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Nomadic society, civil war, and the state in Chad

Peter Fuchs

It is not my intention to give in this paper a full account of the civil war in Chad. My aim is to present some ideas of general interest concluded from the role nomadic societies played during 30 years of civil war in Chad.

The Republic of Chad, situated in north-central Africa, extends from 8° to 24° N. latitude. The surface of 1,284,000 square kilometers stretches from the Sahara to the wet tropical zone. Nearly half of the country is inapt for agriculture, it is nomads' land. Consequently nomads and semi-nomads control about fifty per cent of the Chadian territory, although they represent only twenty per cent of the population (total population in 1990: 5,668,000). In addition the nomads control the borders to Libya and the Sudan Republic, both borders of crucial political importance for Chad.

Nomads represent in fact an important economic, political and cultural part of Chad. They divide into three large cultural groups: One group embraces the Tubu (Teda), Daza and Goran¹ in the north, bordering with Libya, the second group is formed by Zaghawa and Bidayat² in the northeast, living on both sides of the Sudan border, the third group are nomads of Arab origin³, grazing their animals partly in Chad, partly in the Sudan.

The civil war in Chad broke out in 1965. The main cause was the unreasonable taxation of the population, imposed by the government of the late President Tombalbaye to finance ambitious pro-

jects as well as the growing administration and the army. Some years after the independence of Chad an important distance separates the mass of the population and the political élite. In the government we find the bureaucracy making ambitious development plans which do not meet the wishes and needs of the population. It is said of the administrators in the province that they regard their service as a kind of banishment from comforts and amusements of the capital N'Djaména. It is also said that many of the officials despised the "uncivilized" rural population and many cases are reported that officials made with the taxes their own hay (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 150, 220. 1987: 26).

The farmers in the Sahel of central Chad, permanently in a situation of insecurity caused by the variability of the Sahelian rainfalls, were the first to revolt against the imposed taxes and the rude collection methods employed by the functionaries. At its beginning, the Chad civil war was a classical example of a peasants' revolt.

Another cause of the civil war was the political suppression of the Muslim population of northern Chad whose leaders were accused of fighting the government of President Tombalbaye, which was indeed dominated by the Christian political élite of southern Chad.

The nomads of northern Chad, though Muslims and suffering from the repressions of administration and military, hesitated to join the revolt. The rea-

son is that the nomads, rich in animals, could either afford to pay the taxes or they escaped the tax collectors by their mobility. I suggest that nomads are in principle not interested in revolts and wars, they are rather interested in the stability of the state, because they need security for their economy. In Chad nomadic economy is characterized by a high degree of diversification of economic activities. There exist numerous forms of animal husbandry, numerous forms of herding camels, cattle, goats and sheep together or in separate herds, connected with different needs of pasture, requiring different nomadic cycles. Very often animal husbandry is linked with temporary agriculture and with trade forming an indispensable part of their economy. Consequently we find among the Chadian nomads a great variety of local economic and cultural patterns, a high degree of fragmentation among social groups, claiming local autonomy and maintaining "anarchic" political structures. The social and political fragmentation of the nomads is a response to the specific ecological conditions of the Sahel, it is a strategy of minimizing the risk. In this way very small local resources can be exploited (for instance temporary pastures after a local rainfall) and it is easier to elude the greater threats of epidemics, drought, war, etc. (Fuchs 1991: 33). The nomad's dislike of all kinds of centralized administration has to be seen in relation with this way of life.

For the participation of the Chadian nomads in the FROLINAT ("Front de libération nationale du Tchad"), the Chadian liberation movement, an event became of crucial importance that occurred in September 1965 in the oasis of Bardai in Tibesti. During a dance a quarrel arose between soldiers of the garrison and young Tubu, ending with the death of one soldier and three others blessed by

Tubu daggers. As a consequence the whole population of the oasis was swept together, men and women were forced to strip to the skin, there and then they were whipped, beaten and wounded by bayonets without distinction of age and sex. During the interrogation one man was tortured to death, two others were crippled. This incident caused a thrill of indignation in Tibesti, the Tubu as a whole felt dishonoured and humiliated by the Chadian military whose soldiers originated from southern peasants despised by the nomads. Then followed the order of the Chadian government to settle the nomads by force, order that was entirely refused by the Tubu, because it meant the destruction of their economic base and this in the situation of a dramatic drought striking northern Chad (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 146). As a consequence in December 1966 the chief (*derde*) of the Tubu of Tibesti went into exile to Libya, followed by an important part of his people (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 152). In Libya many young Tubu engaged in the armed forces of the FROLINAT and this group became the nucleus of an army that finally covered members of the whole Tubu-Daza-Goran group.

The hurt honour of the Tubu

The response of the Tubu to the actions of the Chadian military administration in Tibesti makes clear that the criterion of "honour" has been of great political importance for the participation of the nomads in the civil war. This is particularly true for the Tubu-Daza-Goran group but to a certain extent also for the other nomads of northern Chad.

"Honour" for the Tubu means a primordial social value. The Tubu conception of honour is the ideological bond keeping together the various social groups of the Tubu society (Baroin 1985:

91, 140). We see that the humiliation of the relatively small group of the inhabitants of Bardai was classified by the Tubu as a humiliation of all the Tubu (including Daza and Goran) and it caused in the northern regions of Chad (i.e. the prefecture B.E.T. = Borku, Ennedi, Tibesti) a wave of hatred, of vengeance and resistance against the administration. I guess that the humiliation of the Tubu was not an awkwardness of the administration but an intend provocation in order to break by repression the moral and political backbone of the Tubu. It was a decision of considerable consequence which finally led to the overthrow of the regime Tombalbaye.

The conception of "honour" (including self respect, insult, vengeance for humiliation, restitution of honour) threads all the history of the participation of the nomads in the Chadian civil war. We will see that it was also of great importance within the nomadic guerrilla.

The nomadic guerrilla

The successful tactics of the Chadian guerrilla were nomadic tactics. They consisted in the application of the means of mobility and diversification of (economic) activities to warfare. At no time important groups of nomads or whole ethnic groups joined the guerrilla entirely. On the contrary, the majority of the population continued in their habitual way to care for the herds. The combatants were mostly young men and even boys. Pictures of Tubu combatants show often 12-year-old boys (de Decker / Tondini 1978, Buijtenhuijs 1987: 425). For a short period they were trained to use modern arms by professional political officers in Libya or the Sudan. Their strength was their (nomadic) familiarity with the terrain, their (nomadic) mobility and their (nomadic) adaptability to

any new situation. Particularly the Tubu, Daza and Goran became famous for their audacity and bravery (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 89, Chapelle 1982: 40). They outfought the numerically superior Chadian army as well as the French foreign legion with its expensive modern military equipment (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 216).

The nomadic guerrilla, like other guerrilla movements, seldom risk an open battle. Their tactics are ruse and ambush. Encountering an enemy superior by number and arms, they soon stop fighting, regarding heroic resistance as "stupid", split in very small groups over a large range (i.e. the nomadic way to meet dangerous situations) and join again if the danger is over. The effect is that regions, which the regular army has "purged" from guerrilla elements, after a while are infiltrated again by guerrilla formations. The game goes on until the army, discouraged and exhausted, retires to a few strategically important bases, leaving the rest of the territory to the guerrilla, which immediately claims them as "liberated zones" (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 165, 1987: 34). This strategy was successful in Chad, because vast ranges are deserted and smuggling of arms from Libya or the Sudan was easy. Since the nomads of northern Chad participated in the FROLINAT, young men joined the guerrilla in such a large number that their political leaders Goukouni Oueddeï and Hissène Habré could establish, in 1969, their own military formation, the so-called "Second Army" of the FROLINAT (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 166), which became of great importance for the development of the Chadian civil war.

There is, besides political reasons, a demographic factor that caused the rush of young nomads to the guerrilla. The increase of population, though relatively low among Chadian nomads, produced more young men than were necessary as

herders for an optimal relation between the number of animals and the number of herders. Normally this "surplus" of young men can be regulated either by an expansion of the herds or by migration to other regions, or by taking up other professions. These issues, however, were blocked up by the civil war. As a consequence many young men took the opportunity to engage in the armed forces of the FROLINAT, they became professional soldiers. This pursues the practice during the French colonization, when many nomads engaged in the police or the army. After the independence of Chad (1960) they engaged also in the armies of neighbouring states.

The nomads in the FROLINAT

We have seen that the rebellion of the Tubu was provoked by the repressions of the Chadian military administration in Tibesti. At the beginning the Tubu made their own war upon the regime Tombalbaye, it was only in 1968 that they joined the maquis of the FROLINAT operating at the same time in the eastern regions of Chad (Wadai). At this time the FROLINAT was directed from Algiers by Dr. Abba Sidick (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 145). Already in 1971 Goukouni and Habré, both commanding the "Second Army" of Tubu, Daza and Goran, came into conflict with the political directory of the FROLINAT (Dr. Sidick) because they had been discriminated at the supply of arms. The pride and presumption of the "Second Army" owing to their military successes against the Chadian army and the French foreign legion, awoke the suspicion of Dr. Sidick (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 250). Finally the "Second Army" separated from the FROLINAT and created its own organization, the CCFAN ("Conseil de commandement des forces armées du Nord") with Habré as president and

Goukouni as vice-president. But soon rivalry between the two chiefs affected the new organization.

Goukouni Oueddeï is a noble Tubu (Teda), originating from the noble Tomagra clan of Tibesti which keeps the position of the *derde* (Sultan of Tibesti) (Fuchs 1961: 108). Indeed Goukouni is the son of the late *derde* Ouddeï Kefedemi.

Hissène Habré is the son of a poor herder of the Goran-Anakaza from Borku. Because of his striking intelligence at school he was patronized by the French government, he studied in Paris and after his return to Chad he became "sous-préfet" of Moussoro. In October 1971 he suddenly appeared in Tripoli. He took up negotiations with the FROLINAT (which had a bureau in Tripoli) probably on behalf of the government Tombalbaye. Up to now it is still a mystery why Habré changed sides at this occasion and joined the FROLINAT. Dr. Sidick offered him a position at the bureau of the FROLINAT in Algiers, but this did not match with the ambitions of Habré; he therefore contacted Goukouni who received him with open arms and offered him his position, i.e. the commando of the "Second Army". Habré became the "patron de la rébellion du Nord" (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 244).

However Goukouni and Habré soon got into dispute over the issue of collaboration with Libya's Colonel Gadhafi who became more and more interested into interfering in the Chadian civil war with the intention to extend the Libyan hegemony to the shore of Lake Chad (an old dream of all Libyan rulers). Goukouni was pro-Libyan because he saw the chance to win the civil war with the help of the Libyans whereas Habré was strictly hostile to the Libyans who had already occupied the oasis of Aouzou in northern Tibesti and he accused Goukouni of giving away the na-

tional interests of Chad. Robert Buijtenhuijs reports that Habré and Goukouni became sworn enemies because Habré in a discussion accused Goukouni in a fit of rage to be a "traitor" (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 358). This insult was of considerable consequence for the development of the civil war. It was in summer 1976 that the "Second Army" broke apart. Habré and his combatants, mainly Goran and Daza, turned east and allied with the nomadic Bideyat and Zaghawa living on both sides of the Sudan border. Thereby Habré was in the position to create in the Sudan his own political and military organization, the FAN ("Forces armées du Nord") (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 32).

Goukouni on his part allied with the Arabs of the so-called "Armée Volcan" of the warlord Baghlani. Together with the Tubu army FAP ("Forces armées populaires"), a new organization was created, the CMIAP ("Comité militaire interarmées provisoire") (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 33-34). The CMIAP was very successful in its operations against the Chadian army, probably due to the strong military support of Libya.

Habré and his combatants however suffered heavy losses. Fortunately to them the rest of the defeated FAN could escape across the border of the Sudan, but soon Habré got another chance. The military government of General Malloum that had followed the regime Tombalbaye in 1975, alarmed by the growing engagement of the Libyans in northern Chad, took up negotiations with Habré. In September 1978 Habré and the FAN marched into the capital N'Djaména, a new government was formed with Habré as Prime Minister and Malloum as President of Chad. Goukouni and his Tubu combatants were condemned as traitors puppets of Libyans (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 44, 63).

Habré took his chance. He did all in his power to eliminate the political élite

of the "Southernners", which led to serious tensions and differences with President Malloum and the regular Chadian army.

Goukouni, however, also took his chance. In March 1978 he held a "conférence extraordinaire" of the FROLINAT in Faya, in the "liberated Borku", to assemble all the commandants of the armed forces of the FROLINAT. They concluded a new political programme (in fact a kind of reprint of the first programme of the FROLINAT from 1966). First of all, however, they dismissed Dr. Sidick from his function as political leader of the FROLINAT. A new political forum was founded, the CR ("Conseil de la Révolution") with Goukouni as president. It was no coincidence that Dr. Sidick was expelled from his bureau in Tripoli by the Libyan authorities. He moved to Algiers. The nomads had seized the power in the FROLINAT (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 453).

Even the government in N'Djaména was dominated by the nomads. The government of Chad as well as the FROLINAT were in the hands of the nomads! Henceforth the struggle for the state was fought out between the warlords of the nomads.

However, at the beginning of this new chapter of the Chadian civil war there was not a fight but an alliance. In the meantime Nigeria became involved in the Chadian affairs. In March 1979 a conference was held in Kano under the patronage of Nigeria which ended with the reconciliation of the "brothers" FAN (Habré) and FAP (Goukouni), both sharing henceforth the power in the newly established government of Chad. The "Southernners" were pushed to marginal positions, President Malloum had to give way to Goukouni. A new logo was created: GUNT ("Gouvernement d'union nationale de transition"). As the Arabs,

fellow combatants of Goukouni, were more or less excluded from the power, new quarrels and crises arose, followed by changes in the government. More and more the hostility between Goukouni and Habré though officially buried, came to light (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 134). In spring 1980 N'Djaména was struck by a new phase of the civil war. Habré (then minister of defence) and his FAN fought against President Goukouni and his FAP (allied with Arabs and Libyans). The battle was bloody, N'Djaména was destroyed to a large extent, there were thousands of victims among the population which finally was ordered to leave the capital, because Goukouni and Habré were resolved to clinch their rivalry by this fight. While the battle of N'Djaména became more and more a stationary war, the "brothers" of the FAN, i.e. the Goran of Borku, attacked the bases of the FAP in the north, cutting off Goukouni's supply from Libya. As Goukouni's situation became critical, Colonel Gadhafi, in October 1980, sent an important detachment of the Libyan army to save his protégé Goukouni. A formal pact of mutual assistance was concluded, signed by Goukouni (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 166).

The FAN (Habré) had to yield to superior forces of the Libyans. On December 15th, 1980, Habré withdrew his forces in good order. The FAN (i.e. the Goran) left N'Djaména with 2500 combatants and about thousand civilians (women and children). Nearly without hindrance they reached the Sudan border (about 1000 km from N'Djaména), resolved to continue the war (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 168, 205).

How can we explain the fact that Goukouni and the FAP did not seize the opportunity to annihilate the enemy instead of letting him go? I think there are three reasons: 1. The fact that during the fights neither the Tubu nor the Goran lost their feeling of "brotherhood", tied up by

many kinship relations. There are eyewitness reports that during the fights from time to time both sides made a break to drink tea together and to exchange news on births, marriages, and deaths. 2. It is a point of honour to prove generosity to a defeated enemy, in particular if it is a "brother". 3. There was a high degree of exhaustion on the side of the Tubu FAP that had already led to the desertion of many combatants of Goukouni (Buijtenhuijs 1978: 165).

It is not clear whether the contract between Chad and Libya was an act of despair or a dexterous move of Goukouni. It is not even sure that Goukouni and his Arab allies realized the considerable importance and consequences of the contract which intended to establish a political union of the two countries. In a retrospective view it looks like an intrigue of the "cunning" Tubu Goukouni. "Cunning" is regarded by the Tubu as the most important quality of a chief (Baroin 1985: 74). Goukouni deceived the Libyans into Chad to deliver him from his dangerous rival Habré and the FAN. Besides he shocked the Western countries and many African states by the announcement of a union of Libya and Chad, thus mobilizing important international political activities in regard to Chad. Having exploited the military force of the Libyans for this purpose and squeezed them financially, he "betrayed" the Libyans by his demand to leave Chad. The Libyans, frustrated by the hostility of the Chadian population, drew back their troops immediately. Now Goukouni called for the assistance of the "Organization of African Unity" (OAU) to engage for Chad in order to stabilize his position and to prevent in the future a Libyan policy of expansion. This was – at least in the eyes of the Chadian population – a matchless political intrigue, worthy of a Tomagra.

Habré, the rival, was equally "cunning". Operating from their quarters in the Sudan, the FAN took up the guerrilla war with the argument to fight only against the Libyan occupation in order to receive substantial aid from the United States (CIA) (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 220). After the departure of the Libyans Habré indeed announced the suspension of hostilities and offered negotiations. However, in reality only a few days after the departure of the Libyans, the FAN began an offensive in the eastern prefectures. In the town of Abéché they captured an important arsenal left by the Libyans. Then they began the "Long March" to the capital N'Djaména.

Goukouni failed in his plan to fill the military vacuum left by the Libyans, by troops from other African states. Chiefly for financial reasons, the formation of the FIA ("Force interafricaine") made only very slow progress. Soon it became clear that the soldiers from Zaire, Senegal and Nigeria were not prepared to fight against Habré's FAN. In addition, there were again quarrels between the Tubu (FAP) and the organization of the Arabs, the CDR ("Conseil démocratique révolutionnaire"), under the warlord Ahmat Acyl (for details see Buijtenhuijs 1987: 351), because Goukouni kept all the arms received from Western governments for his FAP combatants, while the Arabs, fighting in the east against the Goran (FAN), asked in vain for supply (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 209). To make matters worse, Goukouni also quarrelled with the OAU, which wanted to place Chad under a kind of tutelage. Finally his government broke down and Habré, who controlled already the northern regions populated by the Goran (and Daza), entered N'Djaména as victor in June 1982, Goukouni had to flee across the Shari river to Cameroon (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 216). His Tubu combatants returned to Tibesti, partly by long circuits to avoid

the victorious troops of Habré. But this was not the end of the Tubu on the political stage of Chad. In 1987 we find them in a new alliance with their Goran "brothers" in a victorious battle against the Libyans in Tibesti and Ennedi (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 436).

Nevertheless the "Tubu state", as it was called by the people in Chad, was terminated in 1982, followed by the "Goran state". In reality the state did not exist at all. Warlords and their armies ruled over the northern territories, while the south stood aloof from politics, without a regular administration. There were only remnants of the regular Chadian army, commanded by "southern" officers, who successfully prevented the nomadic warlords from carrying their fights to the southern regions (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 215).

Habré became President. But the new order Habré established became a regime of terror that ended in 1990 with the expulsion of Habré and the Goran (FAN) by Idriss Déby and his well-trained Zaghawa combatants, backed by Libya, Sudan and, in secret, by France (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 38-39). Déby, the actual President, was educated as officer in France. He was the warlord of the nomadic Zaghawa and Bideyat living in the north-east of Chad, partly also in the Sudan (Fuchs 1979: 546, Tubiana 1977: 4, 72). They formerly took part in Habré's FAN. Déby started his career as FAN officer, but he separated from Habré and his terror regime and founded the MPS ("Mouvement patriotique du salut"). After the expulsion of Habré who went into exile to Dakar (Senegal), Déby brought numerous Goran and Daza of the FAN over to his side. This of course was not approved by the Zaghawa who were not willing to share the booty with the Goran. But Déby had learnt by the example of his predecessors that it is not sufficient to have an army of dauntless

nomadic combatants to reestablish the state. He carefully contacted the political élite of the south. In 1993 he convoked the "Conférence nationale souveraine du Tchad" (CNS) to elaborate the future constitution of Chad though, up to now the propositions of the CNS have not been realized. Since 1993 President Déby announces truly free democratic elections. But he delayed the elections from year to year, fearing a destabilization of the state as it had followed the first democratic experiment in 1960 shortly after independence. Up to now in Chad the conditions for a system of Western parliamentarianism do not exist and I am in doubt whether they will come to existence in the near future.

Conclusion

1. Before the nomads of northern Chad joined the FROLINAT, it was a revolutionary movement dominated by the Marxist theory of Mao Tse-Tung. Its aim was to establish in Chad a new, socialist, progressive and democratic society, all forms of tribalism were condemned. The principal aim of the FROLINAT was to overthrow the "neo-colonialist" government Tombalbaye, dominated by the "Southerners". The leaders of the FROLINAT belonged to a Muslim political élite which had been educated mainly in Egypt, France, Sudan and Eastern Europe (Russia). Despite their socialist aims, this élite by descent was connected with the urban Muslim bourgeoisie. The military command of the FROLINAT consisted of Chadian ex-combatants who had served in the Sudan army, some had been trained in North Korea, China and Egypt (for details see Buijtenhuijs 1978: 123-128, 198). At the beginning, the military operations of the FROLINAT were not very successful. Only with the participation of the nomads did the

FROLINAT became victorious. The leaders of the nomads, however, did not content themselves with the part of dauntless combatants. They also conquered the leading political positions, and changed the character of the FROLINAT in accordance with their own culture. The FROLINAT became nomadic in character, even though to the outside, it was maintained in the image of a socialist, anti-imperialistic, and democratic movement, another "ruse" to receive assistance from foreign countries. In reality, the FROLINAT became ethnicized, regionalized, and de-ideologized. The aim was no longer to establish a "new society" but simply and solely to expel the "Southerners" from the political power and to replace them by "Northerners" (i.e. the nomads). The FROLINAT became the arena for the rivalries of the nomadic warlords. When the "nomadic" FROLINAT entered victoriously the capital N'Djaména, there existed no political programme to be realized.

2. The nomadic-dominated FROLINAT obtained its cultural pattern from the leading Tubu-Daza-Goran group, introducing their social structure and cultural values. The Chad civil war became a "nomadic war" by applying nomadic tactics of warfare against the Chadian army (temporarily also against the French foreign legion). "Nomadic" character, however, were also the frequent changes in alliances and the rivalries of the leaders as well as the importance of ethnic prejudices.

The Tubu-Daza-Goran regard themselves as belonging to a common culture. Their cleavages and disputes, which had caused fierce battles, were always considered as "fraternal quarrels". In these fights both sides never forgot neither their kinship relations nor their cultural values ("honour"). Enemies from within the group were never annihilated but given the chance to escape (with wives

and children). The enemy of today was often the brother-in-arms of tomorrow.

There are also many kinship ties between the Tubu-Daza-Goran and the Bideyat-Zaghawa group. This facilitated the co-operation in the civil war but in the end both groups were anxious to preserve their independence.

The Arab nomads fighting in the FROLINAT established their own organization with their own leaders. Though they were important allies, they had only few chances to acquire decisive power in the FROLINAT. They were, on the contrary, very often pushed out and marginalized. I think this is due to suspicion and antipathy between Goran (Tubu) and Arabs who belong to quite different cultures and very rarely intermarry. There is a cultural distance between the two groups, which is historically conditioned and which led to constant tensions and quarrels during the civil war. There are reports of battles between Arabs and Goran in which the victorious side did attempt to annihilate the enemy showing that such battles were not considered fratricidal struggles (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 77). In another case an attack of the Arabs under their leader Acyl, in June 1978, on the town of Ati ended in disaster, because the allied Goran refused to fight under an Arab commander (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 59).

Nevertheless it would be wrong to explain the quarrels and fights within the FROLINAT only by ethnic and cultural factors. Very often they are mingled with ideological components. We have seen that the relations with Libya were a permanent point of controversy. In this connection Libya also means "The Green Book" of Colonel Gadhafi containing the principles of his Islamic socialism. There were hot disputes between Arabs and Goran over the adoption of "The Green Book", but also between Tubu and Goran. We have seen that the bloody bat-

tles between these "brothers" had their origin in pro-Libyan (Tubu, Goukouni) and anti-Libyan (Goran, Habré) strategies.

I think it is characteristic that, when there were ideological quarrels within the FROLINAT, the ideological groups were identical with the cultural (ethnic) groups, in no case an ethnic group was split up by ideological differences. This correlation of ethnic and ideological solidarity corresponds with the clan-structure of the nomads, where common ethnic principles keep the clan together.

3. During the civil war the relationship of the nomads with the state radically changed. Before the civil war the "state" meant for the nomads the government in the capital N'Djaména and the administration of the regional prefects. In the economic calculation of the nomads the "state" had its part because of the taxes which everybody tried to keep as low as possible. But the "state" also meant the guarantee for security of routes and markets indispensable for nomadic economy.

The rebellion against the regime of Tombalbaye was not, in the eyes of the nomads, a revolution against the existing post-colonial social system. Contrary to the founders of the FROLINAT, who had the aim of a "socialist society", the nomads never had the intention to "change the society". Their aim was simply and solely a new distribution of power in Chad which was kept mainly by the "Southerners" (i.e. the sedentary peasants of southern Chad). What is called "justice" in the declarations of the FROLINAT, meant nothing else but the participation of the nomadic "Northerners" in the political power. To change the situation by legal means, elections for instance, was impossible because elections would always result in the rule of the southern majority. Furthermore Tombalbaye's system of a unity party made elec-

tions a farce. We have seen that the aim of a balance of power between "North-erners" and "Southerners" became obsolete when the FROLINAT became victorious. The nomads regarded the state as a booty. "State" became for them synonymous with "access to the resources of the government", i.e. good positions, pensions, funds, treasury, privileges. The harder the battle had been, the more blood had been shed, the greater were the claims for compensation. Certainly avarice is not only common in nomadic societies, but for the Tubu-Daza-Goran group it has the meaning of a high cultural value (Baroin 1985: 385, Chapelle 1982: 17). Many nomads participated in the civil war only with the intention to yield a profit. It is significant that all peace treaties between the FROLINAT (or its followers) and the government include an agreement to integrate all the combatants of the guerrilla into the regular army or another service. Such an agreement could never be entirely realized because of the great number of combatants, their low level of education and last but not least because the government did not have the economic means to carry it out. The disappointed ex-fighters became a big problem for the government. After thirty years of civil war it is very difficult to disarm these people and to offer them new prospects.

4. In his political analysis of the Chadian civil war Robert Buijtenhuijs has shown that the common political models explaining revolutionary movements in the Third World cannot be applied to the Chad (Buijtenhuijs 1987: 337, 416-421). Indeed, even the continuance of this civil war for thirty years is unique (except perhaps for Sudan). I think, this civil war was "specifically Chadian" (and therefore hardly comparable) because it was dominated by nomads, giving this civil war a cultural pattern traced to the nomads of northern Chad. Evi-

dently the Tubu-Daza-Goran group held the leading position. The cultural traditions and values of this group explain the endurance of their combatants. They were never discouraged, neither by heavy losses nor by lost battles, nor by their "fratricidal strifes". Jean Chapelle, having many years' experience with the Tubu, describes them as "undefeatable": "Pour les soumettre, il faut soumettre successivement chaque tente, chaque Toubou. Battus, châtiés, dispersés, ils survivent..." (Chapelle 1982: 40).

The cultural values of the nomadic combatants proved to be stronger than the superior military forces of their enemies, including the foreign intervention troops of France and Libya. The "nomadisation" of the "FROLINAT" (i.e. the ethnic formation of the armies commanded by warlords who applied nomadic strategies and were exponents of nomadic ethics) brought the victory, but on the "Long March" the foundations of its political programme got lost.

The nomads (more precisely, the FROLINAT dominated by the nomads) had conquered the state, but instead of realizing the political programme that promised freedom, justice, and security to the suffering Chadian population, rivalries between the leaders and the cultural groups they represented ruled the political stage.

I conclude from these events and developments that a so-called "nomadic state" is not realizable, because the social and political structures of nomads are in contrast with structures essential for the state. Nomads are used to take their own decisions in matters of serious consequence. There is a high degree of responsibility left to the leaders of the various groups. The consequences are very often rivalries between leaders and the splitting of the group. This is contrary to centralized structures which form the basis of the state. Conquering nomads can es-

establish a state only by association with the sedentary groups of the territory, the key position being held by the townspeople. We know from history that the state has its basis in the urban society. Political ideologies are in most cases performed by intellectual élites, belonging chiefly to urban cultures; we rarely find them in nomad tents. I think this is true also for the modern Chadian state.

The "Conférence nationale souveraine du Tchad" (CNS) has shown that the political groups are more or less identical with the cultural groups. It becomes evident when we look at the dispute which arose during the CNS deliberations, that in the political arena, politico-cultural(ethnic) groups like "the Tubu", "the Goran", "the Zaghawa", "the Arabs", "the Sara"⁴, etc. are lumped together and charged with prejudices, imputations, and accusations (Buijtenhuijs 1993: 105, 145). That creates serious problems for the establishment of a western style democratic system. Perhaps the alternative is a modified form of parliamentarianism, a constitutionally regulated distribution and rotation of power between the large cultural groups of nomads and sedentaries. I think that a modern state can operate on the basis of such a convention, but on the condition that power is limited to a fixed period of tenure.

Notes

(1) The Daza inhabit a region of about 2 million square kilometers which stretches from Ennedi in the east to Kawar in the west, from Kufra in the north to the Lake Chad in the south. Their language, the Dazaga, belongs to the western branch of the "Saharan languages" (Greenberg) which embraces also Kanuri and Kanembu.

The Tubu (a Kanuri term, meaning "people of the rocks"), inhabitants of the Tibesti mountains, form the northern branch of the Daza. They call themselves Teda or Toda.

Goran is an Arabic name for the Daza of Borku, embracing the Anakaza, Bulgoda, Gaeda and others.

(2) The Zaghawa and Bideyat, who call themselves Baele, Beli or Beri, speak a language of the eastern branch of the "Saharan languages". They are mainly semi-nomads and cattle herders. The Bideyat inhabit the Ennedi mountains, the Zaghawa inhabit the northern regions of Wadai (Chad) and the North of Dar Fur (Sudan).

(3) The Arab nomads of Chad, speaking "Sudanic-Arabic", are mainly cattle herders (baggara) of the Sahel. Probably between the 14th and 19th century the Arabs migrated from the Nile valley to the west. There is a typical "Sudan-Arabic" cultural pattern which distinguishes the Arab nomads from the other cultural groups of Chad.

(4) The Sara are the most important cultural group in southern Chad.

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Résumé

La participation des nomades à la guerre civile du Tchad fut décisive pour la victoire du FROLINAT (Front de libération nationale du Tchad). Les seigneurs de la guerre nomades donnèrent au FROLINAT le caractère culturel d'un mouvement nomade. Or, après la victoire militaire, les nomades ne réussirent pas à réorganiser l'Etat tchadien. L'exemple montre qu'il n'est pas possible de réaliser un „Etat nomade“, les structures essentielles à l'Etat étant incompatibles avec les structures sociales et politiques des sociétés nomades.

Resumen

La participación de nómades en la guerra civil del Chad fue decisiva para la victoria de FROLINAT (Front de libération nationale du Tchad). Los líderes de la guerra nómada le otorgaron a FROLINAT el carácter cultural de un movimiento nómada. Sin embargo, después de la victoria militar, los nómades no contribuyeron mucho a la reorganización del Estado Chad. El ejemplo muestra que es imposible constituir un "Estado nómada", porque las estructuras esenciales de un Estado son incompatibles con las estructuras sociales y políticas de sociedades nómades.

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