

Life in the Sudan

THE GEZIRA . . . Continued

By Bayyinah Sharrieff

Fatma and I boarded a bus in Wad Medani to return to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. Her brother, Bashir Nasir Bashir drove us to the bus station, which was a small building in an open yard. Many buses were parked in this yard. Fatma's sisters remained in Wad Medani with Bashir. Fatma and I were to return to Khartoum for a few days then go north to Atbara (a city North of Khartoum at the junctions of the river Nile, and the river Atbara).

WE HAD PACKED small lunches in the event that we became hungry on the long journey ahead which was to last eight to ten hours. We also had a thermos bottle of cold water.

We left Wad Medani about 9 a.m. The bus was packed full of many people. There was much laughing and conversing at the station before our departure, for many of the travelers' relatives and friends had come to bid them a good journey.

It was a small bus, similar to a country school bus. Since the roads were not finished a crude bumpy ride was ahead for us. Frequently the bus had to stop for small herds of sheep or goats to cross the road. It was a very warm day. And, air conditioning was not to be found with the exception of the open windows which were without screens on this bus.

Neither of us felt like eating on the road. The ride was uneasy but adventurous. I was very happy to get a chance to travel by bus, so as to become familiar with a popular form of transportation in the Sudan.

Bashir had spoken to the bus driver about Fatma and me. And, when we made a stop, the driver brought us both a cold soft drink.

Every time the bus came to a small village, it stopped. The driver asked us if there was anything that he could get for us to make our trip more comfortable. Children ran up to the windows of the bus, with fruits and handicrafts in their hands to sell the passengers. The men shouted from their fruit and vegetable stands to those of us who remained on the bus to come and see their merchandise and produce. Fatma purchased bananas and mangoes for her family in Omdurman.

WE DID NOT have to worry about being insulted or molested on our trip. For this was a Muslim country. As females we felt safe. Especially since we were both dressed as Muslims. Fatma

wore her national dress, and I wore a Tahara (the head piece which young Muslim women wear to cover their heads, shoulders, bosoms and part of their arms). We did not speak to any of the male passengers on this trip.

As did the other females on the bus, we did not walk around when it stopped. By the time we reached the station in Khartoum, we were very exhausted. We telephoned our families. I was living with the family of Siham Abulelleh, whose husband (Mahmoud Osman Kulieb) I knew when he was a student at the University of Michigan. In a short time they came for us. When we reached home, we bathed and ate a small meal. After resting a few hours, some members of Fatma's family came and took her home.

Siham's family's home was like my own. They had prepared a beautiful room for me and I stayed there whenever I wanted to get a break from my room on the campus.

As I reflect on my ride from Wad Medani to Khartoum, I recall the security which I felt during this trip. This would hardly be the case in traveling cross country on an American bus, where the driver would hardly look after the safety of two Black young women. He would hardly bring us a soft cold drink free of charge without another thought of becoming familiar. But then this is one of the basic differences between an Islamic society and a Christian society.

ISLAM TEACHES against the lust of man for woman and vice versa. It is against the universal ethical laws of Islam to lust. It is not an act of a righteous person, and a righteous person is a Muslim. To avoid the possibility of creating such desires in man, and woman, Islam strictly instructs both the male and female to not look into the eyes of the other lest they invite an evil intent or arise a disease which is hidden within another, (Holy

Quran 24:30). The Holy Qur-an also instructs the woman not to speak too softly to any man for soft speech is a charming attribute of a female and even though it may not be intended to attract or invite a male to make some act or acts of aggression, it may do so (Holy Quran 33:32). In an Islamic society the women do not speak to men other than their husband and blood relatives to avoid such misunderstanding. They even hesitate to speak with their second and third male cousins.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad instructs the woman not to indulge in idle conversation with those outside of the Believing men, unless it is absolutely necessary. For believing men and women his instructions are the same. This keeps at a minimum the possibilities of letting the Believer fall victim to misunderstandings and temptations.

Find Presidency Cost \$50 Million

WASHINGTON—The astronomical cost of political campaigns has come to light here from two sources which assert that candidates, from President to dog-catcher, spent between \$250 million and \$300 million on this year's campaign.

A THIRD of that total was spent in pursuit of the Presidency alone.

The estimates, compiled by experts in campaign financing, are supported by an Associated Press survey of political spending.

Aside from the Presidential race, the costliest contests are those for major statewide offices in the big states.

According to the estimates, Nixon's backers spent \$50 million in 1968.

The burning question, of course, is who provides these funds and what do they receive in return.

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