

VINEYARDS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN ALGERIA

Picture a vast territory whose soil is peopled by European colonists, while military conquest places the natives in a position of total dependence. Settlers from all parts of the parent state and from other countries as well form, at first, an inorganic mass of families arbitrarily placed side by side and differing from one another in all aspects as to place of origin, mental attitudes, habits, way of life.

This population of immigrants takes root only if it is able to draw profit from the possibilities latent in its new milieu. The success of colonization depends then on the development of a sufficiently remunerative system of cultivation. When the technical problem is resolved, this economic basis provides the foundation for developing the structures needed for the organization of a society. First come the productive returns which are to transform the former landholders into agricultural workers and which will create a hierarchy among the colonists according to their personal qualities or their individual luck.

Around the pole of growth constituted by agriculture, systems of communication and other forms of activity are developed. Regular commercial relations are established between the parent state and its

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colony. Soon appear the specific institutions of a society which has attained its majority. The hold of this society on both environment and men is henceforth complete.

We have attempted to analyze this process of colonization of peoples in the study of a particular case, that of Algeria, where it has been visibly taking place for just over a century. The facts are well known. It remains for us to put them in order. Our study, in other words, is less a monograph than an example designed to illustrate a thesis.

It has been said that the day of the grape has come to an end in Algeria. This is correct if one means that the prohibition by law of new plantings, in effect for more than twenty years, has removed all possibility of expansion. Statistics even show marked decreases. But the cultivation of the grape has created structures which have conditioned the existence of modern Algeria. Although overshadowed by other current problems, these structures not only continue to exist but resist the application of new solutions.

Not since 1830 has the economic history of Algeria unfolded in a continuous rhythm generated by its own dynamics. It has known small revolutions, sudden mutations if you will, which have been in one way or another imposed from outside. In an extreme oversimplification this history may be reduced to three principal phases.

The first, a period of successive attempts all equally unfortunate, lasted a half-century. It opened with a mistake for which the blame may be assigned to those in charge at the time and for whom "colony" was identified with "tropical country," the "exotics," as they have since been derisively called. Among them, General Clauzel boldly advanced the idea that "sugar cane, cotton, and coffee will thrive by themselves in Algeria; cocoa will be easily obtained and indigo, carefully cultivated, will soon adjust to the climate." Less excusable were the technicians: A. Hardy, pupil of the Museum and director of the Jardin d'Acclimatation at Algiers; Moll, member of the Société Royale et Centrale d'Agriculture; and the eminent members of the Société d'Agriculture d'Algérie, who outdid one another in extolling the rich possibilities of a colony "capable of providing our market with low-priced sugar, indigo, cotton, peanut oil."

Sugar cane, cacao, and coffee never went beyond the stage of feeble attempts. Cotton was more successful while the Civil War temporarily eliminated the competition of the United States from the French market. In 1876, however, the plantations had disappeared from the departments of Algiers and Constantine; in the Oran region they covered only 204 hectares.

Tobacco, greeted with the same official optimism, picked up where cotton left off. "The moment cannot be far off," declared the chief of a mission touring Algeria, "when our ports, rivaling those of Baltimore, Richmond, New Orleans, Fiume, Trieste, and Rotterdam, will see their ships setting out to carry tobacco to all the peoples of Europe." This scheme had failed by 1860, and, disappointed by the results achieved, the state tobacco monopoly decided to reduce its purchases from the colony. Then flax had its turn. But there was not enough water for the retting vats, and the opening of the Suez Canal favored Indian competition.

This time the situation seemed irremediable. The settlers were forced to renounce the hopes raised by projects for large-scale cultivation of industrial crops and to be content with the meager resources of grain cultivation as traditionally practiced by the natives. A perspicacious observer notes that "all the European exploitations have conserved the Arab system, the most miserable of all systems of crop rotation. The rotation of grain planting and lying fallow, practiced by all, is the most striking trait of the barbarous condition of Algerian agriculture."

By 1880 the colony was on the verge of bankruptcy. "It is time to face the fact," declared Saint-Marc de Girardin in the *Journal des débats*, "that this naturally unproductive soil will never repay the capital and the work expended upon it by the European."

An accident was to prove this prophecy false: the wave of phylloxera which was then sweeping France. It is not exaggerating to say that Algeria was at this moment saved by an insect.

The day of the vine had arrived. Why was it so late in coming, since, owing to the rapidly increasing European population, the colony had been forced at great expense to import increasing quantities of wines and spirits? While there had been no official prohibition of grape culture, there had, however, certainly been no encouragement. So long hypnotized by the promises of rich tropical crops made by all the authorities, the settlers did not consider the creation of extensive vine-

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yards, which require heavy capital investment before yielding any return—all this with no certainty of being able to export to the metropolitan market.

Suddenly in 1880 the situation was reversed. France had to import considerable quantities of wines at the expense of its trade balance. She then discovered the possibilities offered by her Mediterranean possession and launched Algeria upon the creation of replacement vineyards. Previous failures had prevented the colony from building up credits. This made no difference. French capitalism, which had so far been little interested in the colony, stood ready to provide the necessary funds. It took over the Algerian economy and sought fruitful investments; which it found in the exportation of its funds either to foreign countries or to the colonial empire. Large sums were made available by the Banque de l'Algérie, the Crédit Foncier d'Algérie et de France, the Crédit Lyonnais, and the Comptoirs d'Escompte. This availability of low-interest loans went to the heads of the settlers, who had for a long time been able to borrow only at usurious rates. They planted, and planted more, endlessly. They ignored such crises as the outbreak of phylloxera in 1885 and of sales without profit owing to rapid progress in the reconstruction of French vineyards. Overcapitalized Algerian grape production was not always able to meet its obligations: bankruptcies, liquidations, and expropriations multiplied to the profit of the creditors. The first World War interrupted this pioneer phase. The point must be made that the vines of the colony at this time covered 155,000 hectares. Conceived as replacement vineyards, they tended more and more to become basic productive vineyards. The violent crises of overproduction which marked the first decade of the twentieth century prove that they had even become competing vineyards. Wisdom dictated no further expansion.

But expansion took place. No sooner had postwar balance been established than new plantings were made at additional expense, with redoubled vigor, owing to the fact that the threat of restrictive measures had been disclosed in advance. A "galloping production" followed which, from 1929 to 1935, brought the total of Algerian grape planting to its maximum figure: 400,000 hectares.

The inevitable happened, as a new period of overproduction began in 1929, with the crisis reaching a paroxysm in 1934 and 1935, when, in two successive years, Franco-Algerian wine production exceeded 100,-

000,000 hectoliters (2,500,000,000 gallons)! Measures taken by the government to remedy this tragic situation included, among others, the halting of new planting. Bound by this Draconian statute and by its integration into the French customs union which closed off the possibility of export, the Algerian wine industry, along with the whole colonial agricultural movement, found itself at an impasse.

Meanwhile the Moslem population continued to increase at an extraordinary rate, with corresponding needs for new employment opportunities. Algeria lacked both the imagination and the means to provide them. Then came the second World War. It was not until 1946 that France inaugurated her politics of development and modernization for overseas economies. The third phase of Algerian history then began—that of industrialization. But industrialization did not find an open field for development. The Algerian wine industry had prepared for it a Procrustean bed in the structures it had erected.

It seems to us that the results of the *Statut Viticole* in Algeria have not been sufficiently stressed. With traumatic results, the *Statut* brutally halted a development and upset a balance. The colonial society, so recently marked by extreme mobility, was stabilized, fixed, ripened in but a few years, at a moment when expanding Moslem society was violently shaken by what might be called the dynamism of its youthful nature. More than ever these two adjacent societies followed opposing courses. The complex Algerian problem, half-hidden up to this point, was to be fully disclosed.

This is, of course, an unexpected hypothesis which calls for an explanation.

The *Statut Viticole* has been blamed for the stagnation of Algeria's colonial population, which increased by fewer than 100,000 inhabitants from 1936 to 1954. If freedom of planting had been maintained, new immigrants would have arrived, and the relative strength of the native and colonial communities would not have been so unfavorable to the Europeans.

This is a serious accusation. Unsupported statements are not sufficient. The facts must be carefully analyzed.

We have first the assertion of Jules Guyot in 1880: "The cultivation of grapes is that which has the greatest colonizing force; . . . it attracts population." From 1882 to 1911, the years of greatest expansion in the

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wine industry, the European population of Algeria rose from 410,000 to 780,000 inhabitants. Spokesmen of the time all believed in a cause-and-effect relationship: in twelve years, according to one of them, "the vineyards attracted 100,000 settlers." It is difficult to find this enthusiasm convincing.

The extraordinary increase in planting took place at the same time as the Third Republic's vast plan of official colonization. From 1871 to 1900 the administration settled nearly 50,000 families on about 700,000 hectares; in addition to these immigrants established on land concessions, others, perhaps more numerous, arrived in Algeria by choice, attracted by the various possibilities offered them for making a comfortable living.

Viticulture had nothing to do with the expansion of colonization outside its own narrow sphere: the upper plains of Constantine and the high Algiers-Oran plateaus, where the centers of European population were founded solely on the planting and cultivation of grain. In the very center of the grape-growing zone the cultivation of grain took up most of the land belonging to Europeans in 1911. With the help of new methods, it was beginning to bring wealth to the settlers, especially to those of Sidi-bel-Abbès. Thus the cultivation of the vine was not responsible for the great waves of immigration which marked the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But it certainly helped them. Many French vintners ruined by phylloxera left for the colony in the hope of a quick killing, after which they intended to return to France and reconstruct their insect-destroyed vineyards. Most of them remained in Algeria. We are particularly well informed on the Free Lyonnais colonization which took place in two areas of the department of Constantine, along the Gulf of Bougie and in the Plain of Bône. The colonists from Lyons were capitalists who found a worthwhile investment in the growing of the grape. The creative and exploitative work of a rapidly expanding vine acreage attracted to Algeria another category of immigrants: agricultural workers—Sardinians, Spaniards, Frenchmen—who were at first employed in plowing, preparation of the soil, and especially in vine-trimming and the work of wine-making. Some of these migrated temporarily; others remained in the colony.

Conversely, we must add that such wine-industry crises as phylloxera and the poor wine sales which broke out early in this development caused some settlers to return to the cities or even to France. Many who

were forced to liquidate their debts had to abandon their land to creditor banks. One observer writes that “many small growers saw themselves mercilessly expropriated and returned to the mother country with a feeling of rancor against Algeria.” Peyerimhoff, in his *Inquiry* into the results of official colonization, points out the failure of Duquesne, populated by immigrants from Lorraine in 1875; by 1902 a handful of moneylenders had taken possession of most of their land. The senatorial commission presided over by J. Ferry recognized that the great vine areas of Oued-Amizour had been founded by a few owners who replaced the early concessionaires established with government help between 1872 and 1876. On the other hand, as the falling price of wine imposed severe limits on the amounts of money available for exploitation purposes, the settlers stopped calling for European seasonal workers and used instead cheap native labor.

A second phase of rapid expansion began in 1929. Between 1926 and 1936, dates of quinquennial censuses, the Algerian vinegrowing population of 111,000 individuals doubled. Six large cities—Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Bône, Sidi-bel-Abbès and Philippeville—absorbed over three-quarters of the increase, while small towns and villages accounted for the rest, fewer than 20,000. The regions which were given over almost exclusively to the cultivation of grain were generally depopulated: the high Constantine plains, for example, lost nearly a thousand Europeans, and the villages of the Sersou more than sixteen hundred. The grape-growing regions registered either losses, as in the Bône and Philippeville plains and the Jemmapes Basin, or slight gains, as in the Sahel near Algiers and the Mitidja Plain. Though the total rural European population fell from 237,000 to 230,000, the number of vinegrowers doubled. Where did these new planters come from? They were natives and long-established settlers who had abandoned the production of grain to seek greater security and stability in the vineyards.

Thus we see “the colonizing force” of the grape in its true perspective. While it is true that the continued spread of grape cultivation from 1880 to 1935 was accompanied by an increase in the colonial population, these two facts are in reality independent of each other. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the vineyards, unlike the discouraging cultivation of grain, consolidated the settling of colonists, rooting them firmly in the soil. Otherwise the rural European population would have

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decreased. The counterproof? Since 1935 the vineyard area has decreased, and from 1936 to 1948 the rural European population fell to 201,000 inhabitants, a decrease of about 30,000 as compared to a loss of 7,000 in the preceding decade. With vine-planting blocked, the exodus speeded up, and the "European presence" in the Algerian countryside was weakened. For this the *Statut Viticole* is solely responsible.

But if the total European population, that of the villages as well as the cities, is today leveling off, it is due to the fact that the conception of colonization which prevailed from Louis-Philippe to the Third Republic has exhausted its possibilities. Algeria no longer needs new growers in its fields; the Algeria of tomorrow needs technicians, specialists, engineers.

This point having been made, it must be recognized that the culture of grape cultivation is that which most profoundly modeled and fashioned the colonial society of Algeria. It provided this society with what might be called its basic personality.

Let us remember these facts: the settlers' discouragement around 1880 and their bitter feeling of failure at that time. Had they not reached the point of believing that the only Europeans able to support themselves were those who, like the Spanish immigrants, were content with the native standard of living? At this point, almost overnight, came the unhoped-for chance offered by grape cultivation. The psychological shock brought a sudden change. With renewed confidence in the future, the settlers hurled themselves into planting with an enthusiasm scarcely checked by the early symptoms of crises to come. These sons of prudent peasants, accustomed to counting every sou, found themselves borrowing and spending without reckoning the cost at all; wealth was soon measured by the amount of one's debts. The situation favored the spread of the ingenious spirit of enterprise: the new planters would themselves resolve the problems posed by vine culture in hot countries; in a few years they perfected techniques and tools imitated in other countries. Algerian wines no longer deserved their poor reputation. Striking successes rewarded an exalted daring which was in some cases a real taste for risk; some individuals rose rapidly from the ranks to make huge fortunes. A comparison with the American self-made men of the same time is irresistible; among them was Charles Debonne, who landed from Malta in 1886 with nothing but a horse-

dealer's whip. With the chance to show his full measure as a man, he soon owned over 1,800 hectares of land in the Mitidja. The Banque de l'Algérie extended him 8,000,000 francs of credit. The government made him *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* for exceptional services rendered to the cause of colonization. But by 1907 he had lost everything. For this society of speculating planters was extremely unstable; land changed hands often, and fortunes were made and lost in a series of crises.

This heroic period was brought to a sudden halt by the brutal effects of the *Statut Viticole*. Risk succeeded by special privilege—the exceptionally remunerative exploitation of the vineyards. Protected by their exclusive rights, the vintners who could no longer hope for large loans and grants were now safe from the heavy risks of the industry's early days. The pioneers were succeeded by the bourgeois, jealously guarding their legal advantages, bitterly defending their class interests, ready at every moment to demand state help and protection as their rightful claim. After having been progressive, even revolutionary, cultivation of the grape became a very conservative enterprise.

The first fifty years of colonization, marked as we have seen by vain attempts and disappointed hopes, had seen the realization of a sort of static social integration, according to the expression dear to Gunnar Myrdal, among settlers nearly all of whom lived the same sort of life. For a few large landowners “wearing yellow gloves” there were thousands of small holders, poor hardworking men, equal in the mediocrity in which the cultivation of grain bound them with little hope of escape. There were thousands of “poor whites” with a standard of living so close to that of the natives that, through a process humorously compared by E. F. Gautier to “metamorphism of contact,” their mental attitude was also close to that of the natives. Were not Europeans and Moslems mixing fraternally in those bands of wandering beggars, the Circumcellions (fourth-century martyrdom-seeking sect) of modern times, known as the “rolling army”?

It was to this stagnant population that the speculative cultivation of the grape suddenly opened its rich possibilities. Crises eliminated many of them from the competition, upsetting situations that had been thought permanent; individuals were classified in the process according to their luck and their aptitude. At the end, colonial society was organized, differentiated. Mobile and open for so long, it was to turn

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inward as the *Statut Viticole* brought the evolution to a sudden halt. The only transformations visibly occurring today are those that take place within the society through the slow process of concentration of wealth.

As a structuring force, but also a segregating one, the vine cut the European agricultural population in two. On the one hand were the elect—11,500 planters of a total of 22,000. Most of the others had to be content with growing grain and raising sheep. Shall we measure the importance of the privilege? The first drew a gross income of at least 160,000 francs per hectare of grapes; the others, not more than 30,000 francs per hectare of the best land, planted in wheat.

But, although the average area of the individual vineyard in Algeria is 30 hectares compared to 0.85 hectare in France, the 11,500 growers are not all large producers. The latest agricultural census in Algeria revealed that, in 1950–51, 21 per cent of them (2,415) had small holdings of less than 10 hectares. They accounted for only 2 per cent of the 348,400 hectares of vineyards under European control, while 66 per cent of the total land so planted belonged to 3,235 holdings of at least 100 hectares, 28 per cent of the European growers.

There are then indeed European smallholders in Algeria. They are not very numerous, however, and it is the large planters who account for most of the surface area—exactly two-thirds. Concentration is therefore very marked; both individuals and companies have profited from it. There are about 150 of the latter, some organized on a family basis to avoid the scattered ownership which would result from inheritance problems; others, and these are the most powerful, belonging to French or Algerian capitalists. For example, in 1957, the Société du Kéroulis at Laferrière produced nearly 70,000 hectoliters of wine on a holding of 1,340 hectares—much more than most of the wine-producing villages of the Sahel of Algiers.

The grape has contributed largely to the mutual opposition felt by the two communities into which Algeria's pluralist society is divided. Unlike coffee, introduced by the settlers into Madagascar and the Ivory Coast and adopted, even monopolized, by the native peasants, the grape has remained essentially European. This fact is no doubt due less to the Moslem religious prohibition against the making of wine than to the impossibility of their obtaining the credit necessary for initial investment.

Although they had always planted vineyards for the production of grapes, the natives participated but little in the earliest plantings; in 1914 they owned only 4,000 hectares of vineyards. Through a sort of self-contradiction, it was the crisis of overproduction which brought about the natives' entry into large-scale planting of grapes. Particularly in the department of Oran, the Europeans encouraged and even helped the Moslems to plant the 10 hectares authorized by the law of July 4, 1931, for each individual, in the hope of later acquiring their crops and adding to their own total which was to be limited by the new law. Today 19,400 natives have vineyards covering 40,380 hectares, an average of just over 2 hectares. They form 60 per cent of the declaring producers, but they account for only 10 per cent of the total area under cultivation.

The often-repeated statement that viticulture contributed to form a native proletariat by depriving the Moslems of their land is not true. The fact is that the settlers have generally established their vineyards as replacements for other crops they had themselves been cultivating, especially grain. The chief role of viticulture has been to transform the natives into wage-earning agricultural workers more and more closely attached to the soil left to them through the colonization process.

So long as most Algerian planting consisted of grain cultivation, which requires, on the average, but ten days' work per year per hectare, it could be performed by a family with the help of some day labor from time to time. These labor needs increased greatly with the introduction of grape cultivation: a hectare of vineyard requires eighty days' work per year, eight times as much as wheat. We have seen that, after first hiring European workers, the settlers relied more and more upon the mass of rural natives. The latter had to learn the techniques of grape cultivation and wine-making rapidly. Thus was formed what one press agent called the "admirable workers' army."

The call for manual labor resulted in migrations, in overpopulated poor regions, such as the Kabyl mountain area, within the European wine regions. Larger and larger battalions of Moslem workers came into the plains of Bône, the Mitidja, and Oran from which the settlers had removed the old landowners; some took up permanent residence; others continued to make the seasonal journey from their native countryside to follow the barley harvest or the picking of olives and of figs.

So long as the vineyards were spreading, offers of employment multi-

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plied at approximately the same rate as the increase of the native population; there was even a time during the "galloping" period of planting when the settlers had difficulty in recruiting the needed workers. The *Statut Viticole* brought to an end this relatively favorable situation. Since 1953 the grape industry has always had a sufficient labor supply; the need has even diminished as the demand for price reductions has resulted in a higher and higher degree of mechanization. The rural exodus picked up in volume, but instead of heading for the vineyards, where there has been little demand for labor, the fellahin have invaded the cities, where there is no need for them. This pathological urbanization had begun earlier but first showed its disturbing elements in the census of 1936; the first *bidonvilles* appeared at about this time. Is it mere coincidence that the Algerian problem we have described also became serious at the same time?

After twenty years of stabilization one may ask what the colonial wine industry offers today to the natives it employs. The answer is, "A great deal." The native worker receives wages which often mean more than the necessary addition to his old family subsistence earnings; for most it is the only monetary resource. An exact total is difficult to fix. Recent studies, however, have set the number of days' work required by the vineyards at 30,000,000 annually and the total of direct monetary wages at 22,000,000,000 francs. It should at the same time be noted that this amount, although somewhat of an exaggeration in the writer's opinion, equals barely half the savings sent from France to Algeria by Moslems employed on the Continent.

Thus viticulture in Algeria has taken on the character of a highly colonial industry, contributing to both social and racial segregation. For the Europeans it means ownership of the vineyards; for the natives it means working for wages.

Viticulture has played the role which in Keynesian vocabulary is that of a "multiplier," that is to say, a driving force. It was as a function of its development, and to facilitate that development, that the economic substructure of modern Algeria was formed.

For a long time colonial development had to be content with slow and costly road transport. The construction of a rail network had been put off; only a few lines were in service. An over-all program, adopted in 1889, was carried out at the same time as the expanding grape planting,

and until 1892 the placing in service of new lines was rapid. Interrupted by a shortage of credit, construction was resumed in 1900, and then, after World War I, in 1922. With the network completed, all wine regions were linked to seaports. In the meantime, the latter had had to be expanded and equipped to handle an expanding tonnage of wines for export: 625 metric tons in 1879, 575,000 in 1914, nearly 2,000,000 in 1938. The shipping companies increased their fleets and organized faster round-trip schedules between Algeria and France. There is no question but that Oran and Algiers owe to the wine industry their development as important seaports.

Another benefit of viticulture was the institution of agricultural credit and co-operation in Algeria. We have already noted that the large plantings of the early phase had been financed by loans from the Banque de l'Algérie through the intermediary of the Comptoirs d'Escompte, which multiplied to distribute this "manna." Soon other banking establishments joined the ranks: the Crédit Foncier et Agricole d'Algérie dates from 1880; the Crédit Lyonnais opened agencies in the colony.

After the earliest wine crises, the Banque de l'Algérie, victim of its own imprudence, decided to close its windows to the settlers, but it consented to provide the necessary capital for mutual agricultural credit societies. These were made possible by the law of July 8, 1901. Algeria was soon covered by a network of local societies which gave low-cost loans not only for handling the harvest but also for initial investment.

The next crisis led to the formation of the first Algerian agricultural cooperative in 1905, the Dupleix cellar, which placed completed equipment for wine-making at the disposal of its members. Wine-making societies appeared throughout the country, thanks to the financial support of the local societies and of the colonial budget. Following their example, other producers founded wheat, tobacco, and citrus fruit cooperatives.

The creation of a large vineyard area involves multiple activities, some of which provide the means necessary for maintaining the vineyards themselves; others handle the by-products of fermentation. Thus it was that Algeria was soon provided with its first industries for the delivery of copper sulfate, refined sulfur, alcohol, grapestone oils, vinegars, oilcake, potassium tartrate, grape juice, and *mistelle* (partially fermented fruit juices), some of which are exported.

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Let us add that the sale of the wine production had required the organization of a network of middlemen between the planters and the large French wine producers; the great number of traders, agents, brokers, and representatives who with their staffs had taken up residence in the colony made real commercial centers of several Algerian cities.

The true importance of the growing of grapes in the colonial economy will be seen in the fact that in 1907 it represented 43 per cent of Algerian exports. After reaching a maximum of 66 per cent in 1933, it dropped to 39 per cent in 1956. Without ever constituting a true one-crop economy, the vineyards have been the very basis of the Algerian economy for over a half-century.

The grape industry placed enormous capital sums at the disposal of the settlers. Intoxicated by their sudden success, some spent without stopping to count the cost: Armand Arlès-Dufour had a stud farm to satisfy his passion for thoroughbreds, while today some planters own their private airfields. Others indulged in further land speculation, increasing their holdings and planting more and more; self-financing rather than credit provided the necessary funds for the rapid extension of grape planting after the first World War. When the *Statut Viticole* brought this to an end, the settlers turned their attention to citrus groves and especially to urban real estate. It is regrettable that they were not called upon to participate in large-scale investment, which might have begun the industrialization phase ten years earlier.

As a privileged group among the settlers, the planters soon became aware of their common interest. Their solidarity was forged in the various struggles in which they engaged. It first expressed itself in their group effort against phylloxera in 1886; it was strengthened by the rivalry between colonial and metropolitan (French) wine production caused by years of lower sales: the creation of the *Confédération Générale des Vignerons du Midi (C.G.V.)* in 1908 was answered in 1912 by the formation of the *Confédération des Vignerons des Trois Départements Algériens (C.V.A.)*. The latter became the organ through which the planters, organized as a pressure group, showed as much power in politics as in economics. The temporary secession of small and middle-sized producers in 1932 failed to weaken the C.V.A.

It was easy for the planters to exercise this power, since, from 1900 on, Algeria had been marked by their civic personality and by financial

autonomy: the responsibility of managing a total vineyard area of 150,000 hectares had facilitated if not hastened the development of the colony to a status of financial independence. From that date Algeria's right to direct her own budget through financial delegations was recognized. When it is written, the history of the assembly which ruled the country until 1940 will do much to explain the current situation. We shall merely mention that the institution of this assembly was based on the principle of representation of economic interests and ethnic groups. There were four electoral colleges numerically very unequal: settlers, non-settlers, Arabs, and Kabyls, each named a "delegation." The settlers' delegation, in which those elected by the grape interests predominated, soon took the lead. Many budgetary measures favored the wine industry. Going far beyond the limits of their authority, which had been carefully set by the legislature, the financial delegations never hesitated, in speeches and resolutions, to come to the aid of their constituents threatened by the South of France. The Algerian vineyards developed under the provisions of the customs union which was set up step by step by legislative action between 1851 and 1884; its production was freely admitted into France on an equal basis with French wines. However, this security guaranteed by free access to the great metropolitan market was not total; we have seen that it was periodically troubled by crises of overproduction the liquidation of which caused many resounding bankruptcies. Such security was also dearly bought, since the customs union included a requirement to buy in France at prices often higher than those on the world market and to use French ships operating at monopoly rates. This meant cost prices which would not have permitted Algerian agricultural production to compete with foreign markets even if these had been freely open to it.

Cut off from international competition, the Algerian economy found in the customs union a sheltering, storm-free haven. But it was also effectively prevented from developing its agricultural potential beyond the volume which could be readily absorbed by the French metropolitan market. This sort of economic Malthusianism benefited a privileged minority to the detriment of the general welfare. The Algerian wine industry adapted itself perfectly to the protective framework of the customs union; it is significant that the settlers called for budgetary autonomy without ever seriously asking for customs autonomy.

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When the crises in sales were most serious, the customs statute was brought up for discussion, especially by producers of the South of France, who several times called for protection against Algerian competition, including import duties. The settlers always protested against the establishment of differential rules, alleging their patriotism, their rights as citizens, and their equal obligations. On their side, the government authorities never admitted measures of discrimination that might weaken the principle of the customs union. The cultivation of the vine contributed as much to making Algeria French, to assimilating the colony to the home country, as did the 1889 law of automatic naturalization. Economic integration was to be definitively achieved with the completion of political integration, for the latter implies the former. There is an ulterior motive for some in the catchword of Algeria as a "French province" like Alsace, or rather like the Languedoc.¹

It was, on the whole, the establishment of the vine which fixed the broad outlines of Algeria's regional structure as it appears today.

During these various phases colonization peopled at first the coastal zone, around the ports of debarkation: Bône, Philippeville, Algiers, Mostaganem, Oran. Then it penetrated into the interior as far as the edge of the dry inland plain. This second push, less strong than the first, encountered watering conditions less and less favorable to agriculture, so that the density of Europeans diminishes rapidly as one passes from north to south.

Vine culture was to show the characteristics of this division of the land. At first the attempt was made to establish vineyards wherever there were settlers. But natural conditions, such as thick limestone deposits, soil that was too compact or too salty, excessive heat in summer, and late-spring frosts soon forced them back from the poorer regions of the interior, the high plains of Constantine, the Chéelif Valley, the Sersou Plain. The European population was then concentrated along the coast. Not only was the established population thus consolidated, but new groups of immigrants were established there, as well as an increas-

1. On this subject see the remark of J. Ferry in *Le Gouvernement de l'Algérie* (Paris, 1892), p. 8: "They were no ordinary men, these intrepid Algerian planters who, despite usury and phylloxera, moved endlessly forward, wherever there was a road and a bit of arable land, planting their long rows of green vines . . . as if hastening to show, by this most French of all crops, that they were taking peaceful and definitive possession of African soil, in the name of France."

ing number of settlers who abandoned the backcountry in which the growing of grain was a risky venture and not very rewarding.

Thus the distinction between Algeria's façade and its vast hinterland was strengthened. The façade made of hills and littoral plains contains nearly three-fourths of the vineyard area and 80 per cent of the European population, most of them concentrated in the cities. The rest live in the country. In several regions European possession of the land is so complete that the natives are practically reduced to the role of agricultural workers.

But the façade should not delude us; the vineyards formed but a ribbon without depth. Behind this "deceiving façade" there is another and dramatic reality: the plains which nature destined for the extensive planting of cereals and the grazing of sheep, such as the upper plains of Constantine, where Rome, in ancient times, established cities and colonies. Today 32,000 Europeans extract a meager existence from the 40,000 square kilometers of the *arrondissements* of Sétif and Batna. Still more dramatic is the reality of mountains like the overpopulated Kabyls, the Ouarsenis, and the Aurès, where colonization is today represented by virtually nothing but its small cadre of government employees. In the vast steppes of the upper plateaus, near-starving shepherds, left to themselves, lead the life of another era within 200 kilometers of Algiers and Oran.

A real regional division exists in the distinction between eastern and western Algeria. This is a well-known fact today, but it would seem that viticulture's responsibility has not been sufficiently accepted.

Several figures are highly significant. In 1888 the first 103,500 hectares of vineyards were about equally divided among the three departments: 31,000 hectares in the department of Constantine, 34,500 in the department of Algiers, and 38,000, or 37 per cent of the total, in the department of Oran. But beginning with that date the region of Oran moved farther into the lead year by year: in 1914 it had 48 per cent of the Algerian vineyards; in 1929, at the eve of the "galloping production" period, 54 per cent; and in 1935, when Algerian planting reached its highest point, 62 per cent.

Between 1938 and 1955 the application of the *Statut Viticole* failed to stabilize the situation. The relative importance of the Oran vineyards continued to increase—from 65 per cent of the total to 69 per cent. During this period the total area of Algerian grape planting fell from 398,-

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628 hectares to 376,994, a decrease of 30,634 hectares. The Algiers and Constantine regions lost 20,523 and 4,429 hectares, respectively, or 18 per cent of their area; the decrease in the Oran region was only 5,682 hectares—barely 2 per cent. Even more significant, the number of planters and purchasers of harvests fell by 989 in Algiers and 334 in Constantine, while increasing by 3,058 in the Oran region, which then had nearly 80 per cent of the declaring producers!

Every development made it appear as though the Algerian grape industry purposely tended to withdraw from the east and the center to concentrate in the west, where it remained dynamic. In the east it has been strictly localized in the maritime zone, the coastal plains, and hills which are closed off by the dense growth of the Kabyl Plateau. It is excluded from the upper plains of Constantine, which dip farther inland as closed basins. On both sides the Kabyl chains face two separate domains: in the north, as a façade, that of the vineyards sparsely populated by Europeans; on the south, that of extensive grain production and sheep grazing, largely of native population. In the west, on the other hand, the ridge line of the terrain bears far to the south, along the face of the high plateaus; vines and grain, in adjacent fields, extend across the whole arable Tell region as far as the Alfa Steppe. In Oran Province viticulture reaches its maximum penetration to the south—Aïh-el-Hadjar, 120 kilometers from the sea, at latitude $34^{\circ}45'$. Here colonial villages are found deep in the region of the nomadic shepherds.

The distribution of the European agricultural population shows the same imbalance: 16 per cent of the total of separate holdings in the department of Constantine against 45 per cent in that of Oran. There is one European for eighteen natives in the first; one for four, in the second. The east is a native reserve; the west, a European province.

These data explain the geography of the current rebellion. They form the basis for projects envisaging one possible solution to the problem as recognized since 1954 in a territorial division of Algeria between the Europeans grouped in the west, in the grape-growing half of the country, and a Moslem state located in the east.

Culture of the vine has ruled over Algeria so far—but it is now a thing of the past. The out-of-date structures instituted by that rule ought to yield to new structures brought about by the development of

an industrialization movement based on the exploitation of the Sahara oilfields. Then, and without threat to the economy, the reconversion of a large part of the land now given over to the vine will be possible for the purpose of readapting Algerian agriculture to the interests of the total group.