



Sudanese Revolution: Smashing the Junta is the only road to freedom

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Once more, across the length and breadth of Sudan, we are witnessing a massive revolutionary upsurge against the military junta of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemeti), which seized power in the coup of October 25.

Since January 2, the military has been robbed of its fig leaf as prime minister, the civilian technocrat, Abdalla Hamdok. His resignation came after six weeks in office as it became clear that he had absolutely no authority and the mass demonstrations resumed, as did the repression which has now claimed over 60 killed since October.

On January 6, demonstrations, named by organisers as 'Marches of the Millions', filled the streets of the capital Khartoum and its adjacent cities, Omdurman and Ombada, as well as Port Sudan. Other cities in the north of the country, Atbara, Ed Damer, and Dongola, also joined in. Demonstrators packed streets chanting 'the three Nos' - No Agreements! No Negotiations! No Bargaining! and "Power to the People!" They called on the soldiers to return to their barracks and allow the formation of a popularly chosen, wholly civilian, government.

The Khartoum Resistance Committees Coordination set the Republican Palace as the marchers' goal, the junta's response, as on December 19 and in October, was harsh repression. The regime cut off internet services and phone networks in Khartoum, blocked the Nile bridges with shipping containers and the main streets with barricades of barbed wire.

Paramilitaries from Hermeti's Rapid Support Forces, RSF, whose origins lie in the Janjaweed militias which committed genocidal acts in Darfur, plus the Central Reserve Police, and agents of the General Intelligence Service, GIS, used stun grenades and dangerous concentrations of tear gas. At least three deaths and dozens of injuries were reported in Omdurman and Khartoum. Hospitals treating demonstrators were attacked. Nevertheless, some protesters broke through to the Republican Palace in the centre of Khartoum.

'Democratic' and 'Authoritarian' Imperialisms remain silent.

At his online 'democracy summit' last month, US President Joe Biden and his Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, did not even raise the issue of repression and military dictatorship in Sudan. Indeed, Washington has continued to accept Al Burhan's legitimacy and even praised the military leaders. Blinken eagerly supported the October deal between the military and Hamdok

The White House has even suggested that the demonstrators' demands for 'no negotiations, no partnership, and no legitimacy for the military' are 'unrealistic'. In fact, the US and its UK hanger-on are busy outsourcing their Sudan policy to their far-from-democratic Gulf allies, as shown by their December 16, 2021, statement, signed with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which actually praised the military regime for its efforts. This in turn is payback for Saudi Arabia's use of Sudanese forces, including Hemeti's RSF thugs, to prop up its interventions in the bloody civil war in Yemen.

As for the Western democracies' rival, the new imperialist kid on the block, 'Communist' China, it is unsurprisingly silent on the crimes of the Sudanese military. Its global speciality is supporting murderous military juntas, such as

Myanmar, as well as committing its own crimes in Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

In short, none of the rival imperialisms, engaged in their 'new cold war' have anything to offer fighters for freedom and socialism worldwide, as Putin's Russia is now showing in Kazakhstan. Working class and revolutionary movements in all countries must do all they can to aid their courageous class sisters and brothers in Sudan.

The Opposition

A series of interlocking democratic alliances supports the mass demonstrations and aims at replacing the military regime with a civilian government. From the outset of the movement, an important role was played by the Sudanese Professionals Association, SPA. Founded in the mid-years of the last decade as opposition to al-Bashir grew, its core was composed of three of Sudan's largest professional groups: the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors, the Sudanese Journalists Network and the Democratic Lawyers Association.

As the movement developed, it was joined by around 18 trade unions including academics and teachers, engineers and health professionals. In short, it represents a combination of the radical middle class and workers' organisations who revolted against al Bashir's stifling political Islamism and his genocidal wars in Darfur and South Sudan.

There is a 'broad front', the Forces of Freedom and Change, FFC, which includes sizeable bourgeois parties, like the National Umma Party, NUP, and the Sudanese Congress Party but it also involves the SPA and the Sudanese Communist Party. This is what Trotskyists call a popular front. The more conservative parts of the FFC, like the NUP, actively supported Hamdok's November deal with al-Burhan and mourned his resignation. Clearly, these forces would welcome another compromise with the military.

In contrast, Siddig Yousef, a leader of the Communist Party, said Hamdok's resignation was long overdue. The militants of his party do indeed represent a serious working-class force within the resistance committees that organised the demonstrations and the strikes that have occurred over the two years since those that brought down Omar al-Bashir's dictatorship in 2019.

The party leadership, however, has what it calls 'a dual-strategy', one typical of the more radical wing of Stalinism in many semi-colonial countries. Thus, while it works for a general strike, organised and controlled workers' and peasants' committees, at the same time, it wants to build this 'broad front' with liberal and patriotic bourgeois forces. Its plan is to bring in more radical forces, because it envisages the military dictatorship being replaced by a democratic, that is, still capitalist, government. Of course, it also denounces the influence of the USA, the IMF, neoliberalism etc.

This can be seen in the response of Fathi AlFadl, its spokesperson, to the questions, "At what stage do you think the Sudanese Revolution is? How will it be shaped?" in an interview on Facebook. He replied, "At the moment, talks are proceeding for reaching the Broad Front leadership which may include women's and other civil society organisations and political parties. The leadership of such a body will facilitate the complete defeat of the present regime and the wrenching of power by the hands of the people." (<https://www.facebook.com/SudaneseCommunistParty> [1])

In fact, this class collaborationist, popular front strategy will obstruct any independent actions of the masses of workers, peasants and youth aimed not just at forcing the military out of political power but breaking up the high command and the entire corrupt military caste and their control over the soldiers. The last two years in Sudan and before that the Arab Spring, especially in neighbouring Egypt, should teach the lesson that, if these forces remain intact and in control of the armed forces, then coup after coup will occur. Democracy, that is, bourgeois/capitalist democracy with the permission of the generals is a reactionary utopia.

In reality, the only democracy will be what the workers and youth, women and poor peasants can create out of the existing resistance committees and the coordinating organisations necessary to launch an insurrectionary general strike. To be effective, even in driving Al-Burhan and Hemeti from power, the movement must win over the ordinary rank and file soldiers to turn on the RSF thugs, arrest their officers, arm the workers and themselves form soldiers' councils.

The rank and file of the SCP need to follow Lenin's path in 1917 and fight for a workers' and peasants' government that is, in effect, a dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with all the fighting popular forces. If, on the other hand, the Sudanese revolution stops halfway, it will suffer the fate of the courageous fighters in Egypt, who ended up with a dictatorship even more repressive than that of Hosni Mubarak.

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