

SWISS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE FRIENDS OF  
SISTER

EMMANUELLE

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## LETTER TO THE FRIENDS OF SISTER EMMANUELLE

No. 79

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Dear Friends,

### NEWS FROM SUDAN

Our last newsletter summarised for you the first part of a report on a visit by our friends Mrs. Elisabeth Droz and Mr. and Mrs. Hoeffler to Sudan at the beginning of February this year. Since a number of our readers found this report most interesting and instructive, we are now presenting the second part.

*One day we saw the mobile clinic stationed at the entrance of the school. A kind Italian nun is looking after sick children. There is one young boy who has blood in his urine and the test carried out in the laboratory installed in the van-clinic confirms the presence of bilharziasis. The nun selects the appropriate medicine from a large wooden chest subdivided in several sections and, with a loving gesture, she comforts the child. For many years she has been caring for these school children and now, in two weeks' time, she will be moving elsewhere. One senses her regret but, as a faithful religious servant, she accepts her lot without complaint. She will continue to remember these children in her prayers. Hopefully the person who replaces her will be equally good and competent!*

*The Friday Clinic is located in a brick-built building in one of the schools at Hag Youssef. The playground of the school is deserted since Friday is a holiday. Doctors should also be on holiday on Fridays, but here are five doctors, one a beautiful, young Muslim woman, who are gladly giving up their day off to freely minister to the poor sick ones. What a gift of love, because there are masses of sick people. Most patients are women dressed in brightly coloured clothes with babies in their arms and other children at their feet. There are also old people filling the waiting room and spilling over into the playground. On arrival each person receives a number and waits his turn. Patients often have to wait several hours but they never manifest impatience. A lesson for we Europeans! The consulting room has a large table in the middle around which sit the five doctors each one looking after a mother*

*and child. Here is a baby crying: he wants to play with the doctor's stethoscope but the precious instrument is rescued from the child's grasp. A cut finger, infected eyes (a very common sight) consumption, etc. etc. So many sick people! What would happen to them without these doctors who demand no payment and the financial help we provide to obtain medicines? May God help us to continue our support to this important programme!*

*Afterwards, we visit the clinic of Dr. Abu. A likeable, young surgeon explains that the waiting time for treatment of women suffering from a fistula in the bladder has been reduced from three years to just two weeks. Dr. Abu, who established the clinic to perform this operation in Sudan, has now retired but he was able to train several surgeons who are now specialists and have taken over this work in a part of the hospital set aside and financed by Sister Emmanuelle. People now come here from all over Central Africa. In one ward there are 16 women who have just had their operation and in the next a similar number who are already back on their feet but have to stay under observation for two weeks before being discharged after a check up. A further check up has to take place six months after the operation. Since many women come from very far away they stay nearby sleeping in the hospital courtyard. (It is planned to build a house for these women to stay in if the money can be found). During their six-month stay the women are trained to be midwives so that, when they return home, they will be in a position to help other women to avoid succumbing to the ill effects of fistulas. That is a good way to utilise time!*

*One evening, as we are coming back from the desert, we come across a handicapped boy who has received a bicycle "i.e. a cart on wheels" from our Association. He is hitchhiking. We stop and Kamal and the driver hoist him on top of the car. He is very happy to have his difficult journey home shortened even though he manages very well with his new mode of transport which replaces his feet. It is certainly a good investment to provide these simple means of transport for the handicapped.*

*There are also other projects, for example the supplementary feeding programme for some 600 babies. We arrived just too late to see this in action. The last mothers were just leaving with their happy babies having just taken their fill. This supplementary food is vital to keep these children in good health.*

*We have the impression that Kamal's working day never ends. When he finally arrives home he still finds the energy to play with his grandchildren. There he is relaxed and happy. Not for long, however, there is already a telephone call or a knock on the door; someone needing his advice and he is always ready whether it is 6 o'clock in the morning or 11 o'clock at night to discuss and try to resolve problems. Kamal is the driving force behind the whole project and one could never thank him enough for all he does. We have to continue to do whatever is in our power to ease a little bit his almost super human task.*

*May GOD reward his efforts!*

We invite you to participate to our

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**on Monday 18 June 2001 at 8 p.m.**  
**at the Cercle de l'Espérance, rue de la Chapelle (Eaux Vives)**  
**in Geneva**

During this statutory meeting, we shall present the reports of our activities, financial reports and the Association's future projects. We shall also elect members of the Committee.

**Finally, we shall have the pleasure of having with us our representative in Khartoum, Kamal TADROS and Jean-Claude FRANCOIS from Haïti Cosmos**

We are looking forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to this meeting.

Michel Bittar  
President: