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From Cattle Camp to Slaughterhouse: The Politics of Identity Among Cuban-Educated Dinka Refugees in Canada

by

Carol Ann Berger 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Edmonton, Alberta

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Abstract

This thesis explores the politics of identity as experienced by Sudanese children taken from refugee camps in Ethiopia in 1985–86 and raised in Cuba. Most are from the Dinka tribe and were displaced by the civil war in southern Sudan. In the late 1990s, 250 of those sent to Cuba emigrated to Canada. One-third of the new immigrants reside in Alberta, the majority of them being employed in a cattle slaughterhouse. Sent to Cuba by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the children were to be the "vanguard" of the "New Sudan," a country where religious and ethnic identification would be supplanted in favour of a united socialist and secular society. Those raised in Cuba have adopted Latin culture while celebrating a "Sudanese" identity which does not distinguish between tribes. Pronounced cultural and linguistic differences shown by the research group have led other Sudanese to name them "the Cubans."

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Chapter 1
The Politics of Identity

> There is no north, no south, no Dinka, no Arab. We have to stop this mentality. It's just geography.
>
> —Words of a twenty-eight-year-old Sudanese who grew up in Cuba and now lives in Canada.

1.1 Introduction

If newborn calves are left without shelter and exposed to a heavy rain, their scent may be washed away. Cows, looking for their offspring, will search in vain, unable to identify them. Unless a farmer moves quickly to reunite cow and calf, the still-vulnerable calves will become orphans, unable to be nourished and to thrive.

My research group, young Dinka from southern Sudan, originates from a culture renowned for its cattle. The care and trade of cattle have historically been the central influence in Dinka society. The possession of cattle determines status and facilitates marriage, strengthening alliances and enabling the sharing of territory. Cattle are also used in the practice of traditional religion and symbolize or articulate world view. It is one of the many ironies of the story of the Dinka in Alberta that they live in the heartland of western Canada's cattle culture yet feel little identification with it.

They are the children of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the guerrilla movement which has been at war with the northern government of Sudan since 1983. Two years after the start of the civil war, in late 1985, as the numbers who had taken refuge in neighbouring Ethiopia swelled into the hundreds of thousands, 619 children and teenagers were chosen to be sent to Cuba. There they

grew up without parents or kin on an island off the southern shore of Cuba. Today they are like those rain-sodden calves: their "scent," the culture which they were born into, is gone. The disastrous "rain" was the civil war which engulfed their home region in the mid-1980s and transported them to the other side of the world.

After living in Cuba for more than thirteen years, and in the absence of all contact with relatives, their connection to Sudan is a tenuous one. Today most of those transported to Cuba as children or young teens have few memories of their home country. More importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, their culture is no longer African, let alone Sudanese. In their manner, their world view, their sense of self, there are few traces of the culture they came from. They have become known as "the Cubans."

This thesis is about identity, identity as it is constructed from the conditions of geographical origin and kinship. In the former—conditions of geographical origin—social and political conflict led to warfare which directly impacted the individuals in my research group. The latter—kinship—played a significant role in determining what agency these individuals had amidst the upheaval and hardship of war. The civil war has affected millions of people. In the case of those related to individuals enjoying status and power, however, their effective "identity" enabled them to leave the theatre of war. Kinship can also be equated to authority or that authority which an individual chooses to recognize (distinct from the authority of a state or governing body). In this sense, the thread connecting identity with authority is explored in my research.

Since their migration to Canada in the late 1990s, the southern Sudanese who grew up in Cuba have begun to renew their relationships with family, if only by long distance telephone calls. Their foreignness, however, has made the contact fraught with difficulty. As well, their relations with other Dinka who have come to Canada directly from Africa are characterized by incomprehension and criticism. "The

Cubans'" otherness is all the more apparent when they are in the presence of people from their home regions. Dinka use the word *ah cheebel* to describe them. First translated for me as "fools," the Dinka word has a more complex meaning. Those who are called *ah cheebel* are said to "know nothing," but, more generally, *ah cheebel* is said to mean "the people who are lost." The Cuban-educated Dinka, for their part, sometimes refer to other Sudanese as *gauchos*, using the colloquial Spanish term for those considered crude or uncouth, or the English-language "bushpeople," suggesting that they are unsophisticated and uneducated.

The youth who were "privileged" to be taken out of Africa to Cuba, privileged on the basis of their collective or group identity—Nilotic southern Sudanese or, more specifically, Dinka—no longer have that cultural identity. They are, however, alive. Thousands of others died during the trek to Ethiopia, from which the youth were taken to Cuba in 1985–86. The total death toll of the eighteen-year war is estimated at more than 1.5 million people. But the conditions in which the youth lived in Cuba and their isolation from Africa radically altered the identity which they shared as children. Their post-Cuba identity is shared, but only within their specific group—some 250 people now living in Canada. As their residency in Canada continues, that group identity is undergoing change. Values acquired in Cuba are being challenged by those of family members in Africa and other Sudanese now living in Canada.

1.2 Politics of Identity as Concept

It is important to note that ethnography is constrained by the imposition of identity by others. This is no less true of east Africa, in particular, Sudan. Nilotic peoples, of whom the Dinka are included, refer to their northerly neighbours as "Arabs," suggesting a single, homogenous grouping of Arabic-speaking peoples. The "Arabs," for their part, identify themselves according to varying language use,

kinship ties and cultural belief and are a diverse population including the Beggara, Rashaida, Missiriyya, Khatmiyya, Rezigat and Dongolawi. In the same manner, the Nilotics have been categorized as a relatively homogenous group, the major groupings being Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Anuak and Uduk. Their traditional homelands are central-south Sudan. Yet, while the Nilotics share many historical and cultural understandings, a supposed member of the Nilotics would never describe himself as such. Rather, there are descending classifications of membership—from tribe (i.e., Dinka) to clan (i.e., Gogrial Dinka) to subclan (i.e., Twic Dinka)—used depending on the person to whom one is speaking. The more distant the audience is perceived to be, the more general the classification offered. The individual has agency in the ascription of identification of his cultural group. Whether the act of an individual with group identity or an outsider projecting cultural boundaries, the giving of names to a cultural identity organizes social interaction (Barth 1969: 10).

The name *Dinka* itself provides an illustration of the ways in which identity has been projected onto, rather than derived from, a people. The name originates from *jiang*, the Dinka word which means "people." The contemporary term, Dinka, is believed to be a bastardization of *jiang* by Arabic-speaking peoples who bordered Dinka territory. In 1884, in correspondence regarding the murder of the Dutch explorer Juan Maria Schuver, they are referred to as "Dinga negroes" (James et al. 1996: xii).

In the case of Dinka, geographical origin and language used (conventionally termed as "dialect") provide more specific identities, including Malwal Dinka, Bor Dinka, Ngok Dinka and Agar Dinka. Additionally, none of these groups is monolingual. It is not uncommon for people of the Nilotic region to speak four or five different languages, including Nuer, Dinka (classified as a Western Nilotic language), Shilluk, Jur, Murle, Arabic and English. Because the "dialects" spoken by

Dinka have great variance, Arabic is the preferred lingua franca throughout large parts of southern Sudan.

The representation of Nilotic peoples by anthropologists showed seemingly isolated cultural groups, and often ignored interaction and common development with other, neighbouring groups. It is interesting to reflect that early attempts to document the peoples of southern Sudan relied heavily on perceptions of physical commonality. In this sense, early ethnographers used visual recognition to determine kinship and, therefore, cultural ties (Mukherjee et al. 1955: 93–9). The inference, whether intentional or not, was that race equalled culture. Given that the "race" determinations were made by outsiders using arbitrary measurements of biological affinity, the complexity of relationships between the region's cultures was oversimplified and reduced to questions of kinship. As I will discuss later in this thesis, this reliance on race-based recognition of "difference" and "commonality" as a signpost of culture does not reflect the representation of culture as observed among contemporary Nilotics.

The Dinka are the largest single tribe in Sudan, numbering almost two million, while Nuer are believed to number more than half a million. Nuer and Dinka speak genetically related Western Nilotic languages derived from a common proto-language (Kelly 1985: 10). Because of the protracted civil war, large numbers of people in the Nilotic region have been displaced and are living in adjacent regions and countries as refugees.

In common with many peoples, Dinka oral history deals with the origin of languages. This history and Dinka religious belief have many parallels with the Koran and Bible (Deng 1978: 78). These include how God created woman from the rib of man, of how a prophet was born to a woman who had no sexual relations, and the origin of languages. The Dinka story of the latter bears a close resemblance to the Tower of Babel account in Genesis.

Francis Mading Deng, relating oral history from his Dinka homeland, writes: "According to Chief Stephen Thongkol, people were initially created with racial and cultural uniformity. Language diversity later resulted from a punishment God imposed on man when he became so arrogant that he wanted to build a tower high enough to reach God in the sky.

> When God saw them do this, he thought of something to bring confusion to their heads: he gave the people a very heavy sleep. They slept for a very, very long time. They slept so long that they forgot the language they had used to speak. When they eventually woke up from their sleep, each man went his own way, speaking his own tongue. None of them could understand the language of the other any more. That is how people dispersed all over the world. Each man would walk his way and speak his own language and another would go his way and speak in his own language (Deng 1978: 62–3).

These variations in language between "each man" relates well to the Dinka themselves. Each Dinka clan or grouping is identified with a district or region and the profusion of unwritten Dinka language dialects makes communication between the different groups difficult (Southall 1976: 464). While the Dinka are the largest single tribe in Sudan, they are in many ways a disparate group and historically had only limited contact with Dinka groupings outside their respective territories.

For the Dinka of southern Sudan, the meaning of the term "nation" is one which has evolved to mean different things at different times. During the Mahdiyya, Dinka joined with northern, Mahdist forces to defeat the colonial Turko-Egyptians (Beswick: 173–4).[1] In their attempts to overthrow a foreign power occupying the territory of their bordered nation, the Dinka were identifying with a larger political grouping in opposition to another, invading, one.

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[1]The nationalist leader Mohamed Ahmed, later known as the Mahdi or Islamic Messiah, led Sudanese against the ruling Turks in 1881, overthrowing the regime in 1885. The government which followed and ruled between 1885–98 was known as the Mahdiyya (Deng 1995: 49–52).

"African nationalists fighting against colonial oppression became wedded to the legal concept of the nation (as opposed to an absent genealogical sense) through their struggle to take over the colonial state and its bureaucratic apparatus" (Smith 1986: 135). But the overthrow of a colonial ruler does not ensure that the peoples who have taken part in the struggle were of a common culture. Once the Turko-Egyptian forces were defeated, the cultural differences between the Arab Mahdists and the black African Dinka prevented further evolution of the "nation" to include the Africans.

The new rulers in Khartoum adopted policies to ensure solidarity of citizenship among northern Sudanese: Arabic became the standard language and Islam the state religion. The "outsiders"—southern Sudanese—had no affinity for the national symbols and myths endorsed by the new powers. Their exclusion from the sovereign "nation" further defined their own identity as a separate ethnie.

Whether Dinka have any concept of "nation" is a matter of debate. Beswick writes: "[T]he Islamic criterion of group identity and loyalty in times of crisis does not exist in Dinka society. In their homes, the Dinka have no consciousness of themselves as a nation, and a Bor travelling in Raik country may well find himself insulted as a foreigner rather than be accepted as a fellow Dinka." He continues, "With the exception of a few prophets, who have temporarily united the Dinka against a common foe, nothing ties Dinka society together except the language itself" (Beswick 1994: 178). If this is so, then the ties connecting Dinka are tenuous, indeed. The Dinka speak a large number of dialects varying considerably from one another (Southall 1976: 464).

And yet Dinka as a people are recognized to have a distinct culture and territory, though constantly under external (Arab) and internal (intertribal) threat (Southall 1976: 487–8.) A. D. Smith writes: "While we can no longer regard the nation as a given of social existence, a 'primordial' and natural unit of human

association outside time, neither can we accept that it is a wholly modern phenomenon, be it the 'nervous tic of capitalism', or the necessary form and culture of an industrial society. While the revolutions of industrial capitalism, the bureaucratic state and secular mass-education represent a watershed in human history comparable to the Neolithic transition, they have not obliterated or rendered obsolete many of the cultures and identities formed in pre-modern eras" (Smith 1986: 3). He continues to say that "[t]he fate of these cultures and identities has depended as much upon their internal properties as upon the uneven incidence of the modern revolutions. This is because the constituents of these identities and cultures—the myths, memories, symbols and values—can often be adapted to new circumstances by being accorded new meanings and new functions."

This is true of the Ngok Dinka, a subclan of the Dinka living within the administrative borders of northern Sudan (Deng 1978: 7–8). Because of their particular circumstances, Ngok Dinka are known for their vocal defence of Dinka tradition. The home territory of the Ngok Dinka is Abyei district in Southern Kordofan province. They have the longest history of Arab incursion and have adopted Arab cultural elements while at the same time attempting to preserve their Dinka identity (Deng 1978: 74–5).

The question of identity for the peoples of Sudan is a longstanding one. Mading Deng has written of the search for the "true identity" of Sudanese (Deng 1978: 205–8). He refers to "the more equitable model" of "the indigenous Afro-Christian-Arab-Islamic identity" and writes that this model is "a sound basis for an enriched and unifying Sudanese identity." While supporting the description of Sudanese as "Afro-Arab," he acknowledged that the dominant or projected "identity" of the nation is Arab and Islamic. In the twenty-three years since Deng wrote those words, however, the Sudanese government has become an Islamic state, imposing Sharia law and pursuing a radical form of fundamentalist Islam. The

prospect of an "Afro-Christian-Arab-Islamic identity" would appear less attainable than ever.

The identification by others is further complicated in the case of those who lived in Cuba. Their isolation and exposure to political imperatives and their status as a minority group in Cuba have further distanced identity as lived experience from that which is mythologized and constructed. And, given the understanding that the Dinka, as a cultural group, recognize cultural behaviour as a determinant of belonging, their position within the wider community is further compromised.

It is important to note that the values relating to identity which the youth in Cuba sought to uphold were those originally celebrated by the SPLA. The political education of those sent to Cuba was aimed at creating a new cadre of southern Sudanese, the members of which would identify themselves first and foremost as Sudanese. Tribal or geographical affiliation was discouraged or even suppressed.[2] To this end, the youth perceived themselves as future members of a nation state where linguistic, religious or racial differences would be de-emphasized in favour of a collective, inclusive identity.

As will be explained in Chapter 3, the SPLA lost direct contact with the 619 youth sent to Cuba within only a few years of their departure from refugee camps in Ethiopia. While the few adult Sudanese accompanying the youth continued with the intended socio-political program, conditions within the movement underwent a dramatic upheaval beginning in the late 1980s. In 1989 the Arab-led government in Khartoum was overthrown in a coup backed by the Muslim fundamentalist National Islamic Front (NIF). The NIF introduced more open support of a *jihad* or holy war against the non-Muslim south. While the SPLA publicly called for creation of a

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[2]Contemporary literature favours use of the term "ethnic group" over "tribe" (Banks 1996: 25). This paper, however, uses the latter term to conform with the self-identification of informants.

secular, non-tribal state, the increasingly militant Islamization of the country's government encouraged greater ethnic identification in the Christian, black African regions of Sudan. By the early 1990s, internal divisions within the SPLA had led to all-out war between tribal-based, Nuer versus Dinka, factions.

Even without the direction of the SPLA, the youth in Cuba experienced a cultural transformation as they laboured in plantations with other African children. At the same time that the SPLA's "vanguard" of politicized youth were shedding their tribal allegiances, the trend in Sudan was towards increased chauvinism and conflict between related tribes and peoples.

From these changing social conditions new identities have been wrought. It is in this sense that identity is in part the product of political or historical events. Because of this, it is impossible to illuminate emerging identities without an understanding of recent history which has impacted population groups and individuals both in Sudan and in the diaspora.

1.3 Literature Review

The topic of this thesis, the politics of identity, refers to the construction of identity. Historical, social, economic and political influences contribute to the individual or group identity. Contemporary literature uses the term "ethnicity" to refer to that which separates one group from another. The term is used in the much the same way that the word "tribe" was used in early anthropological writings. A group's members identify themselves as having shared culture which, when joined with other like-minded people, gives them an ethnic identity. At the same time, "ethnicity" is projected onto others, and used to separate or categorize peoples and individuals. Implicit in the use of the word is the idea of difference that one is born into. In the North American context, the word has come to mean the part of oneself which is other, different from the hegemonic culture. It also refers to one's biological

inheritance, the "culture" that one is born into, whether evident from the colour of one's skin or in the language used.

In the seminal work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Fredrik Barth writes that the term ethnic group, as used in anthropology, designates a population which:

1. is largely biologically self-perpetuating
2. shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms
3. makes up a field of communication and interaction
4. has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order (Barth: 10–11).

While stating that the definition is flawed, Barth writes that it is workable for the purposes of anthropology. His criticism lies in the implication of "racial difference, cultural difference, social separation and language barriers, spontaneous and organized enmity." As Barth states:

> [W]e are led to imagine each group developing its cultural and social form in relative isolation, mainly in response to local ecologic factors, through a history of adaptation by invention and selective borrowing. This history has produced a world of separate peoples, each with their culture and each organized in a society which can legitimately be isolated for description as an island to itself (Barth: 11).

The inclusion of race in the definition of an ethnic group—that such a group be "biologically self-perpetuating"—is problematic. It perpetuates the idea of primordialism, that race equals culture. As stated earlier, ethnic group, as an anthropological term, has largely supplanted the tainted "tribe." The debate regarding "tribalism" and ethnicity is an important one, the origins of which date from the post-war period of research carried out by anthropologists at the University of Manchester. African anthropology out of Britain during this time was characterized by two divergent perspectives. One dealt with culture and change while the other attempted to fix in time and place what were purported to be

"traditional" methods of social organization. The latter was pursued in the pre-war period by Oxford and Cambridge anthropologists who sought to record through ethnography the manner in which groups of people ("tribes") functioned. In doing so, peoples were effectively dealt with in isolation from other groups, and the interaction and shared culture aspects of their lives were understated or even misrepresented. As these anthropologists carried out their research at the same time that colonization was advancing, the recording of aspects of "traditional" social organization resembled a salvage operation. Combined with the use of the ethnographic present, these ethnographies presented culture as being somehow static, individuals having little in the way of agency or influence.

The former anthropological perspective—that dealing with culture and change—was the post-war focus of anthropologists who became known as the Manchester School (Banks 1996: 25). Among them are Max Gluckman, Clyde Mitchell and Abner Cohen. Their work was carried out in southern, central and western Africa and sought to show the "changes brought about in indigenous social organization by interaction with whites and other indigenous groups." According to Banks, these anthropologists were responsible for the "terminological shift ... from 'tribe' to 'ethnic group'." While their writings contributed to a move away from the use of such terms as "tribe" and "tribalism," they were themselves working within a context of ethnicity—that of members from the community of western academics. "Tribe" and "tribalism," within the colonial context, had negative connotations and were used to infer backwardness. The shift away from the use of the terms marked an attempt to confer a higher status on the social organization employed by peoples in Africa. Using an evolutionary perspective, "tribalism" was identified with rural life and, as Africans became more urbanized, it followed that people would become "detribalized." The research of J. Clyde Mitchell, carried out in the mid-1950s, in particular, showed this to be untrue. Instead, urbanized people also used "tribal"

labels to identify groups of people. Nevertheless, the shift away from the use of tribe in favour of ethnic group marked a recognition that African societies were complex and, in western terms, highly political.

My long-term contact with southern Sudanese peoples has led me to see their social behaviour and organization as more the result of political and economic considerations than supposed ethnic concerns. And, while self-ascribed labels and the apparent kin-based nature of social groups might appear to favour biological affinity as a central characteristic of the identity of such groups, there are subtle but important distinctions between recognition of those who share culture and those who are biologically related. Among these is the practice of cultural inclusion whereby the individual who has no recognized biological affinity with the larger group is, in time, recognized as a full member of the group. The main factor in the individual's acceptance by the larger group is that person's adoption of cultural values in common with the group.

It is noted that more recent writing has replaced the concept of ethnicity with "more ambiguous concepts such as 'locality' or 'identity'" (Banks 1996: ii). Because of the implicit connection between "race" or biological affinity and "ethnicity," the term "identity" is preferred. The term ethnicity suggests a primordial or ascribed set of cultural values shared by a related group, while identity stresses individual agency and the malleability or organic nature of the individual's concept of self. While the subject of my research is the identity of a group—Sudanese raised in Cuba—it is an identity which expresses itself in an intrinsically "individual" way when contrasted with that of the larger, non-Cuban Sudanese group. Certainly, as regards the informants for this thesis, ethnicity has come to represent a tool of control and even oppression. In their case, others who recognize an ethnic or kin-based identification with them have attempted to alter their behaviour in order to conform to the ethnic group's value system or world view. These divergent perspectives—ethnicity as

identity which is communicated between related people and identity as expressed by the individual—have led to conflict between the youth raised in Cuba and Sudanese who have lived their lives in Africa.

At the same time that this thesis does not use the term ethnicity to describe the characteristics of the informant group, the text does use the word "tribe." It is the term used by my informants. A century ago, western concepts of what "tribe" meant were used to apply indirect rule throughout colonized Africa. A tribe, in this sense, was defined as "cultural units 'possessing a common language, a single social system, and an established customary law'" (Mamdani 1996: 79). It does not matter that in many cases colonial administrators were compelled to create tribes where none had existed before, imposing chiefs and encouraging "traditional" laws. As Mahmoud Mamdani writes:

> "Tak[ing] the tribal unit" as the point of departure for setting up a unit of administration was no simple matter. More than just creating a tribal hierarchy where none had existed previously, this often involved working through a mishmash of ethnic affiliations to create "purer" and clearer tribal identities as the basis for tribal authorities. ... [T]ribes are supposed to be in an organized state, each with its own territory, customs, and leadership. But should the opposite be true, it was clearly the duty of officialdom to create order out of chaos and tribal "purity" out of tribal patchwork. (Mamdani: 81).

I include these references to show the ways in which history has conspired to ethnicize peoples in Africa and to better illustrate the ways in which identity in the past, as much as today, is constructed. For this reason, I refrain from using the terms ethnicity or ethnic group. They imply that biological affinity and continuity are by definition factors in cultural identification. As such, they perpetuate the same kind of thinking which led western colonial powers to separate and categorize people. My research has led me to conclude that a more apt, less race-based, term is identity.

1.4 Background to Thesis Research

The conduct of this research has been of great personal satisfaction as it represents an extension of earlier, journalistic, work done in Sudan. I was a resident foreign correspondent from 1981 to 1987, reporting on the start of the civil war and the imposition of *sharia* or Islamic law. As a reporter for the BBC World Service, I made daily broadcasts on political and military developments and travelled extensively throughout the country. By 1985, hundreds of thousands of southern Sudanese had fled their home region. In journeys into southern Sudan between 1983 and 1987, I saw the effects of the spreading war and the forced migration of the war-affected population into Ethiopia. At the time that the children were sent to Cuba, in 1985, I was in Khartoum. The state-run news agency, SUNA, reported at that time that the children were being traded for guns. But the coverage of their departure from Ethiopia was brief, the worsening war directing both government and western journalistic interest elsewhere.

More than a decade later, living in Edmonton, Alberta, a Sudanese friend one day mentioned to me that a group of Sudanese coming from Cuba had arrived in the province. Initial attempts to meet the young men through this friend proved fruitless. I later better understood that his failure to introduce me to any of them stemmed from the emerging conflict between the Sudanese who had come from Cuba and those who had come to Canada directly from Africa. As an elder of the immigrant community, my friend was among those most offended, initially, by the cultural differences displayed by the new arrivals. "The Cubans" did not observe the traditional Dinka culture's reverence for age-sets which places elders at the top of the cultural hierarchy.[3] Sudanese already living in Canada were critical of the new

[3]East African tribes, including Dinka, or sections of tribes divide generations of men into groups based on age. Such age-sets have political as well as social purposes within the immediate group and among the tribe itself (Lienhardt 1966: 53–4).

arrivals. Only by introducing myself to a few young men I saw walking on the streets of Edmonton did I begin what has been a sustained, almost three-year contact with a large number of the new immigrants.

My knowledge of their home region, however, has not been so much an asset in my contact with them as it has been, perhaps, a curiosity or even irritant. Many, particularly those who were under the age of twelve when they travelled to Cuba, no longer know with any certainty the location of home villages and towns. At one point I was asked if I could provide maps, so that the youth could begin to learn about their home country. Over the course of the first year (1999–2000), it was evident that some of the new immigrants had become more familiar with cultural and social concerns relevant to southern Sudan. But even that was fraught with discomfort as the youth attempted to incorporate what was at times an only sketchy understanding of cultural mores and manners. Coffee-table books on "Africa" ("continent as country") were borrowed from local libraries, the west's conventional disregard for the heterogeneous nature of African cultures seemingly absorbed by the African-born immigrants from Cuba. Videotaped copies of decade-old television documentaries on the war and famine in southern Sudan were watched over and over again.

Victor Turner contended that social behaviour is revealed through observation of the relationship between conflict, structure and process. As he wrote, such "social dramas" make apparent "the crucial principles of social structure in their operation and their relative dominance at successive periods of time" (Turner 1957: 93). Focussing on conflict as a means of revealing culture is apt in the case of my informant group. Observation of those who were sent to Cuba and their attempts to conform to the cultural demands both of their new home and those of relatives from Sudan has brought into sharp relief aspects of the dominant rebel culture, the Nilotic Dinka, as well as the post-Cuba culture of the informant group.

1.5 Methodology and Context

Because of the almost complete absence of secondary sources, the research for this thesis has been based mostly on material collected and generated by the author between May 1998 and August 2001. The research has relied on several hundred interviews with a primary group of Sudanese who grew up in Cuba and a secondary group of Sudanese, the members of which have come to Canada directly from Africa.

My personal history led to the decision to use an ethnohistorical approach (using Appadurai's model) in researching my subject group. This background has, of course, contributed to methodological assumptions. These assumptions include the need to use informal interviews to acquire information from informants. My previous experience of peoples from Sudan showed that direct questioning is counterproductive if the objective is to gain knowledge or understanding of individual action and motivation. In order to avoid the performance element in the use of recording equipment, I chose to use only pen and paper, using Forkner shorthand to record lengthy discussions. Representations of self are affected by the use of electronic devices (audio-recorders, cameras) which place the informant in a performative rather than informative role. Taperecording of interviews is comparable to conducting public rather than private interviews (Ellen 115–16). The informant may be affected by his or her impression of what others will think of their comments since the act of taping them makes the informant's voice and comments part of a permanent and accessible record.

It is important to acknowledge, as well, that members of the informant group are mostly reticent to articulate the more dramatic events which have affected them during their remarkable lives. The deaths of loved ones, colleagues and friends from their home region, as well as continued conflict between rebel factions, places the youth in an extremely difficult position, both psychologically and socially. Added to

these harsh realities are the anxieties and social problems experienced as they attempt to establish new lives in Canada. Depending on whether or not the youth are spoken to as a group or alone, different information is shared.

Inconsistencies and attempts to portray events in a particular light are revealing of group pressure to present an ideal over the actual. As such, when trying to understand the role of politics or authority in the perception of identity, what is *not* said can be as important as what *is*. Individuals who have held positions within the SPLA or whose kin are recognized as veterans of the war show a greater openness in disclosing information which contradicts idealized representations of people or events. The collection of information relating to the Sudanese from Cuba has not been straightforward. Information learned in one context was routinely refined or contradicted in another. Given that this thesis seeks to observe and interpret social changes, the accuracy of historical details has been of utmost importance. Without the knowledge of events which have impacted the study group, the interpretation would be of little relevance.

Incorporation of historical details in this thesis allows a processual analysis of the social changes which have followed their displacement by the war. As Appadurai has written:

> ethnohistorical ["thick description"] entails the analysis of all the traces, structural or cultural, that the institution under study has left on the past. But the collection of such traces, however minute and detailed, would not constitute "ethnohistory," but rather history, pure and simple. What makes it ethnohistory is its link to the present, to the cognitive and structural ways in which these traces have become compacted in the meaning systems of actors in the present (Appadurai 1981: 4–5).

Ethnohistory, then, is a crucial part of the exploration of what my research shows as dramatic alterations in the social structure of the informant group. Their identity as a group has diverged markedly from their kin and community in Sudan. Contact in

Canada with other Sudanese has amplified those differences and, as they attempt to adapt to the rigours of immigrant life, there are strong incentives to renew or rediscover their disrupted connection with the cultural identity of their long-absent kin.

The names of informants have been changed. The decision to render the Sudanese anonymous was not an easy one. Their names alone tell a story—who the father is, the order of birth, events which occurred at the time of birth, the tribe and clan one belongs to, whether an individual is Christian or Muslim. The irony of the need to remove names from a thesis on identity was brought home to me as I completed my writing in the summer of 2001.

During the August heat wave a healthy, full-term baby boy was born in the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton. The mother, one of those who grew up in Cuba, is a Bor Dinka. The father of the baby is an Anuak who came to Canada directly from Africa. The Anuak are a Nilotic people whose territory traditionally straddled the Sudanese-Ethiopia border. The community has been seriously impacted by the civil war, entire villages emptied and their inhabitants scattered by attempts to find safety in refugee camps and, more recently, emigration to Canada and the United States. The couple had met while working as labourers in a slaughterhouse in southern Alberta. While their original nationality—Sudanese—is shared and their respective tribes live in the same region, their life experiences are very different. The new mother does not observe the traditional Sudanese culture's constraints on the conduct of women. The father, while fluent in English and wearing western-style, rap-inspired clothing, was raised in a traditional environment in Sudan. English is their language of communication, a language that the mother learned only after arriving in Canada three years ago.

Visiting them in hospital the day after the birth, I asked if the baby had been given a name. The father replied yes and told me the name—Marit. The name was

unfamiliar to me so I asked if it was Anuak. He said it was. I then asked what it meant. The new mother joined in, saying, "Even me, I don't know what it means." Looking down at the small baby lying across his lap, the father told us that the name meant "adding to." I asked him to explain the name's meaning further. "I was alone and now I am not," he told me. The new mother gently protested, "What do you mean you were alone? You were with me!"

The act of naming the child highlighted the cultural lineage of the father and noted the context in which the baby had been born. The father has lived in Canada for less than three years and, until the birth of his son, was without kin. I asked if the child would be given a second, Dinka, name, implicitly suggesting that the mother's lineage might also be reflected in the child's name. The father replied, "No. The second name is my name." Thus identity is ascribed in the naming of a new life.

Information about identity is lost when pseudonyms are used. But there is another consideration as well. To give names to individuals who have experienced the upheaval and tragedy of war is an important thing. It acknowledges the humanity of the individual amidst the plethora of numbers which are used to illustrate the severity of a situation. In Sudan's case, those numbers are more than 1.5 million dead, four million internally displaced and more than one million living as refugees in countries along its borders (Ruiz 1998: 139–74). It is also noted that the individuals are known within the Sudanese community abroad and, in relation to the continuing civil war in Sudan, the country's Islamic government is also aware of their identities. In this sense, maintaining their anonymity is scarcely possible, even with the use of pseudonyms. The decision not to name the individuals who grew up in Cuba was made to protect their futures in Canada.

Portions of the thesis were read aloud to key informants in order to ensure that information presented was factually correct and that individuals accepted the account of their lives. Reading the work aloud enabled informants to know the thesis

contents, their spoken English being proficient while their ability to read English is in many cases inadequate for a full comprehension. Informants made no changes to theoretical or representational portions of the thesis. The only changes made related to place names and dates.

1.6 Method and Organization

The material collected for this thesis chronicles the experiences of my informant group over an almost twenty-year period. Interviews with informants and observation of their lives took place between 1999 and 2001, the first two years of Canadian residency for the majority of the 250 southern Sudanese from Cuba. While space limitations allow only a cursory accounting of the years they spent in Ethiopia and Cuba, it is necessary to attempt a chronology of the journey these young men and women have made. While the chapters contain information of a sequential nature, events of the past and interpretations of these are a constant factor of the present. As such, relevant historical information and informant understandings of same are included where considered necessary.

Chapter 2 provides a background to the civil war, describes conditions which led informants to take refuge in Ethiopia and examines their relationship to the rebel army. The decision to send the children to Cuba and the manner in which they departed Ethiopia is also dealt with, showing how the children's official identity was manipulated in order to avoid international criticism. The final section of this chapter examines the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) *Manifesto* published in 1983. The socialist-inspired document sets out the movement's position on the nationalities or identity question. The stated objectives, though soon abandoned by many in the rebel army, were broadly adopted by the youth sent to Cuba.

In Chapter 3 the lives of the children on the Isle of Youth, off the southern coast of Cuba, are described. Informant representations of the early years in Cuba

show the ways in which their original, southern Sudanese culture was replaced by self-identification as Sudanese. Arabic was introduced as the lingua franca, and the children were politicized to seek unity among their numbers. A context for the growing sense of solidarity between the members of the Sudanese group is provided, including the use of the children as plantation labourers and competition and conflict between the Sudanese and other African nationalities living on the island. An accounting of those who died while in Cuba is also provided.

The chapter also covers the final, difficult, years in Cuba. The 1991 overthrown of Ethiopian President Menghistu Haile Mariam had serious consequences for the SPLA. The rebel army lost its refuge in Ethiopia and its leadership was weakened. In Sudan, internecine war broke out between Nuer and Dinka elements of the SPLA, claiming the lives of tens of thousands. The upsurge in tribal identification within southern Sudan placed the youth in Cuba in a precarious position. As understood from interviews with informants, many of their families were estranged or even at war with the Dinka-led SPLA. The students, meanwhile, recognized their growing identification not with Africa but Latin America.

Cuba was plunged into an economic crisis after the collapse of its patron state, the Soviet Union, in 1991 and the continuing U.S. embargo. Financial support for the Sudanese students was nominal and many of them were destitute. While UN agencies began to provide relief to the students, UN and Cuban officials also pressured the Sudanese to return either to Africa or Sudan itself. More than half of the total sent to Cuba did return, most of them travelling first to Uganda, then Kenya where refugee camps became their homes. The harrowing experiences of those who returned, however, discouraged those remaining in Cuba to follow them. In 1997, Canada agreed to accept the estimated 275 Sudanese remaining in Cuba, the first new immigrants arriving in November of that year.

Chapter 4 documents the perception of identity by the Sudanese now living in Canada. While experiencing the stress of learning English and adapting to Canadian life, the young men and women have for the first time in some thirteen years had direct contact with relatives from Sudan. These contacts have brought into sharp relief the dramatic cultural changes which were wrought by the upheaval of war and thirteen years of isolation in Cuba. The cohesiveness of the immigrants has weakened since their arrival in Canada. Central to this change is their contact with Sudanese who have come to Canada directly from Africa. Divisions within the "Cuban" group along tribal and clan lines have become more sharply defined and there is a perception that individuals are competing for social status and financial success. In addition, the youth have been "racialized" by non-African Canadians and must contend with hegemonic cultural perceptions regarding their perceived "Africanness."

Chapter 5 focuses on the experience of the youth working in a massive cattle slaughterhouse in the southern Alberta town of Brooks and provides a summary. As of late 2001, more than eighty of those raised in Cuba were living in the small rural community. Most work the nightshift, carrying out the jobs of slaughtering the cattle, cutting up carcasses and packaging meat. Over the course of two years, the community has become fragmented, separating into household units based on tribal lines. Some have separated themselves from the wider community, seeking to reduce contact with other Sudanese, while others have attempted to maintain the much-lauded unity of the original group.

1.7 The Argument

If identity is a tool of survival, and therefore by definition constantly subject to change, what element of identity, if any, survives at the centre of culture? Beneath the layers of external change—political theory and indoctrination, the constraints of

social stratification and hierarchy, social and economic necessity—what part of a person's sense of self remains? In this thesis I will expand on the following questions:

1. What is the identity of southern Sudanese children who grew up in Cuba?
2. How have they changed?
3. What remains of the past?
4. What lies in the future?

Chapter 2

Children of War

> I walk and walk. I was crying. I was six years old and I had to walk. ... When we come on the way we were in like maybe three or four ambushes. You are running and you don't even see where you are going.
>
> —A Sudanese raised in Cuba recalls her flight from southern Sudan to Ethiopia in 1983.

2.1 Introduction

The war which has engulfed southern Sudan since 1983 has left few lives untouched. This thesis deals with the lives of only a few hundred of the millions who have been affected. While the group interviewed is not representative of the experience of southern Sudanese, the tragedy and triumph of their lives illuminates central issues which have dominated social, political and economic life in the country of Sudan since its borders were formed by foreign powers in the late 1800s. The group also enables an examination of the "making" of culture.

For the past two decades the country of Sudan has suffered drought, famine and war. In addition to the massive death toll, millions of people have been displaced. The following provides a background to the civil war as it concerns the people under study in this thesis.

2.2 Background to the War

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, covering more than 2.5 million square kilometres. The terrain ranges from deserts in the north to tropical rain forests in the south. The main geographical feature of Sudan is the Nile River and its tributaries.

More than thirty million people live there, most surviving at a subsistence level, working as farmers and pastoralists. The population is a disparate one which includes more than 450 ethnic groups. The country is bounded in the north by Egypt; the west by Libya, Chad and the Central African Republic; to the east by the Red Sea and Ethiopia; and to the south by Zaire, Uganda and Kenya.

Located in what is known as the Horn of Africa, the country has experienced instability from the spillover of conflicts in neighbouring Libya, Chad, Ethiopia and Uganda. In particular, throughout the 1970s to 1990s, Sudan was impacted by the long-running conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia.[4] Sudan, then backed by the United States and other western nations, provided a base of operation for guerrilla armies opposed to the then East-bloc-aligned Ethiopia. In addition to the tacit support for the anti-Ethiopian movements, Sudan allowed more than half a million Ethiopian refugees to live in its eastern region. Other displaced people, from Chad and Uganda, brought the total refugee number close to one million. It was to Ethiopia that dissident southern Sudanese turned when the civil war begin in the early 1980s. The country allowed the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to base its operations from there and gave refuge to hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Sudan was administered through joint British and Egyptian rule between 1898 and 1956, when it became independent. During the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium colonial rule, British administrators pursued a policy of separate development for the mostly Arab and Muslim north and the African and animist South. This policy saw the predominantly Arab northern region benefit from the creation of schools and institutes of higher learning, the building of infrastructure, rail and road networks. The African south, the last region to be pacified and brought under colonial rule, was

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[4]Eritrea, a former Italian colony, was annexed by Ethiopia in 1952. A twenty-six-year war ended in 1991 when Ethiopian President Menghistu Haile Mariam was overthrown and Eritrea was granted independence. In 1999, the two sides engaged in fighting along their common border.

administered by indirect rule. Attempts were made to prevent an Arabization of the south, with trade links between the north and south frustrated by official policy aimed at maintaining the traditional culture of the region. At the same time, southern Sudan was opened up to Christian missionaries. Other than the regional capital of Juba, the south received almost no development. Education was the preserve of Christian missionaries, the different western denominations effectively dividing the south into spheres of influence. While Arabic was the country's official language, English was widely used in the south.

From 1955 to 1972 a civil war was fought in southern Sudan. The guerrilla army, known as the Anyanya, sought separation from the north. At least half a million people in southern Sudan died in the conflict, while another 200,000 people were forced to take refuge in neighbouring countries. The seventeen-year war was brought to an end in 1972 with the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement. The agreement set terms for regional autonomy and the absorption of Anyanya fighters into the Sudanese army and other civil institutions. By the late 1970s, however, large portions of the agreement had been dismantled by the Khartoum-based government led by President Gaafer Mohamed Nimeiri. Development in the south was almost non-existent while Nimeiri sought to benefit the north with oil discoveries in southern Sudan. Despite opposition from southern politicians, the Khartoum government decided the oil would be pumped north for refinement at Port Sudan along the Red Sea. At the same time, the government adopted an increasingly militant Islamist program. Not only the autonomy of southern Sudanese but their identity as non-Muslim Africans was increasingly encroached upon.

In response to criticism from southern Sudanese, Nimeiri arrested large numbers of southern politicians and began to shift southern soldiers out of the region, replacing them with Muslim soldiers from northern Sudan. It was the latter action which immediately preceded a mutiny among southern soldiers in May 1983.

The mutiny by soldiers based at the Bor, Upper Nile region, garrison has become known as the start of the civil war. The officers and troops which deserted the army in the wake of the mutiny were to form the nucleus of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

In the years immediately before the mutiny, however, stirrings of armed rebellion in the south were already evident. In the town of Bor, children had long made small clay toys in the shape of animals. By late 1982, they were moulding toys in the form of the region's favoured weapon, the AK-47. Long-standing grievances were aggravated, particularly in Upper Nile region, by the arrival of western resource companies in the undeveloped south. In the early 1980s, vast deposits of oil were discovered in the Bentiu area of Upper Nile region in southern Sudan. The area, home to Nuer and Dinka, fell within an exploration concession operated by the U.S.-based Chevron Oil Company.[5] The region had no services or infrastructure and the local population subsisted by cultivating cereal grains and raising large herds of livestock, primarily cattle.

To the north lies Kordofan region, home to predominantly Muslim Arabs. Drought conditions in northern Sudan had already exacerbated tension between Arab and Nilotic tribes over the sharing of water and grazing lands for their herds of cattle. By the mid-1980s, armed Arab militias, known as the *murahileen*, routinely attacked Dinka villages lying to the south (Africa Watch 1990: 82–92). The arrival of western oil companies throughout Upper Nile region brought a new element of incursion into the undeveloped region.

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[5]Chevron Oil Company pulled out of its concession following an attack on its base camp at Rub Kona in February 1984. Four employees were killed by members of the Anyanya II, the armed group which preceded the formation of the SPLA. After some years of inactivity and attempts by the Khartoum government to compel Chevron's return, the concession is now held by a consortium which includes, as operator, the Calgary-based Talisman Energy Inc. Oil began to flow through the 1,600-kilometre pipeline to the north in September 1999.

"N" was born in Bentiu district in 1976. He bears a large dent in his upper forehead and his arms are scarred from bullet wounds, injuries received when he and his family made the arduous journey to Ethiopia at the height of the war. His second name is Khawajah, the Arabic word for "foreigner." The name was given to him to mark an event—the arrival of foreigners in Bentiu. These foreigners were oil workers sent to Bentiu to carry out exploration for oil on the Chevron concession. Because the area is undeveloped grasslands with no facilities to house or service outsiders, the oil workers would fly into the concession on a daily basis from work camps in northern Sudan. As a small boy, N would wait until the helicopters had departed before running with other children to collect the tin refuse left behind by the work crews. They would bring the discarded drink cans back to their mothers who would fashion objects out of them. He lives in Canada now, sharing a house with other Dinka from his home region. N spoke about his youth:

> What I remember about Chevron? I remember when people came by helicopter and landed on the islands [in Bahr el Ghazal (Ghazelle River)]. They took [brought] all those cans and we would go get them, after they leave. They call us to come and we get afraid. What I remember was every day hearing the gun shots. They do that, shooting into the ground [shooting seismic to record geological data]. One day we were following the cattle and we found them just making a road, cutting every tree down. And they come to one guy and told him he had to move his *luak* [cattle shelter] from here. They say "We give you money." He say "No." They say, "No, no, we give you money." Then they got a bulldozer and pushed it down. I remember the white guy, he went like this [imitating the foreign oil worker, the informant removed his baseball cap, raised his hand and pointed straight ahead, as if directing the bulldozer] and they did it.
>
> I remember a lot of people were getting angry about what they were doing. And then, two years later, the Arabs came on the road that Chevron made. The first time they came with a camel and some by foot. The soldiers came with Majeros [a brand of truck used by the army] and they leave them at Lake Jow. They put them down [parked the vehicles] there and come walk and attack the villages.

The recollections of N highlight the most immediate consequence of oil development in his home region. While the small number of educated southern Sudanese living in major centres were concerned that no revenue-sharing agreement had been struck to ensure the south benefited from the oil, people living in the oil region feared the outcome of roadbuilding and new infrastructure where none had existed before. Providing better access into the undeveloped region would make local inhabitants vulnerable not only to the central government but Arab militias which sought use of the rich Dinka and Nuer grasslands for their livestock.

When the war began, the areas immediately affected were Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal regions and the southernmost portion of Kordofan region. From the latter came the people of Abyei, a Dinka district which lies within the boundaries of northern Sudan. The first waves of refugees to Ethiopia came from communities which had been devastated by raids by the Arab *murahileen* and those where southern garrisons had mutinied. Throughout 1984 and 1985 the Abyei area of southern Kordofan and the northern districts of Bahr el Ghazal were devastated by cattle raiding, the burning of crops and the hunger which followed. There were reports of death by starvation in Bahr el Ghazal region, reports which were to be dwarfed by the magnitude of the tragedy which followed (Burr & Collins 1995: 30–1). As one informant, "AB," said: "The first people who died for us were from Abyei. The first soldiers for the SPLA were from Abyei." He continued, "Abyei is the bumper of the car and Bahr el Ghazal is the back of the car. When the car crashes, it is Abyei which is the bumper."

The conflict between Arab, Beggara tribesmen from northern Sudan and Nilotic peoples living directly to their south was an old one and centred on the control of water and grazing rights. For as long as people can remember, the two groups have fought for dominance. In the past, annual negotiations were held by the two sides to determine an equitable distribution of the area's resources. At these

meetings, the two sides would also exchange individuals who had been captured or kidnapped in earlier clashes. Such slaves would be returned to their tribe for a negotiated price.

In the early 1980s, however, the balance of power dramatically shifted in favour of the Beggara tribesmen. This was in part due to an influx of automatic weaponry from Chad and Libya. Using northwestern Sudan as a staging point, Hissene Habre seized power in Chad in 1981 with the support of Egypt and Sudan. Soon the northwestern regions of Darfur and Kordofan were awash with automatic weaponry. The area was also suffering from drought and famine. The Beggara sought to extend their grazing and water resources by pushing south into Dinka and Nuer territory. The discovery of oil in southern Sudan also gave the Khartoum government reason to provide military support for the Beggara. Thus was born the *murahileen*, the Beggara militia which received support from the northern-led army in its campaign to depopulate the Dinka land.

In 1984 the south was struck by drought, further worsening the tenuous food situation. At the same time, fighting by the SPLA and its reliance on the support of the already hard-pressed local people led tens of thousands of Dinka and Nuer people to seek refuge in Ethiopia.

2.3 The Journey to Ethiopia

The subjects of this thesis left their homes in the immediate aftermath of the 1983 Bor mutiny and the upsurge in fighting between government troops and southern Sudanese rebels.

One informant, a twenty-two-year-old Bor Dinka woman, was no more than six when she left Sudan. Within hours of the mutiny at the Bor garrison on 16 May 1983, she and her family fled their home in Malakal, Upper Nile region. They walked for some six weeks before reaching the refugee camp in Itang, Ethiopia. P's father,

the late Kerubino Kwanyin Bol, was commander of the Bor garrison and led the mutiny.[6] Asked what she remembers of the journey, she replied:

> Walking ... if I don't walk I'll be dead because my dad like started the war. We had to run away and a lot of people were killed defending us. Being Kerubino's family, a lot of military [rebel fighters] were given to protect us. We left from Malakal to [Jonglei] Canal. We were taken back to Malakal [by the government army]. When they realized we were Kerubino's family they [the army] wanted to keep us to put pressure on him.
>
> They take us back to Malakal, they [the rebels] came and took us at night, in plainclothes. They took us by lorry to the Canal and then to Ayut and then walking from there to Itang [inside Ethiopia]. I was little by then. I walk and walk. I was crying. I was six years old and I had to walk. When we got to Bilpam [future military headquarters of the SPLA] I got sick in one of my legs and they had to carry me for two days. When we come on the way we were in like maybe three or four ambushes. You are running and you don't even see where you are going. The next day they gather you up, all together.

She remained in the Itang refugee camp, with her mother and extended family, until 1986. At the time of their arrival in 1983, the camp was home to more than 10,000 people. By 1987, the numbers of people taking shelter there had reached more than 130,000 (Burr & Collins 1995: 109). Because her father was a senior member of the rebel movement, there were also times when she and her family lived in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. In 1986, at the age of nine, she and her two brothers, one six and the other ten, travelled to the Isle of Youth in Cuba. She would live in Cuba for the next twelve years.

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[6]Kerubino Kwanyin Bol, then second in command of the SPLA, was arrested in mid-September 1987 by Ethiopian President Menghistu Haile Mariam on suspicion of plotting a coup against SPLA leader John Garang (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1994: 229–35). In 1992, after five years of imprisonment, Kerubino escaped to Uganda. He then formed a dissident fighting group aligned with the Khartoum government. He was killed in the Bentiu area in 1999 by a Nuer rebel faction formerly with the SPLA.

Because many of the children sent to Cuba were related to senior officers who mutinied in Bor on 16 May 1983, they were forced to leave Sudan in the earliest stages of the civil war, when the nascent rebel group was at its most vulnerable, disorganized state. They witnessed initial talks with Ethiopian military officials and the dramatic negotiations over who was to lead the guerrilla army. At this stage the rebel army was still known as Anyanya II, after the southern rebel army which fought in the first civil war, the Anyanya. By July, six weeks after the mutiny, Col. John Garang, a Bor Dinka, was the leader of the movement, now renamed the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Garang himself brought three children to the leadership talks, his two sons and the son of Kerubino Kwanyin Bol.

"Q" is the son of one of the officers who led the Bor mutiny. He fled the area on 21 May, joining John Garang and his family in Ethiopia. Says Q, "I was fourteen but I know everything." Within days of their arrival in Gambela, Ethiopia, contact had been made with Ethiopian President Menghistu Haile Mariam. As he recalled, "Libya had sent the arms but Menghistu said 'Organize yourself first and we will give you the arms.'"

He remembers the days following the Menghistu meeting as being "a terrible time." Because he was accompanying the men, he was given tasks such as serving food at the meetings and running errands. Rebecca Nyandeng Chol, Garang's wife, was the only woman present at the talks. She cooked meals for the men, the children assisting her. The meeting to determine who would lead the new rebel army was held sometime in June in Itang. Q described the scene:

> They [the rebel leaders] wanted to fight [each other]. Me and other guys [children], we were taking food. It was Nuer food, *wal walla*, dura [sorghum]. And you know what the meeting looked like? All the men were like this [gesturing to show that the men sat facing each other with their weapons drawn]. The meeting was under the trees

and the bodyguards were standing all around [also with their weapons drawn].

Opposing the leadership of John Garang were Samuel Gai Tut, Akuot Atem, Vincent Kwan, John Kong Garjiet and William Abdullah Chuol.[7] Samuel Gai Tut was the leader of the Anyanya II, composed largely of veterans of the first civil war, and was committed to the secession of southern Sudan. Gai Tut, a Nuer from Waat in Upper Nile, had taken refuge in Ethiopia in the mid-1970s after leading a mutiny in the Akobo garrison. The group wanted Gai Tut to lead the movement and Garang to be deputy commander or deal with external affairs. Also present at the meeting was the Ethiopian army's Chief of Operations, Brigadier General Mesfin Gebre Kal.[8] No agreement on who the new leader should be was reached. It was then that the Ethiopian army sent two companies to Itang to enforce the imposition of John Garang as leader of the rebel army. Garang was said to have held secret talks with the Ethiopians to ensure his position. Warned of the approaching Ethiopian troops, those opposed to Garang fled back to Sudan. Gai Tut and Abdullah Chuol, both Nuer, broke with Garang. The legacy of that original, failed leadership meeting was to haunt the movement for the next decade as internecine war broke out between tribal-based factions, the Nuer faction making an alliance with the Sudanese government against the Dinka-dominated SPLA. Says Q: "The problems, they started from the beginning. [From] the founding of the movement the problems were always there."

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[7]Samuel Gai Tut was killed in 1984 during a clash with a Nuer faction. William Abdullah Chuol, a Nuer, went on to lead a government-supported Nuer militia against the SPLA. He died in fighting with the SPLA in 1984 or 1985.

[8]Brigadier General Mesfin Gebre Kal, a graduate of the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst in the UK, was a full member of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Ethiopia. He was promoted to Major General and appointed Deputy Commander of the Ground Forces in 1985 (Cole 1985: 100). Mesfin went into exile in 1991, following the overthrow of Ethiopian President Menghistu Haile Mariam, and now lives in London, UK.

Q's father also had a falling out with Garang and was killed shortly after in the 1985 battle of Jokau.

In the months which followed the Bor mutiny, fighting in Upper Nile region intensified, sending still more refugees across the border into Ethiopia. Among them was "AB." The Ngok Dinka is now twenty-eight years old and lives in Canada. He remembers fleeing his home in Jonglei Canal area, Upper Nile region, when he was no more than twelve years old:

> In January 1984 I was in Jonglei Canal. I had just finished school, primary school. ... By that time Jamoos [Arabic for buffalo] Battalion [led by rebel commander Kerubino Kwanyin Bol] was fighting. I was just a student, maybe eleven or twelve years old. Jamoos came from [the village of] Atar to attack the army base at Jonglei. They [the SPLA] sent a message to civilians to leave. We were evacuated [and] went to Atar. After the attack, the government came to my home village of Bathali. They burned all the houses. They say "All those people are guilty. Why do they allow these Jamoos [guerrilla fighters] here?" Because of the experience of Anyanya I [the first civil war from 1955–72] the older people ran. ... [T]he military came and burned everything and killed whatever they find.
>
> So we lost our place at the Canal. We couldn't go to Malakal [main town in Upper Nile]. Everybody was suspected of being SPLA, even children and old women. Me and my mom, my sister and my little nephew, we had seven days outside [sleeping without shelter]. Everything was closed [meaning that they had nowhere to go, the army controlling the area]. ... I don't want to run from here to here. It is better to have a gun in my hand than to run from tree to tree. And of course I left with Jamoos and I went to Ethiopia.

AB walked for the better part of one month before reaching Ethiopia and the refugee camp of Itang. By the middle of 1984, he was receiving military training from Ethiopian and Sudanese soldiers. A year later, he was travelling to Cuba, one of the 619 youth selected to study on the Isle of Youth.

Others of the group were engaged in the war as child soldiers. While their participation is played down, many of the particularly teenage youth who were to

travel to Cuba received military training in camps in Ethiopia and took part in the war. From the mid-1980s, the SPLA and its supporters encouraged male minors to come to Ethiopia for education. Education in most of southern Sudan was suspended at the start of the war. As well, young males throughout Nilotic territory were at risk from the army and Arab militias, identified as they were as potential supporters of the guerrilla army. Thousands of boys were kept in camps in Ethiopia and deployed, when required, by the SPLA (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1994: 196–204). Some were soldiers attached to the "Red Army," which included youths between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Members of the Red Army were based inside Ethiopia in refugee camps and received military training from Ethiopian trainers for a period of some three months. These Red Army soldiers were children under the age of sixteen. SPLA officers say that the Red Army recruits were initially used as fighting soldiers but were later relegated to support roles for the main SPLA force. Contingents of the Red Army accompanied contingents of the SPLA, and were used to guard senior officers and prisoners (1994: 207–8).

"C" is now thirty-two years old. He is among the oldest of the informant group. He joined the Red Army in 1985, at the age of sixteen, one year before leaving for Cuba. As he said, "Actually, I didn't fight directly but while we were coming there was a [Nuer] village called Bak Kompi, northwest of Malakal. It's like our forces were coming, entering the village, so [we] surprised some of the government militia [Anyanya II]. They were preparing to make an ambush, had guns and grenades." His recollection of a sudden demilitarization which affected many of those who went to Cuba is consistent with that of other informants. As C explained:

> Before we went to Cuba we were in the same battalion of the Red Army, and that battalion was even included in the big division. I remember one time the Commander in Chief, John Garang, said he was the commander [inferring that Garang, as Commander, had overruled other SPLA officers in demilitarizing the child soldiers] and

> after the battalion was transferred to school [inside refugee camps in Ethiopia] and we weren't soldiers any-more.

"NR" is a tall, soft-spoken man who speaks haltingly of his experiences before going to Cuba. As a Bor Dinka, his home area was engulfed in the conflict early. He describes his role in the war:

> I fight. I was like eleven years old, like [for] three months. My division was for mining [the name of the rebel division he belonged to later translated from Spanish to Arabic and then English as the "Grasshopper Division" of the SPLA]. I was fighting in Jokau [referring to a famous 1985–86 battle between the SPLA and a splinter group from the Nuer tribe which saw the Nuer, backed by the Sudanese army, enter Ethiopian territory in pursuit of the SPLA]. I had ... like, there is anti-personnel mines. My job is to put the mines down and when a military car passed I had to explode it. I was young so after they send me to refugee camps and after to school.

2.4 Departure to Cuba

Cuba's role as a supporter of African insurgencies is long established, dating back to 1965 when Fidel Castro approved Che Guevera's secret military mission to the Congo (Anderson 1997: 620–3). As a partner of the Soviet Union, Cuba supplemented Soviet backing for African rebel and state armies through the provision of military trainers and medical personnel in Africa itself and by giving African children educational opportunities in Cuba. The country's military academies also provided training for African soldiers and rebels whose governments or movements were supported by the East Bloc. In the Horn of Africa throughout the 1980s, Cuba supported the Marxist Ethiopian government in its wars against guerrilla armies in Eritrea and Tigray. Given that the U.S.-backed Sudanese government was providing support for the Eritrea People's Liberation Front and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, Cuba's support of a dissident southern Sudanese army was consistent with Cold War politics of the era. Cuban personnel were

already present in Ethiopia when the SPLA established its headquarters and training camps there. While the SPLA adopted Marxist terminology in its early years of existence, ideology was not a motivating factor for the creation of the rebel movement. Nor, in subsequent years, has political doctrine or revolutionary ideology been a prominent characteristic of the SPLA or its supporters.

The decision to send Sudanese children to Cuba for education is, however, attributed to the relationship between Cuban authorities and one Marxist southern Sudanese. Archangelo Wanji is a former lecturer at the University of Juba. He comes from the Ndogo people, living north of Wau in Bahr el Ghazal region. As a young man he studied in Eastern Europe, returning to southern Sudan an avowed communist. Wanji, as a member of the SPLA, made at least one trip to Cuba prior to the transport of the children.[9] Informant "V" recalled:

> He actually initiated the idea [of sending children to Cuba]. He wanted everyone to be a communist. People wanted to identify with the socialist world. ... He is an old man now. I think he did [have an] influence. He knew more about communism than the other fellows. Even John Garang, he didn't know much. He wasn't a communist.

From the 80,000 Sudanese refugees gathered in the refugee camp at Itang, in remote Ethiopian territory, 619 children were selected to travel to Cuba.[10] Of the total number, sixty were girls. Most of the children, as many as three-quarters, were from the Dinka tribe. To this day, however, many of those from the selected group, particularly Bor Dinka, contend that the Dinka did not make up the majority of those selected. Their accounts, however, are not borne out by information gathered

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[9]Archangelo Wanji sent his wife, their two sons and a daughter to Cuba. One of the sons now lives in Canada while the other is in Kenya. His daughter Shesi, then between the age of five and seven, was struck and killed by a truck on the Isle of Youth in Cuba in October 1987. Archangelo Wanji left the SPLA in 1986 and is believed to live in Kenya.

[10]The figure of 80,000 people was provided by a reliable Sudanese informant who was resident in Itang at that time. It is consistent with later estimates given by western agencies.

regarding the make-up of the 619-member group. In addition, although most informants contend that the youngest was eight, there were in fact children as young as six years old aboard the transport to Cuba. This discrepancy is in part due to the "inflation" of the children's ages by Sudanese responsible for selecting the children. The Cuban authorities stipulated that only children of school age be sent. As well, a portion of those sent were not, in fact, children or even teenagers. Some, as old as twenty-two, had their ages lowered in order for them to be included. These adults were among the first group to leave Cuba, returning to Ethiopia in 1988.

From interviews with those present in Ethiopia at the time, it is apparent that senior officers of the SPLA lobbied for the inclusion of family and clan members. Said one informant: "William Nyuon [deputy commander of the SPLA] championed some of the Nuer [to be sent to Cuba]. There was a kind of tug of war. He sent his children and other officers sent their children." Nyuon sent six of his children, two daughters and four sons.[11]

The youth sent to Cuba represent a privileged group. The 250 who completed their education in Cuba and now live in Canada represent a still more advantaged group among the total number of 619 sent to Cuba. In the late 1980s and early 1990s some 350 individuals, by then in their early twenties or older, returned to Africa. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, those who were still resident in Cuba in the late 1990s and accepted by Canada were enrolled in academic rather than technical or military programs in Cuba. Most of their fathers or other relatives were identified with the SPLA, many holding senior positions with either the rebel army or its ostensible political wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). At the time of the children's departure from Ethiopia, the refugee camps were quickly expanding and emergency assistance negligible. Given the state of the refugee camps

[11] William Nyuon was killed in Ayut in a night ambush by Nuer faction fighters in 1996.

in Ethiopia, it was unlikely that the children would receive any education. Their very survival was threatened by remaining in the camps.

In 1986, the numbers of Sudanese registered in Ethiopia had reached more than 120,000 and Ethiopian officials were described as overwhelmed. Itang, the refugee camp where those who would later travel to Cuba had taken shelter, was the largest and oldest of three camps established inside Ethiopia. Malnutrition and disease were pervasive among the refugees (Burr & Collins: 108–9). For this reason, the youth now living in Canada are best described as an elite which, in many circles, was considered to be the "vanguard" of the future Sudan. As such, they were expected to support the main tenets of the guerrilla movement while receiving their educations.

The UN at that time had only a nominal presence in Itang. In the early years of the conflict, Itang was controlled not by western relief officials but the SPLA. An informant who was in the camps with the children, "V," explained:

> The UN didn't want the interference of the SPLA in the camps. But there was a need for somebody to take charge. The Ethiopians couldn't do it. There was no government. Distribution of food to various areas of the camp was naturally delegated to refugees. There were thousands. There were so many. There were not less than 80,000 at that time.

Asked whether the UN was aware of the refugee transfer from Ethiopia to Cuba, the informant said, "There were so many people there [in the Itang refugee camp] they [the UN] didn't know." I asked what identity papers the children used in order to travel. The informant laughed and said, "The problem of Sudan *is* identity." He continued:

> Officially, they [the children] were Ethiopians from Gambela, identified with Anuak. There were no papers, only a list, a list of names. Nobody trusted the UN at that time. They didn't want to go

> through the UN. Maybe the UN wouldn't accept [the airlift of children to Cuba]. They [SPLA officials] used Ethiopian military plans to take them [from Itang] to Asmara and Addis Ababa. So they just whisked them off. They were kind of stolen.

The informant's recollection of the manner in which the children were identified is intriguing. The Anuak people are considered part of the Nilotic group of peoples, which includes the Sudanese tribes of Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk and Uduk. When colonial powers set the boundaries between Sudan and Ethiopia in the early part of the last century, the territory of the Anuak people was segmented by the new borders. The district of Anuak habitation, which did not fall under civil administration until 1925, was considered wild and access to it was difficult. The Sudanese-Ethiopian frontier had been marked along the course of the Akobo and Pibor rivers, thus the Anuak dealt with the incursion of Sudanese rule by simply crossing the river and entering unadministered Ethiopian territory (Collins 1983: 116–17). The Anuak became known as the "divided frontier tribe," its people shifting up to today between the two countries as necessity demands. By identifying the southern Sudanese children as Anuak, the Ethiopian authorities could claim them as their own citizens and avoid bringing negative international attention to the airlift to Cuba of children who were citizens of another nation.

From interviews with those now in Canada, it is apparent that many of those sent to Cuba were the children or kin of prominent members of the SPLA. The commander of the guerrilla army, John Garang, himself sent two of his sons while Kerubino Kwanyin Bol, another prominent officer, dispatched his nine-year-old daughter and two sons.[12] A third son died in a fall from an apartment balcony in Addis Ababa at the age of four in 1984.

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[12]One of Garang's son lives in the United States while the other is in Kenya. Kerubino's daughter lives in Canada and his sons are in Africa.

"Y" was no older than eleven when he was taken from Ethiopia to Cuba. He is a nephew of SPLA Commander John Garang. Regarding the composition of the group sent to Cuba, he states:

> I didn't come [to Cuba] because he [John Garang] chose me [referring to implied suggestion that he received preferential treatment]. John said ... even a kid less than sixteen, they can go and take a gun and fight.

One informant, "F," is a thirty-two-year-old Bor Dinka. He described the inclusion of Garang's sons as proof that the decision to send the children out of Africa was humanitarian rather than based on receiving military support from Cuba for the still-young rebel movement. But the decision was a contentious one. As informant "T" explained:

> I was one of the very few [who were taken out of Ethiopia]. There is a lot of versions [opinions]. Some people, because they don't like the SPLA, say that John Garang sent us there to buy guns from Cuba. [Others], that we were bad children, that's why they sent us over there.

F added:

> Many thought the boys were being exchanged for guns. Garang sent his own sons [to show this wasn't the case]. For me I was happy because I don't have no school, no food, nothing there [in Ethiopia]. So John Garang came and talked to us and said we could go to school and then come back after you have studied.

Another nephew of John Garang, "R," was fourteen when he went to Cuba. He recalled the start of the war:

> I came to movement when I had, I don't know, ten years, nine years. The fighting in Bor [referring to the May 1983 mutiny], I was there. I had been fighting before but Garang, he said the small guys [children]

> aren't going to fight anymore. I did my [military] training in Bongo [inside Ethiopia]. When we finished training [in 1985] we were 1,000, and half children. ... I say to the guys I don't want to go to Cuba. I don't want to go to school. ... So the guys try to convince me. After, ... I don't know if they were talking with John [Garang] but John, he called me and he talked to me and he says "You have to go to school. We don't want to use the children, to be killed anymore. So you have to go to Cuba." So, he convinced me. I went to Cuba.

After being selected for the journey to Cuba, the children were moved from the refugee camp in Itang to Bilpam, four hours by foot to the west but still inside Ethiopian territory. At Bilpam, the SPLA military headquarters, Cuban teachers, over a period of some three months, instructed the children in the Spanish language.

To a person, all informants interviewed know the date of their departure from Africa. The first group of children was transported from Gambela in the interior of Ethiopia by plane to the Ethiopian (now Eritrean) port of Massawa. There, on 29 December 1985, a total of 314 children, all but thirty of them boys, boarded "Soviet ship number seven, *Iboski*." They sailed for twenty-four days, making several stops enroute, arriving in Havana on 22 January 1986. The ship sailed northwards up the Red Sea Coast, stopping at Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Port Said in Egypt, Italy, Malta and islands in the Caribbean. The remainder of the children flew to Cuba on two separate flights, the first on 20 June 1986 and the second a month later. The June flight took the children from Gambela to the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, then on to Harare, Zimbabwe, and a military airstrip in Luanda, Angola, where the children were transferred to another plane for the final leg of their journey to Cuba, stopping first at Cape Verde.

Aboard the *Iboski*, described as a cruise ship, the 314 children were accompanied by no more than six adults. One of the youth recalled the dilemma posed by the food provided for the children. Sandwiches were to sustain the passengers on their twenty-four-day sailing: half were made of beef and the other of

pork. Nilotic people do not consume pork. As informants recalled, they avoided the pork until there was nothing left to eat. Then, one by one, hoping that they weren't seen by others, they gave in to hunger and consumed the once-forbidden food.

2.5 Political Program of the SPLM

The SPLM published its twenty-eight-page *Manifesto* on 31 July 1983. The document is in English. At the upper left of each odd-numbered page is a circular logo bearing the words "Sudan People's Liberation Movement" and "Unity," "Equality" and "Progress." At the upper right of each even-number page is the logo of the movement's military wing, the "Sudan People's Liberation Army"—a pencil-line drawing of two pairs of crossed Kalashnikovs. According to the *Manifesto*, under the heading "Formation and Objectives of the SPLA and SPLM,"

> Although the Movement has started by necessity in the South, it aims eventually at engulfing the whole country in socialist transformation. The SPLA is fighting to establish a United Socialist Sudan, not a separate Southern Sudan. ...(SPLA 1983: 16).

This "objective," as described here, is crucial to an understanding of the position which continues to be largely held by the youth who grew up in Cuba. When the children left their refugee camps in Ethiopia in late 1985 and 1986, the movement had not yet been hit by the internal strife which was, in part, the product of opposition to the movement's originally stated objective of southern Sudan remaining within a united Sudan. By the late-1980s, serious divisions within the guerrilla army's leadership over the issue had led to open warfare between rival groups. Many within the SPLA leadership wanted southern Sudan to secede from the north. These differences, manipulated and exploited by the northern-led army, were to divide the movement along tribal (Dinka vs. Nuer) lines.

The youth in Cuba, meanwhile, lived in a virtual vacuum, receiving almost no news from Sudan, and continued to abide by the original tenets of the movement. Studying and living in a socialist state which was providing nominal support for the anti-government war in Sudan, the youth had no access to alternative views on the unfolding events in their home country. Instead, they continued to support the SPLM's *Manifesto* for the more than thirteen years that they lived in Cuba, long after shifting political alliances in Africa had led the SPLM to distance itself from socialist doctrine.

The "cadres" of the SPLA/SPLM were politicized to identify themselves as "Sudanese" rather than "southern Sudanese" and to envisage the taking up of arms as a means to unite rather than divide the country. As the *Manifesto* states:

> The immediate task of the SPLA/SPLM is to transform the Southern Movement from a reactionary movement led by reactionaries and concerned only with the South, jobs and self interest to a progressive movement led by revolutionaries and dedicated to the socialist transformation of the whole country. It must be reiterated that the principal objective of the SPLA/SPLM is not separation for the South. The South is an integral and inseparable part of the Sudan. Africa has been fragmented sufficiently enough by colonialism and neo-colonialism and its further fragmentation can only be in the interests of her enemies (1983: 16–17).

The *Manifesto* closes with the following slogan:

> LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE SUDANESE PEOPLE
>
> LONG LIVE THE SPLM
>
> LONG LIVE THE SPLA
>
> VICTORY TO THE SPLA AND THEREFORE TO THE SUDANESE PEOPLE (1983: 28).

In Cuba, the youth increasingly experienced a group identity consistent with the stated aim of the SPLM to create a single nationality—one which de-emphasized tribal or geographic affiliation. As well, neither Christian nor traditional southern Sudanese religions were taught or practiced at the Sudanese school on the Isle of Youth. At the same time, however, events in northern and southern Sudan were creating conditions for a resurgence of ethnic and religious identification. The Islamist government in Khartoum portrayed the war against southern Sudanese as a *jihad* or holy war, one which pitted righteous Muslims against black African infidels (Cohen & Deng 1998: 140). One year after the start of the war, the Khartoum-based government instituted a form of *sharia* or Islamic law, further alienating the mostly Christian and animist south. The use of religious rhetoric was countered by the south's Christian followers and the western churches supporting them, if only by condemning the northern government. Factions opposed to the SPLA leadership of John Garang were also increasingly divided along tribal lines. Internecine wars between the Dinka tribe majority and the Nuer tribe saw the deaths of tens of thousands between 1991 and 1997 (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1994: 90–112).

Eighteen years after the publication of the SPLM *Manifesto*, the only document every produced by the movement, members of the "vanguard" who grew up in Cuba still attest to its influence. Said one, "You have to read the *Manifesto* because it's what I believe."

Chapter 3

Plantation Labourers and "Vanguard" of the SPLA

> The Cuban system, actually nobody is higher than the other. Even ministers work on the farm. During harvest people leave their jobs and come to work [in the fields]. Even children in urban schools, they go out to work in the field for one month ... People are just working for nothing.
>
> —A Sudanese teacher who lived on the Isle of Youth.

3.1 The Isle of Youth

Isla de la Juventud, the Isle of Youth, is the second largest island in Cuba. It lies about 100 kilometres south of the mainland, in the Archipielago of Canarreos, and is 3,020 square kilometres in size. The island is home to some 72,000 Cubans, most of whom live in the capital, Nueva Gerona, and was formerly known as the Isle of Pines and, before that, the Isle of Parrots. Christopher Columbus sighted it in 1494, naming it El Evangelista. The island once served as a hiding place for such navigators as Francis Drake, John Hawkins, Thomas Baskerville and Henry Morgan. Robert Louis Stevenson is said to have based the novel *Treasure Island* on the Isle of Youth. From early Spanish colonial days, the island has been used as a penal colony. Fidel Castro was imprisoned there during the Batista Regime, the jail where he was held now serving as a museum. Near the island's capital is a large prison,

used primarily for holding political prisoners. Until the Cuban Revolution in 1959, American citizens owned much of the land.[13]

Cuban has recently begun advertising the Isle of Youth as a tourist destination, offering such activities as scuba diving, snorkelling, bone-fishing, biking tours and hiking.[14] There is no mention of the part of the island's population made up of students from socialist African nations and movements or the plantations where they labour.

No published documentation, academic or journalistic, regarding the education of African students on the island has been located. Nor do the Sudanese formerly responsible for the children, either as teachers or political officers, have any historical records or printed matter relating to the more than thirteen years that the children lived in Cuba.[15] The only documentation available is no more than a dozen sheets of yellowing paper which list the typewritten names of students who returned to Africa between late 1989 and 1993 and, on a single sheet, the names of those who died in Cuba.

Informants report that the first school for non-Cuban, socialist students was established on the island in the early 1970s. By the mid-1990s, the total population of African students on the island was estimated to be more than 15,000, their schools scattered in the rural plantation area around the main town of Gerona. A small

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[13]*The Columbia Encyclopedia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), via website http://www.slider.com/enc/57000/Youth_Isle_of.htm (accessed on 15 August 2001).

[14]"Havana-Isle of Youth Cycle Tour, October–April/Weekly Departures," as advertised at http://www.macqueens.com/youth.html (accessed on 15 August 2001).

[15]All copies of annual reports prepared by Sudanese teachers during the duration of the children's residency in Cuba were lost when the first group of Sudanese arrived in Canada in November 1997. The documents, representing almost all the material ever produced in regards to the education and welfare of the youth, had been placed in a UN-issued suitcase. The suitcase, one of many of the same colour and size, was either stolen or misdirected somewhere between the boarding of their flight in Cuba and their arrival in Toronto. Copies of the same documents were regularly given to the SPLA office in Havana but these were not believed to have been kept. An alternative explanation, one which was not offered by informants, is that all records were destroyed before they left Cuba.

portion of the total were non-African students from North Korea and Nicaragua. The number of schools grew to forty, students coming from more than thirteen countries and movements allied with the East Bloc. Many of the schools were named after Cuban nationalist heroes. Each school was attended by a single nationality, the facilities including separate dormitories for teachers and male and female students, classrooms, a dining room and citrus plantations. Students were responsible for the tending and harvesting of the plantations, or *campos*, as they were called.

The first children to be housed at a plantation school were from Mozambique, their numbers reaching some 2,000. The children were identified with the revolutionary Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo). Later, children from Soviet-backed Angola and Namibians who had taken refuge there joined them. Students were also brought from Cape Verde. In 1980 or 1981, Ethiopia began sending children, the numbers reaching at least 2,000 by the mid-1980s. Also on the island were children from Burkino Faso, Ghana, Zimbabwe; Guinea-Bissau; São Tomé Principe (formerly known as Equatorial Guinea); and the Western Sahara in Morocco, those identified with the Polisario Front. Also, in the 1980s, more than a dozen children from South Africa were present.

An informant worked as a teacher on the Isle of Youth, explained: "Those who consider themselves socialists would send their children. ... The schools were actually isolated [from each other]. They could meet but they had their own areas, their own farms. They worked on their own farms."

3.2 *"Batalla de Kore"* (Battle of Kore) School

Black and white photographs show the Sudanese children upon their arrival in Cuba in January 1986. They stand under palm trees, small boys, not yet in their teens, adopting serious, unsmiling poses, a hand in a pocket, feet set far apart. They wear short-sleeved white shirts and dark-coloured trousers and stand close to their

friends, shoulders touching. After twenty-four days at sea, travelling along the Red Sea Coast, through the Suez Canal, across the Mediterranean and the open seas of the Atlantic, they had arrived. They had journeyed more than 13,000 kilometres.

According to an informant who taught on the Isle of Youth, the original plan for the children was that they be billeted, for at least part of each week, with Cuban families. Living with Cubans the children would learn Spanish more quickly and, given their separation from relatives, have the semblance of a family to socialize with. The informant explained:

> Actually, the plan at the beginning was different. The African children were to be matched with Cuban families, maybe live in the school but on weekends [stay] with that family. [But] there was a big influx of students, more than [there were] families. They wanted these children to go to good families. It never happened because the number of students was too great.

The children spent the coming years in crowded, largely unsupervised dormitories, their contact with Cubans limited to the teachers who supervised their studies and labour in the fields. At night fellow students took turns guarding the dormitories in two-hour shifts. An informant explained:

> At the beginning the women [teachers] were sleeping with them [the girls] but when they moved away [to the neighbouring town of La Fe] they [the students] were there in their dormitory under some of their head students. Those who were seniors were made responsible for the dorm. They were alone, yes. ... Student guards were selected, only boys. You have to guard through the night.

One of the female students, "O," explained to me when asked about relations between the male and female students on the Isle of Youth, "At midnight the boys can come in [to visit the girls in the dormitory]."

The school which the Sudanese moved into was called "*Batalla de Kore*" or Battle of Kore. The school had originally housed Ethiopian students, the name originating from an Ethiopian battle. To the Sudanese, it was a massive building—two four-storey wings connected by a corridor. Only in a handful of towns in southern Sudan were there any buildings more than one storey high, and those were aged and crumbling colonial offices. One wing held the dormitories, including one floor for the sixty girls and two floors for the 550 boys. Classes were held in the second wing. The school's dining room was on the ground floor, in a separate building. Surrounding the school was the *campo*, a citrus grove of more than 300 trees. They would work there, in shifts, for four hours of every day. Depending when one worked in the fields, four hours of schooling would be held in the morning or afternoon. An informant described the students' schedule:

> They were slashing grass under the trees. They used the machetes four hours every day. One group would go in the mornings to work and the other to study. And when the group comes from the farm, the morning group goes to work. That was the system. You either accept the system or not. Only those who were sick were exempted for the time they were unable to work.

His reference to "the system" and the need for compliance relates to the decision of Cuban officials to send some of the youth back to Africa. As discussed further in section 3.6, students who failed to follow the school and plantation rules were not allowed to remain in Cuba. The informant continued:

> Sometimes there is competition between the schools. They start to work the same day and see who finishes first, during the harvest, normally December to January. And then in February you have the *Festival de la Toronja* [Festival of the Grapefruit]. It's a real big festival held on the Isle of Youth. People come from all over Cuba to participate, to dance, drink beer, lot of food. We also had a kiosk where we cooked our Sudanese food and the same for other countries. You were supposed to compete for a trophy [to see which

> African school completed its harvest first]. The Sudanese would win but there was a lot of underground things I won't talk about. The Sudanese would work hard but normally they would award the cup to other people. The Cubans, actually, they know the Sudanese had nothing, were completely dependent [on Cuba]. The other countries were getting some kind of help from their own governments. They [the Sudanese] were the poorest actually, together with the Namibians. But they also worked hard.
>
> People didn't work on Saturday or Sunday. When you work on Saturday it is voluntary work. People just volunteer to go to work. It's just kind of, as if you are trying to help. The Cuban system, actually nobody is higher than the other. Even ministers work on the farm. During harvest people leave their jobs and come to work [in the fields]. Even children in urban schools, they go out to work in the field for one month, a voluntary work. People are just working for nothing.

The informant's reference to "competitions" highlights one of the elements which contributed to the emerging identification of the southern Sudanese children as "Sudanese." Encouraged to compete for honours and prestige in the annual harvest, the children were drawn together. But, as the informant suggested, there was an apparent inequality among the forty schools housing the various nationalities. This inequality disadvantaged those schools which were without financial means. As described in section 3.5 below, tension between different African groups led to serious conflicts between students. The Sudanese children are reported to have received no financial support from the cash-strapped SPLA. Though Sudanese who lived on the Isle of Youth are loathe to criticize Cuba, it is understood that the buildings they lived and studied in were rundown. They had few supplies, no reading books and only dated textbooks. But, as informant "K" said:

> What I am today is because of what they did. They made me to work. I spent around eleven years in Cuba getting my living free. ... The minor trouble that happened in Cuba, why should I take the negative part of Cuba when the most, the majority part was positive? Cuba educated us, fed us, trained us and didn't take any pay.

One informant, "S," however, looks back on the time differently, saying: "We work for free, eleven years working for free."

3.3 Working on the *Campo*

One of the informants, the daughter of one of the original SPLA leaders, was considered somewhat privileged on the Isle of Youth. While the majority of the children had no contact with family members for the entirety of their stay in Cuba, she received calls from her father as often as three times a week. When asked about the distinction, she replied, "Look at who he was."

But, aside from the telephone contact, her life appears to have been much like that of the other students. She shared a single dorm room with the fifty-nine other girls sent to Cuba. She remembers the room as being very large, divided by three columns and filled with bunkbeds. Two years after arriving in Cuba, at the age of ten, she went into the *campo*, the citrus plantations surrounding the school, with the older students. She recalled the work:

> Even the machete was too big for me. If I'm holding the machete, I don't know how to hold it. Even there were a lot of accidents. The older people went to *campo* and the young ones, twelve and down, would stay to clean up. But me, I went out when I was ten. They sent me. Two people I hit with the machete [in the first] six months. The guy [I hit] in his leg—that one was bad. The guy in the hand—it was too big, five or eight stitches. And those people [I hit], they were coming to help me. I was too little. I'm left-handed. Sometimes you look for an orange and those things [ants] fall on your back. It was fun actually. We were kids. You get tired. You cry.

Even after completing secondary school, the Sudanese continued to labour in the fields. Says the informant: "Everybody was doing it. Even the Cuban students. But you know, when you work like that you do feel like slaving. You have to

[work]. It's part of school, even sometimes they would mark your school and mark your *campo* and average it."

After secondary school, she attended university on the main island, studying psychology for two years and then economics and political science. She worked her last "volunteer" season in 1996, the year before she arrived in Canada.

3.4 Arabic as the Lingua Franca for the "New Sudan"

Each morning on the Isle of Youth the students gathered in a cleared area in front of their school and dormitories for assembly. Two flags were raised—the Cuban and that of the "New Sudan." The flag, symbol of the country which would follow the victory of the SPLA, is an amalgam of the Sudanese national flag, the banner of the Anyanya I (the rebel army which fought the first civil war) and Cuban influences. The SPLA flag bears horizontal stripes in red, green, black and white. At the left is a blue triangle and within it a red star, emulating that of the Cuban flag. Morning assembly was a time to talk to students about news from Sudan and to discuss issues of concern. The language spoken was Arabic. One of the former teachers on the Isle of Youth described the assembly:

> The parade started every morning at seven a.m. We used to speak for half an hour. The students stood in uniform, after breakfast. You see, they get up at five and have breakfast at six. They wore sky-blue shirts, navy blue trousers. For the girls, a kind of skirt with shorts and a blouse. The girls had something like a scarf and a jacket too. Boys had jackets and ties. They looked smart. There was a platform where we used to stand. I used to talk. I talked in Arabic.

The development of Arabic as the lingua franca of Nilotic Sudan is the result of geography and cultural contact, the Dinka—of all southern Sudanese—having had the longest contact with Arabic-speaking peoples (Beswick 1994: 172). Because other Dinka dialects are often difficult for even Dinka to understand, Arabic is often

used. More recently, its use and promotion by the SPLA has been part of a political program aimed at increasing southern power in the country's seat of government, Khartoum. The policy to teach southern Sudanese youth Arabic was an attempt to better position its supporters for a more active role in governance of all of Sudan.

As "V," a Dinka who was one of the youths' teachers, explained: "Official languages were taught there [referring to the official language of Sudan]. I spoke Arabic there. That was the only language which could be understood by all the students who came from the different parts of Sudan. They were taught to read and write Arabic."

But the plan to teach Arabic to the youth in Cuba soon faltered. Within two years of the students' arrival in Cuba, only a handful of Sudanese teachers remained. At one point, there had been twelve Sudanese teachers, at least two of whom were women; one was a former nun who married, had children and then lost her husband in the war. By late 1988, however, the number of Sudanese teachers had dwindled to less than six, only one of them a woman.

Under the Cuban education system on the Isle of Youth, Cuban teachers were responsible for all but two subjects taught to the Sudanese—Arabic and English. Sudanese teachers taught the two languages. As an informant explained: "The Cubans were teaching everything else. All that they wanted [the Sudanese teachers to do] was to maintain the culture only, otherwise they were teaching all courses." But the teaching of Arabic and English soon became almost impossible, since so few Sudanese teachers remained. Initially, however, the intent had been to foster the use of Arabic as the lingua franca of the Sudanese children. English, long in use among educated southern Sudanese, was less favoured as a lingua franca, the SPLA looking more to the north, where Arabic is the dominant language, than the south in its quest for power.

Over the past century, language policy has played a major part of attempts to both unify and divide the disparate peoples of Sudan. The northern half of Sudan is populated by predominantly Arabic-speaking peoples, most of whom are Moslems, while southern Sudan is populated by Christian and animist black Africans. There are many Dinka dialects and Arabic is increasingly the lingua franca employed by members of the Dinka culture. The use of Arabic may have begun to influence the Dinka sense of identity. The direction of Dinka refugee movement and trends in the politics of Dinka political leaders suggest that ethnic identification is shifting away from the English-speaking regions of Black Africa and towards the Arabized north. Members of the SPLA sought to ensure that the children learned Sudan's language of governance—Arabic. Among Dinka individuals, however, most notably those in the diaspora, there is a renewed sense of identity surrounding the use of the Dinka language.

"F" is among the informants most outspoken about the language issue. When asked about the language spoken between he and other Dinka immigrants in Canada, he replied, "We talk Dinka. Sometimes we don't have a word in our dialect so we have to use an Arabic word. But we hate it [Arabic]. We don't want to use it anymore because it's an Arab language, not [an] African language." He continued, "We don't need Arabic in Sudan. I don't want to be Arab, I want to be African." Like many Dinka of his generation, he does not know how to write his mother tongue of Dinka.

"W" is a twenty-seven-year-old Dinka who also resided in Cuba. As he said, "I live in three cultures besides the Arab—Nuer, Shilluk, Dinka." He said that he had "forgotten" the Shilluk language but still spoke that of Nuer and Bor Dinka. After his arrival in Canada in 1998, he attended classes to "improve my Arabic." When asked why, he replied, inferring that the questioner was challenging his loyalty to his mother tongue, "No language is a culture. [It is] part of a culture."

"DD" is a Dinka now living in Canada. He formerly lived in Cairo where he taught Dinka language classes to southern Sudanese refugees. It is his contention that the written form of Dinka must be spread to more Dinka speakers. "As you know, being a native person you have to know your language first," he said. "If you don't know your language you don't know yourself. That is why we are trying to teach Dinka people to write their language, not just to talk."

For the past century, the Dinka people, among other cultures in southern Sudan, have wrestled with changing government policy on language. During the period of Anglo-Egyptian rule (1898–1956), the British administration pursued a policy of isolating southern Sudan. Trade between northerners and southerners was blocked and efforts made to prevent the Arabization of the southern region. English was mandated as the language of work and education and the region opened up to Christian missionaries (Collins 1983: 171–5). In the north, Arabic was recognized as the official language.

During this same period, Western missionaries devised a written script for the Dinka language and translated the Bible into Dinka as part of their attempts to introduce Christianity into the south (Beswick 1994: 180). Until the outbreak of the first civil war, in 1955, limited efforts were made to educate Dinka children in both English and their mother tongue. Knowledge of the script among Dinka today, however, is considered a rarity.

The Nilotic region borders the Arabic-speaking north. Particularly in the provinces of Southern Kordofan and Bahr el Ghazal, the predominant Dinka tribe has a long history of contact with the Arabic-speaking Beggara nomads who share grazing rights with the Dinka along the north-south border. There has been some conversion to Islam among Dinka and a limited amount of intermarriage. In recent decades, however, the relationship between the two peoples has been characterized by violence and oppression. Large numbers of Dinka women and children have been

taken as slaves by the northern Beggara and the once large herds of cattle owned by the Dinka decimated by war (Burr & Collins 1995: 69). In the mid-1980s thousands of young Dinka males fled the provinces of Southern Kordofan, Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile after worsening raids by the Beggara Arabs and Sudanese Army (1995: 222).

Does the use of Arabic, the longstanding language of Muslim Arabs, alter the identity of Dinka? A. D. Smith has criticized scholarly regard for language "as the distinguishing mark of ethnicity" (Smith 1986: 27). He counters that other cultural elements are also important and may supersede the role of language, saying that language may, in fact, be "irrelevant or divisive for the sense of ethnic community." It is noted, however, that the language-culture-discourse relationship, particularly for a culture which is oral-based, will be affected by the expanding use of a lingua franca (Sherzer 1989: 306). The discourse will by definition be changed and, with it, the culture which it expresses.

3.5 Relations With Other Africans on the Isle of Youth

There were reports that tensions between different groups of African students led to ongoing disputes and fights. As informant "K" said: "Western Saharans could fight against Angolans, Guineans against Mozambicans, Cape Verde against Cubans." He continued: "These situations, we couldn't avoid them. If you are in a bus line, if one Sudanese is in front, then all the Sudanese would want to go first. The other races might not like it. It is unfortunate that the clashes between the Sudanese and the Namibians happened but it could happen anywhere."

The clashes he referred to occurred in 1991, when the total number of Sudanese students on the Isle of Youth was few, most of the students having graduated and gone on to higher education on the mainland or returning to Africa. It is understood that the lowered number of Sudanese made those remaining in the

school vulnerable to other nationalities. In May of that year, two students were killed in the fighting—an Angolan and a Sudanese. The Sudanese, Michael Deng Achek, was only fourteen or fifteen years old when he and other Sudanese engaged in fighting, using sticks and rocks, with a group of Namibian students. Michael, already injured, was killed when a heavy stone was dropped on his head from the second or third storey of a nearby building. Four of the Sudanese students who had taken part in the fighting were arrested and sent back to Ethiopia.

Informants interviewed in one-on-one rather than group situations speak openly of a culture of violence among the students. "NP" was sixteen when he went to Cuba and is considered an elder of the group. Now thirty-two, he arrived in Canada in 2000. NP explained:

> The majority of those sent were child soldiers. A lot of them were smoking and drinking, because this is military life. It's not easy. It's not the same to get a child from his mother and father and get a child from military camp and put them in school. They are a very different kind of child. When I was in secondary school in Cuba I was smoking. It was a lesson I learned in military. To go away [from one's family], to see death, to guard—you do things. You smoke, you drink. The Sudanese [among the Isle of Youth international schools] were the most violent, always fighting.

Few have spoken of the problems the children faced while adapting to life in Cuba. Some do, however, making passing references to being "free" once they had completed secondary school and left the Isle of Youth for further studies in Havana and other major centres. While at primary and secondary school, they remained subject to rules of discipline set by Sudanese teachers connected with the SPLA. The morning assembly at *Batalla de Kore* School was not only a time for the raising of flags and singing of patriotic songs. It was also the occasion for the corporal punishment of students.

For minor offences, such as smoking, children were fined, losing the monthly five-peso stipend they received from the Cuban government. But if a student had fought with a classmate or stolen something, the punishment was "beating." Children who were to be punished were called to the front of the parade area, onto a raised platform. There, in front of their assembled classmates, they would receive blows from a long stick. Boys were beaten on their buttocks and girls on their hands. The informant continued:

> The Cubans didn't like this but they gave this right to all the international schools, to respect their system, their culture. Other people, Cuban teachers, they see the students punished like this and they're crying.

The informant said that the reporting of offences and the carrying out of punishments was the responsibility not of the Sudanese teachers but other students, those who were older and considered leaders.

3.6 Those Who Were Returned to Ethiopia

Within a year of arriving in Cuba, at least fourteen students had completed Grade 9 and were sent on to other regions of Cuba to attend polytechnic schools. There they studied agriculture, veterinary science and other subjects. Other students, however, were returned to the refugee camps in Ethiopia, as they were considered unwilling or unable to study and work on the *campos*, or because they were pregnant. Between 1986 and 1990, more than one hundred of the youth were sent back to Ethiopia. Among them were students who were dismissed by the Cubans because they had failed to succeed at school or "lacked discipline" and young women who were pregnant.

Seventeen of the total of sixty female students sent to Cuba became pregnant in the first two years of their stay on the Isle of Youth. In some cases, the young men who had impregnated them were also returned to Ethiopia. One such couple, a Nuer girl and a Dinka boy, married soon after leaving Cuba. They now have five children and live in Ethiopia. The numbers of girls who became pregnant, however, was seen within the wider community of Sudanese as a shame and dishonour.

Informant "G" explained: "Girls became pregnant [and] abortions [were] not allowed. Each and every school has its [birth control] education. They used mainly intrauterine devices. You may have a case of girls less than fourteen." He continued: "[They were] sent back while they were still pregnant. They handed them over to the SPLA. These are some of the hard issues we had to face."

In addition to the 100 students dismissed for various reasons, other groups of students were returned to Ethiopia after receiving specialized training. In 1988, thirty-five of the students, those in their late teens, were returned to Ethiopia. The fourteen girls and twenty-one boys had received a one-year course in paramedics or emergency medicine. They were called "*Cruz Roja*" or Red Cross, but it is unlikely there was any formal connection to the International Committee for the Red Cross. The total number of those returned between 1986 and 1990 was 108.

In the same year, another 124, all male, were sent back. They were officially described as "construction" workers. The inference is that these students had been shifted out of the academic program and into polytechnic fields. A year later, more than a dozen men who had graduated from a military academy returned to fight in the war. At least four students were arrested and sent back to Africa after the 1991 killing of a Namibian student.

Cuba is also known to have deported at least seven southern Sudanese back to Khartoum. The men were not part of the transport of children from Ethiopian refugee camps. Rather, they had reached Cuba after initially taking refuge in Syria

and then Lebanon. Only one of the group was allowed to remain in Cuba, and he was later accepted by Canada along with the other youth remaining there. The fate of the seven who were deported to Khartoum is not known.

3.7 "Orphans" of War and Politics

As earlier mentioned, few Sudanese teachers or adults remained with the children on the Isle of Youth. As well, informants say there was little contact between the SPLA and Sudanese students and teachers in Cuba. The movement maintained an office and representative in Havana but the children appear not to have been a priority. Of the annual progress reports prepared on the students, an informant explained, "We used to send them [to the SPLA] but they were thrown away. No one had any interest."

By the late 1980s the SPLA had consolidated its hold on a large portion of southern Sudan. By mid-1989, it controlled much of the Ethiopian border, the Kenyan border and most of the rural area in the southern region (Clapham 1998: 59). Government troops were held to the main garrison towns and the rebel army had begun pushing northwards, into the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile province. Guerrilla tactics were being replaced by more conventional warfare, the SPLA moving units numbering in the tens of thousands and engaging in the siege of major garrisons and town. But the battlefield successes were soon to be overshadowed by internal splits in the movement and the outbreak of factional fighting. The period marks a turning point in the SPLA's command and control of southern Sudan. Soon the movement would be engulfed in internal disputes, opponents of Garang's leadership of the SPLA being imprisoned and even killed.

As early as 1987, a year after their arrival in Cuba, news of internal unrest in the SPLA began to reach the students. But they received only the barest information through official, Sudanese, channels. Instead, they relied on the state-run Cuban

television and Arabic-language radio broadcasts by the BBC and Voice of America. One informant had been told that her mother would soon join her in Cuba. (A few women married to senior SPLA members, including Garang's wife Rebecca, lived in Cuba for varying amounts of time.) As she recalled, she waited and waited. Months passed without her arrival. Finally, just one day before the mother's plane was said to be arriving in Cuba, the informant and her two brothers were informed that she wouldn't be coming. "'Your dad has political problems,'" she remembers being told. Her father had been arrested by the SPLA. He would remain imprisoned for the next five years, eventually escaping and leading an anti-SPLA faction.

"After that, problems started," she said. The informant added that she wasn't treated differently from other Sudanese students, but there were instances when discussions turned to politics and mention was made of her father. Those opposed to her father, she said, called her the daughter of a "*nyugat*"—an Arabic word meaning "dissident or killer." In the months following her father's arrest, she fell into an argument and then a fight with one of her fellow students. In the fight with the male student, one of her front teeth was chipped.

While the arrest of senior members of the SPLA was damaging to morale and led to some tension between students in Cuba, worse was to follow. In May 1991 Ethiopian President Menghistu Haile Mariam was overthrown. The collapse of the Ethiopian government, known as the Derg, preceded what the youth raised in Cuba refer to as "the disaster." Says "AB," "After the fall of Menghistu [in 1991] there was the SPLA disaster, when Riak [Machar] and Lam [Akol] divided the SPLA. That was the disaster."

Informant "C" recalled receiving the news in Cuba:

> That was really a shock because Menghistu was a friend to southerners and to SPLA because he gave us opportunities even to go to Cuba. And we also settled in Ethiopia and our army was

> training there. So when Menghistu fell it was a really really tough time, when they pushed people from Ethiopia. A lot of people, children, lost life crossing river, Sudan airforce bombs from air.
>
> We got news first on Cuba TV, they called that Cuban Vision, and also on radio, Voice of America in Arabic and also BBC Arabic [service]. [It was] afternoon. I was at that time in high school. We come from work and we were preparing to go to class and we heard that Menghistu left Ethiopia with some of the officers in airplane and they landed in Kenya and after they continued to Zimbabwe. We heard that rebels [of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front] get in Addis Ababa.
>
> It was so sad. All the students, we were trying to hear because, as I told you, that was a really big shock to SPLA. All our families were in Ethiopia so we were worried. What's going to happen to our families there?

The collapse of Menghistu's government was a serious blow to the SPLA and to its leader, John Garang. As stated in Chapter 1, Garang had close relations with Menghistu and his leadership of the SPLA was supported if not imposed by the Ethiopian army. With the SPLA's refuge in Ethiopia ended, hundreds of thousands of refugees were forced to abandon their shelters and return to Sudan. The loss of Ethiopian military supply lines made the rebel army, particularly those based in Upper Nile region, vulnerable and weakened Garang's leadership. Two Upper Nile region SPLA commanders, Riak Machar and Lam Akol, broke with Garang and called for the secession of the south (Clapham 1998: 62–5). The forces of Machar and Akol, both of whom are Nuer, were soon engaged in heavy fighting against the mainstream SPLA and receiving support from the Khartoum government. The SPLA had splintered along tribal lines, the Nuer-backed forces carrying out retaliatory attacks on Dinka civilians identified as supporters of the mainstream SPLA.

Yet the students knew little of the impact of these changes in Sudan. Most had no contact with their families for the entirety of their time in Cuba. "R" was fourteen

when he travelled to Cuba. During the thirteen years he lived there he did not receive any letters from home. In 1990, his father died in Sudan. When he was informed of the death, R suffered a breakdown and spent the next several months in bed, demanding to return to Sudan to help his mother and four siblings. Another, "M," was twelve when he went to Cuba. During the years in Cuba he received two letters, the first reaching him through the Red Cross in 1994 and the second, in 1996. The first letter included a telephone number, which he called. It was then that he received word on his parents, two sisters and five brothers. His parents live in the Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya. His siblings are scattered throughout east Africa.

But other changes were to directly impact the youth in Cuba. The collapse of the Soviet Bloc in the early 1990s and the continuing U.S. embargo plunged Cuba into economic crisis. The Soviet Union's subsidies to Cuba came to a sudden end and the beleaguered island nation was forced to introduce market reforms allowing foreign investment and trade in the American dollar (Anderson 1997: 749). Overnight, Sudanese recall, goods disappeared from Cuban shops and shortages of even basic needs became the norm for much of the next two years.

In initial contacts with Sudanese informants, few offered any critical comments regarding Cuba, making only oblique comments such as, "If you can live in Cuba you can live anywhere." But later, after more than a year of meetings, informants were more candid about the hardships they had faced during the post-Soviet years.

3.8 Years of Hardship in Cuba

Throughout their school years on the Isle of Youth and on the mainland, the Cuban government gave the Sudanese students a monthly stipend: five pesos for primary school, twenty pesos for secondary and sixty pesos for polytechnic and university students. By 1991, sixty pesos was the equivalent of only three American

dollars. By 1993, the exchange rate had inflated still higher, leaving students receiving sixty pesos a month with the equivalent of less than fifty cents. But as long as the students were receiving education, they had housing and some food. "Q" remembers the time:

> We were facing a big problem with food. Even the Cubans [were facing such problems]. We got something every day, but sometimes only rice. From 1990 to 1997, when I left from there, it was so bad. ... Like me, my family were in the United States and sometimes they sent some dollars. One hundred dollars is enough for three months. Sometime, you know, black market, you bring a dollar and sell it at forty peso, you change this to dollars you get two dollars.

Said another informant, "O": "The school gave us food but it is not enough, beans and rice. Meat maybe once a month. Chicken once a month. Sometime it is rice and half an egg."

"V," one of the teachers on the Isle of Youth said it was "embarrassing" to speak of their hardships. He continued,

> Before 1991 they were in paradise, lots of food. After, we were real hungry. We were given some pigs to look after at the school [to later slaughter]. Unfortunately, they were being stolen at night. For the students, most of the meals were beans. They were skinny but they were eating. They would put together all their dollars and buy things like cassava, sweet potatoes.
>
> I had to most of the time beg [from] the Cubans. Just overnight everything that was in the stores disappeared. They just took it to the warehouses. There was nothing. Even the shoes, they didn't have. We had to ask the Cubans to give them shoes, to give them underwear. The uniform was there they [the children] were growing, [the uniforms were] getting shorter, getting tighter. There were no towels, the bedsheets were worn out, the mattresses were worn out. Even exercise books, we cut in half to share. Medicine also was a problem. There was a time when any illness was [treated with] aspirin.

At one point, there were only ten pairs of shoes for forty female students. The Cuban regulations were that all students eating meals in the dining room or taking classes wear shoes. An informant described the solution to their dilemma: "You can go and eat and after, another, he takes your shoes and he goes to eat. Same with [attending] school."

In 1993–94, Cuba privatized the plantations the children had worked on the Isle of Youth. By this time, the Sudanese students had largely completed secondary education and were already living in other Cuban centres studying at universities or polytechnics.

The problems facing students who had completed their studies were even more severe. Without admission to an educational facility, they had neither accommodation or meals. Though the Sudanese had been given Cuban identity cards, they were still classified as foreigners and, thus, ineligible for employment. The solution, according to a senior informant, was to readmit the graduated students to an educational facility. As he explained, "We lobbied, through the Ministry of Education, the Foreign Ministry and the [Communist] Party. I used to write requests to admit them and I would always go to the [Communist] Party to back me up."

While some students were readmitted, others were not. By the mid-1990s, UN agencies were providing some assistance to the Sudanese community in Cuba. The UN, seeking a longer-term solution, proposed that a number of the youth return to Africa. In 1993 the UN was responsible for dispatching more than 150 to Uganda. Because Ethiopia was no longer supporting the SPLA, the UN directed the students through Entebbe, Uganda. But Uganda, itself fighting internal wars and hosting large numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries, was ill-equipped to take the Sudanese.

As informants explained, after the plane disembarked at Entebbe, the youth were put on buses and driven north to refugee camps along the Uganda-Sudanese

Sudanese border. But there was little security there, fighting regularly spilling over the border. Moreover, the Sudanese who had grown up in Cuba were not prepared for the conditions of life in a refugee camp. Some spent days walking to neighbouring Kenya where they sought asylum through the United States embassy. Others rejoined the SPLA, though the movement was at this time severely fractured because of Nuer-Dinka factionalization. The airlift of the Sudanese to Uganda was roundly condemned as a failure.

In 1995 Cuba made a further attempt to return the Sudanese students to Africa, but this time back to government-held territory in northern Sudan. A delegation of Sudanese government officials was invited to Cuba, travelling to the various regions of the country to meet with the students now attending higher institutes throughout the island. Heading up the group was Achol Deng Achol, a former lecturer at Cambridge University and Sudanese Ambassador to Germany.[16] Deng Achol was particularly chosen because he is a Bor Dinka, the hope being that he would be able to influence the predominantly Dinka students. He had, however, remained with the Khartoum government throughout the war against the south.

Informant "M" recalled the meetings: "They told us to come home, that everything was fine, there are educational opportunities. None of us wanted to go." The role of the Cuban authorities in facilitating the Sudanese delegation greatly angered the youth, leading to what was described as "trouble with the Cubans." As many as eleven of the students did, however, take up the offer. The delegation also gave money to the Cuban government to support the students. After the delegation went back to Sudan, each student remaining in Cuban was given fifty American dollars.

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[16]Achol Deng Achol died in August 2001 in London, UK after a lengthy illness.

Following the largely failed attempt to encourage the Sudanese to return to Khartoum, Cuban authorities through the UN approached western nations on the question of accepting the Sudanese as immigrants. In 1997 Canada agreed to accept all students remaining in Cuba. The students, believed to number a total of 267, were given the option of completing their Cuban degrees first.

3.9 Deaths in Cuba

Somewhere in Cuba, in a crypt on the Isle of Youth or in the capital of Havana, are the remains of the sixteen children who died in Cuba. Following local tradition, the bodies were buried after a formal funeral. Said informant "C": "All the students take buses [to the funeral]. Sometimes if there is not enough transport, they just take his [the dead person's] classmates." He remembered that the bodies were laid out in coffins, the upper lid having a small window, "always showing the face under glass." I asked where the bodies were buried, he replied:

> They bury them for a few years, two to four, depends. Sometimes they check. If they see the bones are all clean they take them out. I saw one time they went there to take one lady [girl] who died in Cuba. They found there was still meat.

When the bones are removed, they are crushed and stored. He continued:

> They have boxes with names. There's like a room in the cemetery. The Sudanese [dead were] sent to the island [the Isle of Youth], to a cemetery beside the hospital. Later, when there was nobody on the island [when students were attending college on the main island] they sent them to the Havana cemetery called "Colon," one of the big cemeteries in Cuba.

Labels bearing the names of the dead are affixed. In other circumstances, the boxed remains would have been sent back to Africa, to the homes of the bereaved relatives.

Because of the continuing war in Sudan, however, the boxes have never been dispatched. The remains of the dead children are still in Cuba.

Over the course of the youths' thirteen-year residency in Cuba, sixteen of the youth died (see Appendix II). While the deaths are remembered well by the youth now living in Canada, informants did not raise the issue. Only after being asked specifically about whether or not any of the students had died in Cuba, was information provided. The first death occurred within a month of the arrival of the first group aboard *Iboski*, the Soviet ship which sailed from the Ethiopia port of Massawa to Havana. John Mareng Mach left his dormitory bed one morning and hung himself. It was early in the morning, as the children prepared for morning assembly, that his body was found. Still alive, he was taken to hospital but died soon after. That his death was a suicide is remembered with horror by those who travelled with him. He was no more than eighteen years old.

His was to be the only reported death by suicide. Eight of the other premature deaths were the result of illness or unexplained causes. Six others died as a result of accidents, including three in pedestrian-vehicle crashes, one in a vehicle rollover, one drowning, and one died after eight years' hospitalization following a fall from the fourth storey of the boys' and girls' dormitory. One teenaged boy was killed in fighting between Sudanese and Namibian youth in 1991. Four of the dead were the children of two families.

Informants expressed anger about what they considered the poor medical treatment offered by the Cuban authorities, in some cases suggesting that some of the dead had been left untreated and, effectively, allowed to die.

Chapter 4

"The Cubans"

> We speak not very good English, not very good Arabic, not very good Dinka. What we speak well is Spanish. We are Latino.
>
> —A Sudanese who grew up in Cuba and now lives in Canada.

4.1 To be "Cuban"

It is early evening in the town of Brooks, Alberta, on 6 May 2000. In the living room of a rundown apartment the television is blaring. Past the front entryway, where shoes are neatly arranged, the main room holds a patio-style plastic table and matching chairs. In front of the television are a sofa and an upholstered chair. On one wall there is a tourist poster from Cuba; on the others, a poster showing the all-black cast of the movie "The Best Man," and a picture of the Jamaican reggae star Bob Marley. Dominating the room is a large CD-player and television set. The overstuffed sofa and chair are filled with tall Dinka men drinking beer and smoking cigarettes. They talk over the sound of the television while one of the men idly browses through the cable channels with a remote control. And then, as he paused on one channel, all conversation abruptly stopped and there were shouts of "Che!" The iconic image of the revolutionary Che Guevera filled the television screen. One of the men I had been interviewing tugged at my arm, pointing at the TV. Another reached for a cellphone and dialled up fellow migrants from Cuba in Brooks and the nearby city of Red Deer, alerting them to the television show. He spoke on the phone in Spanish, hurriedly passing on the news.

The men sat forward and watched with intense interest as a documentary on Cuba was broadcast on an American cable channel. When the scene cut to Fidel

Castro giving a speech, they roared with approval. It was archival footage from the early 1960s and a still-youthful Castro was making animated gestures while he called the United States "sons of parasites." One of the Sudanese, "S," laughed heartily and said with affection, "Ah, Fidel." When the black-and-white, stock image of the just-executed Che Guevera in Bolivia is shown, they appeared surprised, even shocked. An image which North Americans are well familiar with was apparently new to them. "Me, that's the first time I see that," said S.

After more than twelve years in Cuba, the young southern Sudanese strongly identify with the heroes of the communist state. None profess to be communist, having experienced the hard times which followed the collapse of the East Bloc in the early 1990s. But there is a regard for the history of the region where they grew up, Cuba, and the socialist countries with which it was allied.

At the end of the documentary, S commented:

> Because of what happened to us we feel more Latino than African, because we were taken there [when we were] young. So we feel more like Latin Americans than African. Like, most of us, we learn to dance to African music here, in Canada.

The Cuban President once visited the students on the Isle of Youth, meeting only a few, specially chosen students. "P," now living in central Canada, was one of them. "In 1989, when I was thirteen, Fidel Castro came and said hi to us and we all said 'Viva Fidel!'" she recalled, shouting the long-ago greeting. She continued, "He's my second dad. Oh, we love him. I think Fidel has done a lot of things for Africa. Africa has a lot of problems and regardless of what he [Fidel] received, he gave a school for Africans. No one was paying the government of Cuba and it wasn't just Sudan [referring to other African nationalities which were given educations]."

In school on the Isle of Youth she and her classmates were taught about Cuba's nationalist heroes. She listed them—"Che Guevera, José Marti, Camilo Cienfuegos." She continued: "I miss Cuba so bad. I want to go back. Sometimes, when I think of my memories they're all in Cuba. Spanish is really my first language now." I ask if she would like to see Sudan again. P replied:

> I want to see how Sudan looks like, the country my father fought and died for. Sometimes I feel like my dad is within me. I know he will always be with me. If I go to the south, nothing will happen to me. The North? If I go straight to the government maybe they won't kill me but they might keep [arrest] me. ... Like a tourist I could go. If you ask me now about Sudan I know nothing, only what I hear and see on the TV.

"J" worked in Brooks for almost two years. He has since moved to Edmonton to live with his girlfriend who is from a Latin American country. They speak Spanish and appear to be very happy. J was in his early teens when he travelled to Cuba. As J said:

> Since I went to Cuba I didn't have much information about Sudan. But I always think about when I was in Sudan. I think about the life I had in Sudan, with my friends. I used to go hunting, little gazelle and like some rabbit, but not with a gun. Just using the dog. I used to have a lot of dogs, like sixteen. When I was in cattle camp I teach them how to kill a gazelle, to go after them and bring them back.

Asked if he remembers the Dinka religion, he replied:[17]

> I forgot the history. I forgot. They [families in Sudan] even know [the lack of knowledge of culture]. They send us [information], they tape

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[17]Dinka religion is centred upon the concept or *Nhialic* (Divinity), sometimes translated as "God," and has been described as "a relationship between men and ultrahuman Powers encountered by men" (Leinhardt 1961: 32). It is noteworthy that the informant, in the narrative which follows, appears to equate "religion" with "history."

> it and record history, with Dinka songs. But most of these don't come from cattle camp. Some people are older and know exactly the culture of Sudan. Maybe they were eighteen or nineteen when the war broke out so they went to Egypt or Khartoum. We were little boys so they think that we might forget. They want us to keep in the culture.

He was quiet for a moment then shook his head and drew a hand across his brow, saying: "We speak not very good English, not very good Arabic, not very good Dinka. What we speak well is Spanish. We are Latino."

4.2 To be "Sudanese"

While "P"'s memories may be of Cuba, after living in Canada for three years she has grown weary of being told by other Sudanese that not only is she Sudanese but she should behave as a Sudanese woman. She explained:

> I'm from Sudan. They always put it in my head. But I was just little [when I lived there]. Sometime I try to be patient but sometimes I lose it. [Other Sudanese say] "Girls don't talk too much. Girls don't look at men's faces or look straight in their eyes." How am I to remember his face tomorrow?

P expressed impatience at the lengthy manner in which Sudanese express their wants. She imitated a conversation between herself and a Sudanese, saying: "'Listen, I'm waiting here for forty minutes, waiting for you. What do you want? Just tell me straight.' Sudanese are never there when you have a problem but they are always there to tell you what to do—'Oh, you have to take care of your family. Oh, you have to stop smoking.'

"You have a meeting with the Sudanese and you may have fighting. Why? Because the older person always thinks that he should have a bigger say. I will

always respect them but I will show them when they are wrong. They say, 'Oh, you are too open, too straight forward.'"

Said a male informant: "This is the other shock [for Sudanese]. Some of the girls coming from Cuba, they don't want husbands but they want boyfriends."

The men from Cuba have also been chastized and corrected by other Sudanese. When I asked what offends their fellow countrymen, "Q" replied: "The way we look. If I'm in other Sudanese place [the home of other Sudanese], if I'm sitting like this [slumped casually in a chair] they will say I am not respectful." He continued, "We [the Cubans] like to feel we can do anything we want." Q pointed to a fellow immigrant from Cuba who was wearing an oversized shirt and baggy trousers, a heavy crucifix hanging from an oversized chain around his neck—standard hip hop or rap-style clothing, popular among African-Canadians. "If they see him in this sportswear they will say 'Is he in a gang or something?'... We grew up outside of Sudan so we don't know these rules. When we first met [other Sudanese] we were really in big trouble." Among the offences, he explained, was "drinking in front of older people."

A startling example of the emerging conflict between the Cubans and other Sudanese came during an April 2001 visit to Brooks. I had spent several hours in conversation with two men, part of the time devoted to reviewing the list of those who had died in Cuba. As I stood to leave, one of the men, "C," told me that he had a problem and asked if I could help. This in itself was unusual, the "Cubans" rarely asking for assistance. In more than two years of contact, I had been asked to give advice only once before, and even that was a minor matter.

C had received a letter from local authorities advising him that he must appear in court the following week to face a charge of assault. The complainant was a fellow Dinka, though not among those who had come from Cuba. This individual, "BD," had been living in the apartment for several months. He is a cousin of one of

the men also living there and, although the two men had not seen one another for more than sixteen years, BD contacted his cousin when he arrived in Canada from Kenya. Because of the family relation, BD was assured of help in finding work and accommodation. BD joined the four to six others living in the apartment, all Bor Dinka from Upper Nile region, and began work at the slaughterhouse.

Within weeks of BD's arrival, however, tension within the apartment had exploded into violence. At issue was the use of the telephone and high costs incurred by the newly arrived BD. C and BD argued and physical violence followed. During what was described as the third such fight, the police were called. There were conflicting accounts as to the degree of violence, BD claiming that C had threatened him with a knife, C denying that he had done so. Both men had been drinking and one account said that BD was drunk. C acknowledged that he had struck BD but contended that this had followed days of aggressive behaviour by BD. An indication of the severity of the attack was the fact that the police had taken C away and fingerprinted him.

Although the two men had been quarrelling for weeks, there was no discussion of one or both of them moving out. Because there is a severe housing shortage in Brooks, finding additional accommodation would have been difficult. As well, there was the issue of pride. Neither man wanted to be the one to leave. BD was said to have sworn at C, a grave offence among members of the community. Although they both worked the night shift, they had avoided being together for much of the time following the alleged assault. Further complicating the dynamics in the apartment was the claim that one of their fellow "Cubans," B—the cousin of BD—had agreed to be the witness against C in the assault charge.

C was concerned that he did not have a lawyer and was unsure what the legal process would be. Although hesitant to become involved, I offered to see the police and find out what information I could. I also suggested, somewhat obviously, that

the men should avoid at all cost further violence, pointing out the possible ramifications if C was convicted and given a criminal record.

As I was leaving the apartment, BD pulled up in the parking lot. He recognized me and greeted me warmly. I asked him about the problem, he replied: "I am the elder. This boy is ignorant. He has to learn." Agitated, he continued with words to the effect that "this boy" had not shown him proper regard. I pointed out that C was not, technically, a "boy," being in his early thirties. BD, responded that, regardless, he was C's elder. The inference was that no matter what BD's shortcomings, he had higher status than the younger C.

Talk that one of the "Cubans" in the apartment, B, was willing to give evidence against a fellow Cuban, C, in support of his cousin, BD, suggested that the bond of family was greater than the bond the men had established during more than twelve years of residence together in Cuba. It was a particularly graphic example of the conflict of competing loyalties I witnessed during the period of contact with the men.

4.3 Identity After Arriving in Canada

In the three years since leaving Cuba, the informant group has undergone many changes. In the initial contact with informants, emphasis was placed on the group's cohesiveness. Said informant "V," a former teacher on the Isle of Youth:

> They know they are Sudanese and so all the time in Cuba they consider themselves Sudanese. We didn't have tribes and all those things. But it wasn't a crime to talk in their own language[s] and they also know they are a part of a whole. That's how they are different. And that's the mentality that they came to Canada with—that we're all one people. When we came here [to Canada] we found things are different. Even people within the same tribe here have problems.
>
> These guys [those from Cuba] are even more united than anyone else. They've seen how things have been going in Cuba. Our people

> depend on themselves and try to make the best of things. And they are hard workers. There is no one who is lazy because the education system [in Cuba] has trained them. Four hours of work and four hours of study [every day] and that is the same for the Cubans.

If the Cubans arrived in Canada sure of their "Sudanese" identity, it was soon to be challenged. As informant "Q" recalled:

> Those who come from Cuba are different from those who come from Ethiopia or Kenya [referring to absence of tribal division]. When we came from the airport, they start to separate us. ... When I was in Windsor [Ontario] even some of my cousins came and say "Why are you living with these [Nuer] guys?" We are three Dinka and one Nuer. Many people who came to visit us were Dinka and they came and talked. But not all of us [were comfortable continuing the "mixed" friendships]. Some of us say, "Okay, I'm going with [those from the same group]."
>
> From the time we arrived at the airport, like for those who were coming to receive us. You imagine them saying, "You can't go live with him. He's not your cousin." Even they say, 'Look, these communists. See how they think."

Q's experience is a common one. Upon arrival in Canada, the new immigrants were meeting relatives and people from their home regions for the first time in more than a decade. There was great excitement at the prospect of becoming reconnected with their homeland. But the meetings were fraught with tension. Q remarked on the increased tribal identification:

> I think, to me, it's like oppression. In the beginning [when he was a child], when I was with my family—even in the SPLA—I wasn't thinking like a Gogrial Dinka. I was thinking I was Sudanese. My father was Dinka but had close friends with Nuer. My mother was Jur [a tribe living in Bahr el Ghazal] and all the time I was living in Equatoria [region]. But now, when I come to Canada, I can confess I am thinking I'm Dinka Gogrial because people are living in groups. I am feeling I must be close to them [other Gogrial Dinka] because if I am in trouble tomorrow they are the only people who can help me.

Yet Q's attempts to find a group to live with have been difficult. He is a responsible housemate and has worked steadily since arriving in Brooks two years ago. But over the research period he has moved four times. He has lived in households of Bor Dinka, Ngok Dinka and with a Gogrial Dinka relative coming directly from Africa. He now shares an apartment with an Asian immigrant who also works at the slaughterhouse. He is the only Cuban migrant known to be living with a non-Sudanese. In all but his current residence, each arrangement has ended after a disagreement.

"O" is now twenty-eight years old. She has a son from a relationship with a non-Cuban Sudanese. "Before they [the different tribes from Cuba] were living together. They come here [to Canada] and found the people who come from different places [directly from Africa] and these people say 'Don't live with other groups.'

"Before in Cuba, the Nuer and Dinka, we liked each other. But now, no. These people who come from Kenya, they live separately, Dinka with Dinka, Nuer with Nuer. And now we do it too."

Yet other informants resisted the pressure to conform to Sudanese attitudes on the mixing of different people. Said J: "After being in Canada for one year we start hearing like different things that we never been in this contact before. That was a big shock, to find that we are very different from the Sudanese who come from other parts of the world. The people [who] come from camp now, from Kakuma [in northwestern Kenya], come with a different ideology because many things are happening there."

An immigrant situation paralleling that of the Sudanese in Canada is the experience of two different groups of Indian migrants in India. As Ahmed Ali Jayawardena writes:

> A number of historical, political and social factors underlie the different courses which overseas Indian groups have taken in their new settings. Perhaps the most important distinction is between those communities founded by indentured laborers and those begun by free immigrants. The conditions of recruitment, immigration and indentured labor had crucial implications for the future course of such communities as the Indians of Guyana, Trinidad, Mauritius and Fiji. Indenture was both an individual, psychological experience and a critical social event (Jayawardena 1981: 219–22).

The Sudanese children taken to Cuba can be compared to indentured labourers, as they spent half of each day working on plantations. Even after they had completed secondary school on the Isle of Youth, they, like other Cubans, were compelled to regularly take part "voluntary" work on Cuban agricultural projects. In common with the indentured Indian labourers, they were without family and living in a communal situation.

The "social consequences of indenture," according to Jayawardena, included a radical transformation of "[t]he hierarchical, heterogeneous social order characteristic of India." He writes:

> [L]iving and eating with members of other castes, the unavailability of appropriate spouses and the end of the highly specialized division of labour underlying the caste system in India all contributed to the "flattening" of the immigrant society and to the development of largely egalitarian values. One's caste brothers were replaced by *jahazi bhai* ('ship brothers'); indentured immigrants and their descendants became, in the words of one Fiji Indian villager, 'all equal here.'

In 1999, during the early stage of research, informants stressed the bond that those from Cuba shared. "Y" is a relative of SPLA Commander John Garang. He was twenty-three at the time of this interview:

> We Cuban guys, we never fight. We've been living together—Dinka, Shilluk, Nuer—we all stay together. We think differently [from other

> Sudanese]. Even the other Sudanese here, they say we are "the Cubans." All these differences [between tribes], we don't agree with it.

As stated earlier, the migrants from Cuba are portrayed as "more united" than the Sudanese coming to Canada directly from Africa. They do not observe social restrictions, many of which are based on hierarchical concepts relating to status, followed by kin from Sudan. As well, particularly while they lived in Cuba, they did not recognize tribal divisions or distinctions. The economic and social difficulties of life in Cuba contributed to the "flattening" of the Sudanese society living there.

Using Jayawardena's analysis, if the youth raised in Cuba can be referred to as the "indentured labourers," then the Sudanese immigrants arriving in Canada directly from Africa are comparable to "free immigrants." While Sudanese society has been deeply affected by the eighteen-year civil war, southern Sudanese values among this group of immigrants have not faced the fracture and dislocation experienced by those coming from Cuba. Dinka coming from Africa still retain characteristic values including hierarchical division between men and women, those who are elder and those who are younger.

The interaction between the Cubans and the other Sudanese has highlighted differences between the two groups and contributed to problems within the Cuban community. In common with the research groups studied by Jayawardena, the Cubans are attempting to retain their egalitarian values but stratification is increasingly apparent. This stratification is not based, however, on the old hierarchy of kinship and elder male dominance but on education, financial success and respect from the community. The newly arrived Sudanese immigrants, meanwhile, continue to maintain traditional values and social levelling has not been evident. Except in some instances where kinship ties have been renewed, the two groups are socially separate.

After two years in Canada, those employed at the Brooks slaughterhouse began to complain of "competition" between the two groups of new immigrants. Said informant "J": "We have a problem, the competition between different immigrants. If I need help I can go to my friends, even to a Nuer, as long as you come from Cuba you can always find help, financially, emotionally. But if I go to one of those other Dinka [coming from Egypt or Kenya] they will say no." He continued:

> There is a big competition in many ways. Maybe they [Sudanese] want to show themselves that they're more knowledgeable than us or they are more related to the movement [SPLA] than us. Sometimes they are jealous and this is one of the biggest things is they are jealous. They are jealous of many things. They say "If the movement took over Sudan you guys will be important." When we are talking there is a lot of little things that they make bigger.

While Cuban migrants continue to assert that their community is more cohesive than that of Sudanese immigrants, the community is showing signs of fragmentation. Late 1999 and early 2000 are remembered as a "bad time" in Brooks. In 1999 the numbers of Sudanese from Cuba living in Brooks had reached around fifty. Within a year, there were more than seventy, those who had previously settled in other Canadian cities moving to southern Alberta for the well-paying work as well as the sense of community. A severe shortage of rental accommodation in the town led to as many as eight people living in one three or four-bedroom apartment or house. Hours of work are long, both men and women regularly working overtime at the chronically understaffed slaughterhouse. It is not uncommon for individuals to clock sixty or more hours of work a week. Other Sudanese immigrants were also beginning to arrive in Brooks, drawn by the opportunity of full-time employment at the slaughterhouse.

The desire to support family members in Africa is a constant pressure. Some had initially planned to go back to school after arriving in Canada. But the need to send money to siblings and parents living in refugee camps in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia quickly shelved such plans. Large sums are regularly wired through Western Union, so much so that some non-Cuban Sudanese question whether the youth are being "manipulated" by their relatives. Said one non-Cuban Sudanese informant: "My sister can live in Uganda for one year on $200. But they are sending much, much more." Some informants were sending between $500 and $700 a month to relatives. A Cuban migrant summed up the seemingly never-ending requests from distant family members: "Every time the phone rings, it's a problem. They always need something."

Said informant "J": "When we came here to Canada we began our life from zero. When we were in Cuba we had no contact with them [family in Africa]. I remember I received just one letter from the Red Cross. When we got here we were in contact. The first thing they say is they need help. As you know, [because of] the civil war ... the family is spread all over the world. That's why I have family in Kampala, Uganda. They [our family] said when we talk to them, that first thing they say is finish your school, work and send money."

Many of them have also taken out bank loans to buy good cars. Said "O": "The bad thing here, they are working and they take a loan. Some people have twenty, thirty thousand [dollars in loans]. They can take $20,000 for a car. They have to work for three years, maybe four years, to pay this loan and they can't go to school."

In addition, drinking and partying had begun to take a toll. Several of the Cubans were involved in car accidents though none suffered serious injury. Licences have been revoked for drunk-driving charges and fighting between Cubans is not uncommon. At one housing complex three separate apartments are rented by a total

of some sixteen to twenty of the men. Parties are held on the weekends and, as informants reported, the RCMP are called to intervene in fights on a regular basis.

By early 2001, some of the Cuban migrants had begun to distance themselves from the larger group and were not joining in on the drinking and partying. Said O, speaking of those she had grown up with in Cuba: "They are drinking a lot. Sometimes they do [a] party and just drink and [have] a lot of fights. They don't think about [their] age. Some people think they have [are] about fifteen years [old] cause they are getting old but they think they are still young. They say it's the Spanish culture but I don't think so. Maybe they don't want responsibility but they don't want to change. But Lakeside [the slaughterhouse], they can work at Lakeside for the rest of their lives. They don't think about the future."

Another informant, "AB," commenting on the negative judgements made about the Cubans' drinking of alcohol, said: "In our [Dinka] culture, people who are twenty, thirty, we don't drink. [The drinking] has nothing to do with [the] Island of Youth. We just do it. Now we come here [to Canada] and I say 'I want to forget everything. I will drink.' Some of them [other youth from Cuba] are orphans. Everyone is dead."

4.4 Perception and Acceptance

"They call us bushpeople and themselves townspeople," said "GG," a twenty-two-year-old Dinka who arrived in Canada one year ago. Like many other Sudanese, GG had travelled to Brooks for work. It was there that he came into contact with the "Cubans." We met at the home of a group of men who had lived in Cuba. The house was inhabited by Dinka from the Bahr el Ghazal region. Although GG was not part of the "Cuban" group, he was welcomed as a fellow Dinka from Bahr el Ghazal.

"They know nothing. They know nothing about the Dinka religion and if we tell them a story from the Bible they think we are making it up. They know nothing of their culture," he said.

"If someone met them [the "Cubans"] without knowing, when they hear their Dinka they will think they're from another tribe," GG added. In particular, he said, there was a confusion of past and present tenses.

We were on a two-hour drive from Brooks to Calgary, passing through the massive sweep of prairie farmland that lies east of Calgary. He had just quit his job at the slaughterhouse, complaining that the equipment was ill-suited to his height. I had not noticed that he was particularly tall. Stopping to take a group picture before leaving Brooks, I had observed only that two of the other men were far taller than he was. He was, in fact, six feet seven inches tall.

He was quiet as we left the town and entered the rolling plains of southern Alberta. At his waist was a small Walkman cassette player from which he was listening to music, a cassette of Dinka songs. He placed the headset on my ears, so I could hear the music, but the batteries were running low and the singing was distorted. As we talked, I realized that one of his uncles was an old friend of mine from the years when I had lived in Sudan. His home area is Abyei in Southern Kordofan region. We talked of cattle and he sang me the national anthem of Sudan and that of the "New Sudan," the SPLA-written song. Both were in Arabic. As he told me about his boyhood, when he moved cattle from grazing areas to home villages, I was reminded once more of how little the "Cubans" share in common with their relations from home. I told him the call my sister and I had used to move cattle when we were growing up on the farm in southern Alberta—"*cub cabbie*." The cattle call has no known origin other than that it was used by three generations of my farming family. I showed him the way we imitated the moo of a cow, placing a hand

over the mouth and calling. Taking his turn, he made the distinctive clicking and sucking sounds used to call cattle in southern Sudan.

I asked him what he and his fellow cattle herders would do if a calf was lost. He replied: "We never lose a calf."

The encounter with the young man highlighted the difference in culture displayed by the two groups of Dinka Sudanese—those who grew up in Cuba and those coming directly to Canada from Africa. GG is dismissive of his fellow Sudanese coming from Cuba. At the same time, he had received their hospitality in Brooks, moving into the home of one of the groups. The contrast between his sense of community and that of the Cubans was marked. Cuban informants routinely remarked on the absence of solidarity among other Dinka; in particular, that they failed to offer assistance to those in need.

GG had left his employment at Lakeside and had no plans for where he would work or live. A younger brother, still in Brooks, had suffered a breakdown and been hospitalized in the nearby city of Medicine Hat. GG showed no sign that he would take responsibility for his brother. In the weeks which followed, the younger brother left hospital and was re-admitted after a further deterioration in his mental state. GG, in the meantime, found accommodation in Calgary and acquired employment. Still, GG was unable to support his sibling, telling him during a lone visit to the hospital, that he could not help him either by providing him with a place to live or financially. Over the two-year period of contact with those from Cuba, it was common to learn of acts of financial generosity within the Cuban group. As well, the group appeared to tolerate individual behaviour which compromised others on the grounds that it was normal for people to sometimes have problems.

One of the youngest to be sent to Cuba, informant "P," is now twenty-two. She told me that the "Cubans" use the Spanish word *gaucho* to describe Sudanese coming to Canada directly from Africa. The word refers to what the youth from

Cuba consider the unsophisticated ways of their relations. The Sudanese, for their part, sometimes use the Dinka word *ah cheebel*, meaning "fools," or "people who are lost" to describe those who were in Cuba. Whether in the manner that they speak or their actions, the Cubans are considered uncouth and disrespectful. One young informant regularly braided his hair in tight rows running from the front of his head to his neck. He has only recently abandoned the style, one which is popular among black-American musicians, after other Sudanese have told him such braiding in Africa is only done by women, never by men. As a middle-aged Sudanese woman living in Edmonton said: "The black Americans have taken it from Africa and the Cubans have taken it from them. But it is wrong!"

On one occasion in Brooks I was surprised when a member of the Cuban group made elaborate, two-handed greetings with all those in the room. In each case he placed both hands on the extended right hand of the person he was meeting and, lowering his face, made several stiff bows. When I asked about the gesture, another of the informants told me: "Some people, they do that in Sudan, in the south." But the greeting is not a conventional one. In many areas of Nilotic territory in Sudan, men do not even shake hands upon meeting. The greeting which the well-intentioned young man was making is reserved for "natives"—people who live in the countryside—when they pay their respect to people from the towns or those of high status.

4.5 Identity Post-Cuba

Since arriving in Canada in the late 1990s, those who were raised in Cuban have expressed a number of varying and, at different periods, contradictory, descriptions of their cultural identity. It is noted that over the two years during which contact was maintained, a noticeable shift occurred within the group. Early interviews showed key informants maintaining, at least for the outsider, a position of

group unity. They expressed impatience and even anger over pressure from other Sudanese to recognize tribal divisions and remain within their original tribal group. Within the first year of my contact with the research group, however, individuals began to express a desire to know their "culture"—that culture being Dinka as opposed to the non-tribal, Sudanese identity they had acquired while living in Cuba. There was a stated desire to be "Dinka" or relearn Dinka culture. Cassettes of recorded Dinka stories and songs were sent to the new arrivals to Canada by relatives in refugees camps in Kenya. These were circulated among the Cuban group.

If you speak with a southern Sudanese born in the pre-Independence era (before 1956) he or she will provide a detailed account of the divisions within tribes. "V" is now in his mid-fifties. As he explained, "The Dinka are one tribe. And then there are twenty sections." He listed them, giving their geographic or home region, faltering only after he had named nineteen: Rek, Twic, Luach, Gok, Agar, Apak, Atuot, Chiech, Aliap, Bor, Ngok, Rueng, Malwal, Dhonjol, Agar, Thony, Ador, Pakam, and Upper Nile Luach. At the same time, V readily acknowledged that the Nuer and Dinka have been assimilating people from each other's tribes for hundreds of years.

For the Dinka who grew up in Cuba, the "sections," or clans and subclans, are virtually unknown.[18] They know only the major groupings—Bor Dinka, Ngok, Twic. And even this knowledge is a relatively recent acquisition. But there is a desire to become more immersed in Dinka culture. Because informant "F" was almost sixteen when he left Sudan, he is among the more knowledgeable about Sudan and Dinka culture. He has been working in Brooks for most of the past two years. In 2000, F sent money to family living in Sudan with the express direction that they buy

[18]Leinhardt describes the tribe as "an association of subclans," the subclans composed of descent-groups (Leinhardt 1961: 8).

cattle. Relatives living in Panyagor district of Upper Nile Region have since sent photographs of themselves with the newly purchased cattle. He keeps some of the photographs beside his bed and others in wallet. F smiled broadly when he showed the photographs, pointing out that the thin, serious man standing with the cattle is one of his relatives.

A fellow Cuban, "J," explained the purpose of the cattle purchase:

> He's doing this for two things: to get married and to help his family. The Dinka custom is if you want to get married with anyone you have to pay with cows. The second thing, you know, in the village people admire cows. They use them for transport, milk, meat, culture.

F said he wants his family to sustain itself in a more long-term fashion (rather than rely only on the wiring of cash from Canada). He also hoped to build the herd in order to marry. Dinka culture requires extensive negotiations between the families of the intended groom and bride, during which a bridewealth is agreed upon.[19]

Some months after acquiring his cattle, F announced that he was leaving Brooks for Ottawa. As he told me: "I want to go to Ottawa. There are a lot of Dinka there and they're proud people. They're proud to be Dinka." He said he wanted to live among people who knew the culture. F did move to the national capital but his stay there was short-lived. Within a few months he had returned to Brooks and taken up his job at Lakeside once more. He had been unable to find regular work in Ottawa. Moreover, he said that he missed the other Cubans still living in southern Alberta.

By late 2001, a full three years since arriving in Canada, F is making new plans. He and another of the Cuban emigrants have decided they want to open a bar or some other business in Brooks. "I've seen, the last year, how traffic is getting

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[19]Marriage payments are made in cattle to the bride's parents and are then used to acquire wives for a brother (Leinhardt 1961: 26).

more heavy in Brooks," he said, "Now is the time to do business." His decision to make a more long-term commitment shows an increased sense of permanence and a desire to use his business and economics degree from Cuba.

The man who wished to go into partnership with him, "R," had told me the year before that he wanted to return to the SPLA and fight in the war. R was the only informant in more than two years of interviews who expressed such a desire. Now even he is thinking about a future in Brooks. Said F of his friend: "He sent $5,000 to Uganda, so his family could make business there. But we need to make something for ourselves here."

Others are attempting to learn about the events which happened in their home country during their time in Cuba. "AB" is an articulate twenty-eight-year-old. He is a Ngok Dinka, his family originating from northern Bahr el Ghazal region. He is the central figure in a rented house in Brooks where between four and six other Ngok Dinka reside. The living room of the house is dominated by a large television set and VCR. AB has gone to some lengths to collect television news reports on Sudan. It is a way for him to learn the news of what occurred in his home region during the twelve years he lived in Cuba.

"When I came from Cuba I found this tape," he said, referring to a 1989 Canadian news documentary on the starvation and chaos which struck Bahr el Ghazal as the war worsened. From a comfortable sofa, he repeatedly watches the unfolding drama on his VCR—groups of starving Ngok Dinka gathered to receive food aid, orphaned children and destitute families who have lost everything in the war. "Actually, I was suspecting this. But I never saw any news. If you come from Sudan now and see films it's nothing. But if you have been away a long time, like we were, actually, it's a shock. It makes me very angry."

4.6 The Daughter of a Warlord

Since leaving Cuba in 1998, one of the informants has lived in central Canada, learning English and working in the high-tech industry. Now twenty-two years old. she is an assembler of computer parts. At one point in 2000, she was getting less than five hours of sleep a night and holding down two full-time jobs. At five in the morning, she would leave her neatly kept but rundown apartment building on the outskirts of the city and travel by bus for two hours to her first job. Work ended at four p.m., giving her two hours before the start of her second job at six p.m.. At midnight she would return to her apartment, stopping on the way to pick up fast-food. Her earnings for the year reached $36,000. Friends say she was too thin at this time, her face drained and her health poor. While she is still thin, she dresses well and is beautiful. The gold chain and rings she wears are in "red"—22-karat—gold.

One of the first things she did after she began earning money in Canada was spend $3,000 to repair a chipped front tooth. A decade before, in 1988, while still in Cuba, news of her father's defection from the SPLA and his mounting of attacks against southern Sudanese villages led to a physical confrontation with another of the youth living in Cuba. As she told me, "One of my classmates broke my tooth." She herself calls her father "a warlord."

Asked how many wives her late father had, she replied: "Nine right now. I can't count the ones who are divorced because if I did there would be fifteen or sixteen. But now there are nine still calling themselves my dad's wives."

She is the daughter of her late father's first or senior wife. The senior wife, now a widow, lives in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi with several other of the widows. Of the many children, twenty-six are in Nairobi and another thirteen are in Cairo. One of the wives is in southern Sudan, in SPLA-held territory. Every month the informant sends money to both Cairo and Nairobi. After picking up this

researcher from a Greyhound station, she said she need to stop at Western Union before taking me to her apartment. She was sending money "home."

"When I first came here I wanted to study but then my father died and now I'm responsible for twenty-seven of them [widows and children]." She paused in thought, as if to correct the numbers, then added, "When I came to Canada three of them were pregnant."

"When I first came here everything was okay. I never thought I would end up supporting them when they had all been supporting me. When my dad died I had to take two jobs. I'm not like a young person. ... I want to be a lot of things but I can't do it. My life is misery. Can you imagine, I haven't seen my mom or dad or any of my family for fifteen years? It's just driving me nuts."

She asked after her fellow "Cubans" in Brooks. She had planned to travel there for "that Santa thing you have [Christmas]." She added that "they party all the time."

In June of 2001, she was working only one job. The high-tech industry had been hit with heavy layoffs, the newspapers the weekend I met with her announcing that more than 10,000 jobs would be cut in the coming weeks. Earlier in the month the company where she worked told her there would be no more overtime. By June 2001, the company had announced a major restructuring and the future of its Canadian operations appeared uncertain. The sudden reduction in earnings had hit the informant at a difficult time. In February of 2001 she went to a bank and borrowed $16,000 to purchase a car. The 1997 red sportscar is her pride and joy. She and another Sudanese-born woman like to drive the streets with the windows rolled down, the car's speakers blasting out the music of the rap artists Dr. Dre and Eminem. But the purchase means that she must pay more than $300 a month in loan repayments and $275 a month for car insurance.

In the bedroom of her apartment was a small pile of scrapbooks and notepaper. She said she wanted to write a book about the experiences of the youth who went to Cuba and had kept some of her old schoolbooks, her identity card from the "*Ministerio del Interior die Sistema Control de Extranjeros*" and other mementoes from those times. On the walls of her bedroom were professional photographs of the informant modelling swimsuits in Cuba. There were also several photographs of her late father in formal, western-style suits and pictures of the black American rap star Puff Daddy cut from glossy magazines. "No one would believe our story, what happened to us," she said.

Because the informant was very young when she travelled to Cuba, no more than eight years old, she shows a particularly strong Latino or Cuban identity. She is westernized yet also respects the traditional values of supporting the family, despite the fact that she has not seen her mother for fifteen years. In her case, the financial demands are considerable. She is supporting not only her mother and several siblings, but the other wives her once-powerful father acquired and the children he had with them. She has also assumed a leadership role with her distant family, paying for three-way telephone calls between relatives to mediate disputes. But there is also pressure for her to become familiar with Dinka customs. Her mother sent a *biong* from Kenya to Canada through the postal service. The short leather skirt was traditionally worn by Dinka women in the villages and cattle camps of southern Sudan. The informant took photographs of herself wearing the garment and sent them to her mother in Nairobi. At the same time, she deals with social pressure from Sudanese living in Canada. She is criticized for not behaving in a more conservative manner. In those instances, she protests that she is not Sudanese but Canadian. As in the case of most within the informant group, she must negotiate between the identity she has acquired and that which others would like her to display.

Chapter 5

Nightshift at the Slaughterhouse

> You know what the cow means to the Dinka? Everything. Now they care only about life.
>
> —A Dinka Sudanese working at Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alberta.

5.1 "On the Knife"

It is an April morning in the town of Brooks. I have awoken at five, well before dawn, to the stench of animal waste. My window is open and the motel room is filled with the smells of the Lakeside Packers. It is somehow stronger than I'd remembered from earlier trips. It reminds me of standing in a manure-laden barn during a spring thaw, ammonia-laden fumes rising from the sodden ground. Local residents say they can no longer smell it.

Lakeside, the massive U.S.-owned slaughterhouse, is located just five kilometres outside Brooks, a town of 12,000 people a two-hour drive to the east of Calgary in southern Alberta. Set in rolling farmland, the terrain is not unlike the grasslands of parts of Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal regions, from where most of the Sudanese living in Brooks originate. Lakeside, where they work, slaughters some 4,000 head of cattle a day over two shifts, up to six days a week.[20] It is one of the two largest meatpacking plants in Canada, the second also located in southern Alberta, outside the town of High River. Double-decker cattleliners deliver the live animals, "on the hoof," at one end of the massive complex. At the opposite end, refrigerated trucks pick up the packaged beef for delivery throughout western Canada. In an adjoining parking lot sits a large collection of workcamp trailers,

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[20]Interview with Lakeside Packers Human Resources Manager Chris Ernst, 17 July 2001.

accommodation for some eighty employees newly arrived in Brooks and unable to find rental accommodation. Lakeside is a non-unionized plant though the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 401, based in Calgary, is attempting to unionize the workforce.

Rising to begin the day, I decide to stop in at the apartment of some of the informants. The lights are on and three of the men are still unwinding after completing the nightshift at Lakeside, having returned home around two in the morning. "B" is disappointed that I am staying in a motel. "Maybe this [apartment] is a zero star," he quips, smiling. "We could make it nicer for you." I assure him that his home is just fine and apologize for not accepting his hospitality. We agree to meet later that day, after they have slept.

Leaving the apartment, I drive to a truckstop at the edge of town to have breakfast. The first person I notice upon entering the restaurant is a young, apparently local man who is asleep on the table of a booth. His head and arms are laid out on the table, a full cup of coffee placed a few inches from his head. He is wearing the local uniform of jeans and long-sleeved, buttoned shirt. Some minutes later, a group of young people in their late teens or early twenties arrives. They appear to be drunk and are loud, laughing and talking, as they settle down at a large table in the back. After seating them, the waitress stops to wake the sleeping man sitting alone.

After I finish my pancakes, I stop to look at a large bulletin board in the entryway of the gas station which adjoins the restaurant. The board carries advertising for upcoming local events. The largest posters advertise the sale of bulls: "Ebon Hill Angus, Bulls to Medicine Hat Bull Sale, March 21, 2001." Three photos of individual bulls in profile accompany the text, the names of the bulls listed below: "Magic Man," "Stockman," "Black Power." The poster lists the date of birth and weight of each bull and other lineages, listing "a strong set of yearling bulls sired by:

Extra Gold, Magic Man, Stockman, Prime Time." In large type: "All bulls are semen tested and guaranteed." Another poster includes the line "scrotal measured." I am struck by the commonality of cattle culture—the naming of prized animals, the affection shown towards particular bulls by their owners, the status acquired from breeding strong herds of cattle, the personalized identification between cow and man which occurs in societies involved with animal husbandry.

Godfrey Lienhardt, in his classic *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka*, writes:

> A Dinka's self-esteem and standing in the community are intimately bound up with cattle ... Dinka sometimes treat cattle as though the beasts had a kind of understanding of the wishes of their human guardians. They are often addressed by name ... The cattle have rights according to their kind within the total society, and the Dinka look with disgust upon their non-Dinka neighbours who slaughter cattle merely for meat. ... To have rights in a herd is to have rights in a descent-group, and through that in the political group to which it belongs. To have no such rights, or to be unable to assert them affectively, is to have no place in the main structure of Dinka society. ... Cattle are thus intimately connected with human personality; a man cannot be fully a Dinka without them (Lienhardt 1961: 16–27).

As a small boy in the early 1980s, "J" spent two years living in a Bor Dinka cattle camp. He recalled the memories with fondness:

> I lived there [in the cattle camp] taking care of cattle. We move [the cattle]. If you live here for four days or five days we know that the grass has been eaten by all the cows so we have to move to good grass and even for safety. In 1983, when the war broke out, we ran. ... We started running with our cattle.

Another informant, warming to J's recollections, added with emphasis, "He went to the cattle camp and he went naked like everyone!" His reference to the nudity practiced in Nilotic cattle camps was intended to impress me with the

authority with which J spoke. J's experience among the informant group from Cuba is unusual, most of the youth having been relatively urbanized. Few of the men had the traditional Nilotic experience of tending cattle in the open grasslands of southern Sudan.

J continued: "I was with my cousin [in the cattle camp]. We would make a small thing [describing a shelter with his hands]. We put a fire under and we sleep on top. ... My grandparents had a lot of cattle."

Asked where the cattle are now, he replied that he has not asked his relatives, when speaking by telephone to them in Africa, because it would be "too upsetting." The assumption is that the cattle have either been raided by the Sudanese army or guerrilla factions or sold because people have been forced to leave their home areas.

Said J: "If I find someone now who could be useful in these things I would like [to buy cows]. But all of them [family members] live now in Kenya, in [refugee] camps. They are not very related to the villages. If my grandparents were still alive now I would do that [buy cows]." His reference to family not being "related to the villages" is understood to mean that they are urbanized towndwellers who no longer have connection with the land.

In Cuba, J studied to be a veterinarian. For the first two years after his arrival in Canada, J worked "on the knife," cutting beef at Lakeside.

The kill floor at Lakeside Packers maintains a constant temperature of twenty-five degrees Celsius. The remainder of the assembly-line complex is kept refrigerated at six degrees Celsius. Because of this, informant Q has chosen to work his shifts killing cattle. Others who work in the refrigerated part of the slaughterhouse complain that they have lost sensitivity in their fingertips because of the constant cold. Those who are "on the knife" suffer repetitive stress injuries which lock their hands. The position requires the labourer to use one hand to hold the carcass with a hook while the second hand wields a knife to cut the meat. Because the

slaughterhouse is chronically understaffed, the workers are often asked to work overtime and, as one labourer told me, even though shifts are often short workers, "we still have the same amount of meat to push through." A Lakeside official disputed the claims of workers, both immigrant and Canadian-born, saying that the slaughterhouse was only "short about 100" workers.

Late one night I spoke with one of the southern Sudanese now working at Lakeside. "The problem is the job," she said. "It's really hard. You got to work fast with the knife. Like, some people, they get a problem with their hands right away." This informant, "Z," would quit the job only a few months later, but remain in Brooks, living with her boyfriend, a southern Sudanese who had come to Canada from Kenya.

"NP" stands almost seven feet tall. He is among the oldest of the group from Cuba. For several weeks he has been off work. If he tries to clench his right hand into a fist, two of his fingers remain locked, unbending. Several of the men and women have experienced the injury. Lakeside policy is to shift such workers to other areas on the assembly-line, where there will be less strain on their injured hands. But there is pressure to return to their original positions. A slaughterhouse doctor treats them and, on several occasions, has recommended they have operations to repair the problem. But the Sudanese have refused, one saying he had been scheduled for the operation but cancelled it. "This job is not going to be forever," he said. Those with degrees routinely say they will remain at the slaughterhouse only until they have paid off car loans or saved money in order to return to school.

Informant "W" described his work:

> My job is heavy. I work in the cooler, temperature is always below, in wintertime even minus thirty-five, but now it's ten to fifteen below. See, I can't feel this [touches his fingertips]. I'm a trimmer. I trim the shit. [When asked to clarify, not hearing the term clearly, and commenting that the word "shit" in English is considered coarse, he

> continued] They [the Canadian workers] say a lot of things. Actually, they have no education. Actually, I call it dead work. ... I stamp the "Canada" stamp, with blue ink. It [the meat] can't go out without it. Trim and stamp and then I hate the clean up, the fat. I hate to take it from the cooler to the slaughter site. They take it away to make hamburger or whatever they do with it. They use it. They take some advantage of it. ... [When] I did my first hours I was wearing gloves but I still feel cold. One day I even cried [but] I keep myself busy. If I just work without thinking, psychologically, it means I won't forget the cold. [I think of] Christian songs and all this, to motivate myself, cause it's boring.

In the right pocket of his trousers W carries a small New Testament Bible. It is worn and permanently curved to the shape of his body. Slipped between the pages are his Co-op membership card, his Scotia Bank card, health care insurance cards from Ontario and Alberta and his laminated identity card for Lakeside Packers. The card, which he must show to enter the outer building of the slaughterhouse at the beginning of each shift, bears a small photograph and a bar code. The photograph is little more than a black smudge, no features of his face apparent. W's religious faith is considered unusual among the group from Cuba.

"If I forget it [the Bible] in my house, I have to go back and get it. I never bought a wallet. I use my Bible. And I've never lost anything," he said, continuing, "[I said to myself] If God wants me to go to Canada, I will go. If God wants me to stay in Cuba, I will stay. So I am here in Canada because God wanted me to." Asked about what he thinks of Canada, he replied: "You do nothing, you get nothing. I came to Canada with ten American dollars. That's all I had." He takes special pride in the fact that he has already paid the fee charged by the Canadian government to all landed immigrants. "Paid two thousand three hundred dollars something, I already paid."

Large herds of cattle can be seen grazing on open fields surrounding the town of Brooks. Pick-up trucks are the most common vehicle used. Like much of southern Alberta, the rural town is described as "western" or having a "cowboy" culture. But major changes have been occurring in the town for the better part of the past decade.

A booming oil and gas industry has drawn crews of labourers to the area. Lakeside has also contributed to an influx of immigrants. Lakeside employs some 2,400 people, 1,400 of them working the day or "A" shift and 1,000 working the night or "B" shift. While the hourly starting wage is considered good ($11), the company has had difficulty maintaining a full staff. As well, a company official reported that staff turnover on an annual basis is "around the industry average" of 65 per cent. The company allows workers three breaks over a seven-and-a-hour shift: two fifteen-minute coffee breaks and a thirty-minute lunch. The work is physically demanding and burnout and injury are not uncommon. New immigrants make up a large proportion of the staff. Brooks officials routinely refer to the town being home to seventy-five different ethnic groups. It is not uncommon to meet newcomers from Iraq, Jordan, Algeria, Palestine and Africa on the streets of Brooks.

A Lakeside official described the Sudanese employees as "hard, diligent workers" with a "strong work ethic." He added, "The Sudanese have adjusted much more readily than the Iraqis," describing the Iraqi immigrants as having "more difficulty taking direction, more difficulty getting along." About the Sudanese, he said: "Once they know the rules they won't deviate from them. They're wonderful people."

Long-term residents of Brooks express varying levels of discomfort over the arrival of the immigrants. Unfamiliar with people from other parts of the world, assumptions are made about the origin of the new arrivals and the manner in which they came to Brooks. As well, reaction to the newcomers is influenced by local

sentiment which is critical of Lakeside. As a Lakeside official said, "Anything negative happening in this area, it's Lakeside's fault. No rain, crime wave—it's got to be Lakeside."

On a Saturday night in April 2001 I went to the bar of the Brooks Hotel. An informant had suggested two of his fellow Cubans might be there. The Brooks Hotel was built in the 1920s and is the oldest bar in the town. It is not unlike the single such hotel found in small rural towns all across Alberta—clad in red brick, its exterior showing the remnants of separate entrances for "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" dating from pre-World War II liquor laws, the requisite number of single hotel rooms on the second floor. The bar's capacity is only 200 and on Saturday nights people are often turned away. A raised platform serves as a dance floor. On the back walls are framed black and white photographs showing cowboys riding bulls and other rodeo scenes. There are also historic shots of the town from the turn of the last century.

It is early and the bar is only half full, the interest of most customers focused on one table where a young woman is celebrating her eighteenth birthday with a large group of friends. Two of the young women are wearing fluffy, Playboy-style bunny ears. Behind the bar is a twenty-foot-long glass-fronted display case filled with the empty glass bottles of more than 200 different brands of beer served over the decades. A sticker on the glass reads: "Beer: Helping white people learn to dance ... since 1837." Another sticker reads: "Beer: Helping the Ugly Have Sex ... Since 1868."

The men I am looking for are not in the bar. I order a beer anyway, and sit at the long counter. The bartender is a twenty-six-year-old man who grew up in Brooks. "Bob" said that the "Africans" come in Sundays to Tuesdays, when the bar is less likely to be crowded. He continued:

> If it's real busy they won't come here. Depends on who's in here. They're usually cowboys. They all say something off the wall, like some racist line. It happened one night in offsale [a separate section where customers buy alcohol to be consumed off the bar premises]. We got a whole line-up of Africans in, then it starts off with just a little comment. Like "Where I come from, hell, this doesn't go on." And then his last line, "Where I'm from we used to hang niggers." So I kicked him out and all the [African] guys were happy.
>
> And it's so bad cause they walk away from everything. The Africans, they just turn their back. They just ignore it cause they don't want a part of it. Ask anybody, they [the Africans] treat us the best. They are by far our favourite customers. Actually, overly polite to us is the way to put it. I've never had any of them get rowdy. Like they'd buy offsale and bring it in here. Anyone else we'd take it [the offsale-purchased beer] away, but these guys we'll give it back when they leave. [It's] difficult to understand their English. They just don't understand our liquor licenses. They're so quiet. They are usually the guys being picked on.

After listening to the young man speak about the "Africans," I asked how long he had been working at the bar and knowing the "Africans." He replied: "Two years." I asked if he knew any of the "Africans'" names. He replied: "Would I even remember their names? Could I say them?"

Talking about the reaction of long-term Brooks residents to Africans, a second waiter commented: "Listen, this is a real redneck town. I know. Even for southern Alberta."

5.2 The Racialization of "the Cubans" as Black Africans

In the first two years of residency in Canada, several of the Cuban men became involved with Aboriginal women. As one of the girlfriends told me, "They [Cuban Sudanese] say 'In our country we're the natives.'" The remark suggests that the men equated their people's minority or second-class status in the Arab-dominated Sudan with what they observed of the marginalized position of

Aboriginals in Alberta society. They also, in some cases, saw parallels between their African, Dinka culture and that of people living on the Blood Reserve near Lethbridge.

"Jane" is in her mid-thirties. She has three children from a previous relationship. They live with her mother in nearby Lethbridge while she earns money working at the slaughterhouse: "These guys still remember bits [of their culture]. In my culture my mom wasn't allowed to look directly at her son-in-law. How would you say it? The classification of women is pretty well the same. We're supposed to serve the men, I guess, [do] household chores."

Jane lives with one of the men from Cuba. She previously dated another of the men. "Ever since I was little I've always been interested in other cultures," she said, adding, "Language barrier is a big problem."

Her friendship with some of the men extended to doing daily chores such as the laundry, for which they paid her, and helping with reading paperwork and paying bills. "Like I'm proud to have them as my friends. They would give you the shirt off their back, if they had it. They're just so compassionate and I help them out all the time, getting them phone services, calling when they don't understand something on their bills. Like, at my house [where her boyfriend and another man lived] I do probably ninety per cent of the business."

"This is a really bad town for these guys," she said. Some weeks earlier she had gone to a bar in Brooks with her boyfriends and another, female, friend. It was around eleven p.m. when Jane left their table to go to the washroom. When she returned she was told by her friend, "Jane, they just dragged your boyfriend out the back door." Three "white guys" had taken him outside the bar, using a side exit leading to an alley. "They were saying 'What did you come here for, to fuck these white girls?'" Jane said. "When I go there, the two bouncers [security guards for the bar] were standing at the door, blocking the door, and the three guys were holding

him down and kicking. They had him down and they were kicking him. He had a cut behind his ear and on his head.

"When I see that going on I went up and punched the white guy in the face and the guy was coming after me. I called the cops and they came right away." She named the officer who had attended and said that no charges were laid. She said the officer told her "nobody wants to come forward and say anything."

"I pointed out the bouncers and everyone who witnessed it. And we were probably the soberest people in the bar," Jane said. Her boyfriend went to hospital where he was x-rayed to determine whether any bones were broken. "We just went home that night and cried," she recalled.

I went that night to the same bar where the assault had occurred. The bouncer whom I spoke with was not one of the two who were said to have blocked the exit while the beating was in progress. I explained to him that I was carrying out research for my thesis and asked him about what he thought of the Africans living in Brooks. He replied:

> They're freaks. They're not welcome here. There have been a few sexual assaults so these guys have got a bad reputation. If I went out and did something nobody would say 'Oh, the whites are bad.' But these guys ... My brother is probably one of the worst black haters and I don't even know why. It's hard for them here. They don't fit in. I've seen the change here. Five years ago there were maybe two black guys and everybody knew who they were. Nobody knows who these guys are. It's really changed here. You can't understand them. That's what I can't stand. They can't speak English.

In the period of contact with informants, I was never told by any of the Sudanese that they had experienced incidents of racial prejudice. Non-Sudanese, Canadian-born individuals, however, told me of several violent incidents in which Sudanese were either involved or described as victims. When asked directly about the incidents, the Sudanese coming from Cuba speak only hesitantly.

One such case involved a twenty-eight-year-old informant. "AB" recalled what happened one winter's night in Brooks:

> It was very very cold. I had just finished a twelve-hour shift. I didn't warm up my car enough. I couldn't make it home. I parked my car at [a bar in Brooks]. It was between eight and nine o'clock at night. My car was so cold I couldn't keep my hands on the steering wheel. I went inside [the bar]. I put my loonie [a one-dollar coin] on the side of the pool table, to play pool. The way you're going to make friends in Canada is play sports with them, that's what we were told by a [Canadian] guy who came to Cuba. So I try to make friends with them by playing pool.
>
> While I was organizing the balls to play, one of them was drunk and he started to say "nigger" and bad words. I kept ignoring him. One of them told him to shut up but he kept watching and staring. I told him to stop. Because I am a black he came to fight me. I kept playing with [the] other guy and that guy, while I was playing, he says "Why are you looking at me like that? You think I am stupid?" We keep playing and I win the game. I made a mistake by winning. I try to give my hand to him and he couldn't shake my hand. I said "No problem." I went outside the pool hall, my car would be warm now, and both of them come outside. I went to hospital. I called the police by myself.

Asked what happened in the parking lot, he said that the two men from the pool game were joined by three others. Three of the men held him while the two others beat him. "I didn't make any charges against them," he said. "The police took one of them to the jail. The same day they let him go."

In rural Alberta, as well as in its urbanized centres, Africans are regarded monolithically as "black." This holds whether the person being labelled is a brown-skinned Muslim from northern Sudan, a fine-featured native of the Ethiopian Highlands or a statuesque, blue-black Dinka from southern Sudan. Sometimes, in Brooks, they are referred to as "jiggaboos," "jungle bunnies" and even "niggers."

One Brooks man told me that he understood that the "black people" in Brooks were "Haitians, coming through Miami." Such an explanation could be an

attempt to account for the speaking of Spanish by the southern Sudanese who grew up in Cuba, Miami being home to many Spanish-speaking people. Haitians, however, speak French rather than Spanish. He continued: "From what I heard, Lakeside Packers sent out applications, international applications for everybody." There are also rumours that Lakeside, in an attempt to fill the large number of vacant positions, has advertised in Alberta prisons and obtained early releases for prisoners willing to work at the slaughterhouse. In an interview, a Lakeside official denied this. The company has, however, paid travel costs for workers coming from as far away as Newfoundland on Canada's east coast.

The journey from Cuba to Canada and the town of Brooks has also revealed to the Sudanese the existence of a Canadian working class and, conversely, better informed their sense of sophistication and international identity. Said informant "U": "Here in Brooks, I can't talk about science, about politics. All they [Canadians] want is get in the car, play loud music. I have been here a year and I haven't gone to the library." Living in a white, racist society contributes to the creation of a "black" as opposed to Sudanese or African identity. This follows their previous, Cuban experience, in which being southern Sudanese, Dinka, Nuer or Shilluk, was overtaken by the group identity of "Sudanese." Contributing to this identification was their enrolment in school on the Isle of Youth and their contact with sometimes competing groups of African children who were separated by political or state identity (i.e., Moroccan children from the Western Sahara, affiliated with the Polisario Front, Ethiopian and Angolan children).

On 18 June 2001 the Edmonton broadcast of A-Channel television reported that a "US-based hate group" had distributed literature aimed against the "non-white" population of Brooks. The report gave no context and made no mention of why the town may have been targeted by such a group, i.e., the presence of the meatpacking plant in Brooks and its employment of new immigrants from non-

European countries, including the considerable population of black Africans from Cuba. The literature reportedly suggested that the "white" population was endangered by the arrival of non-white residents. The mayor of the town was interviewed briefly on camera, saying that he was angered by the targeting of his Brooks for the hate literature.

The Brooks Bulletin is one of two newspapers serving the community. At the time of the news release, the newspaper's reporter was told by her editor to "not make a big deal of it." No attempt was made to acquire copies of the pamphlets distributed. A short notice appeared inside the newspaper.

One informant, "C," told me what he understood of the incident: "I heard that they came here from the U.S. and told the government, they warned them 'These people must go.' But the government told them no. They have to have development—the oil and Lakeside." Another informant acknowledged that some of the Cuban migrants had met following the news. "We are meeting so we can defend outselves," he said, adding, "they say that ten, twenty years ago there were no blacks. People are conservative, not all, but some people." Another informant, "Q," was more philosophical, stressing the commonality of people in Brooks rather than their differences: "You know what I discovered is humankind, they do the same thing. Like, let us say, I've been in Ethiopia for a long time, in Cuba, in Canada for three years. I've been watching people and they all do the same things, in different ways."

An RCMP officer in Brooks, asked about the hate literature, presented the incident in a still different light. When asked who local people believed was responsible for the literature, she replied: "The union. Local people thought it was to organize the minorities to join the union." By this reasoning, the hate literature was

aimed at politicizing the immigrant labourers at Lakeside Packers to vote in favour of joining the UFCW Local 401.[21] The union denied any such involvement, an official describing the idea as "absurd." The RCMP, for its part, released a statement connecting the hate literature with an Internet-based money-making scheme in which people would purchase racist books and other products over the U.S.-based group's webpage.

5.3 Actual Versus Real

The photograph is something of great importance to most diaspora cultures. The Sudanese are no different. At the twenty-four-hour IGA grocery store in Brooks, formal portraits can be taken. I have seen the much-prized photographs in the homes of all the informants. New clothing is purchased, expensive suits and dress shirts, and a suitably grave expression adopted. Sometimes the men arrange themselves in small groups and pose for personal cameras. Rarely does anyone smile and if he does, it is taken as an error and another picture required. Sometimes people change their clothing before even informal pictures are taken. Photographs showing cars are particularly prized.

The men take the portraits, evidence of both the simple fact that they are alive and that they are flourishing, and send them to loved ones in Africa. One informant, "FK," had not spoken to his family in more than eight years. When he arrived in Canada, he called his mother in Kenya. "When first she heard my voice [she was] crying and crying. She couldn't believe I'm alive. I take a picture and I send it to her," he said.

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[21] Between 1999 and 2001, UFCW Local 401 organized three failed votes for unionization at the plant. Local 401 President Douglas O'Halloran reports that Lakeside Packers was cited by the Alberta Labour Relations Board for management involvement in a 1999 union information meeting at which union officials were pelted with eggs, coins and pop cans while addressing plant employees.

That the men have few occasions to wear suits in Canada is of little concern. The important thing is how they wish to be seen. The photographs are symptomatic of other ways in which the ideal is promoted over the real. In return, the sisters who have grown to adulthood in their absence dress themselves in elaborate gowns, some African-style, others in western-style dresses made from shiny polyester fabrics, spend precious sums on hair extensions, and visit photo studios in Nairobi and Cairo to have similar portraits taken. They too adopt stern gazes.

Particularly in my early contacts with "the Cubans," informants stressed the unity of those who had grown up on the Isle of Youth. They also stated with some firmness that they continued to be a part of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and that Col. John Garang was their leader. Yet, as the months passed and my knowledge of their lives increased, it became apparent that the men felt compelled to perpetuate what even they knew to not be the case. At no time, according to reliable informants, has the SPLA or SPLM ever contacted the men in Canada. There have been individual contacts but those only between relatives who remain in the SPLA and those in Canada. During the last decade of their Cuban residence the SPLA did not extend any assistance or even moral support. For public consumption, however, the young men present themselves as a still-extant vanguard which will one day return to southern Sudan and take its proper place in the development of their home nation. As well, it was months before the young men expressed any negative sentiment regarding their time in Cuba. In particular, they were most often loathe to criticize the Cuban government.

5.4 The "Narrative" of Being Sudanese

Benedict Anderson writes that the narratives of autobiography take place in "empty time," framed by history and within a sociological setting. Certainly, in the

case of the Sudanese raised in Cuba, attempts to "remember" their childhoods are deeply influenced by historical events. Anderson writes:

> All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives. ... Out of this estrangement comes a conception of personhood, *identity* ... which, because it can not [sic] be 'remembered,' must be narrated. ... These narratives, like novels and newspapers ... are set in homogenous, empty time. Hence their frame is historical and their setting sociological (Anderson 1983: 204).

Many of those who have come to Canada have few recollections of life in Sudan. An important historical marker is their departure from Africa and arrival in Cuba. While individuals recall the immediate circumstances of the journey with ease, knowledge of the wider events which preceded the worsening of the war and the exodus of refugees to Ethiopia have been formed by the collective.

Each year on May 16 supporters of the SPLA mark the start of the war. In Brooks in 2000, attempts to arrange a party failed. For some months members of the community in Brooks had been involved in disputes between individuals and, later, small groups. Alcohol was a factor, the local RCMP detachment being called on an almost weekly basis to at least two of the "Cuban" apartments. Physical confrontations led to violence. While there was a hope among some members that the day be recognized, at a certain point, planning stopped.

The actual historical accounts of what occurred on 16 May 1983 are of some dispute. That a mutiny occurred among soldiers stationed at the Bor garrison in Upper Nile region is not in question.[22] The reasons for the sudden desertions and taking up of arms against northern officers, however, remains a matter of dispute. The commander of the garrison was Kerubino Kwanyin Bol. The officer, a Bor

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[22]BBC World Service, report by Carol Berger, 14 May 1983.

Dinka, was widely considered to be a violent and corrupt individual. At the time of the mutiny, soldiers at the Bor garrison had not received their pay for as long as three months. Informants at the time of the mutiny reported that Kerubino had been in business with senior army officers, moving contraband between southern and northern Sudan on military planes. The contraband included wildlife and alcohol. Kerubino, it was reported, had demanded a larger cut of the profits and, when denied them, held back his soldiers' pay. At the same time, amid growing reports of anti-government tension, it was claimed that Khartoum had decided to transfer soldiers from the Bor garrison to northern Sudan and replace them with northern Sudanese troops.

While the mutiny, at the time, appeared to be the consequence of one corrupt individual's financial greed, it has come to represent a potent symbol of the start of the war and the rejection of rule from northern Sudan. Within a few years of the mutiny, Kerubino ran afoul of the SPLA leadership and was first arrested and imprisoned by his former colleagues. Later he deserted, joining the Khartoum government and leading some of the war's most brutal military campaigns against his fellow southern Sudanese. Regardless, the youth from Cuba, starved of news for almost the entirety of their time there, have continued to hold a regard for the man they contend fired the first shot in the now nineteen-year-old war.

5.5 Epilogue

By September 2001, as this thesis was being completed, only twenty southern Sudanese of the original 619 remained in Cuba. Fifteen are students completing medical and veterinarian studies. Two of them are women. One former student is now employed at a Cuban university and is expected to remain in Cuba. The reasons for the individual's continued residency in Cuba were not made clear. It was said

that he as "involved in Cuban activities," particularly those of the national Communist Party. Three men are serving sentences in a Havana prison, one on a charge of murder and the two others for raping a Cuban woman. One man, diagnosed as schizophrenic, has been hospitalized in a Havana mental hospital since 1995.

Of the original sixty girls sent to Cuba, nineteen now reside in Canada. Seventeen of the girls became pregnant while in Cuba and were returned to Africa before the birth of their children. Some twenty-two of the young women were trained as nurses and sent to work in refugee and rebel camps in 1988. As mentioned earlier, as of late 2001 two women remained in Cuba, training to be nurses.

In an accounting of the whereabouts of the remaining 541, sixteen died while in Cuba (see Appendix II); a total of 242 (188, including forty-two women, in 1988; fourteen in 1989 and 270 in 1993) were returned to Africa in three separate transports between 1988 and 1993; approximately 180 men (in addition to the nineteen women) live in Canada.

The cattle purchased by informant "F" in 2000 have grown to a herd of forty cows. One of his relatives who tends the cattle in an SPLA-controlled part of Upper Nile has a mobile phone. F calls him now and then. As F told me, "He says the cows are many." I was surprised that he would mention the number of cattle he owns. As Lienhardt wrote, Dinka do not publicly count their cattle, suggesting that anyone who would attempt to give a number to the herd of another man "has the evil eye" (Lienhardt 1961: 22). The counting of cattle, as in the accounting of wealth, is considered disrespectful. The same belief can be found among cattle owners in southern Alberta, where the question "How many cattle do you have?" is most likely to be answered with "Enough to fill a field."

Since coming to Canada many of the men have gained weight. Said informant "P," "We used to make fun of them [in Cuba], they were so thin. We used to say

that to get fat we would have to make an operation. There [was] no meat then. They were so skinny, but now they are getting fat." One informant, "FK," stands around six and half feet tall. He told me, "I'm going to show you my photo in Cuba. I was like eighty pounds. There was no food there, just bananas." After almost three years living in Canada, FK now weighs 210 pounds.

"Jane," the Aboriginal girlfriend of one of the men, was killed in a car accident in the summer of 2000. She had been travelling in the early morning hours between Lethbridge and Brooks.

The relationship between those who travelled to Cuba and the SPLA is an uncertain one. While individuals express their appreciation for the opportunity to go to Cuba and the educations they received there, there are also feelings of having been "abandoned." Although the SPLA maintained an office in the Cuban capital of Havana until at least the early 1990s, the rebel army provided no financial support for the students. Informants report that no official contact has been made by the SPLA to the group now living in Canada. Because nephews of SPLA leader John Garang are among the migrant group, however, there is informal contact between relatives in Canada and those still with the SPLA or living in SPLA-controlled areas of southern Sudan. At the same time that the group has no official relation to the SPLA, they are identified by other Sudanese immigrants, often in negative ways, as affiliated to the movement. Said one informant, "They think we were brainwashed by John Garang."

Over the past year, "AB" and some of his fellow housemates have travelled the two-hour journey to Calgary to participate in demonstrations against Talisman, the Canadian firm which has a twenty-five per cent interest in Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Co., sharing ownership of the firm exploiting the oil reserves with the Khartoum-based Sudanese government and two other companies. The oil company's drilling and recovery is centred around Heglig town, 750 kilometres

south of Khartoum, in what is now known as Unity province. Heglig was the original well site developed by the U.S.-based Chevron Oil, the first oil company to enter and develop the oil site in the early 1980s.[23] It is here, where oil was first discovered, that the men of this household come from. It is also where the first boys were sent by their families to neighbouring Ethiopia for refuge from the war and to receive military training.

5.6 A Night of Salsa for the "Cubans" in Brooks

For several months in late 2000, the flag of the "New Sudan" hung as a curtain in the basement suite of a downtown Edmonton apartment. The flag, four-feet-by-three-feet, has three stripes running lengthways, in green, white and black. At one end is a blue triangle with a red star. This is the flag of the "New Sudan," the Sudan which will emerge following the defeat of government forces by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. One of the new arrivals brought it with him from Cuba, from the flagpole of the grounds of the *Batalla de Kore* School on the Isle of Youth. It rests in Brooks now, in one of the homes rented by Sudanese working at Lakeside Packers.

The flag is no longer current, however. "When the communists were gone, they thought about other things. So they removed the red star and made it yellow," he explained. The colour yellow is said to symbolize "progress." His reference to the "communists" being gone, refers to the overthrow of the Ethiopian regime led by Menghistu Haile Mariam, the regime which had given support and refuge to the SPLA for the first decade of the war.

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[23]In February 1984 Chevron pulled out of the concession area after its basecamp at Bentiu was attacked by the SPLA, leaving four expatriate oilworkers dead (Carol Berger, BBC World Service, February 1984).

"This flag, we got it in Cuba a long time ago. When they changed it [exchanging the red star for a yellow star] we don't get a new flag but we know the flag is changed."

Just as the flag has changed, so has the political and military situation in Sudan. The country where they were born continues to be engulfed in civil war. The government in Khartoum is now allied with Iran and is promoting radical Islamist policies. The SPLA has been riven by internal, tribal-based warfares and the original leadership of the movement decimated by violent deaths.

In August 2001 I travelled to Brooks to meet with key informants. I had planned the journey well in advance and was assured that a group would be assembled so that the thesis could be read out. I arrived at the predetermined time but found that the informant who was to organize the gathering was not home. As I was told, "AB" had travelled to the neighbouring city of Red Deer to conduct negotiations for a bride. A cousin living there was assisting him in his plans to marry a young Dinka woman living in Kenya.

In mid-August the first such Dinka bride arrived in the town of Brooks. She had travelled from the Kakuma refugee camp in northwestern Kenya. The groom, one of those raised in Cuba, had never seen his intended before. His mother, also living in Kakuma, had selected her for him. When she flew into the Calgary International Airport, a party of men from Brooks were there to meet her. "We went to welcome her," said informant "NP." "To welcome a girl you've never met is not very easy. You need friends to help you."

NP explained that although there had been reservations among the Cuban group about bringing wives from Africa, negotiations for marriage were being carried out by at least five of those coming from Cuba. As he said, "We worry about western girls. You may get married and tomorrow you are separated. ... [In Brooks]

we get girls in nightclubs. They aren't serious. We can't get girls who are with their families and are serious.

"It was like this in Cuba, the same. The Cuban girls the immigrants can get are not serious. They are girls on the road." His use of the words "on the road" appeared to relate to the colloquial expressions "on the street" or "street girls," suggesting that the women were not of good reputation.

The cost of marrying a Dinka girl from Africa is high, as much as $7,000 to $10,000. As it was explained, because the Dinka community in Africa has a low regard for the men coming from Cuba, the cost is sometimes inflated. As well, there are expectations about the financial means of Dinka living in North America. The Cuban migrant who has newly married sent a portion of the money to Kenya in advance, wiring it through Western Union. The remainder of the payment is to be made within a certain period of time. Because the cost of the marriage was high, the groom in fact is said to have money problems. The other Cubans in Brooks have donated money to help the couple.

Said NP: "What we are doing is an experiment. Now we've been seeing how [the couple] are doing. We see how it goes. If it works, okay. Everybody is embroiled in this matter now."

He continued: "There are a lot of changes. Canada is a different place. You have to organize yourselves. They find that to organize yourself you have to have responsibilities, you have to have a family. And all these guys [who have acquired wives or are negotiating to do so], they drink and party [before] and now they've quit all that."

While it appeared impossible to review the thesis with the informants, there was an event happening that night. Two Cuban-born immigrants working at Lakeside had rented the local Kinsmen Community Centre and were holding a dance

for the Sudanese. Small entry tickets had been printed on red paper. The tickets read:

LATIN EXPLOSION
September 2, 2001
Rodeo Hall
Cost: $3.00 TIME: 8:00pm
Show this ticket at the door.

By 9:30 p.m., a mostly Cuban Sudanese group had begun to gather at one apartment before leaving for the party at the community centre. "F," his head newly shaven, was wearing a flowing, West African-styled robe. It was a gift from his family who are refugees living in Kenya. The sleeves and borders are embroidered in gold-coloured thread. Heavy embroidery on the chest of the garment has been sewn into the shape of the African continent. Others in the group wore wearing conventional, western-style clothing. All looked smart. AB had returned to Brooks from Red Deer. He apologized for missing our meeting, saying that he had hurried back so as not to be too late, hitting a rabbit as he drove along the highway. He told me that the negotiations for getting married were going well.

When we arrived at the well-lit facility around ten o'clock, only a few people were there. At eleven p.m., a group of women who were raised in Cuba arrived. All were wearing long, tight dresses. They greeted the young men they grew up with in Cuba with kisses on the cheek and brief embraces. One, a statuesque women with short hair, wore a backless black dress with high, platform shoes. "EB" is the daughter of one of the original SPLA commanders, one of those who died violently during factional fighting. "I love Canada!" she told me. In Cuba she completed three years of accounting as well as several years of nursing. She is married to another of the Cuban Sudanese and is known as a hard worker, regularly putting in sixty hours

a week at Lakeside. She plans to have a child in the coming year and later get the necessary qualifications to work as a nurse in Canada.

By midnight there were close to a hundred people in the hall. The lights were still bright but the music was loud and the dance floor full. But for a few Aboriginals and a couple of non-African women, all in the room were Sudanese. And most were those who were raised in Cuba. Although there are far more women than men, most everyone was dancing. The music was salsa from Cuba and Brazil and all from Cuba were expert dancers. One of the women, wearing a blonde wig, danced with the man she is planning to marry next year, a fellow Cuban Sudanese. While the men drank beer, the women held plastic cocktail glasses filled with rum and garnished with leaves of mint.

A few of the Cuban Sudanese women wore trousers with halter tops. One, the daughter of a former SPLA representative in the Havana office, has a pierced nose. She wore a cut-off top with the logo "Tommy" across the front, a small glittery gem placed in her navel. A nephew of SPLA leader John Garang was leaning against the bar, dancing little. He wore a black denim oversized jacket with matching trousers and sported a stud earring. His glasses were heavy black frames with yellow tinted lenses. He watched as the men and women divided into two facing lines, their arms in the air, dancing with joy to the Cuban music.

It was the first time that I had seen almost all of those from Cuba living in Brooks together in one place. "Do you know who she is?" one informant asked me, telling me that the woman he is pointing at is the daughter of a famous SPLA member. "You see there, two nephews of John Garang are here," he continued. I was surprised at the desire to tell me who individual Cubans were related to. In the past, questions about kinship had caused discomfort. I had come to accept that those in Canada did not wish to be identified as being members of influential families. But on this night it was different. There was a sense of bravado in the air.

As I prepared to leave, one of my key informants stopped me and told me I must talk to EB before I completed the thesis. "Really, she knows the real thing," he said. And so EB told me, "What does Sudan mean? It means black and African. Who are these Arabs in the north? Sudan is an African country. And one day we will show you."

When I left, at two-thirty in the morning, they were still dancing. The children of the SPLA, the vanguard of the "New Sudan," were enjoying themselves on a holiday long weekend in southern Alberta.

5.7 Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I posed the following question: If identity is a tool of survival, and therefore by definition constantly subject to change, what element of identity, if any, survives at the centre of culture? Beneath the layers of external change—political theory and indoctrination, the constraints of social stratification and hierarchy, social and economic necessity—what part of a person's sense of self remains? In this thesis I have attempted to expand on several areas of inquiry: the identity of southern Sudanese who grew up in Cuba, how they have changed, what remains of the past and what lies in the future.

The following points may be made in summary:

1. What is the identity of southern Sudanese children who grew up in Cuba?

Up to three-quarters of those sent to Cuba are from the Dinka tribe. The remainder are from other Nilotic tribes, including Nuer and Shilluk, from Equatoria region and, in a few rare cases, Muslim northerners. Officially, the youth were to be the vanguard of the "New Sudan," a nation without tribes or clans, united as one people in a socialist and secular state within the borders of Africa's largest country in

area. During their twelve years in Cuba, however, the young people adopted Spanish as their main language and largely attained a Latino identity.

While on the Isle of Youth, the children developed an African, "Sudanese" identity. It is noted that while at primary and secondary school, the youth were in primary contact with other nationalities of African children also studying in so-called international schools. This contact heightened the sense of group identity as the different nationalities of African children effectively competed for limited resources and experienced some conflict between themselves and other nationalities. The cultural hierarchy among the children and teenagers was essentially dismantled in what was a plantation setting, the Sudanese being employed as labourers throughout their residency in Cuba. An egalitarian ethos was established among the youth and former distinctions between individuals based on clan or kin-based affiliations were supplanted in favour of a common, Cuban-Sudanese identity.

2. How have they changed?

The racialization of the Sudanese in Canada by people of European descent projects a "black" identity, one which informants have, to varying degrees and in different contexts, adopted. At the close of the previous section, I quoted informant "EB" saying: "What does Sudan mean? It means black and African. Who are these Arabs in the north? Sudan is an African country." Her words are in contrast to that of other informants who stressed that they were not "southern Sudanese" but "Sudanese" and that Sudan was one country rather than a nation divided between an Arab north and African south.

In a relatively short period, between 1998 and 2000, a shift in perception among the informant group was, however, evident. As informant "V" said: "Especially the guys coming from Cuba were united. They called themselves Sudanese, national identity was what they were aspiring for. But now people want to

go back to tribes and even the subclans of tribes. Now they are becoming affected. The problem is within the Dinka tribe." This apparent return to identification with tribes follows contact between the Cuban Sudanese and Sudanese coming from Africa. The community of the Cuban Sudanese has been expanded to include people from their home regions. Relations between the two groups are considered complex given the different, conflicting, world views.

3. What remains of the past?

While in Cuba, the youth had virtually no contact with their kin, whether they were living in Sudan or in refugee camps in neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya. Contact has been renewed since their arrival in Canada, mostly through long distance telephone calls and the wiring of money to Africa. There have also been rare reunions with relatives living in Canada or the United States. What remains of the past is an identification with relatives, whether immediate family or extended, and a desire to maintain and strengthen those links. This commitment to family relationships is complicated by the changed identities of the informants, their culture no longer shared by relatives in Africa. Values held by the Cuban-educated Dinka—including diet, dress, languages used, social conduct, world view—differ from those of their kin.

4. What lies in the future?

It is unlikely that any significant number of the "Cuban" Sudanese now in Canada will return to Sudan or Africa. The immediate reason for this is the continuing war in southern Sudan and the factionalization of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Given their personal histories and affiliation with the SPLA, it is not possible for informants to consider returning to Sudan. Nor is it practically possible to return to the rebel movement or areas under its control in

southern Sudan. Relations between the SPLA and the informant group are non-existent. The splitting of the SPLA into factions and the westernized, de-cultured nature of the Cuban group places those who grew up in Cuba in a vulnerable position. As well, family members in Africa, many of whom are in refugee camps, are in great need. Only by working in Canada and sending money to Africa can those raised in Cuba assist their families.

Varying degrees of assimilation or adaptation to western culture are evident among the informant group. One factor in this variation is the age at which informants were sent to Cuba. Another factor is the establishment of new family units, including marriage and the birth of children. The cohesiveness of the original immigrant group has altered in the first two years of residence in Canada. Central to this change is the contact with Sudanese who have come to Canada directly from Africa. These Sudanese have retained hierachical divisions based on kinship and tribe and do not accept Cuban Sudanese conduct which supports a more egalitarianism value system and rejects the division of people along tribal or clan lines. If the current trend continues, divisions within the Cuban group along tribal and clan lines are expected to become more sharply defined. This change would reflect a wider attempt by the Cuban Sudanese to conform to the expectations or world view of other Sudanese.

The scent of cattle no longer evokes an identification with landscape and climate. Political belief and feelings of loyalty or indebtedness to a rebel army dissipate with the passage of time and a broadening of perspective. Language has changed and the mother tongue become awkward and laboured, its use reserved for particular subjects and contexts, no longer sufficient to express the full range of emotions and perceptions. The individual's identification with a group—a group which has experienced great upheaval and suffering, that has instilled a deep sense of

community over many years—can be suppressed by the demands of a single individual living thousands of kilometres away, an individual who has not been seen in more than a decade, if that individual happens to be one's mother, father, sister or brother. Beneath the layers of external change—political theory and indoctrination, the constraints of social stratification and hierarchy, social and economic necessity—the part of a person's sense of self which appears to remain is the desire to retain contact with family.

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Appendix I

Timeline

1983, May 16 – Sudanese Army Battalions 105 and 106 mutiny in Bor, commanding officer Major Kerubino Kwanyin Bol takes troops to Ethiopia.

1983, May 21 – Senior southern army officers desert (including Lt. Col. Francis Ngor, 2nd in command in Malakal, Upper Nile).

1983, July 31 – John Garang named leader of the SPLA; publication of the SPLM *Manifesto* calling for establishment of a united socialist Sudan.

1983, September – Sudanese government passes the "September Laws" imposing *hudud* or Sharia punishments on the existing penal code.

1985, December – Soviet ship *Iboski* transports 314 children from Ethiopian port of Massawa, arriving in Cuban port of Havana on 22 January 1986; further 300 children sent in two separate air transports travelling Gambela-Addis Ababa-Harare, Zimbabwe-Luanda, Angola on Ethiopian planes and Angola to Havana on Cuban planes. First plane departed in June 1986 and the second a month later. Total number of children sent to Cuba was 619, 60 of whom were girls.

1986 – Sudanese children receive six months of intense Spanish-language training upon arrival on the Isle of Youth.

1987 – SPLA Deputy Commander Kerubino Kwanyin Bol arrested and imprisoned by SPLA leader John Garang.

1988 – Transport of 124 male students described as "construction" workers from Cuba to Ethiopia. In the same year, another 35 students (14 girls and 21 boys) described as "*Cruz Roja*" (Red Cross), trained as paramedics, returned to Ethiopia.

1988 – Garang's wife, Rebecca, takes on of their sons in Cuba back to Ethiopia.

1989 – Garang visits Cuba, spending one week in Havana where he met with Fidel Castro and Cuban government officials, one night on the Isle of Youth with Sudanese students.

1989 – Coup backed by National Islamic Front in Khartoum, Sudan.

1989 – 12 or 14 youth, all of whom received special military training, return to southern Sudan.

1991, May 14 – Namibian-Sudanese clash. One Sudanese, Michael Deng Achek and one Angolan killed. Four Sudanese arrested and returned to Ethiopia as punishment.

1991, May – Overthrow of Ethiopian President Menghistu Hail Mariam; hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees forced to leave camps in Ethiopia and return to Sudan; internal Nuer-Dinka split in SPLA in Sudan begins; collapse of East Bloc leads to economic crisis in Cuba.

1993 – Cuba legalizes U.S. currency, further plunging Sudanese into destitution.

1993 – Transport of 69 male graduates of Cuban polytechnical schools to Entebbe,

Uganda; transferred by bus to refugee camps in northern Uganda; two sons of Kerubino Kwanyin Bol taken from Uganda to Kenya, removed from movement.

1993–4 – Plantations on Isle of Youth privatized.

1995 – Achol Deng Achol, Sudanese Ambassador to Germany, visits Cuba and offers financial support to Sudanese in exchange for their return to Khartoum.

1995–96 – UNHCR representatives sent to Cuba to arrange humanitarian solution to their situation. At that time, 270 of the Sudanese students remain in Cuba.

1997 – Canada accepts Sudanese remaining in Cuba as immigrants. Charter plane with 144 Sudanese arrives in Toronto in November, others following in smaller numbers on commercial carriers up until late 2001.

2001 – Approximately 254 of those who were in Cuba now living in Canada.

Appendix II

List of Sudanese Students Who Died in Cuba

Of the 619 children sent to Cuba, sixteen died while living there. Before leaving the Isle of Youth for Havana in 1995, one of the Sudanese headmasters visited the office of the local municipal government and was given a typed list of the names of the dead. The only information on the single sheet of paper were their names, the date and cause of death, and sex.[24] No official death certificates were brought from Cuba and the remains of the dead continue to be held there. The ages are estimates based on the recollections of fellow students.

1. John Mareng Mach, aged sixteen or eighteen, Bor Dinka of the Palek clan residing east of Bor town, died on 17 April 1986, suicide by hanging.

Mareng's death was the first to occur in Cuba. He arrived in January of 1986 in the first group of children which travelled by ship from Ethiopia.

> He took something and he hung himself in the bathroom of the infirmary. It occurred within a month of his arrival [before the second group of children arrived from Ethiopia]. He was sixteen or eighteen years old. One in Calgary, JJ, was his best friend. B [another friend], he's now in Brooks. They said [he killed himself] because all the time he was sick and the doctors and nurses, he felt they weren't listening to him. It was like in the morning, assembly time. Everybody was getting out of the dormitory. A lady was trying to go to that bathroom and she found the guy. She was crying and shouting. He was a little bit surviving but he died in hospital.

[24]Source for background detail, unless otherwise noted, is informant "C."

2. Moses Chier Akuei, aged twenty-one or twenty-three, Bor Dinka, died on 22 September 1986 of an undisclosed illness or injury. Officially listed as an accidental death.

> That guy was actually a really tough guy. He was a football player and he had like surgery in his stomach when he was a child in Sudan, after he fell from a tree. He was playing all the time, competing against other African teams [on the Isle of Youth]. He was getting sick one day. They sent him to hospital, sent him back again. [At] two p.m. one afternoon they took him and we heard the next day he had died.

3. Ruben Majak Ler, aged twenty-three or twenty-four, Bor Dinka, died on 10 October 1987 from "*cirrosis Hepatitis*," caused by the chronic illness bilharzia.

> He died from bilharzia, stomach was big. He was sick all the time. He was my classmate. They take him to hospital, send him back to school. All the time he was sick. He finally died in hospital. I remember, one of those times they took him to hospital and two days later he died.

4. Shesi Archangelo Wanji, aged five or seven, from Equatoria, died on 15 October 1987 after being hit by a truck.

Wanji was not yet in primary school when she was sent to Cuba with her mother and two older brothers. She had just disembarked from a bus when she was struck by a passing truck. One of her brothers, who was also sent to Cuba, now lives in Toronto.

5. James Chol Joseph, aged fifteen or sixteen, Abyei Dinka, died on 30 October 1987 from chronic hepatitis.

> They took him to hospital and the next day he was dead. He was sick and they took him to hospital. Sometime we complain, sometime we suspect that there was kind of ... we thought sometime they [Cuban medical personnel] killed them for intention [on purpose]. Nobody wanted to give them good treatment.

6. Zachariah Ayik Guot, aged twenty-four, Bor Dinka, died on 27 January 1989 of a suspected brain haemorrhage.

> He was just like playing football and suddenly he felt very bad. he died on the way to hospital, brain haemorrhage.

7. William Deng Marol, aged nineteen, Bor Dinka, died on 23 April 1990 from unknown illness. Official cause listed as "*desconocida*" (unknown).

> People say he died of appendicitis. People said his intestine was twisted. The people even say he died in a bad way [in pain]. Nurses and doctors told him he was okay.

8. Garang Dit Garang, aged eighteen or twenty, Bor Dinka, died on 24 July 1990 after vehicle accident.

> You know, in summer, when they give us holidays, students sometimes go to work in grapefruit [plantations]. The truck comes but there was wood in the middle. The truck was very full, crowded, and then the truck left and the students were very crowded and the truck was turning and all the students fell out and he died in this accident.

9. Sunday Permena Majok, aged eighteen, Bor Dinka, raised in Bentiu, died on 7 August 1990 from "*pulmonar*," an undisclosed illness affecting the heart.

> They said his heart was growing and his chest was not capable. He died in Havana after a long time in hospital, almost one year in hospital.

10. Michael Deng Achek, fourteen or fifteen years old, Dinka Bor, murdered on 14 May 1991 by Namibian students in town of Gerona on the Isle of Youth. The official cause of death was "*lesiones cerebrales*," head wounds.

> [He died from] fighting between Sudanese and Namibians. The students all the time when they were hungry they went to go to town to buy something to eat. [They] fought in a town called Gerona [the capital of the Isle of Youth]. They [Namibians] hit him with a big stone, dropped from like four floors. At the time the fighting was really really tough. At that time there was just a few Sudanese in secondary [school]. All the others had gone on to other schooling. Sudanese, Angolans and Namibians [were all] in the same school. [They] killed him after he was injured.

11. "Tuot" Chang Kuoth Ret Lony, aged twenty-nine, Nuer, died on 14 February 1993 from "*intoxicacion Aguda*," acute alcohol poisoning. Tuot had graduated from economics college. One of two brothers from one family who died while in Cuba. A third, younger, brother was also sent to Cuba and is now living in Brooks, Alberta.

> He drank and fell asleep in the bed, in Havana.

12. Atak Alou Mabuoch, aged twenty-two, Aweil Dinka, died on 2 June 1993 after being struck by a bus.

> He was drunk and he was trying to cross the street [in Havana] and the bus came and knocked him down. He lost a lot of blood.

13. Mbali Benjamin Tera, aged fourteen or sixteen, a Moru from Equatoria, died on 3 October 1993 from drowning. He was the elder of two brothers sent to Cuba, both of whom died in accidents. Their father was Benjamin Tera, a prominent member of the Protestant church from Equatoria region. Tera lives in Ethiopia as a refugee, originally fleeing there in the mid-1980s.

> There was an irrigation pond, even crocodiles in it. [Mbali and a second student] tried to cross it, where other Sudanese were, an agricultural college. They made something like a boat. When they got into the middle of the lake that thing they make up to be a boat turned [over]. He didn't know how to swim. That guy [the survivor] almost became crazy trying to get help when he got out. All the students came to try to find the body. Seven days later the body came [was found] far away.

14. Anis Benjamin Tera, aged thirteen or fourteen, brother of Mbali Benjamin Tera who drowned in 1993, died in 1996 after being struck by a vehicle.

> Sometimes, one of the problems we had in Cuba, you know socialist countries, when you get a bus the bus gets crowded and some people get [hold on] outside the door. He fell out then and the bus passed over him.

15. John Taidor David Ret Lony, aged twenty-five, Nuer, died in 1997 after eight-year hospitalization following a 1989 fall from building.

> [He was the] brother of Chankuoth Ret Lony [the second son of one family to die while in Cuba]. He fell from the building, the fourth floor. He was walking outside on the ledge. He broke his back. He was in hospital ... in Havana from 1989 to 1997 [when he died], eight years. They tried to send him to Canada because he had family [here]. They tried to buy him the chair to walk. All the time he spent in hospital [he was] in bed, and finally he died. People said [that] because his body for a lot of time [was] in the bed [it] caused him something called *ulcera*. He was about fifteen or sixteen when he fell.

[He was taking a] shortcut to another building rather than go down and into another building.

—"C"

I remember that night. I was outside and there was an owl and it frightened me. You know, in south Sudan, we think the owl is unlucky. He was coming to play basketball with me when he fell.

—"P"

16. Archangelo Manut, aged twenty-eight or twenty-nine, from Tonj, Bahr el Ghazal, died in 1998 from appendicitis.

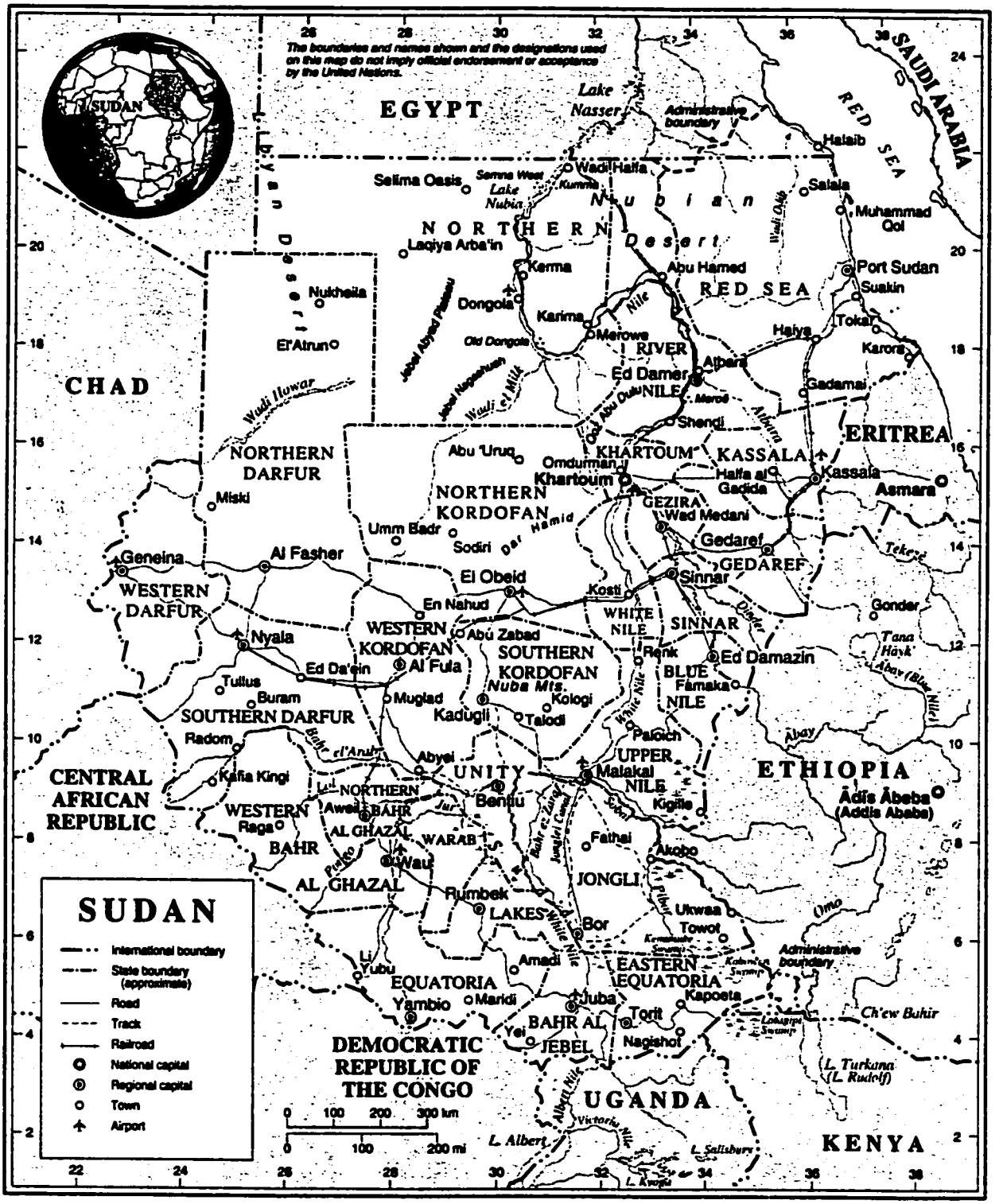
Archangelo was the last to die in Cuba. He was in university in veterinary [sciences at Iscan University in Havana]. He died in a very bad way [in pain]. We even tried to take them [Cubans] to court. He died in dormitory, in bed, after they sent him from hospital back to his bed. And they next day they just took the body from school.

—"C"

There was alcohol involved. He was in pain so he was drinking so he wouldn't feel the pain.

—"V"

Figure 1.


SUDAN
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
EGYPT
Lake Nasser
Administrative boundary
SAUDI ARABIA
RED SEA
Halaib
Wadi Halfa
Selima Oasis
Lake Nubia
Salala
Muhammad Qol
N U B I A N
N O R T H E R N D e s e r t
Laqiya Arba'in
Kerma
Abu Hamed
Port Sudan
Suakin
Nukheila
Dongola
Karima
Merowe
RIVER NILE
Tokar
Hayia
Karora
El'Atrun
Old Dongola
Jebel Abyad Plateau
Ed Damer
Atbara
Gadamai
CHAD
Wadi Howar
Jebel Nagashuan
Wadi el Milk
Shendi
ERITREA
NORTHERN DARFUR
Abu 'Uruq
KHARTOUM
KASSALA
Omdurman
Khartoum
Halfa al Gadida
Kassala
Asmara
Miski
NORTHERN KORDOFAN
GEZIRA
Wad Medani
Umm Badr
Sodiri
Dar Hamid
Gedaref
Tekeze
Geneina
Al Fasher
GEDAREF
Sinnar
El Obeid
WESTERN DARFUR
Kosti
En Nahud
WHITE NILE
SINNAR
Gonder
Dinder
WESTERN KORDOFAN
Abú Zabad
SOUTHERN KORDOFAN
Nyala
Renk
Ed Damazin
Tana Hayk
Ed Da'ein
Al Fula
BLUE NILE
Famaka
Tullus
Buram
Muglad
Kologi
Nuba Mts.
SOUTHERN DARFUR
Kadugli
Talodi
Paloich
Radom
Bahr el'Arab
Abyei
UPPER NILE
Malakal
ETHIOPIA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
Kafia Kingi
UNITY
Bentiu
Kigille
Ādīs Ābeba (Addis Ababa)
NORTHERN BAHR AL GHAZAL
Aweil
WESTERN BAHR AL GHAZAL
Raga
WARAB
Fathai
Akobo
Wau
JONGLI
Rumbek
LAKES
Ukwaa
Bor
Towot
Amadi
EASTERN EQUATORIA
Administrative boundary
Yubu
EQUATORIA
Juba
Kapoeta
Yambio
Maridi
Torit
Ch'ew Buhir
BAHR AL JEBEL
Yei
Nagishot
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
UGANDA
L. Turkana (L. Rudolf)
L. Albert
L. Salisbury
KENYA
SUDAN
International boundary
State boundary (approximate)
Road
Track
Railroad
National capital
Regional capital
Town
Airport
0 100 200 300 km
0 100 200 mi
Map No. 3707 Rev. 5 UNITED NATIONS
September 2000
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Cartographic Section

Figure 2.