

uphold justice and remove cruelty and evil. In the Surah Al-Dukhan (44), the said Verse 38-39, Allah made it clear that the universe was not created for nothing. The universe was created for a reason. . . . It was created to uphold the truth and justice. If we accept the fact that the universe was created to uphold justice, we, being one of Allah's creations, should also uphold justice. In fact, upholding justice is one of our responsibilities as a human being. . . .

Disregard for justice

The world's present chaos is a result of the international community's disregard for the principles of justice. . . . Again, the Bosnian experience can be cited as an example. The weak Bosnian Muslims are not allowed to obtain arms even for self-defense. The Serbs, who are already strong, are allowed to increase their weaponry. Now, the big powers have agreed to give the territories forcibly taken by the Serbs to them without due regard to the rights of the Bosnian Muslims. . . .

Legal history has proven that the process of making laws into statutory legislations was initiated and implemented by Muslims. . . . But it should be noted that since the process of making Islamic laws into statutory legislations was done by people who are not immune to imperfections, adjustments and corrections on these documents need to be made from time to time, depending on time and place. If there is a perception today that Islam is extremist or cruel, the reason is not that Islam is cruel, but because there are Muslims who, when in power, become arrogant and do not abide by the teachings of the Koran and the sayings of the Prophet (Peace Be Unto Him) and the examples of the rule of the Prophet (Peace Be Unto Him) and well-known caliphs in Islamic history. . . .

Islamic countries, including Malaysia, should strengthen themselves. To achieve this, the important thing is to ensure that a fair and efficient administration be established so that our achievement is at par with that of other developed countries. Only after we have developed, can we undertake preparation to strengthen our defense capability to be on the same level with that of other developed nations in all fields. . . . If today certain countries and races, such as the Serbs and the Jews, dare and are able to suppress and terrorize, the reason is because the Islamic countries are all weak. . . . Hence, before we Muslims blame others, we should question ourselves on our Islamic practice, especially in respect of ensuring fair administration. If Islamic justice is not evident and is difficult to be accepted by all, then we are partly to be blamed. . . .

I hope this conference will succeed in clarifying the concept and principles of justice in Islam so that any misconceptions and negative image can be corrected, and that the world can learn and gain from the wisdom of Islamic justice which can overcome the prevailing injustices caused by the arrogance of the present world powers.

Africa

German media hear of Sudan conference

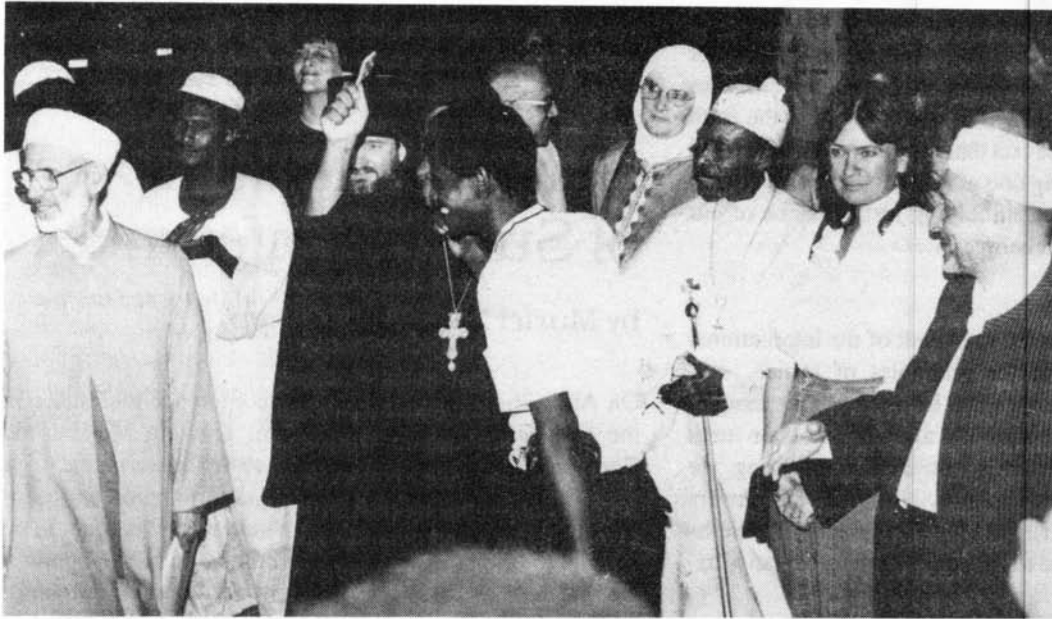
by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

On April 26-30, an extraordinary conference took place in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, drawing Muslim and Christian leaders from 31 countries to deliberate on the ways of thwarting scenarios for religious confrontation and hammering out programs for fruitful ecumenical dialogue. In an attempt to bring the news of the initiative to public opinion, the Sudanese embassy in Bonn, convoked a press conference on June 9, inviting members of the German delegation to report back on their findings. From Khartoum, former Foreign Minister Hashim Osman was also on hand.

The brief remarks of Minister Osman, who had previously served as cultural attaché in Bonn, provided background on the Khartoum government's economic success since it took power in 1989, in bringing the country to food self-sufficiency and even surplus agricultural production. He reported on the government's position in the ongoing peace talks in Abuja, reiterating that the civil war in the south, a vestige of British colonial rule, was political, not religious. He repeatedly invited the press representatives to "visit Sudan and see for yourselves" what is really going on.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who had headed up a Schiller Institute delegation to the Khartoum interreligious dialogue, stated that "religious tolerance is a reality" in Sudan, much to the consternation of the journalists. She identified three principal grounds for the British-inspired anti-Sudan press campaign: first, that the Sudanese government, cognizant of International Monetary Fund and World Bank policies to write off Africa, has decided to seek economic development independent of such institutions, a course which, if successful, would make it into a breadbasket for the continent, and set an example for the rest of Africa and the developing sector; second, that Sudan has rejected the negative aspects of western "culture," seeking in its own cultural roots the means to bring the economic development into coherence with a moral ordering of society; and finally, that it has launched an effort to end the civil war in the south, a war stoked by British interests eager to seize the raw materials and agricultural potential of the region.

If Sudan succeeds in its economic and political experiment, she said, it would thwart the plans of certain Anglo-American think-tanks to portray "Islam" as the new enemy image.



Helga Zepp-LaRouche (second from right) at an international conference in Sudan in April on religious cooperation, with other conference delegates.

‘Religious coexistence’

Ahmed von Denffer, a German Muslim from the Munich Islamic Center, and Christian Hoffmann, a German Muslim responsible in the Christian Democratic Union for public relations and media work, reported on their experience as delegates to the Khartoum gathering. Von Denffer, whose interest was more religious, related anecdotes from a field trip to the southern city of Wau, which painted a different picture of religious life from that portrayed by the mass media. He reported on informal discussions with villagers, some of whom had Christians, Muslims, and animists within one family. Hoffmann drew on the Sudanese constitution to explain that citizenship in Sudan is not based on “religious brotherhood” but on the concept of the “natural citizen,” whose status is equal, regardless of religious affiliation. He challenged the prejudices of the German press when he noted that the Sudanese concept of “religious coexistence” (not “religious tolerance”) not only allows for Christians to occupy federal ministerial and governor posts, but also sanctions Christian church services televised nationally. He asked the audience to reflect on whether they could imagine Muslim Friday prayers being broadcast on German TV.

“What about the Pope’s trip?” objected a ZDF television journalist. “Why didn’t Khartoum comment on it?” “What about religions other than those recognized by Islam?” blurted a youth from Amnesty International; “Would the Bahai cult have permission to live in Sudan?” The Khartoum diplomat answered that during the pope’s visit, 1 million Sudanese had thronged to an open air mass he celebrated, something which the Holy Father apparently had not expected. As for Bahai, “Let them come to the Sudan, if they want.”

One journalist said, in response to the former minister’s briefing on perspectives for peace at the Abuja talks, that he

“was quite sure Abuja would not lead to an overall solution.” Therefore, he asked, “what about interim solutions, like safe havens for the Christians?” This proposal, being floated in western think-tanks, was put forward by another journalist, who had the gall to reference the “safe havens” for Muslims in Bosnia as a precedent. The minister replied by asking, first, who should police such safe havens? More to the point, he insisted that since Christians and Muslims in Sudan are intermingled, often in the same family, no one wants to segregate them; the challenge lies in finding a political solution to the war, which is political, not religious, in origin.

One Arab journalist added, “Now I see from what von Denffer and Mrs. LaRouche have said that the ‘religious persecution’ line being spread by the press, is but a pretext to prepare some military intervention.” He asked: “How can we change the way the mass media report, so as to avert such catastrophes?”

“Take up the invitation to visit Sudan,” was von Denffer’s answer. Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche seconded his advice, and explored the implications more deeply. In addition to praising the quality of political debate she had observed in Sudan during her trip, she emphasized the optimism characterizing Sudanese leaders, who are seeking new technologies and techniques for improving crop yields and animal husbandry.

As to proposals for safe havens, Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche said bluntly that although the United Nations charter might sound good, the five permanent Security Council members run the show and have turned the U.N. into a tool of the oligarchy. As an example, she identified the 1992-93 intervention into Somalia as a “Bush-designed State Department operation to establish a beachhead in the Horn of Africa, poised for future operations against Islam.”