This Thursday, November the 18th, the Moroccan people are celebrating the Kingdom’s Independence Day, which commemorates the historic speech of 18 November 1955 by the father of the Nation, the late His Majesty Mohammed V, announcing the end of the protectorate over Morocco and the liberation of the Homeland. It will remain for all eternity a high point in the history of our country.

Independence Day is not only commemoration of a glorious page in our contemporary history but also a great source of inspiration for all the future generations.

The proclamation of the Kingdom’s independence was, in fact, the crowning achievement of a glorious epic struggle against colonialism, which was written thanks to a secular pact between the throne and the people, and which was marked by sacrifices and feats that have remained in the annals of history.

The symbiosis between the throne and the people and the patriotic struggle led by the Moroccan people finally won out with the triumphant return of the legitimate Sultan to Morocco, where he was given an unforgettable welcome by tens of thousands of citizens from all regions of the Kingdom, paving the way for the advent of a free, modern Morocco, proud of its history, open to modernity and aspiring to a better future.

During the protectorate, the Moroccan Action Committee, considered as the precursor of the National Movement, was created in 1934, announcing at the same time the birth of the political resistance. This committee presented a plan of reforms to the French government in 1934 and 1936.

In 1943, the late HM Mohammed V, Father of the Nation and hero of the liberation, took advantage of the Anfa Conference held in Morocco, which brought together the Allied leaders during the Second World War, to put the issue of Morocco’s independence on the agenda.

Thanks to this initiative, the late Sultan had obtained the assurance from the American President Franklin Roosevelt forhis support to the Kingdom’s independence project at the end of the Second World War.

The date of 11 January 1944 is also engraved in the history of Morocco, as itis the date of the signing, in consultation with the late Sultan Mohammed V, of the manifesto calling for the independence of Morocco.

The Independence Manifesto, which the Moroccan people commemorate every year, was a decisive step in the Kingdom’s contemporary history and one of the many embodiments of the symbiosis that characterises the links between the glorious Alawite Throne and the national movement.

Presented to the colonial authorities and to the representatives of the three powers (United States, Great Britain and the former Soviet Union), it expressed an unequivocal message from all Moroccans who were determined to detach from the domination of the protectorate.

This manifesto, which sealed an ingenious pact between the liberating King, the late Mohammed V, and the leaders of the national movement, made it possible to begin the phase of public demand for independence and national sovereignty by putting forward the common will of the Throne and the people to get rid of the protectorate in order to embark on the construction of a free and independent Morocco.

In its struggle to regain its independence, Morocco was the scene of heroic acts aimed at thwarting the plans of the coloniser, who spared no effort to control the national territory for almost half a century, dividing the country into zones shared between the French protectorate in the centre of Morocco and the Spanish protectorate in the north and south, while Tangiers was made an international zone.

The launching of the operations of the liberation army, which constituted a crucial stage in the struggle against colonialism and for independence, highlights the glorious episodes of the history of the resistance of the provinces of Boulemane, Taza, Al Hoceima and Nador in October 1955.

The launching of the first operations was a natural reaction of the armed resistance movement, when the foreign occupation authorities violated the sanctity of Morocco and provoked the patriotic feeling of its sons, by exiling in Corsica and then in Madagascar, the father of the nation and hero of liberation and independence, the late HM Mohammed V and his companion in the struggle and exile, the late HM Hassan II as well as the illustrious royal family.

A total mobilisation took place and a fierce patriotic struggle was organised to demand the return of the legitimate Sovereign to the mother country. The population joined the ranks of the liberation army to fight against foreign occupation and for the return of the hero of the country’s liberation and independence.

The heroic operations of the liberation army thus marked the beginning of the end of colonialism. Indeed, 45 days after the start of these operations, the late HM Mohammed V returned to the motherland, on 16 November 1955, bearing the good news of the independence and reunification of the Kingdom.

The date of November 16th 1955 will remain for ever engraved in the annals of Moroccan history. It marks the return of the late HM Mohammed V to the motherland and was welcomed by a vast popular movement.

It translated also the perfect symbiosis between the Alawite throne and the people and announced the advent era of the country's liberation from the protectorate.

It was this admirable unity between the King and his people that finallyshook the foundations of the protectorate and caused the departure of the last colonial troops from the Moroccan soil.

"We are delighted to be able to announce the end of the tutelage and protectorate regime and the advent of freedom and independence", declared the late HM Mohammed V before a crowd that invaded the esplanade of the Hassan mosque in Rabat.

Moroccans considered themselves to be independent as soon as the late HM Mohammed V returned from exile. During the period of resistance and the struggle for independence, Moroccans never made the difference between the King and independence, because the return of the King meant independence for them.

Thus, the determination of His Majesty Mohammed V to liberate the country and to start a new era of democracy and development overcame the forced exile and the multiple attempts of the protectorate forces.

The hero of the liberation, the late His Majesty Mohammed V, while announcing the liberation of the Nation from the yoke of the protectorate, had, through a declaration full of meaning, visionary and full of lessons, set the new course for Morocco which had just left the colonial era and launched the process of modernisation, consolidation of the State, completion of national unity and development.

Following the steps of his father, the leader of independence, the late HM Hassan II set his mind in building the country and completing the Kingdom's territorial

integrity, with the recovery of the southern provinces through the glorious Green March.

Today, His Majesty King Mohammed VI continues this great march with determination and dedication, giving priority to the defence of the Kingdom’s territorial integrity and embarking on new projects, those of development, advanced regionalisation and major economic and social projects.

And it is always this same symbiosis between the people and their Sovereign, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, which has enabled Morocco to meet the challenges of development, modernisation and the consecration of the rule of law and democracy.