

Forum

Sudan: 'Urgent help needed now'

We have just received a first-hand report from the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) concerning the emergency life and death situation in Sudan, Africa's largest land-mass nation. Hundreds of thousands of Sudanese children, women and men are facing death as a result of Sudan's terrible civil war compounded by

Pochala and Kapoeta as well as other relief centers in southern Sudan. For the record, the government of Sudan based at Khartoum in the north is controlled by Arab fundamentalists and military dictators. The southern region of Sudan is populated by indigenous Africans. The civil war is fueled by more than differences in race, reli-

items has been grossly inadequate. Othow stated, "A family of 5 to 10 persons now can only expect to get at best a few grams of sorghum when it is distributed and they will have to wait sometimes 3 to 4 days for the next distribution. It is a slow and awful process of unnecessary death and destruction."

The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association based in Washington, D.C. is now working with the Red Cross and other international agencies to develop a plan to resettle the returnees to safer areas in southern Sudan. Yet, past attempts to resettle returnees have been disrupted by the military junta in Khartoum. Othow stressed, "We hope the whole world will at least take note of the flagrant criminal acts being perpetrated by the government against the people of southern Sudan."

Othow witnessed the killing of innocent civilians in Kapoeta from bombings by the government. Othow explained that the foreign policy of the United States in the past has supported the various governments of Sudan and has not raised effectively the issue of human rights for the people of Sudan.

Othow emotionally sighed, "We appeal to you, especially the American citizens, to speak out and to put pressure on the junta in Sudan to stop killing innocent people. We appeal to you to help the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association to find the resources that are necessary for the rehabilitation and development of the returnees as they are resettled in their homes and villages."

If you wish to join us in helping the work of Paul Othow and the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association, you can contact them at SRRA, P.O. Box 27209.

The people of southern Sudan need our help and they need it now.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS JR.

widespread famine. This is an urgent plea for help.

We are grateful for the support many of you have given to peoples and struggles that we have endorsed in the past. Today, there is no greater human crisis in all of the world than the critical situation in Sudan. Many of the Sudanese who are at risk of immediate starvation are the thousands of persons who had taken refuge in Ethiopia from the war in Sudan but are now back inside of southern Sudan.

We spoke with Paul Anade Othow, a native of Sudan and coordinator of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association, who just returned from a trip to southern Sudan. The world media does not focus on Sudan, yet, mass killings and mass starvation is now the daily reality. According to Othow, Sudanese are now refugees in their own country. Those who have returned from Ethiopia are referred to as "returnees." It is an international outrage that the repressive government of Sudan has recently increased its attacks on villages and towns in southern Sudan where thousands of returnees have gathered to receive aid and relief.

Othow visited the towns of

region, and culture. This hideous onslaught is being waged by the government of Sudan against the people of Sudan for the control and exploitation of the vast mineral and oil resources of southern Sudan which has been estimated to be potentially Africa's largest oil reservoir.

Listen to the eyewitness report of Paul Othow: "In Pochala, I saw more than 140,000 returnees who had been refugees in Ethiopia and among them in one place called Gorkuo, I saw more than 9,000 unaccompanied children. The conditions there were very severe and appalling. There were almost no shelters for these people and most of all there was not enough food for them to eat."

Othow explained that the local people welcomed the returnees back to Sudan but the war has prevented the kind of sustained relief efforts that are necessary to save this mass of people from dying. In the towns of Nasir and Pokok, Othow saw 150,000 more Sudanese suffering from displacement and hunger.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been helpful, but the air dropping of food

It can happen here, believe it or not

Let's not celebrate too soon. Yes, David Duke lost the election in Louisiana. But the past Klan leader, neo-Nazi, preacher of racism and

for Duke. Those excuses won't wash. Every Duke voter knew that he still espouses racist beliefs. He was say-

wacky. If Duke wore his Klan hood and waved Mein Kampf at election rallies, he'd have been dismissed as a lunatic. But in his newly adopted guise as a populist conservative, he sounded like national leaders who for many years have been prattling about "welfare cheats," "forcing busing," "crime in the streets," and other code words.

The conventional explanation for Duke's political success is something called "middle class anger." I don't buy that.

Yes, the economic squeeze on working people sparked frustrations that find an outlet in anti-establishment candidates, but it's dangerous to ignore the purely racial aspects of what is, after all, a barely hidden appeal to racism.

We should recall Lyndon Johnson's explanation of the interaction between race and class in American history and politics: "If you can convince the lowest white man that he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you picking

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anti-Semitism got a clear majority of the votes cast by whites and galvanized the far right throughout the nation.

Duke has laid the groundwork for a future run at taking power in the state and the nation, wearing the mask of a friendlier, face-lifted fascism. So anyone who thinks that, as the old saying had it, "it can't happen here," is living in a fool's paradise.

The Duke vote forces us to confront the strength of American racism. We just can't ignore its appeal by making excuses about why so many white people voted

ing what he always said, just using sanitized language and a smoother style.

Not all of those Duke voters are necessarily racists, but they certainly are not sufficiently repelled by racism to reject it, and that is both sad and troubling.

We need to understand that the ease with which Duke can climb out of the sewers of the radical right to become a serious candidate is largely due to the way respectable political leaders have used code words to manipulate racial issues. Their rhetoric legitimizes people and positions once dismissed as

Haitian refugees face double standard

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." These are the words which supposedly define the immigration policy of this nation of settlers and immigrants. Having successfully seized this land from the indigenous people, however, the immigration policy of the United States has largely been guided by the goal of maintaining American as a white nation. The warm embrace of the Statue of Liberty, therefore, and the welcoming/processing center at Ellis Island were largely meant for Europeans.

Despite the fact that the population of various people of color is on the increase in the U.S., these increases in many instances are occurring in spite of U.S. immigration quotas not because of them. And Africans from the continent

and the Diaspora, black people, have faced the most restrictive immigration quotas. In a nation obsessed by race and plagued by racism, restricting the growth of the

How else does one account for the gross discrepancy between the U.S. acceptance of people fleeing political persecution in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Vietnam or



VANTAGE POINT

By RON DANIELS

black population has been and continues to be of great importance. Other people of color are far more likely to be accepted as immigrants to the U.S. than black people. The point is that there is a double standard. That double standard is currently victimizing Haitian refugees seeking to gain access to the U.S.

Cuba and the refusal to accept people fleeing persecution in Haiti? The U.S. admitted thousands of boat people from Vietnam and Cambodia after the Vietnam war and hundreds of thousands of refugees have been accepted from

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