

## Book Reviews

**Ville et pouvoirs au Maroc.** By ABDERRAHMANE RACHIK. Casablanca, Morocco: Afrique Orient, 1995.

Abderrahmane Rachik's *Ville et pouvoir au Maroc* takes as its point of departure the fierce riots that shook Casablanca, the economic capital of Morocco, in 1981, which called attention to the existence of serious social problems within the urban landscape hitherto only nominally invested by the State. The 'politique urbaine', was then an ambiguous category given that the role of the State was itself ambiguous in urban politics and despite the many colloquia and workshops organised to look into this question (throughout the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s), Rachik argues that more research and thought is needed to understand and explain these riots. He compares these Maghribi riots to the ones that broke out in Los Angeles, in England, and in France – the commonality being that they all sprang up in the poor and disadvantaged peripheries where ethnic minorities live. Building on this fact, Rachik proposes to investigate sociologically the relations the political machine has with a rioting urban periphery, a policy he characterises as 'urgent and multidimensional' by the Moroccan State following the riots of 1981.

In the first chapter 'The city and the colonial power', Rachik probes the genealogy of urban politics within Morocco. The policy of Maréchal Lyautey had inaugurated, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a new form of urban planning – the spatial separation between the indigenous and the colonial populations. The segregationist socio-political system was clearly revealed in the urban planning of the city; the colonial power having built in Casablanca the suburb neighbourhood of *habous*, an imitation of urban traditional Moroccan architecture for the affluent classes, worker cities for the working class, and a modern suburb for the Europeans. Each entity was spatially separated from the other for hygienic reasons. These different forms of housing and segregation between the populations was to continue well into the 1950s when the activism (often bloody) of the independence movement forced the French colonial power into reconsidering their urban planning, especially the planning of the periphery. Ecochard, a young French architect, was hired by the then Resident, General Labonne, to draw up general plans for Casablanca. The first plan, however, was emphatically rejected by the municipal council, proprietors, city promoters, industrialists, and the press; the plan would jeopardise not only their financial interests, but would potentially threaten the Europeans as their neighbourhood would be surrounded by the local population. Developing low-cost housing for the masses did not preoccupy the French colonial power, but nationalist demands for independence and the harsh criticism of Ecochard's plan caused the colonial power to build houses for the masses. Rachik argues that this was more of an attempt at saving the colonial regime in decline than having the interests of the poor population at heart. Ecochard was dismissed in 1953 and the municipality then presented its own plan – one based on the concentric model of the architect and urbanist Henri Prost who had designed Rabat and had worked with Maréchal Lyautey in the early 1920s. The municipality did, however, adapt Ecochard's plan for the roads and avenues for security reasons given that the 1950s was a period rife with crisis.

In the following chapter, 'the state, the riot, and the city', Rachik looks into the period following Moroccan political independence. He begins with the centre of Casablanca and argues that the changes it witnessed arose more from the pressures of

the periphery than from planning the centre proper. The most important of the urban projects in Casablanca was Hassan II's mosque. It would introduce radical changes to the urban landscape, one being the relocation of the medina population. Rachik argues that the authorities are hypocritical about the strategically located medina, where the population density is very high. Under all these pressures the city centre is readapting and the poorer social strata are continually being pushed to the peripheries where there is a mix of 'rurality, poverty, and danger' (p.79) constituting, therefore, a 'high risk zone' for the authorities. It was only following the massive discontent of the population within this high-risk zone, that an effective policy of city planning for Casablanca was considered with any seriousness. It is in this context that Rachik raises what for me is an essential question: are these riots a new form of socialisation tied to the process of urbanisation? In order to probe this hypothesis, he looks into existing sociological theories of social change and social movements to argue that these riots are important variables in the urbanisation of the periphery, without being identifiable social movements as such. They interpellate the State as to the rioters' socio-spatial exclusions and, therefore, bring pressure to bear on the political power; the rioters becoming hence informal political actors. Contrary to social movements, the riots are ephemeral, lacking precise goals and without leadership.

Following this analysis, Rachik tackles the question from yet another perspective in his last chapter 'the city, a political arena'. He raises the important question of whether the city planning of Casablanca, or city planning in general, is primarily triggered by and for security reasons. In the aftermath of the 1981 riots, the city was divided into four different prefectures. This administrative segmentation made the State more of a pervasive entity throughout the whole city. During the same period, the Ministry of Urbanism was incorporated in the Ministry of Interior, the backbone of the Moroccan government. New plans were drawn up for Casablanca. Rachik asks about the real aim of these plans, especially whether they aimed to ensure regulatory urbanism and the creation of Haussmann-like spatial grids to allow easy spatial control of certain regions. These new plans even called for the destruction of newly built areas that met all the necessary urban criteria, all of this primarily for security reasons, although in terms of official pronouncements, it is explained as a fight against insalubrious housing, in a hygienic and moralising tone very similar to that of the French protectorate. Following the publication of these plans, individuals and some communities came together in order to stop the destruction of their houses – a solidarity was born although, like the riots, it did not amount to a social movement.

This book ushers us into the tumultuous history of the city of Casablanca as seen especially from the periphery. Rachik clearly identifies the repeated contradictions in the different plans for the city of Casablanca and shows how the elite and the political machine have used these plans for different ideological and/or economic goals depending on the historical period. There are, however, some points I would like to raise about some of his arguments and analyses. The first and second chapters would have gained enormously from reference to existing works on Lyautey and urbanism (viz. Hoisington, *The Casablanca Connection*, Rabinow's *French's Modern*, Abu-Lughod's *Rabat: Urban Apartheid*, Mitchell's *Colonizing Egypt*, or Celik's *Istanbul*). Such a literature has shown the complexities, historical intricacies, and the political uses of urban planning in a colonial context. Had Rachik used this literature, it would have endowed some of his important questions (namely, the link between periphery and riot, planning and security) with more weight and critical edge. Rachik's discussion of the incorporation of the bureau of urbanism within the Ministry of Interior highlighted its effectiveness while omitting the fact that the Ministry of

Interior is the primary instrument of control and repression. Perhaps this has to do with the time of publication: the research for this book was carried out in 1987 and it was published in 1995, a time span during which the kingdom of Morocco was beginning to experience some openings in the political structure especially after the 1970s and mid-1980s known as periods of heavy political repression. While the hypothesis of the book is very interesting, long sections of the text are burdened with digressions which, at times, bury the analysis and make it difficult to read. Despite these few shortcomings, this is a very rich text which has dared to tackle an important topic and a reality that still threatens to relocate a hundred thousand people and demolish thousands of houses. In addition, it contains an extremely useful chronological table at the end which traces the evolution of the city, copies of all the major urban plans proposed since 1952 by Ecochard, comparative statistics of different neighbourhoods in Casablanca, and a very useful bibliography.

JAMILA BARGACH  
National School of Architecture,  
Rabat, Morocco

**'Pariah States' & Sanctions in the Middle East: Iraq, Libya, Sudan.** By TIM NIBLOCK. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2001. pp.x + 241. \$49.95 (cloth). ISBN 1-55587-962-4.

Tim Niblock, Director of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, has significantly enriched the academic bookshelf on the decade-long phenomena of UN sanctions. This book examines the utility of the UN sanctions imposed on Iraq, Libya and Sudan and discusses their impact on the international order as well as on the political and economic development of the three sanctioned states.

As Niblock clearly points out, it was no accident that the UN imposed its sanctions on Iraq in 1991, on Libya in 1992 and on Sudan in 1996. The UN's ability to resort to such a political weapon has been possible only in the post-Cold War era, in the wake of the disappearance from global politics of the Soviet counter-effect to the West. Indubitably, the UN sanctions phenomena was a unique by-product of the New World Order, attempting to bring transgressor states back in line with international norms.

At the writing of this review in summer 2001, the sanctions remain valid in all three cases, although they have been suspended – but not lifted – in the Libyan case. Nevertheless they have differed from case to case in their legal status, their substance and scope, their sustainability, and their impact on each of the countries and on international order. Because of these stark variations, the author has correctly abstained from imposing a common format of analysis on all three cases, preferring to assess each of them separately.

In the preface, Niblock finds it important to accentuate a basic, self-understood characteristic of any academic study, by stating that this book 'constitutes an *objective attempt* (reviewer's emphasis) to examine the rationale, impact, and effects of UN sanctions imposed on Iraq, Libya and Sudan' (p.ix). One should read this remark in the light of his subsequent confession that the motivations for his study were a 'mixture of anger and shame' vis-à-vis the Western forces responsible for the sanctions' imposition and for the consequent agony of the people in what he has referred to as 'pariah states' (p. ix).

One of Niblock's conclusions is that UN sanctions do not enhance the stability of the international order when applied over a prolonged period. Regarding the immediate impact of sanctions, he views only one of them as positively contributing to contain a regime that might otherwise be disruptive; he notes that the sanctions may force the country's leadership to concentrate on its own survival, leaving it with less time and ability to pursue aggressive or expansionist policies directed against neighbouring countries or the wider international community. Indeed, the example of Libya has plainly illustrated this case. The diplomatic and economic UN sanctions forced the regime of Mu'ammār al-Qadhafī to divert its energies to survival. The sanctions adversely affected domestic and foreign affairs, although they were not the sole reason for the heightened socio-economic and political tension, notably the mounting threats by anti-regime Islamist dissidence.

While indicating the UN's success in achieving the sanctions' goal with regard to Libya, Niblock claims that they need not have been imposed. Libya had already begun to respond to the changing world order in 1989, three years before imposition of the sanctions, signalling a renunciation of support for extremist organisations. However, he does not take into account the international community's accusations in the late 1980s and early 1990s that Libya was manufacturing chemical weapons, that Libya was involved in international terrorism, and more specifically, the accusations by the US, the UK and France that Libya was responsible for the bombing of a Pan-American plane over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, and of a French UTA DC-10 over the Sahara in 1989. Niblock describes how Libya 'found itself locked into an intense conflict' with the US, yet one must not ignore the fact that you need two to tango (p.19). Although Niblock claims that Libya's foreign policy was shaped by a mind-set rather than by clearly defined objectives, this distinction seems to this reviewer to be semantic rather than substantial, because at the end of the day it is often the mind-set that drives the operation.

Niblock notes that sanctions do not necessarily achieve the immediate objectives sought by the Security Council and even when states comply with the requirements, it is not clear whether sanctions have been the leading factor. Furthermore, Niblock notes that economic sanctions have tended to strengthen regimes and, therefore, the assumption that sanctions will help the population by opening opportunities for civilian forces to overthrow an oppressive and undemocratic regime is unjustified; the regime can gain some credit domestically by deftly defending itself from an external onslaught as perceived by the population; economic sanctions have an adverse impact on the social basis necessary for democratisation; economic sanctions undermine the long-term political stability of states, with repercussions on the stability of the wider region, as well as delaying the development of frameworks of regional co-operation in both security and economic fields that could underpin regional stability.

Niblock's central conclusion is that the international order has not yet found a satisfactory way to handle states that are accused of transgressing international law. This illuminating study is a most valuable contribution to the discussion of the state of profit and loss resulting from the UN sanctions. Even if one finds some of the conclusions controversial, Niblock's book is nevertheless a challenging basis for a reassessment of the sanctions' effectiveness and an invitation for further academic studies in the field.

YEHUDIT RONEN  
Tel Aviv and Bar Ilan Universities