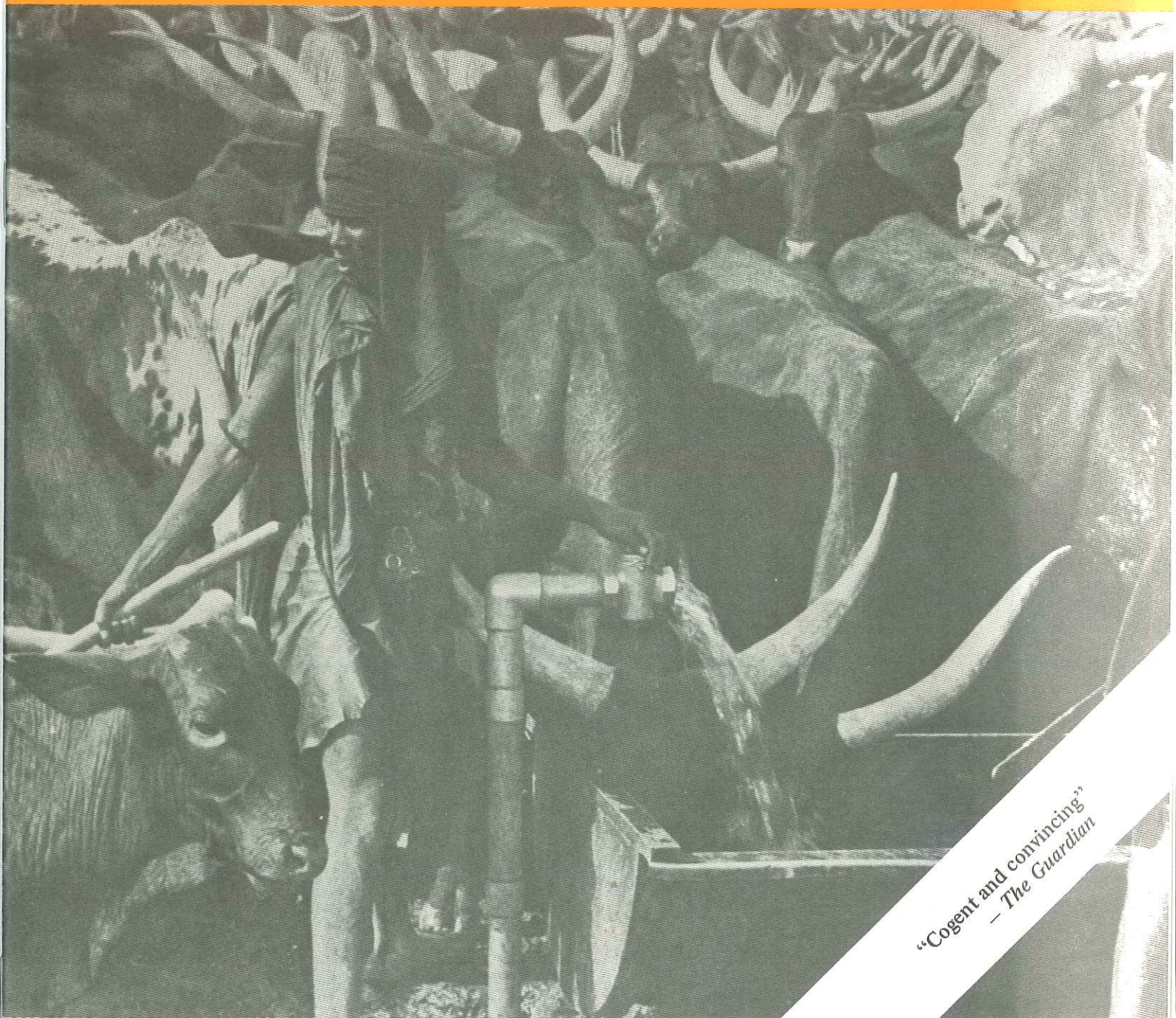


NOMADS OF THE SAHEL



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Report No. 33
revised edition

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- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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NOMADS OF THE SAHEL

By Patrick Marnham

CONTENTS

Map of western Africa showing the Sahel	4
I Introduction	5
II The crisis of 1973	7
III The position now	9
IV Summary	15
Appendix A. How many people died?	16
Appendix B. The economic crisis	17
References and abbreviations	18
Bibliography	19
Selected documentary films	19

From the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights,
adopted by the General Assembly
of the United Nations
on 10th December 1948:

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 10

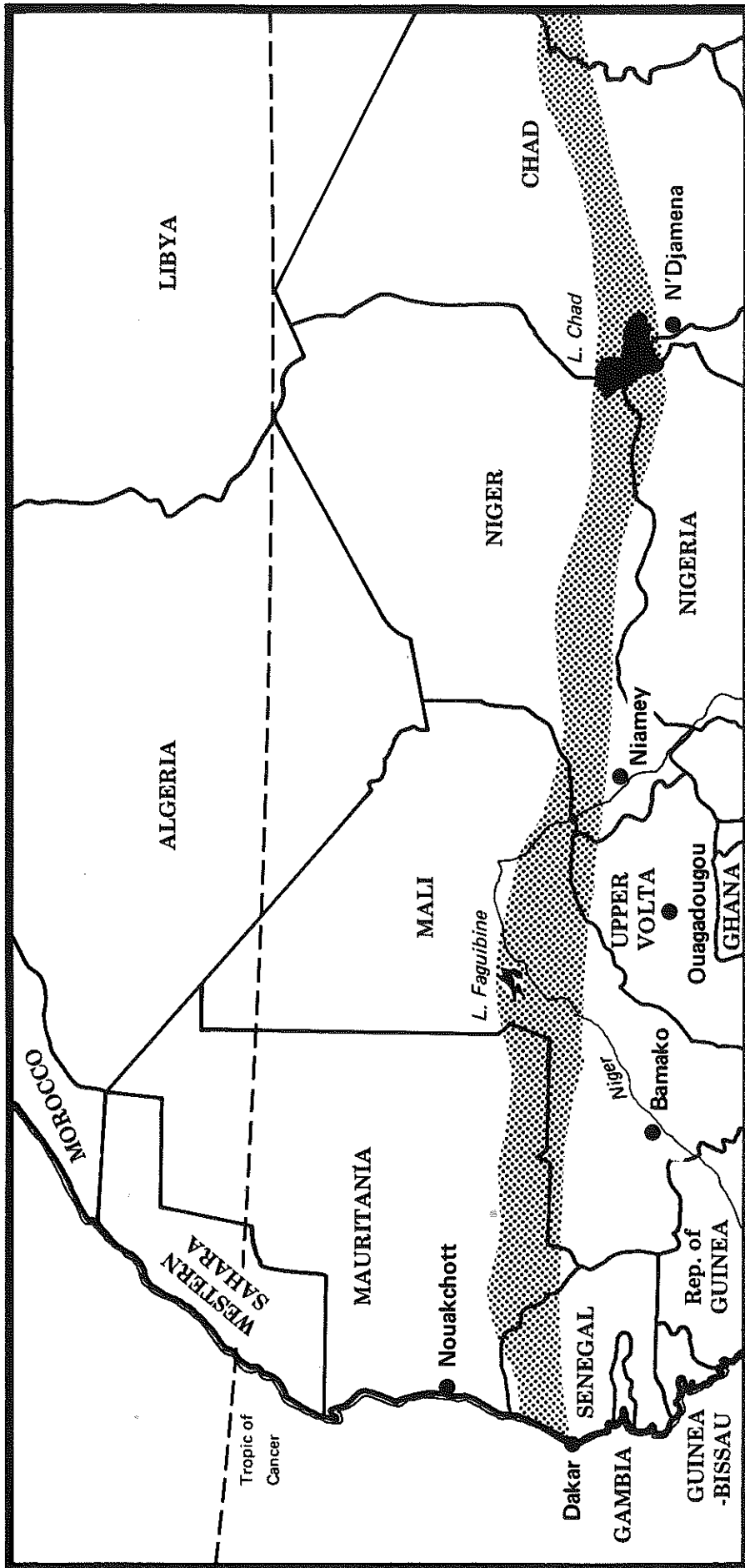
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.


Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.



 The Sahel (4" - 20" annual rainfall).

MAP OF WESTERN AFRICA

I INTRODUCTION

In 1973 an international disaster was declared in the Sahelian countries of West Africa (Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Chad). It was reported that since 1968 there had been six years of drought, that most of the livestock were dead, and that the Sahelian population – numbering six million people – were in danger of starving to death. This crisis was identified and publicised by the Sahelian governments and by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). As the year went by they were joined by various international charities and relief organisations. A typical appeal went as follows:

'The situation in the drought stricken Sahel region of Africa is almost impossible to grasp . . . Most of the cattle are dead anyway. Of thirst, starvation and disease. 100,000 human beings died of the same horrifying causes last year. Without help, God knows how many of the six million survivors will survive another year.'¹

The news of this famine threatening the lives of six million people caused worldwide alarm. In response various nations sent enormous quantities of food. By August, twenty countries had despatched 230,000 tons of relief supplies, and by September the total value of aid provided was \$13m². But the crisis continued. The amounts of food received did not equal the amounts requested by FAO and in November an international mission reported that, after the failure of the rains for a sixth year, the Sahel would need 662,000 tons of food in 1974³.

This time the amounts of food exceeded the FAO demands and a total of 750,000 tons of food was donated to the Sahelian countries. But despite the fact that 1974 saw both massive food donations and 'the end of the drought'⁴, with the heaviest rains for thirty years, the situation had apparently deteriorated to such an extent that FAO considered that food aid would have to continue in 1975 and 1976.

To summarise, the picture presented to the world at the time was of a natural disaster of the first order, affecting six very poor nations. A prolonged drought had led to the disappearance of almost all their livestock, destroyed their way of life, and resulted in mass famine. This had been caused by a change in climate which might continue. The traditionally self-sufficient nomadic peoples of West Africa were permanently weakened. The situation described amounted to no less than a sudden and complete collapse of living conditions in a vast area of the world. But was this an accurate description of events in the Sahel at that time?

The Land

The Sahel (from an Arabic word meaning 'Shore', and used to describe the area bordering the Saharan 'sea') is the 3,000 mile belt of semi-arid steppe between the Sahara desert and the fertile savanna of the West African Sudan. The true Sahel is bounded by the 4in and 20in annual rainfall lines and runs through six mainly French-speaking states – Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Chad –

which have a total population of approximately 25 million people. The Sahel is inhabited by a majority of nomadic people, as well as by semi-nomads and sedentary farmers, and may have a population of 6 million to 8 million. The nomads move between the true Sahel and the adjoining land on either side. Cultivated crops include sorghum, millet and even groundnuts, but the main occupation is nomadic pastoralism. One most important fact about the Sahelian climate is that there is no convincing evidence of cycles of rain and drought.⁵ It is impossible to foretell whether there will be more or less rain within a man's lifetime or how the succession of wet and dry years will take place.

The People

The most celebrated nomadic people of north and west Africa are the Tuareg who for eight hundred years dominated much of the Sahara and the Sahel. The Tuareg are 'Berber-speaking nomadic stock breeders who live in an extensive area of the central Sahara and the northern part of the Western Sudan'.⁶

The most numerous pastoralists are the Fulani (or Peulh) who inhabit parts of Niger, Mali, Upper Volta and Senegal, as well as Nigeria. In addition various nomadic tribes are ethnically grouped as either Arabs or Moors. And there are some distinct peoples such as the Teda, whose homeland is divided by the border between Chad and Libya.

The other important group of Sahelians are the settled agriculturalists of the Sahelian river systems. Historically they have competed for land and water with the nomadic pastoralists and have also provided slaves for the Tuareg economy, including labour in the salt mines in the Sahara, where there was a high morality rate due to the poor working conditions. But at the same time there was an increasing trade between the two peoples, of meat and milk for corn, and of salt and dates for gold and slaves. There was also a sharing of land, and of grazing for fertilizer, which, especially after nomadic power passed its peak in the sixteenth century, led to a more equal relationship between them.

Nevertheless, nomadic control of the Sahel continued into the nineteenth century. And when, early this century, the French tried to arm the Songhai cultivators of Niger against the Tuareg, the former refused the weapons saying that their legs would be their guns⁷. Even into the twentieth century the western Saharan fringe was ungoverned by the colonial powers, and the French were unable to discourage slavery effectively among the Tuareg until the 1930s. (Cases of slavery are still found today. There was a report in 1973 of a nine year-old girl being sold for 20 camels at Timbuctu⁸. For a study of the present practices of dependent and independent slaves or 'clients' see C. Oxby⁹.) The colonial frontiers, which have become a serious hindrance to nomadic freedom were sometimes imposed on a rather arbitrary basis. The line between Spanish Sahara and Mauritania was diverted westwards into the homeland of the Reguibat tribe to allow the French to have control of the salt at Idjil¹⁰. And the border between Algeria and Mali was drawn deep in the Sahara at Timiaouine; on the spot where Colonel Laperrine of the French administration of Algeria encountered his fierce rival Captain Théveniaut of the French colonial administration of West Africa, and agreed to settle matters peaceably¹¹.

By 1962, when the Sahelian countries had received independence from France, the nomads who had once dominated the Sahelian steppe and the Sudanian savanna had been reduced by the growth of sea-trade to West Africa, and other economic developments to the status of a minority within the six new national units, which were dominated by the settled people of the south. At this time many Tuareg in Mali wanted to be considered as Algerians and invited the Algerian authorities to extend their frontier southwards to the southern edge of the Sahara and the traditional Tuareg border. Algeria declined, and in 1963 a violent civil war broke out in northern Mali. At the Adrar des Iforas, in the southern Sahara along the Algerian border, the Malian forces defeated the Tuareg. A free-fire zone was declared in some of the chief grazing areas, and many Tuareg, including women and children were killed. Tuareg women were also abducted by the Malian army, a complete reversal of the historical situation.

The traditional economy

The extent to which the recent drought, and the previous and subsequent development programmes, have affected the Sahelian nomads varies considerably. The Fulani, for instance, who practise transhumance are not pure nomads. And the purer nomads range from those who rely more on cattle and those who rely more on camels. None of these minorities are equally threatened by particular schemes to alter the use of grazing land or to favour the majority of settled agriculturalists. But all the nomads of the Sahel, both those who tend towards the desert on one side and those who favour the savanna on the other, share a culture and an economy which depend to a crucial extent on nomadic pastoralism. And it is the failure of current development programmes to respect this way of life which causes their common disadvantage.

Nomadic pastoralism was the basis of all traditional land-use in the Sahel. 'Herd numbers (and so the number of people who could live off the pastoral economy) were limited by the quantities of dry season pasture within reach of the herdsman's base well. The animals would eat out all the vegetation in a circle of up to 30 km radius, and only a certain number would survive the dry season.¹² The wells were widely spaced. At the end of the dry season the Sahel grasses would start to grow and the herds would move away from the wells, allowing the pasture surrounding them to recover for the next dry season. Pasture and herd size would fluctuate. Animal disease and shortage of pasture kept human population and grazing pressure within bounds.

An alternative source of grazing was provided seasonally by the harvested fields of settled cultivators, where the cattle could graze the stubble, manure the ground and then move away before the cultivators needed the land for sowing. There were, in addition, marginal possibilities of cultivation, particularly of the land left fertile by the recession of the Niger's annual flood; there was the gathering of various wild plants (which continues today throughout the Sahel)¹³; and there was hunting.

Despite all these stratagems famine was a recurring problem in the Sahel, although in times of settled government, as from the 14th to 16th centuries, there are no records of famine¹⁴. Some of the great pre-colonial famines are

still remembered today. There was the 'sale of children' famine (they sold those they could no longer feed), 'the grinding up of the water gourd' (in order to eat it), and *Yollo Morou*, 'sit and stroke your plaits' (for no more could be done)⁵. The peculiar achievement of nomadic pastoralism in the Sahel was to make human occupation a possibility at all. A delicate ecological equilibrium had to be maintained (based on the distribution of water, the use of pasture and the preservation of soil structure) to which the concepts of commercial cropping, stock marketing and taxation were generally alien and destructive.

By the pursuit of high herd numbers and herd variety, the nomads ensured a flexible, living reserve, which, in times of need, could be supplemented by an extended system of loans and sharing throughout an enormous area in which they enjoyed unrestricted movement. At such times the nomads moved into the southern savanna, and reclaimed animals they had loaned to farmers in the previous good years when their own herd numbers had swollen¹⁵. The whole point of this economy was that it could and should be able to withstand drought and avoid or minimise famine.

The people and the land today

The effects of colonial rule on the Sahelian economy were not all immediately destructive. For instance, the growth of the West African coastal towns led to a demand for meat which could at first be easily supplied by the Sahelian pastoralists who were seeking ways of reinvigorating an economy under stress. But the most important effect of colonial development was destructive of the Sahelian economy. One of the first parts of the Sahel to be subjected to this was the Niger river basin. E.-F. Gautier, Professor of Geography at the University of Algiers, writing in 1928, expressed the colonial philosophy clearly. 'There is reason to expect that this region around the elbow of the Niger will have the finest future of any portion of the Sahara, and one out of all proportion to its present wretched state. It is truly a second Nile, *lacking only management to cause it to fertilize a second Egypt*. There is not another spot in the whole Sahara where such financial possibilities are indicated'⁷.

The inevitable result of this vision was to increase human pressure on the Sahelian environment. The consequences were noted as long ago as 1938¹⁶. The natural checks on population growth were removed with the introduction of medical and veterinary skills and political stability. There ensued deforestation, overgrazing and insufficient fallowing of cropland; 'the desert was not invading from without, the land was deteriorating from within'¹⁷. One of the most damaging misconceptions about desertification is that the desert invades from without and can be 'rolled back'. All too often the desert is merely replacing the formerly useable land on its borders which has been degraded by developers. This process has been intensified throughout the colonial and post colonial eras, since the development which has taken place has invariably been inappropriate to the pastoral environment.

It would be easy and quite wrong, to give an impression of pre-colonial nomadic life as idyllic. Nonetheless it did possess an inventive flexibility which was frozen by the colonial regime, without any account being taken of the

wishes of the people. But, despite this, a sophisticated mixture of pastoralism and agriculture continues to be employed wherever possible by the nomads of the Sahel. Nicolaisen⁶ has recorded the system employed in a good year by the Ayr Tuareg who pass between the outskirts of the true desert and the Sudanese savanna. At different seasons they chiefly depend for food on either meat and milk or grain and dates. In mid-February, with the spring of perennial plants, they rely on milk and meat. Then as the dry season tightens its hold they switch to grain and dates, so that by early June when the temperature reaches its annual peak and the herds are under stress and eating out the last of the dry season pastures, their consumption of milk and meat is at its lowest point. When the rains come from mid-June onwards the 'hunger season' begins. By mid-July normal supplies of grain and dates are used up and if the heavy rains do not come to restore the pastures and their supplies of meat and milk, they have to fall back on reserves and loans. By September, when the rains should be at their peak, the annual plants have their spring and Ayr Tuareg's dependence on milk and meat is at its height. And it remains predominant throughout the cooler winter, with its good pastures, until in the succeeding April the previous year's grain provides them with three month's food once more. So for nine months of the year the amount of grazing that they can obtain for their herds is critical, and they rely entirely on the pastoral skills which allow them to judge the different capacities in different conditions of their mixed herds of ewes, cows and female camels.

To some extent this pastoral economy is still supported by trans-Saharan trade. In 1949, forty thousand pack camels were counted at the annual fair of Goulimine¹⁸ and, despite overwhelming competition from Algerian lorries, the nomads are still able to supply the Sahel with salt mined in the Sahara and with north African dates which they exchange for grain. And trading caravans of as many as 200 camels were reported to be crossing the central Sahara from north to south last year¹⁸. Even the overland trip to Mecca from West Africa by caravan has not yet completely died out.

Numbers

Nobody knows how many nomads there are anywhere in the world, and notwithstanding the amount of international attention in the last five years, this remains as true for the Sahel as for other wildernesses.

According to Caldwell¹⁹ in 1974 the six Sahelian countries had a total population of 25 million, of which 10% was nomadic. Another survey²⁰ gave the same countries a population of 23 million in 1970 of which 3.8 million (16%) were Sahelian nomads. At the time of the drought in 1973 the total population of the Sahel was given as 6 million¹⁸ which would mean that (in combination with the previous count) two-thirds of the Sahelian population was nomadic. Confusion is ensured by the lack of agreement on the definition of the term nomad. Further, most of the Sahelian governments are unwilling to admit to having large numbers of nomads; and, anyway, encounter great difficulty in conducting accurate censuses of nomadic populations.

II THE CRISIS OF 1973

'I would not want to claim deaths from famine. We have had an economic disaster in the Sahel without precedent . . . but by all accounts we have had nothing comparable to Ethiopia.'

— Ebrahim Konate, Secretary of CILLS, December 1973²¹.

'Supposing that you manage to get 5 or 6 head of cattle or 10 sheep, as a result of the help given you and your personal effort. Would you stay here or return home and graze them?'

'A.: If the President orders us to go home, we will go; if he orders us to stay, we will stay; it is his right. Since we gave up our forefathers' traditions and came here, we now depend on him and we will obey him . . .'

— Interview with a Tuareg stock holder at Lazaret refugee camp in Niger, December 1973, by Diulde Laya⁵.

Before deciding whether the Sahelian nomads are facing a threat to the continued existence of nomadic life, it is helpful to know what happened to them. Whether or not there was massive famine in the Sahel, there is no dispute that the drought caused a high death toll among the nomadic herds, (although even here estimates of animal mortality vary between 25% and 80%). But there is extensive disagreement about even the rough extent to which the human population was affected by hunger. Perhaps all one can say even now is that there is evidence to suggest that people died in the bush before they could reach those who would have assisted them, that other people died in the refugee camps from the effects of malnutrition or from diseases which they contracted as a result of camp living conditions, and that other people who were in danger of death survived because they received relief supplies. But there are no reliable figures for how many people came into any of these categories. It was common FAO practice not to check the estimates of human and animal mortality made by Sahelian government staff even where there was evidence that these had been wildly exaggerated. (An example is provided by one Department in Niger where the government veterinarian estimated a 35% animal loss, a figure which was widely confirmed, after his annual vaccination tour. The Niger government report subsequently increased this loss to 80%²¹). Clearly UN surveys and official cablegrams were not reliable assessments.

Nor were they consistent ones. Thus, in July 1973, when FAO spokesmen, including its Director-General, were talking in terms of 'millions of people dying', FAO's own magazine *Ceres* carried a report which stated 'There's not much famine'²². Earlier in April the EEC's director of operations in Niger had said, 'There is no catastrophe in Niger. No one will die from starvation'²¹. And Mr. Konate made the statement quoted above when the aid operation was at its peak.

These contradictions continued right through to the reckoning one year later. Within a week of USAID's presenting its summary in 1974, which stated that 100,000 had died and that millions still faced famine, the US Congress was told by the Department of Agriculture that mass-starvation in the Sahel had been averted and the situation was now under control. There was even disagreement within USAID since the deputy-aid administrator

for Africa publicly dissented from USAID's assessment and said that 'the problem of malnutrition and food distribution in sub-Saharan Africa had vastly improved'²³.

One possible reason for the discrepancies may be that USAID exaggerated the observed death rate. For instance, one USAID doctor, M.H. Greene,²⁴ recorded an observed death rate in Mauritania which was 0.3% higher than the normal annual figure. This would have given an excess death rate among Mauritanian nomads in 1972-73 of 3000 (and might suggest a maximum Sahelian famine mortality figure of approximately 18,000). However, in reaching his final conclusion, Dr. Greene took into account unverified reports of a higher death rate and multiplied his original estimate by 15. (See Appendix A.) While the starvation of 18,000 among a population of 25 million is a terrible catastrophe, it presents a problem to famine relief organisations of quite a different magnitude to the death from famine of 100,000 people, or a death rate of 200,000 people a month, or a situation in which starvation threatened ten million people throughout West Africa.

The confusion about an imaginary mass famine of 1973 disguised a threat to the Sahelian nomads which could prove just as final as death from starvation. To quote the authors of a Sahelian Bibliography⁵, 'The Sahel is now well known to world public opinion because of the drought. But the facts, and their social consequences, still remain to be analysed. This is truly a difficult task, because there are many reasons for the disaster and the measures needed to remedy it will be long, difficult and costly. *But it is important to point out that the heavy-handed publicity about the Sahel has generally done more to mislead public opinion than to enlighten it.*'

One consequence of this widespread misunderstanding was that various governments were able to disguise the fact that they were capitalising on the crisis to advance their own ends. As a result of the massive 'famine relief' operation the United States government (through USAID, the Agency for International Development) gained a significantly larger share of the West African grain market; and all the Sahelian governments were able to initiate plans to enclose vast areas of grazing land for intensive ranching schemes²⁵ or settled agriculture. In addition many of their most independent citizens had been reduced, at least for some time, to dependency.

According to Mr. Konate the six Sahelian countries had suffered an economic disaster without precedent, but the effects of this were not evenly distributed among the inhabitants of the six countries. They were chiefly borne by the nomadic cattle raisers. Their economy and, eventually, their existence as a distinctive group of people are overwhelmingly dependent on herding, and many of their herds were destroyed during the drought. Among the nomads there was extensive personal suffering. One young herder said, 'I have never witnessed such distress since my birth. I suffered so much that I wondered what would become of me'. (Older men remembered many previous crises, some of which they were inclined to think had been even more dangerous.⁵)

The relief agencies responded to this distress by treating the situation as one of simple food shortage, and shipping in 250,000 tons of grain. They did this despite the fact that adequate grain supplies from within the Sahelian countries were known to be available throughout the period of the crisis. (See Appendix B.) This suggests that the grain was not intended for famine relief. And this

conclusion is supported by reports from the refugee camps which were set up at this time. For those people worst affected by the drought the camps could offer medical treatment; but for many others their most important use may have been as a market place. Observers who were naturally expecting to witness a simple famine relief centre with all emergency supplies being immediately consumed, failed to understand the commercial uses of the camps and became highly critical of them. But the evidence is that the camps were used as restocking centres by the nomads at the height of the emergency (in other words during a time when the camp populations were supposed to be in a state of hopeless dependency). In December 1973 Tuareg nomads who still possessed money were living in the camps in Niger while their herds continued to graze in the nearby pasture²¹. Later there was a market in Agades for stock which was being sold by refugees, and later still in Lazaret the inhabitants of the camp were selling their supplies of relief food in order to repurchase stock²⁶. Whether the nomads made a profit or loss on these transactions would have depended on the wildly fluctuating prices; but they form a pattern of trading between traditional partners in unusual but perfectly straightforward circumstances.

The current relationship between the nomads and the settled peoples of the area was also reflected in camp life. The camps were administered by the Sahelian governments, representing the southern, settled majorities, the historical enemies of the Tuareg. 'The government has to emphasize that its policy is to treat the Tuareg fairly', said an administrator in Niger²⁷. Otherwise it is feared that some of the southerners handling emergency relief would not be anxious to help people who consider them as potential slaves.'

By 1974, this lack of anxiety to help had deteriorated in some cases into hostility. There were new areas of conflict between the Tuareg and the settled people of the Sahel. In Niger, opposition to settlement schemes for nomads in newly irrigated areas was reported from Hausa and Djerma farmers²⁷. But the first report of a more serious conflict was in *Le Monde*²⁸ which accused the Malian government of deliberately starving Tuareg nomads in the refugee camps, and of 'finishing off' the work begun in the war of 1963. Some criticism of the Mali government dated back to before July 1973, when the President of Mali had described press hostility as a cynical exploitation of the suffering people. But *Le Monde's* comments were on a more serious scale. *Le Monde's* reporter was not given free access to the camps and he said that this was also the experience of representatives of the relief organisations, some of whom had been expelled from Mali for being too inquisitive. Furthermore, grain, which had been donated for famine relief, and which the Malian administration had insisted on distributing itself was on sale in Bamako. Part confirmation of this story was supplied later in 1974 when two senior government officials of the 6th region of Mali (the area where, according to *Le Monde*, deliberate starvation was taking place) were reported to have been severely rebuked by the President and subsequently dismissed. On the other hand, the fact that grain was on sale in Bamako was not evidence of a policy of deliberate starvation. (In 1976 flour was on sale in Bamako which had been donated by the West German government. Curiously enough fine white bread is a staple food in Bamako, but this flour was used for making croissants which are not a staple food among the indigenous population though they are much in de-

mand among the numerous European community. If Bamako has to support a European population which demands croissants it seems reasonable that the European governments should donate graded flour grains to satisfy this demand.) The nomads themselves had been selling relief grain three months earlier in Niger²¹, and in view of the enormous quantities of grain being shipped into countries (where it must be emphasised, there was no overall grain shortage) it is not surprising that relief grain reached the market in Bamako. Finally, at least one relief official was expelled not for suggesting that the Malians were deliberately starving nomads, but for saying that they were exaggerating the food shortage, and that there was no need for grain shipments at the 1974 level. While these various expulsions are not based on mutually incompatible reasons, they do suggest a more complicated story than the allegations made by *Le Monde*. Those in their turn may well have been true, but there was no subsequent journalistic or official investigation into them.

By October 1974 however, there were additional reports of mistreatment. In an extraordinary dispute between Mali and four other countries – Niger, Upper Volta, Algeria and Nigeria – a competition for refugees seemed to be getting underway. By this time the drought had broken with some of the heaviest rains on record and even the annual hunger season was over, but the populations of the ‘famine relief’ camps were in many cases still on site. The dispute started when Mali’s Defence Minister, Major Doukara, who was also responsible for the Interior and therefore the refugees, accused the governments of Niger, Algeria and Nigeria of detaining ‘Malian’ nomads who had taken refuge in the camps of these neighbouring countries. Major Doukara explained that Niger’s interest in such a policy of retention was clearly to increase its entitlement to drought relief²⁹, a statement of such blinding frankness in relation to his own government’s covert policy that it was almost bound to be corrected. The Minister added shortly afterwards that an alternative Niger motive might be to populate its sparsely inhabited regions; a speculation which opened a totally new departure in international development theory, the idea of people being forcibly introduced into the Sahel in order to develop it. As further clarification the Minister added that he did not know what the nomads’ own wishes in this matter might be, whether they would prefer to stay or to return to Mali. Subsequent evidence suggested that both preferences existed among the refugees.

Early in 1975 preparations for war were made in Mali and Upper Volta over what was described as a long-standing border dispute. However, the presence of Malian nomads in Upper Volta was partly the cause of the quarrel. The preparations led to a national levy of one month’s salary in Upper Volta which was predictably unpopular, and in north-east Volta feelings were strongly against the Malian nomads. They were harassed, beaten and imprisoned by local administrators. Refugee camps near Gorom Gorom were turned into prison camps, and people who had left the camps to find work or seek assistance in Gorom Gorom were abducted and transported to the southern part of the country³⁰.

The contrary experience was witnessed by relief workers when Lazaret camp in Niger was broken up in February and March 1975, and refugees were forcibly transported back to Mali. The Malian commissioners who came to inspect Lazaret camp criticised it as being too comfortable. (This was also the view of some Niger administrators. One

of them considered that the facilities at Tchén Tabaraden were of too permanent an appearance, thus encouraging the inhabitants to settle rather than return to their previous self-sufficiency. The man who made this comment, a Tuareg named Mouddou-ru Zakara, then Minister of Finance and Sahelian Affairs, an apt conjunction, was subsequently dismissed²¹.) And, since the refugees did not receive adequate assurances that the conditions at Gao, the camp in Mali to which they were going, would be supportable, many of them refused to leave. They were then forced onto the Malian lorries, but many hundreds out of the total of 3500 refugees jumped off the lorries before leaving Niger and fled into the bush³¹. They were in fear of a worse fate than discomfort from the Malian authorities.

Another report of ill-treatment comes from Algeria. According to a senior Algerian government official, Tuareg refugees from Mali sought refuge in Algeria in both 1972 and 1975. They had experienced brutality and deliberate neglect. In Algeria’s view they were ‘refugees from political problems which had nothing to do with the drought’. In 1972–3 another group of Kel Adrar Tuareg who had taken refuge from the drought in the Algerian Ahaggar (a traditional place of refuge, because they have kinsmen there) were returned to Mali at the request of the Malian government. They included several families. Although it was perfectly clear that they would be unable to survive the desert crossing through northern Mali they were forced to undertake it. They died of thirst in the desert. (Conversations with the author.) Several authorities consider that at one stage members of the Malian administration were toying with the idea of a final solution to the Tuareg problems, under cover of the drought.

III THE POSITION NOW

‘The Sahelian way of life is a form of intolerable suffering.’
– Dr. A.H. Boerma, Director-General of FAO,
May 1973²¹.

‘We have to discipline these people, and to control their grazing and their movements. Their liberty is too expensive for us. This disaster is our opportunity.’
– Ebrahim Konate, CILSS Secretary, December 1973²¹.

A: Various blue-prints for development

All current plans for the Sahel start from the point of view adopted by Dr. Boerma in the above quotation, which is the classic opinion of the outsider. High-growth development and intensified agriculture were the solutions instantly advocated by FAO’s OSRO as early as May 1973, when the committee was supposed to be dealing with the short-term problems of famine relief. To quote Elong M’Bassi, ‘the aim is straightforward. To ‘develop’ the Sahel, the rural economy must be monetized. And to begin with, the most reluctant of the nomad population must be forced to enter into the market economy. They must be obliged to sell their livestock, and, to do this, the entire animal production of the countries concerned must be reorganised by supervising the nomads’ animal husbandry. It is in this light that the series of conventions which have been signed be-

tween the countries of the Sahel and the aid organisations must be understood. These conventions are all concerned with the financing of ranches and fattening centres for slaughter-houses . . .³².

In the studies which were supposed to be directly concerned with averting mass famine the true intentions were obvious. 'A careful review should . . . be made of the usefulness and feasibility of implementing ranching enterprises in more favourable areas,' declared OSRO in May, 1973³³. 'The intensification of cereal production' was foreseen, and the overwhelming conclusion was hostile to the traditional balance of Sahelian life.

'More fundamental economic and social changes' the report continued, 'must be promoted if the people are to enjoy substantially higher living standards. *This applies particularly to the nomadic population of the lower rainfall areas, where transhumance is the normal way of life.* So long as they are tied to their traditional methods of livestock production, involving long migrations, direct dependence on seasonal pasture and water, and isolation from the rest of the community, they have only limited scope for achieving higher living standards and greater security.' At the same time the President of Niger was calling for a 'Marshall plan' for the Sahel³⁴. This was the same vision which had inspired Gautier in 1928, of 'the Nile of West Africa'. In thirty-five years nothing at all had been learnt.

The six Sahelian countries followed the OSRO line in their report of June 1973, and the schemes laid out then are now, imperfectly enough perhaps, being implemented. Although relations between the countries of CILSS are not close (there are still no common consulates between Mali, Niger and Upper Volta) the original uniformity of approach has not been breached. The Malian five year plan (1974-1978) exemplifies this. This document, which has been criticised as being 'less of a national plan than a list of projects'³⁵, faithfully reflects the truisms of uniform, inflexible development, and enters into some detail in doing so. Its objective is simply stated: 'To enable the whole population to reach a standard of living which will provide for all its cultural and material needs'³⁶. The chief means to achieve this are intensive agricultural cultivation leading to the creation of surplus and monetary purchasing power; industrialisation, firstly to produce goods for mass consumption and, secondly, to establish heavy industry; and the end of subsistence food production with a consequent 'liberation of the economy from the annual effects of the climate'.

The Sahel occupies a prominent place in this strategy. Nomadic stock-rearing is to be linked with the manufacture of agricultural by-products. The whole Sahelian region is to be divided into 'managed' and 'unmanaged' zones. Stock will be taken from Sahelian pastures to fattening stations where 'ill-advised' nomadic feeding techniques will be replaced by intensive feeding and mineral supplementation. The goat will be generally discouraged because of its 'fatal effect on supplies of wood' which would be needed for fuel in the new urban centres. And transhumance is to be replaced wherever possible, thereby safeguarding pastures and wells from its degrading effects. The plan reveals obvious contradictions between the demands of the high-consumption economy envisaged and the existing catastrophic damage to the Sahel caused by the mild increase in urbanisation and intensive agriculture which has already taken place. It also displays a complete disregard for the

values and advantages of transhumance in a harsh environment.

'Roll back the desert'

French interests in Mali continue. The Malian five-year plan was written by a French economist seconded to the Malian administration. It was printed to a high standard, at the expense of the French government's aid programme, in Chambéry, France. French influence over Mali embraces such details as pictures of French skiing champions on Mali's postage stamps, and French interests clearly stand to gain if the changes proposed in the Malian national plan are implemented. (For an excellent brief analysis of continuing French interest in West Africa generally, see an article by Samwilu Mwaffisi in the *Kenyan Sunday News*, 24 October 1974 'When the foetus feeds the mother'.) But the chief beneficiary of an up-dated Sahel would be the chief investor in the scheme, the United States. The development programme now being run by USAID, though little-publicised, is probably the most important new factor in the nomadic people's future. In April 1976, Dr. Kissinger wound up his African shuttle with a visit to Dakar where he announced a \$10 billion development programme to 'roll back the desert'. USAID has run bigger development programmes than this, but few which have had an equivalent capacity to destroy the society which is on the receiving end. In November 1975 the Agency had announced a programme which was budgeted at only \$7 billion from 'a group of developed countries', but, in the interim, US policy on West Africa had itself undergone some development following events in Rhodesia and Angola; and the money available for this altruistic endeavour increased proportionately. (The next step in this programme was taken on 2 June 1977, when an international conference of the 'Club of Sahel' in Ottawa drew up an economic plan for the region which will cost \$3 billion (£1765 million) up to 1982, and \$10 billion (£5882 million) over the next twenty years. The 'Sahel States' now include the Gambia and the Cape Verde islands.)

The main objectives of the plan, according to the State Department's deputy director for Africa³⁷, are 'to more than double' the *per capita* income of the Sahelian population; to attain a growth-rate in gross national product of 5% per annum; to bring 2.1 million more acres under irrigated cultivation; to increase agricultural production fourfold; and to double the level of food consumption among the 26 million people of the Sahel. If any further carrots are needed, literacy and life-expectancy are also to be increased. But no binding welfare commitments have been made. USAID commented that the 'actual figures' in this plan were to be regarded as highly tentative since detailed statistics for the region were regrettably absent. The plan makes no more than a nominal distinction between the objectives to be achieved for nomads and those for settled people, and apparently regards every Sahelian as a potentially well-settled citizen of the future.

Restoration and rehabilitation

The first part of the plan ('R & R' or Restoration & Rehabilitation), includes projects for new wells; for new silos

and warehouses for storing surplus grain; for veterinary schemes, new roads and improved river transport on the Niger; for tree planting, and for innovative crops such as onions and rice; for tourist facilities, poultry schemes and for health facilities. Where it has been applied in the Malian Sahel, one of the most active areas, it has met with various difficulties. (The elbow of the River Niger which runs through the Sahel in Mali is potentially the area of sharpest conflict between the nomadic and sedentary population. It is the only part of the entire Sahel where the population exceeds 25 people to the square mile. The river provides the cheapest opportunities for the irrigation of steppe so that it can produce cash crops. But it also plays an essential part in the nomadic strategy since it provides seasonal flood retreat agriculture.)

The pit silos (cost \$248,000), which were devised for feeding draught animals in more temperate regions (where they worked reasonably well), tend to fall in when they are dug in the sands of the remote 6th region. When the River Niger floods the water table rises, the silos also flood and their contents are ruined. In any case there are few draught animals in the Sahel, and it has been found that the people intended to use the silos during 'the hunger season' prefer to use the grass they can still obtain from the receding river flood. In a bad year this alternative might not be available, and the silos themselves might not flood, but to make full use of the silos, grass would have to be cut and stored every year in the knowledge that in most years it would be ruined anyway. Silos have also been dug in the south of Mali where they work better, but again there are few draught animals and there is anyway an ample supply of grass. Some small-bore wells (cost \$534,824) have had to be capped because their new owners lacked the money to pay for the essential electric pump. Wider bore wells of traditional design will now have to be dug instead by the local people. (The services of a UN technician on this project cost \$18,000 for one year.) Two wells drilled in the Sahel (cost \$180,000) are, in one case, unused because the villagers are unable to pay for the water, and, in both cases, are steadily filling with nitrate. The reason for this is not known. Two warehouses have been constructed, one in Mopti and one in Gao (cost \$280,000). The warehouse in Mopti blew down on completion. One man was injured and a court case is pending. Further problems have arisen in the development of grain storage because the only lecturer on the subject speaks English, a language spoken by very few Malian agriculturalists. The old road from Mopti to Gao was unuseable during the rains. Accordingly, road improvements (cost \$305,000) were made. The road is still impassable in the rains. Ten trucks provided as part of the road improvement scheme consumed \$20,000 worth of petrol in one year (that is to say in the four months of the first year when the road was open).

The 'Food for Work' programme uses 'excess labour' (it pays nomads to labour for food). 37 projects, mainly public works have been started in the 6th region. There was also a project to draw the women of the Sahel into the cultural life of Mali by arranging for them to undertake the cooperative weaving of straw panniers and hats for the US market. When the baskets were completed it was found that it was too expensive to sell them in America. On the other hand, they were too cheap to be sold in Bamako, where they would have undercut and ruined the local souvenir traders. It is now hoped to find a limited market for

the wares of the Tuareg basket weavers in the airports of Timbuktu and Goundam, which are used by the growing number of tourists.

No problems have yet been reported on the veterinary health project, which has tripled vaccine production 'to export level', or on the river transport project which has tripled the annual tonnage transportable along the Niger to Gao.

This list of 'problems' (which are regarded as usual at the start of a USAID programme) has not led to any second thoughts about the advisability of this type of development in the Sahel. And USAID are now relinquishing the 'R & R' stage of their plans for stage two.

Accelerated impact

Whereas 'R & R' was budgeted at \$6 million, 'A.I.' (the Accelerated Impact programme) will cost \$7.2 million. There is no detailed list of projects yet, but one of the more imaginative early suggestions has been to introduce cotton-seed as a high-protein dietary supplement. Since primary protein deficiency is now thought to be increasingly rare (even 'almost impossible, except among people who live exclusively on sago and cassava' according to a spokesman from the London School of Tropical Medicine³⁸), and the existing West African average is between 40 and 60 grams of protein a day, this scheme may have as much to do with the needs of the cotton producers as with those of the food consumers. There is considerable 'market-resistance' in the Sahel to the idea of eating a by-product of cotton; but the scheme had reached the stage of trials before the level of protein deficiency in Mali had even been established, and also in the face of a nutritional survey carried out in Upper Volta in 1973¹³, which could find absolutely no trace of protein deficiency even in the hunger season of a 'famine year'.

Another scheme has resulted in spending \$170,000 on the construction of schools which provide no vocational rural training (against the advice of the project director). And a \$3.5 million project for increasing production of rice and sorghum in the 6th region by extension and stricter control of existing flood recession techniques is already under way. One side-effect of this scheme will be further to restrict the use of this land by the nomads and to tilt the existing imbalance further towards the settled farmer.

But the most ingenious part of the Accelerated Impact programme so far is the grain purchase scheme. US grain is being supplied to the Malian government and placed on the market at the local price ('to avoid undercutting local farmers'). The funds from this sale are then set aside, and up to 15% can be drawn by USAID to pay for its own local expenses. (The scheme exemplifies the speed in which grain donations can be converted into grain sales.) The remainder has to be spent by Mali on agricultural projects which have been approved by USAID. This scheme allows USAID some of the financial benefits to be gained from direct sales and a much greater degree of control over Malian agricultural policy. The scheme was devised for countries which have unconvertible currencies, unlike Mali, and has financed many of the new American embassy buildings, since all such costs are in local currency. It also

finances local personal expenses. In Bamako for instance USAID staff receive a sum equivalent to the salaries of 4½ Malian teachers merely to meet their rent and air-conditioning bills. USAID's Malian landlords are also benefiting, and the people of Bamako have christened the new estate which has been built on proceeds of these rents 'le Quartier de la Sécheresse'³⁹.

Another highly effective ploy is the 'Food for Work' programme, which is defended by USAID on the grounds that 'at least it lets us decide who gets the food' — the assumption being that only USAID can be trusted to identify and succour those in greatest need. But food is frequently used to pay for work in areas where there is no food shortage, the effect being to depress the market for local food producers and also to encourage subsistence farmers (in accordance with the Malian national plan) to abandon their fields and to enter the consumer-economy as wage earners. Food for Work very soon becomes food and cash for work, (in Timbuctu, Tuareg nomads are being employed at a tree planting nursery for a wage of 35p and 3 kilos of sorghum a day) and the process is thereby set in motion.

Another method used by USAID to extend its hold over Mali's Sahelian economy is credit. Intensive agriculture with its increasingly thin profit margins, heavy capital investments and low use of labour, faces one especially serious problem all over Africa which is crop damage from wild animals. The remedy which recommends itself to USAID is not, naturally, that intensive food production may be unsuited to West Africa but that fencing should be installed. Fencing is very expensive, and cannot be purchased by local farmers without the provision of credit. USAID is now giving credit (and thereby acquiring debtors in Senegal) *directly* to Senegalese fruit farmers, having by-passed the 'inefficient' Senegalese credit system (which by virtually requiring that those wanting a loan should come to Dakar and be literate, at least protected most Senegalese farmers from a condition of debt). Once again the result is an acquisition by USAID of direct control over the Senegalese economy and agricultural policy. The provision of credit has not so far been widely applied to Sahelian nomads, but it is an integral part of the beef-fattening schemes which they are being invited to join, since the stock which the nomads will provide for the ranches will eventually have to undergo a veterinary and nutritional programme for which it will be far beyond their own resources to pay.

B. The Effects of Development on the Sahel

It is widely agreed that a crucial cause of the events in the Sahel in 1972 and 1973 were the inappropriate and destructive development programmes which had taken place in the preceding 10 years. The governing simplification of that period was well-summarised in a famine appeal advertisement which appeared in 1973. 'Drought sets up a vicious circle. Without water vegetation dies. Without vegetation cattle die. Without food people die.'⁴⁰ The obvious solution therefore was to tackle the problem at the root and provide more water, usually by the provision of wells. Sure enough the same relief agency stated that it was 'building dams and installing pumps and tanks'. It was also 'restoring cattle herds and transporting vets' and providing 'fertilizer, tools, and training on how to farm successfully against terrible odds'. But the real vicious circle was that

the provision of wells and vaccination programmes had led to seriously over-stocked Sahelian pastures and the training provided amounted to little more than an ignorant interference with a subtle local economy. In the words of one experienced observer of francophone West Africa, the Sahel 'is not a "disaster" with all the unpredictability and chance that this term suggests. It is the logical outcome of the policies of colonisation and development in the Sahel. The drought exposed and further precipitated the worsening crisis of the Sahel: over-exploitation and decreasing productivity of the land, the dismantling of rural social systems under the ruthless pressures of the money economy . . . An over-cultivated, over-grazed Sahel will always have droughts . . . The pastoral and agricultural economies of this semi-arid zone were traditionally geared to survival throughout long-periods of drought, as is testified by their livestock accumulation and grain-storage customs. However "modernisation" and the money economy have, in conjunction with the deterioration of the land, largely nullified these survival techniques.'⁴¹

Another writer has emphasised the damaging confusion between the intentions of the developers, who increased herd numbers to ensure a surplus for market, and those of the nomads who welcomed the larger herds as providing an increased reserve for their own use. 'Where such innovations (as veterinary prophylaxis) reinforce the traditional survival strategy by reducing the death rate of stock and allowing larger herds to survive they have been taken up very rapidly, because larger herds are seen by the pastoralists as providing greater security. The critical factor is that they are taken up within the traditional strategy, to reinforce it and not to generate a marketable surplus.'³⁴

What was so little understood in 1973 was that the governing simplification was a formula for a repetition of the very disaster which it was supposed to prevent. The dams and pumps and cattle schemes and expensive inorganic fertilizer were indeed 'terrible odds'⁴⁰ for the pastoralists to face; and it is these same schemes, with one or two nods in the direction of range management to obviate overgrazing⁴², which are now underway in the Sahel. All the current blueprints foresee increased industrialisation and urbanisation in countries where there is not even enough firewood to provide domestic fuel for the local needs of the relatively small urban settlements which have recently been established. Ouagadougou's firewood reserves have been exhausted within 40 miles of the city, forcing most people to spend up to 25% of their income on buying firewood from further away²⁸. And this loss of wood-cover has seriously diminished the Sahel's ability to produce food, as the classic dust-bowl pattern emerges. In the Sahel there is the additional effect that a firewood shortage leads to people using dried dung as a fuel, thereby preventing its prime use as an organic fertilizer. The firewood shortage which follows on urbanisation is directly linked to a consequent food shortage⁴³, and, in the fairly short term, it could lead to large areas of the Sahel which have been used by pastoralists and agriculturalists for centuries, being abandoned altogether by food producers (that is, being abandoned as areas of habitation by 6 million people).

Viewed from the planner's desk the development programmes may seem fragmented, grandiose and lacking any prospect of ordered fulfillment. But viewed from the Sahel even a partial programme has all the necessary capacity to destroy transhumance completely.

C. The Sahelian Nomads since the Drought

Those who returned

The great majority of the refugees who found their way to the camps in 1973 have since returned to pastoralism. This raises possibly the most important question of all; how has their way of life survived the crisis?

Clearly the Sahel has been able to support them for the last 3½ years. But the real test will come with the next period of stress. Will the climatic respite be sufficient to restore their economy to an adequate strength?

Whereas some herders were prepared to set out from the camps in groups of between 6 and 7 people with a mixed herd of 2 camels, 3 cows and 10 sheep³¹ provided they possessed enough grain, others stated that 5 cows were sufficient to provide them with the necessities of life. Some variation would be expected according to the season and what assistance the herders could expect from their peers. And many people eventually left the camps with very much smaller herds. From Timbuctu in October 1974 people left with only 3 months supply of grain, milk powder, and cooking oil or seed, and on average each family had 15% of their usual herd. But their position, even at this early date, was sufficiently recovered for them to be selling silver trinkets smuggled in from Mauritania to tourists. Since then many people have unexpectedly left public works' projects with ample stocks of grain (their pay under Food for Work terms) and only 2 or 3 goats. When the refugee camps were closed in the 6th region of Mali thousands of people faced the hunger season of 1974 with only 3 sacks of grain.

One German adviser working with a rehabilitation team in the 6th region is allocating among each of 800 of the most destitute families, 2 heifers, 3 to 4 sheep and 2 goats which are intended to support them and to restore the whole Sahelian herd to its peak figure within 10 years. The same adviser who had witnessed the disbanding of several of the camps estimated that though there had been considerable hardship at that time it had been alleviated by the traditional system of loaning and sharing. That this still operated adequately suggests a high degree of variation among those afflicted. But the willingness of people to return to the arid zones at all in conditions of such poverty is perhaps in itself the surest sign that permanent recovery is still a possibility.

Those who settled

Of those who did not return to nomadism a small number have been settled in experimental stations to grow crops and raise stock on small ranches round carefully managed and heavily subsidised model projects. In central Niger at the Assaouas oasis 300 Tuareg have been hired by FAO to irrigate a fifty-acre field of millet from a rain-fed lake and subterranean wells; and there are other small settlement schemes in the Djerma country along the Niger river.

At Tin Aicha in Mali a model village was set up north of Goundam on the shore of Lake Faguibine in the Sahel in June 1975. Its purpose is to persuade Tuareg to undertake agriculture, some stock-raising (for cultural as much as economic reasons) and basket-weaving. There is also a school, which teaches French among other subjects, and a

health care programme. The project started with 100 families (550 people) and by June 1976 had grown to 184 families (913 people). The original community came from the Goundam refugee camp. The project requires the full-time services of an American community leader and 7 Malian staff, including the project director. Seed, stock, medicine, a vehicle with maintenance and fuel, buildings and materials were all donated. There are similar schemes on the same scale in other parts of Mali.

Projects such as these, which affect a tiny proportion of the Sahelian population, are still too young to be judged on their own terms (as single villages) let alone as portents for the future. A more representative picture faces the administrator of the 6th region of Mali, who also speaks of settlement as his main objective. The main aim in this region is to draw the nomads into some form of settled agriculture (at least for some of the time). But the administration is currently dealing with a population that may number 1 million which is dispersed over a region the size of France. With the aid of his single landrover the administrator is unable to count the people or gather the taxes. But this does not prevent him, faced with the relentless daily pressure for statistics, from handing out figures on almost anything. Thus human mortality during the entire drought is estimated at '60-70%'⁴⁴ and those permanently destitute today total '180,000 to 200,000'.

Problems with transport and petrol are becoming increasingly serious for all government services throughout the Sahel. For instance in the 6th region half of the annual budget of the veterinary service alone is spent on petrol, and in the rainy season, when the roads are impassable for months at a time, it is impossible to run any veterinary service anyway. Nor is this merely a failure of the local administrators. In Mali even today there is no central coordinating office for nomadic affairs, and so, however ambitious the plans may be, their effects are consistently limited. This confusion and waywardness may of course be even more damaging than an orderly but inappropriate development. In any case, the administrative incapacity is a serious limitation on the whole theory of settlement as opposed to *laissez-faire* support for transhumance.

The unsettled

The third category of refugees have neither returned to the Sahel nor settled in experimental agricultural communities, but have continued in a more or less wretched state of dependency since 1973. The tendency for young men in particular to abandon their families and hang around the towns was noticeable throughout the region as early as 1972. (When it was widely reported in the international press to be a universal decision made by the entire Tuareg people.) Today refugees are still to be found throughout West Africa as far from the Sahel as the coastal cities from Dakar to Lagos. Tuareg men are widely employed on the coast as guards, because of their difference from the local population. Another aspect of their condition is illustrated by a Nigerian newspaper report of September 1975 that 'nationals of Niger had stormed the streets of Lagos begging for alms'. Subsequently 300 to 400 Tuareg were repatriated to Niger. (Gangs of Tuareg children begging in a determined manner are nonetheless a common sight in the streets of Lagos today.) An embarrassed announcement made by the ambassador of Niger at this time is of interest. Accepting responsibility for the beggars because they held Niger

identity cards, he explained that they were mainly 'light-skinned Tuareg from the north of Niger who were unused to any employment except animal husbandry and cattle-rearing'. He added that some Niger nationals who were of the same stock as Nigerians (i.e. people of the Hausa tribe) had been easily absorbed into the Nigerian labour-market. The sense of nationhood expressed in this observation does not tend to unite those holding Niger identity cards.

But the most serious dependency problem exists in Mauritania, where up to 100,000 refugees are said to have settled outside Nouakchott. Within two years of the drought, Mauritania had spent \$4.4 million on assistance projects intended to find some permanent function for the new settled population, but there are only 20,000 jobs in the entire modern sector of the labour force for a total population which is estimated to be 1.2 million. Development in Nouakchott has provided 1000 vegetable gardens and a few hundred construction jobs on a sugar refinery⁵⁸, but if more jobs are not found the future for the nomads will be one of 'refugees in their own country'.⁴⁵ This was not, presumably, the intention of the original Sahelian appeal, and in the present position of Mauritania the least satisfactory aspects of such a mass famine-relief operation can be clearly seen. With the possible exception of Chad, Mauritania is in the worst condition of any of the Sahelian countries. Complete collapse as a national unit under the pressure of the Moroccan-Saharan struggle is a foreseeable possibility. At the same time Mauritania's formerly nomadic citizens, 'the luxury the Sahel cannot afford', are the most advanced on the path to permanent dependency. This process, characterised as 'red-indianisation' by Bugnicourt²⁶ is one which has been in prospect for the nomads since the first refugee camps were opened. The second generation of refugees is already born, their parents have become accustomed to posing for tourist photographers, first as the subject of atrocity shots, then merely as picturesque sights. Now the best hope development offers them is the opportunity of employment; overseeing the herds of the multinational ranchers which will be established on the land where until recently they grazed their own stock.

D. The Notion of Permanent Crisis

'Normality is now a problem in the Sahel; perhaps that is the most important consequence of the drought'.³⁵

Although the mistakes which precipitated the Sahelian crisis are now more widely understood⁴⁶ the problems raised by this understanding have not begun to be solved. Instead of leading to action to halt destructive development, the crisis has resulted in a redoubled development of the old sort and to a perpetuation of that 'whining charity'⁴⁷ whereby each economic setback is seen as an invitation to seek further assistance. If normal life is widely viewed as 'a form of intolerable suffering' the opportunities for achieving a state of ever-increasing national dependence are almost endless.

In 1976 Mali had good rains and a good harvest, and was able to build up reserves and to export cereals to Niger, but nonetheless Mali experiences local food shortages in various districts and consequently *in a good year* requested and

received food aid. In Niger overall food shortages were reported and, according to the government at the beginning of the year, 1.2 million people (nearly a quarter of the population) once again 'faced starvation'. But an appeal for 200,000 tons of emergency relief supplies met with a very limited response, and after USAID had examined the official figures only 70,000 tons were supplied. Already the situation in Niger has deteriorated from 1973 to the extent that the government no longer decides on the country's food needs. Chad and the Cape Verde islands were variously described as having either 'a food shortage'⁴⁸ or 'a food surplus'⁴⁹. In any case both countries are thoroughly entangled in the net of dependency, and, having postponed indefinitely any self-generated solution to the problems of food supply in favour of handouts of American grain, have suffered a similar deterioration to that of Niger.

According to FAO, *per capita* food production throughout sub-Saharan Africa continues to fall behind population growth rates, a tendency which has been recorded since 1971. But despite the evident unsuitability of the remedies adopted to deal with this shortfall nothing changes. The tired remedy of technically efficient agriculture holds the field.

The notion of a permanent crisis is both a cause and an effect of destructive development. Inappropriate measures have been taken to assist a pastoral society ostensibly towards change for the better. The measures have resulted in change for the worse. This has led to a redoubling of the original remedies, and may well culminate in total dependence on foreign food suppliers. Expressed in the expectation of failure and permanent crisis, this, for the Sahel, is becoming the new normality.

E. 1977-1979

In the 18 months since the first edition of this report was completed, events in the Sahel have served to confirm its pessimistic conclusions.

In the political sphere, two of the Sahelian countries have been engaged in a continuous secessionist war. In Mauritania this has contributed to a *coup d'état* in July 1978, and in Chad in the same year it led to the reintroduction of French troops and planes. Hopes that the crisis in Chad was at a turning point, which rose when one of the rebel leaders (Hissen Habré) joined the central government in August 1978, fell again with the news in January 1979 that several of his advisers had been arrested by their own colleagues in the government. There has also been further evidence of a growing American political interest in the Sahel. In Mali in March 1978 four influential ministers, including Major Doukara the man in charge of Sahelian affairs, were arrested and charged with treason. They were described as representing the pro-Soviet element in the government.

The original report predicted a further Sahelian crisis if current development policies continued to be implemented.

In March 1978 Dr Edward Saouma, the new director-general of FAO, announced that massive quantities of food aid were once more needed in the Sahel. According to Dr Saouma some seven million people were suffering from malnutrition which was the result of drought, and the situation was becoming as bad as it had been in 1973. The Sahel region had been extended to include the Cape Verde Islands, the Gambia and Ghana, and it was estimated that 457,000 tonnes of food were needed at once.

In July M. Robert Galley, the French Minister for Co-operation, published a report which added the West African countries of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria to the list of those threatened by the prospect of starvation. He also said that massive emergency aid would be needed in order to forestall a repetition of the events of 1973. At the same time President Dawda Jawara of the Gambia, the current chairman of CILSS, confirmed that the list of development projects first devised after the 1973 drought were underway. In August FAO launched another appeal for emergency food aid for the Sahel, though by this time the amount requested had risen to 600,000 tonnes. Meanwhile there had been severe flooding after torrential rains in the neighbouring Sudan. In September FAO reassessed the situation and announced that the list of African countries requiring emergency aid had risen from 11 to 17, and that food shortages were now being caused by both drought and floods.

This pattern of appeals supports the argument in this report, namely: that it is not the Sahelian climate which is causing the Sahelian crisis. Africa has always known drought and floods. But the food crisis which has been growing over the last ten years has coincided with an intensification of completely unsuitable development schemes. These schemes destroy nomadic strategies for dealing with the climate and disturb the ecological balance of the area. Thereby they cause the very problem of desertification which they are purporting to solve.

The responsibility for this situation rests partly with the national governments of the region, but also with the international relief and development agencies and, in particular, with the influential governments of the West, chiefly those of America and France.

The nomadic people of the Sahelian countries, who are still without any effective representation at either national or international level, continue to be the chief victims of these lethal development schemes. Once again the provision of enormous quantities of emergency cereals is advocated. But such quantities of food still cannot be quickly distributed in the Sahel. Their importation tends to undermine the local system of food supply. It does nothing to assist those in most acute need, and it serves to disguise the true nature of the crisis.

In the United Kingdom the organisations which are best-fitted to assist the nomads are the private relief organisations – such as War on Want, Oxfam and Christian Aid. They are prepared to admit past mistakes, they have excellent up to date information from their own field officers, and they possess practical experience of the problems involved. Their own schemes are bound to be severely limited in scale in Francophone West Africa, but such agencies do have a very considerable influence over public opinion both in this country and abroad.

Certainly without informed and disinterested assistance from some quarter, the outlook for the 3 to 4 million nomadic people of the Sahel is increasingly desperate and hopeless.

IV SUMMARY

Minorities which occupy more than one country present a special problem. The great international conventions on human rights take no account of people outside nations. The people of a nation which has been dispossessed or overrun are within these conventions, but people who prefer not to align with any nation are not. Despite this, nomads

possess the right to exercise some choice over their own future, and the right not to die as a side-effect of official development policies. The current development programme in the Sahel is likely to violate both these rights.

The risk to the continuation of transhumance in the Sahel which is posed by these projects far exceeds that posed by the familiar climatic stress. The exact extent to which this is the result of misunderstanding, as opposed to deliberate but covert policy of enclosure and resettlement, is still unclear. What is clear is that modern aid programmes to countries which have no unavoidable food shortage are used by the developed countries as a deliberate strategy: 'Food is a weapon'⁵⁰. USAID's grain shipments bolster the price of American wheat and introduce artificial levels of consumption into the Sahel which can only be supplied from outside it. They sap the Sahelian capacity to produce its own food, and increase the Sahelian need for foreign exchange to purchase imported food, consumer goods and technological components³².

And in the Sahel there are, in addition, the numerous reasons already cited why the technological development and economic growth which accompany food handouts are inappropriate and destructive. It is interesting to compare the remarks of Governor Blacher, the French Governor of Niger during the famine of 1931, who considered the natives to be 'idle, indifferent, apathetic and fatalistic'⁵¹ with the remarks of the present administrator of the 6th region of Mali who considers that the nomads may still be tempted by idleness and sloth⁴⁴. Furthermore, many of the solutions advocated today are exactly those favoured by the colonial regime in the '30s. New roads, new wells, increased fertilizer, hybrid crops and technological training for agriculturalists were all advocated by the French Minister for the Colonies in a memorandum of 25 July 1933⁵¹. The goals were exactly the same as today, the results will doubtless be the same tomorrow. And the additional emphasis on education and health schemes are no answer to the fundamental problem, which is how to maintain the Sahel as a viable area for human habitation. Schooling, such as is now envisaged under the Malian National Plan, which destroys an ancient culture such as the Tuareg culture should not be confused with education. It increases rather than diminishes ignorance. Poverty is not banished by transforming a community of self-supporting subsistence peasants into a community of urban unemployed, dependent on food imports and welfare handouts.

The point of no return?

*In the view of some students of development, the Sahel and its people have reached the point of no return. The argument for withdrawal from the Sahel is that the traditional economy is so exhausted that the pastoralists are now reduced to selling their only capital, their livestock; their environment has been degraded beyond recovery; the independent governments which succeeded the colonies have insufficient resources to manage even their settled peoples, who take priority; and the only remaining option is to resettle the nomads 'in more accessible areas'⁵².

These proposals, apart from the fact that they take no account of the wishes of the people they affect, would apparently require intensified food-cropping, hydro-electric installations, meat ranching and marketing, and even subsequent resettlement of the populations which currently occupy the areas of reception⁵³.

Against this it is argued⁵⁴ that nomadic transhumance is now suffering less political pressure than in the days of raiding; that nomads do not favour agriculture; that withdrawal would leave a huge area of vacant land which might be of positive economic value to the Sahelian nations; and that resettlement is the recipe for disaster, as before.

Those who take the view that flexible development adapted to local conditions can yet be devised for the Sahel have made various proposals, none of which shows any signs of being implemented. A symposium held in Mauritania in 1973⁵⁵ concluded that the conflict between sedentarisation and nomadism might be resolved by the expansion of 'semi-nomadism', with the introduction of new plant species, range management and the substitution of marketing for population crashes. (The objection to this last proposal is the unpredictability of the environment, which means that the herders never know whether to sell their surplus or keep it for the lean years ahead.)

Another suggestion which is now reaching an experimental stage in Somalia, a country with a nomadic majority, is of nomadic cooperatives to govern the use of a grazing land which is under pressure. The chief strength of this scheme is the attention it pays to the preferences and capacities of the people who have to operate it.

But pending the discovery of a system of improvement or assistance for nomadic economies which is not in itself overwhelmingly destructive, such activities as are now being authorised in the Sahel can be expected both to increase the possibility of future crisis and to weaken people's capacity to withstand it.

APPENDIX A: How many people died?

Nobody knows how many people died from the effects of the drought in the Sahel. There is no agreement even on whether the figure was thousands or hundreds of thousands. Statements by official spokesmen that the entire population of these countries, up to 25 million people, were 'on the verge of death' can now be discounted. But, according to one USAID version, the final count reached 100,000. All these estimates referred to the total number of deaths, not just to those which occurred under the eyes of professional observers in the camps. How were the estimates made? The methods of USAID may have been typical. They were based on 'surveys, American government field studies, official cablegrams and reports of various voluntary agencies'²³. The internal reports of USAID are not usually published but some idea of USAID's own calculations can be obtained from Dr. Greene's report²⁴. He worked in Mauritania from July to September of 1973. At that time Mauritania was believed to have the highest death rate.

Dr. Greene (who was based at the Centre for the Control of Disease in Atlanta, Georgia, and was under contract to USAID), observed a death rate among Mauritanian nomads that was 0.3% higher than the normal death rate in a 'non-famine' year, after an extensive tour of the various centres throughout Mauritania where the affected population had been concentrated. During this tour he was able to make a well-detailed study of malnutrition and disease. His method for discovering the death rate was to ask heads of families how many of their dependents had died 'in the last year'. Although this method has obvious disadvantages it is possibly the only way to reach an estimate of the mortality among a population which for much of the period in

question had no contact with settled bureaucracies. The increase of 0.3% would have given a total of 3,000 deaths (among a Mauritanian nomadic population estimated at 960,000 people) which could be attributed to the exceptional conditions of 1972-3. The normal annual death toll was 23,040 or 2.4%. (The death rate in the UK is approximately 1.2%.) However, Greene was not satisfied with the figure he obtained by this method and considered he wrote, 'almost certainly is due primarily to the inaccuracy of the method used.' So he abandoned the results of his own research in favour of another method; this was evidence from some 'isolated villages' in which the death rate reported was as high as 65 to 70 per 1000. Then, on the assumption 'that this higher rate was a reasonable approximation of the true death rate', Greene produced a table which showed 'an excess mortality figure due to famine' among Mauritanian nomads of 44,160. Greene supported the validity of this assumption by reference to data collected by colleagues in the same USAID programme working in Niger, Mali and Upper Volta, where the *maximum reported* death rate was again 7%. (He did not say whether his colleagues, having used the same method of calculation, supported *their* findings by reference to his.)

The findings of the USAID team in Upper Volta contradict that of the survey carried out by J. Seaman and others in July 1973¹³. This survey raises doubts about the methods used by the USAID team. The weight-for-height method (also used by Greene), when compared by Seaman et al. with *a.* arm circumference-for-height and *b.* a graded clinical assessment gave 'the highest prevalence of malnutrition', but they add that it was not possible to determine whether 'European anthropometric standards' were simply inapplicable to the area. They did not attempt to record mortality statistics, but it is worth noting that among nomads in Upper Volta they found no sign of even vitamin deficiency, and no sign of an increase in epidemic measles which could be related to drought. They concluded, 'the anthropometric and clinical evidence presented suggests that although the population is at a low plane of nutrition the general situation is not unusual for rural Africans living in similar environments'.

The Seaman finding on measles again contradicts Greene, possibly because Seaman was not restricted to refugee camps — measles being a classic 'camp' disease.

According to Dr. Magnus Grabe of the Red Cross League at Lazaret Camp in Niger, the major causes of death were dehydration, measles and colds. Greene describes measles as 'the major current communicable-disease problem . . . in much of Mauritania, as in much of West Africa'. During the 1960s an intensive measles vaccination campaign was launched by USAID and the World Health Organisation. At first recorded cases in Mauritania declined from 3450 in 1969 to 2389 in 1970. In 1971 measles was said to have disappeared in the Sahel². But in 1972 recorded cases in Mauritania leapt to 8997, and in 1973, the year of the refugee camps, the figure reached a record 15,091 according to the Ministry of Health. (Other communicable diseases reported in the refugee camps included tuberculosis, parasitic infestation, meningitis, typhoid, infectious hepatitis, whooping cough and cholera.)

Among the many figures which will never emerge from the Sahel is the number of people who died because they went to the camps when they would have survived if they had avoided them.

If one restricts oneself to the evidence collected by Greene, and sets aside the hearsay, and one assumes that the mortality rate among the Mauritanian nomads was typical for the whole Sahelian nomadic population, again ignoring the hearsay that it was much higher, the total excess mortality rate would be 18,000 (in addition to the normal death total of 138,000). This conclusion would be hardly more convincing than Greene's, but it is at least based on some evidence. And there is further material to support it in Greene's own report. The fatality rate among measles cases treated in the Mauritanian camps was 10%. This is 'not as high as the rate reported in populations experiencing massive starvation, where case/fatality ratios may reach 50%'. (In Chad the fatality rate was 3%⁵⁶. So working from the Mauritanian measles figures alone (which were part of the basis for AID's use of the term 'massive famine') one might conclude that famine was running at one-fifth of 'massive' levels. Curiously enough USAID's final figure for deaths from famine was five times the figure suggested by the observed rate in Mauritania.

APPENDIX B: The economic crisis

The extent of the economic crisis which faced the six Sahelian governments in 1973 is another area wrapped in confusion.

In 1972 the total annual cattle production of Mali, Niger, and Upper Volta was worth £50 million which corresponded to about 1.3 million animals. At a 10% annual cull this represented a total herd for these three countries of 13 million head.⁵⁷ This represented half of the Sahelian herd of 1972. In 1968 the total Sahelian herd had been numbered at 21,317,000 head⁴⁷. These figures do not suggest much of an animal population crash over the first five years of drought, and they are confirmed by the livestock export figures of the six countries. In 1967 Chad exported \$8.8 million worth of livestock; by 1972 this had grown to \$13 million. In Niger and Mali there were similar increases, with Mali reaching all time highs in 1969 and 1970, and Niger a peak in 1972. In Mauritania over the same period there was a slight decline from \$15 million to \$14.6 million; and in Senegal a steep decline, from \$1 million to \$280,000, (but stock exports are an insignificant proportion of the Senegalese economy). Only in Upper Volta was there a blatant and economically significant decline in livestock exports from \$11.7 million to \$8.3 million.³³

To some extent any cattle losses in this period would be disguised by the simultaneous rise in world commodity prices, but price rises could not disguise a population crash; and in any case even if the gross domestic product was falling the revenues of the six governments were rising, not an entirely satisfactory situation but one very far removed from an economic disaster⁵⁷. Clearly traditional Sahelian strategies were capable of maintaining or slightly increasing stock numbers throughout five hard years. As the drought worsened the nomads sold more and more animals to buy grain, and livestock exports could be expected to grow right up to height of the crisis in 1973.

The rainfall figures for the Sahel-Sudan from 1968 to 1971 show how the drought fluctuated. With the average rainfall from 1923 to 1973 represented by 100 the figures were: 1968 (85), 1969 (99), 1970 (88), 1971 (80), 1972 (65),

1973 (62) and 1974 (90)⁵⁷. So there was no drought in 1969, and the real climatic emergency may not have started until 1971 when for the first time there were two bad years in a row. This was followed by two exceptionally bad years, leading to an animal population crash in 1973 on classic Sahelian lines, and the consequent economic crisis.

More significantly, the records for cereal production from 1968 to 1972 show that although there was a fall it did not amount to anything like an economic disaster. In Niger production rose by 5%, and in Mali by 0.6% against the previous five-year average. In Upper Volta there was a fall of 0.6% and in Senegal a fall of 9.5%. In Mauritania and Chad there were more serious falls of 25% and 21% respectively. But even in 1972, despite these falls, the governments of the region were sufficiently unconcerned to allow production and exports of cash crops such as cotton and peanuts to increase. They apparently had good reason to be unconcerned since, according to suppressed FAO reports, more than enough grain was produced in the Sahel region throughout the six-year crisis to feed everyone. (See *Food First, Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*, by Joseph Collins and Frances Moore Lappé, published by Houghton Mifflin in August 1977.) But even the published figures confirm adequate stocks of grain. The FAO/WHO recommended food-intake per person is about 0.6 kgs a day. So 219.6 kgs a year is the break-even *per caput* annual supply. Since cereals form a maximum of 70% of the total average food intake of the Sahelian population³³, the *per caput* annual supply would be 153.7 kgs of cereals a year. Throughout the whole Sahel in every year from 1968 to 1972 the *per caput* supply exceeded this figure comfortably. (That 153.7 kgs is anyway far too high a comfort figure is suggested by the fact that Mauritania has never reached it in any year since 1961, during all of which time it has been exporting livestock and grain.)

Of course these calculations leave no margin for inequality of distribution or wastage. But they do suggest that massive grain shipments from America were an eccentric solution to the problem.

In 1973 the crisis point was reached. The traditional Sahelian techniques so far applied to deal with the situation now began to fail. The first evidence was the rise in the animal mortality rate. Figures of 80% mortality which were reported from some districts seem to have been exceptional if they were even accurate at all. The overall average which was most frequently repeated was 35%, although Berg⁵⁷ suggests that it may have been as low as 25%. But even a 35% loss, economic disaster though that would represent, would not necessarily mean the permanent ruin of the Sahelian economies. And the impression that the damage both to the national economies and to the minority nomadic economies may have been less severe than was generally thought is encouraged by the eventual speed of recovery. As early as December 1974 OSRO was reporting a blooming Sahel with record rains, heavy crops and 'glossy cattle' in Niger, Mali, Chad and Upper Volta. 'The emergency relief averted mass starvation in the Sahel but food aid will need to be continued in 1975 and 1976,' a spokesman said⁴. (Seaman¹³ does not confirm this usefulness of the emergency relief food. 'It is not possible to say whether or not the people who have received free distribution of cereals have actually depended upon them. It is certain, however, that the amount of cereals available for distribution up to the end of July, 1973, — in Upper Volta — could not have provided even survival rations for the great majority.') The OSRO spokesman was referring to

the 1 million tons of grain imported into the Sahel in 1974, one-quarter of it acquired in cash purchase. The point ignored was that in 1967, the last 'normal' year, the six Sahelian countries had imported 336,000 tons of cereals. By 1972 this had risen to 554,000 tons (Senegal, with its heavily cash-cropped agriculture, providing in each case three-quarters of the total). But average domestic cereal production over the five year drought period had not been in universal decline.

Indeed in Niger and Mali it had risen. However the price of American grain had also risen, and by 1972 ½ million tons of imported grain was too expensive, (although even then regional grain exports were running at 66,000 tons). And so the six governments faced with another bad year raised the cry of 'famine' and switched away from grain purchase to grain donations. More equal distribution of even the depleted 1973 stocks would have avoided the need for either, except as an orderly restocking procedure for the years ahead.

The central political question in the confused history of the Sahelian drought is, why and how did a manageable regional economy, at a moment of stress, turn into a disaster area?

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ABBREVIATIONS

CILSS - Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
 FAO - The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization

ILO - International Labour Organization
 OSRO - The United Nations' Office for Sahelian Relief Operations
 WHO - World Health Organization
 USAID - United States Agency for International Development

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SELECTED DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Films listed in THE TELCO REPORT on the drought in the Sahel and its effect on the nomads
(B - broadcast, D - distributed)

Telco no:

Sahel countries in general

732553 *Drought in Africa* (32 min., colour) shows the effect of the drought in Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad and Upper Volta and relief measures by road and air. P-NOS, P.O. Box 10, Hilversum, Holland.

733556 *Drought, Famine, Death* (36 min., colour) shows how the drought has forced the nomads into city slums. This may destroy their old way of life for ever. B - 21 Aug. 73, Swedish TV, 105-10 Stockholm, Sweden.

735267 *The Drought* (Die Duerre) (45 min., colour) was filmed in Niger and Mauritania and shows the Tuareg, Peulh, Haussa and Djerma tribes, how they cope and what hope they have for the future. B - 14 Jan. 74 ZDF, P.O. Box 4040, 65 Mainz, Germany.

740962 *Sweltering Savannah* (4 x 30 min., colour) was filmed in Niger and Chad and shows a woman who travelled 600 kms with her children, the Tuaregs, whose culture is being swept away, the cause, effect and future of the drought etc. B - 14 Feb. 74, Swedish TV, 105-10 Stockholm, Sweden.

743070 A report on the drought (30 min., colour) and its effect on the tribes. Film focuses on one nomadic family in search of water. B - 14 July 74, CBS News (in Lamp Unto My Feet), 524 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019, USA.

743247 *Drought in the Sahara* (5 x 25 min., colour) shows how the people of the Sahara cope during the drought. Film focuses on the Tuareg, caravans, ceremonies etc. B - 15 Apr. 73, NTV/Tokyo. P-NAV Productions, 1-363-8-Nishi-Okubo, Shinjuku-ku Tokyo 160.

762749 *We Were the Ones Who Decided* (28 min., colour) (C'est nous qui avons décidé) shows the people's participation in the reconstruction of life in the Sahel. Film shows the Tchén Tabarden (Niger) pasturage project, new co-operatives established by nomads etc. P-Des McCalmont for Religious Television Associates, 315 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5A 1S7.

Chad

Ancient Pastoral (65 min.) by M.Y. Brandily, shows the life of the Kerchedas, nomads belonging to the Daza group, also known as Goranes. The recent drought has

severely decimated the population. B - 10 Sept. 74, French TV ORTF/1. D-Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, Voie des Pilotes, 94 Bry sur Marne, France.

742141 *Women of the Toubou* (25 min., colour) and *Tibesti* (10 min., colour) shows the matriarchal society of the Toubou. This area is now plagued by the drought. P-Anne Balfour, Balfour Films, 76 Brewer Street, London W1.

Mali

752855 *Sahel - A Year Later* (60 min., colour). P. Zurek filmed the extent of the drought, aid which is still awaiting distribution, wells which have to be driven deeper etc. B - 16 July 75, ORF, 1041, Vienna, Argentinierstr. 30A.

754656 *Hope for the Sahel* (45 min., colour) shows Dr. H. Breman in Mali, studying the cause of the drought and ways to avoid a recurrence. B - 29 Oct. 75, NOS (in Panoramiek), Postbus 10, Hilversum, Holland.

Mauritania

771758 *Mauritania* (9 min. 59", colour) shows the problems integrating nomads into production, Chinese economic influence etc. P-NDR (in Weltspiegel). D - Polytel, Tonndorfer Hauptstr 90, 2000 Hamburg.

Niger

733557 A report on the drought in Niger (30 min., colour) showing the attitude of the nomads to welfare handouts and city life. Half of Niger's cattle have been lost and suicide has increased alarmingly. B - 11 Aug. 73, ABC (in Reasoner Report), 7 West 66th Street, New York 10023.

742859 *Hunger in Niger* (51 min. 50", colour) shows refugee camps in Lazaret and Tchén-Tabarden, the affect of the drought on the Tuaregs, relief work etc. P-NOS, P.O. Box 10, Hilversum, Holland.

742166 *A Coup in the Desert* (18 min., colour). Film follows the coup d'état and shows efforts of the new government to settle the nomads and give them the opportunity to live from agriculture. B - 3 May 74, RTB (in 9,000,009), Cité de la Radio-Télévision, Schaerbeek-Linhout, Brussels 4.

Senegal

732640 *The Drought in Africa* (30 min., colour) shows the extent of the drought in Senegal. B - 21 June 73, Swiss French TV (in Temps présent).

740557 *Drought in Senegal* (45 min., colour). R. Louis filmed military and police guarding food stocks, tourists who never saw or wanted to see the misery caused by the starvation etc. *The Hunger Belt* shows the extent of the drought in the Sahel. B - 1 Feb. 74, NDR/Hamburg. D - Polytel, Tonndorfer Hauptstr. 90, 2000 Hamburg.

Enquiries regarding these films should be addressed to the broadcaster or distributor listed.

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The map is by John Wilson.



The cover photograph, which shows a group of Bororo cattlemen watering their zebu cattle at a new borehole in the desert, is by FAO.



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The Reports already published by the Minority Rights Group are:

- No. 1 **Religious minorities in the Soviet Union (Revised 1984 edition)** — 'systematically documented and unemotionally analysed'; 'telling'; 'outstandingly good and fairminded'.
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- No. 8 **Inequalities in Zimbabwe (Revised 1981 edition)** — 'outlines all the thorny problems'.
- No. 9 **The Basques and Catalans (Revised 1982 edition) (también en castellano) ('The Basques' aussi en français, auch auf deutsch)** — 'very valuable'.
- No.10 **The Chinese in Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia (Revised 1982 edition)** — 'a well-documented and sensible plea'.
- No.11 **The Biharis in Bangladesh (Fourth edition, 1982)** — 'a significant fusion of humane interest and objective clear-headed analysis'; 'a moving and desperate report'.
- No.12 **Israel's Oriental Immigrants and Druzes (Revised 1981 edition)** — 'timely'.
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