

Chapter No. 8:

KHARTOUM TECHNICAL INSTITUTE SCHOOL YEAR 1962/3

The climate in September became more pleasant when daytime temperatures were around 32°C to diminish to say 25°C at nights. On the other hand the humidity was still relatively high at 50% that incited the perspiration. The wind could not "decide" from which direction it should blow so there were often long windless periods. I still had my enduring coughing irritation that obviously was linked to the ratio of temperature to humidity. At least I was happy having my family at close now. Thus I could fully concentrate on the lecturing of a new subject supposedly to start soon. Everything was "taib" as a Sudanese would say for fine or just OK.



Families Diklić and Springer visit the Gebel Aulia Dam on White Nile south of Khartoum

On Thursday September 13th I was to start lecturing for KTI's new school year 1962/3. I entered the class full of good anticipations to start teaching again. The room was for one of the two top senior classes I had taught last year that students were around the age of 20. To my dismay I found the classroom to be empty except for one single student who was waiting for me. He told that his colleagues would not attend my lecture as they were sitting in the students' clubroom. Evidently their strike was against me personally that was a shocking blow to my self-confidence and enthusiasm. At first I was as flabbergasted as I did not know what to do standing there in disbelief what I bumped into. After a while I got to my wits and walked over to see either the Principal or any of the two Vice-Principals.

On my way there I met few lecturers who were surprised with the students' behavior at the very begin of the year. They were trying to put me at ease and suggested not give in under any circumstance. I should remain stern with students when they return to the classroom after. Some time passed until I met Sayed Farah who greeted me smiling and said: "Hey, Zvonko, I know what happened already. I told the students to get back to their class fast or they would loose their scholarships and the school year as well. Please, go back to your class now. Do come to see me on Saturday if the students would be still on strike." I said thanks and with a "Maesh" turned back walking slowly to the classroom few blocks away. I felt that all was in vain and that I would have to wait until Saturday to see what happens after then.

At first I found an empty classroom and at the thought to return on Saturday as with some magic the students started filing in unhurriedly for a while. Without any word I turned to the blackboard and started writing the lecture's title and a few subtitles that would follow later. I have prepared my lectures on "Theory of Structures" considering that I taught this class last year too. I choose a rather systematic approach to cover the syllabus. With stopping I went on dictating the text in connection with the derivation of formulae and the appropriate examples for better understanding. Only at the lecture's end I perceived that most of the students did not write down my transcript - their notebook pages were almost empty.

Because even the best student did not write continuously during my dictation I had to ask him for explanation. His answer sounded almost incredulous: "Sayed, I want to understand what you dictate first and then write it down in my words." Then I did explode in my way reiterating: "How could you write down something in your words if you did not anything about. Your English is not adequate to formulate a particular problem with words that are new to you." Turning to all other in the room saying distinctly that I they have to write my dictations accurately and also all what I write and sketch on the blackboard from now on. If one could read anything from their faces it would be of pure dislike.

Later I went to see the V-P Tech Kamal who did make it clear that students' behavior was not acceptable for KTI after all. He also met students in their Club and told them that they must return to my lectures. However if they have any problems or differences these should be clarified with the teacher first. It appeared that their problem was the way I lectured in choosing the simplest and best approach to a particular problem or formula. After these explanations I gave a few appropriate examples using in them general characters instead of numbers. Also students were worried that I would not complete the syllabus. I did not follow exactly the text and numerical examples shown in their books that were edited in England in late 19th century. Therefore they would not able to learn (by heart) from their books and use the examples therein. There more comments regarding my stern censures and of the too many home works they have to produce. They complained that my dictates are not enough for them to understand the different teaching of mine. This annoyed me so much that my frustration could force me to capitulate for the sake of my peace and general contentment. Why should I try to improve the teaching by changing an outdated syllabus? In practice it would mean to restrain from any individual approach and follow an outmoded colonial teaching system.

Already few lecturers have kindly warned me not to confront the established curriculum of KTI as this would be an almost impossible task. My intention was to teach technical subjects in the way that would allow talented young Sudanese to start thinking with their own brain. Only this would make them capable to solve technical projects required and specific in their country – not those of England of 19th century. My idealism was slowly smoldering away for sure. At home I spent hours endeavoring to find a solution how get over that old-fashioned teaching suggested by the syllabus and still satisfy my principles. One could not possibly give recipes how to resolve any particular technical problem that one could apply successfully in the real life. Should the technical science be reduced to a book of recipes? Should I capitulate just to make the students happy and unconcerned about technical problems that they would come across as engineers? Most likely the time would solve my doubts and reservations too.

September passed fast and the weather became more tolerable although despite higher humidity that still incommoded me. After a talk to Diklić it was decided that Vesna and their daughter Marina would not attend the school planned by the Embassy. Diklić and I were engineers but we had refused to teach younger children on Fridays too. This meant

that we both were in the very opposition to the Embassy's official course. On one evening Vesna stayed with Marina who was her best friend here now. Thus Ljiljana and I went out alone to see a movie in the Blue Nile cinema. We sat there in our car parked on the river's bank for a while before we could start to talk over the problems that were nagging us since Ljiljana's return. She told me what Vesna answered to people when asked about why she wants to return to the Sudan: "I'm going to my home! My daddy is there!" That triggered sentiments in both of us and in particular my responsibility and concern my family's future. We both were troubled with the recent political developments in Yugoslavia that had some bearing on our position here.

This very evening I made up my mind that we should not return to Yugoslavia anymore that meant to leave our home country for good. It was obvious to me that I must seek the way out of the Sudan once my contract expires. I had a colleague Branko G. in Australia who left with his young wife Yugoslavia in secret after he got his Civil Engineer's diploma of University in Zagreb like me. We learned about their departure from a postcard sent under pretence of a honeymoon sea trip in summer of 1958. Branko was a technician and possibly the most talented draughtsman in the industrial design bureau PLAN in Zagreb. Late 1951 he taught me how to produce proper drawings during a short period when part timed to gain some experience and finance too. Early 1952 I got my University diploma of the Civil Engineer specialized in Structural engineering designs.

Few months later I got employed in PLAN bureau when they offices moved to a building across the house in that we were living in Bogoviceva Street. I was assigned to the group "O" of Dr. Otto Werner and working under his leadership was the significant experience for me. By coincidence Branko's table was next to mine for 3 good years. Otto Werner was the leading design engineer and well known as a prominent designer of industrial buildings particularly for the Cement works. Subsequently Otto became the good friend to my family and more important the best counselor and mentor for my professional future. Thus I have decided to write to Branko to explain our problems as well as the idea to immigrate to Australia.

Few days later I wrote this letter asking Branko about his experience and the procedural advice also whether he could support us in this matter. I cannot remember anything of the movie we saw on that decisive evening except for long clusters of grasshoppers hanging from street lampposts. Zillions of grasshoppers covered the road surface making the driving very slippery over this "carpet". However I do recall the many hours and days I spent composing the letter to Branko in Sydney.

At the lectures I had to deal with few students' made-up obstacles trying to slow me down. They also tried to distract my attention by trivial matters like whether a particular topic is in the syllabus or would we finish it until next year's examination etc. These interruptions resulted in making me firm but sometimes I had to increase my voice what Sudanese did not like at all. I required from my students to produce more home-works that I had certified to be considered with notes from their normal tests during the school year. Sometimes I had to check and certify up to 100 home-works that became a real hard on me. Yes, I was hard on them too but that was probably the only way to get reasonable of engineers from the final classes. I knew implicitly that at the end I would have to compromise one way or the other to make the students happy but that was better then to give up from the very beginning.

We got in an eddy of socializing with old and several new neighbors staying in 32 flats of the fully occupied 4 blocks at Hai-el-Matar now. First we had to return my invitations during

the time of Ljiljana's absence. After that followed exchanges of visits with a few German couples like Grubes and Schlaefers. Of the later Joachim and Paul respectively worked for UNESCO office in Khartoum. By end of October Ljiljana achieved some kind of equilibrium between pro and contra invitations but this didn't mean that the following months would be different in months to come. On four of seven evenings per week we would have various kinds of invitation to hold on. We bought a PHILIPS 4-track tape recorder and got almost obsessed in recording mostly classical music from LP-records.

We recorded any LP we could get hold using for a borrowed gramophone. Ljiljana got hold of many LPs at the American lending library so that the recording work kept us busy for weeks. We would have several large reels with 6-hour recorded music before too long. We enjoyed listening recorded music resting in long-chairs on the verandah late in night hours particularly at moonlight. The nights were so quiet and the silence would be interrupted by an insect's rustle or buzz only. Our neighbors listened to our music making and sometimes even called to increase the volume.

Sayed Farah was transferred to the Ministry of Education as the Assistant to Director and responsible for the technical education including at KTI. Thus I lost a good support at KTI but Farah continued visiting us regularly so Ljiljana kept enough of ice cream for him that he enjoyed immensely each time. Vesna on other hand liked his visit too as of her favorite talks with Farah who was the President of Khartoum Jockey Club. Vesna was occupied with any normal teenager's desire like to have an animal but a cat she would not accepted at all. The sad remembrance on our Cocker Spaniel "Lucky" was still too vivid as we had to give him away to a hunter prior our leaving Zagreb. Ljiljana and Vesna visited "Lucky" at his new domicile at Ormoz in past summer but the dog did not care at all for them. Lucky became a proper hunting dog for which his master was the only vital person now. There would not be wise to keep an animal here as our stay was timely limited.

The new Yugoslav ambassador arranged for the welcoming party at his residence in North Khartoum on October 19. Quite a number of the Yugoslavs turned up and it was a normal gathering with chatting and long standing around. Ladies created a small group and the ambassador's wife joined them talking about trivial household matters. By mere quirk a Sudanese naval officer in uniform greeted me smiling but did not recognize him. Only when he started talking in Croatian did I make out the driver that had damaged my car parked at the Post Office some month ago. Few more Sudanese officers joined in telling stories referring to their training in Yugoslavia and other events they remembered. The party hour passed fast and soon it was time to get back to Khartoum on that windless evening that promised an uneasy sleeping.

By end of October the wind still could not decide from which side to blow either from South or North. Then it stopped entirely making our lives miserable and causing many sleepless nights. It was not the heat but the humidity that caused an excessive perspiration to all of humans. The insects' bread in zillions so if one had put on lights at anyplace these bugs were electrocuted that is smoldered smelling awkwardly at times. Ljiljana got skin rushes like me and blisters on her feet caused by the loamy dust – this sensitiveness would keep to her for years to come. Vesna was doing fine in 3rd class of her new school of Comboni Sisters (Italian nouns). Save for the spelling in that I had to examine her but the math was Ljiljana's domain as she was our main procurer anyway. Supplies on the market visibly improved and boys at the souk (marketplace) had something to carry of Ljiljana's weekly supply each Wednesday. Beshir had to wash all vegetables and fruits in two waters with detergent and rinse everything afterwards - all under strict Ljiljana's control. In principle we

would never get any digestive problems with the stuff bought on the souk throughout all times of our stay in Khartoum.



The Head of the Parade on the Republic's Anniversary on 17th November 1962

My students succumbed to their bitter destiny having me as the lecturer in the two of 6th and 7th (final) classes respectively. They came up with few more complains about their home-works and tests that I had requested. I thought that it could be simpler and visibly better for them if I demonstrate certain problems using the graphical method. However soon I had found out that the graphical method is not suitable when working with Imperial unit system where 12 inches make a foot or with weight (force) units etc. The only way to it would be using the decimal system by taking say an inch or a pound as the basis. I got the habit to vary units between inches or yards and pounds or tones as the measures in the examples. Thus I forced on the students to learn how to convert given measures first in the certain basic units and then go on with working out an example. Thus they did discover the advantage of using the decimal system that origin goes back to few Arabic scientists. That made them happy and a little bit more understandable of my way of teaching – at last they had started THINKING and how to use their minds as to the proper engineer's way.



An infantry column in the Parade of Republic's Anniversary in front of the Main Post Office

During November we had to sleep inside and covering us with woolen blankets as the nights became rather cool at last. One did not use the ceiling fans anymore and on a few

occasions we had to close one door wing to reduce the chilly draughts. For a while we got sparrows sitting on the balcony handrail chirping at exactly 6AM that acted as our alarm-clock. A number of lizards settled in bricks hollowness and effectively reducing the insects and grasshoppers those were in abundance then. Good news came in that we would 3-week holidays for Christmas so schemes were thought over where or how to spend this precious time. A hotel in Erkowit near Port Sudan was a supposed to be a pleasant place but it was closed at Christmas time. Somebody suggested visiting Asmara in Ethiopia but it was turned down as too expensive and because any time being outside Sudan would be deducted from the annual leave. With some anticipation we were waiting for the great parade to be held on the Republic's Anniversary on 17th November. We received the invitation from the President personally as well as for the garden party at the State Palace.



A squad of Camel Rides parades on the Republic of Sudan Anniversary

Branko's letter from Sydney has arrived almost unnoticed except for Ljiljana and me. It started the "avalanche" of a number steps and subsequent upshots to be kept in as our top secrecy during the following years. On the first Friday to come - that was November 2 - I decided to visit the British Embassy. It was located in one of the high buildings with yellow pain and bordering the semicircle lawn park along the main avenue that was in front of the President's palace. With some trepidation and beating heart, beware of the risk I watched around not to meet anybody of the Yugoslav community. I continued my casual stroll along the buildings' arcade at seemingly never ending time. At once reaching the main entrance to the Embassy I went in swiftly and sped up the wide staircase to rush into the secretary's office. I remember that a faltering voice came out of my dried out mouth when I asked to see the Consul. After that moment all went in a more or less like by an automatic course

The Consul listened to my explanation with understanding and I could say sympathy before he started with the detailed explanation and procedure how to obtain the family emigration permit for Australia. Branko's letter contained adequate information and data for the Consul so he suggested that Branko should send a certified affidavit for me and my family via the diplomatic channels from Sydney. The Consul told me in a conciliatory and rather sympathetic way that everything should be going on well from now on and that we could receive the entry permits for the whole family within a few months. He added that Australia is looking with the considerable interest for the civil engineers because these are especially needed for the country's development. I left the Consulate almost as suspended by invisible clouds of hopes. I turned into the large courtyard to grant me a long drink at

the Greek tavern where a number of perfect cold fruit shakes were served. I had honored myself with a mixed mango and banana shake.

The rest of November passed quickly and the strenuous time of party-going would start in the next month. Each club held his Christmas party except for the Yugoslav one where the New Year's was the replacement for. Of course there were many other private invitations that we had to follow up as well as Vesna's traditional school Christ-child birth recital in that she played a small role. We got hold of a number of Mahjongg players that resulted in more meetings at which we learned how to play this game from few Chinese who were rather professional and fast players of it. A lot of new movies were flown into Khartoum and the open-air cinemas displayed a new program each week. One evening we were invited to a Sudanese Folklore Show held in open-air theater in Omdurman. This was a most interesting performance where tribal musicians played on native instruments like flutes, different drums, rattles and clasps. Dancers came from many southern Sudanese tribes showing their indigenous dances and dressed in original costumes. But for the girls they had to wear bust-holders in varying colors that marred their appearance. In the rather traditionalistic Muslim town of Omdurman it would be absolutely incompatible that women show or perform their barren breasts. It was a great show so I took many photos that could be unique in times as such a program would never be repeated after.



The Christmas Eve 1962 fête in our flat at Hai el Matar with Beshir in attendance

We had to write many Christmas cards moreover we received quite a number of soon after. We stretched strings in our living/dinning room on that we hang Christmas card the American way that fluttered on any draughty waft. At home Vesna had learned by heart her role as an angel for the school's Holy Crib Play and we got know to sing several Christmas chorals in English also. We bought a Christmas tree as a foldable imitation of a fir-tree that was decorated with glass colored spheres and other forms, wrapped in golden chains and added small candles lit by battery. Our tape recorder provided the adequate festive music and we played chorals in English for the time being. Our favorite was Big Crosby's "White Christmas" that had reminded us on celebrations in snowy winters at home. My parents promised to record my father's singing the Croatian chorals he liked so much to intone on a Christmas Eve. In Yugoslavia one was not allowed to observe the Roman-Catholic Christmas. The Crib play was a great success and for the first time Ljiljana and me observed this feast without worrying about whether we were watched by intimidating eyes. The great Holly Mass in Khartoum's cathedral was the social affair and the great gathering of friends and acquaintances. Nobody bothered about celebrating it in full public on that Christmas Day of 1962.

All members of the Yugoslav Club were supposed to attend the New Year's Eve feast so we joined in the party. There was a lot of chatting mostly about daily household trifles and small groups formed of persons who were more personally acquainted. Children did not have any barriers in this respect so Vesna took over the command about what they could do under club's restrictive circumstances. The whole affair tuned out to be in a more or less dispirited and subdued frame of mind – at least for us. I knew to well that I set off for an officially not acceptable political path in the New Year 1963. There would be several events and meetings that we should have to attend to in next few months. Though **we did not have to report or write anything about this** in our letters home. Ljiljana and I would not talk about to our closest relatives during the prospective home leave due in May 1963.

Vesna's former private teacher Mrs. Stainfield left Khartoum for good and praised her English fast learning. She recommended that Vesna should go to a private school to improve her capabilities. Under the present circumstances this would not be possible so we would pursue her promising path provided the situation allows it in future months or years. Captain Mifka of m/s "Varaždin" had sent books for the 2nd and 3rd classes for a Primary school complying with our plans that Vesna sits for exams during the summer holidays. She started to read these books instantly and with Ljiljana's help she should be well prepared to pass the examinations either in Zagreb or in Starigrad as the schooling ends in June. Thus Vesna would have enough time and in principle achieve what I said when I refused that she attends the Embassy's trial schooling here in Khartoum.



The Congregation after the Christmas Mass at Roman-Catholic Cathedral at Khartoum City

The climate in January was rather pleasant with cool nights so we knew well now that we have to dress warm if visiting an open air cinema or to sit in a restaurant under the stars littered sky. Despite daily temperatures around 30°C (!) we went swimming mostly early in the afternoons and spent remaining hours going after our routine jobs. Vesna's progress at school went well despite having Fridays and Sundays free. It happened once that she had 10 tests in a fortnight yet her notes were excellent: in 6 tests she had 100/100 and in other 4 ones 85-90/100. She had to learn writing and reading in Arabic and her colleague helped by scribbling a translation over the text she had to say in English. The Italian Sisters taught their language that Vesna liked much and soon she would babble it without any difficulty.

Ljiljana's had a lot of pleasure with her flowers on the terrace that were thriving in the sunny and dry climate as watered properly often twice a day. If somebody entered in a room with wet feet Beshir would become disgruntled of footprints on the perfectly polished

floor he was so proud of. The carpets we brought from Zagreb had to be stored away as Beshir did shuck them rather brutally as they were dusty – he said. We all got to a mutual understanding despite Beshir’s whims and serving himself from the fridge sometimes. Well he liked Ljiljana’s cooking – malesh!

The 2nd term on KTI started in February and it seemed that my students got somehow accustomed to my ways of lecturing. We were well in the month of Ramadan when an ordinary letter arrived notifying me that I should visit to the British Consulate at my convenience. I did not wait for too long and on the next free Friday I went to visit this office looking around that nobody sees me. The Consul informed me politely that my appeal for the immigration to Australia has been approved. He gave me the code number to use at any British consulate in case of an emergency. There I would receive the Australian “Laissez Passes” papers for my family guaranteeing the free and save transport for the immigration to Australia. It was accomplished! From then onwards I felt more confident that our future may be getting on a safer and a free path after all.

At those days flights from Kenya to Europe had a stop over in Khartoum so my mentor Otto Werner. Now University professor, made a night stopover to meet us. He stayed in the Grand Hotel of Khartoum (the best and only one in the City) for a few days until his next flight was due for Zagreb. Thus we had plenty of time to talk about many things of mutual interest. For many years Otto has been consulting Dr. Felix Mandl, the Managing director of CEMENTIA HOLDING AG with the seat in Zürich, Switzerland. Their friendship and cooperation went back to times when Mr. Hubert Spannring, a reputable consultant for the cement industry, introduced Otto to Dr. Mandl then director of the former CROATIA CEMENT. From Spannring then Otto took over the consultancy work for the cement works that were under Dr. Mandl’s directorship henceforth. Otto just returned from Mombassa where the works of British Portland Cement Co. were undergoing for an extension of shaft kilns operation. He told me that BPCC is looking for a young civil engineer who could take over the design and supervision of the extension that was underway at Bamburi works near Mombassa. I promised Otto that I would seriously consider this proposal and to get in touch with Dr. Mandl still in Mombassa as soon as possible.



Mr. Klepac a Civil Engineer from Zagreb and our friends at left bank of the Nile at Omdurman

In the meantime Yugoslavia started several investment projects in the Sudan so there was a constant coming and going of specialists looking after these industrial projects. The first started the construction for a leather tannery plant in Khartoum as well as for new cement works at Kosti some 205 miles south of Khartoum. Both projects had more of a political

merit than a real economic value. Later it turned out that cattle's raw skin was blemished by thorns pockmarks and far too thin for a good quality product. Later one recognized that Kosti cement works had the worse possible infrastructural conditions. The fuel had to be imported by rail from Port Sudan and the excavated raw lime stone had to be hauled from a quarry some 70 miles from works over non existing roadwork. To my knowledge a plant at Kosti never started the production while Mira and Ljiljana used the services of Khartoum Tannery to cure snake skins to be soft enough for sewing later. During these many visits we entertained several civil engineers from Zagreb who were looking after the construction works at both plants and on some roadwork projects too.

In between I have completed the project for Halim's new house at Khartoum South that construction was due to start soon after the Ramadan. Our good neighbor Dr. Illes started coining planes for his return to Europe considering traveling by car from Khartoum through the Sudan to Egypt and onwards to Europe. He proposed to me to come along with him in the summer 1963. Such an idea was too extravagant to me but I could not refuse frankly this proposal instantly. From that moment we were in a profound discourse about whether the aristocrats of Zrinski family were of Croatian or Hungarian origin. This dispute dragged over a few months until my father sent enough historical data and facts to prove Croatian origin of both aristocrat families Frankopani and Zrinski.

Vesna had her first Communion on the Sunday March 22, 1963 and Ljiljana made an outfit especially for that occasion. She got a friar like long white dress bound at waist with a dark cord and a big cross hanging on her neck. On Saturday all probationers stayed over night in the school and after the ceremony all kids and their families congregated in the Catholic Club for a lunch as well as for a dinner to be followed by a show and a movie. It was a great fun and pleasure for all who attended that event.

Sayed Farah invited us to visit Khartoum hippodrome where camel races took place on this day. The flat race court was not far outside of Khartoum South suburb where a lot of building development was taking place. At the race court I got a heavy coughing attack so by mere chance our Syrian pharmacologist was present in group of onlookers. He came to me saying: "Zvonko, you have real desert asthma!" As a stroke of lightning – it is asthma – I became aware of my childhood's blight that caused some bad times in near past. From then on I was taking ASMAC medicine that even a quarter of a pill worked miracles. This medication solved my coughing problems triggered by a bronchial allergy of fine dust and certain combination of temperature visa versa humidity. ASMAC also helped me when I had to speak a lot at lectures on KTI and at University. Recently I was getting some design work from the UNESCO's office where several German colleagues were employed.

Daily temperatures were getting closer to 40°C by end of March though it could be chilly in deep shadow and nights were still pleasant. Vesna read through all her Croatian books and comics several times and got to like the Reader's Digest magazine. She liked also English comics and books that exchanged with or lend from her friends. Vesna became a "reading worm" and nothing was secure from her even PLAYBOY magazine that I got from a Greek bookshop. She saw that magazine in a movie that showed a discreet striptease for a short moment. How to answer a 9 year old girl why lights are turned off near the end of a striptease scene or why tits or genitals are covered with funny looking bits of cloth or a leaf? With April came back the high heat and low humidity during days where the nights became sticky and windless so we were sleeping on the verandah again.

The end of school year 1962/3 was closing in and it was high time that we finalize our plans for holidays. Many children birthday parties were held by Vesna's colleagues and

her party was celebrated on 21st March that was her name's day as she would away for her birthday. I received a letter midway of our holiday's contemplations that announced Dr. Mandl's transit stop at Khartoum early in April. This was Mandl's answer to my introduction letter that I sent soon after Otto's visit. I have explicated my interest to work for the Works of BPCC in Mombassa or any other place to Company's needs – except in Yugoslavia. The daytime temperatures got over 40°C in April and at nights there hardly any breeze to achieve a cooling sense by perspiration. Dr. Mandl's flight was due at Khartoum airport by 2AM and Halim arranged through his connection that I got a police permit to enter the transit lounge on that target day.

My intention was to dress as light as possible but my best of wife with the friendly help of our neighbor couples Grube and Schlaefer forced on me a near torture dressing. I had to take dark trousers and long-sleeve shirt with a necktie but sandals were not allowed to wear either. Badly perspiring I started for the airport and got into the transit lounge bathed in sweat possibly sympathized by police officers on duty. When the aircraft landed and no passengers got out I thought that the meeting would be a mistake. At last came out an elderly gentleman short in stature and balding, dressed in shorts and light shirt profoundly perspiring who advanced to me brightly smiling saying: "You must be Zvonko as nobody else would be waiting for me in this oven of heat!"

This eased my tautness and the timely short conversation went in a rather amicable way resulting in the invitation for me to visit Bamburi Works with Ljiljana (he knew her name already!) as early as possible. We agreed that the best opportunity would come during the next Christmas holiday that is by end of 1963. He also suggested that I should send him a list magazines and literature that would help me in my future employment. There was no word mentioned about job's contract conditions or similar but my impression was like that I have a new employment fixed when my contact expires in Khartoum. He parted as fast as he came out leaving me behind in an absolutely perplexed mood. I just could not believe what happened in such a short time. After I returned home we both stayed awoken for some time as I was trying to describe that decisive meeting in all details to Ljiljana.



A visit to Abdel Halim's home with wife Amna (left) attended by his cousin cum wife (right) and Ljiljana clad into the Sudanese Tob dress (at centre)

The rest of time in April went by too fast in this heat as there were many decisions and plans to be finalized. The flight was booked for Ljiljana and Vesna for May 8th to Rome with a stop over for 2 nights to get an onward connection to Zagreb on the 10th. From

there they would travel to Starigrad in a little while as Vesna should attend the Primary school there probably to pass exams for the 2nd and 3rd class simultaneously.

The lectures at KTI were to finish on May 2nd and the exams to be held from the 8th until the 14th – thus I could not leave before. I would certainly not join Dr. Illes for sure on his still confused itinerary and an unpredictable journey by car to Europe as he was leaving the Sudan for good. I did not want to hinder him in his travels although we were on good speaking terms after our dispute about Zrinski's family that we solved in a fairly diplomatic manner. When I confronted him with a number of historic data that father provided it was concluded that our discourse was a matter of mutual misunderstandings only.

We experienced a serious shortage of the water supply in all blocks since April. By Mr. Diklić's position and the liaison to the Ministries an electric booster pump got installed for each block as for Khartoum habits rather fast. Thus the pressure of the water main was increased sufficiently to fill the tanks enough during nights. As for the learning from my past experience we filled the bathtub as a reserve and for the evaporation to cool water (out of faucet about 40°C) for a pleasant dip. In brief time before leaving Ljiljana got into a sewing frenzy on her BAGAT machine brought from Zagreb but she noticed with some disappointment that she needs glasses at 35 already. As the day of departure getting closer her main worry was how to preserve plants that were withering under heat and dryness by now. She prepared a number of bougainvillea shoots and got a few more from the Botanic Gardens she wanted to bring to her mother in Starigrad.

There had be some time to visit a lady dentist recommended to us for checkups and as I was rather concerned about the condition of my teeth. Mrs. Kossachewa, an elderly Bulgarian lady, was kind and concerned dentist using almost antic equipment like the foot-driven drilling machine however she did a fine job on all of us. She probably saved my set of teeth from deterioration that was too important in such a climate. So out of sudden both my ladies left as planned on Wednesday May 8 morning at 7 hours leaving me behind alone again. I was supposed to find somebody to stay in our flat during our absence that was customary here. It turned out that was not an easy task after all! Then our befriended SWISSAIR Ground crew manager Gaston (a Lebanese) agreed to move in on July 15th and to pay the rent for three months he would be using our flat. Gaston became a lucky choice for me too as he had a straight forward impact on my holiday planning later. Also our good friends Grube who were living a floor below us would help even more. Joachim worked as an architect for UNESCO so his wife Elisabeth agreed to take care as much as possible for Ljiljana's plants during the most adverse season for them though.

I was very busy as I had to note 95 examination papers and to complete the consultation works for the UNESCO office too. My students have produced far better results than of the year before and only one student did not pass in my and few other subjects too. Thus I got rid of the two final classes whose students were not easy to work with. However I would have troubles with two 6th classes as their lecturer had left for good so I had to check the students' papers for him. The result was of a most strange upshot. All students of these two classes have answered to all the same questions so it smelled of a real fabrication one way or the other.

Ljiljana's postcards from Rome were received by Paul, Maurice and Halim before I got mine. So I had some hard time with them to explain why my postcard came in several days later. I had booked travel tickets and reserved hotel accommodations for all three of us on our return voyage to the Sudan and everything was confirmed already. The Ministry of Education issued my official annual leave papers and warrants as well as the reentry

visa so it was the high time to go on holidays. Nevertheless the last days became so very hectic due to some unexpected problems in parallel. There were many invitations and small tasks to be done like getting travelers checks, parking my car in a protected place at Halim's office etc. There was a last minute confusion regarding the medical consultation abroad that Halim and Amna dearly wanted and that had been resolved successfully so they left few days prior to my departure. Thus I used Halim's car for the last days solving by too many transportation problems at an abhorring heat. I was longing for very long swims in the cooler Adriatic seas, believe me.

Gaston has arranged a visit to Beirut for me where I would meet his brother to show me around until I board m/s "Esperia" of ADRIATICA Line to leave for Alexandria. Supposedly I had to be in Naples on June 4th 1963 to meet colleagues from the Croatian Society of Civil Engineers traveling by buss through Italy. I should join them on their return leg and in all probability meet Ljiljana in Koper to continue together to Zagreb. The day came to say goodbye to all friends staying behind in Khartoum through heats and haboobs. Gaston escorted me to the airport on May 23rd where I fetched the early morning plane to Beirut. Few hours later I was in Beirut and a taxi brought me to the "Myrtom House" that Mikićs recommended as it was almost at the City's center. I felt rather comfortable instantly. In the hotel lobby stood a huge vase full with long stemmed roses and their smell struck me immediately. Then I realized that my sense of smell got back so this was the first surprise of the so desired home leave and the much deserved holidays after all.



The cotton picking on lands in the Nubian resettlement scheme close to the Blue Nile River in East Sudan

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