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Morocco

# The revolutionary left in the February 20th Movement

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**In the Moroccan political context, the February 20th Movement was a form of resonance of the revolutionary wave that has swept across the Arab and Maghrebian region. Because of the specific recent political history of Morocco – a history marked, remember, by (1) the defeat of the traditional historic opposition which was first brought under control by the monarchy before being integrated in the absolute regime during one of its serious crises to serve as “fireman”, (2) the involvement of the trade unions in the management of the social crisis, (3) the marginalisation of the revolutionary left, something which hinders the development of a radical consciousness among the working class and more generally the oppressed – such a context helps us understand that in Morocco the current militant wave has not led immediately to a revolutionary dynamic seeking directly the overthrow of the existing regime, but rather a movement of opposition based around essentially social demands.**

Certainly, the emergence of the February 20th Movement was principally based on political demands, varying between the reform of the monarchy and its challenging through the demand for a constituent assembly. But a true political dimension of the movement in Morocco has not yet found the social roots which should incarnate a massive political force conscious and capable of going to the end. That means, in the first place, the eruption of the working class as a conscious and organised social force in itself. If the campaign, led by the February 20th Movement, for the boycott of the constitution should stimulate a general opinion hostile to despotism, that was not enough to force the regime to abrogate it.

That said, the emergence of the February 20th Movement, its extent and progressive growth – especially in Casablanca and Tangiers – constitute a patent index of a qualitatively new era in the political scene in Morocco, turning the page on a past during which the regime was absolutely hegemonic, and opens the way to the breakthrough of the potential combative strength of the oppressed.

In this context, the Moroccan revolutionary left is, for the first time in its history, in a real mass movement, albeit alongside other political forces opposed to the regime which do not have any perspective critical of capitalism, namely the Islamists. In the case of Morocco, the latter constitute the most organised force of opposition, having previously profited from the weakness of the left and the rise of movements of the same ideological-political affiliations since the Ayatollahs came to power in Iran. The three decades of effervescence of these forces were precisely the epoch of the crisis of the left and the collapse of its more dominant tendencies in the world (parties and states).

The presence of the Islamists in the current movement in Morocco has led a part of the left – be it reformist or revolutionary – to panic, hoping to obtain political “guarantees” as to their real objective and programme, while another part has openly refused to involve itself with the movement on the pretext of not mixing with them. For this latter tendency on the left, the evolution of the movement and the growing popular influx in the demonstrations will quickly marginalise it in sectarianism and sterile dogmatism. Whereas the first part runs behind Al-Adl-wa-I-Ihsān without any criticism, ignoring thus the basic conditions for a unitary political action already shown by the experience of the history of the workers’ movement as a fundamental tactical conduct for revolutionary socialists.

The distrust towards Al-Adl-wa-I-Ihsān should induce in the left a modality of unitary action which involves placing itself as the main pole of convergence, and not breaking the movement. If the left is found in the same front of opposition with the Islamists, each having their own objectives, that should not be at the price of advancing its own programme and tactics. To strike together and march separately, to militate obstinately to set down roots among the

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oppressed people, develop and enlarge the field of militant actions (with a view to turning quantity into quality), remaining attentive to the evolution of the level of the dynamic and consciousness of the masses to advance adequate slogans: such are the methods which would allow the left to meet its historic responsibilities.

The phase of the current struggle is still of a defensive character. It is possible and necessary in the future to pass to a dynamic of revolutionary offensive which would allow broad social layers to assume revolutionary actions of greater breadth. Nonetheless, to reach such a level in the relationship of forces, it is necessary that the revolutionaries ensure that they put in the first ranks the mass struggles while remaining intransigent in their orientations and fundamental political principles.