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The objective of socialist management of enterprises was, above all, to put an end to the double separation of enterprises--the division of enterprises within themselves and the separation of workers from their means of production. This aim is henceforth attained. The Workers Assembly has become the collegiate body where problems of the **enterprise and**, above all, means of improving production and productivity are examined.

"The working world constitutes a dynamic potential in the process of deepening the gains of our socialist revolution, gains which are set out in the first draft of the National Charter, which defines the main directions of the revolution."

LIBYA

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BRITISH CORRESPONDENT INTERVIEWS AL-QADHDHAFI

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["Exclusive" interview of Libyan President Col Mu'amm^r al-Qadhafi by Ronald Payne near a construction site on outskirts of Tripoli, date not given]

[Excerpts] "We consider the Libyan Arab Republic as a small model for the other Arab countries. And what is being done here urgently needs to be done in other Arab countries. Influence does not depend on the **size** of the population but on the revolutionary values embraced by the country."

These are the words of Colonel Mu'amm^r al-Qadhafi, president of the now rich and powerful Republic of Libya, expressing his ambitions for the country he has built in just under seven years since he seized power in the 1st of September revolution. It is a long time since he has consented to speak to a British newspaper, and in the hour-long exclusive interview he granted me the colonel spoke softly and philosophically about his views and aims and policy.

I asked him about the relationship between the Libyan Arab Republic and the Soviet Union: After the **break** between President as-Sadat and Brezhnev, would the Russians ask for facilities in Libya?

"There is no need to connect the decision taken by Sadat in speaking of Libyan relations with the Soviet Union," Al-Qadhafi said. "Our relations with the Soviet Union is the same as it was before the Egyptian cancellation of the friendship treaty, and, of course our relations with the Soviet Union always develop for the better, despite the action of President Sadat."

Yet the Egyptians through their vociferous newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH last week confidently asserted that the Soviets had **found Mediterranean** bases in Libya as a replacement for Alexandria, now closed to the Soviet fleet. The paper, often furnished with news from Egyptian intelligence, also claimed that the Russians were occupying the Okba Bin Nafei Air Base, near Tripoli, which was formerly a United States base called Wheelus Field.

The colonel was much more forthcoming about progress made in his country since he seized power. "It is very difficult in just one interview to count the revolution's achievements in transforming the country," he said. [paragraph continues]

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"But what I am proud of are the concrete achievements in housing, agriculture, industry and ports, and providing for the material needs of the people. We have made great progress in this field, but this is not the essence of the revolution, which has larger **civilising** aims and can be evaluated only after several generations."

The Revolutionary Command Council which runs the country turned out the Americans and rid themselves of the British Army. Indeed, to mark that anniversary, the walls of Tripoli during my 10-day stay were plastered with posters depicting a rather out-of-date British Tommy in "dad's army" gear, with a Union Jack on his shoulder, being booted out by a smiling Libyan in national dress.

Trying to assess the present political situation in Libya, I asked the president, who is well known for his devout Moslem views, how politics were affected by the religious beliefs of Islam.

"Is religion something unwanted or bad in the West so that you think it has a bad effect on politics?" he asked rhetorically. "In Islam there is no difference between religion and **politics**. You cannot **separate** the two..."

"As regards the Libyan Arab Republic, there were good reasons which pushed us to make the revolution. The main objective **now** is to eliminate the causes which brought about the revolution." What he obviously meant was to look after the **people** of his republic and to make sure that they would go on being prosperous and independent.

A **certain world-weariness** here became evident in his manner. For it cannot have been far from the colonel's mind that, only a few days before, fierce student clashes had taken place in the universities of Tripoli and Benghazi, though in present-day Libya no public **mention** is made of such events.

At Benghazi students marched through the streets shouting slogans like, "Al-Qadhdhafi, the mad one...all your people are kept in prison." Even more offensively they cried, "It is better in hell with Idris than in heaven with Al-Qadhdhafi," a fine example of how Arab slogans move into the field of **hyperbole**, for no-one seriously wants the return of King Idris.

The Prime Minister Drew His Revolver

Squads of police moved in, discharging a hundred rounds of automatic rifle fire. A number of people were wounded and student ringleaders were arrested.

The same week in Tripoli **pro-Al-Qadhdhafi** students set upon others who had failed to turn out for one of the numerous marches organised to support the Revolutionary Command Council. Fighting broke out, with students hurling rocks at one another, before the police arrived and brutally broke up the demonstration. **Major** Jalloud, the prime minister, went there in person, drew his revolver and fired in the air.

"Support for the revolution on the part of the masses is growing **greatly day after day**," was all that the colonel had to say to me on this subject.

The circumstances of my meeting with the colonel had, I felt, been contrived with some care to present him as a man of the people, relaxing and **philosophising** on a quiet afternoon. We had left Tripoli to meet him in a convoy of official cars.

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My first glimpse of him came when the white Peugeot, with "Brother Colonel" in sunglasses at the wheel, stopped by a crossroads just outside Tripoli in the middle of a farming development irrigated by processed sewage from the capital. He was intent on having a chat with an agreeable old man peaceably driving his grand-daughter in a donkey cart who seemed not much concerned with the major political thoughts.

The director-general of the Foreign Ministry, the interpreter and myself finally caught up with the president at the Cavalry Club outside Tripoli, where they are building a clubhouse for officers beside the showjumping course and the stables. It was in the older building which this is replacing, now furnished like a bedouin tent, that I finally met the elusive colonel.

He strode in purposefully, rather smartly dressed in well-cut blazer, windcheater and slightly flared Italian-looking grey trousers. He greeted me in English. Then the interpreter explained that the colonel thought it would be nice to talk to me in the open air.

So reading a list of questions I had been instructed to prepare, and joking with the director, he led the way to a small orchard of blossoming plum trees, inhabited until then only by sheep and goats. Men brought mats and pillows for the followers and folding chairs for the colonel, the interpreter and me. All were placed in the shade of a mimosa tree, and so it came about that, while Al-Qadhdhafi discussed matters of state with me, pollen and yellow blossom descended on our heads and the sheep punctuated our conversation with their baa-ing.

Even before the interview I had wondered if his policies were not revealed more by his actions than by his guarded words.

According to his former friend Major Omar Muhayshi, ex-minister of economics [name and attribution as published] now in exile in Cairo, he once lost his temper during a Revolutionary Command Council meeting, "took out his revolver, and started shooting in the air." (Muhayshi, as we shall see, is now a great source of anti-Al-Qadhdhafi propaganda.)

There were no such histrionics during our alfresco meeting. It started with Colonel al-Qadhdhafi asking about THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH and going on to make some suggestion as to how it ought to be run--under the control of a people's committee "representing all different levels, the workers, the peasants, merchants and shopkeepers." When I remarked that this was an interesting idea which might not go down too well in my own country, he mumbled one or two cryptic "m'ns."

The silences of Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, and there were many during the interview, while his foot tapped nervously at the chair on which the microphone of my tape-recorder had been placed, are almost as powerful as his words. Small wonder that with his technique of the strong and silent stare he once managed to persuade President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia to unite his country with Libya, an agreement he promptly rejected after the colonel had left.

"Any development of the relationship between Arab countries is a step on the road to Arab unity," he replied when I asked about his recent trip to Algeria and relations with the North African Mahgreb countries. Would unity extend to Tunisia and Morocco--for it is well known that Al-Qadhdhafi has so far unsuccessfully tried to unite his country with several neighbouring states, including Egypt?

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"Any bilateral action will have in mind the one objective of Arab unity." When I asked whether bilateral action might extend further he replied, "Yes, the door is open," and the fact that he commented no further seemed to show that he did not feel specially optimistic about such developments.

There is a great deal of bitterness among the neighbours at present. The Tunisians have put **on trial two** Libyans accused of plotting to kill their prime minister after he had refused a 1,000 million-dollar bribe from **Al-Qadhdhafi** to persuade him to unite that country with Libya. Relations with both Tunisia and Egypt could not be worse.

It is from Cairo that the radio daily broadcasts scurrilous messages from **Major Muhayshi**.

The stories pour out, and I quote an unlikely one to give the flavour. "Al-Qadhdhafi is a spendthrift, though he pretends to be austere. He threw legendary parties for seven days on the occasion of the circumcision of his son, inviting 10,000 guests to witness indecent dancing at parties which cost a quarter of a million dollars... He once wanted to build a two-million-dollar palace for himself, but I objected adamantly."

No mention of such things is made in Libya. The newspapers concentrate on printing whole pages of the colonel addressing the masses and patriotic captions.

I could detect no signs of opulent living about the colonel, who at one time lived Monty-style in a tent erected within the El Aziza barracks, H.Q. of the Revolutionary Command Council, and made a point of receiving visitors there. His style is one of ostentatious austerity; he does not smoke, and all alcohol is forbidden in Libya.

About **Major Muhayshi** the colonel had this to say in a speech at Saluq: "We are determined to pursue this spy and destroy him." Al-Qadhdhafi and his men are convinced that **Muhayshi** was a C.I.A. agent.

O.P.E.C. Kidnaping Connection

"We have proof," I was told by the amiable Ahmed al-Shahati, foreign affairs secretary of the Arab Socialist Union. [name and attribution as published] "He went last summer to the State Department in Washington." What emerges from the wave of vituperation about the major is that what he is broadcasting is an odd mixture of fact and malicious gossip.

Many allegations are being made about Al-Qadhdhafi conspiracies against Arab rulers he does not approve of. There is some evidence that he spent some 16 million dollars on last year's plot to overthrow President An-Numayri of the Sudan ("Where did the money come from, Brother Colonel?" Asked An-Numayri at the time), and some evidence of a plot against Bourguiba.

But the Egyptian radio also claims that he conspired against the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, tried to set up an air base in Mali against the Moroccans and Algerians, and supported an attack on President Sadat's rest house at Mersa Matruh. There are good reasons to believe that he had a part in the **kidnapping** of the O.P.E.C. minister in Vienna and lately he has **purchased** quantities of East European small arms to supply Palestinian rejectionist groups fighting in Lebanon.

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When I asked the colonel whether he favoured more O.P.E.C. type actions, and whether they did any good to the Palestine cause, he affected to know little about the business. "What is the relationship between the raid and the Palestine cause?" he asked. He then said the Libyans had nothing to do with it and commented. "I think the purpose of connecting hijacking and raids with the Palestinians' cause is just to defame the Palestinians' legitimate struggle for their freedom."

The colonel took a similarly soft line on his interference in Irish affairs, though it is known that he provided arms for the I.R.A. on at least one occasion and has provided money and training facilities.

"We are not a part in the conflict which is taking place in Ireland, but we are supporting the people who are struggling for their freedom. We are not involved with the various and many parties who are involved in the conflict there. Our stance is to support the struggle for freedom, whether it is in Ireland or elsewhere."

"Does that mean supporting it with military weapons or giving moral support?" I asked, and he replied, "It is not practical for Libya to send weapons. We support the independence of Ireland."

It was perhaps significant to his attitude to Ireland that when he mentioned the I.R.A. he called it in Arabic the "Irish Liberation Army."

"Who Told You?" He Snapped at Me

The colonel showed greater animation when I asked him about a more disobliging view on Britain and Ireland published in one of his newspapers, which rejoiced about bombs in London.

"Who told you?" He snapped. "We answer that we do not make bombs. You just go over to the Libyan newspapers and you will see there is nothing of that kind in the newspapers."

Well, I have done, and I have news for Colonel Qadhdhafi. On March 29 the paper AL-FAJR AL-JADID published these words over the byline of Ahmed Bakoush: "These bombs which are convulsing Britain and breaking its spirit are bombs of the Libyan people, some of them are still being killed in the minefields sown by Britain and for which Britain has refused to give us maps, and which Britain has refused to help us remove.

"Therefore we have sent bombs to the Irish revolutionaries, so that Britain will pay the price of her past deeds after we have liquidated her presence from our land."

Earlier in the interview Colonel al-Qadhdhafi had spoken about improving relations with Britain. "We are always trying on our side to develop a relationship with the British, it was the British side which hindered this. But at the end of Mr Wilson's era constructive and positive talks took place between the two sides and we hope that we shall resume such talks under the new prime minister.

"And of course Britain possesses a lot of things that we need to buy. At the same time Britain also needs to sell its commodities and goods, in particular when an economic crisis faces Britain."

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He even specified that now that British Leyland has been removed from the Arab black-list, which boycotts companies trading with Israel, he would again start buying vehicles such as Land Rovers from that company.

On his relations with the Soviet Union the colonel was less explicit, for although in the past he has denounced Russian "imperialism" and disapproves of communism because of his religious views, he regards Russia as the best source of weapons, which he is buying in ever-increasing quantities.

Last year Al-Qadhdhafi concluded a huge arms deal with the Soviet and it is estimated, though the figures have not been officially announced, that he spent up to 1,000 million dollars. The Russians demanded cash payment, and Western sources believe that they charged four times the market price, knowing that Libya had the money.

The extraordinary feature of this arms purchase is that the Libyan Army is only 25,000 strong and now has 1,500 tanks, most Russian ones, while the 5,000-strong air force has more than enough aircraft for the trained crews available.

It is difficult to imagine any reason other than the desire for prestige why the colonel should want so many weapons, and his buying spree has indeed caused some discontent in the army. Officers complain that there is not enough training, and that because Qadhdhafi will not allow officers either to take university courses or to go abroad on special courses there are no properly trained staff officers.

Last year the leader boasted that soon he would buy an atom bomb--"The nuclear monopoly is about to be broken." But when I asked him whether he intended to make Libya a nuclear power he said:

"We want to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes... You know that efforts all over the world are to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. As developing countries we want to use it for peaceful purposes. All our efforts are in this direction. We want to exploit oil and the wealth that oil produces to build up other resources to sustain our economy."

Asked about the military side, he simply declared, "I think such questions should not be presented to countries who are trying to develop themselves and build themselves up."

When I said that this question arose because it was reported that the Israelis were developing nuclear weapons, he said, "This is the policy of the Israelis and they are responsible for it."

Even without nuclear development Libya is a well-armed nation, occupying an important strategic position on the Mediterranean between Black Africa and Europe. So long as it is ruled by the enigmatic colonel, described by President Sadat as "a schizophrenic, one side of his character excellent and the other devilish," Libya is bound to be watched with anxiety by the Western World.

Things are not easy for Colonel al-Qadhdhafi seven years into the revolution he made. Of the original band of 12 brother officers, only four survive at the centre of government, and there is no obvious replacement for the colonel as he tries to steer his nation between the rocks of communism and the shoals of capitalism.