

**O A U :
WHAT
FUTURE**



Africa !

UNITY

BROTHERHOOD

VIGILANCE

SECURITY

**This special issue is dedicated to Africa and to the
OAU's father founders.
May the ideals that inspired them, live for ever.**

Content

— Note to the reader	1
— Content	3
1 OAU WHAT WAY?	5
— Note from the editor	7
— What is the OAU's future	9
— The OAU's future and the black question	10
— Morocco and sub-Sahara Africa	12
— The DSAR's admission to the OAU and the hidden aspects of this affair	13
— The African Countries threatened by divisions	15
2 AFRICA MUST KNOW : FACTS	19
— Armed conflict in the Sahara : the end of an adventure	20
— African diplomats in the Sahara	22
— Statements made by 3 Ambassadors following their visit to the Saharan provinces	23
— King Hassan II in the Moroccan western Sahara :	
— The meaning of a visit	29
— King Hassan II visiting Sahara	30
— The Epic of Deep South	
— The Moroccan Western Sahara from Yesterday to Tomorrow	31
— Polisario : a time of disillusionment	38
— The Polisario : its background	41
— "Les enfants des nuages" who are they?	42
— Mirages in the Sahara	44
3 IN SEARCH OF PEACE	45
— Maghreb : the solution exists	46
— The Sahara : reflections on Bechir Ben Yahmed's "solution"	48
— Let us build the Maghreb, an the Sahara will follow	50
— The stages of Morocco's decolonisation	52

I

OAU : what way ?

Note from the Editor

WE felt that at a time when the Organization for African Unity is politically blocked, it would be timely for us to intervene if only to contribute some points of clarification concerning the major contradiction paralysing the OAU.

Within the OAU the major contradiction concerns the Sahraoui question. This is an absolute truth that does not need to be dwelled on. Since the Polisario Front's unilateral proclamation of the Democratic Sahraoui Arab Republic on February 27, 1976 and its recognition by 28 member-States of the organization (Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Zambia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra-Léone, Tanzania, Chad, Togo and Zimbabwe), the OAU is struggling like a thousand demons caught in a trap. This trap is a dialogue of the deaf that is imposed upon it; that has locked it up in a straight-jacket and leaves it no other alternative but that of purely and simply renouncing speech in the vast political forum that determines humanity's fate. The admission of the DSAR, through the unilateral decision of its ex-secretary general Edem Kodjo, has completely immobilized the OAU; and the withdrawal of Morocco would have led it to its inevitable self-destruction if the Moroccan authorities had invited their traditional friends to follow their example. The OAU has more or less survived these trials but only at the price of a great sacrifice: the violation of its own charter and the decision to turn its back on political problems... as if it were possible to separate politics and economics, thus scorning the universal law of the dialectical connection between things and phenomena. Even organizations of a purely economic nature such as the CEDEAO, which the OAU now appears to want to replace, cannot avoid political debates. They don't even have the right to do so. Because in this world, "everything is linked, everything acts upon everything else".

The OAU's new attitude is moving towards the solution of economic problems in order to better digest the Sahraoui snake. To us, this appears to be a very dangerous precedent aimed at disguising the Sahraoui fait accompli; a fait accompli that history will consider the most serious attempt to destabilize the African continent.

The OAU's future is in question. Our continent's future is also in question. For with the precedent created by the admission of the Democratic Sahraoui Arab Republic, whose major characteristic is its extraterritoriality, the OAU has opened the door to all kinds of adventures. Tomorrow a Republic of Eritrea, Zanzibar or why not Huambo could emerge, collect "recognitions" by means of dollars or blackmail and impose itself as a member of the OAU. And in one or the other of the cases, the countries concerned would withdraw without giving notice.

What is certain is that the admission, for example, of a Democratic Republic of Eritrea whose proclamation could be announced within the coming months according to reliable sources - would inevitably provoke the withdrawal of Ethiopia which is home to the OAU. It is urgent that Africa take hold of itself so as to organize its own destiny. Black Africa has suffered too much from the quarrels of others. The negro has been so depersonalized that he is completely drained of his dynamic substance: since the white man sold him as cattle, he believes that his place in this dehumanized world is doomed to be no more than a small corner of hell; behind others and always hitched on to the Other's fights.

Yet, the Blacks have their own struggle to carry out. And because of this they are condemned to place their sensitivities within the framework of a special concertation structure such as the League of Black States for example. It is absolutely certain that this League would be a source of support for the OAU.

MAM LESS DIA

"What is the OAU's future"

by M. Leopold SEDAR SENGHOL
Former President of the Republic of Senegal
and
a OAU's father founder

To question the future of the African continent within a framework of uncertainties, reserves and often disappointed hopes is indeed to face up to a great challenge: that of history.

Created in Addis-Ababa in May 1963, only three years after the majority of African states had attained independence; at the beginning, the OAU was a symbol of our continent's deep-felt aspirations for unity. A unity that was founded on a permanent solidarity for achieving greater freedom, a greater well-being, and the emancipation of the continents populations.

More than 20 years have passed and we are still asking ourselves how and when the OAU will be able to faithfully meet the ideals its founding members had assigned it.

Since 1963 now states have obtained their independence and have swelled the ranks of countries which make up this international organization.

Today, Namibia is the only African territory whose independence has been delayed by the government of the Republic of South Africa which has scorned all of the relevant United Nations Organization and Organization for African Unity resolutions. This very same South Africa whose racial discrimination policy, better known as apartheid, has been wholeheartedly condemned by the international community.

In such a context, and after more than 20 years of political and economic experience shared, can we affirm that our continent has progressed?

Have covetousness and hegemonic struggles from outside, which have made Africa their favorite target after the Southeast Asian and Middle East conflicts, made us, the African peoples aware of our need for unity?

The OAU's future and the black question?

by President Mobutu Sese Seko

THE subject chosen is a very topical issue both because the question of human rights as a whole is once again on the scene of international debates, an important part of which is devoted to the denunciation of racism and more particularly of the apartheid system, undergoing the assaults of the universal conscience in recent days. And at the same time this is a topical issue because of the Organization for African Unity's difficulties and need to strengthen its unity around important issues such as: the total decolonization of Africa, the fight against racism and the need to bring the authorities in Pretoria, who are increasingly isolated on the international political scene, into line.

This new direction, while positive and laudable, is nevertheless an admission of weakness regarding the very problems that are at the basis of the political freeze from which the OAU is suffering. One must be brave enough to recognize that at least one Arab State is involved in each of these problems (the Chad problem and the Sahroui issue) which are factors in this freeze: Libya in Chad and Algeria in the Sahara.

The Arab League concerned with safeguarding its unity and cohesion has preferred abstaining from initiating an in depth debate on these issues. This is a wise and responsible attitude which reflects the maturity of this organization which is a forum for the Arab nation's concertation; a privileged instrument for reflection and action that favors the expression of common sensitivities and implementation of the Arab world's specific strategies in the face of the many challenges to the peoples of the Third World.

It is true that the OAU is a continental organization grouping peoples who suffered the same colonial oppression, who together endured the long dark night of foreign domination. It is an organization that has its weaknesses and shortcomings, given that since its creation it has been attacked and shackled by cleavages and contradictions which at times look like antagonistic contradictions.

Yet, the OAU must continue to exist, to strengthen itself by reinforcing its cohesion; to further affirm itself by affirming Africa's will to take charge of itself more, both at the political and economic levels. Even though Zaïre suspended its participation following Morocco's withdrawal, my country nevertheless remains a fervent defender of the OAU and will always contribute to the achievement of its mission.

For the African peoples, the OAU is an irreplaceable tool. Zaïre in any case is deeply convinced of this. Thus we were surprised and irritated when we heard the

accusations brought against us with regards to our proposal to create a League of Black States.

This project is founded on recognition of the following fact: the Black Peoples share a number of situations with the other Third World peoples such as underdevelopment and its corollary: economic, political, technical and military domination by the industrialized countries. However, the Black World like other peoples such as the Arabs, has its own specific problems.

The solution of these problems calls for specific approaches which cannot be completely assumed by the parties concerned themselves; the support and solidarity of others comes as an extra boost.

Like the Arabs, the Negro-africans for example have their own aspirations for cultural, political and economic rebirth. Apartheid in the Republic of South Africa; and the struggle for civil rights, social, political and economic justice of marginalized black populations in other countries of the world are of direct concern to the Black World even if they raise the conscience of the whole world.

This also holds true for the situation created in the Middle East. It justifies without a doubt the existence of the Arab League.

For example, this League should enable the Arab States to meet and jointly elaborate a strategy to be implemented which would end the present trend of recycling petrodollars by investing them in the industrialized world's production systems.

Countries which in their practices, disguised or not, perpetuate the Third World's underdevelopment and white power domination over the Blacks in South Africa. The same countries which also encourage the fratricidal wars and divisions among Arabs by the sale of weapons, and their involvement in the Arab countries' internal affairs.

In such a situation as I have described, Black Africa is living a certain dualism. On the one hand, it shares certain problems and preoccupations with the other Third World countries; and their solution calls for its active participation in all international structures or initiatives likely to advance the cause of political and institutional debate and the struggles aiming at implementing these solutions.

Black Africa must also, as it has done up to now, participate in joint efforts aiming at the restoration of international relations and finding global solutions to the global crisis dividing the world today.

The Black's historical tragedy is not solely the result of political and socio-economic conditions. It is also

explained to a certain extent by his skin color. Yesterday, the Yellow Race (Forbidden to Asians and dogs) and Arabs were discriminated against, entirely subject to their master's bidding.

Today this situation has greatly changed for the better, thanks partly to the emancipation and organization efforts of these brotherly peoples but especially to their joining their efforts. The time has come for the Blacks to more firmly advance in this same direction, by forming structures for concertation along the lines of a League of Black States to achieve these same goals.

If they don't, they will continue turning round in circles while elsewhere in the world other peoples are embarking on new paths of collective emancipation.

While participating in actions and initiatives for the salvation of humanity, we must stress our aspirations a little more and clearly favor the organization of their attainment.

It is sad and even frustrating to see any attempt by the black community to organize itself in an autonomous way looked upon as a wish to destroy more general types of solidarity. Yet the Blacks have always extended their hand to other peoples and sometimes to their own detriment. History is full of examples of this.

The Blacks welcomed the representatives of Western and Eastern civilizations with the honor and facilities african ancestral tradition dictated were due the guest and visitor from afar. Thus they initiated unwittingly their historical tragedy because they were dealing with supposed brother human beings from across the seas whose only desire was hegemony and the looting of our resources. A desire which was cleverly disguised by lies and well organized deceit.

From the very start this caused Black Africa's barbaric loss of 150 million healthy individuals! The reversal in situation described by Frederick Engels was cruelly inflicted upon us: "Men had just begun practicing trade when they themselves became traded". The active becomes passive...

Today this has created a Black World that is scattered and disarticulated: exile and apartheid in our own country (Southern Africa); semi-slavery in some countries; humiliations of all types, the depersonalization of many of our westernized elite.

The Black World's misfortune is great. It is not comparable to any other, neither in content nor in intensity. It is becoming clearer and clearer that in order to arise out of this situation it is necessary that the Black World intervene in an autonomous, concerted fashion at the same time as it practices its extended hand policy and internationalism.

The different hegemonic desires and the most often mystifying images of solidarity with others; and the evil manipulations of their vital interests at times have finally convinced the black peoples that they first of all must agree on a number of common denominators in order to act, while cultivating this grab-bag solidarity where differences and conflicts of interest more or less disguised by speeches and demagogical initiatives prevent the accomplishment of the great designs that have been proclaimed.

They must stop blurring their own particular problems, such as the restoration of their black dignity which has been trampled in general demands in which everyone declares their support. To remain confined to such a position would simply serve to delay any specific and relevant answer to the specificity of the Black's cause.

Without neglecting a framework for african unity, arabo-negro, afro-asian or a real tri-continental one which remains to be built; the Black World must organize itself, if for no other reason than to be less vulnerable to aggressions and injustices of all kinds in Africa and elsewhere.

That is the idea underlying the proposal for the creation of a League of Black States. This framework for concertation and action in which the modalities for carrying out the Black World's concrete struggles for its total emancipation will be determined in harmony with the other just struggles under way in the world. The acuteness of the black peoples problems demand this approach.

One cannot be against this approach without denying at the same time the specificity of some situations to which the Black World, in Africa and elsewhere, is confronted. This world which has always been hampered by the practice of assimilating each of the Black Peoples attempts to affirm their identity and emancipate themselves to hostile acts against other peoples.

Morocco and sub-Sahara Africa

by a former African Minister for Foreign Affairs

THE Kingdom of Morocco is one of the African continent's best organized and most stable countries. At the same time, it is a strong bridge linking Africa and the Arab world on the one hand, and Africa and Europe on the other.

Throughout Morocco's history, no matter how far back one goes, one can see the Moroccan people's will to be — from North to South, East to West, the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean — both a living nerve center; as well as an important factor in the synthesis of Islam and Arabism's most fertile values in a serene opening up towards the Indo-european and Negro-african civilizations.

It is this reality that no political circumstances whether inside or outside of the continent have been able to deeply modify, that has enabled the Kingdom to remain at the very heart of the African continent's evolution. For over 25 years the kingdom has been favourably served by an extraordinary Ruler of exceptional talent and qualities; steeped in an unquestionable arab and islamic culture which clearly distinguishes him as one of the present-day world's most renowned scholars in this field. At the same time thanks to the perspicacity and foresightedness of his father, His Majesty King Mohammed V, he was trained at the heart of Western philosophy.

Placing all of the virtues of the Moroccan people, born of their centuries-old arab and african roots, in stimulating contact with the modern world's needs and demands; King Hassan II has thus made his country an entity that must be taken into account. Today, no viable enterprise nor progress oriented project for Africa can be designed; no step involving the continent be taken whether originating from a sense of needed solidarity in Africa, America, Europe or the Arab world without taking the Moroccan entity into account.

And finally is it necessary to recall the decisive role played directly or indirectly by Morocco's attaining independance, jointly with Bourguiba's Tunisia, in the

total liberation of the Maghreb completed in the early 1960s with Algeria's independance?

At a time when the demons of division are swarming across Africa and fueling the most unrealistic ambitions on behalf of unavowed foreign interests; at a time when throughout the continent we are witnessing the emergence of States whose leaders have never taken part in a real national liberation struggle and are almost totally unaware of their peoples' history; isn't it time to question ourselves on the urgent need to once again see Morocco in close relations with the most responsible African States, faithful to its age-old tradition commit itself to new initiatives?

Designed and carried out by His Majesty King Hassan II, such initiatives would undoubtedly help an Africa which today finds itself in a state of waiting, almost asleep beneath the slogans of an outdated revolutionism. They would help it awaken to the dawn of the 21st century in order to devote itself to a task of great human scope: that is to say the fulfillment of the African peoples' legitimate aspirations.

Today, as we know, the Kingdom of Morocco is no longer a member of the Organization for African Unity. But it is precisely because of this that Morocco under His Majesty King Hassan II can, thanks to its advantageous distance from the OAU and the events that are shaking it on all sides, play an even greater role in Africa. And then who knows? Once the OAU will have carried out its own revolution and rid itself of the slag that hinders its operations, and of the false problems that prevent it from achieving its true objectives; then perhaps countries like Morocco will be able to regain their rightful place in the continental organization. And beyond the formal independance of the African peoples, we will see the emergence of an Africa of solidarity embarked on the road of economic, technical and cultural emancipation. An Africa shielded from the desires and covetousness of the blocs, proud of its past but more importantly in full command of its future.

The DSAR's admission to the OAU and the hidden aspects of this affair

an enquiry by MAM LESS DIA

ONE fact in the history of the DSAR's recognition has particularly held the attention of observers: the PAIGC's attitude (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) which was in power in two African countries when the DSAR was proclaimed in 1976.

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau and the Republic of Cape Verde at the time were headed by the same party, its Secretary General was General Aristides Pereira and he was President of Cape Verde, while his deputy Luis CABRAL was President of Guinea-Bissau. The two States had the same anthem, same flag, and had the same political alliances.

Yet, Guinea had immediately recognized the DSAR while Cape Verde, because of its close ties of friendship with Senghor, a friend and ally of King Hassan II, decided to postpone this recognition until a later date. It left it up to the discretion of the Cape Verdian government alone, to determine when the moment for recognition was right. It was with the 1978 coup d'état in Bissau, which put an end to this sort of confederation, that Cape Verde pronounced itself openly in favor of the DSAR's recognition in order to avoid being considered a "reactionary" according to Algerian terminology.

On the Guinean side, although recognition was automatic, for a long time a great deal was said concerning the "similarities" between the PAIGC and Polisario Front's cases.

Guinea-Bissau was the first Negro-african State to have conceived, organized and carried out a liberation war based on the maoist tactic of surrounding cities from the country-side.

It is also, after the folklorical Marshall OKELLO episode in Zanzibar, the first African country to have set an example of a unilateral proclamation of independence whose legitimacy was no longer contested by the adversary: portuguese colonialism.

Indeed, Guinea-Bissau's liberation army under the banner of the PAIGC succeeded in liberating the countryside, organizing the civil status, cultural and economic life. Before the 1973 unilateral proclamation, the portuguese colonial forces were surrounded in the Bissau capital and the city's resupplying in foodstuffs had

become a problem. The PAIGC's military victory over the Portuguese colonialists was unquestionable.

It was under such conditions that the PAIGC proclaimed Guinea-Bissau's independence in 1973. Three years later the Polisario Front followed suit and proclaimed for its part the Democratic Sahroui Arab Republic... and this while aware of the fact that the DSAR's principle characteristic is *ex-territoriality*. In short, some Guinean leaders like Colonel Saturino, former Minister of the Interior who up until the end of the war was in charge of the heavy artillery, maintain that Guinea-Bissau's war was and still is different from any other on the continent. To a certain extent it is almost malicious to want to find similarities and common points between the PAIGC's procedure and that of the Polisario Front.

If we've insisted on showing the PAIGC's attitude to the recognition of the DSAR its simply because this attitude in all respects reveals a glaring fact: *The Polisario Front's authority over the Sahara is not only contested, but at the same time there is no serious proof which would enable us to conclude its existence... even in its primary, moral or sentimental form.* Contrary to the PAIGC's authority over Guinea-Bissau; that of the Polisario Front over the Sahara is purely fictitious. On the basis of this observation, and given the veritable non-existence of any authority whatsoever of the Polisario Front over the Sahara, it is clear that any recognition of a Republic proclaimed by the same Polisario Front can only result from political considerations. These purely political considerations have absolutely nothing to do with principles of international law and can only be dictated by the persistent imperatives of the defense logic of specific interests.

This is why we chose to concentrate our questions on the Sahroui problem on the events taking place between the Freetown Summit of June 1980 and today.

At the time of this Freetown meeting, the 18th summit meeting of the OAU's member-countries, three major events took place.

— the Sierra-Leone government's recognition of the DSAR,

— Chad's recognition of the same fictitious Republic,

— and the unexpected declaration in favor of the Polisario Front by the Malian government.

The conditions under which the Sierra-Leone government recognized the DSAR are troubling in several respects.

We know that before the Freetown Summit, the Sierra-Leone authorities were facing economic problems such, that it was impossible for them to meet the financial and material needs, caused by the pressing problem of installing the 3000 OAU delegates programmed to stay a minimum of 12 days in the summit's host country, without outside help.

We recall that the Sierra-Leone government itself had expressed its concern regarding the magnitude of the task befalling it. All serious observers are aware of this. They are also aware of the fact that it was the Algerian "big brother" who helped the Sierra-Leone government out of this difficult predicament. Indeed Algeria did not skimp on the means in order to convince its Sierra-Leone "little brother" of its readiness: with remarkable speed, the Algerian government quickly filled two Boeing 747s with foodstuffs and dispatched them to Freetown; some one hundred Mercedes and Datsun cars "kindly" offered; and an envelope with the respectable sum of 20 million dollars for the other costs of organizing the summit. This gesture of good-will went directly to the heart of the Sierra-Leone government which immediately showed its great gratitude to Algeria by becoming the 24th African government to recognize the DSAR's over the Sahara. Thus Algiers was only lacking two votes to seat the DSAR at the OAU on the basis of a simple majority: that is to say 50% of the votes plus one.

It is at this time, during the same summit, that Madagascar's President Ratsiraka tried to convince Chadian President Goukouni Weddey, newly installed in Ndjamena to follow suit in exchange for greater military and political support from Tripoli which should enable him to keep his place and maintain his power. This task was not difficult and Chad became the 25th State to board the Algerian vessel.

Thus only one more vote was needed to consecrate the diplomatic fait accompli: the DSAR's installation in the OAU, a task in which Algeria had invested a great deal of effort and money. Mali's General Moussa Traore decided the issue by announcing at this same summit that his country had decided to become the 26th State to recognize the DSAR.

It is at this time that the problems concerning the application of articles 4 and 28 of the OAU's charter

arose: article 4 describes the necessary conditions for membership in the OAU, and article 28 stipulates the procedures for admission.

While the precondition demanding the "recognition" of an entity by a majority of member States was resolved, none of the conditions stipulated in article 4 has been fulfilled, that is to say: *"the existence of a given territory, the existence of a population living in this territory and placed under the undeniable control of the authorities proclaiming independence and finally, the existence of an administration organized in the form of a government set up in an unquestionable manner on this same territory."*

This was Morocco's argument concerning a prejudicial issue that former Prime Minister Bouabid developed with great brio during the 18th summit. As we know, the relevance of the Moroccan side's argument led the Free-Town summit, in respect of the OAU's very principles, to openly pronounce itself in favor of blocking the DSAR's admission, and this despite the efforts deployed by Algiers. And this, because the Moroccan Prime Minister's argument was simply unattackable given that it was based on the texts that the OAU itself had adopted. This was 1980. In Nairobi in 1981, then in Addis-Ababa in 1983, via the 1982 Tripoli interlude, many attempts have been made to lift the blockage regarding the DSAR's admission. However, unsuccessfully.

It is only with the February 1983 feat, during the Council of Ministers, that the admission of the DSAR was announced, in disregard of all rules, by Secretary General Edem Kodjo of the OAU. The African Heads of State hesitated until December 1984 before finally letting the DSAR install itself surreptitiously in the OAU's semi-circle in violation of all the procedures foreseen in the charter.

We could talk at great length about the hidden aspects of this affair. For Kodjo knew perfectly well that by taking this responsibility he was putting an end to the trust that linked him with the OAU. Observers were unanimous in stating that the OAU Secretary General's diplomatic coup d'etat was linked to a question of big money: the sum of 5 million dollars has been mentioned. Today however, according to sources close to the organization's headquarters it is believed that outside of the money question there were also threats of reprisals, even assassination formulated by the Polisario Front, that were made to bear on him.

Did Kodjo simply give in because of physical fears? History, will no doubt tell us.

The African Countries threatened by divisions

An inquiry made by Abdelaziz Dahmani

OF the one hundred fifty nine countries that make up the United Nations Organization, fifty of them are located on the African continent. Yet while three out of every ten countries in the world are African, they only represent one-tenth of the world's population. And they only represent about a little under two percent of the world's economic circuits.

Better still, of the world's thirty-three L.D.C.s (least developed countries) twenty-two of them are African: some of them have a G.D.P. (Gross domestic product) that is inferior to the turnover of some large department stores in certain European or North American capitals. That's without speaking of the multinationals whose budgets are sometimes greater than that of a group of ten to twenty countries in Africa together.

These few statistics shed a rather disparaging light on the African continent's overall situation. Hunger, drought, and the various international economic crises have aggravated an already precarious situation in this continent which has so much potential. But the African countries must learn how to remain united and form more coherent entities that are more sound from the State and economic points of view. They must avoid embarking on the path to dispersal and the artificial multiplication of States.

Instead of harnessing itself to its development and growth, since independence the continent has not stopped experiencing growth crises and been the victim of numerous separatist movements some of which are still operating in 1985. If all of these movements had been conclusive Africa would have today some seventy or eighty so-called "sovereign and independent" States. This would mean that one out of every two countries in the world would be African! And this is without considering the contagious effect this could have in a number of countries on a few local leaders hungry to be proclaimed "Heads of State", "Kings" or even "Emperors". Like the ephemeral Emperor Albert Kalondji of South Kasai (Zaire).

The DSAR affair is dangerous because it could lead, through its example, to the desire to create one or several States out of nothing. And by the sole will of a few ambitious and determined young people supported by neighbours whose intentions are concealed behind a few pleasing and catchy slogans such as "the self-determination of peoples".

But what is especially comical in the Sahara case is that most of the Polisario's leaders are not even originally

from the former Western Sahara (see article on page ...). A large number of them come from Southern Morocco, Mauritania or Southern Algeria.

If these examples were to multiply, in the end the OAU would be swallowed up. It would lose the little credibility it has left. On that day, the OAU would be definitively destroyed and the continent's countries would be left adrift. We are already far removed from the spirit that existed when the OAU was created.

Twenty-four liberation movements, but no polisario...

On the day the OAU was created, May 23, 1963, thirty-two countries signed the historical and unitary birth certificate which was warmly welcomed by John F. Kennedy (U.S.A.), Nikita Khrushchev (USSR), Broz Tito (Yugoslavia), Chou en Lai (People's Republic of China) and many other presidents alike. What remains today of the world's respect?

Within the walls of Africa Hall in Addis-Ababa in 1963, in addition to the thirty-two delegations from the independent countries, were also seated twenty-four parties or liberation movements which have since then led their countries to independence. But there was no Sahraoui movement! At that time no one was worried by this absence. One had to wait till 1973, ten years later, for the Polisario's name — invented moreover by a Spanish journalist from Las Palmas in the Canary Islands — to appear in the newspapers for the first time. All that was necessary then was for the Polisario to come up with two sponsors, at that time Algeria and Libya, that were rich and determined for the African continent to progressively slide into the worse political crisis it has ever known. It's true that since then Libya, one of the sponsors abandoned the fight leaving the full burden of maintaining the Polisario to Algeria. And the OAU, the pride of the continent has all of a sudden found itself cracked and at times agonizing.

By using the example of turning the former Western Sahara into "an independent and sovereign" State, when there was never even a hint of the reality of a State in this area, let alone a historical existence, the way is opened to all kinds of adventures and ambitions. Tomorrow, Africa, which was already Balkanized by colonialism risks becoming some kind of puzzle very difficult to join

together and unite. Micro-states that would more likely than not answer the orders of their sponsors, be they African or large and medium-sized powers. Africa would once again become the stake for all ideologies and the preferred battlefield of cold wars.

Even the UNO (United Nations Organization) would not remain passive faced with the proliferation of mini-states which would each want a seat, an embassy in New York and a vote. The rest of the world would never accept that in such a configuration Africa would represent almost half of the seats in the United Nations. While these countries represent less than two percent of the world economy's operations. In this 2% figure we include the oil producing countries: Nigeria, Algeria, Libya, etc...

But are we aware of the fact that the African countries as a group, the fifty present UN members represent barely 0.89% (in other words less than 1%) of the UNO's operating budget? Forty of the fifty represent 0.01% of this budget. To give a simple or relative majority in such a case is to dream, especially when we are aware of the ambitions of the United States, the Russians and other Europeans, or Asians to remain the masters of the United Nations destinies and of that of world trade.

Here is what would happen if we further encouraged the divisive and fragmentation attempts of the African States.

Ethiopia : the shattered mosaic

At the time of Spain's occupation of the former Western Sahara, taking it away from the Moroccan authorities, Ethiopia in 1882 was divided believe it or not into 28 different States. And so if the example of the creation of the DSAR was validated, why wouldn't these ex-twenty-eight states not demand their right to "independance!" The majority of them are more populous and at times larger than many present day States. Ancient Ethiopia was then known as Abyssinia. It then integrated Galla Tulama including the city of Addis-Ababa in 1883; then Guma, Guerra and Limmuenen in 1886, the Harrar Emirate and Guraghie in 1887; Gambatta in 1889; Leka Galla in 1890, Uolamo and Sidamo in 1893; Imi in 1894; Arussi in 1895, the Ogaden from 1894 to 1897, Guirima, Jambo and Regno di Caffa in 1897; Borana, Gunza, Beni Sciangul in 1899; or still the Del L'Aussa, Teru or Biru sultanates in 1909...

Menelik alone, who proclaimed himself King of Kings in 1899 following a number of conquests, during his reign doubled the surface area of the original Abyssinia. Since then, he has placed the country's major nationalities: the Oromos, Tigrins, Dankalis and Somalians under the Amharas who represent barely 20% of the total population...

Even if we forget the past, today in Ethiopia there exists not only an Eritrean liberation movement, but also liberation fronts for Western Somalia, Abo Somalia, and the Oromos who represent some 18 million of Ethiopia's 32 million inhabitants. There are also the liberation fronts for the Tigris, the Wello and even the recently created Sidamo movement.

So, if the separatist dynamism was encouraged according to the DSAR precedent, Ethiopia could well break up into five or six different States. And each one of them could refer to history or to a cultural or ethnic

homogeneity to justify its right to independance and self-determination. There is also the case of Eritrea which was recognized by the United Nations as an independant State long before the OAU's creation. Yet the latter has always refused to study this problem. And for a reason... Emperor Haile Selassie one of the OAU's founding fathers was never duped. He did everything possible and offered all the means and advantages possible to make Addis-Ababa the OAU's permanent headquarters. And this so as to avoid seeing the Eritrean, Ogaden and Tigris issues brought up. Hospitality oblige...

Zaire : secession attempts by the Katanga (Shaba) and in Kasai

Into how many "States" would present day Zaire's 2,345,000 sq. km or 28 million inhabitants been divided up? After independance there were a number of attempts, more or less successful, carried out to fragment Zaire. This started with Katanga's first attempt at secession under Moise Tchombe at the end of the 1950s. A secession that was encouraged then by the former colonizer, Belguim, and strong economic interests given that the Katanga, which later became the Shaba, has great mineral wealth: copper, cobalt, lead, zinc, as well as diamond and uranium resources. Later, other neighbors among them so-called "progressives" tried to fan the winds of separatism in Shaba.

In 1977 armed bands from Angola began to invade Shaba and part of the Kassi. Almost the entire country began to fall prey to the demons of division and the energetic intervention of some 3000 Morroccan soldiers, following an appeal made by President Mobutu to the OAU, was necessary to break this separatist attempt. Several States from Southern Africa which had encouraged this destabilization operation have never forgiven Morocco for its intervention which has been recommended by the OAU!

New attempt in 1978. But this time the coup originated on the Zambian border, and in 1984 by infiltration from Tanzania... But every time, "the weak link in the chain" that is the Shaba, has held good. And Zaire has remained united up to now, awaiting the next destabilization attempt by its neighbors or far removed African countries, or countries outside of the continent.

In addition to the attempts to separate the Shaba from the rest of Zaire, there were other separatist attempts such as Albert Kalondji's self-proclamation as Emperor of the Balubas and Head of the "autonomous State of Southern Kasai". Such a success would inevitables have disastrous consequences in Eastern Kasai or Kivu, not to mention the Equator and Upper Zaire regions. This revealed an ignorance of the firm unitary will of Zaire's people under the leadership first of Patrice Lumumba and then Mobutu Sese Seko.

Chad : the Logone flag almost flew over it

Today Chad is still threatened with division. It is even dividable into three, in accordance with the dreams of a large number of local leaders. There are those who advocate the creation of a Southern State, "The Logone Republic", around the cities of Mounda and Sahr. Some

already call it the cotton Republic... In such a case the center and North of the country could explode into two other pieces: the North would openly be under Libyan influence. And the center of the country grouped around N'djamena, including the large Ouadai, Batha, Biltine and Kanem regions...

In the aftermath of independence, power has essentially rested in the hands of the Southern leaders from Tombalbaye. Lacking a better division in responsibilities, a rebellion broke out in Northern Chad as of 1965 led first by Hissene Habré and then Goukouni Weddeye. This rebellion did not cease despite the new power configuration: with Hissene Habre in N'djamena and his "enemy" brother Goukouni on the edge of the Libyan border.

The idea of a secessionist State re-emerged three years ago when Hissene Habre took power in N'djamena. The constitution and flag (black, yellow and red horizontal lines) were even ready when a governmental offensive was launched to prevent such an event. Today, Chad's leaders speak more along the lines of a country restored to peace within the framework of a federal or confederal system... but the concept of partitioning the country has not been abandoned by some...

Sudan : the south's rebellion

The Sudan is also threatened by secession. Indeed a rebellion erupted in the South on September 19th 1955, just a few months before the independence proclamation on January 1, 1956. A rebellion led by the ANYANYA liberation Front demanding the right to govern some three million animists or Christians in southern Sudan. Thirty years later this movement is still posing serious problems for the central government and this despite the many agreements and truces concluded between the government and rebellion's leaders.

The ANYANYA movement has become the MLPS (the Liberation Movement for the Peoples of the South) and hopes to create a federal State in the provinces of the Equator, Bahr Al Ghazal and Upper Nile. Its bordering neighbors would be Ethiopia (which is favorable to the partition), Kenya, Uganda, North Zaire and the Central African Republic.

Nigeria : a country that is also threatened

Nigeria has also known division with the creation in 1967 of the "State of Biafra", proclaimed by Lt Colonel Emeka OJUKWU. It was a State grouped around the cities of Enugu and Port Harcourt, with an area of 75,000 sq. km along the Camerounian border and a population of 14 million inhabitants mainly composed of Ibos and some Ibibos, Efiks, etc...

The central power was obliged to carry out a violent war in order to put an end to this secession which moreover was supported by several Western powers. Biafra was even recognized by a few African countries. Then came the collapse and capitulation on January 12, 1970 with the sad accounting of the war's toll: a million dead and a terrible famine in an essentially oil-rich country.

The creation of a State of Biafra, if it had been

consolidated from the internal and external points of view, would undoubtedly have triggered off epidemics in other large regions of a country that has 100 million inhabitants. The power of Lagos, the capital, has often been contested and to such a degree that the central government has decided to create a new balance by transferring its capital in the coming years to Abuja: a city in the center of the country that is located at equidistances from the large Islamicized regions of the North; Christianized regions of the South; Anglican and Protestant-strong minorities of the East; as well as the animists.

Angola : on the road to the creation of two states ?

Angola is threatened by a secession of a political and ideological nature. The liberation movement against the Portuguese occupation began in 1961. It broke up into three distinct movements: Roberto Holden's FNLA, Agostino Neto's MPLA and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA. Each one had its internal and external allies. The MPLA turned towards the Communist world while Savimbi especially looked for allies in South Africa and in the People's Republic of China. The FNLA, for its part, little by little disappeared from the scene. The MPLA finally took power in 1975 with the help of Cuban soldiers.

In the ten years of independence that have followed, Angola has lived in civil war. Savimbi's troops now control more than half of the country including the Moxico, Huila, Cuando-Cubango and Huambo regions. An almost de facto partition.

Cabinda : an ephemeral independence

Cabinda, a coastal enclave between Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville, not far from the Zaire river's estuary, organically belongs to Angola. This enclave stretches over 7270 sq km and has a population of 80,000 who for the most part belong to the Bakongos ethnic group. The creation of this State was announced in July 1977 during the Libreville Summit of the OAU. However Africa reacted and refused to ratify the "fait accompli". At this time it was noted that several so-called moderate African States refused to take advantage of this opportunity to create problems for ultra-progressive Angola. Cabinda which in fact has no common border with Angola provides significant oil-revenues for Angola.

Tanzania : Zanzibar wants to take the road again

Tanganyika and Zanzibar (a prosperous island with 500,000 inhabitants) had their own statutes until 1964. However, with the overthrow of the sultan on January 12, 1964 Tanganyika annexed Zanzibar and created the United Republic of Tanzania... This union was essentially possible thanks to the stature of President Julius Nyerere. But faced with the failure of socialism and rural collectivities (ujamaas) of Tanzania's founding father, the concept of a new separation between Tanganyika and Zanzibar has continued to develop in recent years. The

events might even speed up due to the imminent voluntary departure from power of Julius Nyerere.

Threats concerning the Sahel states

If we accept the fact that the Rguibet have their own independant State under the name of the DSAR, then there is no reason why the divisive projects shouldn't spread to the Sahel countries as a whole. And like Chad which is at war, each of the countries in this region (Mauritania, Mali and Niger) could have ethnic problems. In one case the Negro-africans could contest the power of the Moors in Nouakchott; the "white" ethnic groups in Mali could contest that of the blacks in Niamey or Bamako, and so on...

Nothing but tragedies and catastrophes in view for the future if the demons of separatism are given free rein. This threat which looms over the Sahel countries is not at all exaggerated: since Niger for example, was repeatedly and quite recently again in June 1985 the scene of expeditions from the North bearing the colours of the Touareg movement.

A Touareg state?

And in the image of a Sahroui State, based on the false ethnic homogeneity (the Rguibet) why not create a "TOUAREG State" which would include the southern portion of the Algerian Sahara and the North of Mali and Niger at the same time? This would certainly give free rein

to other special groups such as the Kabyles in Northern Algeria.

Other threats : Cameroons, Mozambique, etc...

Many other States can also be threatened by fragmentation if they do not remain wary and jealously protect their territorial integrity. This is especially the case of the Cameroons which already suffered a civil war before a united State was created by referendum in 1972. However, Ahidjo's departure from power in 1982 and his condemnation for conspiracy in 1984 led to a serious disquiet in the Northern and Southern regions of the Cameroons.

Mozambique is also suffering a civil war because a liberation movement supported by South Africa wants to overthrow the "leftist regime" of Samora Machel. This movement presently controls, large parts of Mozambique, especially in the center and South. There will only follow catastrophes if these projects and dreams come about...

One thing is sure : if Africa is not careful, if the African Heads of State are not vigilant and do not show foresight then there is a risk that a Pandora's box will be opened. A thousand and one demons will escape from this box and they will heave dissension, subversion and disarray unto this continent which is already buffeted by famine, economic underdevelopment and various destabilizing attempts.

A. DAHMANI

II

Africa must know : Facts

Something very important is under way in the Western Sahara and it is being concealed from the eyes of African public opinion by disinformation: an incredible social and economic impetus, a construction boom, and much more important than all that is the fulfillment of Saharan men and women. When one has seen Laayoune, the Western Sahara's real capital, and Haouza dream capital of the DSAR one is obliged to say that war crimes are also being committed against the mind by means of propoganda and disinformation.

Our duty to African public opinion obliges us to tell the truth, to bear witness to what we have seen, to what is verifiable. It is our duty to put a stop to the lies and deceit that have up to now distorted Africas view of a problem which divides it and threatens its hopes for unity: we are referring to the Western Sahara problem.

Some have gotten into the habit of looking upon the Negro-african as the village idiot who can be made to swallow any story: this must come to a stop!

Armed conflict in the Sahara : the end of an adventure

by Mam LESS DIA

THE OAU's attitude in regards to the Western Sahara question clearly reveals an obvious bias.

The Organization for African Unity in provoking the withdrawal of Morocco — a founding member — by inconsiderately adopting a position favoring the Polisario Front has simply violated the sacrosanct principles in the name of which it never admitted the ANC (African National Congress), which symbolizes the legitimate aspirations of twenty million blacks, as a full member.

Because article 4 of the OAU's charter stipulates that "sovereignty over an independant African territory" is a pre-condition to applying for admission to the organization.

It is in fact because of this pre-condition that the PAIGC (African Party for the independance of Guinea and Cape Verde) founded in 1956 by Amilcar Cabral was never recognized as a full member of the OAU. Yet the PAIGC really controlled the situation in Guinea-Bissau where it organized the social, political and economic life of the populations living in the liberated zones. Better still, in the early 1970s the U.N.'s Committee on decolonization following an OAU delegation had covered Guinea-Bissau from North to South and had drawn up a report stating that the country was an independant African country whose urban centers were occupied by Portuguese colonial forces.

Logically speaking, this report which was not contested or denied by the Portuguese colonial authorities, could have given the PAIGC the right to sit at the OAU like the Polisario Front today. But the idea of seating this liberation movement never occurred to the African States.

Why then was the OAU so anxious to admit to its fold the Democratic Sahroui Arab Republic, a pure and simple invention of the Algerian government via the Polisario Front which is solely made up of a few "refugees" located in the suburbs of Tindouf, in the midst of Algerian territory?

Why did Algiers choose to transfer the false Sahroui problem to the OAU, after the Arab League's categorical refusal to place it on its agenda?

Finally, why did the famous Simon Malley, director of the newspaper *Afrique-Asie*, known for his hopeless infeudation to the Algerian secret services choose January 1985 to state in a peremptory way that the King of Morocco was actively preparing a war against Algiers? It is this last question that retains the attention of the informed observers.

It is known that the OAU, for several years now, is an instrument in the hands of the Algerian government. Senghor, Sakou Toure, Mobutu, Hassan II and the elderly Houphouet were the last bastions against Algiers' systematic domination of the African organization.

The first two are no longer in power. Hassan II, disgusted by some of his peers' conformity preferred to withdraw from the OAU. Mobutu and Houphouet have prudently chosen to distance themselves from it. They no longer believe in the future of an organization whose leaders are for the most part unquestioning supporters of Algerian power. It only takes a glance at the civil status of the eminent members of the renowned DSAR government to further convince oneself that Algiers can impose whatever it chooses on its negro-african "satellites".

The so-called Prime Minister of the so-called DSAR, Eili Ahmed Mahmoud Lamine, is a pure-blooded Moroccan born in Tan Jan in 1948 where he went to primary school. He went to secondary school in the Agadir region and then for higher learning studies attended the Mohammed V Institute in Tarendant and the Rabat Law Faculty, still in Morocco. He does not speak a word of Spanish and never went to a Spanish school; just as he never lifted a finger against the Spanish colonialists who occupied the Sahara until the Madrid Agreements.

The Foreign Minister of this same DSAR, the famous Hakim who only smokes the world's classiest cigars, is himself a Mauritanian. He is a former nurse of the ex-Fort-Gouraud in Mauritania, who was promoted to the rank of Chargé d'affaires in his country's embassy in Algiers from 1973 to 1974. His brother, who is more Mauritanian than former president Haidalla, is presently employed at the Zouerate in Mauritania of course.

In the list of government members of the so-called DSAR, one easily finds Moroccans and Mauritanians. But to find one single Sahroui who speaks even a little Spanish, the language of the colonial power, would be like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack.

Thus it is not possible to doubt at any instant the real nature of the Polisario Front: it is nothing more than Algiers' armed instrument, used to destabilize the neighboring Sherifian kingdom while avoiding a direct confrontation.

But Morocco has almost completed the installation of a defensive strategy, the building of "walls", which remove all possibilities for the Polisario Front's making armed incursions into the Moroccan Sahara's territory.

At the same time it pushes them back to quarters on Algerian territory where the long range weapons, specifically the soviet-made SAM 7s that recently hit a Moroccan fighter, are concentrated today.

Sahara: watching Algiers advance, giving cover to the sabotage operations carried out by the Polisario Front from the former's territory, is it trying to push Morocco to exercise its right of answer which would immediately be used as an "agression"?

We could have given an affirmative answer if Boumediene was still in power in Algeria. For former president Boumediene looked upon Africa as being Algiers' exclusive zone of influence and of choices; be they of a political or economic nature they inevitably always found their inspiration in this hegemonistic concern.

Everything would lead one to suppose that his successor Chedli Ben Jeddid does not want to continue in this direction. And it is not by chance that he has questioned his country's entire socialist option. President Chedli knows perfectly well that a direct confrontation between Morocco and Algeria would destroy all of the developmental efforts made by these two peoples. However, there exists in the corridors of Algerian power a strong lobby of bureaucratic feudality, which is surprisingly similar to the Soviet nomenclature, that is capable of leading the country into any kind of adventure in order to safeguard its privileges... if the President allows it to do so.

This is undoubtedly the lobby that is manipulating Simon Malley, *Afrique-ASIE's* thundering director. During the battles and confrontations at Zag and Amgalla, the Polisario Front lost 4 important military leaders, including the Minister for Defense and the head of the armoured divisions, in January and October of last year.

After this obvious military defeat, an attempt was made to place Morocco in front of a diplomatic fait accompli by organizing the OAU masquerade. But to no avail. And the Algerian budget cannot continue supporting indefinitely the maintenance of a phantom State whose officials are extremely expensive: each Sahraoui minister costs the Algerian government a minimum of 4,500 dollars per month.

Better still, the Algerian people who are facing an agricultural shortfall that is the worse in its history (more than half of the country's oil revenues are being used to make up for it) have most certainly other priorities.

The excessive industrialization policy initiated by Boumediene to shove European finished products off the African market has been a dismal failure.

Algeria's agricultural exports are almost non-existent (about 1% of overall exports).

Oil prices as well as the strategic importance of oil products are inevitably doomed to diminish.

France, Italy and Spain have taken the unfortunate decision to review the fabulous gas contract, to their advantage obviously; a contract which should allow the Algerian economy to get its breath back without having recourse to outside indebtedness at any price.

Here we must add that the "walls" strategy has completely dashed Algeria's hopes to weaken the Sherifian kingdom. The armed incursions of the Polisario mercenaries are no longer possible... unless they are suicide operations calling for the use of considerable logistics means. And then Libya is no longer willing to bankroll the Algerian opening in the Sahara.

This is what the situation is. It is far from brilliant. And it is not surprising that some Algerian circles feel that war is the only solution possible to create confusion and thus mask internal problems.

African diplomats in the Sahara

AT the end of last week, the Moroccan authorities organized a visit of information to the Sahara for the African, Arab and Asian ambassadors posted in Rabat. This visit follows the one organized for the military attachés assigned to Morocco.

With these visits, the Moroccan authorities wanted to give the diplomats the opportunity of seeing for themselves the new reality prevailing today in the Moroccan Sahara, and then make a report to their respective governments. These new realities are characterized by two noticeable facts : the phenomenal economic growth in a region which only a few years ago was one of Africa's poorest, and this despite its phosphates. Secondly, the perfect mastery of the military situation which makes the Saguia Al Hamra region one of the kingdom's most secure. So as to better show them the security that reigns here, the Moroccan authorities had them make the trip by road over a 500 km route from Tan Tan to Laayoune in beautiful air-conditioned buses belonging to the Royal Palace. The trip obviously took place without an escort.

From Laayoune, the diplomats and accompanying journalists were transferred aboard military helicopters to Haouza where they were able to visit one of the great sources of mystification in the history of this conflict. This mystification has made African and world public opinion believe over a long period of time that, here in Haouza, the Polisario had founded a capital in due form. The diplomats discovered upon their arrival in Haouza the ruins of a small Spanish outpost but no signs of construction which would have let one believe in the existence of any earlier human activity. On the other hand, a few kilometers from the ruins, a whole village is seeing the light and wells have been dug ; thus tapping nomads from Tan Tan and Smara regions. The fact is that today, thanks to the discovery of large sources of water, human life and activities are developing throughout the Moroccan Sahara.

Two conclusions can be drawn : first of all, by inviting the diplomats to the Sahara the Moroccans demonstrate that they are perfectly at ease and sure of themselves even in this region where there is complete security : this assurance had already drawn the attention of observers during King Hassan II's visit to the Sahara. Let us recall here that the last visit made to the Sahara by a Moroccan king dates back a century, to the time of King Hassan I's visit. Indeed, the new airport at Laayoune bears this King's name. And then, through this initiative the Moroccans have made a laudable effort to enlighten African and international public opinion on the real situation prevailing in the Sahara ; going beyond all the different mystifications, and this on the eve of the next OAU summit.

Le Politicien

Statements made by 3 ambassadors following their visit to the Saharan provinces

FOLLOWING a visit just made by a large delegation of African, Arab and Asian ambassadors to the Saharan provinces, the ambassadors from Senegal, Zaire and Central Africa told the press of their impressions.

Mr. Aly Dioum, Mr. Barassa Ba Maduka and Mr. Claude Bernard Beloum stressed that "this visit was necessary" in "completely secure provinces" where "a happy population" goes about its daily business in the greatest tranquillity.

The ambassador from Senegal Mr. Aly Dioum said, after pointing out that he would make an objective report to his government, which in full possession of the facts would be able to adopt a position if the need arose, that he thought Moroccan diplomacy would have profitted by organizing this trip much sooner because it would perhaps have brushed aside many ambiguities, cleared up misunderstandings and enabled everyone to see the reality. Ex-president Senghor used to say that "Facts are stubborn." I think that if a trip to these provinces could have been organized it would have allowed us to better enlighten public opinion; this compounded by the work done by the objective journalists who went there. Personally, this is not the first time I went to the Southern provinces. I recall that in 1978-79 while the media was announcing the Polisario's taking the town of Smara, the Moroccan government, rather than formulate a denial, had offered to let those who chose to, go there and see for themselves whether the town was still Moroccan or in the hands of the Polisario. I went with a few diplomats and was able to observe during that recent trip that Smara was still Moroccan.

He added that for the Senegalese people "Smara was of great religious importance because it is the town of Sheik Maa-El-Ainin who has many followers in Senegal and still has descendants in Casamance, Southern Senegal.

The diplomat felt that this visit was necessary: but not so as to see a war situation as one might be led to think. As far as I'm concerned, my aim was to see the provinces' state of economic development. We know that these provinces took part in the legislative elections.

"So", continued Dioum "for myself the question was not that of knowing whether they were Moroccans or not; but rather that of observing the level of social, economic and cultural development attained by these provinces. To see whether the harmonized development, advocated by His Majesty the king, to allow all the provinces to achieve development concurrently could be equally verified in the Southern provinces. That was my major objective."

"And indeed I saw a working population going about its business amidst the utmost security. I was able to speak freely with both the people and their representatives, I really believe that all of this confirms what the Moroccan press and authorities had told us about the provinces. We observed the socio-economic achievements. In fact Dakhla like Laayoune and Smara have become very large towns concerned with town-planning and have an architectural approach that fits in very well with Moroccan culture and civilization; and that in itself is quite striking.

"We visited Haouza, which at the time the media had called the Polisario's capital" the diplomat said.

From Haouza we went on to the "wall", visited a few support points as well as a headquarter. I'm not a military man, nor am I a strategist but what I can talk to you about is the morale of these men who have been living in the desert for years. I think that in order to be able to understand the quality of the army one has to try and put oneself in their shoes.

Facing this stone desert and hostile nature, obstinately gazing at the horizon for hours on end while maintaining a steely morale and continuing to joke with each other. I

believe we must reach the conclusion that these men of undeniable worth are highly motivated. We notice this in conversations with the troops and by listening to the superior officers. It is an undeniable quality of the Moroccan army. We truly saw motivated men who know why they are sacrificing themselves and who are aware of all the facts continue to do so with a certain degree of good humor. I was greatly struck by this and I believe that any strategy should take this aspect into account."

For his part, the ambassador from Zaire Mr. Bavassa Ba Maduka, stated that it would be useful to go there and observe the problem with one's own eyes. And so it was with this intention that I, like my colleagues and the other diplomats who were with us, accepted to take part in this visit to the southern provinces.

Zaire's diplomat continued by saying that it was of interest to the diplomats because you know that Haouza is still looked upon as the DSAR's capital by those who are unfamiliar with the problem: it's still from here that this well-known republic sends out its dispatches. So this place was of utmost importance for we diplomats, we wanted to see if there was a government there.

However, all we saw was rocks and sand and headquarters built by the Moroccan army. We were also given explanations and able to note that Haouza is in the sector controlled by the royal armed forces.

In Smara we also visited several things of a socio-economic nature. The government has made great efforts and construction is doing well. From Smara we went to the front. This was a point of great interest to us, and we were able to get acquainted with the soldiers who defend the front. We obtained all the explanations we wished and shared the soldiers' meal.

In Dakhla we visited the port and an experimental agriculture center which holds great promise.

All this leads me to say that between the information I receive from afar and the things I saw myself I have a precise idea of the situation.

"We not only visited socio-economic achievements but were above all able to speak freely with the people."

"Security reigns everywhere" he added. We went on a round of the cities: in Laayoune we took an evening stroll and were not at all disturbed. Life in these towns is like it is here in Rabat and Casablanca where people peacefully go about their business.

"We flew between Laayoune and Haouza in helicopters at low altitude" he recalled, "this proves that security reigns and that the Moroccan army has the situation under control. These are things that are hard to realize, even if someone tells them to you. But all of this we saw."

The ambassador from Central Africa Mr. Claude Bernard Belloum for his part stated that "The Sahara's population has grouped itself and is living a decent life as compared with its past. And this is important because it is difficult to uproot a people who already are aware of their identity and origins and try to replace them with something else.

"Our contacts with this population allowed us to observe that it is happy that this barren land, made up only of sand and where they lived off nothing but animal husbandry, has been turned into a cultivable land which bears fruit and vegetables: a land which feeds its population.

"All of this has been achieved thanks to Morocco's contribution; Morocco has worked the Sahara and one would have to be blind to deny this. All those who go there to observe life in the Sahara will automatically say that Morocco is right.

"Indeed this recent visit is not my first one: I had already visited the Sahara in 1979 at the time of the false alarm regarding Smara. At the time it had been said that the Polisario had invaded and taken over Smara. We asked to go there and observe the situation, since as diplomats that is our role. It being our role to give our governments objective information, we went and were obliged to note that this was a lie.

"I had not returned to the Sahara since then and during this visit I was really surprised to see the development under way there. For example, before there was just one small hotel with a few camps around it in Laayoune. Today it would take at least 48 hours to visit the whole town. This implies that work was done in the meantime and this work does not go unnoticed. The same holds true for Smara which was just a military camp. This time we visited it and were able to observe new buildings. Another sign of development.



African diplomats visiting moroccan Sahara.

"But all of this cannot be carried out by itself. There had to be someone behind it and this someone is the Moroccan government.

"This implies that all the towns and peoples have rediscovered their motherland: Morocco. They live there in peace. They live comfortably and I feel that is the right life for a people.

"During our visit we also saw the front where the military operations take place. We went to the most advanced points along the Morocco-Mauritanian border and observed troops who did their duty while preserving their sense of humor. They feel no fear, experience no difficult living conditions which means that the zone is peaceful.

"How many times have we heard that there were attacks here and there, that there were hundreds of dead while in each place we visited there were no more than 100 or 130 people. How can you kill more people than are present?

"We saw that the Moroccan army controls the territory and that its defense on this side is one hundred percent guaranteed too.



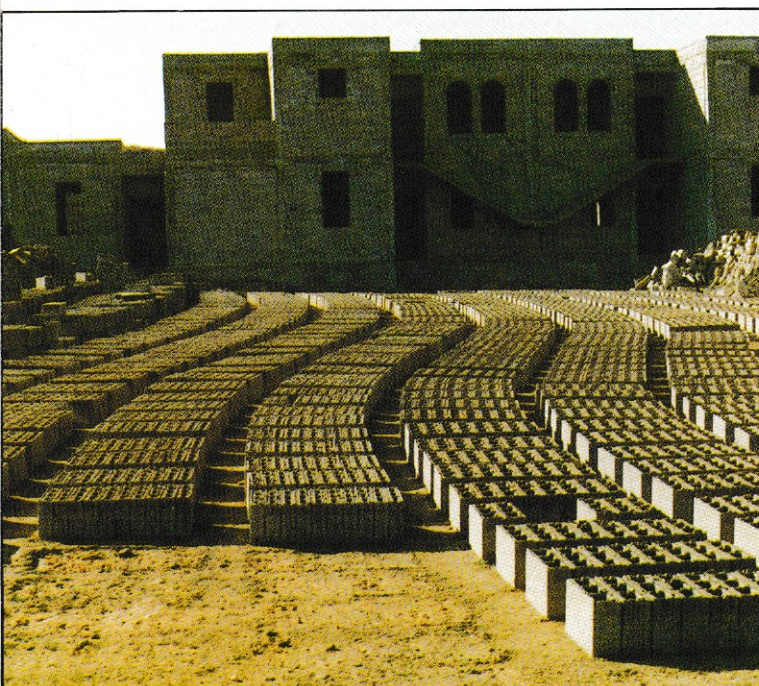
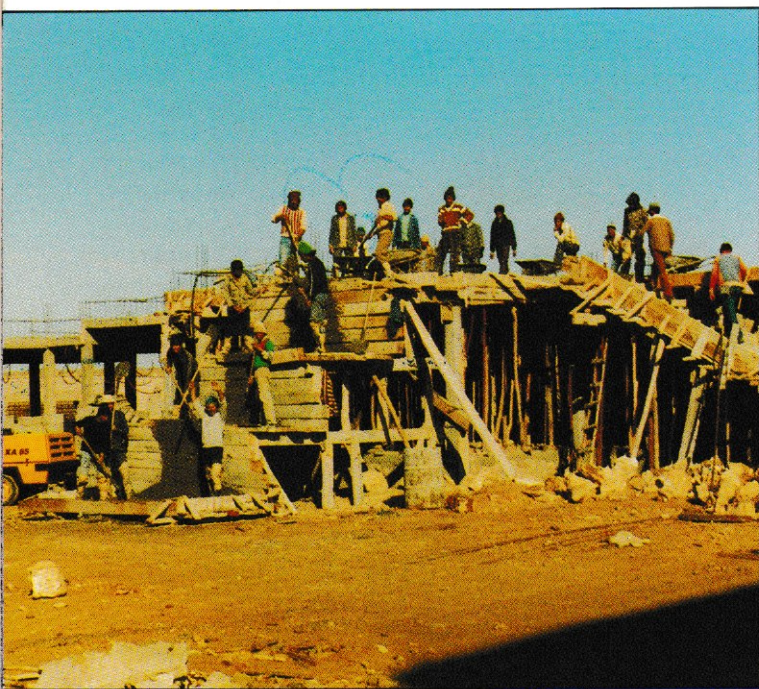
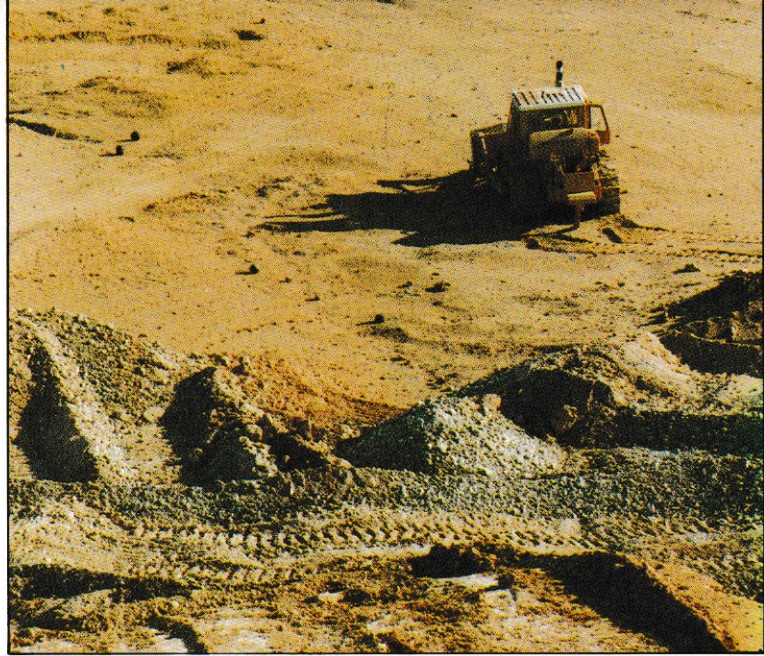
King Hassan II praying at Tâh where upon his order the 350,000 volunteers of the Green March halted in 1975. It was here that the Spanish army erected the barbed wire fences that traced a fictitious border between Morocco and its Sahara.



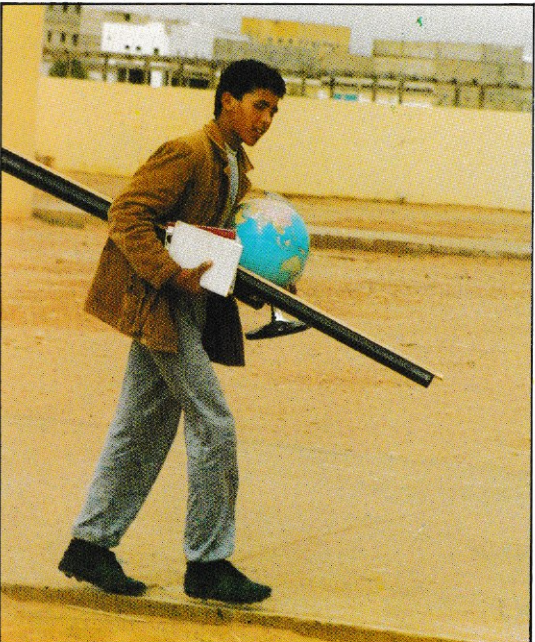
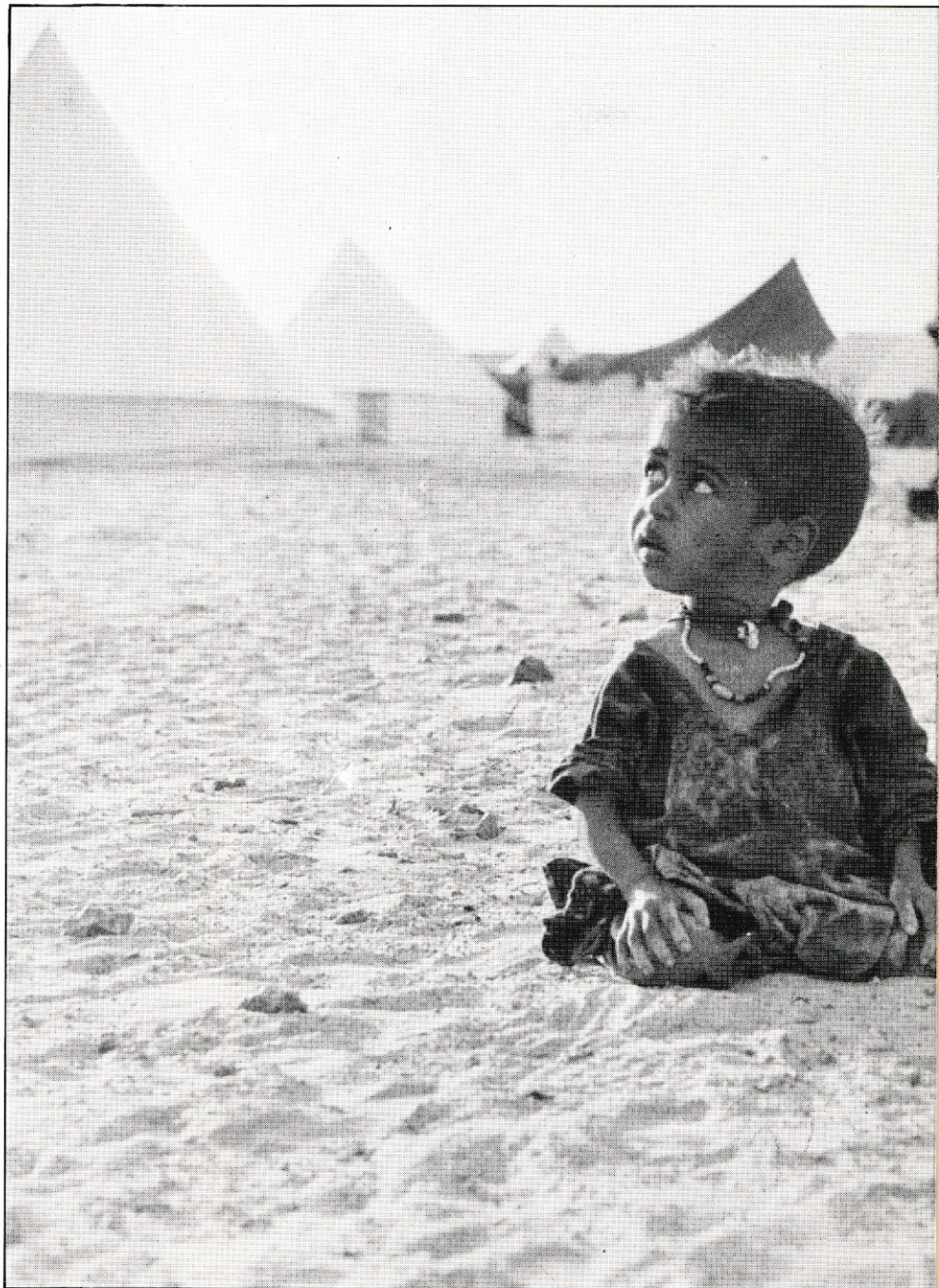
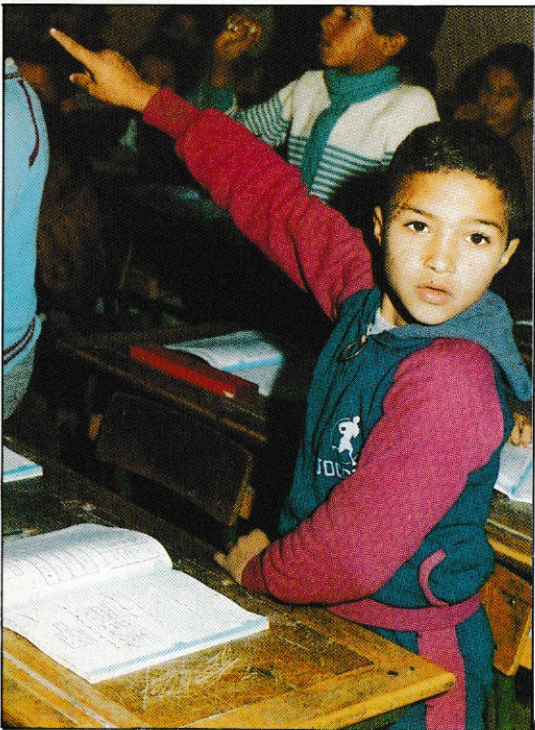
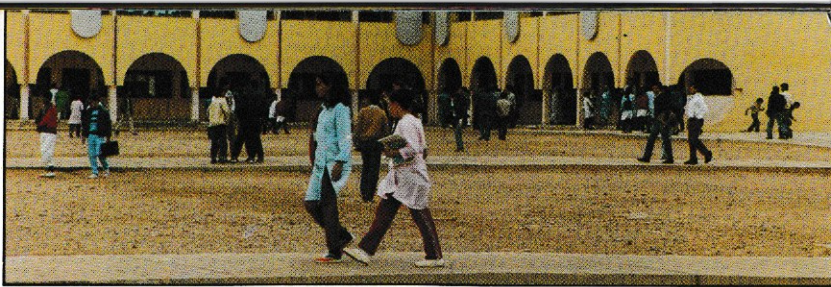
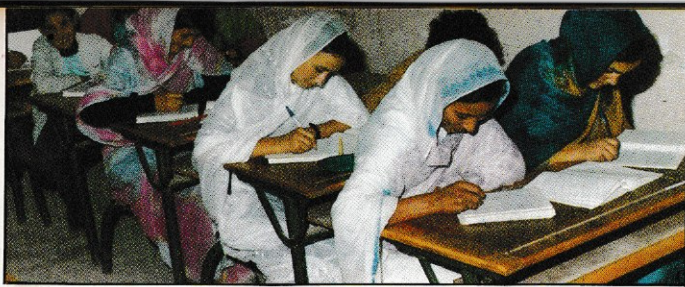
The King in Laayoune. In Morocco, a country where the Islamic faith is deeply rooted, when the King presides over the Friday prayers it is always a solemn moment. The Friday prayer he presided over in Laayoune was not only a solemn moment but also a time of reunion and intense communion.



"LA FORCE TRANQUILLE" (The Quiet Strength), King Hassan II inspecting the troops on the Defense Line.



For the last few years the Sahara's cities have been experiencing an unprecedented boom.



Pictures of school life in the Sahara's cities.

A child within the compound of one of Tindouf's camps.



King Hassan II

in the Moroccan Western Sahara

The meaning of a visit

LAST March the King of Morocco made an official visit to the Kingdom's Saharan provinces (the former Western Sahara). It was a memorable event, the second one in this last decade of Morocco's history after that of the Green March.

— From the historical point of view, King Hassan II's visit to the Saharan provinces comes 100 years after his grandfather Sultan Hassan I's visit there. It is on the one hand a visit of commemoration and on the other a symbolic act by which the Moroccan Sovereign erased the more than seventy years of discontinuity in this region represented by the foreign presence there. This visit completes the bridge that crosses the river of time (a century!), that welds two moments in history and eliminates the break in the Moroccan's collective conscience. One had to be there in order to perceive the sum of emotions left in the wake of King Hassan II's visit to the deep South. There are signs which cannot deceive (see **Mr. Maurice Druon's article**).

— From the psychological point of view, the Moroccan Sovereign's visit had a unifying action on the Moroccan Nation. The Sahraoui populations, which had been cut off from all emotional inter-action with the rest of the Moroccan people during the colonial period, have immersed themselves definitively into the very life of the country. Moreover, the presence of the King — who is the political and religious leader — and all of the members of the royal family amidst the Sahraoui populations has definitely brought about an osmosis in consciences.

— From the political point of view the meaning is quite clear. By giving King Hassan II such a warm and moving welcome the Saharan provinces' populations performed an act of allegiance that bore witness of their Moroccan identity.

Without renouncing the principle of a referendum on self-determination that is demanded by the international community and explicitly supported by the King himself; one is obliged to acknowledge that what has just taken place in the Sahara gives credit to the Moroccan argument regarding the Moroccan identity of this territory.

— From the military point of view, King Hassan II's visit to the Defense Line is just as meaningful. Wasn't this an ideal opportunity for the Polisario to manifest its presence? The eyes of the whole world were tuned in to this event, and the international press present offered a perfect resonance chamber. We thus understand why the Polisario's numerous victory communiques no longer enjoy any credibility.

If we were to tabulate all of these indicators we would be obliged to conclude that Algeria and the Polisario have lost all along the line.

King Hassan II visiting Sahara

by Maurice DRUON

MOROCCAN Friends, may your elderly live their last happily. They will have seen their dreams come true, their Homeland reunited, their Nation assembled and unanimous. May your children always bear in their minds and hearts the visions of this incredible week. At the beginning of their lives they will have experienced one of those rare moments of collective fervour which traces the future of an entire generation.

Of what use would it be to describe what the mass media allowed you to see on the screen; what the satellites broadcast throughout the world and which will continue to exist on the picture supports?

Crowds gathered on both sides of a fourteen kilometer stretch of road in order to acclaim the arrival of King Hassan II in Agadir; in Tiznit the ground had taken on the colors of the sun, copper and azur because of all the rugs that had been laid out for the King's passage. A human wave could be glimpsed rippling on the scene. Goulimine with its hedges of mounted camels and dancers from the South, bursting with joy like fireworks in broad daylight; Tan-Tan overflowing with an exuberant population that is at the same time hectic and orderly. The Liberating King's solidary prayer at Tah, on the desert sand and in the very place from which the historical "Green March" departed. The fabulous entry into Laayoune among the unwound turbans waved by the Sahraouis along with banners. Laayoune, a large village become a county-town and then the miracle capital city in five years time; further enlarged by a camp 25,000 marchers come from all of Morocco's cities and tribes. The Friday prayers and the white-wool framed face of the Commander of the Faithful leaning from his horse towards uncountable multitude in a touching exchange of blessings from King to the people and from the people to the King. The inspection of the desert troops with the sand blowing, along the famous "wall" that has been pushed forward four times, lengthened four times. The unprecedented image of regiments, who have been putting up with extremely difficult living conditions for months, appauding their Supreme leader. Don't ever let these pictures fade for they are the best ones in which you can recognize yourselves.

Morocco has given here a religious example of national determination, military valor, an enterprising ardour and confidence in the future which are all the virtues of great peoples that are only revealed when they are lucky enough to live a great reign.

The only memory I have of comparable scenes is that of the crowds cheering General De Gaulle upon the Liberation of France, or the crowds pressing around Pope John Paul II.

Nor must you forget the water dams, the vast port construction begun, the airports that have been inaugurated; because during the Royal Voyage it was not simply a question of recovered ancestral lands and coasts, but one of lands that are destined to be developed so that they create jobs, well-being and power.

Such epic days are rare. I feel greatly privileged to have been able to be a direct witness of this event of such exceptional national, international, historical and human importance. I think that the event's exceptional nature was obvious to everyone.

Geographically-speaking, Morocco is one of the keys to the planet and so one of the keys to peace.

While you may have envious adversaries, you also have friends who respect and support you everywhere, friends who would not turn their backs on you.

You need only make the world know you like those who know you and see you from within.

Keep your traditions, your arts and crafts, your family customs which are the expression of your authenticity and the cement of your unity, like the land itself. Keep all that you have proven during this unforgettable week, the faith without which nothing is merited; the enthusiasm without which nothing is won; the effort without which nothing is built.

The Moroccan Western Sahara from Yesterday to Tomorrow

by Mamadou WADE

In memory of Sheik Maa-el-Ainin, a true Sahraoui saint, who, at the beginning of this century in the name of God and under the auspices of his motherland and the sherifian Sultan, led the fight against the Spanish and French invaders.

NEAR the end of the last century, just after the Berlin conference had consecrated the partitioning of Africa, His Majesty King Hassan I, Sultan of Morocco renewing the ancient tradition of resisting foreign pressure sent military expeditions from northern Morocco to the Western Sahara.

The sultan, who had just visited this part of the country which, had greatly aroused the covetousness of European powers, tried with these initiatives to counter the Spaniards' desires to colonize Southern Morocco. He also wanted to support the Sahraoui people's patriotic opposition to foreign infiltration.

In 1910, under the leadership of Sheik Maa-el-Ainin and local chieftains, thousands of Sahraoui fighters left Saquiet El Hamra and Rio de Oro which make up the Moroccan Western Sahara and headed for the besieged city of Fez. Representing the different Sahraoui tribes, they formed a heroic march with the intention of aiding the threatened Moroccan North and so took part in the defense of the motherland: the Sherifian kingdom against the French military occupation of the northern region.

The history of Morocco and especially the history of the peoples' fierce struggle for territorial integrity, independance and national unity has thus always been marked by this determination to be whole and by this organic solidarity in the face of invaders from all shores. King Hassan II's recent visit to the Western Sahara takes place 100 years to the day after the visit made to the same

region by his grandfather King Hassan I, stressing the existing struggle to unite the thousand year of Morocco. This confirms the Moroccan nation's tenacious will to preserve the unity and integrity of its national space, and this in spite of the historical tribulations.

Beyond the obvious political and moral concerns, the impressive socio-economic and cultural boom under way in the Saharan provinces since their being recovered by the motherland, and this within a decade, confirm the fact that the forces behind this organic solidarity have not been completely crushed. This boom which is immediately perceivable evokes in the most sceptical observer the well-founded feeling that political considerations alone could not be at the base of this miraculous leap forward. A noticeable leap forward achieved since the Green March in this part of Morocco which had been plunged into a quasi socio-economic freeze by the Spanish occupier.

Indeed the unshakeable faith which underlies all historical missions and national upheavals was needed to obtain the various results seen in the field, and to face the multi-faceted challenges raised by this desert region. A region where the Spanish colonizer, moreover, had left as an inheritance in departing, nothing more than empty barracks and an immense void that at first glance seemed difficult to fill.

Finally, it was necessary that all the Moroccans look upon the rebuilding of the recovered provinces as a national challenge. A challenge covering all aspects of the

Sahrouis' life : social economic, political, cultural and religious. A challenge that created a veritable national consensus as was proven by the great 1975 Green March. This peaceful march, the most impressive one in this century, mobilized over 350,000 unarmed civilian volunteers belonging to all social categories who covered more than eight hundred kilometers across southern Morocco in order to demonstrate this region's being an inalienable part of the motherland.

With these pretty new cities, rebuilt on the golden sand; its incalculable number of worksites and achievements; its bulldozers criss-crossing the desert; its numerous borings and wells spread out across the desert's immensity; its string of new ports; the increasing school infrastructures as well as its socio-cultural, professional training and health developments; its great economic projects etc, the Moroccan Western Sahara's physiognomy is definitely undergoing deep changes and this is principally benefitting the indigenous populations.

Managed by a local administration which is demonstrating its capabilities in the fields of organization, methodology and imagination, and all of this based on enthusiasm and a pioneering feeling; this evolution clearly shows that the long colonialist night that Franco's Spain plunged the region into is definitely over. Nothing will ever be the same and the Moroccan Sahrouis are already looking upon the future with confidence and optimism.

The only sad note that affects them is the fact that some of their brothers and sisters are held hostage not far from them in surveillance camps near Tindouf. And there they do not have the possibility of knowing that their land of origin is now happily advancing forward towards a promising future with the indestructible support of the motherland.

Cities and citizens reconciled

In 1974, a year before the Green March, Laayoune the major city in the Western Sahara only had 28,010 inhabitants according to the population census carried out in the same year by the Spanish authorities (censo 1974). It presented a rather gloomy image with its shantytowns and precarious dwellings, its intolerable lack of educational and socio-economic infrastructures. But also because of its alcohol selling outlets and "Saharan ladies of the night" who swore outrageously with the colorful spirituality that is characteristic of the Saharan region. A region which saw the birth and work of so many Islamic saints, so many distinguished poets and theologians and remarkable oulemas who have enhanced the Sherifian Kingdom's spiritual position in the vanguard of the Islamic Umma.

Laayoune was also abandoned to its own resources as far as urban development and construction for its citizens, even of a primary nature, was concerned. But this did not affect the population's great human qualities.

In the 1950s, the Sahroui militants making up the structure of the Istiqlal Party in Laayoune were among the most determined in Morocco's struggle for independence, territorial integrity and the return of the Spanish-occupied Sahara to the motherland. They thus

carried on a tradition of obstinately rejecting the cutting of the umbilical cord. A tradition that was taken to its moment of glory by the likes of ancestors such as Tekna, Reguibat, Ouled Delim, Ouled Bou Shaa and others, and which under Sheik Maa-el-Ainin reached its opinionated summit. Still at the same time, these militants had to organize an armed resistance in order to obtain the return of His Majesty Mohammed V and recognition of Morocco's independence and territorial integrity by the French and Spanish authorities.

Laayoune was also the privileged place of refuge for patriots and resistance fighters sought by the colonial authorities.

Today Laayoune has some 114,000 inhabitants. It is a town which has been rebuilt from top to bottom and which can now rival a number of African capitals. With its groups of brand new houses; its paved and well — maintained roads; its 30,000 seat sports complex; its modern and functional school establishments which total 18 for the province; its well-designed water conveyance, purification and electrical networks; its large airport which has replaced the corrugated iron hangar; its port complex that is on the verge of being completed, etc. Laayoune is no longer the city that it was under the Spaniards.

It has become a modern city which is determinedly looking towards the future. When the Moroccans regained control over the city they were immediately faced with the crucial problem of developing the city and wisely re-distributing the urban structures. It was a question of achieving the city's unity.

The colonizer had quartered the city and consecrated the separation of the neighborhoods which existed at that time with natural and artificial borders. This is how the city came to be composed of two isolated plateaux : The first of these was mostly reserved for Europeans and had sewers and infrastructures that were relatively satisfactory while the second plateau grouped the indigenous population. It was not even equipped with septic tanks and was made up of two neighborhoods separated by a oued.

The councillors have re-planned Laayoune's urban landscape guaranteeing the city a certain degree of unity so as to harmoniously and equitably meet the neighborhoods' socio-cultural needs since they have been extended by the addition of new creations. The oued was diverted from its original bed and places encouraging meetings have been created. All of this has led to better inter-relations among citizens as well as easier access to, and enjoyment of the collective services wisely distributed throughout the city.

Since its return to the motherland, Laayoune has experienced a real estate boom the likes of which have never been seen before in Morocco. It is true that a number of factors were working to push the decision that aimed at promoting housing in the urban centers of the Moroccan Sahara. Throughout his occupation the colonizer had maintained a policy of socio-economic and real estate void : there is no other name for it !

The Moroccan authorities had recovered a city that was one in name only: on the one side there was the "useful" zone where the Europeans resided while on the other side were located the "indigenous" zones with

precarious structures the rule, and almost entirely lacking socio-cultural amenities! All of these challenges had to be met and efforts harnessed to create a new more humane and more acceptable living framework for the city's inhabitants.

The results registered in one decade and since the Green March reveal that the challenges have been extremely well met. Over 6000 plots have been divided up and given to Laayoune's population along with construction plans. Out of 3918 housing units built by the government in the Western Sahara's urban centers, 2059 are in Laayoune. The "National Promotion", a public agency, has for its part built 3082 housing units of which a good portion have benefitted Laayoune. Since its return to the motherland, this city has known a real estate boom that is unprecedented in Morocco's history. It is necessary to point out here that several factors favored this boom. Moreover, 10,000 units ranging from simple houses to several-story buildings and distributed on a prorata basis among the urban and semi-urban centers, were built by private individuals or cooperatives.

The construction of housing and real estate complexes is for the most part decentralized at the city level: all of the neighborhoods have their quotas and no lack of harmonization has been noted. The Housing Ministry's program to fight against the emergence of shantytowns at the level of the national territory is also being applied in the Saharan towns. The shacks have been destroyed, and new buildings constructed for the inhabitants of these old shantytowns.

Parallel to this construction work, land has been divided up and allocated for economic, industrial and bathing purposes. We must finally stress the architectural concern shown in all of the housing programs. We can see everywhere the concern to adapt the architectural style to climate, ecological conditions and local customs. A veritable desert architecture, which pleases both the visitor's eye and heart, has been consecrated in the cities of the Moroccan Sahara.

The same efforts have been deployed for the recovered Western Sahara's four provincial centers' urban development. The most noticeable example is that of the new city of Boujdour which has sprung up like a miraculous mushroom. At the beginning, and under Spanish colonization, Boujdour was a lighthouse and barracks located on a point of the Western Saharan coast between Laayoune and Dakhla. The Moroccan authorities have made it a real urban center with all the social, economic and educational facilities necessary for a modern city. They have also more fully integrated it into the national entity by carrying out great repair work on the 210 km secondary road that links it to Laayoune and which upon the Spaniards' departure was in an advanced stage of deterioration.

Two years after the Green March, that is to say in 1977, Boujdour already had 3,000 inhabitants, 40 housing units, a school, a dispensary, a women's foyer, a post office, a bank, etc., and these were all new constructions. Today, Boujdour has some 8,000 inhabitants. The city can proudly claim 80 new additional housing units, a fishing shelter finished in 1983 where about 350 boats, with an average catch of 10 to 15,000 tons of white fish per

month, are tied up. Boujdour has two health centers, a pharmacy and two doctors who are aided by some 30 nurses in their work. A provincial hospital with 120 beds and having all standard services is being completed, and projects have been made for the building of a secondary school in the course of this year.

Smara and Dakhla have also experienced an incredible expansion. In 1974 their populations were 7280 and 5370 inhabitants. Today both cities have a population of 17,000 inhabitants each. Smara is now linked to the national road network via a brand new road that goes through Tan Tan and is 220 km long. It was finished in February of 1984.

A 540 housing unit project is under way in Smara, 140 of these are already completed and inhabited. Within Dakhla work has begun on 644 housing units, almost half of which are already completed, and two additional new primary schools. The building of a secondary school in each of these cities is projected before the end of 1985.

These two provincial county-towns have also been equipped with socio-economic and health organisations that have the same purposes as those in Laayoune. In each of these county-towns construction of a 120-bed provincial hospital is under way and will complement the 2 health centers and pharmacy operating in Smara, and the other 3 health centers and pharmacy in Dakhla. The medical and paramedical services in Smara are presently rendered by 4 doctors and about 50 nurses. In Dakhla there are 5 doctors, one of whom is a surgeon, and 60 nurses. This city also boasts a professional training center, created in 1979, which presently has 166 students and has already had 367 graduates since its creation.

Overall results of the regional effort

The projects carried out, on the verge of completion or planned in Laayoune and the few urban centers we visited bear witness to the validity and justness of the Moroccan motherland's recovery of the Saharan provinces. It also reveals the great efforts deployed by the Moroccan nation to make-up for a lag resulting from a century of the most reactionary foreign occupation.

This effort is even more laudable given that it took place and is continuing within the framework of an international economic crisis. A crisis characterized by among other things the growing cost of investment especially in the developing countries who are launching infrastructure programs.

For Morocco, the growing cost of investment is further accentuated by the geographical and ecological factors as well as the region's climatic particularities. All of these factors push those entrusted with the design and realization of projects towards very expensive solutions, with often no reasonable alternatives possible.

However, neither the economic crisis nor the oil shocks since 1973 have been able to dissuade the Moroccan authorities and the strong national consensus that exists on the Saharan question, from adopting the historical initiatives necessary since the recovery of the Saharan provinces in 1975. Indeed, these initiatives aim at eliminating the burdensome consequences of the foreign occupation of these provinces and radically correcting the

imbalances that exist between the North and desert South of Morocco.

The Moroccan government's priority goal is to develop the recovered provinces and in the short term give them an acceptable socio-economic and cultural level.

The results we were able to observe in the field have shown us that this goal is being achieved to the general satisfaction of the entire Moroccan nation and especially to the satisfaction of the Sahara's populations. These results concern several spheres.

Education and human promotion

Special attention has been granted to education and the social development of the Moroccan Sahara's population. The Spanish occupation authorities had completely neglected these two spheres.

During the Spanish occupation education was almost exclusively reserved for the Spanish nationals and the sons of the noteworthy. That is why the total number of children enrolled in school in the territory as a whole was 1774; 920 of these were in Laayoune alone.

As soon as the Saharan provinces were recovered the children's educational needs had to be determined and great efforts deployed. Thus, in October 1976, almost 4,000 pupils were enrolled in primary schools with the beginning of the school year. Then, the numbers of children enrolled in pre-schools (kindergartens and Koranic) and primary schools registered a sizeable increase from 1976 to 1985.

The official number of pupils enrolled in initial education presently is 3076 of which 2461 are in Laayoune. As for the figures for primary education, they reached 13,837 enrolled of which 10960 alone were in Laayoune. When the Spaniards left in 1976, there were 6 primary schools in this city. Today there are 18 of them. The number of girls enrolled in primary schools has increased five-fold from 1976 to 1985: the figure has gone from 845 to 4800 in Laayoune for example.

In the Sahara, secondary and higher education were non-existent as far as Moroccans were concerned. As of 1977-78 a secondary school with a dormitory was opened in Laayoune. A new high school was also added to this city. This high school, which we visited has a surface area of 40,640 sq.m. It has 30 classrooms for general teaching, 6 classrooms for specialized teaching, a 250-bed dormitory, a modern sports complex and extremely functional audio-visual materials. At the present time the high school has 667 students.

Today in the Western Sahara there are 3893 students enrolled in secondary schools and 3180 of these students are in Laayoune province. Girls who almost didn't attend school at all in the past now make up one-third of this figure. From 1977-85, the number of students attending secondary schools increased 70-fold. The baccalaureat examination was first administered in Laayoune in May-June 1984.

A technical school which is almost finished will open in Laayoune in 1985-86. At the beginning it will have two branches (electricity and auto-mechanics), it will recruit students who are in their last year of high school.

The quality of education has truly been revolutionized and has broken away from the Spanish educational system which was characterized by a marked elitism and incoherence in regards to content and orientations. Furthermore, the Spanish programs were for the most part outdated and not adapted to the region's economic and social realities.

The present system meets the needs brought about by the changes wrought in all aspects of socio-economic life in the Moroccan Sahara. It was designed so as to reduce the cultural disparities kept alive by the Spanish occupation and standardize the programs and language used in teaching in order to achieve the best integration possible of the inhabitants into the overall education system of Morocco.

School cafeterias for lunch were set up in the primary schools. In 1976-77 2,500 students were benefitting from them. Today they feed 10,050 students. In addition there are the cooperatives located in each school. There, children can learn about certain crafts: carpentry for boys, and knitting and embroidery for girls. Children also learn how to reflect and behave. Cultural and artistic activities, physical education and sports are also well organized in the school and there are generally two competition teams in each school. Parent associations assist the teachers and school authorities as well as impoverished or deprived students.

Teacher-training has not been forgotten. In 1979-80 a teacher-training center was created. It provides pedagogical training for student teachers who for the most part are originally from the region and will be called upon to teach there. Today the center has 32 trainees.

Professional training and the promotion of "arts and crafts" had been left by the wayside under the occupation. Since then special attention in the form of a vast program set up in 1984 has been accorded them. This program concerns 10,000 youths, 17% of whom are in the recovered provinces where the need for specialized middle managers and skilled labor is clearly felt. This training concerns maritime activities, fishing, maintenance, services, management and administration, and the Moroccan Sahara's particular brand of agriculture (animal husbandry, oasis crops, etc.), etc. In regards to the students in the 13 schools created since 1976, 45% of them have gone into industry, 43% are in the building and construction center, and finally 12% are in management and administration.

Large educational and training projects are planned for the future, some of them are already under way, the following projects have either been planned or completed:

- 4 secondary schools in Laayoune province;
- 1 secondary school in Dakhla, Smara and Boujdour;
- 7 primary schools in Laayoune province;
- 1 primary school in Dakhla and Boujdour;
- 1 new teacher training center and a center for training professors;
- additional infrastructures for technical education and training;
- 1 faculty which will serve as the starting point for a future university in Laayoune;
- 1 technological institute with a 300-bed dormitory.

Health and social action

During the Spanish occupation the spheres of health and social aid the population of the Moroccan Sahara was left pretty much to its own devices. In the whole territory there was just one "home" reserved for Spanish nationals which had 2 or 3 doctors and some "nuns". Preventive actions were unheard of with the exception of the very small hospital in Dakhla with a few beds for observation. This deficiency undoubtedly explains the large epidemics (conjunctivitis, dysentery, tuberculosis,...) that ravaged the area during the colonial period.

Since the recovery of the provinces, a considerable and worthy effort has been made. The old home has been completely renovated, modernized and newly-equipped. It now has a 120-bed capacity and 6 doctors work there full-time.

This year on the occasion of the Throne Festivities, an ultra-modern hospital was inaugurated in Laayoune. It has a 247-bed capacity and has medical, pediatrics, surgery, maternity, reanimation and emergency services as well as advanced research services including a laboratory and radiology services which have the most sophisticated medical equipment, among them a scanner. The hospital cost 8 billion French centimes.

At Smara, Dakhla and Boujdour provincial hospitals with 120 beds each and having standard services will soon be completed.

Great efforts have also been deployed in the field of ambulatory care. And the following achievements have been made in this domain:

- the building of 3 urban centers for medical health in Laayoune;
- 1 rural health center in Tarfaya;
- 1 polyclinic in Laayoune-plage;
- 1 rural dispensary at Daoula and Foum-el-Oued;
- 1 reference center (family planning) in Laayoune;
- 2 health centers at Smara and Boujdour;
- 3 health centers at Dakhla.

All of these achievements meet the preventive health needs in several spheres including vaccinations, school hygiene, health education and environmental health. The regional and provincial auto fleets which are entrusted with evacuations have also been provided with the necessary ambulances.

The medical and paramedical corps has registered a phenomenal growth. In Laayoune province alone, in addition to the private doctors and dental technicians there are 21 doctors who practice there, 9 of them are specialized. They are aided by a paramedical staff made up of 346 indigenous nurses trained in all specialties, midwives, laboratory technicians, etc.

More than 11 doctors, one of whom is a surgeon, and 140 nurses and other health workers presently form the medical corps in the three other provinces. The private sector has also shored an important increase with the opening of 5 private doctors practices and three pharmacies one of which is combined with a medical biology laboratory.

The regression of diseases and the examination statistics confirm the magnitude of the efforts we have

deployed. In 1977 it had recorded 196 new cases of tuberculosis. In 1984 there were only 94 cases. During the same period the number of conjunctivitis cases dropped from 2450 to 1032. The number of cases of dysentery dropped from 2515 to 26 and those of measles went from 950 to 37.

Medical examinations went from 37,760 in 1977 to 24,093 in 1984 and this despite the sizeable increase in population. As far as paramedical examinations (health care) the figure dropped from 296,630 to 147,539.

A school for nurses training was founded in 1976. Each year 30 health workers graduate from this school.

Economic infrastructures

After human and social development, it is in the field of economic infrastructures that we have observed the most important results. This importance is more evident when we bear in mind the situation that prevailed here prior to the recovery of the Saharan provinces by Morocco. As we earlier stressed, at that time Morocco was confronted by a region whose economic backwardness at the infrastructure level was blatantly obvious.

With the exception of the 25 km stretch of paved road linking Laayoune-city to the phosphate wharf, there were no negotiable roads. The other acceptable roads were reserved for the Spanish army's movements. In other words no road structures worthy of the name could be attributed to the Spaniards.

Thus after recovery of the Saharan territory, the Moroccan authorities were faced with two priorities. On the one hand they had to open up the national territory by building roads where they were necessary in order to break the Saharan Moroccans isolation and on the other they had to develop the communication axes anew.

Thus Laayoune was linked to the North's national network by means of the Tan-Tan/Laayoune link which is 320 km long and was completed in May 1984. It was the road taken by His Majesty King Hassan II to and from his recent visit to the Sahara. Tan-Tan was also linked to Smara by a normal 220 km long road completed in February 1984. These two road axes cost 1.7 billion dirhams (at the 1981-82 price).

The unlocking of the Southern Sahara was not neglected. The 190 km long Laayoune-Boujdour link is presently being built. At the present time the trip between these two centers takes no more than 2 hours, while before it took over 4 hours in special vehicles (Landrovers or Jeeps).

The Laayoune-Smara road link (230 km) has also been renovated since February 1985, as has been the Laayoune-Boucraa link.

In addition to these, the following road projects have been foreseen within the framework of the 5-year plan:

- a new Laayoune-Smara axis;
- Boucraa- Guelta Zemour, up till the Mauritanian border;
- Smara- Guelta Zemour;
- Boujdour- Dakhla.

All of these projects are integrated into the African road scheme guidelines and are part of the link that is to

join up Gibraltar with Saint Louis in Senegal via Dakhla and Nouakchott.

The absence of port facilities which are essential for the region's economic development was also felt. To correct this situation, the Moroccan authorities launched a vast port construction program all along the Sahara's Atlantic coast.

An entirely new port was built at Tarfaya. Completed in 1982 it has 250 m (linear) of quays for 6 and cost 180 million dirhams (1979 price for the first section). The port can receive 5 to 10,000 ton ships and has installations enabling it to handle up to 50,000 tons/year of different merchandize and more than 20,000 tons/year of fish.

The new port at Tan-Tan is going to play an important role in the region's socio-economic development. The first part of the infrastructure's construction was carried out between 1977 and 1980 at an overall cost of 300 million dirhams. These initial installations were especially designed to meet the medium term needs of coastal and ocean fishing and inshore navigation.

Today many para-port activities of an industrial nature have installed themselves at Tan-Tan and the port's extension is envisaged to meet the long-term needs.

The construction of a fishing post was completed in 1983 in Boujdour. This shelter accomodates about 350 boats that catch between 10 and 15,000 tons of white fish per month.

The port of Dakhla is the object of a development and reconstruction plan which is incorporated with a fishing port at Argoub. Right now, repair and reinforcement work on the Dakhla Wharf are almost finished.

A new port is under construction since 1982 at Laayoune near the phosphate Wharf the Spaniards left behind. Its maintenance has become extremely expensive. Given its commercial and industrial fishing vocation, the port being built at Laayoune will have a positive impact on the region.

With its first phase alone, the port will be able to handle 200,000 tons/year of different types of merchandize as well as the same quantity of fish to be processed and commercialized. With the dinal phase the figure of 300,000 tons for each type of product will be reached. The first phase which is under way will cost 50 billion centimes in infrastructure.

A phosphate port near the present Wharf is also envisaged in Laayoune which would allow a better flow of the ore at all times. The total cost of equipment for dykes and quays is estimated at 45 billion centimes.

Water and electricity

The supply of water was also one of the priorities for the Moroccan Sahara. The search for water was enforced in Laayoune, Smara and Boujdour provinces.

More than 15,000 m (linear) of deep and semi-deep drillings took place and more than 50 wells were dug at the same time as the military units were carrying out the search for water. The drinking water needs have been entirely satisfied. Laayoune for example only had a flow of 20 l/s of briny water and 1 l/s of soft water. The National Office for Drinking Water has carried out an

important program for soft water conveyance and supply of soft and briny water in this zone.

Since the recovery of the provinces, the populations have for the most part become well acquainted with electrical energy. Today, all of the houses in the Sahara's five cities (Laayoune, Smara, Dakhla, Boujdour and Boucraa) have electricity. Moreover, the lighting of the streets of these cities is one hundred percent guaranteed.

Thus it is thus that in the Laayoune area tha the number of subscribers to the electricity network has increased from 5,000 to 14,600. The length of medium voltage lines installed increased by 47% between 1976 and 1985, rising from 17,500 to 25,320 meters. The low voltage lines for their part increased by 316%, going from 46,522 to 193,821 meters during this same period.

The National Electricity Board is presently studying the possibility of developing the Sebkhah Tah depression located 70 km to the North of Laayoune for the production of electrical energy. Given the site's interesting characteristics, 10 m³ of sea water per second could be directed to a hydro-electrical plant whose construction is planned in the next five year plan. This plant will allow the production of 30 million Kwh/year, that is to say three times Laayoune's present consumption. (85,000 inhabitants). Sebkhah Tah's hydro-solar project will among other things bring about the formation of large salt deposits which will be easily exploited.

As far as renewable energy sources are concerned, given their location and climate, the Moroccan Saharan provinces offer favorable conditions for the development of this type of energy. The hours of sunlight in this region exceed three thousand hours per year. Energy produced by the wind is also abundant in this area, especially along the coast.

Given all these conditions, The Center for the Development of Renewable Energy Sources has projected a number of actions in the Saharan provinces, among them:

- the drawing of maps regarding hours of sunlight and winds in the area
- the building of pilot projects for solar and wind-powered pumps. A first pilot project is presently being completed. It aims at fitting a well with a solar pump for irrigating a thirty hectar green space!

Agriculture and animal Husbandry

The Spanish colonial power made almost no efforts in this sector and not because of the region's climatic conditions, but rather because the sector was not considered as being profitable enough to deserve the efforts and investments needed for its development.

Parallel with this general disinterest of the Spaniards in agriculture, they had also carried out a policy that aimed at obstructing this sector's development in Western Sahara by introducing exaggeratedly high taxes for the indigenous farmers and animal breeders.

After Morocco's recovery of the Saharan provinces, this country's authorities gave the agricultural sector their priority attention. Efforts were deployed in three principle spheres: the search for water sources, the

improvement of lands and the development of methods to protect crops from the sandy winds.

Very interesting results have been recorded in these three spheres. A 40 km long water expanse was discovered in the Laayoune region. This has allowed the transformation of the area into a crop zone with the following yields per hectare:

Open-air		Greenhouse
Tomatoes	30 T/Ha	60 T/Ha
Green peppers	12 T/Ha	30 T/Ha
Carrots	17 T/Ha	—
Turnips	10 T/Ha	—

600 hectares of land are being used for cereal crops (wheat, barley, etc...) with an average yield of three quintals per hectare. This area will be increased to 18,000 hectares of cultivable land.

Livestock has an important place in the agricultural life of the Saharan provinces. While we have seen a decrease in the level of camel-raising, it is because a growing number of camel-raisers are abandoning more and more the nomadic way of life; they prefer moving to the city in order to take advantage of all the things the city has to offer them and especially to guarantee their children's education.

In order to develop the livestock, the Ministry for Agriculture supplies the animals' feed free of charge and is carrying out research and applications in order to improve the races and their reproduction. Within this framework, 180 specimens of breeding stock have been given to Laayoune's breeders free of charge in order to improve the species.

At the same time, an ultra-modern poultry farm was offered free of charge to the Seguiet Al Hamra cooperative. This farm produced some 18,000 chickens in 1983.

Finally we need to point out that the Moroccan government distributed freely to the farmers the necessary agricultural equipment (Tractors, etc...), chemical products and fertilizers.

As far as the fishing industry is concerned, it was almost non-existent and the region's considerable wealth in this sector did not at all benefit the Sahroui populations. The foreign fishing fleets, especially the Spanish one, carried out the systematic looting of the Saharan coast. The development of this wealth has yet to begin, but the Moroccan authorities are creating the necessary infrastructures for the dazzling development of this sector (port, fishing shelters, etc...).

Polisario : a Time of disillusionment

by Mamadou WADE

THE survivors of the Polisario who want to return home to the Moroccan Saharan provinces are growing in numbers. Some of them risk their lives by trying to do so from the Tindouf camps. They can no longer bear the fact that their trust has been abused by propaganda lies and they have become aware of the failure of the Polisario's political and military projects. This situation has had severe repercussions on the morale of those who with the years have become the hostages of Tindouf and its neighboring camps.

Hundreds of them have already fled these camps. They have since then easily integrated themselves into the Moroccan society. I was thus able to meet with two of them who were able to flee the Tindouf camps four months ago. They are Mr. EDDAOUDI BABI who is 37 years old and in the past was a member of the Polisario's Supply Corps; and Mr. ALYANE MAHDI who is 33 years old and served in one of the Polisario's fighting units.

Originally from the Guelta Zemour (South of Smara), they are part of those people that the Polisario had forcefully or by trickery brought with them when Morocco recovered the Saharan provinces. This was the year 1975. In order to insure their flight to return to Morocco, our two camp survivors had to display a great deal of patience and endurance. They had to follow a complicated itinerary which took them from the Algerian borders to Nouakchott and Rosso first, then Dakar, and from there to Rabat.

Eddaoudi and Mahdi are privileged witnesses of the great mystification organized by the Algerian authorities concerning the Polisario and the DSAR. And as far as this subject is concerned they certainly know what they are talking about. They are part of the thousands of Moroccan Sahraouis who were thrown into the arms of the stateless Polisario thanks to an ingeniously orchestrated propaganda ploy. It is with great emotion and at times tearful eyes that the two Tindouf survivors described their experiences to us. An emotion which was probably magnified by the fact that they were lucky enough to return safe and sound and by the memory of their brothers still prisoners in Tindouf and the 12th of

October disciplinary camp (25 kilometers from Tindouf). They spoke to us about the situation in these camps; the origins of the Polisario "fighters"; inter-group, ethnic or social relations and about the massacre of Black Saharans.

Apparently the Algerian indoctrination has an ever decreasing hold over the Tindouf hostages. The Tindouf survivors also told us about the weariness of the Polisario elements and the growing number of those who would like to return to the Moroccan fold. They told us about the surveillance and severe repression exercised by the Algerian authorities over a large number of Sahraouis in order to keep them within the Polisario's ranks against their wishes. And finally they told us about the revolts that took place within the fighting units.

According to these privileged witnesses, what strikes one first regarding the DSAR's numbers is their ethnic and geographical diversity with a large proportion of them coming from the south of Algeria. One also counts among the Polisario's fighters Saharans whose origins are in Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad; very often they are the victims of the drought and famine that the Algerian authorities and their recruiting officers have attracted to their Tindouf trap by luring them with the promise of better living conditions.

The "promises" made by the recruiting agent YAHDIH OULD EDDID OULD SID SALEM are well known in the camps. A famous recruiting agent of the Rguibet Cherg in the Algerian west; he has the recruiting of hundreds of Polisario members from the tribes that straddle the Algero-malian and Algero-Niger borders such as the Ahl Cambous, Bradil, El Brabich, etc. to his credit...

Already in November 1976 during a recruitment campaign, after having criss-crossed the parts of the desert hardest hit by the drought and famine with trucks loaded with provisions: Yahdi and 30 Algerian soldiers who accompanied him were able to bring back to Tindouf 30 trucks filled with citizens of Mali and Niger who had been tricked by the recruiting agent's fantastic promises. Most of them were originally from Timiaoune on the Algero-malian border and among them there was even

the Chief of the Bradil tribe: Dah Ould BOUGARFA.

At Tindouf and at the other "refugee" camps one of the most hostile and deceiving propagandas is being carried out against Morocco. This collective brainwashing aims at making people believe that Morocco is trying to colonize the entire Sahara! That the Moroccan army is killing, torturing and massacring all of the Saharan tribes; that it was responsible for the famine and that it was castrating the prisoners and all those leaving Tindouf to return to the Moroccan part of the Sahara. They are told that in the Moroccan Western Sahara people are dying from hunger and that the tribes there are the victims of a genocide.

It's useless to point out that listening to the Moroccan radio is harshly punished. Once caught in the Algerian trap, these recruited elements from all kinds of different places in the Sahel desert are taken to JNIEH, a large military training center 900 km to the north of Tindouf. This center is also used for training members of terrorist organizations such as the Spanish GRAPO. Instructors from the regular Algerian army give the elements brought here military training and basic initiation to sabotage techniques.

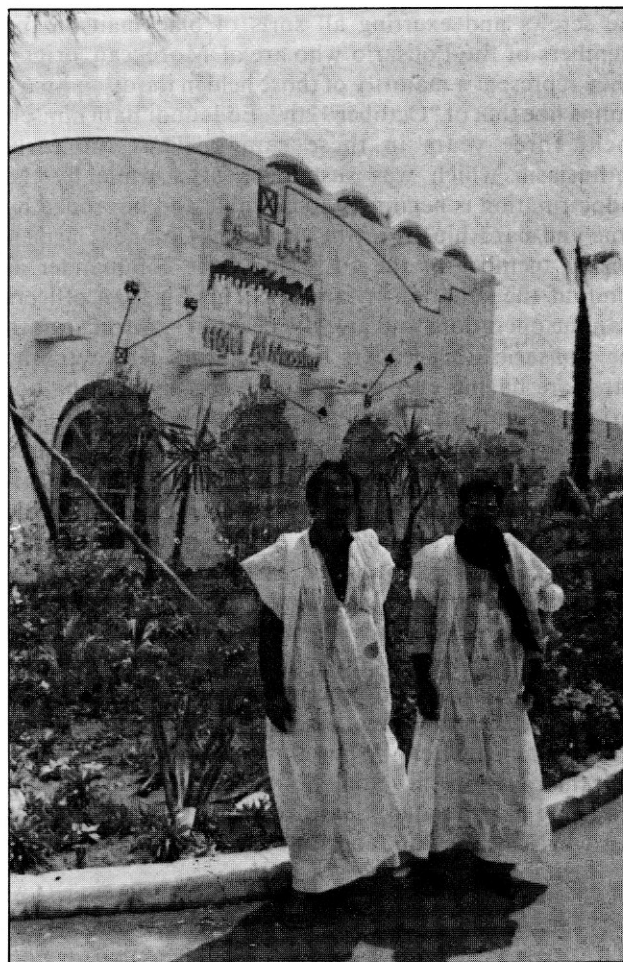
Relations within the Polisario

There is an obvious discrimination based on ethnic considerations that separates the different groups which make up the Polisario. Supported politically and financially by Algeria, the Polisario's leaders form a privileged class who live in comfort and ease. These leaders live in Algiers or the northern Algerian cities most of the time with their families. They come to distribute work or indicate a few orientations and then go back to their families. Following this, a feeling of uneasiness took hold within the camp population and among the Polisario's fighters. The people are noticing more and more the distance that separates them from their leaders and are realizing more and more that they are only working for their interests and Algeria's. The concept of a cause has been completely lost and this despite the intensity of the propaganda to which they are subject.

The two escapees also said that the Sahraouis of Moroccan origin are considered suspect and thus suffer all kinds of humiliations. They are marginalized and distanced from positions of responsibility. These positions are generally given to the Algerian Rguibats. In order to sustain their fervour the Algerian authorities give them advantages such as permanent -structure houses, higher salaries than those paid to the members of the Polisario of Moroccan descent, additional rations of a better quality, etc.

In order to encourage births within the camps and as a result have more cannon fodder, the Algerian authorities give a special bonus to applicants. The bonus went from 500 to 1000 dinars because marriage candidates have become rare. There are several reasons for this: in addition to the difficult daily living conditions in the camps, lack of health care, ever decreasing food rations (especially since the withdrawal of Libyan support), there is the especially badly accepted drawback for the Sahraouis which consists of the abduction of their children when they reach the age of 4. These children are taken to special education centers, among them the "February

27th" one, where they are subject to a special training in which indoctrination plays an important role until the age of 14. It is also a way of ensuring the parents stay in the camp in case the thought of escaping ever came to their minds. Another reason, which is not the least important one, is that the fighters no longer dare leave their wives behind when they go on missions: especially if they are young and beautiful because they quickly become the prey of the camp guards. Mr. Eddaoudi BABI informed



They escaped from Tindouf camps (Algier)

The massacre of the blacks

In his time then president of the Republic of Senegal Mr. Leopold Sedar SENGHOR had to draw international public opinion's attention to the Polisario's massacre of Blacks. The two Tindouf survivors, Mr. Eddaoudi Babi and Mr. Alyane Mahdi, informed us, with some hesitation it is true, of this massacre of prisoners of negro-african origin. They told us that these executions date back to the engagements with the Mauritanian army. At that time, when the Polisario took prisoners that were Mauritanian, they would sort them out and those that suffered the most were the Blacks. This information given by the two Tindouf survivors is even more creditworthy given that they gave it to me visibly embarrassed because I am a negro-african.

Despite this bad treatment, the DSAR was recognized by several OAU member-states which have never tried to discover the real situation existing in this region of Northwest Africa.

An end to illusions

If the outside world continues to be deceived by the propaganda and false initiatives of Algeria, through the DSAR and Polisario; this is not the case among the others, among those who live the hell of Tindouf's camps where hope is giving way more and more to doubt, dejection and disillusionment.

The Algerian authorities are aware of this increasing despair and dissatisfaction, this is why they are tightening the screws and exerting all sorts of blackmail on the members of the Polisario who are of Moroccan origin. They represent a majority of those held in the disciplinary camps like that of "October 12th". Eddaoudi Babi himself spent three years in these camps. Thus the early enthusiasm which was sustained for a while by the indoctrination is beginning to crumble and be eroded by time and hardships. For the Algerian, Colonel Garni, a former member of the FLN and zone commander at Tindouf the situation is familiar. The Algerian officers plan the operations and give the necessary instructions to the Polisario's big leaders for execution. However, the latter are having ever greater problems in carrying out serious operations in the entire former Western Sahara. The Polisario's members now spend most of their time trying to feed themselves rather than fighting. This undoubtedly explains Algeria's reinforcing its diplomatic efforts in favor of the Polisario. Algeria now knows that a military decision is no longer feasible.

Today the Polisario has many hundreds of mutilated, handicapped or mentally ill in its ranks. Faced with a manpower shortage, the movement now sees itself obliged to call upon adolescents 14 to 16 years old. But here again, the indoctrination no longer is effective on the refugees and fighters. When the youths return home to visit their parents they don't hesitate to tell them that they are being manipulated. Some express the desire to desert but what can they do, and how can they abandon their

families? The wave of disillusionment is also revealed by the frequent revolts that take place in the camps which lead to armed confrontations between the Polisario fighters and the Algerian units that guard the camps. It is thus that in March 1982 bloody confrontations broke out at Raboni camp and this led to a violent repression and a tightening of Algerian control.

Following these revolts more than 160 people including some fighters' wives were arrested, the leaders of the ethnic groups held responsible have since then been declared missing. In January 1978 twenty-six of the leaders of the Tindouf mutiny were executed by firing squad.

All of the different problems that the Algerian authorities are confronted with in trying to maintain order among the Tindouf refugees are constantly worsening. The two escapees, Mr. Eddaoudi Babi and Mr. Alyane Mahdi have seen the truth of this. They believe that Algeria's victory at the OAU is ephemeral and that it will soon be reversed. They feel that in the long run the facts will impose themselves on the deceived African States.

In the meanwhile, our two survivors have rediscovered a normal way of life in Laayoune; they have married and now have charming housing accommodations. They have jobs in the civil service. True "survivors from hell" as they call themselves, they feel that their present situation was a deliverance for them. Under the Spanish occupation they ignored the true situation in Morocco before 1975; however, their warm welcome upon their return to Rabat and Laayoune, as well as the welcoming receptions organized by the Saharan tribes in their honor have made them deeply aware of their belonging to the Moroccan nation. Their only despair is due to the knowledge that hundreds of their brothers are still behind the barbed wires of Tindouf. But they are nevertheless confident in the future, even though they know that no lasting prospect is offered the Algerian mystification through its Polisario proxies.

The Polisario : its background

IT is known that the decolonization of Morocco took place in stages. Thus, Morocco attained its independence on March 2, 1956; however it only recovered the Tarfaya Province in 1958 and the SIDI IFNI zone in 1969.

When the Western Sahara's turn to be decolonized arrived, the Spanish felt that they should reveal their "Machiavellianism". Why? For the simple reason that in the mean time they had discovered phosphates in the region. From that moment it became very tempting and even necessary to find some kind of *trick* that would enable them to keep this gold mine. General Franco's regime then dreamed up the idea of creating a "liberation movement" that could demand the Western Sahara's independence. A demand which within the international circles could be opposed against Morocco's if the case arose.

So the Polisario was created in 1973. However, it was created in a rush and without sufficient preparation. The fact is that Morocco hastened things by organizing the Green March in 1975. Born in a climate of haste and improvisation, this movement had neither the time to conceive of itself as being a vector for national demands, nor the time to establish itself in the environment it was supposed to structure. It is here that we can see the *real drama* that the Polisario is living today in 1985. Finding itself without roots, without underground infrastructures, without contacts with the Sahara's urban population; forced by the Moroccan strategy to evolve solely along the borders and to develop classical military actions on a small-scale, the Polisario was condemned to **anaemia**.

The historical conditions that led to the Polisario's creation made it a hybrid movement composed of elements coming from all horizons. As far as the command hierarchy is concerned, the elements holding the key positions are for the most part originally from Mauritania, South Algeria and Moroccan regions which do not figure in the Polisario's demands, **as can be see in the following page**. And as far as the elements engaged in the military actions are concerned, they are recruited from all of the Sahel countries. This situation has obvious harmful effects on the movement's cohesion and the effectiveness of its actions. It has especially led to the non-existence of a system of allegiance, clashes of all types — particularly ethnic ones — and a progressive loss in fighting spirit.

“Les enfants des nuages”*

Who are they ?

THE POLISARIO FOUNDER...

Mutapha el Ouali

Born in 1950 in TAN TAN (Morocco).
Secondary studies in Bouizakarne and Taroudant.
Higher studies at La Faculté de Droit in Rabat.
Former member of PPS (moroccan communist party).
He Founded the Polisario movement in 1973.
Died in 1976 during an attack on Nouakchott (Mauritania).

HIS HIER...

Bachir Mustapha Sayed

EL OUALI's brother. Consider himself to be the heir of his brother, which makes him an element of dissonance within the Polisario leadership.
Born in 1947 in Tan Tan.
Secondary studies in Tiznit (south of Agadir).
He joined his brother after the creation of Polisario.

THE PRESIDENT OF RASD

Rguibi Khalili known as Mohamed Abdelaziz

Born in 1947 in Marakech.
Secondary studies in Bouizakarne.
His father is a member of “SAHARAOUI ADVISORY COUNCIL”, which is an Assembly that groups all of the representatives from the tribes of the moroccan Sahara and advises the King of Morocco on problems in the region.

THE PRIME MINISTER...

Ali Beiba ould Hamdi Douihi

Born in Tan Tan where his family is still living.
Former Interior minister of the DSAR (RASD), he became Prime minister after the removal of Mohamed LAMINE, who was not considered trust worthy by the Algerians.

THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER...

Leili Ahmed Mahmoud known as Mohamed Lamine

Born in 1948 in Tan Tan.
Secondary studies in Tiznit and Taroudant.
Higher studies in Rabat.

THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Brahim Ould Derouich known as Brahim Hakim

45 old, Mauritanian nationality.
Born in Chenguit in Mauritania.
Former nurse and former territorial councillor of the mauritanian government, in Fdirik (formerly Fort Gouraud).
He was nominated as Chargé d'affaires in the mauritanian Embassy in Algeria (1973-1974).
His family is living in Nouakchott.
He is well known in diplomatic circles for his excessive foudness of big cigars and luxury.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION...

Mohamed Salem Ould Salek

Né in 1944 in tarfaya (Morocco).
Secondary studies in Marakech.
Higher studies in Rabat.
He had a scholarship from the morroccan government to carry on his high studies in France.
His family is living in Tarfaya.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE...

Brahim Ghali Ould Mustapha

Born in 1945 in Tarfaya.
Primary studies in this town.
Looked upon as le polisario's strong man, he also has the algerian authorities trust.

* In its early communiqués the Polisario often used this expression in refering to itself. It means “The children of the clouds”.

OTHERS

Bouftah Maalainine Seddik

Born in 1950 in Guelmim, where he had his primary studies.

He has his high studies in Bouizakarne, then in Safi and Casablanca.

Assistant teacher in Collège Ibn Zaïdoune in Casablanca. Formerly employed in the moroccan Consulate in Paris.

Iggourallali known as Habiboullah

Born in 1950 in the Tarfaya region (south Morocco).

Primary studies in Guelmim, secondary studies in Marakech and Taroudant.

His family lives in Guelmim.

His father was a detective working for the moroccan security forces.

Yahdih Ould el Khalil

Born in 1923 in the region of Tarfaya (southern Morocco) A nomadic cattle-breeder.

Deserted the spanish army and joined the moroccan national liberation army.

After a military training in El Hajeb (Morocco) he reintegrated the Royal Armed Forces

He is a member of the Politburo fo Polisario.

Mohamed Ould Sidati Ould Cheikh

Born in 1949 in Tarfaya

Primary studies in Casablanca

Secondary studies in Tan Tan and Taroudant

Higher studies in Rabat.

In 1974 he worked for the "Société Générale des Banques" as vice-director in Agadir

His family resides in various cities of Morocco is father who died in a trafic accident was a prosecutor of the King in Tan Tan.

Brieh Ahmed known as Ahmed Ali Khalil

Born in 1953 in Tan Tan

Studies in Rabat

Former member of Politburo of Polisario

Al Balali Ahmed known as Sliman Mansour

Born in 1954 in Guelmim (Morocco)

Primary and secondary studies in Oujda (northern Morocco) and Zagora

Higher studies in Rabat

His father is a former officer of the moroccan army.

Ould Lemdimigh known as Hassan Mahjoub

Born in 1953 in Tan Tan

Possessing an algerian passport

He actually operate an important intelligence network in Las Palmas (Canaries) on behalf of the algerian authorities.

Lahbib Ould Mohamed Salem

Mauritanian citizenship

Born in 1948 in Nouakchott (Mauritania)

Higher studies in Moscow (USSR)

Brother of Colonel Ould Boukhreiss who in the past held important positions of responsability in Mauritania.

Boukhari ould Ahmed Ould Barikallah

Mauritanian nationality

Born in 1953 in Adrar (Mauritania)

Secondary and high studies in Spain

His father is a retired soldier from the spanish army and a former employee in the mauritanian. Consulate in Las Palmas.

Nihould Lahbib

Mauritanian nationality

Born in 1953 at Izik (Mauritania)

Primary studies at Zouerat

His family resides in Mauritania

Member of the Politburo of Polisario and a military leader.

Salek Ould Boubeh Ould Youssef

Mauritanian nationality

Born at Zouerat (Mauritania)

Former minister of Health

Member of the Politburo of Polisario.

Mohamed Khadad

Mauritanian nationality

Born in 1948 at Atar (Mauritania)

Higher studies in Algier

Member of the Politburo of Polisario

Mouloud Said

Mauritanian nationality

Born in 1940 at Nouadhibou (Mauritania)

Representative of the Polisariion in Addis Abeba

Mirages in the Sahara

There is no longer a limit to cheek and lies!

On May 22, "El Moudjahid" did not hesitate to announce on its front page that the 12th anniversary of the beginning of the armed struggle for the liberation of the Sahara took place in Smara, in the liberated territories! And that on that occasion Mohammed Abdelaziz, President of the DSAR, made an important speech in the presence of several foreign delegations, among them an Algerian one led by Bachir Khaldoun who is a member of the permanent secretariat of the F.L.N.'s Central Committee.

A long article succeeds the "Headline Story" inside the paper. And the "Special correspondent" from the APS gave a detailed report of the festivities held for this 12th anniversary, always in Smara, in the Laayoune wilaya...

Even some of the Polisario and Algeria's friends shivered with indignation in the face of such outright lies. This led to a great controversy among some of "El Moudjahid's" journalists who did not accept the fact that their newspaper — in addition the F.L.N.'s — was the vehicle of such lies. Because on May 20, Smara never hosted a Polisario activity of any kind, let alone a meeting or military parade. Better still, since February 1976 not a single military combattant has approached the city from close or afar. And the city has never missed a chance of proclaiming its Moroccan identity during the many elections...

But everyone knows that there exists in fact a "Smara wilaya" in the Tindouf region on Algerian territory. And it is here, like in the Laayoune or Dakhla "wilayas" that several thousand Sahraouis are quartered behind barbed wire fences, guarded by military sentry boxes.

The mystification had already been used to deceive a few naive and badly informed European cities which thus twinned their cities with some camps located in the suburbs of Tindouf that had the names of several Moroccan cities in the Sahara: Smara, Bir Anzaran, Guelta Zemmour... French cities such as Brest and Le Mans were the principal victims of this surprising trickery.

But how were Algerian journalists able to carry out these reports in "liberated territories" without ever having left their own country? And this is where Algerians of good faith could not accept to be duped with such blatant lies.

Unless? the Polisario having been more and more pushed out of the Sahara, has adopted the decision to liberate Southern Algeria! And that part of the Algerian press has resolved itself to accepting this "fait accompli".

In other words, this would be called treason and attack on the national territorial integrity! Now this shakes the very foundations of Algeria which has never abandoned its conception.

And for a reason. In the aftermath of its independence struggle Algeria inherited a beautiful territory measuring over two million square kilometers. Even if this did not please all of its neighbors who felt that they had been wronged by the colonial division...

It's true that the lie began with the proclamation of the DSAR on February 26, 1976. On that night dozens of journalists left Tindouf, illuminated by the Land-Rovers' headlights. They turned in circles for two hours to stop somewhere in Algeria still, in order to proclaim the formation of the "New Republic".

Nothing is more deceiving than the desert for those who visit it for the first time. However, on that night some clever journalists had brought along compasses. And the ceremony creating the DSAR took place not at Bir Lahlou as it was claimed, but to the Southeast of Tindouf...

Even the then Secretary General of the OAU, Edem Kodjo, was taken in by this mystification. While visiting the Tindouf camps a visit to Haouza, then considered the "Polisario capital", was proposed to the Secretary-General. However, given that he did not have a great deal of free time the Tindouf-Haouza trip was carried out by Land-rover in less than 2 hours... yet Saharan experts say that this trip calls for at least seven or eight hours by road!

Haouza, "capital of the Polisario". This is where the war communiqués and diplomatic successes were dispatched from until its — official — recovery by Moroccan troops in 1984.

This is an extraordinary mystification since we can firmly state that Moroccan troops visited Haouza, then outside of the walls system, at least 15 times between 1981 and 1984...

Today, a pacified Haouza, following numerous water drillings carried out since the beginning of the year, can sustain 30,000 inhabitants. And the distance to Smara or Laayoune is done without the least protection...

III

In search of peace

IN Laayoune, the Western Sahara's capital, the story is told that last year two Negro-african heads of State sent messages of congratulations to the president of the DSAR during this phantom country's independence festivities. The messages ended up on the desk of the governor of this Moroccan province; he returned them to the senders with the inscription: not known at this address. This eloquently illustrates the degree of ignorance with which some Negro-african heads of State, satellites of Algeria, leap eyes closed into all types of situations.

This is why one shouldn't be surprised to learn that the OAU is the only organization in the world to recognize and welcome in its fold a country as fictitious as the DSAR without a known capital, without a geographical territory, without a currency, without a known population: in other words without a real identity. With the exception of its anthem, flag and seat at the OAU, the Democratic Sahraouis Arab Republic entirely created by Boumedienne's government calls more to mind a museum relic rather than a national entity. No Republic, be it Sahouie Arab and democratic, can emerge out of thin air and become a member of an organization that respects itself.

It is the duty of we other Negro-africans to demand that the OAU show us a little more respect. Even if it doesn't want to respect the law and universal common sense.

It is disconcerting that a journalist as responsible as Bechir Ben Yahmed, director of the magazine *Jeune Afrique*, has opted to follow the OAU along the road of irresponsibility.

That the OAU recognize the DSAR, admit it as a full member or a member apart should not really surprise one overmuch.

But that a publication as serious as *Jeune Afrique*, through the writings of B.B.Y., present the DSAR as an irreversible reality and go so far as to advocate fusion with Mauritania quite frankly exceeds the limits of what is tolerable.

Maghreb : the solution exists

I believe that the Polisario and the DSAR exist and the any solution to the Saharan problem must be based on this fact. Just as it was irresponsible of the Algerian leaders to state that : "It is up to Hassan II to find a solution"; the Moroccans would be unrealistic if they contented themselves with saying "The Algerians created the Polisario and the DSAR, and it's their problem." To unite all efforts so as to solve the problem and more importantly implement the solution is a pressing duty that befalls everyone.

Abandonning their traditional position, the Algerian leaders have indeed just proposed a solution to Morocco which quite probably was conceived by their great lawyer Mohammed Bedjaoui, a judge at the International Court of Justice in the Hague. This proposal calls for a sovereign Sahroui State, but one linked to the Moroccan Kingdom within the framework of a "personal union" along the lines of the old Austro-Hungary of the Hapsburgs.

The idea is seductive in appearance only and Morocco immediately rejected it. I believe it was right in doing so because it was just a "cosmetic" solution: the problem is not solved but rather postponed; the illness is not cured but concealed. Obviously something else is needed.

Nevertheless the Algerian proposal has one point in its favor: for the first time in 9 years it re-introduces a creative element into the debate.

Rather than being content with rejecting this proposal or countering it with the non-idea of a referendum to be held prior to a solution, it should be seen for what it is or isn't yet: the outline of an outline of a solution.

In any case it is in this spirit that I offer the following plan for reflection by those concerned and for the public

opinion. I sincerely believe, perhaps without modesty, that the solution which will be implemented within a few months (or more) will not differ greatly with it.

Like war itself, all solutions entail a human, financial, and political cost. When there is neither victor nor loser as in this case, it is necessary to share the costs as fairly as possible among the parties concerned. And even their friends must bear a share. It is this apportionment that I have tried to carry out in the 4 points below.

1) Last week I wrote that the agreement dividing the Sahara up between Mauritania and Morocco as well as the Treaty signed in Madrid on November 14, 1975 had to be abrogated since they were null and void. And, that the Algero-moroccan agreement establishing borders should become definitive by Moroccan ratification. This is one of the parts of the solution, it needs to be acknowledged though not necessarily fulfilled before the rest of it.

2) The major part concerns the peoples, the men and women. It would be beneficial to replace the well-known referendum, of which everyone speaks but which will never be organized since it is used as a propaganda argument by one and all and because no one wishes to see it used as a lever to finding a solution, with the following provisions. Under appropriate international supervision, each inhabitant originally from the territory whether he still lives there or has moved elsewhere — Algeria or Mauritania — will have the right to choose Moroccan, Algerian or Mauritanian citizenship and as a consequence live in the country of his choice. Those who will not want to remain or return to live under the Moroccan flag will be suitably compensated by Morocco, heir to the territory.

3) What will become of the DSAR? Recognized by more than half of the African States as well as other countries outside of Africa — some 60 in all —, it cannot disappear without Algeria, who had it recognized, and the States which accepted to do so losing face.

To circumvent this difficulty, I suggest that the DSAR merge with the Mauritanian Islamic Republic: the two state structures, which are not burdensome, would join to form one single state whose name would be determined by the parties concerned.

But beware! Mauritania's ethnic, demographic and economic balance is so fragile that, if fusion with the DSAR is not carried out with the greatest of care, it could lead to the explosion of Mauritania instead of its enrichment.

Indeed it is necessary to create a fund to help the new Mauritanian and Sahroui Republic assume its new responsibilities over let's say the next ten years. This fund can and should be sizeable: for example 2 billion dollars (that is about the equivalent of only 2 years of war and "walls"). It would be financed by Morocco and Algeria, but also through voluntary contributions from Tunisia, Libya, France and Spain (1).

4) The Mauritanian and Sahroui Republic would have borders with Morocco and Algeria — as they are today or amended during negotiations — that would be established, recognized and guaranteed by the international community. The southern borders of Morocco, having been determined, accepted by its neighbors and guaranteed by the international community; it can be thought that the territorial conflicts and regional problems inherited from the colonial period will have been settled.

It will have taken time and many blunders that could have been avoided. It is then and only then that serious discussions concerning projects for intermaghrebian cooperation can begin.

The solution I put forth above obviously has its defects which I tried to attenuate. It places a great share of the burden on fragile Mauritania, but it brings in a sizeable aid which it needs anyway. A few dozen Polisariou leaders, diplomatic and military, will suffer from the conflict's coming to an end (those who are truly dedicated to their people will accept this), but the average Sahroui will be able to leave his tent in Tindouf and choose his home and flag. If he leaves his place of birth he will be compensated.

A question arises here: do the powers that be want the war to come to an end? Is it in their interest? At the present time the war's continuation serves the interests of the men in power, be they in Algiers, Rabat or Nouakchott. Indeed it gathers the people around them, willingly or not, and easily maintains them in power. But in the long run it weakens them: each death makes the saw bite deeper into the branch they sit on. Deep down, it is in their interest that peace return, and soon. If peace is not restored in the coming months, it would be an error that one or all of the powers would pay at the price of their existence.

I hope that I have persuaded my Algerian friend, and you my reader, that peace with honor for all — without sacrificing any important interest — is perfectly plausible. So I repeat: when Hassan II and Chadli truly want it — which is presently not the case — peace will be achieved within three months.

Bechir Ben Yahmed

3) What will become of the DSAR? Recognized by more than half of the African States as well as other countries outside of Africa — some 60 in all —, it cannot disappear without Algeria, who had it recognized, and the States which accepted to do so losing face.

To circumvent this difficulty, I suggest that the DSAR merge with the Mauritanian Islamic Republic: the two state structures, which are not burdensome, would join to form one single state whose name would be determined by the parties concerned.

But beware! Mauritania's ethnic, demographic and economic balance is so fragile that, if fusion with the DSAR is not carried out with the greatest of care, it could lead to the explosion of Mauritania instead of its enrichment.

Indeed it is necessary to create a fund to help the new Mauritanian and Sahroui Republic assume its new responsibilities over let's say the next ten years. This fund can and should be sizeable: for example 2 billion dollars (that is about the equivalent of only 2 years of war and "walls"). It would be financed by Morocco and Algeria, but also through voluntary contributions from Tunisia, Libya, France and Spain (1).

4) The Mauritanian and Sahroui Republic would have borders with Morocco and Algeria — as they are today or amended during negotiations — that would be established, recognized and guaranteed by the international community. The southern borders of Morocco, having been determined, accepted by its neighbors and guaranteed by the international community; it can be thought that the territorial conflicts and regional problems inherited from the colonial period will have been settled.

It will have taken time and many blunders that could have been avoided. It is then and only then that serious discussions concerning projects for intermaghrebien cooperation can begin.

The solution I put forth above obviously has its defects which I tried to attenuate. It places a great share of the burden on fragile Mauritania, but it brings in a sizeable aid which it needs anyway. A few dozen Polisario leaders, diplomatic and military, will suffer from the conflict's coming to an end (those who are truly dedicated to their people will accept this), but the average Sahroui will be able to leave his tent in Tindouf and choose his home and flag. If he leaves his place of birth he will be compensated.

A question arises here: do the powers that be want the war to come to an end? Is it in their interest? At the present time the war's continuation serves the interests of the men in power, be they in Algiers, Rabat or Nouakchott. Indeed it gathers the people around them, willingly or not, and easily maintains them in power. But in the long run it weakens them: each death makes the saw bite deeper into the branch they sit on. Deep down, it is in their interest that peace return, and soon. If peace is not restored in the coming months, it would be an error that one or all of the powers would pay at the price of their existence.

I hope that I have persuaded my Algerian friend, and you my reader, that peace with honor for all — without sacrificing any important interest — is perfectly plausible. So I repeat: when Hassan II and Chadli truly want it — which is presently not the case — peace will be achieved within three months.

Bechir Ben Yahmed

The Sahara : reflections on Bechir ben Yahmed's "solution"

by Mamadou WADE

IT'S not by chance that the cautious Arab League has up to now avoided looking into the Western Sahara "case". Contrary to the OAU which had the pretention of finding an appropriate solution to the problem, which has turned against it and is presently obstructing its activities. And all this because it favoured a mechanical approach to the detriment of flexibility, creative imagination and justice enlightened by the lessons of history.

If we implicate the OAU, it is not so much the organization itself and the hopes it continues to embody for our continent. Indeed, the OAU is more the victim of the actions of certain interests which are far removed from the Sahroui people; than guilty of the denial of justice resulting from a misinterpretation of the Western Sahara question.

The OAU has been deceived on this issue, artificially made thorny, as have been other elements who are true patriots, because the Polisario Front is nothing more than the subversive tool of a foreign power. A country whose hegemonistic designs have always been hampered and contained by Morocco.

The recent Algerian proposal calling for a sovereign state, but one linked to the Moroccan kingdom reveals this foreign involvement in the complexity of the Western Saharan problem. Faced with the determined vigilance of Morocco, for whom the Sahroui space and population living there have always been an integral part of the Moroccan geographical and human continuum, it also reveals an emerging sense of weariness and lassitude.

For all of these reasons, the Algerian proposal can only be assimilated as a trap or at the least as an interested selflessness. Even if it appears to be a step forward when compared with a certain initial rigidity!

Thus in such a context of what value is Bechir Ben Yahmed's proposal? We know that *Jeune Afrique's*

dynamic boss is a fervent militant for Africa, and especially for his home region: the Maghreb. We also know of his love of just causes. But, once analyzed and given that he doesn't take into account a number of factors which we will raise, "his" solution to the Western Sahara problem appears to be rather ambiguous. (see *Jeune Afrique*, March 13, 1985 issue)

However, if B.B.Y.'s "solution" held only this ambiguity, all other partisan considerations aside, it would not have overly shocked the observers' perceptiveness. At most it would have been looked upon as a cavalier note to readers hungry for new opinions. But the truth is that B.B.Y.'s "solution" ill-conceals a certain alignment with Algerian strategic concerns. The underlying principles of these concerns being the need to isolate the Western Sahara from Morocco: a country deemed to be an obstacle to the Maghrebian designs of Algeria and its Eastern Bloc allies.

The first paradox put forth by B.B.Y. is that he tries through his "solution" to impose a new constraint on a country, in this case Mauritania, by wanting to implicate it anew in a process that it had extricated itself from. Better still, by proposing the fusion of the DSAR with the MIR, Ben Yahmed can but satisfy the Algerian side which thus would have fully created puppets within the leadership of a single State bordering Morocco. The Kingdom would in one move find itself caught between a pincer: between a hostile Algeria and a power it would partially control, with the help of its creations presently presiding over the destiny of the DSAR under close Algerian supervision.

A more simple logic would have encouraged B.B.Y. to argue, while he was at it, for a fusion between the phantom DSAR and the Algerian Republic. This proposal could have applied if the DSAR and its leaders had a territorial basis. But that is not the case. The most

they can claim are the few "refugee" camps they operate on Algerian territory! Fusion with Mauritani is much more interesting. With one move it would achieve several aims: it would give the phantom DSAR a territorial basis which would serve as a sanctuary for the Polisario's subversive machinations given that Algeria would increasingly like to rid itself of this role. It would allow a fifth column, subsidized by Algiers, to infiltrate and prey on the Mauritanian regime. And finally, it would encircle Morocco and weaken its security on the eastern and southern borders through a redistribution of the cards and alliances in the region.

It is clear that given Ben Yahmed's recognized intelligence and finesse, he cannot resolutely advance in such a direction which would lead to his being viewed as an unconditional servant of Algeria's hegemonistic designs for the region.

Regarding Mauritania, the community which represents half of the national population would also pay for B.B.Y.'s "solution". A fusion of the DSAR and the MIR would upset the community balance and this to the detriment of the Negro-africans while strengthening the demographic position of the Arabo-berbers. We make this observation without any racial prejudices whatsoever. We are simply concerned about the ethnocentrist problem underlying the different powers that have succeeded each other in the MIR. They have always been confronted with rebalancing the specific interests of the two communities; Negro-african and Arabo-berbers. The difficult relations between the two have been the source of periodic tensions. And we must not forget the torture and summary executions the Polisario inflicted on its Mauritanian prisoners who had the misfortune of having black skin.

The advent to power in MIR of the Polisario Front's leaders would simply accentuate the fragmented nature of political power in Mauritania. A characteristic that is fueled by ethnic considerations, not to say racial, as well as by the growing clientele links in favor of the Arabo-berbers. Taking into account this ethnic fragmentation, MIR fusion would only introduce a new politico-administrative process working to the detriment of the specific interests of Mauritania's Negro-africans and their necessary political counter-position. A counter-position brought about by the other community group's vague desires for pre-eminence.

Ben Yahmed proposes a "solution" to the Sahroui problem without first defining the DSAR's status. He conceals this status by considering the DSAR as a tangible reality and not as an emanation of Algeria's hegemonism. That is why he speaks of 2 "state structures". Even though they are seated at the OAU, the DSAR's leaders form an artificial government characterized by its ex-territoriality and whose specificities and obedience only serve Algeria and its allies.

The Tindouf "refugees" case clearly illustrates this situation. Morocco always requested the sending of a UN International Red Cross delegation to question these "refugees" on living conditions in the camps. Up till now this country which is highly involved in the Western Saharan problem has only accredited visits by friendly journalists sure to agree with its theses. Furthermore, the Polisario army, estimated at 3000 men, is essentially

made up of Algerians, mercenaries, or Sahroui nationals who are lost in the maze of stakes involving their country or are simply hostages to the situation.

The vast majority of Tidouf's "refugees" is in fact composed of people Algeria deported here when the Spaniards withdrew from the Sahara. Thus we can understand that this country is in no hurry to have these people interviewed by representatives of the neutral international community. There is the risk that innocently and without any ulterior motives, these people might reveal their true "story". They would thus harm the Algerians' "cause", as well as their leaders who, unknown to them and foisted upon them by the Algerians, were purely created by them through the fabrication of documents and resumé.

Ben Yahmed who can well perceive the MIR's possible fears would like to dispel these with the lure of gains and by dangling the "considerable" financial aid Mauritania needs "in any case". One would think that the country's young leaders be fooled! However, the MIR has suffered too many trials in recent years to throw itself headlong into Mr. Bechir Ben Yahmed's "solution". What's 2 billion dollars when confronted with the potential dangers of becoming a pawn shunted around in the hegemonists' strategic games? The MIR has already been sufficiently burned so as not to fear a little cold water. It has other concerns such as national reconstruction and community unity, rather than involve itself in an adventure in which it will have difficulty mastering the ins and outs. The wise initiatives of the new Mauritanian authorities perfectly demonstrate that they will not be tricked by such lures. It is going to tackle more pressing and relevant tasks rather than bog itself down in a geopolitical quagmire full of unknowns and uncertainties.

The alternative raised by the Western Saharan problem has become quite clear. It is a choice between logical consistency and logical necessity. Consistency prevailing over necessity because it is more durable and fruitful. Bechir Ben Yahmed's "solution" like Algeria's, is based on the logical necessity provided by the strategic game which is constantly upset. As for the logical consistency, the only one to advance the Sahroui people's interests: it can intervene on the basis of the recognition of their deepfelt wishes. Now to know the wishes they have, one must be able to question them without constraints or manipulations. And this is what makes the referendum, unflaggingly proposed by Morocco, relevant.

We know that King Hassan II surprised his own public opinion when he accepted the referendum. Justly so, since the principle of questioning the Moroccan identity of the Sahrouis, who have always been Moroccan, was seen as an "insult" by the Moroccan nation. Yet he has been able to persuade his compatriots... because this compromise could help save the OAU. Today this same OAU, tricked and disinforming, turns a deaf ear and shies away from and no longer believes in a referendum that it had brandished as the only solution to the Saharan problem; and this because Algeria understood that the referendum was an alternative which boded uncertain consequences for its expansionist project.

M. WADE

Let us build the Maghreb, and then Sahara will follow

by Mr. Abdallah LAROUÏ

I, like you Bechir Ben Yahmed, believe that there is a solution to the Saharan problem. In public lectures given in 1978 and 1979, I repeatedly stated that the difficulties raised by the decolonization of the ex-Spanish Sahara could be easily overcome within the geo-political framework of the Maghreb.

I had outlined solutions quite similar to the ones you advocate today. However, I always voiced two objections that I would like to put to you.

1. The crisis was triggered in 1975 by the Algerian leadership's faulty assessment of the balance of power and its belief that the effects of the Green March could be brushed aside.

Wasn't Baba Miske (then spokesman for the Polisario, NDLR) boasting in February 1976 that 34 African countries were going to recognize the new state? It took 10 years of sustained efforts to achieve this result and once achieved it has not proved to be decisive.

Yet, your plan aims at making others pay for this error of judgement: Mauritania, Tunisia, Libya, France and Spain. Are you not running the risk of encouraging other errors of judgement? It matters not what I do, others will bear the consequences if the region's countries want peace and want to build the Maghreb! This is what Algerian leaders might say to themselves.

However, laying beyond this observation which could be deemed moralistic is a practical question: how can some countries be persuaded to pay the price of the mistakes made by others? Will we have recourse to blackmail? Will pressures be exerted? What kind of peace would such actions produce?

2. Your plan is conceived of in geo-political terms. Till now the Algerian leaders have been thinking in geo-diplomatic terms. They can but only distort your plan, as they did the Maghreb concept: turning it into the overcoming of border differences. Let me explain myself.

You state that Mohammed Bedjaoui is a great lawyer.

I'll accept that on the condition that the statement is qualified by adding the words: in the good Franco-Latin

tradition. In front of the International Court of Justice his position was based on the analyses made by the advocates of French Colonization which, in their opposition to Morocco from 1830 to 1958, went so far as to deny the historical reality of the Moroccan State.

It is true that he is the sponsor of the latest Algerian proposal made to Morocco concerning a union, through the person of King Hassan II, between Morocco and the Sahara. However, this further demonstrates that he has yet to understand the logic of Islamic public law which underlies Morocco's institutions.

This implies that through this proposal, which it is presenting as a compromise inspired from examples in European history, Algeria is still not addressing Morocco but rather other powers that it wants to win over to its cause. It is still the same diplomatic vision of problems aimed at winning votes rather than solving disputes. You yourself felt this since at the end of your article you ask yourself whether there exists a real desire for peace among the major protagonists.

I understand your wish to appear absolutely neutral, but you will acknowledge along with me, you've stated it often enough in the past, that in this affair Morocco and Algeria are not in the same position as far as the ceasing of hostilities is concerned.

It is not up to Morocco to end a war that it did not start. In 1975 Morocco took an initiative and since then has only reacted. Now, it is and will always be up to Algeria to take the initiative for a new start. It is in this sense and only in this sense that we can say that Algeria holds the key to the problem.

Before speaking of a true pacification of spirits, we must be sure that Algerian leaders have made a fundamental choice: that upon consideration, peace with Morocco is more important for them than friendship with faraway countries. Has the strategic choice been made? You seem to think so and I too would like to think so. However, the last Algerian proposal, if in fact made along the terms described above, does not lead to optimism for

it also highlights Algeria's diplomatic calculations: to win its own allies so as to exert pressure on other countries and in the end act upon Morocco's allies so as to achieve Morocco's ultimate capitulation.

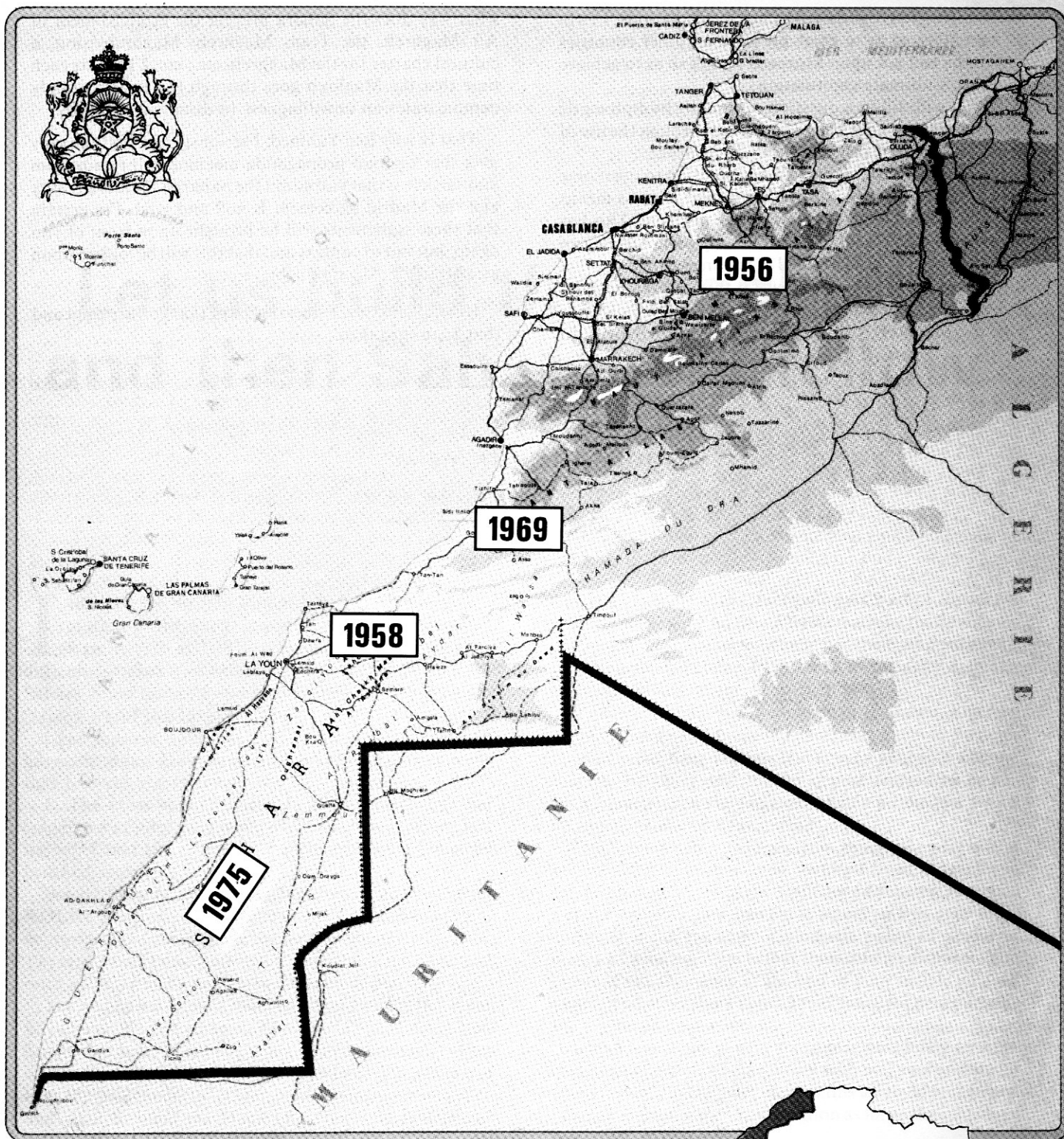
Thus it will still be a question of winning by diplomatic means what it has not been able to win through the use of force. We can not call this the road to peace.

The Maghreb was proposed as a solution to overcome the Saharan problem. Algeria has turned it into a means for imposing an Algerian view on the problem. This has engendered the present impasse. For my part, Algeria can only show that it is determined to put an end to its conflict with Morocco by stating: let us set the Sahara aside and let us buckle down and build the Maghreb. After all, trade with the Maghreb is of special interest to the North. In

what way does the Sahara prevent the establishment of Air Maghreb, the Trans Maghreb, Maghrebvision, a cultural charter for the Maghreb, etc., etc.? To state each time that the Maghreb goes through the Sahara simply demonstrates an unwillingness to discuss it seriously.

That is why Ben Yahmed, I seriously fear that the only idea the Algerian propaganda machine will retain from your article is that you admit the Saharan State is a reality and the Madrid agreement is null and void. I'm certain that these statements will be brought up in front of you again, but out of context and that this will be looked upon as a strategic Algerian achievement.

Having said this, I sincerely hope that you are right and that I am mistaken.



MOROCCO



• The stages of Morocco's decolonisation

- Independence of 2nd of March 1956.
- Decolonisation of the Tarfaya Province in 1958.
- Decolonisation of Sidi Ifni in 1969.
- Decolonisation of Western Sahara on the 14th November 1975.
- Between 21 and 36 latitude North, and 16 and 1,5 longitude West of Greenwich.
- Area : 724,734 km².
- Population : 20,000,000 inhabitants.
- Cities population : 8,400,000 inhabitants.

Edited by "Le Politicien"

Directeur de la Publication : M. Mam Less Dia

Printed in France - Imprimerie MONNET, Paris - Dépôt légal - N° 2785 - 3^e trimestre

