

## A POSTSCRIPT ON RECENT EVENTS IN ALGERIA

During the time immediately after the two articles comprising the "Algeria Special" were written there were 3 notable events, the arrest of the "maquis" of Dra el Marzin, the resignation of Ferhat Abbas as President of the National Assembly, and the debate on the Constitution.

The arrest of this rather mixed bag of "maquis", half of them Europeans of various nationalities, drew attention to the ultra-left agitation permeating certain circles in Algiers. Choosing the highest point in the Kabylie, where the Berber minority predominate, they hoped to raise rebellion among these peoples. The people who went into this venture completely misread the feelings of the Berbers. They were captured in one afternoon, one European woman having been shot dead. It would be easy to brush aside this incident as a childish adventure, ("we thought they were boy scouts at first", Ben Bella sarcastically remarked.) But it seems that this was in some way, not yet fully clear, a provocation by imperialism..... one aspect is that it was a provocation against the left of the Revolution.... Rumours go around the cafes (that) these foreigners come here and then take up arms against our Revolution. Look what these "Communists" and "Trotskyists" do. Of course, the rumours are absolutely untrue. Alger Republican of 27th August implied that Abdelrazak Abdelkader, leader of the "maquis" was a Trotskyist, but withdrew after receiving a letter from Michel Pablo.

It was ironical that some days after this Ferhat Abbas resigned as President of the National Assembly, over the issue of the Constitution. As we wrote before, Ferhat Abbas is the representative of the bourgeois-democratic wing of the revolution as against the outright Bourguibist bourgeois wing of Belkacim Krim. The Constitution which puts the emphasis on Presidential power, violated the concepts of bourgeois, parliamentary democracy of Ferhat Abbas. But of course it was not only the issue of the Constitution which provoked the break with Ben Bella. It was above all the type of revolution that was being developed. Ferhat Abbas's call for "humanitarian" socialism, etc., fooled no one, it was crystal clear he was talking about capitalism. There was hardly a ripple on the political surface, the masses did not even murmur. Messages flooded in supporting Ben Bella and socialism. So with Ferhat Abbas out of the Government and Party...the openly bourgeois wing is almost non-existent. It is certain that all remaining outright bourgeois elements will be excluded by the end of September...

Events have confirmed that the choice is now not so much between capitalism or socialism, but on the type of socialism. With Ben Bella it can be excluded that he can follow the capitalist road. The material difficulties however weigh heavily, and in the governmental strata a continuous battle takes place between bureaucrats who want to make socialism from their office and those who wish it to be a genuinely socialist, popular and democratic revolution, based on the self-management committees. We shall know the decision soon. But it may be only the first round, for the bureaucrats are many. And for those who worry about the Constitution, the solution is simple. If it is a profoundly popular and democratic at the economic roots then the constitutional, legislative will correspond. If it is a bureaucratic revolution then the corresponding structure will be a bureaucratic dictatorship, no matter how ideally democratic the Constitution. But already the achievements of the Revolution, with the self-management committees, has seeped into mass consciousness and will not be easily defeated.

A word on Boudiaf. He denies strongly any connection with the "maquis" but we can say that ideologically they belong to the same trend: an ultra-left trend which holds itself in sectarian aloofness from the real centres of revolutionary struggle for the future of the Revolution inside the Government itself. Instead of joining there and strengthening the revolutionary wing they engage in dilettante critiques.

It is not the mode today to make analogies with 1917 in studying contemporary revolutions. But there is nevertheless a remarkable similarity between the "ultra-lefts" of the immediate post-revolutionary period and the PRS in Algeria today. The placing of Boudiaf under restricted residence in a town in the Sahara was necessary according to the Government due to a conspiracy. There is no reason why this should not be taken on its face-value and further facts awaited. The appearance of the "maquis", whether Boudiaf was involved or not, will mean further investigations. When these investigations are completed no doubt Boudiaf will be released or put on trial.

There are two principles involved for revolutionaries; first the duty of a revolutionary government to defend and develop the revolution to a workers state, and second the duty of the revolution within the widest possible bounds to guarantee the political rights of fellow-revolutionaries, best done through a system of soviets where the masses have direct control over their representatives, just as they do over the workers self-management committees in the factories and farms today. And we must remember that the first vital thing is the social and economic revolution: true socialists cannot refuse to recognise the fact of the former because socialist democracy is not at its optimum.....

Ed. Note: from a correspondent recently in Algeria and slightly shortened.