

Part 2: The Algerian Students and the Coup d'Etat

B. Rayane

General Secretary, The National Union of Algerian Students in England

ON June 19, 1965, when the eyes of the world were upon Algeria, preparing to receive its guests for the second Afro-Asian Conference; at the time when thousands of young Algerians and of the youth of the world were making the final preparations for the ninth International Youth Festival; on that day, the radios of the world announced the military *coup d'état* which overthrew Ahmed Ben Bella, the President of the Algerian Republic and Secretary General of the National Liberation Front, and illegally took power in Algeria.

It is not intended to go into the details of the affair, but to give the first reflections of the Algerian students, on the basis of which they have clearly and firmly condemned the military *coup d'état* effected so unexpectedly on June 19 last. If we examine the official statement of the National Revolutionary Council, signed by Colonel Houari Boumedienne, the reactionary character of the whole text is most noticeable: all the criticisms without any foundation or concrete proof to back up the accusations, and all the reactionary jargon normally found in counter-revolutionary tracts. Without going into too much detail, the message of the statement can be summed up as follows: Algeria was heading straight for bankruptcy and the only person responsible for this catastrophe was the Secretary General of the F.L.N., Ben Bella.

Behind the facts and figures included in the National Revolutionary Council's statement of June 19 are wanton assertions which should not deceive anyone. Nevertheless, it is essential to remind those who claim to epitomise revolutionary purity (this was the claim of the perpetrators of the 'putsch') that if the President of the Republic was responsible for an incorrect policy, they are just as responsible, if not more so, for they were the principal executants of the policy they are denouncing today. As for the accusation of high treason against the President, Ben Bella, not one Algerian or friend of Algeria could believe it. Such a crime was never committed, and the 'putschists' themselves, having found no motive for it, have announced that they are doing the necessary research to find one!

The perpetrators of the *coup d'état* declare that Algeria started on a wrong course by adopting the Charter of Algiers at the Congress of the National Liberation Front in April 1964. And when they use such terms as 'taking back the country into their own hands', 'efficiency' and 'discipline', in clearer terms they mean the removal of the socialist plans being carried out by Algeria, and the installation of a military dictatorship. Look at the declarations of Mr. Cherif Belkacem, the Minister of National Education and an active participant in the *coup d'état*: he declares that the Algiers Charter is inspired by ideologies foreign to Algeria, and that it must be revised. Finally, if we remember that the Central Committee of the F.L.N. took important decisions on economic matters three days before the *coup d'état*, particularly in the field of agrarian reform; and if we remember that the Afro-Asian Conference was about to take place to reinforce the anti-imperialist struggle throughout the world; then we can see that the perpetrators of the coup wished to stop the advancement of the socialist revolution before it was too late for them and for the interests they represent.

Let us look at the list of the members of the National Revolutionary Council. The overwhelming majority of this council are military officers. These are the men who have always explicitly rejected the socialist orientation of the Algiers Charter; it is they who have prevented the National Liberation Army becoming the real people's Army by destroying all that the people's militia have built up and by building up instead a classical type of army with all that is necessary to end the economic development of Algeria. These men who used armed force to take power and who are appeal-

ing to the F.L.N. have scorned the Party and trampled underfoot all its principles and institutions.

With all these considerations before them, the National Union of Algerian Students (U.N.E.A.) have condemned the military coup and remain faithful to the principles of the Algiers Charter. The U.N.E.A. have demanded the liberation of the Secretary General of the F.L.N., Ahmed Ben Bella; appealed for discussion of the problems which are confronting the nation; and the return of the legal democratic institutions, the Central Committee and political bureau of the party, and the National Assembly. The Algerian students take this opportunity to launch an appeal to all the students of the world who love freedom and democracy to unite with them in their struggle against military dictatorship.

Convinced of the justice of their cause, hardened in the fight for National Liberation, the Algerian masses will be victorious once again, and re-establish the revolution on socialist lines.
