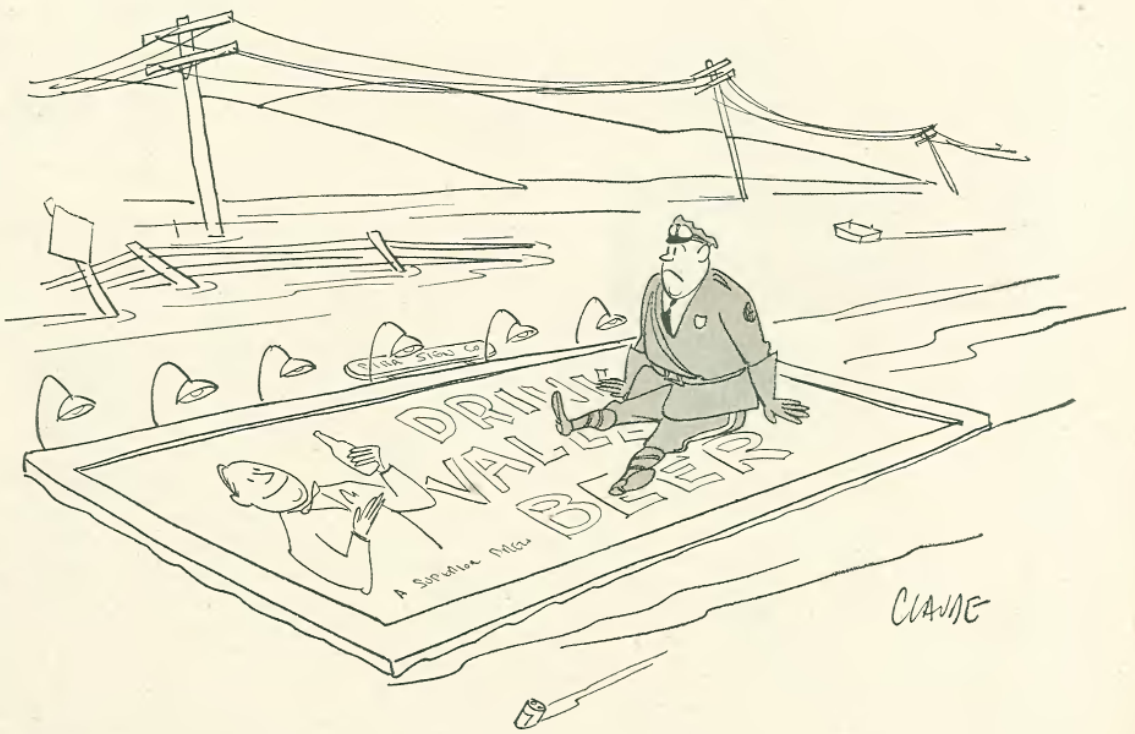
OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

TWILIGHT IN SOUK EL GIUMA

EVERY Friday is market day in Souk el Giuma, an Arab town on the Mediterranean in the Libyan province of Tripolitania, halfway between the port of Tripoli and Wheelus Field, which is the only active United States Air Force installation in Africa. For the American airmen and their dependents stationed at Wheelus Field, visiting the public market of Souk el Giuma makes a welcome interruption in the dull routine of life on a semitropical outpost. Unfortunately, the Americans, most of whom are enthusiastic shoppers and souvenir hunters, can find little of interest to buy in the town. The goods displayed for sale in the dusty, white-walled, teeming market square reflect Libya's pitifully low standard of living; empty ketchup bottles without caps (the caps are sold separately), empty battered baked-bean cans, rusty screws and bent nails, and short lengths of rope and wire are typical items of merchandise. A few enterprising merchants spread their wares out on filthy pieces of cloth, but most just place them on the fine sand of the square and then settle themselves behind their "stores," where they sit for hours, cross-legged and half asleep. During a visit to Wheelus Field a while ago, I drove in to Souk el Giuma one Friday morning with a couple of American fliers and their wives. The big attraction that day was a merchant selling saffron, dried rose leaves, incense, aromatic water, and other offerings of the kind referred to by optimistic writers of travel books as the perfumes of Arabia. The local Brooks Brothers was proudly displaying a much-worn G.I. fatigue jacket, with "PW" stamped on the back, that must have arrived there by way of a former Italian prisoner. We strolled around for a while in the hot sun and the fliers took a few snapshots of camels and veiled women, and then, the magic having worn off, the rest of the party told me they were going back to the Field, where they could enjoy a glass of cold beer and the alluring smell of DDT.

Since I was planning to pay a call on William M. Macdonald, the local District Commissioner, who represented the British administration of Libya, I said goodbye to them, and, when they had left, walked over to the building housing his office. I had made Macdonald's acquaintance out at Wheelus Field, where he is quite popular with the Americans. Since the airfield was in his district, he went there almost daily on business. He had asked me to come and see how he and the Arabs worked together if I was ever in town, and I had assured him that I would very much like to. In front of the building entrance was a shouting, shoving, fighting crowd of old Arab beggars and young Berber women, some of whom held filthy babies in their arms; as I drew near, I saw that they were trying to get bits of used clothing that were being distributed in what I took to be some sort of municipal handout. I made my way through the throng and walked down a hall and into Macdonald's office, where I found myself surrounded by another shouting crowd, this one made up of men who were evidently more prosperous members of the community. Each of them seemed to be arguing violently with all the others in the room, but Macdonald told me later that they had been simply indulging in a friendly debate. A telephone was ringing, an assistant was calling somebody's name, from outside came the raucous noises of the beggars and the women, and in the middle of the pandemonium Macdonald sat calmly at his desk smoking a pipe and having a cup of tea.

On catching sight of me, Macdonald came out from behind his desk and we shook hands. He is a slight, slim, unpretentious man of thirty-eight, with a philosophical twinkle in his eyes, a low, pleasant voice, and a habit of using Americanisms he picked up from our troops during the war. His manner quietly conveys the same impression of competence that one frequently gets from successful surgeons and Army motor-pool sergeants. He comes from Dunedin, New Zealand, and he once remarked to me that he was "a member of that vanishing species of man, the British foreign-service or colonial-administration officer, which is already attracting the interest of historians and anthropologists." Macdonald's desk was cluttered with papers; on the wall behind it hung a big map of the district and several graphs of the sort that business executives often display on the walls of their offices. These, however, were concerned not with sales or production figures (the district's entire commercial activity is limited to a handful of soap factories, oil refineries, and quarries) but with the local tax plan. Macdonald told me that the residents—



thirty-three thousand Arabs and Bedouins, fifteen hundred Italians, and five hundred Jews—paid tithes and farm, livestock, and tree taxes, in addition to an income tax. The owner of a palm tree annually paid a tax amounting to twelve per cent of its estimated value, the owner of a goat two per cent. Despite constant complaints from the Arabs about being overtaxed, Macdonald's graphs showed that in Souk el Giuma government revenues for the last fiscal year had been smaller than expenditures.

After settling me in a chair near his desk, Macdonald signed some papers and then, putting them aside, told me it was a quiet day, but then most days were around there. I said that was quite all right with me. Reports of swarms of locusts had come in, which meant that immediate measures must be taken, but that was all. I asked him what the shouting that was going on around us was about. Oh, that? A few landowners had come in to protest about something—it wasn't clear what. "This is the aftermath of our big land operation," he said, filling his pipe. "When the Americans decided to build a new runway on Wheelus Field, individual contracts had to be drawn up with over seventy Arab farmers to lease approximately thirty acres of their land and to pay for whatever physical facilities they stood to lose. The negotiations took more than five months. Each farmer's holdings had to be assessed separately, and not only accurately but generously. We had to check the titles—a far from easy task, since the land here is never owned outright by an individual but by clans and even whole tribes, and the inheritance and tribal laws are quite complicated. A man may own just a one-sixth or a one-sixteenth share in a piece of land, but that doesn't keep him from acting as though he owned it all by himself, and you've got to listen to him. Even when a man owned only a single date palm, a separate file had to be kept for him and a contract had to be drawn up for the sale of that one tree. Furthermore, no tree can be cut down without a written O.K. from the Director of Agriculture. Gives you an idea of the paperwork involved."

The noise was getting worse, and I had to move my chair closer to catch Macdonald's subdued voice. "A commission consisting of three senior officials of the British administration and four representatives of the landowners was set up to assess the land and explain to the farmers about rental terms and purchase prices," he said. "Farmers who

actually lived on the land and had to move were given a disturbance indemnity. I was the chairman of the commission. We visited each farm and talked to the owners and, in their presence, went over the farm's physical facilities—buildings, wells, palms, olive trees. Well, after a lot of talk, a price would be arrived at and a contract prepared for the owner to sign. Before the American chaps start to build their new airbases over in Morocco, they'll have to draw up one hell of a lot of contracts." Macdonald pointed to two big filing cabinets. Each contract, he said, was printed in both Arabic and English and bore the signatures of all the members of the commission and either the signature or—more frequently—the thumbprint of the owner.

The assistant brought Macdonald a letter and said the writer was waiting outside. Macdonald looked the letter over and then showed it to me. It was neatly typed in English and read, "Sir, may I, the undersigned Bescir ben Mohammed ben Ali, aged 18 years, born at Seloma, submit this application and beg that you will be so kind to take in consideration my bad and poor condition and will recommend me for a job anywhere in the USA unit to help my position and give me the possibility to live, being a stranger from this town. I have the honour, Sir, to be your obedient servant." At the end of the letter, Bescir ben Mohammed had affixed his thumbprint. Macdonald sent word to Bescir ben Mohammed that he would turn the application over to the authorities at Wheelus Field, and told me that more than seven hundred and fifty Tripolitanians were employed there, adding that the one and a quarter million dollars the Americans had spent on and around the Field during the preceding year was a lot of money for that part of the world.

An aged, dignified Arab, dressed in Western style except for a fez, came in and bowed deeply, touching his forehead and mouth with the palm of his right hand. Macdonald introduced him to me as "the richest man in town." The richest man in town offered us American cigarettes, sat down, and smiled, and Macdonald summoned Mohammed, his Arab interpreter. The assistant brought coffee in small glasses for all of us. Most of the debaters had left the room and were now milling around in the hall outside, still shouting. The richest man in town had come to make a complaint. It seemed that the illegal importation of tea from Egypt was hurting the local tea

merchants. Macdonald said he would take the matter up with the authorities, and the richest man in town thanked him elaborately, bowed, and went out.

The phone on Macdonald's desk rang. It was a representative in Al 'Azizia, a town in Macdonald's jurisdiction, calling to report that Locust-Spotting Patrol No. 9 had found two new breeding areas. After hanging up, Macdonald stepped over to the wall map of the district and drew two circles on it, indicating the danger areas. The district's locust patrols, making their rounds on horseback or by camel or jeep, worked on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis, he told me. "We're up against a terrible species of locust here," Macdonald said. "The species we've got to fight is the migratory locust, the locust of the Biblical plague." He walked over to a table and came back with an old tin can covered with a piece of cardboard. When he removed the cardboard, a two-and-a-half-inch-long grasshopperlike creature sprang up the side. Macdonald caught it and dropped it back in. "I got this sample by messenger an hour ago," he said. "It's a grown female, with a wingspread of about five inches. The males are smaller."

The locust was poised to jump again, and Macdonald covered the can. "Ordinarily, locusts lead a solitary life, but once in a while they become gregarious and start a cycle of swarming," he said, sitting down at his desk again. "Very strange animals. The swarms come out of the blue, stay here for one or two seasons, and then disappear as mysteriously as they came. What guides them as they fly hundreds of miles to fertile country? Where do they disappear to when they fly away? We don't know. I've seen locusts in India, Arabia, Egypt, and the Sudan, but ours are the most vicious. They tell me there was nothing left here in 1932 after the locusts came through—not a plant, not a square foot of grass, not a leaf of any kind. The country was invaded by locusts in 1906, 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1930—years when heavy, protracted rains created favorable conditions for them in the so-called outbreak centers, along the Arabian coast and in the Sudan. You've got to keep close watch on those areas. We get regular reports from the Anti-Locust Research Center, in London; all information on locust movements is channelled through it. I've called a meeting of all district officers and councilmen for tomorrow to issue instructions about reporting locust

movements in their regions and to organize a campaign for destroying hoppers—the immature locusts. Once the locusts grow up, there is little you can do except try to prevent them from settling on the crops. The Arabs bang empty tin cans, wave branches, and light smudge fires, and in some communities they collect the adult locusts by hand—shake them down from trees at night and sweep them into bags. They're prized for eating, it seems. My wife is French and we both like good food, but so far, I must admit, we haven't got around to making locusts *à la provençale*."

Macdonald smiled, refilled his pipe, lighted it, and went on. "Control measures against the immature hoppers are much more important than fighting the adults, though. We dig trenches, or put up barriers, or herd and drive them into a pit, where they can be destroyed. The most effective method of killing hoppers is a poisoned bran bait, called Gammexine, which is sodium arsenite. Of course, even with the poison it's never certain you'll succeed in killing off a whole swarm. But we've had evidence that the descendants of isolated survivors sometimes change their living habits and become solitary again, leading the quiet, innocent life of grasshoppers. As I said, it's all very mysterious."

An Arab deputation led by a sheik came in to discuss an automobile accident. A vehicle driven by an American stationed at Wheelus Field had killed a member of their tribe. The sheik, speaking for the assembled relatives of the dead man, demanded an indemnity of six hundred dollars. Macdonald promised to discuss the matter with the au-

thorities at the Field. When the Arabs had gone, he said, "I guess they'll get it. This happened three months ago and they've been after me every week since. I'm glad to say they've instituted a fifteen-mile speed limit at the Field and it's being rigorously enforced. It's a question of security and good will."

Next came a young Arab whom Macdonald greeted cordially. The man, it developed, was a district officer and had worked under Macdonald for two years. He had just returned from a Unesco-sponsored trip to Europe, and was awaiting assignment to duty. "They want to send me to one of the outlying districts, but I would much rather stay near Tripoli," he said, in slow, precise English.

Macdonald laughed and said, "Who wouldn't? I was out in one of those districts myself for two months and I hated every minute of it—isolated and cut off, and those long, lonely evenings, and people always coming by for lunch and you have to lay out meals for them. Well, they shouldn't have any trouble finding a place for you. Now that Libya is about to become independent, it's fellows like you who will be running the administration."

Turning to me, Macdonald said he supposed I knew that under the terms of a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1949, Libya was on the verge of being transformed into an independent state. Once this was done, the British administration was expected to move out, but some British officials would probably stay on as contract employees until enough Libyan officials had been trained to take over. No one could tell how long that would be. At present, there were not nearly enough Arabs sufficiently well educated to take care of the country's administration. I asked Macdonald whether he would be one of the officials staying on. He shrugged and said he thought he would. "I hope you do stay, sir," said the young Arab. "Libya needs you." He added, to me, "Mr. Macdonald was the best teacher I ever had," and then bade us goodbye.

Macdonald looked pleased and again got busy with his pipe. "I guess one grows attached to a place," he said. "Since 1947, when I took over here, we've had only one case of serious trouble. That was during the anti-Jewish riots that flared up throughout the Moslem world over the problem of Israel. Thirty-seven Jews were killed here within twenty minutes by an Arab mob.

Since then, though, we haven't had any racial troubles in Souk el Giuma. In fact, the Arabs and Jews here get along better now than the Arabs and Italians."

A pretty Arab girl came to the doorway and said, "May I have File No. 297, please?" Macdonald winked at me and asked her, "What do you want it for?" The girl was thrown into confusion and started to stammer. Macdonald didn't press her but dug out the file, and she went away with it, blushing. "There you are," he said to me. "That girl can show you a beautiful certificate stating that she has passed her intermediate English examinations, both oral and written. As long as everything goes smoothly—as long as she is called upon for nothing but routine office conversation—she's all right. But the slightest deviation from that routine stumps her. My Arab office workers are all like that."

There was a sound of heavy footsteps in the hall, and in walked a swarthy man in the uniform of an American lieutenant colonel. It was Philip J. John, a Texan of Syrian immigrant stock, who is indispensable at Wheelus Field because he is the only American there who speaks perfect Arabic. He apologized for being later than he had expected. "I had the usual trouble getting away," he said. "Two guys had been sitting under the tree in front of my house for the better part of the night so they could catch me the first thing in the morning. Since the Arabs have found out where I live, I have no more privacy. Seems as though everybody in this district wants to apply for a job or has some kind of petition to make." Taking a chair, he consulted some papers he had brought with him. "Colonel Easley asked me to remind you that those Arab school children are supposed to come out to the Field tomorrow at three," he said. He was referring, I knew, to the commanding officer at Wheelus, Colonel Fred O. Easley, Jr., of Fordyce, Arkansas. "We'll give them coffee and cake and entertain them as well as possible."

"They'll be there," said Macdonald.

"And next Thursday we'll throw a party for those Tripolitanian officials," Colonel John said. "Maybe we can take them up in the air for a short flight in a C-54."

"Swell," said Macdonald, and went on, to me, "These Air Force boys have become accomplished experts in good will and diplomacy. When I think how many centuries it took us British to learn the basic principles of how to deal with

the natives, I must confess that the American fellows are certainly learning fast."

"We don't have as much time as you did, Mac," Colonel John said, and added, without enthusiasm, "Personally, I wouldn't mind going back to Texas and forgetting all about Libya."

"You will, you will," Macdonald assured him. "All of us will be going home soon. The other night, I was reading Kipling. What a break for the chap that he didn't live to see the twilight of the Colonial Office!"

A sheik with a splendid white beard and wearing a white burnous strode in and greeted us ceremoniously. Macdonald and Colonel John rose and bowed to him, and Macdonald got him a chair. Colonel John offered him a cigarette. The sheik accepted it, and then settled back and took some documents out of his wallet. They had been folded and unfolded so many times that they were practically falling apart. He spoke rapidly in Arabic to Colonel John, who translated for us. It seemed that a sergeant from Wheelus Field had rented one of the sheik's houses, in town. The plumbing had been defective, so the sergeant had had it fixed and had deducted the plumber's bill from the rent. The sheik had come to complain that he couldn't allow the deduction. The plumbing had been available to the sergeant, hadn't it? Maybe it hadn't worked too well, but that was certainly no reason to spend money on it. After all, the sheik's brother-in-law owned an electric refrigerator that didn't work at all, and *he* didn't spend money to have it fixed; as a matter of fact, he didn't have electricity in his house. Colonel John promised to have a talk with the sergeant, and after commending all of us to the good graces of Allah, the sheik left.

Then came a very old, dark-skinned Arab, who grabbed Colonel John's hand, kissed it, and muttered a stream of guttural words. "He wants a settlement for a piece of land we needed at Wheelus Field when we built the wall around it," Colonel John told Macdonald.

"But that was settled two years ago," the District Commissioner reminded him. "He was fully paid for it."

Colonel John relayed this to the Arab, who started shouting and pleading. "He says the money's gone and he wants a job at the base," Colonel John said.

"Everybody wants a job there," Macdonald said. "This chap lives in Tripoli. We have to give preference to local job seekers. And, come to think

of it, he had a job for some time at the Field and quit. Wanted more money. Tell him to run along."

When the old man, still protesting, had shuffled out, Macdonald explained to me that unskilled workers at the Field get the equivalent of fifty cents a day. "The Americans think that's too little," he said. "They're always wanting to carry out a private Point Four program. The fact is that this guy would dog it even if you paid him three dollars a day."

Colonel John left to go back to the Field. Macdonald said he was going out to Al 'Azizia to look things over, and asked me to go along. We got into his small British car, and on the way to our destination, we drove past Wheelus Field, a magnificent array of runways, white buildings, lawns, and palm trees, bordering on the blue Mediterranean. A few men in shorts were playing golf, and some girls in two-piece bathing suits were lying on the beach in the sun. "I hope they don't take to showing up in those bathing suits on the streets of Souk el Giuma," said Macdonald. "This isn't southern California. You can't tell what the Arabs might do. The women hereabouts aren't very emancipated. I know Arabs who have been married over twenty years without ever seeing their wives eat. The wives wait on their husbands at table and eat later, with the other women of the house. You may know an Arab for years and he will never introduce you to his wife. You aren't even supposed to ask how she is. In all the time we've been here, my wife has been invited to the house of an Arab family only once. The men come to our parties, but their wives and daughters never do. The men can be quite charming—dancing with our wives and having lots of fun. They're not supposed to touch alcohol,

but sometimes we give what we call a pre-party for them half an hour before the regular party starts. At the pre-party, we serve whiskey and gin. Later, at the regular party, there's only orange juice, but by that time everybody is in a very good mood."

Beyond Wheelus Field, we drove past some large, fertile farms. They had modern irrigation systems and were being worked with the latest in tractors and other machinery. Macdonald said that most of them belonged to Italian concessionaires or were operated by Arabs as collectives, and that they were the finest farms in Libya, producing vegetables and citrus fruits and going in for selective sheep breeding. He obviously felt a personal pride in them.

We rode for a while in silence, and then I asked Macdonald if he had spent his whole adult life in the British colonial service. "Good heavens, no!" he replied. "Most of the time, I've been mixed up in adventure of one sort or another. I love it. During the Spanish civil war I was in Spain with the International Brigade. I had no business being there, but I wanted to fly, and that seemed a good way of going about it. I got in by way of Barcelona, where I was immediately arrested and thrown into jail. I finally got out and joined up with the Brigade, but I never flew a plane. I was no success there. They said I was immature. Actually, I was so immature that I didn't even understand what they meant by the word. I met a lot of well-known characters—that bullfighter chap Sidney Franklin, for one, and Hemingway, who once gave me the use of his bathtub. Even served me a drink while I was soaking. There were plenty of fellows around in blue serge suits and leather coats who pretended to be Mexicans but spoke only Russian. In spite of my immaturity, I had a good idea who *they* were. Their bosses, the commissars, were always talking of ideals when they addressed the troops, but then they would go back to Madrid, where they ran around with women and I don't imagine had much time to worry about ideals. Some of those jokers came here with a United Nations commission a few years ago, when Russia wanted trusteeship of Tripolitania. Most distrustful chaps I've ever met. Kept telling me I was trying to mislead them."

Macdonald's love of adventure was amply satisfied during the war, when he became a member of a British commando outfit specializing in desert patrols and in raids into German-held territory in North Africa. "Our operations

were highly unorthodox," he told me. "Once, I remember, we got hold of some German uniforms and trucks. A few of our Palestinian Jewish chaps masqueraded as German truck drivers, and the rest of us were supposed to be British prisoners of war they were bringing into Tobruk. We got into Tobruk all right, past the German sentries, and started to raise hell. Blew up supply stores and set barracks afire. Almost got Rommel." He added, almost as an afterthought, "Half of our men never got back, though."

Macdonald had to stop the car to avoid running into a couple of sleepy camels idling across the road in front of us. "A couple of years later," he continued as we started up again, "I really was a prisoner, in Germany. They were going to send me to a camp at Luckenwalde, but on the trip through Austria, at night, I jumped off the train. It was summer. I was wearing only a nondescript pair of pants and a civilian shirt, but I spoke no German, so I had trouble getting food. My worst trouble, though, was a psychological one. I got into a state of mind where I thought everybody on the street was looking for me. Everyone knew me, I felt—me, the escaped prisoner of war. Of course, no one knew me, and no one knew I'd escaped. But it was this fear, rather than hunger, that made me give myself up after ten days. In Luckenwalde, I was always in trouble. Couldn't keep my mouth shut. I was forever complaining about the lousy food. Once, I told the German officer in charge that German prisoners in American camps were getting meat and ice cream, and look what we were getting, and he said, 'Of course! Why, those Americans should feel honored to serve ice cream to German prisoners.' They beat me up one time because I told them Germany would be *kaput* in six months. Actually, it took over a year. Anyway, after the war I was demobbed as a major and started looking around London for a job. There was an opening in Eritrea, a former Italian colony. I speak Italian, and somebody in the Colonial Office figured they could use me there. I went by way of Cairo, where I was stopped by our medical authorities. They said there was a yellow-fever epidemic in Eritrea, and I would have to be inoculated and then wait in Cairo three weeks. I asked them to give me something to do to kill time. It happened there had just been some riots in Souk el Giuma, so they sent me here to help out. I've been here ever since, except for vacations—a couple of

months every two years on the French Riviera. Nice change of climate after Tripolitania."

ARRIVING in the small town of Al 'Azizia, we drew up in front of a white-walled fort that might have been a set for a Foreign Legion movie. A group of local dignitaries were on hand to greet the District Commissioner. Mayor Hadj Mohammed Sejf en Nasser, an extremely earnest man wearing Western clothes and a fez, and Police Sergeant Mohammed Ali escorted us across a sun-scorched terrace and into a large, cool office, where we met several *mudirs*—members of the Town Council. The municipal cashier brought out his books, and Macdonald checked over the columns of expenses (wages, uniforms, social insurance, and maintenance) and revenues (market licenses, water charges, rents, fines, and trading licenses). The Mayor reported on current Al 'Azizian affairs. He'd ordered the town crier to proclaim that free rat poison was available and that all garbage must be speedily disposed of. There was trouble about a young Arab who had eloped with a girl and was living with her in "semi-matrimony." The Town Council was awaiting a shipment of new winter uniforms for its employees. Macdonald listened to it all closely. "The mayor's term is one year," he said to me afterward. "He's elected from among the councilmen, and by them. Hadj Mohammed is a good man and I hope he gets a bigger job under the new setup. Let's see, in your money his monthly salary is about thirty-eight dollars. He's rolling in dough, really. The town crier makes all of a dollar seventy-five."

A servant brought a tray and served us sweet mint tea in glasses, with peanuts on the side. He poured the tea expertly, holding the pitcher high. The Police Sergeant reported that he had several members of his force on the lookout for new deposits of locust eggs. The Mayor said that nature was helping exterminate the pests; in some places, the wind had blown the sand off the egg pods and they would now dry up. The Police Sergeant was confident that the plague could be kept under control in the 'Azizia area.

Macdonald and I next visited the office of the Cadi, the town's religious authority. He was a small, shrewd-looking bearded man in a long black coat and a round white hat. The Cadi was worried about an Italian girl who had married an Arab from Al 'Azizia a few months before, in Sicily. The Arab

had won her by representing himself as a man of high social position and great wealth, but upon arriving in Al 'Azizia with him she had discovered that he had neither. Her husband's relatives hated her and the local Italians despised her, and now her husband had run away and she was going to have a baby. Macdonald said he would look into the possibility of removing the girl to some less hostile environment, and the Cadi agreed that that would be the best solution.

The Cadi accompanied us to the town's schoolhouse, where the first-graders broke into a shrieking school song as we entered their classroom. "Only a small percentage of Al 'Azizia's children go to school," Macdonald said to me after the excitement had died down and normal operations had resumed. "There aren't facilities for all of them. The people would willingly build a larger school if we could provide the desks and get them another teacher, but we have no funds." Macdonald exchanged a few words with the teacher, and then, as we left, the pupils broke into their shrieking song again.

Several of the officials who had met us were waiting in the square to see us off. Macdonald said a smiling goodbye to them, and they looked pleased and honored. As our car got under way, two barefoot Arabs shouted, "Cheerio!" Macdonald grinned and settled himself behind the wheel. "Al 'Azizia is in pretty good shape now," he said. "At one time, we had to arrest several Arabs for trying to incite riots and spreading anti-British propaganda. I sent them to jail for five months. There's been no trouble since. Looks as though they were beginning to appreciate us—or maybe they're just

damn glad we're leaving." He called my attention to some mimosa on either side of the road. "We've done a lot of work here," he said. "Three years ago, this road would disappear under sand dunes every time the *gibleh* was blowing. [The *gibleh* is Libya's hot desert wind.] The desert never stands still. It's always moving. So we started on this fixation project. The idea is to square off the dunes and tie them down, first by sowing grass on them and later by planting shrubs and trees."

We passed a British Army installation, and Macdonald waved to two Coldstream Guards officers who were standing at its entrance. "The secret of this job is never to make a snap decision," he went on. "Most of the daily work is routine anyway—boundary disputes, medical problems, education, taxation—but once in a while an emergency arises, and then quick action is necessary. Two years ago, for instance, we had a terrific hailstorm—pieces of ice as big as small apples. Well, we evacuated the inhabitants of the worst-hit sections in buses and moved their cattle to safe places. They're still talking about it. You met a few good officials back there in Al 'Azizia, but, good as they are, I have to check up on them all the time. Their main weakness is lack of foresight. They send out questionnaires and don't follow them up. Everybody's worried now about the locusts, but have they got Gammexine stored up and ready for them? Certainly not. You've got to do all their thinking and planning for them. And you've got to beat it into their heads that public office means responsibility as well as dignity. The machine politicians in Tripoli are all for independence, but these chaps out here who do the actual job of trying to run the villages and towns know damn well that they're not ready for it."

THE market square of Souk el Giuma was still thronged. Two staff cars from Wheelus Field were slowly honking their way through crowds of people, donkeys, and camels. In the corridor outside Macdonald's office, several of the same Arabs were carrying on their interminable debate. Inside, the Mayor of Souk el Giuma, Hadj Mohammed Sciaag, was waiting to make his daily report to the District Commissioner. A deputy came in to inform Macdonald that new concentrations of locust eggs had been discovered in the villages of Collina Verde and Corradini. A British officer, a friend

of Macdonald's, telephoned to invite him to desert maneuvers that night in the Bir el-Ghnem area.

"Why don't you join us?" Macdonald said when he had hung up and told me of the invitation. Regretfully, I said I couldn't make it. "Too bad," he said. "Should be damned interesting. Called Exercise Nightjar. Over three thousand troops of the First Infantry Division take part—units from the Cyrenaica 16th/5th Lancers, Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, and the Camerons. Reminds me of my younger days—adventure, and so on. I'll be going out there around ten—can't make it any earlier. Tonight is Bingo night at the club, and my wife and I wouldn't miss *that* for anything."

—JOSEPH WECHSBERG

•

WIND ON CAPITOL HILL DEPT.
(RABBIT HUNTERS DIVISION)

[*From the Congressional Record*]

MR. WATKINS. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

MR. CONNALLY. I yield.

MR. WATKINS. The Senator from Texas heard the Senator from Georgia say what had caused the trouble.

MR. CONNALLY. I am talking about the reservation of the Senator from Utah.

MR. WATKINS. I am talking about the words—

MR. CONNALLY. That is what is the matter now. We have spent 2 days chasing rabbits, and the fox is trying to escape us. What is it the Senator wants?

MR. WATKINS. I want to know if the statement of the Senator from Georgia is acquiesced in by the Senator from Texas, namely, that this treaty and all its provisions must be implemented by the action of the Congress?

MR. CONNALLY. If the Senator can read—

MR. WATKINS. The Senator can answer that "Yes" or "No."

MR. CONNALLY. I do not propose to be catechized and heckled by the Senator from Utah.

MR. WATKINS. I am not trying to do that.

MR. CONNALLY. I decline to yield further. The Senator from Utah has taken up nearly all the time in this debate, without saying very much.

MR. WATKINS. I am not going to retort to that statement, as I could do.

MR. CONNALLY. The Senator may retort if he desires to do so.

MR. WATKINS. The Senator stated that he would not yield further.

MR. CONNALLY. Let the Senator from Utah go ahead. I am yielding to him now.

MR. WATKINS. Very well.

MR. CONNALLY. I do not yield endlessly. I yield for the moment.

MR. WATKINS. The Senator does not yield because he does not like what I am saying.

MR. CONNALLY. I want to go home sometime tonight.

MR. WATKINS. I am the moving party