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# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 36/81)

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## NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

UK JOURNALIST DISCUSSES ARAB GOLD MARKET

PM238131 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 28 Sep 81 FINANCIAL TIMES Survey: Arab Banking and Finance, p V

[Article by David Marsh: "Oil Countries' Demand for Gold Strengthening World Bullion Price"]

[Text] A resurgence of demand for gold from the wealthy Arab oil producers has been an important factor behind the recovery in the international bullion price during the last two months.

Following the sharp drop from the peak price of \$850 per ounce in January last year to around \$390 in early August, many of the private Arab investors who had piled into the bullion market in the hope of making quick gains had good reason to feel demoralised. One London precious metal dealer tells of disappointed Telex messages sent to him this summer by a key Middle East client addressed to "the big bear"--reflecting anguish at the constant news of falling prices.

Since then the mood has changed perceptibly, with the price regaining the \$450 level by mid-September. Demand both from investors and the jewellery industry has picked up as market participants came round to the view suddenly that gold had been oversold. Some official Arab institutions which emerged as heavy buyers in 1979 and 1980 have also shown revived interest.

Reflecting the solidity of physical demand, particularly from Saudi Arabia, many jewellery fabricating factories in northern Italy--the traditional supplier to the Arab market--are reported to be fully booked until the end of the year. This is a marked contrast to last year, when Italian jewellers were hard hit by a slump in orders and heavy flows of dishoarded metal from the Gulf.

Pattern

The pattern of buying, however, seems to have shifted compared with the latter half of 1979, when many Arab merchants and private sector consortia threw themselves enthusiastically into both the gold and silver market--and had their fingers badly burnt when the price subsequently slumped.

This time the emphasis is far more on trading rather than one-way buying. Investors are careful to prevent their positions from becoming overexposed. A series of quick-moving incursions into the market, buying at the lows and then creaming

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off profits when the price moves up \$10, now seems to be the preferred strategy for many Gulf investors. "The Middle East has learnt that there is money to be made by jobbing," says one Arab bullion dealer in London.

The extent of the turn-round in demand last year is illustrated by figures compiled by Consolidated Ghold Fields, the London-based mining finance house. These show that total holdings of carat jewellery in the main Arab countries of the Middle East were hardly changed last year after rising by about 115 tonnes in 1978, when demand was particularly strong during the run-up to the price explosion of 1979.

Swing

When the whole of the Middle East is considered, the swing is even more dramatic. If Turkey and Iran are included, total jewellery holdings in the area rose by 226 tonnes in 1978 and then dropped by nearly 90 tonnes last year, reflecting large-scale dishoarding--in particular from Iran.

This year the heavy dishoarding has stopped. But physical shipments to the Middle East from the main gold trading centres in London and Zurich will still remain modest in comparison to the boom year of 1978. One reason for this is that the market has become a great deal more speculative and geared to short-term profits. To assist dealing and quick disposal, many investment consortia prefer to keep stocks in bank vaults in Europe, rather than in their home base in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

Additionally some private investors--and, most probably, members of some of the Arab royal families who habitually trade in precious metals--like to maintain holdings in stable places like Switzerland as a form of last resort insurance against a change of regime or other political disturbance in their country. It is significant, for instance, that at least two of the big gold-dealing entrepreneurs in Beirut--the traditional centre of Arab gold dealing before the civil war--have since moved their operations to Zurich, where they are by all accounts prospering.

Although its significance as a trading centre has declined, Beirut is still an important entrepot for Middle East gold. Much of the dishoarded supplies which came back to Europe from the region last year were sent by air from the city to Switzerland.

Dubayy remains an important shipment point for supplies of metal passing from the Gulf and the Indian sub-continent to Europe and vice versa. Recently the Soviet Union has shown increased interest in the possibility of selling small gold bars--the most popular form of investment in India--in Dubayy for transshipment further east.

The exception to the general pattern of lower physical shipments to and from the Arab countries this year stems from the activities of central banks and other official institutions in the area.

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Iraq and Libya have emerged as the two main Arab states which have shown great enthusiasm about building up their gold reserves--partly on purely financial considerations but partly too for political reasons. The United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar have also operated in the market from time to time in varying degrees. Outside the main oil-exporting group, Syria and Jordan have occasionally shown interest.

Convert

Only in the case of the most powerful potential gold convert, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) has there been no sign of any official buying--although rumors abound that SAMA has in fact purchased gold at times through intermediaries.

Last year large-scale shipments of gold from Zurich to Baghdad were revealed in Swiss customs statistics, providing the first confirmation that Iraq had emerged as one of the biggest buyers of bullion in OPEC. The Swiss figures are no longer published following complaints from the Swiss banks' clients that their traditional secrecy was being violated.

But this year it is believed that Iraq, after selling some of its gold stocks at a price of \$550 to \$600 per ounce, may have been back in the market to buy gold again recently. Iraq has been much less financially hit by the war with Iran than Tehran (which has also made large gold purchases through its central banks over the past few years, but been forced to sell some recently).

Iraq's gold reserves have not been published for four years; they are classified as a state secret. Other countries are more obliging, however. According to statistics supplied to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Libya's gold reserves rose to more than 3.5m ounces as of May this year from only 2.7m ounces last autumn.

Libya has been building up its gold holdings in Tripoli, mostly, it is believed, through purchases on the London market.

Buying has been motivated particularly by the desire to maintain a stock of international assets free from possible interference from the West. With the memory still fresh of President Carter's action to block 50 tonnes of Iranian gold held in the New York FED in November 1979, and with the political temperature between the Libyans and the U.S. freezing rapidly, Col al-Qadhafi is in no mood to take chances.

Similar but smaller purchases of gold have shown up in IMF statistics for Oman, Jordan, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, although it is certain that the IMF figures do not tell the whole story because of the proliferation of semi-official reserve-investing institutions in these states.

SAMA is still thought to be basically too conservative to make large forays into the gold market. In a sense, however, the Saudi Arabians have already provided an example for the other more adventurous Arab states to follow. During the 1970's, motivated by the desire to be master of its own reserves, the Saudi government transported all its gold stocks from the New York FED back to the security of Riyadh.

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AFGHANISTAN

SOVIET NEWSMAN TERMS MUJAHEDIN BANDITS, ASSASSINS

Paris PARIS MATCH in French 11 Sep 81 pp 3-9

[Report by I. Andronov]

[Text] The very colonialistic reportage of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Afghanistan.

There have been many articles reporting on the Afghan people's resistance to the Russian invasion. The text we are publishing today is quite unusual in one respect: It was written by a Soviet journalist and published in Moscow by the official literary review, LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. What does a popular uprising represent to a special correspondent who travels through the country under the protection of the artillery and tanks of the invaders, his fellow-countrymen? How does he explain the hostility of the people to the reforms imposed by a government which itself is an emanation of the Kremlin? I. Andronov's reporting gives the answers, even while he claims only to be interested in safeguarding Afghanistan's archeological treasures. All conquerors, builders, and defenders of colonial empires have been followed by chroniclers or reporters whose job it is to sing their praises and discredit the resistance of various "barbarians." The present article is no exception: whatever the invaders may be, they present themselves as liberators, and those who dare resist them are nothing but frightful bandits, assassins, and incidentally enemies of progress...

Not far from the Kabul-Peshawar highway, near the Pakistani border, a rapid intervention regiment of the Afghan army is deployed. The regiment protects this artery, which has always been of exceptional commercial and strategic importance, from the incursions of the "basmachis" (Counterrevolutionary bandit during the civil war in Central Asia 1917-1926). Since time immemorial, caravans of merchants have traveled this ancient road. Along the same road once passed the military cohorts of Alexander of Macedonia, and the mounted hordes of various foreign conquerors from India hurled over it. On three separate occasions, the legions of the British colonialists followed this road to seize Afghanistan. Following in their footsteps today, armed bands of Afghan rebels from Pakistan are erupting in the East. I had

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joined up with this regiment of seasoned veterans who confronted them. I was somewhat hesitant about introducing myself for the first time to the brave officers who command it, for I did not know how they were going to receive the modest but rather unusual request I was going to make: I wanted to ask them to find me a guide to go visit the archeological museum near the village of Hadda.

To justify my unusual request, I had intentionally brought four guidebooks from Kabul, (now, alas, rather useless!) which cited among other Afghan historical curiosities the unique archeological treasures of Hadda, which were described as especially interesting. The digs carried out on the site had resulted in the discovery of an ancient temple, in which the alcove of the altar was decorated with an extraordinarily rare assemblage of sculptures of divinities: a Greek Heracles, dressed in the skin of the lion he had killed and seated next to Buddha. Surrounding the central temple was still standing a fortified monastery from the third century before our era, containing several dozen sacred "stupas" and prayer rooms, full of statues of gods belonging to the various Western and Eastern religions which intermingled here--Buddhism, Hinduism, and the religions of Greek antiquity.

A Protective Escort to Take Me to the Museum

This incomparable monument to the epoch of Greco-Bactrian civilization was built by the descendants of Alexander of Macedonia's comrades-in-arms, who were allied with the distant ancestors of the Afghans of today. This architectonic synthesis of the various civilizations had produced such a magnificent masterpiece of sacred architecture that for 7 centuries thousands of pilgrims came from all over to perform their devotions, even from India and China.

Later, the wild nomadic hordes who subdued almost all of Asia left the sanctuary of Hadda intact. But just recently, alarming rumors from Afghanistan reached the capitals of Europe: the rebels, it was said, had attacked Hadda and irreparably damaged it.

So it was the veracity of these reports that I had come to determine, at the request in the first place, of the department of foreign culture of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. In the second place, finding myself in Kabul, I had an interview with an expert on art, Azam Zariab, director of the department of culture in the ministry of information of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, who told me the following facts:

Starting in 1965, Afghan archeologists carried out excavations at Hadda, carefully restored the sculptures, the bas-reliefs and the frescos of the temple, and ended up putting together a remarkable museum complex, which has become an object of national pride for all our people. But last year, the "douchmans" (Afghan word signifying bandit and hooligan, overall "rebels"), as we call the enemies of the people's revolution, forced the experts to leave Hadda.

Since then, we have received information that the bandits may have destroyed most of the sculptures of Hadda and stolen the most precious of the objects, reportedly to be smuggled into Pakistan, where they were sold. Two months ago, we sent a group of experts to Hadda to make a detailed investigation. But just at that very moment, on the outskirts of Hadda, some fierce fighting with rebel detachments took place and as a result our experts had to circle back and return to Kabul...."



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When I related this conversation to the staff officers of the regiment deployed about 10 kilometers from Hadda, my interlocutors gave me an escort and vehicle to get to the museum: an armored vehicle arrived at headquarters. Along with it came nine soldiers, a lieutenant commander, and three sappers equipped with a mine detector and long poles, the purpose of which I did not understand.

The guide who had been assigned to me--Lieutenant Commander Abdul Raouf--explained to me that the road leading to Hadda might have been mined by the douchmans who traveled in the zone at night. They are currently receiving, secretly, from Pakistan, special American mines, encased in a plastic substance against which mine detectors were ineffective; thus we would be obliged to reconnoiter suspect sites along the road with these "feelers" 4 meters long and pointed at the end. Before starting, Lieutenant Raouf tried to reassure me:

"Don't be afraid! We will be seated on the top of the vehicle, and if we land on a mine, the worst that can happen is a little free flight."

I tried to manage a carefree smile, but without too much success. The Afghans who accompanied us climbed onto the vehicle along with me. We left the garrison behind and were soon covered with dust. The dirt road we followed massed through fields devoid of any signs of human habitation and bare, reddish hills.

I will never forget the first few kilometers of this journey: one's eyes were fixed ahead on the road which stretched out in front, one scrutinized every spot of loose dirt, every bump and pothole, expecting the fatal explosion at any moment. The path zigzagged its way to the forest, then plunged into its depths, and we suddenly found ourselves hemmed in on every side by thick, dark vegetation. A deathly silence reigned in the shadows. Even the birds, heaven knows why, were also silent.

A Spectacle of Devastation Confirmed Our Fears

Finally, the leafy obstacles were behind us, the trees grew farther apart, and we came out on the edge of a steppe. To the right, on a solitary knoll, stood the cubical complex of the legendary monastery. To the left stretched a wasteland, beyond which one could see the closely walled-in enclosure, and the worn soil, of a small village, which seemed dead. No smoke rose from the rooftops, no voices reached our ears. No sign of life. According to the leader of our troops, a man of experience, that was not necessarily a good sign, and he deemed it preferable not to allow the driver and the machine-gunner to leave the vehicle. Seven members of the commando team fanned out rapidly and fell flat on the ground on the left slope of the knoll on which the monastery stood. At the same time, three soldiers testing the ground ahead of them with the feelers and the mine detector, went ahead of us, the lieutenant commander and myself, toward the goal of our expedition.

The spectacle of desolation which greeted us confirmed our worst fears. Nothing remained of one of the world's artistic wonders but the gutted cloister walls. The vandals had burned down the celebrated museum. The roof restored by the archeologists had collapsed. The pillars which had supported it were nothing more now than blackened stumps which protruded monstrously from a pile of ashes. All the sacred "stupas" had been broken into pieces. All the sculptures had been literally evaporated. All the bas-relief murals had been shattered. The entire group of mythical divinities

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of the undersea kingdom of the flowering lotus, a sculpture known throughout the world, had been annihilated. Room by room, we found only debris from the past splendor, fragments, rubble.

"We should take a look into the monastery's underground vaults," said Raouf, "That was where the gallery of frescos depicting the life of man from birth to death was located. Perhaps they had been spared?"

Alas, the entrance to the vaults yawned as wide as the entrance to a cave. Once again, the sappers took the lead, as scouts, and we followed behind. The lieutenant commander used his cigarette lighter to illuminate the stone vault. The little tongue of light enabled us to glimpse a procession of Hellenistic figures garbed in bright red, blue, purple, or silvery tunics and with gold diadems on their heads. But their faces were completely gone: they had been lacerated by the blows of bayonets and daggers. In addition, the gallery of frescos was dotted with bullet-holes. To judge from the number of holes, the vandals had not tried to economize on ammunition. A tragic and symbolic provocation: this is not the first time in history that counter-revolutionaries machine-gun, slash, and burn to ashes works of popular art.

This Monstrous Sacking of Hadda Was In No Way Accidental

Once back out in the open air, we at once heard the crack of gunfire in the distance. The sounds of the firing came to us from the village, but fortunately we were not the targets. Raouf, who understood what was happening, explained it to me: "The village is undoubtedly occupied by the douchmans. They are probably too few in number to attack us. Those shots are a signal. They are asking for reinforcement. I am under orders not to expose you unnecessarily to danger and to avoid any engagements. So we are going to return straight back to the garrison. Tomorrow, we will return here with a company that will rid Hadda of all that riffraff." A week later, in Kabul, I had another opportunity to talk with Zariab, in his ministerial office. I related to him my unhappy news. Even though there was nothing surprising in it, Zariab still spoke of the basmatch vandalism with bitterness and anger:

"This monstrous sacking of Hadda was in no way accidental, if you know the savagery and religious fanaticism of the douchmans," said Zariab indignantly. "Practically everywhere those degenerates burn and blow up museums, schools, colleges, scientific establishments, hospitals, and libraries."

"What they want is to destroy every source of knowledge and culture, to keep the people in ignorance and slavery, and by fire and sword, to strangle the revolutionary democratization of our society. Meanwhile, their admirers, in the West extol the virtues of these murderers and butchers, whom they depict as "freedom fighters!" But the reasons for which they fight, in truth, and with what reprehensible means, must be made known."

The day of my visit to Hadda, I had the chance to see with my own eyes a wounded douchman, captured by the man of an Afghan commando unit. He had been brought in an armored transport vehicle to the regimental headquarters. Then, they changed the dressings on his leg, which had been pierced by a bullet, before interrogating him.

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The weapons that had been found on him were displayed before me: an automatic pistol, a high-caliber Colt, a bandolero, and a razor-sharp saber. The basmatch had been taken on the outskirts of the market town of Gaziabad, during a skirmish between the troops and a band of about 30 rebels. More than half of the latter had been killed, some had succeeded in escaping.

The wounded bandit was named Moudir Zarbab-khan. He said that before the revolution he had been a rich landholder. Subsequently, along with another wealthy proprietor named Kahfir Oul-khak, he had become the leader of the band that had just been put out of action. Head hunched between his shoulders, shrinking like a beast caught in a trap, the moustachioed bandit, his hawk-like nose planted in the middle of a bony face, made his statement in a monotone voice.

"Our last mission was to liquidate Assif Khamker, the president of the Gaziabad agricultural cooperative. We laid an ambush for him on the road, near the village, but we ourselves were spotted and surrounded."

"Who gave you the orders to commit this assassination?"

"A foreigner whose name I do not know, who had been brought from Pakistan by one of our confederates. After sending us off to the ambush, both of them left for parts unknown."

"What about the foreigner?"

"He was an officer. He had white skin. He was dressed in a pea jacket and baggy trousers. He spoke English, and also Pushtu. He participated in the raids we made in the districts of Chinvar and Tchapiar. He was always telling us: "You are struggling for a just cause; to punish the communists and their accomplices." Chiraz-khan told me, in secret, that the mission of this white officer who was sent to us was to pull together our isolated detachments."

"How many of your compatriots have you killed?"

Silence from the prisoner. He looked around him, with a haunted expression. Patently he had clammed up, in hopes no doubt of escaping the punishment he deserved for his murders. As for the "white officer" of whom he had spoken, the spy infiltrated from Pakistan, he was one of those swarms of instructors training the basmatches at almost all douchman bases south of the Afghan border. Before my expedition to Hadda, I had attended a press conference in Kabul, held on the occasion of the arrest of a terrorist, Vali Moukhammed. He recalled the instructions given the rebel-saboteurs at a training field near Peshawar:

The Rebels Tried to Divide the Populace

"The American instructors teach us how to use their mines and explosives to destroy government buildings, bridges, and any other strategic construction. The Americans also taught us how to burn down schools quickly and efficiently. They told us that a single grenade skillfully thrown into a meeting convoked by the authorities could terrorize the atheists enough that in future they would no longer want to attend public meetings...."

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In Djelalabad, I saw with my own eyes the results of their work with grenades: the attack was carried out at the municipal stadium during a soccer game. The toll: 11 dead, including a little boy 4 years old, and 17 seriously wounded. The douchman who had thrown the grenade was taken unharmed, but he had been arrested. During his interrogation, he said that he had acted on the orders of the Peshawar training center.

Col Couliam Kadyr, commander of the Afghan division garrisoned near Djelalabad, shared with me the information he had put together about the basmatch movement: "Today, all the major armed groups of douchmans have been liquidated and dispersed by lawful forces. Besides their military fiasco, the rebels have tried to divide the peaceful populace, promising them to abolish agrarian reform, restore the government of the semi-feudal oligarchy, and eliminate the program of popular education. Now, the military and moral imotence of the counterrevolution has reduced their terrorist activity to criminal banditry by small groups who are trying, through assassination and pillage, to sow panic, disorder, and ruin.

"In the agricultural outskirts of Djelalabad, the douchmans blow up irrigation ditches and bridges, they cut down the power lines, they burn the food storehouses, they destroy the Soviet tractors, agricultural combines, and trucks we have sent them. For the moment, these criminal vermin are still causing enormous damage along the main highway linking Djelalabad and Kabul."

"What is the role of the basmatchs along that road?"

"They pillage, torture unarmed passengers on the buses which serve the route," answered Col Kadyr. "We man posts all along the highway, but it is practically impossible to supply a military escort for every bus. The douchmans slip up to the road under cover, and when the bus comes, they throw themselves into its path, armed with automatic rifles. The driver is forced to stop.

#### A Cannibalistic Ritual of Head-Hunting

"Then, the assailants most often force their victims to line up side by side. All the prisoners are meticulously searched, and their money and papers are taken from them. The rebels use the papers to try to identify the members of the people's democratic party and the revolutionary youth organizations. These people are immediately tied up. An eyewitness has reported that these sadists cut off their ears and nose, gutted them, and decapitated them. The heads were then stuck into the opened bodies.

"These stories are not perhaps for people with weak stomachs, but all the same everyone should know how these douchmans, armed by our foreign enemies, are treating Afghans."

South of Djelalabad, in the mountainous Afghan province of Paktia, which borders Pakistan, my journalistic calling enabled me to see the leader of these head-choppers who for a whole year were engaged in these excesses on the roads surrounding the town of Gardez. Now he has been stopped. On the eve of his sentencing, in the prison, I found myself face to face with this predator in human form, who answers to the name of Afridi Anatkhon.

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Along with his followers he attacked the local bus, and with his own hands personally tortured to death eight local party militants and also killed some 20 peasants who refused to give their allegiance to the basmatchs. His victims were all decapitated. The bloodthirsty Afridi was here following the instructions of Bourkhanouddin Rabbani, the leader of a sect of rebel conspirators, the "Djamiate Islami," who introduced among his satraps a head-hunting cannibalistic ritual. The heads are brought as trophies to Rabbani's well-guarded headquarters.

Afridi a Rebel "Under the Wing" of the Westerners

His principal place of residence is in the city of Peshawar, in Pakistan. From there, he goes frequently to Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Western Europe. President Sadat holds sumptuous receptions for him. Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is his secret mentor. The British press sings his praises until it is out of breath: "Rabbani, an eminently respectable interpreter of Islam," "Rabbani is in no way a fanatic," "Rabbani, a Muslim professor of philosophy." Not a word, mind you, about the fact that this torturer of Afghan patriots, as his accomplice Afridi has now revealed, clandestinely receives on behalf of their obscurantist sect thousands of dollars and tons of American guns.

"How did Rabbani reward you personally for the execution of your compatriots?" I asked Afridi.

"Rabbani summoned me to Pakistan," declared Afridi, and told me: "The more of the enemy you kill, the richer you will be. Keep their money, their clothing, for yourself, everything that belongs to them, their jewelry."

"And this is what you have done?"

"Yes."

"Is this what Islam prescribes?"

"No."

At the time of his arrest, they had found on Afridi a tobacco pouch containing two dozen gold dental crowns torn from the mouths of prisoners. It was this gold, not devotion to Islam or an ardent love of freedom, which drew Afridi into the rebel camp. To my mind, in fact, it is not quite correct to call them rebels. They are nothing but venal marauders, as venal as they can be.

The unleashing of the douchmans' banditry has come back, as if by poetic justice, to haunt all of Afghanistan's neighbors who were giving them refuge. In Peshawar, the Afghan "Bachibouzauks" are kidnapping women, selling them for harems and massacring the Pakistanis who try to protect them. In the Pakistani border town of Quetta, they have kidnapped children and demanded ransom of the parents. Not far from there, in Paratchinar, they suddenly began firing into the open market and robbed the frightened merchants. Near the Pakistani town of Nushki, they cut down the trees, steal the livestock, gun down the shepherds, and have so persecuted the local populace that the latter, in despair, called regular troops and tanks to their rescue.

Further east, in Iran, the parliament in Tehran is considering emergency measures to expel the armed bands of basmatchs and Afghan smugglers who have infiltrated into the country. A band of these smugglers was arrested just recently in India. They were transporting drugs: opium, heroin, hashish. Seen from above, the Kunar [river], which in summer does not carry much water looks like a yellowish-white ribbon, when overflown from a border-post helicopter. The men at the post had taken me on one of their helicopter reconnaissance missions. There, above the unfathomably high banks of the river, 25 km from Pakistan, the douchmans were pressing forward once again, having succeeded in infiltrating into the country. But how can they be spotted, even flying close to the ground? During the day, they hide in the rocky crags that border on the Kunar valley; they only come out at night to carry out their brigandage.

The commander of the airborne Afghan forces invites me, however, to join him in the completely glassed cockpit, points his finger to the ground, and says with no hesitation:

"Douchmen!"

Below, I can see nothing, except the green grass that covers the steep banks of the river like a tapestry, and the little parcels of cultivated land, covered with pink flowers of striking beauty. I find it difficult to believe that the basmatchs have turned their energies to horticulture.

"Those are opium poppy fields," explains the major, noting my astonishment. Opium, and the heroin derived from it, are the object of the smuggling trade which brings the a nice little second income. We, in the provinces of the Kunar and the Nangarkhar, can easily spot the bandits' lairs thanks to the areas sown with opium poppy. In the central parts of Pakistan, where the Afghan counterrevolutionaries are entrenched, they have established immense plantations and had a record harvest last year: 400 tons. They have equipped clandestine laboratories to turn the opium into heroin, and have succeeded in monopolizing the Middle East black market in narcotics."

To whom do they sell this magical poison? That I learned last year in New York, where I was then working as a correspondent for LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. Two big shots in the American Mafia, and six of their accomplices, had just been arrested, and all were accused of having smuggled back from the Afghan-Pakistani border a cargo of heroin valued at \$10 million.

At that time, according to the New York police, the Mafia was already supplying about half the drug addicts of New York from a new source of heroin, and was beginning to broaden its clientele to innocent schoolboys aged 14 to 16. Meanwhile, the number of deaths attributed to this poison being marketed clandestinely leaped up 77 percent over previous years. Naturally, the American public was indignant: was the government incapable then of controlling the smuggling activities of its Afghan puppets and preventing them from associating with the Mafia?

But precisely the opposite was the case. Thanks to the farce of release on bond, all the Mafia dignitaries who were arrested with the heroin were free. The "Agency for the Struggle against Narcotics Trafficking"--an agency of the government--dealt very mildly with these Afghan suppliers of opium and heroin. "As time goes on,

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they will probably have more need to obtain money by selling the opium harvests, to buy arms to continue their struggle..." wrote the WASHINGTON POST, quoting the agency in question. By encouraging local and overseas gangsters, the authorities in Washington are truly taking little account of their own people's best interests.

Worlds away from New York, at the Fort Alikheil border post, an old stronghold built of masonry which dominates the intersection of three small roads which wind up into the gigantic mountains with their blindingly white snowy caps, I remembered again that New York was the epicenter of American narcotics addiction.

From the towers of the fort, one could see the trail from the east head into Pakistani territory. The other road headed toward the north, toward Kabul, and the third, toward Kandahar. This strategic junction is constantly besieged by bands of basmatchs coming from Pakistan. Each time, they are repulsed by the Afghan infantry regiment holding the fort. Lt Massoud Mirodjan is a soldier in that regiment: he is a young Afghan. If he went to New York tomorrow, he should be made an honorary citizen of that American metropolis for the work he accomplished here today. In effect, he told me:

"The government of our republic has given explicit orders to put an end to the enemy's narcotics activities. But the orders are easier to carry out in the provinces of the Kunar and the Nangarkhar, where there are no mountains, than around here. Here, quite often, the traffickers make a detour so as not to be on the roads and succeed in slipping by on footpaths that disappear in the mist--entire caravans of mules loaded with packs of opium and hashish.

"We intercept them, but some succeed all the same in getting to Pakistan. The unfortunate thing is, if one must believe the information we have been given, that in the douchman bases far from the front, the resident Americans in the special services have themselves acquired a taste for the profitable traffic in narcotics. Under their hypocritical and secret protection, a real opium market is operating in the Pakistani town of Landi Kotal.

A veteran of the judicial police, Moukhammed Aziz led me, upon my return to Kabul, into a lane of stalls, called Chicken Street by the American tourists who used to buy souvenirs there. Before the revolution, this street had two "dens" for drug addicts--two holes-in-the-wall--where one could pass the night: the "Green" and the "New-East-Life," both havens patronized by Yankee hippies attracted by the moderate prices charged for the unusual guest services that could be obtained there. Customers of "New-East-Life," for example, were surreptitiously given a piece of paper on which the prices were indicated: "Bed for the night--25 cents; dose of heroin--10 cents; dose of opium--35 cents."

"I saw these American drug-fiends, at the time!" moaned Aziz with a touch of amusement. "We swooped down on them sometimes, to search their rooms. There we found young people, dirty, dishevelled, sweating, sprawled all together on the straw mattresses, in a state of semi-stupor. We confiscated their drugs and they began to cry hysterically, to scream, to flounder around in convulsions. Under the law, we should have put them in prison; but we preferred to send them out to various clinics. The revolution shut down the Chicken Street joints, cleaned up the capital city and purged the country of this imported scum; we are also going to expel them from our border regions.

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The illicit trafficking of the basmarchs, the marauding, the organized vandalism, the assassinations, sadistic executions and torture--none of all that would still take place, if the counter-revolution in its death-throes were not being resupplied with arms and dollars by its foreign benefactors.

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IRAN

ANTI-REGIME ROLE OF 'GREAT MUTE', LEFTISTS DISCUSSED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 247, 31 Aug-13 Sep 81 p 30

[Article by Ghazi Sarhane: "The Erosion"]

[Text] In addition to increased repression, showing a weakness in the present government, there is also a serious weakness within the military.

After a stormy parliamentary debate, the cabinet of President Rajai was finally put together. This government, presided over by a person miraculously saved from death, consists of 22 ministers representing radical and conservative factions. In fact, Prime Minister Javad Bahonar escaped just in time the bombing of 28 June which took the lives of 74 members of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), when he left the party headquarters a few minutes before the explosion.

Though it is advisable not to draw hasty conclusions from such a coincidence, it does reinforce persistent rumors that attribute the attack to a settling of accounts between rival factions within the IRP. In any case, because of this event, Bahonar could succeed Beheshti as leader of the IRP and then as head of state.

As soon as it was formed, the new cabinet tackled the problem of security. An appeal was launched to step up the repression and bring new measures that would "reactivate" the police force and Islamic committees. The people were asked again to denounce the "hypocrites" and "counter-revolutionaries." Since the exile of Bani-Sadr, the number of victims executed reached 600, mostly Mojahedin, Marxist-Leninists, and Kurdish democrats.

In spite of the scope of this repression, there were also close to 2,000 arrests, and attempts on the lives of government officials, of members of the Islamic committees, and of Pasdarans have also increased. These have escalated to the point where an atmosphere of smoldering civil war is felt more strongly than the war with Iraq or the breaking down of the economic situation (30 percent inflation and a shortage of certain food products).

Diversions

To the above were added the first sounds of alarm within the army. The flight of Bani-Sadr and Massoud Rajavi on an army plane, and with the help of officers, was the first sign that the "great mute" is becoming nervous. A few days later, another

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plane, an Iranian army F 27 with 16 people on board, was diverted to Oman, while three navy patrol boats took off in the direction of a port in the United Arab Emirates. No doubt the most spectacular action taken was by General Aryani, a former officer of the Shah, who diverted three French-made patrol boats on their way to Iran.

"Azadegan," a commando of the Aryani movement, with the help of some of the Iranian patrol boat crew, seized a warship off the coast of Spain. Aside from further inflaming Franco-Iranian relations, so strained since Banisadr's and Rajavi's exile in Paris that the French government took the precautionary measures to bring home almost all its nationals from Iran, this is the first striking expression by the Shah's supporters who were believed to have been discredited for good.

"By Any Means"

Today hostility to the Tehran regime is so great that even the former executioners of the Iranian people dare to present themselves as a "liberation movement"! In any case, they proved that some people in the higher echelons of the army remained loyal to them, since there has been no serious purge within its ranks, the government being mainly concerned with purging the left.

In this unclear context, former President Bani-Sadr who has sympathizers in the army and his ally Massoud Rajavi, leader of the Mojahedin who are also present in the army rank and file in vigilance committees, seem to be in a delicate position. One hopes that the appeal they broadcast on 14 August in Iran, calling on civilians and military alike to organize *"by any possible means"* [in italics] resistance cells and an armed struggle, will really succeed in rekindling the revolutionary initiative of the masses against the reactionary despotism in power and will also prevent possible attempts at returning to power supporters of the old regime.

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IRAN

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS PERSONALITIES, KHOMEYNI ANALYZED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 247, 31 Aug-13 Sep 81 pp 31-33

[Article by Hedi Dhoukar: "New Light Shed on Khomeyni"]

[Text] Many events in ancient Persia clearly showed the role played by colorful, religious personalities. This story, still present in the country's collective memory, sheds new light on the character of the "leader of the revolution".

With some apprehension, the world discovered less than 3 years ago a man whose name was wrongly (but not without reason) associated with the fall of a dictatorship several centuries old. The man, Ruhollah Khomeyni, was then at the center of several events such as the one called the "Islamic Awakening" (the Mecca uprising), the matter of the American embassy in Tehran, the Tabas military raid undertaken by Jimmy Carter, and the war of the Gulf. For several months these facts helped divert attention from the increasing political assertion and concretization of this ayatollah's ideas, a man now simply called "Sir" by his opponents of all persuasions.

Subject To Public Condemnation

Now that the "leader" rules alone, supported by institutions he created, Iran has begun to find, certainly at its own expense, a little-known religious man surrounded by the theories of mullahs and ayatollahs where the influence of the old religion is not evident. The only dignitaries in whom one could find that influence were ruthlessly removed and reduced to silence. Such was the case of Madari, the highest ranking ayatollah in Iran, who, moreover, had ordained Khomeyni as ayatollah in order to prevent his execution by the Shah. Next to this Shiite figure, who steadfastly fought all plurality of political and religious functions, is Taleghani, further to the left, for whom "the real clergy does not accept either governmental posts or such responsibilities," its place being among and "not above the people",\* and who was also removed. Thus, from the start, two different kinds of leaders, Madari the constitutionalist and Taleghani the spiritual father of the Mojahedin, have clearly drawn the line with the fundamentalist current which seized power. Many others, who according to the Iranian Shiite rules are higher ranking than Khomeyni,

\* Taleghani interview with Gilles Anquetil in "The Earth Moved In Iran", Hachette.

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were also publicly condemned and are either in prison, like Tehreani, or in the underground movement, like Hosseini.

The real issue is not a dispute about religious doctrine, since all claim to come from the same Islamic religion. But one part of the clergy was quite opposed to taking over the revolution, which was mainly one of the masses oppressed by the Shah and who aspired to justice and economic change. Thus Massoud Rajavi could say with just cause that Khomeyni is one of "the Shah's legacies". This throws a new light on the man now presiding over the destiny of the country that for centuries had been subject to extremely cruel despotism.

Throughout its history, other important events have occurred in Iran, such as the Constitutionalist Revolution or the Tobacco Tax Revolt, which brought religious personalities to the fore. One was especially famous: the great reformer Jamalad Din Assad Abadi, called "al Afghani," whose doctrine, founded on Islamic renaissance based on modernism and science, was spread throughout the Islamic world at the end of the 19th century. This movement was so strong that the Ottoman Empire, then well on its way to being dismembered by the Western powers, wanted to use this doctrine to accomplish an "Islamic union."\* but the Emperor of the Sublime Door poisoned Assad Abadi after one of the latter's followers, while putting an end to the despotism of the Qajar kings in Persia, had assassinated Nassir ad-Din Shah in a mausoleum where he was praying. This event, occurring in the midst of the Constitutional Revolution, had considerable political fallout and forced the new Shah, Muzaffar ad-Din, to promulgate the first Iranian constitution, modeled on that of the Belgian monarchy.

Since then, the role of the clergy has become politically more important, for it is in using hostile religious reaction to the constitution, represented by Sheik Fazlollah Nouri considered today a "martyr of freedom" by IRP [Islamic Republican Party] papers, that, a few years later, the son of Muzaffar ad-Din, Mohammed Ali Shah, had the parliament building bombed and established the "minor dictatorship" (Istibdad Saghir) for a period of 3 years. During this time the resistance of the constitutionalists was organized. The revolution then took on such dimensions that in spite of Tsarist Russia's support Mohammed Ali Shah had to flee. On the other hand, his son Ahmad Shah, who succeeded him, showed so much respect for the constitution that the British, represented by Colonel Ironside, pushed him into permanent exile in Nice, while a Cossack colonel, Reza, later Pahlavi and father of the deposed Shah, seized power (1925). In order to be crowned Shah during his predecessor's lifetime, Reza had to face fierce opposition in parliament led at the time by a religious person, a former worker on his estate, Ayatollah Modarress. It was during the latter's absence from the parliamentary enclosure that Reza finally forced Parliament to crown him. A few days later, two of his henchmen strangled Modarress.

With the accession of Reza Shah, who was absolute monarch for 16 years, Parliament ceased to play any political role whatever. But when Mohammed Reza Shah came to the throne, the Iranian political situation, marked by the existence of many

\* Homa Pakdaman, "Jamal ad-Din Assad Abadi, called 'Afghani'", Maisonneuve et Larose (Paris).

See also the excellent work by Yann Richard, "Shi'ism in Iran, Imam and Revolution" (Maisonneuve).

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political currents and organizations, forced Parliament to become active again, mainly after Dr Mossadegh became head of government supported by a strong popular movement. Yet this nationalist had to count on the clergy, both within parliament presided over by a religious leader, Sheik Kashani, and outside it, where an organization of moslem brothers, Fedayin Eslam, started to attract attention when it assassinated General Razmara, one of Mossadegh's predecessors to the post of prime minister. The ideology of the Fedayine Eslam was anticommunist at a time when Mossadegh's opponents on all sides compared him to the "red peril" and wanted "to restore medieval rule without a prince."\*

#### Wrapped in Shrouds

Oil nationalism crystallized the rival tendencies, accentuating the special role of the religious leaders. Though, at the time, the official Shiite hierarchy carefully avoided involvement in politics, Sheik Kashani, as leader of parliament, motivated it seems by his opposition to the British (who supposedly killed his father and sent Kashani into exile in Palestine), supported the nationalist policy in the beginning. But Kashani soon gave his allegiance to the Fedayin Eslam, to the point of becoming their emissary to Mossadegh, giving him their letters requesting the closing of bars and making the veil mandatory for women. Slowly, Kashani joined the opposition, depriving Mossadegh of an important support at a time when attempts at coups d'etat inspired by the Americans increased and the blockade of Iran by Western powers was being set up. Also, at that time, after learning that the Shah planned to flee, the reactionaries organized a demonstration in front of the palace, and wrapped in shrouds they shouted that in order to leave Iran the shah would have to walk over their bodies. Then for all practical purpose, Kashani and the Fedayin Eslam made common cause with a party vaguely populist in ideology and supposedly financed by the United States, the Labor and Workers Party (PTL) headed by Baghai. The PTL and the Fedayin launched a virulent anti-Mossadegh campaign in the bazaars where the head of state had most of his support.

"Victory, the country is saved," were the headlines of PTL newspapers, when the fifth coup d'etat, organized by the CIA, succeeded in unseating Mossadegh and in bringing back the Shah from his Roman exile.

Baghai still writes, apparently in a different vein, for the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC newspaper, founded by the IRP [Islamic Republican Party]. The same thing happened to Hassan Ayat, another deserter from the PTL, who became the ideologist of the IRP until his death at the hands of the Khalq Mojahedin. In the case of Kashani, though this is not clearly substantiated due to a lack of historical documents on the subject, religious authorities affirm that Khomeyni was one of his most ardent followers and often wrote approving his anti-communist crusade. Yet one fact remains quite clear: among the candidates at the last presidential election were two former Fedayin Eslam members: Cheibani and Owaldi.

Be that as it may, the fall of Mossadegh, immediately followed by the return of the Shah, was the death knell for all opposition, including that of the Fedayin, also destroyed as soon as the Savak got organized and stretched its tentacles. At that time, on the advice of Kennedy, the dictator wanted to win the support of a part of

\* J.-F. Clement "Readings On Khomeynism" in the magazine ESPRIT (January 1981).

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the population. He decided to launch the "white revolution," promising in the beginning since it was supposed to give property to many peasants and favor worker "participation" in solving job-related problems in their firms.

The mullah Khomeyni became known at that time, writing very respectfully to "His Majesty, the Light of the Aryans," not to ask that he complete his social reforms or to turn more seriously towards an oppressed people, but to ask him not to grant women the vote and to take into account the role of the ulemas, the Shiite legal experts. His action was special, and will explain the Shah's anger, in that it placed Khomeyni on equal footing with the Shah. The mullah could question with impunity all governmental matters which could require the opinion of the clergy for whom Khomeyni had become the spokesman from the start, in spite of his modest standing in the hierarchy of the clergy.

When the Shah did not respond to any of the missives, Ruhollah Khomeyni raised his voice accusing the king of "selling the country to the Americans and the Israelis". From then on, Khomeyni definitely became part of his country's legend, and in quite troubled historical circumstances.

On 3 June 1963, the movement for the liberation of Iran, led at the time by Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Taleghani, called for a demonstration in Tehran which was supposed to be disciplined and avoid any provocation. On the said day, corresponding to the 15 Khordad in the Iranian Shiite calendar, huge crowds came to the demonstration, informed of it by pamphlets supposedly distributed by Savak itself. The crowds were screened by the agents of this police force, recognizable by their shaved heads, while at the same time there mysteriously appeared portraits of Khomeyni, and only Khomeyni, to be distributed to the demonstrators. Then the Savak agitators began to loot and burn everything, while the army, which lay in ambush, started to fire into the crowd. Thousands of bodies were then piled up by bulldozers and town dump trucks threw them into the garbage dump at night.

Using this event as a pretext, the Shah launched a massive wave of arrests among the opposition. The latter has since understood the futility of purely political activity, which explains why a few months later guerrilla organizations were formed: the Khalq Mojahedin and the Khalq Fedayin. As for Khomeyni, his life was spared because of a fetwa (a religious decree) by Chariat Madari who ordained him ayatollah. Exiled first in Turkey, then in Najaf in Iraq, Khomeyni continued to show his opposition to the Shah in writings he managed to smuggle into Iran. But his voice was only heard because of intense political activity within the ranks of the people, men such as Taleghani, and progressive thinkers like Dr Chatiati, two famous personalities who had been imprisoned and tortured many times.

That is why, on his triumphant return to Tehran on 1 February 1980, the face of Khomeyni was recognized as that of the liberator. The people only remembered his duel with the Shah, and were favorably disposed towards him because of ideas on social issues and justice, that had been patiently spread by leading progressive clergymen. That is also why the Shah's opponents in lay and university circles enthusiastically joined the people. They were all the more sincere since they accepted in good faith statements made by Khomeyni when he was staying in Neauphle-le-Chateau, and which had been broadcast by the Western media, thus contributing to a great extent to turning the Imam of Qom into a legend.

In his statements, Khomeyni in fact maintained he was for free expression by all political factions, including the "atheistic" Marxists, freedom for the press and even for women who, he said, could be "deputy, minister, and president of the republic". As for minorities, the ayatollah said that Islam favors autonomy, emphasizing the liberating nature of religion.

#### Pitiless Logic

The incident of the air force barracks which brought about the flight of Chapour Bakhtiar and the "liberation" of the Israeli embassy, were two events, the last ones really, that concretized the revolutionary nature of the revolt against the Shah. They were events that favored the Mojahedin and the Fedayin of the people (Moslems, progressives, and Marxist-Leninists).

Since then, one after the other, the university was closed down, the opposition newspapers were banned, the underground movement went back underground, the army was charged with bombing the Kurdish population. Khalkhali, who came out of a psychiatric institution and who boasted of killing cats when a boy, has become Khomeyni's right-hand man and head of Islamic law courts; Savak documents have disappeared; the woman was put in a chador. Supported by new institutions, all called Islamic: committees, courts, guardians of the revolution, and the party founded by Beheshti whose ties with the CIA are known, the repression was unleashed against the progressive left. The rest is history. All this was, however, included as the germ of an idea in the pitiless logic of the first referendum on which the Iranian people was asked to vote, to choose between the return of the Shah and the establishment of an Islamic republic. It could not yet perceive in the aftermath of the victory over the Shah and his Western allies, that it was only voting for a horse of a different color. The fact remains, however, that the episode begun with the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty is far from over. The dynamics of the people remain untouched, even though the present regime exerts all its power to stifle it, possibly putting off for a few more years the real liberation of the Iranian people.

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BRIEFS

AMBULANCES TRANSPORT MINISTERS--Terrorized by the idea of another assassination attempt (like those that have successfully eliminated Ayatollah Beheshti, President Radjai and Prime Minister Bahonar), the Iranian Islamic leaders now move about only in ambulances. This strategy is known to everyone in Tehran, and many doctors are afraid that ultimately some terrorists will fire on a vehicle transporting some sick or wounded person [who is not a government official]. [Text] [Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 28 Sep 81 p 24] [COPYRIGHT: [1981] "Valeurs actuelles"]

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MOROCCO

UNREST IN RURAL AREAS DESCRIBED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 22 June-5 July 81 No 242 p 24

[Text] The Makhzens feel the winds of revolt; poverty and monopolies of land holdings are the cause.

Last year already (in January) a wind of revolt was detected in the rural area of Beni-Mellal, where a large number of arrests had been made, and it was learned that a court had handed out sentences to 13 people of up to 3 years in prison.

This year it is in the regions of Taza, Marakesh, Fez, Fqih Ben Salah (near Beni-Mellal), and Tiznit where the incidents are following one another. Local centers of the USFP (Socialist Union of Popular Forces) were searched and rifled, arrests were made, trials held, sentences passed, then appealed, and more arrests were made. What is the explanation for the new rash of problems and repression in the provinces?

Drought

The days when the Moroccan countryside made up the strength of the regime are long gone. For over 10 years the penetration of capitalist interests has done nothing but accelerate, bringing on strong tendencies toward large land holdings, and imposing a coexistence between "modern" and traditional agricultural sectors which is constantly shifting. On one hand, there are very large holdings (400 of which are bigger than 500 hectares, according to the modest estimates of Moroccan primary school textbooks), the export commodities (vegetables, fruits, avocados, flowers, etc), and state-provided aid and technology. On the other hand, there is the traditional peasant's world of very small farms, thin herds, and damaging royal decrees, like the one of last March forbidding, in the name of progress, any farm under the size of 5 hectares. The Moroccanization of the farmland (that is, the transfer of colonial properties to the Moroccan upper middle class), has consequently created dangerous zones where the richest landowners have the poorest peasants as their immediate neighbors. This is the case with the fertile plains surrounding Fez, Marrakesh, Agudir (towards the East, in the direction of the plain of Tadla, around Beni-Mellal).

Two kinds of conflict can erupt. It may be between landowners, or rather their managers, and agricultural workers, poor peasants who have been dispossessed of their land and have been unable, unlike so many others, to emigrate to urban centers

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or to Europe: these workers are paid between 6 and 10 dirhams per day. Conflicts may also arise between owners and poor peasants of surrounding regions. Here, the cause of the conflict is often use of the lands, trampled by cattle belonging to the big local landowners. This happened several times over recent years, and even more often during the last several months.

This year a second factor has come up: drought. It is prolonged (lasting all last autumn and winter), catastrophic, and a killer. Many farmers have sacrificed their wheat to feed the cattle--then attempted to sell it at reduced prices (sheep went for 50 dirhams each on the market). When they were ultimately unable to find buyers, the cattle were left to die on the parched land, or abandoned in market-places to which they had been driven.

This year's agricultural balance sheet was a disaster, and, as is always the case when poverty amongst the people is accelerated, the concentration of property is also expedited.

The third factor is political. Those in power fear, and rightly so, flare ups in the rural population, which this time has little to lose and no other alternative; not even emigration, which for years acted as a safety valve for easing tension. The agglomeration of the land by the Makhzen, the local authorities, and the feudal system remains strong. But will it be enough?

The opposition became aware quite late of the significance of the peasant population: the latest elections, municipal or national, were a failure for the USFP, which learned its lesson: a significant attempt was made to agglomerate holdings, to create systems that could present a viable opposition to those of the authorities, and even to eventually form a union for agricultural workers.

Militants in the small rural centers often have a different perspective from the urban leaders. They are not confronted with parliamentary debates, negotiations with the Palace, or diplomatic missions but rather with hunger, illiteracy, inequality, and the impunitive injustices of the authorities and landowners. Under these circumstances rural militants become more radical.

We are currently witnessing a bid for power, aimed at bringing down the opposition: an attempt to prevent, firstly, a structuration of land holdings through the political parties, and secondly, attempts to eliminate the elements most accustomed to battles, the most demanding, who make up the hardest core of the party.

Will those in power attain their goals? Will they prevent the politization of land holdings, and effectively carry out their policy of seizing land without causing social unrest? Will they furthermore succeed in organizing an opposition the way they wish, according to need, as has been so often done in the past, by murdering and arresting the most hard-core, by trying to corrupt or seduce the others?

A new aspect of the problem was introduced on 10 May, which will change the interaction of forces in Morocco, at least as regards the king and his opponents. Certainly Mitterrand's election will not put a time limit on the process of integration of all Moroccan fields into capitalist production, much less end imperialism in the west of Africa. Nonetheless, this election will still change many things.