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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DESCRIBED

Paris AN-NAHAR ARAB REPORT & MEMO in English 10 Dec 79 pp 11-16

[Text]

In the period from 1970 to 1977 Syria's GNP rose from SL 3,981 million to SL 26,132 million, a 556 per cent increase.* In agriculture the value of output rose from SL 1,380 million in 1970 to SL 5,120 million in 1977. A further 345 per cent increase was registered in the industry and mining sector, from SL 1,264 million in 1970 to SL 5,626 million in 1977. Record expansion was achieved in the housing and construction sector with a contribution to national product increasing from SL 225 million in 1970 to SL 1,799 million in 1977, a 700 per cent increase. The contribution of the transport and communications sector rose from SL 639 million to SL 1,172 million over the same period, an 83 per cent increase, while the commercial sector's contribution increased from SL 1,173 million in 1970 to SL 6,619 million in 1977. The finance, insurance and banking sector's contribution rose dramatically from SL 120 million in 1970 to SL 685 million last year.

Though hardly exhaustive or recent, the above figures are nevertheless indicative of growth trends in Syria over the past decade. Overall growth raised Syria's national income to SL 23,431 million in 1977, a SL 17,774 million increase over the country's income of SL 5,657 million in 1970, a 312 per cent increase. The share of agriculture out of national income increased from SL 1,309 million in 1970 to SL 4,899 million in 1977, a 275 per cent rise. The industrial sector's share rose from SL 1,068 million to SL 4,948 million over the same period, or by 355 per cent. Income per capita rose 36 per cent from SL 1,030 in 1970 to SL 3,331 in 1977.

*The value of the Syrian pound, a non-convertible currency, has varied by less than 1 percent over the past decade; at today's rate it is worth \$0.2547. For the purpose of this survey, an exchange rate of \$0.25 may be assumed throughout.

Net capital formation in the period 1970 to 1977 rose markedly, with obvious concentration in industry where investments rose from SL 187 million to SL 5,061 million. Net capital formation in agriculture increased to SL 660 million in 1977 compared with SL 248 million in 1970.

Syrian industrial policy reflects the influence of the general problems facing the economy. The Fourth Five Year Development Plan scheduled for the period 1976-80, but announced only in 1977, includes investments worth \$13.8 billion. Delays in the plan are plentiful; their main causes being that 40 per cent of the Third Five Year Plan was carried over to the fourth plan period, and the hesitation among Arab aid donors. These were reportedly unhappy with the way much of the money for contracts was finding its way into the hands of middlemen rather than projects and the manner by which projects were carelessly drawn so that most of them were wasted investments.

The plan was eventually and officially promulgated in April 1977, with the first two years regarded as a transitional plan period. The main targets of the plan, published in this newsletter's issue of May 29, 1978, are the attainment of a 12 percent average real annual rate of growth, a level only two-thirds reached so far. The major areas of growth were to be transport and communications (16 percent), industry (15 percent) and agriculture (8 percent). The plan reflected a change of emphasis, since in earlier plans industry had gradually taken over from trade, agriculture and the Euphrates dam as the main contributor to GDP.

In a recent statement to the official daily Tishrin, Minister of Transport Selim Yassin assessed progress achieved under the supervision and promotion of his ministry, which was created only in 1974. Mr Yassin said the Ministry of Transport had moved along two lines since its creation. The first was to ensure the proper functioning of the existing transportation network and the other was to complete projects listed under the third and fourth five year development plans that were to lead to the expansion and upgrading of the network.

Mr Yassin said the Ministry and subordinate agencies had been particularly concerned over the expansion of the public transport network. One thousand buses were procured for the various governorates. This was accompanied by full capacity utilization of existing public transport means. In Damascus, Mr Yassin said, public transport vehicles are now operating on most transport lines and the rest will be covered in mid-1980. Without giving accurate figures, the minister said between 1975 and 1978 the

Apart from communism--"our 100-percent enemy"--Ghodhani has the other betes noires: Colonel al-Qadhafi and the West. Al-Qadhafi has committed the sin of "repudiating the Sunna and the Hadith rules of conduct because they allegedly bear too much of an imprint of a certain age." And the Libyan colonel "defends Arab nationalism, to which we are opposed," Ghodhani states. "The Arab nation does not exist. We are for Islam and the 900 million Muslims who are all behind the Imam Khomeyni. The Shi'ite-Sunni distinction no longer exists. Khomeyni has all Muslims behind him."

The Tehran hostages? "They are not diplomats. They are spies, criminals acting against Islam. Of course I approve of their being put on trial."

expansion in the number of transport vehicles was as follows: public passenger cars increased 40 per cent and private passenger cars 58 per cent, public buses rose 53 per cent and private buses increased 14 per cent, public transport trucks 44 per cent while private trucks increased 105 per cent, tanker trucks rose 159 per cent, public lorries increased by 415 per cent and private lorries by 444 per cent. Mr Yassin added that the Ministry plans to allow private sector companies to import trucks and other transport vehicles so as to raise the capacity of the state's transport network. A further 1,200 buses were put in operation between major Syrian cities and rural areas to meet the increasing need for cheap public transport facilities.

In railway transport the emphasis was on the completion of existing railway network expansion projects. Noted among these projects are the Latakia-Qamishli railway running 750 kilometres at a cost of SL 734 million, the Akkari-Homs-Damascus railway running 273 kilometres at a cost of SL 363 million and the Homs-Muhsen mines railway running 650 kilometres at a cost of LS 173 million. Progress on the latter project is well advanced and it could be complete in early 1980. Meanwhile the Aleppo-Hama-Homs railway is being upgraded. The railway runs 230 kilometres and the works will cost SL 211 million. A third project, the Tartous-Akkari railway (42 kilometres) is being used to carry imports from Tartous to various destinations through other railway lines.

Among seaports, work is underway on the expansion of the Tartous and Latakia terminals, the latter with Soviet assistance. The first phase of the Tartous port project was completed in mid-1978 when the breakwater was extended 710 metres and the third phase which will bring the breakwater to 1010 metres was launched. When the second phase of the Tartous port project is completed, tenders will be invited for the construction of the wharfs. Total allocations for the Tartous port development under the fourth Five Year Development Plan amounted to SL 327 million.

Three vessels created the nucleus of the Syrian commercial fleet. Four other ships are on order and ship repair yards are contemplated. The Syrian-Jordanian Maritime Transport Company was set up with a capital of SL 100 million which placed orders for two 6,300 tonne vessels at a cost of \$10 million. The first of these vessels, Barada, was delivered and put in service.

Complementary works at the Damascus International Airport are in progress, according to Mr Yassin, while the second phase of the Latakia airport expansion plan is also underway. At Damascus, the State Establishment for Industrial Construction was

Our state and our people are Muslim. We are all believers by the nature of our Islamic regime and culture and no one can give himself the right to judge the manner with which we practice our religion and even less the right to put the latter under his thumb.

In Islam, there is neither church nor order which claim to exercise guardianship on faith, spirit or on behaviour.

Can we forget that the Islamic world cohesion has been disintegrated and that its unity has been broken by the same people who hindered under highly arguable interpretations in order to conceal their nostalgia for paganism and who were unwilling to accept the fact that the peoples of Darul-Andalus

contracted to complete the reception lounge at the airport at a cost of SL 100 million while another national company, ROIKO, was contracted to complete runway expansion works to a length of 1,200 metres. Installations at other Syrian airports are being upgraded. Special importance is given to the Latakia, Hama and Haseku airports.

Syrian Arab Airlines, the national carrier, has spent SL 145 million on aircraft purchase Mr Yassin said, while more than SL 4 million have been spent so far and under the Fourth Five Year Development Plan for aircraft sparepart and maintenance work.

Special Orchard Centres Established

Under the current Plan, orchards were targeted to cover an area of 20,000 hectares of irrigated land and 90,000 hectares of arable land. Special breeding centres were set up which produced 12 million orchards over the four year period 1975-78. Another 6.5 million would be produced by the end of this year and an equal number next year, thus meeting the plan target. The Ministry of Agriculture's role has not been limited to breeding plants and orchards, but has included land reform. The Ministry secured the equipment for land improvement to its various agencies which completed terracing of 4,300 hectares only last year. Pilot orchard farming on low yield areas covered 1,000 hectares. The state orchard cultivation targets were raised by President Assad to 42.8 million orchards by 1983. State assistance to farmers is carried out by the Agricultural Cooperative Bank. The bank, having 54 branches, was established at the end of the 19th century and extends medium-and long-term financing in all forms of agricultural projects and cooperatives, provides other services including the discount and acceptance of bills, advances on current accounts and issues guarantees. The interest rates charged by the Agricultural Cooperative Bank since 1970 are 4 percent for cooperatives and 5.5 percent to 7.5 percent for individuals.

One major agricultural landmark in Syria is the Euphrates dam. The dam has, apart from producing 800 MW of electric power, allowed the irrigation and improvement of up to 31,000 hectares. The area will reach 81,000 hectares by the end of 1980 but will still be short of the 640,000 hectares that could be improved and irrigated when all complementary projects related to the Euphrates dam are completed. The dam has also contributed largely in the provision of potable water to Hama and the new city of Al Thawra, which now has a population of 100,000.

So far five years have passed since the first newly irrigated land under the Euphrates dam project was cultivated. The first irrigated land stretch was 21,000 hectares. The completion of the first phase of the Euphrates dam produced 15 new villages with 6,708 houses. The second phase of the scheme covers a 27,000 hectare area and is being carried out by Roma

of very short assessment. However, nothing is more dangerous for liberty than the fact that it is praised by some orators whose spiritual fathers set up a political regime and adopted a behaviour totally in contradiction with the Islamic rules.

In its capacity as Islam's guarantee as the constitution stipulates it, the state assumes the responsibility of protecting Islam and its institutions in Tunisia and preserving generations from subversive and extremist currents.

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Grimes. The new areas under improvement extend 60 kilometres along the Euphrates banks east and west of Al Raqqa. Of these 3,400 hectares were completed in 1978 and were redistributed to their original owners while the rest is now held by cooperatives. Exceptionally high yields were registered in these new areas, mostly in cotton cultivation as between 300 and 500 kilos of cotton were produced per dunam.

Table 1
Public Sector Industrial
Labour Force

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
State Establishment for Textile Industries	23,506	24,563	21,829	21,050	25,350
State Establishment for Food Industries	3,091	5,206	5,068	4,716	5,172
State Establishment for Chemical Industries	5,060	4,488	5,568	6,438	7,955
State Establishment for Engineering Works	4,859	6,109	6,316	6,511	9,164
State Establishment for Cement	2,701	3,234	5,300	5,382	5,765
State Sugar Establishment	1,872	1,912	1,930	2,922	4,285
Total	40,089	45,512	46,011	47,054	57,691

Another area under the Euphrates basin scheme, Bir Hassem comprises 10,000 hectares and is scheduled for completion next year. The Bir Hassem land improvement works are carried out by the General Irrigation Installation Company SARICO. The national company was reportedly contracted at half the fees required by foreign contractors. The World Bank, which takes part in the finance, had reportedly objected to the choice of contractor claiming that it had little experience and limited ability to complete a project of such scale.

Irrigation
EU

Location of Dam

More rugged terrain improvement is carried out by the State Establishment for the Euphrates Dam which is currently working on 21,000 hectares west of Maskana. The work at Maskana includes:

An electric pumping station with a 36 cubic metre per second throughput carrying water from Lake Assad to the newly reclaimed areas. The station is operative and is already being used to irrigate part of the area.

50 kilometres of main canals carrying water at capacities ranging between 5 and 36 cubic metres per second.

- 400 kilometres of supported canals.
- 2,300 kilometres of covered irrigation canals.
- 150 kilometres of open canals.
- 660 kilometres of paved roads.

This is added to the main land reclamation operations sought under the scheme. So far 4,000 hectares out of the 21,000 hectares covered by the project have been completed and were cultivated last year while another 2,300 hectares were completed this year and will be put to farming in due course. The remaining area is scheduled for completion next year.

Meanwhile the Euphrates Basin Administration Establishment, commissioned with the reclamation of 640,000 hectares, has completed studies for 100,000 hectares in the Balikh basin and nearby finished detailed studies for other areas east of Maskana and is considering work on areas west of Maskana, in the direction of Hama and some 120,000 hectares in the lower Euphrates basin.

Other projects under way include the reclamation of 50,000 hectares on the right bank of the Euphrates from Dair Ez Zoi to Boukandal, 37,000 hectares in Balikh north of Raqqa and 50,000 hectares west of Maskana.

Allocations for industry under the 1978 state investment programme amounted to SL 4,613,393 million. This year, allocations were at SL 3,832,288 million while a series of projects are still in progress under the fourth Five Year Development Plan (1976-80). Tables 2 and 3 provide a detailed run-down of industrial projects that were completed this year and others that are scheduled for completion before the year closes. Projects under table 2 have secured 9,460 employment opportunities at total investment cost of SL 1,219 million. By the end of this month another 13 projects will be completed at a cost of SL 2,089 million and will provide 6,766 employment opportunities. In 1978, 83 industrial projects were launched.

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Despite the fact that the Tunisian economy has developed rapidly in recent years, part of the development in the per capita income is attributable to oil exports which have risen in terms of both production and price during the past few years and months.

Nevertheless, this should not detract from the value and importance of the efforts that have enabled the country to achieve a growth rate which reached as high as 19 percent at times during 1972 and stabilized between 7.5 and 8 percent thereafter. Meanwhile, the average growth rate in the undeveloped countries from 1970 to 1978 ranged between 4.9 and 6.2 percent, according to the annual report of the International Bank for Reconstruction and

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Interviewed last August by Tishrin, Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Halabi said major emphasis is now being placed in the public sector on industrial costing and proper control and reporting of costs on the one hand and quality control on the other. Administrative changes have covered 18 public sector establishments most of which in the textile industry and others in toiletries, metal works and tractor assembly lines. Premier Halabi said the administrative changes were taken after productive deficiencies and low rentability was depicted in these companies' records. Productive deficiencies often resulted from improper reporting of real industrial costs, a requirement stressed by the state and established by law as of January 1, 1979. The state has in fact been particularly active in providing qualified financial controllers for all public sector industrial establishments. Quality control is made possible through the product specifications ordinance of October 7, 1978 based on legislative decree 248. Under the ordinance a state committee is supposed to maintain control over intermediate and semi-processed products as well as the final output, through subordinate agencies in every branch of industry.

Further enhancing public sector participation, or more accurately predominance, Production Councils were formed for the various industrial establishments under law No 6 dated August 4, 1979. The councils were designed to:

--Promulgate annual plans for the establishments;

--Suggest methods of attaining added productivity and draft the proper policies in the light of such suggestions;

--Establish efficiency standards and mobilise the work force to attain these standards;

--Correct deficiencies in the previous year's production plan. The councils were expected to coordinate their efforts with the directors and the boards of state establishments without any interlapping authorities.

The application, since 1977, of a system of incentives and rewards was largely responsible for effective increases in productivity of up to 25 percent, mostly in the textile industry, where strict adherence to the scheme was reported. Varying degrees of success have also been felt in the foodstuff industries and the chemical industries after the adoption, this year, of the state system of rewards and incentives.

Despite the obvious emphasis on the public sector, the Syrian authorities have shown concern for the private sector, with the understanding that the state should maintain the upper hand in controlling production and pricing policies. There were other areas strictly forbidden for private ventures. State support to private industries has taken the form of soft loans through specialised banks and the sale of state-owned industrial sites on easy terms. Interest on industrial loans has not exceeded 3 percent in recent years and payment for industrial terrain was usually spread over a 10 year period.

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END OF

In another connection, a program was recorded yesterday during the mediation undertaken by various parties to secure the liberation of all of the hostages of North Lebanon still in the hands of their abductors.

The key mediators at the present time on this matter are the Minister of Economy, Boutros Harb, and the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Carlo Furno. Harb was received at 0900 hours yesterday by the chief of state to whom he reported the efforts made up to now to ensure the success of the mediation. For his part,

Table 2

Industrial Projects Completed
by The Public Sector Between
1/1/79 and 20/8/79

Project	Cost (Million SL)	Labour Employed	Capacity
Aleppo Menswear Project	113	2,600	1.9 million units/yr
Aleppo Ladies' Garments Project	113	2,600	1.9 million units/yr
Wool Carding and Washing Project, Hama	28	100	2,000 tonnes/yr
Provision of 37,000 Spinning Jennies in Deir Ez Zor	110	1,100	7,500 tonnes/yr
Homs Dairy Products Project Development	12	-	-
Al Riqqa Sugar Project	180	600	Processes 4,000 tonnes of sugar beet daily
Maskana Sugar Project	180	600	Processes 4,000 tonnes of sugar beet daily
Adra Cement Project	325	1,200	2,000 tonnes daily
Aleppo Glass Works	158	660	25,400 tonnes of plain glass panes/yr 14,400 tonnes of glass bottles 100,000 m ² of high resistance glass
Total	1,219	9,460	

Table 3
Public Sector Industrial Projects
Due for Completion Before 31/12/79

Project	Cost (SL Million)	Workers	Capacity
Provision of 75,000 Spinning Jennies in Jebta	2.3	1,150	1,100 tonnes of yarn/yr
Expansion of Al Ahliya Spinning Company, Aleppo with 10,000 Jennies	40	-	1,100 tonnes of woolen yarn/yr
Wool Carding Project, Hama	15	690	2,000 tonnes/yr
Can Company Project, Dunascus and Idlib	10	n.a.	43 million cans/yr
Tal Salhab Sugar Plant (will be completed, but not operational this year)	180	600	Will process 4,000 tonnes of sugar beet daily
Sheikh Said Cement Project, Aleppo	500	1,000	3,000 tonnes/yr
Al Munzirjya Second Cement Plant, Aleppo	150	350	1,000 tonnes/yr
Chemical Detergents Plant, Adra	75	260	38,000 tonnes/yr
Baby Food Project	20	105	1,500 tonnes/yr
Tarhal Superphosphate Plant, Homs	800	930	450,000 tonnes/yr
Damascus Glass Works	158	663	25,000 flat glass panes 14,400 tonnes of glass bottles
Aleppo Cables Plant	118	1,018	8,600 tonnes of assorted cables
Total	2,068.3	4,766	

Table 3

Public Sector Industrial Projects
Due for Completion Before 31/12/79

Cost (SL Million)	Workers	Capacity
23	1,150	1,100 tonnes of yarn/yr
40	-	1,100 tonnes of woollen yarn/yr
15	690	2,000 tonnes/yr
10	n.a.	43 million cans/yr
180	600	Will process 4,000 tonnes of sugar beet daily
500	1,000	3,000 tonnes/yr
150	350	1,000 tonnes/yr
75	260	38,000 tonnes/yr
30	105	1,500 tonnes/yr
800	930	450,000 tonnes/yr
158	663	25,000 flat glass panes 14,400 tonnes of glass bottles
118	1,018	8,600 tonnes of assorted cables
2,868.3	6,766	

light poles to the east. Hence the existing runway lies parallel to the coast. The sources said this would facilitate movements by larger aircraft and also make it possible for approaches to be made over the eastern part of the city as well as the west. Several communications will have to be relocated, among them the local radio transmission station and this is posing problems.

Total Syrian imports from Third World countries in 1978 rose to SL 765 million compared to SL 344 million in 1974, while exports reached SL 94 million last year. Exports to the Arab countries rose to SL 562 million last year compared to SL 401 million in 1974. Syrian imports from Arab countries however dropped. Syrian exports to Eastern bloc countries rose to SL 932 million last year against SL 904 million in 1974. Speaking to Tishrin, the Director of Planning at the Ministry of Economy and Trade, Suhail Jaafari, said the State Establishment for Industrial Equipment and Installations Trading had increased its imports this year to SL 334 million, compared to SL 206 million last year. Imports of chemical and food products this year were valued at SL 822 million while exports of agricultural products were worth SL 38 million compared to SL 26 million last year. The State Establishment for Trading in Construction Material and Iron Products this year imported SL 1,085 million worth compared to SL 549 million last year. The increased imports of textiles this year were valued at SL 230 million and of pharmaceuticals SL 307 million.

CSO: 4820

RETURN OF THOSE CLOSE TO HABIB ACHOUR SEEN AS SH
Paris AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUMALI in Arabic

[Article by 'Abd-al-Latif al-Furati: "Is It the
the Objects of Anger?"]

[Text] The composition of the new government is
factors make it surprising: Mohamed Ennaceur's
as minister of social affairs, and Mohamed Fitou
office of minister of foreign affairs.

Mohamed Ennaceur has returned to the position fr
late December 1977 in protest of the dismissal o
post of minister of interior because of his rep
General] Federation of Labor [UGTT]. The chang
late 1977 preceded by 1 month the outbreak of 2
which led to the death of 45 people and the imp
the old leadership of the UGTT—notably Habib A
the court on the charge of being instrumental in

Mohammed Fitouri's continued occupation of his p
everyone had expected another foreign minister a
suggesting this.

Several other posts in the government were also
the only minister to lose the legislative electi
Jonas is considered to be among those who are cl
former minister of defense and one of the minist
before he was dismissed by President Habib Bourq
the congress of the ruling Destourian Party.

Minister of Cultural Affairs Mohamed Yaalaoui ha
Following the merger of the posts of minister of
of cultural affairs, the combined position was a
was formerly minister of public health. The Min
been without a minister since Chadli Klibi was e
of the Arab League last June.