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Editorial

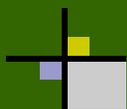
BY AREZKI BOUDIF

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Winna</i> | 3 |
| <i>Mohia, "The Work that Consumed its Author"</i> | 8 |
| <i>The Argan Tradition of Southwestern Morocco</i> | 12 |

... A prison sentence for a president of an Amazigh cultural association.

... An Amazigh athlete and calligrapher writes to AV from South Africa.



This issue of Amazigh Voice is a tribute to someone who left us before we could appreciate fully the amount of effort he dedicated, the number of fields he ploughed, the number of seeds he planted. Let's hope we will be able to harvest!

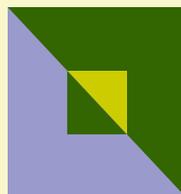
We asked two of Amazigh Voice's contributors to write their testimony about Muhend U Yehya or Mohia, a man they came to know, a man they respected.

Amar Mezdad emphasizes Mohia's pioneering spirit and his humility with respect to the art he mastered better than any one else. Idir Ahmed-Zaid, with an exquisite sense of details, described the trajectory or the path of this brilliant theater and po-

etry lover who served his culture with an immense devotion.

The living poets will always remember him as did Hacene Ziani and Lhocine Yahia in this issue of Amazigh Voice.

In this issue also, we continue with the important topics we evoked in the two latest issues. Indeed, we have decided to publish additional papers on the "cultures" of the Amazigh communities. In the south of Morocco, the argan tree is the center of all traditional economic activity. This agro "culture" sustained the life of the Amazigh community of that region. Around this activity, rituals are born and perpetuated, poetry is written, and sung. Seasonal festivals are organized. This is the cement of the community: this is Culture. This is a living culture as our late Mouloud Mammeri would say. Æ



The Amazigh Voice

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Mail TIBRATIN Mail

A North African in South Africa!

Azul fellawen ay Imaziyen!

Sureft-iji if write in English. I know it's a shame and painful to use a foreign language than my mother tongue "Tamazight", but I don't blame myself, it's an unfair government that didn't give us our rights. I wish I can write it very well and express myself proudly. Like Dda Lmulud used to say: "*Wi byan taqbaylit, ad yissin tira-s*", but one day is one day.

Well, let me introduce myself to you. I am Ahcene Djaroun, Amazigh from South Africa, originally from Kabylia, county (*Tayiwant*) N At Bughardan, about six miles from Boghni, south of Tizi-ouzou. I was born just under the wonderful mountains of Djurdjura!

Well, from time to time, I make some drawings about my culture. I am also an athlete, a former South African national champion in Thai Boxing. I have been selected to represent this country in the World championship. Today, I have decided to offer you pieces of my art because here in South Africa, we don't have cultural associations or any other organizations, we are lost! If you like them, I can send you a lot and it's for free; for the name of Tamazight.

Anyway, I wish you all the best for your activities.

Afud Igehden, Afus Deg ufus

Ahcene Djaroun.

Johannesburg, March 29th 2005

Dear Ahcene:

Thank you very much for the nice letter as well as "the beautiful pieces of your art", as you call them. We chose one to be included in this issue of Amazigh voice (see page 16). Indeed, it is unfortunate that the Amazigh community in South Africa is not yet organized. Our organization (Amazigh Cultural Association in America) is willing to help. Meanwhile, convey our greetings to Imazighen in RSA and continue to live proudly as Amazigh.

Amazigh Voice

News ISALAN News

Amazigh Cultural Movement

A President of an Amazigh cultural association harassed then sentenced to prison

Said Zamouche is the President of the Wahran-based Numidya Association. He has been sentenced to two years probation and 20,000 (twenty thousands) Algerian dinars (200 USD) fine. What was his crime?

In September 2003, Numidya invited a Flemish delegation (Belgium) composed of members of parliament, lawyers, businessmen, students and one journalist to take part in a conference entitled "The North African immigration in Europe and perspectives of cooperation." The conference, part of Numidya's program, was scheduled for October 26th 2003 in Wahran.

With their invitations in hand, the members of the delegation went ahead and applied for visas at the Algerian Embassy in Brussels. The trip was scheduled for October 24th and the return on the 27th. However, several weeks passed without any answer from the Algerian Embassy regarding their visa applications. Under these circumstances, Numidya's staff took the painful decision to cancel the conference and informed the public and the people they had invited. But, the Algerian embassy decided to grant the visas to the Flemish delegation on October 23rd at 5 pm, which is less than 24 hours from their scheduled departure. Nonetheless, the members of the delegation decided to take the trip to Algeria with a little change in their destination. They took the opportunity to visit the Amazigh-speaking region of Kabylia where they met with the leaders of the Citizens' Movement also known as "Aarchs".

A few weeks later, the Algerian police started harassing Mr. Zamouche. Thus, from December 2003 to March 2004, Mr. Zamouche was summoned four times to the criminal section of the Wahran's police headquarters where he was subjected to harsh questioning in relation with the Flemish delegation to Kabylia. On February

(Continued on page 11)

Winna

SUR YIDIR HMED UZAYED

#

Yefka-d Rebbi itij ad as-tiniḍ d tafsut ḡas akken d dujamber i-deg nella. Ġerġer yer-fed tismert-is nnig tyaltin n tmurt n Leq-bayel ... Yettdeggir-ed deg wammas-is iren-nu amzun akken ira ad yezḍ s tazcyt-is tiwririn nni i-yef rsent tudrin ... Akin, Lalla Xedija tesḍallay-ed iman-is s teacit tamellalt, tettak-ed tasmuḍi i wat we-drar s wedfel.

Usan-d akk dayen Imaziyen, nneylen-ed seg yal tama, d ihdumen, d iqejḍilen, d tijlibin, d igelfan, d izumal ... nneylen-ed akk yer Tasaft, yer At Rbaḥ ... wa yuli-d, wa yuder-ed, wa yusa-d buzdawi, wa ...

Usan-d akk dayen Imaziyen, mezzi meqqr !

Nnejmaḡen d imeqqunen, d iserrura, d igemmunen, d tigemmuicin ... la ttganin ... la ttganin taḡelt ... taḡelt n yiwen ... yemmut yiwen ... yiwen nni maḡči d menwala ... d acu kan aḡas ur t-nessin ara. Maca sellen yis-s, sellen i tayect nni ines yettihin tikwal fell-asen. Ihi, kra zzin d agraw tama n yiwet tqintuct akken d tamejtuḡt, ksant-as tcekratin, yeksa-yas ukerruc, yeksa-yas uḡeccad d wezzu, kra n yikunta n ukermus zzin-as dayen am wefrag, taqintuct nni zzin-as dayen yiberdan, tufrar, tuḡa, teqqummec din i yiḡij d waḍu n Ġerġer.

At wegraw nni la smuzguten i tesfifin n winna yemmuten. Tayect-is tettintih dinna, ar tetthi, ar tekkat deg wawalen amzun akken din i-yella bab-is. Netta yenna yakan ayen yenna deg yiseggasen nni i-deg tezmeḍ tyersi, deg yiseggasen nni i-deg “ttagaden medden ad gezmen ayrum s lmus”! Deg yiseggasen nni i-deg mazal llan widenni, widen akken i-yef yesteqsay winna, yeqqar-as ‘anwi wi? anwi wi? ‘Widen akken i-wimi yeqqar deg tallit nni “widen ur neswi”. Ula d tura llan, maca, tura “nestaqel”! Ihi, agraw nni n Imaziyen smuzguten i tayect nni yettihiyen ... ar d-tettawi awalen, widenni ttfarasen deg-s am wakken dayen ad yuḡal s inig nni ines yezzifen ... winna yezzel deg tiyilt nni i-deg ters taddart n At Rbaḥ, yezzel deg tesga am usaru, yezzel zdat-es (d acu i yxussen dagi?) medden la ttrun, la t-ttrun.

Widen smuzguten i tkasiḍin, smuzguten i tesfifin nni yezzifen, tiden akken i-yessekles s ufuḡ-is, tisfifin

nni yesnuzuy ddaw tecḡat imi yella deg yinig, deg wussan nni i-deg teqqur ... winna yesfetray, widenni wehmen, wehmen deg ur ssinen, ayen iwimi werġin slin qbel ad d-yaweḍ wass-a ... usan-d yer taḡelt, ufan-d isefra, ufan-d amezgun, ufan-d win i d-yeqqaren ayen akken yettakzen deg-sen d timucuha, ayen i-ten-yerran d taḡsa nutni ttaḡsan. “Ahahaha ... anwi wi anwi wi, tuḡur d widen ur neswi”!

**La ttganin taḡelt...
taḡelt n yiwen...
yemmut yiwen... yiwen
nni maḡči d menwala... d
acu kan aḡas ur t-nessin
ara. Maca sellen yis-s,
sellen i tayect nni ines
yettihihin tikwal fell-asen.**

Imaziyen nneylen-ed am uweḡtuf, seg yal tama ... Sin qqimen ar skaden deg tteswi ḡa n winna akken i-s-yeqqaren “keḡḡ, yiwen wass ad k-zzuḡren di ssnasel”, ufan ayen ur ufin weqbel ass-a. Ar skaden deg tteswi ḡa nni: udem-is

am wudem n yimesdurar nney, tamuḡli-s tunag wissen s anida i la tesmuqul, imi-s yezmumeg am wakken la yettihi, takaskiḡt teddel aqerru-s, tuḡal kra kan deg yidis, yeḡuccen iman-is, ad as-tiniḍ ira ad d-yini kra ... annaḡ a winna ! Yuḡal yenteḡq yiwen deg-sen yer wayeḍ, yenna-yas :

- D wagi i d Muḡend u Yeḡya?

- D wagi ! Ur t-tessineḍ ara?

- Nekk ḡileḡ maḡči d wa ! Wagi ttemlily-it-id deg Paris, zerreḡ-t deg XV^{cmc}, deg XX^{cmc}, ulac tiymert i-deg ur t-id-mlaleḡ, nekk ḡileḡ d menwala kan, d axeddam am wiyad, d iminig am nekni!

- Ahya a Muḡ ma yella ur tessineḍ ara wagi, ur tessineḍ yiwen! Tettuḍ asmi akken i t-nezra deg Saint Ouen, asmi akken nwala tamezgunt nni iwimi qqaren *Si Leḡlu* ?

- Ur cfiy ara, yella wagi dinna ?

- D netta i d aqerru dinna, d netta i-tt-yuran!

- Tebra ar d ijriren!

- Atan tura yuḡal-ed yer tmurt!

- Sell kan, sell! Llah ... llah!

- D acu iwimi tesliḍ! D ussan, d ussan ara

tselled i wayen yenna d wayen yura! Ayen tesla tmezzuyt-is ilcqd-it, isers-it deg lkayed !

Winna d Muḥend u Yehya ... Ruḥ tura keččini, deg triyilt inna i ylul, deg triyilt agi ara yendel! Ruḥ tura keččini, melmi kan i d-yeqli yer ddunit dagi, deg ugris, annect n tbelluḍt nni ur nli tacacit... Assen tedra-d tmeḡra, yeḍra weslilew, acku netta d aqcic, tuy tafat deg wexxam, tin akken i t-id-yurwen, tewwet afzim, tezzel deg tesga tettfu am waggur mi ara d-tettmiri tziri-s ... Ilul-ed Muḥend, am netta am tezzyi-win-is ... deg Yigawawen, d azwaw gar yezwawen. Isem-is Muḥend, maca gan-as Ebdellah, acku akka i s-semman, netta, ur yezmir ara ad yefren. Yerna, at zik ttheḡgin isem weqbel ad as-gezmen timiḥ i win ara d-ilalen ; ama akken ad d-rren isem n jeddi-s, ney urgan akken, ney dayen ilul-ed deg kra n waggur mucaeen akka am řemḍan, ney tacaebant, ney taēacuřt ..., ney dayen yuzzel yisem nni deg tallit nni i-deg d-yeqli yer tmurt! Ma yella d ayen teqqers akk, ad semmin Muḥend, tikwal ad as-rnun w'it-ilan ney anwa i d baba-s : Muḥend n At Leflani, ney Muḥend u Yidir, ney ... akka i teddunt tḡunam nney zikenni. Yerna ḡur-ney, irgazen akk d Muḥend i-sen-gan isem : ma yella tusiq-ed d amessebrid triḍ ad testeqsid albēad yef kra n temsalt, a Muḥend! ney a Muḥ! ar' astiweḍ. Akka i teddunt temsal yer-ney dahin deg wedrar akk d tḡaltin nni n wezru ademdam. Ihi, netta dayen d Muḥend, gar at Muḥend u Yehya ! Yekker yef yiman-is, iban yedda d yiman-is, iban yettuccen seg wasmi i d-ldint wallen-is.

Ihi, Muḥend yettezzirig, yettegririb, yettenzerwaq gar tcekratin, gar tzeḡrin, gar tenqlin, am tbururt, am takurt ... anida tekkes aḍar yemma-s ad yerr wayeḍ, ad yetteḡgugul deg yijufař-is, ad yetteḡtuḡul deg yicruren nni n tesfifin sut yal d ini i zḍan ifassen-is ; Muḥend, ay anida t-ssawḍent tceḡjirin-is ad yaweḍ. Yerna twalaḍ, niḡ dagi, anida terriḍ d takessart, alamma ur-zen-k-id ifergan d idurna n tidekt d ukermus ! Mulac ad k-yečč wezru ney ad tawḍeḍ s asif ney yer kra n yeḡzer. Akka i d tamurt ... akka i fernen imezwura ! Anida ara terreḍ? Ma tluḍeḍ-ed dinna deg wedrar nney , ad tezziḍ kan, tsekkreḍ ussan d yiseḡgasen alamma d asmi ara k-ḡzen aḡḍi, ad k-zzun am tzeḡmurt nni n ttelqim; d acu kan, tazemmurt nni d allus ara d-tales talalit, ad teffurkeh, ad teg izuran deg wakal nni asgin, ma yella d kečč tiliḍ akken i k-yehwa, akal nni i-ḡer ara tuḡaleḍ d win ara k-yeččen. Tanernit-ik ad tt-teččeḍ weqbel ad k-zzun, ma zzan-k deg wakal d ayen... kra kan, d ayen ad k-ttun medden, ḡas

ulamma ur tettun ara awal-ik ... ma yella teḡḡiḍ-ed awal akken ad k-id-adren medden ! Ad k-id-adren deg wayen yelhan ...

Akken akken, Muḥend yettnernay, yettnernay almi yuḡal d argaz amecḡtuḡ ... d argaz annect n tdebbuzt, maca yedda d yiman-is, akka i d-qqaren. Yuḡal yunag ula d netta, akken d amecḡtuḡ, yuḡal d ayrib amecḡtuḡ, yerra aḍar anida akken i t-yekkes baba-s, idfer-it, imi netta, issawel-as-ed weḡrum. Niḡ zik, anida tufiḍ talqimt ara k-yessidren, tin akken ara k-yessirden laḡ, aweḍ-itt ! Ckunteḍ deg-s am meckunteḍ nni yettalin isekla, ma teḡliḍ ney teḡli-yak, temmuted ! Unagen imesdurar yer waḡraben (akka i s-qqaren deg tallit nni!), zzenzen at tmurt taēḡḡart, fkan tidi nnsen deg yemyuzen akken ad d-ssuksen uzal i yiḡumyen, fkan tidi nnsen deg tḡennariyin akken ad swen aman yiḡumyen, ḡzan iberdan akken ad ayen yiḡumyen deg tmurt nnsen, sseyren akken ad tay tutlayt n uḡumi deg tmurt nnsen, ternuḍ, ternuḍ ... Sked tiyita ur ččin ! Sked anezgum ur ten-newwit! Sked timmuḡbent ur nekriz inyiren nnsen! Ihi, Muḥend yedda deg uḡemmal agi n yinig d unadi yef weḡrum akken d amezyan : ibeddel tamnaḍt, ḡas akken ur ibeddel ara tamurt, yunag akin kra yewweḍ yer Yiēezḡugen, yessenta din tagust netta d yimawlan-is, akin dayen deg yiḡil nniḍ en, wagi d Iḡil n Wuzal ! Kra d ayilif, kra d rreḡ. Ruḥ tura keččini, ad tinigeḍ kečč ur tewwiḍeḍ s ani, kečč ur tewwiḍeḍ d anwa-k ! Akka i tedra, akka i d tamurt nney! Idurar am tdikelt, imesdurar ḡḡten, teddun deg-s am uweḡḡuf, am uweḡḡuf agi i d-yenneylen ass-a ad rren tajmilt i Muḥend u Yehya ... akka akka, yessefk-as i teḡrast ad tessuffey, akken ad tizrir kra tudert i wiyad ... degmi imesdurar nney ttinigen, ttar-ran yer wanida nniḍen, ḡas d kra n wagguren kan deg useḡḡas, ḡas d sin ney tlata kan n medden i wexxam ... ad suzfen kra ayilif.

Muḥend yuy abrid n leḡraya. Zik, imesdurar ttaz-zalen yer leḡraya, zik ifehmen d leḡraya ara ten-id-yessuksen seg laḡ d timmuḡbent ... Muḥend yedda dayen deg uḡemmal n widen inuben yef leḡraya. Yi-wet yiwet, yuy-itent-id akk, yuli yakk tiskedřin n leḡraya, yeldi yakk tiseḡlay yettawin s iger n tussna, tiden akken yessuffuḡen yer rreḡ. Zik, win ikecmen yer uyerbaz, ur yettaden ara aybel d acu ara d-yeḡḡey! Ur as-ttaden ara aybel imawlan-is d acu ara yuḡal asmi ara ifakk leḡraya nni! Awi-d kan ad asen-isuzef timmuḡbent d yiḡilifen. Ma yuḡal d ajenyur, a rreḡ a tafat, ma yuḡal d amezjay akken nniḍen, ma yuḡal d aselmad d tiziri, allen akk ad skadent yer-s, ma yuḡal yessen ad yaru tibratin, ad iēemmer lekwayeḍ dayen

yelha! Almi d ass n wass-a i d-snulfan imawlan, fernen ula d ayen ara yexdem mmi-t-sen ney yelli-t-sen. Tura ad tiniđ řwan imesdurar, la tfeggiden ta-want, la ttgurrueen timenqas, la fernen gar wayen ifernen! D ayen stufan am wakken stufan dayen deg wayen akk nniđen! Muđend yefren ayen akken yeddan s lqis deg leqraya nni yeyra. Yefren tusnakt ney tusnakin! Yessen ad yeđseb, yerna tidmi-s ters řef waya, am lbaz nni yemmyen řef tsekkurt ! Tusnakt agi am tsekkurt, yetwel deg-s, imi allay-is yewzen ...

Ruđ tura kečćini, ziyeen d winna i d Muđend u Yeđya ... d bu tkaskiđt nni yuđalen kra kan deg yidis, d bu tmuyli nni yettwalin akkin akkin ... qqaren-ak llan widen yettwalin, widen i d-yeqqaren ayen ara yeđrun. Muđend u Yeđya , netta yeyra-tt-id deg tutlayt, deg tsekla n teqbaylit! Llan dayen widen i tt-id-yeqqaren deg tmellalt ... Aw-

**Ruđ tura kečćini,
ziyeen d winna i d
Muđend u Yeđya ... d
bu tkaskiđt nni
yuđalen kra kan deg
yidis, d bu tmuyli nni
yettwalin akkin akkin ...
qqaren-ak llan widen
yettwalin, widen i d-
yeqqaren ayen ara
yeđrun, Muđend u
Yeđya, netta yeyra-tt-
id deg tutlayt, deg
tsekla n teqbaylit!**

wah, netta yeyra-tt-id deg tutlayt, tutlayt nni iberren am usaru, asaru i berrnen akken ad t-gen zik d asagel i ubeckid, win akken iweznen, win akken ireqmen, win akken icebhen, win akken usdaden, win akken ur netteyras ara! Niđ abeckid zik am tmeđđ ut d wexxam, fell-asen i ters tinzert n umessedrar. Ihi, Muđend u Yeđya, yeđda asaru n teqbaylit am usaru nni n ubeckid. Yekkes-it-id seg yil-sawen n at tmurt, seg widen akken ur tuli řessalt n tmura nniđen, widen akken yettmeslayen am wakken i d-lulen , am wakken i s-slan i teqbaylit deg yimi n yemma-t-sen. Taqbaylit ur numis ara! Ađas i s-yennan, yeskerki ř taqbaylit. Niđ netta, d ayen tsawalem i d-itenned d isefra, d amezgun, d awal deg tsefifin, ur tufid i yes-sanaf. D taqbaylit nni nnwen! Ala taktiwin i d-irennu ney i d-yettagem řur wiyad, iger-ed ayen yellan d temyer i teqbaylit, yerna-yas i wadif-is akken ad teslu afud ugar; iger-itent-id almi ad tenwuđ d ayen d-turew tutlayt nney, d ayen i d-yemyin deg tmetti nney. Muđend u Yeđya yessken-ed tazmert n teqbaylit ... Kenwi ur teyrim ara Molière, Corneille, Racine, Pirandelle,

Becket, Brecht, Lou Sin, Platon, wahin d tahir. Netta yeyra-ten deg wemkan nnwen. Kenwi testufam i wawal , netta yestufa i tira ... d tira i ywaeren, d tin i ytetten allay, awal anida teddiđ yuzzel. Yerna “awal ma wezzil yefra, ma řezziđ ad d-yawi kra”. Muđend yessiwzil awal akken ad yefru, yessiwzil awal nnwen, acku netta iteddu s lqis. Netta iteddu kra kra, ddac ddac, yeggar kan tisuraf, izetđ tisekkraf ... ziyeen tewħe ř Teqbaylit, umrayet! Is-yessnen ala win i s-iteggen iberdan. Win akken i tt-yeggaren gar tutlayin nniđen, gar tsekliwin nniđen.

Muđend u Yeđya yufa abrid n umezgun akken ad yekkes anezgun i teqbaylit. Amezgun agi d amezgun kan, anida tufid yella, netta ifren-it akken ad yessuffey taqbaylit s annar agraylan. řurwat ad tenwum Muđend ireggem am wakken ireggem deg tmezgunin-is, d kenwi i yreggmen, d tutlayt nnwen i yreggmen! řurwat ad tyilem Muđend d werwer, yetteekki řef medden akken yetteekki deg tmezgunin-is, d kenwi i yetteekkin, tetteekkim deg yiman nnwen. Muđend yudef deg takurt nni nnwen, tin akken i tsekkrem am uzal am yid, iga-tt d amezgun. D amezgun n inezgumen nnwen! Ma tettekkixem, netta yettekkix deg umezgun-is ... D acu kan netta tisegra n wul-is ur ttekkixent ara, netta yesker ddaw tkaskiđt-is, yesker deg tsusmi-s. Tasusmi nni i t-yeblan, acku ahat ur t-tefhim ara! Taqbaylit tu-đal deg umezgun agi am welyem, tettađsa řef wiyad, i nettat? ... niđ řsan medden fell-as! Ihi, akken ad tili lbenna yagi i umezgun fehmet ayen yellan deg-s! Mulac ad tesberbur kan am uberbur nni yesberburen deg ugeffur: mi yensa ugeffur, yessusem uberbur nni ; ney dayen am uberbur nni n texpayt, yennerna, yerra tili, mi werrayet texpayt, tekksem-tt-id, tečćam iqlumen d taqfalt, d acu i s-d-yeqqimen?

Ruđ tura kečćini, ziyeen d winna i d Muđend u Yeđya ... d bu tkaskiđt nni yuđalen kra kan deg yidis, d bu tmuyli nni yettwalin akkin akkin ... d win akken yettun tusnakt řef teqbaylit, Taqbaylit nni n wedrar, tin akken yeđđga asmi akken yunag, yeffey tamurt ur nessečćay ara arraw-is. Imir-en yunag ad ikemmel leqraya deg řansa. Tuđ-it yekcem yakan dagi igrawen n tmaziđt, yelleđ-ed akka kra seg taktiwin n tizzelmeđđ ... deg tallit nni, ulac win ur nga tizrurin, ulac win ur nelsi aserwal nni bu yidarren hrawen, ulac win ur neswi seg temda n Che d wahin d tahir, akka i d ađu i d-isuđen deg tallit nni ... necumm-it meřra, ikcem-ay turin ... d acu kan, akken yenna Ccix deg wawal-is : “yiwen irkeb-it wađu, wayeđ yerkeb ađu”!

Cwi kan, isud-ed waɗu nniɗen : d aɗu n teqbaylit, yerra-yay-ed s abrid yettawin, talli, wissen amek ara teɗru ? Amek ad ay-teɗru, amek ara teɗru dayen i teqbaylit ?

Isud-ed waɗu n tmaziyt : win yejguglen deg tfinay yedda, win yejguglen deg wawal n Mouloud Mammeri, yedda dayen ... Hattan kan ... Wa yettu tusnakt, wa yettu tayarant, wa yettu tadamsa, wa yettu tujjya, wa yettu ... d tasuta yegren ix-f-is ɣer unazir n tmaziyt! Yal wa akken yufa, yal wa akken yezmer ... Ma d tagnitt teqqur mačči d ayen kan! Ttun inelmaden widen i ten-id-yurwen, ttun ayen udfen ɣer tesdawiyn, ttun isekraf, ttun imsulta, ttun ula d iman nnsen, udfen s iniyen ɣef tutlayt, ɣef yedles, ɣef tnašlit! Furwat ad tɣilem d tugin i yugin medden ad zhun, neɣ ad d-lhin d yiman nnsen! Atan Muḥend u Yeḥya iger iman-is ula d netta. Yekcem deg temda lqayen. Yerna mi ara tkecmeɗ ɣer dinna, yewḥeɣ akken ad d-tessukseɗ iman-ik, neɣ i win ara k-id-yessukksen ...

Ruh tura keččini, ziɣen d winna i d Muḥend u Yeḥya ... d bu tkaskiɗt nni yuɣalen kra kan deg yidis, d bu tmuyli nni yettwalin akin akin ... D win akken i d-yattasen per tiddukla n yedles n Tmaziyt, win akken i yuɣalen iteddu kan s tuffra, gar-aney. Tudert-is d tasumi, yiwen ur yeɣri ayen i t-iceyben, yiwen ur yeɣri ayen i t-yeqqazen, ayen i yeqqazen deg wul-is, deg wallay-is. Ur yettcekti i yiwen, ur yesnuzgum yiwen.

Kra dagi, kra dahi ... agemmaɗ akken qqaren deg tal-lit nni. Imir-en, inig yeshel, tameddurt tewḥeɣ.

Ruh tura keččini ziɣen d winna i d Muḥend u Yeḥya ... d bu tkaskiɗt nni yuɣalen kra kan deg yidis, d bu tmuyli nni yettwalin akin akin ... D win akken yunagen akken ad d-yekkes seg wulac taqbaylit nni ... Yerra iman-is deg tama, tura qqaren-as “gar tacciwin”, akken ad d-teḥyu teqbaylit. Niɣ iga isem i yiman-is Muḥend u Yeḥya, yas ulamma s teqbaylit akka i d isem-is! Attan d iy-misen, attan d aselmed n tmaziyt deg tesdawit n Vincennes, attan d tiddukla n Imedyazen, attan d amezgun, attan d tifaskiwin n ccna, attan d tahir, attan d tahir ... tin yersen, ad d-tekker tayed, Muḥend yettay

am usafu, ireqq yettaz ɣer zdat, netta d kra akken nniɗen ... netta d “iyennaten agi”! At “wanwiwi” ttseggidan deg-sen dagi, dahin ! Imir-en ad tesleɗ qqaren-as, ass akken i-deg ara d-asen yeɣriben nney ɣer tfaska, “wissen d acu d-wwin Imaziɣen”. Ah! zi-ɣen llan Imaziɣen deg tama, deg tama nniɗen, llan widen yeskaden deg yimaziɣen nni mi ara xedmen amzun akken d ... ibkan deg teɣzi ... A d widen i d at Muḥend u Yeḥya ... deg tlemmast n Paris ucaylel-leh i sbedden tiyremt i tmaziyt. Yerna, tamaziyt mačči kan d tin n Leqbayel : kkren i wayen iwimi ur d-ttemḥilliɣen ifassen! Akken i s-yenna Muḥend Aɣrab : seg Siwa ɣer Waṭlas, seg Wegrakal ɣer Uheggar! Atan dayen yiwen seg widak nni ... ula d wagi dayen d Muḥend nniɗen. D widenni iwimi bernan izuran ɣef teqbaylit. Imir-en dayen akken akk i zɗan azetṭa dinna : d Agraw Imaziɣen! Ziɣen akka i d-temmummed teqbaylit, am wakken i tt-id-tegga yemmas ɣer ddunit : seg tfinay almi d ayen akka i la neqqar tura “tamaziyt di llakul” Furwat ad tɣilem, lemmer ulac iyennaten agi, ad temqerjajem ass-a gar-awen ɣef tira neɣ ɣef tmaziyt, neɣ ɣef teqbaylit, neɣ dayen ula ɣef tsertit ... Wa llit allen nnwen, ad twalim anwiwi i wen-d-yellin tiwwura ... Imir-en ulac tira neɣ tahir neɣ tagi, ddan medden akken ufan: tafentazit rran-tt di tama. Win ilan tikti iger-itt-id, win ilan frank iger-it-id, win ilan kra n ubeqlul nniɗen yawi-t-id. Ulac abrid nniɗen : ala tamaziyt, ala tinna kan!

Ruh tura keččini, ziɣen d winna i d Muḥend u Yeḥya ... d bu tkaskiɗt nni yuɣalen kra kan deg yidis, d bu tmuyli nni yettwalin akin akin ... D win akken yunagen akken ad d-yekkes seg wulac taqbaylit nni ... d win akken yesskelasen awal nney deg tesfifin, netta tikwal ur yet-taf ara ayen ara iger deg yimi-s ad isuzef yis-s laz tameddit ... Muḥend u Yeḥya yessaffay irennu deg wawal nney, yefka tudert i wawal nni iteddun ad yegres am zzit deg tecbalit deg wussan n tegrest. Ah! A lemmer teɗra i tmaziyt am tecbula nni d ikufan nni yuɣalen deg tesga, neɣ ffexsin, rɣzen, ufgen d iceqfan, wa ur yeddi d gma-s? Lemmer ulac ticeqqufin nni yura Muḥend u Yeḥya ... talli tacbalit tegrareb. Taqbaylit tedda deg-s, Imaziɣen nni dayen ad ddun deg-s ... Muḥend u Yeḥya yessaffay irennu deg wawal nney, d acu-kan netta werɣin yeddi deg yifif n iyer-balen n tsertit, neɣ n kra n tdukliwin nniɗen. Yeqqim kan d netta. Yettili kan di lmendad, gar-aney, gar-awen ay Imaziɣen! “Aql-ay gar-awen, rɣwaḥ ul’anda” ... niɣ d netta i t-id-yennan; yeqqim d war-rac nney, yeqqim yid-ney, yuyal-ed ɣer-ney! Werɣin yezgil ayen akken i s-yessulfen ad t-yeg, werɣin

yezgil γas ula d tazuzift alamma d aycn kan ma yesnuzgem-it waṭṭan, neγ turez-it kra n temsalt ara t-iṣurren. Seg wasmi tebda almi d aycn t-teḡḡa tezmert, werḡin yezgil aselmed n tmaziγt deg tiddukla n yedles n tmaziγt (ACB) ... ddac-ddac ara d-yas, kra-kra kan ara iger iccer deg uselmed, tikwal ad tt-yebdu s utihi, neγ s kra n temsalt i-s-yeḍran deg webrid-is γer dinna !

Ruḥ tura keččini, ziyen d winna i d Muḥend u Yehya ... d bu tkaskiqt nni yuḡalen kra kan deg yidis, d bu tmuyli nni yettwalin akin akin ... D win akken i d-yattasen γer tiddukla n yedles n Tmaziγt, win akken i yuḡalen it-eddu kan s tuffra, gar-aneγ. Tudert-is d tasusmi, yiwen ur yeγri aycn i t-iceγben, yiwen ur yeγri aycn i t-yeqqazen, aycn i yeqqazen deg wul-is, deg wallay-is. Ur yettceṭki i yiwen, ur yesnuzgum yiwen. Muḥend n yiman-is kan! Mačči n yiman-is acku yugi wiyad. Ala, acku yettak azal i tudert, itegg tilas i tudert, s kra yellan ad t-yewzen. Am wakken, Muḥend u Yehya yuγ-itent aṭas γer daxel, yettarra kan γer wul-is, ur iḥ emmel ara ad ifeggeḍ iγebnan-is γef wiyad. Ula d awezwaz kan akka ma yessuter-it i walbaed, ad as-isegri deffir-es “ma tzmred”, “ma yella ur k-yettḍ urru ara”. Akka i d Muḥend u Yehya ... Yelha wul-is almi d aycn yettu iman-is. Akka, seg wasmi iger afus almi d asmi yessuffey iman. Muḥend u Yehya yeqqim kan deg webrid-is, yuzaf neγ idell, yelluz neγ yerwa, yerfa neγ yeḍsa, yeḥzen neγ yefreh.

Usan-d akk dayen Imaziγen, nneylen-ed seg yal tama, d ihdumen, d iqejdilen, d tijlibin, d igelfan, d izumal... d laerac, nneylen-ed akk γer Tasaft, γer At Rbah... wa yuli-d, wa yuder-ed, wa yusa-d buzdawi, wa...

Usan-d akk dayen Imaziγen, mezzi meqqr!

Yuli-d weslilew deg yiwen wexxam, imyaren refden icewwiq d abrid γer tmeqbert. Tura ad neḍlen winna akken iwimi qqaren Muḥend u Yehya deg triyilt nni gar iberdan, gar icekran, gar izezza, gar iḥeccaden d idurna n tidekt d ukermus. Dagi deg wedrar nney, deg wakal nni asgin, Lalla Xdiḡa d Tlettaḍt d Wezru n Ṭhur skaden-ed deg-sen. Mlalen Imaziγen am wat-maten ... tismert n Gerḡer tekka-d nnig-sen. Ass-a, yezdi-ten-id yiwen: d Muḥend u Yehya. D Winna. D Netta, d Netta kan. Ruḥ tura keččini, yemmut Muḥend u Yehya ... am wakken i t-id-yenna.Æ

Di Tizi-Wezzuḍ 17 dujamber 2004

Tamedyazt

Muḥya *Syur Lḥasen Zeyani*

Di tzemmurt teγli tissi
Ayetma t-xerb-i nniya
Ugadeγ ad teglu yess-i
Nekkini ad gluγ s miyya
Deffir waffug d tarusi
Tenxer taewint mi teeya

Ass-ayi tcudd tkersi
Iruḥ Muḥend U Yehya

Yerra udem i teqbaylit
Itellem-itt akken i s-yehwa
Igemr-ed di tberṛanit
Akken i d-gemmrent tzizwa
Isquced-d deg talmanit
Irna-d ula di ccinwa

A yemma qqel-iyi-d tawalit
Iruḥ Muḥend U Yehya

D tablaṭ yezwaren i llsas,
Lefhel ur teγwi sseaya
Kra yuzan γer tama-s
Iddem agerruj n ccfaya
Icerreg wejgu alemmas
Ma teqqim-d kra n rriya

A “les brobros” rut fella-s
Iruḥ Muḥend U Yehya

Mohia, “The Work that Consumed its Author”

BY AMAR MEZDAD

TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH BY RACHID DAHMANI

We first silently wondered what to say about someone who had never talked about himself, except through his extensive work in theater and poetry, and who had always privileged creative writing to promote the Kabyl linguistic issue. Even when he was still alive, we often asked ourselves this question: “What if Mohia is right?”

Although it had been expected for many months, the dreadful news shocked his rare friends and tens of thousands of fans, who all died a little that December 2004. We saw them with their grizzled temples, craggy faces, and paunchy bellies, paying their respects at the Mouloud Mammeri cultural center in Tizi-Ouzou, and at his funerals. They came to thank the author who knew how to sing the dread and aspirations of their youth: they knew that they all owe him something. Indeed, he was their undisputed idol, and a reference for the young Kabyl dissenters, student and others, from the pre- and post-April 1980, thus for many of today's 35-to-45 year olds, the generation of the victims of the *Ecole Fondamentale*,¹ but also of thousands of white collar citizens. During all those years, they were attached to his works like one is attached to a life buoy: they, thereby, managed to counteract the prevailing irrationalism.

It was, in large part, his ever-present wisdom and the irony of his splendid poems and one-of-a-kind monologues that prevented them from resorting to violent means in their struggles. His tapes, whether on their night tables or in cafes, reminded them that victory was possible by other means. He did not make you laugh like an ordinary humorist, but he rather made you gnash your teeth and tighten your fists so as not to despair of a better future.

After long years of work and studies, his genius burst out in 1978. During that time of uniqueness of thought and media, thousands of copies were made from his ordinary tapes, recorded with an ordinary tape recorder

in exile. To avoid any controversy as to the authorship of the background music in his tapes, he used either *idballen* (drummers) or Kurdish melodies, with permission from Kurds he got to know in exile. After all, these songs have certain similarities to Kabyl songs.

Contrary to what is said here and there, Muhend Uyehya is the name he used to autograph his works. His real last name is Mohia and his first name is Abdellah, and he was born in the mid-1900 in the village of At-Rbah, Ibudraren. He lived the war for national Independence as a child. Children of war never come out psychologically unscathed: they grow old rapidly and their look reveals this nostalgia of a somehow missed childhood, that is devoid of unknown indifferences. The war of liberation and independence, so hard-won in a frenzy of a generous and oblivious social deconstruction, ruined the environment in which this generation of adults was immersed. In 1969, he went to the University of Algiers.

Abdellah's wrenching periods of exile follow. From Ibudraren he goes to Azazga, then to Amirouche High School in Tizi-Ouzou. Under his nonchalant air, he was also a brilliant student, but eclectic in his relationships and his readings. He already had this critical and caustic look at life that would later characterize his works. His quasi-ascetic and frugal habits stood out among the more or less pop culture highschoolers of the late sixties. Besides his brilliance in the hard sciences, his natural timidity, gentleness, and reserve earned him the title of “best schoolmate in high school.” He was an assiduous student of Mouloud Mammeri,² and God knows they were not many of them around the Master, and he had attended his classes for at least three years. He also helped him conduct his research, collecting material and typesetting during many long working hours at CRAPE (Center for Research in Anthropology, Prehistory, and Ethnology). It was during that time that he started reciting his wonderful and incisive poems, such as:

*Numember yewwi-d axbir,
yebrez abrid amellal,
i t-igerrzen d irgazen,
widak ireznen awal !*

*Ayen riy mačči d awal
mi t-tennid yeddem-it wadu,
Ayen riy mačči d uffal...*

And many others that he delivered in small doses to a small entourage of connoisseurs. He would say: "Poems for those who deserve them."

These were the exception, the general rule being hostility towards any atypical poetry. The politics of cultural homogenization does not tolerate any asperity, especially if it is expressed in another language, particularly the Kabyl language. On Wednesday December 4th, 1972, a university poetry festival took place with the theme "poetry and revolution." The dean of the faculty of literature spared no means to prevent Mohia and his friends from taking part in this festival. The big argument this medieval-thinking dean put forward was "Your language is a dialect!" He refused that November 1st be said in Kabyl.

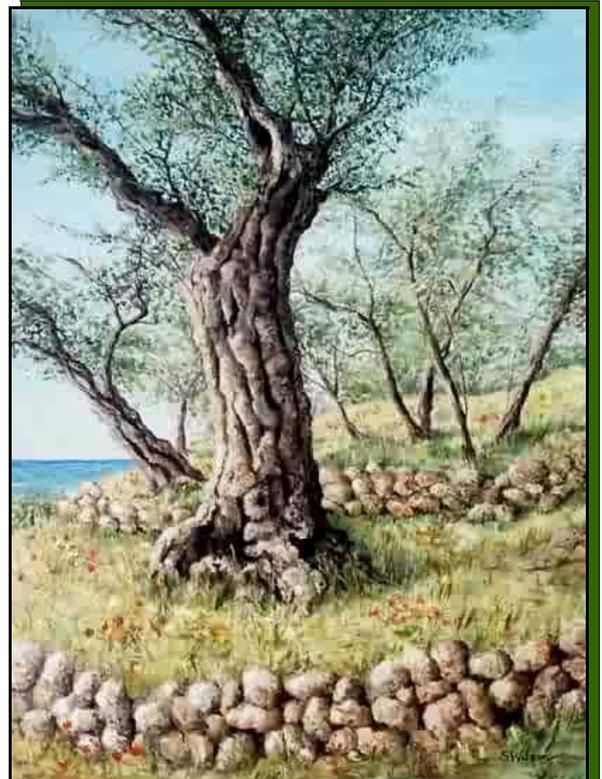
In 1973, Muhend Uyhya left the University of Algiers and Algeria which he would not see again until 1993, in the middle of the dark decade. Mohia foresaw this decade of the "snake brothers" (Les freres izerman) about which he repeatedly sounded the alarm in his works. Regretting his long exile, someone said of Mohia at that time: "*Tamurt mezziyet, abrid yedyeq, argaz meqquer, dunnit tewsaε*" (Trans. The country is small, the road is narrow, the man is great, the world is vast.)

His exile was unavoidable, and actually for him it was a means of survival. It was during this 20-year period, in seclusion and often in sorrow, that he produced most of his work, first in the magazine Tisuraf. A real collection of plays and poems created or adapted from renowned authors, but sometimes from renowned unknowns. We consider, pell-mell this list of authors whose works he translated into Kabyl: Brecht, Pirandello, Prévert, Molière, Becket, Mrozek, Brassens, Félix Leclerc, Philippe Soupault, Boris Vian, de Beranger, J. B. Clément, G. Conte, Jouang Tse, W. Blake, P. Seghers, Racine, J. Brel, E. Potier, G. Servat, J. Ferrat, Platon, Jules Boscat, Tristan Corbière, Lu-Xun, Francis Quimcampois, etc. Mohia often settled for selections

from the works of this multitude of authors, except for plays that he left in their integral form. He used his talent to prove that the Kabyl language has become universal.

The works of all these authors, and many more, were translated, adapted, and kneaded par Mohia to make them accessible to any Kabyl ear without losing an ounce from their original content and meaning. In addition to his poetic fiber, Mohia mastered the French and Kabyl languages more than anybody else. He knew their minor twists. Over the years, exile conditions added to loneliness, and his relentless work for the Kabyl language got the better of his health. As the saying goes: "the work that consumed its author." For 30 years, a small part of Algeria held him high, whereas a large majority ignored even his existence, including in Kabylia! People's consciousness, and Algeria, can be forgiven, knowing that there are many other countries that never deserved their artists. "*Eyya, terbeḥ, win yebyan ad iru, ad iru yef uqerru-s!*"

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- 1- New Algerian school curriculum for grades 1 through 9.
 - 2- Amazigh writer and author.



(Continued from page 7)

Lwennas*Syur Lħasen Ziyani*

Abehri seffer ħiwel
Ar tmurt rzu fella-s
Deg at Σisi ħekker eattel
And' akken yeyli Lwennas

Tawriat Musa tuklal
Ad tsecdid din' yiwen wass
Sellem 'ff igenni d wakal
Matoub zzi-d i lħara-s
Ma twaeat ini-d awal
Ttxil-k ŧebber yemma-s

Awi tamguṭ n lehbeq
Rras azar ff' uzekka-s
In'as mi deg' uzal iħeq
Ay aħbib, ay k-yečča řsař
Deg damen-ik ad yemyi lħeq
S wuglan ney s tuymas

Ih' a k-sedduy asefru
Hdut i yizem ayilas
In'as tamurt ak' tettru
Teġġid-d ilem d lweswas
Neggul am assa a tt-nefru
D wid iy yefkan maras

Tcebbħed timeyriwin
Ternid imelh i lfuřuħ
M'ara cennunt teħdayin
Yyamt tiyatin a nruħ
Kker m'a truđ ay aħnin
Dac' ar' iŧebřen řruħ

D bab n nnif, d ahwawi
Anef i wi' byan ad yegzem
Tecniđ-ağ-d Lħesnawi
Leenqa, Sliman Azem
I tizya-k ternid iswi
Yiwen ur izmir a k-yezzeem

Fella-k iqers-d wedrar
Assa-yi inheded yuywas
Ifrawes uġadarmi lear
Taddukli trennu tissas
Tamurt ay' a s-negg leqrar
D lawan a ttbeddel llsas

Abudali*Syur Lħasen Ziyani*

Aneft-as d abuhali
Ur ixebbec ur yettkerric
Yiwen iseby-it d lwali
Wayeđ iqqar-as d aderwic
Wa izerr-it d azawali
Wa yewhem amek yetteic

Iwwi-tt-id ak' d acali
Deg lexlawi d temdinin
M'ara yaeyu deg tikli
Ad iqeyyel ff' tğaltin
Ad imeyyez ad iwali
I yellan deg wedrar akin

Itett i tuřfa n terwiřt
and' igen ad yali wass
ur yeshisrif ff' teřhiřt
ur t-ittmerrit lweswas
Allay-is yal taŧebħit
Ad iffel akin i tillas

Iheddeř iteddem wađu
Mačč' ařas i s-d-ifeħmen
Yiwen ittagad daewessu
Wayeđ iđsa deg mettawen
Ala d w' iħuz usefru
Ma yemqarab ulawen

Nezra aqerru-s deg genni
Nettyil ff' ulac i yettekka
Ma yettru ma yettyenni
Nug' ansel d ac' i d-yeħka
Wissen ahat d lemeani
Amek ara yili uzekka

Ur seqqarret ara yemxel
Inet-as ur t-neħhim ara
Ur s-qqaret ara yerwel
Netta ur s-yaegib wayra
Ur s-qqaret ara yeshel
Nett' i yugi d lğirra

Nek'ni isumten yer tugett*
Am ħacatwen nesseglaf
Ney agdiđ teġġa tferrett
ittnadi amek ara tt-id-yaf
Nug' a d-nuřal yer tidett
yak d imdanen, nemxalaf

Ammer s tidett nettmeyyiz
Yal taluft a s-nner lqis
Am win isewqen s lwiz
Am win ileħhun deg dis
Kra wi řlin ad yieřiz
Yal asřar s dexxan-is

*tugett = majority

**Iles n Wedrar***Syur Lħusin Ukerdis*

Anwa i k-yerran d awkil
Ay aberriđ ugeritil
Ur nettirid ur nettyar

Ay aken i k-yehwa řtebil
Yibb'as a k-neħtil
Tamaziyt tebra ar tt-nyer

Mačči t-tameyruřt n tterkil
Ney d ayla n sbil
D iles n wedrar aħrař

**Ad dduy bennegni***Syur Lħusin Ukerdis*

Nekk ad dduy bennegni
Wi byun ieass-i
Iggad i teywi ddunit

Widak yetthuzu ubeħri
Adrız d ucali
Ur yid-sen tameddit

Ikfa nniy-as yenna-yi
Assuget i wumi
Tudert teddu s talwit

Ur tettafeđ at tiyersi
La i tizi, la i twizi
Anef-as tura i teqbaylit

Aseyti n Uzeggal

*Syur Eumar Derwic
Tizi n Imnayen*

Am ass-a ad yali wass!

Syur Lhusin Ukerdis

Ulama tyilleḍ neṭtes
Yuqae nadam ger wallen
Ay at usekkud am tmess
Snulfut-ay-d imaynuten
Tallit fellay tessules
Gg^oten buhan imcumen

Ay imenfi ur ttayes
Akud la ifettel ahlalas
Tamurt nney a tt-nefres
A nezdi amnay d uterras
Tilleli a tt-id-nessukes
Am ass-a ad yali wass



Ssawalen yezra

Syur Lhusin Ukerdis

Mazal ssawalen izra
S yiles n imezwura
Di tmurt i yexla uzidud

Nesbek deg yir nnezra
Iy yeḡḡan d ineggura
Am izgaren i nesunnud

Nnejlan at usekkud merṛa
La ttidiren di beṛra
A tamurt amek a' teḥlud

Qqilat-ay kwenni ur nessin!
Tellam ttuzmim-nn dinn:
Nyal amaḍal is ur imeyyin
S amm nekk d kemm d keyyin,
Amyalkam gray ur ta llin.
Da kkatay ad ferḍay tiseggwin,
S ireftilen nwant-i tfednin,
Iḍudan yaḍen ur annin
Ar ackuḍer-inu, gey igellin.
Smuttyat s nnigi titṭawin!
Iman-inu uḍren g turarin,
Temzi zriy han tiyeḍnin!
Mmekrasent felli tagutin,
Ifsan n ufafa-nu ttuglin
S yilxixen d-uwint tigiwin.
Assa, nziy is ur i-uwin
Inegyane isaggugen tilawtin,
Ittebbin abrid i tezrawin.
Ukzeḍ ayudwu i-yettin
Beddey ar syacay timeḍlin:
Rḍaḍsen wulawen i-yugin,
Uḍney is mdin timḍufin
Ussan mgal n tlelliwin.
Slat i yizuga d-ttalinin
Seg tewsitin timaynutin!
Giy yef useyti n tuttriwin,
Aqel-i da ferney tikiwin
Ard isiney ayedda ur nessin!
Qad ntiy s uya yi-d-yujin
Awsey, nemyaf d id zund nekkin.

Amawal:

Aseyti: correction
Amyalkam: communication
Turarin: small games
Ayudwu: shroud
izuga: voices
syacay: to contemplate
ntiy: to begin
zund: as, like

ISALAN *News* ISALAN

(Continued from page 2)

28th, he is summoned again to the Essedikia prosecutor's office where he was informed that he would be prosecuted for "perjury, fraud and deception." He then received a subpoena from the court of Ben Zerdjeb for the 1st of June 2005 where he was accused of "deception, fraud and falsification of documents." On June 22nd 2005, Mr. Zamouche was finally sentenced to two years probation and 20,000 dinars fine.

To better understand the political context of Mr. Zamouche's scandalous sentence, it is important to know that Numidya is an independent social and cultural association registered in Wahran, the second largest city in Algeria. Wahran is located in an Arabic-speaking area but has a large Amazigh-speaking community that originated mainly in Kabylia. Although the Algerian government claims that the Amazigh identity and culture are national issues, it systematically represses any activity related to the Amazigh issue outside the region of Kabylia. By this vicious way, it prevents the principles (democracy, cultural diversity, authenticity of Algerian roots) of the Amazigh Cultural Movement from spreading to other regions. Æ

Publications

A Letter Game in Tamazight

Two computer scientists, members of the association Imedyazen of Algiers, Algeria, have just put last touches to an interactive CD-ROM featuring a game using letters to form words in Tamazight, with the Kabyl variant of the language. As soon as a correct word is formed, its equivalents in French and English are instantly displayed. This tool will definitely help the beginners to learn Mammeri's Language. To discover this CD-ROM, visit the website of the publisher Agawa Production. This CD-ROM is already on the market in

(Continued on page 15)

The Argan Tradition of Southwestern Morocco

BY HELEN E. HAGAN

"Imma yargan iy ibbi nefl mat ittarin"

Even when it is fallen, the argan tree will leave heirs ¹

The Argan tree (*Argana Spinosa*) is indigenous to the Valley of the Souss and the lower slopes of the Atlas Mountains in southwest Morocco. This remarkable tree of the Sapotaceae family is unique to the region and grows nowhere else in the world. Argan groves cover approximately 43% of the land area. From time immemorial, the argan woodlands have functioned both as a literal anchor against the winds and erosion of the soil, and a cultural one around which a pastoral way of life and a traditional home industry of oil extraction from its nut have characterized this Amazigh community.

The ecological, social, and cultural values of the argan tree constitute one of North Africa's unique and most precious natural resources. It has insured the subsistence of some two million Imazighen in this predominantly rural area of Morocco.

Targant ²

"Old Argan Tree, I salute you from the depths of a world which only knows of you the cosmetics extracted from your oval almond. You are the most resistant and without doubt the most beautiful of all trees." ³

The Argan tree, or Moroccan ironwood, is an evergreen spiny tree, which grows in groves throughout the landscape of southwest Morocco from Safi southward as far as Goulimine and eastward through the Souss Valley and Tafraoute where the strongest specimens are found. "Ikst ar Sus ar iggi n Sus ar iahan" (from the Atlas Mountains, crossing the Souss to the region of the Haha, "verse of the Argan Song of Archach Group.)

The tree dates from the geological Tertiary Era, grows slowly and survives sometimes for centuries. The median lifetime of trees is 150 to 200 years, with the oldest ranging from 200 to 400 years. The argan forest covers an area of approximately 320,000 square miles and numbers some 20 million trees. The tree does not grow below the altitude of 500-600 meters, and above that of 2,000 meters, with most of its growth concentrated in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains.

The trunk of the argan tree is gnarly. Its sturdy and deep roots, while retaining the soil against constant erosion, allow penetration and retention of moisture in a land that receives little rainfall. It allows other species to grow in its shade. Its wood is used in construction. Its nuts are harvested in a unique manner through the agency of tree-climbing goats. The extracted oil is of an exquisite quality and taste, and it is used locally both for its



Map of Morocco. The growth of the Argan tree is strictly limited to the southwest region of Morocco, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Draa Valley, in the Souss Valley and the Atlas Mountain foothills, south of Essaouira and north of Tiznit.



The Argan Tree, a venerable specimen near Anil, Souss Valley (© Hagan, 1997)

nutritional properties and medicinal virtues. Argan by-products which are left at the bottom of the press during the process of oil extraction ("tazgemmut") are also essential as fuel and fodder for the animals.

The tree is key to the ecological stability of the region. Today, the ancient knowledge of its nutritional and medicinal properties has grown beyond the local community, and reached the international scene. While many plants have significant import for the health of certain indigenous people throughout the world, few of those acquire any reputation outside the local native populations of an ecosystem in which they thrive, and where a traditional use of native species is maintained.



A handful of roasted nuts. Taroudant (© Hagan, 1997)

Today, the argan tree is acquiring somewhat of a reputation outside Morocco. The recent story of the development and surge of the traditional oil extraction industry is a remarkable one, and owes a

great deal to one woman, Dr. Zoubida Charrouf, Chemistry Department of the University Mohamed V in Rabat. This story, and that of the Amazigh women who are involved in it, is a superb example of cultural and economic develop-

ment based on traditional knowledge and practices in the modern world.

The Collect of the Argan Fruit ("tigri") and Traditional Oil Extraction

The fruit of the argan tree is the size of an apricot or plum, and its white pulp envelops a hard-shelled kernel, which contains from one to three pits, or almonds. The fruit matures between May and July. A tree's average yield of fruit is about 8 kgs per year.

Traditionally, herds of climbing goats are taken to argan groves in the Spring, allowed to gorge themselves on the fruit, then led home in the evening where they are plied with lots of water, making them regurgitate the almonds. These nuts are said to be far superior to that which would be harvested by human hand. The form of collective gathering of the fruit by hand ("ar garrun ifeyyachen," the local term in the region of Essouira among the Haha Ayt Yasin) is authorized by local assemblies after the fruit is allowed to mature, and occurs in July. Public criers relay the decision taken by the assemblies of notables, shouting from village to village: "The Argan is authorized." The fruit is collected with special offerings named "Isisel" to dispel all bad influences, carried in baskets and taken home for processing, and ultimately furnishes the oil. First, the fruit is allowed to dry. The pits are then extracted, and cracked open ("arrag") on a special flat stone ('asarg n warrag.") The action of breaking the nut (aqqa) is called "irga." The flat, hard stone on which the nut is cracked is called "assarwag." The argan nut which has been shelled of its almond (tizenin) or pitted fruit is called "irgn." Today, the dried fruit can also be bought in local markets and shelled by women who specialize in the task.



Tree climbing goats harvesting the fruit between Ouarzazate and Agadir, (© Hagan, 1997)

The subsequent part of the process of oil extraction comes with the roasting of the skinned almonds by the Amazigh women. The roasted nuts are pounded and mixed with a little warm water and kneaded into a brownish dough ("ar zemman tazgmmut") which is pressed through a traditional millstone at home, following certain ritual procedures, incantations and offerings to insure its beneficial properties. An offering of a few drops in the four directions is essential before any consumption of the new oil. The obtained oil is one of the purest oils in the world with remarkable properties. The by-products of this extraction are used for the making of "amlou" (a rich mixture of ground nuts and honey generally consumed at breakfast) and fodder for animals. This leftover substance fed to the cattle is called "tawrit."

The process of oil extraction is lengthy and time consuming. Until recently, it was home-based and labor intensive. It is estimated, for instance, that the collection of argan fuel wood amounts to 800,000 working days a year, while the extraction of oil is approximated to 20,000,000 working days. One needs one hundred kilograms of nuts to produce one or two kilograms of oil. Another set of statistics indicates that it takes at least two working days to produce one liter of argan oil. Traditional use of the argan oil is domestic, nutritional, therapeutic, and cosmetic. Local use as a skin emollient and against arthritis, for instance, has led to its use as massage oil, and a beauty aid. Another use of the oil is for home soap making, and the tree has been found to be rich in saponins in recent chemical analysis. Saponins are natural detergents found in certain plants, mainly desert plants, with cholesterol-lowering properties.

With the advent of oil producing co-ops in the region of Essaouira, it is estimated that the yearly production of oil for that region is about 1,000 to 2,000 tons.

The Argan socio-economic and symbolic value in Amazigh life

"Imik n usxan d ubazjn ayj ur iney" (We have long sweetened our dry bread with your oil)" Argan song of Archach Group)

The argan tree has marked the lives and imagination of the Amazigh people of this territory for centuries. It has inspired poetry, art forms, and local stories. It is a symbol of local culture, inextricably linked to Amazigh cultural identity in the Souss Valley and around Agadir and Essaouira. It symbolizes the natural health of the land, the people, and that of their cultural survival. Even if the tourists that flock today to the super resorts of the coastal areas do not know of this wealth, the ancient world was not totally ignorant of the value of argan oil. Written records of its extraction date back to the thirteenth century AD, and the oil was exported to Europe in the eighteenth century, but was supplanted by the popularity of the olive oil, less nutty in its flavor. The oil has



Traditional millstone , Tioute, Anti-Atlas
(© Hagan, 1997)

a distinctive flavor, somewhat akin to that of walnut oil. There are degrees of purity, and the purest is highly valued. It is not recommended to purchase argan oil on the open market or the side of the road, as such oil is impure (often mixed with other oils) and is often degraded by the lack of hygiene by which it is bottled in recycled containers, and other odd vials. Its shelf life is relatively short.

The Argan Oil enters the global market

The active ingredients of argan oil were not identified until modern chemistry took a look: it is here that the work of a dedicated Moroccan chemist, Dr. Zoubida Charrouf, began to affect the argan oil industry of the region. This extraordinary woman combines the dedication and skills of a superb scientist and researcher with a commitment to helping improve the condition of women. Her passion stems from reading once that in the nineteenth century; a French researcher remarked that there is an active ingredient in the argan nut, the properties of which, however, he did not identify. No one, she mused, was ever curious enough to enquire what was this active ingredient or principle. Those who work on the chemistry of the argan tree wrote on the virtues of the oil without clearly isolating the active ingredients that made the oil so unique. It is her curiosity that led here, step by step, to identify the molecular substances unique to that oil, and those were anti-oxidants.

Feeling rather sad that such oil, with remarkable medicinal and therapeutic properties, was being produced by pounding stones, and often sold in doubtful containers on the side of the road, she began to formulate a way to change its production.

She busied herself to ameliorate the extraction and the pro-

duction of argan oil, through the development of an industrial press, and the creation of Amazigh co-operatives of women, empowering them along the way. "I have been criticized, "she is quoted to have said in a newspaper interview in French a couple of years ago, " for three things. "First, for pushing women into business. Second, for ameliorating the extraction process of argan oil, and finally for being interested in a tree that belongs to the people, and not academicians."

She has successfully engaged the Amazigh women of Tamanar and Tidzi into the creation of thriving co-ops under their own direction. Tidzi was founded in 1998, and Tamanar in 2000. The oil produced by these co-ops is bottled according to international standards as to purity and health. The co-ops have obtained not only certification for export to Europe, Canada and the United States, but the AMAL co-op of Tamanar has been the recipient of an international 2001 Biodiversity Award. They are also engaged today in the production of cosmetics, with worldwide distribution potential. There are 47 women employed full-time at the factories and 120 women working part-time from their homes. The first year's business for these co-ops was around \$100,000. By all standards, it was a success.

Dr Zoubida Charrouf has combined three ingredients in her activism and contribution to the Amazigh culture: women's liberation and empowerment, argan products, and the preservation of a native natural resource in danger. She has been called "The Champion of the Argan Tree." Her doctorate in organic chemistry gave her the tools to devote her research to what impassioned her, plants, with which she feels one can dialog. "Plants are useful." And why the argan tree specifically? She gives two reasons for her lifework and devotion: first, the argan tree is a unique species native of Morocco, and second, it is under threat of extinction.

Though the argan tree constitutes a national treasure, more than one third of the argan woodlands have disappeared in the last one hundred years. It is estimated that where a hundred trees stood, now only thirty survive. In the last ten years, several projects have been undertaken to preserve their unique ecosystem, and the Amazigh cultural heritage associated with this ancient forest.Æ

Notes:

1- From Argan song by Archach Group, reported by Mohamed Nassiri, Ibn Zor University of Agadir 1994-1995 Memoir.

2 - Amazigh feminine appellation of the tree.

3 - Mohammed Khair-Eddine, Ibn Zor University, Agadir, December 2004.

For further information:

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Television program titled "The Land of the Argan Tree" part of the series "Tamazgha, Berber land of Morocco" (1998) produced by Helene E. Hagan, Amazigh Video Productions, available in VHS cassette and DVD on the web site. One half-hour. Tazzla Institute for Cultural Diversity: e-mail tazzla@earthlink.net and web site www.tazzla.org



(Continued from page 11)

France.

(Source: *Liberté*, Algerian daily Newspaper, July 1st, 2005)

« To Topos » : North African Voices 2005

North African poetry is in the spotlight in the USA with the publication of a special issue of the journal "To Topos" dedicated to North African voices and poets. Readers can find poetry in Tamazight, Arabic, French and English. This issue contains the full text of the presentations and the biographies of the authors.

More than fourteen North African poets were present at this conference. Thus, Kabylia is represented by eight poets: Ahcene Mariche, Amel Tafsut, Khadija Al-Mourabit, Remdan Ath Mansour, Fares Bensadi, Cherif Khazem, et Alek Toumi, Morocco is represented by two: Ali Amazigh, Abdellatif Attafi and Libya by one: Sassi Dahmani. Countries of origin are not given for Yasmina Ben Daoued and Hemous H'mmu.

Beside poetry, talks in English were given by professors and academics from the University of Oregon: Pr. Josef Ohmann-Krause (For the introduction), Pr. Nabil Boudraa (An Ancient Mosaic Land), Eric Sellin (A Land of Many Echoes) and Cecile Oumhani (Young Woman At The Terrace). Finally, a special tribute was paid by Eric Sellin and Cherif Khazem to Tahar Djaout and Muhend u Yehya, respectively.

