

Ce plan, qui se présente sous la forme d'un beau dessin géométrique aux couleurs vives, n'a malheureusement pas été suffisamment articulé aux réalités concrètes du terrain. Il s'ensuit que son application directe risque de poser plus de problèmes qu'il n'en résoudra. Il est loin d'être opérationnel sous sa forme actuelle. Tout au plus peut-on en retenir quelques propositions partielles, à développer dans un plan directeur mieux adapté.

On ne peut qu'être frappé par un tel décalage entre un plan directeur et la réalité physique et sociale qu'il est censé ordonner. On peut y déceler, sur un plan moral, un certain cynisme vis-à-vis d'une opinion africaine qui n'a pas toujours les moyens de s'exprimer et d'interlocuteurs qu'on espère manipuler aisément. La présentation richement colorée des cartes, l'abondance des illustrations, la collaboration d'un sociologue à l'équipe chargée de ces plans d'urbanisme, ne réussissent pas à combler l'absence de connaissance de base de villes concernées. Elles ne sauraient convaincre et la méthode d'élaboration de ces plans se trouve directement mise en cause. Mais au-delà de ces questions d'ordre professionnel, on peut y percevoir une idéologie qui fait appel, d'une part, à l'autoritarisme de l'État pour imposer de nouveaux tracés de voie impliquant la destruction de nombreuses maisons (ou ne cherche pas à limiter au maximum les opérations « bulldozer » en repérant les obstacles sur le terrain), d'autre part, à promouvoir un transfert direct de technologie qui ne peut qu'accentuer la dépendance des pays concernés, ceux-ci n'ayant pas les moyens de réaliser à eux-seuls des programmes comportant des voies de haut standing et la construction de multiples ouvrages d'art ■

Réponse de Technosynesis

Abbiamo letto lo studio del sociologo M. J.C. Barbier sul nostro piano d'urbanismo della città di Sokodé.

Non ci pare il caso di rispondere nel merito delle accuse fatte da M. Barbier perchè esse ci paiono dimostrare una lettura molto superficiale e parziale del nostro studio. Se M. Barbier voleva un « Plan Bulldozer » dai bei colori contro cui scagliarsi, ha scelto, crediamo, proprio l'esempio meno adatto.

Tre soli punti ci pare necessario sottolineare, comunque.

1) Technosynesis non ha mai lavorato in Europa, in progetti d'urbanistica, quindi non ha

modelli Europei da esportare.

2) Il nostro approccio « strutturale » al nodo delle motivazioni reali (economiche) di un certo sviluppo anziché di un altro è del tutto ignorato da M. Barbier.

3) L'approccio antropologico-culturale al problema urbanistico, che Technosynesis ha tracciato per prima grazie alle intuizioni di G. Cantalamessa, ha già fatto una certa « scuola » nella storia della pianificazione del Terzo Mondo.

Pare che M. Barbier non l'abbia letto : o forse l'eterna contrapposizione culturale tra sociologi e antropologi gliene ha impedito la comprensione.

TUNISIA : THE JANUARY SYNDROME ONE YEAR LATER

M. Settembrini

One year after the « bread revolt » which broke out in Tunis in January 1984, has the Tunisian political class really learned to consider the urban poor ? M. Settembrini (a pseudonym) has some doubts about this.

Januaries do not tend to be happy in Tunisia. Although this statement admittedly explains little, the themes of January, 1984's events — which took the form of a true popular insurrection — clearly recur on Black Thursday (January 26, 1978) and in the Gafsa coup (January, 1980), which rudely revealed some of the cleavages in Tunisian society that threaten its equilibrium.

Because the Tunisian political class has interpreted these events in terms of a narrow view of its own society, it has not been able to draw the correct conclusions. Thus the considerable error in estimating the economical and social impact of the decision to suppress wheat products (bread, semolina, noodles) subsidy, which ensured the basic nutrition of the underprivileged classes.

The suppression of this subsidy resulted in the activation of a number of the cleavages which break up Tunisian society. This process was visible behind in the insurrection itself.

In the first place, the bread revolt brought to light the existence of a segment of society which modernization has victimized and which exists side by side with another segment which has profited in a number of ways from this same modernization. The revolt's meaning was : a significant portion of the population was incapable of dealing financially with the doubling of the price of bread, despite the growth rates claimed by the Tunisian government in the 1960's.

Another point is made clear through such popular movements. This concerns the youth/adult cleavage : the

demonstrators averaged between twelve and sixteen years of age in Tunis. It was by and large a schooled population, but one which lacked perspectives on the future. The political class had failed to provide motivating myths, cultivatable ground for Islam.

Equally clear are the regional cleavages : the uprising began, in the last days of December, in the deprived regions of the South. Thus the Tunisian state pays the tribute of an unequilibrated development, favoring the North and the East to the detriment of the South and the West. The manner in which the State's power is exercised only aggravates this situation.

Finally, the events seem to be linked to cleavages inside and on the periphery of political society itself. Inside, in the struggle for power, a conspiracy had been organized against the Prime Minister. It aimed through calculated disorder to force the exit of the successor named by President Bourguiba. On the periphery the Islamic movement, even while it seeks official recognition, probably does not hesitate to help organize or to participate in the various spontaneous protests against the regime. In any case, its presence in the demonstrations was quite clear.

The political class could have drawn two valid conclusions from the events of January 1978 and of January 1980. In 1978, beside the organized labor movements, an urban *Lumpenproletariat* had already poured into the center of Tunis, committing impressive acts of destruction ; their target was a certain image of Tunisian society ; they attacked luxurious automobiles and stores. In 1980, the strategy of destabilisation chosen by the government's opponents was based on regional disparities which, while they were unsupported by the population of Gafsa, had at least caused its indifference and thus shown it to be unconcerned with certain political gambles.

But in both cases the meaning of the event was completely missed by the politicians, who spoke in one voice. Black Thursday was the result of a conspiracy due to the struggle for succession and to the directors of the UGTT ; the Gafsa coup had been brought about by external destabilizing forces.

By doubling the cost of bread and of various wheat products the administration, and with them the entire Tunisian political class, thus forgot or brushed out of the way a significant segment of the society (the poor and the young). This denial of poverty and this marginalisation of youth reveals a psychosocial poverty and this marginalisation of youth reveals a psychosocial mechanism in the elite of a country whose development is far from even-handed. This elite tends to construct an image of its own society by substituting an ideal social structure, framed in comfortable signs of modernity, for reality. Further, they play a subtle mirror game with the industrialized countries : in this game, tourism and

cultural exchange play an important role and provide a false security.

This tendency produces dramatic effects when at the same time the channels of expression do not function in a satisfying way, as was the case. The Destourian Socialist party has progressively moved away from large portions of the population and particularly from youth. Classic political representation, consisting of members of parliament and elected local officials, was not capable of conveying any information deriving from the popular sentiments ; this inefficiency is due to the Tunisian political system, which involves a single party and highly centralized government.

The UGTT mostly represents workers integrated in structured sectors of production, to which social laws — in particular the minimum wage laws — apply. Quarrels, rivalry, threats of scission have certainly damaged the authority of the organization's directors. Public administrations are still unequally divided throughout the territory, despite recent efforts to decentralize. Finally, the multiple party system is too late in arriving ; it will prove unable to represent the whole population effectively.

The Leaders' Helplessness When They Were Confronted by the Poor

One must not be surprised by the concession of the political class (including, if only implicitly, the UGTT), which favored suppression of the wheat-products subsidy. The measure was economically necessary, but its form — as soon became clear — was socially impossible. Thus the leader's helplessness when they were confronted with the scale of the protest movements. This scale is all the more comprehensible in the cities, however, when one considers that the structure of Tunisian cities does not provide for any mediation between the antagonistic parties mentioned above. In the process of expansion, large communities mix together and heterogeneous urban zones are created where the disparities between various groups become quite visible. Thus on the periphery of Tunis, « explosive » combinations occur : university/slum/new quarters designed for the well-off. It is no surprise that the new Manar complex, near Jebel Ahmmar and the main university buildings, was particularly sensitive to the disorders. And nothing indicates that current trends of expansion in Tunis, where a number of « wild » populations from rural areas are settling, will strengthen the social fabric.

The leaders' helplessness is all the more surprising when one considers that economic statistics were available and quite clear in their meaning. In any case, their meaning was clearer than that of the contents of some of Tunis's trash cans. I am referring to the subsidy

department's statistics, included in the Sixth Plan of 1982, which already recommended suppression of the wheat products subsidy. The modalities of consumption and the 1980 survey indicate that households were still devoting an important part of their food expenditures to bread and other wheat products. Salaried workers represent only a quarter to a third of the working force. The organized sectors, which include a good number of labor (textiles, leather products) consumers, enjoyed a salary of no more than one-and-a-half times the minimum wage in 1979. Global figures comparing average salaries to minimum salaries demonstrate clearly that the minimum wage laws are not generally enforced. Leaders did, however, take into account such indicators as the price index and unemployment statistics.

Parallel to President Bourguiba's decision to delay the application of measures which would double the price of bread (the decision which made a « happy ending » possible, following the moment of instability) it was necessary to interpret the events in such a way as to ensure the continuing stability of the government, at least in the short term.

At first the official version referred to « influence » and blamed unnamed « agitators » as well as the cleavages in political spheres. These latter were linked to the struggle surrounding the succession, which found expression in the demonstrations of January 6 and also in the imprudent initiatives of Driss Guiga, the Minister of the Interior, who sought to speed the resignation of Mohamed Mzali although the previous acts of President Bourguiba did not indicate that the Prime Minister would soon be vacating his office. The regime then opted for a different explanation which emphasized the political troubles related to the struggle for succession. Thus it downplayed the other cleavages which played a role in the events. This approach is identical to the one which had been adopted in 1978.

Clouds on the Horizon

The danger of such an explanation is clear. It allows the leaders to forget the true problems inherent in Tunisia's social structure. Attention is turned to the problem of succession, which has been confusing the government's order of priorities for years.

The future is composed of short-term deadlines for a double-impasse situation. First there is an economical impasse : Prime Minister M. Mohamed Mzali has qualified the subsidy as a trap, since it is a burden for the tax system and cuts the funds available for investment, the final consequence of which is an increase in unemployment and national debt. Second, there is a

political impasse : the entire political class, which favored suppression of the subsidy, has lost a part of its credibility. This class is unable, now, to furnish any more successful solution. The future is therefore uncertain, and will depend in large measure on external circumstances : the development of the world's economical situation, of course, and also political factors such as the United States' options with regard to the size and form of future aid to Tunisia, or the attitude of Tunisia's neighbors in North Africa.

The sense of uncertainty is heightened when one considers the unknown nature of the Tunisian army. One knows little about this institution except that it is capable of maintaining order in the country, and has proved this capability on two occasions.

The veil could suddenly be raised, if an appropriate therapy is not applied to the January Syndrome ■

LE FÉTICHISME DE LA BORNE, OBSTACLE À L'AMÉLIORATION DES QUARTIERS SPONTANÉS

Michel PROUZET

et

Musepu WOTUTUK

L'amélioration des quartiers spontanés passe dans de nombreux pays par le mesurage et le bornage des parcelles faisant l'objet d'occupation de fait. En effet, la reconnaissance d'un statut minimal d'occupation du sol est souvent la principale exigence pour réhabiliter l'habitat urbain. En outre, on conçoit mal comment la puissance publique pourrait songer à opérer une modification du parcellaire et à mettre en œuvre des mesures de recouvrement des coûts de viabilisation des terrains sans que soit clairement précisée la superficie des terrains occupés par chaque ménage.

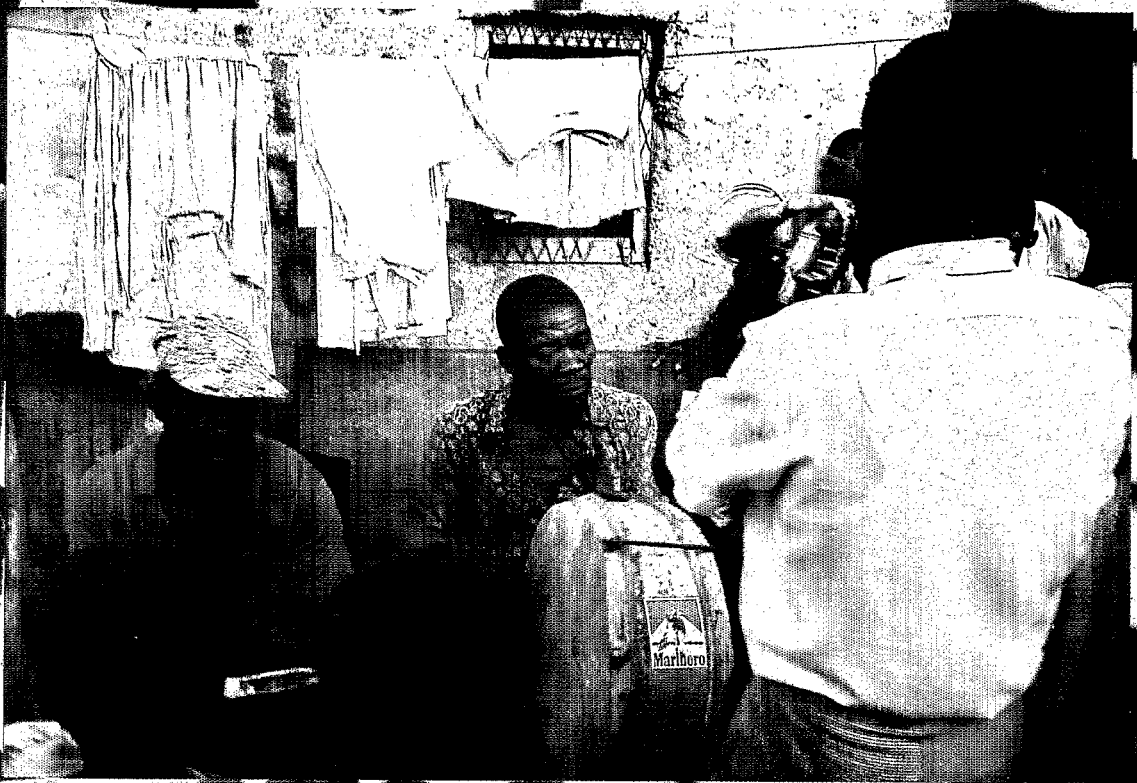
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