

Summary

This chapter has outlined the last of Fanon's works beginning by locating it as a specific intervention in the closing stages of the Algerian struggle its analysis would prove quite prophetic for the direction of many 'postcolonial' societies. While later chapters will demonstrate its relevance to Algeria it can be seen here that Fanon's ideas from 'Racism and Culture' striving to link large scale change with the existential elements in the culture are developed further as an explanation and critique of the Algerian Revolution.

This chapter has also tried to highlight the continuity in Fanon's work in particular his concerns about the psychology of oppression, and the changing of consciousness due to revolutionary social change. This theme was evident also in A Dying Colonialism but now the dialectic process is extended to include broader currents in the society - class and party in particular.

PART TWO

FANON'S LEGACY

Introduction

Part One of this thesis examined Fanon's works, their theoretical background and the context in which they were written, now it moves from examining his texts to some of the contexts in which his ideas were debated. Part Two develops Fanon's dialectical theory of culture in a number of settings and refines it in relation to class dynamics. Overall, however, it seeks to demonstrate the partial nature of each engagement with Fanon's work which opens up the discussion in Part Three of how Fanon's work remains relevant.

Chapter Seven examines Fanon's ideas in relation to the struggle with which he was most involved. This chapter stresses his last book Wretched of the Earth as both a product of and a commentary on the Algerian struggle, which is traced into the immediate post-colonial period. This chapter highlights the strengths and weakness of Fanon's analysis. On the whole his fears proved justified and his analysis accurate not just for Algeria but more broadly, for instance Olufemi Taiwo (1996) argues that it is possible to substitute 'Nigeria' for all the occurrences of 'Algeria' in Wretched of the Earth without otherwise altering the analysis.

The remaining chapters of Part Two begin outlining Fanon's legacy. In order to make this a manageable project it focuses on a few concrete instances rather than aiming at completeness. It emphasises the broad relevance of his work examining four different contexts over time: One African, one Islamic, one North American and one Academic.¹

Chapter Eight looks at the work of Amilcar Cabral, leader of the independence struggle in Guinea-Bissau against Portugal. The proximity of the two struggles made it possible to examine a contemporary of Fanon's who was dealing with similar issues. This chapter argues that Cabral was able to refine Fanon's arguments about classes in the African context. He shares Fanon's interest in the role of native intellectuals and the importance of culture and self-liberation. Cabral differs from Fanon most notably on the role of subordinate classes. He is more specific about the groups in Guinea-Bissau and their revolutionary potential. He also links the three-stage cultural process more directly to the class structure than Fanon. Cabral was critical of Marxists' Eurocentrism and sought to broaden the application of Marxism to the colonial context. Aside from matters of theory, in practice his organisation, the *Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo-Verde* (PAIGC) was also clearer about the need to fight the negative aspects of one's own culture (like the oppression of women) from the beginning. The PAIGC tried to be the kind of party that drew the masses into action, into their own liberation.

¹ Given the comparatively recent debates in South Africa it would have been interesting to explore his influence on the struggle in South Africa, see Turner & Alan (1978), and Steve Biko, in particular, see Pityana et al (1991).

Having looked at an example from Africa Chapter Nine traces Fanon's ideas through the African diaspora to the United States. This chapter examines Fanon's influence on the Black Panther Party (BPP). They were selected chiefly because their debt to Fanon is so explicit. The radical black activists found parallels between their situation and that of colonised people in Africa. Most striking is the BPP's preparedness to take up arms against the police, their suspicion of the emerging black middle class and its 'peaceful' methods as well as the rejection of cultural nationalism, all of which owe something to Fanon. The radical black movement is also important in giving rise some of the earliest feminist applications of Fanon's work using his ideas to critique the sexism of the black and radical movements.

An important aspect of the Algerian struggle, and one underestimated by Fanon was the influence of Islam. The rise of the 'fundamentalist' as the Other of the West gives this aspect of Fanon's work a contemporary ring. From North Africa, Fanon's ideas travelled to other parts of the Islamic world. Hasan Hanafi in Egypt was influenced by him but this chapter looks at the Iranian progressive intellectual Ali Shari'ati. Shari'ati, who was involved in the Algerian struggle while studying in Paris carried Fanon's ideas back to Iran, translating Wretched of the Earth into Persian. He was popular among the youth for seeking out a radicalised Islam that maintained its relevance. He became the ideologist of the revolution that occurred shortly after his death in 1977. Fanon's calls to 'turn one's back on the West' found fertile soil in the anti-imperialist struggle against the Shah. In addition this chapter argues against those that would see Shari'ati as a 'retreatist' in Fanon's sense, that Shari'ati sought to reform Islam and build a fighting culture drawn from Islamic traditions but related concretely to Iran as part of the revolutionary process. Iran has also been important in recent feminist debates about the veil, later Part Three will outline the ways that Fanon's ideas on the veil have been taken up by Arab feminists.

Finally Chapter Eleven looks at the most recent appropriations of Fanon's work in the area of colonial discourse analysis. This body of literary criticism grew out of the old discipline of Commonwealth literature, expanding with the use of new techniques of deconstruction, applied to 'postcolonial' texts. In this context Fanon's work, especially Black Skin White Masks, has served as an important text both as data and evidence for contemporary modes of analysis. This chapter is a selective one dealing with direct appropriations of Fanon by a number of thinkers loosely termed a 'Fanonist tradition'. What is striking about the uses of Fanon here is the focus is so narrow. None of these authors have written a complete analysis of his work or engaged with it in its entirety.

Gates and Homi Bhabha are two of what Wyrick (1998: 158) terms the 'soft' Fanonists, those concerned with the ambivalences of colonial texts as opposed to the 'hard' Fanonists who focus on the Manichean divide and colonial politics. In what is essentially an old debate between aesthetic and political approaches to literature played out in a new form, Fanon's work is taken up in different ways. This chapter

locates postcolonialism within Fanon's dialectical model arguing that the work of the soft Fanonists is a 'retreat' from the dominant Western culture's idea of humanism. This 'retreat' consists in a rejection of notions of truth and humanism in favour of a cultural relativism and difference. Bhabha's appropriation of Fanon specifically rejects the premises that are the basis of Fanon's work. Notions like 'lived experience' and the effects of structures in the traditional sense are rejected in the interest of turning Fanon into what Parry (1987: 31) labels a 'premature poststructuralist'. Class, gender and humanism are submerged in favour of cultural relativity and difference. Despite claims to finding a 'proper time and place' for Fanon, Bhabha's focus is on Fanon as a 'text' without context.

For Fanon, however, texts are used to illustrate the underlying social relations. Deconstruction for Fanon involves, not so much a focus on the contradictions *within* the text, but between the text and the social context it is supposed to illuminate. Thus with the colonial psychiatrist, Octave Mannoni, his theory of the dependency complex reveals its ideological underpinning when as Fanon puts it, it is restored to its 'proper time and place' (namely the massacre of colonised Malagasy). Mannoni's idea of the *mutual* dependence of coloniser and colonised has a parallel in Bhabha's idea of ambivalence.

Edward Said, whose text Orientalism is a foundational one for postcolonialism, seeks to expose the constructedness of Western discourses in a similar way to Fanon, by inserting the absent term, the colonial other. Said by reinserting a canonised poet like Yeats into his 'proper time and place' allows the reader to see the imperial context in which literary work takes place. Likewise the 'hard' Fanonists, like Abdul JanMohamed and Benita Parry, maintain a political context, moving to a focus on what these texts say about the sets of colonial social relations (the Manichean economy as JanMohamed calls it) and the ways that these relations become part of 'lived experience'. For JanMohamed literature must be seen in its proper time and place as part of a dialectical process. Parry makes the key point that the deconstruction of colonial discourse did not begin with the post-colonial literary theorists of the 1980s but with the liberation movements who created their own counter discourse by critiquing not just texts but the institutions that produced them.

CHAPTER VII

Fanon and Post-revolutionary Algeria

Background

Before colonisation Algerian society was divided into three groups: the urban community, the settled highland farmers and nomadic herders. There was no centralised state but a political leadership made up of *djema* (traditional councils) and charismatic *marabouts* (Sufi monks) who served as mediators. All this rested on the patriarchal extended family. Historically, in Algeria:

until the French occupation of Algiers in 1830 and in most parts of the country even to this day, [women] have lived in a traditionalist society in which change has been imperceptible and in which their situation, though differing according to tribe or region has been one of inferiority to men who have treated them more as objects than as persons. This subordination has been justified by the religious precepts of Islam, but an Islam often perverted on the popular level and interpreted conservatively on an educated level (Gordon 1968: 81).

By 1880 colonial society had established itself in Algeria structurally. The urban Muslim community was a key feature where they occupied two-thirds of all available jobs, most of them menial. The growth of 'European' suburbs was co-incident with the rise of the *bidonvilles* (shanty towns). In the countryside, life for rural Muslims changed as semi-nomads were forced to settle. Islam governed traditional Algerian society, though various egalitarian and puritan streams were adapted to Algerian identity over time. All were strongly patriarchal. Women had inferior status from birth to death. Girls were raised to be servants of men. The 'couple' did not exist but the extended family placed adult women under the control of the husband and mother-in-law.

The income of the Muslim section of the population tended to stagnate or to fall. The benefits of economic growth accumulated to the Europeans. Colonisation by settlement meant that settlers took the best land, and provided the technical staff. Agricultural settler colonisation also saw the creation of administrative and commercial French towns with viticulture as the key industry. Then as capitalism took hold, big industries especially mining emerged and these were supported by larger financial institutions. Big agrarian capitalists with ties to financial institutions replaced small landholders (Amin 1970: 100-1). After colonisation a few women attained education and were effected by attempts at assimilation. Colonisation led to a breakdown of the extended family (through unemployment and urban drift) but the 'civilising mission' of the French reinforced patriarchal relations as women became more dependent on their husbands economically.

Algeria at the time of French invasion was a largely independent country nominally under Turkish rule. The French introduced a heavy handed policy of cultural assimilation. The structure was supported by a large body of 'poor-white' settlers living in predominantly French towns and the denial of any political rights to the natives. From 1830-1870 the urban ruling-class fled to neighbouring countries in the face of French military power. The French policy of exterminating landed peasants forced the peasants to fight. The Algerian landlords sided with French army. The peasant-based resistance movement led by Emir Abd al-Qadir, under the green and white banner that would later serve as the national colours, moved to break the power of both the feudal lords as

well as French. To do this required bringing ‘Algerians’ who thought of themselves as Berbers and Arabs of different lineages and loyalties into a populist religious movement.

Though Fanon saw this process happening in the 1950s it was the original French invasion that brought about the beginnings of a national consciousness. In organising effective guerilla resistance to the French it was necessary to unite formerly hostile clans and lineages under a central leadership. Mobility was crucial, as was daring, local support and good intelligence. Qadir was able to begin erecting a new social organisation in liberated areas. Davidson (nd: 36) points out that Qadir was a bridge from past to present, representing a response to threatened independence but also representing a more united future, away from clans towards a national sense.

The peasants resisted the expropriation of their lands by the *colons* as best they could and for a long time, as Amin put it ‘patriotism took refuge in the countryside.’ By 1870, however, the peasantry was defeated and any collectively owned land confiscated. The emergence of rural peasant nationalism before urban bourgeois nationalism is unique to Algeria (Amin 1970: 107). Fanon’s narrative of events reflects the Algerian experience in this respect. Many fled the country at this time resulting in the growth of an ‘Algerian’ proletariat living and working in France, remitting money home to their families. It was with this group that the modern nationalist movement began.

By 1919 half of the peasantry was landless. In the cities there emerged a French educated Algerian petty bourgeois class as well as a new working class. These uprooted classes, driven from their land, looked not to their new class as a source of identity but to the Muslim *ulama* [religious leaders] who provided them with a synthesis of Islam and modern realities. For the new urban petty bourgeoisie education was the key to success (as land ownership was in rural areas). It was the new rural and urban petty bourgeoisie that was most threatened by French insistence on cultural assimilation. Being sandwiched between the marginally employed masses and the growing colonial apparatus it was the conservative *ulamas* calls for cultural autonomy that achieved hegemony over this group. Islam allowed them to define themselves as guardians of the true Algeria, the land and its egalitarian traditions (for example that the land belongs to those work it), against the assimilationist bourgeoisie. This proved crucial inasmuch as most of the revolutionary leadership was recruited from these layers and thus took the persistence of patriarchy for granted (Knauss 1987: 32-34).

Urban nationalism, ignorant of peasant struggles, emerged more cautiously. In the 1930s it was the *ulama* that provided the language of resistance to the Algerians. This is Fanon’s second phase. The early liberal nationalists were superseded by two groups. One was the Puritan religious groups like the *Salafist*² (reformist) Ibn Badis, who formed the Association of Algerian Ulama with the motto “Islam is my religion, Arabic my culture, Algeria my nation”. The other, movements that emerged among emigre workers like Messali Hadj’s *Étiologie Nord-Africaine* (ENA), that worked closely with the French Communist party (PCF). After huge demonstrations in 1934 the colonial government banned all opposition activity and was backed by the *colons* who opposed even insignificant reforms that might have paved the way for French citizenship of Arabs. In 1936 the election of the popular front government raised hopes that were short lived. The newly formed *Parti Communiste Algérien* (PCA) removed independence from its platform as part of the popular front strategy. It promoted Algeria as a ‘developing nation’ in which Arabs, Berbers and *colons* (!) were to unite.

² *Salafist* Islam was also opposed to the Islam of the Sufi (mystical) Islam of the *marabouts* which was the popular form of Islam from the Thirteenth century onwards.

Here Fanon's criticisms of the French Left have their basis. The group around Messali Hadj now demanded universal suffrage and an Algerian parliament. Gradually all groups were radicalising, as was French repression.

In May 1945 massive demonstrations celebrating the French victory in the war and demanding independence were savagely repressed, notably at Sétif, where it was rumoured that 45 000 people were killed. In 1947 an Algerian national assembly was proclaimed based on universal suffrage but the real power lay with the Governor General. By now this was well short of what the key nationalists were demanding which was for sovereignty or at least some autonomy.

In 1943 women were drawn into the national struggle by the PCA whose platform included women's equality. This equality was to be achieved in the transformation of society alongside the working class. The women involved were mostly of Europeans but Muslim women did occupy leadership roles. They also occupied positions on the Central Committee of the PCA that supported their right to work. In 1947 the Association of Algeria's Muslim Women (l'AFMA) was formed in the wake of the ENA. Its chief role was the development of political solidarity with detainees. The nationalists wanted to give priority to men's employment and opposed women working outside the home (Cherifati-Merabtine 1994: 45-6). Nevertheless the effect was the emergence of a public role for women, particularly educated ones, even though most were not campaigning on a feminist agenda or specifically for women's rights.

Messali Hadj's renamed *The Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques* (MTLD) saw the rise of three factions in 1953-54. The first two were the Messalists, loyal to Messali Hadj and the 'centralists'. The third, the *Comité Révolutionnaire d'Unité et d'Action* (CRUA), denounced the others as 'petty bourgeois' and, inspired by the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, called for an insurrection. The CRUA itself formed from an earlier offshoot of the MTLD, the '*Organisation Spéciale*' (OS), founded in March 1954 by nine ex-members of the OS: Ben Boulaïd, Didouche Maroud, Larbi Ben M'Hidi, Boudiaf, Bitat, Belkacem Krim, Khider, Aït Ahmed and Ben Bella. They became known as the 'historic chiefs.' The formation from this group of the FLN and the simultaneous call to revolt led by this group in alliance with several others signalled a new era. As Amin put it:

The new radical nationalism had finally broken with the spirit of moderation that had dominated the preceding period, and by unleashing the peasant insurrection had finally re-established contact with the tradition of Abdel Kader (1970: 112).

The FLN was essentially the revolutionary core of CRUA activists embedded in a broad popular front. In 1957 in the face of widespread urban repression the militants fled to the countryside and the leadership escaped abroad.

In his description of the development of the national struggle Fanon describes how an 'illegal minority' is driven from the nationalist party before making contact with the revolutionary peasantry. We will have cause to debate the correctness of this as a strategy. Clearly there was an illegal armed wing of the MTLD (the OS) which led to the CRUA. This group would break with the legal nationalists and initiate a violent rebellion based on the peasantry. The response of major parties including the PCA was that this action was 'adventurist'. From the earliest days the CRUA had seen the *lumpenproletariat* (specially the unemployed urban masses) as a potential source of resistance. Apparently they did serve as a core of activists for the FLN in the Kasbah during the Battle of Algiers (Davidson nd: 76).

By 1959, the core of the peasant cadre of the front had been destroyed and two million people 'resettled' into camps while thousands fled into neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia. From 1957 until 1960, the peasants carried the burden of the war. It was only after the 'pacification' of the countryside that the movement shifted back to the cities. This is in line with Fanon's portrait of the peasants as the backbone of the revolution.

The War of Independence

The Algerian War of Independence lasted for almost eight years. For most of that time it was a peasant revolt. It was not until at least 1960 when the towns rallied to the nationalist cause. This shifted the centre of gravity from the armed struggle to international diplomacy, from the internal to the external. The first years of that long and bitter struggle revealed that the memory of Abd al-Qadir was still alive in the peasantry.

Most of the individuals who would emerge as post war leaders had joined the FLN: Ben Bella, Ben Khedda and even the liberal Ferhat Abbas. The Left wing government of France elected in 1956 made no headway and the PCF even voted for new emergency measures against the revolution, again reinforcing Fanon's criticisms. Ben Khedda had been general secretary of the MTLN. He was imprisoned until 1955 when he joined the FLN and helped organise the Soumman Conference in August 1956 with Abane Ramdane.

Ramdane, regarded by many as the 'the outstanding political intellect' of the FLN, was someone with whom Fanon shared many ideas (Robinson 1987: 36). Ramdane had articulated the need for revolutionary violence and like others in the CRUA also saw the necessity of relying on the *lumpenproletariat* in urban centres. He was critical of the FLN's lack of ideology as Fanon was in Wretched of the Earth. Ramdane was the acknowledged political leader of the internal revolutionary forces at the time of the Soumman conference. This conference under his guidance provided the FLN with some structure and the beginnings of a political platform. Respected by all sections of the elite, he secured the primacy of the interior to the exterior (the latter being blamed for the lack of weapons and money reaching the interior), collegial decision making and finally the primacy of the political over the military in decision making that was essential to a victory in a guerilla struggle.³ The leaders called not just for independence but for a socialist order characterised by radical agrarian reform. The conference condemned the cult of personality and declared their independence from any foreign powers. These views were an implicit criticism of Ben Bella who was perceived as close to the Egyptian president, Nasser, and as seeking a negotiated solution with the French (Quandt 1969: 100-1).

In May 1958 the Fourth Republic collapsed under the combined assault of the French Right and the *piets noir*, the French settlers in Algeria, who staged huge demonstrations in Algiers. There were threats of a military coup in Paris that eventually saw De Gaulle return to power. Radicalisation came not from FLN program but from the process of resistance itself. The Battle of Algiers saw top internal militants killed or driven from country. The French built huge fences and landmines that isolated the internal from the external leadership. Also the top 'external' leadership was kidnapped. Instead of garrisons and blanketing operations, paratroopers and helicopters introduced mobile anti-guerilla tactics developed by the British. The concentration of the population and the napalming of

³ Abane was killed in April 1958 by his 'comrades'. Fanon later said that it was one of the two deaths, along with Lumumba's, for which he could not forgive himself (Robinson 1987: 37).

forests put the *Algerian Armée de Libération Nationale* (ALN) on the back foot. De Gaulle was anxious to end the war. His new appointee build a second electric fence on the Tunisian border, adopted 'Search and Destroy' missions backed by well-supplied troops and put the ALN close to defeat. When French repression reached its extreme, Fanon describes how women were pressed into the struggle. With the repression focused on men, women willingly took up positions as informants, intermediaries and nurses and fought heroically.

In September 1958, the Algerian resistance formed a government in exile, the *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne* (GPRA) with the leadership given to Ferhat Abbas. While the battle was all but won militarily by France, a people's war needed to be won politically as well. The majority of Algerians still supported independence and there were new and massive demonstrations of support for the FLN in urban areas that forced De Gaulle to negotiate.

In January 1960 there was a second abortive insurrection by leaders of the army. In April 1961 *colons* and French officers, like the now retired Raoul Salan and the right-wing activist Jean-Marie Le Pen formed the *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS). This was the fascist combat force for *Algérie française* that staged a coup that failed, marginalising them. This led to a vicious wave of *colon* terrorism against the Muslim population. The defeated OAS in the last six months of the war killed three times more civilians than the FLN had since 1956 (2360 and wounding more than 5000) in a spiteful campaign of terror (Davidson nd: 85).

De Gaulle regained the initiative and in February 1962 publicly recognised the 'Algerian' character of the Sahara. Negotiations were re-opened at Evian and quickly led to the release of Ben Bella, the future president, and his companions and to a ceasefire on March 18. On March 19 by the 'Will of Allah' the FLN accepted a ceasefire after seven years of brutal war in which more than 300 000 Algerians were killed or went missing. Refugees returned as did peasants driven off the land in their millions. After the war the *pieds noir* fled 'their' country abandoning three-quarters of the *harki*'s, the peasants, who fought in the French army.

After a long war with huge casualties, uprooting of the peasantry and decline of agriculture came the departure of the *colons*, four-fifths of the Europeans (800 000 persons), including almost all the technicians, left 'their' Algeria within six months. Cereals and vegetable production fell dramatically but began to revive with the state's ploughing campaign, vineyards deteriorated without skilled European labour. Animal stocks were down but mining and oil were unaffected and continued to grow. The end of development funds saw construction and public works decline.

Ben Bella emerged as a *cause célèbre* after his capture by French security agents, spending much of the war in prison. In May-June 1962 the FLN leadership met at Tripoli for the last time. After the long war and the end of French colonisation, there was a political will in the direction of socialist solutions but the conditions for its realisation were very difficult. They adopted the Tripoli Program that raised concerns about neo-colonialism. It called for a popular democratic revolution under the leadership of the rural poor along the socialist road. The Tripoli conference reiterated the socialist objectives of the earlier Soumman Congress: 'The factories to the workers, the land to the *fellahin*' [peasant].

This program was accepted by the majority but then there emerged a struggle for power in 'postcolonial' Algeria. Divisions emerged around the GPRA, of whom Ben Khedda was president, Ben Bella, who formed his own politburo, won the backing of the ALN 'frontier army'. This well-trained force equipped by Egypt and Syria had been locked out of the war of independence by

French border defences now became crucial in determining who would rule Algeria. The GPRA was not the only opponent of the 'external' ALN leadership. The *wilaya* [provincial] commanders remained opposed to their incorporation into a new national army in which they would have little say after they had done most of the fighting. Negotiations failed and despite calls for peace from the trade unions, in the summer of 1962 thousands were killed in Algiers as a one-month civil war raged. On September 1, 20 000 people demonstrated in Algiers with the slogan '*baraka saba'a sanin*' (seven years is enough). This led Ben Bella to sign a cease-fire with *wilayas* 3 and 4 (Kabylia and Algiers) a few days later. On September 9 Boumediene and border divisions entered Algiers and the GPRA and opponents of the politburo were eliminated. Ben Bella was now secure and the general election at the end of September was held with one party and a single list of candidates.

Samir Amin (1970: 194), the Arab Marxist scholar, argues that:

The factional struggle for power that seemed so unprincipled to the masses was a discouraging sign; and it may be said that by 1 July 1962 the FLN was already dead. Its historic task - the achievement of independence - was, after all, fulfilled; and it was in no way prepared for a new role as a mass socialist party.

The situation the government faced was a difficult one. Barely ten per cent of Algerians had been in school, most worked on the land. Technology was primitive. The country was desolated by the war; young people flocked to the cities and to France. One million people moved to the city including 1 in 5 peasants. There were two million unemployed and two and half million with no support at all. The population of Algiers doubled; half the total population of the country lived there in crowded and unsanitary conditions. The European sectors of the city were deserted, 800 000 *pieds noir* fled, taking most of the capital and half the income from tax revenue. Large farming estates were abandoned and factories were closed.

Post-revolutionary Algeria: Ben Bella

The new government was installed; Ferhat Abbas was appointed as speaker of National Assembly. Ben Bella was head of government, Hader, Secretary General of the politburo, Boumediene defence minister and five other military men entered the government. Algeria was declared a 'people's democratic republic.'

While Fanon was right about the emergence of charismatic leaders it is perhaps too simple to say that Ben Bella operated simply to hand control to the bourgeoisie. Most of the rural population had not been exposed to ideas like 'socialism' reflecting the ideological weakness of the FLN. Ben Bella outlined his program to the national assembly in September 1962 based on the Tripoli Program. The focus was on 'the people' especially the peasantry and the need for agrarian reform. The peasantry was to be the 'principal pillar of the Revolution.' The party was to represent and aid the peasantry through a series of intermediate assemblies to preserve spontaneity. The FLN was to run the state but be independent of it, representing the creative elite of the nation as Fanon had hoped.

That Fanon was articulating a widely held sentiment within the FLN is clear from the response to his death in Algeria. At Fanon's funeral the ALN commander who officiated pledged that he and his colleagues would remain true to Fanon's program for a progressive and democratic state. They would heed his warnings against the 'cult of personality' (Gordon 1966: 128). The danger of

dictatorship and losing touch with the peasant masses were key concerns and Ben Bella paid tribute to Fanon on these matters:

Au nom du gouvernement je dois affirmer qu'il a été non seulement notre compagnon de combat, mais notre guide, puisqu'il nous a légué à travers son testament spirituel et politique une doctrine que garantit la révolution algérienne (Gordon 1966: 128).

In the name of the government I declare that he has been not only our comrade-in-arms, but also our guide, because through his spiritual and political testament he has left us a doctrine that guarantees the Algerian revolution.

The reality would prove somewhat different. The real powers were the army, the new administration and the unions; the subsequent history of Algeria would revolve around them rather than 'the people'.⁴ Ben Bella saw Algeria as having 'multiple vocations' - an African, an Arab and a Mahgrebi orientation - while remaining non-aligned and neutral. Algeria was, he said to loud applause, culturally and historically 'Arabo-Islamic' and Arabisation was a fundamental goal. There was to be 'no socialism without Arabisation.' The party announced a program of 'Islamicisation in depth,' making the Ramadan fast an official, semi-obligatory observance. Like Fanon, Ben Bella saw the peasants as central and the proletariat as 'privileged.' All key revolutions, including the Russian one, Ben Bella believed were based on peasant radicalism, in this sense he identified strongly with the approach of Sultan Galiev.⁵

A central part of the rhetoric of Algerian 'socialism' was the development of a 'self-managed' sector of the economy. With the departure of the *colons* and without any political structures there was a wild scramble for the abandoned property. The urban petty-bourgeoisie grabbed cars and houses, while the full time agricultural labourers seized the lands of the former colonists. Ben Bella and his Trotskyist advisers (and much of the international left) saw this as a basis for the establishment of a socialist regime in Algeria. Avoiding the development of a bureaucratic caste was the challenge, it was hoped that the peasants would not allow the management committees to become a class of native exploiters. Amin (1970: 195) sums up what occurred in practice:

While a relatively privileged and powerful petty-bourgeois social order was rapidly being created from the very first moment of independence, in July 1962, the FLN disappeared, mass organisations lost their autonomy and their effectiveness, and the regime exhausted itself in factional disputes.

⁴ Despite some claims, Fanon was not ignored in post-revolutionary Algeria. His book, *Les Damnés de la Terre*, was serialised in *El-Moujahid*, the only important newspaper in Algeria, after the overthrow of Ben Bella when the government was supposed to be more conservative (Gordon 1968: 60).

⁵ Sultan Galiev was a Muslim Kazakh leader in the Bolshevik revolution who saw peasant communalism as basis for change and thought of all Muslim nations as 'proletarian' in their oppression by the Great Powers, in his case, Russia. In this sense he is a precursor to Tan Malaka, from Sumatra [Indonesia] who saw in Pan Islamism a potentially revolutionary force and to Mao Ze Dong in seeking to adapt communism to agrarian conditions. See Rodinson (1979: Chap. 7) or Hodgkin (1980: 231f).

The Centralisation of Power

The parliamentary game is faked from the beginning

Fanon (1965b: 133)

Ahmed and Boudiaf had been unable to stop Ben Bella from imposing a strong central government with military backing. Each of them set up opposition groups. In September 1962, Boudiaf set up the *Parti de la Révolution Socialiste* (PRS). Boudiaf argued that ‘self-management’ emerged spontaneously so Ben Bella could claim no credit for it as a socialist measure and in any case it was becoming the vehicle for a new petty-bourgeois class seizing power. Ben Bella’s ‘socialism’ had no central plan and the French administrative apparatus had not been dismantled, but was used by Ben Bella to create a clientele with the state as the patron of ‘self-management’.

The politburo took the initiative of drafting the constitution away from the National Assembly. On 12 August 1963, Abbas, knowing that he did not have the votes to resist Ben Bella’s initiative, resigned as president of the National Assembly. He claimed, with some justification, that the party in a legal sense, separate from the government bureaucracy did not exist, and that the politburo was so small and unrepresentative as to make it no more than a tool of the president. Later that month, the Assembly ratified the constitution by a vote of 139 to 23, with 8 abstentions. The constitution of 1963 declared Algeria a socialist state, established Arabic as the official language and Islam as the official religion (Ruedy 1992: 200). The Algerian Communist Party, now tiny, was banned in November 1962, its members forming the left wing of the Ben Bella regime. The unions were brought under FLN control.

Berber ethnicity, always a factor in Algerian politics, was the basis in Kabylia of plans for an insurrection. Aït Ahmed and El Hadj of the 7th *wilaya* [province] were the first to denounce Ben Bella’s plans immediately after the war. He and Boudiaf labelled Ben Bella a ‘fascist.’ In June 1963 Boudiaf was arrested and his *Parti de la Révolution Socialiste* (PRS) was banned. Aït Ahmed called for a boycott of the elections and began organising the FFS (*Front des Forces Socialistes*) at the end of September 1962 which operated underground with a base in Berber ethnicity. Aït Ahmed largely agreed with Boudiaf and after the latter’s arrest he became more critical of the growing authoritarianism until he finally declared himself in favour of insurrection (Gordon 1966: 142-3). Ben Bella, however, was able to draw on long-standing border tensions with the kingdom of Morocco that boiled over at this time to label Aït Ahmed as a Moroccan agent and imperialist. In the popular upsurge against Morocco, Aït Ahmed was forced to call a truce as FFS supporters rallied to Ben Bella’s call for ‘holy unity’. As the Moroccan army massed troops on the border, Ben Bella was granted full powers.

This is a good example of Fanon’s (1965b: 96) warning that without political education and raising consciousness then ‘the obscurantist tendencies of the country-dwellers are exploited to the full.’ Along the disputed 12 000 kilometre border clashes broke out and for one month the countries were at war. When Aït Ahmed lifted the truce Boumediene had concentrated his troops in the region and though Ahmed continued for a further twelve months eventually he was captured and sentenced to death. Ben Bella pardoned him and allowed to go into exile, returning twenty-five years later as an FFS candidate in 1989. Abbas were also arrested.

March Decrees

The militants are firmly invited to retire...
Fanon (1965b: 134)

In March 1963 Ben Bella formalised the ‘self-managed’ sector with a series of decrees. Khider made moves against Ben Bella but the March decrees increased Ben Bella’s popularity and Khider was forced to resign. The decrees endorsed the seizure of *colon* properties, legalising the ‘self management’ of occupied farms and factories of the Europeans.

Only *colon* factories and properties were collectivised and put under the control of worker’s committees. Given the level of education, productivity was low and although the decrees ordered profit sharing these enterprises rarely showed any profit. After an initial period of decentralised worker’s management, the propertied middle classes, who had seized *colon* assets and occupied new places in the bureaucracy, came to dominate public life. While the president of the management committee was supposed to be in charge, in practice the government representative from ONRA (*Office National de la Réforme Agraire*) which controlled credit and marketing had the real power. They were in effect state farms. The self-managed sector continued the old structure under a different name and management. The state controlled the large estates and by the end of 1963 the rest of the French settlers’ land was nationalised. The point that Fanon (1965b: 124) had made about this was that instead of mobilising the masses the party seeks nationalisation not to transfer power to the people but to ‘transfer into native hands those unfair advantages that are a legacy of the colonial period’.

By 1963 the country was running serious deficits and despite generous French aid even the government was over-budget. Amin (1970: 141) sums up:

The decrees of March 1963, which cleared the way for nationalisation and gave legal status to the self-managed undertakings, did not avoid the establishment of a new, privileged national elite in the seat of power, but on the contrary actively assisted it. If this new elite remains oblivious to the needs of the vast urban and rural masses, and if by controlling the state it annexes too great a proportion of the national income, then the restructuring of Algerian society and the Algerian economy will have achieved the aims of the Algerian revolution only to the extent that the old system of settler colonisation had been destroyed; it will at the same time close the road to rapid economic development for many years to come.

Amid the confusion the army and the administration remained the only well organised forces. The latter though weak through lack of trained personnel gradually expanded, creating offices in a variety of areas: import/export control, a tourist office that controlled hotels, supervising the management committees of colonialist properties. Mining and Industry development continued and there was a massive literacy campaign. Many women were victims of the war and others found a new freedom in the disruption of traditional ways of life left intact by French. In the heady days after the departure of the French the leadership of the FLN in power paid due respect to the role women had played in the struggle. As part of its ‘socialist’ ideology the FLN, especially Ben Bella, sought to honour its promises for woman’s liberation in an independent Algeria.

From 1963 onwards there was a sudden drop in economic activity and a sharp increase in public expenditure. The departure of the *colons* provoked a drop in production but this need not have been a disaster. The ploughing campaign maintained the cereals crop, but the loss of specialised personnel meant the vineyards suffered more. The contraction of industry was a problem not just

for lack of technical staff but also because the lack of markets meant that factories had to be retooled. All these things have been overcome in other 'transitional' situations, however, the real problem lay in the growth of public spending when in Fanon's (1965b: 138) words 'the party becomes a means of private advancement.'

Production falls levelled out after 1964 but barely kept abreast of population growth. Cereals, vines and animal stocks returned to their 'normal' levels and a number of industrial projects were initiated. Prices were relatively stable until the summer of 1964 when they began to rise sharply as the central bank took over financing the deficit that had previously been financed by foreign aid. This had inflationary effects and represented the most difficult time for the new republic. Notwithstanding the administrative needs of the new nation, and excluding the pensions paid to *moujahidin* administrative expenses tripled between 1954-1962. The huge army was expensive but also wasteful. Its 120 000 members consuming about 10 per cent of GDP, excluding armaments. The new Algerian civil service in 1963 consumed twice as much as French administration of 1954 again ignoring war pensions.

As Fanon (1965b: 149) would have it:

The government services swell to huge proportions not because they are developing and specialising but because new found cousins and fresh militants are looking for jobs and hope to edge themselves into the government machine. And the dream of every citizen is to get to the capital and to have his share of the cake.

This growth in non-productive public spending introduced new and serious inequalities in the distribution of income exacerbating the distortions of the colonial period as the new Algerian officials substituted for the old colonist class. This phenomenon was at the heart of Fanon's criticism that the bourgeois stage was completely useless. It was necessary to start anew, otherwise it would be seen that 'that caste has done nothing more than take over unchanged the legacy of the economy, the thought and the institutions left by the colonialists' (Fanon 1965b: 142).

Income distribution on the land was the same as before independence. The 100 000 million francs formerly accruing to colonist-owned land was appropriated by the management committees of former full-time workers. A salary was guaranteed at much lower levels of production and this absorbed the income of the enterprise. The state financed the deficit, assuming the burden of the excessive incomes on these farms. While Europeans had to be replaced, the decline in construction and investment condemned thousands of labourers to unemployment. Other Algerians were able to 'move up' into white collar work and management positions vacated by the departing colonists. On the land urban companies especially self-managed ones took over colonist lands and paid high salaries. The administration recruited 150 000 civil servants and the army 120 000 recruits.

As Fanon (1965b: 125-6) warned:

The big farmers have, as soon as independence was proclaimed, demanded the nationalisation of agricultural production. Through manifold scheming practices they manage to make a clean sweep of the farms formerly owned by settlers, thus reinforcing their hold on the district. In fact the landed interests will insist that the state should give them a hundred times more facilities and privileges...There will be no modernisation of agriculture, no planning for development.

Even as late as June 1965, when Ben Bella was ousted, there was no development plan as the new petit bourgeoisie accepted its role as intermediary. As Amin (1970: 139) puts it in summary:

Analysis of the situation obtaining in recent years suggests that substitution took place on an extraordinary scale, probably in excess of all expectations. Some 450 000 new jobs were created outside agriculture: 180 000 workers, white-collar workers, small entrepreneurs, and executives in the urban economy (especially in the autonomous self-managed sector); 150 000 civil servants and 120 000 soldiers. These new layers of the population, together with the 100 000 or so colonist-employed workers who formed the nucleus of the self-managed agricultural cooperatives. Have until now been the ones to benefit most from independence and from the departure of the *colons* - much more than peasants engaged in traditional agriculture or the less skilled or less well placed urban working class. Indeed they are practically the only ones to have benefited from the European exodus.

The increase in jobs did little to decrease urban unemployment due largely to increases in population that left the same number unemployed in 1963 as in 1955 namely between 150 000 and 200 000 people. This uncoordinated substitution wasted the opportunity to transfer *colon* incomes into national savings to be used for investment; instead it was given to self managed enterprises and a burgeoning civil service. As Fanon (1965b: 135) predicted the 'distribution of wealth that its effects is not spread out between a great many sectors' and 'the new caste is an affront all the more disgusting in that the immense majority, nine-tenths of the population, continue to die of starvation'.

While Fanon assumed that the participation of women in the struggle would facilitate their liberation this was much overstated. The work of Djamila Amrane on war veterans shows that of 10 949 militant women (those permanently involved in the war) 84 per cent were members of the OCFLN (Civil Organisation of FLN) and 16 per cent were in the ALN.

Dejeux sums up Amrane's data as follows:

The women of the OCFLN assumed the responsibility for refuge and supplies, acting as liaison agents and guides, collectors of medicines, munitions; as terrorists (2%), the most spectacular role, they were condemned to death and pardoned; of the 65 *fidayates* [urban guerillas] counted, 33 were arrested and detained and 4 were killed. Of the young women of the ALN, 51% were under 20 years of age and 95% were under 30 years of age. They were the mainstay of the infirmaries, they were laundresses and combatants, but the last appears to have been an exception (Cherifati-Merabine 1994: 47)

The process of modernisation had brought some positive changes. More girls were educated and positions of responsibility were open to women but there was a strong weight of tradition to overcome. The conflict between the traditional and the modern was heightened with the disappointment of the revolutions' promises felt particularly by the *moudjahidates* [female guerillas] (Bouatta 1994). While Ben Bella made some attempts to promote the greater participation of women there has been little serious effort to tackle the topic of women's liberation. No woman was involved in writing the 1962 Charter, nor did any women sit on the GPRA. The *moujahidates* met a swift backlash with the marriage of female war heroes to non-Muslims serving as a prime example. Djamila Bouhired did so during the war but yet Dalila's proposed marriage to a non-Muslim was deemed unacceptable and her brother abducted her (Moghadam 1993: 84). However, the new FLN state did enact laws that restricted girls' marriageable age to 16 years - and threatened to treat as rape any under-age marriage. This created greater chances for women to attain full education.

Unemployment made jobs for women more difficult to find. Women's legal status remained roughly the same. Women could vote, but few held public office. Education has been a priority for the regime and though more boys are in school the ratio is now similar to the average for the Middle East (Minces 1978: 169). The regime did set up a women's organisation, *Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes* (UNFA) which saw to it that the 1963 constitution guaranteed the rights of women, ten were elected to the National Assembly. The UNFA was subordinated to the FLN and building an activist organisation proved impossible.

In the early days after independence the various factions appealed to the most backward traditions to head off more radical changes. At independence the position of women was defined by Islamic law with some modifications via the French *code civil*. The first draft of a new Family Code was put forward in 1963-64 but never reached the floor of the National Assembly. Other legislation advanced in 1966, 1973 and 1980 also failed. In an increasingly authoritarian state, with an active secret police, the observance of Qu'ranic precepts was seen as a sign of being a loyal Algerian, whatever one's role in the resistance struggle may have been. This consolidated the power of the Right wing over the Left and satisfied the rural masses for whom the purpose of independence was the maintenance of the 'Algerian and Muslim' way of life. After the 1965 *coup d'état*, Ben Bella's sincerity gave way to Boumediene's grudging acceptance of women's 'rights'.

As the crisis deepened, on the political front, the only power centre not under Ben Bella's control was that of the army. Ben Bella had begun moves to limit Boumediene's influence. He made key appointments and began to call for popular militias. Ben Bella's rhetoric became more and more leftist and he moved closer to radical elements in the *Union Général des Travailleurs Algériens* (UGTA) and the students. As preparations were under way for the second Afro-Asian conference, the successor to 1950 Bandung Conference, Ben Bella took more control of the negotiations undercutting the foreign minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika. When Boumediene intervened on his ally's behalf Ben Bella threatened to dismiss them both. Rumours circulated that Ben Bella was seeking to accommodate the FFS and that Aït Ahmed had been offered the job of foreign minister. On June 19, 1965, Boumediene's army arrested Ben Bella and he was gaoled without trial until 1979 when he was released into exile. Despite his international prestige the bloodless coup met with little protest at home.

The Army Goes into Politics: The Boumediene Years

*The single party is the modern form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie
Fanon (1965b: 133)*

Fanon's (1965b: 161) unheeded warning that 'care must be taken to avoid turning the army into an autonomous body which sooner or later, finding itself idle and without any definite mission, will 'go into politics' and threaten the government' proved to be Ben Bella's undoing.

Colonel Boumediene was installed as head of state. The mass of the population ignored the event. Bouteflika was foreign minister while Khider and Boudiaf were rejected.⁶ Apart from the old opposition (a weak FFS and PRS), new forces of opposition in exile emerged especially from the left wing of Ben Bella's supporters. Their leaders were arrested at once. Others later set up clandestine opposition movements. In January 1967 Khider was assassinated in Spain. Mohammed Hadj, the FLN treasurer who represented the opposition, was driven into exile and later found strangled. The new leadership constituted a 'Council of the Revolution' of 26 members mainly key military men and two civilian defectors from Ben Bella's camp with Boumediene at its head. This heterogeneous group was similar to Ben Bella's council but gradually Boumediene again emphasising 'collegiality' won over or neutralised any opposition. He survived a number of coup attempts and brought the UGTA and the student movement back to heel. The new leadership began to focus on development plans:

There emerged a new elite of technocrats who had spent the 1950s and 1960s in schools rather than in the *maquis* [the underground] or in political infighting. Their relatively apolitical outlook added to the pragmatic approach of the military served further to stabilise the system (Ruedy 1992: 208).

Gradually Boumediene consolidated power into a nine-member council. The council suspended the 1963 constitution and abolished the National Assembly and the FLN Political Bureau. In this new strong state even though the party grew it was not an organ of popular participation but subordinated to the military and administrative elites despite contrary rhetoric. As Fanon warned 'the nationalist parties make no use at all of the opportunity which is offered to them to integrate the people of the countryside, to educate them politically and to raise the level of their struggle' (1965b: 94). Even though there were regional and local assemblies elected from popular vote, in practice FLN slates determined the candidates.

They lacked any political clout being restricted to the role of implementing policy determined elsewhere:

With the streamlining and homogenisation of the government, the growing authority of the technocracy, the bureaucratisation of the party, and the harnessing of the labor, student, youth and women's organisations, Algeria by the 1970s became increasingly depoliticised. The professional bureaucrats, technocrats, and military officers who made policy functioned in increasing isolation from public opinion (Ruedy 1992: 209).

In Fanon's (1965b: 137) words since independence 'this party has sadly disintegrated; nothing is left but the shell of a party, the name, the emblem and the motto.' For the seven million peasants needed to increase production and reduce food imports, land was redistributed and co-ops organised. Students were sent to help peasants on the land. There was a gradual move away from the revolution's original aim of land reform as it became clear that the new Algeria was urban and planning was focused on this.

In 1966 public accounts were put in order. The policy of nationalisation begun by Ben Bella in September 1963 with the nationalisation of public transport was rapidly extended. First mining and insurance companies were taken over, then all vacant properties, and in May 1968, to all foreign

⁶ Bouteflika emerged in the April 1999 presidential elections as the sole candidate, and was duly elected unopposed. The other contenders, including Ait Ahmed, withdrew at the eleventh hour, claiming the elections were rigged by the military. Boudiaf was assassinated by the military in 1992 after being called in to use his authority as a 'historic chief' of the revolution to stem the rising tide of Islamism and corruption.

owned undertakings. The state finally succeeded in taking closer control over the self managed sector. There was some division in the elite between the 'Easterners' (that is so-called Soviet sympathisers) under Zbiri, the Army Chief of Staff against Boumediene and the 'technocrats', supposedly sympathetic to France. Boumediene faced down several plots to overthrow him and began a process of widespread nationalisation of mines, food production, oil, gas, chemicals, manufacturing, as stimulus to other industries.

Between 1966 and 1971 Algeria progressively nationalised one foreign sector after another culminating in acquiring 51 per cent of oil production and 100 per cent of the gas sector. A majority of self managed sector was nationalised as well. The state created a network of 45 national industrial corporation and eight finance organisations for each sector of the economy. The strategy was designed to break the cycle of dependency by rapid industrialisation via key 'Industrialising Industries' thought to be a stimulus to automatic industrialisation by drawing other sectors in its wake. Faced with a high population growth and declining agriculture this seemed the only course of action (Ruedy 1992: 217). This emphasis of industry over agriculture signalled a marked departure from the Tripoli program.

Three years after independence: there was a huge deficit, few democratic structures, self management was failing, agriculture was stagnant, industrial production was down 50 per cent, 75 per cent of construction companies were closed. Twenty-five per cent of the population had no income. There was massive urban drift, huge unemployment, massive poverty and few facilities; most has no gas or water. Understandably with well-paid jobs in the army, army recruits doubled. The focus was on big development projects: roads across the Sahara, tree barriers to prevent desertification, hundreds of new villages, mosques and schools were built. Boumediene founded Islamic *madrassahs* [colleges] in a determined effort to link socialism to Islam. Meanwhile, the state was increasingly authoritarian. There was state-security enforced censorship and corruption was widespread. Urban drift, falling production and a population explosion all manifested in a crisis of identity among pro-Arab students who began an underground Islamist movement.

In summary, Amin (1970: 223) concludes that:

Compared with 1955, the number of executives and civil servants (who earn relatively high salaries) had multiplied six times by 1965 whereas the number of manual and white-collar workers and artisans had risen only 30 percent. From this it may unhesitatingly be concluded that the departure of the Europeans has so far been to the exclusive benefit of the former group. The direct consequence of independence and the subsequent Europeans exodus has been the establishment of new and relatively privileged classes; for the broad mass of the population, neither the level of employment nor real income per head has improved; indeed quite the reverse. Thus Muslim society today exhibits much *greater class distinctions* than in 1955, when the choicest jobs were all occupied by Europeans (emphasis added).

In Fanon's (1965b: 144) words, the native bourgeoisie:

remains at the beginning and for a long time afterwards a bourgeoisie of the civil service. It is the positions that it holds in the new national administration which will give strength and serenity. If the government gives it enough time and opportunity, this bourgeoisie will manage to put away enough money to stiffen its domination. But it will always reveal itself to be incapable of giving birth to an authentic bourgeois society with all the economic and industrial consequences which this entails.

In 1971 after much debate the long awaited Charter of the Agrarian Revolution was promulgated to address the growing problems. It aimed to rehabilitate the private agricultural sector, to provide food for the cities and prosperity on the land, and to halt urban drift. Land was to be redistributed and cooperatives encouraged. The plan included the building of modern 'socialist villages'. While land was redistributed very little privately held land changed hands due to the resistance of middle to large land holders. Even with 6000 new co-operatives and 670 socialist villages, production and employment stagnated, while the private sector was the locus of production. The crisis deepened.

After Boumediene seized power, his coalition of officers and technocrats had even less sympathy for an autonomous women's movement. Increasingly UNFA became the women's auxiliary of the FLN. Although Algerian nationalists publicly acknowledged the role women had played in the war they stressed the emergency nature of the situation and called for a return to the 'tranquillity' of pre-war family life. Nevertheless the ambitious plans for economic development required a massive expansion of education from which both sexes benefited. More women moved into paid work provoking a growing protest about women's role. Women had to submit to these pressures especially outside urban areas if they wanted to be respected and if they refused, work was impossible to find. Many 'immodest' women were attacked, especially by traditionalist peasants who had drifted into the cities. Women re-veiled as a means of self defence but increasingly the effect was to link 'liberation' for women with 'indecenty.' Women were still regarded as minors and constrained to work in support of the family. Women did make some progress, some were elected to public office and many worked for the first time, their numbers doubled between 1966 and 1977, although the high rates of unemployment made this difficult. The 1967 census revealed that 45 per cent of men were without paid work compared to 97.5 per cent of women. Unemployment remains a serious problem for both sexes. These census figures do not include women in rural areas and domestic servants; nevertheless, women's participation in paid work in urban areas is much lower (about 5%) than that in Morocco or Tunisia where it 15 or 20 per cent respectively (Minces 1978: 167).

Domestically matters were coming to a head. Between 1967 and 1978 growth, while unbalanced between sectors, was an impressive seven per cent. Production doubled in these 12 years and in basic industries it had quadrupled. Industrial employment grew to 460 000 jobs mostly in the state sector (Ruedy 1992: 221-2). Despite these achievements it was clear by 1977 that the economy was in serious trouble. While unemployment fell from 30 to 22 per cent, it was not enough. There was industrial unrest and sectoral imbalances became increasingly difficult to manage. Eventually Algeria turned to foreign capital to finance the rapid industrialisation and by 1980 had an external debt of 16.3 billion. This combined with low productivity and increasing consumer demand being met by imports meant that the outflow of currency became critical especially as investment in social infrastructure like education and medicine failed to meet planned targets.

There was growing pressure for a change of priorities:

By far the most serious difficulty encountered by the economy, however, was the crisis caused by the slow growth of agriculture at a time when population growth and rising urban incomes were causing demand to soar. Between 1976 and 1978, as GDP grew at an average annual rate of 7.2 percent, agriculture grew at 2.4 percent (Ruedy 1992: 221).

Government investment policy meant that much of the demand was met by imports such that 'a country that in net terms was self-sufficient in food in 1962 was only 70 per cent self sufficient in 1969 and 35 per cent self sufficient by 1978.' Food's contribution to the drain on reserves grew disturbingly (Ruedy 1992: 219-220).

On June 19 1975, the tenth anniversary of the ‘revolutionary readjustment’ that brought him to power, Boumediene announced the drafting of a new National Charter that was subject to unprecedented public debate. Like the Tripoli program and the Algiers charter it contained a historical survey and the conceptual framework for a new constitution that was also adopted in a separate referendum in November 1976. The new People’s National Assembly was opened with Fidel Castro as guest of honour. Algeria was promoted as a model for the Third World but behind the facade was a new authoritarian government of soldiers and diplomats. The new constitution recognised one party and one presidential candidate. The FLN remained in control with a new politburo and central committee and the new National Popular Assembly was set up, elected from an FLN slate. In practice the executive held the power. The president controlled the army, could rule by decree and his cabinet were not responsible to the national assembly beyond answering its questions. As in other restructuring this was touted as the vehicle for re-admitting the Algerian people back into politics, but served only to reinforce the president’s power.

Looking back it was, perhaps, the debates around the 1976 National Charter that should have sounded a warning that all was not well in Algerian society. They revealed that the type of Islam accepted by the politicians and technocrats was not accepted by the people. For the mass of people puritan Islam allowed a means of identification in opposition to the elite. The elite, whose modernising project was seen as introducing Western morals and values, was seen as abandoning basic Algerian principles. The National Charter of June 1976 attempted to provide another ideological framework for Algerian ‘socialism’. It guaranteed basic freedoms such as expression and assembly, the right of women to full participation in national life, and affirmed Islam as the state religion. It dealt with women in one page recognising the need to create an environment in which her ‘recognised rights as wife and mother and her material and moral security’ should not be prejudiced (Minces 1978: 169).

From the early seventies onwards, Islamic symbolism came more to the fore. Friday replaced Sunday as day of rest, the campaign to replace French signs with Arabic ones became government policy. Islamic groups appealed for inspiration to Ibn Badis, leader of the reformist *ulama* [religious leadership] in the 1930s. The regime had been able to position itself as the legitimate inheritor of such traditions and dismiss the Islamists as ‘backward’ or seeking a return to the superstitious practices of the past. This became increasingly difficult, for example on the issue of birth control. The traditionalists condemned it and while the regime argued that it was not contrary to Islamic principles, they were forced to retreat. Increasingly traditional conservatives drew on Article Two of the constitution to demand systematic Islamisation; they fought and won concessions like the availability of mosques within university grounds. The government tried to keep political control of religious affairs despite the growing number of ‘private’ mosques and *imams*.⁷ The government tried to avoid controversy by shelving the Family Code and introducing a campaign to purify the morals of the elite as evidence of its fidelity to Qu’ranic principles (Vatin 1982: 237). As the economic crisis deepened it was these aspects of Algerian culture that became the site of struggles over identity as will be discussed in Part Three.

⁷ The bulk of the *ulama* were state employees who received their sermons from the minister in charge of religious affairs.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to begin the assessment of the relevance of Fanon's ideas by looking at the struggle with which he was most directly involved.

Fanon located the development of nationalism in the struggles of the twentieth century. In many ways it was the union against invaders that began in 1830 with Qadir and Islam that developed a sense of unity in the peasant populations. Fanon's narrative in *Wretched of the Earth* reflects this unusual 'nationalism' of the peasantry. The size of the *lumpenproletariat*, largely landless peasants, in Algeria brought them into consideration as a potentially revolutionary force though with much more ambivalence than Fanon expresses. Fanon though did note that they could be used by colonialists. This, and their number, Fanon argued made it imperative to work in some way with them. He saw them as a way of entering the cities and while some did fight with the FLN in the Battle of Algiers there does not seem to be strong evidence of their revolutionary potential in Algeria. Fanon's story of the 'illegal minority' driven from the nationalist party and seeking refuge in the countryside does reflect the experience of the Algerians. In particular the separation of rural and urban elements, the latter being more conservative on the issue of armed struggle, inasmuch, as they had no previous history of it. It is also the case that inside the country it was the peasants that formed the backbone of the revolution, the FLN organising cells modelled on the *djemas* and other traditions of communal peasant egalitarianism.

On women and Algeria, Fanon (1965b: 161) remarked that there is a danger of 'perpetuating the feudal tradition that holds sacred the superiority of the masculine element over the feminine'. While women's brave participation could have led to a rethinking of roles as Fanon describes, participation alone was not sufficient to challenge the traditional role of women. Women like most participants were fighting for national independence and the preservation of their culture from the French, not for a program that involved the liberation of women.

Fanon's work is in large part not intended as a description of the war but is a warning about its future direction. Fanon saw that the key issue in the struggle was the role of consciousness and was concerned about the limits of bourgeois nationalism in Africa. The course of 'postcolonial' Algeria only proved how real those fears were. When the colonialists withdrew there was a civil war between the ALN and the GPRA. While Fanon's sympathies lay with the former inasmuch as he lectured the ALN cadre it was always going to need more than that. Fanon's thesis that participation in violence makes one more likely to be socially and politically conscious is dubious. Although here it was not the ALN, but the 'internals' who participated in the armed struggle most directly and one could argue that they may have been more representative, but of course this is speculation. The key issue is the way consciousness is organised in the process of participation.

Fanon saw the danger within broad national liberation fronts that to maximise participation overall goals are left vague and focus instead on the immediate objective. This creates difficulties later because while everyone agrees on the 'minimum demands' this leaves crucial questions (like the nature of the post-revolutionary society, the role of women and so on) to be answered after independence. By then it is often too late. Fanon saw the need for a party that 'should be a direct expression of the masses' (1965b: 150) but the FLN never transformed itself into such a vehicle. The sort of education and organisation needed would have been very difficult to establish in the post-colonial period.

Fanon's remarks on the role of trade unions were not borne out by the Algerian experience. It was trade union organising that ended the factional civil war between the ALN and GPRA. The UGTA [Trade Union federation], even though it was an FLN front, still served as a pressure group on the FLN. While Fanon says they are 'pampered' and their demands scandalise the 'nation', this is an example of the way in which his nationalist politics leads him into moralising (Farber 1981). The bourgeois forces claim the workers are 'selfish' and use this to divide the population. It is not a case of the proletariat selfishly pursuing its aims against the peasantry but against the ruling elite. Despite the cooption and bureaucratisation of the process worker's interests lie with pursuing their material interests from which the working population benefits not the bourgeoisie. 'Self management' did serve as a potential pole of attraction for genuine socialism. However, it was eventually brought under state, and thus bourgeois, control rather than fulfilling the promise of 'land to the tiller'.

The charismatic leader who serves bourgeois interests is an oversimplification in the Algerian case but as a generalisation is fairly accurate. There needs to be more analysis of the role of such leaders in the context of the bureaucratisation of 'postcolonial' states. The Algerian experience does support the idea that allowing bourgeois interests to come to power - that is to allow them to take root - is fruitless. If one thinks of revolutionary change as happening in stages, once the petty bourgeoisie in Algeria took power in the old colonial state apparatus it was much more difficult to displace them. The generalisability of this result needs to be examined.⁸ Commentators like Ahmed (1992: 10) argue that 'all the socialist revolutions between 1949 and 1978 in Asia and Africa occurred where the bourgeoisie had been sidelined in the course of the independence.' The regime has achieved some gains, but for the vast majority Algeria's progress was disappointing and has now reversed. The FLN's lack of a clear ideological framework was the cause of much of this. As Fanon put it in Wretched of the Earth:

If you really wish your country to avoid regression, or at best halts and uncertainties, a rapid step must be taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness. The nation does not exist except in a programme which has been worked out by revolutionary leaders and taken up with full understanding and enthusiasm by the masses (1965b: 161-2).

⁸ Such an attempt has been made recently by Lowy (1981).