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8 June 1979

TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
(FOUO 24/79)



NEAR
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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

ARAB INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA INCREASING

London THE MIDDLE EAST in English May 79 pp 16,18

[Article by Raghida Dergham]

[Text] The war in Uganda brought to the fore Arab-African tensions which have been simmering in the background for several years. Quite apart from a long history of Arab domination of black Africa which leaders of the states south of the Sahara cannot entirely forget, the feeling has been growing since 1973 that the Arab states never properly recompensed Africa for the losses they incurred by breaking ties with Israel.

Increasing Arab involvement in African affairs, the Moroccans and Egyptians in Zaire, the Libyans in Chad and now the Libyans and Algerians in Uganda, have done little to allay fears and much to revive old memories. And recent racial conflict between blacks and Arabs in Mauritania, Chad and to some extent Sudan is just a reflection of the overall situation.

Libya's dispatch of troops to Uganda to prop up the unpopular and increasingly precarious regime of Idi Amin was justified by the Libyan Ambassador to the UN on the grounds of "co-operation with the legitimate Government which asked for help". But there were undoubtedly also Libyan interests to protect. For Libya had invested a lot both financially and politically in Uganda. Libyans had to some extent taken over from the Asian business community expelled in 1971. Moreover, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi saw Uganda as a possible rear base for the Palestinians and as a useful ally in his feud with Egypt and Sudan.

This naturally prompted Egypt to back Tanzania and support included the offer of 10 MiG-17 jet fighters with their crews during the visit of Vice-President Husni Mubarak to Dar es-Salaam earlier this year.

But Libya's policy was short-sighted and ill-advised. By supporting a leader who was an embarrassment to the whole of black Africa it confirmed suspicions that Africa was becoming little more than a battlefield for the feuding Arab states as well as for the superpowers.

Algeria alone, of all the Arab states seems to have been aware of this and it supported Tanzania partly to try to repair some of the damage done by Libya. One Algerian official stressed to *The Middle East* that "Algeria will not permit any African country to allege that the Arabs helped Uganda's Amin. Condemn any country by name not by region."

Algeria is aware of how little it would take to persuade the Africans to resume their ties with Israel if the present atmosphere does not improve, especially in the wake of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty.

Even so, its involvement in the Ugandan episode was not entirely altruistic, for it can hardly be coincidence that Tanzania recently recognised the Saharan Democratic Republic.

Moreover Algeria's support for Tanzania pulled in Morocco on the side of Uganda - the extension into black Africa of yet another inter-Arab dispute.

Even so, Algeria's involvement can perhaps be more easily justified than that of

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the other three Arab states. Its long-standing alliance with socialist Tanzania and Angola in any case has a certain logic about it.

Nevertheless, all the Arab states, including Algeria, will have to be a little more circumspect in their dealings with black Africa in future if relations are not to deteriorate beyond the point of no return.

As Leslie Harriman, Nigeria's Ambassador to the UN told *The Middle East*, "I am concerned about any Arab-African intervention in African affairs, be it Egypt's and Morocco's intervention in the Shaba Province or Libya's in Uganda."

The Arab states of North Africa belong to the Organisation of African Unity as well as to the Arab League (except Egypt) and black Africans feel that they should settle their own differences before they look southwards.

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NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

POLISARIO ASKS MOROCCAN, MAURITANIAN TROOPS TO LEAVE SAHARA

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 30 Apr-15 May 79 pp 14-16

[Article by Hassen Zenati]

[Text] Rabat's latest attempted maneuvers in the Maghreb are fraught with consequences. Is it really possible to go on in a situation that is neither war nor peace?

Was peace really close enough to touch, for the Saharans and Mauretians? Is war truly at the gates? Can the Polisario afford to waste time where, quite obviously, the new strongman of Nouakchott, LtCol Ahmed Ould Bouceif, is scrambling to gain it?

All these are questions that have been with us since the April coup in Mauretania. The answers are not what one might call simple. And yet, there is something like naïveté in talking of "a situation that is neither war nor peace," and something of the absurd in calling for peace before one has renounced war.

Theoretically, if you believe the public statements of the new men in charge in Mauretania, all that stands between the Boucief team and that of Ould Salek is a mere nuance. It is, however, a fairly sizable nuance.

The fact is that with Ould Boucief at the head of the Military Council for National Salvation, there is a new political logic taking over, which looks very like a sister to the one that was dumped on 10 July 1978, when Mokhtar Ould Daddah fell.

He, too, wanted peace, in compliance with the military alliance with Morocco, for which the only conceivable peace in the Western Sahara is the unconditional surrender of the Saharans and the annexation of their territory. On this count, Ould Boucief has pulled back a good deal by comparison with Ould Salek. The

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new factor here is that Ould Daddah was fighting the Polisario Front -- and losing every day -- whereas Ould Boucief has the advantage of a "no-war, no-peace" situation, which he hopes to make the most of. But can that last?

Be that as it may, there is deep disappointment among the people in Mauritania. Paradoxically, reaction is divided between fear of an immediate resumption of hostilities, with their inevitable train of death and destruction after 9 months of relative calm, and the desire to break the cease-fire, so as to keep the new team from getting a breathing-spell and digging in deeper in the Moroccan impasse.

The desire for peace, clearly voiced by all the people -- be they riverbank dwellers or desert nomads -- after the fall of Ould Daddah has been thwarted. But, like an echo, there is growing popular acclaim for those men, civilians or military now ousted from government but still at liberty, who wanted to take practical steps toward opening the peacemaking process with Polisario.

They are, according to reports from the Mauritanian capital, fast becoming the objects of a genuine cult, which places some binding constraints on the new team in power. To what degree, come to think of it, has the new team actually made allowances for this, by keeping Ould Salek, will-he, nill-he, in its ranks, albeit consigning him to a purely decorative rôle? Because, precisely, Ould Salek still represents, rightly or wrongly, the reassuring symbol of a confused longing for peace that is still very much alive among the people.

The truth is that the zigzag path of the previous strongman of Mauritania was difficult to follow, but at least his objective was clearly stated: get the country out of a ruinous war that has wearied it to death, even threatening its fragile political and social equilibrium. Do it in accord with Rabat, if possible. Do it alone, if he must.

Trial of Strength

Whatever reproaches one may lay at his door today for his hesitant way of moving along the path of peace, for his shilly-shallying, for his lack of daring while his interlocutors in the Sahara were holding out a thousand lifelines to him, he must be given full marks for the fact that he wound up concentrating on his contacts with Polisario rather than pursuing what was certainly an illusory "global peace" which his Moroccan partner and ally apparently was not even seriously considering.

His mind was made up on that count last September, after a stormy meeting with Hassan II. The two men had already reached the edge of an open break, with the king quite willing to threaten the

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Mauritanian president with direct intervention by the Moroccan expeditionary corps stationed in Mauritania if he dared move alone toward peace.

And in fact there were several skirmishes at the time between the royal forces and Mauritanian troops, which were quickly charged up to "inevitable friction" or "irresponsible behavior."

Ould Salek knew, as of then, that he was caught in a delicate race against the clock, and that Hassan II would try, one day or another, to get rid of him. He was also convinced that nothing could be done with Polisario so long as Moroccan troops were occupying his country. Hence his decision to send them home and, unilaterally, to set a deadline for their withdrawal from Mauritania at the end of last month.

The trial of strength was on. The cabinet reshuffle Ould Salek performed on 20 March -- eliminating simultaneously the leaders of the two opposing factions who had been squabbling vainly since last July within the military Council for National Recovery -- would, he thought, allow him to move a little faster along what seemed to be his own path to a separate peace with Polisario. That is believable. What is certain, in any case, is that, with the Moroccan albatross off his neck, Ould Salek would have had a lot more elbow-room.

How did things start to fall apart? What chain reaction led to the emergence of still a third character?

There is a rumor current in the Mauritanian capital that Ould Boucief decided to steal a march following a discreet warning from the Moroccan ambassador to Nouakchott that his name was on a list of people to be arrested on 10 April, although he had just been taken back into the government. True or false, nobody knows now and maybe we shall never know.

Anecdotes and intentions hidden or affirmed on both sides, a delicate chess game is now being played out in Mauritania. Its main characters are not necessarily those visible at center-stage. France is in it, for one.

Despite discretion and his diplomacy, there was considerable comment on the coincidence between the brief stopoff by Mr René Journiac, the Elysée's secret diplomacy boss, in Mauritania and the start of the coup against Ould Salek. The Saharan leaders, for their part, pointed out that the rise of Ould Boucief in Nouakchott was hailed (or at least accompanied by) a statement that can most moderately be described as curious from Mr Jean Francois-Poncet, the French foreign minister, attributing the conflict in the Western Sahara to a quarrel between Algeria and Morocco.

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That is an old argument which seemed to have been dropped by Paris since Giscard d'Estaing told a February press conference that he favored a "political solution," and admitted that this was a "problem of decolonization," even quoting in passing, and for the first time, the Polisario.

How does one explain this hesitation waltz? Paris seems in no hurry to respond to the Saharans' questions, which may require a little more than a friendly little speech when the French minister pays a call on Rabat. What is more evident is that France was opposed, tooth and nail, to any separate Saharan-Mauritanian peace reached without it, and leaving Morocco alone against the Saharan fighters and against... world opinion.

The Morocco Lobby

France, though apparently it feels that the war in the Sahara has gone on long enough (hurting its economic and trade relations with Algeria, without bringing in the expected rewards from Morocco, much less Mauritania), considers itself properly on the receiving end in any "peace dynamics," and even hopes to pull the strings.

It is clearly indicative that it is not on the issue of peace or war that the Mauritanian backers of a bigger rôle for France in their country have come out into the open. But it was by play on the ominous string of the "cultural conflict" between Moors and Blacks, and waving the notion like a sword of Damocles over Ould Salek's head, that the downfall of the previous régime was brought about. It is significant, too, that this "cultural conflict" seems to have vanished since Ould Salek took over the government, which says a lot about the aims and means of secret diplomacy.

Missing from the scene for 3 years, the Americans are stirring in the region again, with Hassan II's military position plus social pressures feeding their anxiety.

The Morocco Lobby in Washington, which brought formidable pressure to bear on the Congress to get authorization for Morocco to use American weapons beyond its own borders against the Saharan fighters, managed in part to achieve its goals. The Moroccan general staff is not doing without right now, but it would like this piratical practice to be legalized and made permanent. In similar vein, we have just learned that there have been American officers for some time on an ultra-secret mission in El-Ayoune, capital of Western Sahara. Maybe they're there to maintain the Moroccan F-5s?

Will they go so far as to provide direct military aid to rescue the Rabat régime from a military debacle?

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So here we are again, right back where we started a few months ago. Are we squaring the circle?

In any case, so far as Polisario is concerned, there can be no question of renewed talks with either Morocco or Mauritania until all their troops have been pulled out of the Western Sahara. "Making contacts for the sake of contacts no longer interests us," warned the Front's secretary-general, Mr Mohamed Abdelaziz. There you have the end of one misunderstanding.

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EGYPT

'GUARDIAN' CORRESPONDENT INTERVIEWS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

London THE GUARDIAN in English 25 May 79 p 21 LD

[Interview with Osama al-Baz, Egyptian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, and Butrus Ghali, Egyptian Deputy Foreign Minister in Cairo by Eric Silver: "A Longing for Peace, But No Desire for Friendship"; date not given]

[Excerpts] In an interview with THE GUARDIAN, Osama al-Boz, the undersecretary for foreign affairs, vigorously rejected Menachem Begin's programme for Palestinian self-rule under Israeli sovereignty. "It is utterly unacceptable to us," he said, "and we are not going to talk on this basis. It is contrary to the letter and spirit of Camp David. If they behave in this way, it means they don't want us to reach any agreement."

Al-Baz, a short, wiry diplomat who talks like a machine gun, blamed Israel for the intensity of the Arab reaction. "Arab hostility serves no interest but that of Israel," he insisted. "Most of the Israeli actions or statements before the ink was dry on the peace treaty were designed to give the message to the Arabs that nothing was going to happen on the Palestinian plane, that this was a separate agreement. Every statement by Begin and his aides was designed to increase and deepen the rift in the Arab world and to scare away all the moderate elements among the Palestinians."

But the Egyptian negotiator was not yet writing off the chances of reaching an agreement before the twelve-month deadline set by the peace treaty. The situation, he argued, was dynamic not static.

"We will not allow Israel to get away with establishing a phoney municipal council for the West Bank and Gaza under the banner of self-governing authority. It must be a real self-governing authority with genuine control. The present position of the Israeli Government is untenable. They cannot maintain it in negotiations.

"They know very well that no Palestinian can accept this formula. Egypt will never deliver the West Bank to Israel. We want to deliver the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinians in an orderly manner that does not invite violence or hatred between the two sides."

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Al-Baz disclosed that the Egyptian team would demand a moratorium on settlement during the negotiations. "We think," he said, "that the Jewish settlements should not stay after the five-year transitional phase to Palestinian self-determination. They should be evacuated like the settlements in Sinai."

While recognizing Israel's anxiety about its security, Al-Baz refused to contemplate continued Israeli control over the West Bank's external and internal security, as required by the Begin plan. "These fears," he maintained, "are not going to be eliminated by territorial expansion or occupation. Don't tell me that any average Israeli thinks it would not be possible to guarantee their security by such measures as limiting armament, demilitarisation and international inspection."

"Occupation is an act of violence. They are not sending the philharmonic to the occupied territories, they are sending thirteen thousand armed men. This act of violence invites counter-violence."

For all his tough talk, Al-Baz acknowledged Egypt's dilemma of negotiating by proxy for unwilling Palestinians. He did not exclude the possibility that self-rule might have to be introduced piecemeal in Gaza, where Egypt had legal as well as historic and geographic connections. It governed the strip under the terms of United Nations Security Council resolution from 1949 to 1967, but did not annex it.

He insisted, however, that the separation of Gaza and the West Bank must apply only to the phasing of implementation.

Another member of Sadat's team, the Deputy Foreign Minister Butrus Ghali, argued that just as the French had been forced to eat their words and give up Algeria, so Israel would have to accept the creation of a Palestinian entity in the West Bank and Gaza.

Unconvincingly, Ghali also put Arab opposition to the peace process in historic perspective: "There have been thirty-three inter-Arab disputes since 1945. Look at the way those disputes have been solved. We believe that this inter-Arab dispute will be solved more easily. Now we are at the peak of the inter-Arab confrontation."

Sadat's negotiators know, nonetheless, that they have few cards to play in the Palestinian cause. They will make Israel pay for every shuffle towards normal relations. This weekend's opening of borders and a civil air corridor will be no more than symbolic. There are still no direct communications between Jerusalem and Cairo.

Ultimately the Egyptians are putting their money on Washington. They hope Carter has staked too much on a successful treaty to let his Israeli proteges settle for less. In an election year the equation is finely balanced. The United States President must consolidate one of his few foreign policy achievements, but dare he alienate the Jewish vote? How far can he go in putting Saudi oil supplies at risk?

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On their own, the Egyptians will in the end confront Begin with the choice between territory and peace. "They will have to give up the West Bank and Gaza," Butrus Ghali insisted. "Otherwise they will have no peace." You will, however, find well-placed sceptics in Cairo who suspect that Sadat, with or without the connivance of his Foreign Ministry hawks, will back down first.

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LIBYA

QADHDHAFI WORKS TO RESTRUCTURE SOCIETY

London THE MIDDLE EAST in English May 79 pp 53-54

[Text]

Colonel Muammar Qaddafi has been ruling Libya for almost 10 years. The kind of regime he is trying to establish, his foreign policy and the use he is making of Libya's oil wealth remain a mystery not only to the West but also to many in the Arab world. Andrew Lycett looks at Qaddafi's pre-anniversary efforts to re-instill the spirit of Islamic socialism and direct democracy into both home and foreign affairs following a period of comfortable slack in revolutionary fervour.

With the 10th anniversary of his revolution coming up on 1 September, Libyan leader Colonel Qaddafi has been at pains to consolidate and extend his rule. Until now the Socialist Peoples Libyan Arab Jamahariyah, (SPLAJ), has existed despite, perhaps even because of, the often glaring contradictions between its rhetoric and its reality.

Businessmen have grown rich as a result of massive development programmes financed by oil revenues. In spite of daily propaganda to the contrary, ordinary Libyan people have grown complacent, preferring the ease of their subsidised city life, with free housing and social services to the hardships of true revolutionary activity particularly the grind of working in desert fields for agricultural self-sufficiency.

Recently Qaddafi has seen fit to reassert the revolutionary credentials of his regime.

His home constituency had been getting slack, invalidating some of his efforts to export his Third Universal Theory. The perpetuation of a rich and powerful merchant class in Libya provided a focus of opposition to his regime and his ideas, and had to be curbed.

So last December, in a speech to the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Qaddafi spelled out a new order of things. After years of ambivalence on the role of private commerce and wealth in the Libyan economy, a further and uncompromising dose of radical egalitarianism was introduced.

In accordance with the theoretical precepts of the Green Book, (the second part of which - concerning economics - had been published earlier in the year), free commerce, wages and rents were to be abolished. "They are bound to vanish so

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that no person will be a parasite on another," Qaddafi said. "This way justice, equality, security, freedom and happiness will be achieved."

In advocating renewed economic revolution, he clearly had certain targets in mind. "Contractors have realised large profits after the revolution as a result of massive projects, since the country had earlier been devoid of developmental activities in all fields. The 10 year period given by the revolution to merchants, contractors and others for making gains was also sufficient for the maturation of ideas which led to the appearance of the Green Book and its theses. There can be no truce after this period."

This signalled the start of the second phase of the latest economic revolution which began earlier last year with Libyan workers taking over factories and offices. Managers and businessmen were sent packing and ordinary people asserted their rights, defined in the Green Book, to partnership in industry.

The basic units of the Libyan revolution, popular congresses, were set up at places of work throughout the country, and many businessmen fled while the going was good. And just in time, for not only were they dispossessed of their commercial assets, but Qaddafi made it clear that they would no longer be able to rely on rents from urban flats or rural farms. Each Libyan was to be limited to one dwelling, which the state would help him to buy, furnish, and, if it was a farm, make productive. But the excesses of private landlordism were to be abolished.

Concurrently with this extension of the economic revolution came consolidation of political development. For three years Qaddafi has been talking about handing over power to his nominally democratic creation of basic peoples' congresses.

In the first part of his Green Book, he emphasized the failure of Western parliamentary democracy in which the wishes of 51 per cent overrule those of the other 49 per cent. The solution he offers is a system of popular congresses through which decisions can be thrashed out at all levels. Delegates are appointed to carry the will of the masses to higher authorities and congresses, culminating in the General Peoples Congress, an annual decision-making gathering responsible to the whole country.

In their first two years, however, the congresses were more a show piece than a reality. Undoubtedly decisions have been taken at all levels, and even Qaddafi's policies have been questioned and rejected. But it is impossible to achieve the smooth working of such a system overnight, thus meetings of the General Peoples Congress have seemed stage-managed rather than spontaneous. And it is difficult to generate local decision-making in a country so dependent on a single, centralised source of revenue for its development--oil.

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But Qaddafi is doggedly determined. In the past year he has reformed the system, setting up 46 basic units. They will each discuss their needs and priorities, and present their budgets to the government for financing. They will send their delegates (not representatives), to meetings of the various committees of the General Peoples Congress on education, agriculture and other subjects. Once a year they will meet at the General Peoples Congress where, amongst other things, they will elect a Cabinet, theoretically just a forum of secretaries of the various committees of the Congress.

To emphasise the autonomous nature of the system, Qaddafi resigned his position as one of the five-man General Secretariat of the General Peoples Congress, as did the other four - all previously members of the Revolutionary Command Council which overthrew King Idris in 1969. Qaddafi said that he wanted to devote himself to "revolutionary activities". Asked what exactly this meant, Libyan officials said that he had given up the reins of government along with its day-to-day responsibilities, in order to "prod the people" into further revolutionary zeal.

To the cynical, Qaddafi appears to be giving up the last strings of democratic accountability - through his membership of the General Secretariat of the General Peoples Congress - for his own revolutionary ends.

But perhaps there is nothing wrong with that, for he has always thrived in his self-appointed role as a gadfly of the Mediterranean. Lack of precision in his ideas and his position has been a hall-mark, even a strength of his regime. It has given him valuable freedom to manoeuvre, not tied to any particular ideology, be it socialism or Islam. Instead he has had to define his own terms, as when he christened his country the Jamahariyah two years ago.

Classical Arabic scholars were unhappy about a neologism meaning "state of the

massdom". But Qaddafi was insistent and the title remained: "I believe all the world will be changed into this kind of political regime which is Jamahariyah," he explained recently, "and the future will be the future of Jamahariyahs in the world. We only hope for the era of masses, the era of Jamahariyahs, as the French revolution established the era of republics, and we here can say Libya now is entering the era of Jamahariyahs."

But why did Qaddafi choose this moment to inaugurate the era of Jamahariyahs? His revolution was coasting fairly comfortably, and the first tangible results of the \$26bn Economic and Social Transformation Plan were beginning to show, for example at the Misurata Iron and Steel complex and at the agricultural stations in the desert oases. Some Libyans were getting very rich on the proceeds of development and everyone in the country was benefitting. Libya was even finding a modus vivendi with the United States, the arch enemy of its rhetoric. The Jamahariyah had got used to a cosy relationship with the American oil companies which drill for its oil and sell 40 per cent of it to the other side of the Atlantic. American firms had even begun to step up their sales to Libya, a tendency underlined by a Congress decision to free the embargo on a shipment of large trucks to Tripoli.

But the easing up of revolutionary zeal had brought Qaddafi more headaches than benefits. The vision of a more comfortable, less frenetic Libya had caused some people to wonder why they needed the trappings of a Jamahariyah at all.

Sections of the enriched merchant class wanted to throw off the restrictions Qaddafi had placed on the accumulation of wealth. Moreover, according to widespread reports, there was unrest in the army which, along with the oil industry, is the only area of society where the new system of popular congresses does not apply.

It is uncertain what the real bone of contention was, though on past experience it

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may have been sympathy for the anti-Qaddafi movement, headed by former RCC member Major Omar Mehelshi, who fled to Egypt in 1975. If the evidence of a recent London court case is to be believed, however it was enough to cause Libyan intelligence to want to assassinate Major Mehelshi and to kidnap London-based former Premier Dr Mahoud Maghribi, bringing him back to Tripoli for a show trial to diffuse anti-Qaddafi agitation.

Earlier this year, according to widespread reports, 14 Libyan army officers were executed after an attempted coup. Other independent witnesses speak of the banning and imprisonment of a number of intellectuals, particularly journalists and writers with left-wing or communist views.

Under attack from left and right, Qaddafi may have considered it opportune to revitalise his revolution, seizing on the 10th anniversary of his accession as the occasion.

There were also foreign policy reasons. Convinced of the moral rectitude of his attempt to establish a new social and economic order based on the democratic ideal of the Muslim *umma* or community, and encouraged by the efforts of Islamic idealists to topple the Peacock Throne of the Shah of Iran, he decided that this was a good time to re-emphasise the puritanical, egalitarian and Islamic aspects of his revolution.

Qaddafi is often portrayed by his supporters as a disinterested backer of

oppressed people throughout the world, and doubtless there is a strong religious, even humanitarian, streak in his thinking. He is certainly a pan-Arabist in the Nasser tradition, but there is also a strong nationalistic element in his foreign policy. His desire for union with Tunisia and Egypt was occasioned as much by his need for a large work force and market for Libyan financed industry as by his vision of an integrated Arab nation.

Sensing the changes going on in the Arab world as a result of the Iranian revolution, Qaddafi wanted to promote the Libyan experience as similar to, if not heralding, the Iranian one. This would add certain kudos to faltering Libyan foreign initiatives in Chad, Uganda and Ethiopia, and win Libya support in her continuing war of words and diplomacy with Egypt. Qaddafi has been seeking ways to counter President Sadat's self-appointed role of the peace keeper in Africa, and one possibility is to promote himself as the warrior of egalitarian Islamic revolution, recently successful in Iran, but tried and tested in Libya.

Qaddafi's continuing propaganda success in this has pushed President Sadat to make preemptive swats at the Libyan gadfly, as he did in July 1977. Egyptian troops have again massed in the Western desert, but this has only drawn Qaddafi closer to the emerging anti-Sadat front, particularly Syria and Jordan. And he is now less isolated in the Arab world than for a long time. □

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LIBYA

QADHDHAFI HOPES TO MARRY TUNISIAN STUDENT

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 2 May 79 pp 14-16

[Article by Souhayr Belhassen, story covered in Paris by Mohamed Selhami:
"Qadhdhafi is Not Making War"]

[Text] What is the matter with Qadhdhafi? His soldiers tried to save Idi Amin in distress and suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Tanzanians. He dispatched them to Chad to regain, on the spot, influence he had lost among his so-called candidates for power--and their advance was stopped, while the Chadian unit struck back at Libya. His interventionism is all the more inexplicable since it earns him nothing but setbacks. Is Qadhdhafi in a mood for continuing to lead his country in such a chaotic and dangerous fashion? Does he have the spirit and the heart?

Some people are speaking of the colonel's "last folly"; others (already) say: It is because he failed to bring about this Tunisian-Libyan union, which he has been dreaming about for five years, that Mouammar Qadhdhafi has decided to marry a Tunisian girl! And what a Tunisian! Beautiful, full of the love of life, a music and dance enthusiast, Qadhdhafi's intended is also--but who is not?--in love, with the economy, the capitalist economy.

Traditionally, in a country of Islam, the woman, who supposedly is relegated to second place, has great influence over the man who marries her. Will beautiful Mishka change Qadhdhafi, the austere, the mystic, the recluse? Or will she be caught up in "Qadhdhafism?" This question does come up since it will have repercussions on the future of Libya and its role in Africa; the adventure which is now beginning is not only that of a woman and a man. It is of interest to JEUNE AFRIQUE and its readers.

Our lady correspondent in Tunis, Souhayr Belhassen, tells us about Mouammar Qadhdhafi's infatuation with Mishka Hanayen. A new "adventure" for Qadhdhafi which is bound to have repercussions.

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A man is introduced to a woman--and lightning strikes. That is quite an ordinary story. But when the man is a head of state and the girl is a college student, that is already less ordinary. And when the head of state is Libyan President Mouammar Qadhdhafi and when the coed is Mishka Hanayen, a ravishing Tunisian, that is an event.

On 26 March, Qadhdhafi received a delegation of third-year students from the Neuilly Commerce and Economics Managers School (located in a suburb of Paris) who had come to Tripoli on a study trip. There were introductions, handshakes, and smiles.

Suddenly, time seemed to stop; the handshake became eternal and Qadhdhafi was smitten. The girl facing him was almost his height; she looked him straight in the eye but her big doe eyes had a look of velvet. Her long hair fell down upon her shoulders like a waterfall. Her grace was equal to her elegance.

The Libyan president wanted to know everything about her, right away. Who is she? Where does she come from? "Mishka Hanayen, Tunisian." "Charmed, Charmed," Qadhdhafi replied nervously.

That same evening, a reception worthy of a chief of state was tendered to the students. Mishka Hanayen found there that the resoluteness, with which the Libyan president is credited, is indeed a fact. The colonel, who attended the reception in his dress uniform, communicated a surprising decision to her. "I want to marry you," he said. "I have always dreamed of marrying a modern and educated woman."

From then on, everything happened very quickly. Mishka, the coed, became the invited guest of a great prince. A mansion was put at her disposal. She was caught up in a whirl of festivities of which she was the queen. Mishka was changed to Memia (Mishka's real name) and the ascete of the desert discovered the charms of a woman who is a symbiosis, a symbol: The East which assimilated the West. Mishka discusses what she saw in Tripoli, the oil wells she visited, the revolutionary committees, the future of the Arab World.

Memia is like a tonic for the warrior: A woman, she was intelligent enough to cultivate all her talents. She accompanies herself on the lute as she sings the repertoire of Oum Khaltoum or Mohamed Abdelwaheb. She also dances, to the bedevilling rhythm of Darbouka or to an air by Chopin (Mishka, who took courses in the classical dance in Tunis, was even admitted to the Paris Opera).

Qadhdhafi could not let this dream creature get away. Her fellow students returned to Paris without her. Two of them took the initiative of phoning Tunis to tell Mishka's mother that her daughter had remained in Tripoli to marry Qadhdhafi!

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In the living room of the Hanayen family, the mother and the sister are stunned for several seconds. Mrs. Hanayen, a woman with a good head on her shoulders, runs a cosmetics products plant. All of Tunis dances to her tune and no reception can be successful without her.

"This is impossible! And I had counted on her to help me run the business." "But, Mother! We could get the Libyan market for our products!" replied Azza, the elder sister. "I am very happy! I am sure that Mishka will perform miracles!" "And what if Mishka had been kidnapped! What if she were being held by Qadhdhafi!" This thought, expressed by Ramla, the youngest sister, throws cold water on the whole thing.

Whom to contact? Whom to see? Especially since tomorrow is Sunday!

"Sunday, 1 April!" exclaims Ramla. "This is an April joke!" Everybody laughs, everybody relaxes. A successful April fool joke, indeed.

Suddenly the telephone rings again and everybody runs for it.

Mrs. Hanayen picks up the receiver. You could read her emotions on her face. Qadhdhafi! Qadhdhafi himself was on the phone! "I have always dreamed of a Tunisian-Libyan union, and now a happy occasion has presented itself to me. I would like to marry your daughter. I am sending a Boeing to pick up the entire family. You could come see your daughter at Tripoli."

Qadhdhafi seems even more impatient to achieve this new Tunisian-Libyan union than at the time of Jerba. Mrs. Hanayen asks for a moment to think and puts the receiver back in the cradle. She gets behind the wheel of her Mercedes and races over to the Libyan embassy, accompanied by a lawyer. The ambassador receives her and the interview is long. Mrs. Hanayen leaves reassured as to her daughter's fate. Qadhdhafi's intentions are entirely honorable. The mother also contacts the Libyan embassy in Paris.

Mishka then phoned Tunis and her first reaction was to say, laughing, to her family that she had a good trip and then she asked: "Well, what do you think?"

What do they think, indeed? The father, a rich and dignified businessman representing the Tunisian bourgeoisie, is furious. He was also waiting for Mishka to come back and help him run his public works enterprise. "This is just kid stuff! I always tried to give my children a solid future! I paid for Mishka's studies although she did get along on her own. She even performed at the Paris Opera before President Giscard d'Estaing. Mishka in Libya--that is crazy!"

But is she not already engaged? Hamadi Abid, son of a big businessman in Sfax and a student at the Polytechnical School in Paris, is studying for a degree as a bridge and highway engineer. He had been waiting for

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his intended to finish her studies before he would propose marriage to her but there were other suitors before him. "But Mishka refused to commit herself to any of them," her friends assured us.

It is true that Mishka has not yet made up her mind: She was 22 on 28 July 1978, she is authoritarian, eager, and ambitious. She loves comfort and never fools around.

"On the contrary," said her sister, "she surmounts all obstacles and she has always been an enthusiastic student." While attending the economic Manager School, Mishka was preparing for a master's degree in economics in Paris. What happened to Mishka is not surprise to her elder sister. "Are you astonished," she asked, "that Qadhdhafi fell in love with her? You know, we are a family of artists."

One of Mishka's two uncles, as a matter of fact, Lotfi Belhacine, managed the Zero Club, Tunis' first and best-known nightclub. The other uncle, Jalal Belhacine, organizes the Tabarka (Tunisia) and Asilah (Morocco) festivals. Both of them live in Paris.

"But Qadhdhafi is already married! Of course, there is the possibility of divorce," her sister continued. Indeed, the marriage of a Tunisian with a bigamous foreigner (Qadhdhafi is married and has five children) would be of interest to Tunisian jurists. The marriage would be considered null and void in the Tunisian courts; but bigamy is punishable only if there is a complaint from one of the concubines or from the first wife. Or, if the attorney general of the republic, on request of the minister of justice, feels that society or public order has been disturbed.

Mishka has had time to contemplate the change which her new life would imply (if she were to accept) because she spent a score days in Tripoli, before returning to her apartment in Paris (located in a modern building in the 15th District). Perhaps she has been begun to go to the couturiers to put a wardrobe together for herself that would be worthy of being the first lady of "Tunisia-Libya." That is a minor problem for Mishka who has already posed for pictures in fashion magazines.

But Qadhdhafi's designs upon Mishka have made Hamadi furious: "She is my fiancee according to the law. And we love each other. I will never allow her to marry another." The fiancee unfortunately wants to speed up his marriage to Mishka. "It will be done in a short time."

"Did Mishka inform you about her meeting with Qadhdhafi?"

"My fiancee never set foot on Tripoli. This whole thing is a put-up job by the Libyans. This is a political maneuver. I will prove that soon, there are supporting documents and your newspaper will be kept informed."

Mishka does not wish to see anybody. But there was one way to confirm the reports being circulated about her.

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Malika, a Tunisian coed who shares her Parisian apartment, told us:
"Mishka is my best girlfriend. She has no secrets from me. But I cannot tell you anything. This involves her private life."

"Is she or is she not going to marry Qadhdhafi?"

"Anything is possible in this life."

Malika told us that her girlfriend is not engaged to anybody. "Hamadi of course does love her. He even asked for her hand like so many others. But there is nothing official about all that. Mishka is still free. For the time being she is primarily interested in her studies."

"Has she been to Libya?"

"Perhaps, but I do not want to fall into your trap."

A trap? Who indeed fell into a trap?

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LIBYA

PROPOSED TUNISIAN LIAISON DETAILED

Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 7 May 79 p 56

[Text] This is a love story. It happened to Qadhdhafi. It began at the end of last March. A group of French students on a visit to Libya was received by the head of state. Qadhdhafi greeted the young people, one after the other, with his embarrassed and nonchalant smile. When he came to Mishka, his face lit up. She spoke Arabic. She was just too beautiful to be true. She has grace and intelligence. The chief of state suddenly became radiant and talkative. He spoke at length with his "neighbor." Mishka comes from an excellent family in Tunisia. Who does not know the Hanayen family in Tunis? There were several hours of discussions. Qadhdhafi always dreamed of finding a girl like her: Educated, modern, with a mastery of Western culture.

The telephone rings in Tunis: "Madam Hanayen? Good day. This is Qadhdhafi speaking. Yes, your daughter is in Tripoli. I have always wanted a Tunisian-Libyan union. I am sending you a Boeing. You all come. I will marry your daughter." But nobody in the Tunisian bourgeoisie started running around like mad. Everybody was very calm. Mishka must first of all finish her year at the university. There would be time to think about the whole thing.

The girl returns to Paris. JEUNE AFRIQUE tells the whole story. An intelligence service from the very beginning managed to tap Mishka's telephone. It learned certain things. Qadhdhafi telephones several times a day from Tripoli. He calls Mishka by her real Arabic first name: Memia. He kept urging her to agree to the marriage. To tell the truth, he is madly in love. She does not express her feelings in any way. But, in any case, she asks him first of all to put an end to the status of women in Libya which is based on Koranic law. Qadhdhafi is already married and has three children. He expected that the system of polygamy would permit him to take a second wife. Mishka does not wish to have anything to do with what she calls "medieval practices." Now we know that Islam is the foundation of Qadhdhafi's politics.

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The intelligence services could not learn what Mishka did not say to Qadhafi but what she confided to a girlfriend. She is also beginning to fall in love with the Libyan chief of state. She does not dare pledge herself to him, she says, because "he surely does not love me enough to change everything in his country." According to the latest news, Mishka is cryin; in Paris--and Qadhafi, in Tripoli.

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LIBYA

BRIEFS

REPORT ON EXECUTIONS--From an Egyptian source comes the report that some weeks ago approximately 20 officers were executed in Libya after an unsuccessful coup d'etat. Col al-Qadhafi reportedly attended the executions and refused to return the bodies of those executed to their families for funerals. Two Czech advisers who were implicated in the plot were expelled to Prague. [Text] [Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 30 Apr 79 p 27]

UGANDA REFUSES OFFER--Libya has offered as much as \$40 million to get the Tanzanians and Uganda rebel troops to withdraw their expeditionary corps from Ugandan territory. The government of Uganda, however, has refused any such offer and has simply requested that Marshal Amin Dada be turned over to it for trial. [Text] [Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 21 May 79 p 43]

LIBYA-ROMANIA AGREEMENT--Rumania is understood to have won a commitment from Libya on increased supplies of oil (possibly in the order of 2.5mn-3mn tons a year) as a result of President Ceausescu's recent visit to Tripoli. A memorandum signed during the visit refers to co-operation in construction, industry, agriculture and trade, including oil, with further details to be worked out by specialised committees on both sides. Rumanian officials have visited several Arab countries to discuss increasing oil supplies and Saudi Arabia has been asked for 3mn tons a year. These requests come in the wake of a reappraisal of oil trade between the Soviet Union and its Comecon partners. [Text] [London THE MIDDLE EAST in English May 79 p 102]

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MAURITANIA

COUP LEADERS PRO-MOROCCAN, LIKELY TO RESUME SAHARAN WAR

Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 29 Apr 79 pp 74-75

[Text] The resumption of war between the Mauriticians and the Polisario Front could be the primary result of the coup that put soldiers allied with France and Morocco and opposed to an agreement with Algeria in power.

France, Morocco and Senegal can breathe again now after an ultraconservative military government took power in Mauritania and ended the previous government's flirtations with the Polisario Front and Algeria.

The new prime minister and true "strong man" of Mauritania, Ould Bouceif, is a 45-year-old soldier who was born in the state of Kiffa and educated at the French Saumur and Saint-Maixent military academies.

He is, therefore, a new Mocktar Ould Daddah (the "father" of Mauritania) who, in his passion for the customs of the country that colonized them until 1960, married a French woman when that was almost a mortal sin in his country. Nevertheless, Ould Bouceif has still another "virtue" to the Quai D'Orsay in Paris: his implacable hatred of the Polisario Front since May 1977 when a handful of Saharan fighters made him taste bitter defeat at the Zouerate mining complex --the military region where he was commander in chief--taking six French hostages with them.

Of course, his great defeat would, a year later, give him his greatest victory: becoming prime minister of his country.

In 1977, Ould Bouceif was in disgrace and, through French pressure, was transferred to Nema, the military region furthest from the border with Algeria. Nevertheless, his exile would be rather brief. In July 1978, Colonel Saleck dismissed the "father of the country," Mocktar Ould Daddah, and brought Ould Bouceif to Nouakchott where he

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was minister of fishing until last week when he decided to rebel against his protector and take his job.

Ould Bouceif also had to favor the Moroccans. Under the previous government, the present prime minister fought on several occasions to prevent part of the 9,000 soldiers "loaned" to Mauritania by Morocco --who control the entire northern part of the country--from returning to their bases last March when the mutual defense agreement between Nouakchott and Rabat expired.

Open opposition to this Moroccan "invasion," camouflaged by politeness, was one of the mistakes that marked Colonel Saleck's end. The other was the presence of three pro-Polissario Front ministers in his cabinet in an attempt to have valid representatives in order to have agreement among all the forces involved in the fight over the Sahara and to put an end to the "absurd and unjustifiable war"--his own words--that drained Mauritania.

The policy of Saleck, who only lasted in power 9 months, achieved a detente with Algeria and the Polisario Front but the Senegalese, Moroccans and French never approved of this "honeymoon" in the desert and decided to put an end to it before it ended in a separate peace.

Tribal Problems

Then tribal problems which had been resolved under Mocktar Ould Daddah reappeared on the Senegalese border. This made the conservative soldiers go into action. Twice in a row, a self-proclaimed liberation front of black villages in the southern half of the country showed up in Senegal while 17 black leaders received pressure from San Luis not to participate in the National Mauritanian Assembly where the Arabs have always had an absolute majority.

There were "warnings" from Social Democrat Leopoldo S. Senghor to the Mauritians that Senegal did not want a socialist country of Algerian orientation next to its borders. "If the whims of the Polisario Front make Mauritania evolve in that direction, we will support the self-determination of the black villages of Rosso and Nema," a Senegalese minister threatened on one occasion.

To Morocco, things were equally obvious. If they pulled out of Mauritania, others would occupy the country and the others could possibly be Saharans in the Polisario Front. Thus Hassan II decided to keep the bulk of his troops in Mauritania and provoke an argument in the heart of Colonel Saleck's army, knowing that its pro-Western ideas would triumph and result in the replacement of Ould Daddah.

Of course, economics, one of the principal reasons Saleck decided to overthrow Ould Daddah in July 1978, was still at the bottom of everything.

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Mauritania has an area that is two and a half times that of Spain, a population of 2 million inhabitants and a per-capita income of between \$40 and \$260. It is one of the poorest countries in the world.

The unlucky gift of the Sahara also contributed to this situation in 1976. Mauritania had an army then of 2,000 men and had to multiply it by 10 and devote 60 percent of its budget to its upkeep in order to confront the Polisario Front.

In spite of this, it was never successful and the Saharans have attacked the Zouerate mining complex and the 600 kilometers of railway used to transport the iron ore from there to the port of Nouadhibou whenever they want. Therefore, while the Polisario Front was actively fighting Mauritania, the iron ore--whose sales made up 80 percent of the national budget--could not be extracted and poverty and hunger returned to the main cities.

After Colonel Saleck's coup d'etat, it seemed that things would change since the Polisario Front stopped attacking Zouerate. However, nothing changed for the inhabitants of Mauritania. The French who, 18 years after the independence of the country, continue to hold the keys to its economy by buying 70 percent of the iron and copper ore that is extracted, arranged things so that neither ore could be exported until there was a government more loyal to their interests.

Desperation

When Colonel Saleck realized this, it was too late. Nevertheless, last 3 March he made a desperate and final gesture of change, dismissing three ministers who were considered too favorable toward the Polisario Front: Jiddou Ould Saleck, minister of interior; Ould Bi-gueira, minister of economy; and Ould Brezilei, minister of culture.

However, he could not save his job. At the beginning of April, Jacques Journiac, Giscard d'Estaing's secretary and successor in "African affairs" to the great head of the French secret service, Jacques Foccard, came to Nouakchott; 2 days later, Ould Bouceif appeared on the scene as the new Mauritanian prime minister.

Sources close to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told CAMBIO 16: "This country which is torn between the Arab culture and the black African culture has few natural resources but has enormous strategic value for the defense of French-speaking countries against possible Algerian or Libyan penetration. It plays a fundamental role for France on the African continent."

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MAURITANIA

OULD SALECK DESCRIBED AS 'FINISHED MAN'

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 2 May 79

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani; special J-A correspondent]

[Text] Threatened with collapse, Mauritania stood at the brink of bankruptcy. The Military Committee for National Salvation intends to give it back its credibility.

Coup d'état, or "rectification"? I was talking to a lieutenant colonel who is a member of the Military Committee for National Salvation, and he smiled.

"Let's say that, on 6 April, we had our first Mauritanian-style coup d'état, and that some of us don't like to think about having been in the coup of 10 July 1978 against President Mokhtar Ould Daddah. The way it was done, that coup d'état was not like us, not in our tradition."

"You disavow the 10 July putsch, then, do you?"

"Not necessarily. The country then lay under a weight of weariness, and was on the verge of bankruptcy. That was nothing, though, compared with the wreck it is today..."

The 10 July coup d'état was welcomed with some warmth. That is true. And it may be explained by the erosion of government, the pauperism brought on by a ruinous war, and the swift reaction it brought from the Polisario, which proclaimed its cease-fire on 12 July. Relief swiftly gave way to mistrust when it turned out that the coup d'état was being used by some as a means for revenge, for favoritism, or for reawakening old ethnic and tribal feuds.

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For example, in the first few days after the events of 10 July, the minister for information, Ould Breid El.1.1.1, summoned the cadres from the radio and from the daily AL-SHA'B to announce a broadcast on the "Crimes and errors of the deposed régime." He ran into passive resistance. This sort of thing does not go down well with the Mauritanian temperament, particularly since the charges laid against Mokhtar Ould Daddah were flimsy. On the day of the coup d'état, there was not a single political prisoner being held, despite the state of war... His successors wanted to change everything. They even wanted to change the system and its orientation, although the one idea that had brought them together was "peace."

A slow, steady worsening of the situation led to 6 April 1979. In that "Mauritanian-style coup d'état, it was Mustafa Ould Saleck, the initiator of the first, who, victim in his turn of the second, told a handful of horrified reporters on 6 April: "The army, for the second time, has been obliged to intervene, fortunately without bloodshed."

Mustafa Ould Saleck almost didn't announce the change. The day before, the military who had accepted LtCol Ahmed Ould Bouceif as their leader offered Ould Saleck a choice between resigning and accepting a figurehead position as chairman of the Military Committee for National Salvation, of which he could no longer be master. Ould Saleck opted for the second suggestion. "Out of cowardice," say some. "Out of cunning," say others, because they think he still cherishes a hope of reversing the situation in his own favor. That latter argument rests on the fact that not many men were replaced after the 6 April coup.

The fact remains that the top planners of the 10 July coup were disappointed in their leader. And Mustafa Ould Saleck today stands openly accused of repeated about-faces, hesitation, and unkept promises to individuals and to nations. He has lost his credibility, a quality to which Mauritanians are very sensitive.

One need only slip into a few Nouakchott salons to hear people agreeing that Mustafa Ould Saleck is "a finished man": he was victimized by some advisers recruited from the ranks of old politicians the like of Cheikna Ould Laghdaf or Haiba; unless, of course, he was "conned" by young Ba'ath idealists or leftists, like Jeddou Ould Saleck, Ould Bneidjara, Mahjouli Ould Boye, or El Wafi.... Caught in a whirlpool of currents from all sides, pulled one way and another, Ould Saleck tried to gain time by reassuring everybody, including the most conflicting interests.

As a way out of the crisis, some suggested offering territory and self-determination to the Polisario. But the Polisario demanded a reversal of alliances. That policy was openly defended

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by ministers and some of the military. They tried to achieve "a more Mauritanian Mauritania" by shipping out 8,000 men, more than 6,000 of them to the Zouerate region alone. Even so, the spark required to light the peace lamp had yet to be struck. All these maneuvers accomplished was to heighten the fear and mistrust of Morocco and Senegal which, in turn, brought their influence to bear against the forward flight of a Mauritania they no longer understood...

Mauritania had become stakes in a game. In the chancelleries, complicated calculations were redrawing its boundaries to overlap the borders of what used to be the Western Sahara...

It is legitimate to believe that France, as well as Morocco and Senegal, was hoping for the change that came on 6 April, after having locked with favor on the coup d'état of 10 July. At the time, the French were nurturing hopes of a peace of their making which they would get by bringing Mauritania over to their side, thus abstracting it from heavy Arab influence, Moroccan or Algerian. France, though, had to back down. There were of course some "pro-French" types in the 10 July team and, at the time of his trip to Paris, Col Ould Saleck actually made a good impression on Giscard d'Estaing, whom he strongly reminded of Mokhtar Ould Daddah...

France had wanted to come back to "its" Mauritania, that slice of desert, bastion of Black French-speaking West Africa. But France failed, and it was Polisario that came very close to moving into Nouakchott, if it could not free its Sahara... The beautiful French plan then gave way to anxiety, and Paris turned its back on Mustafa Ould Saleck's team. Hoping to put things back together again, the man who toppled President Mokhtar last March asked to meet with President Giscard d'Estaing again. He got a polite refusal: the French head of State's calendar was filled for at least 3 months.

Mr René Journiac, technical adviser to the general secretariat of the President's office, was dispatched to Nouakchott. His mission was to listen to the Mauritanians' wishes and, above all, to protest at the abandonment of French interests, particularly at the refusal to award the contract for the 500-kilometer Kiffa-Nema road to the Colas Corporation (the contract was worth 25 billion CFA ...).

The Kiffa-Nema road is the second section of the Trans-Mauritanian Highway, "the highway of hope," which is to link Nouakchott to Nema (1,100 kilometers distant) and put an end to the isolation of a major share of the hinterland. The first section was built between 1975 and 1977 by the Brazilian-owned Mendès Jr. Company, which was awarded the contract (30 billion CFA francs),

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most of it financed by Arab states from the Gulf. Colas, which had bid close to 40 billion CFA, learned its lesson. For the second section, the two firms made the very same bid: 5 billion ouguiya (25 billion CFA).

The choice between Mendès and Colas must have been a prickly one, quite apart from the pressures, bribes, and sundry political influences involved. Right after the 10 July coup, in the first blush of reconciliation with France, the government had written to the Colas company: "You will get the contract, contingent on finding underwriters for funds." Thinking a trifle too soon that the deal was in the bag, Colas set about getting ready to start the job. Mendès, who had friends in high places in the government, returned to the attack.

A lot of Mauritians see the Brazilian company as more competitive, but the contract award was more than anything else a political deal. According to government "progressives," this was the best way to loosen the vise of French influence, particularly since Mendès had been recommended by Algeria prior to the 1975 break. The progressives found some sympathetic ears among such businessmen as Cheikna Ould Laghdaf, who was at once a cabinet member and major public works contractor, on the board of SOCIM, a company then in financial difficulties.

Feeling the ground growing increasingly shaky beneath his feet, Mustafa Ould Saleck decided to pull off a great coup by seizing full power on 20 March. But, immediately afterwards, he set up a 98-member advisory council, put together by a few of his advisers who had not bothered to sound out the chosen advisers.

That did it. On 5 April, at the opening session (which had been postponed once already), 40 members of the council were absent: 20 Moors, and 20 Blacks. Ould Saleck threatened to arrest more than 200 people, including the Black African recalcitrants and some leading lights from the Trarza region. He was also ready to ship Mokhtar Ould Daddah's old ministers out of Nouakchott, and slap them into tougher detention.

His full powers, however, did not awe some of the military and, the morning after 6 April, they were nullified. Very soon the rumor began to fly around Nouakchott and throughout the country of the imminent release of Mokhtar Ould Daddah, for whom, as if by magic, a lot of Mauritians remembered the old title of "father of the nation." Others went even farther: "Mokhtar is a saint! See what has happened to everybody who tried directly to hurt him!" And they went on to recite a long list of people who had been ousted, fallen ill, gone lame, and who had only yesterday stood at the pinnacle of power, but now had disappeared

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into the ranks. They did it Mauritanian style: no hatred, no rancor, no mutters about getting even. Those who were most shamed retired to their tents, to make people forget them, and to reflect awhile on their ephemeral triumph...

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MAURITANIA

BACKGROUND OF OULD DADDAH'S RELEASE NOTED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 2 May 79 p 19

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani]

[Text] "This is a serious, consistent program you have here, but..."

Freed on 13 April, after 9 months and 3 days in prison, the former ministers of Ould Daddah's government and the former president of the National Assembly, Mr Abdelaziz Sall (see J.A. n° 955), agreed that they had been properly treated while they were held in the Military Engineers barracks on the outskirts of Nouakchott... some 100 meters away from the last of the Saharan prisoners. That was not the case for another illustrious prisoner freed at the same time: Abdallah Ould Ba, the former governor of Nouadhibou, the country's economic capital, who had been held in Jdiria under prison conditions that left a lot to be desired.

The flood of visitors calling on the freed celebrities was so great that on 18 April, the director-general of the Sûreté, Mr Yahia Ould Menkous, called all the former prisoners together to remind them that they were "only out on parole, and that any travel to the interior [there were demonstrations in some hinterland towns] or abroad would be subject to permission."

Despite this mild threat, the freed prisoners as a whole quietly welcomed the 6 April change. Hamdi Ould Mouknass, who headed the Mauritanian diplomatic corps for more than a decade, was quick to say as much to one of his many callers, LtCol Ahmed Salem Ould Sidi, second vice-chairman of the Military Council for National Salvation: "This is a serious, consistent program you have here. Quite independent of personalities, it comes to grips with the way things are in this country and with its desire, once peace has been restored, to live harmoniously in its geopolitical area. Careful, though: your efforts may swiftly come to naught unless you free President Mokhtar."

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Hamdi Ould Mouknass recalled that Mokhtar Ould Daddah had got a law passed several years back covering "retirement of the head of state." At the time, he had even put a brake on the generosity of his ministers, telling them that he needed nothing but a decent and respectable living for himself and his family. The 10 July coup d'etat in fact afforded an opportunity to check and make sure that after 18 years in power, Mokhtar Ould Daddah was just plain poor.

"Fre. Mokhtar," Hamdi Ould Mouknass went on, "and you will see that the nation and some important friends abroad will be grateful to you for having corrected so gross an injustice. You can, as the military authority, wait until he has taken a few well-earned vacations here and there abroad, and then use Mokhtar's great prestige for good-will missions..."

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MAURITANIA

WALFOUGUI NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN MAURITANIA

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 2 May 79 p 20

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani: "The Sheriff of Walfougui"]

[Text] On 26 March in Dakar, there was an official announcement of the birth of something called the Walfougui Front, which declared it stood ready to lead the struggle for self-determination of the Black African populations in the South Mauritanian regions of Walo, Fouta, and Guidimaka. Already challenged by a great many Mauritanian blacks, the movement has chosen as its leader one Alioune Diawo, a gendarme born 45 years ago in the Bagné region.

Alioune Diawo's political background is so curious as to warrant examination. When he was a gendarme, he was known for his fits of temper and for his generally unstable character. Some people described him as "a little bit crazy." Back in 1973, he carried some weapons across the Senegal River. At the end of 1975, he came home to bow down before his former chiefs, displayed feep repentance and a desire to fight for his country, already under attack from the Polisario.

Taken back into the fold, A. Diawo was posted to the northern front. A few weeks after the 10 July coup d'état, he savagely clubbed a little band of Polisario guerrillas who had just been captured. He was recalled and expelled from the gendarmerie for "inhuman conduct." That coincided with overheating of relations between the Berber Arabs and the Black Africans. That meant that the time was ripe for recruiting Walfougui's first supporters, especially since a number of ears were reportedly cocked in its direction in Senegal.

In Mauritania, in the event, not many people took the movement seriously. The Black Africans intend to stake their claims on different grounds than that of demolishing the country.

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TUNISIA

LETTER FROM PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY PARTY DISCUSSES SITUATION

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 30 Apr-13 May 79 p 6

Letter signed by Moncet Chabbi on behalf of the PRPT

Text Response of the PRPT Peoples Revolutionary Party of Tunisia

Now, 23 years after the proclamation of "independence" on 20 March 1956, we must say that Tunisia is still as bound to the west, and especially to France, as it was under the protectorate. The policy of growing indebtedness to the western powers threatens all our chances for an independent development of our national economy. All the efforts of the people are being channeled in order to consolidate the economic bases of a domination by an anti-national bourgeoisie that is working hand in hand in Tunisia with the forces of imperialism and which promotes its strategic designs on the region.

The Tunisian people are no more free in 1979 than they were in 1956. They do not have better food. They hardly have any better education. Their desire to see the establishment of a pan-Arab and pan-Maghreb solidarity is repressed.

This painful situation is undoubtedly due to the absence of a progressive and democratic national opposition political force on a scale commensurate with our country. There have been, of course, here and there, groups and mini-groups operating in opposition. These forces, numerous but scattered, have been unable, in the troubled situation, to offer to the Tunisian people a convincing solution, created from their struggles and responding to their aspirations. In a word, all these forces which speak in the name of the Tunisian people have not yet been able to express their unity in the struggle.

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This is not a matter of restoring life to the concept of "national unity," which was manipulated by the Neo-Destourians for a quarter of a century, used to deny the class struggle and to justify the repression of the revolutionary movement. But we remember other struggles besides those of the working class, other struggles fought against special interests, against the ideology and state of the ruling bourgeoisie. This in no way excludes conflicts of special interests which divide a particular social category from another or a particular class from another class. But these conflicts are not the dominant ones in present-day Tunisian society.

The Destourian regime is the enemy of all and is becoming more so every day. The most effective weapon the Tunisian people have to rid themselves of this enemy today is undoubtedly union in the struggle. This union is socially cemented by a working class that is mature and determined.

In saluting the initiative of the Tunisian militants who called for unity in the pages of AFRIQUE-ASIE (no 183), we want to say again that the PRPT made public in its program on 15 April 1975 its determination to fight to achieve this unity, considering it an urgent need. In January and in December 1977, two brochures were devoted to this topic, and even more recently, a year after the events of 26 January, we issued a new appeal for unity.

We do not just want unity; we demand unity, because it is the most longed-for desire of a militant people who have sacrificed everything to achieve it. How can we accept the fact that some leaders oppose it, multiplying their pretexts and sowing doubts and discord? The radical progressive opposition is the heir of a long struggle for complete independence, for Maghreb and Arab unity. It views this struggle in a socialist perspective. It should reject no alliance. The popular verdict will inevitably decide in its favor because it has a flourishing future in store for it.

The formation of a large united movement composed of delegates from Tunisian political, democratic, and union organizations, and of many independent militants, must be considered seriously: the situation of our country and our people demand this.

If this movement respects the principles of law between all and of mutual respect, if it works to seek forms of joint action appropriate for the situation, if it contributes to

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help make opposition to the regime a strategic and not just a tactical choice for all, it will offer the Tunisian people the possibility of a true democratic, progressive, and anti-imperialist change, at the time when the fascist Neo-Destour Party is getting ready to hold a new congress to spell out once again its policy of domination and oppression.

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TUNISIA

COMMENTARY ON NOUIRA STATEMENTS ON HABIB ACHOUR

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 27 Apr 79
pp 1045, 1046

Text Might Habib Achour be pardoned soon? The Tunisian prime minister, Hedi Nouira, questioned about this on 22 March by an Arab journalists from the Middle East, answered simply that the issue is up to the chief of state alone. But he did not fail to point out that foreign interventions in favor of the former secretary general of the UGTT Tunisian General Federation of Labor, moves designed to create economic difficulties for Tunisia, have had no effect on the outcome of this case. We could of course add that any foreign demonstration designed to apply pressure might risk making a gesture of clemency even more unlikely than it seems right now. But it does appear that there are many Tunisians who would like the union leader, who is old and in poor health, to benefit at least from better prison conditions. He is now at the prison, reputedly harsh, of Nador, near Bizerte.

Expiation for the Day of 26 January 1978

Nador is a former military camp. Toward the end of the 19th century, when the Fashoda crisis erupted, the French general staff was concerned about better protecting Bizerte from the possible actions of the British fleet in the Mediterranean. So a battalion was stationed on the Cap Blanc peninsula, which dominates the city to the north. After the tents, barracks were built, and this small garrison became a permanent camp. Behind the batteries overlooking the sea, the camp of Nador crouches on the edge of a rough and rocky landscape, fully exposed to the cold northwest winds. Nador, neither more nor less comfortable than many military installations used to

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be, doesn't seem to be a death camp in the style favored by totalitarian regimes, but it is the harshest facility in the Tunisian penitentiary system, and Habib Achour was placed there intentionally.

The PSD [Destourian Socialist Party], in the person of its secretary general, is still taking just as hard a line, somewhat over a year later, on the union leaders who opposed him and the party on 26 January 1978. When opening the meeting of the Central Committee of the party on 2 March, Hedi Nouira did not hesitate to compare the attitudes of Ahmed Ben Salah in 1969 and those of Habib Achour in 1978. He said that the crisis erupted when the principles of the party were lost sight of. "The first time, when dialogue disappeared from our ranks, yielding to coercion and tension, and the second time, when some people made use of dialogue as a means of confrontation and discord, and as a method to try to seize power."

A few days later, Hedi Nouira repeated this comparison during the closing of the regional days devoted to study of development in the governorate of Fagsa. Speaking to the party cadres at Sidi Bou Zid, he used very harsh terms to describe the origins and consequences of the events of 26 January: the instigators of these events, he said, had underestimated the maturity of the Tunisian people, and thought they could impose just any theory on the people and use social platforms for political purposes. "They thought that the union federation, with its 600,000 members behind it, could become a devastating flood and enable them to achieve their unstated goals. But rather than a devastating flood, it was only a mediocre sort of convulsion, made up of destruction, violence, and looting, and the reaction of the Tunisian people was that of a wise and mature people. For the Tunisians are no longer primitive. The language of demagogy no longer has any hold on the people of Tunisia."

Mr Nouira's Doctrinal Report to the Central Committee

The Destourian campaign in preparation for the congress is now at its peak, and on this occasion Hedi Nouira did his own share of the work. His positions, stated in many speeches given in March, filling in for the president of the republic, who has to be careful of his health, showed very clearly the party and government's policy during this decisive period.

The Central Committee of the PSD heard the secretary general of the party during the opening and closing of its meeting,

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on 2 and 3 March. After speaking of the origins and characteristics of the party, Hedi Nouira said that the party remains open, in a state of perpetual renewal, hostile to any immobilism. He called for "solutions dictated by our new realities," and advocated that the party welcome "the rising potential represented by youth and by proven social abilities." (2 March).

More systematically, at the end of the sessions, Hedi Nouira listed seven points: the ideology of the party, its social policy, its concept of democracy, its unique nature, Islam in Tunisia, some "political attitudes" within the party, and the upsurge in party memberships and the reasons behind this.

The Destourian ideology, described as "the theoretical expression of a policy and a scientific analysis of plans," is characterized by its intent to further human progress. Its action is thus aimed at "the construction of an advanced and balanced society, avoiding both poverty and excessive opulence." It entails considerable social spending and often requires that difficult choices be made. Democracy demands dialogue, not under the form of a philosophic dialectic, but a dialogue to bring about concrete results. "There can be no dialogue between speakers who do not share the same attachment to the nation's independence, the same faith in constitutional legitimacy, and the same distaste for anarchy and violence."

Speaking about the party, Mr Nouira said: "We have a single party (and) in its style our party is unique; it did not arise from a crisis or from a revolution (but) it arose, alone, in the struggle against colonialism; it alone shouldered the responsibility for independence; it alone bore the burden of building the state; it alone guides the struggle for progress. That is why it is single and unique."

And yet membership in the party is sometimes used by opportunists, intriguers, and persons seeking their own advantage. On the subject of the resignations from the Central Committee in January 1978, though they had no special importance, they did involve some ambiguity which transformed them "into harmful or even hostile positions; going back to justify them now doesn't make these attitudes any clearer."

This final allusion was aimed at "liberal sympathizers," but earlier it was obviously some aspects of the former union movement that were meant. We may indeed wonder whether this desire to exalt the merits and role of the party does not lead, in this case, to a misinterpretation of the historic merits of the union movement in the national struggle.

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A Carefully Thought Out Attitude toward Islam

It is a sign of the times that the fifth point mentioned in this closing speech was devoted to Islam, a subject that Hedi Nourira has until now never discussed in such circumstances.

Characteristically, the PSD secretary general began by reminding his audience that Habib Bourguiba, at the start of his political career, worked in support of the traditional values of Islam, such as the custom of wearing the veil, in order to fight against colonialism "which was trying to alienate the Tunisian and Moslem personality." But he did not mention the great Bourguiban reforms, such as the abolition of polygamy by a reinterpretation of the bases of Islamic law; these reforms are, it is true, known to everyone.

Islam, said Mr Nourira, is a fundamental pillar of the party. The number of mosques increased from 793 in 1960 to 1,498 in 1978; religious education, the training of preachers/teachers and religious workers has been given careful attention.

Furthermore, "attachment to the moral values of Islam meets the convictions of the Destourians and responds to the state's policy; the encouragement toward the good and repugnance for evil are part of the virtues of the Destourians. The influx of an authentic Moslem faith in our hearts has in our times become of vital importance," and as much attention and interest are given it as are given to satisfying material needs.

However, "a minority" might seek to disunite the Moslem people. But "discord is worse than death, especially when Islam is used as a pretext for the spread of anarchy and for a sacrilegious trafficking in religious precepts."

Mr Nourira, interviewed 3 weeks later by an eastern reporter, was asked about the "possible repercussions of the Iranian revolution on the balance of power and relations between Moslem countries." He stated very clearly that while "the religious movement was the main catalyst of the Iranian revolution," the situation is very different in the Arab Maghreb; there the political forces led the struggle for independence, and "the religious factor supported the political goals and took part in the fight for liberation." But, "in Tunisia, as in the other Maghreb countries, there are no religious authorities. We are all Sunnite Moslems. None of us has any special powers over the others, for Islam is a religion of equilibrium and equality of opportunity. We do not classify doctrines, and we do not favor one doctrine

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at the expense of others." (AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, London, from L'ACTION, 24 March 1979).

This analysis clearly shows the differences, which are important from the point of view of political consequences, existing between the Shiite form of Islam in Iran and the Sunnite Islam of the Maghreb. But this is not the only fact that Medi Nourra finds reassuring; he is also convinced that the problems of Islam have always been and will always continue to be considered and studied with care and treated attentively, appropriately, and wisely.

President Bourguiba, who is not at all a pietist and who on the contrary has been very much aware of the secular relations prevailing in the west between religion and the modern state, has still always realized the profound meaning that Islam, under its traditional forms, has for the Tunisian people; he himself has felt these values and appreciated their force; he has always honored them at appropriate times and without excess or exaggeration.

Under the protectorate Habib Bourguiba defended Islam as a sheltering value. But as soon as independence was won, he reconsidered it, using the "reformist" method in order to bring its interpretation into harmony with the changes in society. There was a reform of the personal statute, then the idea of an incorporation of work for development into a "jihad," an effort made toward God, thus giving cause for a dispensation from fasting. This brought about an end to both official and social pressures for public fasting. But this trend has reached its limits, for public opinion now shows a still considerable attachment to traditional forms of ritual obligations, and a need has also appeared for moral education, whose only possible framework is found in the teachings of Islam. So new value has now been attached to religious education and to the increase in places of worship. These steps preserve or strengthen the original nature of the nation and country. In all these actions, done at the proper time, without haste, the Tunisian authorities have preceded the rise, in one sense or another, of emotional movements. So integrism does not find in Tunisia the opportunity for aggression that is offered it elsewhere; and as a peaceful private opinion, it is neither restricting nor harassed.

The "Islamic factor," therefore, does not impede or imbalance Tunisian actions and decisions, but Tunisian leaders now speak of Islam more openly than was commonly done in the past.

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PSD Organization and Social Realities

But naturally the internal affairs of the party and more generally, the social problems of Tunisia occupy the major place in the deliberations of the Central Committee and in the remarks of Hedi Nourra.

At the end of its meeting on 3 March, the PSD Central Committee enthusiastically endorsed the decision made by the politburo to increase the number of party cells, a move made in order to have more contact with the grass roots; the Central Committee also recommended that the next congress of cells be "open" in order to enlarge the party's audience. And in the past year, an additional 200,000 members joined the party. He noted with satisfaction that a growing number of officials, and especially of young cadres, are becoming involved in party activities.

On the subject of the 10th congress, the Central Committee feels that this will provide the best opportunity to recognize the model of society desired by the people of Tunisia and to define Tunisia's place among the nations of the world. A few days later, speaking to the cell of the Tunis Air company, Mr Nourra said that the congress will develop a plan to ensure greater penetration by the party and its ideology among the popular masses. On 15 March at Sidi Bou Zid, he said that the congress will certainly deal with the "single party" issue. On 18 March in Gafsa, he said that this will be an opportunity to observe the degree of attachment of the Tunisian people to the "contract for progress," and to its fulfillment.

On this occasion, the prime minister stated that the single party system arose from the history of Tunisia and draws its legitimacy from this history. But he did admit that some people think that society has changed and young people are now asking to be heard; this has led to a demand for a multiparty system. But he claimed that this would lead to the spread of factions, splinter groups, sectarianism, dissension, anarchy, or even to a political vacuum. He therefore concluded that the duty of the Tunisian people is to preserve the single party.

The PSD, said Mr Nourra, offers to all, and in particular to young people, an opportunity for self-expression. And the experiment tried before the congress, to set up "committees for reflection" in the cells, is on the way to becoming a complete success. Able persons have appeared and expressed

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their views, and every committee is becoming "a forum for true and useful dialogue." Whenever there has been a crisis, it has been when the opportunities for dialogue ceased to exist.

At Gafsa on 17 and 18 March, Mr Nourira stressed the fact that a dialogue is not possible with irresponsible people or groups; it is a collective action, and the responsibility must also be shared. Everyone may not share the opinion of the majority, but he must bow to the will of the majority. Furthermore, the demands of the Tunisian people are for such things as jobs and housing, but "no one is calling for a multiparty system...This does not mean that the Tunisian people do not want freedom, but they are calling for the satisfaction of their material needs first, so that they can better enjoy freedom and democracy."

Several times Hedi Nourira showed that he is concerned about the problems faced by young people. The phenomenon of the rural exodus, he told the party cadres in Sidi Bou Zid, is especially serious; an end must be made to this. Young people must be encouraged to settle in their native regions, when they are needed and when some job opportunities are open to them there. The establishment of a link between school and working life, an experiment which is already showing results in the primary level, is to be extended to the secondary system; but to do this requires training competent cadres. The decentralization of the university system will help in this undertaking.

On the issue of student unrest, the prime minister repeated several times that this is just an episodic problem, which is actually quite harmless in comparison with what goes on elsewhere, and the situation is improving. He said that there must be communication with the students, and they must not be rejected. But too often the students do show "an almost infantile mentality," accepting all sorts of rumors without checking them out, following the opinions of those who know how to play up to them, and thus they become an easy prey for agitators.

So the official preparations for the 10th PSD congress seem to be following the usual positions of the party leadership, and so far there have been no real innovations in either form or content.

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WESTERN SAHARA

SAHARAN PEACE PROSPECTS BECOME MORE COMPLICATED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 16 May 79 p 26

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani]

[Text] An enormous carousel, a minuet of visits of kings, chiefs of state, prime ministers, and ministers of foreign affairs. Last February it was the King of Morocco who came to meet Valery Giscard d'Estaing. The French minister of foreign affairs, Jean Francois-Poncet, in Rabat before his imminent departure for Algiers. Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid recently receiving the Spanish Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez. And the King of Spain will go to visit Morocco in early June.

In order to catch up on these discreet discussions, Ahmed Ould Bousseif, the new Mauritanian prime minister, visited Rabat, Paris, and Madrid, then Rabat again, in early May, before returning to Nouakchott. Early May also saw the visit to Nouakchott, Algiers, and Rabat of the delegation of the "African wise men," composed of the presidents of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, of Mali, Moussa Traore, accompanied by the general secretary of the OAU, Edem Kodjo. In Algiers these "wise men" also met the main leaders of the POLISARIO, who, on the ground, continue to harass the Moroccan troops to remind them of their existence and assert their presence in any search for a peaceful solution of the Sahara conflict. In order not to displease the Moroccans, they also met Saharan deputies of the Moroccan parliament at Fez.

Nevertheless, despite all these trips and visits, without counting the "secret negotiations" at Tripoli, Bamako, or Paris, the horizon remains quite obscure because--at least in appearance--each side has stuck to its positions. For Morocco the partition of the western Sahara is not negotiable and, for Algeria, any solution must occur through the self-determination of the Saharan people over the whole of the former Spanish Sahara.... In the mind of the POLISARIO finally, this self-determination does not even assume a referendum, but simply retrocession of the territory, based on the fact that the Saharan populations have already

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exercised "self-determination" by creating the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic (SPAR) recognized by 20 countries.

Over the middle term the changes which have taken place in Algeria seem to offer a perspective of hopes. Discreet negotiations have even begun to bring the King of Morocco and the new Algerian president to direct negotiations: peace or war depends on the two chiefs of state, actually. The "wise men" Olusegun Obasanjo and Moussa Traore ended their tour with this equivocal statement: "Our delicate mission has not been completed with exaggerated optimism...."

The rearguard battle remains, that of the radicalization of respective positions. Morocco thinks it has made some points: with the new situation in Mauritania, the return to "more traditional" positions by Syria and the PLO, a better neutralization of Iran since the departure of the shah, and the burden of an Algerian-Libyan dispute. Algeria for its part counts more on the United Nations to take the file [le dossier] away from the OAU and has believed that it has seen in the Spanish attitude a development more favorable to its thesis. But press conferences or communiqués do not necessarily reveal real intentions. Spain, for example, remains basically hostile to creation of a "revolutionary" Saharan state which would risk dragging the Canaries into its wake. For the moment "an honorable tie match" seems to be the goal between Moroccans and Algerians. It remains to be seen at whose expense: POLISARIO or Mauritania. But increasingly the latter two will not accept being easy prey....The proof is the change which occurred in Mauritania on 6 April and the new aggressiveness of the POLISARIO on the ground.

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