
We must eliminate the vestiges of the colonial system

Report to the Executive Committee
of the Movement of Solidarity
with the Afro-Asian Peoples,
Beirut, November 9-13, 1960.

The resolutions unanimously adopted by the Second Conference of Solidarity with the Afro-Asian Peoples, held in Conakry last April, stressed the necessity of undertaking a decisive action in the two continents to eliminate the last vestiges of the colonial system and to eradicate all forms of direct or indirect exploitation. In order to do this we must mobilize and unify the internal popular forces in each of our countries and strengthen all forms of solidarity among the peoples and states of Africa and Asia and of all other countries upholding freedom, progress and peace.

Our activity in Morocco in the last six months has concentrated on the following two objectives:

- internal mobilization for the antimperialist struggle;
- solidarity abroad with other countries struggling for

their national independence, especially with the people of Algeria, whose struggle and fate are intimately linked with ours.

a. MOROCCO ENTERS THE WAR IN ALGERIA

When the war in Algeria entered a truly revolutionary phase, the Moroccan national liberation movement, under the leadership of the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), made the decision in its National Council of October 21, 1960, to join the struggle for the liquidation of the colonial and feudal system of the Algerian people.

We held that:

"... the question of the evacuation of foreign troops maintained in Morocco five years after independence, is a national problem that should be placed above all polemic and partisan strife, especially in view of the present circumstances in Algeria, an integral part of the Arab Maghreb, where we are witnessing the development of a war of extermination against a fraternal people.

"We consider that the maintenance of French troops in Morocco is not only an affront to national dignity and sovereignty, but also, in practice, an effective aid lent by our country to the French Army in its colonial war in Algeria.

"We believe that the renewal for three years of the agreements between the government of H. M. Mohamed V and France providing for French bases is a danger to the Arab Maghreb, especially since this time period is the same one calculated by the French Army as necessary to quell the Algerian revolution."

Such are the truths contained in the call made to the Moroccan people and to all national organizations, to begin on November 1, a series of decisive actions with the aim of liquidating the sequels of the colonial and feudal systems, of liberating Algeria and constituting a united, democratic and progressive Maghreb.

The Moroccan popular masses responded to this call made on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the Algerian revolution and have even thwarted the royal

government's decision prohibiting all demonstrations other than those organized officially by the same people that two months earlier (September 1, 1960) had signed the agreement to maintain the bases until the end of 1963.

Now it is a question of going from the phase of declarations to that of action. Today the people of the Maghreb are again united in a common front, as they were from 1953 to 1955, in armed struggle against the colonial system which at the end of 1955 had broken this unity by making seductive offers of independence to Tunisia and Morocco.

Those revolutionaries accepted the compromise because they thought that such an independence, even though incomplete (since military and economic domination remained intact) would serve as a springboard for all the Maghreb, in that it would provide a broader and more efficient base in the struggle for Algerian liberation, especially since imperialism was concentrating all its strength in this war.

But the conjunction of imperialist interests, of certain neocolonialist policies and the thirst for power of local semifeudal elements and of the antipopular big and comprador bourgeoisie made events turn in another direction. The intromission in the national movement of certain leaders allied to these different interests succeeded in demobilizing popular energy for some years.

b. THE NATIONAL UNION OF POPULAR FORCES

On January 25, 1957 it was necessary that the popular base of the national movement denounce the incapacity and weakness of the traditional leaders of the Istiqlal and proclaim the creation of the UNFP the following September 6, making possible a remobilization of the people in order to continue the national struggle.

The leadership of the national liberation movement returned then to the driving forces that had led it to combat up to 1956 and that had mobilized all the population.

During the four years of "demobilization," reactionary elements, allies of imperialism, unceasingly tried to disintegrate these forces, either by creating a multiplicity of political parties and so-called resistance or trade union

associations, or by provoking separatist movements for tribal or pseudo-religious reasons.¹

The creation of the UNFP put an end to this undermining and disintegrating action by denouncing its authors and once again organizing all the national forces animated with the same spirit of struggle against all forms of colonial domination and exploitation.

What seemed for a time to be a simple internal struggle for power among more or less progressive factions of the national bourgeoisie turned into a clear confrontation between the anti-imperialist popular forces and the reactionary, semifeudal elements, directly or indirectly linked to foreign interests.

The reality of this national front has grown increasingly more palpable because of the unified position of the different sectors of Moroccan society in regard to national problems:

- intellectual and manual workers organized in the powerful Moroccan Labor Union, which has 600 000 members;
- men from the resistance and liberation movements, chiefly of rural or recent urban origin;
- artisans and small businessmen who constitute a middle class which has fed the ranks of the national movement;
- the students organized in the National Union of Moroccan Students (UNEM).

All, although differing in their political creed or social origin, but united by the same desire for unity and patriotic action, proclaimed on September 6, 1959:

¹ Armed rebellion led by the governor of Tafilalet, Addi-Ou-Bihi, in January 1957, under the pretext of inciting the tribes of this province to rebel to protect the throne against popular forces. This movement failed as soon as it was proved that it was armed and aided by French troops stationed in the region. (The Supreme Court trial—held in December 1959—dictated a death sentence for the governor who is, however, still alive and actually enjoying the secret protection of the royal palace.) One of the conspirators in the plot was Lahcen Lyoussi, Minister and Adviser to the king, now exiled in Spain, who was also one of the promoters of a Berber political party, the Popular Movement, of a feudal nature. (Author's note).

“That there is no contradiction between the interests of the different social sectors of the Moroccan people and that only unity can thwart imperialist designs and assure the realization of national objectives.”

All have also declared that:

“The political organizations in their present form are corrupt and incapable of educating and training the masses for constructive tasks,” and that the same organizations “constitute an instrument of division and even a sham for the defense or acquisition of personal privileges, and favor foreign intervention or have sordid ulterior motives.”

This was the great moment of truth for the Moroccan people who since the proclamation of independence had been subjected to an insidious campaign of mystification and confusion. The revitalized unity left out in the cold the enemies, open or not, of the Moroccan people.

The national struggle for liberty had to begin again, this time under the leadership of really revolutionary, dynamic and vigilant forces.

C. RENEWAL OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The national liberation struggle was seriously undertaken on the official level by the leaders of the UNFP, Abdoulaye Ibrahim and Abdourrahim Boubid, President and Vice-President respectively of the royal council of ministers, after the elimination from government leadership of Ahmed Balafrej, deposed Head of the General Secretariat of the Istiqlal.

During 1959, and up to May 1960, the Ibrahim government, in spite of the important ministerial posts still occupied by reactionary elements, was able to pose the basic problems of national liberation.

Positive results have been obtained against the positions of imperialism and its allies inside the country:

- return to the peasants and distribution in the form of cooperatives of 44 000 hectares of land expropriated by French settlers;
- preparation of legal documents concerning hundreds of thousands of hectares, equally expropriated by co-

- loners who still own nearly one million hectares of land;
- nationalization of the foreign trade of tea, Morocco's traditional beverage;
- establishment of the National Bank of Emission and the Bank of Economic Development;
- control of capital transfers to foreign countries;
- organization of the instruments to draw up and carry out a five-year plan which will reorganize the country's structures, start an agrarian reform and guarantee rural modernization, real industrialization and the training of cadres;
- suppression of foreign radio broadcasts.

These measures, particularly concentrated in the field of economic liberation, have as their object to deprive the neocolonial system of its weapons of pressure and blackmail in order to prepare the way for the liquidation of other vestiges of colonial domination in the military field.

Opposition to these measures of national liberation has not ceased to come from the government itself in the person of the crown prince Moulay Hassan, who was backed by an army and police force inspired by French advisers (and still more discreetly by the new US advisers) which most of the time were commanded by mercenary Moroccan officials who had served in the colonial army, chiefly in the Indochina war. However, there was a period of vacillation, since King Mohamed V did not trust the haphazard adventurous nature of the antipopular and anti-national policy preached by his entourage and by the crown prince. Psychological warfare was begun by the entourage and linked to certain police operations against supposed plots.

These were:

- stifling the students' congress and persecuting the national press that published its resolutions (August 1959);
- bringing the Communist Party to trial (October 1959);
- closing down the progressive daily *At-Tahrir* and arresting its director and editor-in-chief Basri and

Yousouri, both founders of the resistance of the UNFP;

- arresting some twenty leaders of the UNFP, old members of the resistance of chiefs of the liberation forces;
- and especially, disarming and liquidating the Moroccan Armed Liberation Forces of the Sahara, which since 1956 had been protecting the southwestern flank of the combative Algerian nation.

Nevertheless, the patriots in the Ibrahim government steadfastly continued to work for the liquidation of the colonial system. After having obtained an announcement of the evacuation of US troops, they turned to the problem of the immediate withdrawal of French troops which continued their open activities and espionage against the liberation movements in Morocco and Algeria.

The agreement of the King was obtained in April in the Council of Ministers; this established a method and timetable for said evacuation. July 1, 1960 was the date for the realization of evacuation by diplomatic means. After this date, the plan of action called for the handing over to the French government of all French officials and "technical advisers" of the Royal Armed Forces and the police forces and a call to the people to undertake direct action to obtain evacuation.

This was to be understood in the broad sense of the term, and could not be camouflaged by a simple substitution of the emblem of foreign occupation for the national flag. The attempts to effect such mystification quickly failed: the US Ambassador came, in effect, to ask President Ibrahim, also the foreign relations minister, his approval for a group of officials from US bases, among whom were Major Blair, to join the embassy as military attaches, and also to be appointed as "advisers" of the crown prince Moulay Hassan, general staff chief of the Royal Armed Forces, who had already given his consent. Ibrahim's negative reply strangely enough coincided with the dissolution by the King of the Ibrahim government on May 19.

It was evident that the antimperialist stand of the Ibrahim government could not help but put in motion the great foreign interests which behind the façade of Moroccan independence were trying to perpetuate a system of colonial

domination based on a semifeudal regime. The reactionary group that surrounded the King, under the orders of these interests, energetically undertook to eliminate at any price the representatives of the UNFP in the government. Such was the royal coup d'état and the constitution of a ministry presided by the King himself and his son, the crown prince Moulay Hassan, based on a clientele linked to the royal family or to the important commercial and land-owning families, the privileged of the regime.

d. POPULAR FORCES CONFRONT NEOCOLONIALISM

In the middle of 1960 the fifth independent Moroccan government began to take on a new aspect, not that which had stimulated the struggle of the popular forces for whom independence meant democracy, progress and power for the masses, but that of a disguised colonialism which has an already classical name, especially after many African countries gained their independence: neocolonialism.

The initiatives of the new royal cabinet were of such a nature that they endangered the policy of liberation and non-dependence and threatened to cancel out the fruits of victory gained by the people in their struggle for the country's economic and social liberation.

The five-year plan prepared by the preceding government was presented last July by the new vice president of the Council, prince Moulay Hassan. The plan had been radically changed in a way that left no room for real structural or agrarian reform, rendering the latter into a means of strengthening the domination of foreign capital and the military police system.

Far from serving as an instrument to revitalize the country's development and to democratically mobilize the popular masses for national construction, the plan constituted a true retrocession and, according to the declarations of the Minister of Labor of the Royal Cabinet, led to an increase of unemployment.

This regression in the field of economic liberation was composed of a series of antidemocratic measures, aimed at obstructing popular action.

Frightened because of the results of last May's elections to the Chambers of Commerce, the municipalities and the rural communes which voted in a victory for the UNFP;

convinced of the firmness of popular unity which on several occasions was expressed in general strikes of protest with the participation of groups of workers, peasants, businessmen, functionaries and students, paralyzing national life; the reactionary elements installed in the government deliberately undertook to betray the popular masses:

- they annulled the elections to the chamber of commerce of Casablanca, the economic capital, from where the *compradores* had been eliminated by the masses of small progressive businessmen in May 1960;
- they created *de facto* —and legalized on October 20, 1960— an artificial trade union, the General Union of Moroccan Workers (UGTM) to try to break the unity of the working class organized in the Moroccan Labor Union;
- they adopted arbitrary measures against the democratic press, prohibiting it (*Al Moukafih*, Communist) or regularly confiscating it (*El-Rai-El-Am* of the UNFP, *Avant-Garde* of the UMT);
- they appointed former officials of the French Army, implicated in anti-national activities, as governors and heads of security or police forces;
- they replaced the progressive technicians on different economic and financial levels¹ by men linked to the interests of the large semifeudal or bourgeois families, anxious to take the posts where they could continue mercantile and colonialist exploitation.

However, these were merely secondary operations destined to divert the Moroccan people's attention away from the new direction taken by official policy in respect to imperialism.

In the Congo, the Royal Armed Forces acted, under the aegis of the United Nations, as genuine colonial troops. Impartial observers consider its superior officers as partially responsible for the neocolonialist conspiracies hatched against the legal government of Lumumba —which they plan to use again— and the pitting of one African against

¹ Office of Studies and Industrial Participation, Bank of Economic Development, Office of Investigations and Mining Participation, Office of Phosphates, etc.

another. Nevertheless, it was planned to triple the number of the royal army, increase it to 100 000 men and endow it with a US organization team.

In Morocco itself, the plan for the evacuation of foreign troops was abandoned.

On September 1, 1960, the royal cabinet and the French Ambassador Parodi signed an agreement which guaranteed the maintenance of French bases under the form of schools up to the end of 1963, at the very moment when the struggle of the Algerian people was entering a crucial phase.

This was the way semifeudalism, installed in power in the countryside, passed on to imperialism. This placed the popular forces before the obligation of reacting energetically, avoiding falling into error because of the operations of diversion or camouflage which were:

- the question of Mauritania¹
- the closing of the consulate in Oujda²
- the expulsion of some French colonists from that region.

It was evident that the Moroccan people were facing the danger of their country becoming an agent of insidious actions of a neocolonialism camouflaged under the flag of the national Army. In a still more direct manner, Morocco was converted into a legally recognized base of training and point of departure for aggressive forces against the Algerian revolution, thus serving imperialist strategy, concerned especially with maintaining its rule on this side of the Mediterranean even at the cost of the "palestinization" of the Maghreb, the partition of Algeria and creation of a static equilibrium based on the coexistence of neocolonial, fascist and semifeudal regimes.

The royal government was faced with an unavoidable alternative: to refuse aid, now officially granted, to the

¹ Presented as a question of annexation in contradiction with the currents of liberation prevailing in Africa and at a moment when the armed forces of liberation of Mauritania had just been disarmed by the Palace. The position of the UNFP on this question is summarized as follows: self-determination and unity with the Maghreb.

² When the Governor of this province had just been appointed, Colonel Ben Larbi, former officer of the French Army which served in Indochina.

French Army and together with the popular masses undertake the struggle of the Algerian people; or to oppose the mobilization chosen by the Moroccan people for the definitive liquidation of the colonial system in the Maghreb.

The struggle began on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the Algerian revolution, November 1. The instrument of this struggle passed the acid test: The National Union of Popular Forces. The peoples of the Maghreb who assault the last bastion of the colonial system are sustained by a powerful current of solidarity that our Afro-Asian movement must maintain, strengthen and give an increasingly more concrete and efficient character.

e. PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATIONS OF SOLIDARITY

For our part, during the last six months we have dedicated ourselves to making our contribution to strengthen this solidarity, participating in demonstrations of the popular, political, trade union and cultural organizations, which have grown in the same measure as has the struggle for liberation in Africa, Asia and the rest of the world. Practical resolutions have been adopted in this sense, on the occasion of mutual visits between fraternal organizations.

- The International Trade Union Committee of Solidarity with the Algerian workers and peoples, held an important meeting in Havana on October 20, 1960 to study the forms of action to strengthen this solidarity. The Secretary-General of the UMT, Mahjoub Ben Seddik, played an important role in this meeting.
- On occasion of the meeting in Geneva of the 44th Conference of the International Labor Organization last June, the trade union organizations of the Arab countries reaffirmed in a manifesto their solidarity against all attempts at subjugating the working masses by feudalists or dictators.
- On the purely Maghreb scene, a meeting of the General Union of Algerian Workers with the participation of the Young Moroccan Workers was organized in Casablanca from July 29 to August 7, 1960.

We have similarly dedicated ourselves to developing a spirit of solidarity in the struggle and in national development within our youth organizations.

The Congress of the National Union of Moroccan Students, held in Casablanca from July 16 to 20, served as an occasion for the adoption of resolutions in this sense. Our working and student youth has participated in the different international seminars and has played a vanguard role:

- Pan-African Youth Seminar, Tunis (April 11 to 19, 1960).
- International Committee of Solidarity with Algerian Youth, Conakry, March 31, 1960.
- Eighth meeting of the World Youth Assembly, Accra, August 19 to 25, 1960.
- Seminar of Youth on Peace, Aid to Underdeveloped Countries and the Struggle against Neocolonialism, Dubrovnik, September 5 to 13, 1960.
- International camp in Cuba for the construction of a university city, under the auspices of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, August 30 to September, 1960.
- Committee of the Stockholm Youth Festival, October 1, 1960.
- Seminar on the political, economic, social and cultural role of the African trade union, Berg-Neustadt, Dusseldorf, October 21 to 25, 1960.
- Congress of the International Students' Union held in Baghdad in October 1960 where resolutions of solidarity were adopted by Afro-Asian students and those from democratic countries on current problems. Similar resolutions were adopted in the COSSEC Congress held in Switzerland one month before and in the Pan-African Students' meeting held in London was a great success (October 12 to 15, 1960).
- Congress of the General Union of Mussulman Students of Algeria in Tunis was likewise the occasion of a great meeting of Afro-Asian youth, as was the second congress of the National Union of Tunisian Women met in Monastir, August 16, 1960, which established links of fraternal cooperation among the women's movements of the Maghreb countries.

In the field of democratic liberties and free speech, the second world meeting of journalists held in Baden, Austria, from October 18 to 22, 1960, drew up practical means of cooperation in the press and radio.

The Organization of Solidarity of the Afro-Asian Peoples and its Permanent Secretariat have the task of realizing these resolutions. To this effect, we recommend the creation of the posts of Traveling Secretaries in order to guarantee communication and activities between the different popular organizations in Africa and Asia.

We must create antennas in the principal capitals of the world (Peking, Moscow, London, New York, Paris, Geneva) united to the headquarters of our movement and entrusted with the task of diffusion.

The struggle we wage today against the vestiges of the colonial and feudal system has taken on very favorable aspects both for the Moroccans and for other peoples.

Popular forces have reached a high degree of political consciousness, organization and unity.

Reactionary elements of mystification and confusion have appeared under their true light.

The forces of liberty and democracy in the world have been considerably strengthened by the victories won against imperialist rule which has definitely passed from a state of development to one of deterioration.

Suffice it to join all the democratic forces of the world to defeat the plans for the resurrection of the colonial system and conjure all the conspiracies fomented by the local reactionary elements, at the service of neocolonialism.

However, the struggle may be long and difficult. Therefore, we must confront it with determination, resistance and perseverance against all obstacles. Our vigilance should be constantly alert during our long march since at the end lies victory for the peoples.

This victory is certain and will bring liberty, democracy and peaceful coexistence to humanity.