



October 24, 1950

'Ba'd khams sanawat' ('After Five Years')

Citation:

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<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/291032>

Summary:

In 1907, French forces occupied a large part of present-day Morocco. It became a French protectorate in 1912, with a Franco-Spanish agreement turning the country's northern-most part into a Spanish protectorate. Morocco gained independence in 1956, the same year as Tunisia, which from 1881 had been a French protectorate as well. The two North African countries obtained independence more easily than their common neighbor, Algeria. But they, too, had to fight hard. After World War II Moroccan nationalists did so seeking the support not only of fellow colonial elites and of already decolonized states like Egypt, which indeed adapted a rather ambiguous stance towards them. Rather, as David Stenner's *Globalizing Morocco: Transnational Activism and the Postcolonial State* (2019) has shown, they also nurtured contacts in Europe and in the United States. The latter's postwar might made it of critical importance for the Moroccans, who sought to gain US governmental and public opinion support vis-à-vis France. These postwar moves built on networks rooted in the interwar period and in World War II. (In fact, Vichy-controlled Morocco was one of the first polities aligned with Nazi Germany that US and British forces conquered in the war, in November 1942.)

Another important arena for post-World War II Moroccan nationalists was the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York. There, they received organizational and political help from recently independent states like Indonesia and some Arab states. In turn, in the later 1950s Morocco would help Algeria's Front de Libération Nationale at the UN.

The text reprinted here reflects the Moroccan interest in the UN. It is an article published in a nationalist Moroccan newspaper in 1950 about the United Nations' success and failures since its foundation in 1945.

Original Language:

Arabic

Contents:

Translation - English

About today five years ago, in October 1945, the Charter of the United Nations entered into effect, after confirmation by the permanent members of the Security Council and the majority of the member states of this international organization. Two years later, the [UN] General Assembly decided that October 24 would henceforth be "UN Day," and that this day will be reserved for explaining that organization's objectives and accomplishments to all peoples that are seeking to obtain the UN's support.

To be able to [properly] outline the importance of this organization, one has to conjure up in which times it was founded, especially January 24, 1945. On that day, the [UN] founding members convened and decided to turn that organization from an idea into a reality. The war was winding down, the Nazi armies were on their last leg, and the dawn of victory was glowing on the horizon.

At that point, thoughts about liberation spread like a wave, helping to revive the hopes of downtrodden peoples. The Allies, especially the United States, spread [these hopes] assiduously, to garner peoples' support in their war against Fascist and Nazi aggression. It was determined that the free states together would seek to remove all causes for wars and armed confrontations, and to endorse an order that would permanently be in charge of peace and security. Among those causes were colonialism and exploitation, for it was clear that they undermine the consolidation of the pillars of peace and quiet. International public opinion turned to the creation of a global organization with some influence, which would enable it to shoulder the burden of this difficult mission. This organization became the beacon of hope for peoples, both those that [already] enjoyed sovereignty and those that were not [yet] free. The latter rejoiced mightily when the UN Charter's became reality—the charter that determined that the interests of those peoples precede the interests of the nations that had temporarily put [the UN] in charge of gradually guiding those people to self-rule. [Hence], that organization [the UN] is considered an active agent helping [those peoples] in their struggle for their just aspirations.

Did the United Nations carry out what was entrusted to it?

A cursory glance at the messy current international situation and the global tension which is on the verge of leading to a fierce war, will make us decide without hesitation that the organization has not reached at all the aim that it set itself, which is, as we had said, to bring about permanent peace. At least, to date the peace treaty between the [World War II] Allies of yore and Germany and Japan has not become weary. [But] the ideological differences between the great powers are blazing, and the world has been divided into two parts, which hit each other with accusations and all sorts of assaults. And those divisions have been among the most powerful reasons for the local wars that have broken out.

But these obstacles to reaching [the UN's] fundamental objective should not make us forget the right things that the United Nations has done in the field of global security. It has already realized many hopes, making great strides in this regard. We will make due here with remembering the most important accomplishments in the last five years:

Following the arguments that took place in the Security Council, France's forces withdrew from Syria and Lebanon and the Soviet armies left Iran.

Likewise, the conflict between Holland and Indonesia came before the Council in early 1947, and that Council issued an order to the Dutch forces to cease its attacks and to take up negotiations under the aegis of a UN commission. After a long while, these negotiations resulted in an agreement between the two sides. Thanks to it, Indonesia became an [internationally] recognized independent state, joining the UN at this juncture.

After the independence of the Indian continent and its division into two states, war almost broke out between Pakistan and India, and would have had not the UN intervened. The dispute between the two brother states continues unabated, but we are certain that it will end in an agreement.

After a complete study of the former Italian colonies, the General Assembly decided in November 1949 on the establishment of an independent Libyan state at the latest at the beginning of January 1952. At that juncture, the political commission approved with 53 votes (against one vote, France's) a decision decreeing the establishment of

a Libyan National Assembly at the latest at the beginning of January 1951, which from now will be in charge of the transition of authorities from the two states overseeing the Libyan regions—Britain and France—to that government, which has to happen before January 1952, [too].

These are some of the crucial political accomplishments of the UN during the last five years. To present what it succeeded to do in other fields would take up too much space. However, on the organization's list of actions is an oppressive side which we cannot neglect to mention: its affirmation of the patent violence that befell martyred Palestine. Not few of its members defended Zionist aggression and consolidated Israel's steps. But that country of coercion and oppression will not last. Likewise, [the UN] did not treat with justice Egypt's calls against Great Britain, which is not withdrawing its armies and stands in the way of realizing the unity of the Nile Valley.

Despite all of this and despite all the hurdles standing in the way of the UN, the people of the world continue to loyally put their trust in it, for they are confident in the justice of world conscience. There is no doubt that the UN will realize all aspirations listed in its charter. At the same time, the people of the world believe firmly that the UN's success depends on reverting to its principles and on helping humankind's mutually hostile blocs to [co]-exist. This will come about only through the absolute end of imperialism and exploitation and the confirmation of just national aspirations.