



Obituary: Bill Henderson - John Hinnells

What can I say about Bill Henderson's role in SHAP? Quite simply I doubt if SHAP would have functioned had it not been for Bill Henderson's support and the money that he facilitated through the Spalding Trusts. In those early two years of SHAP there was very considerable opposition. Looking back now twenty years later, I think it was, in fact, a movement somewhat ahead of its day, and within academic circles there was considerable doubt, indeed straight opposition. I experienced quite a lot of that myself quite personally and directly, and when the times were bad Bill Henderson was a common voice of support. It was not only that he gave the pump priming money which facilitated the start of SHAP, which enabled us to have those early meetings, which in turn enabled us to cover teachers' costs which would not otherwise have been met; it was also that when the going became difficult for many of us as individuals, Bill Henderson was a constant voice of support and encouragement. More than once he took me aside in a room and said 'Keep at it; there are many of us around who believe you are doing the right thing, despite the opposition.'

Without the sort of personal encouragement, as well as the financial support, I think some of would have found it quite difficult in those early days to keep at it. I really feel quite strongly that the SHAP Working Party owes far more than it can ever imagine to Bill Henderson.

K D D Henderson – the Making of the Modern Sudan (1953)

'So far there is no history of the Sudan Political Service, never numbering more than 130 men on the ground and totalling fewer than four hundred in the whole of its recruiting lifetime (1899-1953)!

"So far" . . . but now, with the appearance of Set Under Authority, this comment at once becomes measurably less justified. For what K.D.D. Henderson - one-time Governor of Darfur, author of several standard books on the Sudan including the magisterial biography of [Sir Douglas Newbold](#), Civil Secretary 1939-1945, [The Making of the Modern Sudan](#) (1953), and who was still writing into his eighties fluently and accurately of the Service in which he himself spent twenty-seven-years - has done is to give us a major, authoritative and invaluable contribution towards the definitive history of what was arguably the most distinct and distinguished Service of them all.

This is not, nor does it set out to be, the history of the Sudan Political Service. But in its acknowledged objective of "putting on record what it was like to work as a British District Officer in the Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium between 1898 and 1956", it amply and admirably achieves exactly that. Through a comfortable blend of narrative, reflection and anecdote, drawing neatly from his own reminiscences as well as effectively from the important unpublished memoirs of his colleagues which were made available to him on their way to the Sudan Archive in the University of Durham, and with a minimum of



patriotic pomp and a maximum of modesty and unobtrusive expertise, Henderson has done for the Sudan Political Service what Mason did for the Indian Civil Service and what Heussler did for the Malayan Civil Service. In short, he has put his Service permanently on record.'

1926-1930	A.D.C. Wad Medani, Blue Nile Province,
1930-1936	A.D.C. En Nahud, Western Kordofan
1936-1938	D.C. Kosti, White Nile Province
1938-1944	D.A.C.S. (External), Civil Secretary's Office, Khartoum
1944-1945	D.C. Kassala Province (Sinkat)
1945-1946	Deputy Governor, Kassala
1946-1949	Assistant Civil Secretary, Political Section, Khartoum
1949-1953	Governor, Darfur Province of the Sudan

K. D. D. Henderson

Henderson, K.D.D.(Spring 1970). "The work of the Spalding Trust and the Union for the Study of the Great Religions". *World Faiths: Journal of the World Congress of Faiths* (No. 79): 1-6.