

T
896

THE COLONIAL POLICY OF THE POPULAR
FRONT IN FRENCH NORTH
AFRICA & THE LEVANT

By

Hagop Khatcher Hagopian

Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in the Department of
History at the American
University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

June, 1967

THE COLONIAL POLICY OF THE POPULAR
FRONT IN FRENCH NORTH
AFRICA & THE LEVANT

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	
INTRODUCTION	1
The Coming of the Popular Front and Its Program	
CHAPTER	
I. THE BLUM-VIOLETTE BILL: PROMISE AND DISILLUSIONMENT	16
II. THE POPULAR FRONT AND THE NEO-DESTOUR	47
III. THE POPULAR FRONT AND THE COMITE D'ACTION MAROCAINE	74
IV. THE FAILURE TO RATIFY THE FRANCO- SYRIAN AND THE FRANCO-LEBANESE TREATIES OF 1936	103
CONCLUSION	131
BIBLIOGRAPHY	133

ABSTRACT

When, in the spring of 1936, the Popular Front won the elections in France, there was a wave of high hopes and expectations as to the modification of the colonial reality in the whole French Empire, and particularly in the mandated territories of Syria and Lebanon, the protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia, and Algeria which was part of Metropolitan France. However, with the passage of time, this optimism gave way to pessimism, and by 1938 a feeling of frustration was evident among all the indigenous peoples of the colonies. The purpose of this paper is to elucidate the causes which led to the failure of the Popular Front government to treat the colonial question efficiently and in conformity with the changing realities of the time. The discussion will attempt to show the gap which existed between what the indigenous peoples wanted and what the French Left was ready to provide. Finally, an attempt will be made to answer the question as to why nothing significant was realized when so much was expected in 1936.

INTRODUCTION

The political structure of the Third Republic was based on a multiparty rule system. The orientation of Frenchmen as to social, economic and political issues was so diverse that only a multitude of political associations could really represent all the shades of thought. At no time from 1871 on did a single party hold an absolute majority in the Parliament, so as to be able to form the government. Consequently, all the cabinets of the Third Republic were coalitions based upon alliances among parties. These alliances were always so constructed that at no time could any one coalition agree effectively upon a single, concerted program. It was this defect which rendered all combinations fragile and produced periods of continual political instability. This phenomenon was further aggravated by the vagueness in the French Constitution, as to where ultimate authority resided. Executive power was dispersed in such a way that none of the institutions of the Presidency, the Ministry, the Senate or the Parliament could claim superior authority over the others; the prerogatives of each were curbed by constitutional rights which the others held.

The basic factor which made effective collabo-

ration among political parties impossible was the ideological identity of each. This feature was most evident on the French Left, where, Radicals, Socialists and Communists could only unite in ephemeral alliances. The inter-war period, 1919 - 1939, can truly be called the era of the French Left, for they were - the three parties together - always numerically superior to the French Right. Three times, in 1924, 1932 and 1936, they allied and won electoral victories.¹ But on neither of the three occasions could they agree upon a united policy in all respects, so as to be able to give French politics - both internal and foreign - a common orientation. At no time was there a congruence in their understanding of the needs of France and the ways in which French state and society could be radically changed. When the foe was a common one, they united their efforts; but this was true only during electoral campaigns. Once in power, they were unable to cooperate on certain concrete issues. Sooner or later, an issue would arouse the ideological intransigence of each, hinder the harmonious working of the regime, and cause its eventual collapse.

¹The Communists united in 1936 only.

The cartels of 1924 and 1932 were formed of Radicals and Socialists. The French Communist party was in perpetual opposition on orders from Moscow, forbidding any kind of collaboration with "reactionary" and "imperialistic" parties. This position of isolation of the Communist Party began to alter in 1933. A number of factors favored the drawing closer of the Communists to the traditionally Leftist parties of France, the Radicals and the Socialists. It is true that many points of strain continued to sow disharmony among the three parties; many attitudes were still conditioned by respective party ideologies. Nevertheless, the movement of unity begun in 1933, succeeded in creating the strongest Leftist coalition of the inter-war period French history. It is significant to note that the Communists played a central role in the formation of the Popular Front. Not only were they the most ardent advocates of unity², but they also succeeded in reconciling the unyielding Socialist and Radical leaders.³ Ironically enough, the Communists would be the

²Jean Grandmoujin, Histoire vivante du Front Populaire (Paris, 1966), p. 140.

³As the Radicals participated in the government which emerged after the riots of February 1934, the Socialists began to campaign against them relentlessly.

first in the three elements of the Popular Front to disrupt it, first by refusing to participate in the government in 1936, and then by refusing it confidence in 1937.

The first factor which enabled the re-formation of the French Left was the economic depression which began to be felt in France in 1933. As a result of the economic contraction, unemployment increased, resulting in social unrest. The worsening of the internal situation of France favored the propaganda of the French Right which related all the mishaps in the French state and society to its democratic nature: the parliamentary regime, the equality of the classes, the rights of the individual, etc. Against this enlightened heritage of the French Revolution, it posed concepts of the authoritarian structure of the state, the reality of inequality in society, and the rights of the elite.⁴ To diffuse these Rightist ideologies among the French population, Fascist Leagues were formed.⁵ These were para-military organizations which excited the masses by

⁴Charles Micaud, The French Right and Nazi Germany (New York, 1964), p. 13.

⁵For a complete list of the Fascist Leagues see John Marcus, French Socialism in the Crisis Years, 1933-1936 (New York, 1958), pp. 52 - 53.

means of their nationalist slogans. Thus, it was thought that their popularity would increase in time and ultimately cause the destruction of the democratic heritage of the Great Revolution. In fact, between 1934 and 1936 all the circumstances favorable to a Fascist revolution co-existed in France. They were the supreme crisis years of the Third Republic.⁶ To cope with this growing prestige of the Right, the parties of the Left drew closer to each other.

The second factor which paved the way for the unity of the French Left was a foreign one, but was directly related to the first. This was the advent of Hitler in Germany - the victory of totalitarian dictatorship in Germany. For the French Right the case of Germany became a living example of the possibility of their success in establishing a similar regime in France. However, it was the international repercussions of the rise of Nazism which facilitated the unity of the French Left. For the Soviet Union, the expansion of Nazism had to be checked. The emergence of radically anti-Soviet regimes in Central Europe was a real threat to the security of the Soviet Union. Hence, the states-

⁶David Thompson, Democracy in France Since 1870 (London, 1964), p. 196.

men at the Kremlin labored intensely to arrest the expansion of Nazism elsewhere. In France, the emergence of a Nazi regime could be checked only if the French Left consolidated its powers and struggled against the French right as a single body. Thus, the French Communist Party, which was directly related to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, on directives from Moscow changed its policy of antagonism to the Socialists and the Radicals, and proposed fraternity. In an article which appeared in l'Humanité on May 30, 1934, Maurice Thorez, the secretary general of the French Communist Party, made a solemn appeal to the other parties of the French Left for a common front. He said, "Nous avons toujours exprimé notre désir d'action commune et immédiate. Nous sommes prêts ... Nous voulons lutter coude à coude et tout de suite contre l'ennemie capitaliste et ses bandes fascistes."⁷

In the meantime, changes in the Socialist Party began to make possible a collaboration with the Communists. At the time, there were three tendencies in the S.F.I.O.: The center, the left and the right. At the Congress of the party at Avignon in 1933, a new policy for the party was looked for in the light of the recent

⁷Jacques Fauvet, Histoire du parti communiste français (Paris, 1964), p. 143.

internal and international developments. After heated debates, the advocates of a genuinely Leftist policy won out. The center group of Léon Blum and Paul Faure allied with the left of Marceau Pivert and Jean Zyromski, isolating the reactionary right of Pierre Renaudel, who very soon was to find his way into the French Right. Thus, the Socialist Party by shifting to the Left, could now hope for cooperation with the Communists.

While the movement to unity of the Left was still in its initial stages, the riots of February 6, 1934 occurred—an event which accelerated the formation of the Popular Front. On that day, militant members of the Leagues tried to storm the Chamber of Deputies. Many interpretations of the purpose of this quasi-insurrection have been given, but for the Socialists it was a full-fledged Fascist putsch, intended to bring about dictatorship in France. To struggle effectively against the swelling of Fascism, the leaders of the S.F.I.O. were aware that a united, common front of all the French working classes was necessary; and such an alliance implied first of all unity between the two strongest working-class movements, the Socialists and the Communists. To this effect, negotiations began between the two parties, and after overcoming all the hindrances, a

pact of united action was signed on July 27, 1934. It was in high spirits that the alliance was concluded, and one year later, Léon Blum could interpret it as the great victory over Fascism and war.⁸

To be effective, the new-born Popular Front needed not only cooperation and consolidation in the working classes, but also unity in action between the working class parties and the left of the bourgeoisie, represented by the Radical Party. There were some difficulties which rendered difficult the inclusion of the Radicals in the Popular Front. However, on September 22, 1935, all dissensions were smoothed over, and the Popular Front, as the grouping of all Leftist parties, came into being.⁹

Thus formed, the Popular Front issued a manifesto in January 1936. At the approach of the elections of May, this document was a summary of the policy of the would-be Popular Front government, in the event of victory. It consisted of a long list of

⁸L'œuvre de Léon Blum (Paris, 1964), pp. 186-187.

⁹Other than the Socialists, the Communists and the Radicals, the Rassemblement Populaire included the Pupists (Parti de l'unité prolétarienne), Radical-Socialists, Republican Socialists, and other minor Leftist groups.

plans,¹⁰ the realization of which would lead to a great change in French state and society: liberty would be better defended, peace better assured, and bread better guaranteed.¹¹ The belief in democracy was evident in the manifesto. To this effect, the core of the program of the Popular Front was the preservation of democratic institutions through social reform. In fact, the foremost concern of the new Popular Front government, as it took over the responsibilities of the state after the electoral victory of May, 1936, was the institutionalization of the reforms proposed in the manifesto. In this respect it had a fruitful start, as it promulgated twelve laws in the Summer of 1936. All these were reforms of the social order - reduction of the working hours per week, national pensions, paid holidays, control on the banking and the financial system, and other reforms of similar nature which the agitated working class had long demanded. These accomplishments, although achieved in an atmosphere of strikes and demonstrations, were outstanding. As a consequence, there was general satisfaction in the ranks of the Popular Front. It was

¹⁰For a complete list of the proposed reforms see, Grandmougin, op.cit., p. 135.

¹¹Ibid., p. 136.

hoped that the new regime would actualize all the other promises made during the electoral campaign.

The reforming program of the Popular Front government was not confined to internal changes only, but also included plans for the overseas territories of the French Empire. The reforms necessary were diverse. In certain colonies some internal changes would suffice; whereas in others, where the idea of national sovereignty had emerged, drastic reforms were indispensable. From the Far East to Africa, the natives of the colonies had passed from the passive stage to a state of activism, even making claims to independence - claims unacceptable to traditional French mentality in 1936. Very few people were aware of the profundity of the colonial question at this time. The idealistic conceptions of France's civilizing mission still served as the foundation of many a Frenchman's reasoning in regard to the handling of the colonial reality. Assimilation which had been France's official colonial policy since the foundation of the Empire, remained the approach favored by most. This was the ideology of raising the individual native member of the colonies to an equality with the individual member of the dominant society. This state would qualify him for eventual admission into

French society.¹² In fact, assimilation was a reasonable approach in the early days of imperialism, when many indigenous peoples were politically passive. But by 1936, many had progressed materially and intellectually and achieved a degree of political maturity. This evolution in native opinion could no longer tolerate the reactionary colonial policy of France, which was inspired by such slogans as "La France de cent million d'habitants". The political and economic subordination of the colonies to France urgently needed modification.¹³ But the French authorities were not prepared to recognize this reality, and therefore, failed to put the colonial question on a new basis by 1936.

By 1936, among the colonized peoples of the French Empire there were two different attitudes as to their future relation with France. The desire for equal rights with Frenchmen, that is full assimilation to France, was dominant in French North Africa and particularly in Algeria; but this attitude was fast losing

¹²Arnold J. Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs 1937 (London, 1938), I, p. 489.

¹³Ch-André Julien, "From the French Empire to the French Union", International Affairs, vol. 26, 1950, p. 591.

ground. The second attitude which was especially strong in the mandated territories of Syria and Lebanon, was the desire for independence.

The colonized peoples with their new aspirations had few friends in France. Even in the ranks of the Leftist parties there were not many voices which dared to defend the cause of the Moroccan, the Syrian, the Algerian, the Annamite and of the rest of the oppressed peoples of the French Empire. The victory of the Popular Front in 1936 inspired high hopes among the colonized peoples. But no tangible reforms of immediate application were realized, because there was no strict set of principles, no doctrine so to speak, that could give direction to the colonial reforms of the Popular Front.¹⁴ There was no apprehension of the political aspects of the issue; what positive attitude existed was nothing but a feeling of sympathy, inspired by humanistic considerations. On the eve of taking over the responsibilities of the state, in June 1936, Léon Blum stated the objectives of the colonial policy of his government. He said that the wish of his government was to realize maximum social justice and fulfil

¹⁴Edward Bonnefous, Histoire politique de la Troisième République (Paris, 1965), VI, p. 27.

human possibilities among the colonies.¹⁵ This was an unfortunate start, for it did not give French colonial policy any concrete principles. It defined the issue of utmost importance in such abstract terms that it was very difficult to derive what was meant by it precisely.

It was true that Blum did not neglect or wish to neglect the colonial question. He appointed competent people such as Maurice Viollette, Pierre Viénot and Marius Moutet to ministries to deal with the issues involved. However, despite the concern showed by Blum, the government exhibited an apparent disposition to ward off the consideration of the colonial question directly and created the Colonial Commission, a body with consultative powers, to draw resolutions on colonial questions. In reality this body was paralyzed from the start, because most of its members were people faithful to the traditional imperialist attitude of the average Frenchman. Decolonization was never thought of. Theoretically, justice to the colonized peoples was accepted as a principle; but practically, instead of any realization in any domain, repression was practised as

¹⁵G. Lefrane, Histoire du Front Populaire (Paris, 1965), p. 304.

the oppressed and frustrated peoples of the French Empire began to manifest restlessness.¹⁶

During the colonial period of the Third Republic different schools of thought emerged in regard to the colonial issue. There was a colonial party, a military party, and a school of sociology. The two former ones defended colonialism, whereas the latter (a small minority) advocated the idea of the diversity and originality of the native civilizations as a factor which made assimilation, and hence perpetual colonization, impossible.¹⁷ During the era of the Popular Front, therefore, these two conceptions clashed. The struggle was unequal, because the idea of the right of the colonized peoples to liberty and independence was not yet accepted by the majority of Frenchmen. In effect, the era of the Popular Front turned out to be a failure, as far as colonial matters were concerned. Undoubtedly, there were other refractory forces also which rendered the settlement of the colonial question impossible between 1936 and 1938. But, in the

¹⁶Daniel Guérin, Front Populaire (Paris, 1963), p. 179.

¹⁷Julien, "From the French Empire to the French Union", op.cit., p. 488.

final analysis, the absence of a genuine disposition among Frenchmen of all shades of thought to modify the political, economic and social structures of the colonies caused the ultimate failure of the colonial experiment of the Popular Front era.

CHAPTER I

THE BLUM-VIOLETTE BILL: PROMISE AND DISILLUSIONMENT

After the seizure of the city of Algiers in 1830, the French troops began the conquest of the largest unit in the Maghreb, called Algeria. During the early years of the French presence, there was active resistance to colonial rule; but the impetus of the movement soon subsided, and in 1848, having completed the pacification of Algeria, the French declared her to be part of Metropolitan France. By this act the French denied the identity of the Algerian, his history and ethnic distinction. But the assimilation of the Algerian society into the French polity was not to be so swift. It was true that in the cities a class of intellectual Algerians adopted the French language and way of living as their own, but the greater fraction of the indigenous populace remained¹ attached to its mother tongues,¹ customs and traditions. Moreover, the Algerians did not abandon the Islamic faith, that aspect of their identity through which a considerable part of the Algerian political renaissance was to be

¹Arabic and Berber were the principal languages of the natives of Algeria.

manifested in the twentieth century. The French tried unavailingly to make the Algerians denounce their Moslem "personal statute", because so long as Moslems clung to their religious code no successful process of assimilation could be effected.²

As the French conquest turned into an apparently permanent reality, a European community began to be formed in Algeria, composed of immigrants from France and the neighboring countries. In time, they mingled and formed an organic class which dominated the political and economic life of Algeria. They became the administrative agents of the French government, the corner stone of French power in Algeria, and as such, assumed a position of considerable importance. To preserve their rights as the dominant society, they stood for the policy of maintaining the status quo: Algeria would remain an integral part of France, and the natives would continue to live in their inferior social and political condition. To this effect, the colons did not hesitate to adopt measures which would antagonize not only the extreme Algerians but also the moderates. Beginning with 1919, when Clemanceau proposed a legislation which would modify positively the status of the

²Toynbee, op.cit., p. 511.

Moslem Algerians, colon solidarity against any law which might be detrimental to their privileged status became evident as never before.

As a manifestation of the solidarity of the colons in their desire to preserve the status quo, a Congress of Mayors was held on May 27, 1920. At the conclusion of the conference, a note was sent to the Paris government, asking for the undertaking of a reasonable policy with respect to Algeria and the rights of the Moslems. It added that consultations with colon representatives should be made prior to the enactment of any law which might touch upon the security and supremacy of the French element in Algeria. To base their future on more secure foundations, the appeal asked for the abolition of the few rights bestowed to the Moslems by the same law.³

As the position of the colons and the French authorities hardened against any positive change in the condition of the native people, the nascent Algerian identity began to seek expression. The movement was not yet expressed in political parties, but in personalities, such as Emir Khaled, whose aim was the reali-

³André Nouschi, La naissance du nationalisme algérien 1914 - 1954 (Paris, 1962), p. 56.

zation of a profound change in the status of the Moslem Algerian. At the municipal elections of Algiers in 1920, Emir Khaled led a list which had a program embodying the political and social claims of Algerians, such as the suppression of the laws of judicial partiality and the application of a common law to all Algerians. The list won the elections by a large majority, but the local colon authorities did not confirm the result. They needed people who would agree with whatever they did. It was an open danger to have in the local government of Algeria people who claimed that which was diametrically contrary to their interests. So, they declared the elections illegal. For the time being such a policy served their aim, but in the long run it was this and similar attitudes of outright contempt, which gave personality and an anti-French bias to the Algerian nationalist movement.

The claims of the Algerians of this period must not be exaggerated. There were two trends in Algerian political thought with respect to France. There were those who demanded equal rights - assimilationists. These formed the majority in the Algerian intelligentsia until the turning point of 1936. The second trend was that of people who rejected identification with France

and demanded respect for the entity of Algeria.⁴ These were a minority until 1936. But the balance between the two ideologies shifted in favor to the latter, as France failed to adapt her Algerian policy to the realities of the time. However, in the 1920's, what the indigenous leaders asked for was fully in agreement with the principles of assimilation. They only differed from the French in their conception of the process of achieving reforms. Whereas the French advocated a slow process, the Algerians on the other hand, especially the educated masses, demanded immediate changes in their status. But the issue was not a direct one between the Algerians and the French. There were the intermediary colons, who, in fear of losing their exclusive rights in Algeria, struggled not to yield an inch to the claims of the indigenous people. However, despite the apparent antagonism of the colons to the egalitarian demands of the Algerians, the native leaders continued to have faith in the goodwill of the French government. When, in 1924, the first Leftist government was formed in France, Emir Khaled sent a note to Edouard Herriot, the new prime minister, asking for equal social, economic

⁴David Gordon, The Passing of French Algeria (London, 1966), p. 21.

and political rights. In fact, Herriot and his colleagues could have been persuaded to take favorable measures in regard to the Algerians, had not there been the pressure of the colons who rejected categorically the Algerian claims. Unfortunately, for a just resolution of the Algerian question, the necessary favorable disposition lacked in France. Most Frenchmen, even people in the ranks of the parties of the Left, much influenced by colon propaganda, were ill-disposed to consider any change in favor of the indigenous people, no matter how mild those demands might be. When the Moslem Algerians sent a delegation to Paris to congratulate the Cartel de Gauches for its victory and transmit to the new government their demands, the colons also sent a deputation to communicate to the government the desires of European Algerians. This latter petition was purely an anti-assimilationist document, for, its sole theme was the safeguarding of colon interests and position in Algeria. And they were successful in their endeavor. They were able to persuade the new executive authority that the preservation of the status quo was for the good of France; that the bulk of the indigenous people was still unqualified to assume equal rights with Europeans. The government of the Left was progressive in many respects,

but in the colonial field the traditional mentality still predominated, hampering the possibility of any legislation that might have precluded later developments.

The nomination of Maurice Viollette as Governor General of Algeria in 1925, was an event of importance, because with him a new approach to the Algerian reality was introduced. He observed that the condition of the indigenous people was unbearable and irrational at the same time. The Moslem Algerian was denied his own identity as well as entrance into the French polity. As such, he did not enjoy any political rights. So, to ameliorate the social and political status of the Moslem Algerian, Viollette introduced a modest reform. The core of the proposed legislation was the granting to Moslems of equal rights so as to have access to posts in the Administration of Algeria. What the perceptive Governor General initiated was not a radical approach to the Algerian situation, but a policy which was less colonialistic but more realistic and human.⁵ However, he failed totally, because he found an insurmountable colon opposition in Algeria

⁵Ferhat Abbas, La nuit coloniale (Paris, 1962), p. 123.

and a hesitant central government in Paris, unprepared to encourage his reforms. In effect, he was dismissed in 1927, and the pressure of the colons in Paris was successful in securing a conservatively-minded new governor. The first great chance to adapt the Algerian policy to the changes necessitated by the progress of time failed utterly, and the pattern of retrogression repeated itself once again.

In face to the refusal of the colons and the French authorities to consider changes in the status of Algerians, the Moslem Algerians began to organize themselves. In 1927, the Fédération des Elus Musulmanes held a congress for the purpose of discussing the internal questions of Algeria and drawing up propositions to be submitted to the Paris government. The note which was submitted to Paris at the conclusion of the Congress, emphasized the existing inequalities in Algeria. Faith was expressed in the providence of France, the country of revolution and progress, to base its policy toward Algeria and the Algerians on a new, realistic foundation. When colonial rule had been established in many parts of the world, conditions then existing had necessitated the institution of strict rules for the natives. But the rise in the social and intellectual standard of the indigenous peoples now

necessitated a revision of all such legislations. The Algerians wanted France to show absolute respect to Islam, the Arabic language, and Islamic civilization; to demounce the myth of racial superiority by adopting a policy of equality; and to help Algeria to transfer her society so as to be able to keep pace with the progress of the time.⁶ At first, the French government reacted favorably to the demands of the Algerians by setting up an interministerial commission to investigate the situation in Algeria. However, nothing significant emerged, because there was no genuine disposition in France to modify the Algerian structure.

As the French government grew more and more intractable to any reasonable solution to the urgent issues of Algeria, four centers of opposition began to materialize. Differences as to goal and method among them were evident; nevertheless, all agreed that the necessity of a profound change in the social, economic and political condition of Algeria was imperative.

In 1924, the Algerian Federation of the Communist Party was founded. The new political association did extensive propaganda through its organ La Lutte Social, and asked Algerians to struggle under its banner for the ending of their miseries. However, the Commun-

⁶Ibid., op.cit., p. 121.

ists did not succeed in rallying a large number of Algerians to their ideology, because what they put forward was always placed in an internationalist context. The nascent Algerian nationalist spirit was Moslem and Arab in character, and as such could not identify itself with the ideology of a party whose ideals were primarily anti-religious and anti-nationalistic.

The first organization which was truly Algerian was the Etoile Nord-Africaine. Many eminent Algerian personalities bred in Islamic and Arab ideals partook in its formation, but the spirit of the Etoile was Messali Hadj, a young man of revolutionary ideas, and as such a singular figure. Speaking at the Congress of the League Against Colonial Oppression in Brussels in 1927, Messali outlined the demands of the Algerians, the most important being independence. Indeed, Messali was the first Algerian to echo the idea of an independent Algerian fatherland, which was shocking if not heretical not only for all Frenchmen, but also for numerous Algerians educated in French culture and the myth of assimilation. In this way the Etoile posed as a revolutionary party, but it failed to consolidate the bulk of the Algerian people, despite the diffusion of its ideology through its organ El Oumma.

It was still early to expect that all Algerians would uphold independence as their primary objective. To this effect, they had to be educated nationalistically, had to be taught their history and national characteristics which differentiated them from Frenchmen. Only then would Messali's ideas and the ideology of the Etoile in general find wide acceptance in Algerian society, as was to be the case a decade later.

The third organization in Algerian life was the one of intellectuals of European formation. In the four centers of opposition, their demands were the mildest. What they asked for was political and social equality with European Algerians - the colons. The polity which they advocated was precisely the assimilation of Algeria into the French whole. Had not they insisted on their Moslem status, nothing would have differentiated them from Frenchmen; they used French as their language, adopted French customs, and made the French way of living their own. Their ideology was propounded by Ferhat Abbas in the organ of the party in terms which may seem incomprehensible today but which were a living reality in those days. Thus, Abbas declared Algeria French soil and Algerians Frenchmen enjoying a personal Moslem status. He said that the

Algerian nation was inexistent; he could not even find it in the cemeteries. Finally, as a Moslem, he thought that nothing in the Sacred Book forbade a Moslem from becoming a Frenchman.⁷

The last organization was the religious association of the Ulema. Founded in 1931, by Shaikh Ben Badis the Association attempted to bring about a renovation of Islam, struggle against maraboutism, colonialism, and the movement of undermining the Islamic and Arab nature of Algerian society. Two months after the anti-nationalistic profession of Abbas, Ben Badis proclaimed that he had searched to find the Algerian nation and homeland in the past and the present, and had found that they existed as all the other nations and homelands of the world. He insisted, moreover, that the Algerian nation had its religious and linguistic unity, its own culture, tradition and national characteristics. He concluded that Algeria was not France, could not be France and did not wish to become France, because every people had the right to independence.⁸ Hence, the Association of the Ulema appeared

⁷Ch-André Julien, L'Afrique du nord en marche (Paris, 1952), pp. 110 - 111.

⁸Julien, op.cit., pp. 114 - 115.

to be a significant active force which, because of the religious authority it enjoyed, could give a new direction to Algerian developments.

By 1930, thus, Algeria had ceased to be an inert colony. The latent nationalistic impulses had become explicit. As a consequence, France was presented with a challenge; she had to react either positively or negatively. At any rate the status quo could no longer be maintained.⁹ There were demands for change everywhere, and it was expected that in 1930, the centenary of the French occupation of Algeria, the French government would promulgate the long-awaited social and political reforms. 1930 came and passed away without any change being introduced in the structure of Algeria. Evidently, the French of the Metropole underestimated the gravity of the Algerian question. The French government, involved in domestic and international problems, willingly left the destiny of Algeria in the hands of the colons and to people who had an equally reactionary attitude in regard to the issue. But the disappointment of the lofty expectations of the Algerians was not ineffective. More and more Moslem Algerians became sus-

⁹Gordon, op.cit., p. 27.

picious of the goodwill of the French. The next chance to save the Algerian situation from extremism was 1936. But before considering this chance, certain developments in Algeria, between 1930 and 1936, should be noted.

Around 1930, a movement of historical research to discover the past of Algeria began to develop. Through the historical works written in this period, the idea of the historic Algeria was introduced. The French claimed that prior to 1830 there had been no Algerian history, but the Algerian historians discovered an organic unity between the past and the present of their country. The publication of Mubarat al-Midi's L'Histoire de l'Algérie dans le passé et le présent in 1929, and Tewfiq el-Mardani's Histoire de l'Algérie in 1931, were moments of historic significance, because they ended the slumber of Algerian nationalism by the teaching of history. There were still many native thinkers who denied their uniqueness in the French whole, but the fact that some other intellectuals began to think in the opposite direction is equally significant. In the six years 1930 - 1936, the national spirit of Algerians was consolidated to such an extent that it became a force to be reckoned with.

This change in the attitude of Algerians with

respect to themselves and their fatherland manifested itself often. The columns of the papers were filled with articles which demanded reforms. Resentment against the social and political injustice imposed by the French began to be echoed loudly. The educated mass imbued in the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity could no longer bear the repressive colonial rule. In fact, a significant aspect of the French occupation of North-West Africa had been the creation of a modern-minded Muslim élite.¹⁰ French education had transmitted them the ideals of the French Revolution. Hence, on this basis, what rights they demanded were the logical outcome of their intellectual formation. In face to these developments, the colon authorities did not show the slightest sign of apprehension. When, in 1934, Algerians dissatisfied with the existing pattern of things won a municipal election, the colons reacted immediately and declared the elections illegal. In this way the situation was aggravated, and the seeds of the later bloody antagonism were sown. Assimilation implied the integration of the colonized peoples into the French polity; what happened in Algeria was a perfect example of segregation.

¹⁰Neville Barbour, A Survey of North-West Africa (Oxford, 1959), p. 50.

Besides the colons, in the period 1930 - 1936, the French government also showed its inability to comprehend the nature of the recent changes in Algeria. The repressive measures, the Circulaire Michel¹¹ in 1933 and the Régnier Decree¹² in 1935, proved that the central government acted the same way as the colons did; that is tried to subdue the emerging Algerian identity at any cost and without any estimation as to what might be the consequences of such a policy.

The approach of the elections of 1936 in France inspired a new hope among the Algerians. The French Left had united against the reactionary Right, and campaigned on a program in which the overseas territories of the French Empire were also taken into consideration. It was in an atmosphere of universal joy that Algerians of all shades of opinion heard of the victory of the Popular Front in May 1936. The anti-colonial policy, which was proper to the parties of the Left, pleased the Moslem Algerians as much as it worried the colons.¹³

¹¹The Circulaire Michel demanded the local authorities in Algeria to supervise strictly the activities of the Communists and the Ulema who endeavored to damage the French cause.

¹²The Régnier Decree imposed severe penalties for the offence of subversive political activity against French sovereignty in Algeria.

¹³L'Afrique Française, 1936, p. 253.

It was honestly believed that what the former regimes had refused to consider would be accomplished by the new regime. The presence of Maurice Viollette in the new cabinet, although without portfolio, was another fact which caused optimism in Algerian circles. In short, the coming of the Popular Front aroused a wave of high expectations among the Algerians.

Shortly after the change of regime in France, a Congress of all Algerian Moslems was inaugurated amid enthusiasm, on June 7, 1936. The conference was attended by all the four organizations of Algerian life. After discussions on the needs of Algeria, the urgent social and political reforms, and the friendliness of the Popular Front, the Congress drew up a list of demands, six in number, called the Charte revendicative du peuple algérien musulmane. The first demand dealt with the laws of inequality and asked for the suppression of all laws of exception. The second asked for direct attachment of Algeria with France. The Gouvernement général, the Financial Delegation and the Mixed Communes were declared to be institutions favoring the colons. It was hoped that direct rule by the French Minister of the Interior would be more just and relieve the indigenous people of the oppression of the colons. The third demand asked for respect to be shown to the

Islamic faith and the Arabic language. It asked for the abrogation of the laws banning the instruction of Arabic and of the Arabic publications. The most important part of this demand was the assertion of the inviolability of the Islamic "personal statute" of Algerians. The fourth demand asked for social reforms, such as obligatory education. The fifth demand dealt with economic questions. Finally, the sixth demand dealt with political reforms: amnesty of political detainees, a single electoral college, universal suffrage, and the representation of Moslems in the Metropolitan Parliament.¹⁴

The implications of the Charter were twofold: Evidently, it was not a revolutionary document, but there was an explicit nationalistic tone in what was demanded. Even if assimilation were to become reality, the French had to recognize the religious and national uniqueness of the Algerians. However, over and above these considerations, the most significant aspect of the Congress was its being the first political assemblage of Algerians since 1830. Many Algerians were not aware of the political renaissance which they were ex-

¹⁴Roger le Tourneau, Evolution politique de l'Afrique du nord musulmane (Paris, 1962), p. 326.

periencing, but it was the beginning which led to 1954 and eventually to 1962.

The factor which led to the deterioration of the Algerian situation of the Popular Front era was not the revival of the political consciousness of Algerians, but the stiffening of the attitude of most Frenchmen with respect to it. Lacking any sense of realism, they continued to assert the eternity of Algérie Française and refused to consider even the mildest of the claims of the Algerians. Loyalty to the existing colonial structure was a duty for all Frenchmen, no matter what the cost might be.¹⁵ To achieve genuine reforms in the colonies, the mentality of Frenchmen had to be first altered. So long as the archaic colonial idealism of Jules Ferry continued to inspire most Frenchmen, any reformatory legislation for the colonies was doomed to succumb before the pressure of the reactionaries.

However, in mid-1936, all Algerians saw a bright future ahead. It was in overwhelming joy that a delegation of the Congress proceeded to Paris to transmit the Charter to the French government. After meeting Léon Blum, the prime minister, a communiqué

¹⁵L'Afrique Française, 1936, pp. 89 - 90.

was issued which expressed total optimism as to a satisfactory settlement of the Algerian question. Blum had assured them that a legislation which would alter the status of the Moslem Algerians positively was in the process of preparation. They also met the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party, where they received a warm welcome, as well as assurances as to a just settlement of the Algerian question.

On its return to Algiers, the delegation was greeted by a popular welcome. However, rejoicing was not unanimous, for Messali, having gathered more and more people around his ideology of extreme nationalism, disapproved the recent developments. He had already made clear his opposition to the idea of integral assimilation, during the last Congress. He demanded an Algerian Parliament in Algiers, elected by universal suffrage and controlled by the Algerian people.¹⁶ At the second congress of Moslem Algerians which opened on August 2, 1936, Messali delivered a tumultuous speech, in which he ridiculed the idea of mild reforms and stoutly defended the principle of independence to be pursued by all progressive Algerians. The effect of the oration was shocking, for it was the first pub-

¹⁶Nouschi, op.cit., pp. 86 - 87.

lic mention of the term independence on Algerian soil. Truly, Messali is the great man in the recent history of Algeria. What he said did not become reality in 1936 or immediately after. But less than two decades later his ideas inspired the Algerians to launch the struggle which ultimately ended with independence.

At any rate Messali's ideas were in their embryonic state and could not affect the bulk of the Moslem Algerians. But at this point another obstructive force began to operate to the detriment of the reformatory process, started in Paris by the Popular Front government. At the sight of a possible drastic change in the colonial structure of Algeria, the colons and their supporters in France began to campaign vigorously against the colonial policy of the new regime. They warned the Blum government to avoid taking hasty measures which might weaken the superiority of the French element in Algeria. The colons verbally requested the government to ask for their recommendation, before enacting any legislation which might in the final analysis not only destroy their own power, but also French sovereignty in **Algeria**.¹⁷

However, colon opposition to any legislation

¹⁷L'Afrique Française, 1936, p. 251.

in the favor of the Moslem Algerians was less inspired by considerations of the safety and the integrity of the French Empire, than by the danger which threatened the exclusive political, economic and social rights which they held in Algeria. This had been the pattern in the past, when governors who had shown sympathy to the demands of the indigenous people were ousted from office immediately. Viollette had personally suffered the experience of being forced to yield to the will of the colons in 1927. But in 1936, the central government sponsored the Algerian reforms, and the colons, seeing the status quo threatened from within and without, mobilized their total forces to neutralize any reformatory action. The belief that only an anti-colonial policy could be expected from the parties of the Left made the colons the irreconcilable enemies of the Popular Front. In October 1936, when it was well-known that a bill modifying the status of the Moslem Algerians was under way, the Federation of the Mayors sent a note to the French government, openly warning that no legislation infringing upon French sovereignty - by which it was meant colon sovereignty - would be accepted.¹⁸ This act showed the resolution of the colons to oppose any change in Algeria, even if

¹⁸Ibid., p. 253.

it was sponsored by a government which represented the three largest parties of France. The factor which gave weight to the attitude of the colons was that they had many partisans in France, not only in the ranks of the French Right, but also elsewhere, because the issue for which they struggled was one which touched upon the nationalist sentiments of the standard Frenchman. For social reform the French worker would go on strike, but when the issue was the equal rights of the Algerians, most Frenchmen were indifferent. The antagonism of the colons to any reform in Algeria and the backing their position received in France is another instance which helps explain the failure of the colonial policy of the Popular Front in Algeria.

On December 31, 1936, Viollette presented the new legislation for Algeria, thenceforth known as the Blum-Viollette Bill. It provided for the enfranchisement of 27,000¹⁹ Moslems. The unique significance of the Bill was that it did not ask for the withdrawal of the Moslem "personal statute" as a condition for enjoying equal rights. Between 1866 - 1934 only 2500 Moslems had achieved equality with European Algerians

¹⁹Barbour, op.cit., gives the figure 30000; Toynbee, op.cit., gives 27,000; and Bonnefous, op.cit., gives 20,000.

by becoming naturalized.²⁰ As the Bill gave equal rights without asking for the withdrawal of the Moslem "personal statute", it was thought that it would enjoy wide popularity in Algeria.

The reactions to the Bill in Algeria were diverse. Out of the four organizations of Algerian life only the Evolués accepted it whole-heartedly. Actually the provisions of the Bill were what they had demanded for a long time--enfranchisement without naturalization. Their wealth and education classified them in that category of the Algerian population which would enjoy the rights conferred by the Bill. As to Messali, he rejected the Bill categorically, because it did not allude to independence. The Ulema reserved judgment; but it was evident that they were not favorable to it. At the end, in 1938, when the Bill was finally defeated in the French Senate, they expressed their opposition to it. Thus, the Blum-Viollette Bill failed to receive a unanimous acceptance in Algeria; and this was the first setback which it suffered.

In the traditionally oriented circles in France, the Bill, despite its imperfect nature, provoked intense hostility. As the provisions of the Bill were found in-

²⁰This implied the acceptance of the French Civil Law instead of the Islamic sacred law of the Sharia.

compatible with French sovereignty in Algeria, forces were mobilized to fight against it in the French Parliament. For most Frenchmen opposition to the Bill was a duty, a manifestation of genuine nationalism. The French Empire was created by struggle and sacrifice and its survival required further sacrifice and courage. Viewed in this respect, the Bill can be considered a test which measured the political maturity of the French; and the failure to adopt to it proved that most Frenchmen were not aware of the changes overseas which the progress of time had introduced. Blind nationalism or national ambition hindered the French from acting so that the future might take a more favorable turn. In fact, the history of the subsequent decades affirmed the arguments of those who had stated before 1936 that history would follow its natural path and the failure to adopt to the urgencies of the time might be disastrous in the long run.²¹

The opposition of the colons to the Bill had a different nature. There were certainly some idealists of imperialism, but for the majority the fight against the enactment of the Bill was an act of survival. All the organs of Algerian life - political, economic and

²¹M. Viollette, L'Algérie vivra-t-elle? (Paris, 1931), p. 469.

social - were dominated by the colons, and the Bill would start a process of undermining their absolute monopoly and lead to their eventual destruction. There were certain communes on the Tell where the Blum-Viollette Bill would have given the Moslems an immediate majority over the colons. So it was to evade present disadvantages and future dangers that the colons put into motion all their means to stop the passing of the Bill. To this effect, they possessed the necessary weapons: the metropolitan press, ardent people in the French Parliament, and finally the greatest weapon - the paralysis of the administration of Algeria.

At the beginning, the Blum government did not yield to pressures. It was stated in official declarations that the Bill would become legislation. The attacks on the Bill were attacks on the government itself, and defending and passing it in Parliament would be evidence of the strength of the government. The attitude of Blum and his colleagues was so promising that the Moslem Algerians, alarmed at the increasing opposition to the Bill, sent a delegation to Paris in March 1937, thanking the government for its bold action in defence of the Bill. In addition, they expressed their anxiety as to the postponement of the enactment

of the Bill, and added that it was the wish of all Algerians to see it in operation in the near future.

As the enactment of the Bill was delayed, the Moslem Algerians became anxious and voices of complaint began to be heard. On July 11, 1937, another Moslem Congress took place. A number of demands were drafted which asked for the immediate realization of the demands of the First Moslem Congress.²² The significant aspect of this Congress was that it was not altogether pacifist in its approach, as it asked the Algerians to be on the alert and demanded that the Elus resign if the Bill was not promulgated by the next cantonal elections. Despite this apparent disillusionment, the Congress expressed faith in the goodwill of the Popular Front. The mystique of the Left still convinced many Algerians that the Blum government would ultimately succeed in surmounting difficulties and settle the Algerian question in an acceptable way.

1937 passed without realizing the Blum. - Violette Bill. 1938 came and the Bill ceased to arouse heated discussion in France, because of newer domestic and international issues. In September 1938, the

²²See pp. 32 - 33.

Senate defeated the Bill and the government cancelled it. There was a feeling of great deception in Algeria and in circles favorable to the government in France. The movement for political and social changes in Algeria, begun in the 1930's, which had, at least at the beginning an egalitarian nature, had to be settled down in one of the two possible ways; that is either the Algerians would begin to enjoy equal rights or continue to live in their inferior status. The French, by failing to pass the Blun-Viollette Bill, preferred the second way.

If the failure of the Bill satisfied the colons and their co-ideologists in France, in Algeria it gave birth to a new orientation with respect to the solution of the Algerian question. Messali Hadj, the nationalist leader, began to attract an ever-increasing number of disillusioned and now nationalistically oriented Algerians. Although the idea of independence was not easily digested in Algeria in 1937, as the Bill did not become reality, more and more Moslem Evolués altered their Francophile attitude and joined the opposition to assimilation. The foundation of the Algerian Popular Party in 1937 was a symptom of the stiffening of positions, as the ideology of the new political association concentrated upon the realization of the

free Algerian fatherland, organically related to the Arab World, Islamic and anti-Zionist in essence. The failure of the Bill, then, gave a new direction to the political attitudes in Algeria, which were now diametrically contrary to the previous moderate ones. To fulfil their demands, Algerians turned to new tactics; this was the beginning which less than two decades later was to bring about the Algerian Revolution. Even the most Francophile intellectuals, such as Abbas and Zenati, expressed their delusion and despair publicly. Thus, the idea of integral assimilation was abandoned, when an Algerian leader like Abbas declared that attachment to France did not mean assimilation.

The forces which operated against the enactment of the Bill were immense. But this assertion does not imply that Blum, with the executive power he held, was totally blameless. He could have enacted the Bill by decree. But Blum evaded this choice for a number of reasons. The most apparent cause of this failure was the preoccupation of the Popular Front with domestic and foreign affairs.²³ Truly, the period 1936 - 1938 is a remarkable one in the social history of France, and Blum exhausted his administration's

²³G. Fraser and T. Natanson, Léon Blum, Man and Statesman (Philadelphia, 1938), p. 280.

energies in coping with the social urgencies of the time. In addition to internal troubles, Blum faced a Europe in turmoil, caused by the two Fascist states, Germany and Italy. As a great power, France had always to be on the watch. So, this was another factor which diverted the attention of the Popular Front government from the colonies to Europe. However, this is not a complete justification; the failure to cope with the Algerian question indicates the relatively minor concern of the Popular Front government with the colonial problem. They may have been honest men and zealous humanitarians, but many of them were not free from the mentality of the average Frenchman, so that when the Bill provoked an intense negative reaction, they preferred to let it fall into oblivion, rather than enact it and bear responsibility before the next generations for having destroyed the French Empire.

But, it would be too optimistic to consider the opportunity of 1936 a lost chance, because this presupposes that assimilation could have succeeded had the Blum-Viollette Bill passed in 1936. The nascent Algerian political consciousness was soon to transfer itself into national consciousness, and inevitably the legacy of French Algeria was to come to an end. The failure

of the experiment of 1936 implied that a great chance was lost in the sense that all the chances for a peaceful settlement of the Algerian question were lost. Finally, the inevitable became reality, but at the cost of over a million lives on both sides.

CHAPTER II
THE POPULAR FRONT AND THE
NEO-DESTOUR

As France consolidated her position in Algeria, a Tunisian question was born. The French assumed that the Eastern Maghreb fell within their zone of influence and had to be controlled sooner or later for the security of Algeria. But the French did not attempt any colonial venture in the Regency until 1878, because the European political and diplomatic situation was not favorable. At the Congress of Berlin, however, France secured the diplomatic backing of Great Britain and Germany, when the latter states consented to the transfer of Tunisia to the French Empire. Having achieved international recognition of her claim on Tunisia, France had to act carefully and effect the incorporation of the Regency into her Empire without offending the national pride of any other rival European state. To this effect, a pretext was necessary to justify a military occupation of the quasi-independent and sovereign state.¹ The raids of the Khrumir tribes from

¹Legally, Tunisia was part of the Ottoman Empire. But since 1705 her subordination to the Porte had become nominal, as she was governed by a native Bey, on a hereditary principle.

Tunisia across the border into Algeria presented the suitable pretext, and in May 1881, the French army conducted an operation which was described as a punitive action. The decadent state fell easily, and the Treaty of Bardo was imposed upon the Bey.

According to the articles of the Treaty of Bardo², France agreed that the occupation would cease, when peace and order had been restored on the Algero-Tunisian border and along the coastline. They agreed to defend the Bey and his territories against any threat. The term protectorate was never mentioned, and all that France was given was a first say in the foreign relations and the finances of the Regency. Such a vague position France did not wish. Thus, after pacifying the internal opposition to the French presence, a new treaty, known as the convention of La Marsa, was imposed upon the Bey. By this act the protectorate was officially established. In fact, when the French landed on the shores of Tunisia in 1881, their primary concern was not the pacification of the Algero-Tunisian border, but the annexation of the territory which was considered to be the natural extension of Algeria. This is why the temporary seizure of 1881 evolved into a protectorate, without limit of

²See the Arab Office, The Tunisian Question (London, 1952), pp. 2 - 3.

time.

For a quarter century, the French did not encounter any opposition in Tunisia. They reorganized the administration of the state totally, establishing an effective control over all the organs of the state. All the posts in the administration and the public services were filled with Frenchmen. What emerged from this structure was a system of direct rule which the Tunisians as well as all the colonized peoples detested. For the first time in the history of the protectorate, in 1906, Beshir Sfar demanded publicly the participation of the indigenous people in the rule of their country.

Beshir Sfar and his co-thinkers rebelled against the structure which had robbed them of the right to political activity.³ In 1907, an association called Partiè Jeune Tunisien was founded which also published a paper - Le Tunisien. What this group of the Tunisian intelligentsia asked for was reform in the colonial structure of their country, rather than the radical demands of the later day nationalist leaders. They did not challenge the reality of the protectorate, but asked for their participation in the modernization of

³Julien, op.cit., p. 68.

Tunisia which the French claimed to be doing. However, even in this mild form, the demands of the indigenous leaders encountered a uniform French opposition, in the Regency as well as in the Metropole. For the colons this was the most vital issue so far as their status in the Regency was concerned, because any step in favor of the native Moslems would equal a decrease in the privileges held by them. In its turn, the French government was absolutely uninterested in the claims of the Tunisians, because it favored enlarging the French Empire rather than curbing its powers in the already possessed colonies. As a result, the claims of the Tunisians were ignored.

The incident of the Jellaz cemetery, in 1911, showed what could be the consequences of such a French policy. The municipal council of Tunis which was a European-dominated body, decided to register and survey the cemetery. This act implied that thenceforth it would become municipal authority. But this action was contrary to Islamic feelings. Thus, on the day the municipal authorities tried to implement their decision, crowds gathered to prevent the infamy, clashed with the security forces. What was significant in the Jellaz affair was the involvement of the masses in an anti-government action for the first time. Until

1911, opposition to French rule had had a very narrow scope. But the involvement of the common people in the defence of national and religious traditions implied the futility of the French attempt to deny the Tunisian identity. This refutation of the French policy of assimilation marked the genesis of Tunisian nationalism which, as a force, was thenceforth to operate to the detriment of French presence in Tunisia.

Until the First World War, the movement, which was later to become the dynamic Tunisian nationalism, did not achieve any tangible results. Minor crises reminiscent of Jellaz occurred, but the Tunisian structure remained intact. If it is true that the French showed no disposition to listen to the demands of the indigencous people, the fact that opposition to French rule in Tunisia was still in its embryonic stage is equally correct. In the absence of outstanding leaders, the movement had not yet become constructive, and it lacked a definite doctrine. The stage of reformist demands had not yet given way to revolutionary nationalism. In short, the movement was still searching for itself.⁴ In this condition, it went underground during

⁴Felix Garas, Bourguiba et la naissance d'une nation (Paris, 1956), p. 42.

the First World War, until there was a new resurgence of nationalist activity in the immediate post-war period.

The end of the First World War witnessed a lively activity among the colonized peoples, for the acquisition of their lost sovereignties. As an ideology, anti-colonialism which had expressed itself so timidly in the pre-war period, now was marked by a new vigor. In Tunisia, two new influences were felt. The first was the independence movements in the Arab East; and the second was the hope aroused by the Fourteen Points of President Wilson, in which the right of the self-determination of peoples was acknowledged.

As a result of the effect of these two phenomena, Tunisian nationalism was reconstructed and re-invigorated and began to pursue an active policy, employing new tactics to attract the attention of the foreign world to the Tunisian question. In 1919, the Tunisian nationalist Taalbi submitted a memorandum to President Wilson, during the latter's sojourn in Rome. It listed the grievances of the Tunisians under French rule and ended by claiming independence as a right which the Fourteen Points granted to all peoples. However, Tunisia was not the colony of a defeated power,

and foreign interference was difficult in an issue which the French considered to be purely internal. So, the appeal to the President of the United States achieved no positive result and convinced the Tunisians that international support to their cause was meaningless, so long as there was no favorable disposition in France with respect to their demands. Hence, the center of the activities of the Tunisian nationalists shifted to Paris. In the French Parliament the leftist deputies had manifested their sympathy to the Tunisian cause, and it was hoped that through them the French executive authority would be moved to introduce changes in the colonial structure of Tunisia. What the Tunisian nationalists sought at this time, then, was the inculcation of interest in the condition of the Regency in French parliamentary circles, and subsequent governmental action.

Parallel to the appeal to French official circles, in 1919, the group of Tunisian nationalists living in Paris published an anonymous pamphlet entitled La Tunisie Martyre: ses Revendications. In this leaflet, the situation in Tunisia was portrayed in dark colors; French rule was equated to tyranny and was contrasted to the liberal, constitutional rule of the Bey,

prior to 1881. In conclusion, the restoration of the Constitution of 1861⁵ was treated as a prerequisite for the amelioration of Franco-Tunisian relations.

However, the French authorities did not show any disposition to satisfy the demands of the indigenous leaders. Thus, frustrated by the unwillingness of the French to consider any amendment in the colonial structure of Tunisia, the nationalist movement went a step further with the foundation of the Liberal Constitutional Party, commonly known as the Destour. Founded in February 1920, and composed of all the opponents to French unilateral rule, the new party published its program. It envisaged reforms based on the liberal principles of the Constitution of 1861, the equality of the French and the Tunisians in their eligibility for public posts, and certain other rights of association and national expression. Those demands did not allude to independence, in order not to offend friendly circles of the French Left. In fact, the na-

⁵In 1861, Mohammed es-Sadiq Bey had granted a Constitution which had laid down the principle of responsible government to an assembly and defined the rights of the ruler and the ruled. Ever since its promulgation, to the Tunisian progressive circles, and even under French rule it was considered as the basis of any French reformatory action.

tionalists of those days were divided as to the manner and time for demanding independence. This was a factor which weakened the movement until the advent of the Neo-Destour. At any rate, moderation was the guiding principle of the time; reforms were demanded in the context of the protectorate.⁶

A complementary aspect in the history of the consolidation of Tunisian nationalism in the early 1920's was the adhesion of the Bey to the nationalist movement. The collaboration between the Tunisian sovereign and the Destour gave dignity to the ideology of the latter. It was indispensable to have the Bey involved in the struggle against the French to give a nationwide form to the movement. The unity between the throne and the Destour did not only assume a passive state, but one of dynamic and integral opposition to the French. With the delay of any French reformatory action, in 1922, the Bey presented an ultimatum to the Resident General, demanding fulfillment of a program of eighteen points,⁷ which was a reproduction of the demands of the Destour. He threatened resigna-

⁶Nicola Ziadeh, Origins of Nationalism in Tunisia (Beirut, 1962), p. 108.

⁷Ibid., pp. 117 - 118.

tion in case of failure to comply with the demands of the ultimatum. However, the Bey was not strong enough to pursue his claims to the end, and the nationalist movement lacked the energy and will to impress the French authorities. Hence, the expectations attached to the ultimatum were disappointed when the Resident General was able to modify the attitude of the Bey. Tunisian nationalism still lacked the personality to give it weight and prestige. Only then, would the French be obliged to respect the Tunisian claims and satisfy its demands.

In 1923 Bey Moncef died. With him disappeared the opposition of the court to French rule, at least for twenty more years to come. One phase in the struggle of the Tunisians against the French was over. The Destour lost its vitality and became practically in-existent. This passive state was to persist until the injection of a new vigor into Tunisian nationalism, which was to be effected by the new generation growing up in the ranks of the Destour.

The basic weakness in the Destour was the defective structure of its organization and leadership. It's leaders had grown old and lost touch with the realities of the new era. They continued to believe

in reformism as the remedy for the needs of Tunisia, at a time when a wave of genuine nationalism was manifesting itself in active oppositions to colonial rule, such as the Rif rebellion in Morocco and the Druze insurrection in Syria. Their ideology had become obsolete and ceased to attract the masses. Especially sensitive to the need of a new approach was the group of young intellectuals which was being formed around 1930. The new generation in the ranks of the Destour had ideals quite different than those of the Sfars and the Taalbis. To the basically Islamic orientation of the latter in all orders of thought and action, the former substituted a secular, progressive and Western set of principles. To the fundamentally evolutionist and reformatory direction of the latter, the new intelligentsia posed claims of independence, although not yet stated arbitrarily, because they knew that Tunisia needed the assistance of France. At any rate, the idea of independence, so vaguely expressed in the early days of Tunisian nationalism, became the core of the dogma of the new generation in the Destour.

This new orientation received an impetus in 1928, when two young Tunisian graduates returned to Tunis. They were Dr. Materi and Habib Bourguiba. In

a short time, they, especially the latter, took the direction of the party into their hands and began to mould it into a form which was different than the former in nature, structure, principles and objectives. At the Congress of the Destour on 12 - 13 May 1933, Bourguiba delivered a speech in which he condensed the aspirations of the new generation. He said that the independence of Tunisia was to become reality. But it was to be realized in collaboration with, not in antagonism to France. The repercussions of this speech were immense. The French authorities now realized that Tunisian nationalism had assumed a new direction, which in the final analysis could only be detrimental to France. A few days later, a policy of full-scale repression was applied; newspapers were banned and the Destour was dissolved. A new struggle was on its way.

Parallel to the Franco-Tunisian crisis, a struggle opened inside the Destour, between the old line Destourians and the new intelligentsia. The bold and assertive attitude of the latter disquieted the former and a split occurred between the two factions. In March 1934, a secret congress was organized at Kasar Hallal to settle the dispute which could have paralyzed Tunisian nationalism. The old Destourians,

seeing that the direction of events was slipping from their hands, refused to attend the congress. The present delegates, all Bourguibaline modernist thinkers, proceeded to elect a Political Bureau to replace the former Executive Commission, and so made the schism in the ranks of the Destour final. This act marked the genesis of the Neo-Destour.

With Bourguiba and his friends not only a young generation took the direction of Tunisian nationalism, but also a new political, social and tactical understanding was introduced into the idea of the struggle against the French. The essentials of the ideology of the new party were opposition to French imperialism, demand for a remedy to the misery of the Tunisians, and ultimately the emancipation and the independence of the fatherland from colonial rule. These objectives were not very much different from the demands of the Destour. In their criticism of French oppression, the attitudes of nearly all Tunisians were alike. However, what distinguished the Neo-Destour was its unique way of achieving the goal.

An important point on which the old and the new Destours disagreed was the issue of the role of Islam in the Tunisian national struggle against the French.

After the conquest of Tunisia a movement of cultural developments had been initiated through the education of large numbers of Tunisians, either in local educational institutions or in France. By this process, an archaic Islamic society was put into communication with a fundamentally secular modern culture. Thus, the problem of modernization became a burning issue for the Tunisian intellectuals. They could not abandon their faith; but for the adoption of modern cultural blessings, some Islamic principles had to be relinquished. The old intelligentsia held the Islamic nature of their movement foremost, and in that failed to challenge the French. The new intellectuals were aware that no progress could be achieved before giving Tunisian nationalism the dynamism it lacked. Thus, they framed the concept of a *synthetic* culture which would reflect Islamic and Western ideals equally in a harmonious way.⁸ Only through the adoption of a Western way of thinking and acting could the West be challenged; and the Neo-Destour endeavored to achieve this dynamic state not by sacrificing the Islamic heritage totally, but by adding those Western virtues to its

⁸A. Demeerseman, Le problème Tunisien, aperçus de psychologie (Tunis, 1945), p. 34.

essentially Islamic being, which would enable it to cope with the West.

The policy of the Neo-Destour in the first six months of its life was one of outright intransigence to the protectorate. The organization of the party was modelled on the centralized party structure which was currently practised in Italy. Party cells were formed all over the country, and the nationalistic education of the masses was carried on through the media available. The dynamic leaders of the Neo-Destour thought that to give a broader scope to their struggle, they had to involve the masses in the nationalist movement. Thus, they advocated the idea of collective, popular action to achieve political liberation and social emancipation.⁹ All these did not pass unobserved by the Resident General of the time Marcel Peyrouton. He comprehended the undesirable consequences of such a development for French power in Tunisia in the long run. In fact, the profound changes in the tactics and objectives of the activity of the Neo-Destour openly threatened the future of French presence in the Regency. So, to save this unfavorable situation the Resident

⁹Benjamin Rivlin, "The Tunisian Nationalist Movement", The Middle East Journal, vol. 6, 1952, p.171.

General tried to reach an agreement with the nationalist leaders. But his attempts came to naught, because what he proposed was too far from what the nationalists demanded. Seeing his initiative frustrated by the intransigence of the indigenous leaders, on September 3, 1934, he ordered the arrest of eight leaders of the Neo-Destour and their deportation to the Sahara. Repression was total, and Tunisian nationalism was effectively checked until the spring of 1936, when two events inaugurated a new phase in the activity of the Neo-Destour. First, in March 1936, Peyrouton was replaced by Armand Guillion, a statesman who showed a better understanding of Tunisian realities than his predecessor had. The second factor was the advent of the Popular Front to the lead of France. As an immediate effect of these changes, the imprisoned leaders of the Neo-Destour were liberated and the party was reconstructed once again.

Liberated, Bourguiba launched an active campaign through the pages of l'Action Tunisien and public meetings. However, the leadership of the party abandoned the policy of extremism and adopted the path of the gradual evolution for the fulfillment of their claims. Independence was still the acknowledged goal.

But it was conceived to be the consequence of a political, social and economic emancipation of the Tunisian people, a state of society which would be achieved by collaboration between the French and the élite of the Tunisian people which was the Neo-Destour itself.¹⁰

On August 28, 1936, a note on behalf of the Tunisians was submitted to Viénot. This document reflected the mild attitude of the Tunisian nationalists. It asked for the ending of official colonialism in Tunisia, complete reorganization of the fiscal system, compulsory education for all, eligibility of all Tunisians to all administrative posts including positions of authority, adequate relief for the sick and the poor, and a campaign against usury. What was demanded asked for the substitution of the existing corrupt regime of inequality, privilege and dictatorship by another which would be less despotic, more liberal, and would be inspired by considerations of common Franco-Tunisian interests.¹¹ Bourguiba left for France to communicate the demands of the Tunisians to the French authorities personally. He found a favorable atmos-

¹⁰Habib Bourguiba, La France et la Tunisie (Paris, 1954), pp. 91 - 92.

¹¹Ibid., p. 83.

phere in Paris; he was promised by Viénot an equitable settlement of the Tunisian question which would be effected after the latter's visit to Tunisia for a study of the situation on the spot.

In the fall of 1936, then, the turn of events had assumed a favorable direction for the Neo-Destour. Encouraged by the disposition of the new regime in France to consider to rights of the colonized peoples fairly, the Tunisians expressed their wishes loudly, in the hope of acquiring immediate reforms. However, they had irreconcilable foes in their way who would not admit to any change in the Tunisian structure, if it were not favorable to French interests. The two most important forces which operated to the detriment of the realization of the Tunisian demands in 1936 - 1938 were the colon opposition in Tunisia and French public opinion in general. In addition to these refractory forces, the tangled European situation necessitated the total attention of the French government to be concentrated upon European and domestic problems, such that it could not pay the due respect to the colonial problem in general, and, in this case, the Tunisian question.

In accord with the principles of French colon-

ial policy, the European population which had existed in Tunisia prior to 1881 was moulded into the class of the colons. In time, the latter had come to control all the organs of the political and economic life of the country, so that the wealth and resources they possessed gave them great prestige in 1936. Not only could they affect internal changes and developments, but they could also influence the policy of the home government through their partisans in the Metropole. In varying degrees, they enjoyed support in the ranks of the French Right and Left alike, for they stood for an ideal which seemed to be truly French - the ideal of French Tunisia which all Frenchmen cherished. They carried an extensive propaganda in France, to prove that the activities of the Neo-Destour were essentially anti-French and to convince the politicians of France that only an anti-liberal policy in Tunisia could preserve the status quo favorable to the French.¹² Indeed, they were successful in creating in France an antagonism with respect to the cause of the colonized peoples of the French Empire. Hardly a few politicians and intellectuals could see that the status quo of the French overseas territories belonged to past times, and

¹²Afrique Française, 1937, p. 92.

that sooner or later the French had to give way to the demands of Tunisian nationalism. Thus, in general, French public opinion was opposed to the demands of the Tunisians. The Right was categorically against any alteration in the existing structure. The parties of the Left were also reluctant to acknowledge the validity of the Tunisian demands. In principle, they admitted what the indigenous people wanted, but did not press to transform them into reality. French public opinion with respect to the Empire had still a long way to go to be able to be emancipated from its traditional conditionings and become realistically oriented.

The third factor which operated against the ideals of the Tunisian nationalists was the critical European political situation which demanded the complete attention of the Blum government. As a result, the Tunisian question, along with the questions of the other French colonies, remained of secondary concern to the French government. The French military chiefs were particularly anxious about the possibility of the loss of North Africa, because of the region's strategic importance. To them, the continuation of the French presence in Tunisia was a necessary condition for France's status of a great power.

The first stage of the "Franco-Tunisian experience"¹³ lasted until the fall of the Blum government in mid-1937. In this period the Tunisians had belief in the goodwill of the Popular Front; they had a special confidence in the personality of Viénot, the responsible minister for the colonial affairs of North Africa. They expected France to choose the policy of association and collaboration with respect to the Tunisians, instead of the traditional French policy of force and repression.¹⁴ However, this was an exaggerated estimation of the essence of the French attitude with respect to the colonies. On behalf of the French government, it was officially stated that France remained attached to the idea of the protectorate. To defend the incongruity of French policy in relation to Syria and Tunisia, it was stated that the nature of a mandate was different than that of a protectorate. Nevertheless, most Tunisians were still optimistic, because certain measures undertaken by the Popular Front government such as the abolition of the "décrets scélérats" of 1933, the granting of the right for the re-

¹³This was the term used by the Tunisian nationalists to refer to the history of the Franco-Tunisian relations 1936 - 1938.

¹⁴Bourguiba, op.cit., p. 96.

construction of the Neo-Destour, and permission for the republication of Arabic papers fed the faith that the benevolence of the French government extended beyond mere reforms and that a great change in the colonial structure of Tunisia was ahead.

But this attitude was to wither away as the French government reaffirmed its decision not to go beyond ordinary reforms. In this respect, the visit of Viénot to Tunis on March 1, 1937, was an important turning point. Once again, the minister who was the hope of North African expectations reaffirmed that the links between France and Tunisia were indissoluble, and that any change anticipated could only be accomplished within the context of the protectorate. Following this declaration, there was a feeling of great deception among the Tunisians. Three days later, the bloody clashes between the workers at the phosphate mines and the security forces marked the beginning of the deterioration of relations between the French and the Tunisians, which was to end in total repression a year later. Viénot's visit which was expected to quicken the rate of French reformatory action in the Regency ended disastrously, destroying the Franco-Tunisian entente even before the fall of the Blum government. After the coming of the Popular Front, the Tunisian nationalists

had intentionally mildened the tone of their demands and had advocated the policy of collaboration with the French authorities to realize their claims in a peaceful and a mutually beneficial manner. But this attitude was not comprehended by the Blum government for reasons cited above.¹⁵ Hence, in the shift of the policy of the Neo-Destour to extremism, which was the logical consequence of the French policy of negligence, the French played the role of negative agents, which they also repeated elsewhere in the French Empire.

The fall of the Blum government in June, 1937 marked the final end of the optimistic first stage of the "Franco-Tunisian experience" of the Popular Front era. With the accession of an executive authority of basically radical formation, the suspicion of the Tunisian nationalists increased as to an honorable settlement of their grievances. So, they devoted the second half of 1937 to reorganization and the adoption of a new line of action which was done at the Congress of the Neo-Destour, in the fall of the year.

The Congress of the Neo-Destour opened in an excited atmosphere. News of repressive French policy in Algeria and Morocco had acted negatively on the

¹⁵See pp. 66 + 67.

delegates of the Congress, among whom the intensification of an anti-French disposition was noticeable. There were two wings in the party: that of the moderates and that of the extremists. Each had the reasonable defence of its position. The moderates claimed that channels with France should not be closed, because the emancipation of the Tunisians would ultimately be realized by French assistance. On the other hand, the extremists demanded open opposition to the French, because their previous experiences had taught them that nothing could be expected of the imperialist masters other than deception. In the final report to the Congress, Bourguiba wisely summed up the attitudes of both wings. He stated that the Tunisian people had to look for its proper liberation nowhere else than to itself, to rely on its own means and resources.¹⁶ But he also satisfied the moderates by stating that emancipation with the support of France in a spirit of mutual understanding was the wish of the Tunisians.¹⁷

However, the Congress did not end in abstract formulations of policy. It decided to pass into the

¹⁶Bourguiba, op.cit., p. 127.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 152.

opposition to the French government, since the latter showed no sign of adopting an acceptable policy towards the Tunisians. As a sign of solidarity with their Maghrebian brethren, a strike was organized on November 20, despite the warnings of the Resident General. Soon activism surpassed the limits anticipated by the Tunisian moderates. In effect, Dr. Materi, the leader of the moderate wing in the Neo-Destour resigned from the party. On this, Bourguiba and the other leaders who thought passive opposition and peaceful demands would not give them what they wanted, took the direction of the party into their hands and organized a series of acts of public disturbance which marked the final phase of the "Franco-Tunisian experience" of the Popular Front era.

Beginning with December 1937, a series of acts of violence, planned and executed by the Neo-Destour, shocked the tranquility of Tunisia. These manifestations of social disobedience reached their climax in April 1938. On the 5th, the leaders of the Neo-Destour were arrested on the charge of creating disquietude in the country. In response to this act of repression, a general strike was decided on the 8th. It took place with the participation of tens of thousands of demonstrators. Public agitation against French rule

was rising high. The final scene took place on the 9th, when the rioters clashed with the security forces, and a bloodshed, unequalled since the Jellaz affair of 1911, occurred. As a result of these serious disturbances, the Bey, on the request of the Resident General, declared martial law. All assemblies of more than six persons were prohibited, and people carrying arms were declared to be liable to immediate arrest and trial by a military court. All Europeans were asked to stay indoors, while troops patrolled the empty streets.¹⁸ Subsequent to this defeat of the indigenous people, the French authorities proceeded to attack Tunisian nationalism by destroying all that had been created by it and by deporting its leaders to the Sahara. Within a short time, a remarkable tranquility was restored in the Regency and the French rejoiced at their victory.

Of the three North-West African territories under French rule, Tunisia had the strongest links with the militant nationalism of the Arab East. The success of the Egyptian, Iraqi and Syrian nationalists inspired confidence and will to Bourguiba and his friends, and in 1938 they demanded a treaty with France, similar to that

¹⁸The Times, April 11, 1938.

of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, as the first step towards the realization of national independence.¹⁹ The "Franco-Tunisian experience" of the Popular Front era ended in total failure, because the French were not willing to concede to the Tunisians what they had granted to the Syrians and the Lebanese in 1936. But the status quo of 1938 did not promise any permanence, for it was achieved by the victory of the might of arms over the natural right of a people to live independently.

¹⁹The Economist, vol. 131, 1938, p. 137.

CHAPTER III

THE POPULAR FRONT AND THE COMITE D'ACTION MAROCAINE

Within a few decades at the end of the nineteenth century, Western imperialism swept over all Africa, save for a few territories. The English, the French, the German, and the other colonialist powers divided the black continent among themselves peacefully. It was a collective endeavor in which all Europe was engaged; the great powers often sat at conference tables to reshape the map of Africa and to legalize internationally a new territorial acquisition. But friction among the rival powers over questions of the partition of Africa was inevitable. None of the powers wished armed conflict, and so, the principle of compensation was applied to preserve peace. This implied the survival of the relative balance in the territorial holdings of the respective European states in Africa, by allowing a proportional increment on the Empire of each other power in the case of an annexation by any one power. All this was accomplished at ease, because of the then general state of decadence of the medieval African states. There was little active resistance to hinder European expansion in Africa, and the indigenous peoples eventually bowed before the might of the arms

which Europe possessed in virtue of her progress.

Because of its proximity to the European mainland, North Africa had been an attractive area for imperialist expansion. It was especially so for the French, who, having secured the domination of Algeria and Tunisia, affirmed their intention not to let any European power establish itself in North Africa. At the opening of the twentieth century Morocco was the only independent state in the area, and the greedy appetites of all the imperialist powers wished to possess her. Already all of them held commercial privileges in the Sherifian Empire, and a host of European traders traversed the country continually. But the chaotic internal situation was so precarious for their normal commercial activities that a sort of protection was necessary which the Sultan could not offer. Thus, the lack of protection of European traders began to serve as a pretext for European infiltration and even for armed interventions.¹ In addition, the state of decadence which had characterized Morocco ever since the fifteenth century, had ushered her into the twen-

¹Before the armed intervention of 1912 which led to the establishment of the French Protectorate over Morocco, there had been many cases of the violation of the boundaries of the Sherifian Empire by France.

tieth century untouched by progress in any realm.²
This state of backwardness was a factor which convinced the colonial powers of Europe that Morocco was an easy prey.

The seizure of Morocco, however, became an inter-European diplomatic question, and was ultimately solved through diplomatic channels. As it became evident that the collapse of the Sherifian Empire was inevitable, the mutual rivalries and jealousies among the European states intensified. France, the major claimant, feared a German seizure and sought to possess Morocco at any cost for the safety of her other North-African territories. In her turn, Great Britain did not wish to see the security of the Straits of Gibraltar threatened by any strong power. Spain did not wish to be overlooked and expected her just share, because of her historic interests in Morocco. Thus, Morocco's fate was bound to Europe; she had become a focus of European interest by 1900.

In 1904 Great Britain and Italy recognized French preponderance in Morocco. In this way the international position of France as the claimant of Morocco was strengthened. But the Germans labored

² Neville Barbour, Morocco (London, 1965), p.141.

ardently to ward off the possibility of a new French annexation in the Maghreb. This irreconcilable antagonism to French colonial expansion led to the crisis of 1906, which could have turned into an armed conflict had not the practice of congresses been applied immediately. The Conference of **Algeciras** gathered all the powers which had interests in Morocco to find an acceptable formula for Europe's relation with the decadent Empire. At the conclusion of the Conference the powers agreed upon a convention, known as the Act of Algeciras, which defined the interrelations between the European states and Morocco in such terms that it seemed to be a German diplomatic victory. The Act was based on a threefold basis: the sovereignty and independence of the Sultan, the integrity of his Empire, and the equality in the economic privileges of the powers.³ The significance of the Act of Algeciras was that it put the Moroccan question in an international context and rendered a unilateral action by France impossible.

However, the Act of Algeciras was effective in preserving the status quo for the time being only. Developments during 1906 - 1912 militated in favor of

³ Rom Landau, The Moroccan Drama 1900 - 1955 (London, 1956), p. 78.

France. England and Italy continued to back France, and Germany could not find allies for the support of her demands. Finally the fate of Morocco was resolved by a Franco - German Convention signed on November 4, 1911. By this agreement Germany gave France a free hand in Morocco, in return for a transfer to her of a territory of 107,270 square miles in the Congo. Thus, after compensating Germany, France felt secure in Europe. By a military operation conducted in March 1912, the French army converted the Sherifian Empire into a French Protectorate.

The change in the political state of Morocco was not accepted indifferently by Moroccan society. Reactions of two kinds marked the genesis of the French Protectorate. First, there was an armed opposition which lasted until 1934. This was organized by the tribes for the preservation of the quasi-autonomous status which they had enjoyed under the weak rule of the Sultans, and which centralized French rule came to destroy. But the significant reaction which reflected upon the past as well as the future of Morocco was a spiritual-ideological one.⁴ The seized country had been an independent Empire with an uninterrupted historical existence of over a millenium. It had had

⁴Ibid., p. 82.

diplomatic representatives in European capitals as a sovereign state. The idea of the identity of Moroccan culture and traditions was well rooted in the mentality of Moroccans. In short, Morocco was a country with a brilliant past ; and the subjugation of such a state and society was not so easy as was anticipated by the imperialists in those days. Instead of the expected passivity, there was much consternation in Moroccan society and the submission of the Sultan to the French was considered as an act of betrayal of Islam and Morocco itself. This marked individuality and continuity in the political and cultural history of Morocco contradict the argument of French zealots who claim that in 1912 Morocco was nothing but a mass of tribes living in chaos, having no conception of either statehood or nationhood.

In this connection, the work accomplished by Marshal Lyautey, the first Resident General in Morocco, was remarkable. Actually, his conception of the Moroccan reality was very odd from the French point of view. In 1916, when he had had only a short experience in Morocco, he stated that he had found in the Sherifian Empire a genuine state and a clearly defined people. In fact, the Treaty of Fez⁵ recognized this fact in-

⁵This was the Protectorate Treaty of 1912.

directly, as Morocco was made a protectorate, not a colony, in which France was to act as a tutor, protector, to lead the backward state on the path of progress. The treaty acknowledged the inviolability of the sovereignty of the Sultan and stated that the Resident General was to rule in his name. However, most Frenchmen did not wish to comprehend the nature of the term protectorate. Lyautey applied the real definition of the term into practice. It meant a country preserving its institutions and administering itself by its native organs under the supervision of a European power which would take care of its defence, economy and foreign affairs.⁶ Lyautey never forgot that the French were invaders in Morocco, and that most of the indigenous people detested them. He was there to alter this feeling. Toward this, he inaugurated a policy of indirect rule and the training of an indigenous administration. He acted so as to increase the prestige of the Sultan, rather than neglect his existence. To realize the ideal protectorate, he mobilized all his possible resources. But this revolutionary conception of imperialism rendered his Moroccan work vulnerable. His successors and their superiors in Paris reversed his

⁶ Paul Buttin, Le drame du Maroc (Paris, 1955), pp. 62 - 63.

evolutionary policy, thus initiating the beginning of the decline of the French presence in Morocco. The inclination toward colonialism and direct administration led to the insecurity of the French in Morocco. The seizure of Morocco was already illegal, because the Act of Algeciras had internationally guaranteed the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Sherifian Empire. The violation of the nature of the Treaty of Fez by the successors of Lyautey was another manifestation of the policy of negligence which the French applied in Morocco. Out of this condition was Moroccan nationalism born, as a counterforce to the French policy of alienation, to a state of thinking and feeling which tried to denaturalize Moroccan identity.⁷

The decisive event which awakened Moroccan nationalism was the revolt of Abd el-Krim. This uprising, begun in the Rif area in the Spanish zone of Morocco⁸ in 1921, continued for five years, spread to the French zone and was ultimately put down by the combined Franco-Spanish armies with great difficulty.

⁷ Ibid., p. 107.

⁸ By the Convention of Madrid of November 27, 1912, the northern shores of Morocco along the Mediterranean were transferred to Spain as her share in the Moroccan spoil.

The rebellion showed what resources of energy and courage still existed in the Moroccan people. It is not pure coincidence that the defeat and exile of Abd el-Krim coincided with the genesis of a new type of opposition to the protectorate. In 1926, an organized political resistance to French rule began by the formation of the nuclei of two political associations.

By 1926, a generation of students had emerged from the educational institutions which Lyautey had founded. Through French instruction, Moroccans were introduced to the great evolutionary and revolutionary history of France, to the Enlightenment, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and the ideals of the French Revolution. Instead of adapting the nature of the protectorate to the intellectual and ideological changes in Moroccan society, the French went deeper in their policy of alienation by trying to inject Morocco with a neo-French civilization, that is, to assimilate Moroccan society totally, instead of restoring her traditional Muslim and Arab personality. As French policy ceased to conform with the articles of the protectorate⁹;

²⁹After the resignation of Lyautey in 1925, his colonial conception was deserted.

as it became evident that the objective of France was the total economic, cultural and political transformation of Morocco, the indigenous people led by its intelligentsia reacted.

In August 1926, eight men educated in Western culture, met secretly at Rabat and resolved to reestablish the ancient glory and independence of Morocco. They realized that adhesion to an outworn way of life had been the main cause of Morocco's decline. So it was through the application of modernism and progressive Western principles that they hoped to recover the lost sovereignty of Morocco.

In the same year, a similar meeting took place in Fez, organized by the students of the Koranic University of Karaouine. Unlike the Rabat group, this center of opposition had a religious inspiration which sought the remedy of the decadence of Moroccan state and society in a return to the purity of the thought and teachings of the Koran and the Traditions. It was this politico-religious form of Moroccan nationalism, led by Allal al-Fassi, which won the sympathy of most Moroccan intellectuals, and eventually of the bulk of the Moroccan population. The inseparability of the Islamic faith and the national consciousness of Morocc-

ans was an undeniable fact. In 1927, the two centers of opposition to French imperialism united and formed a single movement, which, although predominated by Islam, had at the same time a modern, progressive and Western orientation.

The racial and linguistic diversity of Moroccan society into Arab and Berber was thought by the French to be a weapon in their hands to neutralize and paralyze the newly nascent Moroccan opposition to French presence in Morocco. In fact, a third of the Moroccan population spoke Berber and the rest used Arabic dialects. The French thought that there were no bonds of unity between Arab and Berber, except their common loyalty to Islam.¹⁰ Thus, they issued the Berber Dahir in 1930, the apparent purpose of which was to base French rule firmly in Morocco, at the expense of the violation of the traditional structure of Moroccan society. As it stood, the Dahir was a purely judicial and administrative measure. It provided for the legal independence of the Berbers from the Sharia, the Islamic law, by transferring the right to exercise law to the djemaas instead of the caids and the pashas who

¹⁰ Walter Cline, "Nationalism in Morocco", The Middle East Journal, vol. 1, 1947, p. 18.

were the personal representatives of the Sultan. In this way, the Dahir curtailed the Sultan's prerogatives as the defender of the Islamic faith and law, by splitting Moroccan society into two sections with different legal systems. It was the policy of "divide and rule" which the French pursued to no avail. They thought the Dahir would be popular in the Berber districts, and hence win them to the French side against the Arabs. Such the balance, it was thought, would favor the French presence in Morocco.

But the Berber Dahir was primarily an offence to Islam. Religious dynamism had a totally different intensity in Morocco than anywhere in Europe. Lyautey would have apprehended this fact and would have never led the French into such an infamy as was the Dahir, because he would have foreseen the moral setback that France would suffer from such an action. It was not surprising, therefore, that Arab and Berber resented the Dahir equally as an attack on Islam. They had co-existed for long centuries and the determination of the French to separate them seemed an infringement upon their Moroccan identity. Intended to create a dualism in Moroccan society, the Dahir consolidated Moroccan unity by appealing to their Islamic heritage.

In its consequences, the Berber Dahir helped mould the first political opposition openly manifested in Morocco.¹¹ This opposition had clearly a nationalist color, because it was a nationwide resentment against foreign intrusion. However, it must be admitted that the consequences of the Berber Dahir did not introduce nationalism as a novel ideology; it only helped crystallize what was already there in the form of religious identity and national sentiment. Until 1930, the opposition to French rule had been especially a student-intellectual movement; the masses were not involved yet. But the Berber Dahir, seen as a legislation directed against the religious and national being of Morocco, automatically rallied the masses in a common front against the French. Thus, France had only herself to blame for arousing Moroccan nationalism against her.

In the history of the growth of Moroccan nationalism, the impact of Arab Eastern nationalism in Egypt, Syria and Iraq could not but be of paramount significance.¹² The echo of the successes of the nationalists in the latter countries in the 1930's, inspired the

¹¹ Le Tourneau, op.cit., p. 185.

¹² Robert Montagne, Révolution au Maroc (Paris, 1953), p. 381.

hope among the Moroccans that their lost sovereignty could be restored. Another channel through which the impact of the Arab East was felt was Islam. In this respect the influence of the Pan-Islamic Congress of Jerusalem of 1931 was also notable in the history of the growth of Moroccan nationalism. The Congress instituted a bureau to promote Islamic ideals in Moslem states oppressed by colonialism, for the purpose of strengthening the ties among the Moslems of all the world. So, the impact of the Arab East helped frustrate the French policy of assimilation and reassert the identity of Morocco in the French whole.

A landmark in the history of the growth of Moroccan nationalism was the union of the throne and the popular movement. The Sultan was the temporal as well as the spiritual head of Morocco, and in that he commanded great respect and authority, he embodied Morocco in a way. Hence for the nationalists it was indispensable to win him over. In 1927, when he ascended to the throne, Mohammed V was a youth of sixteen. The French had pushed through his succession, because they thought he could be a perfect tool, to be manipulated in their hands. In fact, in the first years of his reign, Mohammed V did not enjoy any popularity,

especially in the days of the crisis of the Berber Dahir which he had signed as the nominal head of the executive authority. Nevertheless, the Moroccan nationalists looked for ways to reconcile their movement with the Sultan. To this effect, they tried to popularize the Sultan. In this connexion, the latter's visit to Fez in 1934, brought the unity of the throne and the nationalist masses a step nearer. He was received in this old, cultural capital of Morocco by ovations and acclamations which took the shape of a nationalist manifestation. The Resident General sought to curtail the riots which had begun to assume an anti-French form. A number of arrests were carried out and the traditional policy of repression was applied once again. However, the nationalist movement did not suffer any loss; no disintegration in its ranks were recorded as a result of suppression. Moreover, the Sultan had been won to the side of the nationalists. He told them that his sentiments were with them, but that he did not wish to back them openly, because in such a case French reprisals would be severer.

The Moroccan nationalist movement received a new impetus in 1934 with the foundation of the Comité d'Action Marocaine. The decade preceding 1934 had witnessed the genesis of centers of opposition to

French rule, but the movement still lacked the dynamism of political parties. The leaders were young, lacked experience as well as solid ideological foundations to their principles. Thus, the Committee of Action was created to give Moroccan nationalism uniform direction. It grouped all shades of opinion: the Islamic and Arabic minded zealots as well as the gallicized herodians.¹³ This combination was not easy to achieve, but the national common denominator led to the resolution of differences, and all the prominent nationalist leaders joined in the Committee of Action.¹⁴

What was the motive which inspired the Moroccan nationalists to join efforts and struggle collectively? Ever since the departure of Lyautey, the grip of French rule was becoming severer. The Treaty of Fez had transferred the administration of Morocco to the French temporarily. But the French showed no signs of relinquishing any of the prerogatives they held in the Sherifian Empire in virtue of the protectorate treaty. They re-

¹³Toynbee, op.cit., p. 509.

¹⁴The principal figures in the Committee of Action were Mohammed Hassan el-Ouazzani, Ahmed Balafrej and Allul al-Fassi. Other names of prominent Moroccan nationalists are given in Julien, op.cit., p. 151.

fused to train and employ a native administration. The principle of direct rule instead of the "control" of the Moroccan administration was applied full-scale, eliminating the indigenous people from the administration of their country.¹⁵ The French did not wish to live up to the essence of the protectorate, because that implied the anti-thesis of the French conception of imperialism. Thus, alive to the consequences of this state of affairs, the nationalists drew closer.

On December 1, 1934, the Committee of Action promulgated the Plan of Reforms. It was first published in Cairo, in Arabic, later in French. It was a booklet of 134 pages which listed the causes of the dissatisfaction of the Moroccans, and ended with proposals for reform. At first, the causes of the malaise marocaine were found in the racial, partial, obscurantist, anti-liberal, colonialist and assimilationist policy of France.¹⁶ After this introduction, the Plan listed the reforms necessary which covered all aspects of Moroccan life. The political reforms asked for the gradual replacement of the French administration by a

¹⁵Marvine Howe, "The Birth of the Moroccan Nation", The Middle East Journal, vol. 10, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁶Le Tourneau, op.cit., p. 189.

Moroccan one. Municipal authorities should also be uniquely composed of Moroccans. In the judicial sphere, the application of the Sharia for all Moroccans was asked. Social reforms included educational, hygenical and syndical matters. In finance and economics, the Plan asked for the independence of the Bank of Morocco from the Banque de Paris et du Pays-Bas. Protection of the peasants was also asked for by modernizing agriculture and guaranteeing them against the French settlers. At the end of the Plan, some special reforms were added which asked for no "Berber policy", the equality of Arabic and French in the administration, and the respect to the flag and the national anthem of Morocco.

Although national independence was not requested, explicit in the Plan was a clearly defined nationalism. In their colonial experience, the French were motivated by one principle, one belief, that the indigenous peoples were inferior to them and had to be raised to their standard. As it stood, this policy was humanitarian than anything else. But transferred into the political context, it assumed a different nature. Thus, instead of being thanked by the indigenous peoples of the French Empire, France came to be considered the

great enemy which tried to naturalize them, to strip them of their national identity. Hence, the Plan of Reforms turned out as the anti-thesis of the French conception of the nature of colonialism. It was natural then, that the Plan should not receive any hearing in France.

The coming of the Popular Front government in France was welcomed enthusiastically in Morocco as elsewhere in the French Empire. It was true that the general attitude in France in regard to the nascent nationalisms in the French colonies was one of antagonism, but the French Left, which was the government of France by mid-1936, promised to deal with the colonial question equitably and satisfy the demands of the peoples of the French Empire. In Morocco, the first measures undertaken by the new government seemed promising. Marcel Peyrouton, the ill-famed Resident General was recalled. His tenure of office in Morocco had been characterized by a policy of repression; indigenous developments had been checked severely and the grip of French direct rule had been strengthened. But disillusionment was soon to reappear among the Moroccan nationalists as the next choice was General Nogués. The new Resident General had been in the administration

of Morocco during the days of the Berber Dahir. Moreover, he was a military man, so the nationalists feared that his administration would be stricter than the former.

The Moroccans did not wait for events to take their course. They began to pursue an active policy by appeals to the Paris government. In October, 1936, Mohammed Hassan el-Ouazzani and Oman Ben Abdeljalil departed for Paris and presented to Pierre Viénot, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs in the French government, the claims of the Committee of Action, which were a restatement of the Plan of Reforms of 1934. Parallel to the appeal to Paris, meeting in Fez under the presidency of Allal al-Fassi, the Committee of Action decided to hold public meetings for the double purpose of rallying a greater number of the masses to their cause and attract the attention of the French authorities to the wide extent of the Moroccan opposition.

As the French authorities in Morocco realized that the course of events was slipping away from their control, they reacted by repression. The French authorities could not reconcile their presence with manifestations claiming that which was the anti-thesis of their conception of French rule in Morocco. Thus

followed the crisis of November 1936; further meetings were banned by the French authorities and the principal leaders of the Moroccan opposition were arrested. But the significant aspect of the crisis was the reaction of the masses to the arbitrary policy of Nogués. The demonstrations of November 1936, organized to protest against the recent arrests, were not serious and violent, but they witnessed the success of the new direction which the Committee of Action wished to give to Moroccan nationalism; and the nationalist leaders were correct in their estimation. Had there not been the pressure of the popular demonstrations, Nogués could have kept the leaders of the opposition in jail. But the activism of the popular element persuaded the Resident General to adopt a milder policy and show respect to the will of the people. In effect, the imprisoned leaders were released in January, 1937, and the banned Arabic papers were permitted to reappear. This was a clear victory for Moroccan nationalism.

However, this bright period ended soon, as a result of a schism in the ranks of the Committee of Action. The great leaders of Moroccan nationalism were not totally unanimous in their understanding of the needs of their country. Although the rivalry between

the two nationalist factions headed by al-Fassi and Ouazzani involved minor tactical issues and personal jealousies, still, its reflection upon Moroccan nationalism was a great setback for the movement. From his exile in Switzerland Sheikh Shekib Arslan exerted all his influence to reconcile the intransigent leaders and save the decline of Moroccan nationalism; but his attempts were to no avail. The Committee of Action had become vulnerable by the paralysis inflicted upon itself by its own leaders. For the French, this seemed a most suitable opportunity to destroy Moroccan nationalism completely. Thus, in March 1937, the Committee of Action was dissolved by the liberal, anti-colonialist and leftist Popular Front government.

The crisis of March 1937 revealed the true nature of the Popular Front as far as colonial matters were concerned. It made evident the absence of a French policy with respect to the nationalist movements in the French colonies.¹⁷ Since its foundation, al-Fassi's nationalist movement had enjoyed the support of the French Socialist Party. So, when the Popular Front acceded to power in France, it was sincerely hoped that

¹⁷Roman Fajans, Alerte en Afrique du nord (Paris, 1953), p. 91.

the Moroccan question would deserve their favorable consideration. But what the French consented to grant was conditioned by motives purely French imperialistic. As a result, there emerged an incongruity between what was asked for by the Moroccans¹⁸ and what the French were inclined to grant. This was the deadlock which impeded the realization of any positive change in the political status of Morocco in 1936 - 1937.

By the act of dissolving the Committee of Action the French authorities hoped to silence Moroccan nationalism, and hence inter the Moroccan question. The consequences of the repressive act of March 1937, however, turned out the contrary of what the French had anticipated. Instead of one, two new parties emerged which pursued the ideals and goals of the Committee of Action. Al-Fassi founded the National Party for the Realization of Reforms, and Guazzani founded the Popular Mouvement. Both parties decided to adopt a policy of activism through popular manifestation for the support of their demands. The significant aspect of the two parties was that they enjoyed wide support among the popular masses. In 1934, Moroccan nationa-

¹⁸The Plan of Reforms of 1934 was kept the basis of the claims of the Moroccans in 1936 - 1937.

lism was embodied by a small group of intellectuals; in 1937, the movement had become a national one. The events of the autumn of 1937 proved that Moroccan nationalism had achieved a firm foundation which the French could not overcome by repression.

The crisis of late 1937 arose as a result of the reversion of the water of the river Bou Ferkane to the profit of four colons, depriving vast indigenous agricultural areas of water. In a poor agrarian country like Morocco, where water to the barren land is as blood to the organic body, this act provoked intense popular feeling against the French. Psychological tension between the Moroccans and the French had already accumulated in the summer; the ground for a clash had been prepared on the one hand by the unsatisfactory colonial policy of the Popular Front government, and on the other hand by the active nationalist policy of the two newly founded Moroccan political parties. On September 1, there was a strike in Meknès, the people gathered in the mosque shouting "water, water". The next day, to disperse crowds assembled for new acts of agitation, the troupes fired upon the Moslems, killing thirteen and wounding about one hundred. Wide arrests followed, but the upheaval did not

subside and spread to the major cities of the Sherifian Empire. Manifestations of protest were organized as an evidence of the solidarity of the Moroccans. On October 4, the day when the Moslem Congress of Bloudan, Syria, opened, manifestations were organized in Casablanca to mark the solidarity of the Moroccans with the Moslems of the Arab East.

In face to the growing atmosphere of commotion which had evidently an anti-French nature, the Resident General demanded authorization from the central government to put down the Moroccan upheaval by the use of force. But the French government was hesitant to do so. However, the events of October, 1937, which showed the full intensity of Moroccan nationalism by the spread of public disturbances to the major cities of Morocco, convinced the French authorities in Paris that French power in Morocco was at stake. On October 25, the Resident General received full authorization to deal with the Moroccan situation as he judged best. Within a short time he actualized his reactionary plan; he dissolved the parties of al-Fassi and Ouazzani, arrested the major nationalist leaders and subsequently exiled them to distant places. As a result, a phenomenal tranquility was reestablished in Morocco. But these

acts of repression did not cause the disintegration of the Moroccan nationalist movement; on the contrary, public opinion considered the exiled as martyrs and reasserted their faith in the line of action advocated by their leaders.

The disturbances of the fall of 1937 in Morocco were formidable. For a short time it appeared that the French had lost the command of the situation. It was only by the use of arms that the situation was redressed. However, the French success could not be lasting, because a dynamic nationalism, which had since long taken hold of Egypt and Syria, had swept Morocco. The success of the independence movements in the Arab East had given a vigor and a will to Moroccan nationalism, which sheer repression could not overcome.¹⁹ The French were not inclined to comprehend this nature of the Moroccan situation of 1937. For the colons the opposition to French rule was organized by some adventurers who were followed by a blind mass.²⁰ The consequences of this underestimation of Moroccan nationalism would not be felt in 1937 or immediately after. The

¹⁹The Economist, vol. 129, 1937, p. 254.

²⁰Afrique Française, 1937, pp. 458 - 459.

future would show what could be the price of such a policy of negligence and indifference.

French policy with respect to the nascent nationalism in Morocco was one of indifference and antagonism. Instead of guiding it, the French rejected its reality. Even the Popular Front was not devoid of this error which helped nothing but the creation of an anti-French ideology in Morocco. Admitting that independence was the acknowledged goal of Moroccan nationalism,²¹ it can be stated that in the period under discussion the demands of the nationalists were modest; they did not ask for outright independence, because the country was not yet ready for self-government. All they wanted was the continuation of the evolutionary policy of Lyautey on the basis of the spirit of the Treaty of Fez. But the frustrations Moroccans felt in this respect, led them gradually to proclaim complete independence as the only means to assure to rights of Moroccans.²² This did not coincide with the era of the Popular Front; but the blunder committed by the Blum government of underestimating the

²¹See p. 83.

²²Landau, op.cit., p. 155.

Moroccan question definitely moulded the feeling that the dissociation of Morocco from France was desirable.

So long as France did not show respect for the historical personality of Morocco, her policy in the Sherifian Empire was to crash to the force of Moroccan nationalism, sooner or later. Only people of no past history could bear the assimilatory nature of French colonialism. No Moroccan ever felt inferior for having belonged to his distinct fatherland and society; on the contrary, the historic grandeur of his country inspired him. For these reasons the prospects of assimilating Morocco seemed condemned to fail in advance. However, the politicians of 1936 - 1937 were not aware of this fact and pursued the traditional French colonial policy directly or indirectly.

In conclusion, it can be stated in the light of the above discussion that the colonial policy of the Popular Front was based upon a mistaken estimation of the Moroccan situation. It was based on the conviction that it was possible to assimilate Morocco into the French polity. The Socialists had expressed their sympathy to the Moroccan cause before 1936. But in power, they followed a more prudent colonial policy than they had seemed to promise. Their friendliness

had a limit; and as the Moroccans claimed that²³ which was beyond that limit, they met determinant resistance in France, and the Popular Front did not form an exception in this respect. Possessing the means and having to deal with a relatively immature movement, the French could withstand Moroccan nationalism in 1937. But this was a transient success, for the nationalist movement was reorganized secretly, and after the Second World War emerged as an insurmountable force; the outcome was to be the end of French rule and the realization of Moroccan independence in 1956.

²³Refer to the Plan of Reforms.

CHAPTER IV

THE FAILURE TO RATIFY THE FRANCO-SYRIAN AND FRANCO-LEBANESE TREATIES OF 1936

During the First World War, the future of Arab lands under Ottoman rule began to occupy the attention of the Allies. The British government was especially eager to settle the question of the re-shaping of the map of the Arab East before the close of the war. The British government was also eager to secure the help of the Arabs on their Middle-Eastern front against the Turks who were the allies of the Central Powers. To this effect, a correspondence began between Sir Henry MacMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussain, the Sharif of Mecca. In a short time agreement was reached: the Sharif promised to revolt against the Turks in return for a British promise of independence to the Arabs in the post-war period.

In the meantime, the future of the Arab East began to be discussed among the Allies also. On May 16, 1916, a secret treaty, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, was concluded between Great Britain and France. It envisaged the creation of an international zone in Palestine, a British zone extending from the

Persian Gulf to Haifa on the Mediterranean, a French zone along the Mediterranean coast of Syria from Acre to Cilicia, and an independent Arab state in the interior of Syria and the Vilayet of Mosul under British and French spheres of influence. The spirit of the Sykes-Picot Agreement differed greatly from the nature of the agreement with the Sharif. The Sykes-Picot Agreement provided for the division of the Fertile Crescent into a number of zones, thus destroying the idea of a unitary Syrian state for which the Arabs had revolted against the Turks in 1916.

When the war ended, Faisal, the Sharif's third son, had already overran Syria, and his ascendancy to the head of the new state was imminent. In November 1918, things seemed bright for the aspirations of Arab nationalists in Syria. By a new Anglo-French declaration, the Allies promised to facilitate the establishment of native governments in Syria and Mesopotamia. However, the French soon objected to the idea of creating an independent Syrian state, because they had always considered Syria as the territory of their influence in the case of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. They feared the British were anxious to annex Syria. Indeed, the events after November 1918 proved what the French had feared most; General Allenby arrived

in Syria, organized the territory and assumed supreme command on behalf of the British government. This act violated the Sykes-Picot Agreement, because Allenby commanded the coastal region of Syria also, an area which had been promised to the French by the same agreement. Thus, Franco-British relations deteriorated, and the future of Syria remained unsettled. In this confused situation, the Covenant of the League of Nations was drafted, Article 22 (paragraph 4) of which read as follows:

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a state of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

Thus, Syria, falling in the category of states included in the above document, was to become a mandated territory. But two questions had to be settled before this could be realized. First, which great power was to be the Mandatory; and second, what the boundaries of the new Syrian state were to be.

At the Paris Peace Conference, Faisal proposed his plan in June 1919. He acceded to the British rights in Iraq, the French rights in Mount Lebanon, and

the establishment in Palestine of a special regime. But for the rest of Syria he demanded independence in the form of a unitary state, to be made a mandatory of the League of Nations. He expressed his preference that it be United States, and failing that, Great Britain. Evidently, the course of events had taken an anti-French direction. The King-Grane Commission, which arrived in Syria on behalf of the League of Nations to learn about the wishes of the indigenous people for their choice of a Mandatory, affirmed the anti-French attitude of the majority of Syrians. However, the impasse was solved by a new Franco-British agreement, on September 15, 1919. By this act, coastal Syria and Cilicia passed to the French in return to certain concessions to be made to the British in Mesopotamia and Palestine. Thus, the destiny of Syria was settled without recourse to the League of Nations or the Syrians themselves. The repercussions of this settlement were very important in Syria. The Arabs thought that they had been deserted by the British. In fact, it was very evident that the war-time promises had been undermined for the sake of inter-European bargains. The Balfour Declaration¹ of November 1917

¹By this declaration, the British government expressed its agreement to the idea of the creation of a Jewish "national home" in Palestine.

had already begun to inspire an anti-British feeling among the Arabs. Thus, the effects of the Franco-British agreement of September 1919 turned out to be detrimental to British prestige in the Levant.

Subsequent to the above agreement, General Gouraud arrived in Beirut and began the reorganization of Syria. However, in the interior, Arab nationalists continued to seek the idea of the independent Arab state. On March 8, 1920, a Pan-Syrian Congress met at Damascus and unanimously declared the unified Kingdom of Syria including Palestine and elected Faisal as the first king. What had happened was essentially against French aspirations in Syria. The British were also worried by this act which touched upon British interests as well. So, by another international act, at San Remo in April 1920, Syria was given to France and Palestine to Great Britain. This had naturally a negative effect in Syria, where the number of incidents increased threateningly. In this situation, only decisive French military action could settle this crisis as the French wished. On July 15, 1920, Gouraud sent an ultimatum to Faisal which insisted upon the immediate acceptance of the French Mandate, the control over the Syrian railways, the establishment of a new Franco-

Syrian currency, the occupation of Aleppo, and the punishment of "revolutionary criminals". Although Faisal accepted the ultimatum, the French forces marched to the interior of Syria. Damascus was captured on July 25, Faisal was dethroned, and the French Mandate was established officially over all the territory envisaged by the San-Remo Agreement.

As the French settled in Syria, the question of the boundaries of the state emerged. The French preferred to divide the territory into certain units on the community basis, so as to weaken Syrian nationalism. In his report to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, the French delegate pointed out that the Syrian populations were far from favoring national unity. He concluded that the loosest form of federation would only suit the Syrians, because they were so heterogeneous ethnically.² This was the imperialist policy of divide and rule for which purpose the French invented the idea of a Federal Syria. The French pursued this policy, because they did not believe and did not wish to believe in the idea of the unity of Syria. General Gouraud expressed

²League of Nations, Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission, August 19, 1922, p. 65.

French opinion in this respect very clearly when he publicly referred to Syria as a "geographic expression."³ Thus, from the outset, the French hurt Syrian nationalist sentiment and prepared the way for the clash of French and Syrian opinions.

The French were to have a difficult relationship with the Arabs of Syria because of a few factors which were absent in North Africa. First, there was a developed nationalism in Syria; the Arab character of the territory had not been changed during its long history under Turkish rule. Secondly, the Arabs were proud of their culture, so the prestige of French civilization could not operate in favor of French rule. Finally, the Syrians were conditioned against the French policy of assimilation.⁴ Thus, the history of the Mandate was to be a period of frustration for both sides: the French wishing to perpetuate their domination, and the Syrians trying to end it as soon as possible.

³Alphonse Joffre, Le Mandat de la France sur la Syrie et le Grand-Liban (Lyon, 1924), p. 98.

⁴Stephan Duggan, "The Syrian Question", Journal of International Relations, vol. II, No. 4, April, 1921, p. 587.

According to the terms of the Mandate,⁵ France exercised power on behalf of the League of Nations. An Organic Law was to be framed within three years in agreement with the native authorities, to facilitate the evolution of the mandated territories towards independence.⁶ But France had no intention of relinquishing her rights in the short period envisaged by the Mandate Treaty. On the other hand, the local populations thought of the Mandatory as a transient tutor, holding provisional authority. Out of this clash of conceptions arose tension between France and the indigenous peoples of the Levant.

The great failure of French rule in the Levant was the failure to secure the collaboration of the local peoples, to be able to carry on the functions of the Mandatory satisfactorily. Ideally, the mandate was a system of government based on the idea of collaboration, in which the Mandatory was to advise, suggest and survey the political and social developments in the mandated territories.⁷ But in practice, what the French

⁵It was published on July 24, 1922.

⁶Alfred Tabet, Les acts diplomatique (Beyrouth, 1925), p. 6.

⁷Colonel George Catroux, Le Mandat Français en Syrie (Paris, 1922), p. 4.

initiated was a system of direct rule which the local nationalists detested whole-heartedly, because it contradicted both the principle of the Mandate and their own aspirations to eventual independence. Thus, the majority of the nationalists always refused the form of the mandate as established by France in the Levant. They based their arguments on the wartime promises of the Allies and the spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant which provided for administrative advice and assistance, and not for semi-colonial rule. The hesitation of the French to aid the indigenous people toward independence, and the encouragement given to separatism and the demands of the minorities made the nationalist leaders the uncompromising enemies to French rule in Syria. The nationalists felt that France was not making any attempt to fulfil the obligations imposed upon her by the Mandate Treaty.

The French divided the Mandated territory of Syria into four parts: the state of Syria, the Greater Lebanon, the Territory of the Alawis (Latakia), and the Jebel Druze. Until 1936, the history of these territories witnessed both violent upheavals and peaceful constitutional developments. If it was true that a separatist movement developed in the latter three terri-

tories, the unitary tendency was also very strong, upheld primarily by the Sunni Moslem element of the population. In general, the Greater Lebanon and Latakia enjoyed comparative tranquility and prosperity during the period 1920 - 1936. The French encouraged the spirit of separatism in the two territories and facilitated constitutional developments, so as to win to their side the indigenous populations which were hostile to the idea of being incorporated into the unitary state of Syria.

As against the comparative calmness in Lebanon and Latakia, the states of Syria and the Jebel Druze were scenes of continual disquietude and disturbance. In Syria, opposition to French rule had been imminent ever since the beginning of the Mandate. The risings of Ibrahim Hananu in Northern Syria and the Hauran exhibited the restlessness of the Syrian spirit under colonial rule. As a consequence, a strong opposition to French arbitrary rule was crystallized around the People's Party. In Arab matters, the goal of the party was the independence and unity of all the Arab lands. In domestic matters, it stood for a unitary Syria which would include the Jebel Druze and the state of the Alawis (Latakia), and the coastal regions of Lebanon,

granting only local autonomy to Mount Lebanon. The party demanded immediate self-government and complete independence as soon as possible.

In the 1920's, the most important Syrian political association was the National Bloc which grouped all the prominent Syrian nationalists. The core of their demands were two ideas, those of unity and independence.⁸ However, the French stood firm against these two aspirations. They refused to consider demands for unity, because that would hasten their expulsion from the Levant. As to independence, which would be granted to several Syrian states, they thought it would be the result of a long process, during which they would style the political direction of the Syrian states such that French preeminence in the Levant would be preserved. It was this policy of hesitation which marked French colonial policy with respect to the mandated territories of the Levant until 1936.

In the Jebel Druze, a feeling of maltreatment by the French was evident by 1925. As a result of this policy, in 1925 a revolt began in the region which was

⁸Association Syrienne, Ce que tout Français doit savoir de la Syrie (Paris, n.d.), p. 8.

to become the largest armed uprising against the French in their experience in the Levant. Although the Druzes had manifested separatist tendencies, when the revolt began they were unconditionally supported by the Damascene nationalists. This fact gave the revolt not a sectarian character, but a united Arab revolt against French imperialism. Soon the rising spread into most of Syria and Southern Lebanon. However, the lack of effective leadership and resources led to the decline of the insurrection which in 1926 was nothing more than a scattered armed opposition to French rule.

The Druze insurrection had serious repercussions in France and at the League of Nations, where French policy was criticized severely. In France it was the Communists who defended the Arab cause and attacked the French colonial policy. They argued that what the French had realized in the Levant was a perfect masterpiece of colonization, and not a Mandate on the terms drawn up by the Covenant of the League of Nations. For them, it was this policy which had provoked the revolt of 1925. As a remedy, they demanded Syria to be left to the Syrians,⁹ hence favored in-

⁹Doriot, La Syrie aux Syriens (Paris, 1926), p.27

directly the independence of Syria. But no other party, not even the parties of the Left, adopted a similar view of the Syrian question. Hence, the Syrian structure did not undergo any important change in the first decade of the Mandate.

At the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, the French delegate justified the French policy of suppressing the Druze insurrection by arms by stating that the Mandatory had the right to resort to arms to ensure the good government and the prosperity of the country.¹⁰ Thus, the French denied the nationalistic aspect of the insurrection and presented the revolutionaries as bands of bandits who threatened the internal security of their country. Moreover, the French delegate assured the Commission that the revolt was a sectarian disturbance, and that there was no relation between the Damascene nationalists and the Druze rebels.¹¹ This was another plain misrepresentation of realities which the French did intentionally to divert the attention of the interna-

¹⁰League of Nations, Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission, March 8, 1926, p. 45.

¹¹Ibid., p. 54.

tional organization away from the troubled Syrian situation.

The question of drafting the treaties which would lead to the eventual independence of the Levantine states remained unresolved during the decade between the Druze insurrection and the advent of the Popular Front in 1936. In this period, the French tried to postpone it as much as possible, while the indigenous people, especially the Syrians, pressed for it; they were eager to realize the Franco-Syrian Treaty and attain independence. It was true that the French facilitated constitutional developments in the Levantine states, but they always evaded taking the final step - the drafting of the treaties which would be the beginning of the end of French presence in the Middle East. In 1933 the work to draft the Franco-Syrian Treaty began, but soon, the attempt failed because irreconcilable differences existed between the French and the Syrian conceptions of the future treaty. There were disagreements over the idea of the unity of the Syrian state, the future presence of French forces in Syria, and other issues which involved the future relation between the two countries. As a result, deadlock was reached, and the nationalist ministers resigned from

the Syrian cabinet. The ministry was then reconstituted by moderates, and the work of the elaboration of the treaty was continued. Later in the year, it was ready and was ratified by the High Commissioner and the Syrian authorities. However, it was never acceptable to the nationalists. Because the treaty was not supported by all Syrians, the High Commissioner suspended the Chamber and constitutional developments in Syria remained in a static state until 1936.

Before the advent of the Popular Front in France, nationalist agitation resumed in Syria. The first days of 1936 witnessed a general restlessness in all the major cities of Syria, inspired by the national Bloc. A national pact was issued which demanded unity and immediate independence. In addition to these internal pressure, two foreign factors, those of the realization of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and Arab eruptions in Palestine induced the French to initiate negotiations for the conclusion of the Franco-Syrian Treaty.¹² To this effect, a Syrian delegation left for Paris and the negotiations began in high spirits. However, it was soon discovered that the differences of 1933 were

¹²The Economist, vol. 134, 1939, p. 384.

as alive as ever. The two questions which caused profound disagreement were the incorporation of the other units of the Levant into the Syrian state, and the degree of control France would retain in the new independent state. Thus, the negotiations ended in dead lock, when in May 1936 the Popular Front won the French elections and formed a government of Leftist direction. Negotiations were resumed, and on September 9, 1936, the Franco-Syrian Treaty was ready.

If one cause of the success of the Franco-Syrian negotiations of 1936 was the change of regime in France, the other important factor was the concession made by the French for the inclusion of the whole Levant except the Greater Lebanon into the Syrian Republic.¹³ In fact, the Treaty provided for the inclusion of the states of Jebel Druze and Latakia into Syria, but implied that Lebanon would have an independent existence - although this was not stated literally. The Syrian nationalists were eager to annex Lebanon, but the Lebanese Christian circles which had ardent supporters in Paris succeeded in perpetuating the in-

¹³The Economist, vol. 125, 1936, p. 631.

dependent existence of Lebanon,¹⁴ by procuring a Franco-Lebanese Treaty similar to the Franco-Syrian Treaty.

The Franco-Syrian Treaty stipulated that there should be perpetual friendship between France and Syria. A separate military convention enabled France to maintain armed forces in the Jebel Druze and Latakia for the protection of the minorities in the latter regions. Moreover, two airports were to be at the disposal of France, and the Syrian army had to use French instructors. In their commercial relations France and Syria undertook to give each other most-favored nation treatment. Diplomatically, the French ambassador at Damascus was to have permanent precedence over other foreign envoys. Thus, the special position of France in the Levant was to be maintained.¹⁵

The most important part of the Franco-Syrian and the Franco-Lebanese Treaties was the promise of independence. But there was a long process to be completed before independence would be realized. First, the Treaties had to be ratified by the French and the

¹⁴The Constitutional Republic of Lebanon was declared on May 24, 1926.

¹⁵The Times, September 11, 1936.

Levantine (Syrian and Lebanese) parliaments. Secondly, there was to be a transitional period until final independence was declared, during which the machinery of independent states would be gradually constructed. Only after this had been achieved would Syria and Lebanon be admitted into the League of Nations; membership to the League of Nations was the necessary condition specified by the Treaties for the assumption of full sovereignty. France advocated this slow process toward independence, because she was unwilling to relinquish her mandatory rights abruptly. Two decades after the institution of the so-called provisional Mandate, France was still determined to safeguard her Levantine position and interests intact. The government of the Popular Front signed the Treaties, because there was no other choice; they fulfilled a belated promise. But when it was a question of the final withdrawal of France from the Levant, even the Leftist French hesitated to ratify the Treaties. It was this feeling which caused another seven years of Franco-Syro-Lebanese crises.

In Syria, the elections of November 1936 resulted in the overwhelming victory of the National

Bloc. Shortly after, the Franco-Syrian Treaty was signed by the Syrian Assembly and the High Commissioner. Although not yet ratified by the French government, it was agreed that the transitional period of three years would begin on January 1, 1937. In fact, the local French authorities showed willingness to satisfy the Syrian demands; they transferred to the Syrians all the organs of government except foreign relations, ultimate responsibility of public order, and certain other administrative services. All these were victories for the Bloc which had refused any settlement short of unity and independence. By mid-1937, optimism reached its height with the return to Syria of exiled nationalists such as Emir Shakib Arslan, Sultan al-Atrash and others, whose patriotism had earned them long years of exile.

However, events did not continue to proceed smoothly in Syria. The history of the period until the outbreak of the Second World War was one of disappointment and disillusionment for the nationalists in Syria and Lebanon. In the former state, developments were more agitated because of the greater number of Arab nationalists and the already existing anti-

French attitude among the ruling class and the predominantly Moslem bulk of the population. In fact, Franco-Syrian strained relations characterized the whole period of the Mandate. The Syrians believed that in 1920, the French had installed themselves in Syria by destroying their self instituted Arab Kingdom; that they had come as the champions of the Lebanese Christians against the Moslem majority of the Syrian population; that they had come as the advocates of separatism, when Arab aspirations of unity were very strong.¹⁶ These feelings caused bitter Franco-Syrian relations, and in the final analysis turned out to be one of the factors which operated to the detriment of the ratification of the Franco-Syrian Treaty by the French.

Among the factors which hampered normal Franco-Syrian relations and ultimately caused the postponement of the ratification of the Franco-Syrian Treaty the claims of Turkey to the Sanjak of Alexandretta and the survival of separatism in Syria were the most important ones.

When the Franco-Syrian Treaty was signed in

¹⁶The Economist, vol. 134, 1939, p. 384.

December 1936, the Turks of the Sanjak of Alexandretta and Antioch were aroused to action. They argued that the rights of autonomy granted by the French in 1921 might not be respected by the Syrians, and hence, the rights of the Turkish minority might be undermined. Secondly, they said that if Syria had the right to independence, then the Sanjak had the right to enjoy sovereign rights too.¹⁷ This was a simple demand. What gave it weight was the backing given to it by Turkey and the willingness of France to concede the territory to the Turks. The issue dragged on until 1939, when the Syrians were finally mulcted of their North-Western province as the price of a promised independence, which might never, after all, be implemented. And in the spring of 1939 France seemed hesitant to ratify the Franco-Syrian Treaty on accounts of Franco-Italian tension in the Mediterranean.¹⁸ This attitude of France was not in conformity with the rights and aspirations of the Syrians, and hence, undoubtedly created tension and agitation in Syria, which in its turn strained the Franco-Syrian relations

¹⁷The Economist, vol. 127, 1937, p. 58.

¹⁸The Economist, vol. 1934, 1939, p. 385.

and delayed the ratification of the Treaty.

In the two formerly independent sectors of the Jebel Druze and Latakia, the inclusion of their territories into the Syrian state was not greeted by wholehearted approval. True, there were some local notables who welcomed the idea of Syrian unity; but still, there were others who hoped to lead an independent existence with French help. Thus, the United Syria envisaged by the Franco-Syrian Treaty was short-lived, and the Druze and Alawi regions proclaimed their independence of Syria in 1937. The French did not stop this act of separatism, because they preferred a divided Syria.

Another separatist movement began to crystallize in Jazirah, in Northern Syria. The Christian minorities living in the area asked the French for a special regime which would safeguard them among the numerically superior Moslem element of the Syrian population. The claimants were encouraged by the French policy of defending the rights of the minorities, the ultimate aim of which was to weaken Syria and make the task of the Syrian national government very difficult.

In France, the ideas of the treaties provoked intense reactions in many parts of French public opinion. The traditionally conservative Right never accept-

ed the reality of the treaties which would put an end to French power in the Levant. They argued that Syria was still a patrimony and not a polity in the modern sense. Perhaps a sovereign could create unity around his personality, but a republic for such a divided country as Syria, ruled by a clan of Damascene politicians was incapable of existing as a sovereign state.¹⁹ The fall of the Blum government in mid-1937 offered a good opportunity to the opponents of the treaties to intensify their struggle against ratification, because the new government of Radical direction was less favorably disposed to the cause of the peoples of the French Empire. The international political situation also necessitated the continuation of French military power in the Eastern Mediterranean which depended on France's presence in Syria and Lebanon. All these factors combined to give weight to the position of the enemies of the Treaties in France and secure the postponement of their ratification by the French Parliament.

At the Permanent Mandates Commission the

¹⁹Marcel Homet, L'Histoire secrète du traité Franco-Syrien (Paris, 1938), p. 10.

French representative declared that the Treaties would be ratified only after detailed study by the French Parliament. He expressed the worries of France in regard to the future of the minorities living in the Syrian state. He concluded that only after the question of the minorities was settled would the Treaties be ratified.²⁰ Thus, the French did not try to conceal their desire to delay ratification.

Faced with the prospect of its defeat, the prime minister of Syria, Jemil Mardam Bey, left for France to save the Treaty. To this effect, he made many concessions to the French, such as the postponement of the transfer of sovereignty to the Syrians, and military advantages to the French in Syria. In this way a new, amended Treaty was drafted. But the new Treaty was far from satisfying the bulk of the Syrian nationalists; it was even refused by Jemil Bey's own followers in the National Bloc. Indeed, by 1938, the emergence of an extremist opposition to French rule in and outside the National Bloc was a clear reality in Syria. The united nationalist front of earlier days had been broken down, with the emergence of new

²⁰ League of Nations, op.cit., November 19, 1937, p. 29.

energetic leaders, such as Dr. Abdur-Rahman Shahbandar (returned from exile) and Shukri al-Quatli. The latter demanded the adoption of active measures to pursue the realization of Syrian independence and despised the moderate wing of Syrian nationalists who still hoped that France would soon ratify the Franco-Syrian Treaty. Thus, the emergence of internal political strife in Syria gave the French another excuse to prolong the ratification of the Franco-Syrian Treaty.

In France, by 1938 the ratification of the Treaties had lost its significance. Some politicians backed the Treaties in order not to lose Syrian friendship, but the bulk of French opinion was opposed to the idea of the loss of Syria and Lebanon which the Treaties implied. In December 1938, the Syrian and Lebanese Treaties were studied by the Foreign Affairs Commission of the French Parliament and were found to be incompatible with French interests. The French government assumed, therefore, that any change in the status quo in the Levant was not desirable. This decision caused profound reaction and consternation in Syria. On the last day of 1938, the Syrian Chamber met and decided unanimously to pursue the ratification of the Franco-Syrian Treaty at any cost. It asked the

national government to undertake the necessary measures to meet the acts of rebellion in the Jebel Druze, Latakia and Jazirah. This spirit of intransigence and unilateral action offended the French and made the peaceful collaboration between the French and the Syrian governments for the settlement of the prolonged crisis of the Treaty more difficult.

The crisis over the issue of the Communities Statute in the spring of 1939 was the last act of the abortive attempt to realize Syrian independence, in the period 1936 - 1939. The Moslems refused to acknowledge the validity of the Statute, because it considered them as one of the many communities living in Syria. The French ignored the fact that the Moslems formed the absolute majority of the Syrian population so as to hamper the creation of a strong Syrian state. The creation of inter-community strife would justify and prolong French presence in Syria, because the French had always stood as the defender of the rights of the minorities. As a consequence to the promulgation of the Statute, public disturbances throughout Syria and changes of ministries followed which paralyzed the political life of the country. The High Commissioner, unable to normalize the situation, took the extreme

measure of dissolving the Chamber and suspending the Constitution. He appointed a Council of Directors to govern by decree-laws under his direction. He completed the abandonment of the policy of 1936 by issuing decrees which reestablished the separate administrations of the Jebel Druze and Latakia, similar to those which had existed prior to 1936.

In Lebanon, the period 1936 - 1939 was one of comparative tranquility. The Moslems gradually reconciled to the idea of their separation from Syria. Although there was much governmental instability, the attitude of the Lebanese in regard to the delay of the ratification of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty was moderate. The Christian majority did not have any reason to press for ratification, because they were satisfied with the status quo. The rest of the Lebanese population expressed only moderate dissatisfaction at the delay of the ratification of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty.

The failure to ratify the Treaties did not signify the desertion of the idea of Syrian and Lebanese independence. This was a promise made by the League of Nations at the close of the First World War, and France had come to the Levant on behalf of the League to actualize that promise. But still, there was no

reason why the Popular Front and the successive Radical governments until the outbreak of the Second World War should not have realized them. Once again, the governments of the French Left made clear the relatively small concern which they had with respect to colonial problems. The Syrian and Lebanese Treaties were the easiest trials which the French governments between 1936 - 1939 encountered in the colonial field. And the failure to carry them to completion, that is to ratify them, proved that the French Left except for the Communists, who were always outside the governments, was less progressive in colonial matters than it pretended to be.

CONCLUSION

In the five countries under discussion - Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Syria and Lebanon - the colonial policy of the Popular Front governments showed considerable variations. The French considered the status of each colony to be different in the totality of the French Empire, and hence, adopted differing colonial policies in their regard. But between 1936 and 1938 all Frenchmen were unanimous on this point: the concessions to be made to the natives of the colonies had to vary in form and content, because the protectorate, the mandate and the Metropolitan province were different things. This condition introduced an evident disparity between what the French were ready to offer and what the colonized peoples wanted, because, essentially and in the main the claims of all the native oppositions to French rule were the same: a desire for political emancipation and independence.

The causes of the failure of the Popular Front to adopt a concrete and well-defined colonial policy should be primarily looked for in the self-deluded and unrealistic conception or understanding of most Frenchmen of colonial realities. There were

certainly other related factors, such as the preoccupation of the Popular Front with internal reform and European questions, which hindered the realization of a successful colonial experiment. But it was the deep indisposition of French mentality with respect to the idea of any change in the colonies that caused the ultimate failure of the attempt to give a new form to the colonial reality between 1936 and 1938.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary Sources

- Barbour, Neville, A Survey of North-West Africa (London, 1959).
- _____. Morocco (London, 1965).
- Berque, Jacques, Le Maghreb entre les deux guerres (Paris, 1962).
- Bonnefous, Edward, Histoire politique de la Troisième République (Paris, 1965).
- Buttin, Paul, Le drame du Maroc (Paris, 1955).
- Catroux, Colonel George, Le mandat français en Syrie (Paris, 1922).
- Gline, Walter, "Nationalism in Morocco", The Middle East Journal, vol. I, 1947.
- Demeerseman, A., Le problème tunisien, aperçus de psychologic (Tunis, 1945).
- Duggan, Stephen, "The Syrian Question", Journal of International Relations, vol. II, 1921.
- d'Estne, Jean, Ce Maroc que nous avons fait (Paris, 1955).
- Fajans, Roman, Alerte en Afrique du nord (Paris, 1953).
- Fauvet, Jacques, Histoire du parti communiste français (Paris, 1964).
- Frazer, G. and Natanson, T., Léon Blum, Man and Statesman (Philadelphia, 1938).
- Garas, Felix, Bourguiba et la naissance d'une nation (Paris, 1956).
- Gordon, David, The Passing of French Algeria (London, 1966).

- Grandmoujin, Jean, Histoire vivante du Front Populaire (Paris, 1966).
- Guérin Daniel, Front Populaire (Paris, 1963).
- Haurani, Albert, Syria and Lebanon (London, 1954).
- Hoffmann Eleanor, Realm of the Evening Star (Philadelphia, 1965).
- Homet, Marcel, L'Histoire secrète du traité Franco-Syrien (Paris, 1938).
- Howe, Mervine, "The Birth of the Moroccan Nation", The Middle East Journal, vol. X, 1956.
- Joffre, Alphonse, Le mandat de la France sur la Syrie et le Grand-Liban (Lyon, 1924).
- Julien, Ch-André, L'Afrique du nord en marche (Paris, 1952).
- _____. "From the French Empire to the French Union", International Affairs, vol. 26, 1950.
- Landau, Rom, The Moroccan Drama 1900 - 1955 (London, 1955).
- Larmour, Peter, The French Radical Party in the 1930's (Stanford, 1964).
- Nef, La, Maroc et Tunisie, le problème du protectorat (Paris, 1953).
- Lefranc, George, Histoire du Front Populaire (Paris, 1965).
- Longrigg, Stephen, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate (London, 1958).
- Marcus, John, French Socialism in the Crisis Years, 1933 - 1936 (New York, 1958).
- Micaud, Charles, The French Right and Nazi Germany (New York, 1964).
- Montagne, Robert, Révolution au Maroc (Paris, 1953).

- Rivlin, Benjamin, "The Tunisian Nationalist Mouvement",
The Middle East Journal, vol. VI, 1952.
- Stephane, Roger, Le Tunisie de Bourguiba (Paris, 1958).
- Tabet, Alfred, Les acts diplomatique (Beyrouth, 1935).
- Thomson, George, Democracy in France Since 1870 (London,
1964).
- Le Tourneau, Robert, Evolution de l'Afrique du nord
musulmane (Paris, 1962).
- Toynbee, Arnold, J., Survey of International Affairs 1937
(London, 1938), I.
- Viollette, Maurice, L'Algérie vivra-t-elle? (Paris, 1931).
- Zisdeh, Nicola, Origins of Nationalism in Tunisia
(Beirut, 1962).

Primary and Contemporary Sources

- Abbas, Ferhat, La nuit coloniale (Paris, 1962).
- L'Afrique Française, Bulletin mensuel du comité de
l'Afrique Française et du comité du Maroc,
1936, 1937 (Paris).
- Arab Office, The Tunisian Question (London, n.d.).
- Association Syrien, Ce que tout français doit savoir
de la Syrie (Paris, n. d.).
- Bourguiba, Habib, La Tunisie et la France (Paris, 1954).
- Doriot, La Syrie aux syriens (Paris, 1926).
- League of Nations, Minutes of the Permanent Mandates
Commission.
- L'Oeuvre de Léon Blum, (Paris, 1964).
- Office National Arabe, Syrie, 1938 (Damascus, n.d.).
- The Times, (London).
- The Economist, (London).