

■ ALGERIA—VICTORY AND UNITY

The rejoicing of the people of Africa over the victory won over French imperialism by our Algerian brothers is tempered by two unhappy circumstances. Firstly, the Evian Agreements reached between the De Gaulle government and the Algerian Provisional government represent a great *but by no means a complete* victory for the heroic Algerian people. They are full of clauses and conditions which infringe upon the sovereignty, integrity, independence and dignity of Algeria. In the words of the Algerian Communist Party *

“Our Party considers that the Evian agreements were a positive compromise wrung from the French colonialists, thanks to the heroic struggle of the Army of National Liberation and of our people. These agreements must be regarded as a means to advance towards complete independence. Their application will create a new situation and new conditions in which it will be possible, through struggle, to liquidate the obstacles which the colonialists seek to maintain.”

Secondly, the people of Africa are disturbed and mystified by the fact that, on the eve of the victory celebrations, and with the enemy, French imperialism, still maintaining military forces on Algerian soil and ready to take advantage of weaknesses, serious divisions and even armed clashes have appeared within the ranks of the Algerian people, the Army of Liberation and the National Liberation Front (the FLN).

These divisions are more difficult to understand since for the most part we learn about them through imperialist press agencies which do their best to magnify and distort the differences so as to make them appear merely the result of a clash between ambitious rival personalities.

Clearly if the Algerian people are to reap the harvest of their seven-year-long armed struggle and their many long years of sacrifice, if they are to move forward from Evian towards complete independence and a new life, it is essential to restore and maintain the *unity in action of all patriotic forces* which has distinguished their struggle until now and inspired our people everywhere.

WHO ARE THE SPLITTERS?

But in order to assert the people's will for unity it is essential to *identify* and *isolate* the splitters who are responsible for dis-

*Letter to the National Council of the Algerian Revolution, Algiers, May 14, 1962.

rupting the united front on the eve of its triumphant advance to power in Algeria. The more we study this position, the more we become convinced that the responsibility for division must be placed fairly and squarely upon the right-wing, capitalist elements of the former leadership, with their anti-Communist obsession and their pro-imperialist leanings.

Let us look at some facts.

It is well-known that the Algerian Communist Party, the Party of the Algerian workers and peasants, played an indispensable and heroic role in the war of national liberation. The Party, forgoing sectarian advantages, gave up its own separate military units and—voluntarily and unconditionally—placed them at the disposal of the FLN. Both in the continuing civilian struggles of the working people and in the military struggle Algerian Communists played an outstanding and distinguished role in the national cause.

Yet, at the Tripoli meeting of the National Council of the Algerian Revolution held immediately after the Evian agreements had been signed, *not a single representative* of the Party was invited. And in the list of election candidates approved by the right-wing leadership, no Algerian Communist was included—and this exclusion was not confined to Communists but extended to other militant anti-imperialist elements supporting vice-Premier Ben Bella.

The right-wing elements say they are “also” for unity—but their conception of “unity” is one which would exclude the representatives of the workers and peasants, which would exclude the scientific socialists basing themselves on the advanced teachings of Marxism-Leninism, and which aim at a capitalist Algeria acting as a junior partner of France and the West in the cold war, an appendage to the European Common Market.

They say they are for a *single party* which would express the unity of all classes of the Algerian people. But their conception of a single party is one based on bourgeois ideology; not one based on agreement, but on coercion of a type which would continue the illegalisation of the Algerian Communist Party imposed by French imperialism.

To this the Algerian Communists have replied that they are ready to take part in discussions of a single party. In fact it favours a single party based upon the ideology of the working class, Marxism-Leninism.

“Such a Party is being realised in Cuba. But political and social conditions must ripen in our country for the creation of such a democratic single party which must express the vital needs of

the masses. For the time being, and in the framework of present political and social conditions, facing the "ultras" who are not yet beaten as well as the neo-colonialists who still hold important military and economic positions, our Party considers it necessary to unite all patriotic and all national organisations in an anti-imperialist and progressive national front—these organisations remaining independent.

"The main thing is a basis of agreement between all patriots for common action. The Algerian Communist Party thinks we must look for everything which unites us and push aside everything which divides us."

THE BASIS OF UNITY

In order to restore and consolidate unity, the Party advances a number of profoundly important practical proposals. The OAS must be crushed; at the same time a campaign must be launched "to draw honest Europeans away from its poisonous influence." A Constituent Assembly must be elected and organs of the Independent Republic installed and set working. The country must be entirely liberated from the after-effects of colonialism, and this means:

- thoroughgoing democracy at all levels;
- far-reaching land reform—involving the dispossession of the French colonialists, big landowners and traitors and free distribution of land to the agricultural workers and poor peasants who formed the basis of the army in the war of liberation;
- nationalisation of the main key sectors of the economy
- the raising of the material and cultural level of the masses.

Finally the Party proposes that the New Algeria embark upon an anti-imperialist foreign policy aimed at safeguarding peace, in line with the principles of the Bandung conference.

There can be no doubt that if all the patriotic forces of Algeria could be brought together on the basis of the above proposals unity would be swiftly restored and the country would move purposefully and effectively towards the consummation of the Algerian Revolution.

What is it, then, that stands in the way?

During the war of liberation, as a result of the correct policy of the Party, close friendly relations developed between Communist and non-Communist patriots, who fought together and died together as brothers. But unfortunately these relations were not always reflected among sections of the upper leadership, influenced still by

colonialist propaganda and ways of thought. As the "Letter" correctly concludes.

"All remaining anti-Communist prejudices should be liquidated as it can only harm the social aims of the Revolution.

"Indeed, given the immensity of our tasks, all the people's forces in the country are not sufficient to meet them."

■ SPLITS IN THE PROTECTORATES

It is disturbing to notice the marked tendency towards splits and quarrels within the patriotic liberation movements in the three British Protectorates bordering on or enclosed inside the Republic—Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. To some extent this feature may be ascribed to the comparative youth and inexperience of these movements. The Lekhotla la Bafo of Basutoland fought for the people's rights for very many years, but it was a rurally-based peasant type of organisation, rather than the sort of modern national liberationist movement which has developed so strongly throughout Africa in recent times. The Basutoland Congress Party, like the Bechuanaland People's Party and the Swaziland Progressive Party, is only a few years old. Yet already serious splits have developed in all three of them, apart from the mushroom development of several smaller, separate organisations.

It is impossible to remain indifferent to these splits, or to treat them as a natural result of political growth and development. In the first place, all African—and for that matter all colonial—experience shows that the progress towards national independence is direct and rapid only where the people are united in action behind a single leading organisation or a united front leadership. In the second, political life of all three territories is tending to become dominated by feuding, by intrigue and personalities, to the detriment of the people and their cause.

What is behind these splits? Is it merely inexperience in politics, or are there more sinister forces at work?

It should be noted here that the divisions we are speaking of are not over matters of policy arising out of differences between various classes in society. The overwhelming majority of the people in all three areas are semi-proletarians and peasants, with no real hard-and-fast dividing lines between them, since peasants migrate to contract labour in the Republic and return to the land between contracts; there are few even petty bourgeois elements—a handful of professional men, doctors, lawyers, and a handful of traders.