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Morocco

Elections to contain the spirit of the popular mobilisations

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Since the early 1990s, the earth has begun to quake under the feet of the dictatorship as a result of the consequences of the neoliberal policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which have generated unprecedented forms of popular protest.

The revolutionary wave experienced by Morocco since the beginning of the year has played a role as catalyst of this movement of social struggle. The popular masses are going in their tens of thousands onto the streets besides the young unemployed graduates who mobilise on a daily basis. Small farmers are emerging from their historic silence in some regions. The striking fact in this new context of struggle is the appearance of the February 20th movement (M20) with its political demands and its demonstrations which have continued without waning for more than nine months, despite the repression and the manoeuvres of the regime.

So as to divert the democratic demands of the movement, the regime has made a formal renewal of its Constitution in which referendum was boycotted by more than half of the population, and organised the elections for the renewal of its parliamentary façade. The M20, the radical left, a part of the reformist left and the Islamist Justice and Welfare movement called for a boycott of the elections. This position was already evident in previous elections, notably that of 2007 with an official rate of participation of barely 37%.

Contrary to the false result of a participation rate of 45% announced by the regime for the elections of November 25, the real rate, using the official figures, is 21%. The number of Moroccans of voting age is 21 million, while 13.5 million are registered to vote. The number of voters was 6.1 million and that of spoiled ballots 1.6 million.

It is clear to all that the regime favours the Party of Justice and Development (PJD), a moderate Islamist party, which it created in 1996 to counteract the influence of the radical Islamist movement. The PJD finally won 107 seats out of a total of 395. This shows that the regime is playing its last cards in terms of choice of political parties. King Hassan II has already played the card of the USFP, which dominated the scene of struggles, notably in the trade unions, through the Confédération démocratique du travail (CDT) and which had a long history of opposition, to save its regime from "cardiac arrest" and guarantee a tranquil transition. The choice of the PJD reflects a political necessity of changing somewhat a little the contours of the old parties of support which are broadly discredited, to appear in perfect harmony with the electoral breakthrough of the Islamist movements in the electoral processes underway in the Arab region, to claim to be in line with the democratic spirit at play, and to say to the imperialist centres that Morocco is successfully negotiating change, led by the king and his new constitution.

But the regime cannot control the explosive situation by using the PJD, which has no roots on the scene of struggle and concerns itself with a hollow moral charlatanism, without ever opposing neoliberal policies and the international financial institutions which sap the sovereignty of the country, destroy progress and increase poverty. All the political mechanisms by which the regime tried to camouflage its despotic nature are in the process of profoundly losing legitimacy in the eyes of the popular masses who have expressed their rejection by a high rate of abstention and by the big marches of November 20 (five days before the elections) in nearly 70 towns and villages at the call of the M20, and those of November 27 (two days after).

This big mobilisation is qualitative and truly historic in Morocco. It constitutes a first stage on the road to a radical change of the institutions of the king. The task of revolutionaries is to continue the fight for the strengthening of the movement of struggle for democracy and social justice by broadening the base of the M20 through an active participation of the trade union movement, young students and pupils, unemployed graduates and the pauperised social categories in struggle in the popular neighbourhoods and the marginalised regions.

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