

<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6100>



Sudan

Sudan at the Crossroads

- IV Online magazine - 2019 - IV533 - June 2019 -

Publication date: Sunday 2 June 2019

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

The great Sudanese revolution has arrived at the crossroads reached by every revolution in the modern era. Are the masses simply removing the head of the regime, or tearing it up by its roots?

The Sudanese people have fought a heroic battle since last December, losing dozens of martyrs in clashes on the streets with the militias of the dictator, Omar al-Bashir. Sudanese revolutionaries have organised huge marches, strikes and sit-ins. At the time of writing, these are continuing in front of the headquarters of the Sudanese Army in Khartoum, and outside army barracks in other provinces. Having forced the downfall of Omar al-Bashir on 11 April, the Sudanese people immediately brought down the head of the Transitional Military Council, Awad Ibn Auf, the next day.

Since Abdelfattah al-Burhan took over the presidency of the military council with his deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, Al-Bashir's generals are trying to divert the Sudanese revolution and empty it of any content in order to buy time to recover from the first blow that the revolutionaries have struck against the regime. The generals have not lost any time. They have been in constant contact with the counter-revolution forces in Cairo, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Manama. Gulf cash has begun to flow towards the military junta, and Egyptian dictator Abdelfattah al-Sisi is working hard to support the military council with intelligence and diplomacy.

The Gulf media are burnishing Hemideti's image on their screens, sending reassuring messages that the Sudanese army is continuing to take part in the aggression in Yemen.

Things are different in the streets. Sudanese revolutionaries organised two protests to the Egyptian embassy to denounce interference by al-Sisi and Egyptian intelligence services in Sudanese affairs. Banners opposing the Gulf states and their "aid" have proliferated, along with demands for the withdrawal of Sudanese troops from a war in Yemen which they have no interest in fighting.

What about the Sudanese Professionals Association and the Forces of the Declaration of Freedom and Change which have spearheaded the mobilisation? The leaders of the Sudanese opposition responded to the invitation by the military council to "negotiate" after the fall of al-Bashir and Ibn Auf. Conflicting accounts and leaks about differences with the military council emerged. Then came a call to escalate the sit-ins along with accusations that the military council was manoeuvring in order to try and retain sovereign powers. The opposition went back to the negotiating table again and revealed on 28 April the details of the dispute with the military council.

While the opposition is calling for a "civilian sovereign council", which would include all the current members of the military council (seven generals), alongside eight civilian members, this was rejected by the military council, which instead called for the addition of only three civilians.

In both cases, the civilian sovereign council would have a military president.

The low bar set by the opposition leaders in their demands sparked anger among many Sudanese revolutionaries, who expressed disappointment in the performance of the negotiators. There was widespread debate on social media, for example asking whether the reason for this complacency was the weakness of the negotiators.

However, the problem is not so much the personalities of the negotiators as the overall strategy of the opposition. By

agreeing to negotiate with Al-Bashir's generals, and allowing them to participate in the transition period, the leaders of the opposition are trying to reconcile the demands of the revolutionary street on the one hand, and the counter-revolutionary generals on the other. This strategy is suicidal for the revolution. Regardless of who the negotiators are, they will betray the hopes of the revolutionaries.

Sit-ins in the streets do not bring down regimes on their own, and the Sudanese Professionals Association has not seriously used general strikes as a weapon since the fall of al-Bashir. Meanwhile the wheel of exploitation continues to turn as revolutionaries gather in the squares to protest after the working day is done. A general strike is necessary to confront the military council while preserving the peaceful character of the movement. In some places, and without waiting for the invitation of the SPA, workers and civil servants are mobilising in their factories and offices to demand permanent contracts, independent unions and to kick their managers from the old regime out of their workplaces. We saw this happen in Egypt in 2011, when Islamists and liberals went on the attack saying "strikes are selfish, now is not the time for them!"

Yet these strikes are the beating heart of the revolution: escalating them into a general strike is a matter of life or death.

There is another challenge. With whom exactly in the military should revolutionaries negotiate? Who from the military should be allowed to take part in the transitional period? Al-Bashir's generals? Or the junior officers and the soldiers who rebelled against their commanders and fraternised in the streets with the revolutionaries?

The rebellion growing in the lower ranks of the officers and among soldiers was one of the main reasons for the junta's rush to get rid of Al Bashir, fearing the collapse of the army and the regime. These are the parts of the army that the revolutionaries should be seeking to negotiate and ally with, and whose participation they should be seeking.

Some may accuse the revolutionaries of trying to drag the country into a bloodbath. But the real bloodbath will be the inevitable blow by the generals against the revolution. Maintaining a peaceful revolution requires a quick move towards a general strike and an appeal to the lower ranks of the army to join it.

May 17 2019

[Revolutionary Socialists](#)

PS:

If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.