

RF/2/21/15

Answers to Questions submitted by Ruth First to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, Tripoli, Friday 2 July 1971.

The Preparation of the Revolution.

1. Q : details of the life histories such as birthplace, family details, education and careers before joining the armed forces of RCC members.

- A : Col Muammar Gaddafi : born in Sirte 14v at UNIV of Libya. — Sign
- Maj. Jalloud : . . . Fezzan in Wadi Shati — Engineer USA Course
between Mizda and Brak
- Maj. Muni : born at Zanzour, west of Tripoli.
- Maj. Beshir Hawady : born at Jaddan . School - teachers.
- Maj. Khweledi : born at Sorman, west of Zawia
- Lt Col Abubakr Yunis: born in Chad at the Augila Oasis.
- Capt. Meheishi : born in Misurata
- Capt. Mgaryief : born near the Marble Arch, eastern Province
- Major Kharuby : born at Zawia Engineer
- Major Gerwy : born in Tripoli, Old City.
- Major Nejm : born in Benghazi in army. v cooper platoon
- Major Hamza : born at Gamenas, Eastern Province.

2. Q : Did the 1964 action of the Government in suppressing student actions directly influence the army officers, and in what way?

A : We started preparations for the Revolutions before that. It influenced us of course.

3. Most of the members of the RCC and the Free Unionist Officers' Central Committee appear to have belonged to the 1963 and 1964 classes at the Military Academy. Were there others too, from other course years?

A : The Free Officer Movement was formed by officers at the Academy in 1963 and 1964 only. We recruited every year into the organisation from among the new classes. Our activities were not uncovered 'Thanks to God.' In 1969, the year of the Revolution, we drew in some of the instructors at the Military Academy. Very few, though. When we felt very strong and in control of the army, we made these approaches. But they were very few, and it was at a very late stage of preparation of the Revolution, between March and September 1969. Not all of these turned out well. One was Musa Ahmed. By March 1969 we had half the officers in all army units with us. The principal organisers were all lieutenants. In August 1969 the members of the Central Committee of the Free Officer Movement were promoted to the rank of captain, all that is except myself and Bubakr Yunis.

Why were the majority of the Free Officers lieutenants?
The majority of the Lieutenants were educated, and had awareness whereas the more senior officers were ignorant and corrupt.

When the 1963 and 1964 classes at the Military Academy graduated we left behind a sub-committee to remain in contact with us. We had no security leaks because we met as friends, not using conspiratorial methods, such as codes. We issued pamphlets only in the last year before the Revolution. Some copies of some are still available. These were for the use of members of the Free Officer Organization only, and were given round from hand to hand. We were very careful. They were in handwriting. Whose writing? Mine. There was a risk but there was no other way; this was my risk but also my responsibility.

4 Q : There has been mention in Colonel Gaddafi's articles about The Story of the Revolution of popular committees of civilians set up to work more or less at the same time as the central committee of the Free Unionist Officers. Could you explain how these civilian popular committees worked? Did any civilians travel all the way with the Revolution?

A : When we were in secondary school we began to prepare the Revolution. Some of us joined the Academy, some went to the University. Civilians were our friends whom we met from time to time. They had the same ideas and principles, and were working towards the same goal. The civilians were not as well organized as we in the army. They were very slow. Their job was to influence public opinion in support of us and to prepare for the Revolution from the army. The Revolution really began in a secondary school in Sebha. Our Independence was born dead. We were influenced by events at Suez, all around us. Arab nationalism was entering a big battle between 1956 and 1968. When the Federation between Syria and Egypt broke up we organized a huge demonstration at Sebha. It was for this I was expelled from school. We were stirred not only by Libyan issues, but by the issues confronting Arab nationalism. From Sebha I went to Misurata. There I met Mehdi and Jalloud. Numbers of the Free Officers were from Sebha.

Q : Why Sebha?

A (Major Beshir Hawady, present during this stage of the interview) Because Gaddafi was there.

A (resumed) The civilians identified with us in those days were very slow. They met from time to time but very infrequently. They had no discipline. Were very erratic.

After the Revolution some of the civilians with us in those days were given work in broadcasting and the municipalities, but not very high-up jobs.

The Timing of the Revolution

Q : Would you care to discuss in greater detail the timing of the Revolution?

A : Originally the date was March 12. We decided against that date because of the Um Kalhtoum recital. Thousands of people were in the hall as well as senior army officers. To act then would have led to considerable trouble.

We had fixed the date of the Revolution nine months before, in May 1968. We had come to Tripoli to do promotion examinations. These brought the majority of our members of the Central Committee together; we discussed and fixed the date for the Revolution.

We estimated our strength among the cadets who would be graduated in August 1969. The majority of the graduates were Free Officers. Our control covered the entire army, even without the last batch of graduates. We postponed the date from March 12 to March 24 but something was happening in the army at that time which compelled us to change our plans. We suddenly discovered that the army was being alerted. Armoured cars and ammunition were concentrated in the central barracks. We had to hand back our trucks. It seems to us that something about us had leaked out. In preparation for the projected March take-over we had been preparing to rise to the surface. All the military cars from all the units were collected together in a camp near Benghazi; the regiments were left without trucks, and the ammunition was recalled. They were taking counter-action as if they knew about our plan. This was a bad time for us. Some of the Free Officers telephoned me to come to Tripoli. I came on leave by night. We thought some dangerous moves were about to be taken against us. We decided to fulfil the plan on March 24 to pre-empt them. On March 19 the King flew to Tobruk from Tripoli. This made it impossible for us to act. We stopped preparations at that stage. Later we decided to carry out the Revolution whether the King was present or not; he happened to be out of the country on 1 September.

Q : Were there other movements at work among the armed forces with plans for takeover?

There were small groups of army friends, some for Shalhi, some against Shalhi; They were composed of officers who had graduated from Iraq and Egypt. Each group disliked the next. The Shalhi coup? We don't know about this.

Q : Was the ease with which the old regime's security forces were overcome due to the fact that the Free Officer Movement had support within the security forces themselves?

We knew the Revolution had to take place; we were ready to counter the security forces. There were junior officers in CYDEF who were members of our organisation. But this was not the reason for their absence of resistance. It was due to the surprise element

in our action. Especially at Beida, their stronghold.

The troops found themselves surrounded by the army and their leaders taken by us. In one camp we found the soldiers inside it arresting their own officers.

In Tripoli by the time there was news that the army had moved in Benghazi, it was too late for any counter-action. The news had come through on the police wireless; they were planning counter-action but it was too late, all the army units had moved. We broke into the storerooms and collected all the soldiers and weapons around us.

This was not a mutiny but a revolution, a movement of the whole of the army.

On the Leading Forces of the Revolution

Q : Gamal Abdel Nasser said after the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 : 'We waited in vain for the masses...' Does the experience of the Libyan Revolution bear out the failure of the civilian masses to carry their revolutionary role?

A : There is some difference. Nasser waited for the masses but in vain. This was due to the fact that in Egypt there were many political parties. Their activity made Nasser hopeful. But in the time of need they did not perform as he had hoped. The Egyptian people at the time were very passive, this a heritage of Farouk.

But here in Libya the population is very small and the people are very active. There were no political parties. The people were united. The Revolution came in its time. All the people were waiting.

I am not disappointed in the role of civilians. It was part of our plan that if there was resistance from the police or from the foreign bases we were to call on the people by radio to join the army in defence of the Revolution. And the people would have been ready. We were ready to give the people arms. We trust our people.

We would have armed them if there had been resistance from Wheelus or El Adem. We surrounded Wheelus with field artillery.

This was moved from Misurata and Homs

The Americans at the base watched us ~~prepare~~ surround them.

They prepared their machine guns and rifles. There was about 200 metres between us and their guns.

They evacuated some of their planes. By 7 at night it was all over.

There was a new regime in power. Any resistance would have been in vain.

Q : How was the composition of the RCC decided?

A : The RCC is the Central Committee of the Free Officer Movement.

Q : The armed forces have emerged as the leading force of the Revolution. For how long do you think this is likely to continue to be the case?

A : When we are sure everything is going well, when there is awareness. We must struggle to make the principles of the Revolution known to everyone. The country has now taken its natural course. The army will take its natural place to defend the country; the Arab Socialist Union will lead the people. The RCC leads the whole country.

Q : The Arab Socialist Union is to be constituted with the RCC as the leading and superior body; how long is this to last? What about a Parliament?

A : The high committee may be changed in the future. The people didn't want us in the RCC to surrender authority; I tried. The people also don't want a Parliament. They want the RCC to lead them. It is the wish of our people because they are satisfied.

Q : Does the Free Officer organisation still operate inside the army?

A : There are still Free Officers in the army, but not necessarily working as an organisation. The control of the army is in their hands.

A : Would you like to give details of the foreign involvement in some of the counter-coup plots against the Government?

A : There were 2 plots in all, The Hawwaz-Musa Ahmed cons^{piracy} and the conspiracy of retired police officers and contractors and the family of Seif al-Nasr. The foreign involvement will be clear when the people involved are brought to trial.

Q : The Intellectuals Seminar of May 1970 was invited to debate, among other issues, the leading forces of the Revolution. Has the RCC drawn any conclusion about the nature of these forces? The ASU constitution provides for the participation of 'non-exploiting capitalists'. Which are these?

A : The non-exploiting capitalist is the national capitalist. We found no real capitalism in Libya. It was a kind of political capitalism people using politics to get loans and contracts and to do business. There will be no more of that.

The non-exploiting capitalist is defined as he who is subject to progressive taxation, who uses his capital efficiently, and who does not earn his money through unlawful means, or does not exploit others.

Q : on the question of trade unions Colonel Gaddafi has stated 'We feared from the start of the Revolution that intruding elements would claim trusteeship over the workers. The Revolution has rejected any trusteeship over the workers'. Which were the intruding elements?

A : The head of the trade unions was a Member of Parliament, he ran business companies and was very rich. The government of the monarchy helped him to control the labour unions. (This was Salem Shiteh). Under the old regime trade union organisers used the labour movement to get political popularity and support and to climb higher; they were not workers themselves.

Q : Does the RCC derive any special lesson for the future of the Arab Socialist Union in Libya from the recent, May 1971, events in Cairo revealed by President Anwar Sadat?

A : These were natural events to be expected.
Corruption is part of human nature.
We have to purify ourselves from time to time.

Q : Do you see solutions at hand for the Palestinian problem and generally in the Middle East?

A : I am hopeful. The example set by the unity between Libya, Egypt and Syria at this time will set an example; this is an important step along the road.

Q : Is not internal change needed in some Arab states before it will be possible to achieve full Arab unity?

A : Change is needed in some countries.

Q : Do you give Libyan assistance towards this end, direct or indirect?

A : We set a good example.

ends

Indian dominated Tibet -
further 'act-16
cultural society occupy

Brit admin + Indian tried to
revert to old structures
They waited for some 70
Tibet grew strong again.
Never did Brit milit. other
governor

When oil came - new class in
making.

Benign ~~the~~ for confeder. 5 tribes
[Caucasian Parliament]

Class w. money emerged
w/ no class