

\$1 billion in oil

U.S. wary of new Libya

The Guardian

When the royalist Libyan government was overthrown Sept. 1 by a revolutionary military council, the action was greeted by popular acclaim of Libyans and grim foreboding of Washington and U.S. oil firms.

With a population of barely two million, Libya is the world's fifth largest oil producer. A former Italian colony, the North African Arab nation became a prize of the Western allies during World War II. After the war, Libya was granted nominal independence and endowed with a "stable" reactionary government under the now-deposed King Idris I, who banned political parties and jailed or exiled those who objected to his solicitude toward U.S. and British interests.

Official U.S. statistics value U.S. investments in Libya at \$1-billion, but now that the revolutionary regime has announced its

intention of establishing socialism, the oil companies are saying that foreign investments in Libya total \$5-billion. The latter figure is probably closer to the truth, judging from other available figures.

About 85-90 per cent of all foreign investment is in U.S. hands. The British Petroleum Corp., which controls approximately 10 per cent of Libyan oil production, claims an investment of \$290-million. Standard Oil of New Jersey alone says that it has invested \$1-billion in Libya and Occidental Petroleum, whose oil output is higher than that of Standard, probably has an equivalent investment. There are 37 other U.S. oil firms exploiting Libyan petroleum resources, including: Mobil, Standard Oil of California, Marathon, Philips and the Hunt family interests.

The revolutionary council has pledged to uphold Libya's international accords and economic agreements and to create a democratic regime at home. Only the future can tell how the obvious conflict between these aims will be resolved. Under the old order the oil companies took precedence, but that day is finished if the new government survives the inevitable CIA intrigues.

The seven-man cabinet appointed by the military leaders has diverse political tendencies, but the members all are united by a commitment to genuine independence for Libya.

Prime Minister Mahmoud Solimon al-Mahgrabi, 36, studied in the U.S. and afterwards was employed by ESSO (Libya). There ends the usual story. Mahgrabi became a leader of the Federation

of Trade Unions, which the old regime did not recognize, and he was one of the founders of the Union of Petroleum Workers. During the Six Day War of 1967, he criticized the government's aloofness toward the Arab cause and was sentenced to four years in prison. The new Foreign Affairs minister, Salir Sousir, was forced to flee the country in 1956 after criticizing an agreement giving Britain military bases, and he remained in exile until his present appointment. When affirming Libya's adherence to its international commitments, Sousir added that there have been numerous irregularities in the awarding of oil concessions that will have to be investigated.

According to the limited available information, the first steps of the new government will be toward raising Libya's share of the oil revenues, and increasing expenditures for economic and social development and aiding the Arab states with territory occupied by Israel. At the same time the government can be expected to strengthen the position of the Libyan state oil company.

Even before the royalists were ousted, the government was pressing for raising of the posted price on Libyan oil, a somewhat arbitrary figure that determines the respective shares of the oil companies and the government. At present, Libya receives \$1-per-barrel of oil produced and the profits of the oil companies are at least that, if not more. Last year the Libyan government received more than \$700-million in oil royalties and the U.S. companies repatriated a larger amount in profits.

Americans have guns, guns, guns and more guns

WASHINGTON (AP) — In urging restrictive licensing of pistols in the United States, the national commission on the causes and prevention of violence issued these statistics in July:

— In 1968, U.S. civilians owned 90-million guns comprising 35-million rifles, 31-million shotguns and 24-million handguns. At least half of the 60-million U.S. households possess one gun or more.

— The total number of firearms

in private hands increased by 5.3-million in 1968.

— Gunfire accounted for 63 per cent of the 12,100 homicides reported in 1968. In 1964, there were 9,250 murders, only 55 per cent of which were committed with firearms.

— In crimes committed with firearms in 1967, handguns were used in 92 per cent of the homicides, 86 per cent of the aggravated assaults and in 96 per cent of the robberies.

World Briefs

U.S. Peace Corps is denounced

ST. PAUL, Minn. (LNS) — The Committee of Returned Volunteers (CRV) capped its first national assembly with a resolution calling for the abolition of the Peace Corps as an instrument of U.S. imperialism. The CRV, which consists of people who have done volunteer service overseas in the Peace Corps and similar agencies, issued a detailed position paper attacking the Peace Corps on two main grounds: firstly that the Peace Corps supports the status quo in the countries to which it sends volunteers and secondly that the corps supports the world-wide vested interests of U.S. business and the U.S. government.

Washington anti-war march planned

CHICAGO (LNS) — The New Mobilizing Committee to End the War in Vietnam is threatening Washington with 1,000,000 visitors on Nov. 15. Their strategy is to scare official Washington by bringing as many people there as a mild anti-war coalition can deliver. As a prelude to the Nov. 15 mass demonstration, a memorial march will commemorate the more than 40,000 Americans killed in Vietnam. Beginning at midnight, Nov. 13, marchers will proceed in single file from Arlington Cemetery in Virginia, to the steps of the capital. Each marcher will carry a sign with the name of one of the war dead or the name of a Vietnamese village which has been obliterated. At the end of the march, the signs will be deposited in a giant-sized coffin.

Town endorses drug test plan

SMITHTOWN, N.Y. (LNS) — The Smithtown town board has endorsed a plan to give blood and urine tests to junior and senior high school students to determine if they are drug users. The four local school boards, who have the legal authority to implement the plan, have not yet taken a position on this latest invasion of privacy.

AT&T asks fairer rate of return

WASHINGTON (CUPI) — The American Telephone and Telegraph Company has disclosed in hearings of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission last week that its profit on long distance telephone calls this year is, or will be, \$167-million more than the FCC allowed as a "fair rate of return." The FCC is considering a move to order the company to reduce its long distance rates. But the AT&T wants the FCC to raise the "fair rate of return" by 20 per cent so the profits can be used to pay higher dividends to shareholders, and for capital costs. In previous decisions, the winner has been AT&T hands down. A similar situation exists in Canada with the Bell Telephone Company. The government sets profit guidelines, but every year Bell smashes through them.

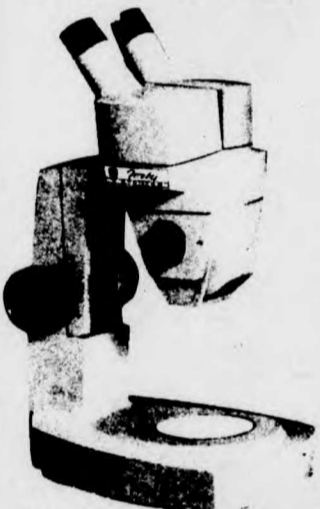
GI's deserting to PRG forces

SAN FRANCISCO (LNS) — U.S. GIs are joining the military forces of the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government (a coalition of anti-U.S. and anti Saigon forces). Recent figures quoted in the San Francisco Chronicle show desertions in the field are running at the rate of ten a day. The PRG derives the greatest benefit from the intelligence reports it receives from these GIs, according to Solidarity, a San Francisco newsletter run by ex-GIs. The majority of the deserters choose to stay in the rear areas so they will not have to fight their countrymen. Some deserting GIs are aided by the PRG which helps such people find housing and food and assistance in reaching countries which do not recognize the tradition of U.S. service deserters, including Sweden, Japan, Cambodia and Thailand. An estimated 300-500 deserters have received such assistance from the PRG to date.

Supported students, journal suspended

MEXICO CITY (CUP-LNS) — The Mexican government has forced the suspension of publication of a bilingual journal of poetry and the arts as part of the government's systematic repression of supporters of last year's student strike. The journal El Corno Emplumado, has published Latin American revolutionary poetry and pro-Cuban material, and actively supported last year's strike. Editor Margaret Randall has also been refused a passport by the Mexican government.

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