

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 1
Number 2 *Parameters Fall 1971*

Article 2

9-25-1971

Social Revolution in Saudi Arabia

Hermann FR. Eilts

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

Hermann F. Eilts, "Social Revolution in Saudi Arabia," *Parameters* 1, no. 2 (1971), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.1028.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN SAUDI ARABIA

PART II

by

THE HONORABLE HERMANN FR. EILTS
FORMER AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA, 1965-1970

Part I of this review of social change in Saudi Arabia, published in the Spring issue of Parameters, provided perspective on the impact of the modernization process on a still largely traditional Saudi society. The discovery and exploitation of the country's enormous petroleum reserves, a growing governmental income enabling considerable economic development, the exposure of Saudi nationals to a large number of expatriates, a massive and costly national defense program and a variety of related developments have all had an effect on molding, sometimes imperceptibly, new Saudi social attitudes. Since the publication of Part I, the Saudi Arabian Government has announced the initiation of a comprehensive multi-year economic development program, calling for governmental and private capital investment of approximately \$9.1 billion to stimulate growth in virtually every sector of Saudi society and economy. This newly approved economic development plan is designed to increase the Kingdom's manpower resources,

to diversify the sources of national revenue by reducing the country's present heavy dependence on petroleum, and to increase substantially agricultural production. A new Civil Service Code, which had been under discussion for well over a year, was adopted in April 1971, and is designed to standardize duties, rank structure and employee practices for the Saudi Arabian governmental bureaucracy. Still another potentially significant harbinger of political and social change is the recent establishment by royal decree of a Ministry of Justice, headed by Qadhi Muhammed ibn Ali Al-Harakan, a highly respected and forward-looking former magistrate of Jidda. Included in the promised ten point reform program of 1962 and long under discussion, such a Ministry may facilitate the complex task of reconciling traditional shari'a concepts with the legal requirements of a modernizing society. The naming of a minister from outside the Al-Shaykh sept, some speculate, may augur an easing of the strong grip which that distinguished family has had on the country's judicial system since the inception of the Saudi state two centuries ago.

Part II, below, addresses educational developments, communications, the role of women, and the tribal society in this land of transition. It concludes with some observations by the author regarding what we might expect as Saudi Arabia confronts the decade of the 70's.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Among the more dramatic aspects of Saudi Arabian social development in the past two decades has been the phenomenal rise of education. The primary *kuttab* schools,

Ambassador Eilts, Diplomatic Adviser to the Army War College Commandant, earned his BA (History and Political Science) at Ursinus College and his MA (International Relations and Middle East Studies) at Johns Hopkins University in the School of Advanced International Studies. He has received the Arthur F. Flemming Award for Distinguished Government Service and is a graduate of the National War College. In World War II he served in North Africa and Europe as an Army intelligence officer. Foreign Service assignments with the Department of State have taken him to Iran, Aden, Yemen, Iraq, Great Britain, Libya, and twice to Saudi Arabia. In 1970, he came to Carlisle Barracks from Saudi Arabia where he had served as US Ambassador since 1965.





DEPARTMENT OF STATE

President Nixon and King Fahd on the White House lawn during the latter's official visit to Washington, D.C., May 27, 1971.

designed to teach all youngsters to recite the *Quran* and to acquaint them with the essentials of Islam, had long existed. Lacking was an all-embracing modern educational structure. This had to be established virtually from scratch. Through the efforts of Prince Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz, the Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior who formerly served as Minister of Education, and of Shaykh Abdullah ibn Hassan Al-Shaykh, who now holds the latter portfolio, educational advance has made enormous strides. Between 1957 and 1968 the total annual appropriation of the Saudi Arabia Government for education almost quadrupled. It rose from about \$33 million to over \$116 million. As might be expected in a male-oriented society, education for boys has received principal emphasis. At all levels, the number of boys' schools, their student population, and their teacher staffing have soared.

Although curriculum content in the lower grades is still largely shaped by Islamic and Arabic cultural values, its scope is broadened as the student progresses to include mathematics, sciences, and foreign languages. English is the principal foreign language taught.

This rapid expansion of schools exceeded indigenous Saudi staffing capabilities and required the Saudi Arabian Government to engage teachers from Jordan, Syria, and elsewhere. Teachers of Saudi nationality outnumber non-Saudis in the elementary schools, but the reverse is the case at both intermediate and secondary levels. In order to redress this situation, Teachers' Training Institutes have been established for all school levels. Seven such institutes, geographically spread throughout the Western, Central and Eastern Provinces, currently exist. Vocational training has also received its due. There are at present five industrial (vocational) schools

located in Jidda, Riyadh (two), Medina, and Hofuf. Training for the handicapped is undertaken in various Institutes for the Blind scattered about the country, and at an Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in Riyadh.

More controversial in a traditional Saudi society, but also progressing, has been education for girls. Outside the purview of the Ministry of Education, it is conducted under a General Administration for Girls' Schools, headed by a highly conservative religious figure who reports directly to the monarch.

There were, and still are, many Saudis who question the need for formal education of the fair sex. Some years ago, for example, in the puritanical town of Burayda in Qasim Province, where an intermediate school for girls was about to be established by the government, to be shared with the nearby town of Anayza, the Buraydans threatened forcibly to prevent the school from opening. They were deterred only by the deployment of troops. They were firmly told by the monarch that they were free to send their daughters or not, but that the school would be opened for those who wished to take advantage of its services. Not long afterwards, many suggest because of the pressure of the women of Burayda on their menfolk, Burayda followed Anayza and somewhat abashedly availed itself of the opportunity.

Saudi Arabian Government appropriations for girls' schools rose from about \$440 thousand in 1960 to over \$13 million in 1967. Government-sponsored elementary schools for girls were begun in 1960; intermediate and secondary schools of this category followed four years later. Intermediate schools for girls are now located in Riyadh, Jidda, Mecca, Tayf, Medina, and the Eastern Province. Only the Central Region, i.e., Riyadh, has two secondary schools for girls. As yet coeducation is not accepted anywhere in the country.

A large number of girls have regularly attended private girls' schools, especially at the kindergarten, elementary, and intermediate levels. Even in private girls' schools, however, secondary education could not be introduced until 1964, when government schools accepted this innovation.

In 1968 there were almost 9,000 girls registered in all levels of private girls' schools.

Three secular institutions of higher learning currently exist in Saudi Arabia. Riyadh University, established in 1957 with only 64 students, has increased its enrollment to about 1,900 students. It now includes faculties of liberal arts, science, commerce, agriculture, engineering (originally UNESCO sponsored) and pharmacy. A medical school will shortly be added. Four years ago the King Abd al-Aziz University was founded in Jidda as a private institution, the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia. The flow of private donations proved inadequate to meet the growing expenses of curriculum and plant development and required the school to seek and accept some government financial assistance. In April 1971, persistent financial deficits caused the King Abd al-Aziz University to be taken over by the Saudi Arabian Government as a part of the national higher educational system. With a current enrollment of about 200 students, the King Abd al-Aziz University hopes to graduate its first class in 1972. A College of Petroleum and Minerals, conducted under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources rather than the Ministry of Education, exists in Dhahran with an enrollment of about 200 students.¹⁰ Education is free at all of these schools and students who attend them receive monthly government stipends. Student study habits could be strengthened across the board, but degree work at the Saudi universities ranges from satisfactory to good.

At Riyadh University women have been permitted to take courses as nonresidents since 1962 in the faculties of arts and commerce. Some 123 women were enrolled in liberal arts in 1968 and another 14 in commerce. At the King Abd al-Aziz University a women's faculty of liberal arts was established, but was physically located in premises removed from the school's principal campus. It was a source of considerable pride to the distaff sector of that university when a woman placed first in the Saudi Arabian Government-sponsored examinations held for all college students in 1969. Following the

recent governmental take-over of the King Abd al-Aziz University, its school for women was detached and will henceforth be separately administered by the General Administration for Girls' Schools.

Until the relatively recent establishment and development of higher education in Saudi Arabia, large numbers of Saudi secondary school graduates were sent to universities in America, Europe, and to other Arab states for degree work. Some went on their parents' account; others, as Saudi Arabian Government bursary students. Precise statistics on the total number are not available, but estimates of graduates of such outside universities range from 2,000 to 4,000. Approximately 1,000 Saudi students are currently studying in American colleges and universities. Most concentrate on the social sciences and, on their return, are absorbed into government ministries as civil servants or teachers, or go into business.

Usually fired with considerable enthusiasm at the time they return, many soon revert to the more leisurely patterns of Saudi society. Others are clearly restive and would like faster change. In 1969 the Saudi Arabian Government determined henceforth to send only graduate students abroad and to require new undergraduates to do their work in Saudi universities.

As might be expected in a country with so deep an Islamic tradition, religious education has also been given priority billing. A series of religious institutes of intermediate and secondary level, directed by the religious authorities, have been established in various parts of the country. Atop these is a Ministry of Education-conducted *Shari'a* College of Law and Islamic Studies, with dual premises in Riyadh and Mecca. Student enrollment in the intermediate and secondary religious institutes totaled almost 8,000 in 1968. At the higher level of religious education, the



ARAMCO

Secretary of State Rogers escorting King Faysal at the Department of State, May 28, 1971.

number is sharply reduced. In that same year almost 550 students attended the *Shari'a* College. These figures offer some clue to the continuing attraction of religious education. The higher level students train to be the *ulema* of the future. Many have traveled abroad. All have matured in a different economic and social environment than the one experienced by the generation of their immediate predecessors. They will perhaps bring to their religious duties a broader outlook on the changing spiritual requirements of a modernizing people.

Saudi Arabia has also experimented with adult education. By 1968 it claimed 550 schools intended for this purpose with an enrollment of 34,824 participants. Such schools are located primarily in the Eastern Province, Jidda, Jizan, Riyadh, Jauf, Tayf, Medina, Mecca, Qunfidha and Qasim.

The direct interest taken by King Faysal and his family in the development of education has been a major encouragement. The King has personally sponsored the Thagr Model School for Boys; his spouse, Amira Iffat, has done likewise for the Dar Al-Hanan School for Girls. Both are located in Jidda and range from kindergarten to secondary levels. Although considered as private rather than governmental schools, they have set a standard which other institutions seek to follow. Equally noteworthy and in striking contrast to the disinterest of the late King Saud in educating his children, all but the eldest of King Faysal's sons have graduated from either American or British universities or their equivalent. They have done so on their father's strong encouragement. Without fuss or fanfare, each of the King's sons is currently serving the country in a responsible and productive pursuit. Most of the daughters of King Faysal have been educated in private schools abroad and, judging from accounts of those who know them, are extremely intelligent young ladies.

The process of educational advance continues. With the increase in numbers, quality is now being stressed. Confronted with an unusually high illiteracy rate, which was estimated in 1960 to be about 85 percent, the Saudi Arabian Government has

concentrated on trying to raise the literacy factor.¹¹ Although current literacy statistics are lacking, it is undoubtedly making progress in this sphere. In a broader sense, the Saudi authorities have sought to train more persons to assume the increasingly complex responsibilities of government and business. In time, the government hopes to reach self-sufficiency in indigenous teachers, who may be expected to have a more enduring interest in furthering the nation's welfare than can be expected of short-term expatriates.



COMMUNICATIONS

In Saudi Arabia, as elsewhere, the advent of modern communications has acted as a powerful stimulus to social change. The introduction of such communications has not been without dispute. Philby, for example, has recounted the initial objection of the *ulema* to the telephone as unsanctioned by Allah and the maneuver employed by the late King Abd al-Aziz to have the *Quran* read over that instrument in order to persuade the religious doctors that the device could hardly be sinful.¹²

Radio was introduced into the country in the thirties with similar misgivings, but quickly proved its utility. During World War II King Abd al-Aziz and his court had to rely mainly on radio to keep abreast of the evolving military situation. For a long time BBC was exclusively listened to as a purveyor of information. Over the years, however, the volume of foreign radio programs beamed to the Arab world by the United States, the Soviet Union, and others has increased steadily. In recent years, in Saudi Arabia as elsewhere in the Arab world, Radio Kol Israel has been listened to widely as a source of news. During the Saudi-UAR confrontation, prompted by the Yemeni Civil War and lasting from 1962-1967, the Egyptian station Sawt al-Arab was particularly virulent in its attacks on the Saudi regime. Other radical Arab state radios have likewise attacked Saudi Arabia for its internal and external policies.

There is no way of preventing Saudis from

hearing such broadcasts. Essentially conservative in its outlook, respecting the person of King Faysal and distrusting the intentions of some of its Arab neighbors, the Saudi public at large has thus far shown little reaction to such radio attacks. These broadcasts have doubtless affected some of the young people, however, who privately deplore what they regard as Saudi Arabia's isolation from the main currents of Arab political thinking. Undoubtedly, too, these hostile broadcasts have created a greater undercurrent of anti-American attitudes on the part of many Saudis than is evident on the surface.

Saudi Arabia has established its own radio stations in Jidda and Riyadh. Program content is diverse and ranges from news to music to religious sermons. In recent years some programs for women have been introduced.

Of far greater impact than radio has been television. In October 1962, a royal order was issued calling for the establishment of television. In the following year, an agreement was signed with the Government of the United States whereby the services of the United States Army Corps of Engineers were made available to plan and supervise the construction of such stations. The US Army Engineers subsequently contracted with NBC/I—and, since the beginning of 1969, with AVCO—to operate the stations. Under the guidance of a foresighted former Saudi Minister of Information, Shaykh Jamil Hujaylan, work proceeded apace. In July 1965, the first two stations were completed in Jidda and Riyadh. Two years later, through microwave links, Mecca and Tayf were connected with the Jidda station. In December 1967 and July 1968, slightly smaller television stations were completed in Medina and Burayda, respectively.

Despite monetary concern prior to station completion that the conservative folk of Burayda might balk and seek to damage the tower, there was no such hostile reaction. Residents of the Eastern Province had since September 1957 enjoyed access to an ARAMCO-operated station. In May 1969, the Saudi Ministry of Information completed two

powerful transmitters in Dammam, which have taken over all television transmission in the Eastern Province and can reach nearby areas in the Gulf as well.

Exact figures are lacking, but an estimated 52,000-67,000 television receivers are believed to have been imported to Saudi Arabia. Many are located in coffee houses where multiple viewing is the rule. Assuming that approximately 10 persons watch each receiver, an estimated 520,000 to 670,000 Saudis—or about 20 percent of the population—are now looking at television. The number is increasing.

Programing is an exclusive Saudi responsibility. Initially, conservative skeptics of the desirability of introducing television were won over by stressing its value as a means of spreading religious doctrine. In consequence, the first programs had to give heavy emphasis to scripture readings, religious lectures, and classical Arabic music. By the spring of 1967, the ratio of religious programs had fallen to approximately 10 percent. Canned American programs, having higher entertainment content and complete with Arabic subtitles, increased. Following complaints by the *ulema* to the monarch, a Committee on Information was established in November 1967, by royal order, to insure that television programing conformed with Saudi custom and to curtail the number of programs with English sound tracks and the number of films showing violence, crime, or women. This led again to an increase in the number of religious programs which by early 1968 were once more consuming about a quarter of all the air time available. The Burayda station as late as 1968 devoted over 50 percent of its time to religious programs.

Much to the distress of the *ulema*, a few Saudi women have occasionally appeared on television. Although *ulema* indignation has usually forced this practice to be dropped, the trend will probably be revived.

Programing has recently been expanded in Jidda to 35 hours a week, of which more than 16 depend on foreign films. Visnews, a British firm, provides news tapes. American programs such as *Bonanza*, *Combat*, *Private Secretary*, *Dennis the Menace*, the

Flintstones, and even the Honeymooners are frequent fare. The most popular programs are Combat, Perry Mason, the Saint, and an interminable Lebanese film, Ghawar Adventure, along with foreign wrestling programs. Live quiz shows, usually with much animated audience participation, are greatly appreciated.

It is obviously difficult to measure with any accuracy the possible effects of television. Some believe that the screen exposure to non-Saudi culture may eventually prove more profound than the effects of foreign economic penetration. Saudis can drive Chevrolets, fly in Boeings, or eat American rice without changing their basic ideas about social customs, mores, and morals. The impact of ideas projected on the television screen may be more enduring. The five stations throughout the country regularly exchange programs. This feature of television may also increase national identity among middle class Saudis.

Although by now firmly established, television continues to stir controversy among the more orthodox. Those managing the system must therefore steer a cautious course. In their programming they must propitiate the conservatives by appropriate religious content, yet at the same time recognize that a growing majority of Saudis look to the medium for entertainment. Some suggest that television is outflanking the *ulema*. If this is true, it is partly because of a failure on the part of too many of the religious doctors to recognize its utility for their purposes. At least one distinguished *alim*, Shaykh Ali Tantawi, is demonstrating the value of television in the cause of religion. Possessed of an engaging television personality, this savant conducts a regular question and answer program on religious subjects. He invites written questions, reads them before the television camera, and with homely anecdote about and relevant allusion to contemporary everyday life instructs his viewers. Lacking his imagination, some of his colleagues shortsightedly criticize him. He deserves more credit. By introducing an element of zest into religious teaching, he increases its appeal to a Saudi generation that is bound to be affected by the materialism of our times.

The public showing of motion pictures remains forbidden. Nevertheless, a lucrative business has grown up in renting films for private showings. Although occasionally stopped by the religious police, the enterprise seems always to bounce back and appears to prosper.

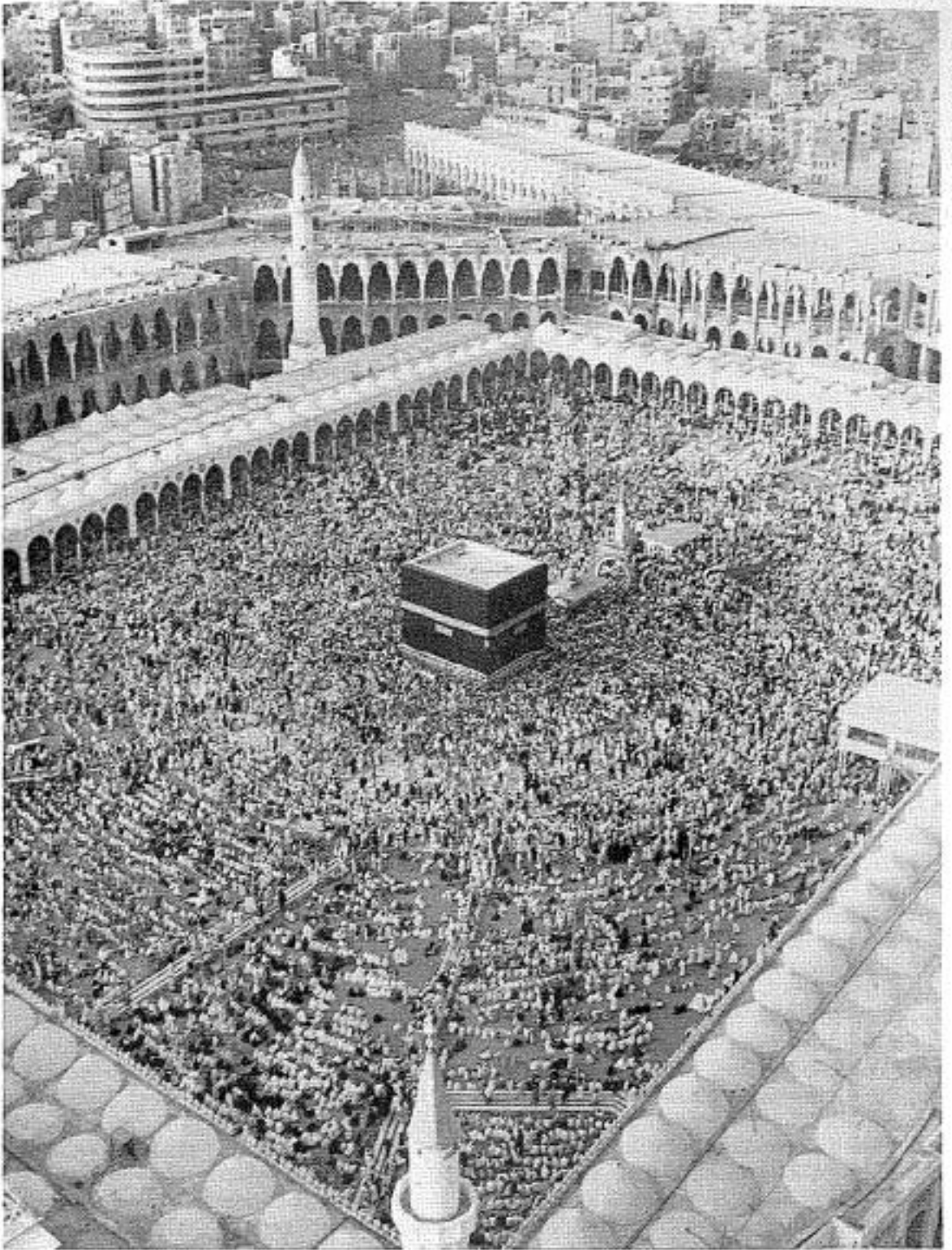
ROLE OF WOMEN

Any assessment of change in Saudi Arabia requires at least a brief consideration of the status of women and of the bedouin; not because of any direct affinity between them, but because they share a common elusiveness for the outside observer.

Saudi Arabia remains staunchly segregationist. Apart from the immediate family, the sexes are not expected to mix. The role of the Saudi woman has traditionally been that of inferior, the servant of man, and closely circumscribed. Although possessed of rights under the *shari'a*, her legal status is not equal to that of the male members of society. Marriage is usually arranged for her, divorce made easy for the husband, and polygamy is permitted. The veil and ankle-length dress still shroud her from the public view. The image has its validity, but is overdrawn.

The role of women is doubtless second to men. The veil persists, although interested observers note that it is becoming more transparent. Nor does it prevent acute feminine observation and the subsequent joys of indiscriminate gossip. Now, as before, moreover, the role of mother or wife is a powerful one. Mother and wife exercise considerable influence in family councils. Polygamy, although legally permissible, is becoming increasingly rare. In our times, even with the rise in income, few Saudis can afford more than one wife.

To be sure, the family remains the arbiter of woman's destiny and is in turn deeply influenced in its management of women's affairs by the dictates of traditional Islam. At school the girl learns religion and the Arabic sciences. The already mentioned increase in education for girls has begun to offer opportunities for higher learning, of which an



ARAMCO

The Hajj (Pilgrimage), one of the five pillars of Islam; Pilgrims at the Holy Ka'aba in Mecca.

increasing number of Saudi girls avail themselves. Yet among most Saudi families, female education tends to be regarded as an end in itself rather than a means to an end. An educated girl is a more interesting wife and mother, hence she is more marriageable.

Apart from teaching and some social work involving women, female employment opportunities remain rare. Gradually, however, a few openings are developing. For specific duties, largely involving contact with other women, various Saudi ministries have engaged a small number of women. Some years ago the police at Qaysumah, located along the TAPLINE route, startled the national authorities by requesting permission to hire a woman warder for female prisoners. Where women are engaged, they work in strict isolation. Such occupations as nursing and secretarial work, which require association of the sexes outside the family, remain frowned upon.

With few exceptions, a woman's life remains centered in homemaking and childbearing. Recreation largely takes the form of visiting other women. Weddings and the Saudi equivalent of baptisms remain the two most important social functions. Yet among women, too, education, radio and above all television are beginning to show their impact.

Behind the veil and under the ankle-length outside cloak, the *abaya*, are worn glamorous miniskirts, gowns, and other modern fashions. They may be imported, but they are worn with confident verve. Wealth has enabled the Saudi woman to cultivate style in dress, jewelry, and hairdos. She obviously enjoys doing so.

The ban on social mixing is also showing signs of slowly being breached. A small number of modernized Saudi women are willing to join their husbands in mixed company with Westerners or with other Saudi couples. A still smaller number of Saudi husbands are willing to have them do so. In the years ahead more women will probably persuade their husbands to risk the social opprobrium which such mixed visitations still entail. Family planning is not religiously approved and hardly seems necessary in an

underpopulated country. Yet, birth control, largely voluntary on the part of younger wives and mothers, is quietly spreading. The "pill" has become a major pharmaceutical import.

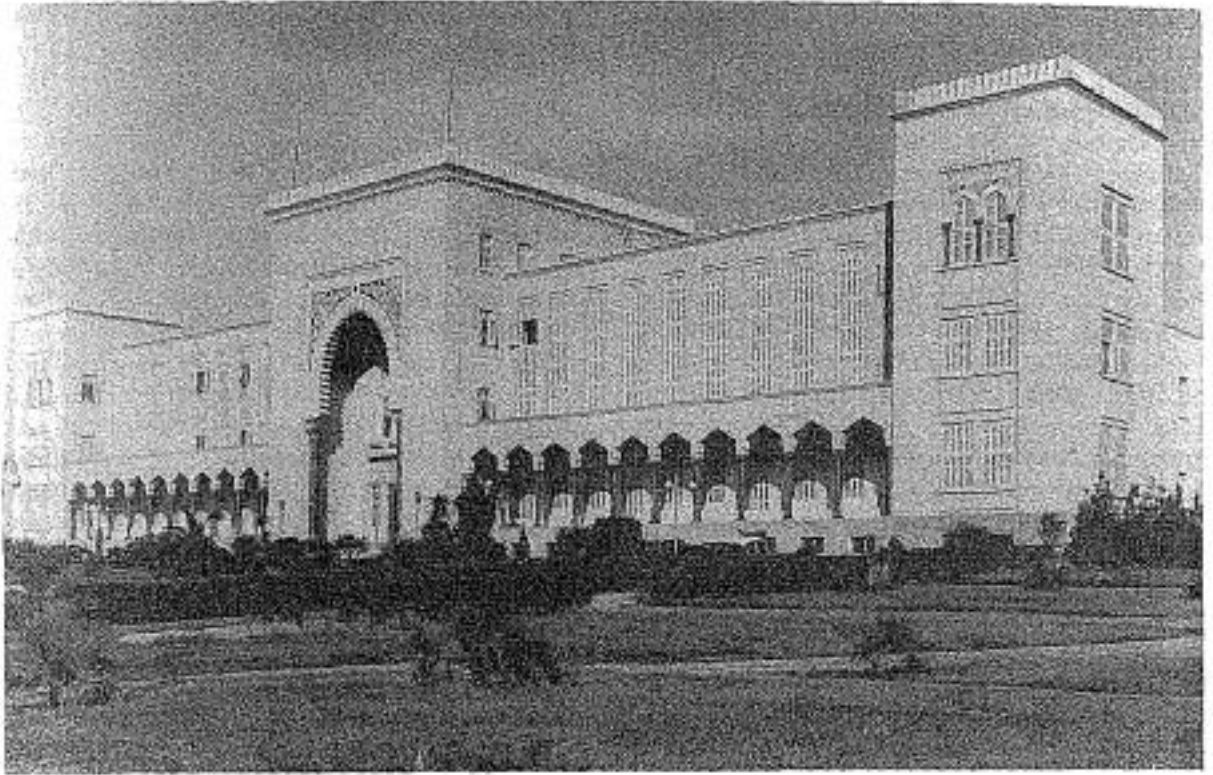
Already a type of social ambivalence characterizes many of the younger Saudi women. At one and the same time they seek to adopt Western fashions, yet conceal them under the garb of prescribed tradition. It is at times interesting to observe a Saudi woman boarding an aircraft somewhere in Europe, dressed in the latest style, yet casually donning veil and the amorphous black *abaya* shortly before arrival at Jidda or some other Saudi debarkation point.

* * * * *

TRIBAL SOCIETY

The bedouin remain a significant economic and social problem for Saudi Arabia. Although accurate statistics are unavailable, it has been estimated that approximately 20 percent of the total Saudi population of perhaps four million are tribally oriented, pastoral nomads.¹³ The great tribes of Anayza, Shammar, Mutayr, Atayba, Harb, Al-Murrah, Manasir, to mention but a few, remain much in evidence in the Saudi countryside. Their one time security threat has been largely removed, but they remain a truculent element of society. Like the *ulema*, their leaders are received in royal audience every Thursday, while individual tribesmen appear at the King's daily *majliss* loudly to demand this or that governmental service. Their petitions are sometimes of interminable length, but are patiently heard and answered by the monarch and his regional governors.

Bedouin settlement schemes are often discussed. An effort has for some years been underway, through the Ministry of Agriculture, to establish a bedouin resettlement area at Haradh, southeast of Riyadh. This involves converting about 10,000 acres of desert to irrigated land in order to settle about 1,000 bedouin families. Indicative of the sensitivity of such a scheme, King Faysal has instructed that only Al-Mussah tribesmen be settled there lest a



ARAMCO

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jidda.

more heterogeneous group rekindle old tribal feuds and add to the complexities of settling these nomads. At last report, some difficulty was being encountered in selecting Al-Murrah families who might give promise of making the scheme work.

The task of bedouin resettlement is unquestionably formidable. In this connection, the lessons of the paramilitary National Guard may be instructive. Made up largely of bedouin elements and organized—at least among its irregular formations—on strictly tribal lines, small villages consisting of the families of serving guardsmen have grown up around most National Guard encampments. These can hardly be considered permanent. Yet, depending on the deployment of the unit, many of these settlements remain for years.

In other areas of activity, too, one senses elements of change in bedouin life. Thus, for example, alongside the traditional black goathair tent nowadays there often stands a modern, store-purchased wall tent. The latter

takes the labor out of tentmaking and takes less time to erect or take down than does the homespun variety.

The goatskin water bag is increasingly being replaced by the rubber inner tubes of discarded tires. One sees more and more trucks parked near nomadic encampments. Such conveyances permit the hauling of sheep and goats to more distant pasturages. Similarly, many such bedouin encampments have tanker trucks bringing in needed water rather than moving camps continuously in search of it. The governor of the Eastern Province, a man deeply experienced in bedouin affairs, once attributed the trend to the nagging pressure of the bedouin wife, demanding that her husband emulate the neighbors and acquire a vehicle of his own. Whether this keeping-up-with-the-Joneses explanation is valid or not, the acceptance of modern motor transport by nomadic elements has the dual effect of lengthening site tenure and increasing grazing parameters.

Nor has the nomad been immune to

communication innovations. Although he may lack regular exposure to television, the transistor radio has found its way into many bedouin encampments and brings with it an increased—if still a suspicious—awareness of the world around him.

The bedouin continues to rely to some extent on the products of his camel, sheep, and goats for his everyday livelihood. With modern roads and trucks, however, the camel has lost its utility as a carrier of merchandise. Instead, apart from family transport, it is destined mainly for the butcher shops of Saudi towns. Here, too, practices are changing. A scene witnessed a few years ago in the northern village of 'Ar'Ar (Badanah) will illustrate the point. While driving near the outskirts of the village, the writer noted several tribesmen seemingly experiencing difficulty with a group of protesting camels. An attempt was underway to truss up all four legs of each of the brutes. This seemed a highly unusual way of hobbling, which customarily takes the form of a rope between the fetlocks of the front legs, and prompted an inquiry as to what they were doing. Tribesmen are reluctant to identify tribal affiliation and these were no exception. After some sparring, one finally acknowledged that he was of the Atayba and explained that the camels were to be sold to the butcher shops of Riyadh, some 400 miles distant. He pointed to a nearby Mercedes truck and explained that twelve such fully trussed camels could be loaded onto the vehicle. Noting that such trucking was surely expensive, the writer asked whether it would not be cheaper to walk the animals to Riyadh. The ragged Atayba tribesman scoffed at the suggestion. Any such trip, he loudly maintained, would take at least ten days, would emaciate the camel, and would certainly fatigue the herdsman. The butchers of Riyadh pay little for scrawny animals. The truck rental might cost as much as 1,000 riyals, but it would insure the arrival of the dozen camels within a day and in prime condition. They might then be expected to fetch at least 800 riyals each and with no strain on the herdsman, who planned to ride in the cab! Truly, the economy and the

practices of the bedouin are not devoid of change.



Social ferment is inevitable, constant, and not in itself wrong. It reflects a public demand for social benefits commensurate with technological progress. Neither official decree nor religious orthodoxy can permanently still it. Its constructive potential needs to be recognized and the test of leadership is to channel it into the building of a better society. Faith and change should not pose as mutually antagonistic. They should move in tandem for the common good. Like devout Muslims everywhere, Saudis are grappling with the problems of modernization. They may deplore the political excesses and economic follies of some of their neighbors, but they are also keenly aware of developments in surrounding Arab states.

Saudi Arabia has made much progress, but much remains to be done. The national dialogue on the nature of desired change, long underway at the private level, has entered the public domain. In a carefully worded editorial, a leading Jidda newspaper editor recently expressed public appreciation for achievements to date, but declared that the individual Saudi now looks forward to the promulgation of a "basic law," to new provincial regulations that may further the process of decentralization, to more low income housing, and to the development of innocent recreation within the country. Such reforms, he explained in good Islamic dialectic, are needed to "...create a strong Islam capable of fighting all destructive elements and ideologies."¹⁴ These aspirations are modest enough and are consistent with the as yet only partially fulfilled 1962 reform program.

The public dialogue remains muted, but it will grow in volume. There is nothing static about Saudi society. It is dynamic and, with continued forward-looking leadership, it is capable of constructive progress. In the decade of the seventies Saudi leadership will increasingly have to come to grips with the

admittedly difficult task of reconciling the country's fundamental values with the inexorable forces of social change. Success in this endeavor is essential for continued stability, development, and the welfare of the nation as a whole.

(This concludes the two-part survey of the background and current conditions contributing to the social change taking place in Saudi Arabia.)

FOOTNOTES

10. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Central Department

of Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook, 1388 A.H., 1968 A.D.*, Dammam, 1969, pp. 41-71, gives statistics on various aspects of education up to the year 1968. Also useful in examining the growing Saudi school system is Alfred Thomas, Jr., *Saudi Arabia, A Study of the Educational System of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Guide to the Academic Placement of Students From the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in United States Educational Institutions*, 1968.

11. Thomas, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 2.

12. H. St. John Phiiby, *Saudi Arabia*, London, 1955, p. 305.

13. Edmond Y. Asfour, *Saudi Arabia, Long Term Projections of Supply of and Demand for Agricultural Products*, Beirut, p. 57. Another 60 percent is estimated as rural population.

14. *Ukaz* (Jidda), July 11, 1970.

**Genealogical Table of the House of Sa'ud (Simplified)
With the Order and Duration of Rule**

