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17 April 1979

TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
(FOUO 15/79)



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NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS EXAMINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 21 Mar 79 pp 21-24

[Article by Hamid Barrada. Insert by M.Z.]

[Text] The message sent to Parliament by King Hassan II on 8 March is part of that category of communications which cannot be debated that the Moroccan Constitution very classically anticipates. For that reason no speech has ever been so debated. The Parliament, sitting in a special session in order to listen to the royal message, was convoked once again on the next day in order to answer it. Certain opposition deputies were heard to observe that the procedure utilized in this regard did not at all respect the stipulations of the Constitution. But they did not hesitate over those juridical niceties. As soon as it is a question of the Sahara, national unanimity is at stake. Everyone agrees in judging with the King that the moment has come to revise the policy that has been followed up to now with regard to Algeria. The debates, which take place outside of the Parliamentary Chamber, revolve around the same questions. To what degree has the King decided to adopt a new policy? How will Algeria react? In one word, are we on the brink of a general war between Algeria and Morocco?

Hassan II has multiplied his gestures to create a belief in the existence of a "new direction" in the Sahara. He has requested his closest collaborator, Mr Ahmed Rada Guedira, to read the message to Parliament although it ordinarily is the duty of Mr Bahnini, the state minister in charge of culture, whose style is entirely different, to take charge of this task. The unchangeable rules of protocol are de rigueur of course but the text is of an unaccustomed clearness: "The action that we have undertaken and the one which we are called on to undertake are so broad and at this point so determining for the future and the destiny of our country, that we have judged it necessary to associate the entire nation in the persons of its representatives to make the decisions that that action demands. From this point of view, we have decided to create beside us, in parallel with our government, a council grouping the representatives of all organized political tendencies, which will have the job of assisting us in the determination and conduct of

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policy in the matter of safeguarding our national territory and the security of the state."

Hassan II admits that the policy of "wisdom" and of "patience" that he has carried on up to now has not borne fruit. He sees himself obliged to reconsider the situation which has been imposed on our country and which is that of neither war nor peace, however with all the inconveniences and consequences of a situation of war.

The King abstains from using the word "war" when he speaks of the new policy. However, the paraphrasing that he uses to sketch out the anticipated decisions do not mean anything else. The prudence of his vocabulary seems to reflect rather the determination in his attitude. Would war then be imminent? However, the royal message has not totally dissipated the scepticism which can be observed in Moroccan opinion. More exactly, an approximation can be observed between the reactions of the political class and the reactions of what we may call less specialized opinion.

A certain young industrial worker does not believe it is necessary to listen to the royal speech. This carpenter displays the same indifference. That writer has of course read the speech but has found nothing new in it. The solemn warnings several times addressed to Algeria and which have had no aftermath explained that state of mind. It has not been forgotten that the King had announced in 1978 that Morocco would exercise the right of pursuit. Not only did that threat remain a dead letter, but the attacks of the Polisario from Algeria became bolder. After the Tata operation in August 1978 there was the Tan Tan operation last February. So that the warnings sent from Rabat to Algiers came to resemble the warnings that the Chinese formerly addressed to the Americans while taking care to number them...

The context in which the royal message was sent is no longer foreign to the general scepticism. The King announced his new policy in the Sahara on the day after the Tan Tan attack, but also after a movement of deep social discontent.

On the very day before the speech, on 7 March, the health services went on strike all over the country and demanded a pay increase. That was the first time that that sector had ever "moved." Even during the general strike by government employees in 1975, the hospitals had functioned normally. One week earlier, the Khouribga (phosphate) miners had stopped work. The highway workers had gone on strike. The educational establishment can also be mentioned, which underwent two three and four-day general strikes in the month of February and then again on 13 and 14 March. The movement, relayed by the strikes called by the secondary students, according to Prime Minister Ahmed Osman, raises fears that the academic year may be a "year in blank." The agitation in the schools also makes the government uneasy because it is assuming a frankly political character and threatens to become worse. Numerous incidents are observed. Slogans hostile to the regime recall those

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which had flourished at the time of the March 1965 riots and they are proceeding to the point where they suggest that what happened in Teheran could resemble what is happening in Rabat. A western diplomat is struck "by that obsession with Iran" which he observes both in the behavior of the government and in the behavior of its opposition.

The phenomenon is even stranger since the Moroccan kingdom in certain respects (democratic liberties and the deep presence of Islam in institutions and public life) seems like an anti-Iran. To tell the truth, by warmly defending the Shah, by consigning Khomeini to hell, above all by sheltering the deposed emperor, Hassan II has done a great deal to encourage an unflattering analogy between Morocco and Iran in public opinion.

People are not ceasing to be astonished that a statesman whose political skill needs no further demonstration should have committed what really must be called a blunder. He must have adopted that attitude against the advice of the majority of his ministers, which is at least what they proclaim today....

It is still necessary in this extremely dangerous climate for the government -- in other words the King -- to do something. The speech from the throne on 3 March would, it is thought, supply him with an occasion to get the situation in hand again. He preferred to skip over the problems and leave the country expecting more in order to ensure in some way greater attention to his message of 8 March. There were two valuable indications in the speech from the throne, however. First, it was the majority which supports him that the King most heatedly took to task.

Those who governed and were elected before were called "cowardly." The opposition was also mentioned but everyone knows that they are irresponsible by definition and they have only 16 representatives in Parliament. Then the King clearly declared that he did not have any intention of stopping the democratic experiment. If the opposition did not exist, he said in substance, he would have invented it. After 27 February the person who appeared as the King's closest collaborator, Mr Ahmed Reda Guedira, on his own initiative had met Mr Abderrahim Bouabid, the leader of the opposition. The conversation had to do with social tension. The first secretary of the USFP [Socialist Union of People's Forces] denounced the ineffectiveness of the government: "We have no one to argue with." Is it necessary to believe that the accusations were not unjustified in the eyes of the King who on the following day ordered the government to begin a dialogue on the side of the unions?

Devoted to Conflict

The research into social pacification had as its object to keep the chief of state's initiative in the Sahara from being assimilated into an operation of domestic politics, according to sources in the King's official family. For that reason, the message was exclusively devoted to the conflict with Algeria.

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For their part, the opposition leaders maintain that their participation in the National Security Council, whose creation Hassan II announced on 8 March, is not tied to any counterpart on the social plane, as far as they are concerned. It is still no less certain that some overlapping was and still is inevitable between the Sahara affair and domestic problems, and that a new policy with regard to Algeria will inevitably have repercussions on the social situation.

A high official, a member of the USFP, recognizes that if his party were in power it would defend the austerity policy and would demand sacrifices from the workers in the name of the war effort. "At most we could make taxation moral."

A close collaborator of the King finally expresses himself in similar language: "The situation in the Sahara requires the government and the opposition to assume a new attitude." Lengthy speculation may be devoted to the relationships between Hassan II's initiative in the Sahara and the deterioration of the social situation. One thing is certain, however: the speech put a brake on the psychological deterioration.

When Hassan II declares in his message to Parliament that "Morocco is facing in the south of its territory a more and more difficult situation which cannot continue without making the country run serious risks," he expresses accurately a general feeling. He then adds: "We know that for many, if not for all, the situation is reaching the threshold of the intolerable."

The attack on Tan Tan marked a turning point. An officer in the Royal Army, who unhesitatingly recognizes the combativeness of the Polisario, declares that on the strictly military level the operation had limited effects, not related to its psychological effects.

"The enemy sprinkled the People's Bank with machine-gun fire and fired a shell that hit an electrical transformer which nevertheless continued to function. They had in mind to carry off 80 women whose husbands are at Tindouf, but they could only carry away 13." "Of course," the officer continues, "if the enemy was able to operate inside the town, that was because of a failure in the defense system. That is a fault that calls for sanctions."

#### New Situation

For our informant, the strategy of the Royal Army in the Sahara, even if it makes the Royal Army vulnerable to strikes from the Polisario is perfectly adapted to the real enemy: the Algerian Army. "We are not weak. We have not used our force up to now. Which is not the same thing." In his eyes, there is no doubt at all that the message from the King creates a new situation on the military level by freeing "the initiative" of the Moroccan Army. Many facts recorded since 8 March corroborate those analyses. Parliament unanimously voted in favor of a resolution recommending exercise of the right of pursuit. For the moment, Hassan II seems to have made up his mind to use

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his right of pursuit...As far as ideas are concerned. Four days after his message to Parliament, he named Lt Col Mohammed Abrouk, whom he had just promoted to that grade, and who has the reputation of being a baroudeur [translation unknown] chief of the advanced staff in the Sahara.

On the next day the first meeting of the National Security Council was supposed to be held. The principal political formations, Istiqlal, USFP, Popular Movement and Independents, are to send two representatives each. Mr Ali Yata will also take his seat in the name of the PPS [Party of Progress and Socialism], which is communist.

Risks and Trump Cards

The presence on the Security Council of men like Mr Bouabid, who had suggested the constitution of such a body in 1975 and who has not ceased to publicly defend a policy of intransigence in regard to Algeria, or like Boucetta (Istiqlal) and Ahardan (Popular Movement) who, in spite of their participation in the government, share the same conviction at bottom, allow it to be thought that Morocco is in the same situation as it was at the moment of the Green March. With the same risks and the same trump cards.

As in 1975, facing the Spanish Army, the risk of a conflagration is real. The chances of a peaceful solution are also safeguarded. The message of 8 March is very clear on that subject: "The object of our present message is first to associate the entire nation in the various efforts that we are employing and to show the nation once again more clearly the objectives of peace that we are pursuing." A close collaborator of the sovereign insists on this aspect: "We shall continue to give special treatment to peaceful means because war is a risk." It could be thought that this is nothing but a bluff on the part of Hassan II. That is not the case. For the good reason that he has deliberately closed that door. You do not tell an army which dreams of combat that they are immediately going to attack; you do not mobilize parties that are in favor of it or a public opinion that wants to get it over with and then sit with your hands folded. That would not be serious. Now everyone agrees, even his adversaries, that Hassan II is serious.

Is it war, then? The ball is in the Algerian court. "In its conflict with us," a responsible official explained to me in Rabat, "Algeria has up to now had the best part. They claim to be defending a principle, that of self-determination for the Saharan people. Now no one, if he is speaking honestly, can admit that a state has mobilized its military and diplomatic apparatus with the single purpose of defending a principle which concerns a third party. The position of the Algerian leaders cannot be upheld just as the position of France could not be supported if it armed, refereed and aided a Basque liberation movement which would carry on guerrilla operations in Spain."

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Peaceful Solution

Our informant continued: "We recognize that Algeria may have any position it wants to on the decolonization of the Sahara. But we deny it the right to help the people who come to attack us in our country." My informant is nevertheless chiefly preoccupied in seeking out a peaceful arrangement. He even disputes that the 8 March speech marked a hardening. When I asked him: "What has changed then?" he answered: "Nothing, except that up to now Algeria was engineering causes of war which we did not consider as such. From now on, a cause of war is a cause of war."

Insert: Algerian Attitude

Will President Chadli respond to the warning addressed to Algeria by Hassan II? Whether it be toward a worsening or toward an easing, the conflict in the Sahara can rapidly assume a new direction. Not only because of the King's message, but also because for the first time since the illness of President Boumedienne, the actors are in place on the Algerian side. The same day that Hassan addressed the Moroccan Parliament, a government was finally formed in Algiers.

More Engaged

What will be the attitude of Algeria on the subject of the Sahara? Do Col Mohammed Ben Ahmed Abdelghani, the prime minister and his team, represent the assumption of power by "hard-liners"? Without any doubt it is too early to answer that question, but the departure of Abdelaziz Bouteflika from foreign affairs was noted. He had been at the head of Algerian diplomacy for nearly 15 years. Must we see in this an indication of a policy of greater engagement alongside the Polisario Front? The former chief of Algerian diplomacy, in spite of his repeated statements about "decolonization" of the western Sahara was, it is true, in private a partisan of a negotiated solution with the Moroccans and the Mauriticians. An intimate friend and counsellor of the deceased president, he might even have progressively won Boumedienne over to his line of argument.

If the meeting between Hassan II and Boumedienne, after long preparation, could not take place because of Boumedienne's illness, Rabat had a right to expect after the appointment of Chadli that contacts would be taken up again. However, when the French secretary of state in Foreign Affairs, Mr Olivier Stirn, announced a meeting between Chadli and Hassan, this was immediately denied by Algiers. Too early? Or rather was it completely out of the question?

If the Algerian leaders still choose a position of firmness, it is not sure that the new government is looking for a clash in the conflict which has been opposing the two neighbours since 1975. The Sahara affair seems to have had little weight in the final balance in the changes that have taken place in the seat of power in Algiers.

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National Defense

With two military men at the head of the country, who allocate to themselves all of the prerogatives of President Boumedienne, it is being confirmed that the partisans of Mr Yahiaoui, a presumed (and unlucky) candidate to the chief magistracy, are accusing them of a retreat.

In the new distribution of portfolios, National Defense has not been officially assigned. This puts the president of the republic in position as a candidate for office in that post.

Competent Walis

In the same way, Colonel Ben Ahmed Abdelghani, who is assuming the duties of prime minister, has not considered it a good idea, in the absence of any precise definition of his new duties, to abandon the Interior Ministry which he has led since the death of its holder, Ahmed Medeghri, in 1974. As a direct consequence of the promotion of Mr Abdelghani, many walis (prefects) have proved their competence on the ground and they have replaced some ministers (Health, Public Works, National Education, Justice). Mr Abdelghani had directed an important re-shuffling of walis in 1978, as he has a certain influence over them. The choice of these men was dictated by the double concern of broadly renewing the personnel of the old cabinet and of putting an end to the mandarinat exercised by certain of Boumedienne's ministers.

The question of the primacy of the single party in the state has not been brought up. The presence of two leaders both on the state level (Chadli, Abdelghani) and on the party level (Chadli is the titular secretary general while Tahiaoui has just been named "coordinator" of the FLN) bears this out. However, it is quite apparent that the balance is not weighed in favor of the "militants," who are desirous of reinvigorating the party.

Delicate Mission

The designation of the first government since Boumedienne puts the final period to a long interregnum. Mr Abdelghani's cabinet has the delicate mission of giving a satisfactory -- and urgent -- response to the worries of the Algerian population (unemployment, housing crisis, supplies) which have been relegated to the second for too long by the "imperatives of development."

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IRAN

KHOMAYNI'S LIFE, REVOLUTION'S BACKGROUND REVIEWED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 2-8 Mar 79 pp 36-39

[Article by Nawal Azhari: "Secrets in Khomeyni's Life; Costume Party Led to Religious-Political Revolution and to Declaration of 1906 Constitution; Assassination of Khomeyni's Father, Foreign Occupation and Mosadaq's Fall Behind Call for Islamic Republic; Alliance of Religious Establishment With Bazaar People Guaranteed Current Movement's Success"]

[Text] Beginning this week, AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI will begin publishing a series of press reports on Iran dealing with the various aspects and with the background of the current events. The paper will start this series with a report on the Shi'ite religious institution, on Ayatollah Khomeyni, its main leader, and on its struggle since the beginning of this century and until the victory it achieved by toppling the regime of Shah Mohamad Reza Pahlavi.

When he boarded the special French Boeing aircraft that took him from Paris to Tehran at the beginning of last February, he spread a small carpet, performed his prayers, returned quietly to his seat and surrendered his head to a deep sleep after the plane took off for its historic trip, whereas tension prevailed among all his companions who were worrying about what evil might face them at the airport at the hands of the pro-shah forces.

This venerable old man has been able throughout his stormy life to maintain an inner calm which nobody, except a few ascetics and Sufis, could parallel.

He is also an ascetic hermit. But his distinction is that he has not shunned people and that he has shared in their affairs and the problems of their daily life. He has even endured from them and for their sake more than strong men can endure.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Mustafa al-Musawi al-Husayni Khomeyni changed none of his habits, neither during his 15-year exile, nor since his return to the homeland. He waked up at an early hour to rejoice and worship in a spiritual conversation with his creator for hours. He then spends most of his day dealing with his family's and with the people's affairs and then retires to bed at 2300.

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His food is that of ascetics: Cheese, bread, yogurt, grapes and cooked or boiled vegetables. Perhaps this strict routine of worship and food is what has enabled him to maintain his vigor and energy in this advanced age, and what has enabled him to endure all the hardships, twists, shocks and surprises in his life.

Ayatollah Khomeyni came into this world at the beginning of this century. His childhood was spent in a small and modest Iranian village, Khomeyn. His father was also a Shi'ite clergyman.

Two Historic Events in Khomeyni's Life

There are two historic events which the memory of his early childhood could not comprehend: The 1906 revolution and declaration of the constitution, and the assassination of his father by government men. The father was firm and never stopped attacking the oppression and tyranny of the shahs and of the landowners and feudalists who cooperated with them.

Let us leave the child to go to the holy city of Qom in the south, where his religious studies began, and let us pause a little to examine that thunderous revolution.

The incidents start with the clergymen's sit-in strike in the mosques to demand expulsion of the Belgian Mr (Nuis), the customs inspector who insulted the clergymen by attending a boisterous costume party dressed in the apparel and turban of a clergyman. The sit-in strike developed quickly to become a demand for the people's right and for a constitution that would put a limit to the powers of Muzaffar-al-Din Shah.

The Ottoman Empire mediated between the shah and the clergyman, and a shahan-shah decree was issued declaring a constitution providing for the creation of a consultative council and judiciary courts. However, the shah procrastinated in its implementation, and the demonstrations were renewed. Tehran clergymen staged a sit-in strike in one of the mosques, and a prolonged blockade was set up around them by the government forces. The matter ended with a permit allowing them to emigrate to the holy city of Qom.

The truth is that the events were not generated by the rashness of a young and impudent foreigner, such as Mr (Nuis). There were deeper and more important social and religious causes.

Oppression reached a peak under the (Fajar) dynasty: A profligate and oppressive shah, a corrupt government, provincial governors harsh in collecting taxes, harsher tax collectors, prevalent ignorance, no schools and no hospitals.

The clergymen were more capable than others of understanding the public desires by virtue of their direct contact with the people and by virtue of the relative organization of the Shi'ite religious establishment itself in a

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manner that permitted its extensive network to spread throughout the rural and urban areas. The clergymen's anger at the shah was an extension of the people's wrath against him.

#### British Exploit Situation

The clergymen's emigration to Qom touched off the people's feelings and made them head singly and in groups to the British Embassy in Tehran. The British and the Russians were the two main parties involved in the international game in this poor Islamic country.

With their cunning, the British encouraged the people to protest. The British were annoyed by the fact that the Russians had the upper hand in the Persian court, and they exploited the opportunity to regain their influence. They opened the doors of the embassy to the demonstrators, who staged their sit-in strike in it for days, during which the people ate, drank and slept in such a very orderly manner, that the most organized present-day popular organizations would envy them.

Muzaffar-al-Din Shah backed down and issued on 5 August 1906 another shahanshah decree declaring the constitution proposed by the clergymen: Constitutional government, elected national council, the Ja'fari Shi'ite creed as the state's official religion, approval of the principle of the separation of powers, and affirmation of public and personal liberties. More important than all this was article two which granted clergymen the veto right over any official law which the clergymen found incompatible with the Shari'a.

The religious establishment in Iran attaches great importance to the 1906 constitution, because this constitution recognizes the establishment's political and social role. Clergymen are the ones who control and keep record of the vital statistics, such as marriages, divorces, births and deaths. They are also the ones who supervise daily transactions such as purchase and sale contracts and leases, and who play the role of banks. The rich deposit with them whatever surplus money they have and pay to them the taxes and fees required by the Shari'a.

These taxes and fees, in addition to donations and inheritance, enabled the Shi'ite establishment to own vast properties and lands. The revenues of these holdings enabled the clergymen to rally the people behind them with the aid and grants that the clergymen advanced to the orphans, the sick, the unemployed and the disabled, and with the sympathy these clergymen gave the people when exposed to the tyranny of the rulers.

The fact is that this constant contact between the Shi'ite religious establishment and the common people in Iran always qualified, in the absence of rulers with a sense of national responsibility toward the people, the Shi'ite clergymen to perform their major role and provided them with unparalleled moral and material support in their long struggle with the government.

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Muzaffar-al-Din Shah attended the opening of the Parliament (the Council) carried on a litter, and died ill and defeated in the year following the declaration of the constitution.

Magnificent Democratic Experience

The democratic experience was magnificent and dazzling. The Council was an exact replica of a teaching session at a mosque. The president sat in the middle and the deputies surrounded him, sitting on mats spread on the floor. They discussed and debated whatever affairs they wanted to discuss. Those present took part in the discussion. Even the common people took their small problems to the Council to present them to the deputies or to the discussion sessions.

Mohamad Ali Shah could not stand this unique experience, and so he sent his imperial guard, who consisted at the time of Cossack cavalymen, under the command of a Russian officer called (Liyakhov) to besiege the Council, expel the people's representatives, suspend the constitution and impose a curfew in Tehran.

How similar is today to yesterday? The people rebelled against the shah and defeated his forces, and the shah had no alternative but to resort to the Tzarist Russian Delegation. The clergymen dethroned Mohamad Ali Shah and instated his son Sultan Ahmad as the new shah. The constitution was reactivated and the former shah was banished to Russia. The United States had not yet extended its fingers to this part of the world. Iran thus became one of few countries that could be counted on the fingers who knew a constitutional democratic rule early in this century.

In 1921, an ambitious and almost illiterate soldier leaps suddenly into the heart of the events in Iran. In 1925, he dethrones the last of the (Fajar) dynasty shahs and imposes himself as the new shah. Reza Shah Pahlavi, the father of the present shah, was no less oppressive and tyrannical than the deposed dynasty.

Under the slogan of modern reforms, Reza Pahlavi, a product of the military establishment, begins his conflict against the clergymen. In the 1930's, he strips them of their constitutionally guaranteed privileges and of the veto over civil legislation.

With the rising star of Reza Pahlavi in power, the star of Ruhollah Khomeyni, the young mulla [low-rank clergyman], begins to rise in the religious establishment. The young man's maturity, awareness and studies were completed and he began to look at the tyranny, transformation and development with a stern face, knitted brows, penetrating looks and two dark and thick eyebrows competing with his thick and dark beard. Nothing has changed in this Khomeyni at present except his beard, which has been invaded by the whiteness of old age.

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#### Khomeyni Facing Reza Pahlavi

The young teacher did not confine his interest to teaching jurisprudence alone. He proceeded to attack Reza Pahlavi and the imperial regime eloquently and fluently. He instigated the people to disobey the shah's orders and told them that such orders would be of no value if the people rejected them un-animously.

Then comes World War II and Iran suffers widespread harm. By virtue of his genuine fascism, the shah had Nazi inclinations. With the advances of the German forces in the Middle East, the allies were afraid that the shah would stab them in the back, and so the British and the Soviets hastened to march into and occupy Iran to get control of the oil fields. They banished the shah in 1941 and appointed his son Mohamad Reza, the present shah, in his place.

The Iranian people's tragedy was thus compounded because they had to endure the burden of occupation and the exhaustion of their country's resources. Khomeyni was one of the clergymen most strongly aware of the enormity of the tragedy and most strongly pained by it. His reaction was crystallized in a three-part slogan that he raised: Freedom, independence and fighting foreign domination.

The war ended and under pressure from the people, the British withdrew after long maneuvers and after making sure of putting the oil under the control of their monopolist companies. The Soviets also withdrew, but only after leaving Azerbaydzhan Province under the control of one of their agents. The Iranians regained the province after long suffering.

#### Dr Mosadaq's Experience

Suddenly, the Iranians were able to regain their oil in the early 1950's, thanks to Dr Mohamad Mosadaq, that old and shrewd politician who was good at maneuvers. Mosadaq would not have succeeded had it not been for the influence of a prominent religious leader named Ayatollah Kashani. Khomeyni was one of the prominent supporters and advisers of Kashani.

However, the people's joy with their national victory did not last long. The Americans toppled Mosadaq's government, brought Shah Mohamad Reza Pahlavi back from exile and replaced the British with their own influence and their own exploitation of Iran's oil resources.

The rule of Shah Mohamad Reza Pahlavi starts actually in 1953. Thanks to the support and backing of the CIA on the one hand and the division in the national ranks on the other hand, the shah was able to impose his sadist and teal rule on Iran.

The shah persecuted the national politicians and the clergymen allied with them, imprisoning their elders. He also liquidated physically the cream of

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Mosadaq's supporters, youths who received their higher education abroad, through assassination or torture in the dark prisons. He did not hesitate to imprison a venerable old man such as Dr Mosadaq, who was more than 75 years old. The shah released Mosadaq only after he became certain that cancer had eaten away his tongue and that he could no longer utter a single word of criticism against him.

The end of the national experience in the spring of its life was a severe shock for Khomeyni, and its failure was harder on him than his imprisonment in the shah's cells and jails.

The clergyman retreated to study, discuss and analyze the causes of the failure, and ended up with a conclusion that became more deeply entrenched in his mind with time, namely that there could be no salvation for Iran--rather, there could be no salvation for all the Moslems--without the establishment of an Islamic state, to be specific, an Islamic republic totally divorced from all the forms of Islamic government established throughout the ages--a state in which rule is not inherited by the caliphs of a ruling dynasty, as was the case in the Ommiad and Abbaside caliphates, and which does not use religion as a curtain for its ignorance, backwardness, suppression and terror, as was the case in the Ottoman Empire.

The clergyman proceeded to use his eloquence and his magical influence over worshippers and over the faithful to call for his "vitruous" republic and to compare what the situation would be in a state that maintains its revolutionary and religious purity, as was the case in the time of Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and prayers be upon him, and the time of his fourth successor 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, with the situation of the Moslems and of Islam in Iran under the rule of Mohamad Reza Pahlavi, the shahanshah and emperor of emperors.

The shah became annoyed with Khomeyni and tried first to buy him with generous gifts, as he had done with others. But Khomeyni refused. He was content with his ascetic life with his big family, a wife and 5 children, in his modest home in Qom.

The shah arrested Khomeyni at the beginning of 1963. After a period of time and when the shah thought that prison had undermined Khomeyni's morale, he sent emissaries to express his willingness to negotiate with him and to release him from prison in return for Khomeyni's abandonment of his call. But Khomeyni told the shah's emissaries: So, what is left for us to negotiate over? The shah brought Khomeyni to trial and recommended that a death sentence be issued against him. But the prominent uelma hastened to hold a meeting and to give Khomeyni the title of ayatollah. This meant that the shah had to stop his trial and to release him in accordance with the 1906 constitution.

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Khomeyni in Exile

The shah was forced to release him, but only on the condition that he go into exile. Khomeyni and his family left for exile in Turkey and then proceeded to Iraq to stay close to the holy places in al-Najaf and Karbala'.

In exile, Khomeyni devoted his efforts to developing his new theory on Islamic rule, guided by the era of al-Rashidun caliphs [the four caliphs who followed the prophet immediately]. He has written extensively on the issue, mostly in the form of lectures that he delivered to the students of religious institutes.

Perhaps the most important of his writings are "The Rule of The Shari'a" and "The Islamic State." In both, Khomeyni says that rule in Islam is not absolute, but constitutional. But it is not constitutional in the conventional Western sense of democratic constitutionality. Rulers in the Islamic state are bound to a number of principles and conditions revealed in the noble Koran and explained in the Hadith and interpretation of Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and prayers be upon him.

Thus, the Islamic state relies on holy laws, and its legislator is God, may He be praised, in accordance with His Koranic teachings and His prophet's interpretation, whereas the role of legislator in the Western constitutional state is performed by the people's elected representatives. Nobody has the right to legislate or to rule without depending on these divine principles.

Khomeyni gives the ulema and the jurists the right to interpretation within the framework of the Koran's provisions and of the prophet's interpretation without any deviation. In this, he is in harmony with the flexibility of the historical Shi'ite religious establishments and with its imams in regard to interpretation to meet the requirements of the conditions and of the age.

Khomeyni defends warmly the penalties stipulated in the Koran to punish criminals, and denies that they are derived from the "harshness of the Arabs," as the orientalist claim. He asserts that these penalties seek ultimately to stop crime, to impose the authority of law and order and to establish security, safety and peace in the state.

Opinion of Khomeyni's Critics

However, many of Khomeyni's critics believe that a lot of ambiguity engulfs the principles on which his Islamic republic is established. They are general principles that intimate that Islam is middle-of-the-road between capitalism and communism, that it permits personal liberties and curtails extensive domination by capital and that, at the same time, it is against state capitalism because it permits merchants to engage in their trade and to earn a legitimate profit. "Capitalism exploits the people through its materialism, communism enslaves the people through political oppression, whereas the

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Islamic state will wipe out corruption and guarantee political and economic equality among all under the canopy of the Koran."

All this remains general principles. As for the actual implementation of these principles in the people's daily life and under conditions that are totally different from those existing more than 1,300 years ago, Khomeyni has not provided many details. Even the borders of this state are not clear to him. Is it confined to Iran or does it include all the Moslems?

The man calls for abolishing the monarchy and sums up his goals in releasing the detainees, arresting the corrupt, cancelling all the contracts and deals that are not in Iran's interest, producing little oil, paying greater attention to agriculture and reducing the number of the armed forces.

Khomeyni says: "This is the first step. Our struggle will continue after we deport the main criminal, namely the shah. Our ultimate success will be achieved when all the foreigners leave us and stop controlling our army."

All this is good in the view of Khomeyni's critics. But the detailed lines continue to be ambiguous, confused and unclear, especially in regard to legislation and interpretation on matters connected directly with the Shari'a rules.

Even the vast numbers of his supporters don't know any noteworthy thing about his Islamic state, whereas his main aides range from those demanding implementation of the Shari'a laws and establishment of the Islamic state to those who aspire to a Western-style democratic system, even though relying generally on Islam and its dictates.

Khomeyni's main aides have exerted tangible efforts in an attempt to explain the executive principles of the Islamic theory. These aides include Mehdi Bazargan, the present prime minister who has asserted in his numerous writings that Islam is not in conflict with science and technology. Meanwhile, Ali Shariati, the departed poet and thinker, tried to mix the Islamic principles with socialism.

But these attempts have been conflicting and varying between the thinking of a liberal like Bazargan and another radical Islamic thinker deeply imbued with the socialist principles, such as Shariati.

#### Khomeyni's Foreign Policy

The utter clarity in Khomeyni's positions and thinking appears in matters pertaining to his foreign policy. He wants to restrict foreign influence in Iran, including the secret role played by foreign businessmen in corrupting the government and the bureaucratic agency.

He is fully aware of Israel's danger to the area, to the Arabs and to Islam. Israel is "the product of the collusion and understanding of the Western and

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Eastern imperialist countries... Its roots must be pulled out with the efforts of the mighty Islamic countries and their great peoples."

In this regard, Khomeyni is very detailed and precise. The Islamic countries "must unite and must exert all their efforts and employ all their resources to uproot the usurping aggressor. They must stop aiding Israel, those who proceed in its bandwagon and those who support it. The Islamic countries must cut off all forms of material and moral aid for them. They must deny them oil and must refrain from using any Israeli products."

In his books, Khomeyni draws a dark picture of Israel's and Zionism's role in the Iran of the shahanshah. "On the hands of the malicious Iranian government, Israel infiltrated into all of the country's economic, military and political affairs, and Iran became a military base for Israel, or rather for the United States. Now, Israel controls our country's affairs, runs Iran's economy and manages the affairs of numerous Iranian factories and installations."

The prominent Iranian leader is convinced that Zionism is plotting against Iran and Islam. He points out in this regard its distortion of the Koran. He is also fully convinced that its ultimate goal is to control the world. He even charges Zionism of plotting to kill him.

#### U. S. Responsibility

Khomeyni holds the United States largely responsible for what has afflicted Iran and what is afflicting the Moslems. "Had the Islamic countries relied on Islam instead of relying on the Eastern and Western camps, they would not have fallen prey to the Zionist aggression, they would not have been terrorized by the Phantom planes and would not have submitted to the Soviet Union's policy of bargaining."

Khomeyni adds: "Let the world know that all our problems emanate from America. All our problems emanate from Israel. Israel is also a part of America."

Khomeyni then wonders: "Isn't it our right to protest the supply of Iranian oil to a country which is in a state of war with the Moslems and to protest giving the Israelis a free hand to tamper with our Islamic country? Israel is currently in a state of war with the Moslems and is planning to invade and occupy the Islamic countries." Despite all this, Khomeyni is aware, as a true Moslem, of the principles of religious freedom. He stresses that Jews and Christians in Iran must be given freedom of worship and of practicing their religious rituals. But he is not at all tolerant toward heresies, such as the Baha'i movement, which has aided the shahanshah's regime.

From his exile, Khomeyni instigated the Iranian Army to mutiny and rebel: "The Iranian Army officers must exert serious efforts to purge the homeland's soil of the desecration and influence of Israel's agents. You are Moslems. Deal your crushing blows to these agents and cut off the evil Israeli hands in your dear homeland."

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Khomeyni is aware of the nature of the relationship that has bound the shahanshah's regime to all of Iran's enemies: "The Pahlavi family assumed power by force. The present shah has destroyed the economy and our natural resources, has reduced agricultural production so as to secure a market for U.S. products, has subjugated the armed forces to foreign control and has abolished freedom of expression and of the press, and his police forces have massacred thousands of citizens."

Today and after the victory of Khomeyni's revolution, Khomeyni has put into practice what he advocated in his exile and in his struggle. He has severed all of Iran's relations with Israel, has expelled the Israeli and U.S. experts and has declared a halt to the delivery of oil to the Zionist state and to South Africa. To reassure the Arabs, he has declared an end to Iran's role as the patrol policeman in the Arab Gulf. He wants thus to show that there is no conflict in the ultimate goals between Iran and its neighbors by virtue of the relations of history, religion and blood.

No Bargaining in Revolution

One of the main characteristics of Khomeyni's personality and of his revolutionary conduct is his ability to adopt decisive decisions. Those who have followed in detail his latest battle with the regime can attribute his victories to his refusal to bargain at the expense of his positions and principles.

He did not bargain with the shah and did not permit his allies (the National Front) or his supporters to cooperate with the regime in its final days or to accept the regime's superficial concessions. He defined his phased objective: The shah must be overthrown. When the shah fled the country, Khomeyni decided to return home. Even Bazargan, his top adviser, advised him not to return. But the revolutionary old man refused to back down and refused to bargain with Shapur Bakhtiar, who split away from the national movement and who accepted the shah's inducements. Khomeyni returned, knowing well that his return constituted a danger to his life and the life of his companions. A revolution does not accept bargaining. It is some kind of a wager and it may win or it may lose, but when it bargains, it starts to lose.

Khomeyni returned and toppled Bakhtiar's government in days. He even ended the myth of the "bogy" with whom the shah and the Americans long threatened the people, namely the army. With the magic of his leadership and with his influence, Khomeyni attracted the troops and wrenched them away from the grip of their officers. Within a few hours of their armed confrontation with Khomeyni, the commanders themselves found that they were alone in the arena. In their position, their forces, their equipment, the instigation of the shah and the advice of the Americans were of no help. They fell into Khomeyni's hands one after the other to face the fate deserved by whoever places himself in conflict with the people's interests and aspirations.

However, Khomeyni was not quick and decisive in adopting the individual decisions concerning fateful issues, such as dethroning the shah, abolishing the monarchy, declaring the Islamic state and nationalizing the oil. Perhaps he

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preferred to refer to the people's opinion on these matters, considering that he had always affirmed that the people hold the final decision.

#### Conflict With Left

Perhaps Khomeyni is in disagreement here with those allies who waged the battle of liquidating the regime with him. What is meant here are the radical communist and leftist organizations, some of which adopt the principle of violence in their political action. By virtue of their thinking and their ideological positions, these organizations do not consider that the battle in Iran has ended. They demand that the hand of the revolution extend to political and military groups, and perhaps to social classes, to liquidate and pursue them. These organizations even find themselves in an inevitable confrontation with Khomeyni and with his call for an "Islamic state." What makes the confrontation even more serious is that these groups are well-armed, especially after acquiring large quantities of weapons from the army barracks and stores.

It is doubtful that Khomeyni and the Shi'ite religious establishment will be able to persuade these radical factions to agree to give up the arms and to coexist peacefully under the canopy of an Islamic state whose opponents are permitted a degree of freedom of criticism and of expression.

In confronting his opponents at home, Khomeyni depends on the overwhelming majority of a people who have deep-rooted Islamic traditions and on a willingness for sacrifice and giving that reaches the degree of martyrdom and redemption for which the Shi'ites have been known throughout their history. This has been proven correct by the unequal confrontation in the street between these masses and a well-trained and fully-equipped army. These masses now put their leader in the position of holiness. In their view, he represents the symbol of struggle, of political purity and of religious selflessness.

Despite this, the ability of Khomeyni's revolution to maneuver is curtailed by several factors and circumstances. His old age does not permit him to exert too much effort to adopt daily decisions. He has not actually assumed power and has left it in the hands of a group of his loyal followers. He may adopt a decision to withdraw gradually from the arena and return to live in Qom, being content with the role of the theoretical leader and the spiritual father.

The other thing that may limit the effectiveness of his role is the disagreement among his supporters and allies over a certain political line and a definite ideological position. Moreover, the leaders of the Shi'ite religious establishment itself view Khomeyni with some envy. He is nowhere near them insofar as their clerical and religious position is concerned, even though he excels over all of them with his overwhelming popularity and his clear, unhesitant and uncompromising positions, especially toward the previous regime.

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180,000 Mullas

There are nearly 180,000 mullas constituting the backbone of the religious establishment that has an almost unique organization in the Islamic world. This establishment pervades the core of Iranian life and exerts its religious and political influence through these firm relations that it has established with the popular classes.

The middle class, represented by the bazaar merchants, has been the natural ally of the religious establishment in its long struggle with the regime that depended on the military establishment. The bazaar merchants often played a strong, even though not apparent, role in tipping the scales in favor of the clergymen over the shahs.

In Khomeyni's revolution, there was a meeting of the interests of two victims in opposing and defeating the regime: The clergymen and the bazaar merchants. The shah's mistake was that he launched in the early 1960's a battle on two fronts. He committed what no political leader in a country with strong religious sentiments would commit when he tried to confront the religious establishment through a police establishment (the SAVAK). Through his political decisions and the slogans of modernization and reform, the shah tried to curb the clergymen's social influence and powers. He confiscated the Shi'ite religious trusts, reduced the government allocations for the clergymen, persecuted their leaders and insulted the religious sentiments by appointing to the positions of power and control individuals belonging to suspect sects, such as Baha'ism, and people whose ability and integrity were doubtful.

Matters went too far when the shah adopted in the late 1960's the course of "Persianization," trying to wipe out the religious feelings by reviving nationalist feelings reminding the Iranians of the glories of the ancient Persian state. But his call was received lukewarmly, and even left a negative impact. This call confirmed to the religious establishment and to the overwhelming religious majority of the people the soundness of their suspicions concerning the shah and the throne.

#### Bazaar's Role

The bazaar markets with their narrow alleys, their closely lined up shops and their low roofs are the heart of every Iranian city. For example, there are in Tehran 60,000 shops and businesses extending over an area of 10 square kilometers. These shops, which attract the tourists with the traditional Iranian and oriental goods that they display, constitute, despite their modesty, the third force in Iran's political and economic life after the shahanshah authority and the religious establishment.

In recent years, the bazaar merchants were exposed to an organized campaign by the authority which overburdened them with its taxes, and with its disregard for the merchants' interests. The authority inflicted grave harm on them through its attempt to fix prices and to hold them responsible for

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tampering with these prices, whereas the authority itself was actually responsible for the inflation and for the rising cost of living through its corruption, its wasting of the country's enormous resources, and its alliance with the big merchants and businessmen, most of whom are Jews and foreigners.

The bazaar merchants felt injustice afflicted on them when they saw the political authority entrusting foreign businessmen and their Jewish Baha'i representatives with most of the contracts and deals. Under the slogan of rebuilding Tehran, the authority even prepared a plan to demolish the bazaar markets and to shatter this enormous class of merchants. In 1977 alone, the authority referred 250,000 bazaar merchants from the various cities to trial. A total of 8,000 of those merchants were sent to jail on the charge of tampering with prices, whereas bribes to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars were filling the pockets of opportunists and foreigners close to the government.

The bazaar merchants thus found in the religious establishment a natural ally to fight the political authority. In 1977, the shah reduced the allocations of the religious establishment from 80 million dollars to 30 million dollars. But the bazaar merchants offered the establishment 320 million dollars to enable it to advance the necessary aid to the poor classes.

When the troubles started at the end of 1977, the bazaar merchants and their employees and workers were the first to proceed to the confrontation arena. One of the bazaar leaders in Iran has said in this regard: "If the Islamic struggle in Iran is the body, then the bazaar is its eyes and the oil industry its heart."

The bazaar merchants financed Khomeyni's movement. Despite the strike and the economic and commercial difficulties, they paid the religious establishment millions of dollars in 1978 to enable it to meet its commitments toward the destitute classes that were harmed by the troubles and to help the families that lost their supporters through martyrdom or imprisonment.

Thus, on returning to Iran, Khomeyni was eager to cut the strike period short. He and his government issued strong calls for return to work and for reopening the shops. He did so out of consideration for the merchants who suffered and for their role and sacrifices in supporting his movement.

But have Iran's problems and difficulties ended with the crushing victory scored by Khomeyni's revolution and with the great gain accomplished by the religious establishment?

The rapid collapse of the shah's regime has caused tens of previously suppressed conflicts to rise to the surface. Perhaps some of these problems, led by the problem of the minorities lying in wait on the remote borders, are enough to create a number of big obstacles in the face of the stability and survival of any central government.

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Ayatollah's Men

The aides and advisers of religious leader Ayatollah Khomeyni are a mixture of clergymen with their black turbans and their green and black robes and politicians and technocrats who graduated from Western universities. Foremost among them are:

Engineer Mehdi Bazargan, the prime minister of the interim government: His Western education has not affected his religious enthusiasm. He has firm relations with the bazaar merchants and strong faith in democracy. He was director of the National Petroleum Company in Dr Mosadaq's time. He then spent 6 years in the shah's prisons and engaged in free enterprise after his release. He used his business as a cover for his political activity. In the early 1960's, he formed (Mujahidin Khalq), the military arm of Khomeyni's movement, which has now turned into the Islamic Guard that has temporarily replaced the police and the army.

Bazargan has many writings in which he proves Islam's readiness to keep up with the age and with science and technology.

Ebrahim Yazdi: He studied medicine at Baylor University in Texas. His inclinations are democratic and liberal and he clings to religion. He was chief of Khomeyni's staff in his Paris exile.

Hasan Nazih (56 years): He is a brilliant lawyer who is well-known for his glorious defense of political detainees. He is a candidate for president of the Islamic republic.

Abd-al-Hasan Bani Sadr (32 years): He is an economics expert who studied at the National Scientific Research Center in Paris. He has done studies on Islamic economy.

Sadeq Qutub (Zade) is 41 years old and was expelled from Georgetown University in the United States because of his political interests and for his failure to keep up with his studies. He is extremely concerned with his appearance. He is a Syrian national. He has been accused of having relations with the European communist left but has denied the accusation strongly.

Shihab Ishraq (50 years): He is Khomeyni's son-in-law. He is jovial and very religious. He works as private secretary to the prominent religious leader.

Ahmad Khomeyni (35 years): The second son of the religious leader. He is a religious scholar and is his father's adviser for religious affairs. This position used to be held by his elder brother, Mustafa, who died under mysterious circumstances 2 years ago. Khomeyni says that his son was a victim of the SAVAK.

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Ayatollah Mahmud Talaqani (74 years): He is the religious leader of the capital, Tehran. He spent 10 years in the shah's prisons and suffers from a shudder which he developed as a result of the fearful torture to which he was subjected in prison. He may play a major role in persuading the communists to engage in legal opposition in the new regime. He became tied by friendship to most of the communist leaderships during his imprisonment.

Mohamad Bashti: A clergyman with great political activity. He was in charge of receiving Khomeyni's speeches and instructions on cassette tapes and then distributing them to mosques in Tehran and in other parts of the country. Those recordings played a major role in kindling the citizens' enthusiasm to oppose the regime.

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MOROCCO

MOROCCAN SOCIALIST LEADER DISCUSSES SAHARA PROBLEM

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 28 Mar 79 pp 16-17 LD

[Interview with Moroccan Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) First Secretary Abderrahim Bouabid by Hamid Barrada: "They Will Not Wear Us Down"--date and place of interview not specified]

[Text] JEUNE AFRIQUE: Do you consider that the king's message to parliament constitutes a rapprochement between your positions and the government's on the Saharan affair, or at least a change of direction?

Abderrahim Bouabid: This message confirms, but more precisely this time, the worsening of a situation which has become "intolerable." Our country cannot defend its territorial integrity while remaining in a state of "neither war nor peace."

As early as last December the USFP advocated a new defense strategy which would enable pinpoint counterattacks to be made, so as to discourage the assailants who for several months have been trying to harass Moroccan regular troops and have been attacking civilian populations. The aggressors hope to wear us down. They are mistaken.

For the time being the royal message is a call to redefine a political-military strategy adapted to the nature of the terrain. This is the task with which we have agreed to help.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Are we on the eve of war with Algeria?

Abderrahim Bouabid: Our country does not intend, at least in the immediate future, to take the initiative of a direct confrontation with Algeria's regular troops. But it intends to make it understood that if driven to it it would not hesitate to use all its means of defense to safeguard the national territory. We hope that the Algerian people and leaders, who are themselves jealous of their independence and the integrity of their territory, will realize that the Moroccan people are in a situation of legitimate self-defense.

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JEUNE AFRIQUE: Did you obtain guarantees about maintaining this new policy during your 7 March talks with the king?

Abderrahim Bouabid: The conversation I had with his majesty the king dealt precisely with the deterioration of the military situation and the consequent urgent need to deal with it more effectively and quickly.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: What are the powers, functions and operating methods of the National Security Council (CNS)?

Abderrahim Bouabid: The council, which is to meet forthwith, will have to specify its functions and discuss, under the chairmanship of the king, as commander-in-chief of the Royal Armed Forces, the new strategy and the resources which must be mobilized for that purpose.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: The king's message comes at a time of great social tension. Does your presence in the CNS not automatically entail concessions on your part?

Abderrahim Bouabid: We proclaim our total solidarity with the working class and all the exploited social classes.

An effective defense policy is bound to involve consolidating the domestic front by satisfying the most urgent and vital demands. The financial means to do so exist or can be mobilized. The underprivileged classes, which have seen their purchasing power shrink by over 70 percent, cannot be expected to make sacrifices on their own.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: To what extent is the war effort responsible for the deterioration in the social climate?

Abderrahim Bouabid: Certainly the war effort is a heavy burden on public funds. But to say that the war effort is the cause of social tension is to give credence to the explanation given by the affluent class, which seeks thus to evade its obligations. The dizzy rise in the cost of the most basic commodities, the extreme exploitation indulged in by employers, the wage freeze, land speculation and wastefulness are directly at the root of the workers' poverty.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Is the CSN not in itself a disguised, "shameful" form of government by national union?

Abderrahim Bouabid: On our side there is no disguised or "shameful" participation in a government of national union. Nor is the CNS the prelude to such a role. The present government is what it is, it is faced with social problems and with its own responsibilities.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Is your participation in the CSN not a renunciation of your party's resolution at the December 1978 congress calling for a "transformation of the monarchy"?

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Abderrahim Bouabid: Certainly not. We are convinced that mobilization of the working people and the achievement of a minimum of social justice are bound to trigger off a dialectical process which must necessarily lead to the establishment of a more credible, more stable democracy within the framework of a constitutional monarchy which must turn its back on certain archaic practices.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Following the Tan-tan attack the king, speaking to a parliamentary committee, involved the Moroccan's Army's inferiority in terms of equipment to justify the cautious policy he has pursued to date. How do you think the CNS could defend this handicap?

Abderrahim Bouabid: A people who want to defend their territorial integrity, dignity and identity act with the means at their disposal and other means which have mobilized. When the Moroccan people were thrown into the battle against colonial occupation in the fifties, their material means were derisory. The example set by other people's fighting for their liberation confirms that it is not material superiority which finally wins the day but motivation and patriotic confidence.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Does the fact that you belong to the same current of political thought (socialism) as the Algerian regime and the National Liberation Front not naturally select you as mediator in the conflict which has divided the Maghreb for the past 4 years?

Abderrahim Bouabid: We are fighting for a socialist society within democracy and by democratic means. We are still quite prepared to open dialog with Algeria. We are fighting for the construction of a great, peoples' Maghreb. We made precise proposals in that connection in 1958. We renewed them in 1967, in other words before the existence of a "Saharan people" or some Polisario or other was ever discovered in the West Sahara.

We made more suggestions still on the eve of the November 1975 Madrid agreements. The Algerian leaders observed an obstinate silence. We still have the firm intention of transforming the Saharan zones, and all the Saharan zones, from zones of conflict and confrontation into "connecting" zones between the Maghreb peoples. The "peoples' Maghreb" cannot be built by provoking war between the Maghreb peoples.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Should all hopes of a peaceful settlement with Algeria be abandoned?

Abderrahim Bouabid: We are counting on making the fraternal Algerian people aware of the situation and on our comrades in arms for the liberation of the Maghreb peoples and to insure that the worst is avoided.

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TUNISIA

OPPOSITION LEADER ON POTENTIAL POST-BOURGUIBA SITUATION

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 2-15 Apr 79 pp 19-20 LD

[Interview with Ibrahim Tobal, "Tunisian National Opposition Leader," "To Unite To Liquidate Bourguibism", date and place not given]

[Text] AFRIQUE-ASIE: As the moment approaches when a power vacuum will occur in Tunisia the country is becoming increasingly isolated. How do you explain this phenomenon and what consequences can it have as far as Tunisia's domestic and foreign policies are concerned?

Ibrahim Tobal: The fact that Tunisia is isolated is a consequence of the way in which it has been ruled since 1956. Like all authoritarian regimes, Bourguibism has fallen victim to its own methods. It has not escaped the logic of terror--stifling of fundamental liberties, invented "plots" followed by prefabricated trials, the spread of violence and so forth. This undemocratic system was bound to lose contact with the people from whom it finally became divorced following the 26 January events.

This isolation has not only been caused by the fact that Bourguiba's health has deteriorated and that the regime's barons are relentlessly fighting one another for the succession. It is mainly a result of the fact that the system is corrupt and that no one believes in it any longer. Even its traditional allies, who have repeatedly saved it in periods of crisis, now hesitate to do it again. The visits undertaken by Prime Minister Hedi Nouria to France and the United States, by Neo-Destour [as published] Director Sayah and by the head of state himself to the FRG and other European countries have yielded no result.

It appears that the allies have realized that the system is completely cut off from the people and that they are seeking to find a way to protect the West's vital interests in Tunisia. As for public opinion in the Arab world and progressive Africa, which has been enlightened by the Tunisian national opposition on the subject--it has opposed Bourguibism right from the beginning--that is, 1955.

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This means that a preinsurrectionary atmosphere prevails in Tunisia. Making all due allowance, the present situation here is similar to that which prevailed before the shah's departure. One idea is shared by various opposition groups--antimonarchism. Hence the profound discontent among the people which has sometimes assumed a violent form and obstructed the country's social and political life. The only solution would be to end Bourguibism so as to insure that our country regains real independence which would make a national revival, naturally inspired by socialism, possible. Bourguibism is an ideal example of a neocolonialist system. Obviously, France and the United States, which installed it but which are now aware that it is weakening, will do their utmost to try to protect their economic and, especially, strategic interests in this part of the world. Tunisia occupies a key position between the East and West basins of the Mediterranean. Yes, there is a plan. There are even three Western plans for insuring Bourguibism's survival after Bourguiba's death.

The Mestiri solution--in the event of a conflict between Hedi Nouira and Sayah as a result of which the latter would have to abandon the idea of becoming "regent," Mr Mestiri, leader of the Social Democrats, would become an allegedly democratic guarantor for "Nouirist power."

If no conflict were to break out, Mestiri would be allowed to form a Social Democratic Party which would serve the interests of bourgeois opposition and would perhaps regroup some fractions from certain opposition groups. However, while pretending to represent an "opposition movement," he would make no profound change. The West believes that since repressive action was taken against the Tunisian General Federation of Labor [UGTT], genuine opposition has been weak and badly organized. Therefore, it would eventually have to give in.

The Bourguiba Junion solution--This would be an ideal solution from the viewpoint of Bourguiba Senior who dreams about his name being perpetuated in history. This solution is also advocated by the CIA and the Pentagon. However, Bourguiba would have to enthrone his son during his own lifetime, an operation which Paris could refuse to endorse.

A solution involving a Latin American style military putsch, supported by NATO and France--let us remember that many high-ranking officers in the Tunisian Army have been trained in either America or France and that some of them openly advocate a putsch. Obviously, this solution would enable the West to consolidate their strategic position in the Mediterranean most effectively. It would be consistent with the West's neocolonialist policy, which, however, could lead to failure--the desire to win all along the line could result in the loss of everything. You cannot indefinitely overlook a people's desires nor, a fortiori, deny their existence.

AFRIQUE-ASIE: Could there be no other solution, an Ahmed Ben Salah solution?

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Ibrahim Tobal: Possibly, since a certain section of the European left regard Ahmed Ben Salah and the People's Unity Movement (MUP) of which he is the leader, as reliable partners. However, will this weak and unstable European left be able to impose its choice on the multinational companies and the big banks which are operating in Tunisia? It is rather doubtful. But be that as it may, Ben Salah and his movement, who have clearly expressed their opposition to Bourguibism, are progressive and anti-imperialist.

AFRIQUE-ASIE: In your opinion, why does the Western press--whether right-wing or leftwing--keep silent about the struggle waged by the Tunisian national opposition, a movement which you have represented for almost 25 years?

Ibrahim Tobal: I have the impression that a certain section of the leftwing press has not yet settled its differences with the national movements of the third world. This is because it does not know them well and wrongly accuses them of a certain chauvinism. Both our national liberation movement and those of other third world countries are first and foremost anticolonialist and progressive. Their aim is to establish socialist regimes--consider Angola, Madagascar, Benin, Congo, Mozambique, Cuba, Vietnam and so forth. Furthermore, our movement also aims at uniting the Maghreb peoples and the entire Arab nation.

As for the rightwing press, which is still colonialist, it is only natural that it ignores us, just as it ignored the Iranian national movement since the downfall of its leader Doctor Mossadeq. It is certainly mentioning it now, just as it mentioned Tunisia for a while following the 26 Black January events. But will we have to have another bloodbath before journalists start mentioning the Tunisian situation objectively?

AFRIQUE-ASIE: In your view, what is the position of leftwing movements in the third world in general and Tunisia in particular?

Ibrahim Tobal: These forces emerged during the struggle against colonialism. To liberate their countries, movements with often very different ideologies fought side by side. However, once independence was achieved, these differences, which were willingly overlooked during the war against the common enemy, came again to the fore. Hence the political crises in recently liberated third world countries which have been exploited to a great extent by neocolonialism with a view to gaining ground there.

In Tunisia, the traditional left believed that a successful outcome of the struggle for national independence was dependent on the left's achieving power in France. However, the converse is true. Liquidation of colonialism weakens capitalism and can, therefore, help progressive forces to win, whether in France or elsewhere. Nonetheless, the disappearance of traditional colonialism has also helped progressive movements.



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It must be admitted that in Tunisia national liberation has solely been a result of the national (Neo-Destour) and people's (UGTT) movement's activities. It is regrettable that the traditional left has adopted an ambiguous attitude toward the struggle waged by an overwhelming majority of the Tunisian people against neocolonialism and, obviously, Bourguibism.

Steeped in the various ideologies prevalent in the international workers movement, various factions of the traditional left have assessed Tunisian problems in terms of these ideologies while overlooking the specific conditions prevailing in Tunisia. For instance, some people believe that the working class on its own can successfully carry out a social revolution. They overlook the fact that peasants constitute an enormous proportion of the working masses.

Relying on an incomplete analysis of the situation and seeing that certain so-called socializing experiments have proved unsuccessful, some others have reached the conclusion that it is impossible to achieve a radical transformation of Tunisian society, while still others want to (as it were) "import" into Tunisia conflicts involving the Soviets, the Chinese and Trotskyites. And so it goes....

Roughly, this is what the position of the Tunisian left looks like. Having said this, despite their divisions, most of the factions born of the traditional left have helped to impart a positive content to the social struggles.

AFRIQUE-ASIE: Under the prevailing conditions, how can these forces and the national movement which you represent unite with a view to liquidating Bourguibism and carrying out a real revolution?

Ibrahim Tobal: In order to answer your question I must first tell you about the history of the national movement. First, there was Ali Bachhamba's Tounes el-Fatat (1911), then Abdelaziz Taalbi's Destour (1922), and, finally, the Neo-Destour (1934).

Already during the struggle for independence, a marked difference of opinion emerged between those who accepted the idea of a compromise with colonialism and those who wanted to carry on with the armed struggle throughout the Maghreb until the entire North African region achieved real independence.

The first trend is now represented by Bourguiba's Neo-Destour Politburo and the second by our Tunisian National Opposition Movement of which I have been chairman since my predecessor Salah Ben Youssef's assassination in 1961. In the struggle for national liberation and in its opposition to Bourguiba, this second trend firmly supports the idea of a socialist revolution adapted to Tunisian reality.

There is also the progressive and socialist MUP led by Ahmed Ben Salah. Furthermore, among the young people belonging to the national movement there are various trends--al-Nasirites, Ba'thists, independent democrats, nationalists and communists. I must also mention the Tunisian People's Revolutionary Party [PRPT] which claims kinship with the radical national movement. These are the real forces of the Tunisian opposition.

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