

## Flightiness of U.S. Aid Is Seen During Trip to Gezira On A Hot Day in Sudan

By Bayylnah Sharrieff

One of the most pleasant trips I had while in the Sudan, was to the Gezira.

**THE GEZIRA** is located between the Blue and White Nile rivers. It is closer to the Blue Nile, about 75 miles south of the capital city of Khartoum. It comprises 1,850,000 acres which is cultivated primarily for the production of cotton, Dura, and wheat and groundnuts may also be used in this system.

Cotton is the main export of the Sudan. Her economy therefore depends largely on her cotton product, which is exported primarily to England, and Germany second.

The Sudan has been under England since the Condominium agreement in 1901, which placed the Sudan under the rule of England, and Egypt (in reality solely under England). It did not receive independence until 1956.

This fact has made her very dependent on England with regards to looking to England for guidance concerning products, government, and education, etc. Up to this day, England is the largest single market to which the Sudan exports her resources.

**DURING** one of the vacations, while I was a student in the University of Khartoum, Sudan, I went with my roommate, Fatma Nashir Bashir to stay with her brother who was an inspector of the Gezira near El Housh, a small village near the Gezira.

Fatma, her two younger sisters and myself rode in a Volkswagen driven by her brother, who spoke very fluent English.

It was an extremely hot day, with temperatures in the 100's when we left the city. We took a road which was paved by the American government towards Wad Medani.

This paved road stops right outside Khartoum, and only the dirt road continues to Wad Medani.

The Sudanese students have often said that it is the equivalent to a landing strip for airplanes, and that perhaps this was the objective of the American government in not completing the road.

Whatever the recorded reasons for the American government's incomplete project, the students and the people in general do not like this unfinished work. This is, however, typical of the American government extending what is termed aid to underdeveloped countries. She starts projects to make the people see the marvels of her capabilities, and then does not complete them unless that people and government accepts all terms (which in reality benefit the American government) with the aid. When and if the people do not comply with their terms the project is either stopped, left incomplete, or destroyed. Yet America boasts of their great contributions to foreign aid.

**WE PASSED** a poor small village of the Nigerian filahin (peasant). Some of them settled in the Sudan after making their pilgrimage to Mecca. Many of them work in the gezira. They also do menial work in the Sudan. Often one can see a Nigeria felahin woman selling peanuts on the streets and in the market places.

The automobile in which we rode was the only one on the road that could be seen as far as the eye could see. We drove along the canals which are used to irrigate the lands. It was very interesting to see the water locks and the way the people irrigate the lands.

As we rode along, the people in the villages waved at us, spoke out to us, and the children ran up to us laughing and playing. It took us about 8½ hours to drive from Khartoum to Wad Medani.

**THE GEZIRA** is worked on a sharecrop agreement, 40 per cent of the proceeds of the sale of the crop goes to the government, and 46 per cent to the tenant. The other 14 per cent is divided between the Sudan Gezier Board, the development fund, and the local government.

Before going to Fatma's brother's home in the Gezira, we went to Wad Medani.

(To be continued)

“MO