

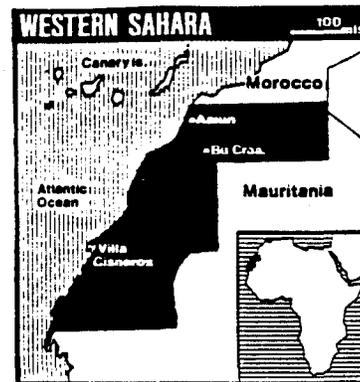
WESTERN SAHARA CAMPAIGN, U.S.A.

FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

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REPORT ON "PEACE FOR THE SAHRAWI PEOPLE",
an international conference held at the French
National Assembly, November 23-24, 1985.



The Paris Peace Conference, "Peace for the Sahrawi People, A European Concern", held November 23-24, 1985 at the French National Assembly, was a new effort by the Coordinating Committee of International Support Committees for the Sahrawi people to focus world attention on the plight of the Sahrawis who have been resisting Moroccan annexation since late October 1975.

The International Coordinating Committee, which has had yearly meetings since 1975 to coordinate relief efforts for the Sahrawi refugees, a group of refugees which numbers about 165,000 persons in camps in the Tindouf, Algeria region, decided in late 1984 to host a Peace meeting in order to direct European attention to the Sahrawis and their long efforts to exercise self-determination. Western Sahara Campaign, USA was involved in the planning from the beginning and worked to bring the Peace conference to the attention of many Americans. Through the Campaign's efforts, the following Americans became sponsors of the conference: Ramsey Clarke, The American Committee on Africa, Richard Falk, Rev. George Houser, Noam Chomsky, Rev. Dr. William Sloane Coffin, and Eqbal Ahmad.

[In February 1976, the Sahrawis announced the establishment of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), the state to replace the former territory of Spanish Sahara. To date sixty-three nations recognize the SADR and a much larger body of nations recognizes the Polisario Front, the political organization of the Sahrawi people. A number of international organizations, among these, the Organization of African Unity, also recognize the SADR. The current president of the SADR is serving as Vice President of the OAU. The Polisario Front has official status at the United Nations and at meetings of the Non-aligned Movement.]

The only European nation to officially recognize the SADR, Yugoslavia, included in its delegation to the Paris Peace Conference Nijac Dizdarevic, Yugoslavian deputy. Other major parliamentary figures to attend the meeting were Enzo Enriques Agnoletti, Italian Senator; Wim Albers, Dutch deputy; the adjunct Secretary General of the OAU, N'jenga; Anne-Marie Lizin, Belgian deputy to the European Parliament; Barbara Simmons, West German deputy to the European Parliament; Petra Kelly, West German deputy; M.A. Anderssen, Swedish deputy; M. Guggenberger, Austrian deputy; J. Rouxin, Adjunct Mayor of Le Mans which has a sister city relationship with the refugees from Hauza.

Raoul Weexsteen of the French Socialist Party was a delegate and represented the Socialist International at the same time. Jeremy Corbyn and Tom Enright, British and Irish parliamentarians, were in attendance as were representatives from a number of liberation movements including SWAPO from Namibia and the ANC from South Africa. Leaders of several Pan-African groups were also delegates to the meeting. American participation included Dr. Anne Lippert of the Sahrawi People Support Committee (Ada, Ohio); Ludlow E. Bailey, Secretary of Western Sahara Campaign; David H. Smith of Miami, Florida; and Western Sahara Campaign's Executive Director, Teresa K. Smith. Ms. Smith, one of the speakers at the conference, presented the paper "Implementation of the OAU Peace Plan for Western Sahara". Dr. Richard Falk made a brief appearance on his way to the 40th anniversary of the Nuremberg trials in West Germany.

Two resolutions came out of the meeting, the first of which was signed by Parliamentary figures and Party representatives in attendance. It called for the creation of a network of political solidarity, circulation of information on the evolution of the political, military and diplomatic situation in Western Sahara, called on governments, especially those twelve nations of the European Economic Community to support the call for implementation of the UN and OAU resolutions on the question, asked the EEC to recognize the legitimacy of the struggle of the Sahrawi people and the SADR, and asked all governments to support concretely all initiatives and all efforts to promote peace in the area with respect for national sovereignty and in conformity with the Charter of the OAU.

The second resolution, which was approved by the over 400 delegates present, called on states and private enterprises to cease assisting the prolongation of the war through investment in Western Sahara and the sale of arms, called for implementation of the OAU/UN peace plan, and urged direct negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front.

A very broad group of diplomats, parliamentary figures, scholars and human rights activists from all over the world attended the meeting. Messages were received from a number of people unable to attend the meeting including Bishop Tutu of South Africa, Mayor of Atlanta Andrew Young, George Crockett, Jr, U.S. Representative, and Senators Paul Simon and Rudy Boschwitz. Sahrawi dignitaries who attended the meeting were Madame Guejmoula Ebbi, Secretary-General of the Union of Sahrawi Women and her Director of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Keltoum Khayatt; Omar Hadrami, member of the Political Bureau of the Polisario Front; Hakim Ibrahim, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Ahmad Boukhari, Polisario Director of European Affairs; and those Sahrawis working in information bureaux in Europe. The meeting was conducted primarily in French, but there was simultaneous translation in English and Spanish and some delegates gave their presentations in English and Spanish. A book on the proceedings of the conference will be published later this year.