Muslim impoverishment in colonial Algeria
Tony Smith

Résumé
Les études qui tentent d'analyser les origines de la misère musulmane en Algérie coloniale expriment deux courants d'opinion : ceux qui estiment la force du capitalisme français en Algérie comme responsable et ceux qui, au contraire, jugent que ce système économique a plutôt négligé le peuple algérien. Cet article essaie de démontrer que la force et la faiblesse du système économique dominant étaient à la base de la misère musulmane. Par la force la France a conquis le pays, nuis par faiblesse elle ne pouvait l'assimiler. Cela explique en partie pourquoi certaines périodes d'expansion économique en Algérie sont associées à l'exclusion de la masse musulmane des bénéfices, tandis que d'autres périodes de recul économique sont caractérisées par l'intégration de certains Musulmans dans le secteur français. Avec l'explosion démographique de la population, la logique de la situation établie signifiait la misère croissante de la masse des Algériens. Les grands traits de la faillite du système français sont apparus donc au début de ce siècle, au moins vingt ans avant les revendications nationalistes pour l'indépendance. Alors qu'en même temps que le système politique colonial se fixait dans sa forme moderne, le système économique le condamnait à être réactionnaire. L'auteur tient à remercier le West European Studies (Harvard University) pour son assistance dans l'achèvement de cette étude.

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MUSLIM IMPROVERISHMENT IN COLONIAL ALGERIA

by Tony SMITH

Résumé

Les études qui tentent d'analyser les origines de la misère musulmane en Algérie coloniale expriment deux courants d'opinion : ceux qui estiment la force du capitalisme français en Algérie comme responsable et ceux qui, au contraire, jugent que ce système économique a plutôt négligé le peuple algérien.

Cet article essaie de démontrer que la force et la faiblesse du système économique dominant étaient à la base de la misère musulmane. Par la force la France a conquis le pays, mais par faiblesse elle ne pouvait l'assimiler. Cela explique en partie pourquoi certaines périodes d'expansion économique en Algérie sont associées à l'exclusion de la masse musulmane des bénéfices, tandis que d'autres périodes de recul économique sont caractérisées par l'intégration de certains Musulmans dans le secteur français.

Avec l'explosion démographique de la population, la logique de la situation établie signifiait la misère croissante de la masse des Algériens. Les grands traits de la faillite du système français sont apparus donc au début de ce siècle, au moins vingt ans avant les revendications nationalistes pour l'indépendance. Alors qu'en même temps que le système politique colonial se fixait dans sa forme moderne, le système économique le condamnait à être réactionnaire.

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When the Algerian Revolution began in 1954, it was, in Leninist terminology, organizationally "adventurist" since it had not carefully prepared the political infrastructure theoretically considered necessary for victory. In this sense, the Revolution bore much more similarity to the insurgency models of Guevara or Debray than to those of Mao or Giap. Politically, its ultimate triumph depended on the disaffection of the totality of the Muslim elite after a succession of rigged elections begun in 1948 sabotaged the postwar reforms of the French Fourth Republic. The result of this practice was to ratify once again the unquestioned dominance of the French settlers—one million strong, some 12% of the total Algerian population—over this area four times the size of France and less than 500 miles south of Marseille, since 1830, the most important colony of the Empire. Tricked elections and the appointment of Muslims of proven loyalty to political posts thereafter (the "beni-oui-oui's") made it virtually impossible for the French to establish a native elite to counter the FLN once the Revolution was
underway. For now, whoever agreed to work with the French was hard put to avoid the taint of sell-out and corruption. French efforts to right this error, to root a moderate “third force” political structure within the Algerian people and so create an “interlocuteur valable” with whom they could negotiate, was to prove one of the most frustrating aspects of the revolutionary period for them.

The economic preconditions for the political origin and success of the Algerian uprising are to be found most notably, on the one hand, in the growth of a vast impoverished Muslim mass uprooted from its traditional ways and, on the other, in the French inability to establish an economic system which could successfully integrate this population into their structure of rule. Thus the character of the political confrontation between the Muslim and French communities in Algeria, begun in its modern form in the 1920’s and 1930’s, depended in important respects on critical tensions in the country’s economic development, whose principal features, so far as the eventual Revolution were concerned, started to emerge sometime shortly after the turn of the century. By an irony of history, the political and economic barriers which the French had elaborated since the conquest to keep the Muslim from entry into the European city turned out in time to be a defense behind which the rebellion could rally. This paper will concern itself with the chief economic aspects of the French failure, after 125 years of sovereignty over Algeria, to make this area securely their own.

On one point at least there seems agreement: at the time of the Revolution the Muslim Algerians were a desperately poor people. Statistics on their production of sheep and grain (principally hard wheat and barley), the chief indicators of the economic well-being of the Muslim sector, reflect a steady and dramatic decline since the coming of the French. Although colonialism displaced the Muslims from the better lands, the area under cultivation by the indigenous population apparently remained relatively stationary through the conversion of poorer tracts to exploitation. Remarkably, production does not seem greatly to have fallen either except for a gradual interwar decline not reversed until the late 1940’s. What is indicative of Muslim privation is the starting downward plunge of production considered on a per capita basis as an Algerian birth rate of 2.8% (as high as any in the world) cracked the traditional economic base. After the First World War, Muslim grain production on a per capita basis fell to about half of what it had been on the average previously, and by even more if comparison is made with the late 19th century. For a decade before 1952 (when production reached a meager 2.15 quintals per person, seed and food for livestock included), Muslim output was under 2 quintals per capita. The decline in sheep was even more spectacular: herds estimated generally at 7.5 to 8.5 millions heads before the First World War fell to from 5 to 6 millions subsequently. In 1877, there had been 3.97 sheep per Muslim, from 1885 to 1889 an average of 2.85, from 1910 to 1914 an average of 1.65, reaching by the outbreak of the Revolution, 78 sheep per Algerian Muslim (1).

(1) While statistical estimates do vary in absolute numbers, the same general patterns seem everywhere evident. For the period before World War One, see the monumental study of C.R. Ageron, Les Algériens musulmans et la France, 1871-1919, two volumes, (P.U.F., Paris,
Nor were the Muslims able to compensate for the per capita contraction of these staples by diversification of their agricultural base. Between the turn of the century and 1914, the eminent historian C.R. Ageron notes an increase in the amount of Muslim land given over to the cultivation of food and industrial products other than grain to a total of 11.6% (2). I have been unable to locate statistics on Muslim agricultural production in goods other than food grains for the period after 1914; but the aggregate (Muslim and European) figures for Algeria show a gradual rise until the late 1920’s for those goods associated with the Muslims (olives, dates, tobacco), followed by a sharper decline thereafter (3). Figures for 1954 put the total Muslim land used for the production of goods other than grains and orchards at about 10% (4). From the figures available, it is possible to conclude that the diversification of agriculture constituted the base for a small number of Muslim landowners to move from a subsistence to a market economy (see below) but that the trend meant nothing to the great bulk of the rural population.

In the face of the declining per capita productivity of the traditional sector, the Muslim was saved from starvation by his inclusion in the modern European sector of the economy. While labor statistics are difficult to obtain and compare, they are more accurate for this modern than for the traditional sector (5). Out of 2,142,500 Muslim men listed as active in the census of 1954 (including urban unemployed), 299,000 appear as employees (for the most part workers) in the cities. Another 112,000 are listed in the permanent agricultural work force, though this is probably undercounted by 20-30,000 to avoid social security payments. Similarly, from the size of their holdings, we may assume that 25,000 Muslim landowners produced for the market, while perhaps 9,000 Muslim

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1968), chapter 29. For estimates on the postwar period, see A. Nouschi, *La naissance du nationalisme algérien*, passim, and two articles by R. Barbé in *Économie et Politique*, “La Question de la terre en Algérie”, June 1955, and “Les Classes Sociales en Algérie-1”, September 1959. I have been reassured on the general validity of these patterns by the statistical work of A.D. Ellerman, presently at work on a Ph.d. thesis at Harvard on the economics of grain in colonial Algeria.

(2) Ageron, *Ibid.*, pp. 797-799. Ageron does not include soft wheat though this accounted for about 3% of Muslim grain production before World War One and was not used for consumption but as a cash crop.

(3) *Annuaire Statistique 1925*, for the years 1915-1924; *A.S. 1936* for the years 1925-1935; *A.S. 1939* for the years 1936-1938. Nouschi, *op.cit.*, p. 116-117 gives a breakdown of the value of Muslim production in different agricultural goods. Following grain, the most valuable commodities were wine, olives, tobacco, and dates. Wine, like grain, remained relatively stationary in production; native production in wine jumped in the early Thirties.


(5) As an example of statistical confusion in the traditional sector, consider the problem of how to count the man who is at once small plot owner, khammès/sharecropper/and seasonal worker. Barbé, *op.cit.*, September 1959, p. 15n, notes that of 615,000 holdings, only 130,000 belonged to a single individual; 125,000 belonged to six or more. Similarly, Ageron mentions the survival of many forms of mutual aid in the countryside not legally—or statistical—recognized. Vol. 2, p. 832.
businessmen (those who employed salaried labor) had entered into what is called the modern sector (6). The occupational census does not take account of approximately 275,000 Algerians who had left the country to find work in metropolitan France (7). These men nevertheless be considered basic to Muslim survival since it was commonly agreed with Prime Minister Edgar Faure in 1955 that their heavy remittances to Algeria kept alive 1.5 million people. In all, then, nearly 1/3 of the Muslim male labor force was directly concerned with its livelihood within the European sector of the economy (8).

On the basis of income statistics, Alain Savary concludes that 16% of Muslim families had incomes equivalent to 1/3 the French national average or better (9). Yet it is clear that in itself inclusion in the modern sector did not guarantee even relative economic security (10). More important, it is not at all evident to what extent this inclusion was keeping pace with the growing poverty of the masses on the other side of the economic divide: in the countryside, part-time and seasonal workers, sharecroppers (fermier, metayers, khammès) and owners of handkerchief plots; in the cities, the small shopkeepers and artisans (forever threatened by industrial competition) and the officially recognized unemployed (1/4 of the active male urban population). Theirs was not to be a revolution of rising expectations.

Two totally different arguments are generally advanced to explain the existence in Algeria of this vast impoverished mass, the social tinder of revolution. One group argues that French capitalism was exploiting Algeria for its own sake and that of the European settlers at the expense of the land and the labor of the

(6) The occupational census for 1954 is reproduced as Appendix 1. Robert Aron, Les origines de la guerre d’Algérie, p. 225 and Barbé, op.cit., September 1959, argue for a higher figure for the permanent agricultural work force. Barbé, “Les Classes sociales en Algérie” II, October 1959. Economie et Politique offers a breakdown of the Muslim shopkeepers and businessmen, giving a figure of 9,000 with salaried help. A. Savary, Nationalisme algérien et grandeur française, p. 12, reproduces figures on land holdings in the Muslim community. This appears as Appendix 2 (subject to the reservations of footnote 5).

(7) A. Michel, Les travailleurs algériens en France (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1955), p. 11, puts this number at 186,418, admitting it may be slightly low. The Perspectives décennales, op.cit., p. 54, puts it at 275,000 and this seems to me the more likely estimate.

(8) Admittedly, these figures are rough indeed. First, I have not included the 430,000 part-time or seasonal workers, nor the 60,000 sharecroppers (fermiers, metayers, khammès) though probably a significant proportion were connected in some manner with the European system. Second, the addition of 275,000 emigrating workers to the rolls of the active male Muslim population gives a total of 2,418,000, or one man active for each 3.5 persons in the society. Samir Amin states, however, that in North Africa the proportion of active males to the total population is 1 in 5 (Le Maghreb Moderne, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1970), p. 65.

(9) Savary, op.cit., pp. 22-24. Note that the number of families is considerably less than the number of active males in the Muslim population.

(10) Part-time unemployment was much higher than occupational figures alone suggest. In addition to the 147,000 recognized as unemployed by the Perspectives décennales (a better study than the 1954 census, Appendix 1), another 84,000 in the cities are considered underemployed. Page 32n.
Muslim people. To depict the survival of the Muslim population as based on the lifeline thrown them by the European economy was only the ultimate in capitalist cruelty: after having despoiled a people, the Europeans adopted the pose of benefactor. Nowhere has the mechanism of this process been put more sharply than in its first formulation in the *Communist Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese Walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves... The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors', and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment'. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of Philistine sentimentalism in the icy waters of egoistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value and, in the place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom-free trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

To my knowledge, however, there has been no sustained attempt by advocates of the exploitation hypothesis to prove that in the case of Algeria the French "means of production", to use the terminology, led to corresponding "relations of production" in such a manner 1) that the surplus value generated by the Muslim masses proved basic to the prosperity of the European sector; and, conversely, 2) that the siphoning off of surplus value proved basic to the pauperization of the Muslim community. Rather, the French who point to exploitation as the justification for revolution in Algeria (fewer still called it a *cause* in the sense of the dialectic) most often do no more than catalogue the miseries of the Muslim masses and lay alongside them other tables demonstrating the relative affluence of the European sector (complete, to be sure, with a list of the large French enterprises operating in Algeria). The causal link between the misery of the one sector and the plenty of the other is left to the indignant imagination of the reader (11).

It is precisely the existence of this link between the two communities in Algeria which is denied by a second more heterogeneous group of commentators. However little the individual members of this group might welcome their association together, their unity lies in their conviction that the Muslim's problem was his inability to convert to economic modernity or, conversely, in the lack of incentive for the modern sector to integrate the native mass into it. Those who concerned themselves with the Muslim aspect of the dilemma singled out patterns of traditional mental, social, and economic life for consideration. Writing as late

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as 1962, the French historian Robert Aron pretended to locate Muslim disaffection from the European style in the former’s manner of thinking: “/they lack/ the taste for order and clarity that we have inherited from Descartes/ . . . They do not know how to reason and argue like us . . . the true nature of Muslim thought reappears—more emotional and sentimental than dialectical and logical” (12). A well-known economic historian deplored Muslim work habits, “their idleness and nonchalance as soon as the daily needs are met” (13). In a more sophisticated vein, the renowned ethnologist Germaine Tillion argued that the elimination of disease under the French had combined with the customs of an “archaic” and “unadapted” people to permit a ruinous demographic explosion. Unable either to change or to support this heavy additional burden, the traditional economic base collapsed. According to Tillion the suffering of the Algerian people was simply one aspect of a world-wide process of cultural trauma:

Their misfortune was to find themselves in the impact zone of the modern biological revolution before having attained the level of life and culture which I propose to call the ‘level of self-protection’. And it is here, in my estimation, that our responsibility enters. Responsibility and not culpability since the present misfortune of Algeria was very likely unavoidable—in the sense that it is henceforth impossible to spare an archaic people all contact with this prodigious monster which is Planetary Civilization and in the measure that this contact is fatal to those unprepared peoples who undergo it (14).

Or again, one might hold responsible the Muslim system of land tenure where ownership by extended families allegedly undercut the spirit of individual initiative and enterprise which alone could change these relatively unproductive fields into modern economic units. This “agrarian communism”, as the settlers of the nineteenth century liked to call it, was hopelessly recalcitrant to economic modernization (15).

Economic historians might also argue that it was also less for reasons intrinsic to the Muslim life style than for characteristics peculiar to the European sector that local traditional practices were not abolished. According to established models of “dual economies”, for example, a dynamic industrial system should draw up a rural area in contact with it through its demand for labor, markets, and cheaper and more plentiful food. In Algeria, however, French settlers, by virtue of their large, capital intensive farms, had usurped agricultural trade with France from the Muslims. Algeria had not two economic sectors but three, and the third was left in its millenary slumber superfluous to the needs of modern growth. To be sure, the settlers had taken the best third of the cultivable land and they did

(12) Robert Aron, Les origines de la Guerre d’Algérie, Fayard, 1962, pp. 11-12. His observations could be summed up in the familiar terms of the Muslim’s “fatalism” and “fanaticism”.


(14) G. Tillion, l’Algérie en 1957, Editions de Minuit, pp. 67-68. See especially Chapter 3 and 4 of this book.

(15) See, for example, Chapter 8 of Desmontès, l’Algérie agricole (Librairie Larose, Paris, 1930).
exploit a small native labor force. But it was demographic growth, not the reduction of the land which weighed more heavily in accounting for Muslim pauperization. As for exploitation of a Muslim work force, it had, on the whole, eased, not increased, the economic plight of the community. Were one to fault French capitalism it should not be, as readers of the Communist Manifesto might believe for its strength but rather for its weakness. The tragedy, that is, lay not so much in Muslim submission to the capitalist system as in the inability of the Europeans hereby to bring them to modernity. Considered on the balance, the fault of the French was not so much to exploit as to neglect the traditional system after upsetting its equilibrium. However important the European sector was to Muslim survival, the contrary was not true. As far as the economic interests of French capitalism cared, the Muslims could be left to get along as best they might, more a nuisance for their land holdings, pilfering and sporadic insubordination than an asset as a work force.

To sum up views of this heterogeneous group (which in its varied forms was by far the most widely held in France at the outbreak of the Revolution), the sins of France in Algeria were more those of omission than those of commission. Like the privileged the world over, the French either denied that their prosperity depended on the subordination of the Muslim people, or, even more self-righteously, maintained that their wealth alone could rescue the Muslim from his backwardness. At great effort to himself the settler had built new cities, roads, schools, and hospitals, and had brought new methods of farming to the country. Perhaps he should have been more generous in associating the Muslim with these benefits; but the misery of the native population would have been still greater had he not come. Look at Egypt (16). As Resident Minister Lacoste, a Socialist, put it before the National Assembly (in a speech soliciting votes to increase the legal powers of repression in Algeria in 1956):

There is not a Frenchman who accepts to see France chased from a land where she implanted herself by the debatable right of arms but where she has conquered by the undebatable right of a civilizing work made of humanity and generosity (Applause from the Left to the Extreme Right)... the Algerian fellah would have known nothing of liberty and he would have been confronted by an infinitely more tragic misery had Algeria not been integrated into the French community (17).

In a word, the French were innocent and it is perhaps no coincidence that the leading exponent in our own day of the politics of innocence should be a son

(16) A leitmotif of the early period of the Algerian Revolution was the denigration of Egypt and its pan-Islamic leader Nasser who was held responsible for the unrest in North Africa. Moreover, Egypt served as a test case: it had done worse without the French (Napoleon's effort notwithstanding) than the Algerian masses with them. For example, seven months before the Suez invasion Daladier said before the National Assembly: “This arrogant Egypt allots four times less ressources and credits to organizing popular institutions/at home/ than we do ourselves in Algeria although we still find our effort there inadequate. (Applause from the Left to the Extreme Right)... In Egypt the infant mortality rate is twice as high as in Algeria. The standard of living of the Egyptian fellah is very inferior--by about 25%--to that of the Algerians whom we have the ambition to raise even higher” J.O., March 12, 1956, p. 852.

of Algeria, Albert Camus. Camus' writings are a good illustration of this tendancy
to divide in theory what the settlers tried so assiduously to divide in fact: the
two worlds of Algeria. To be sure, Camus was a liberal, appalled by the plight of
the Muslim people. But he consistantly addressed his fellow settlers as though
they should be Good Samaritans, never suggesting that they were responsible, in
the sense of historically linked, to the misery of the 90% of the Algerian
population which was Muslim (18).

Yet if this theory of European "neglect" seems to score points against the
exploitation hypothesis of Muslim impoverishment, does it in turn account for all
the evidence? Or are there not important indications that French policy in
Algeria consciously prevented the modernization of the Muslim sector? I would
argue, that is, that the inability of the traditional sector to modernize was due to
more than either its own hidebound "premarket mentality" and all which that
suggests, or to the strictly economic disinterest or lack of incentive within the
modern sector for the Muslim population. Instead it was the result of a policy at
times overt, at times covert, to exclude these people from the European city. To
be sure, the basic weakness of the French system played a role in determining this
policy while the inherent disabilities of the traditional sector allowed it to stand
unchallenged. But unlike the word "neglect" which suggests the French simply
turned their backs to concern themselves with their own affairs, the word
"exclusion" insists upon the element of concerned attention and determined
action needed to keep the Mulism society at bay.

A colony won by arms over a people of a totally different culture is
maintained by arms until that day when it can assure its predominance by some
other means. The crux of the problem of Muslim impoverishment lay simulta-
neously in the weakness and the strength of the French economic structure in
Algeria: in their strength, the French controlled the political heights and so could
parry threats to their sovereignty; but in their weakness the French did not dare
to help the Muslims or to let them organize to help themselves. Nor was the
question only economic; ultimately it may be one of racial numbers. The Union
of South Africa had a much more considerable economic base than the French in
Algeria, yet never felt secure enough to move beyond a politics of force toward
the native community. There are good indications, as we shall see, that a
somewhat more successful modern sector in Algeria would have absorbed even
fewer Muslims than it did. Less favored than South Africa materially, the French
of Algeria had neither the economic nor the demographic strength to absorb the
Muslims; how could the logic of this system be anything other than racist?

There has been a good deal of nonsense written about how purely through
the veins of Jacobin France runs the blood of assimilation. As the story goes,

(18) See, for example, his "Misère de la Kabylie", (1939) reprinted in Actuelles III:
Chroniques algériennes. History, for Camus, had no apparent logic; it was as "absurd" as the
universe when he first recounts confronting it in The Plague (1947). Hence no society is ever
"guilty" as he declares in regard to the French in Algeria in his 1958 introduction to Actuelles
III, p. 22. And in The Fall (1958) he mocks the spirit of self-condemnation. Camus' ethics of
political innocence (The Rebel, The Just Assassins) is another matter altogether, although one
which was even more important in defending the position he took against the Revolution.
assimilation—the "France of one hundred million Frenchmen", the idea of a civilizing mission based on a document of universal import, the Declaration of the Rights of Man—is color blind. The more sophisticated go on to point out that in reality assimilation is a subtle form of racism, denying the integrity of specific cultural forms in terms of an abstract concept whose origin is, accidentally, French. Here is the heart of the matter: French universalism is simply another variant of nationalism. Scratch the surface of a French Socialist maintaining his international duty (Prime Minister Guy Mollet, for example, defending his invasion of Suez in these terms) and you will find a ferocious French nationalist. Nor was the French colonizing mind so captured by the concept of assimilation that it failed to take into account racial differences. The entire monumentum of the Third Republic, it should be remembered, was to people Algeria with Frenchmen and only quite secondarily to assimilate the natives to France. The French effort was directed to the creation of the French village in Algeria, inhabited by Frenchmen. Such was the position of official spokesmen for colonization in France and Algeria alike. Rigorously excluded, then, from the concessions of land, the grants of money, and the facilities of credit were not only the natives, but also non-naturalized Europeans and naturalized Jews. When the Muslims were taken into account, it was to assure that the successful implantation of France in Algeria was the necessary intermediate step to their own assimilation (19).

Racial discrimination barring the path to the European city was far more pervasive than the matter of land grants. The main avenue into the economic world of the bourgeoisie has always been education and, as we might suspect, the French education program for Muslims in Algeria was most notable by its absence. A review of the historical record shows that this was not far from neglect on the Europeans' part, but the consequence of a consistent, determined effort not to open up the modern economic structure to Muslim penetration through the pride of the Third Republic, the schoolroom. On different occasions, the French of Algeria diverted, vetoed, and even refused funds from Paris intended for Muslim education. After closing schools specifically designed for Muslim children under the Second Empire through the pretext of "assimilating" them to the French system, local authorities in Algeria subsequently worked to disaffect the Muslims from the new "mixed" schools where they were made available. Special vocational schools likewise stagnated for lack of funds. The rudimentary Muslims education system which survived the loss of revenue land (habous) belonging to the mosques, was alternately tolerated for the poor quality

(19) The colon leader spokesmen in the 19th century, Warnier (after whom the land law of 1873 was named) was famous for his eloquence on the merits of the French village. The official French historian of colonization makes this same point the central theme of his study (Peyerimhoff, Enquête sur les résultats de la colonisation officielle de 1871 à 1895, (J. Torrent, Algiers, 1906), see e.g., pp. 13, 41, and 202). Both Peyerimhoff and V. Desmontès insisted that non-French Europeans be excluded from these ventures. See Peyerimhoff, p. 41, and Desmontès, L'èpeuple algérien, 261ff. Different academic theses, worthless in themselves but interesting as a reflection of the bureaucratic feelings of the time, show the same concern. See, e.g., F. Selnet, Colonisation officielle et Crédit Agricole en Algérie, 1930.
of its instruction, harassed in order to prevent the growth of "fanaticism", or, less often, upgraded under the pressures of staffing the French administrative apparatus with competent arabists. Statistics sum up the results: in 1892, 1.73% of Muslims of primary school age were being educated within the French system; by 1918 (after nearly fifty years of Republican government) this percentage had increased to 5.7%; by 1954, 16.5% were enrolled. In 1954 as well, 3/4 of 1% of Muslims of secondary school age were attending school (20).

Outside the education structure, the French system proved equally hostile to native economic improvement. Agricultural credit facilities--the Caisse algérienne de Crédit agricole mutuel--was heavily oriented toward the European sector claiming most Muslims did not possess the proper credentials (in the form of mortgageable land titles, e.g.) to participate. Statistical reports vary widely in the sums they give as distributed in short them and equipment loans, but they all agree that the approximately 3% of property owners who were European accounted for some 90% of the credits granted (21). For the Muslim there was usury--rates of 50 to 60% were not uncommon (22) and reliance on a special financial organization set up for them called the Sociétés indigènes de prévoyance (SIP). Those Muslims who wished to belong subscribed a certain amount and, in turn, could draw upon the SIP when the need for credits arose. Predictably, the record of this organization was distinctly poor. Credits were not allotted either generously or ambitiously; efforts to increase its financial base through obligatory subscriptions were blocked, and schemes to provide other forms of protection, for example through the construction of grain silos (mukrama), a traditional Muslim form of moderating the hardships of frequently bad harvests, were neglected (23).

As Ageron sums it up, "In the end the SIP had not put an end to famine or usury and had played only a minimal role in the improvement of the native economy. The annual handful of loans brought no well-being to the fellah's agriculture. It had mainly served the Administration to fight famines, to make advances, to distribute charity without it costing anything to the colonial budget" (24). Following the Second World War, it is true, the system of agricultural credits and especially agricultural instruction with teams of experts was noticeably improved. By this time, however, the situation had long been critical and, despite

(20) Ageron, Chapters 12, 33. Favrod, p. 178. Raymond Aron, Algérie et la République, pp. 18ff. But Aron's statistics of 16.5% do not fully depict the actual situation. According to N.E.D., No. 1215, primary education in Algeria in 1947 was separated into two cycles. Section A had 121,990 Europeans and 38,509 Muslims; Section B had 6,122 Europeans and 142,421 Muslims. Thus 79% of the Muslim students were cycled to complete their education with primary school while this was the case with less than 5% of the European children. In reality, then, only 1.65% of the Muslim school age population was being educated in the manner of first class citizens.

(21) See Favrod, p. 192; Savary, p. 14; Barbé, September, 1959, p. 19.

(22) See Desmontès, Renseignements, op.cit., 154ff. Ageron makes similar comments.

(23) For some unintentionally illuminating remarks by local officials see Robert Aron, op.cit., pp. 197ff.

the dedicated effort of those who worked for these programs, the peasant base for revolution was not significantly reduced.

Not only did the French fail to provide capital credit to the Muslims, but they took much of the funds available to the native community in the form of ruinous taxes. Conveniently renouncing one aspect of their assimilationist program, the French maintained and extended the Turkish tradition of direct taxation of the local population, the impôts arabes, in addition to submitting the Muslims to the form of taxation current in the European sector. Ageron estimates that until 1919, when the impôts arabes were cancelled, the Muslim community had been paying some 60% of the various budgets in Algeria. On the local level, in the European controlled communes de plein exercice this percentage reached its highest level, sometimes covering 80% of municipal expenses. In return the Muslims received very little indeed. Ageron calculates that in 1918, the total spent on charitable houses, hospitals, schools, justice and religion for the Muslim population amounted to 3.1% of the Algerian budget (25). Such improvements as the French presence brought to Algeria were not funded by charity.

It is in matters of land and labor that the process of Muslim impoverishment is best seen developing. With the sénatus-consulte of 1863, Napoléon III had tried to halt the unbridled acquisition of Muslim land being carried out by the arbitrary exercise of French title to most land in Algeria allegedly inherited from the Dey (26). The Emperor's idea was at once to open Muslim land to colonial acquisition but at the same time to preserve native interests and to facilitate their assimilation to the French system by submitting them to the French form of land tenure. In this fashion, Napoleon would create a Muslim peasantry in the European manner as the bulwark of the French order in Algeria. Such a base had already served him well in France and it seemed logical that it become the foundation of his new "Arab Kingdom". By the law of 1863 Napoleon had assured the disaggregation of the tribes through their settlement into douars and the division of their lands. Subsequently, as we shall see, he lay the groundwork for a new political organization in Algeria. But his master touch was the method which he proposed to graft the native structure to the new political system. As the Minister for Algeria put it in 1958, "Our goal must be to develop individual initiative and to substitute responsibility, property, and taxation for the cohesion of the tribe in order effectively to prepare the populations to come under civil authority (27)".

(25) Ageron, op.cit., pp. 1233-1235. See also Chapters 9 and 26. In addition to taxation, the Europeans also drained capital from the Muslims through individual fines (the natives were reputed to pay 9/10 of those levied in Algeria) and through collective penalties, particularly those associated with forest fires.

(26) According to the theory, the Muslims had only usufruct to the bulk of the land they employed in Algeria under the Turks. Thus the French as successors to the Turks could claim legal title to the territory they needed for colonization.

(27) Ageron, op.cit., p. 38. Reasoning by fault analogy from Turkish land codes, the French decided that Muslim land in Algeria was one of two kinds (excluding habous or religious domains): arch, belonging collectively to the community, and melk, belonging to private
As the Bureaux arabes, charged with surveying the land and according individual property titles immediately recognized, however, the implementation of the law of 1863 would not profit the growth of a frenchified native peasantry but the expansion of the European settlement. Hence they delayed, determining douars and dividing communal land among them but failing to record individual titles (to the anger of the settlers). Since title to property could not be transferred nor liens upon it secured before all tribal property had been individualized, settlers were forced to depend on state grants of land and the Muslims' extended family system (as opposed to their tribal structure) was left intact (28).

The creation of the Third Republic and the simultaneous defeat of the Mokrani rebellion sounded the victory of colonization in its struggle to obtain unhindered access to possession of the land. First there were the sequester of some 450,000 hectares (specially chosen for its use in settlement) and the payment of heavy indemnities, to be used in part to facilitate European expansion (29). Subsequently laws were passed in Paris with the express purpose of promoting settlement by making possible private transfers of land title. The law of 1873 (as clarified and amplified by the law of 1887) provided for the sale by individuals not only of their portion of tribal lands (arch) but also of their portion of land held by the extended family (melk), and sanctioned a series of procedures whereby Europeans could insinuate themselves into collectively held melk land and force the sale of an entire tract (30). Court and parliamentary decisions cheked the worst abuses of this system in the decade of the 1980's, but no before the social as well as the economic structure of the Muslim community had in many places been severely shaken.

Estimates place the amount of arable land in Northern Algeria (31) at from 5,860,000 to 6,765,000 hectares out of a total surface of 21,000,000 hectares (32). Climatic and soil conditions are such that only 600,000 hectares are considered truly good land. During the first twenty years of the Third Republic, the settlers obtained in addition to what they already held 577,000 hectares from the State and 378,000 hectares by private purchase (33). By 1900, settlers held individuals. Melk land was not, however, suitable for incorporation into the French land tenure system since it was held by extended families and hence presented the same appearance of community property as arch land. The law of 1863 proposed to individualize only arch land; laws of 1873 and 1887 individualized melk holdings.

(28) For a description of family structure see P. Bourdieu, The Algerians, (Beacon, Boston, 1962), passim.

(29) Peyerimhoff, volume I, p. 177ff ; Ageron, op.cit., Chapter 1.

(30) Ageron, op.cit., Chapter 4.

(31) Northern Algeria comprises the coastal Tell and the plateau and mountain land behind it. Southern Algeria, for the most part identical with the Sahara, is more than 16 times its size.

(32) For the low estimate, Ageron, speaking of 1917, p. 769 ; for the high estimate, Barbé, 1955 article, p. 13, speaking of Algeria in 1954.

(33) Ageron, 101 and 101n.
1.7 million hectares, by 1917, 2.31 million hectares, by 1940, 2.70 million hectares (34). If we can account for the discrepancies in the extent of arable land by the extension of irrigation, then since the First World War colonization held 1/3 of the cultivable land in Algeria. The importance of these holdings lies as much in their quality as in their extent. A combination of the State claiming for itself the former domains of the Turkish Dey whom the French had succeeded (a series of arbitrary decisions at best), sequester, expropriation under the right of eminent domain used to expand the so-called “perimeters of colonization”, and private purchase had acquired for the European community the best land in terms of climate, soil, irrigability, and access routes.

So Napoleon’s dream of a Muslim peasantry exploiting the land in the French manner failed. On the one hand, European purchases and expropriations had dispossessed many; on the other hand, population explosion, taxes, lack of credit facilities and technical know-how worked to hold the Muslim sector in its traditional posture. In itself the land issue need not have meant the Muslim’s economic ruin if circumstances had been right so that he could have achieved a transformation in his life style Napoleon had not imagined. The great Russian Minister Stolypin, for example, had broken up the land of the mir thinking thereby to create a conservative peasant strata but quite aware of the landless proletariat which would thereby be formed. Why in Algeria, then, could the more fortunate of the Muslims not buy out their fellows just as the Europeans were doing, with those dispossessed going to work on the large farms created by this process of concentration or moving on for work to the cities?

Apparently it was precisely this process which was beginning to occur in Algeria after the turn of the century. The subject awaits its economic historian, but the general trend seems evident in terms of the formation of a native middle peasantry and a permanent agricultural proletariat in addition to an increasing Muslim work force both in the cities and in metropolitan France. The number of Muslims in each of these modern labor categories seems to increase progressively with the century (35). Equally modern however, and equally on the increase were other, more miserable groups: the urban unemployed, the meskines or rural workless, the salaried sharecropper, the migrant laborer. These the French economic system could not handle.

Yet it does not follow that a more powerful capitalist system in Algeria would necessarily have rescued the Muslims from their misery, however much this

(34) Barbé, September 1955. See also Ageron, op.cit., pp. 101n and 769.

argument may have appealed to those advocates of colonialism who always saw native salvation mediated by the European presence. Take, for example, the history of development of Algeria’s most important product during the colonial period, wine (36). When after 1863 the phylloxera epidemic began progressively to destroy the vineyards of France, many concluded that Algeria had perhaps at last found the key to its economic success (37). Substantial amounts of French capital were made available to enterprising settlers, a process of vinification was developed which nullified the damage caused the quality of the harvests by the heat of North Africa, and during the 1880’s wine established itself as the most valuable, the most labor specialized, and the most labor intensive commercial good produced in Algeria. Initially, however, the benefits of wine were used to profit the growth and solidarity of the European community, not to aid the Muslim nor to work for the symbiosis of the two communities. Campaigns were launched in France and from Algeria not to make use of the momentum of this expansion for the assimilation of the natives but for the growth of the European colony. This was to operate in two ways. First, wine had been the mainstay of a small peasantry in France and officials anticipated that viticulture could provide the foundation for a massive relocation of French growers in Algeria. Second, vineyards are labor specialized and labor intensive, particularly at their inception. Hence a permanent agricultural work force of European descent could be recruited to Algeria. Emigration was encouraged from throughout southern France and a regular steamship service was inaugurated between Oran and Spain by which large numbers of migrant workers arrived each year in Algeria. Those Muslims hired to work in the vineyards found themselves with the lowest of pay and the most menial of jobs, segregated from the Europeans and barred from improving their position (38).

It was not so much this economic expansion as economic crisis for the wine producers which increasingly associated the Muslims with the vineyards. In 1893, the vineyards in France unexpectedly having recovered through the importation of blight resistant plants from California, the first crisis of overproduction occurred. So began the pattern of foreclosures and land concentrations which erased the possibility of a small French peasantry based on the vine at the same time as wages fell reducing the flow of skilled labor from Europe (39). Setback for the

(36) H. Isnard, La vigne en Algérie, two volumes, op. cit., and Isnard, “La viticulture algérienne : erreur économique ?” in Revue Africaine, Algiers, 1956. Unfortunately Isnard does not raise the specific issue presented here, but his remarks on the work force for the vineyards are interesting. See Volume II, 94ff and 211ff.

(37) From 1851 to 1878, 15,400 hectares were planed in grapes ; from 1879 to 1887, 67, 801 were planted.

(38) There were, to be sure, other reasons unconnected with race which explain the settler preference for Europeans. Europeans were more skilled and it made economic sense perhaps to hire them when they were available rather than to train Muslims. Nor could Muslims always be counted on as a migrant labor force : good harvests or local tax collectors might keep them at home. On the other hand, there was the confirmed settler belief that a Muslim could never work like a European.

(39) Simultaneously, wages and property values increased in metropolitan France compared to what they had been at the height of the epidemic. There was a revaluation of the Spanish peseta as well.
Europeans meant advancement for the Muslims (40). Slowly the Muslim was upgraded until, by the interwar period, he was indispensable to the vineyards of Algeria. Had wine been more successful in Algeria—had, for instance, the French vineyards in fact been irretrievably destroyed as was at first believed—who can certify that the condition of the Muslim would have improved correspondingly? It had not been the strength so much as the weakness of viticulture in Algeria which had secured him a foothold in the modern economic sector.

A stronger capitalist system in Algeria would not have seen to the wholehearted exploitation of the Muslim without first having encouraged as many Europeans to swell its ranks as possible. Algeria would become French primarily by European blood, the rhetoric of assimilation notwithstanding. Thus the major public works programs in Algeria meant not the training of Muslims, but the immigration of Italians (41). Similarly, what gains the Muslims made in the urban work force in the twentieth century seem to me to have had less to do with the ability of the capitalist system in Algeria to provide for them as with its inability to provide competitive wages and thereby draw to North Africa the number of Europeans it so ceaselessly desired (42). Suppose, for example, that the tremendous oil and gas reserves of the Sahara had been discovered in the 1920’s rather than in the 1950’s, giving Algeria a considerable economic base. Whatever Muslim labor might have become associated with its development, it seems consistent with French practice that the first concerns for distributing its advantages would have gone to the reinforcement of European predominance. A stronger economic foundation would have offered the French of Algeria a defense against both the Muslims (through the anticipated immigration of more Europeans) and against Paris (through threat of secession in the manner of South Africa). Doubtlessly a far more vigorous European economic sector would have absorbed more of the vast labor reservoir in Algeria. But assuming the problem of numbers to remain, would this have done more than alter the terms of the cultural confrontation? (43).

The keystone to French control of Algeria was the virtually total disfranchisement of the Muslim community. Here the evidence of racial discrimination appears in its most obvious form. Fractured by the French landing (1830), the defeat of Abd al-Kader (1847), and the imposition of Bureaux arabes, tribal

(40) For a time, the settlers made a concerted effort to use prison labor. Despite some positive reports, the attempt had failed by the end of the century. See Peyerimhoff, p. 68n; Isnard, 217f; “Monographie du Domaine de la Trappe de Staoueli”, in Congrès de la colonisation rurale, Algiers, 1930, p. 323.


(42) The French settlement in Algeria was a lower class community. Income statistics cited by Savary, op.cit., p. 24, show that about 71% of the pieds-noirs earned half or less the French national average. Such facts could hardly have stirred much enthusiasm for emigration.

(43) In another fashion, too, European economic advance ignored the Muslim. The mechanization of agriculture (including the improvement of transportation routes for moving goods to market) seems to have required more in quality but less in quantity of native labor.
cohesion in Algeria was finally undermined by the sénatus-consulte of 1863 which broke tribes into douars and split community property among them. Political reorganization remained strictly in French hands. Three sort of local administration were set up depending on the number of Europeans in the area. Where very few were present, the French established communes indigènes under military command. These were for the most located far to the South and were of no special importance. Most Muslims fell under the jurisdiction of a commune mixte where an appointed administrator (under the Second Empire, a military commander) was in charge, acting with a municipal council whose European members were elected (under the Third Republic) and whose members were named. Since 1864, most Europeans had been living in the metropolitan manner in regularly constituted communes de plein exercice alongside (by 1911) over a quarter of the Muslim population. Here both Muslims and French elected a municipal council whose European members in turn selected a mayor. However, only a restricted list of Muslims could vote and they had at most 1/3 (after 1884, one fourth) of the council seats. Generally the Muslims liked least the communes de plein exercice for here it was inevitably the case that the European mayor would use his powers of taxing and punishment in ways far more severe than the administrators of the communes mixtes. By the same token, the French of Algeria preferred the commune de plein exercice and worked diligently at its extension throughout the country as well as for the increase in power of the European members therein. The Third Republic gave them far more in this respect than the Second Empire, cutting the number and powers of the Muslim municipal councillors while extending the prerogatives of the European mayor (44).

Above the local level, Algeria was grouped into arrondissements which in turn formed three departments (each of which was much larger than its metropolitan equivalent) headed by Prefects. Finally the whole of the country was under a Governor General who was linked to Paris through the Minister of the Interior. Yet Algeria was far more decentralized than this schema may suggest. From 1881 to 1896 a system of “direct attachments” had deprived local authorities of much of their power while the eight ministeries in Paris decided Algerian questions. But after 1896 these powers for the most part devolved again to the Governor General and the groups and individuals beside him. Prefects, generally pieds-noirs, were assisted in their tasks by elected Council Generals composed unequally of Europeans (4/5) and Muslims (who were named until 1908, then elected by a restricted college of only 500 until 1919). After 1898, Algeria also had financial autonomy. Elected Délégations financières composed of three groups, one Muslim (selected from a restricted electoral college), one French farmer, the third Frenchmen in the cities paying personal taxes, could oversee the budget and had substantial prestige as a rudimentary sort of Algerian Assembly. In addition, a Superior Council composed of government officials and delegates elected from the Council Generals and the Financial Delegations sat beside the Governor General. Finally, there were the various staffs responsible to the Governor General, recruited for the most part among the French of Algeria.

(44) Ageron, Chapters 6 and 23.
Under the Third Republic the French of Algeria had as well the right to three Senators and from six to ten deputies in the Chamber (45). From this vantage point, and with the aid of well-financed colonial lobbies, they were able to put pressure on the one man they could not always control in Algeria, the Governor General. In short, during the first three decades of the Third Republic, the French of Algeria managed to establish a political structure so supple that except for the most determined opposition it could effectively 1) call for support from Paris when it needed; 2) isolate itself from the pressures of Paris when it seemed necessary; 3) insure the political subordination of the Muslim community. Certainly it had to deal with troublesome official investigations (Ferry from 1891-1893), reformist Governor Generals (Cambon in the 1890's, Chatigneau in the 1940's), determined Prime Ministers (Clemenceau in 1919), and the threat of the use of the power of decree held by the Prime Minister (Blum, 1936). But it inevitably recovered its stability until the combined assault of the Algerian revolutionaries and Charles de Gaulle swept it away.

Not only tribal but also religious leaders had wielded great political power in Algeria before the French arrived. In the absence of central or even feudal authorities, holy men—marabouts—through their possession of mystical powers or baraka had come to act as judges, legislators, and leaders. Islamic brotherhoods (tariga) sometimes working with marabouts or growing from them, constituted secret fraternities whose allegiances bridged not only tribes, but even distant regions of North Africa. Abd el-Kader was a leader (moqaddem) of Qadriya brotherhood while other brotherhoods were involved in the massive uprising under Mokrani in 1871. The French eliminated those brotherhoods where they met resistance but exploited their rivalries and worked with them when they could. At the same time, however, the French seized all habous land, the domain of the mosques, and in one stroke reduced organized religion in Algeria to dependence on the French State. Clergy was named, salaried, surveyed and even arranged in hierarchy. Religious education declined drastically, reflecting the loss of mosque revenues, pilgrimages to Mecca were discouraged, religious property was allowed to deteriorate (or, as in the case of the principal mosques of Algiers and Constantine, transformed into Catholic Churches), and a host of regulations appeared to insure the political sterilization of the clergy. Ironically, the separation of Church and State so assiduously championed in France never found much support in Algeria (aside from those who hoped to damage Islam even more).

The French completed their monopoly of political power in Algeria by a system of justice which, if it respected Muslim law in regard to what was called "personal status" (e.g., marriage and inheritance), exercised French law in regard

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to most questions of property (all those where one party was French) and criminality. In addition, a series of laws particular to Muslims were assembled and finally codified in 1881. These special regulations, the indigénat, included an internal passport system, forced labor, and penalties for acts or remarks prejudicial to French sovereignty or to the authority of public officials (47). Those who argue that French concepts of universalism prevented them from being "realistic" about adjusting to the end of Empire after World War Two might well consider that similar doctrines never seemed to have inhibited a "realistic" answer to the problems of the expansion of this Empire.

Such a system in place, one wonders if those metropolitan liberals who so ceaselessly denounced the "stubborn blindness" of the Europeans of Algeria on issues of political and social rights for the Muslim community were not themselves more truly blind. Political freedom and economic mobility were pious daydreams for a land where deep cultural antagonism had come to be compounded by economic conflict. The Muslims had all the grievances of a defeated and despoiled race. Who would guarantee that a new-found ability to organize, debate, and act would not result in the eviction of France from Algeria? What would the Muslims do with majorities on municipal councils and Council Generals? The Europeans were well aware of what could be accomplished given such power. The Muslim had not converted (despite the derisive attempts of the Church) or naturalized, nor, or so the settlers feared, surrendered. "When the Muslims protest you become indignant, when they approve you become suspicious, when they are silent you become worried"—such was the famous observation made by onetime Governor General Viollette of the Europeans of Algeria in the early 1930's. Indeed one searches the historical record in vain for a single instance of a generous gesture by the European community to the Muslims. Without exception, they combatted every measure of the government in Paris intended to improve the lot of the Muslim population. Such a system had a self-perpetuating logic. The French had been the first to define the character of the racial relationship in Algeria: a gain by one side was a loss for the other. Subsequently piece-meal reforms could be legitimately forecast as easily to incite the Muslims to insubordination as to rally them to the French presence. In three quarters century of settler opinion on the Muslim, one finds no metaphor so often expressed as the fear of being "drowned" by the Muslim "tide". "Bougnoules", "melons", "ratons"—their world would never be that of the French. "They don't have the same needs as us... that is/what most Europeans think", wrote Jules Roy, a leftist writer of Algerian descent of their frame of mind. "The Arabs are a dirty race and our error has been to treat them with humanity" (48). As one Secret Army Organization (O.A.S.) booklet put it (though the hierarchy would repudiated such a statement made publicly):

The right of France to stay in Algeria is a solid right. It is that of the builders of cathedrals which is superior to that of the builders of gourbis/Muslim mud huts/. The ground

(47) Ageron, op.cit., Chapters 7 and 25 and pp. 165-175.

belongs to those who work it, not to whose who sleep on it (49).

These views were especially popular with the "petits blancs" who inflated their self-importance at the expense of the Muslims. Because of the caste system based on race, "the least official is a king" observed Pierre Nora (50). Or as Sartre wrote:

But if the Muslim affirms himself in turn as a man, as an equal to the settler? Then the settler is attacked in his being; he feels diminished, devalued: the advancement of the 'coons' to the world of men he sees not only in its economic consequences, he abominates it because it means his personal dethronement. In his fury he comes to dream of genocide (51).

It was no accident that Bab-el-Oued the working class district of Algiers which traditionally voted Communist became the center of O.A.S. activity in Algeria. As one of the movement’s defenders put it, "the O.A.S. was born of the Algerian population... What must be understood to grasp its evolution is the extremely deep physical implantation of France in Algeria" (52). It is interesting, in this regard, that before the Sétif outbreak in 1945, the pattern of community confrontation took the form of political abuses on the part of Muslims and racial abuses on the part of the French (53).

The error of metropolitan France was not so much to condone as to deny the racial opposition in Algeria. Writing in 1948 Camus could say:

I sum up here the history of the men of my family who, in addition, being poor and without hatred, have never oppressed nor exploited anyone. But three-fourths of the French of Algeria resemble them and, on condition that one gave them reasons rather than insults, will be ready to admit the need of a more just and free order (54).

The French Left was quite willing to accept such pledges, content to direct its attacks at the wealthy European in Algeria and so spare "the little whites" of the country who generally voted left of center. Thus during his term as Minister of the Interior, Edouard Depreux, a Socialist, declared before the National Assembly:

/ Settlers and Muslims/ have quite exactly the same interests... these honest people, these workers... who have kept well their pioneering state of mind and who do not go there


(51) Sartre, Une “Victoire”, Situations V, pp. 85-86. (From his introduction to Alleg’s La question).

(52) Lauriot’s testimony at Le Procès Salan, Nouvelles Editions Latines, pp. 231-232.

(53) See the various reports assembled in Robert Aron, op.cit., Part 2, Chapter 1. It is also instructive that the favorite term of abuse for Governor General Viollette was “Violette l’arabe”, and for Governor General Chatigneau, “Sidi Chatigneau”.

(54) Actuelles III, op.cit., p. 22. One suspects Camus knew better, at least in lucid moments on the subject. Quillot, the editor of his collected works, notes examples of toning down potentially racist situations in his writing. See O’Brien’s comments. p. 11, about Camus’ "hallucinations" over Algeria.
to oppress the Muslims but in order to gain their livelihood honestly, love the Muslims as they
deserve to be loved by them (55).

As late as 1955, another prominent Socialist, Christian Pineau, similarly
stated:

Alongside the big settlers for whom profit alone matters and for which they are ready to
sacrifice everything, there are the Frenchman of Algeria who work in conditions often difficult,
who are not 'colonialists', who understand the complaints and the aspirations of the Muslim
populations (56).

Tragically, it was the one powerful Socialist who did understand (albeit late)
who nonetheless decided not to work against it. As Guy Mollet observed:

The 'ultras' /right wing extremists/ so often attacked are sometimes recruited--this will
surprise you--among the most humble of the Europeans, those whom I will call the 'little
whites' . . . /they have/ privileges dangerous for the good accord of the communities. It is they
who scorn the Arab or the Kabyle, often more cultivated, it is they who are the most opposed
to an agreement for fear of losing their little advantages (57).

Either of two solutions might have saved Algeria for France. On the one
hand France might have honored its commitment to assimilation and undertaken
a full scale integration of Algeria to the metropole. With its relatively powerful
economic system, its heavy demographic advantage, and its tradition of cen-
tralized political institutions sustained by a spirit of Jacobin antiregionalism, a
vigorous French program of integration might have made Algeria its own. Why,
then, was assimilation never resolutely pursued? The answer seems to lie in the
political and economic disadvantages such a plan would involve for France.
Writing in 1958, Raymond Aron set out clearly to his compatriots in a brilliant
little book Algérie et la République the price of such a political and economic
policy. Economically, the expense of raising Algeria to the standard of living of
the metropole would mean industrial stagnation at home as investment capital was
diverted to North Africa, and a halt to rising family incomes. Politically, it would
mean the further destabilization of a political system already brought to the point
of collapse by the differences which divided it. Projecting Algerian growth rate
into the future, Aron even warned of a day when the Muslim population of a
greater France might equal that of the European element. All this was assuming,
of course, that the Algerians would accept assimilation into France, which by
1958 obviously was not the case, as Aron pointed out. One can argue, I believe,
much the same line for the Third Republic as well: a full-scale effort at Algerian
assimilation was politically and economically beyond the desires--and perhaps the
means--of the French Republic. The result was to temporize. Perhaps in the future
France would be capable of assuming such a burden; in the meantime a policy of
gradualism offered the best hope of raising the Algerian to the European level. It
was not altogether irrational of the French of Algeria, however, to fear the
centrifugal forces this program might release. To the "stalemate" Third Republic

postponement was a way of life. In the case of Algeria, delay served only to exacerbate the problem.

For it was becoming progressively clear after the turn of the century that the other possible solution favorable to France in Algeria, the triumph of colonialism there, was doomed. The brake in French expansion is associated with the settlement of the land. From 1872 to 1890, the number of rural Europeans had doubled from 100 to 200,000, and had come to represent better than 40% of the non-Muslim population. In absolute figures their numbers continued slowly to grow until the 1920s when they were more than 230,000. But two decades earlier the decline of the rural population in relation to the urban element had begun. Since the turn of the century, emigration too had fallen, and the census of 1931 confirmed what had been feared for some time, a decline in absolute numbers of rural Europeans. Between 1936 and 1948, the total French population actually declined, and by 1954, only slightly better than 10% of the Europeans, just over 100,000 persons, were outside the cities (58).

As the momentum of colonialism declined, so the energy of the native society seemed to accelerate. Since the 1880s, the Europeans had come to realize that the Muslim was not going to die out like (as they had reckoned) the American Indian or the Australian aborigine. The previous decline in native population as a consequence of famine and French repression had reversed. At first, the French could lay this fact to the credit of the civilizing work of France in North Africa, but eventually it became clear that the native society would not only stay many times the size of the French but that it was growing at a faster rate. The census of 1931 established that the Muslim had moved into a decided numerical superiority in the towns (59).

"In a word, we must be strong enough to survive the injustice of which we still stand condemned in Arab eyes", declared Bugeaud in the 1840s. Yet sometime after the turn of the century it becomes clear in retrospect, colonialism had failed to attain the material or demographic strength to digest Algeria. So the major socio-economic forces which would come to mark the character of the future Revolution began to move into position. In a different century, in a different dress, the French were once again acting out the drama of the ancien régime. The most likely model for future developments now became not Australia or the United States as the colonists had hoped, but Ireland.

It thus appears that just as the reforms of 1896-1900 were finally assuring a supple political apparatus for Algeria in terms of favoring settler domination there, the developing configuration of social and economic forces in the country

(58) Once again figures differ although the general pattern is everywhere the same. For the figures on the European element before the First World War, see Ageron, 546-548, 551. For census figures after this period, see Barbé, op.cit., September 1959, p. 13 (a low estimate of rural Europeans), and Isnard, op.cit., Revue Africaine, p. 464 (a high estimate). The official rural population is reported in Tableaux de l'économie algérien, op.cit., p. 22.

(59) See Tableaux, Ibid., and Thomas Opperman, Le problème algérien, p. 43, the latter for a complete census, the former for a breakdown of urban-rural population since 1886.
was, on the contrary, coming to make such an arrangement patently reactionary. To be sure, compared to the government they replaced in Algeria in 1830, the French may at first have seemed political virtuosos. The organization of their bureaucracy and the strength of their army eclipsed the feudal—or more frequently prefeudal—structures which they had encountered. But as the serious social and economic problems born of the disintegration of the traditional Muslim system combined with other twentieth century forces to produce a new breed of Muslim political leadership, the French order faltered. Neither democratic nor authoritarian resolutely in their “three North African departments”, the French failed to institutionalize either of the two forms of rule which have survived the test of twentieth century mass political participation. Instead their presence was characterized by a lethal mixture of liberality, which allowed discontent to organize, authoritarianism, which in ignorance and fear refused to satisfy the demands it had allowed to collect, and neglect which (true to the pattern familiar to the Third Republic) was the favored road to pursue where no one position on a problem could be consistently adopted. In its clumsy efforts successively to repress, to allay, or worst of all perhaps to disregard Muslim hostility, the French system failed to deal at all effectively with the increasingly conscious and organized native leadership of the interwar period. It was this untenable contradiction, far more than repression alone, that set French rule off from that in South Africa and which explains an important part of Revolution’s eventual origin and success.

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U.S.A.
## Population active par catégorie socio-professionnelle au 31 octobre 1954 — Algérie entière.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catégorie</th>
<th>Sexe masculin</th>
<th>Sexe féminin</th>
<th>Ensemble de la population active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Musulmans</td>
<td>Musulmans</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Professions agricoles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chefs d'exploitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propriétaires et fellahs</td>
<td>15 900</td>
<td>494 500</td>
<td>510 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aides familiaux</td>
<td>2 900</td>
<td>478 000</td>
<td>481 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Métayers</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>2 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fermiers</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khammès (1)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>57 000</td>
<td>57 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20 900</td>
<td>1 032 300</td>
<td>1 053 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Salariés</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouvriers à capacité réduite</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>23 800</td>
<td>23 900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journaliers</td>
<td>1 600</td>
<td>353 400</td>
<td>355 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saisonniers</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>76 400</td>
<td>76 600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ouvriers permanents</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>107 200</td>
<td>110 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maîtrise</td>
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<td>2 300</td>
<td>4 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Régisseurs</td>
<td>1 400</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>2 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8 300</td>
<td>564 000</td>
<td>572 300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensemble des professions agricoles</td>
<td>29 200</td>
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<td>1 625 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Professions non agricoles</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Chefs d'entreprises et indépendants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrons s.n.i.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans</td>
<td>10 300</td>
<td>27 500</td>
<td>43 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrons pêcheurs</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerçants s.n.i.</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>12 400</td>
<td>13 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petits commerçants</td>
<td>18 000</td>
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<td>79 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industriels</td>
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<td>81 600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autres commerçants</td>
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<td>4 200</td>
<td>8 400</td>
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<td>Professions libérales</td>
<td>9 200</td>
<td>2 100</td>
<td>11 300</td>
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<td>Culte, congrégation religieuse</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>7 600</td>
<td>8 500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>55 900</td>
<td>117 100</td>
<td>172 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Cadres et salariés</td>
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<td>Cadres supérieurs et intellectuels</td>
<td>15 100</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>16 400</td>
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<td>Techniciens, intellectuels</td>
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<td>7 900</td>
<td>31 500</td>
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<td>Maîtrise</td>
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<td>4 400</td>
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<td>Employés de commerce et assimilés</td>
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<td>5 600</td>
<td>10 700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manoeuvres</td>
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<td>Pêcheurs salariés</td>
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<td>4 400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mineurs et carriers</td>
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<td>8 600</td>
<td>8 900</td>
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<td>Domestiques</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>1 400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Femmes de ménage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel de service</td>
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<td>16 300</td>
<td>20 300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armée, Police</td>
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<td>5 600</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>176 700</td>
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<td>Chômeurs</td>
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<td><strong>Total général</strong></td>
<td>274 700</td>
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</table>

(1) De nombreux fellahs et ouvriers permanents sont en même temps khammès. Tableaux de l'Economie algérienne, 1960
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exploitations</th>
<th>Non Musulmans</th>
<th>Musulmans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moins d'un ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 à 10 ha</td>
<td>2393</td>
<td>105954</td>
<td>5039</td>
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<td>330259</td>
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<td>324249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plus de 100 ha</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Nombre d'exploitations</td>
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<td>7181.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superficie en milliers d'ha</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1363.1</td>
<td>3321.1</td>
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