Sudan’s Revolution of 2019

written by Kevin B. Anderson | January 11, 2020

Sudan’s revolution is not only Arab but also African in a way not seen in the 2011 Arab uprisings. The old regime combined Islamism and a racist form of Arabism with military rule, touching off in response a youthful, democratic, multiethnic, and pro-feminist revolutionary movement that has achieved something akin to dual power. –Editors

The Sudanese uprising has unfolded in a slow, determined manner, beginning last December. By April it drove out Omar al-Bashir, who seized power three decades ago. Since April, the uprising has dug in in the face of armed repression and has forestalled repeated attempts to keep the Bashir regime in power under another name.

At the same time, the compromises the revolutionary leadership has made with the old regime risk the slow death of the movement through disillusionment of the base. So far, however, that mass base has remained patient and determined and it is the regime that has again and again been forced to concede ground. So deep and wide is the opposition to three decades of the Bashir regime that even the army and regime militias have shown for months some dissension within the ranks and parts of the officer corps as well, putting limits on the actions of their top commanders and threatening regime collapse. The result has been a stalemate, redolent of dual power. How long this situation can maintain itself remains to be seen.

But no matter the eventual result, we should not skip over the fact that the vast sit-in involving hundreds of thousands of people over seven weeks this spring showed a creative form of grass-roots democracy that offered an alternative to both nationalist authoritarianism and Islamism, currents that continue to hold great sway in the region. The Sudanese case is particularly interesting to study because the ideology of the Bashir regime comprised both Islamism and militarist nationalism. This meant that, in comparison to Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, or Libya in 2011, the Sudanese opposition developed in a manner independent of both of these forces of oppression. In contrast, the Egyptian movement overthrew Mubarak with the support of the Muslim Brotherhood, and then overthrew the Brotherhood’s Mohamed Morsi by calling on the nationalist military to do so, something that doomed the revolution and paved the way for the iron rule of General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. (This relative sophistication of the Sudanese opposition is analyzed in Gilbert Achcar’s acerbic “The Fall of Sudan’s ‘Morsisi’,” *Jacobin*, April 14, 2019.)

Sudan, Africa, and Arab World: A Distinctive Culture and History

By the time Sudan exploded, the Arab uprisings of 2011 seemed to have been extinguished. In Syria, the murderous Bashar al-Assad regime was inching toward victory over the insurgency, while Egypt seemed to be silent as a tomb under Sisi. But Sudan suggested that the people’s aspirations for freedom and liberation have only been driven underground.

As Karl Marx proclaimed in the wake of the defeat of the 1848 revolutions, a regional series of democratic revolutions often compared to the 2011 Arab revolutions, "The revolution is dead! Long live the revolution!"

The ferment in Sudan of December 2018 was followed in February by an equally massive people's uprising in Algeria. These two uprisings, both coming seemingly out of the blue, surely troubled the sleep of all rulers in the region. As of this writing, a major uprising has broken out in Lebanon, and Egypt also saw unrest in the streets. This fernent continues even as global and regional powers aim to carve up the region for their own exploitative and imperialist/subimperialist projects, as seen most tragically in how both the United States and Russia gave the green light to Turkish President Erdogan's invasion, repression, and attempts to ethnically "cleanse" the Kurdish-dominated autonomous regions of northern Syria.

But it would be wrong to place Sudan entirely in the context of the Arab world and its contradictions while failing to take account of the sub-Saharan African dimension as well.

Let us look for a moment at this factor and several others that give Sudanese politics and society a distinctive character, sometimes in contrast to other countries of the Middle East/North Africa region. First, Sudan is an Arab country with a much stronger African identity—despite denials from its military rulers—than its North African counterparts like Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, or Algeria. This means that events in Sudan have impacted—and been impacted by—not only the Arab world, but also sub-Saharan Africa in ways not experienced by the other Arab revolutions of 2011. The most visible indicator of this is seen in how Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali was able to mediate between the opposition and Bashir's successors among the top military leadership. Abiy Ahmed, the recipient of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, has roots in the predominantly Muslim Oromo community, Ethiopia's largest and long-oppressed ethnic group. Under his administration, which came to power in a shift at the top after years of unrest from below, the authoritarian political system has opened up and peace has been negotiated with neighboring Eritrea after decades of war and tension.

Waves emanating from these major changes across the border in Ethiopia surely impacted Sudan, which has been opening up economically to its neighbor to the southeast. In recent years, trade ties between Sudan and Ethiopia have increased markedly. Sudan is beginning to import electricity generated by dams in the Ethiopian highlands, on rivers that feed into the Nile. This has drawn Sudan closer to Ethiopia and also gotten the attention of Egypt, which is wary of any tampering with the flow of the Nile or its tributaries. At the same time, Sudan has in recent years become the largest investor in Ethiopia, besides China.

As the acclaimed Sudanese writer Jamal Moujib noted recently:

> At the edge of the Arab world, the country has always sought recognition. Its character is unique. Historical links tie us, ethnically and culturally, to our African neighbors to the south and the west. During the 1960s and 1970s, there were several attempts to define, via poetry, this singular cultural heritage, by drawing together these African and Arab elements. But this was generally forgotten in later times. Islam was always part of the culture, but only partially. The symbolism that emerged from the revolution has shown this clearly, making explicit reference to the country's pre-Islamic history and the matriarchal Nubian culture, personified by the figure of "Kandaka," the queen mother. All of this was incarnated in the image that went viral of a young woman, Alaa Salah, perched on a car and leading the chants at a protest
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> ("Pour éviter le désastre, le Soudan doit repartir de zéro," *Le Monde*, October 20-21,

2019).

The chant went as follows, with each line ending with the word "*Thawra* [Revolution]."

Their nonsense (Revolution)

They burned us in the name of religion (Revolution)

They killed us in the name of religion (Revolution)

They jailed us in the name of religion (Revolution)

Second, the Bashir regime committed outright genocide against some of its minority populations that had strong ties to Africa, in an effort to "Arabize" the country. The genocidal wars carried out by Bashir and most of his predecessors in the 1970s-1990s targeted the largely non-Muslim African population of what is today South Sudan, which broke away to form an independent country in 2011. (That oil-rich new nation has been stillborn, amid horrific warlordist fighting among its political leadership.) During the long years of Sudan's war against the South, some two million died as a result of murder and famine, amid mass enslavement and rape of the southern population. Later, in the first decade of this century, the Bashir regime also committed genocide against the predominantly Muslim but non-Arab population of the Darfur region, which had dared to mount resistance against its racialized second-class status. Bashir subcontracted the repression to the brutal Janjaweed militias, which financed themselves from pillage while committing mass rape and murder, with the death toll estimated at up to 400,000 people. During those same years, the regime also attacked the Nuba peoples of Kordofan provinces, again a mainly Muslim but African-identified ethnic group, killing tens of thousands. These three genocides—in South Sudan, Darfur, and the Nubian mountains—exposed, among other things, the fact that anti-Black racism is not confined to European and North American societies. At the same time, this eventually forced the democratic opposition to come to terms more with the country's multiethnic character, in order to combat a regime whose ideological basis lay to a great extent in racist appeals to the Arab-identified majority.

Third, the Bashir regime used a form of Islamism linked to the Muslim Brotherhood as an ideology of legitimation ever since coming to power in 1989. This led to brutal repression of women's self-expression, as seen in the public floggings of hundreds of women and girls for violating its notion of "proper" dress codes by wearing trousers and the like. Initially, Bashir even flirted with Al Qaeda, but in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, he offered full cooperation with the United States against that terroristic form of international Islamism, all the while maintaining a harsh, religion-tinged dictatorship internally. Three decades of Islamist ideology as a cloak for dictatorship alienated the population from Islamism of any kind, giving the 2019 revolution a more explicitly secular and feminist character than its 2011 Arab counterparts.

Fourth, in addition to this history of Islamism, Sudan once had a large Marxist left, dominated by a pro-Russian Communist Party, and socialist ideas seem to persist to this day among some parts of the intellectuals and the working class.

Winter 2018-2019: The Uprising Builds

In late December 2018, crowds began to gather in a number of cities, first in the hundreds and then in the thousands, sparked by Bashir's ending of subsidies for wheat and fuel under pressure from international financial institutions. This gave the movement economic as well as democratic demands, something that solidified its working-class support. By December 26, a nationwide unlimited general strike was declared by the underground Sudanese Professional Association (SPA),

a large network involving unions of lawyers, engineers, teachers, journalists, and medical doctors, with many of the last in leadership positions. Formed a few years ago, the SPA from the start highlighted low wages and continues to call for a minimum wage amid mass pauperization, in addition to democratic political demands.

Bashir's outside supporters in the region—Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, among others—sought to prop him up as best they could. In one bizarre move, Bashir, who could accept few international invitations due to an indictment for genocide by the International Criminal Court, visited Damascus, where he was embraced by Assad. The photo of the two murderous leaders together on the eve of Bashir's fall is priceless.

By mid-January of this year, daily protests were rocking the country. Twenty-seven-year-old Dr. Babiker Salama became an early martyr of the revolution on January 17, gunned down in cold blood while asking security officers to allow him to evacuate a wounded man. The regime tried to blame his death on "Communists," to no avail. In February, Bashir reshuffled all his government ministers, declared a state of emergency, and promised not to run in the 2020 elections, again to no avail.

April: Generals Push Out Bashir

On April 11, Bashir was ousted by his own military and placed under house arrest. During the week before, hundreds of thousands kept demonstrating, many of them encamped outside the national military headquarters in Khartoum, where Bashir lived in a closely guarded compound. As the situation reached crisis dimensions, some soldiers went over to the people, clashing with others who wanted to attack the demonstrators. At this point, the notorious Janjaweed militia, redubbed the Rapid Response Force in recent years, was called in to patrol the capital, once again to no avail. Sara Abdelgalil, spokesperson for the SPA, greeted the ouster of Bashir with scorn, however: "What has been just staged is for us a coup, and it is not acceptable" (*New York Times*, April 12, 2019). They demanded a fully civilian government as the streets erupted with the chant, "It fell once, it can fall again." Many rank-and-file soldiers solidarized with the demonstrators.

During the next few weeks, protesters remained in large numbers outside the military headquarters, as the SPA issued a series of specific demands that included a purge of wide sectors of the state, military, and legal apparatus. The SPA also demanded no rush to elections before a completely civilian provisional government was in place and civil society could begin to reconstitute itself after three decades of repression. The post-Bashir regime was centered on some older generals but with Janjaweed commander Mohamed "Hemeti" Hamdan Dagolo exercising a very important influence, if not constituting the real power within the armed forces.

Reactionary regional powers like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt immediately announced support for the refurbished military regime, with the oil kingdoms also pledging new financing.

May: Flowering of Democracy and Liberation Amid Stalemate

From mid-April until June 3, real grass-roots democracy flourished on the streets of Khartoum and other cities, as the demonstrators refused to budge and the military could not yet decide on how to respond. In Khartoum, crowds as large as 500,000 filled the streets twenty-four hours a day, with many camping outside on the plaza facing military headquarters.

"Bread and dignity" was the chant of the hour, while "All power to civilians, that the military depart, or a general strike will take place," was its more political version. Women were everywhere in the forefront, beyond the level experienced in the 2011 Arab revolutions, with youth overall also in the

lead. Even the open consumption of alcohol was a statement of liberation. In what was above all a revolution of youth, young couples held hands as they walked around, an act that would have courted arrest under Bashir's Islamist military dictatorship. During this period, the Sudanese LGBTQ community also expressed itself online, although it was not yet able to appear openly.

Oppressed ethnic groups, including Darfuris, rode into Khartoum on trains to join and celebrate the revolutionary ferment. The representatives of Darfur assumed a prominent place at the gates of the military headquarters, holding up banners depicting the genocidal destruction Bashir and Hemeti had visited upon their region and giving the lie to the racist epithet of "slave" that Bashir's forces had bestowed upon this self-identified African people.

African scholar-activist Magdi el Gouzouli offers a vivid description of what amounted to a new society gestating inside the old:

> As an organizational form for protest the qiada sit-in was wildly successful, probably far beyond the expectation of the parties involved. While it lasted, it was a place where mostly young women and men could live out their claim to identity as real citizens. Cash transactions were the exception in the qiada sit-in as the protestors fashioned an economy of their own devised around the socialist instinct of "from each according to her ability and to each according to her need." Food, medical care, public health services, security, and transport were organized on a voluntary basis and proved remarkably resilient. A minor flu epidemic, known as the "qiada cold" troubled the protesters but otherwise the massive sit-in registered no other public health crisis thanks to robust and efficient public health measures. From afar, expatriate Sudanese contributed funds and information technology hardware as well an explosion of sympathetic protests in Western capitals.

Gouzouli reported that the ferment was not confined to the square, but was equally grounded in neighborhood committees in what amounted to dual power:

The course of the Sudanese revolution is for the now in the hands of the "resistance committees." Some have claimed local authority in their neighborhoods, toppling the petty autocrats of the Bashir-era "popular committees" and are refashioning micro-authority to fit an emancipatory zeal. The question remains, will they be able to translate this zeal into mass political action that can take on the brutal machinations of the Sudanese state? ("Sudan's Season of Revolution," *Review of African Political Economy*, July 5, 2019).

At a few junctures, Hemeti and other military leaders tried to play the old Bashir card of calling for the implementation of "Sharia law" to create a supposed order and stability in the face of revolutionary "chaos" on the streets. Attempts on the streets to voice such sentiments met with a firm response, however. As Africa scholar Gérard Prunier reported, on April 28, some remnants of Bashir's party, by now disbanded, held a meeting calling for Sharia law as the foundation for any new government. Before their meeting got very far, they were set upon and their leaders almost lynched by revolutionary crowds. A week later, on Friday, May 3, an imam came into the crowd and began to preach against "forbidden [haram]" mixing of the sexes during the vast sit-in. In a response that showed how deep the opposition to three decades of Islamist social controls ran, crowds of men grabbed and silenced him, pushed him out of the crowd, and escorted him back to his mosque. Many also pointed to how the "pious" Bashir's residence was found to hold $350 million in cash at a time when the price of bread had tripled for the general population. ("Au Soudan, le rejet des 'marchands de religion' au pouvoir," *Le Monde*, May 9, 2019).

Achcar gives political context:

> In Sudan, popular opposition to both reactionary camps is all the more radical because they have shared power since Omar al-Bashir's 1989 coup. As head of a military dictatorship allied with the Muslim Brotherhood (the relationship did not always go smoothly), Bashir was like a mixture of Morsi and SisiA key feature of the Sudanese uprising, more politically radical than any in the Arabic-speaking world since 2011, is its open opposition to the rule of either the military or their fundamentalist allies, and its declared wish for a civilian, secular, democratic and even feminist government ("The Seasons After the Arab Spring," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, English version, June 2019).

The nonviolent sit-in in Khartoum was carefully organized, with weapons searches for all those entering the area carried out by volunteers. Basic survival needs like drinking water and toilets were self-organized by participants, on a vast scale. Various military units stood nearby, with women demonstrators speaking with the young soldiers in an effort to bring them over to the revolution, telling them, among other things, that it stood for more educational opportunities and a better world for all. At night, large parts of the crowd danced to music from DJs.

During May, small-scale armed attacks on the barricades protestors had set up were still taking place occasionally. By now, the SPA had become part of a large coalition, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), which included a wide range of groups, from the moderate Islamic Umma Party to the Communist Party and Arab nationalists, also comprising unions and professional associations. Some of these factions favored more compromises with the military than the SPA, but the general demand for a completely civilian government continued to be expressed. By the end of May, a two-day general strike took place, but on a somewhat limited basis that did not shut down transportation across Khartoum. The tentativeness of the strike was in part due to pressure within the FFC from old political parties like Sadiq Al-Mahdi's Umma National Party, which wanted quick elections as well. This quick-election gambit, also proposed by the military and which would have advantaged old established organizations, was successfully opposed by the SPA within the FFC.

June: The Uprising Continues in the Face of Massacre

By early June, some small counter-revolutionary demonstrations were mounted at the edge of the giant sit-in, with chants of "Power to Islam [Islamiya]" and "Power to the Military [Askariya]." They also claimed to be out on the streets "to oppose the communists," an allusion to the fact that the Communist Party was part of the FFC. The revolutionary crowd responded with the chant, "Power to Civilians [Madaniya]." One of Hemeti's generals also told the media that the sit-in was a gathering of "prostitutes and hashish dealers" (Jean-Philippe Rémy, "'Askariya!', 'Islamiya!': menace sur le mouvement démocratique au Soudan," *Le Monde*, June 2, 2019).

The well-orchestrated massacres of June 3 were carried out by the Rapid Support Force, the former Janjaweed under the command of Hemeti. Khartoum and other major cities experienced dispersal of their sit-ins with gunfire, beatings, rapes, and, at least in Khartoum, throwing bodies into the Nile. The death toll stood at at least 35. That same night, the RSF raided the homes of opposition leaders, but most escaped and went underground, protected by the vast support the revolution enjoyed among the masses.

As Fergal Keane reported for BBC News on July 2, a few weeks later, "Since the protests erupted late last year, the state intelligence networks struggled to penetrate the close-knit communities of activists. No matter how many arrests took place there always seemed to be somebody waiting to

take up the work."

RSF forces also broke into the University of Khartoum, which abutted the sit-in, destroying precious archives and stealing anything of monetary value. This university had for decades been a center of Marxism, with the Marxist students often battling with those loyal to the Muslim Brotherhood. After Bashir's 1989 coup, the Marxists were driven underground. The university has been closed due to strikes since January, but students and professors had been conducting free classes for the public from tents within the sit-in. According to French journalist Jean-Philippe Rémy, one of the last of these public classes before the massacre addressed "the efficacy of a general strike and of a civil disobedience campaign" ("L'opposition soudainaise entre en clandestinité," *Le Monde*, June 12, 2019).

The RSF created further outrage by attacking hospitals in Khartoum, forcing them to close at the very time that 35 people were reported dead and 650 wounded.

The type of brutality the genocidal Janjaweed had carried out in Darfur was now coming home to Khartoum.

Mass Mobilization and Compromise

Reactionary regimes in the region initially supported the generals, with the Saudis and the Emiratis pledging $3 billion to the military regime, also flying in military equipment. The people could tell who was supporting the regime by the markings on the armored vehicles in which the RSF was riding around while killing and brutalizing the population. While Egypt's General Sisi also openly supported the military, Africa as a whole reacted differently. Future Nobel Laureate Abiy Ahmed Ali of Ethiopia arrived to offer mediation, effectively pressuring the regime to cede ground. In addition, the African Union suspended Sudan's membership on July 6.

As events would show, the revolution was far from dead at this point, as the massacre seemed to enrage and galvanize rather than intimidate the population. On June 30, the largest crowds since the beginning of the revolution filled the streets of major cities in giant demonstrations, with as many as a million people participating despite the military's attempts to stop the flow by blocking roads and bridges and by arresting movement leaders where they could find them. Tellingly, June 30 was the thirtieth anniversary of Bashir's 1989 military coup. "All power to civilians" was the chant that dominated on June 30, 2019, however.

The June 30 demonstration was organized in near secrecy from below. According to French journalist Rémy,

> For days, neighborhood committees took charge as the Internet was shut down and phone calls monitored. Plans for the feeder marches were organized secretly. These groups, instead of assembling in one location, which would have exposed them to immediate dispersal, organized themselves as feeder marches moving off from the homes of those killed on June 3 in order to honor them. … By afternoon, the watchword from the organizers called for the demonstrators to converge on the presidential palace, where the sit-in had occurred in spring, but they were blocked from crossing the bridges into the center of Khartoum ("Trente ans après le coup d'Etat, les Soudanais exigent 'tout le pouvoir aux civils'," *Le Monde*, July 2, 2019).

Reports also emerged by this time of deep dissension inside the regular army, among junior officers opposed to the brutality of the RSF.

A few days later, on July 5, military and FFC leaders suddenly announced the outlines of a political compromise. During a 39-month transition period, military and civilian leaders would share power. It was the revolutionaries who had demanded such a long transition period, in order to allow a real transition time to occur, with sufficient time for a new constitution to be drafted and to give new political parties enough time to organize. Evidently, they had the example of Egypt in mind, where too quick a transition gave power first to the authoritarian but well-organized Muslim Brotherhood, and then to the still more authoritarian military. Apparently worried by the size and persistence of the mass mobilizations, the regime's external supporters like Saudi Arabi and the United Arab Emirates now started to pressure it to compromise. The compromise was far from what the revolutionaries had been demanding. Even the murderous Hemeti would remain in power, although an investigation—but not an international one—of the June 3 massacre was promised.

Left-wing groups including the Communist Party denounced the agreement for ceding too much to the regime. The Darfur Displaced General Coordination (DDGC) stated, "The aim of this agreement is also to block the realization of the goals of the revolution: to bring down the regime, prosecute its criminals, achieve freedom, peace and justice, establish a civilian-led government, resolve the civil wars in the country and restore the rights of displaced people and refugees" (cited in Emma Wilde Botha, "The Revolution has Emerged: Sudan's Acute Contradictions," *Review of African Political Economy*, September 5, 2019). Mass demonstrations continued, with thousands turning out on July 13, which marked forty days since June 3, a traditional time to commemorate the dead. Calling for the punishment of the June 3 perpetrators, crowds filled all the major cities on July 13. Large demonstrations also broke out on July 30, after four students were killed by the RSF.

By August 3, a constitutional declaration was agreed by the military and the FFC, which was then signed on August 17. It provided for a transitional government composed of both military and civilian leaders, including a legislative body composed of representatives of the pro-democracy movements, rebel groups based among the country's ethnic minorities in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains, and existing political parties with the exception of Bashir's banned National Congress Party. A new prime minister was to be chosen by the FFC. The constitutional declaration calls for a civil state with equality for all citizens. Tellingly, in an advance over even the Tunisian Constitution, it contains no reference at all to Islam or any other religion. But the RSF will remain, albeit supposedly under the control of the regular army.

Some leftist tendencies rejected the compromise. Some also noted that few women were among the leaders who appeared in public at the signing ceremony, in contrast to the large proportion of women who had participated in the revolution up to this point.

However, the new cabinet did eventually include four women, with one of them, Asma Mohamed Abdallah, appointed foreign minister. Writer Jamal Mahjoub noted how the new government's inclusiveness contrasts with Bashir's manipulation of regional and ethnic differences to maintain himself in power: "Unity is the key to the success of the revolution. Prejudices and social barriers based upon class, race, and gender need to be overturned and replaced by a principle of citizenship. The issue of [economic] inequality, the actual motor of the revolution, needs to be confronted at its roots from now on at the institutional level, and dealt with by deep changes and genuine inclusion" ("Pour éviter le désastre," *Le Monde*, October 20-21, 2019).

Where Next for Sudan?

In a recent interview, post-revolutionary Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok listed making peace with ethnic rebel groups as a top priority, in contrast to Bashir's strategy of racist demagoguery and repression. Hamdok also noted bitterly that the United States has yet to lift its sanctions against Sudan as a sponsor of "terrorism," this despite the fall of Bashir and the democratic transition

underway.

In addition, however, Hamdok also illustrated the limited vision of his basically liberal agenda by speaking of shrinking the public sector by cutting the budget of the military-security apparatus and shutting down corrupt and inefficient state enterprises, of which there are certainly many. But there was not even a whiff of social democracy, let alone socialism, in his words concerning capitalism: "We need to establish an environment favorable to the development of the private sector, which is essential for job creation" ("Les sanctions américains asphyxiant le Soudan," interview with Abdallah Hamdok, *Le Monde*, October 2, 2019).

This kind of thing, as Emma Wilde Botha notes, points to a division among the millions who rose up in 2019 between a largely middle-class leadership and the full class, ethnic, and gender dimensions of the country:

> The mobilization rhetoric of SPA derived from Sudan's effendya, a nationalist ideology of the small class of Sudanese who were educated to fill the ranks of the civil service during colonialism and who were prepared for post-colonial rule. This framework was too narrow to speak to the diversity of the Sudanese people and reimagine a Sudan that embraces all, across ethnic, racial, religious lines. The dominant slogans of "peace, freedom, and justice" and '"madaniya" (civilian) fail to wed political demands with class demands in a moment ripe for a revolutionary message. Rather than drawing from alternative frameworks of the working class or the feminist movement, the SPA appealed to the universal rights and freedoms of citizens, using language that is not incompatible with the neoliberal state. The failure to center class demands and implicitly or explicitly raise revolutionary slogans may partially explain why Khartoum's peripheral neighborhoods of poor and displaced people did not join in the protests as enthusiastically as the middle-class neighborhoods ("The Revolution Has Emerged: Sudan's Acute Contradictions," *Review of African Political Economy*, September 5, 2019).

But just as we note the deep contradictions within the movement that overthrew Bashir and reached a compromise with the military, we also need to view Sudan in the historic mirror once again. The year 2019 has shown us a new type of revolution in a country that lies at the crossroads of two regions with long histories in the struggle for human emancipation, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world. Led by the youth, a people has awakened and fought for its liberation, facing down a regime that has carried out outright genocide. In deep dialectical contradiction to the Islamist-militarist Bashir regime, the revolutionaries have espoused, in their millions, democracy, economic justice, justice for ethnic minorities, and women's rights. It is a solid beginning and a beacon for the region and the future. At the same time, the risks are enormous, as the forces of the old, both domestic and international, are waiting for their chance to swoop down and crush the revolution.