

An Analysis of the Editorial Position of the  
New York Times on the French-Algerian Crisis:

1954-1958

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an analysis of editorials appearing in the New York Times between 1954 and 1958 which address themselves either directly or indirectly to the French-Algerian conflict. It is in no way meant to be a continuous history of the war in Algeria during this period. Indeed, editorials by their very nature do not provide in themselves either the information or the authority needed for such a study. Rather, it has been my purpose in this work to deduce from these editorials what position was taken by the New York Times in regard to this struggle and to present these opinions in some organized manner.

In order to achieve some continuity in presenting this material, I have found it necessary to divide this paper both chronologically and by topic. Since each editorial stands as a whole and depends upon no other editorial for meaning, the specific topic of each editorial varies greatly from day to day. Also, the position stated in one editorial may be repeated several months or even years later. This means that a purely

chronological approach would jump from subject to subject so often as to make it impossible to perceive the continuity of the New York Times' position on any given topic. A strictly topical approach is also unacceptable since it would ignore the chronological development of events which necessarily effected the New York Times' position.

The year 1958 was chosen as the closing date for this study because in that year Charles de Gaulle came to power and an entirely new period began. The period from 1958 to 1962 when Algeria received its independence constitutes another era proper for a separate study. The chronological divisions which each chapter represents were made primarily for the sake of convenience in handling the material rather than because of any dramatic change in the New York Times' policy from one period to the next.

Within this structure I have allowed the editorials to speak for themselves wherever possible and have interjected historical facts only where necessary to provide a back-drop for what is being discussed by the New York Times.

Finally, I have included a quick sketch of Algeria's history, emphasizing the growth of Moslem nationalism. Although not absolutely necessary, this chapter does provide a background which will aid the reader who is unfamiliar with this field of

history.

It will be noted that the bibliography for this thesis is somewhat short. This is due to the nature of the thesis itself. Since it is an analysis of editorials, no other sources were needed except insofar as they provided background information. Because of its brevity, it was felt that it was not necessary to divide this material into primary and secondary sources, books, magazines, etc.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>

#### Early History

The recorded history of the area now known as Algeria reaches back before the time of Christ. The first known people of Algeria were the Berbers, who in the third century B.C. united into two kingdoms which eventually combined to form the kingdom of Numidia.<sup>2</sup> This kingdom covered all of what is today called Algeria and part of Morocco. Around 100 B.C. these people came under Roman domination. The Romans, in spite of several revolts, held this land until the seventh century A.D. The seventh century brought Arab conquest, against which the Berbers also rose in rebellion. During the succeeding five centuries, a series of Moslem Berber kingdoms were established, ending in the twelfth century when present-day Algeria became part of the empire of the Moroccan Almohade dynasty.

In the late fifteenth century, this dynasty, threatened by Spain,<sup>3</sup> relinquished its sovereignty to two cosairs, Baba Aroudj and Kheireddine,<sup>4</sup> for the sake of protection. Kheireddine proceeded to have the Turkish Sultan in Constantinople recognize him as Pasher (a title which two centuries later was changed to Dey) of this land and so brought Algeria into Turkish hands.

During these years under Turkish rule, Algeria grew in strength through trade and piracy, until, by the eighteenth century, it was recognized by the countries of Europe as a power with which to contend.<sup>5</sup> Diplomatic representatives were sent and tribute was paid. But for various reasons, the position of the Deys weakened in the closing twenty-five years of their rule. It was in this weakened position that Charles X of France began in 1827 what can be referred to as the dawn of French influence in Algeria.

#### Dawn of French Influence in Algeria

The establishment of a French Algeria may be considered as something of an accident. Charles X, suffering unpopularity at home, saw an overseas expedition as politically desirable. The pretext for the expedition was a supposed insult leveled at the French Consul by the Dey in 1827.<sup>6</sup> After issuing an ultimatum impossible for the Dey to accept, Charles X declared a blockade of the country which lasted three years. The blockade proved expensive and unpopular and so in January, 1830, Charles organized a punitive landing. The French arrived in June of that same year, and by September the Dey was forced to capitulate and sign a Convention. This Convention, though expensive for the Dey, implied no transfer of sovereignty.

Meanwhile in France, Charles X lost his throne to Louis-

Philippe in spite of his victory in Algeria. Louis-Philippe and his advisers felt the total collapse of the Dey's power could profit France and so proceeded to break the Convebtion and establish French control of the country. Moslem resistance to these developments was great. A "Holy War" against the French was lead by Emir Abd el-Qader who strove to establish an Algerian nation; organizing the country and reforming the Turkish administration. In 1837 his authority over Algeria was recognized by a treaty signed by the French Marshal in charge of the area. However, it was not ratified by the French Chamber.<sup>7</sup> Rather, a ruthless campaign was initiated to break Abd el-Qader's power. Abd el-Qader surrendered in 1847, but resistance continued in a series of insurrections, the last of which took place in 1871.

#### Development of French Presence

In 1848, after Abd el-Qader's surrender, the Second French Republic gave Algeria the status of three departments of France. During this period the European take over began in earnest, as thirty thousand European settlers acquired one-third of the cultivatable land. Few settlers were actually French. Most came from the strife-torn lands of Spain, Malta, Italy, and later, Alsace-Lorraine. But a French law in 1899 conferred French nationality on second generation immigrants. These set-



tlers, 600,000 among four million Moslems by 1900, naturally developed into a strong community. Defensive and antagonistic, they were especially critical of any governmental policy protecting "native rights" or improving the Moslem's standard of living. Accordingly, French legislation favored the European element at the detriment of the Moslem population.

In 1865 Napoleon III made it possible for the Moslems to acquire French citizenship if they would submit to the French civil code. Submitting to this code, amounted for the Moslems to breaking up the whole structure of the Islamic family life, with its principles of patriarchal authority, collective ownership of property, and inheritance rights. Assimilation, as it was called, meant the renunciation of African culture and adoption of the patterns and ways of life of the metropolitan community. At such a high cost, it is not surprising that few Moslems were assimilated.

In government also, the Moslem community suffered since their desires were represented by only a handful of councilors with no real power. As the years passed, the European settlers continued to build up a western nation in Algeria while the Moslems suffered increased pauperization.

#### Seeds of Algerian Nationalism<sup>8</sup>

The end of World War I saw a resurgence of Algerian (Moslem)

nationalism. During the war, Moslem inhabitants of Algeria were subject to French conscription. Moslems began to reason, if they were now subjected to the same duties as Europeans, they should enjoy some of the same rights. These signs of Algerian nationalism, the first since the suppression of the 1870-1871 revolt, were seen as the Moslems demonstrated for an end of the "native code",<sup>9</sup> and fiscal inequality; and for an increase of educational opportunities, and in the number of Moslem representatives on municipal councils. The settlers firmly refused.

Three Moslem protest groups rose to the occasion. First, a party founded by Messali Hadj in 1927 and its successor in 1937, the Parti du Peuple Algerian (PPA). Strongly influenced by Marxist doctrine, these parties had limited appeal and were restricted to a rather limited circle of initiates who moved outside the mainstream of Moslem society.

The second group were called the Ulemas. This was essentially a religious movement whose aim was a return to the pure principles of Islam. Too small in number for political action, the Ulemas established Arab schools which drilled into thousands of students the separate qualities of their Arab nationality. These "medersas", as they were called, became a breeding ground of young nationalists.

The third of the Moslem protest groups stood apart for a

good many years. Founded by Ferhat Abbas, this group was known as the Young Algeria movement and was made up essentially from the middle class. Its goal was the promotion of Moslems to full rights of French citizenship.

#### A Change in Algerian Aspirations

The aspirations of the greater part of Algerian Moslems up to 1940 included association with France in an effort toward real assimilation. This fact is revealed in a statement made in 1935 by Ferhat Abbas, a man later to become recognized as a leader of the Algerian nationalist feeling. It indicates that he saw Algeria's future not as an autonomous nation but linked with France. "If I had discovered the Algerian nation, I should hbe a nationalist....However, I will not die for the Algerian fatherland, because this fatherland does not exist."<sup>10</sup>

Several events, however, served to dispell the hope of assimilation held by both Abbas and the Moslems at large. The major factor was the realization of the impossibility of meaningful reform. Significant reform, political or social, was either blocked by the "colon"<sup>11</sup> lobby in the French parliament or broke down in actual application.<sup>12</sup>

Sensing the internal weakness of the French government at the close of World War II and having been frustrated in previous attempts to achieve real assimilation, Ferhat Abbas pre-

sented a formal statement of Moslem aspirations to the French in 1943.<sup>13</sup> It revealed a marked change in the tone of Moslem demands. No longer was assimilation Abbas' goal for Algeria, but one of separate status within a federalist structure. This manifesto was rejected "in toto" by the Governor-General of Algeria.

Though the French did respond to these demands later (1944) with an ordinance making concessions which would have satisfied the Moslems in earlier years, it proved to be too little too late.

#### Towards a Violent Revolution

Three causes may be cited as essential elements leading to the violent revolution which began in 1954 and ended in 1962 with Algerian independence. The first was a massacre which took place V-E Day, 1945, in the Algerian town of Sétif. The occasion was a parade in which a young Moslem carrying the Algerian flag was killed by a police officer. Ill-feeling already existed in the area between the Moslem and European communities because of the extreme poverty the natives suffered and the abundance enjoyed by the Europeans. After the killing, half of the crowd went wild and proceeded to massacre any Europeans they found. In all, one hundred and three Europeans were killed and one hundred and ten wounded.

The European reprisal was devastating. The local military carried on a "comb-out" of the area. The French government gave its support in the action and French civilians went about as "anti-terrorists" for weeks killing innocent Algerians. At least 15,000 Moslems lost their lives as a result.<sup>14</sup>

This incident polarized Moslem opinion and proved to be the point of no return.<sup>15</sup> It became clear to the nationalists that the "colons" were ready to defend their position with force of arms if necessary. Furthermore, the French government made it clear with whom it would side in conflicts between the "colon" and the Moslems.

The second major cause was the death of the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto (UDMA) founded by Ferhat Abbas in 1946. The UDMA still held to the hope for an autonomous Algeria within the French Union. This relatively moderate group was opposed by the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms (MTLD). Under the leadership of Messali Hadj, the MTLD advocated more militant action than former parties had. Its program called for the election by universal suffrage of a sovereign Algeria. The UDMA then, provided an important alternative to the extremist groups. The tragedy of the failure of the UDMA is expressed by one author in these words:

If the French government had given Abbas a hear-

ing for his ideas in the Second French Constituent Assembly and kept the UDMA alive as a vital channel between the extremists of both sides, it is conceivable that the revolt of 1954 might never have broken out. As it happened, the UDMA died of 'electorial malnutrition', and Abbas went on to join the ranks of the nationalists.(16)

The final cause which might be cited is the discontent which existed among the young men within the MTLD. Opposed to the old professional revolutionaries' conception of revolution, the younger men wanted the party to do something, take action now.

Finally in March, 1954, nine young men lead by Mohammed Ben Boudiaf established the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action (CRUA). The aim of the CRUA was to pave the way for an armed insurrection in the near future. By September, commands had been worked out, and in October it was decided that the rebellion would start at midnight on October 31. On November 1, a radio station in Cario, the "Voice of the Arabs", announced the establishment of a Front of National Liberation (FLN): "Today...at one o'clock in the morning, a powerful elite of the free children of Algeria started the insurrection of Algerian freedom against French imperialism in North Africa."<sup>17</sup>

The war was on and Algeria was in the news.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BEGINNINGS OF TERROR

#### Reaction at the Outset

The series of sporadic attacks which took place on the first of November as the first step in the violent overthrow of French rule in Algeria found their way into the editorials section of the New York Times on November 5, 1954. The editorial's first reaction to this uprising indicated that it realized the grave significance of what was in store for the future. "This is the first time violent nationalism has reached Algeria and it can be serious business for the French."<sup>1</sup>

It was nationalism, the movement sweeping Africa, into which Algerian Moslems now stepped. Commenting on the nature of this nationalism, the New York Times predicted the expense to be incurred if it continued.

However, the contemporary nationalism is xenophobic; the aim is to get rid of the foreigner at all costs. Often the cost is high and in the case of Algeria it certainly would be for all concerned.(2)

But the New York Times did not view this as a spontaneous kind of nationalism. This violence was seen as an extension of conflicts taking place in two French colonies that bordered

Algeria. As the editorial stated: "It remains to be seen how the Algerians will react to the attempts by Tunisian and Moroccan nationalists to stir them up."<sup>3</sup> Agitation came from these sources to a country legally part of France in which one million French lived "harmoniously" with nine million Moslems. The New York Times further laments that, "The French were just getting down to real reform giving genuine satisfaction."<sup>4</sup>

#### Reaction to French Policy

IN the first months after their instigation of active rebellion, the Army of National Liberation (ALN)<sup>5</sup> confined their operations to ambushes and skirmishes. The French troops already in Algeria sufficed to handle the situation. But by May, of 1955 the rebellion had grown to such strength that Premier Faure had to increase the French forces in the country to 100,000. This transfer of troops included the French NATO forces in Europe. That the New York Times saw this as no solution for Algeria is clear from its editorial of August 8, 1955.

In any case it is obvious that in the long run France cannot sit on bayonets, and that it will have to find a political solution that will both pacify North Africa and keep it in the Free World camp. (6)

This quote also reveals a primary concern of the New York Times which presents itself again and again in its editorials.



That is, "There is no question that French North Africa must be held for the Free World and that France is at present the only nation which can do so."<sup>7</sup> What is questioned, however, is the possibility of a solution under the French policy of this period. On the eve of negotiations between the French government and Moroccan nationalists leaders, negotiations aimed at solving the French-Moroccan problem,<sup>8</sup> an editorial comments:

It remains to be seen whether that situation (Algeria included) can be solved within the rigid context of French Union or whether a more flexible concept like a French Commonwealth of self-governing countries will become necessary to keep North Africa on the side of the Free World.<sup>9</sup>

An editorial on August 23 stands as the first instance where the New York Times mentions the internal tension in Algeria as caused by France's inability to initiate real reform. Reform is seen as an essential element in the resolution of these hostilities.

Algeria is an administrative part of Metropolitan France, but it is true that the Moslem people, who are in a vast majority, do not have equal rights with French residents. To raise the level of the Algerian to the French standard is obviously a long-range problem and it is hard to see what the French can do now except make it clear to the Moslems that this is the goal.(10)

And again on September 2, while discussing the newly estab-

lished representative government for Morocco, the New York

Times comments:

This course does not yet embrace Algeria, which by a legal fiction is part of Metropolitan France with a second-class citizenship. Sooner or later a similar readjustment will have to be made there.(11)

These statements indicate that this conflict was no longer considered by the New York Times to be a mere matter of external agitation. This is quite a different picture from that painted in the November 5 editorial where one million French were living "harmoniously" with nine million Moslems. But in spite of the inequality now existing because of mistakes in the past, the New York Times felt that French rule continued to be best for Algeria in the existing situation.

And provided it keeps the door open for progressive self-government, French overall rule is still better than either a native feudal despotism or anarchy and civil war. That is why the latest French efforts deserve all the support they can get.(12)

The whole situation is analyzed by the New York Times in these terms:

French North Africa is being rent today by a complicated interplay of native nationalism and radical and dynastic rivalries compounded by camouflaged Communist penetration(13) and aggravated by French

weakness, all of which leads to a situation that explodes into Moslem terrorism and European counter-terrorism, as in Casablanca.(14)

#### Algeria and the Debate in the United Nations

In late September of 1955, the strong Afro-Asian block proposed to the United Nations' General Assembly that the Algerian conflict be brought into debate before the nations of the world. The French protested, arguing that Algeria was a domestic matter and that the United Nations had no jurisdiction in the case. The New York Times supported this protest. An editorial on October 2 argued, "Disturbance in Algeria is not an 'International threat to the peace'."15 In addition to this argument the New York Times further stated: "A general debate can not possibly do any good. It may do a great deal of harm. It cannot promote the cause of good government in North Africa."16

But while agreeing with France that the United Nations action would be out of place as far as Algeria was concerned, the New York Times did not overlook its international implications. It said: "If it is true, and we believe that it is, that the political status of Algeria is a French domestic problem, it is also true that the whole question of North Africa is of international consequences."17

The day following this editorial, the United Nations' General Assembly voted in favor of debating the Algerian question.

The French responded to this action by establishing a French boycott of the General Assembly. Three quotes make the New York Times' position concerning the United Nations' decision crystal clear.

That the General Assembly's action was a serious blunder is beyond question.(18)

Having persistently refused to face the issue ... of the new soviet colonialism which has subjugated half of Europe and Asia, and having turned down consideration of Cyprus, a British colony, the assembly could only stultify itself by voting a debate on Algeria, which by its own charter, has no jurisdiction.(19)

The United Nations has no business interfering in what is only too clearly an internal affair of France.(20)

Consistent with their position that the United Nations had made a mistake in voting a debate on this issue, the New York Times was critical of the weak support given by the United States to the French in their effort to keep the Algerian question out of the General Assembly. It commented: "On the more important issue of Algeria, Ambassador Lodge merely made a lukewarm speech in favor of the French, and so far as known, we did not lift a finger to persuade our friends to vote with us."<sup>21</sup>

This criticism was reiterated on November 24 when the New York Times, in looking back over the vote, stated: "As was realized too late, there would have been enough votes to defeat the

resolution if the U.S. delegation had put itself out to help France and if a certain number of countries had been properly briefed in advance."<sup>22</sup>

The New York Times had more to say concerning this issue on October 26, the occasion being the tenth anniversary of the United Nations. After stating that a major problem still remaining for the United Nations after ten years of existence was that of jurisdiction within a state, the Algerian problem was cited as an example of just such a problem beyond the present capacity of the United Nations. But this editorial also indicates a certain degree of criticism concerning France's boycott of the General Assembly and her refusal to debate the Algerian question. For while advising that, "The United Nations should be careful not to tread heavily on the toes of members who feel strongly that they should be let alone,"<sup>23</sup> it also said of France, "Granting that the U.N. has no business to meddle in the affairs of Algeria, it is a fact that France would have nothing to fear from an open debate on the subject."<sup>24</sup>

The United Nations voted to drop the Algerian issue in late November. It was dropped in order that France might return to take part in the discussion of the big question of disarmament soon to come before the United Nations. Without France present, it would have been impossible to have a fruitful dis-

cussion of this topic. Comments in the November 26 editorial of the New York Times revealed that its position had in no way changed concerning the debate just completed. Again it stated: "The vote (to put the Algerian question in debate) was an inexcusable intervention in France's internal affairs and nothing can hide this fact."<sup>25</sup> This editorial also makes it clear that the New York Times is against any attempt to end colonialism which would prove harsh or condemnatory of France.

It (the problem of ending colonialism) cannot be dealt with by cruel blows at a power like France, which may make mistakes or may be slow in doing the right thing, but whose long-range policies are aimed at independence and equality for independent people. (26)

#### Criticism of French Policy and Government

To say there was a reciprocal relation between the situation in Algeria and the stability of the French government is a truism. The growing rebellion and its drain on French men and money shook the foundations of the already weak government in France. Likewise, the very weakness of the French government made reform and resolution of the conflict nearly impossible. Because of her weakness, the New York Times felt that France was to a large extent responsible for the development of the crisis to its present stage. On October 3, 1955, it stated: "She (France) made herself vulnerable by governmental weakness

and confusion at home and by a blundering and dilatory policy within her overseas possessions."<sup>27</sup> And again on October 7, "...M. Faure can be accused of inexcusable weakness in allowing the situation to reach this present stage."<sup>28</sup> The problem itself was not Minister Faure's fault; but, according to the New York Times, its present state of escalation was.

The weakness of the French government was due to many things, one of which was the constitution itself which permitted the National Assembly to dispense with governments at will. This was done by a vote of confidence. If this vote was lost, the government was forced to resign. Such a vote was called on October 18, 1955, the subject being Minister Faure's Algerian policy. Faure's policy was a middle course of integration. It included political liberties like free democratic elections, a program of land reforms, and stepped-up investments. Faure survived by the vote 308-254. But the narrow margin and the division among those supporting him only confirmed the instability of the platform on which he stood.<sup>29</sup>

Concerning France's policy in Algeria at this time, the New York Times' position is somewhat vague. Very little was actually said, but two quotes from October editorials seem to indicate some inconsistency. The first, on October 3, gives the impression that the New York Times saw a radical change in

French policy as necessary. Just exactly what this change should be is not explicitly stated. One thing is certain though, the solution will not be reached if France continues to insist that Algeria remain within the French Union. Here the New York Times has answered the question it raised back on August 22, 1955 (quoted on page 14), that is whether Algeria can remain in the French Union. The October 3, 1956, editorial reads:

But it will require bold and imaginative action which does not cling to old traditions of legal fictions but recognizes the new forces abroad in the world and takes steps to mobilize them in behalf of the free world.(30)

The second editorial mentioned above, appeared on October 7. It admits that the implimation of the French policy of assimilation has been somewhat retarded, but finds the policy itself praise worthy. It states:

It is a fact that the 'assimilation' of Algeria into the French Union has lagged, but it is also a fact that France has a consistent and laudable policy in Algeria which deserves a peaceful evolution.(31)

Asmittedly these statements do not contradict one another. They do seem to reflect, however, two different emotions toward France and her policy. It is somewhat the situation of a person who finds himself in disagreement with a friend. On the one



hand, the New York Times feels that France must approach this problem more realistically and be open to a more liberal solution. On the other hand, the New York Times reminds France's critics that she has made an honest effort in Algeria and must not be criticized too harshly for her mistakes. Generally, this is the New York Times' position throughout the whole conflict.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE CRISIS CONTINUES THROUGH THE MOLLET GOVERNMENT: JANUARY, 1956 TO JUNE, 1957

##### Difficulty of Reaching a Solution

As the Algerian crisis stretched into its second year, the New York Times saw little hope for a solution in the near future. Commenting on the general elections to be held in France later in January, the New York Times predicted on January 3 that, "Whatever government or governments take office in 1956, Algeria promises to be the most serious single problem."<sup>1</sup>

The editorials during the first half of 1956 provide the basis upon which the New York Times made this prediction. In them, the New York Times outlined what it saw as the complexity of the problems and the difficulty of finding a solution.

The first editorial of the year presented a brief history of Algeria and French involvement there. In discussing the Organic Statute of 1947, which extended French citizenship to all Moslems who would comply with its terms, this editorial remarked that the difficulty of real political equality was a matter of numbers. It stated: "To give Algerians equality in parliament for instance, would have meant about 150 Algerian Deputies in a National Assembly of 627."<sup>2</sup> Proportionately the Algerians would

have tremendous strength in this body, strength which the parliament was understandably opposed to giving them. But this political equality was precisely what the Moslems demanded.

The Algerians, however, demanded even more than political equality. They demanded the freedom of self-determination; the freedom to be a nation independent of France. The New York Times clarified that it believed this demand could not possibly be met at present. Considering this question, an editorial on February 7 stated:

However, Algeria is not a nation; it never was. When the French conquered it in the 19th century it was a geographic fiction, peopled by warring tribes. There is no ethnic unity, no Algerian race, and no Algerian nationalist leaders today who can speak for the people.(3)

Furthermore, an editorial on January 3 argues, though, "Assimilation or integration no longer seems possible, yet Algeria is economically absolutely dependent on France. France cannot give up Algeria; Algeria cannot do without France."<sup>4</sup> To the New York Times, then, logic dictated that independence was unreasonable for Algeria in its present state.

The difficulty noted at this point by the New York Times was that no matter how illogical an independent Algeria might be, logic held little sway in the face of what France was fighting: nationalism. As the New York Times asserted in an editor-

ial on February 29:

Yet contemporary history--above all, the force of nationalism--has brought a situation in which the Moslems of Africa demand and must get independence. There is no argument to conter this demand; because it is emotional; it is outside the bounds of reason and logic.(5)

But if independence is illogical, the New York Times also felt it was unreasonable to ask the Moslems to remain in their present state of second-class citizenship. An editorial on February 11 stated: "But to expect Algerians, any more than Vietnamese, Tunisians and Moroccans to accommodate themselves to an inferior status in the present world atmosphere of rampant nationalism is not logical."6

In the eyes of the New York Times, France for her part, by the very nature of her government, placed an additional obstacle in the way of the resolution of this dispute. Although it was obvious that no settlement could be reached without France loosening her grip on Algeria, the New York Times sympathized with France's desire to keep Algeria within the French Union. An editorial explained: "The French, like all of us, are prisoners of their history, traditions and way of life, and it so happens that they have always had centralized governments."7 But as understandable as the French position was, it only served to further complicate attempts at negotiations.

To summarize, the dilemma confronting France and Algeria in solving their conflict, as analyzed by the New York Times, revolved around these facts. First, political equality for Algerian Moslems within the French Union was impossible because of the imbalance this would create in the National Assembly. Neither could the French reform programs aimed at social and economic equality meet the population expansion within Algeria.

Secondly, France was presented with a situation which demanded that she provide more autonomy for Algeria. The question was: how could this be achieved when France continued to insist that Algeria remain within the French Union? France's immutable faith in the necessity of a centralized government posed what seemed to be an insurmountable barrier.

Finally, the Moslems, swept by the spirit of nationalism, cried out for complete independence, while still lacking those elements necessary for nationhood. This cry could not be answered, but neither could it be ignored or silenced.

Add to this the complication created by the presence of one million French settlers and several million dollars worth of French investments in Algeria and the picture is complete. Even if independence were granted, which looked like the inevitable outcome, how could these citizens and investments be protected from the new government if it choose to be vindictive?

The perplexity of this final question was expressed by the New York Times in these words: "No force in our time has ever stemmed the tide of nationalism in any region of the world. Yet the government must protect the lives and interests of the French residents."<sup>8</sup>

These problems, together with even more serious ones to be treated in the next section, faced Guy Mollet during his year and a half as Premier of France. As difficult as these problems appeared, Mollet's first month in office offered some hope for the future. But soon the situation in Algeria changed, and what little hope existed died as European settlers rioted against Mollet's Algerian policy. The next section of this thesis will concern itself with the New York Times' response to and lack of response to these and other important events which took place during Mollet's administration.

#### Developments Under Mollet's Government<sup>9</sup>

The French general elections held in January of 1956 resulted in the ascension of Guy Mollet to the position of Premier of France. Mollet, formerly the General Secretary of the Socialists Party, was true to his party's philosophy and began in his first month in office to propose a more liberal solution for Algeria. He called for cession of terrorism of rebels and also of the blind repression directed against Moslems by European

settlers and government alike. Mollet also proposed a free election in Algeria with just one electoral college instead of two as was then in use (one Moslem, one European). In order to facilitate this policy's implementation, Mollet chose General Catroux to be the new Governor-General of Algeria.

These proposed changes in French policy were not commented upon by the New York Times in its editorials. Indeed, no indication was given that the atmosphere in France had changed at all. After Mollet took office, the New York Times merely continued to criticize the same French policy in Algeria as it did before his election, ignoring Mollet's more concessionary stand. Two statements exemplify this fact. Immediately before Mollet's election, the New York Times had this to say concerning the French policy of integration: "There never was any social integration, even in Algeria, and the bulk of the Moslem population was backwards in every sense--economically, educationally and politically."<sup>10</sup> A month after Mollet's election, the New York Times commented again on the policy of integration: "Yet the original idea of making Algeria a part of metropolitan France--which it is juridically today--was not honestly implemented and stands today as a failure."<sup>11</sup>

Now these statements are consistent and both refer to the same policy. The important thing to note, however, is that in

not one of the New York Times' editorials is any mention made of Mollet's changes. Apparently the New York Times simply was not aware of the significance of what Mollet was doing. But if the New York Times was not aware that any change had taken place in French policy, the European settlers of Algeria certainly were.

When Guy Mollet went to Algiers on February 6, 1956, to install General Catroux, enraged crowds of rioting Europeans made evident their opposition to Catroux's appointment and Mollet's more concessionary policy towards the Moslems.<sup>12</sup> That same day, Mollet cancelled the appointment of General Catroux as Governor-General. Robert Lacoste, the Socialist Finance Minister, replaced Catroux; and according to one contemporary, "...was very soon in the pocket of the settlers"<sup>13</sup>

The importance of Mollet's capitulation lies in the fact that the settlers had proven that they had the power to twist the arm of the French government in Paris. The "colons" became more steadfast in their resistance to any change in Algeria's status and their separation from the Moslem community increased. Tanya Matthews, in her War in Algeria: Background For Crisis, proposes that the weakness shown by the French in this matter, "...paved the way directly to the European revolt of 13 May, 1958--and to the other insurrections that followed."<sup>14</sup> Besides



this, Alfred Cobban, author of A Modern History of France, feels that another result of this incident was that it convinced Mollet to change his original position and caused him to slide back in the the old French position of "no concessions". He states that, "This experience seems to have shocked him (Mollet) into a remarkable reversal of policy, from one of concession to one of resistance."<sup>15</sup>

As serious as these events seem now in retrospect, the New York Times gives little evidence that it considered them too important at the time. It did not mention that the hope for a solution, as held out by Mollet, had been crushed since it was not aware that such a hope had ever existed. An editorial on February 11 had only this to comment on the revolt: "Yet this (the revolt of settler understood by the New York Times to be a demand for protection) cannot be allowed to obscure the fact that the French government has mishandled the situation and has shown deplorable weakness."<sup>17</sup>

But the importance of the European revolt in Algeria and the radical change in Mollet's policy after this revolt were not the only developments which were overlooked during this period by the New York Times. Other changes were also taking place in Algeria which never found their way into its editorial section. Two of these developments, as listed by Cobban, might

be noted here. First, in reference to the nature of the war, Cobban states, "It was becoming increasingly a private war, waged with the utmost barbarism, between the army and the 'colon' on one side and the Algerian rebels on the other."<sup>18</sup> Secondly, in reference to the administration in Algeria, Cobban states, "The government increasingly passed into the hands of the military."<sup>19</sup> But, seemingly impervious to these developments, the New York Times continued its usual criticism of France's weakness and of her policy in Algeria. The next section will deal with this criticism.

#### Criticism of French Government and Policy

The preceding two sections of this chapter have already alluded to the character of the New York Times' criticism during this period between January 1956 and June 1957. What is revealed in this section will further substantiate that the New York Times' position remained essentially the same as it had been before.

An editorial on February 11, 1956, contained a general evaluation of the Mollet government. It said that the only encouraging feature of Mollet and his cabinet was that they had good intentions and a genuine desire to find a solution fair to both the French and the Moslems. But little hope that such a fair solution could be reached was seen by the New York Times.

The idea of equal rights and duties between the Moslems, the French settlers, and Metropolitan France was not acceptable to the settlers or the Moslems. Neither was Mollet's government strong enough to impose such a policy. The riots of Europeans in Algiers had proven this. The situation was summarized by the New York Times in these words: "Miscalculation compounded by weakness, and both applied to a plan that was probably impossible to begin with, have created a state of affairs which could hardly be worse."<sup>20</sup>

Just what French plan the New York Times was referring to in this statement is not clear. But from what was said in previous editorials, it is unlikely that it meant either France's economic plan for Algeria or the possibility of an autonomous Algeria within a French framework. This statement, then, was probably directed towards France's insistence that Algeria be completely integrated into France. This would make this statement consistent with the New York Times' previous questioning of the feasibility of such a plan. It should be recalled that the New York Times stated on August 22, 1955:

It remains to be seen whether that situation (Algeria's status) can be solved within the rigid context of French Union or whether a more flexible concept like a French Commonwealth of self-governing countries will become necessary to keep North Africa on the side of the Free World.<sup>21</sup>

The next opportunity taken by the New York Times to discuss French policy came in March 1956 when the French General Assembly voted to give Mollet "full powers" to handle the Algerian situation. An editorial on March 13 stressed that this move should not lead anyone to suppose that France was thinking of withdrawing from Algeria. Commenting on the prospects aroused by the General Assembly's decision, the New York Times said:

However, it is hard to envisage Frenchmen agreeing to abandon Algeria as they did Indochina. In fact, such a solution is unthinkable. It would also be the worst thing that could happen to Algeria and --by no means incidentally--to the democratic West.<sup>22</sup>

Not only would such an action have disastrous effects on Algeria and the Western nations as a whole, but in particular, "France would cease to be a great power if she lost North Africa."<sup>23</sup> In one form or another, this statement finds its way into the New York Times' editorials throughout this whole conflict and seems to be a prime concern. But there was little reason to worry. Mollet had no intention of letting Algeria cut herself off from France. During the succeeding months, France was to see a build up of troops and equipment in Algeria surpassing all previous records.<sup>24</sup>

For a month and a half, no editorials related to the Al-

gerian War appeared in the New York Times' editorial section. The New York Times renewed its commentary on May 9 with an editorial entitled "The Problem of Algeria". On the whole, this editorial was extremely favorable to France. It explained that France held Algeria not for the sake of pure colonialism, but to protect the one million French settlers there. "These men and women (Europeans in Algeria) cannot be abandoned by the Mother Country."<sup>25</sup> Neither were these settlers to be blamed for their prosperity in the face of Moslem poverty because "The best land is owned and run by the French, simply because they made it the best."<sup>26</sup>

This editorial also manifests again the seeming paradox of the New York Times defense of France while criticizing her in the same breath. Two quotes illustrate this point well.

The fact that Algeria has been part of Metropolitan France is also fine in theory, but it was not implemented in practice.(27)

The French have made mistakes--grave ones--and they are paying heavily for them now, but at the same time they carried out a civilizing mission and an economic development of the first order.<sup>28</sup>

The final occasion taken by the New York Times to comment on French policy came in February, 1957, when the United Nations voted to bring the Algerian problem into debate again. Two editorials during this month speak forthrightly in favor of the

French plan for Algeria. The first appeared on February 4. In it the New York Times expressed this opinion:

France has a reasonable plan for Algeria that will lead to the equivalent of self-rule. Obviously there can be no elections until there is internal peace and France cannot be asked to abandon the 1,200,000 French 'colons'. The guerilla warfare is not a popular movement and is carried on by bands, mostly armed and trained in Egypt. The Moslem population is seriously split between Arabs and Berbers. (29)

The plan to which this editorial refers was put forth by Guy Mollet in May of 1959. It called for prior pacification and ceasefire in Algeria on the promise of free elections to choose Moslem representatives to discuss a new status for Algeria based on indissoluble ties with France. By "pacification" was meant a massive military effort to crush the rebels. The second editorial appeared two days later, February 6. It was completely consistent with the first and stated:

To keep Algeria inside of a French framework is logical enough in present circumstances and there is no adequate basis for saying that a majority of the Algerian Moslems would want it otherwise if they understood the issues and could vote on them freely. (30)

Besides their statements concerning French policy, it is obvious that these quotes also express an editorial opinion on the strength of the rebel's support among the Moslem population

at large. It is important to note that, although these are made as statements of fact, they are more correctly understood as opinions of the New York Times since there was much debate on this point.

#### The United States' Position

Two specific events presented themselves during the period between January 1956 and June 1957 which the New York Times used as occasions to comment on what position it felt the United States should take concerning the French-Algerian conflict. The first took place on March 2, 1956, when the French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau, accused the United States and Britain of indifference to France's ordeal and of harboring designs to inherit French influence in North Africa.

The New York Times addressed itself to this accusation in an editorial on March 13, 1956. This editorial explained that the seeming indifference of the United States to France's plight was not a matter of "designs on North Africa" but part of the general passivity shown by the United States in all of the Middle East. It stated: "It certainly can be argued that American policy has been inert so far as North Africa is concerned, but this is something that can be argued on the whole Moslem-Middle Eastern conflict."<sup>31</sup> Throwing it back into France's lap, the New York Times further retorted: "The truth of the matter is

that France is in a bad way in North Africa because of her own policies and she will extricate herself or not according to what she does, not what we or the British do."<sup>32</sup>

United States Ambassador to France, Thomas Dillon, attempted to pacify the French in a speech later that same month. Dillon assured the French that the United States supported the policy they were following in all of North Africa, including Algeria. This pleased the New York Times since it had called all along for the United States to take a stronger stand for France. But it also irritated the New York Times that such a statement had to be made, since, if the State Department had been doing its job, such a speech never would have been necessary. This opinion was expressed by the New York Times in an editorial on March 22 as follows:

Ambassador Dillon was right in feeling that there was a failure of public relations somewhere along the line. It should not have been necessary for him to make a speech telling the French something they would have known if the State Department and our diplomatic corps had spoken out at the beginning and kept on speaking. This is one of the many cases where secret diplomacy defeats itself and frankness pays off.(33)

The second event took place on February 4, 1957 when debate on Algeria was resumed in the United Nations' General Assembly. It is quite clear that the New York Times' conviction that this



question had no place in the United Nations had not changed in the year and a half since this issue came up last. As before, the New York Times' position was, "Some who would like to see Algeria independent don't see anything to be gained by bringing the issue into a three-ring circus on the East River."<sup>34</sup> Two quotes from and editorial on February 4 make it obvious that the New York Times was completely consistent with their previous insistence that the United States should support France.

France has a strong case and deserves the firm backing of the United States.(35)

The United Nations should let France get on with the job and the United State should use its influence in the General Assenbly to defeat any rash or condemnatory resolutions.(36)

The New York Times' desire that the United States speak out for the French in the United Nations was fulfilled on February 6, 1957, when United States' Ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge, delivered a speech before the General Assembly giving complete support to France and her policy in Algeria. The New York Times' reaction was predictable. An editorial on February 8 stated; "Ambassodor Lodge's intervention Wednesday gave the French everything they could desire. It was the right thing to do and it should help a bit in the prograss of repairing the deteriorited relations between our

our countries."<sup>37</sup>

#### The Resignation of Guy Mollet

All French governments are condemned to the guillotine from the moment they are voted into power. French Premiers are like men in death row, continuously making appeals (votes of confidence), living from one reprieve to another, loudly proclaiming tjeor ommpcemce bu secretly accepting the inevitable wondering and worrying when the big knife will fall.(38)

The knife fell for Mollet the last week in May of 1957. The final tabulation of the vote of confidence on his budget found Mollet on the short end, 250-213. Although this did not constitute the necessary constitutional majority to force his resignation, Mollet, fully aware of his political weakness, took the chance and resigned anyway.

During his tenure of office, Mollet had alienated the left by the militancy of his policy in Algeria. The right found it impossible to support his socialistic programs. His support thus narrowed, Mollet and his government ended. But one problem remained for the French National Assembly and President Coty, who could gain enough support to win a vote of confidence and succeed Mollet? The next chapter will answer this question and will discuss those events which took place between Mollet's resignation and the ascension of Charles de Gaulle and the Fifth Republic.

## CHAPTER FOUR<sup>1</sup>

### THE FALL OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC AND THE RISE OF CHARLES DE GAULLE

#### The Government of Maurice Bourges-Maunoury

The fall of the Mollet government marked the beginning of the end for the Fourth Republic. After Guy Mollet resigned in May of 1957, France found herself without a government for five weeks because the French National Assembly was unable to get a majority together to support one. Finally, in June the National Assembly begrudgingly approved the government of the radical socialist, Maurice Bourges-Maunoury by the revealing vote of 240 to 194.<sup>2</sup>

The New York Times examined the new government in an editorial on June 14, 1957. It concluded that Bourges-Maunoury's government was much the same as Mollet's had been. The problems which it faced were obvious. "The struggle against the Algerian rebels has not only tied the French army down in Africa to the detriment of NATO and France's own prestige, but is also costing it a billion dollars a year, which is the main factor in the financial crisis."<sup>3</sup>

According to the editorial, prospects were good that the new government could curb this financial crisis by its proposed

reduction of imports and the increase of taxes on the home front. But these measures were only temporary in staving off bankruptcy. The main source of France's economic instability had to be contended with if she wanted to survive. In this area, the New York Times felt the new government also offered by its proposed reforms aimed at forming an Algerian federation of self-ruling provinces based on ethnic lines.

Apparently this hope did not last very long. In July of 1957, the New York Times spoke again of the chances for a solution in Algeria. This time the picture painted was rather gloomy.

It would surely be difficult to find anyone outside of France or Algeria who believes there is any chance of a solution short of independence or a high degree of autonomy. Something approximating a miracle will have to happen if the French are going to succeed in their aims.<sup>4</sup>

But as has been seen in previous discussion of this problem, the New York Times felt Algeria was not capable of successfully sustaining an independent government. An editorial on September 12 verifies that the New York Times had not changed its mind on this point. "It is very possible to demonstrate that Algeria, in the economic, political, and civic fields, is not ready for independence and that, in fact, independence would be a tragedy for the people of Algeria."<sup>5</sup>

An editorial on July 18 discussed another situation not

mentioned before by the New York Times which also contributed in making France's task in Algeria a near impossible one. After specifying that Europeans were still opposed to the government's making any real concession to the Moslems, this editorial declared that Moslems friendly to France were being pressed by rebels so that they could not stand by France.

The unique thing about this editorial was that it further stated that the rebels were not the only reason these Moslems hesitated in their support of France. France by her own actions contributed to the Moslem's timidity. Looking at the situation from a Moslem point of view, the New York Times observed: "Besides, the French have too often shown themselves unable to protect friendly Moslems and French soldiers have sometimes been as brutal as the rebels."<sup>6</sup> This stands as one of the few instances where the New York Times even mentioned French brutality, though it was a problem for many peoples' consciences.<sup>7</sup>

The final editorial to discuss the government of Maurice Bourges-Maunoury appeared on October 2, 1957. It announced that the hope it had expressed in his proposed reform back on June 14 had ended. Bourges-Mounoury and his cabinet had been forced to resign. The French National Assembly had at last rejected his plan for Algeria. This plan was essentially the

same as he had proposed at the beginning of his tenure of office. It would have established regional autonomy for Algeria within a federal structure.<sup>8</sup>

#### The government of Felix Gaillard

The month which followed Maurice Bourges-Maunoury's resignation was another unbearable period of turmoil for the Fourth Republic. After repeated attempts by President Coty to gain the approval of a new government for France, the National Assembly finally elected the young Finance Minister, Felix Gaillard by a vote of 337 to 173 in December. At 38, Gaillard became the youngest man to rule France since Napoleon in 1799.

The immediacy of the problem facing Gaillard was framed by the New York Times in an editorial which appeared on November 23, 1957. It reveals what the New York Times believed to be the wider effects of the war in Algeria.

A solution of these problems is becoming all the more imperative because it is no longer a question of Algeria alone, but a question of France, of Europe, and of the North Atlantic Alliance, all of which are being poisoned by the miasma of this struggle.

But hope was added: "The problem of finding a formula acceptable to all the parties should not be beyond the capacities either of Western diplomacy or of the French language."<sup>10</sup>

Events in October gave the New York Times even more rea-

son to hope, the major one being the approval by the National Assembly of Gaillard's Algerian program. This program contained the same basic provisions as Bourges-Maunoury's had. As is evident from the following quote, the New York Times was extremely pleased by this new step forward in French policy.

Fortunately, a new approach to this question has now been made possible by France's adoption of a law providing for Algerian home rule as a regional basis with a view toward a later Algerian federation with France. This new approach can be welcomed by both the United Nations and France's allies as a basis for a cease-fire and further negotiations.<sup>11</sup>

Two subjects which should be treated in this section remain. The first is the New York Times' comments on Tunisia's support of the Algerian rebels. An editorial on February 21, 1958, laments that Habib Bourguiba (President of Tunisia), although pro-west and a believer in the gradual achievement of independence, was being forced by domestic clamor to side with the Algerian rebels.<sup>12</sup> In reference to France's attempt to control movement across the Algerian-Tunisian border, the New York Times estimated that, "Even with the borders sealed, the Algerian rebellion would continue,"<sup>13</sup> because the rebels' strength is determined by guns not numbers.<sup>14</sup> The editorial concluded, "The French are putting up a bold front, but at best they are making little or no headway in Algeria."<sup>15</sup>

Lastly, the New York Times devoted an editorial to the First Conference of Independent African States held at Accra, Ghana. This conference drafted what the New York Times described as the "African Monroe Doctrine."<sup>16</sup> The New York Times' response to this document was somewhat negative. While confirming that, "there can be no objection either to the call for an ultimate end to colonialism in Africa,"<sup>17</sup> the Times further stated:

And it would seem to be contrary to the charter (charter of this African Conference) to proclaim the ultra-militant NLF as the sole legitimate authority in Algeria and to pledge all 'practical' aid to it when it has no mandate from the Algerian people and is in fact fighting not only the French, but also the more moderate Algerian element which might constitute a majority.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Algerian problem and the United States

During the governments of Maurice Bourges-Maunoury and Felix Gaillard, several statements were made by the New York Times concerning the United States' position in relation to the Algerian war which merit a separate section in this chapter. The first comments were occasioned by a speech made by Senator John F. Kennedy.<sup>19</sup> Senator Kennedy's address before the Senate on July 3, 1957, urged France to give Algeria independence as soon as possible and further suggested that the United States offer to mediate a settlement. Two



quotes summarize well the New York Times' reaction to this speech.

As a democrat and a senator he (Kennedy) is certainly entitled to criticize our own administration's policies on this issue, but considering the sensitivity, jealousy and distrust the French have shown of our motives, an intervention of this type is at least very risky.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, the impression that the United States may try to mediate on behalf of the Algerian nationalists will surely stiffen their resistance against the French. A compromise solution is made more difficult by an intervention of this type.<sup>21</sup>

The New York Times criticized Kennedy's analysis of the problem as being to a degree superficial. This was not simply a case of imperialism on France's part. The situation did not admit of a solution as easily as Senator Kennedy implied in his speech. "Algeria is a unique and baffling problem which may prove insoluble in the long run but which should be left for the time being in French and Algerian hands."<sup>22</sup> The New York Times reiterated this opinion in an editorial on July 18 when it said: "Those, like Senator Kennedy, who glibly urge the French to grant Algeria independence are ignoring many factors which make such a solution unacceptable today."<sup>23</sup>

In keeping with its criticism of Senator Kennedy, the New York Times also brought the whole senate under fire. A

speech similar to John F. Kennedy's made by Mike Mansfield in February, 1958, prompted the New York Times to make this statement concerning what it felt was the senate's intrusion into United States foreign policy:

The whole business of the senate moving into the field of foreign policy is a dubious one on principle, although it must be expected in a time when United States policy appears indecisive or weak. An Algerian policy, if there is such, belongs in the State Department, which at the moment is wisely letting the French deal with Algeria as best they can.<sup>24</sup>

Further comments were made concerning what the United States' response should be to the blood-letting in Algeria on August 21, 1957. The main topic of this editorial was the seeming impossibility of reaching a solution to the problems facing France and Algeria. As is apparent from the following two quotes, the New York Times remained confirmed in its conviction that the United States should leave this problem in French hands.

Someday France may give up what seems to us like a hopeless struggle. As things are now the United States can only say that Algeria is France's problem and only the French can settle it.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, there would seem to be no alternative, from the American point of view, except to encourage the French to keep on trying for a genuinely liberal outcome and to stand by them so long as they do try.<sup>26</sup>

The New York Times' final statements during this period

were precipitated by the outbreak of hostilities between the Tunisian border village of Sakiet-Sidi Youssef in which the majority of victims were women and children.<sup>27</sup> France demanded that the settlement of this conflict be left to France and Tunisia to work out. The New York Times saw this affair in a somewhat different light.

France argues that the Algerian struggle is an internal affair of French government and that the conflict with Tunisia must in the ultimate analysis be settled bilaterally. yet the fate of North Africa affects us, NATO, and the Middle East in the gravest manner. If events continue along present lines, Washington may be forced to say that it considers peace in North Africa to be a vital concern of the United States.<sup>28</sup>

It is interesting to note that the arguments used in this statement by the New York Times are almost identical with those used by Senator Kennedy in his speech July 3 urging United States' intervention in the Algerian crisis. This does not necessarily constitute an inconsistency in the New York Times' position since it was applying these arguments to a different situation. One wonders, however, why the Times did not feel they applied equally well to the situation discussed by Senator Kennedy.

#### The military revolt and de Gaulle's rise to power

The most dramatic event in the entire war in Algeria up to this point took place on May 12, 1958. What began on this

day in Algiers as a demonstration against the up-coming confirmation of Pierre Pflimlin as Premier of France resulted in a full-fledged insurrection by the French military in Algeria against the government in Paris.<sup>29</sup> By May 15, the revolting Europeans, through the maneuvering of Gaullist supporters, were shaped into a pro-Gaullist movement demanding the retired General's return to office. The reaction in the French National Assembly was the immediate election of Pierre Pflimlin as Premier.

The New York Times analyzed the situation in an editorial on May 15, 1958. Of Pflimlin's government it declared: "His government has such a narrow base it cannot exercise the firm authority needed to solve the conflict over Algeria."<sup>30</sup> It further stressed, "Outsiders must hope that the political and not the military solution is the one that triumphs."<sup>31</sup>

On May 17, the New York Times commented again on this military revolt in Algeria; this time concerning the Committee of Public Safety's call for the return of de Gaulle.

The implication is obvious; that de Gaulle would pursue a tougher line against the Algerian rebels than would Pflimlin or any other government. The irony of the situation is that this may not necessarily be true.<sup>32</sup>

The last sentence of this quote was amplified in an editorial on May 23. "It would be the supreme irony of the whole Gaul-

list movement if it were based on a misunderstanding of what the General stands for in respect to the key issues of the present crisis which he is supposed to resolve."<sup>33</sup> On this point, history was to prove the New York Times' prediction to be one hundred percent correct.

Indeed, de Gaulle's exact position on the Algerian question was never made clear until he had gained power. In this way he was able to draw support from both sides of the debate. His support of the insurrectionists was more effectively achieved by his silence than by any positive statements. The New York Times interpreted de Gaulle's refusal to disassociate himself from the revolting military as a sign of approval.<sup>34</sup> De Gaulle's most positive statement concerning the army in Algeria was made in a press conference on May 19 in Paris.<sup>35</sup> The New York Times felt his statements at this time amounted to "approval of the defiance of the military and civil leaders in Algeria!"<sup>36</sup>

But as slippery as it was to pin de Gaulle down on his specific policy for the solution of the Algerian war, the Times made it clear that de Gaulle's personal integrity was never in question. It is consistently repeated throughout the editorials of this period that it is to de Gaulle's credit that he refused to come to power except through legal means.

Neither was it believed that de Gaulle sought leadership for any personal reasons. "His intentions are good: his ambition is not for himself: his conviction's passionate."<sup>37</sup>

In the meantime, the crisis in Pflimlin's government was developing rapidly. Even with the emergency powers granted him by the National Assembly by an overwhelming vote, Pflimlin continued to fight a losing battle. The question facing the French in this struggle between de Gaulle and the constitutional government was summarized by the New York Times in these pointed words:

The issue is whether France shall continue to be governed by its legitimate and democratic government, firmly committed to the North Atlantic Alliance and European unification and now seeking to eliminate its all-too-glaring weakness by a reform constitution, or whether the country that has liberty inscribed on its banners shall be ruled by military and ultra-rightist elements backing General de Gaulle, whose attitude towards the North Atlantic Alliance and European unification is less than enthusiastic.<sup>38</sup>

Obviously the New York Times favored the Fourth Republic as opposed to what it chose to refer to as the "de Gaulle regime." This quote also makes it clear that the Times felt a Gaullist government would mean something approximating a military dictatorship with the loss of some personal liberties in store for the French people. This opinion was supported by an editorial on May 26 which observed: "First of

all, it is now clear that if he does come to power, he will do so not because he was called by the French people, who are lukewarm toward him, but because he was imposed on the nation by the armed forces."<sup>39</sup>

The showdown for the Fourth Republic came on May 27 when the pro-Gaullist insurrection spread to Corsica. The imminent danger was immediately perceived by the government in Paris. It was seen by some as the first step in an invasion of the mainland of France. On May 28, Pierre Pflimlin survived a vote of confidence by a slim margin but offered to resign because he had not gotten an absolute majority of the non-communist vote. President Reny Coty threw the decision of who was to follow Pflimlin back into the lap of parliament. There was no question of what was to be done.

On May 29, 1958, General Charles de Gaulle, after eleven years of self-imposed exile from the French government, returned to active service by the vote of 329 to 224. The question in everyone's mind was what would France's future be now? What would be the future of Algeria? The New York Times offered its readers a hope for the future as it had done for the previous four years. "It is quite conceivable that General de Gaulle might be able to effect a reasonable settlement in North Africa that men of lesser prestige could not even at-

tempt."<sup>40</sup>

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De Gaulle's success proved the Times' prediction to be extremely penetrating. But that part of French-Algerian relations is beyond the scope of this thesis.



## CONCLUSION

This analysis of the editorials of the New York Times has revealed that consistent editorial positions were taken by the New York Times on several aspects of the French-Algerian crisis. These positions, of course, gained breadth and strength as the crisis continued, but certain trends are readily discernible throughout.

Back in November of 1954 when the violence began in earnest, the New York Times seems to have been caught unawares though not completely. Not really familiar with the situation of the Moslems in Algeria, the New York Times first attributed the outbreak of violence primarily to outside agitation. As events progressed, the New York Times evinced a greater awareness of the deeper roots of disturbances in Algeria; inequality in rights for the Moslems, economic poverty, political weakness, and social frustration.

As the situation of the Moslems made a deeper impression, the New York Times began a more active criticism of the policy France had been following in Algeria. It criticised the weakness of the French government, France's insistence that Algeria remain within the strict confines of the French Union, and her inability to implement policies of integration and

and assimilation. More striking, however, was the New York Times' support of France's efforts in general. The common refrain was that France deserved every consideration since she was making noteworthy attempts to achieve a just settlement of the conflict. Changes in French policy were urged, but general condemnation of French policy was avoided.

The course which the New York Times felt the United States should follow in reference to this conflict included support of the French in their efforts in Algeria and the encouragement of the French to reach a more liberal solution for Algeria's status. These suggestions seemed to rest on several political realities. First of all, the precarious state of United States-French relations. Secondly, France's key position in the North Atlantic Alliance. France's cooperation with the United States was necessary and it was felt that nothing should be done to jeopardize this. Furthermore, the disturbances in Algeria did not have any direct effect on the United States and it was legally a matter for French domestic policy to handle. Thus ran the New York Times reasoning.

This argumentation was carried over into the question of the United Nations' debate of Algeria by the New York Times. Although it once asserted that France had nothing to fear

from an open debate of its conduct in Algeria, the New York Times vehemently supported France's position that this was no business of the United Nations. Algeria was legally part of Metropolitan France; the United Nations had no jurisdiction within a state unless international peace was threatened; a debate could accomplish nothing positive but might hinder this problem's solution. Once debate was begun, the New York Times urged the United States to block any resolutions offensive to the French.

The New York Times remained consistent in its application of these general principles in its comments on specific individuals, policies, and events connected with the French-Algerian crisis.

## Footnotes to Chapter One.

<sup>1</sup>This first chapter is, for the most part, a summary of pages 1-16 of Tanya Matthews' work, War in Algeria: Background for Crisis.

<sup>2</sup>It was this kingdom which allied itself with the Roman army against Carthage in the second Punic War (218-202 B.C.).

<sup>3</sup>King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were leading an invasion of North Africa. This action was directed against the Moslems whom the Spanish had just driven out of Spain.

<sup>4</sup>Baba Aroudj and Kheireddine were leaders of strong bands of pirates who were stationed in the Greek islands.

<sup>5</sup>It is interesting to note that the United States was one of these countries which found it necessary to pay tribute to these Algerian corsairs.

<sup>6</sup>The Dey had asked the Consul about the payment of a debt owed to him by the French government. With little tact, the Consul replied that it was beneath the French King to answer a mere Dey. Infuriated by this, the Dey responded by striking the Consul in the face with a fly-wisk.

<sup>7</sup>Marshal Bougeaud, who had signed this treaty, had in fact, advised the French Chamber against ratifying it. Bougeaud had taken a bribe to sign it and thought he could keep it quiet if the treaty were defeated.

<sup>8</sup>For a detailed and very excellent treatment of this period of Algerian history cf. David C. Gordon's The Passing of French Algeria or Joseph Kraft's The Struggle for Algeria.

<sup>9</sup>Since the majority of Moslems were not French citizens and therefore not subject to French law, the "native code" came into use. These were not Moslem laws but French laws made for Moslems. To the Moslems, these laws were grossly unjust.

<sup>10</sup>This statement is reproduced by many authors with slight variation in text. This citation is from Matthews, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>11</sup>"Colon" in its proper sense refers to the Europeans who owned vast tracts of land in Algeria. They closely resembled the plantation owner of our South. In time, the term "colon" came to mean any European settler in Algeria.

<sup>12</sup>The Blum-Violette Bill (1936) is a prime example of the fate of reform bills. It held the unique position of being the first bill which extended the rights of the Algerian Moslems without requiring them to renounce their Moslem status. The Bill drew a roar of fury from the European settlers of Algeria. The mayors threatened to resign; the French ex-service men demonstrated; rumors were circulated that property was being sold wholesale. Leon Blum (as quoted by Matthews, op. cit., p 32) when debating his bill in the Parliament, chastised the deputies: "When the Algerian Moslems protest, you are indignant; when they approve something, you are suspicious; when they are silent, you are afraid." He ended with this prophetic warning: "These men have no political homeland. They ask you to let them into yours. If you refuse, they may soon create one of their own." The deputies did refuse and the bill was defeated.

<sup>13</sup>As condensed from Jaques R. Goutor's Algeria and France: 1830-1960, p. 27. this manifesto proposed the following:

Condemnation and abolition of colonization.

Application of right of self-determination to all people.

The granting to Algeria of her own constitution which would include provisions for:

Absolute equality and liberty of all its inhabitants.

Suppression of feudal property and a sweeping land reform which would guarantee the well-being of the Algerian proletariat.

Free and obligatory education for all children of both sexes.

Recognition of Arabic as coequal with French as an official language.

Freedom of worship for all, and separation of Church and State extended to the Moslem religion.

Immediate participation of the Moslems in the government of Algeria.

<sup>14</sup>The figure 15,000 is agreed upon by most historians. Other figures range from 1,165 by the French Information Service, to 45,000 by the rebels.

<sup>15</sup>The fact that the Setif massacre and what followed was the turning point is universally agreed upon by historians.

<sup>16</sup>Goutor, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

#### Footnotes to Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup>Editorial, "Terror in Algeria," New York Times, November 15, 1954, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>The Algerian rebels took this as their official title immediately after the war began.

<sup>6</sup>Editorial, "A Dangerous Move," New York Times, August 8, 1955, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>This problem was that of Moroccan independence from France. It was much easier for France to grant Morocco independence since it was a colony rather than a part of Metropolitan France as Algeria was.

<sup>9</sup>Editorial, "Terror in North Africa," New York Times, August 22, 1955, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup>Editorial, "North Africa Aflame," New York Times, August 23, 1955, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup>Editorial, "French and North Africa," New York Times, September 2, 1955, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>How great this Communist penetration was is not indicated by the Times. An editorial on October 3, 1955, entitled "Dangerous Rift" is a bit more explicit and reveals that at this time the New York Times believed Communist influence was minimal. "There is no communism to speak of in Africa, but nationalism itself is such a strong force that it needs no help."

<sup>14</sup>Cf. note #6.

<sup>15</sup>Editorial, "Algeria and the U.N.," New York Times, October 2, 1955, Section IV, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Editorial, "Dangerous Rift," New York Times, October 3, 1955, p. 26.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Editorial, "Anti-Colonial Rampage," New York Times, October 5, 1955, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Editorial, "France and the U.N.," New York Times, November 24, 1955, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup>Editorial, "Overtaxing the U.N.," New York Times, October 26, 1955, p. 30.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Editorial, "The Return of France," New York Times, November 26, 1955, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. note # 18.

<sup>28</sup>Editorial, "The French Travail," New York Times, October 7 1955, p. 24.

<sup>29</sup>Faure was able to succeed because he drew the support of the Right. The Right, however, did not support Faure's Algerian policy. Their vote was not for Faure but against the Socialists and Communists on the Left.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. note #18.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. note #30.

### Footnotes to Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup>Editorial, "The Problem of Algeria," New York Times, January 3, 1956, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Editorial, "Mob Rule in Algeria," New York Times, February 7, 1956, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. note #1.

<sup>5</sup>Editorial, "Algerian Dilemma," New York Times, February 29, 1956, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup>Editorial, "Canger in Algeria," New York Times, February 11, 1956, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. note #5.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. note #3.

<sup>9</sup>The historical information presented in this section and in those following it in this chapter was taken from the editorials themselves; Tanya Matthews' work, War in Algeria: Background for Crisis; David C. Gordon's work, The Passing of French Algeria; and the third volume of Alfred Cobban's work, A History of Modern France. For more specific information not contained in these, the Time magazine proved extremely helpful.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. note #1.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. note #3.



<sup>12</sup>On page 54 of Matthews' work cited in note 9, it is reported that the crowd shouted "To the gallows!" "Into the sea with him!" and "The army's on our side!" Although tear gas was used to disperse the crowd, Mollet was smothered in a sea of flying tomatoes.

<sup>13</sup>Matthews, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books Inc., 1965) p. 234.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. note #3.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. note #6.

<sup>18</sup>Cobban, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. note #6.

<sup>21</sup>Editorial, "Terror in North Africa," New York Times, August 22, 1955, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup>Editorial, "New Chance in Algeria," New York Times, March 13, 1956, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>It is recorded that \$4,000,000 a day was spent by the French to fight the war in Algeria and that 400,000 French troops were now stationed there. Editorial, Time, June 10, 1957, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup>Editorial, "The Problem of Algeria," New York Times, May 9, 1956, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Editorial, "Algeria and the U.N.," New York Times, Feb-

ruary 4, 1957, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Editorial, "Europe and Africa," New York Times, February 6, 1957, p. 24.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. note #22.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Editorial, "Light on Algeria," New York Times, March 22, 1956, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> Editorial, "Algeria and the United Nations," New York Times, June 19, 1956, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. note #29.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Editorial, "U.S. and Algeria," New York Times, February 8, 1957, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Editorial, "The Big Knife," Time, June 3, 1957, p. 20.

#### Footnotes to Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> I have depended upon the Time magazine for the more specific details of events treated in this chapter. This has been necessary since histories of this period do not usually mention the smaller events upon which these editorials comment. Whereas a history has to be selective and include only those events which in retrospect have proven to be the most important, an editorial is a comment on those events reported on the front page and these often prove to be trivial. For this reason, a weekly summary of the news, such as contained in Time magazine, has proven very useful. This footnote was included to avoid constant footnoting of sources used for background in this chapter. It may be assumed that, unless footnoted to the contrary, the background for this chapter came from Time magazine.

<sup>2</sup> Note that Bourges-Maunoury received fewer votes (240) than Mollet received when he resigned from office (250).

This indicates the extreme difficulty which the National Assembly had in voting in a new government.

<sup>3</sup> Editorial, "France's New Government," New York Times, June 14, 1957, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Editorial, "Algerian Realities," New York Times, August 21, 1957, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Editorial, "The Algerian Statute," New York Times, September 12, 1957, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Editorial, "The Algerian Conflict," New York Times, July 18, 1957, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. "Against Torture," Time, April 1, 1957, p. 26. and "Mobs and Morals," Time, April 8, 1957, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Editorial, "Cabinet Crisis in France," New York Times, October 2, 1957, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Editorial, "Solutions for Algeria," New York Times, November 23, 1957, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Editorial, "NATO, Algeria and Cyprus," New York Times, December 3, 1957, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Editorial, "Algerian Dilemma," New York Times, February 21, 1958, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Editorial, "North African Union," New York Times, March 7, 1958, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. note #12.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. note #13.

<sup>16</sup> Editorial, "The Voice of Africa," New York Times, April 23, 1958, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator Kennedy, "Imperialism--The Enemy of Freedom," 85th Cong., 1st session, July 3, 1957. Congressional Record, 10780.

<sup>20</sup>Editorial, "Mr. Kennedy on Algeria," New York Times, July 3, 1957, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. note #6.

<sup>24</sup>Editorial, "Algeria in the Senate," New York Times, February 6, 1958, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. note #4.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Editorial, "France and Algeria," New York Times, March 1, 1958, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Tanya Matthews, War in Algeria: Background for Crisis (New York, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 1961) pp. 80-90.

<sup>30</sup>Editorial, "The French Revolt," New York Times, May 15, 1958, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Editorial, "Crisis in France," New York Times, May 17, 1958, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup>Editorial, "Paris and Algiers," New York Times, May 23, 1958 p. 22.

<sup>34</sup>Editorial, "France at the Crossroad," New York Times, May 19, 1958, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup>French Embassy, Major Addresses, Statements and Press conferences of General Charles de Gaulle (New York, N.Y.: Press and Information Division, 1964), pp. 1-6.

<sup>36</sup> Editorial, "The Enigma of de Gaulle," New York Times, May 20, 1958, p. 32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Editorial, "The Issue in France," New York Times, May 25, 1958, Section IV, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Editorial, "France in Turmoil," New York Times, May 26, 1958, p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> Editorial, "Agony of the Republic," New York Times, May 29, 1958, p. 26.

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