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Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 2/81)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

BRIEFS

LIBYAN TROOPS NEAR TUNISIA--Libyan secretary of foreign affairs Ali Abdesselam Triki will soon be leaving for Tunis. This was suggested by Libya's leadership during a meeting in Tripoli in early December with secretary general of the Arab League Chedli Klibi. The Tunisian Government quickly extended the invitation to him. Meantime heavily equipped Libyan troops have massed along the border with Tunisia: a total of 10,000 troops with equipment ranging from 435 tanks, 40 Mirage F1 and V, Tupolev 22 bombers, to about 20 assault helicopters and batteries of ground-to-ground missiles (Frog 7 and Scud B) as well as surface-to-air missiles SAM 6. Going from north to south the Libyan troops are situated right along the border at: Boukammach (where there is a launching ramp for Frog ground-to-ground missiles); El Assa (with 45 tanks and artillery); Ouazen; Nalout (30 tanks); Ourzod and Ghadames. The bulk of the troops is situated in a second line close enough to reach the border without delay. El Ouatia (about 20 km from the border in the northern sector) appears to be the main base (40 Mirage F1 and Mirage V are located there along with 19 MT 24 assault helicopters and two troop transport helicopters). A launching ramp for Frog or Scud ground-to-ground missiles and two Crotale air defense batteries round out the arms stock at Ouatia where there are also two battalions, motorized infantry and artillery. Two additional tank battalions (60 armored vehicles) and one ground artillery battalion are situated at Zeltan. Zouara has two tank battalions. Further back, about 100 km from the border, there are forces situated at: Sabratah (8 battalions including 4 units consisting of 120 tanks); Zawia (3 battalions); Yeffren (1 battalion); Ghariane (3 battalions plus one special forces unit). It's a foregone conclusion that Abdesselam Triki will have some explaining to do during his trip to Tunis. After all it was only in November that Colonel Qadhafi asserted that there were no Libyan troops along the Tunisian border. [Text] [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 24 Dec 80 p 25]

MILITARY ASSISTANCE--A military assistance agreement between Malta, on the one side, and Tunisia and Algeria, on the other side? Malta's prime minister Dom Mintoff tendered this proposal in Tunis and Algiers on his mid-December visit in those capital cities. It is linked to the plan guaranteeing Malta's neutrality so cherished by Dom Mintoff. Nor does he neglect seeing to it that Malta's relations with Libya do not deteriorate too much. [Text] [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 24 Dec 80 p 38]

TUNISIAN BAATH PARTY MEMBER--A Tunisian is a member of the Baath Party's national command governing Syria. He is 40 year old Mohamed Salah Hermassi a former high-school headmaster in Tunis. He is responsible for Baath dealings with the Maghreb region. [Text] [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 24 Dec 80 p 38]

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ISLAMIC AFFAIRS

STREETCORNER PREACHERS OF COMPETING SECTS ATTRACT CROWDS IN SUDAN

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Nov 80 pp 40-41

[Text]

In recent years, conflict between the various Islamic sects in Sudan has taken to the streets. In an effort to preach not only the Word, but their own interpretation of the Word, conflicting Muslim groups have been keen to take the chance to go out on the streets and plead for support for their own particular case.

Last month, reporter Azhari Abdel Rahman found out who was saying what, how they had started, and what the relevant authorities had to say about it.

INHABITANTS STROLLING around the Three Towns — or in any other of the major cities throughout the country — will probably have noticed an increase in the number of small crowds surrounding preachers haranguing the public from mosque-corners or in the streets themselves.

People who make up these gatherings are either seriously interested in what the preacher has to say, or have just come along through idle curiosity. Perhaps not surprisingly, these sessions are highly organised, and tactically arranged by competing Muslim groups — on the one hand, the *Ansar el Sunna*, and on the other, the Republican Brothers. As one member of the *Ansar el Sunna* told *Sudanow*, preaching-sessions within the Three Towns conform to a strict schedule.

There are many theories as to how and why these *al fresco* sermons have grown up. Dr El Hag Bilal, of the Afro-Asian Studies Institute, in the University of Khartoum, believes that changing social conditions and the emergence of western trends have all contributed to their

appearance. Many of the preachers harp on moral values and questions, perhaps worried by the threat to the 'moral base' of their society posed by the rapid interference of new values. Because of this, notes Dr Bilal, such discussions are rarely held in rural areas, where the threat is more distant. Street-corner discussions are also a fairly efficient means of broadcasting new ideas, and they tend to reach a wider and poorer audience than the more 'elite' media of newspapers and television.

Other academic Islamic scholars have agreed with Dr Bilal, noting that in periods of rapid economic and social change, reforming figures have often appeared in large numbers, claiming that there has been a deviation from the strict Islamic faith, and calling for a return to purity, to the *Quran wa el Sunna*.

The appearance of street-corner preachers in the view of Abdelsalaam Sid Ahmed, another scholar, is due to the fact that the question of Islamisation of the state has not yet been settled in Sudan, pointing out that street-preachers are not common in other Islamic countries where the issue has already been decided. Different groups are arguing for a different constitutional role for Islam, but unlike Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan, no one specific doctrine has been constitutionally accepted.

The preachers themselves use the street-corner meetings to express their differences with their rival groups and to convince their audience of the righteousness of their own beliefs. According to Abdelsalaam Sid Ahmed, the religious conflict can be traced back to the original schism, at the turn of the century, which

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divided the *Sufis* from the orthodox believers. Islam entered Sudan, in the main, through the large numbers of *Sufi* groups who believed that the tombs and relics of religious figures were as much a significant symbol of faith as the mosque itself. This contradicted the teaching of the orthodox believers, who grew up at the turn of the century under the influence of the Egyptian el Azhar religious school.

So the *Ansar el Sunna*, orthodox Muslims, a group which was formed in the 1930s, use the street-corners to launch heavy religious attacks on the *Sufis*. The Republican Brothers, on the other hand, who appeared for the first time in the 1940s, use the streets for talks on a wide-ranging selection of topics: politics, religion and sociology. The Republican Brothers, in fact, have been banned from preaching in the mosques, although one member of the Brotherhood, Ahmed Dali, told *Sudanow* that if they could avoid a public disturbance, they would try to preach in the mosques sometime in the future.

In 1978, following several virulent attacks by the orthodox movement, many of the *Sufi* organisations banded together to form the Islamic Revival Committee (IRC). The initiative for this move came from Mohamed Osman el Mirghani, the leader of the *Khatmiyya* sect, who toured the central parts of Sudan that year seeking the support of the *Sufi tariqa* leaders in the provinces. The IRC is now particularly active in the universities and work-places throughout the capital.

The four main *tariqa* in the country, Tigania, Shazalia, Ghadria and Idreesya, and their branches, are all represented on the IRC. To many observers, this is historically an important move on the part of the *Sufis*; changing, as they have, from mild competition with each other to a unified sect, strengthened in their defiance to the attacks of orthodox followers.

The IRC took an active role in the recent Omdurman Islamic University student elections. When *Sudanow* asked some of the IRC student-leaders how they could participate in elections when this directly conflicted with the tenets of their faith, they replied that they were

merely seeking to improve the conditions of their fellow students and that their brand of *Sufism*, *Sunna Sufism*, does not prohibit their participation in day-to-day affairs.

The *Ansar*, the orthodox believers, were reportedly invited in to the IRC, but no reply was received. Given the traditional rivalry between the *Ansar* and the *Khatmiyya*, and the fact that since the days of the Mahdist state (1885-1898), the *Ansar* have been out of favour with all the other *tariqa* in the country, this was hardly surprising.

One of the *Ansar el Sunna* told *Sudanow* that their main purpose at the moment was, through preaching in the streets and in the mosques, to put over and strengthen the concept of *Tawheed*, belief in one God. This concept negates the existence of any mediator between God and man, and is an indirect attack on *Sufism*. In reply, a *sufi* told *Sudanow* only *Sufi* Islam could survive in Sudan, as they employ the kind of popular teachings and ideas that suits Sudanese culture.

The Republican Brothers, in particular, are not afraid to discuss political issues; in fact they are loathe to separate political and religious issues, and this has brought them into conflict with the government on several occasions. In 1977, Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, the founder of the Republican movement, was put under detention for a month, although no official reason was given for this, and many Brotherhood supporters see this as only one link in a chain of attempts from fundamentalists to halt their movement. Most important of these attempts was, say Republican Brothers, the 1968 trial and conviction of Mahmoud Mohamed Taha for 'Defecting from Islam...'

Other *Sufi* groups are quick to point out the differences between themselves and the Republican Brothers, one Republican Brother told *Sudanow*, especially after the Muslim Brothers, a strong orthodox sect, agreed to a policy of reconciliation with the government. Many people believe that because the Republican Brothers support the government no attempt has officially been made to halt their activities, but Ahmed Dali is convinced their relationship with the

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government depends on how much sway their religious rivals really have with the administration.

So far, the street-corner gatherings have escaped interference from the authorities concerned — who could prohibit them under Article 115 of the Penal Code, prohibiting unauthorised assemblies — because they have 'religious cover.' Mr Ismael Attiya, Director of Khartoum Province Police, told *Sudanow* it is a matter of interpretation as to what constitutes an 'unauthorised assembly.'

But Beshir Abbas, of the High Council for Religious Affairs and Endowments, believes these street-corner meetings should be stopped by the authorities. since, in his opinion, they have become an umbrella for anti-Islamic activities. Answering the question of why, therefore, the Council has not already taken action. Mr Abbas said that the Council has to work through *all* religious sects in the country. and cannot involve itself in direct conflict with any particular group.

All groups engaged in street-corner preaching will be loathe to give it up, maintaining the justness of their cause as being irrefutable, and therefore for the moment at least the fate of the street-corner preacher appears fairly secure. ■

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IRAN

CAUSES OF IRANIAN REVOLUTION ANALYZED

West Berlin BEFREIUNG in German No 19/20, Fall 1980, pp 129-143

[Article by Eric Rouleau: "The Islamic Revolution in Iran: A Path Fraught with Pitfalls"; translated from LE MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE, Oct 80, by Gisela Just]

[Text] The war between Iraq and Iran is not simply another episode in the "centuries-old enmity" between the two nations, as one might suspect. There have also been long periods of peaceful coexistence and even close cooperation for the two states. Nor is it a question of the normal escalation of a border dispute into an armed conflict. The treaty signed between Baghdad and Tehran in June 1975 called for a series of mechanisms aimed at the amicable settlement of all difficulties that might arise in the process of realizing agreements obtained in lengthy negotiations. Thus, the treaty provides that the Iraqi government must enter into negotiations instead of resorting to weapons, and in the event that these talks should fail, it would be obligated to request arbitration from foreign powers friendly to both parties to the talks -- chiefly Algeria, which had chaired the reconciliation negotiations in 1975.

The treaty was definitely viewed at that time not as a "dictate," but as a settlement that was fair to both sides. Both Iraq and Iran claimed sovereignty over the entire Shatt al Arab estuary. The treaty declared this estuary an international waterway belonging in equal measure to both parties to the treaty, so the boundary line coincided with the line down the middle. Both states could thus guarantee safe navigation in their own territorial waters and access to the open sea. The national pride of both sides was similarly preserved.

It therefore seems clear that the main causes of the war must be sought elsewhere. The Iraqi Ba'ath government had made its peace with the shah; from the beginning, it had taken a hostile position toward the revolutionary movement that was intended to sweep away Pahlavi domination in Iran. The Imam Khomeyni had had to flee to France after having been expelled by Iraq in the fall of 1978. Following the overthrow of the monarchy in January 1979, Baghdad provided generous support to all opponents of the young Islamic Republic -- to monarchists as well as the "moderate" republicans; to Arabs from Kurdistan as well as the Kurdish autonomists.

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The Iraqi armed forces repeatedly provoked border incidents, while the Iranian army — which was itself in the process of falling apart — attempted to maintain order inside the country.

The government of Saddam Hussein could not have chosen a better time for a general attack on Iran. The power struggle in Tehran seemed to be nearing an end, and the formation of a homogeneous government was imminent. The Islamic Republic wanted to turn its attention to the task of freeing itself from isolation. The war broke out at a time when Iran could count on no outside support to speak of. Considering the Soviet Union's declared hostility toward the top Iranian leaders and its own alliance with Iraq, it could do nothing but declare its "neutrality." The problem is obviously even more complex for the United States. After Washington had been unable either to free its hostages or destabilize the regime — which merely by virtue of its existence represents a permanent threat to American interests in the Middle East — it would have had every reason to be happy about the Iraqi coup, especially if it were to lead to the downfall of the Islamic Republic.

The revolution in Iran cannot be equated with any other; it is one of a kind. Hence the difficulty in comprehending its day-to-day development.

The Shiite clergy's rise to power is rooted in its history and ideology. Since the disappearance of the 12th Imam in the 9th century A.D., the clergy has held that no secular power in the world is legitimate or just. Justice will be restored in the Muslim community only after the end of the "Great Darkness" and the return to earth of the hidden imam. And when the legal scholars (ulemas) called for the election of a parliament at the beginning of this century, they named it the "House of Justice" (adalatkhane). Any ruler is a priori a usurper because he is taking the place of the 12th Imam, the only one capable of making himself the instrument of divine will. It is for this reason that the Shiite clergy has had a natural inclination to question the authority and conduct of the various dynasties that have ruled Persia since then and to fight the monarchy wherever it set out to open up the country to outside influences that threatened to "pervert" Islam, or went about instituting customs that ran counter to Muslim culture and its traditions. Thus, the Shiite movement has shown itself to be "anti-imperialist" in the literal sense since the beginning of the 19th century. In 1826 the ulemas declare holy war on Russia; 3 years later they are behind the assassination of the members of an official delegation from Petersburg. They succeed in rescinding the astonishing monopoly granted in 1872 to Baron Julius de Reuter over mining, timber, railroads, banks, customs duties and telegraph communications. The ban on the use of tobacco proclaimed in 1891 — a boycott that was widely supported by the people — leads to revocation of the monopoly granted the year before to a certain Mr Talbot. And when some of the clergy take an active part in the 1906 revolution aimed at installing a constitutional government, they do it not in the name of democracy — a "Western" concept that was loathsome even then — but to gain greater control over a monarchy which is supporting the European encroachment. It is for this same reason that a considerable number of the clergy, led by Ayatollah Katchani, back Mossadegh in 1951 when he nationalizes the petroleum installations belonging to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

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Legacy of Imperial Rule

Foreign domination, despotism, injustice -- the three most important targets of the clergy -- are the very same three evils under which the Iranians suffer during the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah. Land reform, as he applies it, benefits only a minority of the farmers; they, for their part, soon fall under the control of large corporations which farm on an industrial scale. The massive imports of agricultural products -- chiefly wheat from the United States -- and the lack or minimal level of protective tariffs contributes to the ruin of numerous small farmers and increases unemployment and migration from rural areas. The shah's "modernization program" very shortly enriches the members of the royal family and the court, the entrepreneurs (almost exclusively licensees of large Western firms), the major Bazaar merchants who import the spare parts and consumer goods and the speculators who are aided by an almost classic "rampant capitalism" that would be worthy of the 19th century. By contrast, suffering under this program are the small producers and the craftsmen who are pressed by the foreign competition, the workers (who are nevertheless well paid), the tremendously expanding middle classes and the millions of wage earners whose purchasing power is being eaten up by a galloping inflation rate (more than 50 percent in the last 2 years preceding the fall of the monarchy). The recession that comes to Iran in 1976 strengthens the antipathy toward the regime. The declining oil exports and increases in the cost of imported goods force the shah to make substantial cuts in the credits allocated for development measures; disillusionment follows the powerful hopes aroused by the 1973-74 oil boom. The economy measures that are decreed appear all the less justified since the shah continues to spend millions of dollars on the purchase of armaments (chiefly from the United States) which pile up in the arsenals while there is no clear idea of their actual future use.

The middle classes back a constitutional regime which is supposed to assure them the material security and political stability that is threatened by arbitrary royal power. An end to the terror perpetrated by SAVAK is demanded by the entire population. In the 37 years of Mohammad Reza Shah's rule, an estimated 500,000 people were arrested and disappeared for a short time, or for many years, in prisons or internment camps. Thousands of enemies of the regime -- or those who were considered enemies -- became the victims of special courts, executions without trials and assassination attempts; or they died as a result of the torture that was universally used.

Most Iranians were only too ready to lump together the regime that was oppressing them with the United States, which was accused of having restored the shah to the throne in 1953 and of having given him political, economic, military and police support.

It is from this angle also that the twin thrust of the insurrection of 1978-79 can be better understood, one that was directed as much against "American imperialism" as against the tyranny of Mohammad Reza Shah; the two were regarded as two sides of the same coin. Leadership of the largely spontaneous movement could very well have been assumed by Marxists or nationalists of the same cut as a Mossadegh. But repression succeeded in smashing the nonreligious groupings. The National Front was only a collection of mildly aggressive individuals who had long since lost the lustre of Mossadegh, whom they had taken as their model. The leftist parties such as the People's Mojahedin (progressive Muslims) or the People's Fedayin (Marxist-Leninists) had concentrated too much on urban guerrilla actions and had had to take

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too many losses to still be able to play a politically significant role. Then at the right moment the Shiite clergy offered leadership and organization in addition to its mobilizing ideology; this leadership and organization was to bring success to a venture that otherwise would have been doomed to failure.

The clergy plays a role in Iranian society that is not to be ignored. More so than the Sunnite sheikh who is generally appointed and paid by the state, the mullah lives off the donations of the faithful, whose prosperity, poverty, joy or sorrow he shares. The most varied issues that concern the community are discussed in the mosque or at traditional meetings in private homes, attended by the mullah; religion and politics are inseparably bound up with one another in Islam, as they are in Judaism. The mullah can thus be friend, confidant, adviser or leader to his faithful flock to whom he gives moral support in case of misfortune.

With the aid of sometimes quite substantial means (the faithful are called upon to donate up to one-fifth of their income), the clergy had established schools and social or humanitarian facilities for the needy during the shah's regime. Some clergymen criticized the social injustices, the customs, the corruption (meaning the ruling family and its American allies) and preached a return to the true Islam as the way to defend virtue and national identity from violation by Western technology. A number of clerics got to know the shah's dungeons: Suffering torture by SAVAK agents were, for example, the ayatollahs Taleghani (who died a few months ago); Muntazeri, who is considered the successor to Imam Khomeyni; and Rafsanjani, who last July was elected speaker of the parliament.

After the Imam Khomeyni had fled to the holy city of Najaf in Iraq, he continued to be a distant symbol of this diffuse resistance. The political vacuum made him by turns the standard-bearer, the catalyst and ultimately the leader of the revolution. His statements during his 15-year exile made him the embodiment of the hopes held by the most varied groups among the population. Shortly before he was expelled from Iran in 1964, he became renowned for publicly criticizing both the shah's disregard for the constitution and the granting of diplomatic status to American civilian and military advisers and their families. "They have torn our independence out by the roots," he wrote from Najaf to Prime Minister Hoveida in 1967.

This letter, which like many others was tapo-recorded, circulates in secret in the cities and the rural areas. In it the imam describes the United States as the "head of the imperialist snake"; he accuses the monopolies of "plundering" Iran's resources; he complains of the "ascendancy" of foreign capital, of the squandering of public monies on massive arms purchases. On the occasion of the spectacular festivities in Persepolis in 1971, celebrating the 2,500-year existence of the monarchy, he condemns the "shameless luxury" in which the shah and his family live. From the beginning of the popular uprising he calls upon the people to continue the struggle until Reza Shah has fallen -- without the force of arms, however, contrary to the counsel of some of his advisers. He stresses repeatedly that the Shiite faith will ultimately be victorious over brute force. His judgments prove to be substantiated: The imperial army -- whose strength is second to Israel's in the Middle East -- capitulates a year later to the "bare-handed revolutionaries" after the latter had sacrificed tens of thousands of martyrs.

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A Transition Premier

Shortly after the return of the Imam Khomeyni to Iran in February 1979, the second phase of the revolution begins — the period of "anarchy," as it is called in the West: The "holy alliance" that had been formed out of a common interest — the fall of the monarchy in this case — breaks up (a classic phenomenon that manifests itself over and over again) under the pressure of opposing forces which reflect the interests, expectations and objectives of various groups among the population. Life resumes its normal course, so to speak. The ethnic minorities of the old Persian empire — Kurds, Arabic-speaking groups, Baluchi, Turkomans — are all the more forceful in demanding the right of self-determination now that they do not belong to the Shiite community. The Marxists — orthodox communists, Maoists, Trotskyites and so forth — who had demonstrated under the green flag of Islam, Allah's name on their lips, open their own "shops" and put up the hammer and sickle. The "bourgeoisie," with its Western education, raises the banner for a secular government (separate from the Shiite clergy) by calling for the preservation of a liberal or social-democratic economic order and the establishment of a parliamentary system modeled after those of the West. The Muslims themselves split into rightist, moderate and leftist groups, each led by an ayatollah with corresponding convictions. Despite its seemingly uniform devotion to the Imam Khomeyni, the Shiite clergy is just as divided as the secular political circles of which the clergy is more or less a direct reflection.

It has frequently been written that the Imam Khomeyni is an unyielding man who, by virtue of conviction and temperament, permits no halfway measures. Had he not rejected every offer of a compromise with the shah, despite the insistence of many of his supporters? Had he not also turned down all proposals to form a government of national unity after the fall of the monarchy, a government that would have spared the economy unprofitable disruptions? However, the Imam Khomeyni does not identify himself with Iran in the same way General de Gaulle used to mistake himself for France. As head of Shiite Islam, he could not and cannot enter into any "tactical alliances" with groups which question or indeed assail the dogmas which it is his duty to defend. The "leader of the Islamic revolution" has nevertheless demonstrated many a time that he, just like any "secular" politician, is capable of resorting to political maneuvers or directly to tricks that he believes are indispensable if he is to achieve his goals in roundabout ways. The appointment on 5 February 1979 of Mehdi Bazargan as head of the Provisionary Government was perhaps one of these gambits. What else would have made the Imam Khomeyni choose a man whose ideas were so far removed from his own?

It is true that Bazargan had been incarcerated four times under the previous regime because of his opposition to the shah, and he described himself as a supporter of the man who had gone into exile in Najaf. He nevertheless did not profess to be a revolutionary. He had gone to Neauphle-le-Chateau to plead for a policy "of small steps" that also included retention of the monarchy. In other words, he pledged to follow a course also chosen by Bakhtiar, a "friend" whom he was never prepared to condemn as a "counterrevolutionary" or "traitor," by the way.

Bazargan's government is sharply conservative in tone. His ministers belong to the moderate wing of the National Front; they are Mossadegh followers who are despised by Khomeyni; they are representatives of the bourgeoisie that grew wealthy under the shah or are former members of the imperial army. As prime minister, Bazargan

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announces publicly from the very beginning his abhorrence of the institutions born of the revolution: the Islamic committees and militias as well as the revolutionary tribunals which do their best to condemn the former imperial dignitaries and SAVAK tormentors. The summary courts-martial and immediate executions are revolting to him. Bazargan is a man of order: He seeks to preserve intact the tools of the old regime -- army, police, the machinery of government -- by ordering only very minor purges so as not to rob himself of "highly esteemed and irreplaceable" cadre.

As a worthy representative of the Bazaar, the head of the Provisionary Government also does not wish to alter the foundations of the economy, and the effect is somewhat agonizing when he decrees the nationalization of the banks, insurance companies and large industrial complexes. He tries in vain to resist the "wild" occupation of large estates by farmers who own no land and the election of "workers' councils" which take over management of the factories.

Although Bazargan, who earned his engineering degree in thermodynamics from the Ecole Centrale de Paris, is a religious and practicing Muslim, he nonetheless does not share the Imam Khomeyni's view that "Islam is more important than Iran," and he deplores the insidious saturation of the government with "ignorant and arrogant" mullahs. He had voted for establishment of the "Islamic Republic," but shortly before resigning he admits to Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci that he fears a "dictatorship of the clergy." Two "capital offenses" lead to his downfall: He opposes the Islamic constitution which had been drafted by an "assembly of experts" consisting almost exclusively of clergymen, and he works to normalize relations between Iran and the United States -- the "great Satan," according to Khomeyni.

At Khomeyni's command he is forced to break off diplomatic relations with Egypt following the signing of the peace agreement between Cairo and Jerusalem. He makes virtually no protest when the shah is admitted to a New York hospital, and he does not consider it of any use to issue a public demand that the former ruler be extradited. A week later in Algeria he begins cordial talks with Brzezinski aimed among other things at the resumption of arms and spare parts deliveries for the Iranian army. Four days later this causes some 400 "Islamic students who follow the imam's line" to occupy the American embassy and take its diplomats hostage. It is in this way that the Imam Khomeyni, who had apparently been informed of the forthcoming action, had forced Bazargan to resign. Why had he waited for 9 months? Was he not aware from the beginning that his prime minister was neither a "revolutionary" nor an enemy of the "great Satan"? All indications are that the decision to install Bazargan as premier was dictated by tactical considerations. Having just returned to Iran, at this point the imam is afraid of losing control over the situation. The imperial army was apparently still intact at the time (it did not collapse until 12 February, a week after the Provisionary Government was formed), as were the police, the constabulary and the machinery of government. The Marxist parties -- most particularly the People's Fedayin -- and the People's Mojahedin were armed to the teeth and seeking to go beyond the Islamic movement, which was indeed firmly rooted among the people but had no mechanisms of any kind at its disposal (the Islamic committees and militias were not institutionalized until later). The middle classes, which were influential in the economy and the government apparatus, were threatening to lapse into a dangerous passivity or to cross over and join the camp of the National Front's moderate parties.

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Only Bazargan seemed to be in a position to counter all these impending dangers. He had the loyalty of the Muslim and relatively conservative Bazaar. The leftist groups (particularly the Mojahedin) believed they could count on his liberalism to preserve their right to exist in the young republic. A number of higher-ranking officers -- some of whom had secretly negotiated a compromise with him -- were confident that he would clear the way for a smooth transition for the army from the monarchy to the republic. By appointing Bazargan as premier, the Imam Khomeyni had wanted to gain time, time he needed if he were to be able to form a "true revolutionary government." But he had of course not given him real power: Bazargan could issue statements and protests over radio and television as often as he wished, but the important decisions were nonetheless made by the Revolutionary Council which was composed chiefly of clergymen. In his interview with Oriana Fallaci, Bazargan himself drew a very convincing picture of his situation: "They put a knife in my hand, but they only gave me the handle; others have the blade."

The Carter Government's Mistake

The taking of American diplomats as hostages in Tehran, an act which meant the end of the Bazargan government, also caused an open eruption of the latent conflict between Iran and the United States that had existed since the collapse of the monarchy. Ayatollah Khomeyni had not forgiven the seven presidents who had succeeded one another in the White House over the last 40 years for their unswerving support of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlevi who, in the eyes of most Iranians, was a bloody despot. The imam was also not prepared to forget that Carter had wanted right up to the end to save the Pahlevi dynasty. The fact that the shah was granted permission on 22 October 1979 to enter the United States had confirmed his suspicion that the American government intended to help the fallen emperor return to power. This gesture, which was termed "humanitarian" and "courageous" in the West, was viewed in Tehran as a new and intolerable provocation. Said Sadegh Ghotbzadeh: "It is as though Franco's Spain had offered right after World War II to cure Hitler of cancer." Though this caricature seems excessive, it nevertheless illustrated the disillusionment and wrath of the Iranian people as well as the deeper motivations underlying the revolution.

It is the opinion of many observers that the Carter government made the same mistake before as well as after the hostage drama: It believed it could settle the Iranian-American conflict by negotiating with the moderate leaders in Tehran; first with Bazargan and his ministers, and later with President Bani-Sadr and Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh. Washington thought it had chosen the most practicable route; in reality, however, it was blocked. The new head of government and his foreign minister did indeed disapprove of the Islamic students' occupation of the American embassy and would like to have pushed for a normalization of relations with the United States. But these very same good intentions cost them the credit they had enjoyed with the Imam Khomeyni and at the same time weakened their position vis-a-vis their opponents, especially among the clergy.

The American government could still ultimately have bet successfully on the "moderates" if it had been prepared to grant them adequate concessions that would have given them credibility with the Iranian public. President Bani-Sadr had refrained from calling for extradition of the shah; in return, however, he did demand that the United States admit its complicity in the crimes committed by the shah and that it stop its more interfering in Iran's internal affairs. Had it been accepted, the

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offer — which is essentially no different from the one made in September by the Imam Khomeyni himself — could have been at least the beginning of a dialog if not a basis for negotiation. But President Carter did not want even to dissociate himself from the coup d'etat with which the CIA had helped Reza Shah regain power in 1953. If it is true that a great power cannot afford "to humble itself," then one must ask why the United States was seeking to negotiate a compromise which it could logically not conclude without accepting the minimum demands of the other side. Was it hoping to be able to free the hostages without giving something in return?

Frequently offered as an explanation for the failure to reach a satisfactory solution is that the multiplicity of centers of power in Tehran made a genuine dialog impossible. If that is truly the case, however, why were negotiations begun with only one of the existing groups without waiting until the internal struggles had been brought to an end by the installation of a homogeneous and responsible government? It appears that the cautious stance that has been adopted by the United States since May — when its Tabas expedition failed — is the product of a realization that could have been substantiated as long ago as November: The takeover of the American embassy by Islamic students was at least just as much a domestic political maneuver — if not more so — as it was a maneuver directed against the United States.

After the popular uprising against imperial rule and the establishment of the Islamic Republic led by a Provisionary Government, Bazargan's resignation initiated the third phase of the revolution — following the hostage-taking, the Imam Khomeyni declares it the "second revolution." To be sure, the patriarch of Qom quite apparently was of the opinion that his loyal prime minister had served his purpose: The imperial army, which had meanwhile been relieved of its leaders and purged — no longer posed a threat to the republic; the upper-middle class had been dislodged from its positions of economic power by a variety of measures, including massive nationalizations. It remained only to neutralize the representatives of the middle classes, the moderate nationalists, who were characterized in popular slogans as "Westernized liberals" who were prepared "to come to terms with imperialism."

Charged with the task of driving out this new enemy were the Islamic students. They were enjoying a double helping of popularity in the land at that time: They had challenged mighty America — a role that was elevated still more by virtue of the importance ascribed to them by the mass media and the government in the United States — and, moreover, they were representing themselves as the conscience as well as the instrument of the revolutionary movement. They were now in a position — under the unobtrusive leadership of the Imam Khomeyni — to proceed gradually to eliminate the opponents of the Islamic regime which they were trying to consolidate.

With the aid of more or less unequivocal documents — which were only all the more impressive in that they had come from the secret files of the American embassy — the Islamic students were now in a position to discredit or have arrested a great number of parties and politicians that were considered pro-Western in the context of the Islamic revolution. Amir Entezan, vice-premier under Bazargan and then ambassador in Stockholm, is seized as an "agent of the CIA." Accused of the same monstrous deed, Hasan Nazieh, former director of the NIOC (National Iranian Oil Company), and Rahmatollah Moqaddam-Maraghi, head of the small Radical Party, were forced to leave the country; both of these had supported — if not instigated — the Tabriz uprising in December 1979. Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, a rightist liberal in

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whose name the rebellion in Azerbaijan took place, was silenced when "compromising documents" made the rounds mysteriously in Tehran. The Republican Party, headed by Madari's son, had to close its doors after dozens of its members were shot to death or arrested. Several elected deputies were relieved of their positions with the help of documents that were similarly found in the American embassy; these documents made it possible to accuse the deputies of "intelligence connections with the enemy." Removed from the political scene in this manner were men like Khosrow Qashqai, chief of the tribe of the same name, and Admiral Ahmad Madani, a moderate who had received 2 million votes in the elections of last January.

The list of the Islamic students' victims, too long to name each one separately, testifies to the important role of these students in the "second revolution" and proves that the efforts by President Carter and Bani-Sadr to end the occupation of the American embassy in Tehran were premature.

The Rift Widens

In terms of domestic politics, the hostage drama very soon proves to be the point on which the right and the left agree the least: Those who support the Islamic students are among the "good guys" who are against imperialism and in favor of the revolution; all others are counted among the "bad guys" and can be stamped as pro-Western counterrevolutionaries. It is for this reason that since then there have been only a few who have dared speak out publicly against the embassy takeover. It is true that the People's Mojahedin — which actually would have preferred the formal cancellation of the circa 900 agreements and treaties which, as they say, still link Iran with the United States — applauded the events of 4 November 1979, but they then became more and more vehement in their criticism of the conduct of the Islamic revolution.

After some very conspicuous hesitation by the People's Fedayin, who in the first months of the revolution had ridiculed the Imam Khomeyni's superficial anti-imperialism, they positioned themselves on the side of the occupiers of the embassy. Most of the moderate parties and politicians either said nothing at all or took a position that was sufficiently fuzzy to protect them from the reproach of having defended the United States. Since 6 November, only Bani-Sadr has had the courage — or the imprudence — to make it known and to repeat at every opportunity that he disapproves of the hostage-taking on the grounds of Islamic morality and in the interests of the revolution.

Paradoxically enough, Bani-Sadr is pursuing a policy that is not unlike the one which was Bazargan's undoing and for which he was most violently attacked by Bani-Sadr while he was still leading the Provisionary Government. He thus offered an open flank to his opponents — mainly the Islamic Republican Party led by Ayatollah Beheshti — and they very quickly placed him in the less than honorable camp of the "liberals." They of course reproached him for his conciliatory attitude toward the United States, but also for his "illusions" about possible close cooperation between Iran on the one hand and Europe and Japan on the other. Even his emphatic condemnation of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was considered suspect — even though this was completely in line with the militant clergy's dogma of "neither East nor West." Was he not perhaps attempting in this way to justify a normalization with the West as imperative in order to better avert the impending danger from the East?

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In terms of domestic policy Bani-Sadr proved to be a man of order — like Bazargan. On the day after his election as president of the republic on 25 January 1980, he announced that he would be disbanding the Islamic committees and the "protectors of the revolution" (Republic militias) as soon as he had reorganized the armed forces, the constabulary and the police. Two weeks later he ordered the release of Minachi, the nationally oriented minister who had been arrested as an "agent of the CIA" at the demand of the Islamic students. In the ensuing period Bani-Sadr tried, although in vain, to protect other moderates — Admiral Ahmad Madani, for example, and Khosrow Qashqa'i, chief of the Qashqa'i tribe. As an opponent in principle of political force, he remarked on 27 July: "Denunciations, vilifications, torture, violence, massacres and prisons are nothing but the marks of a Stalinist society."

Bani-Sadr -- a good Muslim, but, like Bazargan, influenced by French thought -- has mixed emotions about the Shiite clergy. In the "assembly of experts" that was charged with writing a new constitution, he surprised friend and foe by coming out strongly against the proposal to grant comprehensive powers to the Faqih [religious guardian-jurisprudent -- or the Imam Khomeyni]. Although he repeatedly denied it, he was ultimately accused of having abstained from voting on the constitutional article concerning the rights of the faqih even though these rights had already been reduced in comparison with the original draft. No matter whether he did or not, Bani-Sadr spoke out unequivocally in favor of a separation of powers, of noninterference by the clergy in affairs of state, and he went so far as to poke fun at the "Richelieu and Mazarin who populate Iran's political scene." After his election as president of the republic, he remarked that he "owed his victory to the people," and only then did he add that he also thanked "the lower levels among the clergy for their support." It was his view that the higher-ranking clergymen had supported the Islamic Republican Party of the Ayatollah Beheshti, whose political "demise" he prophesied upon assuming the highest office.

Bani-Sadr's optimism at that time was not unfounded. The Ayatollah Beheshti had just had to endure three substantial setbacks: He had intended to be a candidate for the presidency, but the Imam Khomeyni had decided that no spiritual leader should run for this office; he then proposed Jalaledin Farsi as a candidate, but his Afghan origins ruled him out; he finally supported the candidacy of Hasan Habibi, who received only 10 percent of the vote, while Bani-Sadr garnered 70 percent. He thus believed in January that the party had made a final decision in his favor. He asked the Imam Khomeyni for permission to form a second provisional government for the period preceding the elections. This would have given him the opportunity to get out from under the control of the Revolutionary Council, the majority of which was composed of friends of the Ayatollah Beheshti, and to implement political and economic reforms of his own choosing.

But the Imam Khomeyni refused his request, and Bani-Sadr had to be content with the meagre "privilege" of chairing the meetings of the Revolutionary Council, which was controlled by his principal foe. The chairman of the Islamic Republican Party took advantage of this opportunity to dash the initiatives of the president of the republic as often as possible and lay the foundations for his own power. He arranged (in March 1980) for his party to be awarded a majority of the seats in parliament and had himself appointed president of the Supreme Court. Once he had thus gained control over the judiciary and legislative branches, he also set out to acquire executive power with his demand that the candidate for the chairmanship of the

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Revolutionary Council be required to have the prior approval of his party; he would thus have reduced the role of president to that of a figurehead.

Bani-Sadr resisted on every point. He challenged the results of the parliamentary elections; the Imam Khomeyni held them to be "fair." He spoke out against renewed purges in the government and in the various organizations assigned to keep order -- the purges having been demanded by the Islamic Republican Party -- but he was forced to give in when the imam called for a "cultural revolution" which the state would use to rid itself of "counterrevolutionaries" and "Westernized liberals." In any event, after the American expedition near Tabas on 25 April 1980, a radicalization of the Islamic Republic could no longer be avoided. This operation had illustrated the inaction, or -- as was maintained -- even the complicity, of a part of the armed forces. In the first 6 weeks following the Tabas operation, seven different conspiracies were uncovered, several hundred officers arrested and a few dozen executed.

Main Problems and Economic Difficulties

The dangers that hovered over the Islamic Republic in this fall season (1980) were no figments of the imagination but were just as real as the general worsening of the political, economic and social situation. In chance encounters, journalists came to hear only complaints from all segments of the population -- from the affluent as well as the poor, in the city as well as the rural areas. The new agrarian reform decreed in the winter of 1979 had not yet been started in several parts of the country. Government investments have declined by 20 percent in agriculture and 50 percent in industry as compared to those for the year before the revolution. Without capital aid, spare parts (a consequence of the Western embargo) and capable leaders, the enterprises of the public sector are operating at only 50 percent of their capacity at best, and most of them have substantial deficits.

The exact unemployment figure is not known. It is estimated at between 2 and 4 million out of 11.5 million people of working age. The state provides about 800,000 of the unemployed with a paltry contribution to their livelihood; the others live by doing odd jobs or are supported by relatives. The rate of inflation -- between 25 and 30 percent -- is already higher than that which had set the middle classes against the shah; it amounts to more than 50 percent for the "market basket" of the "middle-class household." Rents, which had declined considerably after the fall of the monarchy, have rebounded in Tehran today almost to the 1977-78 level. There have been sharp price increases for some foodstuffs -- fresh vegetables, flour, meat and fruit.

The increased living costs hit the middle classes harder than others because of their consumption habits. Salaried employees and wage earners as well as government workers (1.4 million people, including the armed forces) are seeing a substantial decline in their purchasing power, not only as a result of inflation but also of the 50-percent cutback in the upper salary levels, the elimination of overtime and diverse payments-in-kind -- all of which are measures taken for reasons of economy or uniformity. Since the curbing of oil exports, the state has actually been running a deficit. State revenues -- officially estimated at \$ 21 billion this year -- are not even enough to pay government salaries. Since the state could not export more (fuel), it finally had to obtain loans or tap its reserves, which had shrunk to about \$ 7 billion after Iran's assets (circa \$ 8 billion) in American accounts had been frozen.

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Thus, the economic situation had clearly worsened since the fall of the Bazargan government despite Khomeyni's immediate order to the authorities to see "to the welfare of the mostaz'efin [the oppressed]. The imam had thought it better not to appoint a new government, thus giving a free hand to the Revolutionary Council and the high-level clerical dignitaries who enjoyed his confidence. Mullahs were being appointed everywhere now and given the task of keeping tabs on those in responsible positions who were not of the clergy: in the armed forces, the police, the large industrial enterprises and virtually all ministries. Anarchy thereby grew worse, and "no one obeyed anyone anymore" -- as a highly placed individual told us.

The machinery of government was virtually crippled as a result of the intentional or unintentional inaction on the part of government employees, many of whom doubtless wanted to undermine the regime. Strikes occurred with increasing frequency in the enterprises and the civil service. Interruptions in the electricity and water supply caused trouble every day for the residents of Tehran and other cities. The pasdaran (Islamic militiamen), who came under a number of different decisionmaking centers, acted only too often at their own discretion. Certain army units refused to fight the Kurdish rebels. During the summer the state found itself in a condition of progressive dissolution, while at the same time a number of military conspiracies with links to political circles were discovered. The most serious consideration, however, was that the public's dissatisfaction was threatening to direct itself against the clergy as a whole, which was being held responsible for the worsening of the situation. This makes it easier to understand what the Imam Khomeyni meant when he announced: "Not a single one of the present ministers is revolutionary (...) and if the next government resembles our present one, we can begin the funeral rites for the Islamic Republic, because we shall have been defeated." Moreover, one understands the significance of the massive purges, the arrests, the mass executions, the attacks on the offices of rightist as well as leftist political parties -- in other words, of those who could have profited from the collapse of the Islamic Republic.

The moderate nationalists, the main target of the "cultural revolution" that was initiated in July, were considered the greatest threat. In fact, their influence extends to the economic centers, the machinery of government, the armed forces and the universities, the character of which is marked on the whole by the "Westernized" cadre whose traditional origins lie in the middle classes, people who are very much opposed to the power of the clergy and economic and social reforms. This influence is indeed present all over the country, but it is concentrated chiefly with the opposition groups that have emigrated abroad, some of which have also found refuge in Iraq. The people listen frequently to the two radio programs broadcast daily from Iraqi soil by a "clandestine transmitter," one of the broadcasts in the name of General Oveissi, the other in the name of Shapur Bakhtiar. It is an open secret that these two men, like some others, maintain regular contact with individual ethnic groups as well as with civilian and military circles in Iran; under more favorable conditions, these groups could bring the regime down.

At least for the foreseeable future, this does not apply to the left despite the considerable progress it has managed to make in recent months. In contrast to the right, its social base is relatively narrow. Until evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, the Islamic movement personified by the Imam Khomeyni has not lost the support of the lowest levels among the population, even though they have experienced

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many disappointments and frustrations since the founding of the Islamic Republic. The workers have not forgotten that their wages have in many cases doubled since the revolution. The farmers are receiving generous subsidies -- they average 50 percent more than during the shah's regime -- and the farmers who own no land have not yet given up hope of profiting from later agrarian reforms. The abundant rainfall in the winter and spring will cause harvest yields to be an estimated 20 percent to 30 percent larger than last year's. Moreover, the "mostaz'efin" have the feeling of living in "their" own republic and under the protection of the Imam Khomeyni.

Nevertheless, the People's Mojahedin, a Moslem movement with a very radical ideology, was able within a few months to evolve into a party of the masses, one which the Imam Khomeyni seems to fear most especially, as can be deduced from his condemnation of the "Islam-Marxists." In June the leader of this movement, Masoud Rajavi, brought together in Tehran 150,000 members and supporters at a public rally that had not even been announced by the press. The Mojahedin have a good reputation because, for one thing, they had carried on an armed struggle against the imperial government and, for another, they unmistakably place themselves on the side of the unprotected. However, their opportunities for action are limited at the moment by reason of the youth and inexperience of their leaders as well as political mistakes they have made.

Party Without a Program

The communist Tudeh Party has a significantly smaller organization and following, but its influence has proven to be significantly more decisive on various occasions. Its cadre -- largely trained in the East bloc countries -- are of high quality. They are brilliantly informed regarding the international situation and are capable of marking out a clear strategy and tactics which they put into practice with astonishing discipline. For instance, they made use of the anti-American wave spilling over Iran to make friends and allies reaching all the way into the clergy, even though the latter remains extremely suspicious of them. It is a conspicuous fact that the Imam Khomeyni has never attacked the Tudeh by name. When he condemns the communists, whom he describes on occasion as the "American left," he mainly has his eye on the People's Fedayin (Marxists-Leninists) who had taken up arms against the government in Kurdistan and elsewhere. His obvious forbearance with the orthodox communists is explicable for at least three reasons: They have always supported him since he went into exile in 1964 (using their "clandestine transmitter" probably located in the GDR, they regularly broadcast his statements that were recorded in the Iraqi city of Najaf); like Khomeyni himself, they are resolved "to pull American imperialism out by the roots in Iran"; and they offer support for the defense and consolidation of the Islamic Republic.

Events that took place last June have expanded their room to maneuver: These events involve differences of opinion that gradually separated the People's Fedayin and the Kurdish Democratic Party. The majority of the Fedayin leadership decided after long and arduous debate to adopt an "anti-imperialist" policy that is virtually identical to that of the Tudeh. The same thing took place within the Kurdish Democratic Party, where a minority split with the majority led by Abdel Rahman Ghassemlu and accused the majority of cooperating with Iraq and NATO. These two divisions have de facto increased the moral authority of the Tudeh and consequently also multiplied its negotiating trump cards.

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It is indisputable that the Imam Khomeyni intends under no circumstances to be dependent upon a non-Islamic group, certainly not one which takes Marxism as its authority.

His actions since the beginnings of his struggle indicate that he intends to reserve the power monopoly for the "true Muslims." The only question is whether he will be able to achieve this end. The Islamic Republican Party, upon which he apparently intends to rely, is not a structured party of the masses but is more of a collection of individuals from the spiritual and secular worlds as well as different -- even conflicting -- groupings and trends. It is for this reason that the party of Ayatollah Beheshti was unable at any point to provide itself with a political, economic and social program such as is indispensable for a ruling party. Above all, it cannot fall back on a sufficient number of cadre which could be used to help run the government. The Iranian intelligentsia, which from the very beginning had adopted a negative or hostile stance toward the Islamic regime, belongs in part to the liberal right and in part to the (Marxist or non-Marxist) left. In the event that there is no spectacular about-face, the Imam Khomeyni will not bring either one of these two political currents into the government. The path which he has chosen will undoubtedly be a long and difficult one to follow because it is fraught with pitfalls; and given the present balance of forces, it threatens to lead to catastrophe.

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SUDAN

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ELECTIONS PASS PEACEFULLY

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Nov 80 pp 19-20

[Text]

Readers of Sudanow will be aware of the political tensions in our university system (Current affairs, May). The unseemly disputes of the last academic year, which culminated in the tragically unnecessary death of a University of Khartoum student, introduced an unpleasant air of suspense to the opening of the new academic term. The recent student-body election at Omdurman Islamic University was thought to be a possible occasion for the resumption of violence. In fact, however, it passed off peacefully, notwithstanding an unlooked-for reversal of fortunes for the hitherto dominant faction of the Muslim Brothers. Azhari Abdel Rahman reports.

THE MUSLIM BROTHERS (MB), which had dominated the Omdurman Islamic University students' union since its establishment in 1967, last month failed to place a single nominee on the thirty member union council. Of the 1042 male students 901 exercised their right to vote and unexpectedly gave a newly formed coalition, the Forces of Islamic Solidarity (FIS), all thirty of the council's seats.

The FIS, sole opponent of the MB in the October election, was formed in September as a coalition of the Association of Independent Students, the Ansar, the Democratic Unionists and the Islamic Revival Committee. Although directing its adherents to vote for the FIS slate of candidates, the Islamic Revival Committee, a newly formed group composed of different Sufi tariqas (sects), did not have any representatives standing for election. The new union council is thus composed of independents, including its president Hussein Salih

Khaddam, Unionists and Ansar, in a ratio of 16:7:7. Although this balance was politically designed, posts in the ten man executive committee (4:3:3) were allegedly filled solely on the basis of personal qualification. The FIS has itself formed a coordinating committee to guide the activities of the Front and its components.

The margin of FIS' victory was substantial, with its leading candidate receiving 519 votes compared to the 427 votes received by the leading MB candidate. Most of the FIS' votes came from the 397 students of the Arts faculty. Support for the MB primarily came from the three departments of the faculty of Islamic Studies, which numbers 245 students, most of whom are admitted from religious institutes (Ma'ahid). As well, the MB received very strong support from the 115 male scholarship students from other Islamic countries. Mohamed Hussein el Managra, the Syrian ex-president of their association, told *Sudanow* that they used to remain neutral in Sudanese affairs but, after analysing the situation, decided to support the MB. These foreign students represent 23 nationalities and have arrived at the University through two channels: either state to state scholarships offered through the National Council for Higher Education or through scholarships offered by the University to Islamic groups around the world.

Several explanations have been offered for the unprecedented transformation of the University's student council. Abdel Fatah Farah, leading MB proponent, argued that such a shift of popular support was, at some point along the line,

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inevitable in view of the 13 years of MB dominance. This view was supported by Dr Abdel Aziz Mohamed Osman, dean of student affairs, who observed that, 'A trend for change is a characteristic of any collection of students.'

Dr Abdel Aziz went on, however, to suggest a further, more specific factor - the MB rejection of a role for regional students' associations. These associations, which unite students from a particular region, first appeared on the University of Khartoum campus, spreading thereafter to other universities and institutes of higher learning. The MB staffed student council at Omdurman Islamic University refused to officially recognise or deal with these associations.

A final factor in the outcome of the election was the students' unrequited desire for various administrative and academic changes. For the past two years both staff and students have been pressing for changes in the curriculum and the teaching system, but despite separate staff and student conferences, which forwarded various recommendations, no substantial changes have thus far been effected.

There were few *apparent* differences of opinion between the MB and FIS slates. The FIS programme, for example, was silent on the issue of the formal separation of the sexes at the University, an arrangement endorsed by the MB. In the recent staff and student conferences the view was expressed that effective academic reform requires mixed studies. Thus far, however, this demand has not been backed by any of the officially recognised student groupings. Abdel Bagi Ahmed, a MB adherent, denied that there was any significant difference regarding the religious point of view and argued that the contest had been conducted around the details of the functioning of the student union. In general FIS supporters concurred in this assessment, stressing that their approach might be called 'trade unionist' rather than 'political'. The FIS sees itself as a front embracing the forces that are fighting for the University and its students within the framework of the Islamic faith. Its programme mentioned politics only in the most general way, arguing that the union would participate in national activities that promoted the Sudanese identity and Islam. Otherwise

the programme speaks only of furthering the social, intellectual, and academic standards of the University.

There are, however, underlying political differences which might, in unfortunate circumstances, tie-in with differences between political forces at the national level. The October election, for example, was the first to be held since the banning (for alleged 'anti-Islamic activities') of the Democratic Front and the Students' Struggle Front, a coalition of Nasserites and Baathists. This ban was not challenged by the FIS, nor raised in any form during the election campaigning, but it is thought likely by both Abdel Fatah Farah and Hussein Salih Khaddam that the former supporters of these groups voted for the FIS.

Furthermore the MB charge that the FIS is composed of groups which are opposed to the government's national reconciliation initiative and that some of the FIS' electoral slogans hinted at

objections, if not opposition, to the government. They go on to raise suspicions about the external-to-the-University source of the FIS' financial support, arguing that a coalition composed of such different groupings could not have reconciled their differences except under external pressure. This charge seems to have no further substance than the suddenness with which the FIS formed and the success with which it campaigned.

The MB, however, do not think that the union will be transformed into an opposition front since the FIS' programme is resolutely inclined toward student affairs rather than politics. Dr Abdel Aziz shares this judgement. Indeed such a transformation would seem ruled out not only by the leading role of the independent forces, but also by the sharp differences between Unionists and Ansar. Furthermore, since any eruption of internal FIS differences would likely return the students' council to MB control, such a dramatic alteration of FIS purpose would appear unlikely.

Naturally Hussein Salih Khaddam rejected these MB allegations. Indeed according to the FIS the real threat of an unwarranted injection of politics into the University system arises from the presence of the MB faction on campus, since

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— it is claimed — this group is subordinate to the national MB leadership and the latter has in the past exploited its student contingents to further its own interests.

The possibility of unpleasant disruption remains. Khaddam expressed the view that the events of the University of Khartoum would not be duplicated on the Omdurman Islamic University campus because there was agreement between the FIS and the MB on the constitutional procedure applicable to student elections. MB leaders acknowledged that there was this constitutional agreement but argued that this was not necessarily the real source of trouble, noting that the components of the Proportional Representation Forces of the University of Khartoum are (excepting the banned Democratic Front and the Students' Struggle Front) the same as those of the FIS. It will thus be some time before we know whether this election heralds a new era or merely another round of battle. ■

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SUDAN

PARALLEL MARKET REGULATIONS HELP IMPROVE ECONOMY

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Nov 80 p 29

[Text]

Almost one year to the day from the introduction of the parallel market rate, at which the Sudanese pound exchanges at 80 pt per US dollar rather than at the 50 pt of the official exchange rate, Minister of Finance and National Economy Badr el Din Suleiman announced that all exports except cotton and all imports except wheat, flour, petroleum and its refined products, sugar, drugs, and powdered milk, had been transferred to the parallel rate of exchange. This alteration follows, by two months, the Minister's budget speech (Current, June), in which he mentioned that the parallel market would be consolidated, and means that 64% of all exports and 56% of all imports are now channelled through the parallel market. Alfred Lognie Taban reports:

WE WANT to correct certain ills, like inflation in our economy. We want to balance the quantity of money with the quantity of goods, so that prices don't rise because too much money is chasing after too few goods. By transferring most imported goods to the parallel market we are making the dollar more expensive, even for the government, and thereby withdrawing excess money from an economy with too few available goods,' was the explanation offered by Agil M. Abdel Manan, deputy under-secretary of the Ministry of Finance and National Economy.

'The rate of exchange should be determined by our rate of productivity. With our low productivity we should have had a high rate of exchange. This didn't happen because the rate was artificially fixed. The fact is, the parallel market matches our low productivity,' Mr Agil continued.

Explaining the advantages of transferring all exports except cotton to the parallel rate, Kornelio Koriom, deputy director of the foreign exchange control department of the Bank of Sudan, said: 'This is an encouragement to producers and exporters because they will have a 60% increase in revenue in the parallel market. We hope that this will boost production.'

In fact, things are not quite so simple: for example, the government has imposed an export tax which will claw back some of the financial advantages that exporters will derive from this expansion of coverage of the parallel rate. Responding to this point, Mr Agil observed, 'The export tax was created so that exporters do not realise sudden windfall profits, thereby inflating the economy and undermining our efforts to control the money supply. But the export tax is small, as compared to the benefits to them under the parallel rate: the tax may absorb 20-30% while the increase in revenue will be about 60%.'

The original purpose of the parallel rate is a matter of dispute. An official of the Bank of Sudan offered the view that, 'The measure amounted to nothing but a devaluation of the Sudanese pound. The government did not want to admit this because it would be politically dangerous to devalue a currency twice in the same year.' Two months prior to the September 1979 creation of the parallel rate the government had devalued the pound 20%.

The government, though acknowledging the devaluing effect of its policy, argues that its purpose was to improve Sudan's balance of payments deficit. And, indeed in the first year of the operation of this policy Sudan's reserve credit rose to \$84

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million as compared to the \$6 million of the previous 12 months. Unfortunately, however, no such level of improvement has been registered in the current and trade accounts deficits. The current account deficit rose from Ls8.8m in 1976/77 to Ls133.8m in 1979/80, while the trade account fell from Ls8.2m surplus to Ls199.3m deficit in the same period. Moreover, in this year our balance of payments deficit actually worsened: from \$675m to a projected \$1b.

However, the parallel rate has been credited with creating an atmosphere of confidence among Sudanese working abroad as evidenced in the \$74m they have remitted. In total, \$329m was invested in the parallel rate in the first year of its operation.

Once again, however, the benefits bring in their wake corollary alterations which are less advantageous, like an increase in domestic prices. 'Since the dollar is now very expensive because of the parallel rate, so too have imports become more expensive,' noted one banker. Ministry officials insist, however, that this rise will be temporary. 'Prices will rise for awhile,' Mr Agil claimed, 'but as more goods reach the market and find less money, they will gradually decline.'

Indeed the Minister has already claimed success in reducing inflation rates: 'Sudan has scored tangible success in fighting inflation. During the period January-May

1979 the rate of inflation was 33.6%, while during the same period this year the rate dropped to 4.6%.' These figures, however, are subject to dispute since, as an inspector of statistics in the Ministry acknowledged, the former figure is a 12 month average while the latter is applicable to only a brief five month period. The Ministry insists that its argument is valid and that only the prices of clothes and footwear have risen sharply, while those of food and drinks have remained more or less stable.

The government appears determined to see the parallel market take hold and succeed. Although it provides subsidies only for those imported goods on the official rate of exchange, thereby shifting the financial burden of the parallel rate to commercial banks and the black-market, the Bank of Sudan has put more than \$30m into circulation in order to support the commercial banks' resources, so as to meet the citizenry's requirements for imported commodities and the demand for equipment and spare parts made by local industry.

The parallel rate can serve many purposes, from curtailing inflation to consolidating rates of exchange (and thereby taking a step towards ending the black-market for financial transactions). In the final analysis, however, only a substantial increase in the productivity of labour and capital investment can turn Sudan's economy around. ■

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SUDAN

LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENT UNDERWAY AT PORT SUDAN

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Nov 80 pp 38-39

[Text]

All of the goods that travel to and from Sudan by sea are handled at Sudan's only port, aptly named Port Sudan. The port is currently undergoing a 'redevelopment programme' under which it should achieve the capacity to handle the growing volume of imports and exports which is expected to increase sharply in the next six years.

The programme, which is broken into three stages, will, among other things, quadruple the port's handling capacity and in the hopes of many, lessen the bottlenecks often experienced at the port. Also in the plans is the revitalisation of Suakin. Mustafa el Sunni reports:

SUDAN'S ONE and only port, Port Sudan is undergoing redevelopment so that it might be brought into line with international standards.

The process was initiated in May of 1978 as part of a three-tiered development scheme inaugurated by the winners of the tender for Stage One, the British company Marples and Ridgeway.

The firm will modernise berths 17 and 18, increasing their capacity of vessel acceptance to 50,000 tonnes. The berths will also be able to handle container ships. Marples and Ridgeway will alter the construction of berth 16 so that roll-on/roll-off vessels might be introduced. Also included in Stage One are the construction of two wharf faces, roads, an oil terminal and a container-park.

Marples and Ridgeway, whose work is well under way, has imported the equipment and machinery for all phases of Stage One. The firm estimates that this first stage of the redevelopment process will be completed by 1981.

The system of transporting goods from the docks by rail has been one of the primary reasons for the bottlenecks for which Port Sudan is famous. This system consumes great amounts of both space and time. Cumbersome railway tracks are being uprooted and replaced by asphalt roads to ease the movement and clearance of goods from the port's docks.

In its present stage, Port Sudan is incapable of meeting the demands generated by economic development throughout the country. The completion of Stage One is expected to increase the port's capacity to deal with the production increases expected over the next six years. After the port has been modernised and expanded, its handling capacity should be increased to some 13 million tonnes per year from its present capacity of 3.8 million tonnes per year.

The purpose of Stage One is to reorganise the port by maximising the potential of existing facilities and to introduce modern mechanical cargo-handling equipment. A personnel training centre is to be established so that employees can be trained to handle the new equipment and properly manage port operations.

'If this modification is completed, there will be no delay for incoming and outgoing vessels, and goods can be handled quickly,' asserted Dirdiri el Sawi, head of the new Projects Department of the Sea Ports Corporation.

Other benefits are included in Stage One: if a grant from Germany receives final approval, work will begin on a hospital, several pharmacies and a social centre.

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Local financing for Stage One amounts to some £8 million, and is complemented by a \$22 million loan from the World Bank which, along with other financial institutions, is considering financing Stage Two. West Germany contributed with an 88 000 DM technical aid grant in 1977/78 and a commodity exchange loan totalling one million DM. An additional one million DM in West German aid was granted for the cost of tugs and is now being applied towards the cost of two cranes imported from West

Germany and currently in use at the port.

Some £5.7 million was put into the project by the British Overseas Development Ministry. The money is to be allocated towards the promotion of the shunting operation at the port and for miscellaneous equipment.

Consultants for the overall development programme, Liversy & Henderson, completed a traffic forecast in 1977 and submitted the development plan which extends throughout the year 2000. The Projects Department of the Sea Ports Corporation and Liversy & Henderson began working together in late 1975 and L & H continues to supply the projects department with experts and handle all of the consultancies.

Stage Two of the redevelopment plan is an extension of the first stage. However, it includes further construction - three new berths at numbers 12, 13 and 14 and new wharf faces on berths 17 and 18 - that will give the port access to even larger vessels than covered by Stage One. Stage Two also covers the construction of all civil works - for example, offices and roads - and includes the provisions for a generator. The generator should, along with the replacement of railway tracks by roads, make a great contribution towards increasing the efficiency and productivity of the port.

The port's grain stores will be expanded from the present holding capacity of 25,000 tonnes to 100,000 tonnes. The provisions of Stage Two also allow for the establishment of the headquarters of the Sea Ports Corporation at the port, where it will move from its present offices in Khartoum.

The third and final stage of the project has been set aside for the completion of all phases initiated during the first and second stages.

At present, Port Sudan has sufficient facilities to assist vessels entering and leaving the port. The port maintains rescue and fire services and the entire port has access to clean drinking water, which is supplied to all vessels in the port by launches with capacities of some 150 tonnes.

A total of 7,322 vessels passed through the port between 1972 and 1979, while some 207,599,967 million tonnes of imported goods were handled from 1970 through 1979. Exports during the same period amounted to 10,237,086 tonnes. A financial push has been aimed at the port with the approval of a new tariff in February and an April decision to accept ships' duties in hard currency.

Not wishing to put all of its eggs in one basket, the Sea Ports Corporation is also pursuing plans to revive the old port at Suakin. Based on the conclusions of a half-million dollar EEC-financed feasibility study, authorities estimate that Suakin could be expanded to an export capacity of one million tonnes per year.

Other plans for Suakin include its functioning as a floating dockyard for the maintaining and serving of vessels in port. The abundant supply of fish in the area increases further the scope of possibility for the now defunct port.

Once Suakin is operating, it will be used specifically for vessels coming from the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Work is scheduled to begin immediately following the announcement of the winner of the tender, but will obviously not be completed for some time. ■

Milked for what it's worth

DAILY DAIRY PRODUCTION in Khartoum may soon increase as a result of the expansion in size and an improvement of equipment at the Kuku Cooperative Dairy. With the addition of 1036 feddans to its present utilized area of 2000 feddans and with almost \$1 million from a Saudi Arabian grant to spend on new boilers, spare parts, a can-washing machine and a stand-by generator, the

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hope is that the cooperative can overcome the problems of out-of-date equipment and inadequate administrative supervision.

The Kuku project, originally financed by American aid, opened its doors in 1962. For the first two years of its operation it was administered by American personnel. 'This was the golden era for the project,' according to Mr Mohamed el Fateh of the Public Corporation for Animal Production, which now administers the cooperative. Following the departure of the American administrators the project rapidly deteriorated. At present, for example, very little butter or cheese is produced and much of the milk is lost because the cooperative's machinery is 20 years old.

The project's reorganisation began in 1972 when Saudi Arabia loaned \$5 million through the agency of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. Crucial to the present stage of reorganisation is the expansion of the cooperative's staff of technicians. Since 1962 only four trained technicians have worked at Kuku. Project management intends to expand training, both locally and abroad; some trainees, for example, will be sent to Kenya and Finland for advanced courses.

To improve its financial base, the cooperative has initiated negotiations with the Sudan Development Corporation in order to form a milk reconstitution unit. This unit would utilise powdered milk - donated by the UN for purposes of disaster-relief - to raise the capital's consumption level.

Also in need of improvement is the administration of the cooperative's farmers, formerly Batahin nomads who are now settled as commercial peasants. Each of the cooperative's farmers is given 10 feddans and 12 cows. Daily per cow production is supposed to be 20 pounds but because farmers have raised their herd sizes to as many as 70 head, without a commensurate increase in grazing area or fodder, per cow production has dropped to 10 pounds a day. The milk is collected from the farmers and prepared and packaged in a nearby laboratory. Returns from sales are distributed twice monthly to each farmer according to the level of production.

At present Khartoum's daily milk consumption is about 225,000 *rottil*, of which Kuku contributes about 30,000. It is hoped that this figure will more than double as the Saudi-financed reorganisation takes hold.

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SUDAN

ROAD CONSTRUCTION MOVES FORWARD AT BRISK PACE

Khartoum SUDANOW in English Nov 80 pp 9-13

[Text]

In a country of Sudan's size, what is the best way to transport goods, by road or rail? Sudan has recently embarked on a massive road-construction programme, the first stage of which was opened by the First Vice President early last month. So far the programme is progressing ahead of schedule, but some questions still remain about the feasibility of the project. Are roads really better for the country than railways? How much money is being spent? Who is planning them? Berhane Woldegabriel investigates.

THE LAST SECTION to be completed of the 1,200 kilometre Khartoum-Port Sudan highway — the 350 kilometre Kassala-Haiya stretch — was opened on the third of last month by the First Vice President, General Abdel Majid Hamid Khalil.

Most of the 1,900-member workforce employed on this last section — a number which rose to 2,500 during the height of the construction work — were Eritrean refugees, and the joint venture between the three Italian companies Recchi, Impresit and Lodigian, took some five years to complete. Indeed, 'this most difficult road,' to quote Road and Bridges Public Corporation (RPBC) project director El Mahdi Abdel Rahman, was laid down under the most adverse of conditions. Proper materials for the embankments were not easy to come by, the asphalt proved very difficult to handle in the hot sun and working conditions generally deteriorated as the blazing heat of the desert — up to 50° Centigrade — and *haboubs* — heavy dust storms — began to take their toll. Water was scarce in the desert and had to be pumped

through an eight-inch pipe from Goz Rajab, near Atbara, some 335 kilometres away. These factors, compounded by the country's other more common problems — transport delays, fuel shortages and foreign exchange difficulties — delayed the completion date of the road by over a year and increased the final cost of the project, which has yet to be fully computed.

According to engineer Enrico Recchi, who spoke on behalf of all the contractors at the opening ceremony, the Kassala-Haiya two-lane stretch — seven metres wide with a one-and-a-half metre hard-shoulder either side — consumed some £7 million worth of petroleum products and £8 million worth of spare parts in its construction, 70 bridges and 560 box-culverts inclusive. However, Mr Recchi says they have received no payment for the work they have done since last September, never mind the additional costs due to unforeseen factors and the £10 million Kosti bridge which was opened by the President last January.

According to the contractual agreement, Mr Recchi claims that his company was entitled to stop work if 90 days passed without payment. 'But there were other considerations to take into account,' he said, 'chiefly, the 17 years of friendship and cooperation between us and the Sudanese people. Besides, abandoning a project such as this would be like stabbing a friend in the back. We have a saying in Italy: 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.' Mr Recchi told *Sudanow* that his company, of which he is a director, is owed over £20 million. 'Up until last June,' he said, 'the

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total cost of the project was some £26.6 million, plus £20.5 million in hard currency. We kept on working. We have constantly been promised by the top authorities that the financial problems will be ironed out, and that we will be paid in the near future.'

The claims for payment have yet to be settled because the full figure is not known; increases in commercial interest rates incurred due to the lack of payments have yet to be calculated.

'But we are not newcomers.' The Italian engineer went on. 'We came here in 1973 when we built the Shambat bridge for the Kassala-Haiya section and we're still working there replacing joints,' he continued.

But more difficult even than the financial problems, were the human problems caused by the construction of the road; problems, in fact, Mr Recchi has been able to turn to good use by composing a film-script around them.

Firstly, the young Italian director pointed out, there were the problems within the Italian community itself. Imagine, a small Italian town transplanted in the middle of the desert, artificially created to be sure, but containing virtually all the goings-on of a small Italian village, including love and betrayal. Derudeb, again according to Mr Recchi, was such a town, and more. Every Italian living there, regardless of social stature, drank in the same bar, swam in the same pool, watched the same films in the same cinema, all under the blazing sun of an African desert; a real challenge to human survival. Conventions and sensitivities were stripped away by the harsh environment, the ability to 'muck-in' and make the best of it became more important than the status of rank and, these qualities proved an irresistible magnet to the fairer sex, resulting in love and betrayal or, indeed, betrayal and love.

Then there were the problems with the local communities. The local tribe, the Rashida - a Red Sea nomadic tribe originally from Saudi Arabia - are known more for their numerous camels than for their accumulation of Fiats, and they were more grateful for the water-pipe than for the road itself. They continually broke the pipe, not to sabotage the project but to gain access to the water supply. Having relinquished their spears and swords after the troubles in Eritrea,

all they had to do was blow holes in the pipe with their Kalashnikovs and there was a plentiful supply of clean, running water; saving their beasts and themselves a 50 kilometre sweat through the desert to some doubtful water-hole.

Early in 1978, under pressure from project directors, Rashaida chiefs held a meeting to elect one supreme chief from among them to negotiate a settlement between the Rashaida and Recchi. 'as police and army efforts to solve the problem proved unacceptable,' the Italian director said.

Thus it was that the two cultures came together and shook hands. 'Despite discrepancies in technology and culture, men are basically reasoning beings, and common sense is still binding,' said Mr Recchi. 'We told them there was enough water for all in the pipe, and we would construct water-points and *haffirs* all along the pipe, and in turn they promised to refrain from breaking it open.' During the agreement the supreme chief was told that his men should not have broken the pipe on the grounds that the welfare of Sudan was at stake, and thus their welfare as well.

'But what good will the road do us if our camels die of thirst?' the chief responded.

'We are both right given the standards of our two civilisations,' explained Mr Recchi.

But a dangerous precedent has been set. The Rashida have now left their traditional water-holes to the desert and the blowing dust. Thousands of beasts and families now rely on the pipe for their everyday supplies of water, and the pipe has now passed under the control of the regional authorities. What would happen if the water suddenly stopped flowing is anyone's guess.

The strategically important Port Sudan-Khartoum Highway - Port Sudan being Sudan's only real trade gateway to the rest of the world - is only one road in a large network planned by the Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU), the body which holds overall responsibility for transport planning throughout the country.

'Road planning, like other state activities, emanates from the people and is brought to the attention of their representatives at the National Congress who meet to discuss overall planning strategy once every three years,' an SSU official told *Sudanow*. The SSU, acting

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upon the decisions of the Congress, then organises working bodies of experts to look into the feasibility of the projects; experts whose work is overseen by the political bureau who make certain the project coincides with the country's overall strategic needs. In fact, most transport planning is worked out in detail by the Ministry of Planning, where the technical problems are ironed out, and then goes through the Council of Ministers for other considerations - political, social and so on - before finally being rubber-stamped by the People's Assembly.

The RBPC has a planning unit of its own, but the supervision and control of day-to-day transport operations will lie, in theory at least, with the Technical Office of the Ministry of Transport. Work on the Office has not yet begun, despite a 4 million guilder grant from Holland and technical assistance from West Germany. Indeed, progress has deteriorated at the Office since the first moves were made to set it up in 1977.

'Transport experts are extremely expensive,' said Mr Azhari Fadl Abdel Karim, director of the Central Planning Bureau in the Ministry of Transport, 'and without the West German and Dutch technical assistance it would have been impossible for a proper office to have been formed.' But, ironically, the five highly-experienced Sudanese transport officials who have run the Office for the last few years have recently left for Saudi Arabia.

'We can't compete with Saudi Arabia,' said Mr Azhari wistfully.

'The formation of the Technical Office would mean the recruitment of skilled personnel from our ministry,' said Mr Abdel Rahman Mohamed Hassan, Director of Transport and Communications in the Ministry of Planning. 'However, the ministry itself is understaffed and we can spare no one.'

The core of Sudan's road-construction strategy, indeed transport strategy in general, is the Six Year Plan, which began in 1977. 'When the Six Year Plan was formulated, road-projects were divided into three categories,' said Mr El Mahdi Abdel Rahman, RBPC project director. 'Firstly, category (A), composing those roads which were under construction at the time the Plan was formulated. Then category (B), those roads whose detailed designs and financial arrangements had been settled before the plan took effect.

and finally category (C); roads where the design was still unfinished and the financial arrangements had yet to be concluded at the onset of the plan.'

Category (A) comprises the Port Sudan - Khartoum - Kosti - Medani - Sennar highway, category (B), the Sennar - Kosti - Sinja - El Damazin - Nyala - Kass-Zalinge - Jebel Awlia - El Dueim - Rabak road; and category C, Gedaref - El Suki - Wad El Huri - Sam Sam - Rabak - El Rank - Kadugli - Talodi.

'It is true to say that roads in categories A and B have almost all been completed,' Mr El Mahdi continued, 'only the last section in category B, the El Dueim - Rabak stretch, has to be finished, and we are now evaluating tenders. Detailed engineering plans have been drawn up for most of Category C roads; their tender documents have been completed, and they are just waiting for the financial go-ahead.'

The road-transport development plan is way ahead of schedule. But much of the success of the road-construction programme can be explained by the generous budget allowances. In 1969/70 the budget of the RBPC was £595,704, rising to £54 million in 1977/78 and an expected expenditure of £54.6 million for the current year, 43.5 million of which has already been approved. Details of freight capacities on road and rail over the last ten years are given below.

According to the Six Year Plan, public investment in railways was calculated to amount to some £578 million over the six year period, while investment in roads was calculated to be around some £249 million, including the £125 million which is assumed will be invested by the private sector - investments such as the Kassala-El Sawagi road which was opened by the First Vice President last month. However, more than the total allocation of funds for the Six Year Plan has already been spent in the first three years, and what effect this will have on the remaining road-projects in the plan is uncertain. 'But what is for sure,' said an official in the Ministry of Transport, 'is that there will be no new projects until after 1982.'

But why is there this emphasis on roads and why are the railways, seemingly being 'run down'? The carrying capacity of Sudan Railways has declined from three million tonnes in 1970/71 to 1.9 million in 1978/1979.

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Road haulage, conversely, has been on the increase.

'It is a question of ideology,' said an official in the Ministry of Transport. After all, rail transport is cheaper than roads, it is more popular with the low income groups and the revenue from the railroads goes straight into the public treasury. Also railways benefit from their centralised nature by making easier the controls and regulations governments can place upon them. The first programme of action of 1973, first developed an interest in road-planning and was bitterly opposed by the Russian transport experts who planned the first Five Year Plan.

'There is another point of view,' said Ministry of Planning Director of Transport and Communications, Mr Mohamed Hassan, 'There has been a bottle-neck in the transport of goods from Port Sudan that the railways have just been unable to handle. It is physically impossible for them. Railways have had their fair share and now it is absolutely essential for roads to be constructed.'

So while work has finished on the Port Sudan-Khartoum highway, for the moment at least, elsewhere construction continues apace. Work should be starting this month on the drainage structure of the 582 kilometre Kenya-Sudan road-link, 335 kilometres of which fall in Sudan.

The Ls24 million grant, jointly donated by the EEC and USAID for the construction of a main drainage system and for the improvement of some sections of the road, will have to be utilised before the beginning of 1981,' said one RBPC official. The execution and

supervision of the project is being undertaken by a joint technical committee of Kenyan and Sudanese officials, and the original feasibility study was completed by the Norwegian firm of Norconsult, who have also just finished a further study on the category (C) Kosti-Umm Ruwaba 140 kilometre stretch. Consultants would not necessarily be picked from those companies already working in Sudan. The World Bank has agreed to finance the construction of this 150 kilometre category (C) highway.

The total cost of the 110 kilometre two-lane Rabak-El Dueim road is not yet known. The Yugoslav construction company Partizanski Put have submitted the lowest bid at \$33.3 million, the highest being Sir Alfred McAlpine's \$61 million. Consultants to the project are Louis Berger from the United States and Kampsax International of Denmark. A source in the RBPC said that the tenders are being evaluated at the moment, but that no decision has been announced yet.

The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) and the African Development Bank (ABD) have been asked to finance the 1,200 kilometre Omdurman-Dongola-Aswan highway, but according to Mr El Mahdi, there has been no response from them. Italy has already granted some 300 million lire, and the Netherlands some 5 million guilders, towards the initial feasibility study.

Finally, work on the Nyala-Kas-Zalingi section of the Massawa-Njemena trans-African highway, a 210 kilometre stretch, began in early 1979 and is on schedule for completion in 1983. The road, all asphalt and seven metres wide, is being built by the West German Held and Frank

Mode	1970/71	1975/76	1978/79	1982/83 targets
Railways	2.7 billion ton/km	2.6 billion ton/km	1.8 billion ton/km	4.5 billion ton/km 1.5 billion passengers/km
Roads*	0.9 billion	2.6 billion	n/a although 3 billion ton/km estimated	4.98 billion ton/km 10.7 billion passengers/km

* Road haulage figures are difficult to estimate because unlike Sudan Railways - a single government corporation which releases exact freight figures - there is no fixed number of government and private organisations involved in the carrying of road-freight.

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construction company. Although the tender cost is some \$29.2 million, due to its distance from Port Sudan, and thus high transport costs, plus the high cost of labour and materials, the actual cost of the road will probably be much higher, said RBPC's project director.

The project is being jointly financed by the Saudi Development Bank - 123.5 million riyals - the Islamic Development Bank - 4.5 million dinars - the West German Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau - DM83 million - and by the government, who will pick up the rest of the bill which amounts to 30 per cent of the total cost.

The Nyala-Kas-Zalingi road is only one road of many in Sudan which will one day become part of the pan-African highway system. A meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held in Addis Ababa back in 1971, decided that African countries should be connected by a network of international highways. '1980-1990 should be the decade of roads in Africa,' declared the commission. Eight trans-continental highways were planned: Algiers-Mali, Mombassa-Lagos, Ndjamen-Dakar, Nouakchott-Lagos, Massawa-Ndjamen, Cairo-Nouakchott, Cairo-Gabon, Tripoli-Ndjamen. The ECA have pledged to canvas international bankers to support the scheme, and have recommended that African states give full priority to those roads which fit in with the planned network.

Mr El Mahdi from the RBPC, a frequent member of the Sudanese delegation to ECA meetings told *Sudanow*: 'Fortunately, a good part of Sudan's road construction programme falls within the pan-African plan.'

Two of the trans-African highways - the Cairo-Gabon and the Massawa-Ndjamen roads - pass through Sudan. The Mombassa-Lagos section, although not passing directly through Sudan, will be met at Nairobi by the Kenya-Sudan link.

Of the Cairo-Gabon stretch, 1,452 kilometres is in Sudan. The highway passes through Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and finishes in Botswana. Within Sudan, the section is an important part of the country's development project; passing through Wadi Halfa, Dongola, Khartoum, Wad Medani, Gedaref and Gallabat, and then on into Ethiopia.

While the 420 kilometre Khartoum-Gedaref road has already been asphalted, virtually nothing at all has been done on the Gedaref-Gallabat section. This stretch was designed by the Egyptian Roads and Bridges Corporation in 1972, but the African Development Bank did not respond to requests for funds when plans for the road were initially laid down. RBPC will renew its requests subsequent to the warming of relations between Sudan and Ethiopia; Ethiopia is also interested in the project and both countries have signed an agreement to open traffic over the border through the existing dry-weather Gedaref-Gondar road via Gallabat and Metemma.

Northwards in 1974 both Egypt and Sudan applied to (ABD) and the (AFESD) for funds to finance a road-link between the two countries. Although this link was in the context of the pan-African highway programme, the concern of the two countries to forge such a link was attributed more to their economic and cultural integration programme than to any commitment to the ECA plan.

ABD and AFESD were asked to put up some \$172 million, which in 1974 was estimated would cover the cost of studies, designs and construction. 'We had no response from them,' said Mr El Mahdi, 'but we did get a grant of \$150,000 from the Italian government to finance the initial feasibility study,' he added.

The other major pan-African highway to pass through Sudan is the Massawa-Ndjamen section; which will draw a 2,159 kilometre line from Sudan's eastern border town of Kassala to the western border town of Adri. The highway will pass through Gedaref, Wad Medani, Sennar, Kosti, El Obeid, El Nihud, El Fasher, Nyala, Zalinge and Jenena. The 557 kilometre section from Kassala to Sennar is at this moment being constructed, and the RBPC hope to lay the tarmac at the end of next year. Detailed designs for the Kosti-El Obeid section, some 310 kilometres, will be drawn up at the beginning of next year - the Kosti-Umm Ruwaba stretch is in the hands of Norconsult, while the Umm Ruwaba-El Obeid section is being studied by the Japanese consultancy firm Mitsui.

Up until now, almost no work at all has been completed on the El Obeid-El Nihud-El Fasher road, but, 'it is becom-

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ing increasingly attractive,' said Mr El Mahdi, 'not only in terms of the large amounts of gum arabic found in the area, but chiefly in terms of the proximity of the proposed road to the petroleum exploration area.'

The EEC is being asked to finance the 125 kilometre Zalinge-Jenena stretch from funds allocated towards road construction during the second Lome convention. The El Fasher-Nyala section is at present being improved by a Dutch government loan and the last section in the highway, the 30 kilometre Jenena-Adri stretch, will hopefully be financed by the ECA themselves; although with the civil war in Chad, many observers feel there is no particular rush for this section.

If the ECA could convince enough international bankers of the sound economic, social and cultural reasons for the pan-African highway programme, a great deal of money could be saved on these costly feasibility studies. It is more than a question of economics. The El

Rank-Rabak road, started last year, was planned as much for its strategic use in linking the south and the north, as for the economic benefits it might bring.

But it looks as though, for the next few years at least, road construction will continue at a heady rate throughout the country. Whether or not this will lead to a rapid increase in the country's fuel-bill, and the sight of multinational companies' haulage fleets cutting up the newly laid tarmac before it has had a chance to dry, is too soon to say. But there has been a clear lack in the infrastructure of a well-coordinated transport network which could provide economic and strategic incentives to foreign and domestic investors. Whether the present road programme will fit the bill is still not clear. It is certainly a gamble, but a gamble which Sudan must take some time or other, and at the moment, the fact that the programme is ahead of schedule may mean this is just the right time to gamble. ■

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