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"FRANCE AND ALGERIA UNDER DE GAULLE"

By

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In speaking of France under De Gaulle, I think I should first describe the man. There have been so many De Gaulles in the last twenty years, from the prophetic colonel who wrote military books that no one read with the exception of the Germans, to the rebel against the Vichy Armistice in London, the General in Algiers, the liberator of France, the fighter of the Rhine and the Danube, the leader of the R.P.F., to the exile of Colombey-Les-Deux-Eglises. This De Gaulle of mid-1958 is a different man; from his retreat he emerges with greying hair, majestic and distant. There is between him and his ministers, between him and the people, a distance made of respect and, shall we say, a little of mystery.

The General sometimes speaks of himself in the third person. "Has De Gaulle ever abandoned anything?" he will say to a paratroop officer who said, "We must not leave these people", speaking of the Algerian Moslems. Or he will say, "De Gaulle has been saying that for the last thousand years".

He identifies himself with France and in so doing, he really ratifies the destiny which has given him the very name of the country.

He governs France from l'Hotel Matignon, where I was to meet him on the 25th of September with the other representatives of French interests abroad. He governs like a monarch and I understand that his Ministers with the exception of two have a holy fear in their contacts with him. He is tall, distinguished, unsmiling, looks at you intently and asks questions to which he wants a clear rapid answer. He came into the room at l'Hotel Matignon with Guy Mollet, shook hands with each and every one of the forty-five of us, and spent an hour speaking to first one and then another.

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On departing - this was only a few days before the Referendum - he said: "The destiny of France is in your hands; your conscience will guide you, you have to listen to that alone", and he walked out.

The men around him in order of importance are (1) Guy Mollet, the only member of a left wing party. (He split his powerful Socialist party to support the investiture. If he hadn't, perhaps the General would have gone back to Colombey and France might well be torn by civil war to-day.)

(2) Malraux, an old friend of the General, attached to the Council of Ministers, more an adviser than a minister.

(3) Soustelle, Minister of Information, the man behind the 13th of May revolution.

(4) Pinay, Minister of Finance. His name spells confidence and the General says : "Good politics make for good finance." When Pinay asked the General what his financial policy was, he was given the following answer: "But it's you who are Minister of Finance, Pinay, not I".

(5) Couve de Murville, Minister of Foreign Affairs. He is a civil servant, whom the General chose in preference to Joxe who might normally have expected the portfolio. The others are Pflimlin, Cornut Gentille, Houphouet-Boigny, Ramonet, Buron and others, twenty Ministers in all.

De Gaulle, however, holds all the major controls and to begin with Algeria, where he has Salan and Generals Allard and Massu to exercise prefectorial functions. Regarding Algeria, Defence, Diplomacy, Interior, De Gaulle has direct command over what is essential. He rules and he can make alone, with his two councillors, Georges Pompidou and Olivier Guichard, who have no portfolios but who wield a strong influence, the laws that 600 deputies and 300 senators so painfully manufactured in the past.

We must start with what is now known as the Revolution of the 13th May. It all began, as one knows, in Algiers, when both soldiers and civilians thought that Algeria would go the same way as Morocco, Tunisia, Indo-China, the French territories of India, Syria and the

Lebanon. These men, soldiers and civilians of Algeria, had lost faith in the Fourth Republic, sadly famous in recent years for its lack of policy and its instability which had resulted in a fearful loss of life amongst its soldiers and subjects, not to mention the fabulous and often unnecessary cost to the French Treasury. A few words can, unfortunately sum it up: France had changed Premiers 23 times since De Gaulle resigned the Premiership, when the French National Assembly rejected his proposed amendments to the constitution in 1946.

On the 13th May of this year a group of colonels and civilians which two famous generals, military heroes of the Algerian war, soon joined, formed a committee of Public Safety, openly defied the authority of Paris and demanded that General De Gaulle become Premier. Their motto was:

- 1) Algeria is French and shall remain French, for us, our children and our grandchildren;
- 2) The tricolor will remain the flag of the ten million people of this country;
- 3) De Gaulle at the head of the Government will see to it that such is the policy of France, now and always.

Quickly the revolt spread. In Paris and in France millions of citizens, tired of the vagaries of successive cabinets, joined the rioting. Corsica, French West Africa and Equatorial Africa set up committees of Public Safety, and with them the commander of the French Mediterranean fleet declared that General De Gaulle was the only man capable of solving France's long smouldering troubles.

In Algeria and even in France the 13th of May is now described as a revolution, but either the meaning of the word has changed or it's the wrong word. Revolution to many of us implies blood, fire, rioting and plunder; we French can never quite dis-associate the word from the guillotine. And yet the aspect of this revolution is very different.

In Algiers this is a popular, healthy and gay affair. Not a drop of blood was shed, not a wound, not a scratch. There was not a shout

of hate, but patriotic songs were often sung as well as the Marseillaise. This revolution never took on that icy frightening aspect of the (coup d'Etat militaire). It was more like a huge merry party in which Europeans and Moslems in their hundreds of thousands fraternised, officers and men, military and civilian, men and women, rich and poor, young and old. Moslem women were encouraged to unveil and in fact, day after day they came into the crowds wearing tricolor hawks which they solemnly took off and threw to the crowds. This is the symbol inspired by Kemal Ataturk, "You are the equals of the men". And when the Referendum comes, it will be seen how rapidly they will have assumed their part, how suddenly their influence has made itself felt.

This happened not only in Algiers, but in Oran, in Tlemcen, in Constantine and all over the country.

What of the rebels during all this merry making? But the rebels only control a few mountainous areas in the country, from which they hesitantly emerge to commit their crimes, and to which they hastily return.

Before we leave Algiers for Paris, I think it will interest you to learn the names of the leaders of the coup in Algiers. Soustelle, civilian No. 1, now Minister of Information and a one-time Governor of Algeria, is the main organiser. Behind him are four colonels whose names are known but have never been mentioned, and who were the backroom boys. Then there is Delbecq, civilian No. 2, a forty year old son of an artisan, intellectual, soldier of the campaigns of Indo-China and Northern Africa, typical of men sick at heart of France's lack of policy. Civilian No. 3 is De Serigny, owner and director of the most read Algiers paper, "L'Echo d'Alger", a member of one of the wealthiest families in Algeria; he remains in the background. In the forties he was an admirer of Marshal Petain and only recently became a supporter of De Gaulle. Sid Cara, a 4th civilian, is a Moslem, and President of the Committee of Public Safety. Finally, there are the two generals; Massu, commanding officer of the paratroopers and the man who cleaned

up the casbah of Algiers and many others, as popular amongst his men as amongst the Moslem population, and General Salan, head of the army in Algeria, General De Gaulle's official representative in Algeria, and acting Governor.

In France itself amongst the population, a similar atmosphere prevailed - processions in the streets of Paris, demonstrations, the people, the police and the army fraternising quietly - no brutality, no abuse. Here too not a nose bled and I like to think of this as a miracle of French civilisation.

If we want to follow the political events that then took place in France, we shall have to go to the Elysée, where President Coty lives, to the Chamber of Deputies, seat of the National Assembly and to Colombey les Deux Eglises, where General De Gaulle has his home.

We are in the last days of May. The Committee of Public Safety has informed Paris that if General De Gaulle is not called to take over the Government, then operation Dragonfly will be set in motion. This operation is the landing of paratroopers at key points, mainly in Southern France, and liaison with Resistance members of the last war in France who were alerted and who agreed to join the landing forces. The situation was very dangerous. The revolution could have degenerated into a civil war on the model of the bloody Spanish Civil war.

At the Elysée, President Coty had called together the Presidents of the National Assembly and of the Senate, known as the Conseil de la République, MM. Le Trocquer and Monnerville, to meet General De Gaulle, to consider the conditions under which he could constitute a Government of the Republic.

Le Trocquer is a Socialist elected President of the National Assembly, thanks to Communist votes. Monnerville is a coloured man. The meeting was difficult and painful with Le Trocquer, who could probably foresee a new Popular Front Government backed by the Communists, if De Gaulle could be evicted. The Senate, however, gave the General its full support.

President Coty, in the mean time, to cut short Le Trocquer's dangerous haggling, gave him, as President of the National Assembly, a letter to read to the Deputies.

On the 29th May, M. Le Trocquer proceeded to his seat at the Chamber of Deputies to the accompaniment of applause from all the Communists, most of the Socialists, and some of the Radicals and MRP's; he was obviously their man who perhaps tomorrow would lead a Popular Front Government. A few moments later the Ministers of the existing government made their entrance lead by M. Pflimlin. M. Le Trocquer opened the meeting and asked the Deputies to rise to hear a message read from President Coty: "We are on the verge of civil war. I have called the most respected of Frenchmen. I shall immediately resign, if my choice does not receive the approval of the National Assembly". Shouts of "Fascism, dictatorship", came from the left. Simultaneously, in Paris a demonstration called by the Communist leaders and thought to bring into the streets half a million people, was attended by only 45,000. A general strike for 24 hours failed completely.

In the Chamber of Deputies M. Pflimlin informed the MRP members and the Radicals, that only De Gaulle could save the country from civil war. All the members of the two parties, with a few exceptions, gave him their support.

In the Socialist camp the scene was much more violent. But slowly it appeared that M. Le Trocquer was far too partial and had failed to report to his party De Gaulle's answer to a letter from Vincent Auriol, ex-president of the Republic, in which the General said: "I shall never consent to be called to power by anyone but the people or, at least, by their elected representatives". The Socialists were amazed and asked why they were not told of this letter, obviously because someone was happy to help the Communists. The word went round to every Socialist deputy, "De Gaulle does not intend to establish a dictatorship", and the powerful Socialist party, known as the white collar party, split in two, and the larger half led by Guy Mollet pledged its support to De Gaulle.

Back to the Elysée that same day, or rather night, we find General De Gaulle in a two hour meeting with President Coty. They were quietly in full agreement deciding on the exceptional procedure of investiture:-

- 1) Individual consultation with leaders of parties and groups on Friday;
- 2) Round table discussions with party leaders on Saturday;
- 3) Declaration by the General before the National Assembly.
No debate. Immediate vote;
- 4) Investiture Saturday night or Sunday morning;
- 5) Immediate official visit by Prime Minister De Gaulle to Algeria on Sunday afternoon.

The news broke simultaneously over Paris and Algiers: "De Gaulle has consented to form a government of the Republic". The Champs Elysée were in a matter of minutes jammed from end to end by a delirious crowd. In Algiers hundreds of thousands of Europeans and Moslems invaded the Forum before Government House. De Gaulle was back and with him came hope and faith.

At Saint Dizier, specially chartered planes arrived one after another to bring to Colombey les Deux Eglises many of the party leaders who wanted fuller information to present to their parties and to clear up last/minute misgivings. Amongst them were Vincent Auriol, Guy Mollet, Maurice Deixonne and many others.

From over the ocean Ike said: "I like De Gaulle", and certain fears that the leader of the Free French might possibly drive the Americans back to their policy of isolation with regard to France and withdraw financial co-operation, seemed utterly unfounded and another obstacle often referred to in the last ten years by a certain influential Paris paper to keep De Gaulle out, was removed.

The next stage was the Constitution and the Referendum.

After General De Gaulle had sent the Deputies of the National Assembly on a six months' holiday, and after he had toured Algeria where he saw that faith, justice and love could, if one knew how, replace

suspicion, hatred and terror, among the two communities, he came back to France to draft with Michel Debre the new Constitution, and organise the Referendum.

This reform of the Constitution which the General has made his first task, shows that in fact, he has gone back twelve years and that he is starting where he left off. That was in 1946 when the National Assembly rejected his proposed Constitution. During his twelve years of retreat he has never ceased to say that the kind of parliamentary republic constituted in France could not possibly cope with the problems of the world today. General De Gaulle has often compared this situation with that of the French Army in 1939. He had then asked the Government for mechanised divisions and he even wrote a book on the subject. But his request remained unheard, and the collapse of France in 1940 followed. In his opinion you can no more govern a country in the atomic and nuclear age with an outdated Constitution, than you could win a war in 1939 with bayonets against panzers and the Maginot Line as a means of attack.

I will not attempt to analyse the 92 articles of the new Constitution. Let me make only a few points. To begin with, in the Fifth Republic far greater powers will be given to the President of the Republic. Amongst many others, he will have the authority to appoint and discharge Premiers, negotiate and notify treaties; he can dissolve Parliament after consultation with the Premier; in case of national emergency he may assume vast powers by simple proclamation. He presides over the Council of Ministers and the Councils of the National Defence. He is elected for seven years by an electoral college, which includes members of Parliament, Councillors and representatives of rural centres.

As the importance of the Presidency increases, so the power of Parliament decreases. Parliament will meet twice a year for periods of three months each. It can pass laws under certain circumscribed conditions. No Deputy may accept a post in the Cabinet or the Government as long as he is a member of Parliament.

The Premier who is appointed by the President, shall direct the operation of the Government and ensure the execution of the laws.

The Senate is also given greater powers and a Constitutional Council has been formed of members appointed by the President of the Senate. The Assembly and the President of the Republic will determine the legality of laws and act in much the same way as the United States Supreme Court.

In the case of oversea territories, according to their present status, they are included in the Republic where they enjoy, by virtue of the loi-cadre, semi-autonomy. In the new Constitution these territories will have to make a choice. Either they reject the Constitution and by so doing they withdraw from the Republic and break away from France, as in the case of French Guinea, or they accept the new Constitution and by so doing declare their will to remain united with France.

In the latter case they will have the option of becoming

- either: an overseas department, similar to any department of France with, however, certain minor adjustments to meet local conditions;
- or a territory attached to the Republic, as most of them are today;
- or, finally: a separate state still associated with the Republic and within a group known as the community. This type of organisation is similar to that in the British Commonwealth.

A word of warning is necessary here. Algeria is not an overseas territory, so that it must be clearly understood that the choice outlined above is not applicable to Algeria.

If Algeria approves the Constitution, it will be proof of her will to remain French, proof of her adherence to a policy of equality of rights and duties. I understand that General De Gaulle has intimated that the stages will be:-

- 1) Peace;
- 2) Reconstruction, and social and economic development;
- 3) Final determination of a status according to the will of the Algerians.

The people of France and the citizens of the overseas territories were asked to vote a simple "Yes", or "No", if they approved or desired the new Constitution, "No", if they did not. This was the Referendum and was to take place on the 28th September.

At this stage I think it is important to try to see what the Referendum meant to Charles De Gaulle on the one hand, and what it meant to the people of France and to those of the French overseas territories on the other hand.

General De Gaulle has made it overwhelmingly clear that he did not wish to, and, in fact, would not seize power other than legitimately. He has repeatedly implied that he could not be brought to power through a military putsch, however bloodless and however justified. In other words, the 13th of May revolution engineered by the Army in Algeria and the Algerian citizens must be confirmed by the people of France and of the overseas territories; it must be legalised. The Referendum offered a simple means of testing the will of the people. If an overwhelming majority voted in favour of this Constitution, if the overseas territories joined in, then was this not sufficient proof that the people wanted De Gaulle?

Obviously, De Gaulle was fully aware that only a chosen few could understand the intricacies of the clauses of the new Constitution; only a few with some legal background could discern the changes that the new Constitution meant to France. Then, of course, he concluded that those voting in favour were voting as much for him as for the change in the Constitution.

The question was, what is an overwhelming majority, 60^o/o, 70^o/o, 80^o/o, 90^o/o? Where would De Gaulle set the dividing line between a majority and an overwhelming majority? Rumour has it that 65^o/o would have been considered sufficient. Many then asked, does that mean, that if he received 62^o/o for instance, that the General would go back to his country retreat? And what then? These questions were never answered and fortunately, in the light of events they need not be. However, personally, I feel quite sure that having gone so far, the General would not have gone back.

For the people of France the issue was even simpler. The majority of the French people didn't even read the Constitution, let alone understand its intricacies. As for the Moslems of the Algerian

villages and the Africans of Equatorial Africa, most of them couldn't read it, even if they had wanted to. The French people, let it be plainly said, voted first and foremost for the honourable man, the courageous soldier, the sincere Frenchman who is General De Gaulle. Secondly they voted against twelve years of muddle, of indecision and of instability, thirdly they voted for a change which, they were told, was symbolised by a change in the Constitution.

Before the vote, General De Gaulle made a tour of France, of Algeria and of most of the other French territories overseas. In France he made speeches which gave no idea of what his policy would be. In Algeria he failed to pronounce the word "integration" which made the settlers uneasy. In the overseas territories all he made clear was that the period of the clenched fist and the begging palm was over. A well-known American magazine, aptly if disrespectfully summing up the effect of De Gaulle's campaign, wrote:- "All that most Frenchmen have for certain is a memory of De Gaulle moving among masses of people with the awkward lope of a giraffe, patting a head here, shaking a hand there, peering about him with near-sighted benevolence. But they know also that he is a man of integrity and vision, and that nothing less will suffice now".

From Cairo, Ferhat Abbas, the self-proclaimed president of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, sent word round that no Arab was to vote, that he would carry the war to France and that the Referendum would be remembered in years to come as the culmination of terror throughout France. It must be remembered that there are 400,000 Moslems working in France. The vast majority of them are solid decent people, who have expatriated themselves so as to send back to their families in Algeria the best part of their pay; it is said that these 400,000 Algerians working in France support two million people in Algeria. Unfortunately too, through threats, terror and murder they were also called upon to support the rebellion.

Agents of the rebels check that each and every one of them pays a monthly contribution, the amount of which is decided by strong men committees; if the Arab doesn't pay up on due date, he is beaten up;

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if he persists in his un-cooperative attitude, he may well be murdered, or a member of his family murdered. The Police, as far as possible try to break up these rebel activities and have achieved, it must be admitted, a fair degree of success. However, to carry out the spectacular crimes that were needed to mark the Referendum and comply with Ferhat Abbas' orders, teams of volunteers willing to be sacrificed had to be formed. They became identified as the men in black leather jackets (les hommes aux blousons noirs), because when a criminal outrage was committed, not only were the armed volunteers dressed in these black jackets, but it was found that a number of unarmed Arabs with their identification papers in order, were strolling about in the area of the outrage, also dressed in black jackets, so as to confuse pursuit and arrest. All the crimes attempted or committed were carried out by teams of five or six men who stopped at nothing and who were sacrificed in advance. In fact, nine out of ten were mowed down by the Police, very few ever being caught alive. They were young men, most of them trained in Morocco, and they worked in teams of five or six consisting of gunmen who kept the firearms and distributed them just before the criminal attempt, informers, who observed the victim and his habits, and placed the executors in the best position to carry out the crime, and finally the executors who were generally three in number. These, of course, were the sacrificed men often chosen from amongst the most fanatic Moslems who were made to believe that when they died, they would be received by Allah as his privileged sons.

Such were the men who tried to create a climate of unrest and of terror. M. Soustelle narrowly escaped from an attempt on his life when his car was attacked. But mostly the criminals specialised in attacking policemen on their lonely beats; a shot in the back and the gendarme lay dying in the street. Or he might have had time to sound his whistle and then the chase was on, with cars screeching around corners and automatic weapons blasting.

Throughout France I should say that on an average there were, possibly, three such attempts every day, ranging from murders to railway

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sabotage, bombs planted in public places and attempts to set fire to factories, but extraordinarily enough the victims were few, certainly not more than fifteen in the thirty days that preceded the Referendum. The Police did an extraordinary job in protecting key centres, the railways, the airfields, and large industrial plants; they also managed to uncover the whole terrorist organisation and were able to break it up. Today there is from time to time an isolated act of terror in metropolitan France, but they are few and far between.

In Algeria all the rebels did was to warn their countrymen and threaten vengeance on those who voted. In this atmosphere one comes to Sunday, 28th of September, the day on which 26 million Frenchmen were to say "Yes" or "No" to De Gaulle's Constitution, in fact, to De Gaulle himself. In Algeria over four million were to vote, and if they did, this could certainly be interpreted as a challenge to F.N.L. authority, a certain proof that the rebels were weakening. In the other territories a further fifteen million would go to the polls, excluding French Guinea which had chosen independence in advance. Incidentally, the population, not the voting population, but the whole population of French Guinea, men, women and children, is 2,500,000.

The following are three Referendum results in round figures: In Metropolitan France 22,300,000 voted. Out of 26,600,000 registered voters 17,670,000 were for the new Constitution and 4,620,000 were against it. In Algeria 3,500,000 voted out of 4,400,000 registered voters. 3,350,000 were for the new Constitution and 118,000 were against it. In the other territories 10,800,000 voted out of 14,800,000 registered voters. 10,100,000 were for the new Constitution and 700,000 were against it.

In France, 67% of the total number of registered voters cast their votes in favour of De Gaulle; 80% of those who actually voted were in favour of De Gaulle. In Algeria, 76% of the total number of registered voters cast their votes in favour of De Gaulle; 90% of those who actually voted were in favour of De Gaulle. In the other territories 68% of the total number of registered voters cast their votes in favour of De Gaulle; 93% of those who actually voted were in favour of De Gaulle.

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Certainly, few leaders in the Western world can boast of so overwhelming a mandate. Without wishing to analyse the figures, one must, however, stop a few minutes and ponder the results.

In the elections of January 1956, the Communist party registered 5,600,000 votes in favour of its candidates. There were only 4,400,000 votes against the Constitution in this referendum. Does this mean that the Communist party in Metropolitan France has lost 1,200,000 votes? It goes even further than that, because if one runs through the results of the voting department by department (county by county), in the "Eure" for example, which is Mendès-France's constituency, there were many votes against De Gaulle, and the same applies to the "Haute Garonne", Bourges Maunoury's department, "Tarn & Garonne", Baylets' and the "Vaucluse", Daladier's constituency. Analysing the results of the departments one by one, it will be found that in most of them the Communists have lost considerable ground, and Marcel Servin, one of the leaders of the Party Communist Français, said at a Committee meeting of the Party on the 6th October:

"This is a very serious setback for the working classes, the whole of the democratic world, and for our party. It is the first time since the liberation of France that such a phenomenon has occurred. Not only have we lost freshly acquired constituents, but also many who have voted Communist for a long time". And the "Humanité", the Communist paper, bitterly accused the campaign of terrorism of the F.L.N. in Metropolitan France of having frightened the electorate into voting for the worst enemies of the working class. It went even further in accusing the French police of planting the bomb in the Eiffel Tower with the object of organising something along the lines of the Reichstag fire to arouse public indignation, which could well be used to ban the Communist party which is known to support the F.L.N.

In Algeria the results were even more striking. 80% of all eligible Algerians went to the polls, Moslem women voting for the first time. Out of the 3,515,000 who voted, only 118,000 voted "No". I was in Algeria only a few days after the election and I asked officers, settlers and Moslems, how it happened. The officers said that, of course,

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the Army had provided transport for those in isolated far-off villages, but they had needed no coercion and every Moslem had voted freely. The settlers said that the Arabs had voted in a spirit of peace. To them De Gaulle means that terror will be ended, and he has promised them a better standard of living. The Moslems themselves made it very clear: "Yesterday we could not show our feeling for France because France had no strong policy with regard to Algeria, and if France pulled out as in Tunisia and Morocco, and we were known to have supported her, we would have had our throats cut. Today, with De Gaulle we know that France will not pull out, so we can come out in the open and support her".

All the other overseas territories, excepting French Guinea, voted en masse for De Gaulle.

To De Gaulle the results spelt independence, freedom from political parties, freedom from the contingencies of balance of power combinations, and freedom from the Algerian settlers and the army that carried him to power. Finally, Algeria had given an unmistakable indication of its will to co-operate with France.

De Gaulle lost no time and immediately went into action. He ordered general elections throughout France and Algeria which will take place at the end of November. He ordered administrative, judicial and fiscal reforms. He ordered that everything should be ready for France to enter the six nation Common Market on January 1st 1959. In Algeria he ordered all military personnel to withdraw from the Committees of Public Safety and he made a direct appeal to the Algerian rebels F.L.N.

I shall only comment briefly on the three more important points, as time does not permit an analysis of all these measures. The three measures that are of greatest interest to us in the framework of this exposé are: the elections, the order to the Military in Algeria, and the offer to the rebels.

The elections. The ineffectual Fourth Republic having died its sudden death and such death having been officially registered in the Journal Officiel, it is necessary to hold elections for the representatives of the National Assembly. De Gaulle has intimated

that he will side with no particular party and he has insisted that his name even in the form of an adjective should not be utilized by any group or candidate.

There are just under three thousand candidates for 465 seats which would seem to indicate that the new Constitution has not brought politics into disrepute as much as was expected. The old timers are all starters and the political parties are more numerous than ever. There has, however, been an enormous change in electoral alliances and there is also a newcomer among the parties, something that, I suppose, could be referred to as new blood - it is called the Union for the new Republic "U.N.R." and its leader is Soustelle. Its politics are: a new France under De Gaulle and the maintenance of the French link with Algeria. Outside the Communist party which under the Fourth Republic was the largest and best disciplined single party in the country, there is the powerful Socialist Party headed by Guy Mollet. I am not going to try to attempt even to enumerate the other ten parties. My view is that following the elections General De Gaulle will become President of France and he will appoint as Premier Guy Mollet.

The people of France, and particularly the young people, are disappointed to see the old timers back at their political tricks; they would have liked a clean sweep and a fresh start with new young men. The General has said that this will come of its own accord, time not having been sufficient for the young men to form themselves into groups and come forward, but there is a beginning with Soustelle's new party, the U.N.R. Anyway, De Gaulle has said: "I cannot strike out anyone, it is up to the electorate".

Algeria will elect her representatives under the same conditions as Metropolitan France, and provision is made for at least two thirds of those representatives to be Moslem citizens. But though the candidates have the right to defend any ideology, three organisations remain banned in an Algeria at war. They are: F.L.N. (Front de Libération National), M.N.A. (Mouvement National Algerien), and the Communist Party, and it must therefore be understood that any candidate

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proved to have taken an active part in any one of these banned organisations will lay himself open to penal prosecution and could not qualify as a member of the Assembly. They will take their place in the National Assembly in absolute equality with other members. It is thought that the General is looking over the heads of the F.L.N. to these newly elected Moslem representatives of tomorrow to bring about a settlement of the war in Algeria. In the meantime, De Gaulle has set up his Five Year Plan for Algeria which provides for:

- 1) Equalisation of wages in France and Algeria;
- 2) Redistribution of 600,000 acres of land to Moslem farmers;
- 3) Schooling for all Moslem children by 1965;
- 4) 10% of civil service posts in Metropolitan France to be open to Moslems and more in Algeria.

Immediately following the Referendum, De Gaulle gave orders that all officers sitting on the Committees of Public Safety should withdraw from such committees, abandon politics and return to the military mission which is entrusted to them, that is, to fight the rebels and ensure order and finally peace in Algeria. This order was followed without a word of protest by all military personnel from General Massu downwards in the best military tradition. Civilian members of the Committees were indignant and gave the General the first signs of insubordination. They called a symbolic strike which they cancelled after General Salan had stepped in; there was talk of no less than a second 13th of May revolution, and the settlers who consider that they were the architects of the renaissance of France had yet another cause for concern. De Gaulle had told them that the period of European privileges in Algeria had ended, but he had failed to pronounce the long awaited word "integration", and now he had all but taken from Algiers any political say and implicitly sent them, the "ultras" back to their different tasks. Paris was the policy maker, not Algiers.

The appeal to the rebels was a stroke of genius and it was timed to satisfy the French, the Algerians and the world at large. "The peace of the brave", said the General, "let those who opened fire cease fire

and return without humiliation to their work and their families; let the combatants use the white flag of truce. As for the outside organisation, if they wish to designate delegates to negotiate the end of hostilities, they can address themselves to the French Embassies of Tunis or Rabat, and they will have my guarantee of safety and freedom to return".

Even Mendès-France was impressed. In his paper, the "Express", he wrote: "Everyone is now a Gaullist; a plebiscite this week would undoubtedly exceed the 80⁰/₀ of the recent Referendum. At the moment, De Gaulle is himself the Nation. Even the Communists were happy that the door to negotiation was open".

But in Cairo Ferhat Abbas was uneasy. Going to Paris would seem like surrender. He rejected the offer, vaguely spoke of negotiations in some neutral country and threatened that the F.L.N. would call for volunteers from the Arab world, not so much because they were short of soldiers, but rather to spread the conflict. Bourguiba was uneasy.

De Gaulle sat back. He had shown the world that the F.L.N. government in exile was not quite as eager to talk peace as it had repeatedly proclaimed. Paris had recaptured the initiative - a new hope was sweeping over France, which could easily blow over North Africa.

Before I end this talk, I should like to say a few words on Algeria and the Sahara, where I stopped for a week on my way back.

In Algeria another type of revolution is taking place, one which must be of great interest to all of us living on this continent.

Algeria and indeed the whole of North Africa, is about to change from a land of extreme poverty to one of great wealth. The oil of the Sahara and natural gas point towards the future industrialisation of the country.

Whereas it was known some months ago that there was oil in payable quantities in the Sahara, it was not expected that the oilfields would be so extensive and so rich. Two main strikes were made, one at Hassi Messaoud and one at Edjélé, and drilling has been carried out over a wide area; at Hassi Messaoud no less than seventeen holes are productive and a further twelve drillings are being sunk. The furthest holes are

separated from North to South by fifty kilometers and from East to West by thirty. The limits of the field have not yet been determined. Edjélé is not quite as spectacular a field, but both have potentialities, such that two 24-inch pipe lines are being built; one will link Hassi Messaoud to Bougie, a Mediterranean port very near to Algiers, and another will link Edjélé to Sfax or Gabes on the east coast of Tunisia. Between them these fields will be able to supply twenty-six million tons of petrol per annum by 1962, which is just about France's consumption today. It is expected that by 1962, France's requirements will probably have reached 34 million tons, but by then one can expect that drilling will have uncovered even greater reserves.

The petrol is of good quality, and it will reach France at a cost of just over £2.0.0. a ton, as compared with £9.0.0. a ton which is the present cost from the Middle East.

To date, £50,000,000 have been invested and a further two hundred million will be needed by 1962. The investment at this stage is assured from French resources and of course, it will be lightened by re-invested profits from 1960. This is a field comparable to the best in the Middle East, and there are smiles all round in the French oil world. The oil men certainly deserve their smiles. Think of the courage they needed to invest enormous amounts with what I call the extra risks of yesterday - a country at war and a shaky government which might well have decided to pull out at any time.

There is enough natural gas in the Sahara to feed the largest industrial combines. Plans are being drawn to pipe it to France over or rather under the Mediterranean. Not an extraordinary project, I am told, as gas is piped from Texas to New York in the United States.

In Algeria there is great prosperity, even though there is a war on. Building is going on at a great pace. Centres which can be compared with, say the Rosebank centre, but flanked by a number of twelve story buildings are going up in many cities. These are centres planned to house five thousand families. They have their own school,

their own market and shops, their own cinema and swimming pools. Moslems, white, black or coloured live in these centres alongside Europeans. The little Moslems play with the little Christian children. There is a committee in each centre, which ensures that the Moslems use the accommodation as it should be used; it advises on hygiene and customs and watches that no dispute arises between the communities. In Algiers I visited three of these enormous and beautifully planned centres and all work smoothly - each centre has its own police station and the officer in charge has told me that so far there has been no trouble.

On the oilfields too, there is a mixture of races with identical pay for identical work, identical food and identical accommodation.

This is what is happening in North Africa on this Continent of ours. I feel that it is a duty that those who see these things should report them. I do not say that such should be the methods adopted in other parts of the Continent nor do I say that what is adaptable to North Africa is also adaptable to Southern Africa. But I do say: this is the trend, it is a trend that is spreading throughout the world at the speed of a galloping horse. It is frightening to those who love this country, whether they be South African citizens or not, that the policies of this country seem to be directed in the very opposite direction. Perhaps there is much that is being done that I do not know of, and that I am not justified in being frightened. If that is the case, well and good, but if it is not, I think that my observations, added to all others, can only be helpful.