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**To cite this article:** Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi (2022) Abderrahmane Yousseoufi: an embodiment of the mutations of the Moroccan left, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 27:5, 894-927, DOI: [10.1080/13629387.2020.1855426](https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2020.1855426)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2020.1855426>



Published online: 04 Dec 2020.



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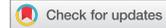
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# Abderrahmane Youssefi: an embodiment of the mutations of the Moroccan left

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## ABSTRACT

At first sight, becoming the Prime Minister of Hassan II after having been considered, a few decades earlier, to be ‘the foreign minister of the resistance and the plotters’ against the monarchy might constitute a spectacular turnaround in a political career. In fact, this reversal was part of a process that was both slow and discontinuous, with bifurcations, and moments of fluidity and uncertainty. By examining oral sources from an interactionist perspective, this article shows that Youssefi is the paragon of a segment of the nationalist elites, and that his trajectory embodies the transformations in the relations between a part of the Moroccan left and the monarchy. It stresses that individual and collective destiny cannot be reduced to explanations in terms of ‘domestication’, and that not everything was played out beforehand and once and for all. These strategic changes were intrinsically linked to variations in the resources available to the actors, their perceptions of their environment and the dynamics at work within it, their appreciation of the cards they could play, and so on. More specifically, if the left epitomised by Youssefi benefited from ‘reputational capital’ acquired through repression, it never managed to accumulate the organisational capital of the mass parties. After bidding a regretful farewell to the revolution, the Maquis, and even the putsch, its leaders chose the only option they perceived as available to them: institutional participation.

**KEYWORDS** Morocco; Abderrahmane Youssefi; the left wing; activist career

## Introduction

After the announcement of the death of Abderrahmane Youssefi, on 29 May 2020, official testimonies honoured the ‘emblematic figure’, and ‘exceptional career’ of the Moroccan resistance fighter, the left-wing activist, the Prime Minister of the ‘government of alternance’ (1998–2002). On the other hand, on social media, some recalled above all ‘the dream nipped in the bud’:<sup>1</sup> the ‘secret pact’ that he is believed to have concluded with Hassan II may have facilitated the monarchical succession, but dug the grave of the left.

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In many ways, Yousseoufi's itinerary epitomises the shifting relationship to the monarchy of a part of the Moroccan left. Born in 1924 in Tangier, he joined the National Movement in Rabat at the age of 19. Under the Protectorate (1912–1956), he was one of those who promoted Sultan Mohamed Ben Youssef as a symbol of the nation. When the sultan was exiled in 1953, Yousseoufi started to organise the armed resistance. However, at independence, when former allies became adversaries, Yousseoufi was arrested twice. During the first decade of his exile in France (1965–1980), he sided with the supporters of the 'revolutionary option'.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1990s, Hassan II initiated talks with part of the parliamentary opposition. On 4 February 1998, they led to the appointment of Yousseoufi – who had been first secretary of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) since 1992 – to the head of a government known as 'consensual alternance'. On the death of Hassan II in July 1999, the man often presented as the 'former companion' of Mehdi Ben Barka,<sup>3</sup> the 'martyr' of the left, assumed the role of 'transitional regent' (Gallissot 2002). As for the USFP, its internal tensions have been exacerbated, the scissions have multiplied, and its electorate has crumbled.

This story has been approached from several angles: the power struggles between the Moroccan monarchy and the National Movement in the aftermath of independence (Waterbury 1970; Leveau 1985; Monjib 1992); the 'expertise in survival' of the monarchy (Anderson 2000); the history and characteristics of the Moroccan political parties (Willis 2002; Santucci 2001; Storm 2014; Kasmi 2015), often considered to be 'segmented', 'domesticated' or even 'irrelevant' (Maghraoui 2020); the 'metamorphoses' of the left (El Benna 1989; El Maslouhi 2009; Bennani-Chraïbi 2010); and the tribulations of the 1998 governmental alternance (El Mossadeq 2001; Roussillon and Ferrié 2006).

This abundant literature is both rich and stimulating.<sup>4</sup> However, the analyses often remain entrapped by a quest and a schema. The first consists in approaching political parties through the prism of authoritarian resilience, 'radicalisation' or 'moderation', 'crisis' or 'weakness' (Catusse and Karam 2010), with regard to a democratic expectation horizon. The second tends to reduce the institutional political game to a face-to-face between the Palace and the political elite, where confrontation always leads to the domestication. As Myriam Catusse points out:

a schema that has been repeatedly convoked to account for the relation between sovereign and political elites: that of a deliberate but unstoppable defusing of all forms of dissidence (...) As if, ultimately, faced with the royal institution and the effective exercise of power, political actors (parties, unions, parliament, and organizations of every kind) were but marginal and manipulated actors, whose mobilizations, modes of contestation, or forms of opposition served ultimately only to reinforce the mechanisms of domination. (Catusse 2013, 31–32)

The very fact of fixing the spotlight on the institutionalised politics leads to eclipse social dynamics and what is at stake in the different venues of politics. With a few exceptions (Vairel 2014; Hivert and Vairel 2019), the effects of repression are insufficiently investigated. On another level, the focus on the 'menu of manipulation' exposes to the pitfalls of retrospective prediction, which consists in confusing the intentions of the actors, the 'causes' of events and their outcomes. Most of all, it sometimes gives the feeling that history is written beforehand, that roles are distributed once and for all, that the 'triumph' of the monarchy is written in its DNA, and that everything else stems mechanically from it. Finally, this leaves little room for the actors, for their trial and error, and their tribulations throughout their lifetime and through changing historical configurations.<sup>5</sup>

In this article, I capture the mutations of a part of the Moroccan left by focusing on 'what actors make by being made' (Fillieule 2020). More specifically, I examine Youssofi's career path both in terms of what was structured and structuring, and in its contingencies. To do so, I employ the concept of an 'activist career', as developed by Olivier Fillieule (2001), based on the interactionist legacy (Hughes 1958; Becker 1960, 1966; Strauss 1959, etc.). As Howard Becker highlights, quoting Hughes, the concept of career hinges on two dimensions:

In its objective dimension, a career is 'a series of statuses and clearly defined offices ... typical sequences of position, achievement, responsibility, and even of adventure ... Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things which happen to him'. (Hughes 1937, 409–410 in Becker 1966, 102)

On the one hand, this allows us

to think activism as a process and therefore to combine, in the analysis, the issues of dispositions to activism, the move to action, differentiated and variable forms of political commitment over time, the multiplicity of commitments throughout the life cycle, and the retraction or extension of commitments. (Fillieule 2001)

On the other hand, it enables us to analyse the interactions between the individual pathway, institutions and contexts, and to rebuild

a sequence of steps, of changes in the individual's behavior and perspectives, in order to understand the phenomenon. Each step requires explanation, and what may operate as a cause at one step in the sequence may be of negligible importance at another step. (Becker 1966, 23)

Finally, it invites us to pay attention to the junctions between micro-events – which disrupt individual destiny – and historical events – which lastingly transform structures and practices while being unpredictable (Sewell 1996).

This reflection is based on three sources in particular. As part of fieldwork on the genesis and transformation of the partisan political landscape in Morocco, I conducted a six-hour recorded interview with Abderrahmane Youssoufi in his apartment in Casablanca on 4 and 5 January 2006. Despite his cautious attitude and his withdrawal from political life since 2003, he talked about his life path until the early 1960s. In the spring of 2015, he kindly responded to my requests for clarification in a six-page typed text. M'barek Bouderkha, one of his companions in exile, managed to collect more and put together several documents. In 2018, he published a three-volume book in Arabic, *Some thoughts about what happened. Fragments of my journey as I recounted them to Bouderkha* (Casablanca, Dar al-nachr al-maghribiyya). Long before these testimonies, Hamid Barrada and Najib Gouiaa made a documentary in 2002: *Il était une foi: Abderrahmane Youssoufi*. These sources certainly contain a significant bias, since they all stem from Youssoufi, who retrospectively delivered the piecemeal 'fragments' that he was willing to share. However, and beyond 'the biographical illusion' (Bourdieu 1986), I aim to take seriously the way in which this secret figure<sup>6</sup> narrated his story, while at the same time using other sources: interviews I have conducted with other protagonists of this history, and secondary material.<sup>7</sup>

By examining these sources from an interactionist perspective, I show that Youssoufi is the paragon of a segment of the nationalist elites, and that his trajectory embodies the transformations in the relations between a part of the Moroccan left and the monarchy. I also point out the individual idiosyncrasies, constraints and contingencies of different orders that have shaped his life course. In doing so, I stress that this individual trajectory and the collective destiny of the left that it embodies cannot be reduced to explanations in terms of 'cooptation' or 'domestication', and that not everything was played out beforehand and once and for all. In order to grasp its twists and turns, it is important to take into account trial and error, and perceptions of the limits of the possible and the feasible in relation to individual dispositions and to the capital accumulated on a personal or collective basis.<sup>8</sup> This argument will be developed through the analysis of four sequences: the early years and the beginnings of political socialisation in Tangier and at secondary school in Marrakech and Rabat (1924–1944); total commitment to the service of king, country and party (1945–1956); radicalisation at the dawn of independence and the years of exile (1959–1980); the vagaries of reconciliation with the monarchy for a man without a power base.

### **The early years of a paragon of the 'second generation' nationalist elites (1924–1944)**

According to some studies, Abderrahmane Youssoufi is a paragon of the 'second generation' nationalist elites (Ashford and Zartman 1973). These

have more provincial, rural and humble origins, compared to the 'first generation' elites who come from old city families (Fez, Meknes, Rabat and Salé) and from commercial and intellectual circles: religious scholars, magistrates, large landowners, and even from the Chorfa (whose social prestige derives from their descent from the Prophet). In a society where illiteracy is widespread, all of these groups are distinguished by their status as educated, and their political commitment is intrinsically linked to their formative years.

With hindsight, Youssofi considers that it was an advantage for him to be born and grow up in Tangier, which then enjoyed an international status under the sovereignty of the Sultan of Morocco.<sup>9</sup> The cosmopolitan and multicultural character of the city, as well as its 'openness to the world', must have had an impact on everyone living in Tangier and certainly on his family environment. According to him, in the mid-1930s, his father, Ahmed Youssofi, was a 'notable', a member of Tangier's 'petite bourgeoisie'. Nevertheless, this position was acquired through a double mobility, residential and social, which suggests a real social fluidity. Originally from Dar Zhirou (Fahs), a village 25 kilometres from Tangier, he migrated at an early age to the neighbouring city, before finding a job in Gibraltar with a diplomat. Back in Tangier, he became a guard (*chaouch*) in a bank in the Siaghine shopping street. Little by little, he 'developed his business' and acquired two houses in Tangier. Before his death in 1937, he fulfilled two functions. As a certified defender (*wakil*), he assisted advocates and litigants, and arbitrated disputes. In addition, he represented the Drareb District (*moqaddem*),<sup>10</sup> a 'prestigious' arbitration function at the time, which would have been linked to his influence over others: he was a property owner in a small way, with 'some knowledge' and a reputation as a 'respectable' man, full of 'wisdom'. This self-educated man had attended the Koranic school in his village and listened to lectures in mosques to assimilate the rules of Islamic law. Working with brokers, notaries and advocates of different origins and religions, he was introduced to divorce, inheritance and real estate sales procedures, while becoming familiar with the French and Spanish languages. His friendships were not confined to the male, outdoor world. The Jewish wife of his friend from Souss became a close friend of his first wife, Fatima Al Fahsi, who only left her village, the one in which both she and Ahmed had grown up, after their marriage.

Abderrahmane was Fatima's eighth and last child.<sup>11</sup> He grew up in a family environment that valued education. The brothers he mentioned attended the Franco-Arab school in Tangier; one of them, Mustafa, studied at the Moulay Youssef College in Rabat for two years. As a reminder, the educational system established by the French for Muslims was both Malthusian and hierarchical. At the end of the 1930s, 1% of school-age children had access to it. Among them, only a very small male elite had the opportunity to receive a general education in 'schools for the sons of notables' and large Muslim

colleges. On the eve of independence, this system is estimated to have produced only 640 Muslims with a baccalaureate (Vermeren 2002).

When the young Abderrahmane obtained his primary school certificate in 1936, his father and three older brothers, already adults, wanted him to continue his secondary education in the French zone. He applied for a scholarship to enter Moulay Youssef College and passed. But the scholarship was refused because his father, who was renting a house to the French Directorate of Education in Tangier, was categorised as a 'landlord'. In 1937, Abderrahmane was orphaned and the headmaster of his school supported him in obtaining the scholarship that would enable him to study at the Sidi Mohamed College in Marrakech (1938–1941), then at Moulay Youssef (1941–1944).

In 1943, his family was once again afflicted by misfortune. His older brothers, Mohamed and Mustafa, both died. Abdeslam, the eldest brother, was abducted by the Spanish secret police and lost his life in a Spanish prison. During the occupation of the international enclave by Spain (1940–1944), Abdeslam, who liked to comment on current events, had dared to publicly announce the Allied victory. Youssoufi remembered him as a party-goer who did 'odd jobs' during the day, dedicating his evenings to Andalusian music, frequenting cafés and 'bachelor flats'. Despite the circumstances, Abderrahmane was dissuaded by his family from interrupting his studies.

Youssoufi's interest in political and social conflict was awakened long before Abdeslam's disappearance. In the interview he gave me in 2006, he recalled an event of global importance and family interactions. According to him, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 had a major impact in Tangier: 'Some families even killed one another. When one was for Franco and the other was a communist.'<sup>12</sup> From a distance, the young Abderrahmane watched the demonstrations and listened to the Internationale, the workers' anthem. One day, his father, who understood spoken Spanish but could not read it, asked Abderrahmane to use his skills to enable him to access the contents of the newspapers that his brother Mustafa brought back from the printing shop where he worked:

He said, 'You have got the school certificate, tell me what's in these papers.' I took the newspaper, I read: 'General Franco ...' (...). I wanted to translate ... 'a French general ...'. He told me: 'Don't translate, just read ... What is that certificate you got?' [He laughed.] It stung me to the core. He showed me that I didn't know how to read a newspaper. And from that day on, I started reading the newspapers. So, I got a little bit politicised by reading the press.

Mustafa not only facilitated his younger brother's first contact with the press, he unintentionally introduced him to a form of protest: 'He was effective. He was on a one-man strike. When he stopped, the machine stopped working and I saw the boss coming to my father's house to negotiate my brother Mustafa's return to work.' [He laughed.]

More generally, Youssoufi has identified three major vectors of his politicisation during his youth: the 'colonial atmosphere', education, and the action taken by the National Movement. Although the colonial atmosphere did not weigh very heavily in Tangier, he became aware of the division of the country at the age of 13–14, when he left his home for Marrakech. He had to get a passport, obtain a visa at the Spanish consulate to cross the Spanish zone, and open his suitcase at the Tangier customs, on entering and leaving the Spanish zone, and then at the French customs on entering the French zone: 'The desire to fight for the building of our country was being forged unconsciously.' As a student in Marrakech, he regularly witnessed 'ill-treatment' and 'acts of racism'.

Like other witnesses of this period, he also noted that the education provided by the French was 'doubly effective' in the gestation of national feeling: on the one hand, the 'content' and ideas inculcated by 'liberal' teachers, especially Moroccans and Algerians; on the other hand, the behaviour of 'arrogant' and 'contemptuous' teachers. According to him, the attitude of the latter aroused reactions like the one that led him to organise the first 'strike' at Sidi Mohamed College, in 1941. It all began with dribbling onto a piece of bread, which was perceived as spitting and provoked the anger of the college dean. Faced with the threat of sanctions, a 'hunger strike' was decreed.

Are these memories I have kept from my childhood: my brother on strike, the Spanish workers on strike? These are things that come from the subconscious. I don't remember how they came into my mind. It must also be that I have heard people talking about the strike at Moulay Youssef College.

After obtaining his school-leaving certificate, Youssoufi became a student at Moulay Youssef College in Rabat. By his own account, he was one of the students noticed by the supervisors who had been asked by Mehdi Ben Barka to 'detect those who are politically aware and have the potential to be leaders in the college'. The criteria were academic success, attitude, and the perceptions of classmates:

Someone who had dignity, who was quick to respond, or had authority. For example, the supervisors used to ask me to substitute for them. (...) The criterion was authority, influence over the others or being serious, for example. And they also saw the network of friendships you might have. They also saw how you were regarded by the others: if you were someone who was heckled or disliked, not respected by his classmates ... And then, in conversation, you could sense whether someone was reacting to this atmosphere of colonisation.

The five or six students recruited were friends who shared a taste for study and for literature, as well as an aspiration for change. In their eyes, Mehdi Ben Barka was already a heroic figure, although he was only a few years older than them. In December 1943, he gathered the new recruits to

inform them of the existence of a political party and to have them swear an oath on the Koran: 'I swear by God before the sacred Koran to be faithful to my religion, my country, my king and the Istiqlal Party [the leading party in the National Movement], to implement its decisions and to keep them secret' (quoted in Rézette 1955, 305). Through the supervisors and comrades outside the college, they received copies of the Independence Manifesto, presented to the sultan and representatives of the Allied powers on 11 January 1944. They studied it, helped to circulate it, and were particularly enthusiastic about one of the demands: 'a democratic regime comparable to the regime of government adopted by the Muslim countries of the East, guaranteeing the rights of all groups and classes in Moroccan society and defining the rights of each' (quoted in Julien 1978, 190). According to Yousoufi, 'the example was the Egypt of the Wafd party. There was a parliamentary regime in a monarchy. It was worth what it was worth, but for the Moroccan elite it seemed to be a model'.

The arrest of the leadership of the Istiqlal party led to protests. The young Abderrahmane participated for the first time in a demonstration (*mudhahara*) and this action produced a first turning point in his trajectory. The 'agitators' were excluded from the college residences, the college itself and all the other institutions; their scholarships were withdrawn. Yousoufi could not return home: obtaining a visa for Tangier was all the more difficult as relations between Spain and France were tense. The Istiqlal leaders still at large looked after him and he put himself at the service of the party, the country and the king to whom he had sworn loyalty.

### **Total commitment to the service of his country, his king and his party (1945–1956)**

According to Robert Rézette, party discipline took on a 'quasi-military appearance' in the Istiqlal of the late 1940s (Rézette 1955, 314). From this point of view, 'total commitment' (Duverger 1976) was the norm rather than the exception. This tendency was exacerbated in the case of Yousoufi because of his very dependency on the party, the resulting interpenetration between the different spheres of his life, and the responsibilities that were soon assigned to him. For the rest, his perceptions, actions and strategies were strongly permeated by the limits of the thinkable and doable for the figures of the elite that was in formation, before a new inflection occurred following the deposition of the sultan on August 20, 1953.

#### ***'I started my life in the party as a leader'***

After his expulsion from college, Abderrahmane drifted from house to house. When his first host was arrested, he was taken in by Fqih Mohammed Belarbi

Alaoui (1880–1964), the spiritual guide of the National Movement, who was also the father of one of his classmates. When the Fqih was exiled, Youssoufi accompanied another classmate to the home of his uncle, the pasha of Safi. When someone informed on him, he went to Casablanca. After a fortuitous meeting, he was taken to the local leaders of the Istiqlal party who lodged him with an activist. At the age of 20, far from his family, he led an austere life devoted to his studies and the party. After taking the first part of the baccalaureate as an independent candidate, he prepared for the second part at the Lycée Lyautey.<sup>13</sup> In 1945, he was the only one in his year group to graduate with the baccalaureate. Even the fact that he then chose to study law, a career which very many of the nationalist elite would choose to follow, was linked to his activist commitment.<sup>14</sup>

When I was at Sidi Mohamed College and then Moulay Youssef College, I was strong in maths and physics. And my ambition was to take Maths Sup. (...) I met Mehdi [Ben Barka] and I asked him his opinion: 'Am I going to take Maths Sup? He said: 'No, it won't do you any good. If you do maths, you'll become a teacher and, since you are in politics, you'll get fired.' [He laughed]. 'And then you'll be unemployed. And since you're probably destined to become an activist, I advise you to take up a liberal profession. It will be better if you do law.' And that's how micropolitics determined me.

Above all, the young man invested himself body and soul 'seven days a week' in nationalist action. Unlike the founders of the National Movement, he did not become a leader 'by virtue of self-designation' (Rézette 1955, 256); he was propelled to positions of responsibility in a particular context: leaders were imprisoned or exiled; the party had very little central organisation; bilingual cadres were a rare commodity. But, like the figure of the *za'im* (leader), a historical product of the nationalist moment, he played the role of a 'bridge between an old order undergoing destruction and a new order' (Camau 2008, 74). Until 1949, he carried out a range of actions that show what it meant to be an activist at that time, as well as the methods that were used. For educated nationalists, the struggle for independence involved mobilising society and nationalist action was at once partisan, social, cultural, educational and sporting. In the mind of the young Abderrahmane, workers and young people were priority but not exclusive targets. And whether it was a matter of running a cell (*al-khaliyya*), setting up an embryo trade union or a mutual insurance society, or creating a school or a football league, the challenge was to 'recruit', 'organise', 'supervise', 'train', 'educate', 'raise awareness' and 'modernise', regardless of whether the action was legal or clandestine.

One of Youssoufi's first tasks in Casablanca was to supervise the party's cells. Whether organised by district, occupational sector or purpose, the cells had a maximum of seven to ten people, just the right number for a meeting in people's homes. During the 1940s, the main function of the person who headed the cell (*al-musayyir*) was to train and provide

information to the party members. In affinity with their chosen environment, the nationalist figures who had been socialised in the colonial schools used the registers that they had experienced during their years of study, particularly that of history, one of the disciplines to which they regularly referred: to undertake research or to prepare an oral presentation. It follows that training mainly consisted in passing on the history of the National Movement and the struggles for independence throughout the world.

I didn't go to the Nationalist school. I was only trained indirectly. But when the party took me in ... I sometimes say jokingly with friends: 'Me, I started my life in the party as a leader.' [He laughed.] Because when they took me in here in Casablanca, they immediately put me in charge of running cells: cells of shopkeepers (...). I didn't go through a training school for activists. I was told: 'Well, now you're a young man, you're twenty years old, you're going to train ...' Well, I had no idea what to do. [He laughed]. And before each meeting of a cell ... The gentleman I was staying with had a library. There were newspapers of the party and of the National Movement, there were biographies of Egyptian leaders, there was some history. I was studying, learning, researching. I was reading, I was studying one of the aspects of the history of Morocco, one of the aspects of the Moroccan crisis, international life ... And I was preparing my presentation. I was training myself while training others. We were learning the same things. Because there was this thirst for learning and being up to the task. (...) We were doing the best we could. (...) But there was one guideline, and that was to give the comrades the historical background of the National Movement in order to arrive at the Independence Manifesto.

From 1944, the Istiqlal party broadened its bases beyond the urban world of intellectuals, religious scholars, craftsmen and traders, and expanded particularly strongly in Casablanca, the main industrial centre of North Africa. One of the most important responsibilities entrusted to Youssoufi was therefore to organise 'the working class' by looking after railway employees, and workers' cells in the industrial district of Roches Noires, in factories considered to be flagships of colonial industry. As well as leading the party's working-class cells, Youssoufi explored different ways to create 'more general awareness' and to increase recruitment capacities: infiltration, subverting existing structures or creating new ones.

Thanks to the 'resourcefulness of the patriots' belonging to the workers' mother cell at the Cosuma<sup>15</sup> sugar company, Youssoufi was hired by the company as a teacher. Some workers asked the management to organise literacy classes in Arabic and French, and encouraged him to submit a spontaneous application. After being recruited, he was in direct contact with a larger group of workers, whom he now supervised not in homes but in a shed provided by the company. He set up a football team at Cosuma, where the workers were given a pitch at the company's expense, and another, *al-Ittihad* (the union), in the Hay Mohammedi district of Casablanca. And when a free football league was created, he became its general secretary.

Also to increase recruitment, he took the initiative in creating the first mutual society in Cosuma after observing the practice of the Caisse Moulay Yakoub (*sandūq Moulay Yakoub*). This used to collect contributions within a network (village, tribal, etc.) in order to help those who had to face costs arising from happy events or misfortunes (a marriage, a birth, an illness, a death, etc.). In order to 'rationalise' and 'institutionalise' this practice of solidarity, he decided to place it in the framework of a voluntary association: election by a general assembly of a board with a chair, a treasurer and a secretary, drawing up rules on the amount of the contributions and the benefits according to the nature of the event. The factory nurse and doctor contributed to the operation by certifying cases of illness and death. Benefits were paid by cheque, and a few training sessions familiarised the workers with the operating procedure, which barely required them to know how to write figures and sign a document. Around 100 workers joined the mutual association and the model spread to other factories in the industrial district. But the initiative brought him to the attention of the civil controller.<sup>16</sup>

I was well aware that, when he found out we had an insurance society, he might be against it. So, we came up with this idea – the war was still on: I asked the delegation that used to see him, some of them were already on the mutual insurance board, to write a first cheque ... [as an aid to France at war]. (...) Something clicked. (...) he made an enquiry and discovered that I was a former student at Moulay Youssef who had taken part in that demonstration. He went to the management and told them: 'What's this? You've got someone here who is against the French! You have let yourselves be fooled. He must leave right away.' He kept the insurance society because he thought it was good.

After being fired from Cosuma, Youssef continued his work as a 'clandestine trainer' and covered almost all the factories in the *Carrières Centrales*. As the cells were closed, he hijacked the religious ritual of prayers for rain (*talab al-ghayth*) to get an idea of the strength of the party in the region. In 1945, there was a severe drought and the National Movement was organising soup kitchens. Youssef circulated an order through the mother cell: the workers of the region should make a procession to beg for rain.

It was under the cover of [this ritual] that we were able to organise a demonstration that gave us some idea of our capacity to mobilise. It was a demonstration under religious cover [he laughed], but it was actually organisational. It was actually a training exercise to see what capacity for organisation capacity these activists had.

Long before Istiqlal allowed the party's workers to join the Union des Syndicats Confédérés du Maroc (USCM),<sup>17</sup> an organisation subordinate to the French Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), party workers formed trade union cells, with the complicit acceptance of officials like Youssef. For Youssef, the objective was to train them and to establish 'a certain

force', to be able to organise a strike, demonstrations, and to 'make the May 1 demonstrations significant, so that the presence of the Moroccan working class would be palpable'. On his return from exile in 1946, Allal al Fassi (1919–1974) went on a tour of the country. During his visit to Casablanca, workers came to greet him. According to Youssoufi, during the meeting of the National Council, the iconic leader of Istiqlal said: 'The party is in the hands of people we don't know.' Indeed, part of the leadership was perplexed by the increasing presence of low-income groups in the party in Casablanca:

They only saw people they didn't know, who hadn't grown up in the inner circle, who had achieved authority and had opportunities for action. And then they had seen this trend, the opening up of the party to the working classes (*l'ouvriérisation du parti*), as if the party was losing its equilibrium. There was an increased mass of new people. Plus, there was a bit of a flavour of the socialist Left. In other words, the atmosphere of the party was becoming more proletarian, more working class.

In spite of the Istiqlal leadership's ambivalent relations with communism, for Youssoufi, the drive 'to train' was so insistent that, with the connivance of 'communist friends', he encouraged members of Istiqlal to join the Communist Party to benefit from the Party school for cadres. As a correspondent for Al-Alam, Youssoufi covered the trials of trade union cadres, who were arrested following pogroms in Oujda and Jerrada after the announcement of the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Described as 'communists', some of them surprised the public by confessing their membership of Istiqlal.

From the outset, Youssoufi's training and guidance activities targeted both workers and the younger generation. In order to help expand the Istiqlal party networks in Casablanca, he created a 'free school',<sup>18</sup> Al-Ittihad, in 1945. At the same time, he set up a student centre to house the excluded, whose scholarships had been withdrawn. And when Abdelkrim Lahlou school opened secondary classes, he taught mathematics, physics and chemistry in Arabic, making an effort to translate, as he had learned these subjects in French.

In order to extend the effort to provide guidance to young people in schools, football teams, associations and scouting, the idea of organising young people in the same way as the working class gradually gained ground. Youssoufi reported to Mehdi Ben Barka on this subject and proposed the institution of a '1 May for the Young'. The challenge was to bring young people together and offer them an opportunity to show their strength, and make demands. When he left for France in 1949, he met Moulay Ahmed Alaoui (1919–2002), a member of the royal family; he presented the idea to him and asked for his help in finding the birthday of a prince or princess falling during the summer holidays. This was as much about avoiding a

ban as it was about making an impact. As early as 1950, the Istiqlal party started organising a festival of youth on 9 July, the birthday of Prince Moulay Hassan. According to Youssoufi, during these difficult years, the event remained embryonic: it only reached its full extent after independence, when the first government made it official and took over its organisation.

### ***Activism outside Morocco between 1949 and 1952***

In November 1949, thanks to the support of a nationalist industrialist, Youssoufi went to Paris to study for the third of his degrees [Licences]. After graduating, he enrolled at Sciences Po and started a course leading to the Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures in Law, which he did not complete due to his expulsion from Paris in 1951.

Istiqlal students had two fields of activity in France. The first was very close to what Youssoufi had developed with the workers in Casablanca: organising emigrants, grouping them in cells, teaching them to read and write, but also helping them adapt to life in France. The second was to set up a communications channel: to contact the press, put out information about events in Morocco, try to arrange 'pro-Moroccan articles', mobilise the 'forces of democracy', and advocate for getting the Moroccan question onto the UN agenda. In Paris, a hotbed of anti-colonial struggles, connections were made between young nationalist elites from Morocco and elsewhere. It was during this period that Youssoufi forged ties with French, Algerian, Egyptian and other intellectuals and politicians, whom he remobilised at crucial moments in his activist career.

Our party understood from the beginning the role of international information, the role of the solidarity of the democratic forces that exist in France. And the people who ran that, the contact, were the students. And on Throne Day (...) we invited everyone who was anyone in the Paris political scene. We made a presentation, a speech. We organised it at the Hôtel d'Orsay, where there is this great museum. And in 1950–51 there was a major economic crisis. Mohamed V had come to Paris. I made a speech. This agitator who had been in Morocco was now in France. And they decided to expel me from Paris, actually send me back to Morocco. But we organised a lobby: Charles-André Julien, Louis Massignon, Claude Bourdet, Jacques Berque<sup>19</sup> ... We were protected by very important people. I was arrested at the police station, I stayed there for a while and in the end, after negotiations, we came to this solution, that I would be expelled to Poitiers. [He laughed.]

To continue the party's international work, he was about to travel to New York to open a party office at the United Nations. His 'Egyptian friends,' specifically the secretary general of the Arab League, had promised to grant him an Egyptian passport, but revolution broke out in Egypt in 1952: 'The people we knew were all overtaken by events. All I could do was return to Morocco.'

### ***From political action to the organisation of the armed resistance***

On his return to Tangier, his family home, Youssoufi joined the international bar and began his legal internship in 1952. The National Movement, trade unionists and communists were the target of repression. Most of the leaders of Istiqlal were in prison, under house arrest or in exile, and the party structures were dissolved. Youssoufi himself took forward two types of actions: one already tried in France, the other completely new.

On the one hand, he contributed to setting up a coordination and information committee to continue the action begun in Paris. Because of its status as an international zone, Tangier was a hub for the dissemination of information to New York, Paris and Cairo. Thanks to its Spanish, French and English post offices and its private communications companies, it was possible to send and receive telegrams freely.

On the other hand, he embarked on the organisation of the armed resistance, of which he became a leader.<sup>20</sup> Following the assassination of the Tunisian trade unionist Ferhat Hachad, a solidarity strike was called and there was an uprising in the Carrières Centrales slum in Casablanca from 6 to 8 December 1952. After the break-up of the party and trade union structures, followed by the deposition of the Sultan of Morocco on 20 August 1953, small groups of 'ordinary people' – farmers, workers and small shopkeepers – were formed.<sup>21</sup> Although these actions were local and decentralised, 'the matrices [were] the working-class or low-income neighbourhood cells' (Ayache 1993, 168). Some were autonomous, others regrouped and formed sections in the main cities: the Black Hand (*al-yad as-sawda*), created in 1953, the first to be dismantled; the Black Crescent (*al-hilal al-aswad*), created in March 1954 by survivors of the previous organisation and communists; the Secret Organisation (*al-mounadhama as-sirriya*), constituted on the basis of the Istiqlal's low-income group cells. Faced with these actions, the Istiqlal party's leadership in exile was divided. As for Youssoufi, he began to feel uneasy about the exiled leadership's tergiversations. Like other activists, he decided to take the initiative and join the armed resistance:

We had to make our mark. It was the Protectorate that was setting the agenda, with the repression ... Mehdi [Ben Barka] had been in prison in the desert since 1951. And then it began to simmer in the minds of many activists that the peaceful struggle was inoperative. (...) Perhaps it was necessary to consider the possibility of armed struggle, not just taking the blows. There had to be a positive reaction. So, that proved to be right when the two-stage repression really hit and damaged the National Movement (...). The survivors, those who escaped the repression, managed to grasp the weapons of resistance, to go into action ... to use violence. And so there was a maturing process. French repression, systematic ... (...) the culmination [consisted in] touching the very symbol of the country. It didn't take long. [He laughed.] It broke out right away. It was in our hearts.

As a result of the Franco-Spanish conflict,<sup>22</sup> northern Morocco and Spain had become sanctuaries for Moroccan refugees fleeing repression by the authorities of the French Protectorate. Spanish 'solidarity' was expressed in particular through the freedom of movement granted to the refugees. Tangier had become the 'royal road for armed resistance' and Youssoufi's law firm became a warehouse for weapons from Spain and Egypt transiting Tangier and Ceuta. Much later, in 1992, Hassan II introduced Youssoufi to his sons as 'the leader of the Moroccan socialists and opposition and the greatest arms trafficker of the colonial era' (Attai' 2014, 25).

There was a black market in Spain. (...) [Franco's regime] did not tolerate such a thing. But, thanks to our friends, we had a network that could provide us with things that we bought and loaded into cars. The methods now being discovered by all the kif smugglers – we already had them. [He laughed]. We stuffed the cars with weapons, in the doors, in caches, and it would come back. (...) There was a private radio, Tangier Libre. We used radio messages for dedicating records (...) they were coded messages.

When one of the smugglers was caught red-handed in Paris, Youssoufi decided to move away from Tangier. A doctor diagnosed serious deterioration of one of his lungs. The illness and the need for treatment served as a cover for him to travel to Spain in August 1954. After a major operation, he settled in a villa in San Lorenzo Del Escorial, a resort about 50 kilometres from Madrid, which became an important political and logistical base for Moroccan nationalists and the resistance. It was a place where those from Moroccan interior met exiles established in Spain and elsewhere, including Allal El Fassi, and leaders such as the Algerian Ahmed Ben Bella. It was also here that work was carried out to coordinate the Moroccan and Algerian liberation armies, which moved into action simultaneously.

It was very effective, since Algeria had gone up in flames on August 20, 1955 in solidarity with Morocco, to celebrate the anniversary of the overthrow of Mohamed V. And it was on that day that France realised the seriousness of the Maghreb situation. (...) Moreover, Algerians always celebrate the day of 20 August, they call it the day of the fighter (*yawm al-mujahid*), the same day we celebrate the Revolution of the People and the King.

At independence, Youssoufi's radicalisation continued: his reservations about the Istiqlal party grew and his relationship to the monarchy changed.

### **Radicalisation at the dawn of independence and the years of exile (1959–1980)**

On 16 November 1955, as King Mohamed V returned from exile and triumphantly landed in Rabat, Abderrahmane Youssoufi was reviewing the detachments of the Liberation Army in Tetouan, which were preparing to continue the fight 'until the end'. The Liberation Army became more active in order to

put pressure on the independence negotiations (Waterbury 1970). In January 1956, the Algerian-Moroccan command of the Liberation Army swore an oath in Madrid to continue the fight until the complete liberation of the Maghreb. For the 'hard-liners' of the resistance, the Aix-les-Bains agreements<sup>23</sup> were 'reached by politicians behind the backs of the Resistance, wresting from their hands the weapons that should have led them to total victory' (Benouna 2002, 28). On 18 August 1956, during their only meeting chaired by Youssoufi, the members of the National Council of Moroccan Resistance, created in November 1955 after the return of King Mohammed V, adopted the same tone:

Some have begun to wonder at the present time if our revolution has failed after the declaration of independence. The victories that we have attained up to the present are important victories only in so far as their effects result in the liberation of Moroccan sovereignty in the spheres of diplomacy and law. As for internal affairs, the awaited upheaval [inqilab] has not occurred nor has there been any change worthy of note.<sup>24</sup>

Fifty years later, Youssoufi took a more nuanced view of this episode, affirming that there was no contradiction between the 'friends of the party' who were negotiating in Aix-les-Bains and who advocated moderation, and the resistance, which showed its firmness by demanding, among other things, the return of the king.

Rather, there was support from the resistance. The resistance had a beneficial effect on the positions of our friends the negotiators. It gave them something to lean on. (...) There was not, as commentators and journalists have suggested, a conflict. We all had the same goals. Our other comrades who were the politicians, they were right to think that the resistance did not have the major resources required to achieve all this. Once, one of my friends told me that the resistance did not have a Ho Chi Minh or a Vietnamese-style structure. And I said, 'You know, they may not have a Ho Chi Minh, or a Vietnamese structure, but one thing is certain, they are people who are willing to die for the results they have set for themselves.' (...). It was this determination, this clarity, this absence of hesitation (...) that gained the Moroccans very precious time.

Between 1955 and 1959, the floating configuration of allies and adversaries that had prevailed under the protectorate broke down. During this phase of fluidity, the rivalry between the monarchy and figures of the National Movement was played out in several arenas: they devoted their energies to the construction of the institutions of independent Morocco and negotiated the terms of their coexistence, while seeking to weaken each other and even physically eliminate each other. The rules of political competition were undefined and the area of struggle was not delimited. The groups were heterogeneous, changing, riven by internal conflicts; as for the individuals, they were driven by indecision, trial and error, and great instability in their positions.

Youssoufi himself did not return to the Istiqlal party at Independence. Like other members of the resistance, he expressed some reservations about the party's leadership. Through 'some minor indiscretions', he perceived that the party's Higher Council was divided between a 'conservative majority', which saw independence as 'a Moroccanisation of the Protectorate', and a 'progressive minority', led by 'effective' people such as Mehdi Ben Barka and Abderrahim Bouabid,<sup>25</sup> who advocated fundamental structural reforms. Youssoufi did not get involved in the process that led to the scission of the Istiqlal in January 1959, especially since his health remained fragile (Waterbury 1970, 181). However, he presided over the constituent congress of the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), which was principally composed of intellectuals, trade unionists from the Moroccan Workers' Union (UMT)<sup>26</sup> and members of the resistance.<sup>27</sup>

According to Youssoufi, before the scission, the majority of the Istiqlal leaders were both 'happy and unhappy with this resistance network: they were happy, insofar as it constituted a reinforcement that balanced their position in relation to the palace, and they were unhappy because it could weaken them internally'. Abderrahim Bouabid, one of the leaders of the left wing and Minister of Finance, gave them material support through Fqih Basri. As for the Palace, it endeavoured to neutralise the resistance either by absorption, direct or indirect armed action, or by the targeted liquidation of its leaders (Waterbury 1970). Some members of the resistance joined the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) – created in 1956 – or the police or the administration. Others refused to surrender their arms. From December 1958, Abdellah Ibrahim (1918–2005), a left-wing figure, was at the head of the government; this did not prevent the Palace from continuing to strike at what remained of the resistance or from dissolving the Liberation Army in March 1960.<sup>28</sup>

In December 1959, Abderrahmane Youssoufi and Mohamed Fqih Basri<sup>29</sup> were arrested and charged with endangering the internal security of the State, offending the King and disturbing public order. These two high-ranking members of the resistance were, respectively, editor-in-chief and director of *At-Tahrir (Libération)*, an UNFP newspaper. In Youssoufi's view, there were two reasons for their arrest: the fact that they regularly defended the resistance, and the publication of an editorial calling on the government to be accountable to the people. Continuing to alternate messages encouraging resistance and calls for restraint, the UNFP leadership was too concerned about making the government experiment a success until the elections of May 1960 to protest vigorously against the repression.

There wasn't a perfect agreement or synchronisation. Whoever knew the best way to play the game would win. [He laughed.] And it ended when Basri and I were arrested in December 1959 because of the newspaper, because of an

editorial. The Liberation Army was disbanded. (...) There wasn't a homogeneous leadership within the resistance (...). The resistance (...) did not have the direction and leadership necessary to impose its views, or at least to defend itself better than it did.

Although still weakened by his lung problems, Youssoufi went on a hunger strike, during which he was hospitalised. After mobilising for Morocco's independence, his French friends campaigned for his release which came after two weeks of detention. However, Fqih Basri remained in prison for 5 months.<sup>30</sup>

After the dismissal of the Ibrahim government in May 1960, Youssoufi worked closely with Abderrahim Bouabid to organise the call for a boycott of the first constitutional referendum in 1962: the UNFP advocated the holding of a constituent assembly and considered that the text submitted to the referendum consolidated royal 'absolutism' rather than a 'parliamentary monarchy'. In the aftermath, Youssoufi became involved in the preparation of the legislative elections of May 1963. He had been President of the Bar Association of Tangier since 1959, and he was elected as a deputy in his home town. But in July 1963, he was among thousands of UNFP and PCM activists arrested for conspiracy, with charges of 'intent to overthrow the government and to assassinate the king'; they were also 'accused of storing arms and constituting illegal bands to carry out their plan' (Waterbury 1970, 212). Much has been written about the effectiveness of the conspiracy, with some accusing the regime of plotting against the UNFP and others accusing the left of orchestrating the king's assassination. The fact remains that the 'revolutionary option' was on the agenda. In its manifesto of 5 May 1963, the UNFP declared that it was:

the enemy of the feudal and personal regime. One of our most immediate objectives is to put an end to it. UNFP is proud to have pushed this regime into showing its true face. It is not a matter of improving it, amending it or endorsing it: it needs to be abolished. There can be no deal with this regime, no national unity around it. (Quoted in Bennouna 2002, 57)

Nevertheless, the details of how to 'end' the monarchy remained very unclear, especially as the UNFP had rapidly turned into a 'fratricidal battle between tendencies and currents of opinion' (Monjib 1992, 163). According to Youssoufi, at that time 'there was always a conspiracy in the air'. [He laughed.] But in 1963 there were probably only 'intentions of conspiracy'.

As for the police, the justice system, the authorities, they stuck to the definition of conspiracy: 'If you talk to someone, it's a conspiracy.' (...) The central idea was to get rid of this opposition and make a clean break. The justifications could come later. And there was no shortage of justifications. Because people were clumsy ... they weren't careful ...

The violence of the 1963 repression surprised Youssoufi. Compared to 1959, the regime's agents were more 'hardened'. As he was seen as 'the Minister of

Foreign Affairs for the Resistance and Conspirators', Yousseoufi did not suffer the same torment as the others. Day and night, he heard his comrades being tortured. He endured repeated night-time awakenings and interrogations, as well as 'humiliating' treatment, such as having to clean the toilets. He was told that General Oufkir was indirectly taking an interest in him: 'They behaved shamelessly and cruelly. And I thought that they were behaving that way because they were sure that I was never going to see them again. I could identify them.' He went on hunger strike again. During the trial, he was presented as one of the masterminds of the conspiracy. But in the end, he was only given a 2-year suspended sentence 'for not reporting a conspiracy'. After eight months in detention, he took over the leadership of the party and organised the motion of censure in parliament.

In addition to his activities in Morocco, Yousseoufi regularly visited his Algerian friends, such as President Ahmed Ben Bella, whom he had defended a few years earlier.<sup>31</sup> While he was in prison, the Sand War had broken out on the Algerian-Moroccan border (September–November 1963); some senior members of the UNFP condemned the attack on a close ally and neighbour, which was exhausted after years of struggle for independence. In July 1964, UNFP activists celebrated the first anniversary of Algerian independence in Algiers: among the guests were Yousseoufi and Mehdi Ben Barka who reportedly began to reorganise what was left of the resistance (Bennouna 2002, 63).

In 1963, Yousseoufi did not represent the group of 'conspirators' versus the 'political' wing of the UNFP; he embodied the tension between the avenues of legal participation and a nebulous insurrectionary path, which claimed to represent 'the revolutionary option'. This double game mirrored that of the monarchy, which repressed its potential rivals while regularly inviting them to form a government. But in 1965, the opportunities for institutional participation were shut off. In the wake of the events of March 23,<sup>32</sup> the state of emergency was declared on June 7. On 29 October 1965, Mehdi Ben Barka was abducted in front of Brasserie Lipp in Paris. For many years, the 'unburied corpse' of the martyr constituted a major obstacle to any reconciliation of the UNFP with Hassan II.

After Ben Barka's abduction, Yousseoufi went to France 'with a small suitcase' to organise the trial and act as a witness for the injured party. During the interview he gave me, he did not want to dwell on his years of exile. He only recalled his political science studies,<sup>33</sup> the symposium on the Rif War that he co-organised,<sup>34</sup> and his advocacy and involvement in voluntary work for SOS Torture, the Arab Organization for Human Rights, and the Arab Lawyers' Union of which he became Deputy Secretary General from 1969 to 1990. He remembered his involvement in the defence of 'Arab causes', the fact that he was one of the lawyers for the commando units of George Habbache's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which were responsible for the hijacking of aircraft in the early 1970s.

Official records show that he also represented the party at international level.

How did he make a living? According to journalist Hamid Barrada, a former exile who left the UNFP in 1967, 'we had all the money we wanted, the problem was refusing (...). The political parties always had cash, provided by the Arab regimes'.<sup>35</sup> But Yousseoufi maintained an ascetic lifestyle. In 1968, he married H  l  ne Kessissoglou, the daughter of a Greek fashion designer, whom he met in Casablanca in 1947, and who left Morocco with her family for Cannes in 1965. According to his account, their engagement dragged on because of his arrests in 1959 and 1963, and then his deep involvement in the Ben Barka affair. His wife owned a shop and a two-room apartment in Cannes, where the couple stayed regularly, even after the years of exile.

The role Yousseoufi played between 1965 and 1973, a period during which the 'revolutionary' or 'insurrectional' option was more than ever favoured by a large part of the UNFP-Rabat leadership,<sup>36</sup> remains to be determined. As the armed wing of the UNFP, the Tanzim (the organisation) was a revolutionary organisation (1963–1973) strongly influenced by the spirit of the times and, in particular, by the Palestinian guerrillas, the Ba'athists in Syria, and the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN).<sup>37</sup> It was initiated by former members of the Southern Liberation Army, who wanted to form a revolutionary vanguard. Among them, Fqih Mohamed Basri played a central role, particularly from 1966 onwards. He mobilised the financial and logistical support of regimes at that time considered to be progressive; some, such as Syria, Algeria and Libya, even hosted training camps for Tanzim members.

Although he did not play an active part in military coordination, Yousseoufi was the principal leader of the party abroad. He met regularly with Tanzim members in Syria, Algeria and France. When asked about armament issues, he is said to have replied: 'I don't care about the couscous, I'm only interested in the vegetables that top the dish' (Bennouna 2002, 198). In the early 1970s, both Abderrahim Bouabid and Yousseoufi were more convinced than ever that the only way to bring about change was through insurrection.

Some activists (...) were convinced that local action was ineffective, that the authorities did not allow ordinary activity. [Bouabid] counted on the collapse of power as a result of its internal contradictions and on putsches and the military wing of the party. He used to say that the revolution would come from Algeria and Tripoli: 'Here we make people go' (*hna hi tanqdiw*). And those in Algiers and Tripoli were saying the same thing (...): 'We're going to be welcomed by the masses.' They all lived under the illusion ... But there was no party either in Algiers or in Morocco ...<sup>38</sup>

Among the operations initiated by the Tanzim, the most salient took place in 1969 and 1973. After an attempt to infiltrate Tanzim members trained in Syria, which was rapidly uncovered, a wave of arrests occurred in 1969 and 1970

(Bennouna 2002). Charged in absentia, Yousseoufi orchestrated a solidarity campaign from Paris. He reactivated the networks set up at the end of the Protectorate and mobilised international bar associations. In the International Committee for the Defence of the Accused in Marrakech, created on the eve of the opening of the Marrakech trial, there were orientalists, politicians from the France Maghreb Association and French left-wing leaders.<sup>39</sup> Yousseoufi was one of the forty defendants. The prosecutor called for the death penalty, but it was not pronounced: the case was disjoined for further information. Skhirat's attempted military coup<sup>40</sup> eventually put the 1969 'conspiracy' onto the back burner.

Throughout this period, the 'insurrectionary' options did not have unanimous support within the UNFP. Moreover, since its creation, the party had been profoundly 'disorganised'. These initiatives had been neither centrally coordinated nor even discussed with the party cadres, to the extent that it would be hasty to speak in terms of the bicephalism of the party. Within the Tanzim itself, the 'Blanquism' of Fqih Basri led to tensions and defections from 1966 onwards among those who aspired to build a revolutionary vanguard. This was the case of Mohamed Ben Said Aït Idder,<sup>41</sup> among others, who called in vain to Bouabid and Yousseoufi for an 'assessment' of the previous failures; but, according to him, the two leaders persisted in supporting the Fqih, at least until 1973.<sup>42</sup> At another level, many UNFP activists and cadres, arrested and tortured in 1973, had no knowledge of the existence of the Tanzim. And when Hassan II invited the UNFP-Rabat to form a government following the 1971 coup, Abderrahim Bouabid offered him a list of young party cadres. He may have been betting on the insurgency on the other side of the border or on the second military coup.

On the eve of the coup of 16 August 1972,<sup>43</sup> Oufkir established contact with opposition leaders inside and outside Morocco. In a letter to Bouabid and Yousseoufi, Fqih Basri 'recalled' that he spoke with military officers 'on behalf of the party' and not in his own name.<sup>44</sup> He also referred to a meeting held in late 1971 or early 1972 during which, he said, Bouabid announced to Yousseoufi, Fqih Basri and Mehdi Alaoui<sup>45</sup> that he had agreed with General Oufkir that the UNFP would participate in the constitution of a government after the fall of the regime.

During the events of 3 March 1973, members of the Tanzim were infiltrated from Algeria and the instigators of the guerrilla warfare were repressed even before they could organise revolutionary focal points in Moulay Bouazza (Middle Atlas) and Goulmina (High Atlas). A major wave of repression hit the UNFP and nearly 300 people were arrested. On 3 April, the UNFP-Rabat was suspended by decree and its premises sealed. During the summer of 1973, 157 people charged with the March events were brought before the Permanent Court of the Royal Armed Forces. Death sentences, life imprisonment, prison sentences and suspended sentences were handed down.

These events ended the insurgency options. At a time when UNFP communiqués denounced the repression and proclaimed the ‘legal’ nature of the party, Youssoufi is thought to have endorsed the ‘Meknes communiqué’ claiming the insurrectionary attempt on behalf of a fictitious group, the National Liberation Front (Bennouna 2002, 301). At a meeting in Algiers on 2 August 1973, Youssoufi would have sought to save what was left of a party that had been devastated by repression, its very existence threatened. After the failure of the ‘revolutionary’ option, Youssoufi must have persuaded Fqih Basri to ‘accept his responsibilities’ and to dissociate the military entity from the party. At the Extraordinary Congress of 1975, the UNFP-Rabat officially became the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) and adopted the strategic option of ‘political democracy’, which favoured the struggle within the institutions. This shift was promulgated from above without being discussed in depth during the congress.

### **The vagaries of reconciliation with the monarchy for a man without a power base (1992–2003)**

In August 1974, Spain announced its intention to withdraw from Western Sahara and hold a referendum on self-determination. Presented as a national priority, this question fostered the search for a compromise between Hassan II and part of the opposition, at the same time as the monarchy was imposing itself as a central institution (Leveau 1985). Some diehards were suppressed, others exiled, or detained for long periods. In this way, repression helped to shape the contours of the re-emerging official political sphere. From the point of view of the monarchy, ‘relaunching the democratic process’ consisted in organising a mobilisation from above within a ‘consensual’ framework, imposing the recognition of its hegemony, and the disciplinarianisation of the actors inside the political game. As for the approved opponents in the official political game, they had to bid farewell, regretfully, to a conquest of power through a revolutionary, insurrectional or even putschist path. In their view, legal recognition and participation in institutions would allow them to loosen the stranglehold of repression, have their voices heard and have access to a set of material and symbolic resources. Moreover, they did not despair of transforming the political regime from within and increasing their room for manoeuvre, and they were prepared to renegotiate their position in the established political sphere through pressure in the protest arena.

During the summer of 1980, Hassan II granted amnesty to about 100 detainees and pardoned 24 exiles, including Youssoufi. Back in Morocco, Youssoufi continued to be involved with voluntary work for international associations. When Abderrahim Bouabid died in 1992, he became the first secretary of the USFP. His aura of exile, reputation as Mehdi Ben Barka’s former companion, international stature, image as a ‘wise old man’ and ‘quiet force’, and the

fact that he had held himself aloof from internal politics helped to raise him above the fray.

From 1992 on, Youssoufi pursued the plan of his predecessor: to find a 'historic' compromise with the monarchy.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Hassan II had initiated talks with the parliamentary opposition parties in a very particular context. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, international pressure on 'Our Friend the King'<sup>47</sup> had increased, all the more because promises of democratisation were becoming clearer amongst the Tunisian (1987) and Algerian (1988) neighbours. At the national level, the events of 14 December 1990, followed by demonstrations against the Gulf War (1991), marked a period of intense defiance of the King. Moreover, from 1992 onwards, Hassan II knew he was seriously ill. Following the 1993 legislative elections, Hassan II invited the Koutla<sup>48</sup> to form a government. The latter refused in the absence of a parliamentary majority. Nor was it conceivable that a Koutla government could include the Ministries of Sovereignty, as the Interior, directly appointed by the King. As for Youssoufi, he voluntarily went into exile in Cannes both to protest against the rigging of the elections, and to show his displeasure with the Koutla and members of the USFP. According to the testimony of Fathallah Oualalou<sup>49</sup>:

That day, I was doing on-call duty. In the evening [Youssoufi] came, he found me by the phone. Three things upset him: first, the unlawful intervention of the Interior Ministry; second, in Fez, the Istiqlal people betrayed solidarity with the USFP; and in Casa the USFP people argued among themselves and lost the seat ... The restriction of the electorate increased tensions. To revolt against the political class as a whole, he resigned and went to Cannes.

Among the factors that prompted Youssoufi to return from his voluntary exile in Cannes was the desire to organise a fitting welcome for Fqih Basri, whose return from exile in June 1995 had been under negotiation for a decade. According to Fathallah Oualalou, this issue had caused a 'dramatic contradiction' within the political bureau 'between those who wanted to welcome him as a hero' and 'those who said he should undertake self-criticism'. Youssoufi wanted to welcome him, 'with respect'. (...) 'He cared about Fqih Basri, because he was his friend, even if he didn't agree with him politically. (...) We respect the past, even if we don't agree (...). Fqih Basri is the past and all that it represents.'<sup>50</sup>

In October 1995, Hassan II's illness became public knowledge. The formation of a government under the aegis of Youssoufi was an imperative for the monarch. The challenge was to ensure the smooth running of the dynastic succession. A few gestures of goodwill were made. For the first time, the Koutla, now composed of the USFP, Istiqlal and the PPS, called for a vote in favour of the constitution. It officially endorsed Article 19, which enshrined the pre-eminence of the King, commander of the faithful.

In return, Hassan II promised to guarantee the transparency of the 1997 legislative elections, and a charter of honour was signed on 28 February 1997 by the political parties and the public authorities.

In 1998, Yousseoufi agreed to lead the government of alternance, 'consensual' for some and 'granted' for others (El Mossadeq 2001). And yet, the victory of the Koutla was narrow, the 1997 elections were marred by electoral fraud, the Palace imposed its men in the key ministries, and Yousseoufi was forced to take into the government coalition parties previously considered as having the support of the administration. In a lengthy speech in February 2003, Yousseoufi gave his reading of history both immediate and much older.

The consensual alternance built from the 1997 Parliament was not imposed by elections unanimously contested by the political parties, nor was it the result of alliances freely entered into by the parties. It was the result of an agreement between King Hassan II, who held all the power, and the historic opposition in Morocco (the USFP, which historically represents the largest and most important part of the forces that fought for independence, for the return of the patriotic King Mohammed V to his throne. [...]). (...) We were faced with only two options: one was dictated by the national interest and the other favoured partisan political considerations.<sup>51</sup>

'Saving the country from a heart attack' and putting the 'national interest' first became the leitmotifs of the USFP leaders, concerned to justify the party's move to government after 40 years of opposition. For Yousseoufi, it was important not to miss 'the appointment' with history, it was even about 'correcting' a failure of history: the Moroccan National Movement was one of the few in the region that did not take the reins of power after independence. From then on, restoring relations of trust with the Palace was achieved through strong signals, drawing on the nationalist repertoire of the 'Revolution of the King and the People': proclaiming loud and clear its adherence to the monarchy by voting for the constitution of 1996 and, out of sight, taking a solemn oath to honour a pact between two men, one who knew he was dying, the other 74 years old and raised to the status of 'transitional regent' after having fought the monarchy for part of his life. Yousseoufi's detractors will never cease to castigate him for having committed the future of the Moroccan left by 'swearing on the Koran'.

In addition to the symbolic dimension of the reconciliation of the monarchy and the National Movement, it is important to recall other factors. At that time, transitological perspectives were on the rise on the left (Vairel 2007). In Yousseoufi's eyes, the success of the democratic transition depended on an alliance between the 'doves', which was supposed to provide a counterweight to the 'hawks'. Moreover, Hassan II was not alone in worrying about the fate of his regime after his death. For Yousseoufi and for many others, the death of the king risked plunging the country into instability and it was, therefore, necessary to be in command at that time to avoid the excesses

that haunted their imaginations: the return in force of the army, the takeover of the country by the Minister of the Interior Driss Basri, the triumph of Islamist 'extremism' etc.

Abroad, there were many incentives, not only from donors such as the IMF, who were relying on the arrival of socialists in government to clean up the country's economic situation, but also from socialist friends who were in government here and there in Europe. In December 1997, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin was on an official visit to Morocco. During an audience, Hassan II told him in an aside: 'I ask you to make your friends understand my complete good faith in the offer I am making to them.' To the members of the political bureau who expressed their doubts, Jospin replied: 'If you wait until the situation is perfect, you will never come to power. The Palace is making you this offer because it needs you.'<sup>52</sup>

In addition, organisational considerations weighed in favour of the 'granted alternance'. The party was very divided and relations within the Kutla were marked by distrust and rivalry. In the absence of strong collective partisan capital, Youssoufi was not in a position to wrest more from Hassan II than he was granted (Bennani-Chraïbi 2019). Consequently, he played the card of the 'pact' and the restoration of 'trust' between two individuals. It was with Mohamed VI that he hoped to move from 'consensual alternance' to 'democratic alternance'. Those close to him also hoped that the stature of Prime Minister would allow the first secretary of the USFP to take back control over the party.

After the 2002 legislative elections, the USFP was the largest party in terms of the number of seats, although it had lost votes since 1997. Youssoufi defended its record on the economic, social and, above all, political level. He considered that he had risen to the challenge of organising the country's first 'honest' elections. Even though he was convinced that he would be reappointed head of government, King Mohammed VI appointed an 'independent' Prime Minister: the task was made easier for him by the fierce competition between the two major parties of the Koutla: the USFP and the Istiqlal.

On 26 October 2003, Youssoufi announced to the Political Bureau that he was resigning from the post of First Secretary and from USFP. For the last time in his life, he went 'on a one-man strike'. His withdrawal from political life has given rise to several readings. As in 1993, it was probably an act of protest against the Palace and against his own people. In his speech in Brussels in February 2003, Youssoufi gave his analysis of the experience of Alternance and stressed the 'particular importance' of the elections of 27 September 2002, which were to constitute 'a real turning point towards effective democracy'. Although it recognised the failure of the strategy pursued, the political bureau of the USFP accepted participation in the 2002 government. According to Youssoufi, a difficult choice had to be made between participation that

'endorsed the undemocratic method' and nonparticipation that '[would have] condemned the whole experiment to failure'. Once again, national interest would have prevailed over the interest of the party. On another level, the internal crisis within the USFP continued to escalate. During his tenure as Prime Minister, Youssefi came under attack from both his opponents and his own friends within the party. After the party's disappointing results in the 2003 communal elections, the crisis was at its height, the attacks were public, the decisions taken by party bodies were not respected, and the first secretary was finding it increasingly difficult to get the political bureau to meet.

## Conclusion

At first glance, becoming the Prime Minister of Hassan II after having been considered, a few decades earlier, as 'the foreign minister of the resistance and the plotters' against the monarchy constitutes a spectacular turnaround in a political career. But, as I have tried to show, this reversal was part of a process that was both slow and discontinuous, with bifurcations, moments of fluidity, and uncertainty. It reveals the links between an individual destiny – that of Youssefi, a collective trajectory – that of part of the Moroccan left – and the history of Morocco in the twentieth century, which emerged at the crossroads of 'dynamics from within' and 'outside' (Balandier 1971).

At the level of the left embodied by Youssefi, it appears that the choices made cannot be reduced to moral categories ('corrupted' versus 'incorruptible'). In any case, they are intrinsically linked to the variations in the resources available to the actors, their perceptions of their environment and the dynamics at work, their appreciation of the cards they could play, and so on. In Youssefi's own words, the UNFP and USFP were 'parties of sympathisers'; while they benefited from reputational capital gained through repression, they never managed to accumulate the organisational capital of the mass parties. After bidding a regretful farewell to the revolution, the Maquis, and even the putsch, their leaders chose the only option they perceived as available to them: institutional participation. Certainly, in a retrospective reading, it is easy to observe a growing asymmetry between their organisational capacities and the coercive resources accumulated by the monarchy. However, this story was not written in advance. Youssefi's trajectory bears witness to this.

The activist career of this leading figure includes biographical ruptures, but also continuities in terms of accumulated capital, dispositions activated in different forms and preferred strategies. Throughout his trajectory, Youssefi embodied a figure of exteriority. When he was expelled from college and the college residence after his first demonstration, he found it

difficult to envisage a return to the bosom of his family, and the only support he could see was the party. Neither the son of a notable nor heir to wealth, his material resources, personal relationships and symbolic capital came from his total commitment to the National Movement. Anticipating this, he chose a profession convergent with his activist career and, in the end, he did not make a living from his profession as a lawyer, which he practised mainly in national and international political trials and put to use in international bar associations. After 15 years of exile, he returned home with his Greek wife, with whom he had no children. His only personal capital was the networks of friends forged during the resistance, the years of repression and exile, his international aura, his reputation as 'Ben Barka's former companion', his image as a man of 'integrity' and a 'quiet force'. When Bouabid died, this position of exteriority contributed to his appearance as a 'man of consensus' in an already divided party. Moreover, it was his lack of capital that made him stand above the fray: he had no hold on the party apparatus, he had no family, tribal or regional fiefdom. In other words, he was not perceived as a threat by other competing leaders. But, in the end, the 'assets' that enabled him to become the first secretary of the USFP soon turned into handicaps; he tried in vain to unite the warring factions whether within his party or the Koutla. At that time, he had two main weapons. On the one hand, his disposition to prefer escape whenever he felt confronted with a threatening or dead-end situation: even when he was not exposed to repression, he protested by going 'on a one-man strike', going into exile or threatening to go into exile in Cannes. On the other hand, he gained a major asset at the end of his political career: the 'confidence' of Hassan II.

From his 'clandestine reflexes', Yousseoufi also retained a disposition to silence, secret pacts and solitary decision-making, reactivated when Hassan II asked him to head the government of alternance. With hindsight, he perceived himself as a survivor: he survived a serious illness that for a time sheltered him from repression and political assassination; he survived the 'years of lead'; and he outlived his closest friends and Hassan II. His predilection for silence combined with his 'loyalty' was reflected in his very relationship with the past: neither justified nor repudiated, it was faithfully concealed. The transition from the revolutionary to the democratic option was not to be subject to 'assessment' or 'self-criticism' or to designation of those responsible. The change of strategy did not make it necessary to break with 'friends' who had not undergone the same transition: Fqih Basri was welcomed with great pomp on his return from exile. As for the companions in exile who participated closely or at a distance in the actions of the Tanzim, they were placed in the government or in embassies at the time of the alternance.

Praised by Hassan II,<sup>53</sup> Yousseoufi's 'pragmatism' did not go back to the talks that led to the alternance. Throughout his trajectory, the end seemed to justify the means. Like other Moroccan political figures, Yousseoufi did

not favour either a reformist option and legal modes of action, or a 'radical' option and clandestine and insurgent strategies. During the struggle for independence, he used all available registers of action: legal and clandestine, informal and institutional, in the associative, trade union and partisan spheres. When he engaged in the resistance against the Protectorate, he did not give up the institutional channels available at international level. 'Conspiring' against the monarchy did not preclude the drafting of editorials advocating 'responsible government', running for election or organising a motion of censure in parliament. Engaging in the insurgency also involved investing in regional and international advocacy organisations. Opting for 'consensual' alternance did not mean repudiating the past and the friends of the past.

## Notes

1. Like a left-wing Moroccan academic in a public Facebook post on 29 May 2020.
2. This is also the title of the report submitted by Ben Barka to the UNFP secretariat before the 2nd party congress in May 1962.
3. Born in 1920 in Rabat, he was among the founders of Istiqlal in 1944, then in 1959 of the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), the left wing of the National Movement, created following a scission within Istiqlal. Before becoming an exiled opponent, a third-world leader, then the hero of an unsolvable enigma, that of his abduction on 29 October 1965 in front of Brasserie Lipp, he was a professor of mathematics at the Royal College, and the president of the Consultative Assembly of Morocco from 1957 to 1959.
4. For a literature review see for example, voir Catusse (2006), Catusse and Karam (2010), Bennani-Chraïbi (2019)
5. See, however, the survey carried out by Bennani-Chraïbi (2013) among 4127 national delegates from ten Moroccan political organisations.
6. In the documentary, *Il était une foi Youssoufi*, several political figures described him as a 'quiet force', a man 'silent as the grave', even 'a solid man, does not move too fast, always thinks before speaking'.
7. On the renewal of historiographical debates, see for example the article of Susan Gilson Miller (2014).
8. See the distinction made by Offerlé (2018): 'collective partisan capital' refers to a 'political brand', an acronym, emblems, a programme, premises, an organisation, activists, staff, resources from membership fees, etc. Conversely, 'individual capital' is 'attached to the person, incorporated and recognised by socially relevant attributes and titles'. In between, some actors accumulate their own political capital through their involvement in a political party.
9. Under the Paris Convention of 1923, Tangier, a diplomatic city in the nineteenth century, acquired this status, which was in effect from 1925 to 1958. As a reminder, under the French Protectorate (1912–1956), Spain also had two zones of influence (in the north and south of the country).
10. In independent Morocco, this refers to the administrative officer in immediate contact with the population, particularly at the neighbourhood level.
11. Youssoufi's father was polygamous, and had two children with a second wife. In all, Youssoufi had four sisters and five brothers.

12. This passage and all those not be followed by a note are extracted from the interview Youssoufi gave me in 2006. All quotations are translated from French or Arabic by the author.
13. This French secondary school was at first exclusively for Europeans. It gradually opened its doors to 'Muslims', who accounted for 12% of the student body in 1951.
14. He studied for his first two law degrees in the Casablanca annexe of the Rabat Centre, which was run by André de Laubadère, a specialist in administrative law. The professors came from Rabat or Bordeaux, as did Maurice Duverger.
15. In 1949, Cosuma had nearly 1800 Moroccan workers (Ayache 1993, 64).
16. Until then, civil controllers had run the Cherifian administration alongside the pashas and the caïds. Having noticed that the National Movement was becoming increasingly popular after the demonstrations of 1944, the authorities of the Protectorate decided to appoint a civil controller at the wholesale market in Casablanca, tasked with supervising the working classes.
17. The leaders of Istiqlal allegedly banned their members from joining the CGT unions in 1946 (Ayache 1990, 150–151). This was challenged by Fouad Benseddik (2000, 294).
18. 'Free schools' were established as part of the nationalist system from the 1930s (Damis 1975).
19. On 8 June 1953, in the midst of the Moroccan crisis, these figures were among the founders of France-Maghreb. This association was presided over by François Mauriac and included intellectuals, politicians and recognised experts on the region who were keen to produce 'objective' information and to promote measures in the face of the worsening situation in the Maghreb (Julien 1978, 289–290).
20. According to Waterbury (1970, 203), the leaders of the resistance – formed by 'urban terrorist groups' and a rural Liberation Army – were divided into two groups with different functions. Youssoufi was one of the eight most active members of the 'external' team, composed of 'educated members of the urban bourgeoisie' who mobilised outside support, and collected funds and weapons.
21. Between 1953 and 1955, nearly 6000 attacks occurred in urban areas, and European 'counter-terrorism' was also organised (Julien 1978, 336–337).
22. The French deposed the Sultan without consulting the Spanish, who reacted very badly to this decision (Julien 1978).
23. On 22 August 1955, the president of the council Edgar Faure invited the representatives of the French of Morocco, the 'old makhzen' and the nationalist elite to talks in Aix-les-Bains. The conclusion of these agreements led, in particular, to the return of the Sultan from exile (Julien 1978).
24. Excerpts from a brochure in Arabic produced by the National Council of the Moroccan Resistance, The August 1956 Conference, page 8 (quoted by Waterbury 1970, 208).
25. Abderrahim Bouabid (1922–1992) was a signatory of the Manifesto of Independence in 1944, imprisoned between 1944 and 1946, exiled between 1952 and 1954. He was one of the representatives of the nationalists in Aix-les-Bains in 1955, and one of the main founders of the UNFP in 1959. In 1975, he became the first secretary of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP).
26. The UMT was founded on 20 March 1955. It mainly drew its base from the UGSCM (Ayache 1993).

27. The Dahir of 11 March 1959 defined conditions to qualify as a resistant (in particular the fight between 15 August 1954 and 7 April 1956) and created a National Council for the Resistance, presided by the prime minister (Waterbury 1970, 210). There were reportedly 60,000 'official resistants'.
28. The Southern Liberation Army supported the Algerian revolution, put pressure on French military posts in southern Morocco and led offensives in the Sahara, still under Spanish occupation. In January 1958, France and Spain carried out Operation Ecouvillon, at the end of which they crushed the Southern Liberation Army, with the blessing of the Palace. In January 1959, the Crown Prince – the future Hassan II – suppressed the Rif revolt and dealt a blow to the Liberation army thanks to the support of pilots placed at his disposal by France.
29. Fqih Mohamed Basri (1930–2003) was born in Demnate, in the High Atlas. He was part of the group of nationalists that was formed at the Ben Youssef University in Marrakech, before becoming a leading figure in the urban resistance.
30. After a charge of press offences and defamation, the Rabat regional court dismissed the case in May 1960.
31. Youssoufi was one of the lawyers defending the Algerian leaders of the FLN who were abducted during a hijacking by the French services in 1956.
32. These events occurred between 21 and 25 March 1965, particularly in Casablanca, and were bloodily repressed.
33. He obtained a Diploma of Higher Studies in Political Science (DES), in Nice in 1971 (dissertation on 'Moroccan resistance to foreign penetration [1904–1934]').
34. Organisation of a symposium: 'Les institutions de la République du Rif', in *Abd El-Krim et la République du Rif, Actes du colloque international d'études historiques et sociologiques*; 18–20 January 1973 – François Maspéro, Paris, 1976.
35. Author's interview with Hamid Barrada, 6 January 2015, at his home in Casablanca.
36. From 1965 onwards, tensions within the UNFP increased, gradually resulting in a scission between the UNFP-Casablanca, led by the UMT, and the UNFP-Rabat, which met as the UNFP-Administrative Commission on 30 July 1972, the prelude to the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), officially formed in 1975.
37. See the very well-documented account of these insurrectionary attempts in Bennouna (2002).
38. Author's interview with a lawyer, member of the USFP, on 12 August 2008, in his office in Casablanca.
39. The Orientalists who mobilised included Jacques Berque, Charles-André Julien, Vincent Monteil, Jean Lacouture and Maxime Rodinson. In addition to Robert Buron, former French minister, the committee also included Pierre Cot, Pierre Joxe, François Mitterrand, Alain Savary and Michel Rocard (Bennouna 2002, 151).
40. It took place on 10 July 1971 during Hassan II's birthday party at the Royal Palace of Skhirat, mainly instigated by General Mohamed Medbouh, head of the Royal House, and his son-in-law Lieutenant-Colonel M'hamed Ababou who mobilised the cadets of the Ahermoumou military school for non-commissioned officers.
41. Born in 1925 in the Chtouka Aït Baha region, he was part of the group formed at the Ibn Youssef University in Marrakech. Previously a leader of the Southern Liberation Army, he participated in the scission of Istiqlal in 1959. He was detained

- in 1960 and sentenced to death in absentia in 1963. Initially exiled in Algeria, he broke with Fqih Basri and settled in France. In the early 1970s, he joined the 23 March Movement. Amnestied in 1981, he co-founded in 1983 the Organisation for Democratic and Popular Action (OADP), which subsequently became the United Socialist Party (PSU). He was a member of parliament from 1984 to 2007.
42. According to the author's interview with Bensaïd in January 2006, a testimony confirmed by journalist Hamid Barrada ('La fin d'une époque', *La Vieéco*, 31 October 2003).
  43. The main instigators of the attack on Hassan II's Boeing were General Oufkir, Minister of Defence, Chief of Staff of the Royal Armed Forces, and Colonel Amokrane, Commander of the Kenitra Air Base.
  44. Published by *Le Journal* in 2000, the French translation is available on the Maroc-Réalités website: <https://www.maroc-realites.com/fr/archive/mouvement-ittiha di1/tanzim--fraction-armee-de-l%27unfp/mohamed-basri-dit-le-fqih>.
  45. Mehdi Alaoui was one of the leaders of UNFP in Paris during the 1960s and 1970s. Formerly sentenced to death and exile, Alaoui became ambassador, then adviser to Youssoufi when the latter became Prime Minister.
  46. After the Abdellah Ibrahim government (1958–1960), Hassan II contacted the opposition to invite it to form a government in 1965, after the events of 23 March and before the abduction of Ben Barka, and again in the early 1970s, after the first military coup.
  47. Title of the essay published by Gilles Perrault at Gallimard in 1990.
  48. On 17 May 1992, the Constituent Charter of the Democratic Kutla (*al-kutla ad-dimuqratiyya*) was signed by five parties: the UNFP, the USFP, Istiqlal, the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS) and the OADP. The UNFP soon left the coalition, followed by the OADP, which boycotted the constitutional referendum of 1996 and refused to participate in the government of alternance in 1998. This name echoes the ephemeral coalition formed by Istiqlal and UNFP in the National Kutla (*al-kutla al-wataniyya*) in July 1970.
  49. Author's interview with Fathallah Oualalou, Casablanca, 24 July 2008. Born in 1942 in Rabat, this economics professor was involved in the founding of the USFP. He was a member of the House of Representatives from 1977 to 2002, Minister of the Economy and Finance, then Minister of Finance and Privatisation between 1998 and 2007, and Mayor of Rabat between 2009 and 2015.
  50. The two men became distant after the publication in December 2000 of the letter sent by Fqih Basri to Bouabid and Youssoufi in the early 1970s, which recalled contacts with the putschists. Youssoufi was prime minister at the time. On 8 December 2003, *Le Journal, Demain, As-Sahifa* was banned on the basis of article 77 of the press code, an article long fought against by the USFP when it led the parliamentary opposition (El Kadoussi 2018). Formerly subject to censorship, it appears that Youssoufi had become a censor.
  51. Speech delivered in Brussels on 26 February 2003, on the occasion of the ceremony organised in his honour by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Text available at: <http://usfp-grandcasa.net/fr/index.php/l-usfp/item/31-discours-de-si-abderrahmane-al-youssoufi-a-bruxelles-en-2003>.
  52. Alain Chenal, then head of the French Socialist Party's relations with the Arab world, interviewed by Dalle (2011).
  53. When announcing the formation of the government of alternance, Hassan II is reported as welcoming a 'pragmatic and nationalist Prime Minister'. [https://telquel.ma/2013/02/19/Histoire-II-etait-une-fois-l-alternance\\_557\\_6280](https://telquel.ma/2013/02/19/Histoire-II-etait-une-fois-l-alternance_557_6280).

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank very warmly Myriam Catusse, Olivier Fillieule, Michel Offerlé and the anonymous reviewers for their stimulating comments on early versions of this article.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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