

«For a united, federal, democratic Sudan»

Interview with Col/Dr. John Garang, leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army and Movement (SPLA/SPLM)

How do you characterize the new regime in Sudan?

The new military regime in Khartoum has no real relation with the forces that brought down Numeiri: the SPLA, the workers, professionals, students and the traditional political parties. None of these are represented in the ruling Military Council which is the real power. Neither are most of these forces represented in the civilian cabinet of Al Jazoli Dafalla which is composed wholly from the professional unions and traditional political parties. These are uncontested facts. The new regime does not belong to those who suffered the most during Numeiri's 16 years of misrule, or who actually struggled to overthrow him. The new regime is therefore bound to be insensitive and intransigent.

In effect, it is the regime of the same generals who, until April 5th or even 6th, were still defending Numeiri and shooting down demonstrators who stormed Kober prison to release the prisoners. This is why we denounced the regime as neo-Numeirism, Numeiri's regime in a different form. Whatever clothes the hyena puts on, it remains a hyena.

What is Swaredahab's position on the problem in southern Sudan, and what are the aims of your struggle?

The regime never stopped fighting the SPLA even during the seven days of ceasefire which we declared. They attacked our forces in Farhala and Jehon. Then, especially after they announced their own unilateral ceasefire, they attacked our forces in Fangak. The regime is actually preparing for war not peace. All this talk about peace is only to deceive the Sudanese public and hoodwink international opinion. Until now, the regime has never sent a messenger or message to the SPLA. The generals base their policies on lies and wishful thinking, not on objective realities, in complete disregard of the Sudanese people.

As to Swaredahab's stand on the so-called Southern Question, you will have to ask him. Our view of the problem is clear in our manifesto: The SPLA/SPLM has long ago, in July 1983, rejected the thesis of the Question or Problem of Southern Sudan. It is the nationalities question that must be addressed in general. It is simply because the South took up arms, in 1955-77, that the nationalities problem has traditionally been identified with the South, but other nationalities or regions are also capable of taking up arms if no general solution is found.

In fact, the war in the South has effected other regions and nationalities in a major irreversible way. So there is a general demand for some form of regionalism for the West, East and North. This is a fact. So, if you solve the problem of southern Sudan even in what appears to be a satisfactory way, then you will soon after be faced with the problem of the Nuba Mountains, the Fur or the Beja, and the country will again be bogged down in civil war.

Hence, the SPLA/SPLM addresses the nationalities question in Sudan as a whole and proposes a comprehensive solution: a united, federal, democratic Sudan in which the federal states have real power, in the hands of the masses not the elitist intellectual bourgeoisie. The structure of the federal government would be shared in such a way that all the states effectively participate.

Why aren't you participating in the new cabinet?

It is not true that we refused to participate in the Military Council or in the civilian cabinet of Al Jazoli Dafalla. Nobody consulted the SPLA/SPLM. As usual things were determined in Khartoum, by Khartoum. The regime created a story that I was on my way to Khartoum, knowing that this could not and would not materialize. This was simply to deceive the public that the SPLA/SPLM had refused to participate. The strategy of the generals was to isolate the real forces that overthrew Numeiri. Jazoli's government is not really a government. It was a concoction of the generals to defuse tension in the streets and make people return to work. It has no powers whatsoever. Take foreign affairs as an example: It is the generals who are globetrotting, not the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. Jazoli's government should resign and leave the generals to run their show until the people run them out.

How can the generals' attempt to cool down the popular uprising be prevented?

The real issues that led to the popular uprising will continue to baffle the generals as they did Numeiri. The economy is in complete shambles and will continue to deteriorate under the plunder of the generals' neo-Numeirism. The national and religious questions will continue to haunt them. Given their narrow, sectarian outlook, they cannot come near to a correct analysis, let alone a solution. To be more concrete, the real guarantee that the generals will not succeed in hijacking the people's revolution is the SPLA. The SPLA is the dynamo of the popular uprising and will keep it aflame to burn down the new generals.

What really happened concerning Numeiri's allowing Sudan to be used for the transfer of Ethiopian Jews to Israel?

The Sudan Airways workers are best situated to expose this plot. They are doing this well and we appreciate their revolutionary stand. Numeiri's motive in this undertaking was most certainly financial. It is reported that more than 56 million dollars in bribes were paid to Numeiri and his immediate circle of officials. Such a giant project cannot be executed without the knowledge and explicit involvement of the ministry of defense. Civil aviation was under the ministry of defense at this time. And who was the minister of defense when the project was executed? Of course, the same generals who are now the government. The question is not whether, but how much some of them took of the 56 million dollars, and to what extent they participated in the plot. Numeiri and the present regime are inseparable. The generals cannot bring Numeiri to trial for this affair or for any of his hideous crimes because that would also incriminate them. Some window dressing can be made to hoodwink the public, but no real