



**tricontinental  
on the march**

## **Algeria-FLN: Like a Locomotive**

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THE HISTORY of the Algerian National Liberation Front is the history of an entire people's struggle for liberation, it is the history of the struggle for the construction of a society in which 130 years of colonial domination have to be changed, remodeled, revolutionized. Between the Algerian armed process and the present stage of construction there is a continuity, a line drawn from a particular experience and at the same time tied to the experience of other peoples. **It is not easy, it is not a problem that is solved in a few years,** Mohammed Cherif Messadia, FLN Director of Orientation and Information, begins.

With his thin face finely lined and framed by a black beard, Messadia — one of the leaders of the Algerian party in charge of confronting and clearing up problems and contradictions — explains to me expressively, almost anxiously, details, the current situation, ideas.

**I confess that I have never felt, as I do today this tension, this fatigue. It is exhausting. We must do everything, resolve everything along**

the way. We have no time to stop and think. Messadia describes the crossroads of all revolutionary process: **Before, during the armed struggle, what was the problem? Decision only; and if you didn't have a gun you had a rock. But now? The objective of independence that the people had must be replaced by something equally valuable.**

The question doesn't stop there, it practically begins there: **We start from our reality, our customs, our form of being. Other socialist countries chose Marxism-Leninism. We do not have a specific, dogmatic philosophy. We have Islam we are religious, and we opt for socialism. But this also makes us struggle, discuss profoundly, there is a great struggle right now. By what text, by what doctrine can I accuse someone else of deviationism?**

But in this struggle, in this confrontation, characterized by Messadia as perhaps a transitional stage, all hopes are concentrated: **We have no complex about our Party compared to others. We may even be more to the left than others. And in any case there is one thing we know very well: our revolution must never lose its popular character. It is not a revolution of one caste; an entire people defends it and has never felt separated from it. The current process of the FLN is intimately linked to the construction of the country in every aspect: basically, economic and institutional decentralization, reform of all the economic and legal texts, stimulation of individual responsibility and initiative translated into community, and wilayas (departmental) elections, and fundamentally the formation of cadres. The Algerian leader enumerated for me three conditions that summarize the present situation, and the thick web of problems that must be confronted si-**

multaneously:

1) To arrive at a very strong political organization: clear in its concepts, powerful because of its human composition, strong in structure and because of its mass organization (trade unions, youth, women's and former fighters' movements). **These organizations must complement each other — he declared — not oppose each other.** And he searches for an image: **"The Party must be like a locomotive capable of pulling all the coaches at the same speed."**

2) To create an administrative apparatus, not on the model of the classic ones but by a revolutionary system. **To do this we must begin with formation. And this isn't easy either. At the same time that we transform our texts, our laws, we must transform our mentality.**

3) To develop a defense force, a very strong security system. **Our army is not a classic army. It is a people's army, allied with the people. An army with a concept, a productive rather than a consuming army. Here also there are "transition" problems. We must train it, educate it in a new technique the most modern, but at the same time be careful that the technical does not impinge on our political necessities: that it remain an instrument of the people.**

In foreign affairs too, Algeria is extracting and contributing experiences. Messadia pointed out with the same intensity of expression, constantly smoking: **Ideologically the world is chaotic. Suddenly: What do I want with theory if I am hungry? I am not for peace. How can I be if I am at war? Ideas accumulate one on top of the other: Capitalism has demonstrated that it is more intelligent and has greater internal**

solidarity than socialism. The fundamental contradiction today is between the developed countries and the underdeveloped countries. And in this way he returns again to the basic ideas of the FLN: Mali, for example, had one of the best Parties that I know, solidly and well constructed. What good was it? Did anyone help it? Actually, it had a well constructed party but economically, nothing. A coup and the whole thing caved in. Messadia defines: Without a strong economic base no party structure can stand up. Of course, throughout the entire conversation, the Director of Orientation and Information pointed out to me several times: What I am telling you is valid for us, for our experience, for our reality. It may be that another concept is valid for other situations, for other countries. Only sometimes we are criticized: We are told "this is good but that is bad." We look into it and we see finally that the experience was 70% to 80% positive. Then we were right.

One of the affirmations that Messadia most emphasized and about which he was most categorical: Algeria was menaced, is menaced, and will continue to be menaced while the world is divided between powerful countries and underdeveloped countries, between imperialist countries and countries economically and technically dominated, between compromised countries and countries which are not compromised.

#### Historic Sketch

The National Liberation Front developed as the political-military organization of a single front composed of all those fighting for national independence. In 1956, during the course of the historic Congress

of Soumann, the FLN-ALN (National Liberation Army) was given a structure, a platform, and a leadership: the Coordination and Action Committee (CCE), and a supreme authority: the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA). The platform defined at this congress is considered to be the first important Party text. The shortcomings in this text and the diverse problems of organization were discussed in June of 1962 in Tripoli, capital of Libya. The Tripoli Charter — its exact name is the Program for the Realization of the People's Democratic Revolution — was unanimously adopted by the CNRA and affirmed for the first time Algeria's desire to commit itself to a socialist path of development.

In the Algiers Charter, a group of texts adopted by the First Congress of the FLN in 1964, it was pointed out that when the CCE left Algeria in the course of the Battle of Algiers, "the original deficiencies of the FLN increased" and that "the refusal to tackle the problem of the social content of an independent Algeria, directly influenced the Evian Agreements, negotiated and concluded precipitously." Algeria's accession to independence on July 5, 1962, coincided with an internal crisis, political maneuvers by the provisional executive and the sabotage of the administration and the economy by the Secret Army Organization (OAS). It is in this context that the Political Bureau of the FNL, designated by the CNRA in Tripoli, assumes leadership of the country, appoints the representatives of the National Assembly and proceeds to elections. This Political Bureau, composed of five members, was in charge of preparing the First Congress.

In this one-dimensional history

— presented here in a supersynthesized form and without reflecting all the wealth of experiences that it carries with it — the birth of the FLN as the single party is anticipated: the armed struggle against French colonialism convinced the Algerians that only the destruction of the legalistic political organizations would permit the desired national realignment.

Before the First Congress — whose exact dates were from the 16th to the 21st of April, 1964 — mass organizations were created such as the FLN Youth, the National Union of Algerian Women (UNFA), National Union of Algerian Students (UNEA), the Association of Former Combatants and of Former Arrested and Imprisoned, were finally fused into one organization. The Central Syndicate, General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), was created before independence.

The Algiers Charter which came out of this Congress, the Tripoli Charter, and the Proclamation of June 19, 1965, as well as the speeches of President Boumedienne, are considered to be the basic texts for a future draft of the Party's charter.

It is after the Proclamation of June 19, a crucial moment in the Algerian revolutionary process, that the Executive Secretariat of the Party is created, which has as its supreme authority the Council of the Revolution. This Secretariat also has five members. On December 9, 1965, the President of the Council of the Revolution, inaugurates the meeting of Party cadres with a speech in which he criticizes the isolation of the FLN from the base during the preceding period of Ben Bella's presidency. Boumedienne points out:

The Party cannot be solid nor strong except to the extent that

it represents the nation and effectively mobilizes the country's revolutionary forces. But can the stage of armed revolution be separated from the present stage which is that of building socialism? The answer to this question is obvious: the Revolution is one and continues and there can be no rupture between its past and its future.

Boumedienne, reiterating the principles of the single party, also warned that it is necessary to put an end to the total autonomy that the national organizations enjoyed:

This autonomy is contrary to the principle of the single party, since in practice it leads to the establishment of a multitude of parties in the very heart of the single party. [He added:] The role of the Party consists, in one word, in building the State and not destroying it since the State is the organ that implements the political line of the Party.

A few days after this meeting, a decree was published dissolving the Executive Secretariat, and Kait Ahmed was named Party Director. At the same time, the old structures of commissions were replaced by that of departments and an order of general reorganization of the FLN was issued on January 24, 1968.

The first stage of this reorganization lasted, approximately, until the end of 1968 and consisted basically of a campaign of explanation and dissemination; the second, which lasted six months, had as its object the adherence and readherence of party ranks; and in the third stage, of about three months, the committees of the *kasmas* and provisional cells were constituted. The FLN is now in the fourth and final stage of its general reorgan-

ization: elections to select the committees of the cells and *kasmas*, a process which was initiated on the basis of a draft text of December 16, 1969. This draft defines the role and the prerogatives of the cell, the *kasma*, and the electoral process. This text was finally adopted by the Council of the Revolution after discussion and the incorporation of amendments, in the middle of February of this year.

### Principles and Method of Operation

Defined as "the party of the vanguard," the Algerian FLN has, basically, four aims: to express the people's will; to achieve the objectives of the people's democratic revolution and to build socialism in Algeria (article 25 of the Constitution); to define the political line of the nation and inspire the action of the State (article 26); insure control of the functioning of the state apparatus. The political and organizational principles basic to the FLN are defined in the Algiers Charter. In very general lines one can make a bare summary designed to show the points of major ideological interest:

1) It must be a party of the vanguard "profoundly linked to the masses, drawing its strength from this union, motivated by the imperatives of the socialist revolution and intransigency in the face of the enemy." The motto of the FLN is: "Revolution for the People and by the People."

2) Article 2 of the Statutes says: "The FLN Party draws its strength from the peasant and workers masses, from the revolutionary intellectuals, and is the people's guide in the battle for total independence, socialism, democracy, and peace linked to the people's demands for

liberation."

The FLN is ruled by democratic centralism, "the functioning principle that joins a real democracy for each one of its members to the necessity for a central leadership and to discipline." This means that the members of the FLN must submit themselves to the party organs, the minority to the majority, the lower to the higher, and that all must be subordinate to the Congress.

The Final Resolutions of the First Congress reaffirm the need for fulfilling the Algerian national character in different aspects (already achieved): total evacuation of foreign military forces, total Algerianization of the administration, diversification of foreign trade at all costs, acceleration of Arabization of education, stipulation that the socialist option be implemented indeed.

The First Congress declared that "the cornerstone of our foreign policy must tend to make the Algerian revolution a revolutionary pole in the Maghreb, in the Arab world and in Africa." The FLN must "undertake a firm and determined struggle against imperialism and Zionism and persevere along the path of taking the initiative which leads to the formation of a vast anti-imperialist alliance with all the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America." It adds that it must "apply a policy of nonalignment" and "reinforce cooperation with the countries that can help us to conquer the difficulties of underdevelopment and stress our independence from imperialism."

Important points in foreign policy are also: the continuation of aid to the liberation movements and the strengthening of their unity, and assurance of support "to all those who suffer for liberty and progress."