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THE ALGERIAN QUESTION

A Letter from Charles F. Gallagher

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Of all the bitter issues of colonialism and loss of empire which have burned bright during the mid-20th century few have caused such a searching of the soul of Western man as the dilemma which has been posed in Algeria for the past three years. Because of the nature of Algerian society -- the enforced cohabitation for over one hundred and twenty-five years of two groups dissimilar in culture, in religion, in economic well-being, in all the manifold attributes which make up the social personality of ethnic entities, there has nowhere been a more violent and bloody reaction to the forms of control established by the Western world in most of Asia and Africa during the last century, and, conversely, there have nowhere been more evident feelings of guilt, outraged self-righteousness, and frustration on the part of the European members of the society.

As this is written the Algerian problem is up for discussion for the second time in a year before the forum of mankind at the General Assembly of the United Nations, in spite of the insistence of a dogged nationalism which claims that this far-reaching crisis in relations between East and West is a matter of private interest, of concern only to the controlling power. The discussion at the United Nations is in itself a refutation of that claim insofar as the world conscience is concerned; the influence of the Algerian revolution on the strategic interests of the United States and its relations with the other Arab states in North Africa and the Middle East likewise gives grounds for contesting this point of view.

In a world so shrunk that, in words which the French themselves have often used to justify their control of large parts of the rest of the world, "Interdependence among nations has become a necessity," there is little doubt left that the Algerian question is of vital interest to all men, and it is this writer's opinion that it is

especially so to Americans. It is with that thought in mind that this paper has been prepared, in an effort to outline as clearly as possible the fundamental causes of the revolt in Algeria today, and to consider objectively some of the results which may stem from the present, dangerously fluid situation.

THE LAND AND THE ECONOMY

Since long before the present revolution -- one of a score of revolutions in the past five generations -- Algeria has been a tormented country. It is tormented physically by its terrain and its location, balanced between a desolate, isolating Sahara to the south and an unfriendly, craggy Mediterranean coast on the north; fragmented, to an extent almost unbelievable unless seen from the air, into semifertile, pocket valleys, and razorback mountain ranges to which far too many mud-hutted, overpopulated Berber villages cling. In Kabylia, the heart of Algeria between Algiers and Constantine, these agglomerations face outward from the protecting mountainside, like a porcupine with its quills raised, bearing witness to the human torment which has visited Algeria, in the form of Roman invasions, Arab incursions, internecine tribal warfare, and the present occupancy of better valley lands by the latest, European intruders.

In reality Algeria is two countries: the habitable north, and the Sahara, south of the Atlas mountains. It is the former that we are discussing here, for until the very recent discoveries of oil and other minerals in the Sahara, that part of the country remained outside the realm of consequence. The Sahara is already playing an important role in the political story of Algeria, and it may well be decisive in the long run, but at present the crux of the problem on the human, political, and economic level lies in the north.

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Here, in about 133,000 square miles -- slightly less than the size of California -- live just over ten million people. Those figures do not tell the true story of overpopulation, however, for the "habitable" north is by no means all inhabited. The most fertile stretch, the so-called Tell, contains most of the population, at the rate of around 125 per square mile.

The Tell also has most of the sixteen million cultivable acres in Algeria, and almost all its 500,000 irrigated acres. As can been seen, the land, with approximately 1.6 cultivated acres per person, is decidedly overpopulated. Further extension of the cultivated area is unlikely at present technological levels except on a minimal scale; irrigation possibilities are already largely tapped, and any moving out onto the steppes, or up the slopes of the mountains would expose farmers to more severe and more recurrent droughts on the one hand, and to further dangerous erosion on the other.

THE PEOPLE

Fundamental to the discussion of any aspect of Algeria's problems is an understanding of the dual society that inhabits the country and divides all activity into two sharply disparate and unequal parts. In 1957 an estimated 10,300,000 persons live in Algeria, not counting the more than 400,000 military temporarily in residence. Of these 1,070,000 are counted as non-Muslims, and the rest, some 9,200,000 are Muslims. The non-Muslim group is not entirely European, for 150,000 Algerian Jews are included in it, and 60,000 foreigners (mostly Southern Europeans). Deducting these, one is left with about 860,000 French citizens, not more than half of whom are French by blood. These figures are significant, especially in view of the constant distortion in favor of the European minority put forth by official French publications which blithely ignore the 1954 census on which present estimates are based. The most serious repercussions come when the United States Secretary of State, whose advisers should know better, refers in a press conference to the "million and a half Europeans" in Algeria.

The ratio of Europeans to Muslims is thus, putting the Jewish population in a separate category, almost exactly 1:10. In 1926 it was much higher, nearly 1:6, and it is estimated that within a generation it will be 1:18. Not the least of the basic causes of European worry in Algeria has been "demographic panic." The Muslim population is increasing at the rate of at least 2.5 per cent per year, and should double within thirty years. In view of the already critical land situation, it is evident that, whatever the outcome of the military struggle in Algeria, population growth is likely to remain an overwhelming long-range problem.

Further examination of the dual society in its relation to present-day economic and political problems reveals great unsoundness in most areas. The European tenth of the population owns about 32 per cent of the cultivable land area, with an average holding of over 270 acres; the Muslim nine-tenths has the balance, with an average holding of under 16 acres. The ratio is accordingly 17:1, without taking into account the quality of holdings which inordinately favors the Europeans. Much bad land, pasture and grazing areas, and brush are included in the Muslim properties, a majority of which are considered too small to be really productive. Part of this can be adduced to Muslim law, which favors atomization of land parcels, but the steady pressure

of colonists moving into the best lands during the 19th and early 20th centuries and pushing the natives back onto smaller and less rewarding holdings played a large part. An analysis of the crops grown on European farms and their part in the total value of Algerian exports shows the correlation between good land and profitable crops -- notably wine and citrus fruit. A summary of the division of agricultural products indicates that the European element, 3 per cent of the farm population, holds 32 per cent of the land, and receives 60 per cent of the total agricultural income. The rural Muslim (73 per cent of the total Muslim population) is listed in one French report as having a per capita income of $55 a year.

The urban economy shows divisions just as great. The income of the European part comes to around $700 a year, slightly less than in France, although until the revolution it was difficult to find a job in Algeria, particularly among the white-collar class, that was not better paid than in metropolitan France. Above this middle class, which contains less than one per cent of the Muslim population, comes a top group, with a per capita income of over $4600 -- roughly $20,000 for the average non-Muslim family of $4\frac{1}{2}$ persons, on which a maximum income tax of 29 per cent is paid.

Although the European per capita income in Algeria is almost equal to that in metropolitan France, minimum salaries paid to Muslim workers are considerably lower in the North African departments. This is particularly true of agricultural salaries which, in France in 1955, ran from 890 francs to 1,107 francs (from $2.12 to $2.64) for a nine-hour working day, while in Algeria the range was from 340 to 427 francs ($.82 to $1.01) for a 12-to 14-hour working day. The extraordinary social benefits to which French workers are entitled at home do not apply in Algeria to agricultural workers and for employees in commerce and industry are greatly inferior to those in the metropole. At the end of 1954, for example, a French worker in France who received a family allowance of 28,275 francs (about $70) for his four children, was in an enviable position compared to an Algerian working in France, but whose family remained in Algeria, who received 9,600 francs (about $23) for the same number of children.

PRE-REVOLUTION POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Although the political organization of Algeria has been in a chaotic state of flux for the past two years and is currently being debated on a unilateral basis by the French Parliament, the structure existing before November 1954, the beginning of the present revolution, merits examination. For contrary to the oft-repeated declarations of French politicians in the early days of the outbreak that "the basic roots of the problem ... are first of all economic and social," the leaders of the Algerian opposition have never concealed the fact that their political demands were equally important, and they have constantly made clear that Algerian insistence upon ultimate independence was fundamental.

The organic law governing the Algerian departments remains the Algerian Statute of 1947, with the arbitrary modifications introduced by an executive, police-state regime since early 1956. In order to understand the Statute of 1947, a bit of recapitulatory history is necessary.

The conquest of Algeria began with the shelling and occupation of

Algiers in 1830 and the gradual fanning out of French troops through its hinterlands during the next decade. Indeed the "pacification" of the 19th century, like its modern counterpart, was repeatedly promised long before it could be delivered, and it was not until 1847 that the whole northern part of the country was under firm control.

The first ten years were a period of governmental indecision on the future status of the conquered territory, and of haphazard, unofficial colonization as a result. Speculation in land (whose boundaries, and sometimes whose existence, were subject to variation, litigation, and contest) was common; Blida, in the words of an army officer of the time, was sold several times over to eager buyers long before it was conquered and occupied. In time this produced a reaction; the first settlers, anxious for get-rich-quick profits, became discouraged by the hardships of North African life, and animosity was sharpened between the civil and military elements of the European colony.

With the advant of General Bugeaud in 1841 came "official colonization" for the first time. Emphasis was laid on peopling the country with soldiers who had served in the Algerian campaigns and who were thus considered suited to the life and better equipped to defend their acquisitions. Apart from the purely military aspects of the long campaign of repression, which were no better or worse than any similar conquest of the era, the 1840's saw a proliferation of administrative decrees which began to set the tone for relations between ruler and ruled in Algeria. In 1840 the theory of "cantonment" was enounced -- France had a right to canton off the tribes in selected areas because they were not the true proprietors of the soil. The same year produced another decree confiscating the goods of Algerians who had taken up (and were still taking up) arms against the French. In 1844 and 1846 various ordinances declared state property all land not in use whose proprietors were unable to produce titles previous to 1830. In these and other less flagrant ways the best land passed into European hands and the government began to be able to offer it to settlers on long-term low-priced concessions, often made to companies which thus acquired very large domains.

The period from 1848 to 1870, roughly that of the Second Empire, paradoxically produced more liberty of a sort for Algeria than was to be found under the republics. Settlement by criminals, vagrants, orphans, etc., which had been official policy, continued on a steady scale, but Napoleon III preferred to view Algeria as a separate entity; the doctrine of "assimilation" had not yet come into effect. His famous statement in a letter to Marshal MacMahon that "Algeria is an Arab kingdom, a European colony, and a French camp," summarized the situation. Although the lot of the Muslim population was eased by various legislation under the Second Empire, such as the decree of 1863 reinstating some of the tribes on their ancestral lands, the natives were primarily looked upon by Napoleon, embroiled in empire building all over the world, as a reservoir of manpower for an already stagnant France.

With the Third Republic in 1871 came the dilemma of assimilation. As Algeria became more thickly settled with Europeans, including numbers of Alsace-Lorrainers who crossed the Mediterranean to new homes after the Franco-Prussian war, demands grew from the Europeans that Algeria not be considered simply a colony, but be treated as an integral part of France. The insistence of the European element upon complete equality with their brethren in the

metropole posed the problem of continued separate treatment for the Muslim population, for real assimilation of all the inhabitants of Algeria was the last thing wanted by the settlers. To enlarge their own numbers on paper and further to divide the local population on a confessional basis, Algerian Jews were made French citizens by the Crémieux decree in 1871. Military government was abolished and Algerian affairs were attached to the regular ministries in Paris. The combination of political maladroitness and unfavorable natural conditions led to the Kabyle insurrection, suppression of which was followed by further expropriations of land, making the essential problems more acute for future generations. At the same time the phylloxera blight which destroyed such a large part of France's vines in 1878, produced intensive plantings in Algeria, and marked the beginning of an economic nightmare -- the enormous overproduction of wine -- which plagues both France and Algeria even today.

The governmental reorganization of 1896 came at a time when European settler influence had thoroughly consolidated itself. The system then established contained just that measure of freedom which allowed the European minority to do as it pleased in Algeria while holding to the benefits of economic and cultural association with the motherland. The power of the Governor-General was reinforced; he was able to legislate by decree as well as to withhold, when he thought suitable, the application of laws passed in France. An autonomous budget enabled the all-powerful bureaucracy, reinforced by its ties with the leading land-owing families, to grow like a cancer and make itself impervious to any real control from Paris. The European minority controlled -- or was itself -- the Algerian bureaucracy, tied the hands of the few well-meaning metropolitan officials who occasionally attempted reform, and held powerful economic clubs over the heads of parliament and cabinet ministers in France itself.

With few changes this was the situation which existed until 1947, and the Statute then granted on the urging of the left-of-center members of parliament did little to change the de facto state of affairs. Once again Algeria was neither fish nor fowl; citizenship was granted to all residents, but they were divided for representational purposes into two groups: the European minority, with a minuscule Muslim sub-minority attached to it, and a second group composing the other 95 per cent of male Muslims. Both groups elected equal numbers of representatives to the French Assembly (15) and to an impotent Algerian Assembly which sàt in Algiers (60). Voting equality thus did not exist even on paper, and real equality in a social sense was a distant dream. Elections were openly rigged, subservient Muslims were favored and brought to power so that the closely-knit European section of the Algerian Assembly, always working together with the Government-General, (almost unchanged by the Statute,) was assured of political control. Article 39 firmly locked the door on remedial parliamentary action by stating that, if demanded by the Governor-General, or by the Commission on Finances, or by one-fourth of the Assembly, a majority vote of two-thirds of the Assembly was necessary including a majority in both colleges (my underlining). In any event, the first Algerian Assembly produced a Muslim section in which 43 out of 60 members were "government candidates", and only 17 represented opposition political parties.

These political parties had been, since the beginnings of the 20th century, the manifestation of an awakening Algerian conscience both on a national level, as a political continuation of the tribal resistance of the

previous generation, and the follow-up to the political renaissance throughout the Arab world. The Young Algerian Party was founded in 1912 -- significantly only a year after the organization of the Destour (Constitution) Party in Tunisia -- and it demanded suppression of the indigenous code, removal of fiscal inequalities, schooling and representation. In 1912, as in 1957, these demands were qualified by the authorities as "stemming from externally-directed agitation." They were renewed in 1919, after Algerians had served in France under compulsory military service in World War I, but were met with the statement of a French senator that "The natives have performed their duty and deserve to be rewarded. But is it necessary to resort to imprudent measures?" Needless to say, no imprudent measures were taken; immobilism and the status quo prevailed.

Other political parties sprang up in anger and desperation. In the 1920's Messali Hadj founded the North African Star which was dissolved in 1929 for demanding independence. Messali was imprisoned, released, went into exile in Switzerland and was allowed to return to Algeria under the Popular Front in the mid-30's. In 1937 the North African Star was again dissolved, and Messali founded the more discreet Algerian People's Party (PPA), which lasted until World War II caused its dissolution in turn.

Less outspoken at the beginning was Ferhat Abbas, now one of the leading members of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in exile, who founded the Federation of Muslim Electees in 1930. This group lacked popular support until it was broadened in 1938 as the Algerian Popular Union (UPA), and became the nucleus for the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto, (UDMA), which in 1943 grouped signers of a petition calling for freedom which is likely to go down as Algeria's Declaration of Independence.

In 1931 an important, politically-oriented religious group, the Association of Ulemas, (Doctors of the Law,) of Algeria was formed by disciples of Sheikh Ben Badis. It was a conservative, nationalist, and reformist group which built its own system of free schools and colleges, in opposition to the officially-designated religious leaders, who were often of heterodox, maraboutic tendencies. It aimed on the religious plane at a revivification of orthodox Islamic practices in Algeria, practices which, especially in the countryside, had long been a dead letter, and on the political plane it sought to erect the bases of unity with like-minded nationalist-religious movements in the Middle East. Naturally the Government-General and its official imams feared this combination of religious revival and political orientation led by uncontrolled clerics. The Association was carefully kept under surveillance and a monopoly on preaching was given to the official clerics (in violation of Islamic law which permits any fully competent Muslim male to deliver sermons in the mosque). A puppet Consultative Council on Religion was organized and patronized by the authorities, and the Secretary-General of the Department of Algiers, a Christian, was named to it in a step which violated what little was left of freedom of the cult. Much less violent than the resistance of the political parties, the steadfastness of this orthodox religious opposition, and its maintenance of close ties with the rest of the Muslim world, has perhaps in the long run made it more difficult for the French to deal with. Just as this is being written, news has come that the Association has been dissolved in the Department of Bône, and its goods sequestered, because of its "political stand."

As with all the North African countries, the Algerians looked to the future with hope after the allied landings in 1942, and the years from 1943-47 gave some promise at first of a slight bettering of their status. Reforms of 1944 gave citizenship to about 60,000 Algerians and some municipal representation. But the reforms were limited in nature and slow in coming, (it took a year and the personal intervention of President Roosevelt to have the anti-semitic laws passed by Vichyist Europeans in Algeria repealed) and riots broke out, in May 1945, in Setif. As always they were bloodily repressed and then used as an excuse for further inaction. "French sovereignty is in peril" said a tract in Algiers at the time, without knowing how prescient it was.

Thus the slow-pedaling of the Europeans in Algeria and their agents in Paris had much to do with the impotence of the 1947 statute. Granted by a Socialist government, it had to accommodate itself to the views of all the parties as well as to the Algerian colonial lobby, which at one point threatened to indict France in the United Nations if the Statute were voted. The results amounted to a complicated numbers game in which the odds were overwhelmingly stacked in favor of the house. It was not surprising that the players who could never hope to win by honest means would eventually try, quite literally, to break the bank.

Seven years of gradual breakdown followed the imposition of the 1947 statute, a breakdown that was common to Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. Blinded by their preoccupations, first with Indochina, then with the protectorates, the French public could not or would not see that the basically unsound political and social structure was coming apart in Algeria. The continuing superficially successful electoral fraud, the deceptive calm before the storm, the emotional value of the myth that Algeria was forever French, all played a part in this myopia. But underneath, pressure was being generated. The MTLD, (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties,) a postwar successor of the PPA, split significantly in July 1954, into "Messalist" and "Centralist" groups, with the latter majority group denouncing the dictatorial tendencies of the ex-leader, while a third group began forming the nucleus for the later underground reorganization of the national liberation (FLN) front. This Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action (CRUA), met with the other two factions in the late summer of 1954 and seems to have agreed with the Centralists to enter into direct action. Other elements were in Cairo at the time, receiving training and arms from the Egyptian government and moral support from the Arab League. The history of the summer of 1954 and the immediate responsibilities for the beginnings of the insurrection remain to be written. As yet the leaders involved are too reticent to outline what actually happened. But military preparations, stockage of arms, clandestine comings-and-goings to and from the East continued through September and October. They were unknown to the general public, for whom the storm broke without warning, but not to French intelligence in North Africa -- although, like the Americans just before Pearl Harbor, they knew that something was up but were not quite sure what or where. With the advantage of hindsight, one can remark the growing number of plain warning signs during the last few weeks in October. La Nation Algerienne, for example, on October 29, said plainly:

> "The French government believes that everything is fine in our country, that there is no Algerian problem -- only economic and social problems. False judgments and solemn affirmations will never do any good for the Algerian problem faces us with a constantly growing seriousness, and it faces us primarily from a

political point of view."

Two nights later the revolution began.

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THE REBELLION

On the night of October 31 -- All Saints' Eve, the American Halloween -- a series of attacks and assassinations broke out all throughout Algeria, but with a focus in the mountainous, little-roaded southeastern part of the Aurès Mountains. The quality of the attack and the methods used were rudimentary, but the timing and the dispersion of the uprising showed that it was no isolated outbreak. The proximity of the Aurès region to the Tunisian frontier, where fellaghas, or irregular guerrillas, had been operating before Tunisia received a promise of internal autonomy in August 1954, first gave rise to speculation that some of these elements had crossed the border and were making trouble in Algeria.

Immediate reactions to the outbreak were mixed: in France astonishment was general, and genuine, that Algeria, where French peace reigned because it was French soil, could duplicate the turbulence of Tunisia and Morocco, in which "lack of firmness and not enough direct control" was thought by many to be responsible for the struggles then going on. Emotion in Algiers was intense, and fear was combined with demands for 40,000 additional troops to guard against an "extension of the trouble" to other areas. Within a few days the principal political party, the MTLD, was dissolved and the Procureur of the Republic filed suit against "X" for an attempt against the internal security of the state. The situation was described as "preoccupying," but also as "stabilizing itself."

Three weeks later, at the end of November, the Minister of the Interior, M. Mitterand, claimed that the Aurès was not in insurrection; there were only a few hundred confirmed rebels hiding in the mountains. Threats of violent repression of the revolt (from Premier Mendès-France) were alternated with reassurances by visiting VIPs that the situation was well in hand and getting better. And the inevitable result was to convince the average metropolitan Frenchman, always ready to be skeptical of official statements, that the whole issue was a tempest in a teapot. Military communiqués, throughout the winter, gave proof of further incoherence. In December three-fourths of the Aurés was under control; but in January five thousand troops, supported by tanks, launched a large-scale operation to clear it out. Another similar task force went into action a few days later in the same region. Meanwhile in Kabylia, the mountain massif to the east of Algiers, another army task force of 4,000 went looking for armed groups who were described as "Kabyle bandits who had always existed in the area."

The history of official communiques and government handouts in Algeria since then has been a long, dreary, and incredible tale. No one reading the official version of events would have the slightest idea of what was really going on. A more accurate picture can be presented by considering the rebellion in three separate chronological stages:

1) November 1954 - August 20, 1955. This stage was marked by the original flare-up in the Aurès, a region naturally suited to guerrilla operations by its remoteness, its proximity to the eastern border, and the warlike nature of its Berber-speaking Chaouia population. Moving gradually northward through the spring, sometimes in diversionary movements, sometimes as full-scale foci of revolutionary infection, the resistants entrenched themselves in the Constantinois, first in the south, then bit by bit in the northern, heavily-wooded coastal mountains.

The first authentic metropolitan reaction came with the decreeing of the state of emergency in March 1955. In essence this provided for powers under which the Minister of the Interior and the Governor-General of Algeria could apply special measures to specific parts of Algeria; among them were the institution of "assignment to residence" (i.e., concentration camps), the power to prohibit public assembly, to close cafes and theaters, to control the movement of persons, to search houses at any time, and to take all measures to control the press, radio, and cinema. Although some debate was aroused in the Assembly on the legality of proclaiming an emergency in one part of the indivisible Republic, the issue was resolved by a compromise. The state of urgency was limited to six months, but was renewed, and was followed in the spring of 1956 by the institution of a "state of exception" akin to complete martial law, the Draconian provisions of which made these first measures seem extraordinarily light.

Early summer saw a degradation of the military picture, with rebel emphasis put more on attacks on isolated European farmhouses, economic sabotage, burning of crops, and boycott of state monopolies in the cities. Official steps taken in Algeria, such as the Plan Soustelle looking toward increased employment of Muslims in the lower echelons of the administration, were attacked by the European press and local authorities in Algeria, and more firmness, with the institution of martial law, was demanded by the settlers.

The preoccupations of France in the summer of 1955 were, in spite of all this, more with Morocco than with Algeria. The almost open rebellion in the protectorate had finally led the Faure government to change its Resident-General, and the Casablanca riots of July had brought tension to an extreme point. A round-table conference was arranged by Premier Faure, in spite of the opposition of a good part of his own cabinet, for August 22 -- a date considered by many to be too late, since it fell two days after the anniversary of the deposition of the Sultan of Morocco (August 20, 1953), a day for which trouble had been widely predicted.

The trouble came both in Morocco and Algeria, and this joint action showed more than anything else the underlying unit of nationalist aims in North Africa. The massacres at Oued Zem in Morocco, and the nearly successful rebel attempt to seize and hold Philippeville in Algeria brought a blood-bath resulting in over 1,000 European deaths in one day and ushered in a week of repression which saw reprisals totaling many times that figure; the casualties on both sides, in most cases, were innocent victims of events which had gotten out of hand.

But whereas the shock of August 20 in Morocco brought a realization to the French cabinet that a solution had to be found in the Sherifian Empire, the pendulum swung the other way in Algeria. Although it may some day seem

clear that what was to succeed in Morocco (and Tunisia) might have been applied as well in Algeria, the accident of history which had made of one a 19th century colony become a part of the homeland, and of the other a 20th century protectorate in which concessions were possible because face could be saved by complicated legalistic formulas, obscured the vision of men in Paris who were probably as well-meaning as could be hoped for under the circumstances. So, for Algeria as for Morocco, August 20 became a date from which there was no turning back. Spilt blood called for revenge, increased terror called forth stepped-up repression, and both became progressively more blind in their search for victims.

2) August 20, 1955 - February 1956 was the period which saw the generalization of the rebellion -- its spread into the western province of Oran, the multiplication of attacks everywhere throughout the countryside, the growth of terrorism in the cities. In France it marked the beginnings of an understanding that the rebellion was more than the work of a few bandits, and the first signs appeared of a crisis of conscience which has ever since troubled the large and vocal liberal element in the metropolitan press. World opinion was moved for the first time to look at Algeria when the United Nations voted 28-27 to inscribe the affair on its agenda in the fall session of 1955, and France walked out.

But the most serious trend within Algeria after August 1955, was a progressive separation of the two communities. Confidence was gradually being lost on both sides, and a ditch of mutual distrust and hostility began to widen. In September, when the French government announced that it was determined to proceed with complete integration in Algeria (which was manifestly impossible in view of the negative attitude of both communities toward it), the second (Muslim) section of the Algerian Assembly rejected integration as out-of-date and demanded recognition of the "Algerian national concept." The Muslim legislators further denounced the military repression being carried out, which was "directed at a considerable number of innocent persons" and decried the principle of collective responsibility then in application.

With the fall of the Faure government at the end of 1955, the comedy of Algerian political representation came to an end. It was decided that the 30 Algerian seats in the French Assembly would not be contested in the general elections of January. The Algerian Assembly was dissolved a few months later.

3) February, 1956 - to now is the third period of the Algerian revolution. It had its debut in the constitution of a Socialist cabinet under Guy Mollet after the inconclusive general elections which produced no majority but made the Communists (with 150 seats) the most powerful group in parliament, and in the visit of the Premier to Algiers on February 6, 1956. The Mollet government's program for Algeria was presented in a three-word slogan "Pacification-Reforms-Elections" which were to be carried out in that order. The government entered with bright hopes, and with -- even at that late date -- the possibility of a solution if the proper combination of firmness and generosity had been shown.

Unfortunately the Premier's visit to Algiers culminated in disaster. He was met by a crowd of rioting Europeans, who showered him with ripe tomatoes and garbage, cried out for the "Army in Power," and forced him to desist from naming the Governor-General of his own choice. His capitulation to mob

rule, and the appointment of Robert Lacoste as Resident Minister (to take the place of a Governor-General) confirmed the power of the European racists in Algeria, and likely was the keystone in the arch of self-destruction which they have been building since.

A fully authoritarian regime was established under this Socialist government which, it has been said, has carried out policies so ultrarightist that even the rightists in the French Assembly might hesitate to undertake them. In March the "state of exception," exceeding the "state of urgency," was decreed, and Resident Minister Lacoste was granted absolute powers in Algeria to dissolve elected bodies, to rule by decree, to suspend constitutional rights, to keep out or expel persons from the region, and to take any special measures necessary.

At the same time the Lacoste regime carried out a series of reforms in administration, land reform, and public instruction, most of which are on paper and must eventually be ratified. Many of these will be rendered obsolete by the Basic Law for Algeria now under discussion in the Assembly. Experience with past reforms in Algeria has proved that extreme skepticism must be shown until they are actually in effect. The power of the European minority to rescind, alter, and deform what have often been the good intentions of Paris or its agents remains as great as ever and it is not to be supposed that if the revolution were crushed by force they would allow themselves to be legislated out of prerogatives which they retained at the end of the struggle.

The most recent important development in the Algerian revolution has been the constitution of two independent states on its flanks. Since obtaining freedom both Morocco and Tunisia have made it clear where their sympathies lie, and have called upon France to negotiate the same sort of settlement with the National Liberation Front (FLN) as was previously worked out with their own nationalist parties. It is certain that the existence of the two countries is already acting as a yeast on Algerian insistence upon complete independence, and the idea of a Maghrebian Federation, while presenting practical obstacles to its ultimate realization, is an ideal which actively stirs all the inhabitants of North Africa.

The existence of Morocco and Tunisia has changed the military aspect of the revolution as well, for although some French troops have been freed from service in the protectorates, border surveillance difficulties have increased to the point where both frontiers are now lined with barbed-wire entanglements and divided by a no-man's land under searchlight observation. Semiofficial support by both states of the rebels continues unabashedly but is more marked in Tunisia, because of its geographical position as a link with the Middle East. Leaders of the revolution come and go freely between the neighboring states, guerrillas slip across the border to rest and return to fight again, and rebel headquarters operate openly in the main streets of Tunis. The increasing tempo of frontier incidents between France and Tunisia shows the danger of an anticolonialist revolution turning into a local war, with all the ominous overtones that eventual Arab solidarity would provide.

THE EFFECTS OF THE REBELLION

The results of three years of revolution and civil war have been

grave in loss of human life, in financial drain and economic wastage, and in the progressive sapping of moral values on both sides.

Rebel action since November 1954, has resulted in 7,408 persons dead (of whom 1,110 are Europeans) and 2,371 persons missing (of whom 142 are Europeans). These official figures do not take into account the number of guerrillas put out of action by French army forces, nor of the large numbers of Muslims who have been the victims of accidental bombings and strafings, nor of occasional "extraofficial" retaliation by paratroopers, legionnaires, and self-constituted local vigilante groups. In addition there has been a quantity of wounded stemming from indiscriminate terrorist attacks by bombs and grenades in the cities. Finally, there are omitted, for example, the Muslims lynched by European mobs in Algiers this June -- the number officially placed at fewer than ten but considered by eyewitness foreign correspondents to have been much higher. And the total would be incomplete without adding uncounted deaths from feuds between the FLN and its smaller rival guerrilla group, the Messalist "Algerian National Movement" (MNA) army; the more than 300 victims of the Melouza massacre this June seem to have died as a result of this rivalry. And how to estimate the number of suspects rounded up, principally by paratroopers in a get-tough campaign launched this past winter, who have simply disappeared and not been heard from since? No matter how viewed, the rebellion does not make a pretty picture in human terms.

Financially the drain has been severe also. According to estimates made by the United Nations Commission for Europe in Geneva, the over-all cost of the Algerian campaign runs France about 700 billion francs a year ($1,666,000,000 at the new semidevalued rate of 420 francs to the dollar.) The repercussion of the conflict on France's balance of payments, already badly strained, is put in the neighborhood of 250 billion francs a year (about $600,000,000). The Commission added:

> "The extraordinary burden which now weighs on the French economy is certainly that of the Algerian campaign. The stepped-up draft of young men for service in North Africa has taken away more than one per cent of the normal labor force, without counting workers and other resources directly or indirectly used to serve military needs."

It is hard to judge just how much this expenditure had to do with the August decision to readjust the external value of the franc, but the possibility of continued long-term military operations -- perhaps on an even more extensive scale -- can hardly contribute to the stability of the franc or to the soundness of the economy.

From the military point of view the stationing of nearly 500,000 men in Algeria has been a serious drawback to NATO plans for the defense of Central Europe. The withdrawal of most French forces from the European theater led directly to something the French found abhorrent, the appointment of a World War II German commander, General Speidel, as head of NATO ground forces in the area. In proportion to its population France is maintaining a much larger force in Algeria than the United States had at any time in Korea. The use of conscripts in Algeria -- unlike the war in Indochina to which they could not be sent against their will -- adds a further element of unpopularity to the struggle.

This is not to say that the average Frenchman-in-the-street is as yet actively opposed to what is happening in Algeria. His emotions are complex and not easy to describe, but in a recent trip to France I tried to get a composite picture of present attitudes on the issue. They go something like this:

The "troubles" in Algeria are not looked upon as a real war. Casualties among the soldiers have been relatively low and metropolitan families have not been hard hit. Engagements have not had the murderous quality of the Indochina war, and even there it took the shock and humiliation of Dien-Bien-Phu to arouse the Frenchman at home from a long period of lethargy and indifference to a colonial issue which was remote and incomprehensible in many ways. The Algerian problem has not gone on nearly as long as did the eight-year struggle in the Far East and, in consequence, has not yet earned the sobriquet of the "dirty war" applied in Indochina. To counterbalance this, however, the issue joined in Algeria has a deeper meaning, and France's prestige is felt to be more directly involved.

The number of Frenchmen who have been to Algeria, who have relatives, friends, or business interests there, or who are now in military service there is infinitely greater than was the case in Indochina. The presence of 300,000 Algerians working in France itself further brings home the issue to them, especially since the recent beginnings of terrorist activity in Paris and some of the industrial cities of the north. Finally, a greater sensitivity to foreign criticism, a feeling that other, more backward or less-cultured nations have no business giving advice (witness the statement of a rightist deputy in the Assembly a few days ago that "It makes no difference to us if we are condemned by the slavers of Yemen or the racists of Little Rock"), and a distrust of the United Nations which has deepened steadily since the abortive Suez attack -- all of these create a certain collective obstinacy which, at its worst, degenerates into paranoid feelings of persecution. An extreme example of that kind of reaction was found in the statement of the Federation of Mayors of the Department of Algiers who on September 18 declared themselves:

> "Distressed at the way it is proposed to abandon one million five hundred thousand (sic) Europeans for sordid reasons at the order of foreigners, notably the United States."

The back of the Frenchman thus tends to be up; he sees foreign plots on all sides, and if it is not other countries which are his undoing it is the weakness or the gullibility or the machinations of "those in power." He feels that he has been pushed against the wall by those who had no right to meddle in his affairs and he resents, rather than the situation itself, efforts to solve it.

This is only one side, the darker side, of the emotional picture, however. One can sketch in a somewhat less precise way the outlines of a different outlook. For one thing, there is at the bottom in France a vast reservoir of good sense and liberal opinion, often slow to come to the surface, but which seems now to be rising in ferment. It consists on the one hand of the overwhelming majority of the intellectuals, who form a distinct class and a vocal minority more powerful here than in almost any other Western country because of the access to the press which they command and are constantly using. To it is added the liberal wing of the Catholic Church

which, according to nationalists in all three North African countries, has been among their best friends in the fight for independence; plus a scattered mass opinion composed of the followers of the dissident radicals, supporters of Mendès-France, some members of the Socialist Party who are uneasy at the group's official policy, and, out on their own limb, the Communists.

The Communist Party's policy of outright support to Algerian independence claims is clearly based on opportunism; in 1946-47 it was denouncing Algerian nationalists of the Popular Algerian People's Party (PPA), who were in fact leftist in orientation, as "neo-Nazis" and "Fascists." In those days Moscow thought that an unstable postwar France was a better bet for subversion and that when it fell all the French colonies would come with it. Now, just as the Soviet Union, which once voted for the creation of the state of Israel, has decided that Middle East Arab nationalism is a coming force, so the French Communist party sees the advantages to be gained by backing what looks like a winning entry in North Africa. But, on the basis of this unsolicited, and often embarrassing, support, to qualify the Algerian revolutionary movement as a communist-inspired or communist-led -- as the French do when they want a final, clinching argument for Americans -- is a grave error.

The dominant force in North Africa today, just as in the Middle East, is Arab nationalism; it will continue to be so for as far into the future as we can see, until its fundamental aspirations are satisfied, regardless of the support it gets from the Eastern or Western blocs. The failure to recognize Arab nationalism as a living, independent force, and the constant tendency to look upon it as a tool of Soviet policy and nothing more has already led to one setback after another for the West in the Arab world; if the same attitude persists in the Algeria crisis it may lead the West straight to disaster.

An important by-product of the Algerian crisis which, in the eyes of many, is beginning to mean more to France than simple victory or defeat in a colonial campaign, is the moral rot which many Frenchmen say is beginning to spread through the framework of democratic institutions in the Fourth Republic. The French liberals mentioned above have been the first to condemn this, and outstanding men like Mauriac and Camus, and notable papers such as Le Monde, L'Express, France-Observateur, and Témoignage Chrétian, have been in the forefront of the fight to preserve civil liberties. The opposition of the journals has brought down on their heads the wrath of the military government in Algeria, where they are repeatedly seized and their distribution banned on the grounds that articles revealing unpleasant truths about the way of conducting the "pacification" will give aid and encouragement to the rebels; it has further brought them into conflict with the law at home.

The most influential of these, the daily Le Monde, has recently been threatened with severe action: a suit for 20 million francs has been brought against it by the Minister of National Defense for an article, alleged to be insulting to the army, which compared French military methods used in Algeria to those employed by German troops in occupied Europe in the last war -- an accusation which many impartial observers find not too wide of the mark. The clear intention of military leaders in the government to brook no criticism of their actions is emphasized by this effort to strike down their most respected critic. The pending trial has caused considerable concern in international press circles where it is pointed out that even a summary

condemnation with the symbolic damages of one franc would enable the government to taint the reliability of future Le Monde reports on Algeria. Apart from this it is noteworthy that the editors-in-chief of the other three journals mentioned above have all been indicted for "demoralization" or "defamation" of the army; the best-known of these, the crackerjack young editor of L'Express, Jean-Jacques Servan Schreiber, had been a member of the Mendès-France "team" of young liberals, a kind of junior brain-trust which surrounded the Premier in 1954, and he later volunteered for service in Algeria. It was extracts from his revealing book "Lieutenant en Algerie" appearing in L'Express which caused his indictment. The concern of the journalistic world in this area was recently expressed by the International Press Institute which published in its August bulletin a sadly-long list of violations of freedom of the press in France since the beginning of this year.

The real reason for the degree of "demoralization" which exists in the army is less the printing of letters by young soldiers describing their repugnance to savage measures of repression (this is the offense with which France-Observateur is charged) than in the events themselves. For it is not only the press and civilian liberals who have recently been objecting to the widespread practices of torture, illegal arrests, and indefinite detention in incommunicado conditions, but an influential member of the army itself.

This was General Paris de Bollardière, a hero of the war in Indochina, who had asked to be relieved of his command in the Algiers region early this year because of his disagreement with the "methods employed in Algeria." When Servan-Schreiber was later indicted for the reports he published in L'Express on the same subject, General Bollardière wrote him a short note which in restrained terms reveals much of the character of the man who refused to employ these methods:

> "My dear Servan-Schreiber,
>
> "You ask me if I think that the articles published under your signature in L'Express are such as to injure the moral of the army and to dishonor it in the eyes of public opinion.
>
> "You served under my orders for six months in Algeria trying to help us find rules of action both efficient and worthy of our country and its army, with a sincere and objective view of realities.
>
> "I think that it was highly desirable for you, after having lived through our action and shared our efforts, to do your job as a journalist by underlining to public opinion the dramatic aspects of the revolutionary war which we are facing and the frightful danger there would be for us to lose sight, under the fallacious pretext of immediate efficiency, or the moral values which, alone, have assured the grandeur of our civilization and our army."

The punishment for having written the letter was thirty-days' house arrest for General Bollardière, but the moral punishment to the French Army still resounds.

Frenchmen no longer doubt that the use of torture on prisoners and

suspects has been general -- primarily as a means of gaining information. Denied at first by officials in Algeria, it was later admitted sotto voce that this was a way of sparing lives. An International Commission which investigated found that torture had been used, but felt that the government was now doing its best to eliminate illegal measures. But it would still be a naive man who could believe that human rights are guaranteed in any appreciable measure in Algeria at this moment.

A pointed testimony has come out this week in L'Express, the story of a young French woman teacher, Mme. Mezurat, who said she was tortured by electricity for six hours by the military as the result of her casual friendship with a young Algerian Muslim who had been arrested. (No one knows what happened to him.) She reported she had been threatened with reprisals if she revealed what had happened to her, and that she gained enough courage to speak only after returning to France this summer. Thoughtful Frenchmen as well as non-French observers are convinced that such actions by French officialdom can have only one result: a progressive barbarization of the spirit and the implantation in the Algerian people of a burning, inexpungeable hatred.

SOLUTIONS

While history and bitter warfare continue to be made on the spot in Algeria, the combination of the new, uneasy awareness of Algeria in French thought and the fear of condemnation by the United Nations (which had in effect given France an eight-months' delay to find a solution) joined to give rise to measures designed to express a new de facto situation: that Algeria is no longer France. This is now clear to all except the European colons in Algeria and the die-hard rightists in the Assembly, but the inevitable corollary to this -- that Algeria is Algeria -- is still not recognized widely enough to carry the day.

The world was treated on the night of September 30 to the spectacle of the Assembly, impotent and irascible, refusing to agree on the text of a Basic Law (Loi Cadre) which would have given Algeria very limited local autonomy and prepared the groundwork for a federal state. Although the Basic Law was not the best of laws, it was something and its passage would have afforded some hope. Its great sin in Assembly eyes was that its meager concessions, watered down by amendments introduced by the conservatives, went too far -- there was even a provision for voting equality in a single college. By a vote of 279-253 the Assembly struck it down. An illogical combination of Communists, determined to obstruct a solution and oppose the government; of neo-Fascist Poujadists, and of rightwing Social Republicans and Independents who live with pre-1789 delusions of a grandeur gone decidedly shabby, united to defeat the project and overthrow the government. Among the explanations offered by the head of the Social Republicans, Jacques Soustelle (who as Governor-General in Algeria had first introduced a police-state there) was the fear of his group that demands for a federal executive body which had been made the day before in the Bamako Congress in French Black Africa would be reinforced if the government showed weakness in Algeria.

In a final, desperate appeal to members of parliament, Premier Bourges-Maunoury warned that "We will either all save Algeria together or lose it together," but there is no "togetherness" in French politics today. Just

as parliament was torn between the fear of chastisement by world opinion and the characteristically French inability to make voluntary concessions in time -- so the country was split.

The liberal wing of French thought has received a severe setback and the partisans of the status quo have won a Pyrrhic victory which may well bring further suffering to France and Algeria. Although the liberals saw a glimmering of hope in the fact that nearly half of the Assembly wanted to take even the half-way measures which the Basic Law provided, they feel there is still a long, dark night to pass through before dawn is reached.

Meanwhile, internal pressure in this divided country, incapable of solving its own problems and now isolated by the affront it has offered to international opinion, will gradually become unendurable. Already every element of French pride, every French emotion has been shaken by the pulls of the Algerian dilemma. When Raymond Aron, the "Walter Lippmann" of France, suggested openly a few months ago in his book "La Tragedie Algerienne" that Algeria would inevitably be independent and that it should be clearly understood that this would mean the exodus of much of the European colony there over the long term, it was not only a protest from his political opponents that was evoked, but also a profound state of shock throughout the nation, much like the patient under psychiatric treatment who has for the first time been brought squarely to face with an unpalatable truth. Unfortunately there is no way out for France in this Calvary, and no escaping of final responsibility for the decisions which must sooner or later be taken. Thus, in spite of the growing pressure which can be expected from the mountain fighters in Algeria, and from the United Nations in New York, we must still look to Paris for a reading of the shape of things to come.

THE FINAL OUTLOOK

At the present writing it is in one word: bleak. An exacerbated nationalism, part of the world-wide movement of the non-Western peoples for freedom, is becoming daily more violent and more frustrated. Its contact with one of the more tenacious remnants of European colonialism has produced a hostility which is not likely to be appeased in a short time. When independence finally comes to Algeria the relative ease of transition which accompanied that new status in Tunisia and Morocco may be hoped for but not seriously expected. A continuation of the present bloodshed much longer will destroy what few threads of spiritual communication are left.

At the denouement of the tragedy, however it is finally resolved, both societies are likely to emerge exhausted and, at least for some time, psychologically impaired; their traditional structures may not survive the shock and in any event will be much transformed. To France the eventual loss of Algeria will probably be an emotional blow equal to that of 1940. Its army will have been engaged in nothing but defeats and retreats since then, and repercussions against chaotic republican institutions cannot be ruled out. From the point of view of the rest of the world, final negation of Algeria's aspirations would be fatal to co-operation between the West and the Arab world, extremely damaging to relations with the other Asian-African nations.

Further prolonged identification of the West, as a civilization and in political terms, with the forces of blind colonialism in Algeria would unavoidably lead to an arrangement between the resistants and the enemies of the West -- an arrangement of the kind now taking place in parts of the Middle East. That it has not already happened is a blessing for which the West can be thankful but on which it cannot continue to count much longer.

In terms of American foreign policy, questions of expediency and moral values as well as of sentimental attachments all enter and may conflict. It appears to be time, however, for Americans to consider seriously the need for disassociation from policies which so many see as standing in the way of history and more importantly, as being unworthy of the highest ethical standards of Christian civilization. In the intricate web of the modern world the luxury of abstention is becoming ever more costly. The bell is tolling insistently and it is tolling for everybody.

Charles F Gallagher