

الاستعمار والتكوين الطبقي في الجزائر

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ملخص

يقترضى فهم البنية الاجتماعية للمجتمع الجزائري المعاصر التعرف على الخلفية التاريخية لتكوينها، وبخاصة تحليل سيرورة النمو غير المتكافئ الذى ميز التشكيلة الاجتماعية أثناء فترة الاستعمار.

تحلل هذه الورقة فى جزئها الأول سيرورة التحولات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية التى غلب عليها طابع المصادرة بالقوة للأراضى الفلاحية، وتحطيم الحرف مما أدى إلى هدم البنى الاقتصادية والاجتماعية السائدة آنذاك. وإطلاق سيرورة تكوين بنى وعلاقات جديدة قائمة على العمل المأجور والإنتاج السلعى.

فيما يعالج الجزء الثانى الشروط التاريخية لظهور طبقة عاملة ناشئة وتكوين الحركة العمالية وبخاصة تحليل الدور الذى لعبته التنظيمات النقابية الميثروبولية فى تعبئة وتأطير العمال وتكوين فروع نقابية فى المستعمرة (الجزائر).

أما الجزء الثالث فيعالج ظروف نشأة وتطور التيار الوطنى ضمن الطبقة العاملة وتكوين التنظيم الوطنى المستقل (الاتحاد العام للعمال الجزائريين). كما يركز على تحليل العلاقة بين الحركة العمالية وتنظيمها النقابى من جهة، والتشكيلات السياسية التى قادت الحركة الوطنية من جهة ثانية، وفى مقدمتها جبهة التحرير الوطنى.

تلك العلاقة المعقدة التى استمرت فى مرحلة الاستقلال الوطنى بكل ما تحمله من آثار عميقة على تكوين بنية المجتمع الجزائرى المعاصر.

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Colonialism and Class Formation in ALGERIA

1- Colonial Capitalism and Working Class Formation

In this paper we intend to consider some of the principal elements that constitute the historical background to the present-day Algerian social formation. It is not meant to be a history of the development of colonial Algeria, but an attempt to retrace significant processes and economy. Our focal point will be the process of proletarianization which has so profoundly altered the social structure of the Algerian society from 1830 to 1962.

The paper will be divided into three sections. The first deals with the processes of socio-economic transformation associated with the sometime violent process of expropriation, resulting in the destruction of traditional forms of property and relations of production in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities. We will argue that these movements lead to coexistence of the old and emergent types of class relations. Special attention will be paid to the formation of these new forms of class relations, particularly the emergence of an incipient working class.

The second section will be devoted to the analysis of the historical conditions leading to the development of the labour movement. Of particular interest here was the role played by the metropolitan labour confederations, especially the "confederation Générale du travail" (C. G. T.). Of special historical interest was

the division of society on an ethnic basis, which gave rise to deep cleavages in the incipient working class and union organization.

In the third section our attention will focus on the end product of the complex process of socio-economic transformation and political polarization; that is, the emergence of an independent national labour movement. The context in which this movement arose, and its relationship to the nationalist movement as represented by the "Front de liberation Nationale" (F. L. N.), is a key element in understanding the character of the labour movement and its later development. While tracing the emergence of the "Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (U. G. T. A.), we will also consider the problems associated with working class mobilization and organization in what was an extremely violent colonial context. These peculiar historical conditions have had lasting effects on the development of the working class and its organization, giving rise to the issue of the status and autonomy of the union organization in the process of working class formation and its future role in independent Algeria.

1.1 Colonial Agrarian Capitalism

The colonial subjugation and capitalist transformation of Algerian society and economy were carried through in two distinctive, but complementary periods, distinctive in time (1830-1880) and (1880-1962), their socio-economic contexts and aims, and consequently in the practices and policies on which they were based.

At the risk of some over-simplification, we can say the first period extended over the half century from 1830 to 1880; a period of military conquest and the consolidation of colonial rule. This period also saw a process of massive land expropriation, so establishing a base for the future settler economy and society. This process of land expropriation assumed different forms and was carried out in successive stages and by various means, depending on the politico-military conjuncture at the time. The Bylik⁽¹⁾ property held by the Regency of Algiers was the first to be expropriated immediately following the fall of Algiers in 1830. In 1833 there was the takeover of land not legally recognized as property by the French legal system⁽²⁾. From 1839 onwards land owned by rebellious tribes was expropriated following their defeat in colonial wars. From 1843 there were successive expropriations of land owned by religious establishments and associations (Mosques and Religious associations), followed in 1851 by forest lands and in 1861 by all uncultivated land not used for pasture by the local communities all of which was declared the property of the French State. In the 1870's French colonial authorities took the decisive step of expropriating communal lands (Arch)⁽³⁾ which made up a significant part of cultivable land and stood at the heart of traditional social structure. This was achieved through a series of laws aimed at privatizing land property⁽⁴⁾.

The second period in the process of colonial expansion and domination was marked by the establishment of a settler community and the beginning of capital accumulation. Thus,

between 1880 and 1900, the colonial authorities distributed to French settlers 687.000 hectares of the best agricultural land and constructed some 700 villages. In parallel, a process of free colonization began with private settlers acquiring about one million hectares of land in the period between 1871 and 1900. This constituted a major break with the early years when settlers had held only 481.000 hectares.⁽⁵⁾ By the turn of the century, therefore, a whole process of land expropriation on a large scale had been achieved, with the inevitable transformation of socio-economic structures. Various forms of property ownership and relations of production, partly communal, partly quasi-feudal such as the Khammet system⁽⁶⁾ were either transformed into capitalist forms or subjugated to its logic of operation.

Land expropriation and violent destruction of existing communities caused successive series of mass movements of the population to arid and mountainous areas. Population pressure on cultivable land, already apparent in the pre-colonial period, was accelerated to an unprecedented degree⁽⁷⁾.

The development of agrarian capitalism was essentially an uneven process resulting in the development of two distinctive yet related socio-economic structures. The traditional sector, largely dominated by the local peasantry, represented a subsistence economy, while the modern sector, dominated by the Europeans was a cash-crop export-oriented economy. However, this was by no means a simple dual economy. Their apparent separation, as measured by their different modes of organization and level of

productive forces, concealed their fundamental interdependence. The two sectors were performing different but complementary roles in an emergent system of capitalist division of labour and accumulation⁽⁸⁾.

The contrast between the two sectors and their characteristic communities was bound to be profoundly marked. The last decade of colonial domination (1952 - 1962) witnessed a high degree of land concentration in the cash-crop sector, more than 2.700.000 hectares of the best cultivable land were in the hands of some 22.000 Europeans. This represented a quarter of all agricultural land and 40% of effectively cultivated land⁽⁹⁾. Thus, the situation of the Algerian peasantry was dramatically transformed. By the 1930's the disparity between Algerian land owners and settlers was marked. the settlers held an average of 120 hectares as against 11 hectares by Algerians⁽¹⁰⁾.

Table 2. 1 : Structure of land ownership in 1930

Categ. of hol in ha.	No. of E'pean owners	Ave. Prop.	Total land	%	No. of Al'ian owners	Ave. Prop.	Total land	%
- 10	8,877	4.7	42,534	2	434,537	4	1,738,806	23
10-50	7,140	29.2	216,787	9	140,010	18.8	2,635,275	35
50-100	4,725	77.1	364,366	15	35,962	43.1	1,595,398	21
+100	5,411	318	1,721,979	74	7,035	198.3	1,593,398	21

Source : BENACHENHO, A., Formation du Sous-développement en Algérie OPU, Alger, 1976, P. 283.

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As can be seen, the tendency toward land concentration was accelerated during the period 1900 to 1962. It is important to note that this phenomenon of concentration, characterized both communities and sectors. However, concentration appeared in varying proportions whether in relation to the size of holdings, number of large landowners or total cultivable surfaces, and most significantly in the resulting ability to use modern techniques and means of production and organization.

It is also interesting to note that the percentage of the settler population living on agriculture was declining at this same period, from 221,293 in 1911 to around 100,000 in 1954. Of those, only a tiny minority was actively engaged in land cultivation (26,746) in 1954.⁽¹¹⁾ Equally important was the transformation of the settler community. In 1911 the percentage of the rural settler population living in the families of land proprietors represented 40%, that of tenant farmers and stewards 20%, and that of wage labour (workers and supervisors) another 40%. In 1954 the respective proportions

were dramatically changed to 65%, 10% and 25%. This transformation was dependent on the systematic subjugation of the traditional sector including the dispossession and potential proletarianization of large parts of the Algerian peasantry. The transformation of the European rural population was paralleled by a similar process in the structure of activities among this population as table 2.2 shows.

Consequently, in 1954 a small minority of large proprietors, 6,385 (owning over 50 ha) owned 87% of the total colonial land

Table 2.2 : Evolution and structure of European

active rural population (1948-54)

Category	1948	1954
Proprietors	19,384	17,129
Tenant farmers	2,094	1,162
Stewards	3,111	1,445
Workers & Supervisors	5,349	2,006
Total	29,938	21,742

Source : Barbe, "Les Classes Sociales", OP. Cit., Pt I, P. 15.

relative increase in the number of the small peasants and landless (2,726 700 hectares). At the same time there was a rapid decline in the rural population as a whole. Non-agricultural activities, especially services were attracting the majority of the European population. The number of European agricultural workers stood at 7,020, in 1954 representing 25% of settlers employed in agriculture while the other categories such as tenant farmers and stewards fell by over 50% in the short period of six years (1948 - 1954)⁽¹²⁾

1.2 - Pauperization and Proletarianization

The creation of large capitalist farms and plantations and their orientation to the export market had, in the context of a decline of both settler population living on agriculture and of that group employed in it, profound consequences for the Algerian socio-economic structures. The growth of these capitalist enterprises presuppose the existence not only of a relatively large mass of wage labour, but also of a relative surplus population

In the specific context of colonial rule this outcome was achieved mainly through two measures. First, land expropriation and concentration which led to the breaking of old communal property into a mass of small holdings increasingly unable to meet the subsistence needs of the peasantry⁽¹⁴⁾. It also led to greater differentiation and concentration of property within local communities as the traditional norms of indivisibility, collective cultivation and heritage were replaced by new legal norms transforming land into a commodity which could be privately purchased and owned. The natural corollary of this process was a relative increase in the numbers of the small peasants and landless labourers. Secondly, the generalization of commodity relations, of money and extension of market mechanisms through the systematic use of taxes on property and people, all precipitated significant changes in the socio-economic structures which can be seen from table 2.3.⁽¹⁵⁾

Table 2. 3 : Evolution and structure of the Algerian rural population (1911 - 54)

Year	Tot. Pop.	Pop. living on agricultural.	%	Rural Active Pop.	Land owners all categs.	%
1911	4,252,474	3,423,722	80.4	--	--	--
1948	7,579,531	5,884,286	77.7	2,755,532	571,141	20.7
1954	8,455,000	5,825,000	68.9	2,573,504	503,728	15.6

Source : Compiled from Barbé, OP. Cit, Part I, PP. 21 - 22

Considering the period 1948 - 1954, three important remarks should be made. First, while total population increased by almost one million, the agricultural population declined by nearly 9%. The decline in the agricultural population was directly linked to the acceleration, over the same period of labour migration to urban centres, as well as emigration to France⁽¹⁶⁾. Secondly, the already noted concentration of land ownership was creating greater socio-economic inequalities within the Algerian community itself. Also by this time the major acts of land expropriation and land purchase by the settlers had been completed. Each of these processes was associated with or led to pauperization of particular sections of the peasantry. The rise in the number of the economically active population coupled with the steady decrease of landowners was expressed in the relative increase in the category of landless "peasants". These either joined the ranks of wage labourers or share-croppers (*khammes*), further expanding the unemployed, or embarked on metropolitan migration.

Of particular interest to us is the possibility that we are observing here a process of proletarianization. This could be suggested from the simple numerical expansion of the category of landless labourers whether these were effectively transformed into a wage labour force (permanent or seasonal, in Algeria or in France), or took the form of a relative surplus population. It certainly is the case that due to the failure of capitalist agriculture to absorb this growing labour force (partly as a result of mechanization) a great majority of the active population in the rural

areas was chronically unemployed, thus forming a lumpenproletariat drifting in and out of the urban areas seeking temporary forms of livelihood.

Table 2.4 : Evolution and structure of active agricultural population (1914 - 54)

Year	Rural bourg. 50ha	Medium peasants 10-50ha	Poor & small peasants		Wage Labour
			Fellah/10	Khammes/10	
1914			375,000		210,000
1930		140,000	434,537	206,100	462,000
1950	25,079	167,170	350/430,000	154,692	560,000
1954	20/25,000			60/100,000	570,000

Source: Compiled from Barbé, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 17, 19, 22, 23 and Algerian, *op. cit.*, p.p. 508, 511, 514.

The important phenomenon expressed by the figures in table 2.4, however uncertain and only of an indicative value, was the steady decline in the category of poor and small peasants, especially the khammes grouping while the number of those owning less than 10 hectares seemed to have changed little, their share of landed property, in fact decreased from 23% in 1930 to 18.75% in 1950, shrinking even further in the following years. On the other hand, the share held by the rural bourgeoisie, especially the large landowners (>100 ha), increased from 21% to 23% of all land owned by Algerians in the same period (47). The most important transformation, however, was that signalled by the decline in the number of khammes and the increase of wage labour

over the years. The two were not unrelated, for both the pauperization of small peasants and concentration of land opened new possibilities for the small but powerful group of landowners to introduce modern farming techniques. This Algerian rural "bourgeoisie", was for obvious economic reasons in favour of using wage-labour⁽¹⁸⁾. This double process of decline in the khammes and the extension of wage labour reflected, therefore, the extent to which capitalist relations of production were expanding.

However, the extension of wage-labour indicated by the figures in table 2.4 is misleading. Behind the apparent steady increase in the wage labour force there is stagnation and even decline of permanent employment as the productive forces progressed in the period 1930 - 1954. The number of permanent agricultural workers declined from 180,000 to around 160,000, while seasonal labour expanded to top half a million. Seasonal unemployment was a major feature of colonial capitalist development. Unemployment and under-employment had been throughout the colonial period a distinctive mark of the rural areas. By 1954, according to observers, there was in existence up to one million unemployed in the rural areas, representing approximately 20% of the rural population⁽¹⁹⁾.

The mass of the rural population was living in poverty and there being little to distinguish the conditions experienced by the different social categories, such as agricultural workers, small peasants, khammes, and the unemployed. A hand-to-mouth existence was a general pattern for the majority; dispossessed,

economically exploited, socially and culturally disoriented⁽²⁰⁾. The profound transformation of the rural areas can acquire their real significance when seen in perspective against a similar process taking place in the non-agricultural, urban areas. To these we shall turn now.

1. 3 - Limited and extroverted industrialization

French capitalism could be said to have followed the classical strategies of early imperialist expansion. Algeria was essentially a source of raw material, cheap labour and an outlet for the surplus production of metropolitan industries. Algeria's emergent industrial sector was consequently not only very weak, but heavily dependent on the forms and pace of development in the metropolitan economy, a fact well recognized and documented by the metropolitan authorities, despite attempts to remedy the situation⁽²¹⁾. Industry had no possibility of autonomous development. The two occasions when such autonomous development became a practical possibility were the recession of 1929 and during the Second World War⁽²²⁾. These windows of opportunity were short-lived, however, and little exploited by local capital. It is not surprising therefore that colonial Algeria had no industrial base worthy of the name. The non-agricultural economy was dominated by the services sector and commerce. Even the extractive industry and consumer goods production were very limited.

During the whole of the colonial period the only serious attempt to industrialize was made in the last decade before

independence. In 1958, in the context of escalation of the national liberation war, the French government adopted the "Plan de Constantine". This five-year plan had two main objectives⁽²³⁾ : first, lifting the rural society and economy from their crisis and stagnation through a number of limited reforms such as land distribution to the poor section of the peasantry; the extension of irrigation systems and building of dams; the construction of one thousand rural villages; the activation of agricultural service cooperatives (Societes Agricoles de Prevoyance - S. A. P.) and the extension of health care. A second set of objectives involved the realization of a programme of industrialization based on the idea of "poles of growth" That is the cocentration of investments in selected industries and locations situated in Northern Algeria. The branches were selected on the basis of valorization of local raw materials (iron ore, phosphate, and oil). The plan contained a steel complex in Annaba, an oil refinery in Arzew, an oil pipeline from the fields of Hassi - Messaoud to the port of Bejaia, and a gas pipeline from the field of Hassi R'Mel to the port of Arzew. Other less important projects were also planned in textiles, leather, construction materials, etc.

The underlying logic of the plan was to provide a socio-economic base which would undermine the Front de Liberation Nationale (F. L. N.) in its struggle for independence. In practical terms, however, the plan made little immediate impact and was abandoned⁽²⁴⁾ .

1. 3. 1 - Evolution and structure of industrial enterprises

Information regarding industrial and commercial development in the period before World War Two is both scarce and contradictory. Ageron, for example, claims that in 1918 industrial enterprises numbered 716 and employed some 23.000 workers. In 1939 the number of industrial workers totalled 40.000 only one-third of whom Algerians. The overall development of wage labour was very slow. Thus, in 1924, wage earners, including those working in construction and public works totalled 164,000. In 1954 this figure had reached 264,000, of which 117,800 were employed in construction and public works⁽²⁵⁾. These figures are of limited value given the absence of reliable sources. Nevertheless, they indicate the slow pace in the expansion of wage labour among the Algerian population. they also indicate the limited level of economic development in this period.

The number of enterprises (including commerce, transport, construction and services) developed in an uneven and contingent manner over the years after World War II. In 1947 it was estimated that there were 28,681 enterprises employing a total workforce of 267,916 and in 1956 they were estimated at 37,302 enterprises with a workforce of 431,682⁽²⁶⁾. The labour force was split between their concentration in a small number of large enterprises, and the great majority who worked in very small craft enterprises. This characteristic reflected another important feature, that of capital concentration expressed in the increase in the number of large enterprises employing more than 100. From 1950 to 1955 this

category expanded by 50%, those employing between 21 - 100 increased only by 25% while the smaller enterprises grew at an even slower pace⁽²⁷⁾.

Table 2. 5 : Evolution of enterprises by size (1950 - 55)

Year Size	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
1-5	23,600	24,578	25,779	27,160	29,036	28,608
6-20	6,165	6,343	6,341	6,366	6,007	6,527
21-100	1,843	1,987	2,106	2,068	2,171	2,300
+100	449	557	615	605	626	671

Source: Barbé, Op., Cit., Pt. II, P. 37.

The instability of the industrial base was associated with existence of small enterprises with a very limited capacity for wage employment. At the other end of the spectrum, however, were the large enterprises (671) employing 41% of all non-agricultural wage-labour. The top 50 of these enterprises each with 500 + wage employees had a total wage-labour force of 50,000 or one-seventh of total wage-labour⁽²⁸⁾. This bipolar structure distinguished the various branches of industrial and commercial activity. Simple commodity production, retail commerce and services were the specific activities of the small enterprises. Activities such as the extractive and manufacturing industries, wholesale commerce and services were monopolized by large enterprises; essentially metropolitan companies and their local subsidiaries and to a lesser extent, settlers' private enterprises.

The division of society on ethnic grounds, noticeable in agriculture, was also a principal element in the social structure of urban society. The seemingly large number of enterprises owned by Algerians exaggerated their real economic and social importance. In 1948, of 70,000 such enterprises only 2% were not considered craft workshops. For the European sector the ratio was disproportionately many times higher; of 30,000 enterprises, 24% were not considered craft shops. In 1954, the same structure was sustained and developed further. Thus, of 100,000 Algerian enterprises less than 10% were employing wage labour with a total capacity of 30,000 employees. Of the 65,000 European enterprises, more than 30% employed wage labour with a total capacity of 320,000 employees⁽²⁹⁾.

Another interesting characteristic of colonial industrial development, not unrelated to the structure outlined above was its geographic imbalance. Areas with greater density of settler population had the greatest number of enterprises. Some have argued that this expressed the underlying familial nature of these enterprises⁽³⁰⁾. But it seems to us that there was more to it than that, as large enterprises hardly escaped this rule. The overlap between location of enterprises and settler population was most probably a function of the quest of capital for profitable markets and favourable conditions of operation. Thus areas of concentrated settler population represented two necessary conditions for operation of capital reinforcing the overall discriminatory framework of colonial domination. First, there existed a market for

its material production and services and secondly, it was able to draw upon a qualified and skilled labour force. These two factors could only be satisfied by the European community with high incomes and quasi-monopoly of education and training. As for the unskilled workforce, it was made up of Algerian workers who were attracted to the urban areas where they could find employment.

Table 2. 6 : Distribution of a sample of enterprises by region and activity

Branch Region	Food Proc	Wood	Metall-urgy	Lea. text	Chems	Paper & pr'ting	Constr material	Bldg and Pub. Wks.	Tot.
Center	173	45	137	105	102	43	57	111	773
West	137	28	61	20	24	5	11	2	288
East	61	54	18	4	30	4	39	1	211
Total	371	127	216	129	156	52	107	114	1272

Source : Compiled from Taleb, Op., Cit., P. 514.

As we have mentioned, the disparity between the three geographical regions in relation to the number of industrial enterprises was paralleled by the unequal distribution of population. The Central region of Algiers with the highest number of enterprises had a population of 402,614 Europeans and 2,656,285 Algerians. Oran and its Western region had a population of 385,149 Europeans and 1,767,277 Algerians. The Eastern region of Constantine with distinctively the lowest number of enterprises had

the lowest European population of 183,304, and the greatest Algerian population of 3,220,075⁽³¹⁾.

1. 3. 2 - Wage labour and the industrial proletariat :

The inability of Algerian emergent agrarian capitalism to absorb the growing mass of the labour force coupled with a weak industrial base had important consequences for the social structure and in particular for our problem of working class formation. One significant result was the acceleration of both internal and external migratory movements of the population. The first of these processes had the effect of increasing the mass of wage labour and the unemployed and under-employed in urban areas thus constituting a potential base for the future working class-in-formation. The second represented the creation of a "proletariat in exile." Writing of the former process in 1950 M. Larnaude noted :

"part of the peasant families who also lost their lands refused to search for a subsistence in the countryside and migrated since a quarter of a century to the suburbs and cities; an urban proletariat, which was nonexistent in 1914, was thus constituted. The last war has only aggravated the situation .. The population of Algiers and its suburban municipalities increased by 42% between 1936 and 1948, that of Oran and its suburbs by 33%. This considerable increase resulted, most probably, from the influx of the Muslims."⁽³²⁾

Given the destructive impact of settler colonialism on traditional socio-economic structures, value systems and organizations it was not surprising that these population movements were so massively evident. The modern malaise of masses of disoriented, and deprived people sinking into the deprived conditions of the shanty-towns around major cities and ports was an early experience in Algeria. It is notable that even without marked industrialisation Algeria's rural population fell from 80% to 68% of total population in less than 50 years (1911 - 1954)⁽³³⁾. The result was one million urban unemployed. In the period between 1936 and 1948 alone more than half a million people migrated to the urban areas. The regions exhibiting high rates of out flow were, not unexpectedly, those where agrarian capitalism was strongly established. Thus, from 1948 to 1954 the population of Tiaret dropped by 8.4%, that of Medea by 4.8%, Setif by 3.4%, Constantine by 6.9% and Tlemcen by 7.2%⁽³⁴⁾.

Table 2. 7 : Evolution of urban wage labour (1911 - 54)

Category	Europeans			Algerians		
	1911	1948	1954	1911	1948	1954
Wage lab (includ. unempl.)	135,285	225,590	253,311 ¹	109,546	312,154	463,187 ²
Workers	84,524	91,260	84,951	64,163	212,723	241,649

Source : Compiled from Barbé, Op., Cit., Pt., II, PP. 29, 32, 33, 35.

Notes : 1- the figure included 14,131 unemployed.

2- including 84,000 partially unemployed and 133,110, totally unemployed.

Despite these migratory movements leading to the rapid growth of the urban population, the evolution of wage labour⁽³⁵⁾ was slow. As will be seen in Table 2. 7 settlers comprised a major part of wage labour in the period 1911 to 1954. In the case of the Algerian community access to wage employment was far more restricted during the same period. Access began to expand significantly only after the second war, a period characterized by the relative expansion of industrial activities. When we distinguish manual workers from wage labour generally it will be seen that while the number of European workers declined-in absolute and relative terms-representing only 32% of all European wage-labour in 1954, the number of Algerian workers steadily rose during this period representing more than 60% in 1954. Unemployment, was concentrated among Algerians 23% of the wage-labour force was totally unemployed in 1954. This rate was even higher when the partially unemployed were added. The figures being based only on those who had previously worked do not include the chronically unemployed.

Looking more closely at the structure of the wage-labour during the last decade of colonial rule reveals further characteristics of the Algerian working class-in-formation. The structure of urban wage-labour (table 2. 8) continued to faithfully reflect the low status of the Algerians. The table shows the composition of the working class in terms of ethnicity, skill and qualifications.

Table 2. 8 : Evolution and structure of wage labour by skill (1948/54)

Skill Category	Europeans		Algerians			
	1948	1954	1948	%	1954	%
Senior staff & technicians	45,676	56,289	10,395	18.5	9,725	14.7
Employee s. incl. junior staff	56,846	56,164	29,421	51.7	15,204	21.3
Skilled Workers	38,755	50,629	24,551	39.8	39,443	43.8
Semi skilled workers	32,859	28,102	50,404	60.5	60,811	68.4
unskilled workers	11,714	7,217	128,783	91.7	141,395	95.1

Source : Barbé, Op., Cit., Pt., II, P. 38.

Notes : The category of employees was underestimated in 1954.

It was probably due to different methods used in the two censuses.

The table indicates that European wage-labour was disproportionately concentrated in non-manual higher status occupations, as well as the skilled positions within the category of manual labour. European workers could be seen, therefore to represent a labour aristocracy⁽³⁶⁾. Among Algerian workers the tendency was reversed very few achieved non-manual occupations, and only a tiny minority entered skilled manual occupations. The

emergent Algerian working class exhibits a peculiar structure and composition; reflecting a combination of capitalist exploitation, alienation and colonial domination. Such characteristics, it is argued, would have serious and lasting effects on the development of the labour movement and the future role of the working class in the later period.

Table 2. 9 : Population and employment 1954

Category	Europeans	Algerians	Total
Total population	1,000,000	8,455,000	9,455,000
Active population	354,510	3,157,424	3,511,934
Salaried employees & wage workers	262,260	1,035,265	1,297,525
workers (including unemployed)	106,102	938,690	1,044,792

Source : Compiled from I. L. O., *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, 1966 and tables 4 & 7 of this section.

Conclusion :

If we accept official statistics offered in table 2.9 we would conclude that the working class in the restrictive sense of manual labour, represented 80.5% of all wage labour, and 29.7% of total active population in 1954. However, these figures are deficient in a number of ways. First, the census of 1954 underestimated the active Algerian population⁽³⁷⁾. Secondly, the figures for workers

included the unemployed and under-employed in both agriculture and non-agricultural activities, around 400,000 and 200,000 respectively.

Despite these various deficiencies the discussion above would lead us to the following conclusions and hypotheses which will provide one of the starting points in posing the question, is there an Algerian working class ?

- 1- The colonial period was important in shaping the peculiar structure and experience of the embryonic working class, consisting of agrarian wage labour and the urban workers and the unemployed.
- 2- The size of these groupings, particularly that of urban, industrial workforce was low during the colonial period. Nevertheless, their experience was socially significant.
- 3- Paradoxically, this slow growth was the product of low industrialisation but a high level of mechanization in agriculture.
- 4- The composition of these occupational groupings was distorted along lines of ethnic division and discrimination with the Europeans representing a landowning class and a labour aristocracy, subjectively conscious of its privileges and eager to sustain them.
- 5- The embryonic Algerian working class was subject to high levels of un-and under-employment and urban marginalization.

In this sense the exploited experience of the urban and rural workers was similar. The question arises to what extent did the weight of colonial oppression and ethnic discrimination reinforce traditional structures and values despite the fact that in many cases their objective base was violently disrupted ?

2- The labour movement under colonial domination

The identification of a working class requires that we not only consider the objective factors-as above-but also the question of action and subjectivity. In the consideration of such questions in the context of colonialism it is also important to ask if such a study can be limited to trade unionism and its organization into, or alliance with, political parties ? The answer must be negative in so far as workers' practices and struggles may assume many and diverse forms. Their grievances, claims and actions could be articulated in a variety of ways, from the most spontaneous popular manifestations to established forms of communal associations, clubs and cooperatives. This fact must be borne in mind in the context of what was a particularly oppressive form of colonial domination. That is to say Algerians were, for much of the colonial period, denied any right to formal organization and even spontaneous actions were severely suppressed.

Another important feature in the development of the Algerian labour movement has been its problematic relationship to political parties (communist and nationalist). Throughout the colonial period it could be said that a conflictive cooperation existed between the

developing trade union movement and the political parties. The line of demarcation between the trade union movement, the communist party and the nationalist movement in the later years was, and is still, very difficult to draw⁽³⁸⁾. The crucial historical moments of labour unrest were, for example, more often than not also moments of political agitation and nationalist resistance to colonial rule. These cross-cutting ties were a result of the fact that colonial capitalism was experienced in its dual effects of politico-cultural oppression and socio-economic exploitation and discrimination. Approaches that assumed an a priori essentialist incompatibility between the two movements, or privileged the nationalist political movement at the expense of the labour movement and dismissed this latter as a foreign and imported phenomenon are both simplistic and misleading⁽³⁹⁾.

It is, therefore, important to grasp the full complexity of the context of the labour movement; the nature of the cleavages and alliances, tactical or strategic, between different groupings and political trends. The heterogeneous composition of the embryonic working class, reflecting the ethnic division of society, sustained and developed to its dramatic expression in the national liberation war. It is also important to note that both ethnic communities were internally divided along political, religious and regional lines. This hybrid composition has been a rock against which trade unions and political parties have continually stumbled. Both trade unions and political parties have grown out of, and to some extent, reproduced that division. Thus the communist party was largely European,

while the nationalist parties were Algerians. Neither had the exclusive loyalty of a particular community however. Both rooted their legitimacy, in different ways, in their representation of the interests of the Algerian nation and the unified working class.

Given this complex historical context, the important questions are what were the objectives and forms of organization adopted by the labour movement and what was the nature of the struggles and constraints it faced? In answering, the focus will be on the trade unions. While we are aware that the labour movement was made up of more than the trade unions the near impossibility of documenting other forms of the labour struggle, practices and organization leaves us with no choice. Even in the area of trade unions there are great difficulties, such research has progressed very slowly and much is yet to be done⁽⁴⁰⁾.

In the following discussion of trade unionism we will divide the period into three stages; the early years before the First World War which saw the emergence of the first trade unions; the period between the two wars; and finally, the post-war period, leading to independence. This division is significant in a number of ways. First, the quality of the data varies enormously, becoming reasonably rich only in the final period. Second, the trade union movement itself underwent significant transformation in each period either in terms of organization, structure, composition and politico-ideological orientation, or in its relationship with the metropolitan trade union movement and political parties.

2. 1 - Early trade unionism

The emergence and development of trade unions in Algeria-given its character and status as a settler colony-was a slow and uneven process. Initially, it represented a simple extension of metropolitan organizations, not only in terms of their organizational and structural aspects, but also in their objectives and doctrine. Existing documents suggest 1880 as the year in which the first trade union branches were founded. The first workers to organize were the printing operatives in Constantine. Four years later the whole of this occupation was organized. By 1901, the bulk of the existing occupations were unionized even though their membership was very small and reserved for Europeans workers only⁽⁴¹⁾.

During the war years (1914 - 18) union activities (strikes, agitation, publications) were suspended. Nevertheless, workers continued to engage such activity, especially in the Western regions of Oran, Mostaghanem, Mascara and Bel-Abbes⁽⁴²⁾. The racial character of unions in these years not only limited their size and success, but had a large impact on their future development. In the Oran region, for example, there were only two Algerian union members in 1892. This exclusiveness also encouraged the creation of rival unions, founded on a racial basis, as was the case of the Union of Algerian Indigenous Dockers at the turn of the century. Colonial legislation which prohibited the launching of specifically Algerian organizations and associations was relaxed in the early years of this century. However, Algerians continued to be legally

banned from holding positions of responsibility within the unions⁽⁴³⁾.

In the early years trade unionism was characterized by its uneven and disparate development. It was strongest in the central and the Western region of the country (the Algiers and Oran regions). The Eastern region, by contrast, was the least organized, a disparity that can be explained, as we have already noticed, by the concentration of both industrial enterprises and settler population in these regions. These were areas of intensive and systematic colonization. It is interesting to note that even the nationalist independent union of later years exhibited the same pattern. This fact overruled any simple explanation of this tendency on the basis of an inherent contradiction and antagonism between the union movement and the nationalist movement. While the union movement was strongest in the West the nationalist movement gained its early strength in the East. The Central And Western regions had a larger permanent agricultural wage labour as they were regions of intensive agricultural production and had most of the capitalist plantations of vineyards, fruits and vegetables. The Eastern region was mainly one of cereal agriculture which required seasonal labour and rapidly developed into a capital-intensive activity.

The slow emergence of unionism in these early years was, however, largely related to the absence of any real industrial base, and the limited spread of wage labour agriculture, regionally disparate and dominated by seasonal labour, which was specifically difficult to mobilize.

Union organization was also inhibited by the ethnic divisions as well as the legal prohibition of any popular forms of mobilization and organization among Algerians. This latter was achieved through enforcement of special laws under the name of "Le code de l'Indigenat", lasting from 1881 to the turn of the century⁽⁴⁴⁾.

2. 2 - The Trade Union Movement Between The Two Wars

The First World War represented a turning point in the history of the union movement. A great number of Algerians served in this war⁽⁴⁵⁾ as well as in metropolitan economy. They consequently came into close contact with the metropolitan proletariat and its union organizations. Immigrant workers were generally affiliated to the "Confederation Générale du Travail Unifiée, C. G. T. U." which had a radical and communist orientation. In the aftermath of the war Algerian union membership rose sharply resuming the activities which were suspended in the war time. In the Algiers region union membership doubled while in Oran it tripled⁽⁴⁶⁾.

The national, or the colonial questions as it was called, constituted the main issue of debate in the trade union movement as well as the radical political parties, including the French Communist party (P. C. F.) and its Algerian section. The strength of the unions in the early inter-war period (1919 - 23) was short-lived failing to overcome their main handicap, communal divisions. European workers largely continued to identify

themselves in ethnic terms, as did the Algerians. European dock workers did not hesitate in 1919, to demand higher wages than those paid to Algerians⁽⁴⁷⁾. Nevertheless, such sectional demands did not entirely inhibit the unions from strengthening solidarity across the communal divisions, in the case, for example, of the wave of strikes that swept the Oran region in (1919).

Other example of such solidarity included the formation, in that same year, of "Committees against high living costs", and the refusal of dockers to handle the shipment of expensive consumer goods destined for the metropolitan market⁽⁴⁸⁾. This was also the significance of the help given to women in the Bastos tobacco factories by the secretary of the bakeries union during their bargaining with employers in 1921. Union solidarity was shown in later years also. For example, in 1936 - 37 a wave of strikes by agricultural workers in the Oran region led to position of negotiating assistance from the local school teachers union⁽⁴⁹⁾. Strikes were an important feature of the union action in the inter-war period as Table 2. 10 indicates.

The occasional acts of solidarity did not, however, resolve the deep malaise of communal division and its repercussions for the union movement. The divisions were exploited by the colonial authorities and the employers who had been gravely disturbed by the militancy of unions in the aftermath of the First World War. Workers were commonly used against each other to break strikes and weaken the union movement. In 1919 - 1920, for example, both unemployed Spaniards and Algerians were used to break the

Table 2. 10 : Evolution of strikes (1919 - 1934)

Year	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
Strikes	53	28	07	16	13	15	09	18
Workers	7836	6250	371	1294	3100	114	458	2124
Year	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Strikes	07	20	22	04	03	--	04	04
Workers	897	1817	2210	391	675	--	267	635

Source : Table, A. B. "Some Characteristics of the Algerian Union Movement during the Colonial Period", in *Revolution & Labour*. Special Issue, Nov., 1984, P. 56, (Arabic edition).

strikes of railway workers in the Western region (mostly Europeans). In 1921 a strike in the mines of Beni-Saf was broken after eleven days when European workers were persuaded to defect, leaving behind their Algerian and Moroccan comrades⁽⁵⁰⁾.

The colonial employers and authorities had systematically pursued a policy of divide and rule. This was justified by the aim of keeping unions weak and without credibility. wage differentiation between Algerian and European workers was justified in teleological terms; that is to preserve an essentially discriminatory reality, it was argued that the needs of each community varied greatly⁽⁵¹⁾. The suppression of the union movement was, however, carried out regardless of ethnicity. Political and ideological affinities overshadowed the ethnic divisions. Trade unionists and political leaders whether communists or nationalists, Europeans or

Algerians were under close surveillance and their activities monitored in detail as comprehensive police reports testified⁽⁵²⁾.

The inter-war period witnessed a number of significant events affecting the union movement. Three events were of particular importance : first, the economic crisis of 1929 - 30; secondly, the launching in France of the Popular Front in 1934; and thirdly, the rise and establishment of modern Algerian nationalism. The crisis of 1929 - 30 further weakened the already fragile union movement; after a brief recovery in the aftermath of the first war. Widespread unemployment greatly undermined the spirit of solidarity that seemed to be developing. The rise of the Popular Front brought one new element to the scene; the unification of the two largest labour confederations in France, the C. G. T. U. and the C. G. T. with a membership of mostly Europeans and a reformist ideology. The overriding concerns of the Algerian union movement after this change was to contain the effects of the crisis, to preserve its membership and to play a leading role in the anti-fascist struggle. The radical and revolutionary tendencies of the old C. G. T. U. were compromised and with them interest in the national question and the independence of the colony.

The confederation; both the C. G. T. and the C. F. T. C. (a Christian Union) sought to expand their influence throughout the colonies. The doctrine of "Colonial Socialism"⁽⁵³⁾ developed by some communists in the early twenties found a new impetus in the anti-fascist struggle on the eve of the Second War. The nationalist aspirations of Algerians which earlier roused the sympathy and

recognition of sections of European workers suffered a setback. The hostility was particularly clear in the non-communist unions and political parties both in Algeria and in France. At this time the Communist Party and the C. G. T. had a confused and hesitant attitude resulting in a series of contradictory and ambiguous policies towards the national question and the role of the union movement⁽⁵⁴⁾.

Despite the setbacks this period witnessed not only a growing number of Algerian unionists who also played a more prominent role. Successful strikes were also carried out during this time, those by agricultural workers leading to the creation of their first union in 1936, which achieved a membership of 40,000 Algerian workers only one year later⁽⁵⁵⁾.

The rise of modern Algerian nationalism was the third most important event of this period. It was particularly significant that this movement originated among emigrant Algerian workers and was closely associated with the communist movement in France. Despite continuing controversies about the origins of the nationalist movement, the creation of the "Etoile Nord-Africaine" (E. N. A.) in March 1926 was seen as the first national political formation with a clear and coherent nationalist doctrine in the modern sense of the term. In its programme of 1933 a number of fundamental points were specified : a total and complete national independence, construction of a democratic state, nationalization of major assets and natural resources under state control, and socio-economic reforms such as free education, and agrarian reform⁽⁵⁶⁾. The

nationalist ideology of the E. N. A. becoming later (1936) the "Parti du Peuple Algerian" (P. P. A.) had considerable influence on the attitudes of Algerian workers, organized in the communist-oriented C. G. T. The conflict that developed between the nationalist and communist political parties was certainly responsible for the frustrations leading to nationalist breakaway from the C. G. T. and the formation of the national independent union.

2. 3 - Towards an independent union movement

The communist-oriented C. G. T. was always the strongest union organization in colonial Algeria despite the emergence of other organizations such as C. F. T. C. and "Force Ouvriere" (F. O.) after 1947. Most Algerian workers, whether in France or in Algeria, were affiliated to branches of the C. G. T. In 1945 the C. G. T. claimed membership of 250,000. But union success in the specific context of colonialism was highly unstable. Thus, after the May events of 1945⁽⁵⁷⁾ the C. G. T. suffered a sharp drop in its membership mainly because of the withdrawal of Algerian workers and of the breakaway of the F. O. in 1947 leading to defection of great numbers of European workers. By late 1940, the C. G. T.'s membership was estimated at around 80,000 of which over 60% were Algerians⁽⁵⁸⁾. In June 1954, the metropolitan C. G. T. had finally accepted the principle of an autonomous Algerian labour confederation, leading to the transformation of its local branch into the "Union Générale des syndicats Algériens" (U. G. S. A.). The

membership of the new autonomous union was estimated at 100,000, distributed between the three regions as follows : Algiers, 40,000; Oran, 40,000; and Constantine, 20,000. However, labour historians such as Gallissot, think this was an over-estimation that should be reduced by 25% bringing the figure to around 70,000. At the same time F. O. unions claimed a membership of 125,000. The real figure, however, was around 60,000, most of them Europeans⁽⁵⁹⁾.

The division of the union movement along ethnic lines concealed the important fact of its division on ideological grounds. The U. G. S. A. retained strong links with the metropolitan C. G. T. and the P. C. F. Its members were also members or sympathizers of the Algerian Communist Party (P. C. A.) created in 1936⁽⁶⁰⁾, or the nationalist party (P. P. A.-M. T. L. D.). Other unions, C. F. T. C. and F. O., were under the influence of the reformist and social-democrat ideologies on the Christian and Socialist parties. The most important elements dividing the union movement were the various position on the national question. While U. G. S. A. had always recognized, at least in principle, the right to national independence and considered colonialism to be a fundamental obstacle to the emancipation of the Algerian masses, other unions were openly hostile and resisted such a possibility. But the stand of the U. G. S. A. and the Communists, both in France and Algeria, however radical it may have seemed to non-communist Europeans, remained fundamentally conservative in the eyes of Algerian nationalists.

This can be seen from the status of local unions and their relationship to metropolitan confederations. Both the Algerian C. G. T., and later the U. G. S. A. and Communist Party were until very late in their histories simple sections or branches of the metropolitan organizations. The P. C. A. received its independence formally in 1936, and the unions almost twenty years later (1954). Even then, this autonomy was formal rather than real. The metropolitan unions always resisted attempts to create independent national unions. The classical case in the Maghreb being the rejection of the Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (U. G. T. T.), a nationalist breakaway from the C. G. T. in the mid-forties. The attitudes and reactions of metropolitan union leadership clearly betrayed deep-rooted colonial prejudices. As one of the C. G. T. leaders remarked in relation to Tunisia at the time :

"Accepting the unions' autonomy means prejudging the future political situation, because it means clearly accepting the breakaway of Tunisia from the French Community"⁽⁶¹⁾.

In the case of Algeria autonomy was resisted until 1954 and then it was granted as a tactical move rather than as the result of genuine concern. By that time formal autonomy was too late to forestall the irresistible process towards the split in the U. G. S. A. The formal character of the autonomy granted was betrayed by the Statutes of its creation. In the last article (No. 20) it was stated that:

"U. G. S. A. (C. G. T.) assumes the permanent link between the Confederation Generale du Travail (C. G. T.) and Algerian trade unions. C. G. T., in matters of directives, decisions, programmes of demands and orientation fixed by the supreme bodies of the C. G. T., and their application with adaptation to the Algerian situation and particularities. The Secretary of U. G. S. A. is its representative to C. G. T."⁽⁶²⁾

As this formal autonomy was insufficient to heal the rift in the union and the growing disaffection of Algerian nationalists, the U. G. S. A. took the decisive step in the summer of 1956, proclaiming itself an independent national union, deleting from its statutes all reference to the C. G. T. and claiming direct affiliation to the World Federation of Trade Unions (Federation Mondiale des Syndicats - F. M. S.)⁽⁶³⁾. This was, however, its last act as it was banned five months later, in November 1956. The proclamation of independence also came after the formation of two Algerian nationalist unions in February 1956⁽⁶⁴⁾. Until it was banned, the U. G. S. A. had branches in most occupations and sectors of economic activity, grouping the dock workers union, the miners union, municipal workers union, construction and public workers, railway men's and post office employees. Membership at that time, however, was only 15,000. After its ban, the P. C. A. recommended in November 1956 its members to join the nationalist union (U. G. T. A.)⁽⁶⁵⁾.

After the Second War and until its transformation into U. G. S. A. the C. G. T. maintained a relatively radical and militant stand compared to C. F. T. C. and F. O. and continued to do so until it was banned in 1957. While other unions were favoured by, and cooperated with, colonial authorities, ⁽⁶⁶⁾ the U. G. S. A. was seen as an active ally of the nationalist movement led by the F. L. N. Its programmes and demands stressed the urgency of radical social reforms including wages, agrarian reform, unemployment, and so on. Although the question of colonialism was seen as the main obstacle to real emancipation, this was always addressed in equivocal terms, coming last in the list of union demands. In the last two years of its existence the U. G. S. A. maintained its spirit of militancy despite repressive measures and organized a great number of strikes and other actions. Thus, in December 1954 popular protests against unemployment were organized in many cities and towns. In that same month 1,200 dock workers in Oran refused to unload armaments and were locked out by the authorities. This movement later spread to the port of Algiers.

In 1955 strike actions multiplied, spreading to such areas as gas, electricity and water supplies, the railways, manufacturing industries, mining and services. The dock workers were very frequently involved in strikes and lock-outs. Agricultural workers, especially in the Oran region, were also involved in popular actions and strikes during the summer of 1954. Against this background of labour unrest and nationalist armed struggle, the colonial authorities stepped up repressive measures. Union militants and

leaders were harassed and imprisoned, union offices closed down and their publications suspended. This process culminated in the banning of the U. G. S. A., in November 1956⁽⁶⁷⁾.

2.4 - The special character of the Algerian union movement

Given the socio-economic characteristics of this peculiar colonial context, and the radical transformation to which Algerian society and economy were to be subjected, it is not surprising that the labour movement and in particular the trade unions were rendered a somewhat marginal phenomenon. If we consider the year 1954 in which the liberation war was launched by the F. L. N., trade union membership did not exceed 150,000 (C. G. T. and F. O. combined). This represented a small fraction of the mass of wage-labour estimated at around 650,000. If we add the 400,000 seasonal agricultural workers, and the 1.5 millions in process of proletarianization, as the economically active population stood at more than 2.5 millions, the unionized fraction was, therefore, a tiny minority in a mass of disinterested, pauperized and oppressed people. It is also significant that the majority of the union membership was to be found in the services sector, and a minority in the large industrial enterprises⁽⁶⁸⁾.

This limited success of the unions and the consequent weakness of the working class in process of its formation, were mutually reinforcing elements. A number of conditions represent real and objective constraints on such developments. The first set of conditions were those arising from the specific context of an

oppressive colonial capitalist system. The second, were the nature and characteristics of the unions, as a product of this specific context.

In considering the first set of conditions, we are forced to appreciate the colossal task faced by unions in a situation of high and chronic unemployment and under-employment. The relative surplus population produced and sustained by colonial capitalism was very high throughout this period (50% of the active population). The characteristically weak and extroverted economic base coupled with discriminatory policies had profound consequences for the formation of the working class. First, the mass of unemployed and under-employed Algerians were, by their very status, inaccessible to unionization. Secondly, the large part of the wage-labour force was dispersed among a great number of small enterprises, thus complicating further any attempt to mobilize and organize workers. Thirdly, Europeans, disproportionately, represented the urban wage-labourers. They were, concentrated in sectors of activity with relatively high material and moral security (administration, services, and transport). They were particularly accessible to union mobilization and organization. This particular fact had serious and lasting effects on the orientation of the union movement.

It was also noteworthy that agricultural workers were not organized until 1936, and even then they were the locus of suspicion simply because in their great majority, they were Algerians. It was one of the aspects on which Algerian membership

in the C. G. T. and P. C. A. were very critical of union policy. They even saw in it a policy of deliberate neglect of those workers and clear expression of deep-rooted hostility and apprehension. For the mobilization of agricultural workers not only risks to disrupt the colonial enterprise par excellence, but also had a clear nationalist dimension. A question which the labour movement (unions and political parties) sought to avoid and towards which they adopted inconsistent and equivocal attitudes⁽⁶⁹⁾.

This combination of conditions lent the union movement its specific character. First, it was essentially a European movement whether assessed in its composition or attitudes and policies. This tendency changed little even when Algerian workers joined in great numbers. Secondly, the unions were directly linked to, and strictly controlled from, the metropolis. Their structural and doctrinal dependence explained, in part at least, their failure to overcome the congenital weakness of their operation in Algeria. Thirdly, the colonial context, with its various discriminatory measures and structures, ensured that the unions were dominated by an aristocracy recruited from the most accessible sectors of the economy, and the more privileged sectors of wage-labour, i. e., European workers and some Algerian skilled and professional workers.

The fact that the union movement retained its European character for so long can then be explained by the historical socio-economic structures and politico-legal systems of colonial domination. In historical terms, the labour force represented a

segment of the metropolitan proletariat which both the unions and political parties sought to mobilize and organize in accordance with the political struggles and class conflict in the metropolis. This was especially clear in times of economic recession and political upheavals, in 1930, 1934 and during and after the Second World War. Algerians were, for a long time, excluded from the unions for political reasons, including the policy not to contest which was anchored in the submission of Algerians. This exclusion realized two important aims. It confined Algerian workers in a position of second class subjects. Secondly, it assured colonial capitalism a stable market for cheap labour, thus limiting the strength and challenge of a potentially organized and united working class. This explains the fact that the settler encouraged the promotion of special legislation throughout most of the colonial period. The ethnic division of society had its objective reasons in the logic of colonial domination and the union movement as a product of those same conditions could not but sustain this division and reproduce it.

The dependence of the union movement vis-a-vis the metropolitan labour organizations and political parties was, to a large extent, the corollary of the conditions discussed above. We have already mentioned resistance of metropolitan union leadership to any acknowledgement of the autonomy of local union organizations. In fact, local union leadership reflected and reinforced this attitude. From the metropolitan view the dependence was justified by a number of reasons. First, Algerians, it was argued, still lacked skilled and trained militants to run their own unions.

Second, autonomy would put unions in a very weak position vis-a-vis colonial authorities. They would both lose their legal status and legitimate cover and protection against repression. From the viewpoint of local union leadership autonomy would certainly mean the loss of their active role in policy-making structures at the enterprise and government levels. Second, autonomy was associated with a tendency towards weakening the already fragile unity of the local working class whose divisions along ethnic lines would be enhanced by such a process⁽⁷⁰⁾. There was also a strong sense of the need to preserve the relationship and solidarity of workers both in the colony and in the metropolis. Years of traditional ties and doctrinal influence produced and sustained the illusion that the liberation of colonized peoples could be achieved only through the liberation of the metropolitan proletariat.

The local unions were also elitist in character. This was by no means inherent feature of the union movement as such, but the product of the specific objective conditions we have outlined. The social and occupational origin and background of union leadership reflected the structural conditions of unionization. They were mostly Europeans, but the Algerians shared in the general pattern of recruitment from such occupations as junior and medium level employees of public transport and other services, teachers and foremen⁽⁷¹⁾.

These were the type of people who invariably assumed the leadership positions of different unions. The general compositions

of union membership and, in particular, their leadership, was related to their dependent status vis-a-vis the metropolitan unions. It might also explain the hesitant and equivocal attitude of the union movement towards the national question, being generally rooted in a cultural compatibility with the metropolitan leadership.

However, the point we made about the social origins of the union leadership had a significance that extended beyond the colonial situation. A similar pattern can be found in the post-independence period characterized by the continuing impact of general socio-economic imbalance. It was striking how similar the attitudes of rank and file workers to the union leadership continued to be. M. Launay recorded the following statement made by an agricultural worker at the close of the colonial period, and in some respects it was still relevant :

"They would come once or twice a year, talk well and do nothing for us .. If we had a union card we would be thrown at the gates and starve to death, the union would do nothing. If you break a plough you will be thrown at the gates. You can go to the court, but you lose every time. And we still do not know who is the big boss of the union"⁽⁷²⁾ .

One of the major difficulties faced by the unions in all Dependent Social Formations, whether in the colonial or post-colonial periods is that associated with the high instability of wage-labour. Workers were largely from a recent peasant

background, in many cases, preserving strong ties with their rural communities, thus forming a mass of what was termed "target workers". Consequently, unions experienced great fluctuations in their membership. In the case of colonial Algeria this was true, to a limited extent, about union membership but not the character of wage-labour. Studies of the colonial period have revealed a striking degree of fixity in relation to wage-labour. Limited chances of employment offered by the colonial economy left no choice for workers but to develop attitudes of "target workers" on a large scale as observed elsewhere in Africa⁽⁷³⁾. Bourdieu, for example, made this point very clear in his study of work and workers' attitudes on the eve of political independence.

"In urban society, the sharpest cleavage is that separating workers into two groups, those who are stable and they are extremely so, and those who are unstable (one in three) and they are also extremely so. The chosen instability constitutes a luxury"⁽⁷⁴⁾.

At this stage, we might conclude that the labour movement had little impact on the process of social transformation. This argument has not been a denial of its importance or relevance, but a recognition of the specifically difficult and complex context in which it emerged, developed and carried out its struggles. The colonial barrier, the weight of the colonial bourgeoisie and the colonial state was too much to allow for full and real expressions of class divisions and conflicts. Instead, communal divisions on ethnic, religious and cultural grounds deeply rooted in highly

unequal socio-economic conditions and political oppression and subordination gave rise to other forms of social solidarity. The future development of the union movement itself would bear clear imprints of this transformation, dislocation of social conflicts and antagonisms.

3 - Nationalism and the labour movement

3.1 - The roots of the independent union movement

Attempts to create a labour confederation which was both nationalist and independent from the control and influence of metropolitan unions dated back to 1947. However, the general socio-economic and political conditions as well as the divisions within the nationalist movement delayed its effective realization. The idea was taken up again in 1953 during the second congress of the nationalist party (M. T. L. D.). This time a commission of labour affairs headed by a union militant-Aissat Idir-was established⁽⁷⁵⁾.

Some historians have suggested that union committees at the wilaya level (provincial) as well as committees for the unemployed were created, and a national conference of the unemployed was held in the period 1953 - 54⁽⁷⁶⁾.

These early attempts and their failure reflected the instability of both the labour and nationalist movements. For the former, they clearly signalled the deep-rooted dissatisfaction with, and antagonisms within, the existing union organizations. For the latter,

they reflected its inability to develop viable structures and forms of organization to mobilize specific sections of the Algerian population. This may well be a particular feature of a nationalist movement with strong populist overtones.

The launching of the national liberation war in November 1954 represented a turning point, not only in the history of the nationalist movement with its various political formations, but also the labour movement and its organization, the trade unions. This event has exacerbated the contradictions inside both movements, especially accelerating the process of division inside the union movement. This was mainly due to the fact that the F. L. N. had, for the first time, posed the national question, not in terms of a probable event, but in concrete and practical terms. The unions and the political formations were forced to take practical stands and choose sides, rather than merely express preferences or reflect on a theoretically possible event. The union movement failed to develop a consistent attitude and a coherent programme in relation to the national liberation, dashing the last illusions of the nationalist militants. This confirmed them in their conviction that not even the U. G. S. A., let alone the other unions, the C. F. T. C. and F. O., was fundamentally interested in the question of national independence, continuing to pursue its economic demands only.

3. 2 - The creation of the U. S. T. A.

The Union Syndicale des Travailleurs Algeriens (U. S. T. A.) was the first independent nationalist union. It was launched by

Messali's Movement National Algerien (M. N. A.) on the 20th February 1956⁽⁷⁷⁾. Its creation was viewed favourably by colonial authorities because it reinforced rivalry and bloody opposition that had developed between the F. L. N. and M. N. A. However, U. S. T. A. had very little success in Algeria. Its membership amounted to a few thousands (5,000 by its own claims, this was considered an over-estimation of its strength). Its membership was limited to few employment sectors as the composition of its first secretariat suggested. Of the ten members of this secretariat, six were from urban transport in the Algiers region, three from electricity and gas services, and one was a hospital employee. By contrast, its branch in France was relatively successful, perhaps due to the legacy and influence of Messali's previous political organizations (E. N. A., P. P. A., M. T. L. D.). Its strongholds were in the Eastern and Northern regions of France. In the aftermath of its first congress in France in 1957, it claimed a membership of 75,000. But independent sources suggested a figure of 15,000 members for its metropolitan section⁽⁷⁸⁾. There is little record of its doctrine or programmes of action. However, a strong anti-communist feeling was said to have been its dominant orientation.

Both the creation and role of the U. S. T. A. and M. N. A. are still very problematic. It is known that in 1956, U. S. T. A. played an active role in breaking strikes called by U. G. S. A. Most seriously, Gallissot has pointed to police and other government archives suggesting that this union was at certain moments used by and / or cooperated with colonial and metropolitan authorities⁽⁷⁹⁾.

Whatever may have been the reasons behind its creation, this union had little impact among Algerian workers, especially in Algeria.

3.3 - U. G. T. A. from its creation to its exile

The Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens, (U. G. T. A.), was created just four days after the U. S. T. A. on February 24, 1956. In its structure it reflected the strong influence of the French union models, especially the C. G. T., and U. G. S. A. from which its leaders came. It was presented as an independent nationalist labour confederation of various occupation-based unions. It had a hierarchically centralized structure composed of an executive committee of 21 members, which elected an executive bureau of 12 members, and this in turn chose a secretariat of five members. Horizontally, it was organized in three regional unions (Algiers, Oran and Blida) and two local unions in Algiers itself. In addition to these, U. G. T. A. had a special commission of control with five members. All the decisions were to be taken by the congress held every two years. The first occupational unions to join the U. G. T. A. were the railways union, post office employees, dock workers, agricultural workers, and later the teachers union. According to union claims its membership rose very rapidly achieving 110,000 one year after its creation, distributed among 72 sections (the basic union structure). Its implantation in the Eastern region, however, was very weak, if not absent due mainly to the intensification of the war in this part of the country. In February 1957 the U. G. T. A. extended its activities to Algerian emigrant workers through the

creation of the "Amicale Générale des Travailleurs Algériens" (A. G. T. A.). This was conceived as an association of emigrants and a mouth-piece of the union and the F. L. N. Algerian workers were encouraged to join French unions, especially C. G. T., while the A. G. T. A. played a more prominent role in civic and political matters, representing emigrants interests at the highest levels and mobilizing support for the national question⁽⁸⁰⁾.

In terms of objectives, U. G. T. A. defined its aims in a classical trade unionist manner. These were made explicit in the declaration of its first national secretariat⁽⁸¹⁾:

- to give workers' struggles a new and revolutionary orientation, congruent with their profound aspirations.
- to help workers acquire a class consciousness enabling them to fight all exploiters without distinction.
- to eradicate all forms of discrimination in the defence of the working class.
- to establish real and effective democracy within the unions.
- to realize the unity of the Algerian working class by joining one International Trade Union Confederation.

The U. G. T. A. was conceived as universal, that is, open to all workers without distinction of race, religion or political convictions. But the repeated calls to European workers suggests that these were not attracted to join despite the recommendation made by the P. C. A. to its members and sympathizers after the

banning of the U. G. S. A. The U. G. T. A.'s leadership stressed that their strategic aim was :

"the construction of a democratic Algeria against the imperialists and feudalists .. Only the U. G. T. A. can represent the class consciousness of all the Algerian proletariat"⁽⁸²⁾ .

The attempt to cross ethnic lines was also expressed in the call made in an open letter to European workers :

"We are democrats. We would not accept to live under a feudal, monarchial or theocratic regime"⁽⁸³⁾ .

In its first and only year of legal existence U. G. T. A. was actively involved in a number of economic and political strikes. Its members and leaders were subjected to all sorts of harassment and repression⁽⁸⁴⁾ . One of its first shows of strength was its participation in the election of enterprises' committees of the 30th April, 1956. U. G. T. A. delegates took 72% (12 of 18) of the seats contested. But the Governor General declared these results unacceptable and offered the seats to other unions, mainly the F. O. Examples of repression which U. G. T. A. militants had to endure are too many to enumerate and we have given just two of them here. In May 1956, U. G. T. A. offices were stormed by police who seized documents and arrested 150 members including all its leaders. In June 1956, union offices were again searched after a bomb explosion, documents were seized and 700 members arrested. It was only too significant that U. G. T. A. in the first

months of 1957 had already had its seventh National Secretariat⁽⁸⁵⁾.

The wave of strikes, whether economic or political, started in 1956 by a political general strike successfully followed in both Algeria and France. This led to new arrests in the union ranks and in reaction to the repression a new strike was called in August 1956. In November 1956 a general strike was called, this time in collaboration with the Moroccan U. M. T. and the Tunisian U. G. T. T., in commemoration of the second anniversary of the liberation war. In January 1957 a strike by railway workers developed into a strike of dock workers, and 74 union officers were arrested. The longest and most successful strike was the general strike of 26th January, 1957. This was called to show support for the F. L. N., as the United Nations General Assembly was debating the Algerian question for the first time. The strike was observed by all Algerians and lasted more than a week. The repression following this event was even greater than before with 183 union officers imprisoned while a number were either killed or disappeared. By mid-1957 U. G. T. A. could no longer withstand the systematic repression, and went underground with its leadership posted to Tunisia where the F. L. N. had its headquarters⁽⁸⁶⁾. This event represented a major turning point in the development of U. G. T. A. Its activities in Algeria dropped dramatically, and its political involvement in the first year, coupled with the growing need to coordinate its clandestine activity, led to its subordination to the F. L. N.

As a result most of its efforts became concentrated outside the country. The unions new role involved two specific missions⁽⁸⁷⁾. First, there was a diplomatic task aimed at gaining the recognition of the International Congress of Free Trade Unionism. This also involved intensive activity to gather support for the F. L. N. Second, the U. G. T. A. became more concerned with training and educating trade union officers and planning for the future role it would play when political independence was eventually achieved. In this period also the U. G. T. A. intensified its activities in France through A. G. T. A. until the latter was banned by French metropolitan authorities in August, 1958 as a result of its political activity.

3. 4 - Nationalism and trade unionism : U. G. T. A. and F. L. N.

An interesting question that historians of the Algerian labour movement have not explicitly formulated was why the final split of the U. G. S. A. and the creation of an independent national union only occurred one and a half year after the liberation war had been launched ? We believe the answer to this question is to be found in both the weakness and divisions within the nationalist movement, on the one hand, and the relatively strong influence of U. G. S. A. among Algerian workers, on the other. The first point can be seen from the reaction of all Algerian political formations : the M. T. L. D., the P. C. A., the Association of Ulema and the M. N. A. These were without exception, suspicious, if not openly hostile to the armed struggle and its leaders. With respect to the second point, the

existing union organization (U. G. S. A.) despite its internal divisions, seemed at least temporarily, more comforting in the context of the confusion affecting the political scene.

The lapse of time between the outbreak of war in November 1954 and the creation of the U. G. T. A. in 1956, had a double function. It confirmed the F. L. N. as an authentic nationalist and popular force leading a liberation war, and not a momentary uprising. Second, it also confirmed the equivocal and hesitant of the U. G. S. A. towards the question of national independence, including the impossibility of taking an independent stand from the metropolitan confederation. These two significant events certainly convinced Algerian militants in U. G. S. A. of the necessity to create their own independent union organization.

We have to raise this question because it is also associated with an important claim : that the U. G. T. A. was a creation of the F. L. N. ⁽⁸⁸⁾. This could be seen to have within it an explanation of the delay in the split of U. G. S. A. and the creation of U. G. T. A. However, there is no historical evidence to support such a claim. Quite the contrary. Documents from the period, whether issued by F. L. N. or U. G. T. A., suggest that no links of direct organizational subordination existed. Their relationship prior to 1958 appears to have been through individual militants who were affiliated to both organizations. The institutionalization of closer links came as a result of a number of elements, not least the increasing repression to which both were subjected. The most important element was certainly their specifically nationalist

ideology. Their nationalism in distinction to that propagated by the P. C. A. and practised by the U. G. S. A., "the nation in the making", was firmly nostalgic. For them, the nation had already been in existence with all its spiritual, cultural and socio-political elements. What it needed was a resurrection, reaffirmation of all that was suppressed, distorted and violated.

It was, however, of utmost importance to note the existence of some ideological and political differences between F. L. N. and U. G. T. A. The former never considered the working class an important social force in the revolutionary liberation and transformation of Algerian society. Rather, it saw the working class as a potentially conservative force. Such an attitude may be explained by the social origins of the F. L. N. leadership (*petite bourgeoisie*) and its claimed base in the peasantry. In its first elaborate ideologico-political programme, the Soummam declaration of 1956, the F. L. N. leadership exalted the peasantry and was, to some extent, critical of the workers. Nevertheless, it recognized their distinctive role and weight in strengthening the liberation movement :

"The working class can and must bring a more dynamic contribution, giving impetus to the rapid evolution of the revolution, its power and final success"⁽⁸⁹⁾.

As Gallissot has rightly argued, the complexity and, indeed, confusion characterizing the relationship between the F. L. N. and the union movement was the product of the specific conditions of

the liberation struggle. These necessitated close links and coordination of actions leading to the subordination of socio-economic concerns and objectives of the union to the political aims of the F. L. N. and its strategy of national liberation. This subordination was reflected, in the period after 1958, by the organic domination of F. L. N. apparatuses over the U. G. T. A. It is also important to note that this institutional and ideological hegemony had a specific class content. The F. L. N., despite its heterogeneous social composition was in its early phase dominated by a radical grouping of the petite-bourgeoisie. Later on, the predominance of this fraction was weakened, through a process of the accommodation of other political tendencies representing different groups of the rural and urban bourgeoisie⁽⁹⁰⁾. The hegemony of the F. L. N. over the U. G. T. A. was not, therefore, a simple contingency plan dictated by conjunctural conditions, but reflected a latent process of class hegemony in the making. The working class and its independent organization would certainly represent the main threat to the alliance that emerged between the bourgeoisie and the petite-bourgeoisie, and its subordination and control represented one of the main tasks of this alliance.

Colonial suppression and exploitation was a general phenomenon, though different classes or groupings of classes did not experience it in the same way and were affected in varying degrees. In effect, however, the principal contradiction, that between the colonial order and the indigenous society, to some extent overlaid, its internal divisions and antagonisms. The aim of

national independence was the overriding goal on which all social forces could agree, but nothing beyond that. Algerian workers and their unions were no exception as this statement clearly suggested :

"We ought to be clearly understood, in the present stage, the principal enemies of the Algerian people, and the workers in particular, is French colonialism. That is why each worker must understand that the U. G. T. A. is closer to any Algerian industrialist imprisoned for his patriotism than to Mr. Zittel, the former C. G. T. Secretary of Algiers Municipal Workers, who defends the slavish policy applied by the former unionist lacoste"⁽⁹¹⁾.

Even the "revolutionary" character claimed by the union movement was not foreign to the F. L. N.'s populist ideology. Indeed, here we could find another convergence. The revolution was couched in general terms and associated with political independence. However, U. G. T. A. saw this latter as a necessary, but sufficient condition for the emancipation of the popular masses. The socio-political project of a future society was something which the F. L. N. ideology did not, most probably intentionally, specify. For the union movement there was a socio-political project, however vague and lacking a clear social content. This was specified in general terms as nationalization of foreign assets, state property of all material wealth, and construction of a planned and independent economy on the basis of industrialization.

"It is not a secret for anyone : tomorrow's Algeria must be, will be-because this is the will of its people- a socialist Algeria .. What we want is to be totally free, and there is no total freedom without economic and social liberation. This is the essential : disappearance of all exploitation .. We are not fighting to exchange masters, but in order not to have any, it means to become masters of ourselves. The condition of this freedom is socialism. It implies the distribution of wealth, suppression of all forms of monopoly and all the privileges, a planned economy"⁽⁹²⁾ .

Another key element in this socio-political project was agrarian reform. Here as elsewhere, however, the lack of a specific social content and definite plans for the future forms of socio-economic organization was clear.

"With respect to the agrarian reform, it must be complete .. : limitation of property, distribution of land to those who work it, collective cultivation"⁽⁹³⁾ .

It was, therefore, not totally justifiable to claim, as some scholars did, that the U. G. T. A. saw political independence as its strategic and final aim and had no perspective beyond that point, no plans for the future, however vague and general⁽⁹⁴⁾ . It was a more serious charge to dismiss the revolutionary project of the U. G. T. A. as an independent nationalist union movement in the way Gallissot did :

"There is no need for a revolutionary programme for the aftermath of political liberation, since the suppression of the colonial status is sufficient. Does not this revolutionary national trade unionism hide, behind the term of national revolution, a reformism of simple social promotion⁽⁹⁵⁾ .

It was undoubtedly true that the union movement was dominated by a particular stratum of the emergent working class; mainly, non-manual employees and manual skilled workers. But this was a product of the specific historical conditions in which the labour movement developed previously and within which U. G. T. A. was created. The liberation war, the violent suppression during the years of its existence and the exile of its leadership had all inflicted damaging consequences on the union movement which must not underestimated. The U. G. T. A. problem, in our view, did not lie in the absence of a revolutionary programme for the future, but rather in the absence of an objective base.

Since 1957 when it went underground and its leadership was exiled, the possibilities of a serious mobilization of workers was greatly compromised. Even before that the context of the war had imposed on the union a specific orientation for its actions, mainly political strikes and anti-colonial propaganda at the expense of class-oriented actions of mobilization and education of workers. The contrasting example presented by emigrant workers in the metropolis was significant in this sense. Only this group had, to some extent, the chance and, indeed, the privilege of developing its

class consciousness and ideology in the context of socializing action of the metropolitan labour movement and the intensive action of the A. G. T. A. But this group was as much in exile as were the U. G. T. A. and its leadership. The role played by emigrant workers in the formulation of U. G. T. A. ideology and programmes is difficult to overestimate, but more important is the fact that this group represented inside the U. G. T. A., the potential core, as against the non-manual service employees dominating the union in Algeria. It is not our intention to claim that U. G. T. A. had an unproblematic and revolutionary class ideology or programme, but to draw attention to the specific nature of the movement and the conditions within which it was developing, and consequently the potentially conflicting orientations resulting from its status and role. The U. G. T. A. had and still has, both class and national aims objectives.

Foot Notes & references

- (1) Land owned by the Bay (Turkish name for governors ruling provinces under the Ottoman Empire).
- (2) This included communal land, habous and tribal property all of which were not considered as private property since they were not registered as such under the French legal system.
- (3) Communal lands were common property for all members of a tribe. Everyone had a right to cultivate it, but could not claim its ownership. It was inalienable; i. e. could not be sold or exchanged.
- (4) See, K. Farsoun, "State Capitalism in Algeria". Middle East Research Information Project Reports (MERIP), Vol., 35, 1975, P. 3.
See also Bennoune, M. "Origins of the Algerian Proletariat". In *Dialectical Anthropology*. Vol. 1, No. 3, 1976, PP. 201 - 224.
- (5) RAFFINOT, M. & JAQUEMOT, P., *Le Capitalisme d'État en Algérie*; Paris, Editions Maspero, 1977.
- (6) A. System in which landlords lease their property to peasants in order to cultivate it taking one - fifth of the crop as a remuneration for their efforts.
- (7) The population pressure on land in pre-colonial Algeria was the result of both the steady growth of population and the development of forms of unequal access to land. See J. C. Martens, *Le Model Algérien de Développement*; SNED, Alger, 1973, PP. 137 - 39.
- (8) The traditional sector and local communities provided means of subsistence and labour-power while the modern sector realized the valorization of capital. They were also articulated through the subtle mechanisms of market and commodity relations ensuring the transfer of both surplus labour and surplus value.
- (9) RAFFINOT & JAQUEMOT, Op., Cit., P. 29.
- (10) Ibid, P. 29.
- (11) Barbé, T., "Les Classes Sociales en Algérie"; *Économie et Politique*, Part 1, Sept., Oct., 1959, PP. 9 - 13.

- (12) Barbé, Op., Cit., P. 16.
- (13) Marx notes that the relative surplus population is directly linked to changes in the process of capital accumulation and in its composition. These changes are "always connected with violent fluctuations and the temporary production of a surplus population, whether this takes the more striking form of extrusion of workers already employed, or the less evident, but not less real, form of a greater difficulty in absorbing the additional working population through its customary outlets". Capital, Vol., 1, Penguin Books & N. L. R. (eds.), 1976, PP. 782 - 3.
- (14) This increased the number of peasants searching for additional income, hence the growing number of potential wage-labourers on the labour market.
- (15) Barbé points out that at least 90,000 units must be added to the figure of active population in 1954. The 1954 census has used very restrictive criteria in defining this category, a fact acknowledged by colonial authorities and not without significance in view of the political context of that period in which the liberation war was launched.
- (16) Though the emigration to France started before 1914, this movement assumed unprecedented proportions after the Second World War : 35,000 departures in 1946; 80,000 in 1948; 142,000 in 1951, and 165,000 in the first nine months of 1954. The Algerian community in France totalled 300,000 in 1954. The rural areas were the main reservoir for this movement. In some regions 40 - 50% of the male population was working in France. 90% of emigrants were wage labourers, and 80% of them came directly from the rural areas. 70% of all emigrant workers were unskilled manual labourers, 22% semi-skilled and generally employed in Construction and Public Works, and metallurgical and mechanical industries. Only 5% of them attained the category of skilled workers, 0.1% that of supervisors or foremen and 0.1% employed in office work. See,

Charles-Robert Ageron : Histoire de l'Algérie Contemporaine, Vol., II, P. U. F., Paris, 1979, PP. 529 - 30.

(17) AGERON, C. R. Op., Cit., PP. 509, 514.

(18) The Algerian landed bourgeoisie constituted a small fraction of 4% of all Algerian landowners and had a share of one-third of all agricultural production of the Algerian community including 31.5% of cereals, 22.*% dry vegetables, 30% vineyard products and 27.8% of industrial crops. See Barbé, Op., Cit., P. 19.

(19) Seasonal labour is a form barely distinguishable from total unemployment. Labourers work on average 90 days a year for an annual income of 20,000 to 25, 000 old Francs in 1954 which is under subsistence level as colonial administrators themselves acknowledged. See, AGERON, C. R., Op., Cit., PP. 511 - 512.

(20) AGERON, C. R., Op., Cit., PP 215 - 21 & 510 - 517.

(21) The architects of the Plan de Constantine - a five year plan (1959 - 63) - destined to industrialize the colony - acknowledged that : "Algerian industry is composed of industrial enclaves technically and geographically isolated from each other, multiplication or acceleration effects which follow from industrial development are, in the actual situation, quasi-absent .. The greatest part of commercial networks find their point of departure in import or end in export, in many cases the interests of importers or exporters constitute obstacles to industrial development".

Rapport Général du Plan de Constantine, P. 483, cited in T. Benhouria; L'Economie Algérienne Paris, Maspero, 1980, P. 224.

See also AGERON, Op., Cit., PP. 500 - 504. He partly rejects the responsibilities attributed to metropolitan capital and authorities putting the blame on the absence of an entrepreneurial class as well as the geographical and socio-political constraints.

(22) In these two occasions the influence of metropolitan capital declined providing an opportunity for local investment to develop in the

- absence of metropolitan companies. However, the conversion of local capital from agriculture and commerce into industry failed for a number of reasons. See Ageron. Op., Cit.
- (23) RAFFINOT & JAQUEMOT, Op., Cit., P. 35.
- (24) The plan failed for two main reasons. First, errors of judgement inherent in the logic of the plan counting on greater involvement of metropolitan private capital and a local class of entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. Both failed to react favourably - the first because of the unprofitability of the adventure and the risks it involved; the second, mainly because of its weakness and to some extent uncertainty of outcome. The second reason was the intensification of the war. See RAFFINOT & JAQUEMOT, Op., Cit., PP. 37 - 38.
- (25) AGERON, Op., Cit., PP. 500 - 502. Such figures did not include those given by Barbé. In fact, different sources provide contradictory figures, hence their limited value.
- (26) Barbé, Op., Cit., Part II, P. 36.
- (27) Ibid, P. 37.
- (28) Ibid, P. 26.
- (29) Barbé, Op., Cit., PP. 23 - 25. Algerian enterprises contributed 8% to GDP and European 90%, three-quarters of this share was provided by the largest 1,000 enterprises.
- (30) See Taleb, A., "Essai de recension des entreprises dans l'Algérie coloniale"; in Enterprises et Entrepreneurs en Afrique aux XIX et XX Siecles, Tome 1. Eds. L'Harmathan, 1983, P. 512. The author points to the reliance of colonial industries on the European population as their main market, but does not analyse this relationship in any depth.
- (31) Populaton figures taken from the census of 1954 provided by Barbé, Op., Cit.
- (32) M. Larnaude, "Algérie", P. 102; cited in Barbé, Pt., 1 P. 21 (emphasis added).

- (33) Barbé, Op., Cit., Pt. 1, P. 9 See also Table 2.3 above.
- (34) Taking 1948 as index (100), Ageron notes that Algerian urban population increased from 66% to 131 from 1936 to 1954 while the rural population increased in the same period from 87% to 115.
Ageron, Op., Cit., PP. 473 - 74.
- (35) Throughout, we have made a distinction between wage labour comprising all those who sold their labour power for wage returns and workers who, although part of this category, were distinct by their position in the hierarchical system of authority and their direct involvement in the production process.
- (36) The average annual earnings of skilled European workers were between 300,000 and 600,000 F. Algerians of the same category earned between 300,000 and 400,000 F; Semi-skilled and unskilled Europeans, 250,000 F. For the Algerians, the unskilled earned 80,000 F. and between 180,000 and 250,000 for the semi-skilled. Three-fifths of Algerians workers were unskilled and an additional 133,000 were permanently unemployed, thus living under subsistence levels.
See Barbé, Op., Cit., Pt. II, PP. 44 - 45.
- (37) One of the ways is the exclusion of all women on the ground that they were not seeking employment.
- (38) This was the case until the liberalization of political life in Algeria following the riots of October 5, 1988.
- (39) These approaches were also ideologically motivated in the sense that they expressed the viewpoint of the national bourgeoisie and petite-bourgeoisie anxious to obliterate the internal division within the Algerian community. See - F. Soufi, "Sources et Problématiques de l'Histoire du Mouvement Ouvrier en Algérie". CRIDSH, Université d'Oran, Histoire de l'Algérie : études, sources et documents, No., 9, 1983. P. 2.
See also - A. Koulakssis & G. Meynier, "Sur le Mouvement Ouvrier et les Communistes d'Algérie au lendemain de la première Guerre

- Mondiale"; in Le Mouvement Social, No. 130, Jan - March 1985, P. 3.
- (40) A mass of official government documents, party and union records, reports and publications are still unused and many are inaccessible to researchers, scattered as they are in different places in Algeria and in France. A great mass was destroyed during the war and the panic leading to independence.
See F. Soufi, Op., Cit.
- (41) Weiss, F.; Doctrine et Action Syndicale en Algérie. Paris, Cujas, 1970, P. 17.
- (42) Koulakssis & Meynier, Op., Cit., PP. 2 - 3.
- (43) F. Soufi, Op., Cit., PP. 20 - 24.
- (44) The "Code de l'indigenat" was promulgated since 1881 for a period of seven years, renewed in 1888, and was suspended in principal in 1896. Its objective was total control over the Algerian society in the wake of the end of military rule and the introduction of civilian rule. In its terms, 33 specific items were considered punishable offences, ranging from verbal abuse of any form of colonial authority to unlicensed travel outside the municipality familial and public gatherings without permission - all of which were punishable by imprisonment and fines. See C. R. Ageron, Op., cit., PP. 24, 25, 49.
- (45) There are no exact figures but the number of Algerians who served in the war was estimated between 120,000 and 150,000. See Ageron. Op., Cit.
- (46) See Koulakssis & Meynier, Op., Cit., P. 4., Figures for union membership and composition in ethnic terms or occupations were not available for those early years. However, unions were still essentially European-based.
- (47) See Soufi, F., op., Cit., P. 5.
- (48) Koulakssis & Meynier, Op., Cit., P. 5.
- (49) Soufi, P. 23. In this case a European teacher was dismissed by the authorities for his involvment with workers. This reflected the

influence the landed colonial bourgeoisie had over colonial authorities and their determination to break any form of solidarity.

(50) Koulakssis & Meynier, Op., Cit., P. 27.

(51) Soufi, Op., Cit., P. 15.

(52) Ibid, PP. 16 - 18, Examples of widespread and systematic suppression were numerous. We mention two which reflected with their anecdotic character the type of atmosphere in which Unions operated. In 1919, a shopkeeper was imprisoned for shouting "Vive le Bolshevisme", and a union militant for raising the red flag.

(53) The aim was to spread socialist ideas in the colonies and prepare them for the eventual socialist revolution in the capitalist centre.

(54) Ageron, Op., Cit., PP. 379 - 389. The author gives examples of ambiguities of the position of communists torn between support for a nationalist cause and the spirit of internationalism on a proletarian basis.

(55) Weiss, F., Op., Cit., P. 20.

Union membership and its distribution was not available in all documents consulted. Only fragmented information existed.

(56) For a detailed account of the rise of Algerian nationalism and its different political expressions and organization and its relation to the communist movement, see Ageron, Op., Cit.

(57) On the 8th May, popular demonstrations took to the streets of many Algerian cities and towns especially in the Eastern region (Setif, Guelma, Skikda, Kharrata ..). These demonstrations were instigated by the nationalist party P.P.A.-M. T. L. D., claiming independence for Algeria on the eve of the Allied victory in the Second War. Colonial authorities brutally suppressed these demonstrations leaving thousands dead and injured, among them a number of Algerian Union militants. The C. G. T. and the communist party blamed the nationalists and denounced them as 'agitators'.

(58) See R. Gallissot, "Syndicalisme et Nationalisme : La fondation de l'Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens, ou du Syndicalisme C.

- G. T. ou Syndicalisme Algérien (1954 - 1956 - 1958)"; in Mouvement Social, Vol., 66, Jan.,-March 1969, P. 9 & footnote 8.
- (59) Ibid, P. 9.
- (60) This followed a decision by the International Communist at its 7th Congress held in Moscow in 1936. It was resisted by trade unionists in the leadership of the P. C. F. and seen later by Algerian communists as essentially negative because the party was denied any real base as unions were still tied to the metropolitan C. G. T. and consequently to the P. C. F. See Weiss, Op., Cit., P. 22, and Ouzegane, A., Le Mieux Combat, Julliard, Paris, 1963.
- (61) A statement by L. Jouhaud, leader of the C. G. T. cited by F. Hached, founder of U. G. T. T., cited by Weiss, Op., Cit., P. 21.
- (62) Archives of C. G. T., Dossier : Organizations Algériennes. C. G. T. Française, cited by Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 11.
- (63) See Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 24.
- (64) The two unions were : Union des Syndicats de Travailleurs Algériens (U. S. T. A.) and Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (U. G. T. A.). Both will be discussed in the next chapter.
- (65) Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 25, footnote 75.
- (66) Weiss, Op., Cit., PP. 20 - 21.
- (67) For a detailed discussion of the position of authorities toward unions, See Gallissot. R., Op., Cit., PP. 16 - 17 See also F. Weiss, Op., Cit.
- (68) Gallissot, R. Op., Cit., P. 18.
- (69) Ouzegane, A., Le Meilleur Combat. Op., Cit., PP. 90 - 91.
- (70) See Weiss, Op., Cit., P. 22 and Gallissot, P. 13.
- (71) Gallissot, R., P. 14.
- (72) M. Launay, Les Paysants Algériens Eds. Seuil, 1936, P. 140.
- (73) See R. Cohen and R. Sandbrook (eds.); The Development of an African working class : studies in class formation and action; London, Longman, 1975.
- (74) Bourdieu, P. et al. Travail et Travailleurs en Algérie. Paris et La Haye, Mouton, 1963. Cited in Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 34.

- (75) See Weiss, Op., Cit., P. 30.
- (76) Ageron, Op., Cit., PP. 592 - 93.
- (77) Messali Hadj, a major political figure in the history of the nationalist movement, leader of E. N. A., P. P. A. - M. T. L. D., and when the party split in 1953, over the question of Messali's leadership, into loyalists and oppositoin to the F. L. N. as the liberation war was launched, and armed confrontation opposed militants of both parties during the war.
- (78) See Weiss, Op. cit., P. 29, footnote No. 6 and Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 20.
- (79) Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 20, footnote 53.
- (80) Weiss, F. Op., Cit., PP. 30 - 32.
- (81) The declaration of the National Secretariat appeared in l'Ouvrier Algérien No. 1, of 6.4. 1956, reproduced in Weiss, Op., Cit., P. 321.
- (82) Aissat Idir in "Conscience Maghrébine", Cited by Weiss, P. 34.
- (83) U. G. T. A., "Appel aux travailleurs Algériens d'origine Européenne"; Jan 1957. See Weiss, Op., Cit., P. 322.
- (84) Weiss, F. Op., Cit., P. 33.
- (85) See Weiss, Op., Cit., PP. 33 - 34. Successive members of the National Secretariat were either jailed or went into exile in Tunisia and Morocco. Aissat Idir the founder and first secretary of the U. G. T. A. died in prison in 1958 after being tortured for months.
- (86) Weiss, F. Op., Cit., P. 36.
- (87) Weiss, Op., Cit., P. 37.
- (88) See Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 38, where he points to some historical evidence on the question of U. G. T. A. 's independence relying on the testimony of some early militants.
- (89) F. L. N., Plate - forme de la Soummam, cited by Gallissot, Op., Cit., P. 39.
- (90) This change in the balance of power was the result of other political formations joining the F. L. N. in 1955 - 56, though as individuals. The composition of the Conseil National de la Revolution

Algérienne, the supreme instance in F. L. N. apparatus reflected this : 17 of the members were from the early leaders, a radical splinter group of the M. T. L. D. five were from the "Centralist" tendency of the M. T. L. D., two from the liberal "assimilationists", and two from the Association of the Ulema. Some of the "Centralists", the liberalists and the Ulema were all representative of different fractions of the bourgeoisie (large landowners, traders, entrepreneurs and liberal professions). See Gallissot, Op., Cit.

(91) *L'Ouvrier Algérien*, No. 1, 6th April 1956. Cited in Gallissot, P. 40, original emphases.

See also M. Mashino, "Entretien avec un syndicalist Algérien", in *Les Temps Modernes*, Oct. - Nov. 1960, P. 527.

(92) See M. Mashino, Op., Cit., P. 525, original emphasis.

(93) Ibid, P. 525.

(94) See Gallissot, P. 41. Basing his argument on a selective reading of U. G. T. A. documents, he concluded his analysis by denying the union any authentic representation of working class interests and considered it the creation of a frustrated stratum of Algerian workers and employees who were denied chances for social promotion within the context of colonial order.

(95) Ibid, P. 42.