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JPRS L/9830

8 July 1981

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 22/81)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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ALGERIA

BRIEFS

COOPERATION WITH CONGO--Marius Mouambenga, minister of agriculture and livestock raising of the People's Republic of the Congo, left Algiers for Brazzaville on 14 May following an official 6-day visit marked by the signing of an agreement protocol on agricultural cooperation between Algeria and the Congo. The two delegations emphasized their determination to reach "self-sufficiency in food and to break their dependency on foreign countries." Upon his departure from Algiers, Mouambenga said that "South-South trade should be privileged." [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 22 May 81 p 1405] 11,464

COOPERATION WITH BANGLADESH--An official 3-day visit made to Algiers last week by Muhamad Shams Ul-Haq, minister of foreign affairs of Bangladesh, made it possible to draft a plan of action to strengthen and expand bilateral cooperation. Shams Ul-Haq said that the plan will go into effect with application of the 1976 commercial agreement which provides the supplying, by Bangladesh, of large quantities of jute for a period of 5 years. During his stay in Algiers, the head of Bengali diplomacy, who was received on 10 May by President Chadli Bendjedid, to whom he delivered a message from President Dhia Er Rahmane, held several meetings with his counterpart, Mohamed Benyahia. Two scientific, technical and cultural agreements were signed providing that Bangladesh will send doctors and professors to Algeria. For its part, Algeria is to begin exploring and prospecting for natural gas resources in Bangladesh. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 22 May 81 p 1405] 11,464

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IRAN

OIL OFFICIAL SAYS ANNUAL OUTPUT GOAL UNMET

JN281400 London REUTER in English 1339 GMT 28 May 81

[Report by Alan Philips]

[Text] Tehran 28 May (REUTER)--Iran will not achieve its goal of doubling its oil output this year because of the war with Iraq and a glut on the world market which is making Iranian oil less necessary, according to a senior Iranian official.

Deputy Oil Minister Mohammad Sadeq Ayatollahi said Iran was technically able to export five million barrels per day (bpd), but was held back by "bottlenecks."

His remarks, printed in the English-language TEHRAN TIMES today, made clear the Oil Ministry was not satisfied it could meet the government's draft budget call for a doubling of oil exports to 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) to avert a massive deficit.

Analysts in Tehran say Iran is currently exporting 1.3 million bpd, while the oil industry newsletter PETROLEUM INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY says total output in March was about 1.8 million bpd, leaving 500,000 for domestic use.

Mr Ayatollahi said Iran's problems in exporting were due to "anti-Iran bloc" of exaggerating war dangers in the Gulf and said the Iranian navy had established tight security on the vital shipping route.

Last week a cargo ship was attacked and damaged by Iraqi aircraft near the Iranian port of Bandar Khomeyni at the head of the Gulf, a spokesman for Iran's joint staff said at the time.

Sharp disputes are continuing over the government's proposed budget in the Majlis (parliament) two months after the start of the year it covers.

Referring to the budget plans, Mr Ayatollahi said: "Oil output has been earmarked at 2.5 million bpd for exports, which owing to the present imposed war and other problems is far from practicable."

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"In future, it is very possible that we will have to increase our oil production to the level of 3.5 million bpd to compensate for the present bottlenecks," he added.

Mr Ayatollahi said Iran's oil sales policy was based on an embargo of the United States, Morocco, South Africa, Chile and Israel. The number of oil buyers had been trimmed since the 1979 revolution and this had limited the big power's ability to dictate to Iran, he said.

He said there were plans to repair the Abadan oil refinery, the biggest in the Middle East. This contradicted an earlier statement by the beleaguered city's acting governor who said the refinery would have to be abandoned and a new one built.

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IRAN

ARREST OF BANI-SADR ADVISER REPORTED

JN021339 London REUTER in English 1309 GMT 2 Jun 81

[Report by Annette Von Broecker]

[Text] Tehran, 2 Jun (REUTER)--A legal adviser to Iran's embattled president Abolhasan Bani-Sadr has been arrested on charges of supporting counter-revolutionaries, taking bribes and smuggling people and foreign currency out of the country, officials said today.

The arrest on Sunday of Manuchehr Mas'udi was the latest in a series of blows against the president and his staff and followed an official statement yesterday that Mr Bani-Sadr himself had violated laws of the Islamic Republic.

It was the second arrest of a presidential adviser in little over two weeks. On May 17 an aide was taken into custody on a charge of smuggling secret documents from the Foreign Ministry.

Both assistants are being held at Tehran Evin jail.

An official statement by the city's revolutionary prosecutor said that 15 other people, including two "impostor clergymen," had been arrested as a result of the Mas'udi investigation.

It accused the legal adviser of accepting bribes, misuse of his powers and collaboration with a vast network which illegally exported foreign currency and smuggled counter-revolutionaries out of Iran, the official news agency PARS reported.

It also accused Mr Mas'udi of extorting money from relatives of counter-revolutionary prisoners seeking their release.

Informed sources said the president's legal department had frequently been approached by anxious relatives seeking reprieves for prisoners condemned to death.

The charges against Mr Mas'udi also include collaboration with agents of the ousted regime of the late shah.

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If convicted on all counts, Mr Mas'udi could face death.

The accusations may prove to be the most serious brought against a member of the president's office by Iran's clergy-dominated judiciary.

The president has been under legal investigation for his alleged role in a rally on March 5 at which 45 people were injured in clashes between his supporters and Islamic extremists.

In addition a three-member commission of Moslem clergymen told him yesterday that he had violated the constitution and the orders of revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni.

The commission, set up by Ayatollah Khomeyni to calm the war of words between the president and his opponents, rebuked Mr Bani-Sadr for what it called his defiance of a ban on public speeches harmful to the country.

It also accused him of violating the constitution by refusing to sign a bill passed by the Majlis (parliament). This would empower the government to make appointments to vacant ministerial portfolios.

The president has not yet replied to the accusations but his office said he was expected to do so in due course.

The commission did not recommend any legal action against Mr Bani-Sadr but sources in his office said he might be summoned by the judiciary to defend himself.

A member of the commission hinted yesterday that discussion of Iran's internal crisis should be left till after the end of the war against Iraq.

President Bani-Sadr is leading Iran's efforts to drive Iraqi troops out of the country in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

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IRAN

BRIEFS

LOW BYELECTION TURNOUT--Tehran--Only one-sixth of those eligible to vote in Iran's parliamentary byelections on Friday took part, according to figures released by the Interior Ministry yesterday. Nineteen separate polls were held to fill vacancies in the National Assembly and in most cases produced overwhelming victories for candidates supporting the dominant fundamentalist Islamic Republican Party. Despite the success of its candidates, the government may be concerned at the poor turnout in this first test of opinion and the course of the revolution since the overthrow of Mr Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, the former president, two weeks ago. The poll in the 19 constituencies which ranged from the Turkish-speaking north west, along the Caspian coastline and into the north eastern Khorassan Province, plus several seats in the southern and south eastern Gulf provinces, was also well down. [Terry Povey] [Text] [LD291410 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 29 Jun 81 p 2]

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LIBYA

BRIEFS

WARSAW PACT ADVISERS--2,000 Warsaw Pact military advisers (East Germans and Bulgarians) are expected by summer in Libya. This is one result of Kadhafi's visit to Moscow. [Text] [Paris LA LETTRE DE L'EXPANSION in French 4 May 81 p 5] [COPYRIGHT: 1981. Groupe Expansion S.A.] 6145

OIL TANKERS--The oil tanker Al Gordabya, built in Sweden for the Libyan merchant marine, was officially handed over to her owners early in April at the Goteborg shipyards. This is the second of three tankers of the same type built in Sweden for the Libyan national shipping company. The first, the Al Hani, was delivered in March, and the third, the Al Fouihate, will be delivered by the end of April. These are 153,000-ton vessels, 279 m long and of 45 m beam. Their delivery brings to 12 the number of tankers in the Libyan merchant marine, which represents more than a million deadweight tons, making it the third largest Arab fleet and the largest African fleet of oil carriers. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 24 Apr 81 p 1181] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981] 6145

FOKKER PLANE ORDERS--In our April 24 issue we very briefly noted an order from the Libyan air carrier Libyan Arab Airlines for eight Fokker F-27 Mark 600 aircraft. These planes, which can carry 44 passengers, will be delivered in 1982 and 1983. Libyan Arab Airlines has operated Fokker F-27's since 1972. Ten of those now in service will be made available to oil companies working in Libya: Oasis, Mobil, Occidental, Arabian Gulf Oil, Esso, and Agip, whose transportation needs are ever growing because of expanding concessions and prospecting areas. With the new F-27's the Libyan company will serve existing domestic routes, and open new ones. Thus in two years the oases of Hun, Brak, Murzuk, Ubari Derna and Beida will be served. The company will also be able to make charter flights. The most heavily traveled routes, from Tripoli to Sebha and Benghazi, will be served by Boeing 727's. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 1 May 81 p 1241] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981] 6145

ETHYLENE PLANT--The Italian firm Belleli Industrie Meccaniche has just been retained to build an ethylene production plant at Ras Lanuf in Libya. The contract is for approximately \$45 million. Financing is to be provided by the Banco di Roma and by a pool of international banks including, among others, the European Union Bank and the Arab and French Banking Union. Moreover, the Italo-German consortium which has obtained the contract for an urea plant at Marsa El Brega (see MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS, 24 Apr p 1181) includes the Italian firms Belleli and Romaine des entreprises industrielles [sic] and the German firm Uhde of the Hoechst group. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 1 May 81 p 1241] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981] 6145

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MAURITANIA

RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO, POLISARIO, EFFECTS ON ECONOMY DISCUSSED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 11-24 May 81 pp 25-26

[Article by Bouzid Kouza: "Emerging From a State of Precariousness"]

[Text] When, on 28 November 1960, in a modest school in Nouakchott, Mauritania's independence was declared, no one thought then that the nation that had just been born would still, 20 years later, be so weak and so threatened that its collapse could be a real possibility. Born under the sign of precariousness, the Mauritanian state has, since its first days, had to fight to be recognized and admitted within the international community. Its adversary at that time is the same one today: Morocco, the avowed ambition of which is to give substance to a dream nurtured by yearnings for a past glory. Indeed, Rabat has not given up hope, in spite of the successive failures it has recorded in its foreign policy, of rebuilding Greater Morocco, an empire that would extend as far as the Senegal River, encompassing the western Sahara, a major part of the Algerian Sahara, and vast portions of Niger and Mali.

The former colonial power, which has still maintained privileged relations with Morocco, which it uses today as a "contract policeman" (the Shaba war and the aggression of Benin are the most marked illustration of this), bears a historical responsibility for the very serious current situation in Mauritania. It is true that Paris has never openly supported the Moroccan claims on Mauritania. But neither has it opposed them. The neocolonial regime of Ould Daddah, which it set up following independence, was satisfactory in its eyes because it was weak and completely dependent on the West.

The efforts to build an independent economy were blocked or diverted for a long time: it was not until 1970 that a long term strategy could be born which had the objectives of progressively releasing Mauritania from the neocolonial influence and of building a national economy based on the mining industry. These efforts, opposed by Paris and by Rabat, had not had time to bear fruit when the western Sahara affair happened.

We know how the Ould Daddah regime succumbed to the temptation offered by Hassan II and how he engaged his country in the adventure which, 5 years later, was to lead Mauritania to the edge of collapse under the weight of a disastrous war. The movements of the old regime were dictated by many reasons, the least acknowledged of which was to circumvent Hassan II and to calm his covetousness toward Mauritania.

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We know also that behind the speeches on Moroccan-Mauritanian brotherhood, the Royal palace had never abandoned its claims. At the most, it had changed tactics and methods: instead of "swallowing" this state that it was challenging, it would content itself with placing it under its guardianship. The presence of an expeditionary body of 10,000 men and the taking over of part of the security services, the administration, and the economy made the Moroccan seizure of the country effective in a practical sense.

It was in this context that the movement of 10 July 1978 arose, which gave birth to the Committee of National Salvation. This name itself, chosen by the patriotic soldiers who put an end to the Ould Daddah regime, sums up the state in which Mauritania found itself. It was a bloodless country which they inherited: the economy was on its knees, since the drop in the production of iron, coupled with the crisis in the capitalist system, had reduced to practically zero the financial receipts on which the running of the state depended to a large degree; the administration, a product of the colonial period, was paralyzed and was undergoing the repercussions of a war situation and of the instability that stemmed from it; the agriculture, already reduced, was far from meeting the nation's needs, which were made even more sensitive because of a drought that forced tens of thousands of nomads into an idle sedentary life without any prospects; the ethnic rift between Arab-Berbers (the majority) and Negro-Africans had become more bitter and more conflictive because of the Negro-Africans' opposition to a war in which they were bearing more of the costs than the others; the national feeling, in an embryonic state, was being harassed from within, as much by Moroccan agents as by certain forces based in Dakar, who were benefitting from the goodwill of former president Senghor; finally, the tribal and clan structures that formed Mauritanian society represented, in this context, a weight that worked in favor of a breakdown in the central government.

In the whole series of priorities that the Military Committee had to face, the end of the war and the regularization of relations with the POLISARIO were the most urgent.

Influences

It required a year, however, before this objective could be attained. This long period represents the many influences, diverse if not divergent, that appeared--some of which are still appearing--in the successive government teams since July 1978. It was around the nationalist and independent nucleus led by President Haidallah that were balanced, in a complex and subtle fashion, the various ideological, ethnic, and tribal forces, with different awarenesses that made the separating lines even more changeable since the political expression of the struggles for influence remain restricted within the government machinery.

The national trend, aware of the dangers of maintaining this system and wishing to quickly put into action the promise of democracy for the country, has attempted during these last few months to give the country institutional structures and to establish a favorable climate for mobilizing a large part of the population to protect the state and revive the economy. This trend, it seems, has not been unanimously accepted in leadership circles. Although the prospect of promoting multipartism has received the support of a large segment of the youth and the urban working classes--as can be testified by the spirited discussions that followed

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the publication of the proposed constitution last February--it was also seen as a danger by certain forces who are represented in the leading circles but who have no base among the masses. It is true, however, that apart from the National Democratic Movement, which enjoys a relatively favorable reception among the population, most of the other political trends are formed by personalities who gather around them a clientele composed predominantly of tribal and family relatives.

This situation, made even more complex by the effects of the war between the SDAR [Saharan Democratic Arab Republic] and Morocco and the effects of the ratio of forces in the whole region, both in north and south Sahara, and aggravated by Mauritania's financial difficulties--which have made the country even more vulnerable--has not facilitated setting up the plan to democratize the country and return to a civil government.

The destabilization attempt of 16 March, stirred up by Morocco, has accentuated the feeling of the precariousness of the situation. Can the new, completely military, government that has just been formed succeed in carrying through, in a reasonable period of time, the process that the Military Committee had entrusted to the former civilian team? What is the meaning of setting aside the civilians and redistributing the positions among the military? The lack of solid factors makes an answer to these questions impossible. At the most we can state that the head of state and the new prime minister, Mouayya Ould Sid Ahmed Taya, are giving themselves as priorities the tasks of assembling all the national energies in order to cope with the new attempts at destabilization, to reorganize the administration, and to revive the country's economy.

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SUDAN

BRIEFS

GLUCOSE PLANT--A call for bids has just been issued in Sudan for the building of a plant to produce glucose and starch from sorghum. The plant is to be located about 35 km south of Khartoum, in the El Gedid Elthawra industrial zone 3 km west of the Khartoum-Wad-Medani highway, and is intended to process 150 tons of sorghum per day. Operating round the clock 7 days per week, it is to produce 65 tons of glucose daily, the starch to be transformed to glucose by acid action. The call for bids, in two parts, concerns the following equipment and construction items: 1. production equipment and related construction; 2. design and drafting of specifications for administrative buildings, warehouses, and exterior works. Bids may be submitted for the second part only, or for both (a bid for the first part only would not be accepted). Submit bids to: Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development, Street 21, New Extension, PO Box 2102, Khartoum. Closing date: 1 July 1981. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 1 May 81 p 1241] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981] 6145

MINERAL EXPLORATION AGREEMENT--The Geological and Mining Research Bureau (BRGM) and the French firm Total will participate in exploration and development of mining resources in Sudan. An agreement has been signed between the Sudanese Republic and the two French state corporations concerning development in the province adjoining the Red Sea in the northeast of the country. Traces of ores were brought to light in that region in the course of the general prospecting campaigns which have been conducted since 1976 through Franco-Sudanese cooperation. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 8 May 81 p 1294] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981] 6145

JOINT PROJECTS WITH NETHERLANDS--Following the March visit to Sudan by a Netherlands delegation, and pursuant to cooperation agreements between the two countries, the Netherlands is to participate in numerous projects in Sudan including: The Bor-Kongor highway; dredging and weeding at Gezira; a sanitation program; rehabilitation projects; an agricultural and horticultural program at Gash/Kassala; a water protection project at Kassala; road repair; development of Kassala region; development of Bor region; a farm project at Bor; rural development services; technical aid; a foundry at Khartoum; the Nyala-El Fasher highway; financial assistance, and an assistance program. Total Netherlands assistance to Sudan represents over \$20 million to be used in these different projects. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 8 May 81 p 1295] [COPYRIGHT: Rene Moreux et Cie Paris 1981] 6145

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TUNISIA

NATIONAL SPIRIT FOLLOWING PSD CONGRESS REVIEWED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 11-24 May 81 pp 22-24

[Article by Said Ould Khelifa: "Travel Notes".]

[Text] It all started in the train leaving the Algerian village of Annaba and taking us toward Tunis. By a stroke of luck we were traveling with three young Tunisians who were relaxed and voluble enough to "contaminate" the rest of the travelers. Right away Mohamed explained to me that he had come to sit for an examination in Algeria: "I am in technical school. I have already 'done' Tunis, but it is no longer possible, I am going back to take care of my affairs. I have to be in Annaba before 30 May! My deferment expires on that date." Another young man, who stated that he was born in 1963 and sent down from the technical school because he had "retained nothing", said, "A deferment! For 50 dinars you can have an exemption!"

Then a somewhat confused dialogue took place, interrupted by a third youth, who had remained silent until then: "Those methods should not be encouraged. They should be denounced to the authorities [...] I am from Jendouba, a licensed unemployed person. I have 'done' Germany and France. After the death of my father, I have come back to the country."

At Souk-Ahras, he politely asked a young woman if she did not have anything important to declare. And, without waiting for her reply, he put a chandelier beside her: "You will say that it is a present for your family in Tunisia..." After we passed the customs, he gave a great sigh of relief. However, no one had been forced to lie: the Algerian customs officials had been more interested in coffee: "they are unmanageable. You know, there are at least 500 packets of coffee that enter Tunisia every day by this train," said the "Jendoubi", an avowed expert.

The discussion continued in fits and starts, dealing, in a partisan or very anecdotic fashion, with the student strikes. It was interrupted by Ali, who advised us to take the panes out of our windows, for we were at Melassine, entering Tunis. In the time it took to do this, the "reasons" for this "advice" started to rain in, in the form of stones of every size.

The scenery, passed through quickly, made one think of the Quarantaine district in Beirut: the same flagrant poverty, the same dilapidation, the picture of which still remained in the mind when the train stopped in Tunis station--a beautiful architectural building opened in June 1980.

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In that late afternoon in April, the main streets were almost deserted. Everyone seemed to be meeting each other in the alleys of Avenue Bourguiba. The legendary nonchalance of Mediterraneans is not contradicted by Tunis, where people seem to take the time to live. Nothing showed at that time that these areas had been the setting for "serious disturbances."

"And What of Simon Malley?"

However, the underlying mood . . . Next to the Halfaouine district, the atmosphere was more stormy. The "craziest" rumors circulate here. The recent amendments to the Code regarding personal status are debated with passion. These amendments, revolutionary according to some people, dangerous according to others, improve the ways to repair the harm caused to the divorced wife. The integrist Muslims are 100 percent opposed to them: "The masculine privilege in inheritances" (two shares for the boy, one share for the girl) "could well have been abolished were it not for the prompt intervention of our Saudi brothers," stated a Tunisian intellectual. As for an inspector on the Tunis-Hamman Life bus, he maintained that "this can only encourage certain women to ask for a divorce so that they can get the 3,000 dinars due them in such a situation. There is no news about it. The Destourian newspapers trumpet the same news. LE PHARE, TUNIS HEBDO and EL RAI have been suspended, so truly we don't know what to think."

In order to be able to think, one must first be informed. At first sight, the imposing newspaper stands on the Avenue Bourguiba seemed to be even too well stocked; but the illusion blurred with a closer look. A close-up view presented an edifying sight. There were piles of periodicals of the Hersant group, the Springer group, and others, which are a thousand miles away from the political, economic, and cultural concerns and questions of the Tunisian people.

A rapid look around established that this avalanche of newspapers was very channeled. There was no danger of coming across a foreign progressive publication. Even, so, we ventured to ask for AFRIQUE-ASIE from one of these vendors. With a smile, he said quietly: "Things aren't going well?" Gradually, the discussion took another turn. Our speaker was convinced that Ahmed ben Salah, the secretary general of the Popular Unity Movement was on the editorial staff of the newspaper or "something like that." And he added, decisively: "In any case, Si Brahim [he was, of course, walking about Ibrahim Tobal, leader of the Movement of Tunisian National Opposition], I am more sure of him . . . The husband of my older sister, a Youssefist who lives in Algeria and often reads AFRIQUE-ASIE, told me so" (!)

"But of course we know AFRIQUE-ASIE! Let us hope that M'zali will soon authorize it to be circulated in Tunisia . . . And what of Simon Malley?"

The people we were speaking with, a group of students whom we had arranged the day before to meet at the Cafe de Paris, had come in force. They were of all ages and from various backgrounds. One of them brandished an issue of the new weekly, LE MAGHREB, which a former journalist, a defector from the Ministry of the Interior, had just published: "It's promising!" he said with a meaningful pout.

Events were commented on. They spoke of large groups of bursary students being sent abroad, to the United States among other places; they discussed the BOP

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[Public Order Brigades] who, with their bludgeons in their hands, their helmets on their heads, are permanently stationed all over in front of their armored vehicles. Passions are aroused and accusations burst out: "Gafsa? There will be others like him so long as poverty rages in Tunisia!"

University students give their opinion that, apart from the "isolated paradises" in the Sahel, the whole land is "a hell for men." "Now Bourguiba talks about an overture but, in our opinion, he is a little late. A dialogue cannot be established with the workers, the minor civil servants, and above all, the unemployed."

And what precisely is the overture? "Ah well, it is like the Infatah of Sadat, with whom, moreover, Bourguiba has never broken. For the government, the 'enemy Egypt' was that of Nasser [. . .] M'zali's multipartism is full of ulterior motives. . . Who are these social-democrats and the others? It is our history that one day will have to challenge them for their various acts of collusion."

The verdict is harsh. It is disputed by another friend at the table: "Let's not exaggerate and let us acknowledge that these opposition parties have a certain amount of courage, enough to permit them to question the Destourian Party's power. We have confidence in M'zali and we will perhaps give him our critical support once multipartism has been established."

"The Fangs of the Jackals"

In a little stall on Avenue Djamaa-Zitouna, a 70-year old welcomes us with "neo for ever," that is to say, "neo-Destour." On the way to Sidi Mahreb, where the mausoleum and the mosque have been restored, our old Destourian explained to us that "Bourguism is a science, a philosophy that no longer respects the current generation. Before it is too late, bear all this in mind." The keeper of the restored mosque explained to us that the very beautiful chandeliers, costing "hundreds of millions" of dinars, came from Italy as did all the marble. An old woman who was looking for the place reserved for women so she could pray retorted to us, "Islam is worth more than that!"

When we left, the candy vendor, at the bottom of the mosque steps, was out of patience. On the sidewalk opposite, a child kept asking him constantly, "Did Bourguiba visit your shop yesterday?" A sign of the times . . . There were to be many others. A young vendor from whom we asked for a copy of the newspaper L'ACTION, devoted entirely to Bourguiba, answered: "It is 'out of date' . . . It's over. Wouldn't you like something else?" It was very probably about something else that the integrist Moslems wished to talk to us in a house in the medina-- a safe place, "not in a cafe, we would quickly be spotted." Their point of view? "Bourguiba is intelligent, he jumped at the opportunity to replace Nouira . . . He knew very well that they would only make short work of him. M'zali is tougher, but we will win our case . . . There are many believers, and they are with us." It could not be clearer.

A retired man described to us his happiness when, on leaving the mosque, he was able to get the last cassette of the Egyptian Kouchke, a preacher appointed by the Moslem Brothers: "The Sheikh has said that Sadat is a man of peace." Sadat is also in the pages of that Egyptian religious book that is sold from under

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djebba^{1/} in Tunisia and is read "in a state of nirvana," if we were to believe our old pensioner.

M'rad, a Tunisian communist, waited a long time before back to his country. "Amensty came at the right time. I was wasting away with homesickness. But it is the state of "after-Bourguism" which bothers me. The jackals are sharpening their fangs, and the country is at the mercy of any kind of intrigue. The working class is too isolated to be able to count on the other sectors. All the faults are attributed to it. Let us not talk about the peasants, who are still under the khemassat [translation unknown] exactly like serfs!"

Lend to the Rich

Unbelievable Tunisia, where the boats unload hundred of unconcerned tourists who are clearly happy to not be too much out of their element, to find themselves in a "politically calm" country.

On the road to the station, the student who was bringing us from the university campus turned on a cassette of Sheikh Imam. "He is our chorister! We sing his songs at all our meetings. [A silence.] You see all these Shell, Mobil, Total, Esso signs. And to say that we have been independent for a quarter of a century. For myself, I would first vote for those who say they are against the multinationals in Tunisia. Unfortunately, most of the parties in Tunis are silent on this subject. You will see, multipartism will always benefit the same people. It is a way of lending only to the rich."

The train starts moving, taking us away from a deeply troubled capital. Rain is falling on the Beja plain, where the harvest promises to be excellent. I don't know why, but I truly have the impression that "it always rains where it is wet."

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^{1/} National costume

TUNISIA

NATIONAL OPPOSITION MOVEMENT LEADER DISCUSSES DESTOURIAN PARTY CONGRESS DECISIONS

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 11-24 May 81 p 24

[Article by Ibrahim Tobal: "An Exclusive Pluralism"]

[Text] The leader of the MONT [Tunisian National Opposition Party] sent us the following statement, in which he takes a position with regard to the decisions made by the latest congress of the Destourian Socialist Party.

The Tunisian head of state claims to be starting a new era for the country by putting an end to the single party system. This decision, saluted as an historic one by what it has been agreed to call the opposition--a vague term that indiscriminately describes both the trends within the mobility of the Bourguiba government and those who hope to get back there--is based on transparent ulterior motives: the only ones to profit will be those groups who agree to play the game, the rules of which are fixed by the party in power. To see this party play on the rift that exists within the various opposition groups, suspend the public opinion press, dismiss political figures who are held in suspicion, reprimand the intellectuals, students, and workers, it is clear that behind the facade of a "democratic opening up" one can detect the designs of the leaders of the PSD [Destourian Socialist Party]: to break the fragile consensus that formally unites all those opposition groups and attaches them through a true act of allegiance to the head of state.

Two examples illustrate these steps of the government. In the first place, the suspension measures that have been slapped on three papers, about which the least that can be said is that they have never shown any radicalism whatsoever in the positions they were defending.^{1/} It can be seen that, before embarking on its new-look process, the PSD is trying to "regularize" public opinion by attacking any groups expressing different viewpoints, even if they are within the framework of the Constitution.

In the second place, the authoritarian Bourguiba regime, which has become accustomed to exercising absolute power, feels itself to be in a somewhat precarious position

^{1/} ENRAI (L'OPINION), TUNIS-HEBDO, and LE PHARE. This last paper had "dared" to print a photo of Salah ben Youssef, Destour's secretary general, who was assassinated in 1961 on Bourguiba's orders.

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for assuring a democratic swing which, in fact, has been forced on it as much by an explosive domestic situation as by the injection of multinationals and their social democrat agents. Thus it is surrounding itself with a series of precautions aimed at making this opening up devoid of danger to its leadership. In order to do this, it has first branded as exclusive all the parties which are demanding true nationalism, and preaching economic independence and social progress within the framework of a development plan that responds to the real needs of our people. Then it has encouraged the contestants in certain parties to show dissent and to form independent groups, thus accentuating the splintering of the political groups and movements and at the same time opening up new possibilities of recovery, if not paralysis, of these same opposition trends.

The third element that gives little credence to this "democratic opening up": it is the government which, all throughout the process of opening up will give, or refuse, authorizations regarding the forming of the parties; it is the government that will continue to control, by itself, the media, particularly television (the importance of which is well known); and it is again the government that will have the upper hand over all the country's institutions.

There is no doubt that the current operation is nothing more than a recovery attempt, such as we foresaw following the Gafsa insurrection. The Bourguiba regime cannot stand on its own feet any longer. It needs crutches. That its dependents--from out of its own harem--are supplying them does not surprise us or our people. However, the fact that opponents who call themselves patriots and anti-imperialists consent to maneuvers of superficial reconciliation and serve as foils for a doomed regime, this says much about their true ambitions--which are not those of defending the people. As far as we, the national opposition, are concerned, who are putting down our roots in the liberation movement, faithful to our people's tradition of combat, we will not be fooled by the new medicine that Bourguiba wants to administer to our country. The government knows this very well. And the people also.

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TUNISIA

GRAIN PRODUCTION UNSTABLE DUE TO RAINFALL

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 22 May 81 p 1406

[Text] Tunisia's grain production continues to seesaw because of several factors, the most important of which is rainfall. It is therefore necessary to import large quantities of grain every year to meet increased human and animal consumption and respond to the needs of a food industry that is rapidly developing in the country.

Since 1970, grain production has had its ups and downs. It has always varied between 6 and 9 million quintals, with the exception of 1972, 1976 and 1980, when it was 11.5 million quintals. Nevertheless, even the latter figure is far below what had been hoped.

The goal was to reach self-sufficiency in food, particularly with respect to grain. However, numerous factors hinder achievement of the objective, especially the poor use of land: Areas reserved for grain have had no major changes over the past decade. Sown fields, which totaled 1.54 million hectares in 1973 and 1.7 million hectares in 1979, fell to 1.22 million hectares in 1980. Furthermore, the parceling and location of farmland constitute a serious obstacle to the desired improvement in grain production, despite the introduction of new growing methods, mechanization and the use of high-yield, select seed.

According to statistics from the Grain Office, one observes, by way of example, that parcels of 10 hectares represent 18.2 percent of all grain areas and those between 10 and 50 hectares 43.3 percent. Consequently, the utilization of fertilizers has not been in keeping with the provisions of the different development plans because of a lack of dissemination, the inadequate financial means of grain farmers and failures in the supply system. The same is true of weeding, whose objectives as set by the plans have not been fully reached because they were never defined on the basis of a study taking the means to be used into account.

Seasonal credits destined to help grain farmers to produce more cover only 45 percent of all operating charges. The rest (55 percent) are borne by the farmer and therefore constitute a heavy burden, especially for small and medium-size farmers whose income is very low. This then limits self-financing capabilities and constitutes a veritable check on increased production.

One must also note, according to the national agency TUNIS AFRIQUE PRESSE, that grain farmers with small and medium-sized businesses were excluded from the benefit of seasonal

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agricultural credits until 1972. Some 18.2 percent of all grain operations did not benefit from this type of credit.

Finally, climatic conditions have not always been favorable. Tunisia, a semi-arid country because of its geographical position, has had years of drought. This essential factor explains the poor yield, particularly in the central and southern regions of the country, inasmuch as a good or bad harvest depends on the abundance or insufficiency of rain.

According to predictions, grain production on the order of 15 million quintals is expected this year from the 1.4 million hectares planted. Some 400,000 quintals of seed and 970 tons of fertilizer were used. The Tunisian Government made the move, in order to provide encouragement, of increasing the prices of hard and soft wheat and barley by 1 dinar per quintal. However, authorities still expect to import 11.3 million quintals of grain for a total value of 95 million dinars in order to meet all needs, including controlled human consumption on the order of 14 million quintals.

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TUNISIA

BRIEFS

COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH MAURITANIA--An agreement protocol for cooperation between Tunisia and Mauritania was signed in Tunis on 15 May. It establishes conditions for the sending and work of Tunisian technical assistants in Mauritania and grants that country the privilege of admission to institutes of higher education and technical study and scholarships for study in Tunisia. Signing for Tunisia was Ahmed Ben Arfa, general director of international cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for Mauritania, Mohamed Abdelkader Ould Didi, ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to Tunis. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 22 May 81 p 1405] 11,464

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