

"THIS CONVENTION IS SOVEREIGN"



OPENING AND CLOSING SPEECHES

by

Dr. John Garang de Mabior

OF THE FIRST SPLA/SPLA
NATIONAL CONVENTION

April 2nd 1994

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General

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**SPEECH OF THE CHAIRMAN
AND
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

**TO THE FIRST SPLM/SPLA
NATIONAL CONVENTION**

2nd April 1994

1. SALUTATIONS AND INTRODUCTION

Honourable Invited Guests,

Distinguished Elders and Chiefs,

**Fellow Delegates, to this historic First SPLM/SPLA
National convention.**

I salute and greet you in the name of our great and historical land, Belaad al Sudan, and in the name of our great and heroic Movement, the SPLM/SPLA. I greet you individually, each and every one of you and in your collectivity as the First National Convention of the SPLM/SPLA. I congratulate you for having this unique opportunity to be a delegate to the First National Convention of the SPLM/SPLA.

Today is a great day, and it will go down in our history as a major watershed, for it is the first time in the history of the Sudan for delegates representing the oppress, the neglected and wretched people of the Sudan to come together on their own and hold a Convention of this **magnitude in a liberated part of our country with the express aim of deliberating freely on issues of life and death and take into their hands the responsibility to**

decide their destiny and fate. This is a very weighty task and responsibility that history has put on your shoulders.

Fellow delegates, the road to this Convention has not been an easy one. The delegates from the Nuba Mountains, Missiriya, Bahr el Ghazal, Ingessena, Upper Nile and Western Equatoria had to walk several months to come to this convention. Every one of you had to face and overcome many obstacles and hardships on the way to this historical gathering. Several delegates have lost their personal belongings or were wounded in accidents or had to risk their lives in aerial and ground attacks of the enemy. We appreciate and admire wholeheartedly the sacrifices made and the determination shown by each and everyone of you. I congratulate all of you for making this Convention a success.

Yet with regret and great sorrow, we have to register for posterity and for the generations to come, that on the way to this Convention, we have not only endured hardships, but indeed our people had to shed blood. We have lost very dear of our distinguished sons and daughters of our land; twelve of our Compatriots had fallen on the way, five of whom were delegates to this Convention.

Among them are the distinguished Chief and Veteran freedom fighter Stephen Thionkol Anyijong of Yirol District, Chief Majak Adel of Luac, Tonj district and Chief Lavino Keri of Pageri, Nimule, Torit district, the distinguished and energetic Women Association Leader, Comrade Sicilia Joseph of Nimule, Torit District and our beloved G.I.S. Instructor 1st Lt Andrew Kuir Riak: All of them have joined the long Holy list of our undying

martyrs. Let us pay homage to all those martyrs who gave their lives to save our Mother Land and its people including those who fell through assassinations, such as father Saturinho Lohure and William Deng, or who died from hunger and neglect.

I ask you all to stand up and bow our heads in a minute of solemn silence in honour and sacred memory of them and of all our immortal heroes who have fallen in this great struggle for restoration of our dignity, freedom and liberation of our land and people. Please stand —
—Thank you.

SALUTATIONS.

I also take the opportunity to thank the invited guests and the foreign press for braving it into the jungles of Southern Sudan in spite of the risks to their own lives and the poor amenities. To those invited and could not come, we also thank them for remembering us in their thoughts and prayers.

I take the opportunity of this Convention forum to express our appreciation and thanks to all those foreign friends who support and stand in solidarity with the suffering people of Southern Sudan, Nuba and other marginalized areas and who have expressed concern on the gross human rights abuses by the NIF Government.

Recently the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lady Cox and Bishop Macram visited the liberated areas; Congressmen Harry Johnston and Frank Wolf, Senators Paul Simon and Nancy Kassinbaum and others have sponsored several resolutions in the United States Congress condemning the genocide in Southern Sudan and Nuba Mountains by the NIF Government.

The European Parliament and the British House of Lords have expressed similar concerns; the Holy See is also on record about the situation in the Sudan; the OAU through the Babangida Abuja peace initiative has shown some concern; the Carter Centre, Norway and currently four IGADD countries under President Daniel arap Moi, President Yoweri Museveni, President Meles Zenawi and President Issaias Afewerki have engaged in commendable efforts to bring peace to the Sudan.

Many NGOs, such as OLS, NPA, LWF, WEP, AAIN, ICRC and our own indigenous NGOs and Churches have done a commendable job in saving lives and ameliorating the suffering of our people. To all these humanists, some of whom we do not even know but are very concerned about the suffering of our people, we thank them wholeheartedly wherever they are, and I ask this convention to give them a big hand in a vote of thanks for their humanitarian work and peace efforts.

FELLOW DELEGATES:

This convention was first called in June 1991 following the collapse of the Mangistu Regime and the changing regional and international situation. The former Political Military High Command (PMHC) called for convention in June 1991 in order to review and analyse the impact of these changes on our Movement and adjust ourselves accordingly. But this was frustrated by events which you all know and which I need not go into in these opening remarks. Again, when conditions improved and the imperative of holding the national convention remained as urgent as ever, we announced in mid-1993 that we would hold the convention before the end of that year, but the enemy for the first time in ten years

launched a wet season military offensive which continued into this dry season.

In addition to the military situation, a convention is not just a gathering of people; we had to organize at the grassroots and across regions and nationalities so that the convention is as broadly representative as possible. In retrospect, and appreciating the amount of energy that went into the preparations for the convention, it was not easy to organize and elect or select six hundred delegates from the grass roots under war conditions and over a vast liberated territory more than area of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi combined, for that is the size of Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains without even the Ingessena; and to move the delegates to one place for the convention.

All in all, we are finally able to hold this convention, and as the saying goes "better late than never". Some comrades have even reversed this popular adage about the convention saying "better late than too early", arguing that had we held the convention ten years ago we would not have had the wealth of eleven years of experience which we now have. Some argue that some of the thugs who found their way to top leadership and the blindly our ambitious PhD holders would have wrecked such a convention. Whatever the case, we are holding this convention today and this is a major victory for the SPLM/SPLA and the Sudanese people, especially those of the marginalized areas of Southern Sudan, Nuba, Ingessena and Missiriya.

The mere fact that we are able to hold this convention at this particular time when the NIF regime has launched its biggest dry season offensive in eleven years, billed

the mother of all dry season offensives, sends a clear and frightening signal to those who beat the drums of war in Khartoum. It reminds them that the SPLM/SPLA is very much alive, kicking and very dangerous. Let all know, friend and foe alike, that while Turabi's "mother of all dry season offensives" is underway, we the SPLM/SPLA, have been able to organize a national convention attended by some six hundred delegates. This convention frightens and shakes Turabi, Beshir and the NIF to their toes because it unambiguously signals that their dream of defeating the SPLM/SPLA is just that, a dream! The holding of this convention is a proclamation that the SPLM/SPLA has come to stay rain or shine.

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

Finally, to end my opening remarks, I would like to pay special tribute to the Convention Organizing committee (COC). We have said that the physical road to this convention was hard and you all know that as each of us experienced their own difficulties in reaching this venue. Also hard was the preparatory work for the convention. I take this opportunity, on behalf of our Movement and people and on behalf of our fighting men and women, and on behalf of this convention to sincerely thank and congratulate the COC, Commander Yousif Kowa Makki and the whole Committee for accomplishing the nearly impossible task of convening this conference. We know and appreciate the massive preparations they have been able to make with so little resources and under very difficult conditions. The COC has done an excellent job, and I request that we, this first National Convention, give Cdr Yousif Kowa and the COC a great hand of vote of thanks for a great work well done.

II. WHY THE SPLA WENT TO WAR

Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades in arms, Fellow Delegates:

I do not feel the necessity to go into the details of why the SPLM/A went to war and the history of the domination of the People of the South, Nuba and Ingessena and other marginalized areas such as the Missiriya whose delegation is here in force. Every delegate here knows it as much as the other. Even a child born today as I speak is already feeling the pain as that child is born into suffering. All of you here use foot as the main means of transport, and you know that the more a footpath is used the clearer it gets. My remarks are therefore not that you do not know but are intended only to clear the footpath.

Fellow Delegates:

The history of the Sudanese people has been one of a continuous struggle between the oppressed and the oppressors, the invaded and the invaders, between the exploited and the exploiters - from our ancient past down to the present day our Sudanese people have always struggled for freedom, justice and dignity, for a better life. The interests, culture and identity of the ruling forces has been always dominant and imposed on the whole society. This has been the case in the past and is the case today.

Our present revolutionary struggle, spearheaded by the SPLM/SPLA, is an integral part and a continuation of these past struggles of our people. The SPLA action of 1983 was a translation and a continuation of a long standing political conflict into an armed conflict. The SPLA's resort to armed struggle was a resumption of

earlier wars which had been temporarily halted by colonialism and more recently by the Addis Ababa Agreement.

Our country, Belaad al Sudan, is an unfinished product of a long historical process. It has undergone a continuous process of metamorphosis and mutation through history - changing identity and content from time to time in accordance with the interplay and correlation of power among the socio-political and socio-historical forces at any given period - Kushitic, Pharaonic, Christian, Islamic and colonial states and civilizations have appeared and disappeared on the soil of our great land, Sudan.

If we visit the corridors of history from the biblical Kush to the present, you will find that the Sudan, and we the Sudanese, have always been there. Let us affirm and remind ourselves that we are a historical people because there are persistent and concerted efforts to push us off the rails of history. There is no book of antiquity in which we are not mentioned and in which our greatness and the richness of our civilization is not narrated.

In Isaiah Chapter 18 we are the land of Kush, the land of the black beyond the Mountains of Ethiopia, a land of brave, fierce and proud tall smooth-skinned people that sent ambassadors to Jerusalem with expensive gifts, a people that conquered Egypt and pushed into Palestine and were only repulsed by the combined armies of the Assyrians and Hyccos. Ancient Rome called us African, meaning the land of the blacks, while to the Greek historian, Heroditus, we are Ethiopia, meaning the land of the blacks, and he later called us Egyptians, meaning the land of people with woolly hair, which means the

same as land of the blacks. In later days the people of the Arabian Peninsula called our country "Bilad El Sud", meaning "Land of the blacks" from which we now derive the name of our country the "Sudan".

I will come to this point of our historicity, that we are a historical people, when I talk about self-determination as it relates to the concept of the New Sudan, but let me ask the question: "Since when did we not belong to the Sudan to run away from it or not to want it? Is the case not rather that there are people in the Sudan who want to dispossess us of our land, of our Sudan? Bluntly put the Sudan simply means Africa. It was only during the recent colonial partition of Africa that the continent lost some of its more comprehensive names, e.g. Ethiopia and Sudan came to mean the present colonially demarcated countries.

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

It is painful to try to prove that one exists when one does indeed exist. Is our mere current presence not sufficient proof that we have always been present?. Let us not therefore belabour the point. Let us put aside our ancient history and analyse the present Sudanese socio-political reality, not just for academic understanding of it, but to see where and how we presently fit in the Sudan in order to change things for our benefit and for the benefit of posterity and of all Africa.


We find that the Sudan as a contemporary state with its present political boundaries is a direct result of the colonial scramble for Africa by the European imperial powers in the 19th century, in which the Anglo - Egyptian forces conquered the Mahdist State and extended its zones of influence southward to halt the advance of

France to the Nile basin (we remember the so-called Fashoda incident) and westward annexing the Darfur Sultanate and other peoples in that region to their condominium territory.

Like anywhere in Africa, the colonial boundaries in the Sudan were arbitrary from the point of view of the indigenous people, for none of these people were consulted whether to be or not to be part of this or that colonial territory. These colonial boundaries which our "independent" states inherited were only expressing the limits separating one colonial zone of influence from the other.

The result was that at independence almost every African state found itself composed of different peoples, communities and diverse cultures. Given this reality, it was not surprising that the social and political forces and the elites, who inherited the state power from the colonialists, made the question of "national formation", nation building" and "national unity" their top priority. The colonially inherited states must be modelled into viable nation-states, or else unprincipled local elites and bandits masquerading as nationalists would pillage and render the people of the new states destitute in collaboration with foreign interests who should not be expected to bear any responsibility.

In the formation of nations and nation-states, African countries including the Sudan are not an exception. Nations and nation-states are products of historical events, they do not fall from the sky and once formed are not immutable. The African colonial experience is one of such historical events that resulted in nation-state formation. Other nations and nation-states are the result



of other events, such as the historical movements of peoples. People move for whatever reasons and find themselves in geographical space.

Through economic, social and political processes, nations and nation-states begin to form. Contemporary examples are many. The USA and the nation-states of South America are such examples. Some of these countries such as the United States have mutated into very powerful nations, and this was not accidental but the conscious work of men and women in their interaction and interplay with various forces, economic, political, social and environmental. Underlying all dynamic, growing and successful nations are universal principles of freedom, justice, democracy, equality and unhindered pursuit of opportunity and happiness.

But in our country the Sudan, the ruling elite who took power by the time of independence have done the contrary. They instituted policies of hegemony and social, racial and religious discrimination, bigotry, injustice and restrictions to self-fulfilment.

But who are these ruling elite who have become the oppressors in the Sudan and how did they get formed? Who are these elite that have been responsible for these misguided divisive and oppressive policies and practices of the ruling minority clique regimes in Khartoum and who have been ruling the Sudan since "independence" in 1956? Which social group of the Sudanese society has been in power ruling, subjugating, oppressing and exploiting our people? Whose interests was the Sudanese state protecting since the departure of the British colonialists?

The correct answer to this cardinal question is of great

decisive and strategic importance to our struggle as a people and as a Movement, because it is from that answer that we can define correctly and clearly our real enemy. And nothing is so crucial for the success and victory of any liberation struggle than the correct and objective definition of the enemy, for it is on the basis of such definition that a liberation Movement like ours can formulate correct strategies and tactics of the struggle to attain the lofty aims and ideals, and distinguish allies and friends from foes, as well as correctly formulate objectives to be achieved.

Without going into great details in answering this question; the ruling social group that has been ruling our country, is popularly known as the "Jellaba".

The Jellaba have in their hands the economic and political power, they control the economy of the Sudan, they have control over very powerful political parties, over the media and over the dominant culture, and all this permits them to have firm control over state organs either through their representatives and sons or through corruption and bribery of state officials and ultimately through the organs of coercion; the army, police, courts, prisons and other para-military forces.

But then who are these Jellaba, where or how did they come? The Jellaba are a social group which have developed since the fifteenth century from elements of foreign and local traders including slave traders and who have established themselves in trading centres which later became important urban centres and towns like Dueim, Omdurman and Sennar, etc. The Jellaba are a hybrid of different races and nationalities from the indigenous Africans, and the immigrant Arabs, Turks

and Greeks, and other races, who have interacted and intermarried in the long historical process which took place mainly in the riverain Northern Sudan.

The very hybrid nature of the Jellaba explains their excessive and almost sickening proclamations and obsession with being Arab. Their false sense of superiority and belonging to the Arab people is nothing but the expression of a psychological over compensation for their inferiority complex, characteristic of any assimilated people, who are usually uncertain and apprehensive about their roots and who fail to make a transition into a new objective identity. This is a major problem in evolving a new Sudan commonality and identity.

Because of their economic and social position of strength (in relation to other social groups), the Jellaba were better prepared to inherit the political and state power when Sudan was "granted independence" in 1956. This is in addition to the fact that the Jellaba were developed and aided by the colonial regime, and prepared directly or indirectly by that regime to assume power when direct colonialism became untenable. Indeed, the colonial regime sacrificed the peoples of the marginalised areas of the Sudan as they were never consulted about Sudan's independence. The independence was an affair between the anglo-Egyptian colonial regime and the Jellaba. The following are known examples of lack of consultations in the events leading to independence.

1. There was the notorious policy of the Closed Districts Ordinance of the 1920's and 1940's affecting the South, the Nuba and Ingessena, and which policy effectively closed them off from modern influences and therefore subsequently in partici-

pating in the events leading to Sudan's independence.

2. In 1946/47, there was the Sudan Administrative Conference (SAC), in which the marginalized areas were excluded. This created great discontent in the South, and as a result, the Colonial Administration was compelled to convene the cosmetic Juba Conference of 1947. Despite the lack of seriousness on the part of the colonial administration, Southerners still demanded to exercise the right to self-determination, which was of course denied, as the purpose of the conference was not to consult Southerners, but rather to confirm what Sir Robertson, the civil secretary, had already decided. I wish to state here parenthetically, that this convention will be the first time for people of the marginalized areas to decide freely on their own on matters that affect their survival and destiny.
3. In 1953, Egypt summoned the Sudanese political parties to discuss the independence of the Sudan, and here too, Southern Sudanese political parties, the Nuba and other marginalized areas were excluded.
4. In 1954, Southern political parties met again and pressed the powers that were for a Federal system of Government. This led to the 1955 December 19th resolution passed in Parliament that the Southern request for federation "**would be given due consideration**" in the new Constitution, but only after the independence of the Sudan. Now the NIF says self-determination will be given "due consideration".

5. Before the end of 1955, the Colonial Administrative started the program of Sudanization of the civil service and the Jellaba, self-proclaimed Arabs of the North, stepped into the colonial shoes and took over the whole Government of the emerging independent Sudan.
6. The rest is history, all these situations led to the hegemony of the Jellaba and to the seventeen years of the first civil war (1955 - 1972) led by the Anya-Nya Movement, as well as the present eleven years of civil war led by the SPLM/SPLA.

Compatriots

It serves us no purpose to apportion blame to the colonial regime as that is past and now history. So let us come back to our present situation. The tragedy of the "Jellaba" as a social group is their narrow Arabo-Islamic outlook and their total failure to look beyond these two parameters of Arabism and Islamism as the sole uniting factors for the Sudan. With such blurred outlook, the "Jellaba" were bound to be incapable of leading the Sudanese people towards the achievement of the historic tasks of national formation and national liberation.

The very economic system of the "Jellaba" is responsible for deepening the inherited disparities among the regions of our country in favour of the relatively developed Central Northern Sudan. Because this class had kept the peripheral regions i.e. Southern, Western and Eastern Sudan as areas of reservoirs of labour and primitive accumulation of capital. The funds and resources of the marginalized areas were always transferred and invested in the "Jellaba" areas of central Sudan.

The basic problem of the Sudan, as history has shown, is the failure of the ruling minority regimes in Khartoum to evolve a viable and correct democratic process of nation building, a process recognizing and allowing for the participation of our various nationalities and cultures, a democratic national process based on our diversities producing our commonality as Sudanese, a process including all of us as active participants in which none of our people is excluded or turned into a passive object or victim of such a process because of ethnicity and/or religion.

The second problem of the Sudan is global and is shared by other African countries, and this is the failure of these regimes to work out sound economic programs to solve the problems of economic backwardness and dependency on unstable foreign markets. Again, the incidence of hardships caused by the consequences of the economic policies of the "Jellaba" regimes has been mainly on the people of the marginalized areas as these policies have pillaged their areas and degraded their environments for the luxury consumption of the "Jellaba" and their attachments.

These were and continue to be the fundamental problem of the Sudan, which have caused all the conflict between the "Jellaba" minority regimes on the one hand and the toiling masses of the Sudanese people everywhere in our country.

III. THE FORMATION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SPLM/SPLA

The reaction of the oppressed and marginalized peoples of the Sudan against the various Jellaba governments that have come and gone in Khartoum has been resist-

ance, which took different forms according to circumstances. In the cities it took the form of popular uprisings (1964 and 1985), while in the marginalised areas, especially of Southern Sudan and Southern Kordofan, the resistance took the form of popular and patriotic armed struggle (1955-1972 and (1983 to the present).

The birth and formation of the SPLM/SPLA in 1983 was therefore not an isolated incident, but rather a culmination and continuation of these struggles of the Sudanese people. The objectives of the SPLM/SPLA as enunciated in the 1983 Manifesto were not dreamed out, but rather based on the victories and setbacks of the Sudanese people and on the correct definition of the enemy as the oppressed regime of the Jellaba regime.

The objective of the SPLM/SPLA as articulated in the 1983 Manifesto is the complete destruction of the oppressive Jellaba regime and its replacement by a Government of the New Sudan. Nothing can change this cardinal objective unless one means to surrender for a regime of oppression any where and at all times will not voluntarily relinquish power. Whether you are a Southern separatist or an advocate of the New Sudan, nothing changes the reality that for either objective to be achieved the Jellaba regime of oppression must be destroyed.

The chief instruments of oppression is the army and other organs of coercion and these must be destroyed. There is no short cut. This is the purpose for which the SPLA was formed, to destroy the army of the Old Sudan and to establish a Government of the New Sudan. The SPLA will give us the New Sudan or an independent Southern Sudan. Our experience has shown that those who talk

about what will be "given" Southerners, or that if we did this or that Southerners will be given separation, such people are in reality talking about surrender in a camouflaged form, as they are not talking about what the people will do on their own, but what will be done for them by others.

Whether it is the "New Sudan" you want or an "Independent Southern Sudan" or some interim Confederal Arrangement leading to a referendum on self-determination, this must be the result of our struggle, not a gift from anybody. Let me underline that whatever we want, we must take it ourselves and this includes self-determination.

It is not there for the giving and that was made very clear at Abuja by Mohammed Amin Khalifa, who said that those who want self-determination could get it only through the barrel of the gun. I will come back to this issue. But let me add that surrender is also an option I am not ruling out. If the people are tired of the war and that is what they choose in this Convention, you are free to do so, only that we must call it by its correct name.

DEVELOPMENT OF SPLA

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

I would like to talk briefly about the development of the SPLA (the army proper) and the conduct of the war over the last eleven years. As expected, it was not easy although probably because of our many victories, some people took it as a simple matter to form, train and maintain an army and engage it in physical and mortal combat to defeat a well established army such as the Sudanese army.

In the beginning it was necessary to unite all the various fighting guerilla units in the bushes of Southern Sudan with insurgent forces of Battalions 104 and 105 along with organization of the thousands of students, workers, peasants and intellectuals who had rebelled at the wake of the historically 16th of May 1983 insurgency in Bor, Pachalla, Ayod and other garrisons. It was necessary to unite all these forces around a correct political program which had to reflect the cardinal and real interests of the oppressed and exploited people of the Sudan, and heritage of their past struggle and lessons of their experiences.

It was vitally important for the SPLM/SPLA to diagnose objectively the problem, assess the past experience and come out with a realistic vision upon which to base the war. It was on the basis of that diagnosis and vision that the SPLM/SPLA formulated its objectives raising the slogan of the "New Sudan" which transcended the previous myopic regional, religious, racial and Jellaba vision of the Sudan.

The political discourse of the SPLM/SPLA was directed to all the oppressed and exploited Sudanese people, regardless of region, tribe, religion or cultural background. The call was for a struggle to address and solve the fundamental problems of our country. The overriding aim was to bring about fundamental change, and indeed, without exaggeration, large sections of our people from different backgrounds and regions responded to this call. Peasants, students, workers, intellectuals and soldiers have joined together around the new vision and objective of creation of a secular, democratic New Sudan.

The composition of this very Convention that we are holding today is a living attestation of the correctness of our vision and the response that we have had, for here we have the Nuba in force, **we have** representatives from the Missiriya and we have the **Ingessena** delegation in addition to representatives from Southern Sudan. Without our vision of the New Sudan what would have brought the Nuba here and for Cdr Yousif Kowa to be the Chairman of this Convention today?

The vision of the New Sudan and the adoption of objectives and programs consistent with it had its difficulties and troubles in the early days of our Movement. It was then that Samuel Gai Tut, Akuot Atem and William Abdalla Chuol and some Anya-nya-II Commanders splintered from us claiming that their difference with us **was** that they wanted to fight for an independent Southern Sudan. And instead of fighting the Sudan Government in order to achieve their independent Southern Sudan they instead allied themselves with that same Sudan Government and fought the incipient SPLM/SPLA for the next four years.

In our consideration, such a phenomenon of divisions was natural because of diversity of vision and political thinking in any National Liberation Movement. What was not normal was the collaboration with the enemy of our people, that same Government from which those of Anya Nya-2 wanted to separate from becoming their ally. This is an experience we must draw lessons from, for we must beware of our self-professed separatists, and not allow them to shout empty slogans about separation to misinform our people. They must concretely explain how they plan to achieve it.

In those early days, one of the most important issues and dilemmas which faced us, and which was another source of differences was whether to make as the first and urgent priority the building of a strong disciplined army to confront militarily our enemy or whether to engage in the formation of Westminster styled cabinets in refugee camps, bushes or foreign hotels. We opted for the first. Our detractors chose the latter, and most of them ended up in Khartoum and other occupied towns with empty high military ranks, before we persuaded them back to the fold of the SPLA.

We started with the reorganization, retraining and arming of Battalions 104 and 105 right from July -August 1983, followed by the training and arming of "Jamus Battalions". These first gallant SPLA Battalions immediately engaged the army of the Old Sudan in many battles, which produced very important results:

1. Firstly, the military victories signalled to our people the birth of the SPLA as the advance armed detachment of all the oppressed of the Sudan and restored confidence in our people. These victories affirmed the ability of the SPLA to stand up to and defeat the army of Khartoum, while at the same time disproving the alleged invincibility of Khartoum.
2. Secondly, the military victories focused and attracted the attention of the world and neighbouring regions to the events in the Sudan showing the ability and the determination for the SPLM/SPLA to achieve its objectives and realize its vision of the Sudan. Indeed, the SPLA soon became a household word and the pride of Africa.

3. The third result was the immediate massive voluntary joining of tens of thousands of our youth and the arrival of Anya-nya-II forces from Bahr el Ghazal to the SPLA bases. These were to form our great Divisions of "Koryom" and "Mour Mour". By the end of 1984 we had trained and armed our gallant Battalions of Tiger and "Tumsha" and in September the same year we graduated the first Brigades of "Koryom" to be followed by the rest of the Division towards the end of the year and early 1985. Within two years we had 25,000 men and women in arms!

Compatriots, Comrades-in-arms, Fellow Delegates:

You all know the great victories achieved by these brave and gallant SPLA divisions and units, and I need not go into their details. Many of you participated in these great battles fought and won. The SPLA firmly established itself as an indisputable decisive political and military presence of the Sudanese political arena. The SPLA claimed its first casualty within two years of its establishment. The SPLM/SPLA effectively contributed and strengthened the democratic and popular forces in the North and this resulted in the defeat of the May Regime of Field Marshal Jaffer Mohammed Numeiri in a popular uprising in March - April 1985.

The SPLM/SPLA continued to grow in might and morale. We continued to train, graduate and deploy more divisions and units such as "Kazuk", "Zalzal", "Intefatha" and many others. We switched in late 1987 to strategic offensive of the Bright Star Campaign, that aimed at liberating the area bordered by the River Nile to the West, the Sobat to the North and the International bounda-

ries of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda and this was wholly achieved by the middle of 1989. The offensive continued to Western Equatoria in 1990 and by 1991 the SPLA had liberated more than ninety per cent of Southern Sudan and had succeeded to extend the armed struggle to zone-two, capturing several towns in Southern Blue Nile and creating a very firm and effective liberated area in the Nuba Mountains as well as advancing to Darfur the same year.

Compatriots,

Allow me to revisit the theme once more. We can only achieve our aim, whether this is the New Sudan, Self-determination or Separation, only and only if we destroy the system of the Old Sudan, for it is unthinkable that the regime will voluntarily relinquish power or be forced by international pressures to grant separation. That is wishful thinking which is not in the vocabulary of freedom fighters.

Events have proved that our vision of the New Sudan brought about through popular armed struggle in conjunction with an urban popular uprising was correct and an effective means of dealing with the minority clique regimes in Khartoum, and for the attainment of freedom, equality and justice for our people.

This SPLM/SPLA strategy has caused the collapse of the Numeiri regime, the Suwar Dahab regime and several Sadig el Mahdi Governments, which all opposed the will of our people. In fact, by 1989, the traditional Jellaba system of the Old Sudan became untenable, and the Old Sudan could only maintain itself by resorting to its most extreme form. That is why the evil National Islamic Front of Hassan El Turabi and Omer el Beshir

had to stage a coup in July 30th, 1989 to save the Old Sudan through Jihad. You very well know the events that led to the NIF army coup. It was clearly the result of SPLM/SPLA military and political victories that threatened to close the chapter on the Old Sudan. I assure you that the present NIF regime is the last Government of the Old Sudan for the next Government after that of the NIF will either be the Government of the New Sudan according to the SPLM/SPLA vision, or else the Sudan will break up into several states.

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

The SPLM/SPLA as a socio-political body does not exist in isolation. It is bound to affect and be affected by external and internal surrounding conditions in which it exists and operates. We have not been developing in isolated mountain caves to protect us from winds, rainstorms and external torments, nor have we been in exile to avoid the effects of internal changes in our country. The SPLM/SPLA is a living political organism in the real meaning of that word, and so it should not be a surprise or shock to any one that we have been adversely affected by recent international and internal changes, which seriously challenged our very existence as a Movement and as a people. But we have persevered and we have survived, and not only have we survived, we shall win!

Without doubt, all of us are aware of the great effects and influences brought by the recent international changes on all the countries and political forces the world over-change that were precipitated by the collapse of communism, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block countries and the end of the Cold War.

The world is in a historical transition from one historical era to a new one, and all countries, societies, political organizations and liberation movements such as ours must adjust to this momentous change. Some will survive the change and others will not. The SPLM/SPLA has survived the international transition.

Again, in the last five years many important changes occurred in our region of which the most important to us was the collapse of the Government of President Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia and the emergence of Eritrea as an independent state and the disintegration of the Siad Barre's Somali state, among many other important events. Internally, in the Sudan, as we have mentioned earlier, we witnessed the seizure of political power by the NIF through a military coup d'etat and creating the most extreme Government of the Old Sudan.

The cumulative effects of all these regional and international changes, especially the loss of the support from Mengistu's Ethiopia accompanied by an opportunistic attempt by the NIF regime and other foreign circles to destroy the SPLM/SPLA in 1991, when the SPLM/SPLA was perceived falsely to have been weakened by the loss of Ethiopian support, led to the Nasir defection of the three SPLA Commanders, Lam Akol, Riek Machar and Gordon Kong. You all know what happened.

In short these commanders got frightened, turned capitulations and sought to strike a deal with the NIF Government in collaboration with some foreign business and political interests.

In essence the Nasir announcement of a coup came as a result of a combination of motives and fears; of the lust for an imaginary false glory and power and fear of an

imaginary imminent defeat by the enemy. Time had shown beyond any reasonable doubt that the Nasir splinter group were a confused defeatist group despite all the glittering and high sounding slogans they have chanted from the first day. They had bowed down before and sold themselves out to the worst enemy of our people, the NIF regime and since then were employed to destroy our glorious Movement and to divide our people in an earnest service to the NIF Government.

We do not intend to call any person names for it is not our ethics but we must state the facts as they happened. The leaders of the Nasir group, Riek Machar and Lam Akol are responsible for very many crimes against our people. They have divided our movement at a time of international and regional changes when we needed unity most. They have divided our people on tribal lines, inciting one Southerner against the other while without shame they talk loudly about separation of Southern Sudan, while sleeping on the same bed with the enemy. What a mockery and insult to the intelligence of the people of Southern people. Beware of self-styled Southern separatists. Some of them are genuine, but a lot of them are the very scum of our society, hyenas in sheep's clothing. Why is it that the enemy is scared of us who advocated a New Sudan and sang praises for Lam Akol and Riek Machar. That alone is telling.

The situation created by the Nasir split and their practical defection to the enemy was exploited by our enemy to break up our siege of Juba, which we had planned to capture in November, 1991. Without the Nasir debacle, the SPLM/SPLA would have surely captured Juba in 1991 and the war would have been long over. Instead the enemy regained the initiative and launched a major

offensive, the so-called Saif al Ubur, which succeeded in retaking several towns from us, something which they never dreamt of at all. These set-backs also led to the desertion of William Nyuon, who got infected by the Nasir virus of defeatism, saw the SPLA as facing imminent defeat and hurried to the enemy asking for forgiveness and absorption in the Government militia.

MISTAKES AND THEIR CORRECTIONS

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

During the last eleven years since the inception of the SPLM/SPLA, our just and legitimate struggle against the various oppressive regimes in Khartoum has taken various forms and went through many obstacles. We achieved glorious victories, but we also suffered bitter set-backs. As I have just been saying, many momentous events occurred and these have had profound effects on our Movement. Over the last eleven years we have accumulated a basket full of mistakes and another basket full of victories and successes.

I believe that the basket of victories and successes is much bigger and heavier than that of mistakes and failures, and I submit that this is why we have survived and are able to hold this convention today. Yet the mistakes and failures are considerable and must be rectified, and this is the purpose of this convention, to sift through, so that we consolidate our victories and successes and rectify and eliminate the deficiencies.

It is vitally important that we soberly sit back and take stock to examine critically and with a sense of responsibility and devotion the cause and interest of our suffering people. We must review the last eleven years of our

existence as a Movement and army to discover our mistakes and correct them, and to assess and consolidate our victories so that the SPLM/SPLA forges ahead to achieve peace with justice, liberation, democracy and human dignity and thereby provide opportunity for our people to develop in freedom to realize their worth for themselves, their children and for Africa and our common humanity. It is very important to positively analyse our experience in the last eleven years because it constitute our great wealth and is part of the heritage of the struggle of our people from which we shall gather new ideas and lessons to face the future challenges awaiting us in the long and arduous road to freedom.

POLITICAL ALLIANCES

Compatriots, Brothers and Sisters in the struggle

While we pursue the armed struggle, we are not oblivious to the possibilities of achieving our objectives and peace through other means or combination of means and principled political alliances. The SPLM/SPLA, since its inception, has been deeply conscious of the importance of uniting and rallying all political forces interested in the search for a viable and just resolution of the acute national crisis. It has always been our conviction that a wider participation of and dialogue among the various political forces could lead to an acceptable solution of many issues that concern our people.

We were the first to call, in March 1985, for the holding of a National Constitutional Conference to be attended by all the political forces in the country with the aim of uniting these forces to overthrow the Numeiri May Regime and evolved a minimum program for the post-Numeiri period. Although we were let down by the

urban forces of the uprising, we never delayed in engaging in dialogue with the Democratic Alliance for National Salvation (DANS), that (wrongly) assumed they were the main force after the demise of the Numeiri regime. This dialogue with the DANS resulted in the Koka-Dam Declaration and the recommendation of Arbo Workshop.

After the June 1989 coup and formation of the present NIF Government, we immediately called, in August 1989, for the creation of a wide democratic front to defeat the Islamo-fascist NIF regime in Khartoum. Later that year the Northern opposition formed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and the SPLM/SPLA immediately joined the NDA on the basis of what unites us; namely the overthrow of the present NIF regime and its replacement by a Government of the New Sudan and thereby bring an end to the war.

In the NDA we have arrived at various agreements from the signing of the NDA Charter in London in 1991 to the Nairobi Agreement of 1992. Several issues were resolved in these agreements including a commitment by all parties to a secular constitutional system as the basis of Government in a post-NIF regime. Although this commitment on secularism on the part of the Northern parties still remains vague, it is nevertheless a step forward. In any case as long as we retain our independence of action and our armed forces we have nothing to fear and a lot of mutual gain by making alliances with the Northern opposition, individually or collectively in the NDA.

It is our humble and modest consideration and submission that remaining in the alliance affords us the follow-

ing positive benefits for our Movement:

1. Extension of the scope of political action of the movement both within the Sudan and in the Middle East.
2. Understanding of and interaction with the Northern opposition political parties. These parties will also in turn appreciate the decisive role of the SPLM/SPLA in the overthrow of the present regime and hopefully have no incentive in pursuing the subjugation of the South, Nuba Mountains and other marginalized areas in a post-NIF situation.
3. Recognition by the Northern opposition political parties in the NDA of armed struggle as a legitimate and viable means of struggle and hopefully adopt this means of struggle and coordinate with the SPLA to expedite the demise of the NIF regime.
4. Retention of all our options of a united, secular, democratic, New Sudan, of a Confederation or Association of Sovereign States, of exercising the right to self-determination, and all this at no cost to us as long as we maintain our independence of decision-making and the armed component of our Movement.
5. Even the option or the possibility of the unthinkable is retained; that a fundamental change in the thinking of the hybrid Jellaba of the Sudan to accept the concept of the New Sudan in its true meaning of a new Sudanese Commonality and a correct Sudanese identity. Large sections of the traditional ruling elites are rapidly abandoning

their archaic slave owners mentality. The streets of Khartoum sometimes shout the slogan "Hassen el Abid min el Beshir wa el Turabi"[the slave is better than Beshir and Turabi]. Well insulting as it is, it is nevertheless an indication of frustration and fundamental changes in thinking.

Yet with our continued membership of the Alliance, we expect the NDA to come out more boldly in the struggle against the present system by translating its commitment to the **armed struggle** into real action. We would like to see the National Democratic Alliance having military contingents against the NIF army in the battle fields and popular demonstrations in the streets of Khartoum and other cities. If the NDA proves incapable of meeting this challenge we encourage other political forces in the North to take up arms, for the NIF regime will only be brought down by a combination of armed struggle and popular uprising, and it should not be only the SPLA to provide the armed component.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

On the basis of the new vision and with correct tools of analysis our Movement has always been able to diagnose and study the intricate international situation, taking advantage of the possibilities and even making good use of the contradictions and correlations of international and regional forces to secure support for our struggle.

We have managed to establish very good relations with several nations of the world and were able to attain the understanding and sympathy of many people to our

cause. Our people will know how to appreciate, thank and return the gratitude to all those peoples and nations who have come to their help at this hour of great need. However, not everything in this field of foreign relations is accomplished. There is a lot left to be desired. We need to come up with yet better organizational forms and institutions for our foreign and diplomatic work, as well as for all the other sectors of our Movement.

And in this connection, I would like to underline the necessity to look inward and rely on our internal resources to conduct the war. There is a lot that we can do, and I am confident that this Convention will give this issue very serious consideration as it is on the agenda.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND SELF RELIANCE

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

The humanitarian tragedy facing our people today is very grave. The NIF Government in pursuit of their unholy war is massacring and displacing large sections of our population through indiscriminate aerial and artillery bombardment of the civilian population and camps for displaced people and conducting ethnic cleansing in the Nuba Mountains and fanning up tribal warfare through the Government sponsored militias.

The situation is critical and we must double our efforts to alleviate the suffering of our people. We must adopt multi-dimensional policies in this field to improve the efficiency and operational capacity of the SRRA and other NGOs, and formulate flexible laws that shall regulate and facilitate the work of international, and indigenous NGOs and improve security in the liberated areas.

so as to encourage the return of the displaced and the refugees to their areas when and where possible.

We also need to organise effective information mechanisms within the humanitarian wing of our Movement in cooperation with our information department so as to inform and reflect to the world any humanitarian disaster as quickly as possible. We should not just complain of lack of focus of attention by the international community to the plight of our people, we must take the challenge and make the necessary effort to draw that attention.

PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT AND THE PEACE PROCESS

Compatriots, Comrades-in-arms, Fellow Delegates

Our Movement, the SPLM/SPLA, right from its inception has maintained a very clear and principled position on the question of peaceful resolution of the conflict in our country. We have engaged in many peace talks with the Government of the day. With the current NIF Government alone we have held five different sets of peace talks.

Our engagement in the various peace talks and peaceful resolution of the conflict is principled and not opportunistic. It is based on the objective realities of our country and the objective of our Movement. The SPLM/SPLA has advanced the concept of the New Sudan as a socio-political mutation, a qualitative leap out of the Old Sudan, or else an interim political arrangement leading to a referendum on self-determination at the end of the interim period, and it is this principle that guides us in all peace talks.

We would like to assure the world and the Sudanese people through this forum that the SPLM/SPLA would be satisfied if the peace talks led to a just peace, and end the war through a peace agreement. However, I also assure foe and friend alike that we will never accept a bad peace, for as I have said before "a bad peace is worse than war". We have maintained this principled position in all peace talks, and all the delegates of this conference room know our track record. We have never betrayed you or wavered in any peace talks.

RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates, Fellow Countrymen

The other aspect of the search for peace is the search for the unity of the oppressed, for in order for the oppressed people of the marginalized areas to defeat the determined enemy of the old Sudan, they must unite. The old adage that "unity is strength" will always be valid at all times. But this must of course be principled unity, not procedural or opportunistic unity as that can never be strength but rather weakness. I am specifically talking here about reconciliation and unity with those who have defected and splited from our Movement.

We are on records from the first official reaction of our Movement to the sad news of the Nasir "BBC Radio Coup" in August 1991. Although the Nasir announcement was a mutiny, we called for reconciliation and since then our Movement has spared no effort to reconcile with Nasir and the "United" group of Riek Machar, Lam Akol and Company. There is no doubt the Nasir divisive move has caused our people incalculable harm and suffering and retarded the march of our Movement to victory.

The unity of our people is a basic necessity to our survival. We urge you to review our several failed attempts of reconciliations and to work out ways of how we could repair the damage done by the Nasir defection so as to restore the unity of our Movement and people. In addition to restoring the unity of our Movement, the people of Central, Western and Northern Upper Nile must be saved from the present anarchy caused by Riek Machar's meaningless coup. Bringing back these areas into the fold of the SPLM/SPLA also denies use of our innocent people by the NIF. And fourthly, bringing these areas back into the SPLM/SPLA reopens our route to Southern Blue Nile. Unity and reconciliation is therefore not only a moral issue, but a strategic objective of the movement, and ways and means must be found to bring back these areas into the SPLM/SPLA.

OBJECTIVES: WAYS AND MEANS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

Allow me to conclude by talking more about our objectives and ways and means to achieve them as well as our vision of how to resolve the Sudanese conflict. Our Movement has studied in depth the Sudanese problem, its root causes, development, tendencies and effects. We have also studied and worked out the possible solutions to end the conflict. On these solutions, it must be categorically stated that a solution within the context of one Sudan is only possible if the cardinal issues are addressed, and if and only if the Sudan moves away from its present basis of Old Sudan to the New Sudan, for otherwise the country will break up and none of us in the SPLM/SPLA would shed any tears.

Given our vision of the New Sudan and our methodology, and if we are to remain principled and consistent, there are only three possible objective outcomes to resolve the Sudanese crisis. I have pictured these possible solutions in diagrammatic form for easy understanding. As they say, one picture is worth more than thousands of words.

MODEL 1: NEW SUDAN MODEL. This model represents the outcome of a united secular democratic New Sudan, as envisioned by the SPLM. Such an outcome necessarily entails the total dismantling or destruction and disappearance of the Old Sudan, and on its ruins the building of a just united democratic secular multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious Sudan, which we have called the New Sudan.

MODEL 2: CONFEDERATION MODEL. This model represents a transitional situation involving interim arrangements and an interim period. The model implies a (temporary) co-existence of the two systems, the Old Sudan and the New Sudan, whereby the Old Sudan shall continue to operate in those parts of the Sudan where there is no armed resistance to it, while in all other areas, where there is civil war, an SPLM administration shall be set up.

The "Confederation Model" shows a "Sudanese Commonality" in the shaded area. The SPLM presented this model at the Abuja-2 peace talks as its "Interim Arrangements". The shaded area is reached through mutual agreement between the Old Sudan and the New Sudan, and such mutual agreement should be the subject matter of any peace talks.

Each Confederal State shall be sovereign in its laws and

SOLUTION MODALITIES FOR THE SUDANESE CONFLICT

MODEL 1:

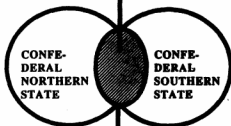
NEW SUDAN MODEL



MODEL 2:

CONFEDERATION MODEL

SUDANESE COMMONALITY
(CONFEDERATION)



MODEL 3: ARAB SUDAN MODEL

MODEL 4: BLACK AFRICAN MODEL



MODEL 5

TOTAL INDEPENDENCE MODEL



security arrangements. Hence, the controversial issue of Sharia (Islamic) Law, and any similar issues, shall be handled separately by each state according to its constitution, and no state can compel the other against its will, since the security arrangements are separate. All such matters where there is no mutual agreement are contained in the white areas of the diagram, while all such matters where mutual agreement is reached are contained in the shaded area and constitute the "Sudanese Commonality", or Confederation.

It is these common features and interests, on which the two Confederal States agree and cooperate for mutual benefit, upon which a healthy union can be built. It is these mutual benefits, and not compulsion which militate against complete separation, as a result of self-interest on the part of the two states. The SPLM concept of a New Sudan can be viewed by the help of Model 2 as the expansion of the shaded area and the gradual withering away of the white parts of the diagram, as the commonalities increase, and thus leading to completion of the New Sudan. This modality enables the Sudanese to end the war without long-term bitterness and further unnecessary loss of life, while at the same time maintaining some degree of genuine Sudanese unity based on mutually agreed commonalities and not on compulsion and domination. The objective of Model 2 is thus to achieve (temporary) co-existence between the two systems in order to enable us to immediately stop the war and attain peace, while necessary conditions are created and arrangements made for the people of the Sudan to decide their fate through a referendum on either to agree on the united secular and democratic New Sudan, or they disagree then part ways.

MODEL 3: UNITED ISLAMIC ARAB SUDAN MODEL. This Model is that of the present Khartoum system of a united Islamic Arab Sudan. This is the model which has been in force since 1956 to the present, and which has resulted in 28 years of war out of 38 years of independence. This is essentially a "War and Separatist Model", because the non-Arabs (Africans) and non-Muslims do not and will not accept an Islamic Arab Sudan. They have been resisting this model since 1955, and have gone to war twice because of this Model. They will certainly eventually separate from the rest of the Sudan if the model is continued. I have labelled it as a war as well as a separatist model because the model essentially seeks to subjugate, assimilate and/or annihilate the Black African and Non-Muslim people of Sudan, thereby causing war and leading to separation by the Africans.

MODEL 4: UNITED SECULAR BLACK AFRICAN SUDAN MODEL. This is a hypothetical model, but not far-fetched. It is to be recalled that those who registered as Africans in the 1955 census were 61%, while only 31% registered as Arabs and the remaining 8% classified under "others". These "others" were actually West Africans, the so-called "Falata", and hence the African population, according to that census, was 69% of Sudan's population. If the 31% Arabs of the Sudan can call for a united Islamic Arab Sudan as they have done so since 1956, there is no reason why the 69% Africans, both in the North and South, cannot call for a united secular Black African Sudan. However, like Model 3, this is also a war and separatist model, because the non-Africans (Arabs) would not accept a Black African Sudan. They would resist this model, go to war and

eventually separate from the rest of the Sudan.

MODEL 5: TOTAL SEPARATION MODEL. This is the separate existence or total independence model, in which the Old Sudan and the New Sudan part ways as a result of total incompatibility. It is essentially a residual model. It is clear from the diagrams that Model 3 and Model 4 lead to Model 5, while Model 2 can also lead to Model 5, if the concept of a transformed New Sudan fails to materialize.

NOTES

It is important to note that none of the solutions in the above five models is on offer. In order to realize any one of them, it must be the result of struggle. Model 3, that of a United Islamic Arab Sudan, is the one now in force, and it is in force by force. The regime, any regime that is based on Model 3, will not and cannot voluntarily abandon this model in favour of any of the other four models.

This point is important to emphasize and underline because there are some Southerners and foreigners who ask: "Why does the SPLM not go for separation?" These models are not an academic multiple choice examination question. By pronouncing separation, there is nothing that the SPLM can do more than what it has been doing since 1983.

Some people assert that Southerners would get external

better mobilize Southerners than the complicated modalities in the above diagrams. Joseph Lagu pronounced separation and that did not get him much exter-

nal support, nor did that objective mobilize Southerners any better than the SPLM has organized them.

Others shrug off this argument by saying that, well, that was then but times have changed since 1955 and 1972. We counter by saying that in the present changed times Lam Akol and Riek Machar did pronounce separation (1991), but they did not get any external support, on the contrary, they ended up formally joining the NIF regime, while Riek Machar continues to procrastinate. Lam Akol and Riek Machar did not fare well either in mobilizing Southerners as a result of their pronouncement on separation.

The SPLM objective and struggle for Model 2, that is, for a Sudanese Confederation, leads either to the New Sudan (Model 1), or to separation (Model 5), and hence by adopting this strategy, the SPLM/SPLA keeps all its options open without losing anything. All Southern separatists and all those who believe in the concept of a New Sudan should fight together since there is no contradiction, at least for now, between the two. At the end of the day, when the necessary conditions are created by the struggle, it is the people who will freely decide their destiny in an internationally monitored referendum. At that time neither the separatists nor the New Sudanists can afford to oppose the will of the people, as the will of the people is supreme and shall prevail.

ROLE OF WOMEN

Compatriots, Fellow Delegates:

For the first time our women are represented in large numbers. We must admit that the woman is the marginalized of the marginalized. The Movement must

adopt positive measures to ensure that women, who are more than fifty per cent of our population, play their rightful role in all aspects of the struggle. I am totally convinced that there is nothing that men do which women cannot do. It is only that they are denied opportunities, they are discriminated at every turn, sometimes even in the kitchen. I make this special appeal to this convention to put an end to all forms of discrimination against women.

ON SOVEREIGNTY OF CONVENTION AND RESPONSIBILITY

Fellow Delegates to the first National Convention.

You have in front of you the agenda and document of the COC. These are proposals of the COC. This Convention is Sovereign. You can reject all these proposals and bring your own agenda. You can modify them, adding new items, while deleting others; it is completely up to you. I believe that this is the first time people of the marginalized areas have come together in such a large number and broad representation to freely deliberate and decide on their destiny. This is a very demanding task and historical responsibility.

The Convention will critically review our past, learn lessons, correct our mistakes and further consolidate our strengths. We are called upon to put together all the good and creative ideas and find solutions to all the problems facing us today. We are also called upon to elect the leadership that will lead the struggle in the new phase ahead of us, and all delegates here are free to elect or be elected to any office including the highest office, that of the leader of the SPLM/SPLA and the army. The task of the Convention is enormous but we are confident

that we will accomplish what history requires of us.

MILITARY AND CIVIL INSTITUTIONS

Compatriots

For the SPLM/SPLA to forge ahead and achieve victory, we must be able to restructure and create efficient political and civil administrative institutions and reorganize our glorious army the SPLA to make it more efficient so as to deal the last blows to our enemy. Organizing an effective civil administration is vital to our success in this phase. We must know that for the civil administration to be effective it must be fully empowered. This will entail two things; there must be a relinquishing of powers by the military authorities and there may have to be a shift of some efficient cadres who are now in the army to the civil service. Both aspects may have problems that we know well. Some army officers may resist relinquishing of powers, while some officers who will be shifted to the civil service may falsely construe this to be a demotion, retirement, or pension with all the negative connotations. I ask the convention to give this matter serious thought.

NEED TO ORGANIZE POPULATION

Compatriots

Our civil population must be properly organized so that they fully participate in the struggle. We must evolve popular organizational forms to harness the vast untrapped energy of our people. Above all the Movement must put the people, the common citizen, in the centre stage of the struggle for they are the object of the liberation struggle. We need to organize our people in the liberated areas from grass roots up to the national

level into popular organizations through which they are able to mobilize their efforts for their own benefit and therefore for the benefit of the Movement. Our farmers, women, youth, and students must get organized everywhere.

RELIGION AND STATE

Although there is formal or constitutional separation of the Movement (SPLM/SPLA) on the one hand and Church and Mosque on the other, we call upon our clergy to be part and parcel of the struggle of our people according to their call, providing both spiritual and where possible material support to our people. Our church leaders and clergy must be accorded full respect as spiritual leaders of our community and I call on them to also respect their call in a harmonious relationship with the Movement in order to further advance the cause of our people.

SPLM CHAPTERS ABROAD

We must also continue to organize our people outside into SPLM Chapters abroad so that they contribute materially and politically to the liberation struggle. Meanwhile, our people in the areas controlled by the enemy must be encouraged to organize themselves into secret and clandestine organizations for they have a great untapped potential to effectively contribute in bringing down the present Islamic fascist regime of Turabi and Omer el Beshir.

I am happy that our people in the Government controlled areas were able to respond to our invitation to this historical Convention, and so there is a delegation representing our supporters and sympathizers in Government controlled areas and they will put the Convention

in full picture of the state of affairs in the NIF controlled areas as well as contribute to the deliberations of the Convention. The Convention may need to consider increasing the size of the NLC so as to accommodate our compatriots who are also fighting under very difficult conditions in enemy controlled areas, so that those inside there are given full authority to elect their representatives to the NLC.

SELF RELIANCE

Compatriots,

Our Movement has grown in the last eleven years and we need at this stage all these organisational and institutional structures so as to be able to revitalize the economic, social and cultural life of our people in the vast liberated areas and to mobilize our local resources, so as to achieve self-reliance in the struggle for the liberation of our people. As I said before, you have a historical task in front of you.

We have survived the trials and traumas of the international transition of the last few years and have proved wrong the expectations of our enemies and detractors. Our survival is a concrete and living proof of the solidity of the SPLM/SPLA, that the foundation of the SPLM/SPLA is hard rock, not sand, and that hard rock is the indestructible will of our people, which I need not prove to you. Our indomitable will and determination are shown by the fact that you walked for months to come to this Convention braving all odds and dangers on the way.

Now that you have come this far, do your historical national duty. Let me end by assuring you that our forces

in all the fronts are holding their ground despite massive and concerted attacks by the NIF forces of Turabi and Omer el Beshir. Today is April 2nd and Omer el Beshir's "mother of all dry season offensive" will end up in a "major mother of all disappointments" for the NIF. The SPLM/SPLA has come on the Sudanese political and social arena permanently and no force in the Old Sudan will ever defeat us for we are guided by correct principles and we are determined and all those rulers of Khartoum who have under-rated us in the past and sought our defeat have been thrown into the dustbin of history. The present NIF regime, I assure you, will suffer a similar fate.

Again, I greet and salute you and congratulate you for coming to the First SPLM/SPLA National Convention and for making it a success. Some of you who have radios might have heard that there is another Convention taking place in our Region. It is the 7th Pan African Congress, which opens in Kampala, Uganda next tomorrow on April 4th. Your Movement, the SPLM/SPLA, has been invited to this historical gathering of Africa, and I will leave today to attend that Congress representing you. It is a pleasant historical coincidence that our SPLM/SPLA National Convention is being held at the same time with the 7th Pan African Congress. The 6th Pan African Congress was last held in Dar es Salaam twenty years ago in 1974.

Coincidence as this may be, our invitation to the 7th Pan African Congress is another living proof of the maturity of our Movement and the correctness of our globalist vision of the New Sudan as opposed to a myopic and narrow mis-perception of our reality. I have been made

to understand that I am one of the keynote speakers at the 7th Pan African Congress. This is full recognition of the SPLM/SPLA in Africa as a genuine Liberation Movement not only for the oppressed of the Sudan, but for the whole of Africa. I will transform the speech I have just delivered here for the Pan African Congress. Meanwhile, I will leave you to deliberate on the agenda in front of you and I will join the Convention as soon as the other Convention comes to an end in the next few days.

Victory is certain!

Long Live the First SPLM/SPLA National Convention!

Long live the SPLM/SPLA!

Long live the struggle of the Sudanese People!

SPLA Oyee! I greet and salute you all,

**DR. JOHN GARANG'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH ON
HIS ELECTION AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NA-
TIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL AND NATIONAL
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BY THE CONVENTION**

12th April 1994.

Oath of office of the Chairman of NLC and NEC.

I, John Garang de Mabior, do hereby solemnly swear, in the name of the fatherland, the New Sudan, and of all our people and in the name of Almighty God, that I shall faithfully uphold the aspirations of our people and the aims and principles of the SPLM/SPLA, and to execute without fear or favour, to the best of my ability the duties of the office of Chairman of the National Liberation and Executive Councils, so help me God.

SPLA Oyee!

SPLM Oyee!

National Sudan Oyee!

National Liberation Council Oyee!

Good Evening!

First of all I would like to express a message of acceptance of your election of me and Comrade Salva Kiir and the giving of this weighty responsibility. I thank you for that. I would also like to congratulate the first National Convention and all the delegates who come here for coming here all the way from Nuba Mountains, Missiriya, Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal. It is not like in the past when you would have to look for a gun. This time, you came to look for a conference which would come on forward so that we can meet, mull over and re-dedicate ourselves to achieve our objectives. This is the message of this convention.

It is very significant that we are able to hold this convention in April 1994 when Beshir and the NIF have launched their biggest offensive in eleven years, what they call the "**mother of all battles**". I assure you in this august Convention that their mother of all offensives will turn out to be the mother of all disappointments.

The successful holding of this Convention is significant in many aspects which you have discussed in your Committees. It renews us. I would like to remind ourselves of what we have done here in this Convention. We have done many things. First of all we have given the child a name. Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria, Southern Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan and Upper Nile now have a name - **The New Sudan**. When we talk, when we fight, when we struggle, the conventional saying for some people is that we are fighting for Southern Sudan. Southern Sudan is just an element of the New Sudan. We are fighting for the New Sudan. It is important to have a name. We all have names here. There was a confusion before but now we have a specific name. We have been baptised, for the Christians. We have a name. Our name is New Sudan which amalgamates the five regions. But let us not be misunderstood in the rest of the regions of what we call the old Sudan. We have interest there also. We can compare it to a nail. We are like a new nail. When a nail becomes old an rotten and another one comes from underneath it, it is a matter of time and it takes over the whole finger. So let us start with the New Sudan and we shall see in future whether we can advance forward or not - is it enough or not enough. Let us complete the liberation of the new Sudan of five reasons first then we shall decide in future whether or not to advance forward. So that is a great achievement you have made.

In the Legal Affairs committee, we have talked about laws

governing society. This has been lacking in the Movement for a long time. We had some few laws but not enough to protect our citizens. So now we have laws governing the civil and public institutions, and we have laws governing the SPLA. We have separated civil from military affairs so that our people do suffer in between. As the Chief said before, when the needle of a gun is lost, a soldier is fined ten heads of cattle. We do not know which law is saying that. The SPLA has no such a law. If anybody does that, he is a thief and we shall call him a thief. Thus these are important resolutions of the Legal Affairs Committee. So we shall restructure ourselves. Our civilians have suffered a great deal. We have now put the citizen at centre stage. He is the one that liberation should serve not the one that should suffer from liberation.

With respect to the Political Affairs Committee we have restructured ourselves. We now have a National Convention which is the one sitting here. This is our highest organ. It represents the people. So we are truly transforming the SPLM-SPLA after it has asserted itself. Abraham Lincoln has said that a government must be of the people, for the people and by the people. Our Movement the SPLM-SPLA must be of the people, for the people and by the people. The highest organ is the National Convention which is the first National Convention of the SPLM-SPLA. This is by law. The National Convention as you have seen here comes from a broad base from all the five regions and in each region everyone is represented. We can say that this Convention represents the will of the people of the five regions. So although we are not sovereign, we shall act as if we are sovereign because we have been mandated.

After the National Convention, we have the National Liberation Council to represent the National Convention in its absence. So the will of the people continues to exist although the

National Convention is not sitting. That is the task of the National Liberation to represent the will of the people. They have just sworn in front of this Convention that they will do this.

We have the National Executive Council which will execute. As the Chairman of the National Executive Council I would like to pledge to this Convention that we will execute the will of the Convention and therefore the will of the five regions and the will of the rest of Sudan very faithfully.

The Military Affairs Committee also set. Although they have not completed their work they will. It is a technical work. What I would like to emphasize is the necessity for us to transform the SPLA to a strong branch of the movement that will achieve its military objective. In order to do this, we must not just be quantitative. We must be qualitative so that our people are assured of the achievement of their objective because it is the SPLA as an army which will crush the old Sudan. We shall do this as SPLM-SPLA.

We have also talked about public civil services. The civil services Committee have deliberated over many various things which we shall need to study and see how we can improve them. Examples include the improvement of our information services and the possibility of reviving Radio SPLA. Without a voice, we are unable to speak. There are many suggestions. In fact, I would like to assure this convention that we will do everything in our power to see to it that this year we will have Radio SPLA. Since you have authorised us to borrow, if this requires borrowing, we will borrow. If it can be done by begging, we will beg. The important thing is that Radio SPLA should work in the shortest possible time. One can also rent. If we are able to collect half a tin of gold as one speaker had suggested, this option would be possible. If you go to someone

as request to use his radio for payment, no one will refuse you because they want money. It is when you go to beg that it can be refused. But when you ask to rent with money, they will give you.

The Finance Committee stressed the necessity for self reliance. I would like again to stress this point in my acceptance speech. We have called for a New Sudan consisting of these five regions as a beginning. We have called for self reliance. We have also called for self-determination. That is what it means when we declare the five regions as sovereign. That means you are determining your destiny. We cannot ask for self-determination if we are not self-reliant unless there is some magical way of getting our freedom. There is no magical way of getting our freedom. We must struggle. We cannot struggle by begging other people because our destiny then will depend on them. Our destiny must be in our hands. For our destiny to be in our hands, we must finance ourselves. So the Finance Committee, the National Executive Council and the national Liberation Council must take this issue seriously and explore all ways and means to be able to finance the war because we cannot do it by the help of others. We have lots of resources. Borrowing on mortgage exists. Our own production is possible. We can collect our own revenues. There are many ways in which we can raise finances so that we stand on our feet and we are not swept away by anybody. Self-reliance will guarantee our independence. It is precisely independence that we fight for.

The National Executive Council will be formed according to the laws promulgated. It is not possible for me to form the National Executive Council now. It needs consultations and so we need time for that. The National Liberation Council is already in place and they will need to approve the National Executive Council.

I would like to talk briefly about the National Liberation Council. It is composed as you have seen of various nationalities, backgrounds, and regions. I was doing some arithmetic and I came up with some percentages. Seventy five per cent [132] of the National Liberation Council is freely elected. The appointees are forty eight; thirty two by the armed forces and ten by myself. So let nobody accuse us of dictatorship. These were free elections which were held here today. I also noticed that the women form ten percent [18/180] of the National Liberation council. This is a small beginning. In my view, eighteen out of one hundred and eighty is too small for the women because the women constitute more than fifty percent of our society and have a lot of potential which the movement is not tapping. So I would like to congratulate our women for this small gain of ten percent. But you should continue to struggle so that in the next National Liberation Council you may increase you percentage, hopefully to thirty, forty or even fifty percent.

The first National Convention will be over possibly today as the Chairman of the Convention said before. This Convention was held here in Equatoria. We would also want to rotate the holding of our National Conventions and our national Liberation Councils. We meet once in a year in the National Liberation Council. Maybe we can hold the next meeting in Bahr el Ghazal, the next meeting we do in Upper Nile, the next meeting we do in Nuba Mountains, the next meeting we do in Southern Blue Nile. We rotate like that so that we take the Movement to all places, all corners, all the hearts and under all the trees of our country.

We will form the National Executive Council and present it to the National Liberation Council in the next one month; let us say by the 16th of May which is our eleventh anniversary. We can take that as a benchmark in which the National Liberation

council sits. By that time the National Executive Council should have been formed. The forty eight nominations will have been made so that the full National Liberation Council will formally sit. We will meet here first for me to say hallo to you before you go. But after that we shall sit formally to approve the National Executive Council. In terms of its composition, the National Executive Council must be reflective of our society. It must reflect the unity of our people. It must reflect consistency with the objectives of our Movement. It must reflect efficiency so that they are able to do their job. I pledge to you that the team that I will select, will be selected very carefully in order to advance the interests of our people.

I would like to underline the necessity of the unity of our people. Therefore I would like to underline again what other people have said before about an amnesty to allow people who left the Movement. We now and here declare a general amnesty. All those who have come or will come back to the Movement will enjoy all their rights of citizenship without any discrimination.

We will base the unity of our people on the people themselves as I said last time, and not on unity of organizations. It is people we unite not organizations and we in the National Executive Council will proceed to bring about the unity of our people with an open heart so that we achieve our objectives and so that the common enemy does not exploit our internal weaknesses.

I would like to assure the Convention and the National Liberation Council that he prospects for our victory are great and real. By this Convention we have cleansed ourselves. We did not come here to the Convention to destroy the house. We came to clean it. You have done this and this is your victory. We shall proceed now with a rejuvenated SPLM/SPLA. The confidence that we will win is not based on fantasy. It is based on reality.

We will win and we will establish the New Sudan. You have been hearing over BBC as I also heard when I was in Kampala that our forces under Oyai have been chased. I am happy to announce to you that as we were talking here yesterday, Comrade Oyai repulsed the enemy offensive. Today on the 12th of April, their dry season offensive is coming to an end. We are going into May and they have not been able to defeat us as they thought. Yesterday, their casualties were more than two hundred. We captured 12.7 and 82 mm motars from them. So our confidence is not based on wishful thinking. We are powerful even though some of us do not realize it. That power which we have is more in us today because of this Convention. Someone can be strong without knowing he is strong. Ladies and gentlemen we are strong. Our strength is known more outside than inside SPLA areas because we take things, including our victories for granted. Outside there they are not taken for granted.

I just came from Kampala. I had gone to attend the Pan African Congress. We went from here as I said last time in a fighting mood. Indeed we went and fought there and we defeated the Sudan government in the Pan African Congress. The issue of the Sudan dominated the Pan African Congress. You might have heard over the BBC that the main speakers included President Museveni, the OAU Secretary Salim Ahmed Salim and your SPLA was among the top five speakers. We presented the five models which I presented to you here in my opening speech to this Convention. We took the two Conventions to be one thing. So this convention is also an African Convention. Whether this is coincidence or not, they came at one time. The last Pan African Convention was held in 1974. It is twenty years since then and now we are holding this convention at the same time as the Pan African Convention. I told them that. The Africans in diaspora stood solidly with us

in that Pan African Congress. One of the principle issues that was discussed was the principle of self-determination. This is a general principle for the whole world. It is not just for the Sudan. But the Sudan government of the NIF took it for self-determination for our New Sudan. We argued on the matter of principle and one of them was saying "it is a matter of life and death for us". My response was that why should this universal principle be a matter of life and death for them. The Africans in diaspora stood with us to the end and we were able to push [..... end of tape].

[This speech was transcribed from a tape recording by the Department of Information. We regret any errors and the omission at the end of the speech.]