The legislative elections of June 1997 have enabled an apparently new political map to be drawn up. From these elections emerged a coalition government composed of ministers representing the RND (National Rally of Democracy), the MSP (Movement of the Society for Peace), formerly Hamas, the moderate political tendency described in more detail below). These three parties constitute the current majority in the Assembly – a majority which gives President Zeroual a degree of room to manoeuvre.

For its part, the parliamentary opposition is made up of parties occupying about a hundred seats. Some of these parties are very old; others have appeared more recently. The former are characterized by the charisma of their leaders, the leaders of the national movement. Essentially, they are the FFS (Fronte Al Ahmad’i Front des Forces Socialistes), the PLS (Mohammed Bouad’i Paris de la Revolution Socialiste), which dissolved itself in 1976, the PCA (Parti Communist Algérien), which was later to become the PAGS) and the MDA (Mohammed Boudiaf’s Mouvement Démocratique en Algérie). As their acronyms suggest, the PLS and the FFS, as well as the PAGS, remain attached to the principles of the revolution and democracy in the case of the first two parties, socialism without democracy in the case of the PAGS and democracy without socialism in the case of the MDA). In addition to a radical reform of the system that it has always advocated, the FFS has succeeded in opening itself up to other demands: the Berber culture and gender equality. Generally speaking, almost all of these parties are open to progress and the separation of politics and religion.

Recent Opposition or Radical Islamism

It is the Islamists who are mobilizing the most and who are mainly recruiting among the working class (the FIS) and the most favoured sectors. Some of these parties are very old; others are composed of intellectuals who are looking for an ideological and political doctrine (socialism in the case of the MDA). In addition to a radical reform of the system that it has always advocated, the FFS has succeeded in opening itself up to other demands: the Berber culture and gender equality. Generally speaking, almost all of these parties are open to progress and the separation of politics and religion.

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