



*A scene at the National Congress. On the front row, left, is President Gen. Omar al-Bashir; two seats to the right is Dr. Hassan al-Turabi.*

While receiving the *EIR* delegation, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, explained the process Sudan has gone through since 1989, as “evolution,” rather than “revolution.” The first parliament following General al-Bashir’s coming to power, he recalled, was appointed; the second parliament was elected, but not on a party basis. Similarly, with state governors: First they were appointed; after three years, candidates were nominated by the President, and then approved; now, they are elected officials. Now, “we are going to take the final step,” he said, which can be open to a multi-party system.” But, he specified, “these cannot be parties based on religious sects or tribal lines; they must be open to all religions and groups.” Dr. Mustafa said that the National Congress session had developed the model of a party, on which others could be shaped.

### **The economic dimension of independence**

The other leading issue in the general debate and in the workshops, was economic policy. Particularly strong were the interventions from farmers and herdsman, who demanded more government action to strengthen agriculture and husbandry. In the economics workshop, the focus of discussion was on the need to harmonize economic policy with the moral orientation embedded in Islam, and to guarantee equitable wealth-sharing and taxation. The cooperatives, which represent a particularly strong sector, argued for tax breaks. Privatization was also discussed, and the consensus was to maintain state control over strategic sectors of the economy, and proceed with privatization cautiously, particularly in light of the recent disastrous experience of the “Asian tigers.”

Sudan has been fighting to defend its political independence and sovereignty, particularly since 1989, when the current government under Gen. Omar al-Bashir took power. The British-directed assault on the country has come in the form of military attacks, from Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and political subversion, through Baroness Cox and her puppets in the NDA. Cox’s primary activity has been to spread lies about Sudan, alleging the practice of slavery, religious persecution and terrorism, in order to motivate political bodies, like the U.S. Congress and the United Nations, to pass legislation imposing economic sanctions on Sudan. The leading edge of Cox’s campaign for sanctions has been to impose an oil boycott and an arms embargo. Due to efforts such as hers, Sudan has been isolated from the “international community,” and has received no financial aid, for example from the International Monetary Fund, since 1989. It has been subjected to embargoes and a general credit cutoff. Thus, the fight for political independence has comprehended also a struggle for economic sovereignty.

Just on the heels of the National Congress proceedings, another event occurred which signalled progress towards achieving economic independence. On Feb. 22, a ceremony was held in the Friendship Hall in Khartoum, for the signing of contracts related to a new pipeline, which will transport oil from fields in the southwest, to Port Sudan. The ceremony was attended by General al-Bashir as well as Dr. Machar, representing the south. Several nested contracts were signed by representatives of the Chinese CPECC, the Argentine Technint, the British WEIR, and Allen Diesel. In attendance as well were representatives of the Greater Nile Petroleum