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By **ROBERT LEE**

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**TUNIS**, Tunisia — The night before I left Algiers, Algeria, a French friend of mine gave me a tip.

"The place to meet African leaders is in the night clubs," he said. "Go to a few when you're in Tunis and see."

"Good idea," I said. "Should have been doing that all along instead of wasting my days pounding on doors to see officials who end up giving me the addresses of other doors to pound on."

**THE NEXT** night, in Tunis, I took a quick look at a list of the town's half-a dozen night clubs, decided there must be enough official types to fill them all, and picked the one closest to the hotel.

"Cabaret," said a neon sign above a pair of hand-carved wooden doors. There were a few pictures of dancing girls at the left.

"Probably jammed with Bourguiba's ministers," I thought as I checked my coat and pulled open a second pair of wide doors.

I think it was the minister of protocol who rushed over to greet me. She mumbled something in English that I didn't understand, grabbed my arm and pointed to a table.

**I DECLINED** her invitation. You can't expect to find out about Tunisia's new oil finds from the minister of protocol.

"A table where I can be alone, s'il vous plait, monsieur."

Seated at the far side of a rather elegantly furnished room I noticed that the minister of protocol was not the only female member of the government. Of about 40 persons in the room, only 10 were men—the six members of the orchestra, three waiters and me.

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"Tunisian women have certainly moved ahead of their Algerian counterparts as far as politics is concerned," I said to myself.

The minister of protocol was back at my side, looking even fatter and uglier than she had the first time. I still didn't understand her English.

"Speak French," I pleaded.

**I DON'T** speak French," she said. "I'm Italian."

The minister of fuels and energy sidled up on my other side. I knew it was she because she asked for a light.

"Sorry, can't help you there," I said. "I don't smoke. When is your country going to start exporting oil?"

"Do I please you?" she replied.

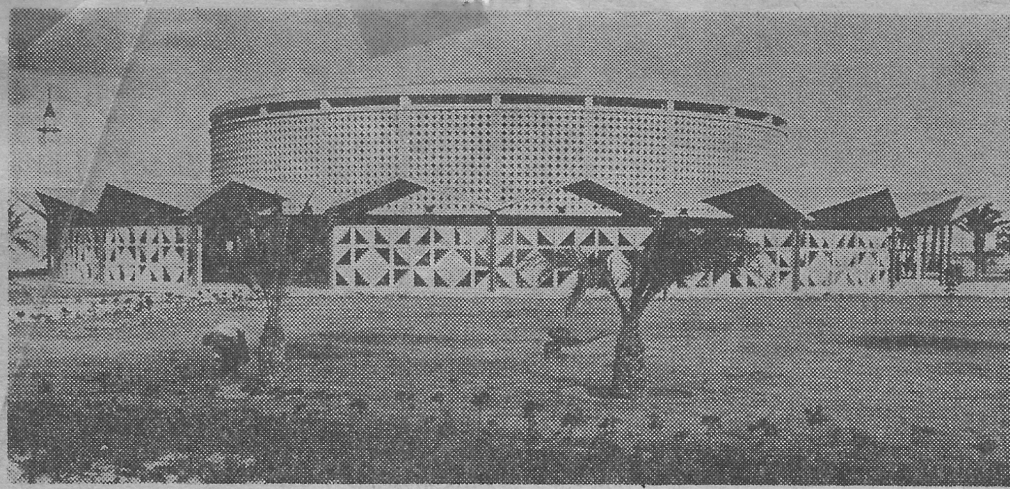
"Well, you're very pretty, even beautiful, but . . ."

"Do you want me to go away?"

"Oui."

Peace restored. She must have been only the deputy minister of fuels and energy anyway, because the Minister herself charged immediately from the front.

I Recognized her because she asked for a light.



**FESTIVAL HALL IN MONASTIR, TUNISIA**

*Building seats 2,000, is used as a movie theater, convention center*

## For Allah—and Tourists—Islam Repels the Christians Again

By **ROBERT LEE**

MONASTIR, Tunisia — Blue and white lights bathe the watchtower of an ancient Islamic fortress, and a voice booms through the dark: "Allah is great. Allah is all powerful."

Then there is silence and darkness. The Christians are attacking from the sea. A spotlight plays along the ramparts as the Muslim leader urges his men, in Allah's name, to fight to the end.

Music is heard from every corner of the fort. Lights flash across the walls.

The Christians are thrown back. Now they're back with more boats. They're storming the walls. It's impossible to hold out.

That stronghold of Islam, the Ribat of Monastir, is abandoned to the enemy.

But Allah finally is victorious. His troops storm back to rout the Christians; and once more the Spectacle of Sound and Light extolls Allah's glory.

THEN the spectacle is over, and the three shivering spectators who have braved a chilly winter evening leave their 20-cent bleacher seats atop the ramparts and descend a narrow stone stairway toward the 20th century.

Once the foot-thick wooden doors have been pried open with a giant crowbar, it takes only five minutes to get to a hot shower, a hearty four-course dinner with good red wine and a warm bed

under hand-woven blankets from Kairouan.

WITH the temperature dipping below 40, there are only a dozen vacationing Germans and a handful of Frenchmen in the hotel.

But the hotelkeeper says his rooms will fill quickly when the sandy beaches begin to warm in late February. He expects a full house from March through October, thanks to a large influx of German and Swiss tourists, a fair number of Englishmen and a few, but very few, Americans.

In fact, demand for the 500 hotel beds in Monastir and nearby Skanes is so great that the state-owned Societe Hoteliere et Touristique de Tunisie is building an 800-bed vacation village a few miles away.

THE COMPANY already owns and operates the only four hotels in Monastir and Skanes, all "first category" establishments built since 1959. Prices are about \$6 a day per person for a double room with bath plus breakfast and lunch or dinner. Full pension runs to \$7 a day, tips, but not beverages, included.

The Monastir area is one of four in which the Tunisian Ministry of Tourism has been concentrating its efforts to attract more foreign visitors.

Those efforts already have resulted in a quadrupling of the number of persons entering the country from 1961 to 1964, and, for the first 10 months of 1965, entries were 21 per cent ahead of 1964.

THE EXCELLENT beaches along the 15 miles of coast between Monastir and Sousse, the third largest city in Tunisia, are the chief tourist attraction.

But there are sites of historical interest, too, such as the 9th century Ribat at Monastir, another at Sousse and a municipal museum at Sousse that contains a remarkable collection of Roman mosaics. And the towns of Kairouan, with its rich religious traditions, Mahdia, a fishing village that is almost an island, and El Djem, with

its Roman amphitheater, are only an hour's drive from Monastir.

Finally, the tourist is assured of good company. Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, a native of Monastir, maintains a large summer home near Skanes.

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