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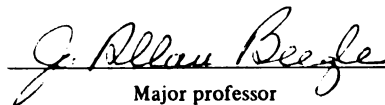
*Colonialism and Rural Change  
in Algeria*

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

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Major professor

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COLONIALISM AND RURAL CHANGE  
IN ALGERIA

By

Hocine Kouache

A THESIS

Submitted to  
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## ABSTRACT

### COLONIALISM AND RURAL CHANGE IN ALGERIA

By

Hocine Kouache

This thesis focuses on the change that affected socio-economic and cultural structures in Algerian rural society. The geographic and historical factors have shaped the structures that colonization and decolonization negatively affected. Urban centers dominated the countryside from antiquity up to the present time, and even independence has not significantly modified this situation. A case study of a newly constructed socialist village was designed to assess the post independence development impact and the difference between socialist theory and practice. A brief comparison between this village and the Israeli Kibbutz is included.

To the memory of my Father and Mother

To my dear wife

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Algeria recovered its national sovereignty from the French on July 5, 1962, when the bloodiest colonial war of the twentieth century officially ended. Algerian society had to build from nothing but ruins. The FLN did not define what kind of development Algeria was to follow after independence until the war ended. In fact, the Tripoli program adopted unanimously by the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA) in Tripoli (Lybia) in June 1962, was the only program of the FLN.

This program was intended to be implemented by the FLN in an independent Algeria. It presented a short analysis of Algeria's socioeconomic conditions since colonization and put forth guidelines for educational, political, and socioeconomic orientations to be followed by the new state. Its main points of interest were: the agrarian revolution, economic planning, mineral and energy resources nationalization, credit and foreign trade, development of literacy, and building of public facilities.

In its brief social category analysis, the charter mentioned the peasants as being the main revolutionary force that liberated the country. "The poor peasants were the chief victims of colonialist seizures of land, segregation, and exploitation . . . it is, generally,



the peasants and workers who have been the active basis of the movement and have given it its essential popular character" (34e:41-42).

The Algerian peasantry seems to have been exploited by urban centers from the time of Roman domination up till now. In the 14th Century Ibn Khaldun described this exploitation:

Countrymen suffer from the city dwellers authority. As was already stated, nomadic civilization is inferior to that of those whose dwellings are fixed or live in large cities.... When rural people continue to live in flat country without conquering a town or building an empire, they need this urban population. They should work for the city dwellers, obey their orders, and their governmental exigencies. If the city is commanded by a prince, countrymen are humiliated and under submission because of his strength and desire to serve his own interests. (25: 50)

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels came close to expressing the ideal thinking of Ibn Khaldun concerning the town and country antagonism.

The division of labour is already more developed. We already find the antagonism of town and country; later the antagonism between those states which represent town interests and those which represent country interests. The antagonism between town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilization, from tribe to state, from locality to nation.... The town already is in actual fact, the concentration of the population, of the instrument of production, of capital, of pleasures, of needs, while the country demonstrates just the opposite fact, isolation and separation. (32: 49-69)

The Tripoli program clearly favored the socialist type of development deemed more likely to bring about socioeconomic and cultural justice that never existed for the large majority of the rural population. But during the first three years of independence, the socialist experimentation occurred amid internal political strife and external threat. Morocco not only laid claim to part of Algerian territory, but even organized an armed invasion against Algeria in 1963. On June 19, 1965, a coup d'état ousted A. Ben Bella and brought

to power H. Boumédiène. Ben Bella was accused of adhering to an anti-scientific socialist policy that caused economic waste and administrative inefficiency.

Boumédiène's government chose a specific socialism that is deemed to conform to Algerian social and historical conditions and started operating under the mottoes of profitability, efficiency, and social welfare. This policy aimed at ending privilege, social inequality, and exploitation of man by man. A program called regional balance was initiated to help the country's poorest regions develop themselves by allotting them special budgets. These efforts seem to be ineffective since they could not create necessary conditions for socialism to develop. The disparities in income, the people's styles of life and thinking do not conform to a socialist culture. This effort toward development did not help solve the antagonism between city and country inhabitants.

As an Algerian who grew up in the rural areas before the colonial rule was challenged, who was involved in the struggle against it, and who finally witnessed its overthrow, I am interested in understanding the socioeconomic change process in the rural areas in pre- and post-colonial Algeria, and the contradictions between ideology and concrete reality. Independent Algeria is now 17 years old and it may be time to look if there is any significant change in the prevailing socioeconomic and cultural structures involving the rural world. Has there been a significant improvement of rural life after independence, as one may legitimately expect? Social changes are better shown when looked at in distinct periods, and the colonial and post-independent Algerian eras offer useful periods for comparative purpose. How was the

Algerian peasantry structured before the colonization? What was the impact of colonization on this structure? What are the important changes that affected rural society during the liberation war? What is the impact of French colonialism on Algerian development today? These are major questions to which this thesis is addressed.

My data are from published books, Algerian official documents, and field work. The first two sources are in English, French, and Arabic, and all translations from French and Arabic are my own. Also the field work data are mostly translated from Arabic but some from French. The field work lasted from July 30 to September 15, 1978. In addition, about two weeks were spent between administrative offices (the Ministry, Wilaya, and township) and the village, to obtain an authorization before working. I have interviewed informally about 40 people: farmers, administratives, UNPA authorities, CAPRA presidents, CAPCS authorities, and village committee members of different ages and sexes. But I was unable to enter more than three homes, one of which was with a visiting French youth group for whom I served as translator. I have visited two farms three different times to observe farm operations.

In this study, emphasis is successively made upon the impact of the geographical factor and the successive invasions of the country that have significantly shaped the socioeconomic, cultural, and political structures in Algeria. French colonialism, faced with a different culture and language, was determined to break up these structures in the nineteenth century. Nationalism and the Islamic "Renaissance" prepared the way for the national liberation war that devastated and uprooted the peasantry. Despite undeniable improvement

of living conditions after independence, the rural people are still exploited by urban centers. This exploitation began in antiquity and continues today. A case study of a new agrarian village was designed to assess the difference between ideology and practice. Some comparisons are also made with the Israeli Kibbutz. Socioeconomic, cultural and political changes are viewed from historical, structural, and class struggle perspectives.

## CHAPTER II

### PRE-COLONIAL ALGERIA

#### The Geographical Setting

##### Borders

The geographical factor is very important in Algeria, because it significantly affects the economic and social structures of this Central North African country. Algeria can be viewed as the central part of three related countries: Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Together they form what the Arabs referred to ever since the seventh century as the "sunset island" (Jazirat Al-Maghreb), which when abbreviated becomes the (Maghreb). The three countries share extensive boundaries and when viewed as one geographical unit, it is bounded by the Mediterranean Sea eastward and northward, the Atlantic Ocean westward, and the Sahara southward. Algeria is the largest of the three countries, with only one facade bordering the sea and including the Sahara which can be considered as a sea of sands composing a large part of the country.

##### Climatic Zones

From the viewpoint of climate and average annual rainfall, Algeria is divided traditionally into two zones: north and south. The north is characterized by Mediterranean climate and the south is arid. In the past, with limited means of access to the Sahara, this division

into Tell (Coastal) and Sahara was very meaningful. All the high plain and slightly watered sectors, western Orania as well as the whole of the Constantine region up to southern Aures and Boutaleb are Tell. The rest of Oran's high plains, the Algiers' high plains, and the secondary ranges of the Atlas bordering them to the south are Sahara Desert.

This demarcation separates zones that receive, throughout the agricultural year (October-May), more than 300 m/m of rainfall (which causes erosion) and those that do not receive 300 m/m of rainfall (and consequently do not cause erosion). This demarcation also separates the zones drained into the Mediterranean Sea and that drained into closed basins (27: 20).

The distinction between Tell and Sahara is also meaningful with regard to differences between soils and vegetation. The north defined by this demarcation is a relatively small part of the country, because the distance separating the Sahara from the sea is very short, and does not go farther than 100 KM into the Tlemcen region (west) and 200 KM at Biskra (east) (27: 21).

The mountainous character of the coastal zone near the sea, the altitude of the high plains, and their isolation from the sea determine the climate of Algeria, as a whole, much more clearly than is the case for Tunisia and Morocco.

The natural conditions in Algeria have particularly grave consequences for human activity. Because of lack of dams, which are very few, the Algerian agriculture depends mostly on irregular rainfall. As one proceeds into the south, rainfall becomes less and less. Thus, most cultivable lands are located in the northern part of the country

which receives plenty of seasonal rains necessary for agriculture. Cereal crops and sheep breeding are the major agricultural activities of the traditional sector, but a dry winter--generally one out of three--decimates the herds and reduces the wheat and barley harvest by half (37: 40). The irregular character of the coastal rivers and the seasonal flow of the rivers in the high plains rivers constitute an irreversible obstacle for the use of water in irrigation or for other purposes.

From the point of view of economic activity, there are three major climatic zones in Algeria: the first is in the north which receives a minimum average rainfall of 400 m/m yearly and where farming is practiced without need for irrigation. This zone contains relatively limited arable land surfaces because of the importance of mountains. This zone accounts for about 6,800,000 hectares of land and a rural population of 8,000,000 people (33e: 10).

The second zone comprises about 20,000,000 hectares which receive less than 400 m/m average yearly rainfall. This zone constitutes the Algerian steppes that are mainly used for cattle growing, because no crop culture is possible without irrigation in this immense zone. Some cereals however are grown in the northern part of this zone, especially in portions having between 300 to 400 m/m average yearly rainfall (33e: 99).

The third zone is the Sahara Desert which represents nine-tenths of the total Algerian territory and is equal to the size of Western Europe. This desert is inhabited by only about 720,000 nomads and oasis dwellers. But if the Sahara is poor in agricultural potentialities, it is very rich in oil and natural gas. Algeria's

gas reserves are second only to those of the United States and equal to those of Russia (37: 42). The Algerian Sahara is a real desert, but none of the Maghrebin high lands are really arid. The north, with the exception of the plains of Oran and the Cheliff Valley bottom, benefits from both plenty of rain and the mild Mediterranean climate. But even so, the farmer is never sure of harvesting what he plowed because of the climatic uncertainty. The annual risks are very great and the natural conditions do not favor finding a better way of farming in Algeria (12: 211).

### Successive Invasions

#### Internal and External Conflicts

It is well known that Algeria has experienced, through its long history, successive invasions, including the Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks and French. The natives invariably fiercely resisted these foreign invaders. Few of the invaders established durable empires and few others exercised a significant cultural influence, because the natives "had received, with a strange passivity, all the imported civilizations" (27: 8).

In addition to the resistance to foreign conquerors, there has been throughout the history of this country, conflicts between sedentary farmers and the pastoral nomadic people. Ibn Khaldun has described quite well, in his history of Berbery, those permanent tribal conflicts which indirectly, helped the outside invaders to be masters of Algeria for centuries, but not forever.

The country had been, more often than not, divided into different isolated regions. Each region had to organize, separately, its



own limited resistance to defend its territory. Typically, each new invader had to defeat the predecessor before taking his place. The natives were usually pushed to remote areas and had to fight a succession of invaders.

### The Romans

Although the French invasion was the last and the most important, it may be useful to take a brief look at their predecessors. The Berbers maintained their social organization during the Roman domination and Rome never pretended to have been able to directly administer the Berber population. Neither their religion nor their civilization were accepted by the natives who were subjected but were never assimilated or even neutralized. The Roman occupation was important but it was limited to the plain areas and to the more easily accessible zones. Consequently, the mountainous regions of Aures, Kabylia, Ouarsenis and part of Oranian high plains were never dominated. Generally "the mountains were free territories to which the Roman agents pushed the plains' population and from where harassing actions could come" (27: 86).

Land was most important for the Romans and those having lands were systematically forced to leave and go elsewhere, for example, into the mountains or desert as occurred in (193). There was no peace that could last for a long time, because whenever the Roman cantonments were not sufficient, further land was confiscated. So, "the Roman peace was, really, a constant repression of Berbers' ceaseless attempts to recover their lands and their independence" (27: 87). This policy of land confiscation will be extensively repeated again by the French settlers, centuries later.

### The Vandals and Byzantines

In 429, when a Vandal army of about 15,000 soldiers arrived in Algeria from Spain, a large scale Berber revolt was the real cause of the collapse of the Roman domination. The Vandals were defeated, in turn, by a Byzantine army in 533 which gained a rapid reconquest of some meridian regions. Just after the Byzantines' victory over the Vandals, a Berber war started against the Byzantines. It took place in the mountains and in the arid border regions.

The driving back of the Algerians had two major consequences: an overcrowding of the tribes in the mountains, from where ceaseless attempts were organized for recovering of the land, and the driving back of others southward. Both movements seem to have considerably changed the social and economic structures of these regions (27: 93-96).

### The Arabs

This deeply bruised central area of North Africa, with its dislocated but free population organized against foreign domination, had been attacked at the end of the seventh century, in the eighth, and again in the eleventh centuries, by Arab Conquerors. Thus, the Arabs penetrated the area in three successive waves. Their influence has been the longest and the most important of all the invaders. Thanks to their religion, Islam, they could after fighting establish a lasting bond with the native population, with whom they lived in a symbiotic relationship (28: 21-22).

The Berbers could find in the new religion what they were fighting

for many years.<sup>1</sup> Effectively, this religion called for a society of freedom, equality, and democracy among all its citizens. For this, the Berbers converted to Islam and helped to conquer Spain and part of France (Poitiers) in 732. It seems that the Arabs were later defeated by the Frankish King, Charles Martel because of the Berber resistance to the Arab policy in the Maghreb (17: 18).

Another fact seems to have favored this peaceful co-existence between Arabs and Berbers. In fact, it was the Moslem policy not to allow their soldiers to look for wealth but rather only the spreading of Islam and of social justice.

### The Turks

Algerian maritime cities and ports suffered intermittent Spanish and Portuguese attacks and cannonades that destroyed some of them at the end of the fifteenth century. The aim of these attacks was to take hold of the major forts in the area and to gain supremacy over the southwestern part of the Mediterranean Sea. Spain not only attacked Algerian shores but for some time had occupied such ports as Merselkebir in 1505, Oran in 1509, and Bejaia in 1510.

In order to protect Algerian shores and ports, the maritime city of Algiers called for help from the Turkish Corsair (Aroudj) in

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<sup>1</sup>It should be mentioned that Moslem conquerors (soldiers) had no right to own lands in the conquered country. They were permitted to work lands and pay tax (Kharaj) in exchange. Generally, in Islamic history, Moslem conquests did not aim at economic or political goals, but rather the spread of Islam throughout the world was the main goal. According to this policy, the vanquished people of a conquered country had to choose between becoming Moslem and equal to the conquerors or to pay war taxes (Jizia) in order to be defended against outside attackers, in which case their religion and properties were protected. No one was forced to become Moslem, but Islam was seen as the oppressed people's religion, which fact explains the rapid spread of this religion.

1514 and his brother Kheir-Eddine in 1515, both of whom were named "Barbaroussa." Aroudj, who was able to deliver Algerian shores from Spanish incursions, sought to establish his own sovereignty over the areas he wrested from their occupation. He perished in 1518, and his brother then recognized his suzerain Sultan Salim of Constantinople as Caliphate, who in turn appointed him Pacha of Algeria and bestowed upon him the title of Beylerbey (emir of emirs). Two thousand Janissaries and 4,000 volunteers were sent to Algiers at that time (27: 139-41; 28: 22).

Thus, Algeria became a Turkish ruled country beginning in 1518 and lasting until 1830. During the Turkish rule, Algeria was divided into three districts, each governed by a Turkish Bey appointed by the Dey. As the Romans, the Turkish authority did not extend over the whole country, except at tax collection time, when troops took the Dey's tribute from the local population.

The Turkish rulers did not intervene in the existing social organization of the country but neither did they incorporate Algerians into their political affairs, which consequently, made Algerians foreigners in their own country as they were before. "The Turkish ruling minority held itself aloof and failed to share its power with the local Arabs" (17: 19). This fact made easier for the French army, later in 1830, to defeat the Turkish army in a very short time, because this army was without any popular support.

### The French

The story of the French invasion of Algeria has been presented as a mere consequence of the Dey's striking of the French consul in

Algeria with his fan to express his disappointment with the French government for not honoring a debt contracted thirty years before. This happened in April 1827 and the French army landed in Sidi Ferruch on June 14, 1830. A few days later, Hussein Dey was forced to capitulate on July 5, 1830. Then Algeria started its longest and bloodiest colonial fight that lasted 132 years.

But even though the French colonialism ended officially on July 5, 1962, its important impact on various aspects of economic and social life still affect the newly independent Algeria. It will surely influence its future development for many years to come. For this reason, it seems to be very important and useful to look at the colonization process and its impact upon the today's development in Algeria as a whole and in the rural society's past and present situation.

### The Social and Economic Structure

#### Land Ownership System

Land was the primary means of gaining a livelihood for a large majority of Algerians before the colonization. To understand much more clearly the meaning of land confiscation by the French colonizers, its importance and negative impact upon the rural society from then on, we need to know about the land ownership system before the conquest took place. This is true because the system was the basis not only of the economic structure of this society, but also of its social organization as well.

The social, economic, and cultural structures influence each other, but the economy is, as Marxist theory asserts, the basic structure that affects, controls and directs the others. In Algeria, the economy was based mainly on agricultural activities, when the country

was invaded for the last time. Thus, any change in the agricultural structure is expected to affect, inevitably, the whole system of the societal organization.

It should be pointed out, before listing the types of land ownership system and their characteristics, that Algerians were not much attached to their lands. This is so, perhaps, because they did not own them individually or because the ingratitude of these lands did not permit the peasants to love them. In fact, the Algerians were ceaselessly pushed to the poor areas, where their efforts in working the land were never rewarded, so "the Algerian peasant keeps working his lands, because they provide him with living; but they are too ingrate to be loved" (12: 33). When other means of earning a living were offered later, farmers just abandoned their lands.

Labor was considered the basic element of the agricultural system, among others that included seeds, instruments, team, and land itself. Ibn Khaldun expressed best the Maghrebin philosophy about land value, when he defined its importance as being very related to labor. To satisfy human needs, land is nothing without human intervention. Thus, land value comes from human effort. The simplest man's effort of collecting food is, for him, more important than land by itself. Labor force was the most important condition of land ownership in the Algerian system. Even today, this factor has its significant influence.

As a consequence of this ideology, lands were, generally, collectively owned, but allocated to individuals or to groups in usufruct. Those who do not work land, for any reason, usually have no right to ownership. As for women, they were mostly not involved with land

affairs. Even though, Islam gave them inheritance rights later, in Algeria they still are not much (or not at all) taken into account where agriculture is concerned. Females, according to Islamic laws, are always the responsibility of the father, husband or their descendant males.

There were in Algeria before the colonial destruction of the system, five traditional types of land ownership, namely, public domain, Hubs, Arsh, Azel and Melk.

Public Domain: The public domain lands were those owned by the central power and controlled directly by the treasury. They "were usually taken care of either by tribes (as part of the forced labor they were subjected to) or by hired peasants, referred to as Khammes" (28: 24).

Arsh: The Arsh lands were part of the tribal owned lands. They were given in usufruct to individuals, families, or groups. In addition to that, they were considered as the private property of the individual or family working them. They may be exploited collectively by stock breeding groups in the case of pastoral lands, or by cereal growers groups. These lands cannot be sold and they can be redistributed in case of abandonment or when the owner of a plot dies without leaving a descendant male.<sup>2</sup> In the case of individual property, lands are returned to Arsh and redistributed among the members of the community families, according to their needs. This guarantees the solidarity and equilibrium between rich and poor members of the community (27: 208; 28: 27).

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<sup>2</sup>Females are excluded from Arsh land inheritance since they are viewed as not being able (or allowed) to work land.

Hubs.<sup>3</sup> The Hubs land were those donated to religious foundations or cultural institutions. They cannot be sold or converted from their original designated purpose.

Melk: The Melk lands were private properties acquired by written contracts. They were familial properties kept away from the danger of partitioning by maintaining them in indivisibility at the succession time. They may be sold but custom forbids selling them (27: 208; 28: 27).

Azel: Azel lands were those parts of the public domain "used to reward staff members for services rendered and to compensate some tribes who were willing to raise the Bey's cattle" (28: 30). These lands were also called Djich (Army) lands, because most of them were distributed to the army veterans.

It appears from the above types that the system, generally, prevents people from selling their lands, but if it happens to be, as in the case of Melk property, many conditions should be fulfilled before the land is sold. From among these conditions are: securing the consent of co-inheritors and transcending the opprobrium that befalls any individual who sells the land of his forefathers. Then land is offered, first, to the tribe members to preserve its territorial unity and integrity. If no tribal member can buy it, only then land is sold to outsiders. Selling fathers' land can happen only in a grave crisis and even then, every step is taken to avoid tribe weakening, and to preserve its unity and solidarity (28: 28). Briefly, the land ownership system that prevailed in Algeria before the 1830 conquest

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<sup>3</sup>Hubs or Habus, Arabic for devoting.



was made to reinforce and strengthen the social and economic organization of this society which was constantly forced to fight for its existence and freedom.

### Types of Association

The social inequalities that developed progressively in the rural society were strengthened by some governors' tendency to donate important land surfaces to those whose help was wanted. This practice favored an agrarian feudal development, but the collective ownership system moderated the historical evolution toward social inequalities (31: 139).

The social structure helped to solve economic problems. Many working associations between relatively poor and rich peasants helped to strengthen mutual help and assistance. The economic necessity and more specifically, the scarcity of money and means of production, forced the society to coordinate community members' efforts to combat this singularly sterile natural environment. Thus, the contracts were mutually profitable and of such variety that all possible combinations seem to have been effected (8: 2).

Among the most important contracts are the plowing association, farming leases, Ashabah,<sup>4</sup> and Khammessah.<sup>5</sup> The Ashabah is a contract between two tribes of farmers and breeders. One tribe receives half of the wool and lambs in exchange for keeping the herds owned by the other tribe. The Khammes is a farmer in charge of the whole of the agricultural labor. He receives the fifth of the harvest in return

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<sup>4</sup>From Arabic (Ashab): grazing.

<sup>5</sup>From Arabic (Khams): fifth.

for his labor force. The system is built up with respect to five factors of the agricultural production, which are: land, team, labor, instruments and seeds. The cost of each element was estimated to be a fifth of the harvest. The Khammessah system was a kind of a palliative to unemployment and it avoided large surfaces from being abandoned and therefore unproductive. It has also been viewed as a means of solidarity, because the land owner does not really perceive much more than the claimed fifth. Meanwhile, he is traditionally, obliged to advance to his associate necessary living funds, provide him with housing, and very often educate his children (31: 140-41).

Also, in case any Khammes happens to have more than his labor force, his part of the harvest would increase, proportionally, according to his participation in the farming process. So, a landless peasant or one who does not have enough land, may work others' lands to increase his income by taking one fifth, two fifths, and one fourth or one half of the harvests.

#### Tribal System and Nomadism.

The Algerian social structure of the past has very often been described as being a tribal system. To believe some writers, this tribalism was general, and "outside the main urban centers, the social organization was tribal" (28: 25). This simple generalization is not correct for it does not correspond to the total reality. There were obviously two different Algerias from the viewpoint of rural social organization: one was represented by the people living in the mountainous north Algeria, the other by the people living alongside the Sahara borders, in the Steppe zones. Thus, excluding the cities'

inhabitants we should consider two rural social organizations, namely, that of the nomadic people with their tribal system and the sedentary people with their federative social organization.

It is needless to try to justify or prove the existence of the tribal system among the Arabs, especially before their religion, Islam. This tribalism has been preserved by those living in Algeria under almost the same conditions as in their original country, the Arabic peninsula. This was mainly the case among the stock breeders who, by their economic style of life, needed large spaces for their cattle and herds. This forced them to live in a constant transhumance and nomadic life. Looking at only one aspect such as this and to generalize to the whole society is not correct. Another writer goes even further when he says that "the Maghreb agriculture has been characterized by nomadism" (31: 137).

Ibn Khaldun and Marx, later, considered the economic factor as the most important in shaping social organization. He called "Arabs" all people who live in the same economic conditions. Arabs were living, mainly as stock breeders and cattle raising. These people not only had a different social structure from the sedentary people, but their values were also different. They were freedom lovers and they disdained city life because their economic life did not allow them to live in the cities or villages.

In my view, nomadism goes with tribalism, but living in tents and moving from plots to plots are characteristic of some Algerian people who are not considered to have a nomadic style of life, as for example by Lazreg who wrote, "In fact, precolonial Algeria was neither feudal nor communal. Neither was it made up of nomadic tribes

roaming through vast stretches of land as has been claimed ..." (28: 26). To generalize, nomadism was not true of Algeria as a whole, but negating any existence of nomadism would be equally untrue. There were and still exist some tribes who need, for economic reasons, as the above quoted author himself recognized, to move. Even when denying nomadism, he wrote, "Some of these tribesmen often lived in tents which were more functional because they permitted great mobility in view of ever receding plots ..." (28: 26). In reality, even today, nomadism is one of the problems facing the Algerian revolution. The problem is being faced by building pastoral villages with necessary services for this economy. The goal is to improve productivity and develop a social life that would allow better education of the nomadic children.

### Federative System

The existing differences between regional social structures were not very marked, but large areas of colonization experienced much more change than the other areas where colonization was not very heavy or did not penetrate at all. Generally, the Berbers preserved more or less their own original social structures, by somehow avoiding the influence of the conquerors. Effectively, mountains were their refuge. The mountainous regions of Aures, Kabylia, Mitidja Atlas, Titteri mass and Ouarsenis had given them more chance to continue living as they had before. This is also true for the distant regions of the Sahara. It is in the mountains that traditional culture has deteriorated relatively little (9: 22). This was true because conquerors could not and had no interest entering these regions and staying for long periods of time. Thus, "many Moslems in the remote

Aures and Kabylia mountains, had never seen an European before in their lives, and their sole contact with France was through a hated tax-hungry Bachaga or Caïd"<sup>6</sup> (2: 40).

This is to say that the Berber social structure was not really tribal but rather a federative system made up of a series of inter-locked small groups. Each group had its own name, property, and social organization. The smallest of these is the extended family, basic social cell, called Akham. When a number of families join together, they form a more complex family called Thakharoubth, which in joining together forms a third more complex organization called Adhroum. The village is made up of several Edhermen, plural of Adhroum. A group of villages from Arsh sometimes called tribe which is not correct (8: 11). The different forms of association and the prevailing collective ownership system favored a very elaborated development of community practices and solidarity that go far beyond tribal limits (31: 141).

The social structure of Berbers started from the extended family, a basic cell in which the father is the most powerful chief and leader. The mother is the second personage who helps her husband in the affairs of the family management. She represents the husband's power within female society and she is greatly esteemed and regarded as the pillar of the family. All family members cooperate to maintain their cohesion and solidarity. Mutual aid is of extreme importance.

All male adults are members of the village general assembly which elects its council Thajmaath which democratically manages

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<sup>6</sup>Bachaga or Bachagha, a Turkish militia grade followed by Agha, then Caïd. The latter is a communal chief executive, during the colonial era.

the village affairs.

There was very often some disagreements in these councils, but efforts were made not to let them appear publically ... In the family, nothing is more fearful than to show a disagreement with the father; in the council, nothing is more fearful than a disagreement of a council member with his co-members; in the village or Duwar<sup>7</sup> nothing is more fearful than a disagreement with the council" (12: 204-5).

To the village council are elected only the old people who represent a power acting as a head and delegate of the group within a particular society. These councils administer, govern, legislate, and arbitrate whenever they are free. Their decisions must be taken unanimously. The members are joined together by a sentiment of solidarity, fraternity, and existing together as only members of the group. This instinct of the group called by Ibn Khaldun Assabyya served to maintain and strengthen the group unity.

### Isolation and Regionalism

This plurality of social organization in Algeria, and the division into different zones were a consequence of the various conquests that dispersed Algerians and pushed them to isolated regions. They did not permit the existence of a national center of power that was able to last for a long time and unify the country's territory. For this reason, each region had organized itself, somehow, differently from the others, over its own quasi-closed and isolated territory. They formed limited but proud independent units.

The French colonists, later, focused great efforts on maintaining and even strengthening regional divisions and disparities. Thus,

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<sup>7</sup> Duwar or Dowar represents a limited number of families or a tribal fraction in the pastoral zones, but when transferred to northern Algeria, its meaning changed to communal locality.

the colonial policy had consolidated regional spirit. To this regionalism was added the ethnic factor. The Algerians, then, were divided and classified into Arabs and Berbers or at times, into Kabyles, Shawia, Mozabites and Arabs. Here ethnic and regional factors are put together.

## CHAPTER III

### COLONIZATION AND ITS EFFECTS

#### Economic Reasons for the Conquest

Algeria had been known during antiquity as an agriculturally rich country. It had the famous reputation of being the granary for Rome and Carthage. It was effectively providing them with wheat, wool, olive oil, etc. (12: 7). This agricultural richness is confirmed, during the first ten years of the French conquest, by the Algerian Emir's commercial activity. In fact, the Emir proposed in 1835 to use the Rachgoun islet for the purpose of "exporting wool, wheat, barley, wax, leather, oil, etc. from the Tlemcen territory in exchange for manufactured goods, coffee, sugar, spices, etc." (22: 124).

This agricultural richness without any doubt attracted French expansionism. It was not true that revenge for its humiliated consul is the reason that France sent its army to invade Algeria in 1830. The economic interests and the colonial expansionism were the real goals of their expedition.

Many facts lend support to the view that this invasion aimed mainly to open a market for French industry and to people a colony in Algeria. Sismondi expressed clearly the colonists' aims, when he wrote "This kingdom of Algiers will not only be a conquest, but it will be a colony, where French population surplus and activity could



spread" (27: 241). General Bugeaud, in a letter to the French minister of war, explaining to him why he was about to sign a limited treaty with the Emir Abdelkader, wrote "Is it not preferable to have our own undisputed territory, trade freely with the rest of the country and establish a colony that will serve as a model of civilization for the rest of Africa? That is how we can conquer a new nation of consumers for our industry and commerce" (28: 38).<sup>1</sup> This future Marshal, champion of colonization in which he played a leading role, was known for his theory of "Soldat-Colon" which was applied by the Israelis in the creation of their state.

### Resistance and Repression

The French domination was much more extensive than its predecessors. Algeria simultaneously became an exploited and peopled colony. To accomplish this goal, the colonizers first, had to destroy the existing society before building a new one. But if the Turkish authority collapsed shortly after the French arrived, the Algerians themselves fiercely resisted this new invasion and paid a high price for their resistance.

In fact, the colonizers needed a general take over of the best lands and the peopling policy supposes a total domination by the European minority, which was not easy for the Algerians to accept. Bugeaud stressed the need for the colonization when he wrote in 1841:

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<sup>1</sup> Bugeaud's mentioned civilization has very often been used by the colonists as an umbrella to hide their real goals. French politicians and social scientists tried to justify this colonization. A. Comte, for example, was accused of justifying the colonialist enterprise by his famous three stage theory of social evolution which allowed the advanced societies to bring up the, then, so-called primitive societies to the last stage, even by force. This action was called "civilizative mission."

"The conquest will be sterile without the colonization" (22: 239). This colonization could only progress to the detriment of the Algerian properties.

The war caused the Algerian population of the cities to seek security in the rural areas and, "All Arabs who were no more working for the European colonization profit were eliminated from Mitidja"<sup>2</sup> (22: 154). This indicates that the resistance took place, mainly, in the countryside, where "From 1830 to 1871, Algerian tribesmen strongly opposed French expansion into the countryside" (17: 19).

The countryside suffered much from the consequences of war. Some examples may be needed to describe how the French conquest occurred and the price paid by the rural people. Marshal Bugeaud is, in my opinion, the one who clearly defined and described both the colonist philosophy and the Algerian's reaction against it. For him, the domination over the Algerians was the first step without which neither security for the European population nor colonization progress were possible. For the same reasons, the second step was to govern Arabs, and the last step to be taken was to organize the colonization and administration of the Europeans (22: 223). This shows the capital importance of the military actions to enforce submission, then take total control of the Algerians. The military concern was justified by the resistance as Bugeaud asserted: "We have never obtained anything from these people without using force; we have often tried, in vain, to use persuasive means. Either we had no answer at all or we have told to use force before that, and should we be conquerors they

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<sup>2</sup>Mitidja is the rich plain of Algiers where the colonists started building their settlements.

would submit" (22: 223, April 17, 1845). Bugeaud stressed the need for repressive methods on June 15, 1842: "The well pushed tribes will be quiet and obedient for a long time" (22: 223). But even the well pushed tribes were not enough, because he said: "You have forced them to submit through arms and you cannot maintain them in submission otherwise" (22: 223).

### Villages and Economic Destructions

Violence was used throughout many years of the conquest, which means, evidently, killing innocent people, destroying villages, economy, and the way of life of the Algerians. First as the resistance was fierce, so the repression was cruel. Rozet wrote: "We would be quite obliged to exterminate all the Berbers who live in the mountains of Beni-Manad, Chenoua, etc." (27: 255). Each of the 27 years of continuous warfare, the French army destroyed the possibility of producing for many years by destroying the basic elements of production in this agricultural country. The French columns "did not suppress the possibility of resistance until they, almost, suppressed that of survival" (31: 312). This was not a momentary or isolated fact of war, but it was a planned and a systematic policy to deal with the resistance. As Marshal Bugeaud pointed out: "We should not run after the Arabs but they should be prevented from plowing, harvesting, and pasturing" (34c: 10).

This means a complete economic destruction was set up as a war method. To see more precisely what happened to the Algerian countryside during the conquest, some French army high officers' diaries may be helpful. As he came back from his expedition to the lower Kabylia

in 1851, General Saint Arnaud, who later became Marshal, avowed:

"I have left on my way a vast fire, all the villages, about two hundreds, were burnt down, all the gardens ravaged, and the olive trees cut down" (27: 312). The same general wrote in 1842, "We are in the middle of the mountains between Miliana and Cherchell. We fire very little, we burn all dowers and all villages, all hovels...." (April 5). And continuing, "Beni-Menacer is very beautiful ... we have burnt and destroyed everything. Oh! War! How many women and children sheltered into Atlas snow's, where they died of cold and misery ... we devastate, we burn, we plunder, we destroy houses...." (October 5) (34c: 9).

Another future Field Marshal of France, the Lieutenant Colonel Forey reported his experience of the Algerian War. In 1843 he wrote:

Since I am in Algeria I have never seen, I have not even thought of, that there could be as many and as big centers of people, as those I have met in the mountains of Beni-Bouaich and Beni-Boumelek (west of Algiers). There, no mere isolated hovels on the top of the mountains made of branches and rebuilt as soon as destroyed, but villages like our towns in France, with the most beautiful position, all surrounded by gardens, vast forests of olive trees, as big as the plane-trees of Perpignan.

And he concluded:

We all were amazed, by so much natural beauty, but orders were imperative and I believe I was performing consciously my mission, not letting any tree, any camp undestroyed (34c: 9).

Changarnier expressed the same idea when he declared, "After having ruined the Algerian government and dispersed its troops, we should attack tribal real estate and harvests to force them to submit" (26: 92; 31: 11). To each action of resistance the systematic response policy was to destroy harvests and to burn villages.

This savage repression did not stop resistance actions for

long, and this prompted military and civilian authorities to find means other than violence. Colonel Montagnac, for example, wanted to deport all Algerians to the Marquesa Islands (31: 11). Another project proposed was to deport all Algerians into the south.

The Illiot project, prompted by the Vichy government, at the end of World War II, proposed to deport all the Algerians into the south ... The government of the national union had massacred more than 40,000 people in the Department (Province) of Setif (East Algeria) in May 1945 (31: 11).

### Empty Cities

Under a pressing need for security that was persistantly threatened by the resistance, in order to build the new colonial society, a policy of killing people, exhausting local economies, destroying houses and villages, was agreed upon and practiced by the colonizers. This policy reduced the rural population to a constant life of poverty and misery. The need for land increased as the European population became important, and the Algerians were forced to live in the countryside, more than before. The rural population was very important before 1830 (about 95%) (31: 225) and the French arrival aggravated the situation. In effect, the cities were empty of the Algerians, because the middle class fled to the countryside or to the nearby towns seeking refuge.

Most of the refugees never came back to their cities, and consequently most important cities did not recover their 1830 Moslem population for a long time. Algiers, for example, did not recover its Moslem population before 1906; Kolea and Cherchell (west of Algiers) not before 1872; Tlemcen (western Algeria) not before 1891; Mascara (Capital of the Emir) not before 1901; Constantine not before 1911; and the urban center of Miliana did not even before independence

(31: 317).

### Land Confiscation

Land confiscation was one of the most powerful and dangerous means of repression used against the Algerian people. The colonists used violence and legal means to take over Algerian lands. In his address to the chamber of deputies on May 14, 1840, this son of French farmer, Bugeaud declared: "The colonists should be settled wherever good water and fertile lands exist. Without asking to whom these lands belong, they should be allocated to the colonist as his own property" (31: 314).

Thus, Algerians were merely ignored and it is needless to say that violence was the most important means of land confiscation. Speculation was rife and the colonists just moved in on the abandoned lands as a result of the exodus of Algerian land owners who sought refuge in the mountains. The colonists were "hoping that their newly acquired property would be legalized" (28: 41).

In fact this hope became a reality, because no regulations were made by the colonists for a long time. Later, when made, they aimed mainly at satisfying colonists' needs and to limit the Algerian properties to the profit of the new immigrants from all over Europe.

Pushed by misery, Algerian small farmers had to sell their plots of land to the colonists. At that time, a tendency not to sell the lands to the settlers emerged among Algerians. The root of this tendency existed even before, but it developed rapidly and took a form of nonviolent resistance against the colonists. Thereby, to limit spoliation, rebuying lands from the settlers or selling them cheaply to

Algerians rather than expensively to the foreigners, were the means used (26: 13). In many cases, Algerian peasants had to buy or rebuy their own sold or confiscated lands from the colonists.

The land confiscation started from the beginning of the conquest and persisted until 1945-46. The size of lands taken from Algerians, are classified as follows (33e: 12):

1840-1860	365,000 hectares
1860-1880	517,000 "
1880-1900	243,000 "
1900-1920	<u>200,000</u> "
Total	1,325,000 hectares

To these are to be added the lands confiscated later and those sold by Algerians to the colonists, after the 1873 Warnier's law that instituted the individual ownership of lands on the previous collectively owned lands. The total, then, would be about 2,500,000 hectares of northern Algeria's best land. The north counts about 6,800,000 hectares, thus the confiscated lands represent about one third of them (33e: 12).

As a repressive measure, these confiscations were very hard for the peasantry to accept in view of its precarious economy, especially when associated with other repressive means, as was the case of Kabylia's uprising in 1871.

The repression was fearfully harsh; thousands of Kabyles were sentenced to death, usually by courts composed of colons who had themselves suffered at the hands of rebels. A 36 million Francs fine was imposed and 500,000 hectares of some of Kabylia's best land was confiscated (2: 24).

As shown in the above table, confiscations started legally in 1840 to repress resistance as it became stronger, when the colonization

process increased the colonists penetration into the countryside. "In 1840, a decree provided for confiscation of lands belonging to Algerians who had taken up arms against the French" (17: 20).

### Destruction of the Social Structures

As mentioned before, the social organization of Algeria was formed in a collectivist and strictly equalitarian environment. The means of production such as grazing areas, land, water, pasture, etc., were collectively owned. In addition to common pasture, the stock breeding system allows cattle to spread over the tilled lands after harvesting, no matter who owns these lands. The transhumance also relied upon the complementarity of plain and mountain lands. The democratic social structure of the rural society helped to strengthen solidarity among its members, which in turn allowed them to survive despite various invasions.

This strong cohesive rural society was attacked by the French colonists from the beginning. The attack aimed mainly "to break up the pre-existing forms of mutual help" (31: 12), and to limit the Algerian property to the profit of the colonists. The social organization was viewed as the main obstacle to pacification, thereby every step was taken to destroy it. Thus "the Senatus Consultum of 1863, was the first step towards tribal disintegration by breaking up the ties of solidarity" (27: 67). All means were used to destroy the social structures and the existing system of values which maintained the united and viable society despite different difficulties.

Violence as well as legal means were used to accomplish this colonial goal. Obviously, the war was the simplest but not the safest



of these means. According to the precept, "the well punished tribes will be quiet and obedient for long time." The Algerian economy was destroyed while the colonial economy represented almost nothing. A large part of the rural population was prevented from plowing, harvesting, and pasturing their herds. Many were compelled to take up arms, to seek refuge far from their lands, or even to emigrate abroad. Destruction of livestock was very important: 18 million sheep, 3.5 million cattle, and one million dromedaries were lost between 1830 and 1845. The considerable decrease in agricultural production means, misery, poverty and proletarianization, especially for rural people (27: 315-19).

The cantonment policy was one of the means of social and economic destruction. It aimed at both land confiscation and spiritual reduction to slavery, as was asserted by Captain Richard.

In fact, the essential is to regroup these people who are everywhere and nowhere, the essential is to render them captured. When we will hold them, we will be able to do so many things that are impossible today and which, perhaps, will allow us to seize their spirits after seizing their bodies<sup>3</sup> (9: 15).

The cantonment aimed also at reducing the chance of resistance, because the policy of driving back the tribes or simply decimating them, appeared, later, to be too simple and insecure. Thus, "Since 1846-47, the populations were gathered over territories where they were forced to build" (12: 45).

These cantonments seemed to be real prisons, conceived to maintain the population under constant control. It was necessary, according to Captain Richard, to imprison people in these cities of tents,

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<sup>3</sup>Étude Sur l'Insurrection du Dahra (1845-46).

in order to gain peace. There was no way to control Algerians other than "to put these people under our feet to make them feel our weight," wrote Richard (12: 49).

The European settlers increased regularly, but at the beginning, Frenchmen were a minority in many Algerian cities. Europeans included: Italians, Spanish, Germans, British, Maltese and French. The Colonial population was needed to be European and preferably French, but only 44 percent of the Europeans were French in 1840. While the French were a majority at Algiers (6,861 French out of 14,434 colonists, with 4,735 Spanish, 1,115 British, 932 Italians and 791 Germans), the Spanish dominated in Orania (2,333 Spanish out of 4,827 with 1,342 French), and British and Maltese dominated in Eastern Algeria, Annaba (1,322 British and Maltest out of 3,172, with 1,103 French). The total increased in 1881-1902, from 195,418 to 374,257 (22: 158; 27: 383).

Helped by the new colonial land laws, these settlers could penetrate into the heart of the countryside and destroy the basic structures of the traditional society. The main land laws that permitted this penetration were:

The Cantonment laws of 1845-46;

The Senatus Consultum of 1863;

The Warnier law of 1873, amended in 1887.

So, the first catastrophic law was the famous Senatus Consultum that instituted individual ownerships over the undivided lands. This act was intended to make it easier for the Europeans to take over the best tribal lands by the auction-sales system and by other inconsiderate sales. The result was as expected, "The disintegration of the

familial traditional social units, because of the indivisible fact (of land), and the appearance of a rural proletariat, which was constituted of dispossessed and miserable individuals, a reserve of cheap manpower" (8: 52).

Assessing the effects of the Senatus Consultum, Captain Vaissière wrote: "The Senatus Consultum of 1863 is, in fact, the most effective war machine that could be imagined against the native social state and the strongest and the most fecund instrument that can be put on the hands of our colonists"<sup>4</sup> (9: 16). Briefly, the Senatus Consultum was conceived to realize two main related goals. The first was to break up the existing land ownership system in order to liquidate tribal land, part of which was to be maintained as personal, divided, and defined property of Algerians. The other part was to be used to attract European immigrants. The second goal was to disorganize the tribal system, viewed as a principal obstacle to pacification<sup>5</sup> (9: 16).

The reviewed Senatus Consultum, called Warnier law of 1873, was considered by Algerians to be a death sentence to the tribe. To the war, administrative measures were added to help achieve this radical change in the Algerian property structure, which affected the social organization in general.

In fact, where tribal system dominated, a process of dislocation was organized. It aimed at replacing tribal units with local divisions. Fractions from different tribes were combined to form a

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<sup>4</sup>Les Ouled Rechaich, Alger, 1863, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup>A. de Broglie, Une Réforme Administrative en Algérie, Paris, 1860.

single Duwar and fractions of the same tribes were divided up in a small number of Duvars. Thus, parts of the same tribe might come under different communal jurisdictions (27: 47).

To the contrary, where a federative system had dominated before, the colonial administration forced a tribal organization.

In Kabylia the system furthermore entirely alien to Kabyle mentality. The French ... forced a tribal system on the Kabyles and designated Bachagas and Caids despite extreme Kabyle reluctance to recognize any such alien authority, for Kabyles have always rejected the Caidal system in favor of rough-and-ready democracy in the form of popularly elected village councils (2: 40).

The Caidal system was applied in what was then called the Arab zone, which was one of the three administrative zones into which Algeria was divided on April 18, 1845. The three were:

- I - A civil zone where Europeans were a majority which, consequently, would permit organization of all services;
- II - A mixed zone where Europeans were a minority, and consequently, it was not possible for the colonists to organize those services;
- III - An Arab zone where only Algerians lived and which was placed under military rule.

Before any of these classifications and changes were made and put into effect, a system called Bureaus of Arab Affairs was created to serve as liaison between the French command and Algerian administrators. These bureaus composed of interpreters, judges, intelligence officers, etc. acquired, through their members' contacts with the population, better and more realistic knowledge of the prevailing social and economic conditions. This knowledge was, consequently, used by the colonists to inflict radical changes on the existing structures

(28: 39).

### The Cultural Uprooting

Prior to the invasion of 1830, most Algerians were able to read, write and count, which means that elementary education was widely spread throughout the country. This is contrary to the colonists' propaganda that presented Algerians as illiterate people to whom colonization brought education. Denying the colonist point of view, Rozet wrote in 1830 that the Algerian population was "may be, more educated than the French people, almost all men knew how to write, read and count."<sup>6</sup> Professor Emerit also confirmed this reality, when he estimated the illiteracy proportion in Algeria to be less important than in France, when it, then, reached more than 40 percent. (27: 228). General Valazé described the educational situation as follows, "Almost all the Arabs know how to read and write. There are two schools in each village"<sup>7</sup> (31: 207).

The colonization almost entirely destroyed, instead of building as is often claimed, the pre-existing educational structure. This came about because from the time of the conquest, the French faced a language and culture that differed very significantly from their own. Algerian schools and culture were systematically opposed, because they represented a strong element of resistance against French cultural penetration. General Ducrot proposed to Napoléon III in 1864 the means to use in the pacification of Algeria when he wrote: "We should

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<sup>6</sup>Rozet, Voyage dans La Regence d'Alger, Paris, 1833 (T. II, p. 75).

<sup>7</sup>Quoted by Lacheraf and Martens.

hinder as much as we possibly can the Moslem Zaouia<sup>8</sup> and schools development ... we should tighten the moral and material disarmament of the natives"<sup>9</sup> (26: 107; 31: 209).

The most important fact in this question, however, was that, the destruction of thousands of Algerian schools was not compensated for by building French schools. In 1887, for example, less than 9,000 Algerian pupils could attend reserved schools, from among about 500,000 school age children. A century later after integrating Algeria to France (1844-1944), 90 percent of European children attended schools as against only 8 percent of the Algerian children. In 1962, the years of Algerian independence, the unique university of Algiers counted 700 Algerian students out of 5,000 enrolled (31: 209-10).

The cultural uprooting was very significant and intensively affected the daily behavior of the Algerian people. The most disadvantaged working class who had closer contacts with the Europeans were more deeply affected by this fact. They were inculcated with a mentality of fighting the colonists and the colonial regime by every means. They have had a tendency to destroy any colonial property, including their working tools, stealing time from hated labor, or gaining some money with the least possible effort. In other words, all means were good to struggle against the colonial presence. This situation has done grave damages to the worker's intimate personality which has not yet, and maybe will not be repaired for a long

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<sup>8</sup>Zaouia was a kind of high school in the precolonial system of education, where students got free education, including housing and food. They were financed by revenue from Hubs properties and from popular collected funds.

<sup>9</sup>Ducrot, Correspondance, T. II.

time. As a result of this cultural uprooting, many people are destroying, even today, public properties, exactly as they did during the colonial presence. Evidently these means were the arms of a disarmed people struggling against poverty and its main cause, colonialism.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR

#### Pre-War Conditions

##### Isolation

Throughout the entire colonial era, Algerian and European communities lived separately and the contacts between the two were everywhere very difficult. Both remained closed to each other and most contacts that occurred between them were, largely, through the Algerian resistance and the colonial repression that continued for a long time. Neither community trusted the other and dealt with the other as an enemy. The dominant colonists viewed the dominated Algerians as inferior human beings and consequently dealt with them as such. "The colonizer ignores commonly the colonized, voluntarily considered as not being adult, primitive, incapable, and just worthy of fatherly solicitude" (27: 9). The Algerians in turn regarded the colonists as foreign invaders whose only aim was to take over their properties, exploit, oppress, and enslave the local population. In fact, there was no limit to the colonists' injustice and segregation and thus, to confiscate lands, suppress acquired rights, or even to kill an Algerian were normal facts for which no administration or justice had taken care of (22: 157).

The Algerians were merely driven back to remote areas, where they were isolated and prevented from taking any part in the economic,



social or administrative affairs. Effectively, the French colonists gave no role to Algerians in the running of the country, because the colonial administration was set up almost entirely by Frenchmen. In Tunisia and Morocco, on the other hand, the French ruled through native administrators.(37: 48). Of course, some Algerian families, from whom Caids were chosen, did collaborate with the colonists and shared with them some benefits of the colonization, but these families were not numerous.

Indeed, the Algerians, generally, boycotted the colonial administration, which they did not want to recognize as a legal authority. As an example of this general trend, the case of the leader of the modern Algerian "Renaissance," Ben Badis is very significant. This leader was from one of these few families who collaborated with the colonists. He was asked by his teacher to promise not to accept any official job in the colonial administration as a condition for teaching him Islamic laws and serve him as adviser in his education.

### Impoverishment

The colonial policy simply ignored the local people's needs and interests. The colonial system was established to satisfy only the dominant minority needs and the French Market interests. Bugeaud, defined again what should be the Algerian agricultural production. He declared, "The agriculture of the African colony should not produce the same products as French agriculture" (22: 252). As the Algerians fled to the countryside, the colonists took over their properties. When about three quarters of the Europeans lived in the cities, the others were concentrated in the rich coastal plains of

Mitidja and Cheliff Valley, where they had developed modern colonial agriculture. This sector included about 3,000 hectares of the best lands, the equal of California's best. They "used the most modern techniques to grow wine grapes and citrus fruits, which together accounted for 65 percent of farm revenue and were Algeria's two principal exports" (37: 39).

Thus, the colonial agriculture was specialized and monopolized the most profitable products: 90 percent of the vineyards, 90 percent of the citrus fruits, and 70 percent of early fruits. Meanwhile, the Algerian traditional sector was reduced to a subsistent economy, since the agricultural cultivation was forced into the poor lands where the farmers had to produce 75 percent of the hard wheat and 80 percent of the barley. These products of the traditional sector were mostly destined to keep people from starving. Tobacco, as an exportable item, had been developed considerably by the colonists, to the point that its production passed from 800 k.g. exported in 1843 to 215,837 k.g. in 1847. (12: 141-42; 22: 252).

At this time, there were two different societies in Algeria. "The two Algerias are, then, differentiated at the same time by the biological, economic, and the socio-cultural levels of life, and the labor model" (12: 143). This impoverishment dangerously affected the means of production used by the Algerians whose private farms were mostly very small. There were about 450,000 families who had to eke out their living on plots of ten or less hectares of arid lands located mostly in the mountainous regions and on the high plains. Besides the poor land and the aridity, primitive tools were used to till land. "It is common to see peasants scratching earth with

wooden ploughs drawn by mules or camels" (35: 41). Thus, in addition to acute shortages of tractors and their high prices, the large majority of the traditional sector farmers could not afford using modern techniques in their small, poor, and sloping plots. These techniques were not economically profitable for them.

As a consequence of these difficult conditions, the annual per capita income of these small farmers was very low, if not the lowest in the world. Different average annual income estimates were made. According to Algerian economic accounting, per capita income in Algeria was about 61,000 French Francs in 1953-54, as against 240,000 Francs in France; 54,000 in the Maspétiol Commission Report of 1955; 22,000 in Alain Savary's (*Nationalisme Algérien et Grandeur Française*, 1960); fixed at 20,000 Francs by Raymond Barbé in his (*Classes Sociales en Algérie*, 1959); and only 16,000 F (\$40) for Maurice Byé (1959) in the case of the Moslem six million people (21: 18-19).

Briefly, following the military conquest of 1830, the Algerian economy had become a colonial economy and its most important characteristics may be summed up as follows:

- a) An economic, political, and social preponderance of the colonizer minority;
- b) Maintenance of the colonized masses in a radical state of inferiority in every fundamental domain of human existence: nutrition, education, employment, essential liberties of citizenship;
- c) Immediate exportation of raw materials, instead of transforming them in the country by developing an industry that would have been profitable to a large majority of the people;

- d) Monopolization of the best lands and the most profitable cultivated crops by the colonial minority;
- e) Systematic sabotage of the corrective measures sometimes decided upon by metropolitan power (21: 22).

Hence land dispossession, rapid demographic growth, and the passage from barter to a market type of exchange put the Algerian peasantry in a catastrophic situation. With their economy destroyed, and with the vast majority of the farmers condemned to underdeveloped conditions, a mass exodus from rural areas to the Algerian cities and abroad began.

### Immigration

The circumstances were such that the Algerian peasants were compelled to live in permanent poverty. It was not that peasants produced only for family consumption rather than the market, not that they failed to invest wisely, and not that they failed to use fertilizers or failed to adopt agricultural innovations. Rather, their poverty dictated that they could wait no longer. Without any hope other than to harvest enough to survive, the most miserable of them, generally the landless peasants, had to choose between this hopeless fatalism (that has nothing to do with the Islamic religion as some people tend to think), and leaving the countryside. Thus misery was the essential factor that forced the peasant's emigration (9: 19-20).

Despite this misery caused by both the colonial economic system and the rapid demographic growth, the vast majority of these landless "had waited for a long time before accepting work with the colonists. Only at the beginning of the 20th Century an agricultural

working class was formed" (31: 144). Effectively, the landless peasants who could not find land to rent, hired their services out to the colonists, and those who could not do so, emigrated to the remote areas within the country or abroad, notably to Morocco, Tunisia, or Syria, and only later to France.

About 80 percent of the Algerians were living from the agricultural products and they started starving because they totally depended on food crops, when emigration to France was no longer free. It "presupposes a permit issued by the administration" (27: 432). Because of this situation, the poor people started going to the large Algerian cities, where they formed a cheap labor force and non specialized lumpen-proletariat for whom were left the most lowly of jobs. There they lived in ghettos and slums.

The first emigrant group to Syria was in 1911 and from Tlemcen (western Algeria), and at the same time, peasants from Tebessa and Ain Beida (Eastern Algeria), imitated them.<sup>1</sup> There were 4,000 to 5,000 North Africans in France in 1912, but Algerians numbered more than 80,000 during World War I. To these are to be added 173,000 Algerians mobilized during this war. A large number of these immigrants came back to Algeria after the war ended, but from then on, the emigration became an irreversible phenomenon because of the precarious subsistence Algerian economy. Later, when the French economy reached an expansive stage, the French government felt a need for

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<sup>1</sup> Emir Abd-Elkader was the Algerian chief of resistance who fought the French army for about 17 years. He was captured and imprisoned in France. He chose to live in Syria when freed from prison. His family and friends lived with him and this fact could have attracted the emigrants of 1911 to Syria.

manpower and preferred Algerian workers who constituted a reserve army for French industry. Many emigrant regulations were made between World War I and 1947, but from then until 1956, emigrants were free to go back and forth.

As a consequence of this freedom, two giant streams took place between the two countries: the first was a human flow from the south to the north and the second was a counter stream from France to Algeria represented by a flow of money sent by the emigrants to their families left behind in Algeria. This was beneficial for both countries. Since 1956 until the Algerian War ended in 1962, a visa system was established. Immigration became free again for a few years after independence, but in the late 1960's economic difficulties emerged between France and Algeria. When Algeria nationalized French oil companies, some Algerians were killed by French extremist organizations and immigration to France was suppressed by the Algerian government, once for all (27: 435-36; 48: 17-23). Today, there are about 800,000 Algerians in France of which about 300,000 are under age of 18. This important human exchange played a great role in the Algerian Renaissance. The immigrant contacts with European thoughts and ideologies and European people other than the racist settlers, influenced them positively. Immigration as an agent of change affected social, economic, cultural, and psychological spheres especially. It, greatly, helped to develop the national consciousness that guided Algeria to its independence.

### Nationalism

The Algerian nationalism started early as two main tendencies, one termed assimilationist which was developed by those influenced by

the French culture. They were asking mainly for equal rights and French citizenship. The other represented those whose ideology was to reestablish Moslem society by fighting the colonial presence in the country. These two opposed ideologies appeared even before 1880. Algerians, under French occupation, were considered French Moslem citizens, which fact gave them no rights, while they were subjected to all duties. Briefly, they were second class citizens.

But the modern political parties emerged after World War I and developed more in the thirties. At that time, the two principal political parties were still defending the two previous tendencies. But a third organization was created in the 1930's, not as a political party but as a cultural and religious movement of renovation and modernization. It represented an Islamic Renaissance movement and was called Ulemas Association ("Doctors of Moslem Law"). This exerted a great influence upon Algerian society as a whole. Its chief, Ben Badis, is viewed as the father of the Algerian modern Renaissance.

Effectively, by creating free Arabic schools all over the national territory and through his paper Al-Shihab (Dawn), Ben Badis diffused widely Arabic teachings that were prohibited in the Algerian public schools. Assessing the importance of this association, Behr wrote, "...perhaps, in the thirties, it was the Ulemas association of Ben Badis rather than the Messalists or the moderate followers of Ferhat Abbas which exerted most influence in Algeria" (2: 44).

This association played a major role in shaping Algerian national consciousness through daily and nightly classes. Among the proclaimed principles of this association were "Islam is my religion, Arabic is my tongue, Algeria is my country ... and independence is a natural

right for all people on earth" (2: 44). In this way, science, religion, and nationalism were joined together to form the basic ideology of this movement.

Assessing the most important Islamic characteristics, Ben Badis asserted in 1938, that

Islam is the religion of God and must be, par excellence, that of humanity. It honors and glorifies reason and recommends that all acts of life be based on reasoning. It condemns the servitude of man to man, as well as despotism in all its forms ... it is essentially democratic and does not admit absolutism at all, even for the benefit of the most just man (2:45).

It is obvious that the Ulemas' weapons were schools and papers which were effectively used to combat ignorance, illiteracy, and backwardness. It is important to notice that the free schools' teachers were educated to be truly militant for this new ideology and could spread its principles widely. The vital importance of the role played by the Ulemas in the cultural domain is best understood, when the educational conditions into which, the Algerians were reduced to live, are made known.

### Consequences

#### War Destruction

The Algerian national War of liberation started on November 1, 1954, and ended nearly 8 years later on July 5, 1962. During this period of Algerian history, the same destructive methods used by the French army throughout the colonization war, were used once again in the decolonization process. Destruction of the villages was used from the beginning of the war in November 1954 as a collective



reprisal against the innocent rural population, where some acts of violence took place. At the beginning, the rehousing problem of the villagers did not appear, because these were generally, massacred at the same time (12: 60).

This collective punishment accompanies all warfare stages. Alfred Muller,<sup>2</sup> a foreign legion soldier reported that in January 1959, his regiment has regrouped all the nomadic people of the Geryville-Boukdoub region, burned down their villages and killed 35 people, because they tried to save some of their properties. Briefly, this was the bloodiest war of national liberation, similar to that of the conquest. "The long, bloody conquest of Algeria had established a pattern of violence that would be evoked a century later with astonishing similarity" (2: 7).

Because the mountains were the bastion of the revolution, the countryside suffered much of the massive destruction and ravage. About 8,000 villages were destroyed; more than 2,000,000 peasants were uprooted and herded helter-skelter into regroupment centers; several thousands people were imprisoned; about 300,000 victims fled to Tunisia and Morocco, and at least 1,000,000 peasants moved into the cities (with fully 50 percent of the rural population displaced). The number of the Algerians killed was estimated by the Algerian officials to be about 1,500,000 people, and 15,000 French soldiers officially were declared killed in Algeria. The largest colonial army ever assembled counted 500,000 French regular troops, 200,000 auxiliaries, and a large number of armed civilians. This army won most of the battles

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<sup>2</sup>Alfred Muller, Journal: Reichsruf Hannover, Août, 1960. Quoted by Cornaton, p. 105.

but in the end lost the war.

By its repressive methods the war succeeded in achieving what the colonial policy aimed for. The rural economy was deeply destroyed again; land was abandoned, large surfaces were burnt by napalm bombs, and most areas where population had lived before the war were declared prohibited zones by the French army to suppress popular support of the national liberation army (ALN). Erosion took its toll in large portions of the arable lands.

The population of the cities increased very rapidly as a result of the rural exodus, because the situation in the countryside was no more viable. Between 1954 and 1960, the total population increase was about 67 percent in the Algiers cities and towns, 63 percent in the Constantine regions, and 43 percent in Orania (9: 21).

The war not only destroyed the rural economy but also the most ultimate social organization, familial ties. In fact, Algerians were compelled by both the national liberation front (FLN) and the French to take sides. Paternal authority and traditions lost much of their weight, familiar ties weakened and often broke. Sometimes, brother fought brother, and son was sitted against father. There were many women who threw away their veil for the first time in their lives to carry arms, run messages, prepare food, or to take care of the wounded fighters (37: 31).

### The Regroupment Policy

The regroupment policy during the colonization period was precisely repeated during the liberation war in Algeria. If the goals were different, the methods were the same. At an interval of one

century, the officials whose duty was to apply the Senatus Consultum and the officers responsible for the regroupment, resorted to the same measures to accomplish their aims. The uprooting of the rural population was the main goal of the colonization process, whereas military security was the goal of the decolonization regroupment. Both equally affected social and economic structures.

In the revolutionary war, the colonial army used regroupment techniques to control regional populations. Since in this type of war the whole population participated in the war, therefore the adversary could not distinguish between fighters and nonfighters. Thus the whole population was imprisoned in what was called regroupment centers, where social and economic activities were reduced to almost nothing. In an effort to cut popular support to the fighters, hundreds of these centers were built up throughout different rural areas (12: 23-33; 9: 15-27).

The regroupments of conquest were called cantonments which consisted of three operations: containment, compression on the spot, and pushing back. These aimed at realizing two goals, to confiscate lands and dislocate the pre-existing structures deemed hostile to the invaders' material and spiritual interests. The decolonization regroupments were also planned to serve the colonists' interests. To justify the regroupment policy, its security aspect was often invoked. The regrouped people and observers were told that regroupment was a means to protect people from being killed by the rebels.

The hidden aspect of this policy was the use of it to serve the colonists by establishing these camps near the colonial properties, which had a double benefit for the colonists, the presence of French

troops to protect them and plenty of cheap manpower. The regrouped were rarely allowed to continue working their lands, which fact merely reduced them to form an immense and cheap manpower reserve. Europeans were conscious of this fact and hoped to have regroupment camps in their communal territories. This gave them not only a cheap labor force, but also an exceptional budget (9: 39).

Thus, the more the Algerians were poor, the more they profited the colonists. This was the main reason for keeping them as poor as possible. There is no better way to take profit from people than when they are kept in a permanent economic and cultural weakness and inferiority. In fact, the regrouped were generally reduced to a beggarly level, because they were prevented from tilling their lands. Farming, of course, was almost the only income resource for the large majority of the peasants. Thus, the Algerian agricultural crisis started from the war period and from the fact that most farmers were uprooted and forced to abandon partially or in most cases totally their previously cultivated lands. Farming practices and stock breeding were abandoned for many reasons: loss of animals, excessive distance from the land to till, restrictive measures of moving and several other military harassments; controls, Laissez-passer, and imposed itineraries and schedules.

The regrouped people felt and viewed these centers as worse than normal prisons where, at least, prisoners were fed. Here are some witnesses describing the way of life in these concentration camps, and how the regrouped were prevented from any economic activity.

How can one work in the field when at any moment a war plane may rifle you down, or when a patrol sees you and takes you as its target ...? ... without counting all these spying agents who

are eager to suspect you of making contact with the rebels.... Under these conditions, is it not better to be in prison? There, at least, we are fed. Here we're not free, the center is a prison, and more, one is responsible to gain his family's living (9: 48).

This was an old man describing his economic embarrassment and failure to be able to respond as he should to his family's needs. Another old man expressed his view about this difficult life in the regroupment center. "To save my life is what counts at this moment; the house, harvest, and tree are of a little significance! My life is before anything else! All other goods may be recovered" (9: 48). A third person simply said, "Go work my lands! I am not crazy! I am not going to gamble with my head" (9: 48).

It is not hard to imagine the deep misery that reigned in these centers for years, throughout the wartime, when we know that most of the farms of the traditional sector were included in the prohibited zones, where fighting was persistent. The regroupment increased the already existing poverty caused by the deep crisis of the agricultural economy. If the peasants were at different levels of poverty, the regroupment made them all equal. General Parlange<sup>3</sup> well described the economic conditions in the regroupments, when he wrote:

On the economic level, the uprooting is shown, very often, by an increased poverty. It is certainly easy to declare that the people lived previously, from nothing; their poverty was not viable, because their isolation created an unstable familial economy. The Ouarsenis inhabitants told me: 'Before we were eating acorns, but we were, at least, eating.' When these people are put together, the poverty becomes more shocking and more acute among them '... It is a total ruin and the uprooted live, fanatically, in the misery. While they are rendering us [French] responsible for their situation, they wait that we totally provide them with living (12: 93).

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<sup>3</sup> Parlange was an inspector of the regroupment centers.

Attempts were made, through the regroupment policy to "westernize" the Algerians, by imposing some rules intended to break up the social system, as by substituting the extended familial unity for a village unity, when people were forced to build a house for each household, which weakened familial ties. Sometimes, a population was simply divided and dispersed, as was the case, for example, of Ain Bouyahia's population. Half of it (3,986 people) was dispersed into three different centers; (Ain Tida: 975, Louroudi: 1,234 and Bouarous; 1,777). To this add families who fled to the cities, abroad, and all men who quit their fractions to join the fighters (9: 118-29).

The regroupment policy was consequently, one of the most catastrophic war weapons used against the social and economic structures. It still has very serious consequences for Algerian development today, because these uprooted peasants, instead of returning back to their lands and previous rural style of life, went to the cities after independence. So, the regroupment centers lost their population, and the rural exodus increased instead of decreasing following independence. This was true despite the colonial propaganda showing that these centers were bases for modern socio-economic life. The colonial administration, effectively, tried in some cases, to provide common services in some chosen centers which served to mislead superficial observers. For this purpose, some apparent aspects of modern villages were managed, such as roads, schools, town halls, houses, dispensaries, etc. It is true that some of these centers survived, but most of them just disappeared after independence.

## CHAPTER V

### POST INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENT

#### Colonial Aftermath

When Algeria acceded to its independence on July 5, 1962, the country was plunged into complete chaos. To the underdevelopment which the country was suffering for a long time, the war not only added human casualties, but also economic and social destruction. To these problems, one can add the massive exodus of Europeans who formed almost all the colonial administrative staff. July 1962, was considered a black month in Algeria from the view point of administrative officials and other services, because civil servants, engineers, technicians, accountants, etc. had to be replaced immediately after independence: There were not enough doctors to care for the mutilated victims of war and not even enough simple secretaries. The French administration did not make any serious effort to educate Algerian administrative officers, which could have given them experience. In the vast Oran exchange, for example, there was only one single telephone operator to answer calls. The operator had replaced two hundred European colleagues who fled. There was only one preciously guarded typist in the president's cabinet. Not a file, not a folder, not even a telephone was left in the office of the

newly-appointed minister of education.<sup>1</sup>

The European exodus accounted for 90 to 98 percent of all workers in some technical services, such as the highway department. The departing French officials left behind them nothing but emptiness. They destroyed everything they could. All statistical records and other documents were burned or stolen (31: 9-10; 31: 30). Everything had to be rebuilt from almost nothing. Even the revolutionary forces had split into two main forces combating each other for power. It is no exaggeration to say that no country in the world acceded to national sovereignty under conditions as extreme as Algeria.

Obviously, the countryside did not directly suffer from this particular situation since the colonial administration and services did not significantly reach the countryside. The rural population lived isolated and marginal to city life. The poor rural people who carried out the burden of war did not benefit from the fruit of independence as did the city dwellers. In fact, only the middle class city dwellers and the wealthy landowners really benefitted from the departure of French settlers and administrators, because they had the money to buy farms and shops from the departing settlers whose houses and offices offered a large choice for them.

### The FLN Policy

To understand the orientation of the Algerian social and economic development, we need to look to the FLN policy which was developed only at the end of war, because this party was born only shortly

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<sup>1</sup>From Ben Bella's speech to youth leaders on April 4, 1963 in "Algeria on the Move," Algerian Center of Documentation and Information, 1965 (Quoted by Ottaway).



before the war started. Effectively, the National Front of Liberation (FLN) declared war against French colonialism in November 1954 while condemning the Algerian political parties and turning to transcend their internal differences. To gain popular support, party leaders and militants were called to join the FLN ranks, but only as individuals and not as organized parties. The FLN position was defined in its proclamation of November 1, 1954:

We are independent of the two clans disputing the power. Placing the national interest over erroneous and narrow personal prestige considerations, according to the revolutionary principles, our action is solely directed against colonialism, the only and blind enemy, who always refused to allow any freedom by peaceful means (34e: 7).

No socio-economic program was defined at this early stage and even the political program was narrowed to permit all nationalist forces to join in the combat to achieve restoration of the sovereign, democratic, and social Algerian state within the framework of Islamic principles. All the fundamental liberties were to be respected without any racial or religious distinctions. In fact, one should not expect the FLN to define a clear and detailed socio-economic program for the country's future, because the FLN was an alliance rather than a cohesive political party. Its militants came from the different condemned pre-1954 parties who represented contradictory and clashing interests. Hence, its policy was considered as contradictory, because while it condemned parties, it appealed to their leaders and militants to join in one party.

Effectively, the urban middle class militants and leaders who joined the FLN in 1956 were very influential and could quickly capture power from the early urban and peasant militants. After taking control over the national leadership of the FLN, these professional

politicians emphasized political over military struggle. While the burden of war was being carried out by the peasants and the internal leaders, different opposed tendencies appeared among the external leaders who were engaged in silent strife for power (5: 5).

The FLN held its first congress in Algeria (Soummam Valley), on August 26, 1956. This took place despite the French counter-surgency techniques. The congress included only members who were directly involved in the armed struggle within Algeria and was intended to give the FLN its political platform. It is not clear whether those outside Algeria were not invited to this congress or were not able to attend. It was decided then that the interior ought to have supremacy over the exterior, that the political leaders were to have precedence over the military and the direction of the struggle was to be collective (28: 68).

In 1958, the first Algerian provisional government was formed in exile and was presided over by the moderate F. Abbas. The second was presided over by Ben Khedda, both political leaders of the Union Democratique du Manifeste Algérien (UDMA) and the Mouvement Pour Le Triomphe Des Libertés Democratique (MTLD), respectively. Meanwhile an external army was created and armed. Most of the weapons purchased or given by friendly countries were kept by this external army in Tunisia and Morocco, which later forced its entrance into the Algerian capital in 1962 (5: 5).

Briefly, the Soummam platform decisions were not entirely respected and not much was said about the future of the peasantry which formed the dominant proportion of the National Liberation Army (ALN). It was briefly mentioned that, for the peasantry, independence

means agrarian reform. Up until the Tripoli Charter was adopted in June 1962 by the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA), the various programs and declarations of the FLN focused almost entirely upon the armed struggle, voluntarily neglecting to specify any socio-economic program for the country's future. Only vague promises were made to both workers and peasants in the form of land reform and the nationalization of the basic economic sectors.

The Tripoli program, to the contrary, was drafted as a new FLN program to be implemented in the independent Algeria. The importance of this program is shown by its unanimous approval by the CNRA members, without any amendments. It defined roughly what the new society should look like after recovering national sovereignty from the French, starting with a complete analysis of Algeria's socio-economic conditions since colonization. It set forth the basic educational political, social and economic orientations of the future state. Agrarian reform, economic planning, energy and mineral resources nationalization, credit and foreign trade, and building of public facilities were defined clearly for the first time in the FLN history by its left wing. But if the program was easily adopted, the vote on the members of the political bureau who were to be in charge of implementing this program, was very difficult to the point of adjourning the congress in total confusion and without electing any member to the political bureau. This proved once again that the FLN was not a cohesive political party.

Analyzing the social content of the national liberation movement the authors of the Tripoli Charter wrote:

... the poor peasants, chief victims of colonialist land dispossession, cantonment, and exploitation ... the urban proletariat, a relatively small group and the teeming sub-proletariat constituted mostly of the dispossessed peasants ... another intermediate social category composed of artisans, menial and middle rank workers, civil servants, small shopkeepers and certain members of the liberal professions, all of whom together make up what can be called the lower middle class. This category has often actively taken part in the liberation struggle and contributed political staffs ... a relatively unimportant middle class composed of businessmen, wealthy merchants, managerial personnel, and a few industrialists ... large landlords and prominent colonial administrators, these last two social categories have participated sporadically in the movement perhaps from patriotic conviction or from opportunism. Exception must be made for flagrant administrative feudalists and certain traitors who sold themselves body and soul to colonialism ... It is, generally, the peasants and workers who have been the active base of the movement and have given it its essentially popular character (34e: 41-42).

### Education

Education suffered much more than any other sector from the colonial policy. The preexisting educational structure had been attacked and destroyed from the beginning of colonization through the confiscation of the Hubs lands, the main source of income. Effectively, the colonists annexed Hubs lands to the public domain and then seized them. This action dangerously weakened the cultural institutions by significantly reducing their income. The most important of all was that the destruction of Algerian schools had not been compensated for by the creation of French schools. Later, when some efforts were made in this vital sector, they were mainly directed to serve colonial aims. This is true because these efforts were concentrated in some regions of the country, thus favoring these regions and depriving others which deeply aggravated regional disparities.

As a result of colonial policy, illiteracy was widespread

throughout the country, the largest proportion of which was found in the largely colonized areas. Some writers refer to a double illiteracy on the part of large numbers of Algerians who could speak Arabic and French without being able to read or write either language. But a triple illiteracy could also be found when we consider those speaking Arabic, French, and Berber, but unable to read or write at least one of them.<sup>2</sup>

The Algerians were aware of this grave problem and some efforts were made even during the war to cope with this obstacle. Some young people were sent abroad to get education. The Tripoli program planned to extend the methods of mass education to combat this illiteracy and mobilize all national organizations to teach every citizen reading and writing in the shortest possible time (34e: 50). But no important action was taken concerning this problem in the first years of independence, or later on despite the lack of staff, of technicians, and the high rate of illiteracy that prevented the working masses, in a so-called socialist country, from fulfilling effectively their role of managers. In 1966, 76 percent of all Algerians ten years old and over were illiterate. This percentage dropped to 67 percent in 1971 and if the quadrennial plan achieves its goal as expected, the illiteracy rate should have dropped to 50 percent in 1976 and will drop to 34 percent in 1981 (30: 240).

With the above exception, it can be said that a huge effort was made in the educational sector after independence to get rid of cultural underdevelopment. The number of persons attending schools

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<sup>2</sup>Berber is a spoken, not a written language.

increased significantly from 869,000 in 1962-63 to 2,254,000 in 1971-72. This makes an annual increase, in the elementary schools, of 14 percent for this period. But, despite this effort, only 50 percent of school age children (6-14) could go to school in 1969 as compared with 8 percent in 1944. Percentages in the secondary and higher education were more important. Lack of schools and teachers strike rural areas much more than cities, as the peasantry is still far behind the urban centers in education. The educational budget accounts for 11 percent of the national gross income, which places Algeria well ahead of both the United States and the Soviet Union. But despite this relatively important money spent in education, equal chances are not given to all Algerian children to go to school. The colonial impact is still determinant in the actual development and the previous disparities have not yet disappeared.

### Industry

Algeria was not poor because of lack of natural resources but its poverty, during the colonial era, was due to that regime. The colonial economy was dominated by France and was entirely in foreign hands. Algeria was used as a source of raw material and as a market for manufactured products. Its dependence was shown by being the first consumer and furnisher of the French economy, with no serious industry. The European minority did not effectively use the productive resources of the country (34e: 46).

This disarticulated economy was permanently exposed to a slow-down, since the investment in the modern sector has had no effect upon the traditional sector. There was no interior market because

there was no investment, which means that there were no wage employees. The most important characteristics of the Algerian economy were: low individual income; high infant mortality; insufficient nutrition; high fecundity; strong predominance of the agricultural sector; low level of education; permanent aggravation of the imbalance between the population and economic growth (21: 15-16). The colonists attitude was very clear concerning the predominance of an agricultural economy in Algeria. The possibility of industrialization was deliberately sacrificed when they exploited the local resources, including specifically the minerals, with minimum risks and maximum profits.

When De Gaulle came to power in 1958, an attempt was made to favor industry over agriculture, but it was too late and his plan called "Plan de Constantine" was viewed as a weapon of war against the revolution and fought by the Algerians.

The FLN, through the Tripoli program,<sup>3</sup> emphasized the need for industrialization considered as a necessary condition for real progress. The real development of the country is related to establishing necessary industries in order to satisfy modern agricultural needs (33e: 49). This means that agricultural development depends on the industrial progress which would provide machinery and other products needed in agriculture. This orientation seems to follow the Soviet type of development which was based essentially on three successive stages of concentration: creation of powerful socialist industry as a basis for the reorganization of the national economy; gradual transformation of small peasant farms into big agricultural enterprises;

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<sup>3</sup>This program was drafted under Ben Bella's direction by Lacheraf, a Sorbonne professor; Harbi, a Marxist; and Yazid, a former Centralist, in June 1962.

and at the end comes the cultural revolution. The Algerian type of development was similar (18: 11).

Industrial potentialities are very important in Algeria, especially after the discovery of oil and gas. Besides these, there are many resources, including phosphate, iron, coal, zinc, and copper. Diverse other ores were discovered later in the Hoggar mountain mass, which include: gold, platinum, tin, tungsten, diamonds, cobalt, uranium, and mercury reserve puts Algeria in the first place among the countries possessing this material. As for the efforts made in the prospecting process, Algeria is the first (30: 29, 56-57).

Heavy industry was seen as a radical but the best way of alleviating underdevelopment, since the country possesses enormous possibilities to build petro-chemical and iron and steel industries that would not only provide light industry and agriculture with means of development but also provide large scale, stable jobs. Heavy industry was a good start for general industrialization that was needed to transform the country from a food producing to an industrialized country. Only intense capital investment can generate and accelerate capital formation, as Bezy stressed.<sup>4</sup> Also the idea of the developing countries specialization in food and other primary production was rejected by Algeria because it was not longer defensible. Thus, a significant shift from agriculture to industry was made, in order to suppress economic dependence on the former colonizer country. But this shift dangerously affected the vast majority of the peasantry

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<sup>4</sup>F. Bezy, *Les Problèmes de L'Industrialisation*, in "Nouveaux Dossiers d'Afrique," Éd. Marabout, Bruxelles, 1971, pp. 246-86 (quoted by Martens).



which formed the large part of the "moudjahidin"<sup>5</sup> during the wartime.

The Annaba iron and steel plant forms one pole of industrialization and Arzew forms the second, thanks to its petro-chemistry plant. Small scale industrial units are scattered throughout the country. But since the development process is made through national corporations representing the state, the system is criticized for creating social class differences between industrial workers and farmers. In fact, these differences existed before, but instead of diminishing as expected in a socialist regime, they are seemingly growing. Statistics show that 5 percent of Algerian households receive 28 percent of the national income.<sup>6</sup>

Each national corporation holds the monopoly over its sectorial activity and private capital, even though relatively unimportant and marginal as compared to the state capital, holds its place in small scale industry. President Boumédiène declared about the future of private capital: "We will never allow any private branch to form a danger for the revolution."<sup>7</sup> It is state capital that actually prevails in Algeria, which is more beneficial to a limited managerial class of Algerians than to the population generally.

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<sup>5</sup>Fighters for a sacred national or religious cause, or freedom fighters.

<sup>6</sup>Secrétariat d'état au Plan, A.A.R.D.E.S., Enquête sur Les Budgets Familiaux, July 1, 1973 (P. 04), quoted by Lazreg, XV.

<sup>7</sup>Boumédiène's declaration on November 12, 1971 (quoted by Martens, p. 65).

## Agriculture

### The Self-Management

Algerian agricultural production declined dangerously during the last years of war, and was almost destroyed at the time of independence. This situation worsened through the ensuing years of independence that brought radical social changes. The dangerous decline was due essentially to rapid demographic growth, rural exodus to cities, and the departure of French settlers whose preferred access to French market no longer was available. Also, Algerians who took over colonial farms did not have adequate experience to effectively manage modern farms. Knowing that the traditional sector was already destroyed during the war, some observers asserted that without considerable natural resources, the Algerian evolving agriculture could have had catastrophic consequences for the foreign trade balance of the country (31: 172). Effectively, after 1962, little changed for the peasants, since the state paid no attention to the traditional sector, as had been promised. President Boumédiène himself recognized this fact when he asserted, "We would like, also, to help the traditional sector, our so unlucky farmers. They did so much for the country's liberation and are hardly helped up til now."<sup>8</sup> This promised help has never become a reality for the large majority of the peasants.

The massive exodus of the European settlers during the Summer of 1962 greatly facilitated the recovery of lands by Algerians who were already working with the colonists. Immediately after this

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<sup>8</sup>In an interview with Georges Montaron, in "Témoignage Chrétien," Feb. 17, 1966, (quoted by Cornaton).

departure, managing committees appeared on the abandoned farms. The state gave 30 days to the colonists to come back and retake their farms, but nothing happened. In the Fall of 1962, the government legalized the committees' actions and decided that the abandoned lands should be managed by cooperatives and technicians appointed by the state. Likewise, it was decided that every abandoned property should profit the collectivity, in order to avoid that individuals own them to the detriment of the masses.

Three famous decrees known as the March decrees organized agrarian collectivism. The first, signed on March 18, 1963, transformed vacant lands into state property. The second, signed on March 22, organized these goods management, and the third, signed on March 28, defined the process of sharing revenues. Later decrees modified and clarified the preceeding ones. The self-management bodies include: the workers general assembly, the workers council, and the management committee. Their respective duties are as follows:

- a) General Assembly. This body is formed by the permanent workers and is considered as the supreme and sovereign body of self-management. Its role notably consists of electing the workers council or the management committee and the president. The assembly also studies and adopts: development plans, annual production and marketing goods, the working program proposed by the council and the committee, working regulations, and interior exploitation, use of funds, and approval of accounts at the end of season. The body controls the activity of other self-management bodies and makes decisions such as asking for a director or technician

to be fired after examining the accounts. The general assembly meets two times a year or more when necessary. The presence of members at meetings is obligatory unless excused. If no meeting is held within 7 months the minister of agriculture can convene the general assembly to debate upon the precedent period management.

- b) Workers Council. This council is elected by the general assembly when its members attain 50 or more persons, if not its prerogatives are exercised by the general assembly itself. Council members could number between 18 and 45 (6 elected for 15 electors). The council meets at least once every two months. Among its duties are electing management committees from among its members, taking decisions according to the general assembly orientations, deciding measures concerning interior regulations, equipment and development, admission of new members, suspension and exclusion of members convicted of serious offenses, and studying and adopting supply programs. The council members control seasonal accounts before submitting them to the general assembly and they also control management committee activity. At least 2/3 of council members should be directly involved in production. They are elected for 3 years but a third of them are reelected each year. No kinship ties are permitted among members.
- c) Management Committee. This committee is elected from among the council members, and consists of 6 to 12 members, at least two-thirds of whom should be directly involved in

production. Members are elected for 3 years and one-third of them are renewed annually. No two members can have direct kinship ties. The committee meets two times a month or whenever necessary. Its essential duties are: elaborating development plan, annual equipment programs, production and marketing. Establishment of working regulations, repartition, responsibilities, and seasonal end counts. The committee may propose to the general assembly a revocation of the director and technicians after studying seasonal counts. The committee's decisions should be presented to the director who is the only one to have implementation responsibility.

The President is the collectivity representative, presides over the committee, council, and general assembly meetings. Elected for 3 years, he is the only farmer relieved of his farming activities while being president, countersigns meetings records, convokes for meeting, receives claims and suggestions from workers and transmits them to the competent bodies to be studied. He controls the implementation of decisions, but has no power outside of the meetings.

The Director is appointed by the minister of agriculture and represents the state in the farm. He is the chief executive, signs bills and manages the farm, helped by workers bodies. His status is not yet defined<sup>9</sup> (33c: 16-23).

Many serious obstacles prevented farmers from succeeding in their mission as expected. Among these are: a deep cleavage between

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<sup>9</sup> Decree No. 69-16 February, 1969, 33e.

permanent and seasonal workers, the seasonal workers saw their social status declining while doing the heaviest and most uncertain work-- a factor that strengthened antagonism and indifference which led to decreased production. Personnel appointment was arbitrary and in surplus. Employing family members appeared as to increase authority and income of some responsible persons. The General assembly meets sporadically, without having enough information for proper assessment. A vast majority of workers are illiterate and have received no training to carry out their managerial role. With little workers' control, the management committees behaved differently as employer and union groups against the directors and the state. No bookkeeping was available. Farmers generally ignored their part of production that is sold and at what price. This situation was true especially in the centralization phase that lasted years after 1962, because of the lack of experience and also the center of decision making was outside the farms. Farmers simply became performers, not managers (31: 153-56).

As for the workers rights, most of them are only written and they did not have a chance to exist in practice. The private familial garden is said not to exceed 5 ares and when permitted is subject to local conditions that are not specified as well as to the minister of agriculture agreement. This garden could have significantly increased family income, if permitted. In the Soviet Union, for example, the private plots suggested to be used as "Kitchen gardens and orchards" secured a surprisingly large return. "In 1938, the private plots were responsible for no less than 21.5 percent of total Soviet agricultural products, although they covered only 3.8 percent of the cultivated

land"<sup>10</sup> (11: 34). It is also written as an advantage to the farmers to have some family livestock consisting of poultry, rabbits, bee-hives, and two sheep or goats (33c: 13). This legal right is simply not applied. The farm worker has the right to a house but for which he may be asked to pay rent. Agrarian workers, however, benefit from some social dispositions that were previously reserved for the industrial workers, as for example, paid holidays, retirement, familial allowances, social security, etc. (33e: 21). The farmers receive a monthly minimal advance over the revenue from their products irrespective of the outcome at the end of the year. They receive their part of the profit if any, and may purchase for family consumption, their own products at wholesale price. These are some important features of the agricultural self-management system in Algeria.

### The Agrarian Revolution

Approximately 10 years after independence, an ordinance constituting the agrarian revolution was signed. Effectively the signing took place on November 8, 1971. The signing was not expected to be a magic action that would change rural life immediately, but at least the process started. The agrarian revolution was designed to alleviate misery and social injustice endured by millions of low income peasants.

The agrarian revolution was intended to improve socio-economic and cultural conditions of the rural masses. The revolution is said to have no value without creating a new socio-economic balance in the rural areas. That is, to put an end to the division of agriculture

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<sup>10</sup>Piscunova and Polyakova, pp. 107, 109, 113, (quoted by Conquest, p. 34).

into modern and poor sectors, technical insufficiency of production, subsistence economy, illiteracy and subnutrition, subuse of human potentialities and natural resources, and in general to engage the rural world in a revolutionary development process (33e: 24). Another goal was to create an interior market for industry by modernizing agriculture and increasing living standards of the rural world. This would increase demands for fertilizers, machinery, and create a series of agricultural transformation industries (33e: 25).

The rhythm of achieving these goals was set up to go slowly, despite the utmost need for change. The agrarian revolution charter warned that this revolution should have a general and global character, because it is intended to include the whole of farming and life conditions. This is, evidently, to justify:

... a certain progressivity in its realization, because it should, correctly, adapt itself to the complexity and diversity of the situations characterizing the rural world ... to secure durable results, it should, necessarily, be set upon scientific bases and mobilize consistent technical, financial, and human means (33e: 30).

The agrarian revolution does not suppress private property but does limit landholdings to a manageable size and reduce the existing social inequalities in the countryside to a bearable degree. From an economic point of view:

... the question is not to seek the construction of an economy cut off from the world market, it is the necessity of ameliorating the productive capacities of agriculture to meet the food needs of a population whose very pattern of consumption evolves with industrial progress (33e: 25).

Socially, the agrarian revolution was to improve the standard of living by

... constructing villages based on rational economic conditions and insuring population fixation. On the bases of the agrarian cooperatives of the agrarian revolution, these villages will



form real socio-economic complexes insuring all economic, social, cultural, and administrative functions (33e: 29).

A big question needs an answer, will the agrarian revolution be achieved and in how much time, if the question is answered positively?

## CHAPTER VI

### A CASE STUDY OF A SOCIALIST VILLAGE COMPARED WITH THE ISRAELI KIBBUTZ

#### The Village Setting and Working Organization

##### Slow Process

Tala<sup>1</sup> is one among the first villages constructed within the framework of the agrarian revolution. It is located somewhere in the rich, previously colonial areas, not very far from large cities and surrounded by the previous colonial villages. The area had received early French settlers, and the Algerians were driven away from this area. Based on this fact, traditional sector problems do not exist in the area, but most of the beneficiaries came from this sector. Tala was half constructed when inaugurated, and it is not clear how the Ministry of the Agriculture and the Agrarian Revolution (MARA) would classify achieved and nonachieved villages. Tala, is in effect, among those villages considered achieved, despite the fact that part is actually in the process of being built.

From among 329 planned villages, only 74 are achieved, 72 are in the process of achievement, and 183 have just started.<sup>2</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup>Tala is a fictitious name given to the socialist village studied. It is intended to keep anonymous this newly constructed village within the framework of the agrarian revolution in Algeria. The village was chosen for practical purposes.

<sup>2</sup>Source of information is the Ministry of the Agriculture and the Agrarian Revolution (MARA).

shows how slow the process of the construction is, especially when we know that the government had promised to build one thousand villages, that only 74 have been constructed, and that some of these have been only partially completed in 7 years. Even the slogan of one thousand villages was previously used by the French Délégué Général in Algeria, Paul Delouvrier, when he declared on April 19, 1960: "Every [Regroupment] center deemed definitive by reason of its undeniable socio-economic viability which insures it a certain future, is one of the "thousand villages" that is suitable to consider as such."<sup>3</sup>

According to the official document, Tala counts 153 habitation units, but the real number found was 145 furnished, and allocated entirely free to agrarian revolution beneficiaries, self-management farmers, and civil servants. The self-management farmers whose farm land was used to build the village asked for 45 houses but got only 21.

One of these farmers, B. A., told me his story about the housing problem. He was living in a hovel until 1971, because housing on the farm where he works was not easy to get. He lived in a shed before getting a one-bedroom house on the farm where Tala was to be constructed. He was asked to leave but refused because he had nowhere to go, even though the fence around his house was burned down two days before a bulldozer destroyed the house itself. He said,

During the colonial era, we suffered too much. At times, we could not find what to eat or to wear. When the Americans came to Algeria, during World War II, clothing was plentiful. We were readily banished from the land, including all family members. It was possible to find a job on another farm, but

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<sup>3</sup>Quoted by Cornaton, M. p. 70.

not necessarily enough space for the whole family in the hovel.

B.A. is about 60 year-old. One of his sons finished two years of military service and another is actually serving the military. There are 10 people living in 3 bedrooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. B. A. seems to be almost happy with his situation. He told me, "During the colonial era, we were working under repressive conditions and we were destroying as much as we could of the colonial property. Now we are free men."

### Inadequate Planning and Materials

Concerning planning and construction of the village, farmers are not satisfied. The Wilaya's<sup>4</sup> coordinator of the Algerian National Peasants Union (UNPA) told me that village planning was a mistake and that they were not asked their opinion on the matters. The village as conceptualized was intended to be a pastoral village but then was changed to a farm village when completed.<sup>5</sup> This clearly shows two important facts: lack of adequate technical planning, and confirmation of the fact that decisions come "from above." Neither party and its mass organizations, even at the Wilaya level, nor interested farmers could have their say on the problem, despite the recommendations of the National Seminar on Rural Housing, and also despite socialist

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<sup>4</sup>Wilaya (Plural Wilayate) is an administrative district into which Algeria is divided. Each of the 31 Wilayate forms a number of Dairate (singular Daira) each of which is divided into a number of Communes, basic administrative cells.

<sup>5</sup>Transforming decision was made by President Boumédiène at the true moment of inauguration. This fact shows, evidently, a lack of adequate technical planning based upon serious socioeconomic studies.

principles emphasizing collective decision-making. In fact, the Seminar<sup>6</sup> strongly recommended that beneficiaries be allowed to participate in determining individual and collective needs, within the framework of UNPA. Also, farmers should be given a chance to know in advance their future homes so as to adapt them to their specific needs. It was generally said that workers should be the master of socialist villages at all levels: conception, realization, and management (33f: 32-33). Nothing of that sort happened in Tala.

The materials used in construction were not proper because houses are humid in the winter and hot in the summer. Some farmers told me they were seriously considering changing to the newly-designed part of the village being built, if given a chance to do so. Another grave problem was the water supply that affected village life. In fact, water was not included in the planning of the village. It seems that the village was supplied by water from a farm well, which in the summer is just enough to supply the farm needs. Most houses, the Mosque, and the health center have no running water for about 4 to 6 months out of the year. I have seen young people filling cans with farm water, others use tractors to get water, and construction workers use water in truck tanks to satisfy their needs. Efforts are being made to solve the problem, which would not have existed with adequate planning.

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<sup>6</sup>The First National Seminar on Rural Housing took place on March 20-24, 1973 with the intent of studying rural housing modalities and conditions that should be met to insure the success of socialist villages.

### House Size and the Extended Family

The extended family is another problem of the socialist village Tala. Many beneficiaries live with their married brothers, sons, or parents. Generally speaking, there are at least two married couples and their children living together in most Tala houses. From among the farmers I talked to, for example, are the following: B. Ch. L. is married with 8 children, two of whom are married, and one has 3 children, the other has one child. All live in a three bedroom house. B. A. is a married man, has 3 children, lives with his brother who is 30 year-old, his sister with one child (in the process of a divorce), and their mother. B. O. is a married man living with his married daughter and her husband. H. K. is a married man with 8 children; M. M. is a married man with a total of 18 family members, all living together in a 3 bedroom house. Two of his sons are adult, one is married and gives his father no money; the other is not yet married and helps provide living for the whole family. M. M. has 3 babies fed on cow's milk which he must buy, because the mother has no breast milk to feed them. The three infants are two year-old, one year-old, and just a few months-old.

The extended family problem was discussed in the First National Seminar on Rural Housing, but no decision was taken as to whether the farmhouse should be restricted to a single nuclear family, which needs no more than a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom or should the house respond to the needs of the extended family. In the first case, the house density would increase at the beginning. But, it was decided to provide different possibilities which would make easier an eventual house enlargement, as for example, permitting

flexibility in dividing bedrooms and leaving enough free space, in which other rooms could be built when needed. No decision was made concerning kitchen garden and other facilities (33f: 34). In the Tala case, the design uniformly consists of three rooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a shed planned for 8 cows (as the village was to be, initially, pastoral), and a large backyard considered essential for the Algerian family.

### Village-Farm Distance Problem and Bureaucracy

The relatively long distance separating the village and farms is another problem causing farmers some trouble. Effectively, there are about seven farming cooperatives whose members live in the village, but work in different distant farms. This situation is different from the Israeli Kibbutzim, and the Soviet Kolkhoznik, for example, and even from the Algerian self-management system, where farmers generally live and work at the same place. Most of Tala's farmers work relatively far from the village, the distance being between 6 to 17 kilometers. In addition to the daily waste of time getting to and from work, workers are forced to use their tractors not so much for farm work but mainly for transportation.

As a result of this situation another more complicated problem appears. In fact, most tractor drivers do not have a drivers' licence which led to severe fines and even imprisonment. A cooperative president was sentenced to one month in prison and a fine that exceeded his monthly income, for driving a tractor without a driver's license.

H. B. M. received 500 Algerian Dinars fine for the same reason. He is a married man with 8 children. He was unable to pay the fine,

because his family income was just his advance, monthly paid, which is 400 A.D. (about \$100). He had to pay or go to jail. Both cases evidently, could have had catastrophic consequences for the family. This farmer was lucky since the Mosque Imam<sup>7</sup> decided to ask his followers one day for help and the farmer was effectively helped.<sup>8</sup> The Communal UNPA told me when I asked him why such a problem is not resolved:

I did all I could do to solve the problem. I have sent applications to the Wilaya but they were sent back to me. I have talked to the chief of the Daira and to the party's federative chief about the subject. Promises were given to solve the problem.

But the Wilaya coordinator told me something else about the same problem:

The question was studied by a responsible group from the transport body, Wilaya and Commune. It was found that if a farmer gets a normal license, he would leave for an industrial corporation where he would be able to work under better conditions and receive more. A driver's license in Algeria equals a scientific diploma.

This reveals, how the bureaucratic apparatus deals with the peasant masses and keeps them at an unskilled level. Workers training should be the first goal in order to improve productivity and living conditions.

Who knows? It may be for the same reason that livestock is not allowed despite its recognized important usefulness. The Wilaya

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<sup>7</sup> Imam is a religious man, a Mosque's chief. He is employed by the state to perform daily prayers and, normally, teach people their religion. I have witnessed a verbal dispute between the Imam and the farmer about the funds collected. The latter accused the first of not being sincere in collecting funds for him to pay the fine, because he could collect more. The Imam said that his act was unlawful, since it was not authorized by his ministry. So, without goodwill, he would not do it.

<sup>8</sup> This farmer left his original cooperative and joined the self-management sector, during the period I was visiting the village.



UNPA's Coordinator told me when I asked him the reason for which small livestock was prohibited in Tala:

We have discovered that some farmers were making contracts with the industrial workers and traders, in application of which, they were given cows to keep at home. We are against farmer exploitation. That is the reason why we decided not to allow this situation. Farmers should be able to have small livestock, because there should be no farmer without a goat.

The reason cited by the coordinator does not seem to hold true, because in this situation not all farmers would have resorted to the same means to satisfy their needs. Some farmers bought cows when they received their annual benefits. The communal coordinator of the UNPA answer to the question supports the idea of a collective punishment that was caused by some individual's behavior. It should hold true that most farmers cannot afford buying cows but it is equally untrue that they cannot buy some chickens and rabbits. I was able to enter two houses and in both, I was told that a group of city employees was touring homes checking if someone has poultry or other animals.

### Dream of the Socialist Village

It seems that despite these different problems, villagers feel happy to live in a socialist village, like Tala. Mrs. A. Z. said she is happy to live here. She works as a janitress in the school, and her husband was a Khammes, now working in self-management. They have only 2 sons, both going to school. The wife had some chickens but was ordered to sell them. A. ES. M. was a farmer, then changed to administrative work in a large city. He considers that a socialist village was a dream that came true. The farmer enjoys all modern life comforts that may not exist in the cities. Some defects of the village are due to neglect, but this tends to be superficial. The

differences are great between the past and actual life. We were living in a hovel. H. K. said,

I would not participate in the agrarian revolution if there was no house. Only the house holds me here for we were living in a collective house in the city. We had troubles almost every day; here we are really free and quiet.

### Kibbutz Housing

Compared to the Israeli Kibbutz,<sup>9</sup> Tala's housing is very different. In fact, the Kibbutz model seems to be much closer to an extended family than any other cooperative system. Based on communal ownership, which includes production, consumption, and living arrangements, the relationships in the Kibbutz are not limited to families and workers as units of interaction but go far beyond that to include all individual lives. "The Kibbutz community is responsible for the satisfaction of the individual's needs" (14: 87). This is what makes the Kibbutz different from all known cooperative types, except, maybe, the religious cooperatives. Everything is collective in the Kibbutz, and no private activity is allowed including cultural, social, and educational spheres as well as various economic aspects of Kibbutz life. The collective property includes means of production, dwelling, and consumer goods. Married couples usually live in individual units consisting of small apartments of one to two rooms. The apartments called quarters, sometimes have no toilet facilities, and kitchens are not included in the design. However, most couples have a hot plate on which they often prepare four o'clock tea or coffee or the evening snack. The food is obtained from the Kibbutz diningroom (38: 8).

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<sup>9</sup>Kibbutz is a Hebrew word for group.

Economic and social child rearing functions have been transferred to the Kibbutz as a whole, so parents have both limited control of, and responsibility for their biological children (38: 9). Shortly before the delivery, the expectant mother is taken to the hospital where she receives free medical services and a few days after, the mother and infant return to the Kibbutz; the mother goes to her own quarters and the infant is directly taken to the infants house, "to be taken care of" (43: 19-20).

After leaving the toddlers' house, boys and girls continue to share sleeping quarters until they graduate from the (Mosad)<sup>10</sup> at the age of 18. There is no separation between sexes in the dormitories or even in the shower room. Boys and girls shower together, theoretically, until adulthood. In practice, however, the pubescent girls, especially those who have developed fairly obvious secondary sexual characteristics, maneuver to take their showers when the boys are not around and develop a good deal of modesty with respect to their body (38: 32). Also, the adolescent boys and girls may share sleeping rooms and shower facilities. But most of the time, they manage to avoid self-exposure, such as the practice of going to bed at different times (38: 33). Housing problems cannot emerge in this very particular type of organization, where a married couple may share a single room with another adult. Algerian society would never accept this kind of housing or allow adult boys and girls to share sleeping rooms and showers. It is clear that even Kibbutz parents are not satisfied with the situation. What happened in Tala village is that parents and their children share

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<sup>10</sup> Mosad is a high school level in Israel.

sleeping rooms, as sisters and brothers most often do. No outsiders of the family, even close relatives, are allowed to share sleeping rooms. Sharing showers would never happen in this society, since neither males nor females share them.

### Productive Cooperatives and Ownership

Within the agrarian revolution, earning is viewed as collective and beneficiaries are organized in small cooperatives called the Agrarian Cooperative of Production of the Agrarian Revolution (CAPRA). The number of farmers differs from one CAPRA to another, according to the surface area of the allotted lands. In the case of Tala, there are 7 CAPRA, each of which has a number of beneficiaries as follows:<sup>11</sup> 13 in the 13th CAPRA; 16 in the 16th; 16 in the 19th; 10 in the 20th; and 11 in the 23rd. I was unable to obtain the number of beneficiaries in two CAPRA, the 14th and 15th, whose beneficiaries live in Tala but work in two other communal territories that I could not visit due to lack of time. The distance of one farm from another seems to be the factor taken into account when membership in CAPRAs were decided upon by the communal authorities. The agrarian revolution lands have come from three sources: nationalized lands of absent farmers, partially nationalized lands of large landlords, and public collective lands: domanial, communal, Arsh, and Hubs lands. Also included were self-managed lands that were not rationally cultivated (33e: 16-18). Lands are state owned but given to the farmers for an unlimited time. Beneficiaries are free to leave their CAPRA if they wish. All they would lose, in this eventuality, is their houses that are reserved for

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<sup>11</sup> CAPRA numbers are fictitious.

those who work land or have a close relationship with the land.

### Ownership in the Kibbutz

In the Kibbutz case, a member has no property right except personal belongings. No shares are distributed and no private plots are allotted. Moreover when a new member is accepted, he usually hands his property over to the commune, and loses everything when he leaves the Kibbutz. He can only take "his clothes, some household articles, books, toys, and similar objects. He receives a certain sum in cash, so as to tide him over the first period after departure, until he finds some means of livelihood"<sup>12</sup> (14: 87). Since all services are provided by the Kibbutz, including the communal kitchen and dining-hall, the Kibbutz members receive no wage for their work; this corresponds very exactly to the Algerian traditional family. "However, a Kibbutz member receives a small sum of money in cash, which he may spend as he sees fit: private journeys, gifts, etc" (14: 91). Kibbutz members are not permitted to receive valuable gifts such as a radio set, a watch or even food parcels. Members who work outside are obliged to transfer all their earnings to the Kibbutz. Each new member is forced to deposit his own property with the Kibbutz which he will not reclaim if he leaves the Kibbutz after more than a year (14: 156-57). This reminds one of prison life where total equality is imposed.

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<sup>12</sup> Among Kibbutz principles is equality which was to be respected by preventing Kibbutz members from accepting gifts or even holding their own previous property.

### CAPRA Members' Earnings

The CAPRA unit is too small to divide working tasks among its members. Only a president is elected to represent his CAPRA within administrative bodies and to be a member of the marketing cooperative (CAPCS). CAPRA members receive monthly advances in cash. The sum is different from one CAPRA to another. It is 350 A.D. (about \$88) in some cases and 400 A.D. in some others. At the end of the season, counts are done and benefits distributed, but not without some difficulties. The Peasants Congress<sup>13</sup> asked that advances be raised at least to 800 A.D.

### Marketing System and Supply

The marketing system seems to be the most important factor in the discontent of beneficiaries in Tala village. The agricultural products are marketed in Algeria through a system consisting of three different bodies working at different levels. There is, at the communal level, a cooperative called The Agrarian Polyvalent Communal Cooperative of Services (CAPCS) which is supposed to play a leading role in the agricultural sector as a whole. This role consists of providing productive units with fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, and services as reparation, transportation, tractors, etc. It is also expected to provide technical assistance and distribute agricultural products to retailers, public establishments, and Wilaya cooperative of fruits and legumes (COFEL). At the Wilaya level, COFEL receives and distributes fruits and legumes coming from or going to CAPCS. At the national level another body was created, the National Office of

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<sup>13</sup>The Second Peasants' Congress took place on April 24-28, 1978.

Fruits and Legumes (OFLA). This last body at the national level has a monopoly over the import and export of legumes and fruits. "The OFLA is charged to insure regular provision in fruits and legumes of the national market" (33b: 6). All cooperatives are obliged to sell their products to the CAPCS. Private farmers and Moudjahidin cooperatives are not forced to sell their products to CAPCS. They may market them directly. This situation seems to be, according to Hafir-assou, the origin of price differences on the market.

In fact, changes that worsened the market came from the private sector or what is called small farmers, who directly, market their products or sell them to intermediaries at prices differing from those fixed at the Wilaya level. This is the only reason that allowed traders to sell CAPRA products as those coming from the free market. This is due to lack of control and to some Moudjahidin cooperatives that do not sell their products to CAPCS (19: 10).

Tala farmers are not satisfied with the marketing system. The Wali<sup>14</sup> fixes the price of fruits and legumes twice a month at his Wilaya level. "Prices to pay to producers, and wholesale and retail prices are periodically decided by [Walis] based upon COFEL propositions and the executive council advice."<sup>15</sup> OFLA, also, sends propositions to Walis and to interested ministers (33b: 41). Farmers are in no way involved in what is of most concern to them, the selling of their own products. Even the UNPA that is supposed to defend their interests is absent in the area. Effectively, the UNPA Wilaya Coordinator is not a member of the Wilaya Executive council which helps decide prices. The Wilaya coordinator of the UNPA told me that there are new dispositions to start in October 1978 and which will permit the

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<sup>14</sup>Wali is the Wilaya chief.

<sup>15</sup>Ordinance of 10/10/74, quoted by (33b: 41).

coordinator to be a member of the executive council. This will allow him to act efficiently, instead of sending reports that were never taken into account in the past. According to this coordinator, the State focused its efforts on the industry and now it is time to change the situation to the profit of the agriculture by increasing its budget and the agricultural products price which is the cause of farmers discontent. They sell their products at a price that is very inferior to that of the market.

### UNPA Role

The NUPA seems to be more a container of peasants rather than a defender of their interests. Among the UNPA objectives are: having peasants effectively participate in the management of agricultural bodies, supporting peasants legitimate aspirations to socio-economic and cultural wellbeing, and representing them within the bodies charged with carrying out the agrarian revolution in practice, encouraging initiative and mobilizing their efforts to realize the general interest. The UNPA mission was to help improve the professional and cultural level of the peasants and to participate in the extension service actions, to fight against under-employment, to ameliorate peasants revenue, and to make equitable the State technical and financial help and its national use (15b: 10-12). Contrary to these objectives and others, the UNPA is not given necessary power to help peasants. The communal coordinator of this body told me "we have no power, all we can do is to send reports that are not looked at." One of the UNPA member expressed the idea as follows:

There is in the administrative apparatus, a new bourgeoisie class that, intentionally, sabotages the socialist revolution and the



agrarian revolution within the country. The party role is secondary compared to the administrative supreme power.

### Technical Assistance

The technical role that the CAPCS is expected to play is not played because of lack of qualified technicians. The CAPCS once received an agronomist from Egypt but he could not stay there due to a housing difficulty. He went to another Wilaya. There is, as it seems, a graduate technician from a technological institute, but farmers are not helped to satisfy their needs and they have received no training at all. The problem appears more dramatic when it is known that most farmers have come from a traditional sector, with no knowledge of modern techniques used in the agriculture. In addition, illiteracy seems to be general among all farmers, except rare individuals who can barely read and write some Arabic. The village committee president is illiterate. I witnessed a case when a CAPRA member was helped by chance. I was in the communal UNPA office when a farmer came to look for plans and estimates to build a shed. The CAPRA had decided to choose an enterprise to do the needed work without even waiting to see other estimates to see which would be more beneficial. I asked the coordinator why the UNPA did not explain to the farmers how to choose. He said, "I can not tell them what to do because I may be accused of taking bribe for advising them." A member of the Algerian National Youth Union (UNJA) was present at the time. The UNJA very often organized voluntary actions to help farmers. I told him that it is maybe better to help farmers solve their technical problems than to help them do manual tasks. He, effectively, went with the farmer and after comparing the four estimates, he found

that the chosen plan was adopted without knowledge of all CAPRA members.

B. O., a farmer explains the situation in his cooperative: we did not yet harvest our wheat, our tractor broke down, and we could not get it repaired. Authorities did not help and our cooperative is always losing.<sup>16</sup> There is no effort to provide machinery in time, we rent machinery at expensive costs from CAPCS. We are illiterate people, we need technical help from the CAPCS or from the Commune, if the engine stops, we do not know anything about it and the work is automatically stopped. Private people do not like to work with us. Without making profits, the 350 A.D. advanced can do nothing, especially when a farmer has a family. We need to live on the farm, as some of our colleagues do, in order to have some livestock to help ourselves.

#### Lack of Cohesion

Among the difficulties facing farmers is lack of cohesion among themselves and lack of efficient working organization. It seems that each is counting on the other to do the work. B. Al. lives in the farm garage. He preferred to live there because of the distance between the village and the farm. He works and keeps watch of the field every day but no one accepted doing the watch at night. People come and take what they want of grapes. Another farmer is living with him in the garage. In the orange season a third is added to assist

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<sup>16</sup>When a CPRA loses, that means CAPRA members have no benefits to add to their previous advances that one reputedly acquired anyhow. This is the reason for asking the state to raise advances to at least 800 A.D. (\$200) instead of 350 or 400 A.D.

with the watch. Farm 19 has a plot where two farmers do irrigate for a half day, then they are replaced by two others for another half. Thus, there are 16 farmers but only two work at the same time. The water engine stopped two years ago and still is not repaired. It broke because of misuse and neglect. B. Al. colleagues preferred to live in the village because of school and other services. They have neglected their farm, B. Al. said.

Some farmers are very pessimistic, B. A. thinks that most villagers are bandits and everyone is looking out for his own self-interest. The farmer is a blind man who needs someone to guide and teach him. Only housing holds me here. Farmers do not understand each other. Everyone is doing for his own and his relatives. At times, they decide to kick out someone because he has no relatives in the CAPRA. I would prefer to live on the farm, to do my work any time in the day or night, and to get rid of daily going back and forth.

K. M. worked as a farmer with the colonists for about 38 years. He is apparently an intelligent man but is in big trouble with his Co-CAPRA members. He chose not to live in the Tala village when a house was offered to him, because he was waiting for someone to leave a farmhouse and replace him. His colleagues advised him not to take the house over until they, together, decide what to do with it. He did what he wanted and his colleagues were angry. They decided not to pay him and told him not to work but he is still working.<sup>17</sup> No one could help solve this problem, not the commune (despite some

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<sup>17</sup> This farmer was not paid for about 4 months in the time when I was visiting the village, also some farms in July-September, 1978.

attempts at reconciliation from the Mayor), nor the UNPA, nor any other official. Everyone seems to be powerless to decide. This farmer told me that the ex-CAPCS director was found by University students trying to embezzle about 110,000 A. D. He cited the Algerian saying: "There is no honey worker who would not lick his finger." He said about the UNPA, "It should coordinate between CAPRA's, CAPCS, and administrative authorities, but it is useless and negative."

These are some typical examples showing that there are obstacles facing CAPRA farmers which need to be studied and solved. Apparently nobody is doing anything about them. Such problems surely push farmers of the agrarian revolution to look elsewhere to find a place to work and possibly conserve the housing that is almost impossible to find today in Algeria. Most families arrange to have at least one member working in the agrarian revolution in order to get a house in the socialist village.

### Common Services

#### Education

One of the important goals that the agrarian revolution intended to realize was to provide necessary and modern socio-economic and cultural conditions in order to modernize the rural areas. The socialist village was to be a center that would alleviate the grave disparities existing between urban and rural areas, seemingly a primary cause of rural mass emigration to cities. In fact, lack of sufficient educational institutions in rural areas is a striking fact and perhaps is the most important factor causing people to leave farming after independence.

Education is seen as the basic means of raising one's level of living and everyone is making his best effort to obtain education, facilities for which are mainly located in urban centers. Meller confirmed this fact when he wrote,

... it is perhaps as much for this reason as for any other that farm families in low-income countries tend to take such a great interest in education. They recognize that educating their children improves the chances of attractive nonfarm employment ... (29: 28).

The UNPA Second Congress placed great emphasis on the educational sector and considered extremely important to improve farmers' cultural, political, and professional levels. As a consequence, this in turn would improve their production, change their style of life, develop their capacity of adaptation to the socialist revolution, and make their ideological moulding by the party easier. To accomplish this vital aim, among the means suggested were to open regional training centers to train farmers how to use agricultural machinery; to consolidate craft centers in order to preserve the traditional heritage; to promote the national economy and to provide farmers with an additional source of income; to open cultural centers in every socialist village and provide them with necessary means to improve the farmers cultural level; and to consolidate education and eliminate illiteracy by reopening the National Center for Generalized Education (15b: 13-14).

Included in the Tala's center for education are an elementary school which seems to function without particular problems, a Mosque, and a Youth House (Dar Al-Shabab). The last two seem to be in trouble and consequently need some attention because their respective roles are very important to the village life, both economically and culturally.

### The Mosque Role

The role of the Mosque is different from the role of the church, because generally, the political, cultural, social, and economic aspects of life are not separated in Moslem society. In the traditional Algerian village, an Imam was a leader and everybody sought his advice in everything. According to Islamic laws, an Imam should be the best person among those he has to guide, from the viewpoint of physical formation, knowledge, intelligence, and behavior. Now, an Imam is just a state employee whose role is very much more limited than before independence. I have heard Tala's Imam<sup>18</sup> saying that he was prevented from speaking in a village meeting by a party coordinator before the meeting started. The coordinator said if he (the Imam) wants to speak, he must go to his Mosque. Tala's Imam was the second employee in the Mosque. He became the first when the Imam left. He does not seem to have sufficient ability to be an Imam, and some problems stem from this fact. Effectively, his physical handicap and his inability to recite the whole Koran<sup>19</sup> during the month of Ramadan<sup>20</sup> prayers forced the villagers to substitute another man who could better do the task.

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<sup>18</sup>Tala's Imam refused to be interviewed. He told me when I first presented myself to him and asked for an informal interview that he needed an authorization. When I showed him an authorization from MARA, he said he was not able to read French. A week after this, I came with another authorization in Arabic from his own ministry and he still refused. He even tried to prevent the Koranic teacher from talking to me. This refusal to talk was explained to me later. A reporter who got some information from the Imam reported the information to his inspector who blamed him for releasing such information. This clearly shows the negative effect of previous studies upon the following ones when not carefully handled.

<sup>19</sup>Moslem holy book.

<sup>20</sup>Ramadan is the ninth month of the Moslem calendar in which daily fast is enjoined from dawn until sunset.

### A Case of Exploitation

The person who was chosen to substitute for the village's Imam three years ago seems to represent a flagrant case of exploitation of man by man and reflect the precarious social organization of a village that was especially built to suppress this exploitation. This man is about 57 year-old and was Imam of a traditional village before joining one of his sons working in the region. He applied for a position in the agrarian revolution and was appointed a CAPRA member, but could not find a place in the original CAPRA, changed to a second and third, and finally was permitted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to teach the Koran to children. Even though he is not accepted as an employee of this ministry, seemingly due to his advanced age, he is paid 600 A. D. (\$150) every six months so as to provide him with some extra help. The village committee then decided to pay him 400 A.D. (\$100) a month from the money collected from his own pupils.

A disagreement developed among the village committee members since 1977 which seems to take its origin from a dispute between the Imam and the Koranic teacher. In fact, in addition to substituting for him during the month of Ramadan, the Imam seems to take advantage of the teacher by somehow forcing him to play his own role while he is absent for any reason. When these absences became more regular, the teacher felt exploited, and consequently refused to conform to this irregular situation. As a result of the dispute, the Imam put pressure on the teacher to submit or leave not only his work but also his house since he was not working in the village.

There are two situations that I myself saw in which the Imam sought to exert pressure. The first was the action of dispersing

children who were waiting in front of the Mosque for the teacher to come. The second, also destined to prevent children from going to class, was placing a coffin at the entrance of the classroom. An 11 year-old girl was killed by a car on August 11, 1978 while trying to sell homemade bread to passing drivers as a means to improve the family income. After the burial, the empty coffin was put at the classroom entrance. Such a circumstance could not happen without the intent to sabotage the teacher's work.

The classroom itself is not adequate and is not furnished to be a regular classroom. It is very small in relation to the number of pupils expected to occupy it, without a single chair and without carpet. Children just sit down on the floor and start reciting the Koran in a very traditional way. Both the village committee and the Ministry of Religious Affairs could have managed better conditions than those now existing. The teacher is not fully paid after the disagreement happened, because of lack of money. The illiteracy classes lasted only two months at the beginning of the village life and then were suspended.

In my view, the Mosque can play an important role in strengthening solidarity, mutual help, and better understanding among the villagers as it did for many years if better organized and cared for. In a small village like Tala, where the expressed intent was to build a new and modern social life, illiteracy should not co-exist with the three cultural institutions--School, Mosque, and Dar Al-Shabab.



### Youth House

With its Youth House, Tala is in possession of a third cultural institution that is designed to provide cultural, artistic, sportive, and professional learning facilities for the village youth. But the institution does not seem to work as successfully as expected. The main reasons are lack of educational means and the director's misconduct that angered Tala's youth adults to the point of boycotting the institution. In fact, the village boy scouts simply opened their own center as a sign of opposition to the Youth House director.

### The Outsiders and Inadequate Schedule

The Director's method was to attract village youth by starting with patrons from outside. He said, "We have started working with some 7 girls all from outside the village and after a month we could organize an exposition of the articles made in the center. This attracted the village girls in large numbers (80)." It is not clear whether the Director, who is a Youth and Sports Ministry employee, has tried and failed to recruit his patrons from the village itself, or just preferred to start with his own boys and girls from the center where he was prior to coming to Tala. He is very sharply criticized by local youth for preferring outsiders to the detriment of villager youth who, as they think, should be the first to benefit from any facility in the village.

Other facts seem to have incited Tala's young people and their parents to oppose the Youth House Director. The daily schedule does not allow Tala's youth to take advantage of the House, since classrooms are closed early in the day because, according to my informants

K. A. and B. B., both trainees and trainers live outside the village and are consequently forced to take the last bus home, (not later than 7 P.M. or even sometimes before that time). When villagers come back from work and schools, the House is closed. As a post-school center of education, the House should be open after daily activities. The Ministry of Youth and Sports suspended night classes and ordered trainers to devote their activities only to sports and other arts. This new orientation caused trainees to drop from 200 to 60. Their number was 300 when the village was inaugurated.

The young people who need the most help are those between 14 and 18 of age and who have not been admitted to junior high school to continue their education. Their age neither allows them to stay in elementary school nor to work. They need complementary education and professional training which the Youth House should be able to offer them but is unable to do so today. This situation is not specific to Tala, but it generally is acute in the rural areas. Tala's more educated people are willing to volunteer to help their young people, but there are no facilities to do it.

The House director confirmed the idea that Tala's youth are not satisfied with only hobby activity, but want something useful for their future. He said, "Algerian youth have developed and are no longer satisfied with the little they receive." And after citing what the Youth House was supposed to do he added, "All these projects are nice but we do not have necessary means to realize them." There is a general discontentment among Tala's youth and the Youth House Director seems to express this tendency when he said, "The young people leave their activities with anger toward their local authorities."

The outsider phenomenon exists everywhere, since all common services not only are managed by these outsiders but also even their staffs are from outside. This is the case of the Post Office, City Hall agency, Health Center, Mosque, school, and Dar Al-Shabab. This places the villagers in a position of dependency and prevents the wives and children from finding jobs in the village itself. Also, farmers think that they may be better served by other villagers than by those who leave the village when day ends. Since most of them live outside the village they are not involved in village life except for their limited professional activity.

#### The Village Committee

This leads us to say something about the village committee that was set up to manage the village affairs. This committee consists of five members presided over by an illiterate man. All five are farmers and not one of the administrative employees is really involved in helping this committee. It is more symbolic than an effective body, as intended. It has no power and is unable to manage and solve the village problems. Its power is divided among social and administrative units which in their turn depend on their respective hierarchical authorities of the city. So, the center of decision making is not in the village, but rather the city is managing Tala through different agencies that exert authority over the village. The village committee has no voice in any existing services except for the shopping center.

#### Shopping Center

Apparently, the shopping center is managed by this committee but a brief look at this center shows that its problems are beyond the

committee's ability to solve them. One of these obvious problems is its planning. Effectively, the center consists of a number of separated rooms, as if each was to be a shop of its own: coffee shop, grocery, fruits and legumes shop, bakery, Butcher shop, etc. This fact alone requires employment of at least 10 people to put these shops into operation and to insure minimum service, assuming only 2 people are employed in each shop. The committee possesses no means of provision (van, etc.), no single person is trained even in small business, and there is no capital at all. Private people are not permitted to do business in the village. An opportunity was once offered when a foreign president visited Tala. Commodities were plenty on that day, but a few moments later nothing was left. The goods were brought for the occasion and were taken away immediately after. Tala was lucky when President Boumédiène visited the center and found nothing but emptiness. He donated 150 thousand A.D. (about \$37,500) and the grocery started functioning from then on. CAPCS also sent a retailer to sell fruit and legumes.

The grocery salesman is not happy with his new situation even though he is paid more than when he was in the CAPRA. He knows nothing about the price system, he has no means for maintaining provisions, and no idea about bookkeeping. He was alone and another man was appointed to help during the month of Ramadan. The important fact is his uncertainty about his future. He wants to be sponsored by someone and have his status defined and protected. He is originally a CAPRA member. It is not clear why the committee hired this farmer instead of another young man who was more educated but was not working on the farm. This was the case in another socialist village that

I visited to see if there was any difference between the two villages. The other village shopping center is similar to that of Tala, but seems to work better because the CAPCS to which the village adhered provided means that are not provided in Tala. Still the planning problem is the same. If a large shop was built, it could save manpower, means of provision and preservation, and consequently be economically more efficient. In Tala now, there is no meat, milk, or bread sold in the shop. Fruit and legume prices being lower attract people from all over to compete with Tala's inhabitants who sometimes find nothing to buy.

#### Health Center

Health care is free in Algeria as a whole. Tala is provided for by a center equipped to deal with daily needs. Visits are made every day by physicians and medical assistant who lives in the center and may help anytime of the day or night. Nurses work everyday, but even drugs provided free are not sufficient to satisfy the needs of those who have no social security insurance as do the self-management workers. This causes some trouble for those who do not have someone working elsewhere with social insurance. Contrary to self-management workers who have family allowances, social security, retirement, etc., the beneficiaries of the agrarian revolution have only work accident insurance.

#### The Kibbutz Autonomy

Compared to the Kibbutz system, differences are very significant. The first important difference is that Kibbutz common services are managed by Kibbutz members themselves and do not depend upon

external authorities as is the case of Tala, where everything is controlled from above, no matter how small or unimportant it is. As an example of the Kibbutz autonomy, decision making and internal policy are the Kibbutz members' affairs. But, the Kibbutz movement is unwelcomed in Israeli society, at least by the official government.

"On January 16, 1950, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, publically denounced the Kibbutz movement for its 'shameful' policy of refusing to accept the new immigrants as hired laborers" (24: 21-22).

The Kibbutz internal organization is more sophisticated and consists of a general assembly, a secretariat which is the operational administrative body, committees that form the framework within which the various social and economic activities are carried out, and the cycles of branch workers whose activities are restricted to their respective branches and to routine operations (14: 101-102). The social committees are as many as the different aspects of the Kibbutz life--one for each of the following: education and child care, culture and public activities, members' social affairs, health, editorial board (giving weekly information about all branches), nomination and election, aid to parents, security, politics, integration (gives attention to the new members), clothing, housing, and sports (14: 106-108). The average population of the Kibbutz is several hundred members and the functions are divided as follows: the general assembly elects institutions, admits new members, and decides on matters of principle and ethics, while the secretariat and committees run the day-to-day management of the Kibbutz (14: 109-110).

### The Kibbutz Origin and Decline

Neither this autonomy nor this sophisticated organization exist in the Algerian socialist villages or in the self-management sector. The Kibbutz movement itself is declining in Israel because of its policy and declared goals that are in contradiction with the principles that led to the creation of Israeli state itself. In fact, the main goals of the Kibbutz movement were to build new values and economic and social relationships, and create higher standards of morals and collective behavior among the Kibbutz members. Ownership and religion were not allowed. "Since the often poverty-stricken ghetto family was immensely concerned with both religious values and earthly possessions, neither religion nor materialism would exist in the Kibbutz" (6: 23). It is well known that the Israeli state was created by religious people over religious claims, to be a religious state for Jews only, since Moslems and Christians are not welcomed there. For this, the Zionist organization and the official government did not welcome the Kibbutz movement. "The Zionist leadership did not view this development [of the Kibbutz] favorably and espoused a different form of settlement called the Moshav"<sup>21</sup> (24: 17). The Kibbutz original idea came from young European Jews who wanted to put in practice Marxist socialism. So, the idea "had reached them [European Jews] from Germany. In the form of German enlightenment, socialism in its Marxist form had come to them from Germany ..." (42: 21).

The main and original differences between Kibbutz and Moshav types of organization came from previous intentions of those who

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<sup>21</sup> Moshav is an agricultural settlement based upon private family farms, with an agreement providing for many cooperative arrangements (43).

helped to create them. As for the Kibbutz, French imperialism seems to be the basic goal for colonizing Palestine, and

... what Rothschild had in mind was to provide the Jews who fled from the pogrom in Tsarist Russia with land in Palestine and colonize it along the lines of the contemporary French colonization of Algeria. He never subscribed to the fundamental Zionist idea of a Jewish nation state, but [rather] opposed it. He was a financial pillar of French capitalism and thought in terms of increasing France's influence overseas (30: 11).

The Kibbutz started with Jews who came from Russia and were compelled to compete with poorly paid Arab workers. This led to serious strife with the plantation owners and their overseers, as was the case of the Zionist administered farms. "Here, also was persistent strife between the farm administrators and their Jewish workers and these farms frequently were operated at a loss" (24: 16). As a consequence of the strife

... the representative of the Zionist organization decided to lease a nearby tract of land to a group of workers for a year. The farm was to be collectively managed by them. The conditions of the agreement were: a minimum wage plus 50 percent of the net profits. These arrangements were of a provisional nature and gave the workers no claim to ownership of the farm (24: 16).

This is exactly the situation with the agrarian revolution beneficiaries. They are working in lands owned by the state, receive a minimum wage called "advance" plus 50 percent of the net profits. Both systems are said to be a socialist movement based on belief in economic, social, and political equality and both reject, in principle, any kind of exploitation. But the Algerian type is not actually working well for different reasons, and the Kibbutz represented almost 8 percent of the Israeli population in 1948, after 20 years, the system dropped to 5 percent of that population (43: 9). As Ali mentioned, "How could it be possible to put together the ghetto



socialist movement seeking for the emancipation of man by setting up the Kibbutz society in Palestine and the racial capitalist Israeli government" (43: 12). In the Algerian type this contradiction seems to be between principles and practice. In fact, the agrarian revolution charter says that

The agrarian revolution is a political operation which should, during its realization, respect consequently the socialist methods of construction in our country. This means first decentralization, democracy, participation of the interested people, mobilization and adaptation of all political institutions and technical-administrative means (33e: 32).

The contrary of this is the reality in Tala, since there is no decentralization, no participation of those interested, and democracy seems to have another meaning for the farmers, namely laissez-faire.

#### Common Services in the Israeli System

There are no common services in the Kibbutz similar to those existing in Tala. Israeli agriculture took shape in three stages, the first of which was without detailed planning. "In many cases, the settlements were without any detailed planning or preliminary survey of the soil. This sometimes results in the establishment of settlement without a sound economic basis" (4: 34). In the second stage, these services were taken into account, and

... the settlements were sited as close to each other as possible, and in the middle of the group a common service center was built within walking distance of each settlement. Its sole function was to serve as the location for common services and institutions for the villages in the neighborhood, such as the school, tractor station, marketing facilities, stores, etc. (43: 35).

In the third stage, planning was regional and comprehensive. "This comprised all the levels, the agricultural village, the village center, and the regional town" (4: 36).

In the Algerian case, the village center and the regional town are not necessarily included in the planning, especially where colonial villages and towns are located. Inclusion would be necessary, however, in the newly-cleared lands or in some traditional sectors where such services are very far from the population.

### Other Aspects

#### Women's Role

The formal role of women is reduced to nothing in Tala, despite the fact that most Algerian women have been, in most traditional areas and throughout the country's history, involved actively in social, economic, and political activities, at home as well as in the field. Algerian women participated positively in the national liberation war and the Soummam charter not only recognized their important role, but glorified those "who participate actively and at times, weapons at hand, to the sacred fighting for the country's liberation" (34e: 23). The women's tasks during the war were in general as follows:

- a. Moral support to the fighters and resisters..
- b. Providing information, liaison, provision, and refuge.
- c. Providing help to prisoners and resistor's families and children (34d: 24).

The UNPA Second Congress focused its attention upon the women's role and called for fighting against bourgeois social relationships that prevent women from working after they were producers in the countryside, and asked for the organization of workshops and for the building of centers for them (15b: 8). But generally, women are simply omitted in the agrarian revolution's charter. Even in the case

when a beneficiary of this revolution becomes an invalid, only a male descendant can replace him in the cooperative (if he meets the necessary conditions to become a CAPRA member). If not, the invalid or dead CAPRA member's family is paid by the cooperative in which he was member. In this situation the burden is supported by the CAPRA which not only loses manpower but also pays for unlimited time (33e: 69). One such case occurred in Tala, and the CAPRA members are unhappy with it.

Tala's women do not participate in social and economic activities, except for four women (three of whom are outside the village), two at the Health Center and two at the elementary school. In addition, farmers resist allowing their wives to work and nothing is done for their education and training. Evidently young girls go to the elementary school and some others go to the Youth House. A. Z. is the only woman working in cleaning classrooms in the school village. Another asked the city officer for a job but was turned down. When the Health Center nurse asked for a house in Tala where she works, the city officials' answer was "Why do you not get married?" The medical assistant struggled for a long time before she was accepted as the Health Center chief. She lives in the center but her only contact with village women is through medical consultations. Some women come to see a doctor not because of sickness but as a means to get out of their houses where they are imprisoned, said the medical assistant. Others have psychological troubles and fear that their husbands will get married again. The medical assistant told me,

A woman is prisoner in her house, her husband deals with her as a slave. There is no means of entertainment and no house is allotted to the nurse because she is a woman. Women are not

encouraged and the Algerian National Women Union (UNFA) simply does not exist in Tala. A working woman is continually harassed here. Girls at the Youth House come from outside.

The Wilaya coordinator of the UNFA said that she tried to constitute a UNFA cell in Tala, but when her efforts succeeded she was told never to come back to the village again.

B. O. said of this subject,

A farmer's wife cannot give milk products to a foreign man in her husband's absence. She does not know how to milk a cow and should not meet with a veterinarian when her husband is absent.

Asked why this new attitude is adopted, contrary to the people's attitude in the traditional village where women were able to participate in many social and economic activities, his answer was: "In the traditional village, we were living in a familial context. Here people have come from different regions. Even though we say we all are Algerians, the conditions have changed." This shows clearly that the village conditions had negatively changed women's life. This, in my view, is due to the lack of adequate social organization that could reinforce and consolidate the already existing social basis.

Because of the farmers' resistance to allowing women to work outside, and because of lack of possibilities, some farmers asked the Youth and Sports Ministry to provide tools for women to work at home and to sell their products through the village shopping center. This idea could be useful, at least as a first step toward providing jobs to all women who actually do nothing for pay, and this would naturally increase significantly the family income of farmers.

The Kibbutz women are regarded as equal to men in rights and responsibilities. They are not dominated by men. A married woman keeps her maiden name as a symbol of not becoming the property of the

husband. The Algerian woman also keeps her maiden name, but this fact does not mean in practical life that she is free of equal to man. Once again this shows the significant difference between theory and practice in Algeria.

### Family Income

Concerning farmers economic needs, the First National Seminar on Rural Housing placed particular emphasis on maintaining the beneficiaries previous revenue. "The previous revenue being very often made of multitude sources, their suppression may, in the first times, provoke grave perturbations" (33f: 34). To satisfy immediate needs, each specific case needs a particular solution to that particular problem, but a general solution was recommended for the long term. "When agricultural revenues are insufficient and when employment diversification is necessary, the commission proposes that small scale industry and diverse artisan activities be established within the framework of the socialist village" (33f: 35). These complementary revenues are deemed effective to improve the workers living level. Nothing was done in Tala, where most farmers are suffering gravely from insufficient income.

There are significant differences among Tala farmers with respect to family income and this seems to be a result of two main facts: the difference in pay between farmers working in self-management and those working in the agrarian revolution sectors and the family composition. The self-management workers, though not very satisfied with their situation, are much better off economically than the others. According to B. A., a self-management farmer, he and his colleagues

are paid 24 A.D. a day (which makes 720 A.D. a month as advance) plus familial allowances that amount to 25 A.D. per child under 18, and a part of the net profit at the end of each season. B. A. received 800 A.D. as his part of the profit this year (1978). To this he can add retirement and social insurance. The agrarian revolution beneficiary receives an advance of 350 A.D. or at most 400 A. D. (about \$87.50 or \$100) a month plus his part of the net profit, if any. Because of lack of technical knowledge, machinery, pesticides, and cohesion among beneficiaries themselves, not every CAPRA is able to realize profits. In both cases the government takes 50 percent of the net profit to pay for retirement, social insurance, solidarity fund, etc. In addition to that, the agrarian revolution farmers do not have any right to retirement or social insurance. The self-management farmers are more likely to make profits, because of the relatively better working conditions, more sufficient machinery, better technical knowledge, and better lands. Some Tala's CAPRA members could make profits in each of the past years, but others could not up to the present time. CAPRA 16 could make a significant profit in 1975-76 when each member got about 12,000 A.D. (\$3,000). There were 18 members who started with an advance of 150 A.D. (\$47.50) a month. K. M. said, "we were confident to gain our living, land is generous when well worked. The production decreased last years because of lack of pesticides." Their CAPRA has about one hectare of cleaned land to be used as a common kitchen garden but has no water on it and is far from the farm.

Farmers of both sectors are discouraged by the pricing system. M. M. said about this subject,

Prices are fixed by the Wilaya; we are losing when the consumer is buying at high prices. We want the advance to be raised to 700 A.D. instead of 350 A.D. That is discouraging to the farmer when he sees his children without enough food or clothes. The self-management farmers are making more profits because they have the best lands and tools. Also, there are big differences between urban and rural people. The beneficiary of the agrarian revolution is in the worst situation, his living level is the lowest, which is aggravated by the high rate of inflation, whereas the others are living comfortably. Agriculture is really neglected, the wage laborer is only concerned to finish his mission, and our reports have no results. The UNPA is not effective. We were really happy to see the agrarian revolution started but its intentions are not put into practice. At times, farmers are threatened by some authorities to jail them. We really need a direct contact with the Wilaya Direction of Agriculture (D.D.A.). The OFLA is throwing away legumes everywhere, because of misuse of our products and lack of an adequate processing system everyone is a loser in this situation. The high level officials are not aware of what is going on in the base. Most farmers cannot afford to eat meat except only once a year (religious holiday) and only when they get a loan from someone else.

When a family has more than one worker, the situation is much better economically, but social problems emerge within the family itself when it becomes larger. Children are used to sell homemade products such as bread, eggs (before poultry was prohibited), some handicraft products, resell some Algerian pastry during Ramadan, for instance. Children also work during harvest seasons. This allows families to benefit from an extra income which, even though very small, helps children to buy some clothes, school supplies, etc. Some agricultural products given to farmers as familial consumption items are also sold by children to car drivers, despite the serious danger of being killed.

I have seen H. K.'s son coming back from town where he was sent to get some Zalabyya to resell in Tala, without getting anything. "Today, (08/08/78) is the second day he was promised some Zalabyya, but as you see he got nothing." The father then concluded, "I cannot

help him despite the fact that I am doing nothing, because I fear of being accused of being more interested in selling Zalabyya during Ramadan rather than working in agriculture."

H. K. described his economic difficulties as follows,

Our advance is too little, the problem comes from the marketing system. When we sell our grapes at 2.50 A.D. a kilogram (about 62¢) to the CAPCS, we buy them at 4.50 D.A. in its agency of Tala. [The same grapes cost 8 to 9 A.D. in the market at the same time.] We have no family allowances nor social insurance. When a doctor prescribes drugs, we find only small part of them in the center pharmacy, which forces us to buy the rest expensively outside. We now receive 400 A.D. a month and a quintal of Semolina costs 170 A.D. Everything is expensive and the farmer cannot eat meat but only once a year (Holiday). Four hundred A.D. is not enough for the holiday and for the school entrance season. A child's pants costs 70 A.D. a briefcase 30 A.D., and supplies cost much. He who has 4 children needs at least 800 A.D. just for school entrance.

This kind of problem does not exist in the Israeli Kibbutz, since no shares are distributed among its members and all needs are satisfied by the Kibbutz community as a whole.

### Freedom and Democracy

The meaning of freedom is variably understood and differently used by the farmers, by their representative UNPA, and by the administrative officials. In fact, the communal coordinator of the UNPA, who is supposed to represent and defend the farmers' rights and interests thinks that "The government gave farmers complete freedom, but they neither understood their rights and duties nor did they appreciate the confidence of the state. They think only in terms of eating and sleeping." It is not easy to see where this complete freedom is. Such freedom exists nowhere in my view, since farmers have no say in any decisions concerning provisions, marketing of their products, prices, planning, etc. All they can do is to send reports or make



some proposals. Even within their own homes, they are unable to do what they want to do, such as keeping some chickens and livestock, for example. Tala farmers are prevented from this minimum of freedom and are truly reduced to the most primitive level of eating and sleeping freedom, as expressed by their legal representative.

The farmers reaction to this situation is represented by their negative attitude toward their work as also expressed by the same coordinator. "When a farmer is asked by an authority to do something, the answer is usually: 'this is a state property.' And if the question is reasked again, it is the dismissal of the authority and nobody can be against the people's decision." The state property mentioned here invokes a colonial legacy that many Algerians still have in mind. It means in practice neglecting or destroying the colonial state property. It is not true that farmers are able to dismiss any authority so easily. The K. M., a CAPRA member who behaved against all his colleagues by occupying a farm house, is a good example proving the contrary. All the CAPRA members could do was to suspend his monthly advances which he may get once the difference is solved. The coordinator seems to show the existence of democracy among the farmers which is doubtful. It is an anarchical rather than a democratic situation that prevails in many CAPRAs. "There is neglect and threats from the administrative authorities," I was told by a young member of the Algerian National Youth Union (UNJA).

It is true that freedom means not working for some farmers and the Youth House director sees the government propaganda as the main reason for lack of activity. "Farmers were told that the state will provide them with all necessary help, including a furnished house and

a monthly wage. They thought that the government will give them everything, but the reality dissatisfied them," and "freedom reached a degree of anarchy and destruction," said a former self-management farm director, who could not stay where he was and joined a CAPCS as a director of the machinery. Because as he said, "A functionary has no authority over farmers nor any power to punish anyone. When he does, he is considered as a colonist. The party and the workers' union always intervened against any punishment or dismissal. As a result, there is Laissez-faire and a neglect that causes the production to decrease dangerously. The farmer works a limited time of the year and buys his food from the market as anybody else." But, B. A., a farmer in the self-management tends to assert the contrary of this when he said, "In the self-management, we are not free, we work for others. We sell our products cheaper and we have someone to command us."

The agrarian revolution farmers suffer much of this false freedom and democracy. H. B. M. said, "Freedom here means anarchy, when somebody proposes something, another contradicts him, meanwhile land and production are lost, because technical knowledge is lacking." These farmers want more help, democracy, election of authorities at all levels, and a true freedom that the traditional farmer is enjoying now. He receives orders from nobody. Farmers aspiration for freedom and democracy shows that they did not yet exist for them. M. M. told me that "what most interests us is not who is responsible but that the law is applied." The ex-Daira chief's attempt to expel some people from the village was fiercely resisted. This action seems unlawful because even if these people do not, effectively, work in agriculture,

families arranged to have at least one member working land. The fact gives right to a house in which other family members live together, without being forced to work in agriculture. Some of the non-farmers were farmers and then changed to industry or to administration, some others never worked in agriculture but they are sons, brothers, or parents of the farmers. There is no law specifying that the farmer should live alone, separated from other relatives. Despite this, the Daira chief sent his gendarmes to expel the nonfarmer residents in the village. They did not succeed in their mission and the Daira chief lost his position there.

#### Withdrawal

Tala beneficiaries of the agrarian revolution are facing several obstacles and since they are living in closer contact with urban and industrial centers, they have a tendency to withdraw from this sector. In fact, many profitable jobs attract these farmers to administration, industry, and to the self-management sector. It is certain that the acute housing crisis in Algeria today makes it much more difficult to find a house than to find a job. For not to lose their houses, beneficiaries try to find a job in self-management or manage to have a family member working in any sector of agriculture. Usually those left in agriculture are old men, handicapped, or those who could not find a job elsewhere. And others are to look for a better job in industry. The Wilaya coordinator of the UNPA asserted that

The existing industry in this region, facilitated farmer's exodus from farming to industry which guarantees durable and stable wages, familial allowances, and social insurance. The worker emigrated to France or to Sahara in order to gain his family's living. Actually, he is able to find a job very close to his house. Farmers abandoned their lands because the state focussed its efforts on the industrial sector.

H. B. M., a former beneficiary of the agrarian revolution and actual self-management worker, told me before changing his job, "Working the land is difficult; it needs tools and effort, and people preferred working in administration where less effort is needed and better wages are gained." This caused the country to shift from a food exporting to a food importing country today.

The Kibbutz members likewise are attracted by administrative jobs, because:

The Kibbutzim had a considerable reservoir of trained manpower needed by the burgeoning governmental agencies as well as by other public bodies.... Many Kibbutz members were attracted to these positions.... Since the older members are frequently the skilled and managerial personnel, their departure was a serious loss to the collectives (24: 22).

This corresponds somehow to the existing situation in Algeria, where skilled workers are in great demand and are better paid in the industrial sector. Administration comes in the second position and agriculture is the lowest paying sector. As already seen, farmers differ significantly in pay within the same sector. A driver's licence, for example, can help gain a respectable wage in Algeria.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Geographical and historical factors greatly influenced the shape of the socioeconomic structure in Algeria. The largest proportion of Algerians lived in the northern part of the country and a relatively small proportion lived in the south. The climate and amount of annual rainfall are the main factors that determined and divided the country into south, north, and the area of the steppes between two called the sheep country. The north is a relatively small area and farming is practiced on a limited range of arable surfaces. The successive foreign invaders pushed Algerians into remote and poor areas, from which persistent and fierce resistance was organized against the invaders. These areas formed what was later called the traditional sector.

The scarcity of the means with which to farm, including land, animals, water, and tools forced strict socioeconomic organization. The collective land ownership and farming associations reflect this fact. The geographic and economic factors divided the country into isolated zones and sub-zones with respect to social organization. Tribalism and nomadism prevailed in the southern pastoral zones, while a federative system predominated in the northern mountainous areas. Production is represented, as Gallissot put it, by "collective forms made up of kinship ties and more or less ethnic local and regional

communities--from village to federation, from Duwar to tribe" (16: 418). The system was mainly imposed by geography and the gradations of different modes of life. Ibn Khaldun asserted that "life style differences among human groups are only explained by the ways through which living is gained. Meeting in society has no goal but mutual help to obtain a living" (25: 133). Marx also made clear this close relationship between material production and social structures. "The model of material life production determines generally, social, political, and intellectual life processes."<sup>1</sup>

The French colonization of Algeria was very harsh and since the colonization was intended to establish settlements that needed to break up the existing structures, the Algerians fiercely opposed the colonial penetration into the countryside. The settlers were faced by a different culture and language, and consequently, in order to dominate, existing socioeconomic and cultural structures were systematically destroyed and land confiscated as repressive measures.

The Algerians in rural areas were reduced to isolation, poverty, and ignorance. After enduring this status for a long time, they emigrated to Algerian cities and later to France at the beginning of the twentieth century. These direct contacts with other Europeans and ideologies were influential. In addition, the influence of the Islamic renaissance was widespread over the national territory. Both forces revived nationalism that led to the creation of nationalist political parties after World War I. During the national liberation war, the Algerian peasantry was uprooted and the rural economy was destroyed.

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx. Préface à La Critique de l'économie Politique (quoted by Bousquet, in Ibn Khaldun, p. 133).

This condition aggravated the existing misery and forced the rural people to flee to cities.

At the time of independence, internal political strife and external threat did not allow the implementation of the unique FLN program adopted at the end of war. The masses of peasants who carried the major burden of the liberation war benefitted less than any other social category of Algerians from the fruits of independence. They were systematically the victims of foreign invasions and local exploitation. They suffered from the domination of urban centers, which represented military, political, cultural, and economic supremacy. The peasant's poverty and exploitation from the past were somehow alleviated by social solidarity, but today, despite an undeniable improvement of their living conditions, they suffer great disparity in income, which is becoming more and more obvious. The huge efforts made in educational and industrial sectors benefit urban residents more than rural residents. A wealthy, bureaucratic class emerged in the urban centers to replace the previous European bourgeois class.

The departing French settlers in the summer of 1962, made available many opportunities for upward mobility. A privileged urban class and wealthy landlord were in a pretty good position to compete for employment and to buy up commercial shops, factories, farms, or simply to take these properties over when abandoned by the settlers. Such a class already existed as Gautier, the French historian mentioned, when he wrote in 1930: "The native Algeria is almost entirely rural. There exists, naturally, a Moslem bourgeoisie but not as a distinct class.... There is in Algeria a rural and pastoral plebe. To administer this plebe there is nothing more than 823,000 colonists, the

only constituted class."<sup>2</sup> The new Algerian bourgeois class included large landlords, wealthy merchants, industrialists, and functionaries.

The Algerian type of development was influenced by the colonial legacy in which industry was neglected. To get rid of the dependence and underdevelopment, Algeria has chosen to give first priority to industry considered as the most effective route to development. Important successes were made through the industrialization process, but the rural world was merely sacrificed. In fact, the large, poor, and illiterate majority of the peasants are neglected. The peasants could not benefit from the economic development despite their massive participation to the liberation war. This not only poses the problem of socioeconomic equity, but also prevents a harmonious development of the country as a whole, since urban centers are already overcrowded. One may say that towns, even in the regional balance policy, dominated and exploited the countryside from the time of the Roman Empire up to the present time. Independence has not yet modified this fact. The towns have always represented a concentration of combined military and civil power (16: 437).

Tala village is an example in which this domination is concretely represented. Tala is a village that lacks the power to control the institutions that regulate and determine its existence. External forces control Talā life. The colonial effect is still present. The antagonism and contradictions between town and rural society develop more freely than ever before. Effectively, Tala farmers feel that they are externally administered and paternalistically dealt with. They

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<sup>2</sup>Emile Gautier, Felix, quoted by Jeanson, p. 57 (freely translated from French).



have no say in what most interests them: the pricing system, CAPRA membership, the construction of the village and their homes, common services, and even inside their households where small livestock breeding is prohibited. The farmers have no freedom as is the case of the Soviet farmers, despite what is verbally declared. This shows the gap between practice and theory. Golikov asserted this reality in the Soviet Union when he said:

Certain mistakes, however, were made in the practical work connected with the collectivisation. There was a certain 'pushing forward' of the collective farm movement and at times the principle of voluntariness was ignored.... These deviations made themselves felt at a much later period, for example, in 1959-64, when the growth rates of rural economy dropped substantially and the agricultural targets were not fulfilled (18: 137-38).

The Algerian farmers do experience urban authoritarian bureaucracy. The cooperatives are handicapped by long delays in providing agricultural machinery, fertilizers, and pesticides. Sometimes "they are victims of interference that put constraints upon management bodies," said the minister of agriculture.<sup>3</sup> The marketing system is a major obstacle to both farmers and consumers, despite the slogan "from the producer to the consumer" that was used once to change the previous system of marketing. Lack of storage facilities, inefficient processing, and mishandling destroys important quantities of legumes and fruits. The traditional sector is neglected up until now, as the minister of agriculture asserts: "We cannot carry out an agricultural policy whose aim is self-sufficiency with a marginal traditional private sector that represents more than half of the farmers" (23).

Family income is another problem in Tala. This is due to

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<sup>3</sup>Quoted by Junqua in Le Monde.

administrative and planning obstacles that prevent farmers from having a small amount of livestock. There is not enough space for a kitchen garden that could provide a supplementary source of income. Vidich asserted that

The family garden, the Mason jar, and the deep freeze are important parts of Springdale's economy. For many families in the village as well as in the country, the garden represents an important income supplement. A small garden can easily produce a family's annual vegetable needs, and in this way the diligent housewife can make a direct contribution to the household economy (46: 20-21).

This also was true of the small private plots in the Soviet Kolkhoz.

The Israeli Kibbutz, compared to Tala village, represents the opposite direction with its sophisticated internal organization and autonomy. But its isolation from the norms and values of the outside world made it a temporary system rather than a long-lasting one. A combined "from above" and "from below" system of agricultural cooperatives seems to be the best way for lasting success.

There is a strong tendency toward leaving farm jobs in Algeria, and as a result the cities are very crowded and food shortages create a serious problem. The capital city of Algeria, designed for about half million people, today is inhabited by more than 2 million people. Agricultural production dropped dramatically with the rapid growth of the population and food shortages forced the government to import much of the country's food, which produced a high rate of inflation. Wortman suggested that "The first objective must be to increase food production, but more food is not enough" (47: 34-35). His idea that people can buy food if they have money would not solve the problem. Two pounds of meat would cost about \$10 today in Algeria. The farmer whose pay is \$100 and who has 10 members in his family cannot really

buy meat. The solution to the food crisis can be realized through rural development which would provide small scale industry that "will reverse the migration from the country to city" (13), because this will allow off-farm employment which "is an important source of income for many people" (20: 173).

There should be no doubt that the deep aspirations of the Algerian peasant masses are frustrated through bureaucratic obstacles and through an ineffective party. The socialist claims are mere abstract theories without a strongly organized party to fulfill the agrarian revolution more adequately. In actuality, the FLN appears more as a symbol rather than a real effective entity. The party's role in the guidance and application of the agrarian revolution is insignificant. For this revolution to succeed, it should reach all rural population categories, form an integral part in a general planning of the country's economy, and ceaselessly controlled by a central power deeply rooted and truly representative of the popular needs, as Jeanson has observed (21: 46).

This is not the case in the actual situation, and even those reached by this revolution suffer acute problems. In Tala village, farmers are unhappy with their situation. They are not receiving help to solve their problems. Administrators are seen by the farmers as the main obstacle to the agrarian revolution. Their representative UNPA is ineffective and seems to be more a container rather than a defender of their interests. There is a high rate of illiteracy and no training of the farmers in modern farming and use of machinery. The poor farmers are still poor because they are prevented from having the necessary means to get rid of this poverty. The Youth House that

is supposed to help train farmers and their children is doing almost nothing. There is not enough drugs and no social insurance for the beneficiaries. Many farmers suffer living in small houses with a large, extended family. The shopping center is not working as it should. The planning and construction of the houses are inadequate to suit the real needs of the farmers. There is no parking lot in Tala and tractors are parked on the sidewalk. The agrarian revolution seems to have changed women's role in a negative way, and the village committee is powerless to solve village problems since the power is divided into external forces that dominate every aspect of village life.

Tala village, of course, may not be representative of all socialist villages in Algeria. Based upon field observations and interviews in Tala, however, there is a wide gap between the theoretical organization and actual practice. Many of the problems exhibited in Tala should not be impossible to solve. In such a short time, and given the dramatic change represented by the village experiments, one could scarcely expect perfect functioning of the village organization. What the future holds, time only will provide an answer.

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