

Oil and water

Tomo Kriznar

*In memory of Peter Kogovsek,
my friend, a philanthropist, a native and a savage,
who 'went into the wilderness to fetch a rabbit
and out he drew a wild boar', as he always loved to say.*

Author's note

The material for this book has been accumulating over the past ten years. In the years after publishing my last book, *Nuba, the Pure People* (1999), I had aspired to write down my experience encouraging influential and powerful people of Europe and the United States to prevent the extermination of the Nuba people, 'the last natives' in Central Sudan. When the biggest adventures were nearing their end in 2003, promising a happy ending to my new book, it hit like a bolt from the blue – a new rebellion of the African natives in Sudan, this time in the western province of Darfur.

Metastases of that same cancer had spread faster than the endeavors of a few activists trying to remove the sick tissue of humanity.

For that reason my priorities changed, and in the following years produced documentaries (*Nuba -the Pure People*, *Nuba – Voices from the Other Side*, *Dar Fur – War for Water*), which put writing on the back burner. Documentaries can reach more people in less time. I had to try to create the critical mass needed to stop the warlords from sacrificing the most innocent of all at the altars of the world.

Meanwhile the metastases have gone completely wild. They are most fiercely expanding in places abundant with natural resources. They are killing everything that is genuine. Exterminating everything most precious.

Yes, momentarily we still have enough clean drinking water and healthy social tissue in Slovenia. That is exactly why I am certain we are facing the same cancer threat I am warning the world about.

This book is my attempt to draw the healthy cells away from fictitious computer games and attract them to participate in the reality show happening just beyond massively induced stupor, shared oblivion, collective indifference and general nihilistic state of depression.

The book is especially intended for readers under thirty-five who were left with nothing after the older generations had feasted themselves and therefore have the strongest motive to take action.

Tomo Kriznar
Naklo, September 11th, 2010

Part 1

Oil

Most important dates in the modern history of Sudan and Darfur 1978-1999

1978 – The American corporation Chevron finds oil in the region near Bentiu in southern Sudan. This causes geostrategic earth shake that pushes Sudan irreversibly over the brink of ruin. World's largest oil companies begin their horrific fight over Sudan's black gold.

1983 – A civil war between north and south breaks out, taking toll of 2 million lives in twenty years and forever changing the demographic map of the country as the 'Arabic North' attempts by all means necessary – even by ethnic cleansing – to eradicate Christian and animistic people of the south. Southern Sudan is one of the least evolved parts of the world, defended by *Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)*, lead by the legendary John Garang.

1983 – The then President Muhammad Ja'far Numeiri enforces Sharia Law in Sudan.

1985 – Following mass protests, Nurmeiri is deposed by a group of Sudan Army high-ranking officers who then establish a 'temporary' military authority.

1989 - Coup d'état lead by generals; a start of a dictatorship that seems to have no ending.

1993 – Omar al Bashir becomes President.

1998 – President of the United States Bill Clinton orders an attack on plants believed to produce chemical and biological weapons in Sudan. Missiles hit entirely 'innocent' pharmaceutical factory in the suburbs of Khartoum which causes strong anti-American reactions. At this time Osama bin Laden lives - and builds roads – in Sudan.

1999 – Sudan starts exporting oil. The tyranny over the threatened Nuba people living in the Nuba Mountains is at its worst.

Leni Riefenstahl, Pökingen, October 1999

She sat there on a large white sofa set over a magnificent white carpet, crossing her legs, rubbing thighs against each other in a coquettish manner. Her lips were red as strawberries, her hair a mix of gold and platinum, her eyelids purple and somewhat bluish at the sides. Her vivacious gestures and her mimicking were all in tune. If I hadn't been aware that the lady is ninety-seven years old, I would say she was flirting with me.

'What is happening to my Nubas?' she asked mournfully, wringing her hands. 'What happened to my Gabik? Where is my Massala now? What is Kaka doing?' she sobbed.

One eye was radiating with curiosity, the other sparkled with excitement. Each was looking in a different direction. Leni Riefenstahl was cross-eyed. How on earth did they manage to hide that fact on all the films and every photograph?

It was mid October at her home in Pökingen, a village resting by the Lake Starnberg about fifty kilometers south of Munich. I got her phone number from a friend Vito Babic, and he got it through an acquaintance at the Neue Slowenische Kunst who was then desperately trying to

interview the famous controversial German artist for some time. I had left at least ten polite messages on her answering machine but all to no affect. Finally as I was heading home from the Frankfurt Book Fair it came to me that I should add to my usual messages that I was bringing news from Kau, Niar and Fungor. These are the names of three places in the Nuba Mountains in Sudan where she took pictures in the sixties and seventies and published them in two large-sized books, '*The Last of the Nuba*' and '*People of Kau*'. Through doing that she successfully shocked not only the romantics attracted to Rousseau's myth of a good and noble savage but also the art world, affecting a whole line of artists from Pablo Picasso to Andy Warhol. When I dialed her number yet again her secretary answered and informed me excitedly that the madam was absolutely anxious to see me. She told me madam was in bed because she was very sick however she would get up immediately and get herself ready for my visit.

Steins of foaming beer, platefuls of pork sausages and sauerkraut, greasy steam permeating the air among the stained windows in a village inn where I asked for directions for the final part to my destination reminded me entirely of our local scene in Bohinj. Even the music was the same and a few tourists were there, too.

'A little further, beyond the poplars, behind the tall fence, on the edge of the village....' puffed up faces nodded after me exchanging meaningful looks.

I was welcomed into the house by her friend Horst Kettner who must have been half her age. He accepted my handshake somewhat reservedly and led me through the house that from the outside looked like a regular provincial home, into the living room. He did not sit down but instead positioned himself upright beside his '*protégée*' and immediately started to interpret. The first thing they both agreed on lying about was that Leni Riefenstahl could not speak English.

'They are dying!' I said straight out and with a raised tone. 'They are finished! If you do not respond at once and do something, they will be exterminated!'

She covered her mouth with a shaking hand and pretended as if she could not believe her ears. But hasn't she predicted in both her books that the culture of the Nuba people would not be able to survive as such?

'One of the survivors in Kauniar, a local man, told me that the main pogrom started with your El Kitab. In your books you portrayed the indigenous animists bare naked and of a kind that the Muslims in northern Sudan see as a national shame. When president Nimeiry honored you with Sudanese citizenship and a Sudanese passport for your merits in promoting Sudan, he also sent a death squad to the Nuba Mountains, executioners with a sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. Those who would not accept the Koran were systematically exterminated. All naked, all natural, all primal, all pagan, all symbiotic, all that co-existed symbiotically with Mother Nature, all had to die.'

She winced.

'In your book you wrote that in no other place or time had you been happier than amongst the Nubas; not even when you were one of the most powerful women in the world. If you truly love them, then for the love of God, help them now!'

I told her that my interest in the Nuba people started in 1980 when I first saw a photograph of the ash-covered winner of the famous Nuba arm wrestling competition sitting on the shoulders of his fellow man. The photograph was taken by a British colonial officer George Rodger right after the end of the Second World War. That same photograph was, as she revealed in her biography, the one that took her to Sudan, after she could not find any extras in the whole of East Africa to help her shoot a documentary on contemporary slaves.

Photo: If today cowboys would surround 250.000 Native Americans or Aborigines and banish them from their country, then send them to special camps and systematically exterminate all the rebels, the whole world would be on its feet in a matter of hours.

I put ten video tapes on the table. They were copies of recorded material of how they had exterminated native farmers. I recorded them illegally the summer before in the forbidden zone that no reporter succeeded entering since the beginning of the civil war in 1983. I described to her how the government army, various Arabic nomadic police groups and security agencies are systematically moving fifty Nuba tribes from their mountains to the deserts up north where they are dying of scarcity and homesickness. Those who would not surrender are besieged, starved, bombarded from the air or burnt with napalm. Those who survive are hunted for slaves: girls are recruited as mistresses, boys are used as janissaries, the old and 'useless' are simply killed. I lamented that nobody of any power or influence cares for the fortune of the most innocent people on the planet and that there are very few of us so privileged to be able to get to them, to know who they are and what they mean, to take responsibility and try to help them. Or we could just let these people wait out their final ruin as if they were from some other star. The campaign was initiated by Alex de Waal, a British organization African Rights activist who has been urging the world's spirit with his book *Facing Genocide: Nuba of Sudan* for the last two years. There to help him is an independent journalist Julie Flint with a BBC documentary *Sudan's Secret War*. Another activist is Arthur Howgh who secretly recorded an amazing documentary about life under the Arabic government forces, *The Kafi story*, but no television channel wants to show it, not even the film festivals on the topic of human rights. There is also Peter Moszinsky, a freelance reporter and consultant that no organization wants to listen to. We are all trying to support Suleiman Rahhal, a doctor in London, born in a chief Nuba family Kadugli. He has established a self help organization called *Nuba Survival*. But all European governments, even Scandinavian and the Big Brother government in Washington are apparently under the influence of oil lobbies that cooperate with Islamic fundamentalist authority in Khartoum in equipment supply for the pipeline which is being built by Chinese convicts. This promises more business in using the abundant oil reserves of the largest African country and thus all our efforts are more or less useless.

'We need you because, apparently, it is not enough to write intelligent letters to the bureaucrats in the UN. Nuba people need somebody with connections in Hollywood. They need maybe Spielberg, who can get every single person on the planet to feel like we all felt when that little Jewish girl in a red coat marched into a gas chamber in *Schindler's list*,' I got all heated up.
'We said: Nie wieder! Never again!' I practically yelled.

We know that in the City of Angels, the biggest pulpit in the world, names like Jodie Foster and Madonna stand in line for the part of Leni Riefenstahl in the movie about her five lives. The movie about her demonically attractive controversial persona should have her story end in the Nuba Mountains. It would be a happy end that would dive into the collective conscience of the whole humankind much like everything she had done in her life. This sort of archetype might give a nudge to the politicians, diplomats and government and non-government organizations to pull their heads out of the sand.

'If your love for Nubas is as true as you say it is then you must go to Sudan immediately.'

'Leni is too old and too sick to undertake such a journey,' Horst shook his head in disapproval, glancing repeatedly at his wrist watch. But his protégée had obviously forgotten about her thighs which have, as I had noticed, suddenly spread apart. She no longer felt like crying. She squinted this way and that and one could tell she was calculating something.

I took my bag and pulled out a copy of my last book, *Nuba, the Pure People*. I wrote her a dedication and signed it. I showed her the photographs and explained how easy it had been to get into the sealed zone with a plane, hired by the German Emergency Doctors (Kap Anamur), the only foreign organization that is helping two million Nuba people, the rebellions, with only one doctor, one female and one male nurse in the simplest of hospitals one could ever imagine. I also mentioned Father Kizit, the Italian missionary in Kenya, who does not bow to the Vatican nor to Rome and heads up to the mountains with stocks of salt, medicine, pencils and notebooks at least once a year. True, the Sudanese army tries to shoot down every plane, claiming that the enemies of Sudanese sovereignty are providing the rebels with guns but the two Moldavian pilots know their job well and, as they say, 'not every projectile hits the plane'. And even if that would have been her last destination... hasn't she, back in the seventies, chosen to be buried among the noble savages? If the rival of Eva Braun should die in the Nuba Mountains, the whole world would hear about the genocide over the innocent that very same day, I thought to myself. But I said:

'Go back to the mountains Leni and we your friends will do everything we can so the history will set you as a shining example to all lounge humanitarians worldwide.'

Three hours later Horst was still upright and I was still seated. Leni and I were sharing joyous reminiscences of the rituals the Nuba perform in gratitude of the first raindrops that announce the coming of the wet season and the ritual pleads for fertility. We spoke about happiness we witnessed when their seeds first sprouted and when the bellies of women, cows, goats and pigs started getting bigger. With sparkling eyes she assured me that she was also deeply touched by modesty, co-operation, unity and care for every person in the tribe, a quality that enabled the Nuba people to survive thousands of years in the most inhospitable of environments on the planet. We both agreed that we, the descendants of Mesopotamian civilization, are surely to go mad with ignorance and arrogance, competitive spirit, selfish individualism and cravings for material things in a very short time. On the contrary, the Nuba have kept their minds natural and it is the naturalness of the human spirit that can help defy Orwell's prophesies and artificialness, degenerateness and sickness of Huxley's *Brave New World*. The Nubas are the alternative to the havoc humanity is sliding into and they have what we are lacking most. In this rat race let us leave some of the Nuba culture as the seed for future generations.

When our conversation was at its most passionate, I suggested it might be best to kill four fifths of the human race. They care about nothing but 'wine, bread and circuses' and that holds true for my neighbors, acquaintances, most friends and family as well.

Afterwards some of my colleagues belittled me by saying how could I have ever associated with one of the most influential persons of nazistic establishment, accused by numerous critics of the former century that she had sold her talent to the pioneers of modern Hollywood and supermarket culture. But those were difficult times for the Nuba people. I would go with left wing and the right, with communists and the Vatican. I would go with Satan himself if it would help them. Leni was only the last in the long line of weighty people through whom I have tried to stop the extermination of the most innocent.

A moment came when I just wanted to push Horst away and hug that aged, fragile, vulnerable woman sitting before me. She was able to manipulate millions and was also manipulated herself when my entire family on my father's side was deported to Dachau and other concentration camps because they rebelled against fascism and Nazism. For a second there I felt such great compassion for her, such an immense mercy. Isn't there at least a shred of eugenics, racism and xenophobia in each and every one of us? The allies should hold their

tongues! Weren't they using and exterminating the 'savages' in their colonies even longer than the Germans? The Anglo-Saxons were still systematically performing genocide over the Australian Aborigines thirty years after the Second World War. The Francophones were involved in the slaughter of Tutsis in Rwanda only fifteen years ago. The Americans are butchering and killing people today and we can easily expect they will be doing so tomorrow if all of us, who believe in equality and cohabitation don't at last join our forces and make a stand against it.

'Nuba Mountains are the first green paradise south of Khartoum. Nuba Mountains are the first natural reservoir of rainwater outside the Sahara. War in the Nuba Mountains was started because of water,' I continued warily. 'I am a living witness to how traditional conflicts about access to water between native African farmers and Arabic nomadic immigrants are used by the Arabic government in Khartoum to cause the natives to flee well watered soils in a way that it supports the Arabic nomads called the mujahedeen, which means – holy warriors of the holy war against African pagans. I witnessed the establishment of mechanized plantations which yield more profit but also destroy the natural balance of the environment and more importantly drive the Nuba people from their land.'

They were both listening to me with caution.

'But when the Americans found oil in Sudan they offered their support to the Africans and instigate them against the Arabs. War for water continues into war for oil. The USA has supported the SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) since the beginning of 1983 that was four years after the American company Chevron found oil south of the demarcation line that divides northern and southern Sudan. The cowboys are responsible for the civil war in Sudan.'

'Nein! Nein! The Jews are to blame!' she exclaimed and instantly straightened her eyes. 'Die Juden! Die Juden!' she raised her index finger in admonition.

'It is not enough for them to control all the world's gold, they want to control all the oil too!' a voice of indignant Horst meddled in. 'All over eastern Europe, in Slovakia, Ukraine and in some countries of former Yugoslavia, Jews are buying redundant used weapons and shipping them in containers to black rebels in the southern Sudan. By supporting the rebels inside SPLA they are provoking the Arabs and destabilizing Sudan.'

'Then hit them back and return to the mountains and show the whole world who is driving black tribes away from oil fields and water sources,' I begged. 'Please, return to the Nuba Mountains, film everything, take photographs, show the famous Jewish Susan Sontag that you're not only concerned with Nazi aesthetics.'

'Susan Sontag? How can someone so intelligent say such foolish things about me? I am interested solely in art and beauty, only in what is wonderful. Politics I do not care about. I have nothing to do with politics. Look, you can see it here!' she added and took a copy of her book *Mein Afrika*.

On the first page she wrote: 'To Tomo Kriznar, who came to tell me about Nuba.'
I had apparently overstayed my visit; Horst was already standing at the door.

'I am going!' she absolutely unexpectedly informed me over the phone the week after. 'Our German ambassador is on very good terms with the Arabs in the Omar Bashir government. Our ambassador in Khartoum has promised me that he would personally organize a visit to the Nuba Mountains.'

'Sixteen thousand Mesakin Nubas in the Rekha village will dance in my welcome!' Leni was happy two weeks later. 'Ray Muller is also coming with us. He will make a new documentary about me.'

'Big mistake! Big mistake!' Julie Flint immediately protested in London.
'The Arabs in the Sudan government will create a perfect show for Leni who will then try to convince the whole world how happy the Arab-occupied Nuba families are. The Arabs will use Leni as propaganda how very well the Nubas who have let themselves be arabised by Islamic fundamentalists are doing.'

Leni had to be taken to the areas controlled by the Nuba rebels so that she could compare on which side the natives have more chance of survival in their indigenous coexistence with their environment. Then maybe she would start defending the Nubas and thus helping to preserve the ultimate human symbiosis I haven't seen coexist so naturally anywhere else in the world. But the legendary commandant of Nuba rebels Yousif Kuwa Makki who would most certainly succeed in winning over the famous German lady to side with those who are still fighting for righteousness, for the right to be Nuba, has been suffering from prostate cancer in Julie's apartment in London. The cancer has taken so much of his strength he was not able to convince his people on the field to get Leni through the tampon zone.

All of a sudden Leni had to be stopped immediately.

But in the first week of January 2000 Leni, Horst and Ray were already in Khartoum waiting only for their final official permit from the Sudanese Ministry of Interior. I called every day from a free phone in the editing room in the basement of the TV Slovenia building (Slovenian national broadcasting company), where we were working on my documentary, *Nuba, the Pure People*. I called Julia and Kuwa in London and Leni and her team in Khartoum trying to reach a compromise.

However both Leni and Kuwa persisted in their opinions.

'She will be cautioned once more, maybe twice – if she does not desist, she will have only herself to blame!' Yousif's voice warned over the phone.

On January 29th, 2000, Leni's team takes off in an old rented helicopter rising over Khartoum and heading towards Kadugli. When landing in the administrative centre of the Nuba Mountains their helicopter inclines so dangerously it punctures a tire.

The team has to hire a jeep in order to continue its way to Rekha 'peace camp'.

They are welcomed by Mesakin Nuba just as Leni predicted. There weren't exactly sixteen thousand of them but still enough to create an overwhelming tumult. Everyone wants to shake her hand and dance to her welcome and as tradition goes, invite her to their home hut among shooting nests and mine fields. She can only recognize a few old friends from the pictures she took on her earlier visits. But they are not at ease, they are tense, they are visibly frightened, obviously terrorized. What they see around them is phony. All of it, the village, the people and the animals. All that is left is designed exclusively for a well planned perception management, much like the political orgy at the Nuremberg stadium in 1934. Leni and her team are aware of the fact that the Mesakin Nuba at this 'peace camp' as they call the concentration camps on the government side of the mountains, are in truth, captives and hostages. Next she hears that one of her old Nuba friends had just been killed. A moment later the crowd is aloft with panic. The act of propaganda starts getting out of hand. Government security officers demand that the foreigners are instantly taken back to Khartoum. Twenty hours later a helicopter buzzes into Rekha village.

Only a few minutes after takeoff the flying ramshackle crashes to the ground from the altitude of fifty meters.

Leni slips back into consciousness in El Obeid hospital with a couple of broken ribs. Ray finds himself with a cracked pelvis bone.

Lokichogio, northern Kenya, May 2001

I couldn't sleep. Again I was tossing and turning all night. Once more my fears were creeping out from every corner of a simple round mud and straw hut. Old fears I am very familiar with and I know they come to greet me before every expedition. Also new fears, so mysterious and horrifying, that I could not tame them by any strength of reason.

I heard the call of muezzin and disentangled myself out of mosquito net. I slipped into my running shorts, hoisted a full sackcloth by the doorway with 'Present from the Americans' written on it and ran barefoot into the plain.

The last stars languished on the dark, velvet blue sky. Soft purple hue on the east side was promising another scorching day.

I dodged the puddles filled with black liquid manure, passed heaps of stinking waste in the yard of the shelter for landmine victims, where I was staying. It was my third week there, waiting in vain for a plane to take me to the besieged Nuba Mountains in the centre of Sudan. I let myself loose from the reins and started running towards the village. I ran along a high barbed wire fence with sturdily lined up Herculeses wearing UN, FWP and UNICEF shirts, then pass gigantic tents with food supplies and over to a green plain announcing the start of rainy season and thus the termination of all flights to the sealed mountains.

Meager, scabby dogs wildly scampering after my bare feet were the only souls on the narrow paths among tukuls (traditional huts) in such early morning hours. Through the windows with no windowpanes I could see crumpled flat nosed faces of men and women rising from their simple beds. Apparently they moved here to the border line from the equator highlands. Stout Kiku's and fat Kambas were yawning, stretching and scratching themselves.

That morning in the start of June 2001, the Lokichogio hamlet by the Sudanese border in northern Kenya was waking up late, same as every time it is faced with bad news. Bad news in Lokichogio actually means good news. The bad news is that the Arab government in Khartoum and the African SPLA rebels from south Sudan did not achieve truce at peace negotiations in Nairobi and war will continue. But that in Lokichogio is good news because it means that jobs in one of the western humanitarian organizations that supply relief to the victims of the longest African civil war in the south of Sudan, are not threatened. On a day like that bars and clubs come to life, on the night like that people drink and dance and have sex and enjoy themselves till the break of dawn.

It was only amongst the concrete cells on the main street that I have surprised the first Somalian Muslim merchant. A little further on a man gazed after me like a face from a holy Coptic picture. Even the Indian and Pakistani tradesmen saw me as an alien in their local scene. White people don't jog around so far north in Kenya.

Farangi, as they call Europeans and Americans in Swahili, are quartered behind tall fences of non-government humanitarian organizations and guarded with guns. One can only see them in the daylight, never at night, in the early morning and late afternoon when the broiling heat ceases, when they rush to the plane on the ready for them on the runway in their luxurious landrovers with long radio antennas and when they return to their fenced haven.

After that, in a blink of an eye, everything foreign and artificial is left behind me - savanna opened herself before me. It had turned green over night after the first rainfall in nine months when there wasn't a drop of water from the sky. Now she was soft, willing and sweet smelling and she let me inside her like a wife who is ready to make love. Tiny golden flowers were smiling among droplets of morning dew on green hairy grasses as far as my eye could see. Sharp acacia thorns that were tearing skin to the bone only a week before was now hidden

under gentle flower cups. Their smell of vaginal juices and sperm attracted endless insects, bugs, spiders and dragon flies that were being born out of wet mud under rotting stumps, right in front of my eyes, immediately rising in the air, crawling about and marching around to accomplish their sacred mission. Everything was abuzz, fiddling and chirping, rejoicing and celebrating like there was a whole new creation arising that day.

Right in front of me an enormous ostrich leapt out of his hideout in a gigantic termite's nest and bravely made a dash at the bluish mountains beyond the horizon. Without even the slightest effort I ran after him until I forgot to lift my legs in amazement - oblique rays of sun made the colorful sands sparkle so iridescently it seemed like the whole country was covered in jewels. I dropped to my knees touching it, picking it up and feeling it like a child. Some tiny stones reminded me of Australian opals, others of Guyanese agates, and some looked like Indian amethysts. I was smelling them, placing them on my tongue, listening to them.

One of them appeared especially noble. Iridescent with blue, ocher, lilac and purple shades, it began to form most precious images strangely familiar to my heart. The longer I gazed at them enchanted by their magic the more the images became reminiscent of home. I started recognizing features and very soon I caught a glimpse of my daughter's face. She wasn't even a year old.

'Alas, Maja!'

'I deserted you. I left you and your mummy and came here.'

'Oh, Maja!'

There it was and I could not escape it. It caught me. Wherever I turned, whichever way I wanted to run it was after me, goggling from every corner of the round horizon, now also in the daylight. The same old fear that was haunting me in the dark of night.

'But Maja, I didn't know what else to do. The whole year since my last return from the Nuba Mountains I was so torn inside. I wished more than anything to live a normal life with you and your mother – but at the same time I felt such an urge to come back here. Two forces like two infinitely mighty willpowers pulling me each in opposite directions, each to its own side...

I grabbed a stone and drew a line in the sand and rounded it up to a full circle. I sat in the centre of it and crossed my legs to position myself in yogic asana. I closed my eyes and tried to focus solely on my breathing.

Inhale – exhale. Inhale – exhale.

I couldn't do it.

I didn't feel serenity, I felt my body rocking. It was leaning back and forth, back and forth, very gently at first then more and more vigorously. Somewhat like the distressed mountain gorillas Diane Fossey looked after in the Rwandan jungle.

My body did not rock by my will. Something was rocking it. And that something wasn't me.

It was the stone bed under me. The abundant Earth was rolling me. My body was being massaged and softened by my mother.

Rupert Neudeck

It was his grey, nearly white beard, lean bony figure, his brisk gestures and benevolent look in his eyes that hadn't changed since I last saw it in the German national television documentary, that gave him away. I was sitting in the shade in a pub garden at the Norwegian People Aid camp near the border between Kenya and Sudan. I was massaging my neck that was swollen from the heat and again feeling dangerously tempted to leave and go straight home, when suddenly I saw him coming straight across the dance floor.

'Herr Rupert Neudeck, I suppose,' I leaped from my chair.

'From Slovenia?' smiled the hale sixty-year old. 'That new little country that fell blessed on its knees because it was on its soil that Bush and Putin met for the very first time? Did you really clear out the whole city in their honor last week?'

I started defending myself saying that the presidents met there by mistake since they had confused Slovenia for Slovakia. I then immediately boasted that Slovenia used that opportunity to show itself as a world scale humanitarian super power. Twenty one eminent Slovenians had signed a petition demanding the two administrative masters of the world devote some of their time, aside from the issue of atomic shield protection from Iranian and Chinese bombs, to the genocide the innocent natives in the Nuba Mountains and central Sudan are facing. The petition was signed by academic intellectuals as well as reputable journalists and artists, including the most prominent of statesmen, heads of parliament and the Slovenian archbishop at the head.

'Is that why no media would mention the country or the city of their meeting anymore?' he shoved the latest Newsweek and Times right under my nose.

I skimmed both articles and realized that there was actually nothing in there about Ljubljana and Slovenia.'

'People who own the media collaborate with people who own oil lobbies and they immediately sabotage any initiative that would allow for the great shame to come out,' said Rupert, shaking his thought absorbed head. 'They are all in it together. They are organized. Birds of a feather flock together.'

I had the privilege to sit at the table with the leader of the German non-government organization, the German Emergency Doctors, known in its country as Kap Anamur. That was the name of the first ship which the German hippies, that had suddenly stopped smoking pot on the beaches of Thailand and put their words into action, used to save 'the people from the boats' as the Vietnamese were called back then. They were massively fleeing from American and later, after the victory, also communistic violence in their fragile vessels. Rupert Neudeck bought the ship on his own initiative with the contributions that have poured into a special bank account in one single night after his appearance on German national television, where he informed the audience about the desperate struggle of refugee families for survival that were being hunted by local sea pirates and blood thirsty sharks.

'I wouldn't be doing what I am doing if I wasn't a leftist,' he scratched his head answering my question about who he is working for. 'However I cannot agree with all the mythology those left-wing extremists are making up,' he presented a copy of another magazine he brought tucked under his armpit.

On the front page of the New Internationalist spread a sea of black oil and aboriginal natives were melting in it alive while American, Chinese and European oil-sucking vampires were stretching out their bloody clutches.

'It looks like they don't care about the truth any more than the rightist at the Wall Street Journal or the extremists from Islamic fundamentalist groups,' he said.

'What is the truth then?'

'Look around you,' he shrugged his shoulders. 'The truth lies bare naked here in Africa.'

Three years before in 1998, when I first visited the rebels, German Emergency Doctors were the only foreign organization I came across that was helping the families in the Nuba Mountains already besieged and enveloped for over ten years. Of all that are bound by their statute to help the most threatened, the young Germans were the only ones risking their lives and giving themselves to the victims as an example of the finest European humanitarianism.

The name Rupert Neudeck first rang in my ears when it was shouted through a radio connection by one of four team members responsible for logistics, Roberto Vilone. He wanted Rupert to send already, for the love of god, twenty five thousand square meters of plastic

sheets so he could cover the only landing strip that was not occupied by government forces and thus keeping it dry in the rainy season that had just started.

That was two months after I had done everything I could to smuggle myself to the Nuba Mountains by bicycle through war zone declared by Sudanese government military which no observer, reporter nor humanitarian organization was allowed to cross. Sudanese Arabs were performing ethnic and cultural cleansing of the natives in the Nuba Mountains for already a full decade and they were doing so under the pretence that the naked savages are attacking their installations, much like the Indians were attacking trains in the Wild West. The naked people in the Nuba Mountains are, like those in the south of Sudan, a remnant of the past and such an awful disgrace that they had to be approached with the Koran in one hand and Kalashnikov in the other and forcefully dressed, muslimized and arabised. In four months of illegal cycling I was arrested five times, but released each time after a maximum of four days. But they wouldn't let me go until the military intelligence agents tried to infuse me with their propaganda that the extermination of the naked savages in the mountains is an absolute necessity if Sudan is to develop into a modern prosperous country like United Arab Emirates and United States of America.

The longer I pushed my bicycle across the forbidden lands, the more I spoke to different officers, the clearer I saw that in Sudanese civil war it was not so much about ethnic, cultural and religious conflicts between the Muslim Arabs in the north and Christian Africans in the south, as media was reporting to its followers in Europe and the USA, nor was it much about freeing the south from traditional slave hunters from the north. It wasn't about any of that anymore. It was only about oil.

Why I wanted to get, by all means necessary, to the Sudanese rebels in the Nuba Mountains three years ago, was because I wanted to see for myself what had happened to my friends in the Mesakin Quisar tribe whom I first met as a student in 1980. I wanted to see if it was true that the UN Unicef and the World Food Programme are involved in the extermination of the last naked pagans in the Nuba Mountains, together with the Sudanese government, like Alex de Waal from the African Rights organization, stated in his book. But what worried me most was Peter Werney's information in the book '*Oil and Conflict in Sudan*' according to which the Sudanese government was using the instruments otherwise designed by western companies for the protection of their workers on their oil franchises to systematically gunning the natives from their helicopters. Not only the American companies but also European multinational corporations were allegedly involved in those deals, including those from the most social Scandinavian countries like Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

That was the time just after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Soviet Union was on its knees, the Americans had stopped wanting to control every African country, every single mine and every potential worker and soldier only so that he would not fall into the hands of communists. They left the people of the oldest cultures on earth at the mercy of Asian Arabs that had been slave-hunting Africans for centuries. And to the new Asians, the Chinese, who instantly started to use the newly formed vacuum for strategic conquest of natural resources. I found the Nuba Mountains sealed and the natives transferred to the deserts up north. Those who wouldn't surrender were surrounded and condemned to slowly dry up away from the new pipeline, installed through the Nuba Mountains by the Chinese convicts, and be systematically exterminated on land and from the air.

Roberto died a week later of a viral lung disease he supposedly caught while rummaging around cluster bomb oddments. The plastic sheets never arrived because the entire team left the mountains in a light aircraft together with Roberto's body. So there I was alone with over two million African souls left in the arms of fate till the end of rainy days. Cluster bombs from Russian antonovs were dropping on villages I walked around in August and September 1998

like government spies were bringing news to government garrison posts under the mountains. The bombs were an unmistakable message that I, being the sole foreign witness, should immediately clear off from the mountains. They may not be able to destroy me, but they can easily kill the innocent Nuba children, women and elders; I should come to my senses eventually.

Roberto Vilone was right on the money, saying that the presence of a foreign reporter is surely to bring Nuba their death. But I couldn't know that that first evening in the mountains when he scolded me, called me an adventurer and a profiteer. It didn't come to me as such even, on the second day after I landed with a German teacher, another German member's girlfriend, a midwife and a lady doctor I accidentally ran into on the main street in Lokichogio. She trusted me blindly and got me on the plane. We did not land empty handed. We brought three tons of German equipment for a simple hospital unit and a hundred kilograms of meds from Slovenian pharmaceutical companies Lek, Krka and Kemofarmacija collected by my friends back home. I was interviewing the representative of the Nuba self-help organization that noon when we heard a government bomber and that ominous whistling sound of falling death that had changed my life forever.

I didn't realize it even after me and my new Nuba friends were picking up the pieces of explosion-torn children with our bare hands trying to sort them and match them with the appurtenant tiny corpse.

It was not until I returned home that it hit me how terribly wrong everything was going. It was when Barbara told me that Robert's wife sent her my letter from Venice, the letter I wrote to her that evening we buried a few small heaps of torn remains of four children and two women. I gave the letter to Robert before I headed off to the unknown with Nuba soldiers. Just in case. Just in case because I believed the letter would reach Barbara sooner and more certainly if it was with Robert. After his death the rest of the German team evacuated all his belongings and therefore the letter had indeed reached Barbara sooner than I did.

How very wrong everything was going, dawned on me when Barbara ignored my letter that came with Robert's body and was exclusively concerned about whether or not she could hear on the tape I had sent with the letter and on which I was lamenting how I was missing her, also how I am at the same time making love to an African woman.

Rupert and I did not discuss my personal quandaries for the reason that they all seemed so utterly banal weighed against the accusations of several non-government organizations that he is responsible for Robert's death and that he is needlessly putting his team in danger.

We talked about Leni Riefenstahl.

We condemned her because in all her life and she died last year almost a hundred years old, she never, not once, in all her interviews in prestigious cosmopolitan magazines that praised her return to the Nuba people, praised her life force, her *Triumph des Willens* and wondered how nothing can destroy her and speculated whether Adolf Hitler had left her the secret of elixir vitae..., not once had she ever in any way disclosed that 'her Nubas' are victims of genocide.

'Die Juden! Die Juden!' I see her with a raised index finger. 'Jewish conspiracies are to blame for everything!'

Leni never accused the Arabs in Sudan for exterminating the Nuba people, the Ingassana people and other native African tribes because she believed until her last breath that the Jews are at the root of every single problem on this planet. She sided with the Arabs to her dying day because in her view the Arabs were also victims of the Jews. It is most likely not a coincidence that the Arabs on the Nile presented her with honorary citizenship and a Sudanese passport...

We talked about William Gaisler, the influential German statesmen in Kohl's political party, who after the passing of Leni Riefenstahl last year, responded in action and accompanied by

Rupert, without a Sudanese government permit, illegally visited the Nuba Mountains and saw with his own eyes in what circumstances our friend Roberto Vilone died. When he returned home he did what we forever expected Leni to do. In the most-watched ZDF's television talk show he phoned in front of the German audience the president's palace in Khartoum and told them that he was there and saw the whole thing and then threatened the Sudanese government with diplomatic excommunication and abolishment of German aid if they did not immediately stop exterminating the innocent African children and women.

We talked about Franco Jurij, the state secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who managed to convince the UN Commission on Human Rights to finally start dealing with the genocide over Nuba people. Slovenian initiative for sending international observers was first backed by Scandinavian countries and later also by the European Union.

We talked about the head chief of Ljubljana's Caritas, Stane Kerin who last year together with the Italian missionary in Kenya, Kizit, and the American Comboni missionary Paul visited the Nuba Mountains bringing humanitarian aid and reassuring the natives that they are not outcasts and that they are, despite all the horrors, still people.

We talked about the Slovenian director Maja Weiss and her sister, producer Ida Weiss, and Zvone Judež, TV Slovenia and the documentary '*Nuba, the Pure People*' which earned us the honorable prize for best documentary at the film festival in Teluride, Colorado and drew the attention of the National Geographic that immediately offered to produce a new documentary. Their team wanted to come with me which I kindly refused as I could not vouch for their safety. Everything I can get on film we will edit in Washington and make a new documentary that is supposed to be promoted by Hillary Clinton in person. The Americans will protect the Nuba people at least as much as they are protecting sharks...

'I knew people from the Balkans would eventually show they don't care only about their own arses,' he continued reassuringly but then became really earnest:

'During last offensives the rebels lost one third of their land. It is impossible to get a plane. All the pilots say the government dogs will shoot us down!'

So it is all true.

He confided in me that last week, just in case the government side manages to repress the last rebellion in the mountains, he flew to Khartoum and prepared the ground for negotiations. He requested to meet with the interior minister, admitted that his humanitarian organization operates a hospital in the forbidden zone and asked that his fellow activists – in case they are captured – are not too maltreated.

'You won't believe this but the minister cried,' he drew to a close. 'He was so touched he cried. But that, my friend, is no guarantee. We have to get my people out a.s.a.p. It doesn't matter what it costs!'

A very ordinary trip to the other side

That evening a young Turkana fellow who offered me some chewing Khat on the main street told me that there is a compatriot of mine staying at Kate Camp, a UN aircraft maintenance guy from Slovenia. I went to see who it was by impulse and so I met Milan, a.k.a. Monkey, a chubby-legged, fat-bellied, slightly flushed Serb in his prime. We sat down by the pool, ordered a beer with an elephant on the label, turning away child prostitutes and regularly exchanged distrustful glances.

It took three rounds of beer to untie our tongues. He bragged about working all over Africa for various white masters at various times. He spoke with exuberance about war in Angola, Mozambique, Congo, Sierra Leone and Liberia and showed absolute excitement about how

much money a man could earn and save in those days and how much he was able to send home and build his own house and show off before his neighbors...

'Well, it's all in ruins now!' he skipped straight to NATO's bombardment of Yugoslavia. The Anglo-Saxon Jewish connection hit them right in the balls. Many Serbian boys have testicular cancer thanks to their uranium rich bombs. Milan's nephew too lost his young scrotum.

I asked him if he could find a plane but not until I had skulled my sixth beer. 'It can be any plane. Price is not important.'

He started scratching his head and wondering why the hell a person of normal mind would want to fly to the Nuba Mountains. His fellow pilots are steering Russian Antonovs on both sides of the front: one time they are carrying food and another aid from Loki and at other times they fly bombs from Khartoum and El Obeid. It's an excellent business. He knows everybody and he knows it can be done but he does not understand why anyone would take the risk and fly to a place everyone knows will be war torn any moment and that the Nubas cannot be helped and that I or Rupert trying to help will be as efficient as a wooden stove. Nubas are the least evolved and the most primitive of all people and if they are not able to adapt that means that god did not give them enough brains. Such people are doomed to extinction. That is the law of nature.

Africans are the least important figureheads on the chessboard and no more than regular slaves. They were slaves throughout history and now their situation is no different. They are the cheapest military slaves. To have the cheapest soldiers is an advantage like having the cheapest workers. Look how well the Chinese are doing. If you recruit a black man in America it costs a few thousand dollars a month. If he gets killed, his death will cost you a few additional ten thousand dollars. To recruit a soldier in Africa costs nothing, if he dies it costs nothing. All you have to do is convince a native that he would be fighting for his family, for his clan, for his tribe and then you can do with him what you will. His poverty is your benefit. His ignorance is your benefit. Ignorance can be used for profit and that is what they are doing. The Jews are doing it, the Anglo-Saxons are doing it and so are the Chinese, the Russians and others who are fighting for military control over natural resources in Africa. That is all that matters, anything else is purely trivial and there is nothing one can do about it.

When we guzzled down our ninth beer, a Ukrainian colleague joined our party and told us on his own accord that it is not true that nobody flies to those mountains. Only a week before he flew there himself every day for SPLA, sometimes even twice a day.

I gaped at his words! That could only have meant one thing and that one thing was that they were carrying weapons to the Nuba Mountains as well. That had never happened before. All the weapons I found there a year before were old, battered and apparently confiscated from the government military.

There was obviously a new force operating in the Nuba Mountains.

'Milan! Do you dare risk it or don't you? Do you have the balls for it or have you lost them, too?' I asked.

'I do!' he prided himself with a bottle in his hand.

The plane was so tiny that when Rupert and I were boarded they could not squeeze more than five hundred kilograms of German meds in the remaining space. Milan was nowhere in sight. The Ukrainian pilot's face was even more puffed up and he was still staggering around somewhat.

We took off before dawn, that way we evaded mandatory registration at the Operation Lifeline Sudan office. OLS is an umbrella organization most of the largest non-government

organizations joined under in the last years. United in notorious and gigantic humanitarian action of all times with a budget of two billion dollars annually, they are providing for the civilians living in places controlled by the Sudan People Liberation Army in the south of Sudan. The entire umbrella is run by Unicef, a UN organization that prides itself with a statute bounded by an oath to give help to the children who need it most, i.e. to the most threatened children on the planet. Well, since the outbreak of war in 1986 the most threatened children on the planet have been living on the front line between government forces on the north and the rebels in the south in the besieged Nuba Mountains, where it is impossible to flee to safer neighboring countries like Kenya, Ethiopia or Uganda. Only Unicef however, still hasn't managed to obtain since June 2001, the permission from the Sudanese government to fly to the Nuba Mountains as it had managed to do so for other locations in Sudan. Unicef somehow failed despite all the criticism of us activists who have visited the mountains regularly and thus proving it can be done. After I personally exerted pressure in Slovenian media, the Slovenia national Committee for Unicef responded with an invitation of the Unicef's Emergency Programmes Chief, Mr. Mohamed Mahyuba who was not able to explain to the press why a few volunteers like myself can reach the altar of the world and the well-paid UN officials cannot. He explained the politics of the UN, namely that they only cooperate with governments and not with suspicious rebels and if a government says NO, that for them clearly means NO. They are not allowed to convey their humanitarian aid for the Nuba people no place further than government camps for pacification of 'savage natives'. So they are doing that.

We flew over the Sudan border so low that the radar the Sudanese army installed a month before close to Juba and which the SPLA rebels hadn't yet managed to destroy, could not detect us.

With acacia canopies racing beneath us I remembered Stane Kerin, head chief of Ljubljana's Caritas. Stane was the first to respond to my reports about the hidden genocide which no one responsible for history repeating itself wanted to know about. He organized the collection of monetary aid at Christian establishments and it wasn't just about how much money he can get people to donate because they trust him. He was actually concerned where the money would end up so he personally wanted to accompany it to its final location. We hooked up with the Italian missionary in Nairobi, father Kizit, who I met two years before making my illegal visits to the forgotten altar of the world. Even though we come from different worlds, we accomplished everything we set out to do and gave a shining example to all who do nothing but vex each other in our little country. Immediately after our plane took off last year he opened the Bible and read and prayed for the most part of the three hour flight. If the government forces were to shoot us down he would not lie on my conscience since I am sure he would fly straight to heaven. Working with him was an entirely different experience from my collaboration with Unicef Slovenia which I had hoped would give its fullest support through campaigning and collecting donations. It turned out however, at the Gala concert in the Cankarjev Dom cultural centre in 1998 that they were above all trying to use me for piling donations which they later sent to the Unicef headquarters in New York. That would all be fine except the latter remitted the money not to the children in the besieged mountains but to the concentration camps for pacification of savages, where the Arabs first distributed the supplied aid to their clannish members scattered all over Sudan. The leftover crumbs they set as bait to the children of the 'savages' living in the mountains – the same children of the 'savages' they are perpetually bombarding from the air and attacking on land with the tactics of calculable selection. To their mind the prospect of survival and education is with those who surrender themselves to 'peace' camps. That would be the 'peace' camps where the entrapped boys are used as janissaries and trained to attack their relatives who still stand their ground in the

mountains, and the girls are recruited as mistresses for the Arab officers and utilized as new wombs for bearing Arab children.

The United Nations' bureaucracy is abusing, raping and killing!

Folded in two and jammed amid cardboard boxes Rupert was dozing the whole time and would only move when he got a fit of coughing from the cigarette smoke rolling profusely from the cockpit. The Ukrainian pilot was a chain smoker, looking back nervously every now and then and yelling and pointing to the ground but the plane was making such a din we could not understand him.

Another day was dawning. From one end of the horizon to the other the flat, grassy land with hardly any shrubs was passing sluggishly beneath us. There were no towns or roads, not even villages or hamlets to meet the eye. Nobody has ever invested in this part of the planet. The ancient Greeks who managed to get through here and marched on until they saw snow on the volcanic Ruwenzori Mountains and named them Mountains of the Moon for the unexpected glare, never returned to this place. The Arabs merely killed the elephants and filched their tusks. The British only concreted a few small bridges over the torrents on their Trans-African motorway. The monotonous burned crust of a planet was troubled only by the craters of exploding bombs filled with water glistening the same mirror image that was radiating from the heavens.

What happened to the nomad shepherds that tended their flocks here on the margin of the largest swamps by the Nile? Where are those tall, slender, long-legged naked Dinkas that were waving so kindly in my greeting in the rainy season of 1983, when I pushed my 49cc motorcycle on my way to Congo and onward, following the trails of slave hunters across Rwanda and Burundi all the way to Bagamoyo in Tanzania at the Indian Ocean coast? Covered in ash to protect themselves from mosquitoes they looked like ghosts from a parallel universe. The instant they spotted me they ran to meet me, waving at me to stop, wondering in amazement. They were inviting me to their humble yet always neatly swept yards, repeatedly offering me milk mixed with cow piss and blood. It was with them that I drank the most refreshing drinks, ate the most delicious of steaks, breathed with such ease and so deeply and slept and dreamed the most extraordinary dreams. The nudity was as easy for me to get used to as it is easy to get used to the nudity of cows. I got rid of the clothes myself. Why would I be running around dressed in a land of naked cows and naked people? I had finally comprehended that clothes do not make a man and neither does a Kalashnikov. When I returned home my perception of the naked nomads was naturally completely opposite to the opinion my mother had about them. Clothing was so important to her, she had always made me dress nicely when I was younger. She was so tyrannical about it that she blew me away in a totally contrary direction.

Two million of these nomad shepherds are now dead. Five million at least fled their homes. The civil war took them and killed them. The longest civil war in Africa.

Who is responsible?

An occurrence from 1979 resurfaced from my memory.

'We found oil in Sudan so we can now do anything!' a man with a thick Texas twang threw out his chest and pushed his hat on his forehead, revealing his red bull neck typical for a descendant of tomato pickers from southern US. 'We from the Chevron Company can now fuck any woman. We can now trade with alcohol. We can smoke bango in public!'

It was hot. It was so hot even the small flies flagged, the ones that in the south of Sudan by the Nile in the last month before the rains want to get into your eyes and suck the last remaining

moisture from their corners. Thirty years ago there were sufficient precipitation and nobody complained over climate change, nevertheless it was dry. It was so dry your heels cracked. 'Sudan is no longer Sudanese!' he added meaningfully. 'We are now in charge in Sudan. We can get you out of this shit before you know it. Just give me half an hour.'

I watched him march away, his arms akimbo, from a concrete cubical ramshackle where they were keeping me behind rusty bars at a police station in Bentu village, where I had been waiting for my trial together with three Nuer cow thieves for three days already. I couldn't help but admire his cowboy ease of motion with which he crossed the littered yard and kicked open the door into a freshly painted green colonial building. Chief Administrator of Bahr el Gazal province used to reside in it but now it has a new master, Mister Administrator provided by the Arabs in Khartoum. He can now flaunt around Bentu in the same uniform and even with the same ceremonial cane in his hand showing the residents who has the power in their country now.

I had no idea where he came from. He came rushing through the savannah in his terrain vehicle leaving behind a long tail of dust and he slammed on the brakes the moment he saw a white man experiencing unpleasant circumstances. For a second there I panicked that he wasn't real, that he was only produced by my feverish delusions. I actually had a pretty serious medical situation on my hands. I called the local doctor, a six and a half feet tall Dinka, a monkey and demanded that he returned to its tree and stay there for good. It happened in a collapsing structure once known as a colonial hospital and only after he wanted to take most of my money in exchange for four shots of chloroquine even though it was perfectly obvious to both of us that I had been showing no signs of malaria. Moreover, I saw him refusing to help a mother with a sick baby in her arms because she had no money. My liver had swelled up to the volume of a medium-sized papaya, my urine was a color of dark beer and the reflection of my corneas in the camera mirror seemed darker than my teeth. Choleric as I was I was much like nearly all white people you meet in Africa, so I escaped the smothering hall occupied by a few hundred sick people and their relatives who were camping at their bedsides and got out for some fresh air. I retreated to a distance no pair of eyes could seem me, took off my Arab jelabia and butt naked, like I habituated myself living among the last naked Nubas in the mountains where the local shamans sent me on my way saying they could not help me with their magic anymore, I sat in the darkness under the stars but no moonshine whatsoever. But the man came after me. He acted surprised and started giving me a hard time with his narrative about how he once landed in Belgrade on his flight to Moscow where he'd been studying and how he never saw a single Yugoslav bare naked at the airport. Therefore I have to be the worst Yugoslav of all. And then I lost it:

'You fucking monkey! Get the fuck back on your tree!'

He vanished and came back with his friend, the chief police officer of the district who was equally well fed. I repeated my words two more times, slowly, syllable by syllable and then added:

'Fuck off you arrogant bastards! You don't give a shit about what is happening to your people in the mountains right there!'

They couldn't believe their ears as well so they called a whole group of policemen with clubs and guns.

'He said that from this day forward no black man can go to the movies or even for some ice cream,' explained the chief police officer of the district. 'Well, say it again if you have the guts.' I said it again.

They took my stuff and took me too. They did it so carelessly it made my stomach turn. On the drive through plain sands toward the river I threw up from disgust. I was disgusted at the spoiled ignoramuses and at everything they were doing with themselves and their gift of life. I

heaved also from the horrors I had seen a week before in the Nuba Mountains which I had suppressed deeply into my subconscious.

A week before, on February 12th 1979, was my first time witnessing the outcome of a massacre of indigenous people of Sudan. The elderly from the Mesakin Quisar tribe led me across the hills and over the east side of the mountains where one could see all the way to the Nile at morning time. It was the day after. They showed me the burned down, pillaged and slaughtered Kaka village. I was the only foreigner counting chopped, burned and hyena gnawed corpses of children, women and men in all the various stages of decomposition. On February 11th 1979 in the difficult to access Kaka village where the greatest deserts and vastest marshes meet, more than a hundred locals died. They had been modestly living with the land for thousands of years and all they ever wished was to be left in peace. The naked survivors of the massacre told me that the village was bombarded from a plane high above coming from the north and were desperately asking me *why*. Apparently the Arabs did not come to collect the slaves this time. After they had, covered in my vomit, jumped out of the car while it was moving and I was driven on through the hollow land without a driver, they again caught up with me running and cursing loudly. They took control of the vehicle and drove straight to prison.

When the American came three days and an hour later I was indeed released to freedom.

The administrator organized a quick court and for a few hundred dollars that came out of a pocket of an American colony leader, saying that white people in Africa must help each other, he put an end to that blackmail session. For the next three days six Americans who also worked for Chevron offered me comfort and relief in air-conditioned containers of their oil corporation on the edge of Bentu. They arranged for their light aircraft to take me over the savannah of naked shepherds, where elephants were still grazing at that time and delivered me elegantly to the first proper hospital in Malakal by the Nile.

All six Chevron workers died five months later, on September 6th 1980.

When I got home I searched through national and foreign newspapers to get an answer for what the hell is happening in a friendly and nonaligned country of Sudan. The massacre of over a hundred civilians in the Kaka village was not registered anywhere and neither was the slaughter of the Chevron workers. I only found out about that twenty years later, in December 2006, two months after the attack on the USA, at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, where I was trying to persuade a Jewish organization to help the Nubas.

But what was documented in Yugoslav and European newspapers and in big letters too, was that the American Chevron found huge oil deposits in Bentu, five hundred kilometers south of the Nuba Mountains, and that Sudan will sooner or later transform from Arab granary to one of a leading oil exporting country

Sudanese sources are still firm in their belief that the Chevron workers were killed by savage black shepherds of the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk people. However, the educated sympathizers of the SLA (Sudan Liberation Army) rebels claim that the spear attack was arranged by the Arabs from the north as they wanted to get rid of foreigners and avail themselves exclusively with the newly found black gold.

Years later I got hold of a book written by a Sudanese professor, Dr. Samuel Bald who has fled to the USA. In his book he exposed the way the Khartoum authority enforced the rebellion of the Shilluk people from Fashoda which gave it an excuse to kill their last leader and forcefully reduce them to obedience.

Sudan is a country with the highest number of the most preserved indigenous cultures, dating back in times of our mutual incarnation two hundred thousand years ago, as the latest studies

of the human genome have confirmed. Sudan, the Arab country of a black man, is a place where one can best set out on a journey to the depths of the inner self, but is at the same time, because of the hidden war between China and the US for natural resources, also the least accessible. Peoples of Sudan, who could contribute invaluable to answering questions like who we are, where we come from and where we are heading, are being massively exterminated. Their knowledge would be at the very least of the same significance as newly discovered plants in tropical rain forests, are to the science of medicine. But they too are being destroyed by the cancerous urban greed.

North Sudan is a magnificent land of date palm oases in the upper Nile valley and extraordinary monuments the likes of those we visit in Egypt. The locals, dark-skinned Muslims, are incomparably more dignified and honorable than the Egyptians in general. No place else on this planet have I met more hospitable local people who would try so hard to please a foreign guest. What drew me to this country were the Sufis who gazed into the promising future with big healthy white smiles and talked eagerly about how they would grow a garden on the fertile soils between the two Niles and supply food for the whole Arab world. And their unusual serenity that reminded me of the people living in remote valleys of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the 1970's Sudan was like health to me. Running sores on my legs that got infected in the primeval forests of the Central African Empire and which no antibiotic would cure, healed on their own before I managed to limp from the airport to the Khartoum capital. Sudan should be discovered by some international organization for patients with depression, not by oil speculators.

'The time has come! Our sons have grown!' I remember an old teacher from Zande tribe saying to me on a boat in the middle of Nile marshes in the south of Sudan in 1983. 'It will be war!'

That boat was the last to sail on the White Nile River between Kosti and Juba to this day.

A month later, in August 1983, the SPLA rebels sank it.

They have been moving for as long as they can remember. Within living memory of their prophets they have been forever travelling like clouds, like those wonderful clouds. They have been wandering like the sun, the moon, the stars, the rains, the droughts. A life of a nomad is in their mind the only way of life worthy of a man. To settle and grow roots to them is to stagnate, to become stale like a swamp. Settling in one place to them is restlessness, misery and death. They don't care about comfort. Being in motion is in their blood just like their conviction that there's nothing better than taking care of cows, dwelling with cows, laying on cows and living of cows. They enjoy milk soured by cow piss more than white flour, white rice, white sugar, white salt or white towns. They have never invented anything like bricks and straight lines have been foreign to them to this day. Letters were never something of an interest to them and measure units were never adopted. The Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk and Anuak people and other tribes that tend their flocks in the vast savannas by the Nile in the south of Sudan, live by instinct and will always tell you with rapture that if you don't live from your heart you don't live at all.

Their culture is depicted on over ten thousand years old wall paintings in the Hoggar and Tassili mountains in mid Sahara. There they are together with wild animals, giraffes and antelopes that lived there until the climate change at the end of the last ice age. Depicted in motion they are blissfully chanting and dancing with spears in their hands, decorated with hairstyles, garters, tattoos and scars much like their contemporaries with Kalashnikovs today. For the city folks of the Mesopotamian civilization the nomad shepherds were merely dangerous savages, barbarians and people would do best to protect themselves against them with high city walls. He who is civilized lives in a city. He who is civilized conducts himself in a

bourgeois manner and resides within city walls. All those who stay outside in the wild are not people; they are savages and can be killed without any moral reservations. In his legacy, which we, the descendants of Mesopotamian-Egyptian-Greek civilization have embraced as our own, Aristotle wrote that some peoples are born to be slaves and the sooner they accept that fact the better. Since then, all who have found themselves outside city walls can be shamelessly hunted and used for free labor and casual sex and if they resist, they can be proclaimed as terrorists and exterminated. Our civilization started on the backs of captured slaves. The first written notes of a higher culture, that is now globalizing the last corners of the planet, are recorded numbers of captured and sold slaves, rather than some poetic overmuch of yearning for democracy and human rights. Nubia in the present-day north Sudan became an Egyptian colony sometime in the third millennium B.C. Ancient Egyptian word *nb* apparently meant both *gold* and *slave*. In the first millennium B.C. or so the Nubians supposedly used the dissensions in Egypt and ruled the entire Nile valley, from the Mediterranean and all the way to the Great Lakes of Uganda. The Holy Bible tells about a Kingdom of Kush and the capital Napata that is believed to be main centre of the ancient world. The Nubian kings and the lion god ruled Egypt for full four hundred years until the coming of Assyrians. Then they moved south and in the forests beyond great deserts they built a new capital Meroe. But the former glory was never to return. In the fourth century B.C. they were conquered by their rivals from the Christian Kingdom of Axum which lay on the territory of modern day Ethiopia. Christianized Nubians were holding back the Arab Muslim armies from advancing long after the latter have taken Egypt from the hands of the Byzantine Empire, until 1250 when Egypt fell under the rule of Mamluks and the Islam became a synonym for arabisation.

Islam was the tool the Arabs have used to penetrate into Sudan since the 13th century. However the moment the Mamluks' power began to dry up due to inner conflicts, two new kingdoms named Fur and Fung rose south of today's Khartoum. They flourished on taxes collected from the passing caravans. Fung was in charge of the Nile valley all the way to Ethiopia, and Fur controlled mountain passes in Jebel Marra in the west, which today are a part of Darfur.

But the vast marshes by the upper Nile have remained unchanged and still match the description of Roman expedition members the emperor Nero sent out in the year 60. For them it was an endless wet papyrus desert where everything ends. The flooded country alarmed them and reminded them of the remains of the chaotic birth waters for which they believed the world was created from. The report mentions the wildest of peoples and the wildest of cultures imagination can possibly produce.

Sudd, as the Arabs call the marshes by the Nile south of Nuba Mountains in central Sudan, had prevented the Muslim and Christian armies from advancing until 1840 when the Turkish king of Egypt Mohamed Ali cut his way through papyrus clogged canals and opened the south for the great invasion. The contact with the 19th century world was as disastrous for the natives as it was for the American Indians, Australian Aborigines or Arctic Inuits. The adventurous Arabs and Europeans went absolutely crazy having killed all those elephants and capturing all those slaves. Their ferocious greed burned down, slaughtered, hunted and raped everything that was running away across the desolated land, like thousands are dying today on the run from oil hunters. It was a fact then as it is now that the only way for them to survive and defend themselves was to find mountain protected places with water and fertile soils. In the Nuba Mountains, north of the marshes, on Ingassana Hills in the east and in Jebel Marra in Darfur in the west. In this way these mountain fortresses have preserved what was left of ancient cultures and human warmth from the times when people first became conscious of their own self.