masters of the day. They show it to you when, for equal work, the highest salary of the native is half that of the European, even if he is a drunkard or a moron.

And why all these injustices? Because you are afraid to fight effectively for your rights, because you remain insensitive or indifferent to your own misery, because your harvest is that of the passive dog that yells and does not bite.

You are responsible for the shame with which the rulers cover you. Do you expect help from Allah, whose religion orders you to take revenge, and with whom you are in contradiction since you are subjected to infidel masters? No, do not expect anything from Allah, the heavens are empty, and the gods were created only to serve exploitation and preach resignation. Seek salvation only in yourselves, for your liberation will be your work or it will never be.

Come to those who seek to free humanity from all its tyrants.

Come to your brothers in misery who, regardless of race, will fight with you for absolute brotherhood and equality. Come to the revolutionary unions — the General Confederation of Labor — Revolutionary Syndicate (CGT-SR) -, come to the anarchist groups and, in the face of the humiliation of which you are victims, stand up for your right to life, fight to live as free men.

Forward to the direct action that will free humanity from all these politicians and parasites! Forward to libertarian federalism!

Saïl Mohamed, for the Anarchist Group of Indigenous Algerians

The Strange Stranger

The Collected Writings of a Kabyle Anarchist (Texts Collected and Presented by Francis Dupuis-Déri)

Mohamed Saïl, Francis Dupuis-Déri

2020

An Appeal by the Anarchist Group to the Indigenous Algerians[1]

In spite of more than a century of ferocious domination, of shameless exploitation, the rulers of "sweet France", with their appetite always sharpened, refuse to put you in the rank of humans and do not tolerate that you can defend your right to life.

One hundred long years have passed, during which you have lived an atrocious existence under the indifferent yoke of politicians, and the promises of liberation that you have been made so often have only served to make you accept ever more meekly the odious servitude under which you have been kept. Your exploiters don't even consider you as men, but as slaves who can endure anything; they use you as they would a docile donkey thrown to the slaughterhouse after having exhausted it by beating and working.

They showed you this during the war, when thousands of you were taken to the battlefields to kill other men, and many of your corpses rotted far away from your homeland. They show it to you every day, when they ask you for taxes for lands often arid and uncultivated while they have taken by force all the fertile plains. They show it to you when they deny you the right to unionize and the freedom to think differently than your

[1] La Voix libertaire, no 295, March 23, 1935. Also published under the title "La Tribune nord-africaine — Frères de misère", Terre libre, no 12, April 1935.

hold you in slavery, refuse to trust the rulers who, after having stolen your native land, hunt you down in France while they open their arms to the fascists…

And if they want to drag you into warlike adventures, remember the 100,000 of your people who were murdered on the battlefields to defend the so-called rights that are now being denied you.

Do not fear violence or prison, fight relentlessly against all authoritarian regimes, because they are always based on the exploitation of man by man.

Down with all slavers, whoever they are! Down with all dictators!

Down with all nations! No God or Master! Long live Anarchy!

Saïl Mohamed, for the Anarchist Group of Indigenous Algerians

**

Contents

Introduction 7

The Calvary of the Indigenous Algerians 24

Down with the Indigeneity 28

The Ideal of the Communist Party 31

A Mixed Commune in Paris 34

Colonization! 37

The Centenary of the Conquest of Algeria 40

To Public Opinion 44

For Her As For You, Stand Up, Algerian People! 47

Response to Secours Rouge 49

The Cynicism of Administrators 51

Oppression in Algeria 54

Saïl's Affair and the Press 57

Justice! 60

To Algerian Workers (and Others…) 61

An Appeal by the Anarchist Group to the Indigenous Algerians 63

The North African Tribune 65

The "French Civilization" in Algeria 66

Down with the Code of the Indigeneity! 70

Letter from the Front 74

Paris-Banlieue 77

To the Algerian Workers 79

At the Time of the Elections 81

The Kabyle Mentality 84

The Calvary of the North African Workers I 88

The Calvary of the North African Workers II 91

The Calvary of the North African Workers III 94

The Calvary of the North African Workers IV 96

The Calvary of the North African Workers V 98

The Calvary of the North African Workers VI 101

Colonial Hell 103

Prisons in North Africa 106

The North African Calvary I 109

The North African Calvary II 112

To Algerian Workers (and Others...)[1]

Bravo! You start to wake up, you enter the social struggle after having understood that you are oppressed. But, alas! believing that you are free from the French plague which is eating away at you, you want to reject yourself towards the Islamic cholera, which will destroy you in the same way, or towards politics, which will devour you.

What do the charlatans who surround you want from you? All of them have the same goal: republicans or communists, royalists or fanatics of various religions, all of them want to live by the sweat of your brow and to keep you in the most shameless and miserable slavery. They all preach to you in their own way, but their methods are the same: to keep you under their authority in order to govern you and exploit you shamelessly.

Anarchists we say to you: Down with all the governments and all the exploiters, whether they are Russians[2] or Muslims, because all of them want to live on the backs of the workers... all of them are politicians who seek their interests and not yours.

The poor have neither God, nor Master, nor Fatherland, and you are among those who are most affected by the capitalist, religious or political vindictiveness that ransoms your credulity: do not fear the bullying of cynical rulers... The right to struggle is never given, but is taken. Break the heavy chains that

[1] Le Combat syndicaliste, January 25, 1935.

[2] In the Muslim population of North Africa, a term that designates the Christian people of Europe.

Justice![1]

Our comrade Saïl was sentenced by the 16th chamber to one month in prison. Despite the fact that he has been detained for more than two months, the all-purpose judges of the sacred union government refuse him freedom. He remains charged with possession of weapons of war. His recent conviction was for the crime of carrying a prohibited weapon. The investigation is dragging on and Saïl remains in prison, while the reasons for the charges are ridiculous or exist only in the imagination of the police mafia.

We ask all our friends to protest against this arbitrariness and to work with all the workers' organizations so that they do everything possible to enlighten public opinion about the procedures currently in honor among the servants of fascism!

The Editorial Staff

[1] L'Éveil social, No. 30, June 1934. See here for a contextualization of this text.

Our Old Comrade Saïl Mohamed is Dead **115**

A Year Ago our Comrade Mohamed Saïl, An Exemplary Activist, Passed Away. **117**

But it was said that the most repugnant note was to be given by a newspaper that claimed to be working class. L'Humanité, in a vile and scoundrel article, smeared our friend Saïl, calling him, for the sake of the cause (!), an agent provocateur. "Between such an individual and the communists", one could read in the same sheet, "there can be no link". No link, indeed, you said it, scoundrels, you said it, bastards. Between Saïl, a disinterested militant, and your professional jesters, there is an abyss, an abyss that all the slobber of a Cachin or a Vaillant-Couturier[8] could not fill.

We know that calumny is the weapon of cowards. It must therefore inevitably be the favorite weapon of Bolshevist politicians. When one has a fine revolutionary past like Comrade Cachin, one can afford to pour garbage on the heads of others. After having asked for the post for a Raffin-Dugens[9] and for a Brizon[10], one can without inconvenience flatten oneself a little more in the mud and attempt the moral assassination of a workers' militant.

The Editorial Staff

**

[8] Paul Vaillant-Couturier (1892–1937), writer and politician, one of the founders of the French Communist Party (PCF).

[9] Jean-Pierre Raffin-Dugens (1861–1946), politician and socialist deputy, then a communist with Trotskyite tendencies.

[10] Pierre Brizon (1878–1923), militant and socialist deputy.

propaganda pamphlets in a haphazard fashion. The story of these "secret documents" which are daily put on sale and distributed in broad daylight is famous!

No less famous is the story of the formidable arsenal discovered at Saïl's home; an arsenal that contained two revolvers and an old Mauser without cartridges. All this must soon collapse like a house of cards. If the Staviskyist policemen[4] absolutely want to discover plots, let them go to the Fascists, let them go and question the arms dealer Petavy, on Boulevard Saint-Germain, the worthy sire will undoubtedly be able to give them the list of the Camelots du roi[5] of which he is the supplier.

The arbitrary arrest of Saïl Mohamed was, in reality, due to the anti-fascist campaign that he had undertaken in the circles of North Africans. The vandals of Maurras[6] and Coty recruited their adherents above all in Algerian circles, breeding grounds for the ignorant and the miserable. Saïl's propaganda could hinder this recruitment[7]. It had to stop! At the first opportunity, Saïl Mohamed was to be arrested.

[4] The Stavisky affair, a political and economic imbroglio that broke out in January 1934: Alexandre Stavisky, who had been the subject of several police investigations, was targeted this time for a story of fraud involving high-ranking politicians. He was found in agony and the authorities ruled it a suicide, while several conspiracy theories involving the political world were circulating, which encouraged anti-parliamentary mobilizations.

[5] Fédération nationale des Camelots du roi, an organization of young royalists who distributed the newspaper L'Action nationale and ruled the streets of the Latin Quarter wielding their iron-tipped cane. They participated, among other things, in the fascist anti-parliamentary demonstrations of February 6, 1934, in reaction to the Stavisky affair (Mohamed Saïl participated in the counter-demonstrations: see his text "Le calvaire des travailleurs nord-africains (2)", p. 125). For more on this organization, see Matthias Bouchenot, Tenir la rue. L'autodéfense socialiste 1929–1938, Paris, Libertalia, coll. "Ceux d'en bas", 2014.

[6] Charles Maurras (1868–1952), nationalist writer and politician and leader of the ultranationalist royalist organization Action française.

[7] In his text "La Tribune Nord-Africaine" (see p. 89), Mohamed Saïl refers to these Algerians hired by the fascists to carry out hit-and-run actions.

Introduction

On the Tracks of Mohamed Saïl by Francis Dupuis-Déri[1]

In October 2016, a plaque in memory of "Saïl Mohand Ameziane, anarchist activist", was affixed on the wall of his birthplace in the village of Taourirt, in the department of Constantine, in Kabylia. On this occasion, the communal library of Tibane welcomed a small crowd who came to attend commemorative activities in honor of this child of the country, better known as Mohamed Saïl, born in Algeria in 1894 and died at the age of 59 years in Bobigny, in 1953, in mainland France. An exhibition of photos, press clippings and various documents, as well as a round table discussion, provided an opportunity to discover the extraordinary life of a man who had been a polemicist, organizer and shock activist of the anarchist movement[2].

[1] Professor of political science at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and author of several books on anarchism, including Les nouveaux anarchistes (Paris, Textuel, coll. "Petite encyclopédie critique", 2019), L'anarchie expliquée à mon père (Montréal, Lux, coll. "Instinct de liberté", 2014, with Thomas Déri), L'anarcho-indigénisme (Montréal, Lux, coll. "Instinct de liberté", 2019, collection of interviews with Benjamin Pillet) and Nous sommes ingouvernables (Montréal, Lux, coll. "Instinct de liberté", 2013, co-edited with Rémi Bellemare-Caron, Émilie Breton, Marc-André Cyr and Anna Kruzynski). He would like to thank Gabriel Secours, a master's student in political science at UQAM, for his help in transcribing some of the texts in this anthology, as well as Leila Benhadjoudja, Carole Boulebsol, Thomas Déri, and Marie-Eve Lamy, for their assistance in the realization of this project.

[2] The event was organized by the socio-cultural association Taddart-iw, chaired by Ameziane Hadjab, and members of the committee of the village of

Recognized as such and attacked by the French authorities and the Stalinist communists, he was always able to count on the support of his comrades.

Some of Mohamed Saïl's writings can be consulted on the web, including "La mentalité kabyle", which is sometimes described as a true "political testament" and which has been included in a brochure and a small book offering some of these texts: Leur civilisation. Texts of the anarchist Mohammed Saïl, (Paris, Ravage, 2019) and Appels aux travailleurs algériens (Paris, Fédération anarchiste, 1994). The present anthology is distinguished by the greater number of texts that we have traced[3]. Some of them have unfortunately remained untraceable, notably texts published in the 1920s in Algeria or in L'Insurgé (Paris, 1925–1926), an individualist journal that defended criminals and prostitutes and advocated free love. This newspaper held discussion evenings on anarchism in Aulnay-sous-Bois, a suburb of Paris, where Mohamed Saïl lived.

Here are collected texts of intervention, often marked by the current events and in which the author intended to take part in the debates of the hour, including in front of the "false" communist comrades. The Kabyle anarchist questioned at the same time the French working class on the misfortunes of Algeria, and the Algerian people to make him discover the interest of the anarchism. We will also find some texts written about Mohamed Saïl by his comrades in anarchist newspapers, whether about his trials or his wound received while he was at

Taourirt (Bachir Djaider, "Honor the anarchist. A vibrant tribute to Mohand Ameziane Saïl," La Dépêche de Kabylie, October 19, 2016).

[3] With the precious and fraternal help of Philippe Bouba, who signed a doctoral thesis entitled L'anarchisme en situation coloniale, le cas de l'Algérie. Organisations, militants and press (1887–1962) (University of Perpignan / University of Oran, 2014), and of anonymous comrades from Kabylia. I also benefited from the help of the Centre international de recherches sur l'anarchisme (CIRA) in Lausanne, where I spent long hours consulting the archives, and the CIRA in Marseille.

Saïl's Affair and the Press[1]

The arrest of our comrade Saïl was commented on by certain newspapers as a sensational event. Mr. Léon Bailby,[2] the man who writes with the feet of his secretaries, could do no less than devote half a page of the newspaper Le Jour to the comments required by an affair of this importance. For Mr. Bailby, it was clear as ink. Saïl Mohamed had the famous 14,000 rifles that had just crossed the border. Thousands of good-natured imbeciles were thus convinced that France and their property could only be saved thanks to the patriotic vigilance of Bailby, Coty[3] and others.

More cautious, the other news papers were content to report the facts succinctly, slipping in a few inaccuracies that were probably intended. Thus Paris-Soir and L'Intransigeant declared that it was Saïl's suspicious anxiety that was the cause of his arrest. This statement is ridiculous and absolutely false. As the newspaper L'Œuvre said, Saïl must have been followed for several days without him being able to suspect it, when his arrest took place.

"Important documents were seized…", one could read in some newspapers. Important… numerical, indeed, because, too stupid to make a choice, the inspectors in charge of the search made a real raid. They packed books, newspapers and

[1] L'Éveil social, no 29, May 1934. See here to know more about this "affair" (accusations and imprisonment).

[2] Léon Bailby (1867–1954), pressman and director of several French newspapers, including La Presse, L'Intransigeant and Le Jour.

[3] René Coty (1882–1962), lawyer and politician, deputy of the Seine-Inférieure from 1923 to 1935. He was President of the Republic from 1954 to 1959.

alarmed by fascist armaments and of getting rid of a staunch enemy of fascism and of war.

This arbitrariness can be repeated tomorrow, the League of Refractory People asks the militants not to give in to these attempts of intimidation which have the aim of giving the free way to fascism. It is necessary to react also against the slanderous interpretations of the Bolshevist politicians, who try to disqualify all the militants not acquired to the Bolshevik cause. All supporters of individual freedom must unite to fight against all dictatorships, including the dictatorship of lies and slander.

**

the front during the Spanish war, or to pay tribute to him after his death.

It is even said that the famous poet Jacques Prévert dedicated his poem Étranges étrangers, in 1951, which opens with a reference to his country of origin:

> Kabyles de la Chapelle et des quais de Javel[4]
> Hommes de pays loin
> Cobayes des colonies
> Doux petits musiciens
> […]
> Étranges étrangers
> Vous êtes de la ville
> Vous êtes de sa vie
> Même si mal en vivez
> Même si vous en mourez[5].

The present anthology has both historical and political value, in that it allows us to delve into the mind of an anarchist born with the 20th century who mobilized his pen against the hypocritical, unjust, violent and deadly nature of the French colonial system. It also leaves the beaten path of anarchism surveyed by its traditional European figures (Proudhon, Bakounine, Kropotkine, Goldman), and the voice of the Kabyle anarchist echoes that of anarchists today engaged in decolonial struggles in the West and elsewhere.

---

[4] In reference to two districts of Paris with a large immigrant population.

[5] Jacques Prévert, "Étranges étrangers", in Grand bal du printemps, followed by Charmes de Londres, Paris, Gallimard, "Folio" series, 1976.

Poorly educated (he only completed elementary school), a driver-mechanic by trade, then a pottery repairman after an injury that left him with a weakened hand, Mohamed Saïl was an avid reader and wrote numerous articles in various anarchist newspapers, sometimes under the name Saïl Mohamed and probably under pseudonyms[6]. The exact date of his first crossing of the Mediterranean to reach metropolitan France is unknown, so we can only speculate on his first contacts with anarchism, but he would have joined this "movement" in 1911, at the age of 17[7]. Perhaps he attended, in Algiers, talks organized in a bar in the Place du Gouvernement (!) by the Precursors, a small anarchist group active between 1905 and 1912 and which brought together students, workers, fairground merchants and small shopkeepers[8].

The traces of Mohamed Saïl are enlightened by the research work of some specialists of anarchism. Philippe Bouba presents Mohamed Saïl as "the best known and most prolific Algerian anarchist"[9], even if he reminds us that some of his comrades have had partly similar trajectories. The story of Mohamed Saïl seems to take the opposite direction of that of thousands of anarchists who have taken the path of exile in the other direction, from Europe to North Africa and to the Americas. Several recent studies have documented these migratory processes, from the Jewish communities in Montreal and New

[6] This is, at least, what some sources indicate, but we have retained here only the texts signed with his name, to avoid possible errors.

[7] Émile Carme, "Mohamed Saïl, ni maître ni valet", Ballast, no 2, spring 2015.

[8] The group included Joseph Pontigny, Eugène Gilbert, Gaston Dugan, a certain Gisbert, Charles Momigny, François Barry*, Don Martin Padovani, Joseph Vivès*, Émile Mouren, Maurice Gilles, Firmin-Honoré Emeric, Jules Labonne, Jacob Israël*. Judging by the names, it seems that there were no Arabs or Kabyles. In fact, only three of the members were born in Algeria (identified by an asterisk). For more information, see Bouba, L'anarchisme en situation coloniale, op. cit, p. 56.

[9] Ibid, p. 259.

There are few brigands who could boast of having extended banditry in such a way…

For the extortion of taxes, you are also gifted with great qualities. In the middle of the night, followed by your "servile dogs", you go and surprise in his hut the unfortunate person who doesn't have a liard to pay the sum you are taxing him with. For the poor guy, it is the seizure of his meager patrimony. You leave him with the only poor clothes he has on his body. There is only distress and suffering where your justice passes.

Insatiable, when it is a question of inflating your ill-gotten fortune, you become of an unparalleled ingenuity and the most ridiculous pretext is enough for you to pressurize the native. If a dispute arises between husband and wife, you quickly demand a fine; if two neighbors quarrel over beans, you demand a fine. All means are good for you and the civil servants of the democratic republic let you do your little dirt.

I have, Mr. Kaid, many documents on your scoundrel actions. These documents will be brought to the attention of the public in France and in Algeria so that they can get an exact idea of what justice is like in North Africa. May the fear of scandal inspire you to behave more wisely and put an end to your odious traffic.

"Protest" of the Ligue Internationale des Réfractaires à tout Militarisme[2]

The League of Refractory People vehemently protests against the arbitrary police action that allows its treasurer Saïl Mohamed to be kept in prison, charged with possession of weapons of war because the puppets of the Sûreté found an old Mauser and two pistols in the home of his companion, a war widow. The League is certain that this comedy is made with the double purpose of diverting the attention of those

[2] L'Éveil social, no 29, May 1934. See here for a contextualization of this text.

Oppression in Algeria[1]

Open Letter to the Caïd of Beni-Oughlis, Sidi-Aïch (Constantine)

Imposing Lordship,

Suffer that the rebel, the man who has lost the habit of bowing his head under the outrage of your fellow men, disturbs your heavy digestion by bothering you with his insulting diatribe…

According to the investigation that I carried out in the Algerian circles of Paris, it appears that your opulent person boasts, like the donkey in charge of the relics, to have reached the culminating point of the official and integral "larbinism". Your position as a stooge cost you 100,000 francs. It didn't take you long to recover this tidy sum from the natives, your victims.

In less than two years, you were able to ransom a small fortune from the poor buggers that misery was driving out of this inhospitable area. Any worker who wanted to leave the country to find elsewhere the bread he lacked in Algeria was obliged to leave in your hands the few pennies he had amassed through hardship. The exceptional laws that govern the Algerian territory want, in fact, that the emigration is regulated by the caïds. Most of these caïds are made in your image, that is to say, having their conscience placed under their slippers, the result is an ignoble exploitation of which the most miserable of the workers are the victims. For your part, it would seem that the number of your victims would amount to more than 4,000.

[1] L'Éveil social, no 26, February 1934.

York, to the Italian in San Francisco, to the Greek and Italian communities in Cairo and Alexandria, to the anarchists from Spain and Italy who were active in the revolutionary unions in Argentina and Brazil (among others)[10]. These anarchists were involved in general strikes, social banditry or, more discreetly, in the organization of talks or the publication of revolutionary newspapers. Did these migrant populations bring anarchism with them or did they become anarchists through the shock of exile and the difficulties of integrating a new economic system, trading the experience of poor peasant to that of exploited worker? In Egypt, it is now known that Italian and Greek anarchists did not succeed in integrating with the local population, either because they were mostly inspired by nationalism and socialism, or because these anarchists did not really make an effort to get closer to the people, whom they often regarded with contempt[11].

Of course, North African anarchists like Mohamed Saïl were not the only ones to reach the West: anarchists from

[10] See, among others, Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (eds.), Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies (Oakland: PM Press, 2017); Kenyon Zimmer, Immigrants against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, coll. "The Working Class in American History," 2015; Jean-Marc Izrine, The Libertarians of Yiddishland, Paris, Alternative libertaire, 2014; Jacy Alves de Seixas, Memory and Forgetting. Anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism in Brazil, Paris, Maison des sciences de l'homme, coll. "Brasilia", 1992.

[11] Anthony Gorman, "Anarchists in Education: The Free Popular University in Egypt (1901)", Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 41, no. 3, May 2005; Anthony Gorman, ""Diverse in Race, Religion, and Nationality… But United in Aspiration of Civil Progress": The Anarchist Movement in Egypt 1860–1940," in Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt (eds.), Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940, Amsterdam, Brill, coll. "Studies in Global Social History," 2010, pp. 1–31; and Costantino Paonessa, "Class, Race, and Italian Anarchists in Early Twentieth-Century Egypt: an Intersectional Analysis of their Activism (1860–1914)," lecture presented at the Anarchism and Social Sciences colloquium at the University of Lille, March 23, 2018.

China and Japan settled permanently or in exile in San Francisco or Paris. But Mohamed Saïl's relationship with metropolitan France was obviously different, since he went into exile in the very heart of the colonial power that dominated and exploited his native country and even claimed that Algeria "is France. His texts insistently remind us of the injustice committed by France, which mobilized and sacrificed the troops of its colonies in the name of principles that it nevertheless deprived the natives of. He was imprisoned in Normandy for insubordination and desertion during the First World War, an experience that particularly marked him.

In his texts, Mohamed Saïl repeats that the colonization of Algeria was made possible by the French army, which razed villages, slaughtered livestock, ransacked fields and olive groves, assaulted women and massacred the population ("theft, piracy and rape[12]"). The colonial regime thus represented a despoiling of the land and led to forced labor, misery and indignity, as well as to the dumbing down of a formerly educated population, especially girls, whom France deprived of education[13]. Colonization was also marked by the hypocrisy of the colonizers, themselves barbarians who claimed to civilize already civilized peoples,[14] who incorporated the indigenous into their

[12] See the text "Colonization!"

[13] Mohamed Saïl is little concerned with patriarchy and sexism. Even if he evokes in passing the difficulties of girls and women, he uses a macho vocabulary a few times, speaking of the "virility" of a brawler or the "emasculated" people of France.

[14] This reversal of values — civilized or barbaric — is regularly found in the discourses of colonized peoples. In his book, Je suis une maudite sauvagesse. Eukuan Nin Matshi-Manitu Innushkueu, the Innu author An Antane Kapesh writes, about colonialism in Quebec: "Before the police arrived here in our territory, we already had civilization too. It was not the police who civilized us Indians, it was not the prison and it was not the courts either. […] When they came here, the police took us Indians for uncivilized beings. I believe that it is probably those who considered us as uncivilized that civilization was to fail." (Montreal, Mémoire d'encrier, coll. "Chronique," 2019, pp. 109–111.)

cians from France and Algeria, do not care about the fate of the indigenous workers. The latter can starve to death under the palm trees of Africa, it doesn't matter to the sinister puppets of capitalism, as long as they can find an abundant supply of human flesh to "stick" in the mouths of the cannons.

Let the Algerians remember the criminal comedy of 1914–1918. One hundred thousand workers left their carcass to conquer a supposed freedom. The heroism of the children of Africa was exalted… When it was a question of dying, they were heroes. Now that it is a question of living, they have become "bicots" again.

The gropers and mercantilists of Algeria, like those of the metropolis, want to go on a tax strike. The Algerian workers could one day imitate them and refuse to pay the "blood tax". Neither executioners nor victims, that is what they will have to spit in the hideous face of the professional assassins of all the countries.

and that he is not made to groan eternally under the hard-on of the slavers.

To flee, to flee… such is the desperate solution that is offered to a people who have been stripped without scruples and dispossessed of a soil that allowed them to live. One must flee or accept to slave away, empty-bellied, to enrich some great scoundrel expert in the art of robbing the weak.

But still, this flight comes up against many disadvantages. The emigrant is often stopped by the administrative barricades erected by the docile servants of the safe. The "baudets" of the administration try to stop the exodus and push back, as much as possible, the unfortunate natives under the exploitation of the filthy buccaneer.

Just recently, a typical case was brought to my attention in the province of Constantine, at Sidi-Aïch. A man named Mansouri Amar, who had just completed his service in this fine French army which is the pride of M. Schneider,[3] took the resolution to leave the African prison in order to create for himself elsewhere a fate more appropriate to his quality as a man. To do this, he had to ask the administrator of his commune for a "laissez-passer". The latter answered him that it was impossible because his name did not exist on the civil registers.

The ridicule is thus at its height. The administration had not cared about this gap when it had seen fit to make Mr. Amar wear the disgusting military rags. To learn how to kill, there is no need to be registered in a legal register, but when it comes to claiming one's right to life, it is no longer the same.

The administrator of the Soummam[4] who made this beautiful reply could not have shown the Algerian people better the contempt that his masters feel for the workers. In fact, the capitalists and their henchmen, brown traffickers and crazy politi-

[3] Probably Jean Schneider (1896–1944), an industrialist whose company, the Schneider Company, supplied the French army with cannons and tanks.

[4] A valley in Kabylia named after the river that runs through it.

armies in the name of defending civilization while depriving them of their fundamental rights and preventing them from migrating to the metropolis. In colonial lands, republican brutality was no different from that of fascism. Mohamed Saïl has exhumed terrifying quotes from French army officers who described without much hesitation the operations of destruction and massacre that they had directed. He could also have quoted the great intellectual Ernest Renan, often associated today with an open and tolerant republican nationalism. And yet, did he not write: "Colonization in large numbers is a political necessity of the first order. A nation that does not colonize is irrevocably doomed to socialism, to the war of the rich and the poor. There is nothing shocking about the conquest of a country of an inferior race by a superior race, which settles there to govern it. England practices this kind of colonization in India, to the great advantage of India, of humanity in general, and to her own advantage[15]."

According to Mohamed Saïl, colonization was also a context in which the most ambitious and dishonest sold their souls and their brothers for a few advantages. As we read on, we understand that Mohamed Saïl preferred to emigrate to continental France, where the situation was somewhat better than on Algerian soil, even if he remained aware that life on the continent was not perfect, far from it. He explained himself thus, in his article "The 'French civilization' in Algeria": "That is why there are many of us, anarchist or revolutionary militants, who remain exiled in France, a country supposedly of freedom, far from our native soil where we would have something to live on, many of us having goods that they could enjoy if they didn't know that over there they would be placed in

[15] Ernest Renan, La réforme intellectuelle et morale, Paris, Michel Lévy frères, 1872, p. 92–93. Thanks to Vincent Romani for pointing out this quotation.

front of this dilemma: either to submit shamefully or to live in the shameless exploitation of the colonial raptors"[16].

In front of the possibility of a popular revolt, Mohamed Saïl obviously encouraged his people to renew with the "Kabyle mentality", whose traditions offered tools to found a libertarian, egalitarian and united society. He called at the same time Algeria to be interested in anarchism and to be wary of the nationalist, communist or Islamic projects, so many ideologies which misled the people by brandishing false idols. Mohamed Saïl was opposed to the Stalinist type of state communism, but identified with the anti-authoritarian communist anarchism advocating the class struggle. As for his atheism and his anticlericalism against Islam, they were typically anarchist positions (especially since many Kabyles were also resistant to Islam, a religion perceived as conquering in this region).

Diving into the texts of Mohamed Saïl also allows us to reconsider the divergence of anarchist positions in the face of colonialism, as presented by Sylvain Boulouque in Les anarchistes français face aux guerres coloniales (1945–1962)[17]. The author distinguishes three positions: that of the individualists (and some syndicalists), both against colonialism and the war of liberation, but who sometimes make xenophobic remarks by reproaching the "Arabs" for stealing jobs and housing from the French (!); that of the libertarian communists, who side with the oppressed peoples and consider colonialism as the worst of abjects, at the risk of idealizing the independentists; and that, in solidarity with the liberation struggles, which reproaches the local elites for having recuperated them to found capitalist nation-states. Certainly, Mohamed Saïl finds himself in this

[16] See the text "La "civilisation française" en Algérie", p. 91.

[17] Sylvain Boulouque, Les anarchistes français face aux guerres coloniales (1945–1962), Lyon, Atelier de création libertaire, 2003.

The Cynicism of Administrators[1]

By cowardice, the human being often takes his pain in patience. Oppressed, he resigns himself and, by "instinct of conservation", holds back in order not to spit his disgust in the face of his leaders. But, when he discovers himself victim of a crying injustice, when he sees his rights systematically abolished one after the other, he begins to envisage the saving revolt which could restore the integrality of his right to life.

Afflicted, for the most part, with a large family, the Algerians are unable to achieve a salary higher than seven francs a day. The indigenous workers whose daily salary does not exceed four francs are even very numerous. This is enough to show how precarious their existence is, despite the large margin of profit they provide for the "pirates" of colonialism and the many notables and caïds who live lavishly off the sweat of the poor.

Many of these poor buggers, tired of serving as beasts of burden to brutal and insatiable masters, seek to escape from this miserable environment. So they flee the land that no longer produced for them and went elsewhere to seek a little well-being and freedom. In spite of the fact that education is dispensed in the boondocks[2] with crass parsimony, the native worker begins to understand that he is a man like any other

[1] L'Éveil social, no 20, August 1933.

[2] In the Maghreb, it means the interior of the land, the villages (as opposed to the cities).

With me, all the victims of dictatorships and authority will stand up and shout: "Down with all the prisons of the earth! May on their ruins, one day, rise, radiant and triumphant, Anarchy!"

Our friend Vergine,[2] insulted by the professionals of slander who adorn the red beam of Drancy, has already answered these rascals sharply in a tract published by the libertarian group. In their last parish bulletin, the sworn ramblers of the Communist Party continue to insult our comrade who had the mistake of interfering with some of their little political "schemes". The troopers of the Stalinist militia of Drancy evolve admirably in the garbage. One can see that this is their natural element. The libertarian group stands in solidarity with comrade Vergine and expresses all its contempt for the pitiful histrionics who, between two grimaces, only know how to drool insanities on the best militants.

**

[2] Louis Dorlet, known as Samuel Vergine (1905–1989), individualist and pacifist anarchist. In 1932, he organized in Drancy, where he lived, a support committee for the unemployed and a consumer cooperative. The same year, he was also the editorial secretary of the newspaper Le Libertaire.

third category, with the particularity that he is himself both the object and the subject, the colonized and the anti-colonialist.

In 1925, Mohamed Saïl returned to Algeria, bringing with him funds collected in Paris for the anarchist newspaper Le Flambeau, based in Algiers[18]. Sitting at a table in a café in Sidi-Aïch, he dared to criticize out loud the "marabout regime"[19], a statement that an informant reported to the police, who arrested him and threw him into a "filthy jail" where he languished for ten days, according to a media report[20]. It is necessary to say that he had collaborated for two years to the newspaper Le Flambeau[21]. This "anarchist organ of North Africa" published a text in support of its collaborator, entitled "Les crimes de l'indigénat" (The crimes of the indigenous):

For having simply said in a café what he thought of the regime of the "Marabouts", ignoble vassals of the "French Civilizers", our comrade Saïl Mohamed was arrested in Sidi-Aïch by the cops of the Administrator, indigenous cavaliers, and incarcerated for ten days in a stinking jail; Refusing to dig the garden of the administrator under a burning sun, he was deprived of food for forty hours, and it is only thanks to the intervention of his friends and relatives that he was not subjected to a harsher revenge of the "gods of the land".

The French domination is not hard and unjust enough in itself, it is necessary that there are cowards among the natives (claiming moreover the moralizing principles of the religion) who, for a piece of bread, take on the task of the masters, as good watchdogs, to tyrannize and curb their co-religionists.

[18] Bouba, L'anarchisme en situation coloniale, op. cit, p. 149.
[19] Name given to Muslim religious guides and sorcerers.
[20] Bouba, L'anarchisme en situation coloniale, op. cit. p. 259–260.
[21] Ibid, p. 149.

Corruption is an art that civilizers as well as religious impostors know well to dominate their common slaves. This will continue until the day when the conscience of the unfortunate exploited will awaken to throw down the oppression of the conquerors and their allies the, yes, Judas[22]!

Back in the Paris region, Mohamed Saïl shared his life with the militant Madeleine Sagot, about whom we unfortunately could not find any information. He began writing texts published in the organ of the Fédération Anarchiste (FA), Le Libertaire, in addition to editing L'Éveil Social (1932–1934), which merged with Terre Libre in 1934, a newspaper for which Saïl was responsible for the supplement for North Africa, La Tribune Nord-Africaine. This editorial activity attracted the attention of the police, who in their reports showed an interest in "a fascicle entitled La Tribune nord-africaine, the author of which was a man named SAÏL Mohamed[23]". The authorities then tried to identify the mailings to subscribers, and a report from the police station in Bône (Constantine) indicated that these newspapers "were sent by mail, rolled up in old tracts. These packages bear, in addition to the address of the addressee, one or two small inscriptions by stamp and in violet ink mentioning: 10, rue Émile-Jamais, 10, Nîmes. Only these inscriptions can allow us to detect the nature of the mailings[24]".

That said, Mohamed Saïl's militant activity was not limited to writing articles and publishing newspapers. If the editorial office and the administration of L'Éveil social are domiciled at M. Laurent's, 26 avenue des Bosquets, Aulnay-sous-Bois, it is Mohamed Saïl who directs the newspaper and who collects subscriptions and other funds from him, for example donations to help the spouse and children of "comrade Soitel," who was sen-

[22] Le Flambeau, no 30, June 1, 1924.

[23] Bouba, L'anarchisme en situation coloniale, op. cit. p. 240.

[24] Special police station of Bône, department of Constantine, report no 208 of April 12, 1935 (transmitted on April 16, 1935). Thanks to Philippe Bouba for this document.

Response to Secours Rouge[1]

The organization called "Secours Rouge" does not lose an opportunity when it comes to hiding its hypocrisy in the defense of the imprisoned and politically persecuted.

Today, it has taken the fancy of claiming amnesty for my case. Red Relief strives to demonstrate its political independence in this way, just as it strives to demonstrate as often as possible an internationalism that does not exclude slavish submission to the Moscow government, which tortures and imprisons the best revolutionaries in the Russian prisons.

Let Red Relief know that, as a convinced anarchist, I will never tolerate that my defense is taken by the choirboys of the red fascism that is rampant in Russia, no more than by any other politician who will come to shout amnesty today to lock me up himself tomorrow. My carcass is hard enough to withstand more than one stay in the jails of the white or red regimes that could infringe on my freedom. It is not for this reason that I will beg for mercy from people who are only the henchmen of certain politicians and the henchmen of a regime which does not yield to the capitalist regime in any way.

In the newspaper La Défense of December 31, the good apostles of the Red Relief dedicate a few lines to my person. In the future, I will exempt them entirely from such a hypocritical formality; I can only despise such solicitude as long as it does not extend to the victims of Stalin.

For the leaders of Red Relief, as for all those who act as stooges and supporters of dictators, I can only have contempt.

[1] L'Éveil social, no 2, February 1933.

During the war, the government of the Third Republic showed you how it was necessary to die for the beautiful eyes of the financiers and bankers of the metropolis. Today, in your turn, know how to show it that you are ready to fight with all your strength for your own cause and, by wresting the liberation of Marguerite Aspès[2], it is the liberation of a whole race shamefully oppressed that you will obtain.

For her as for you, stand up, Algerian people, stand up!

**

[2] Marguerite Aspès (1901–1937), member of the Algiers section of the Confédération générale du travail — Syndicaliste révolutionnaire (CGT-SR), of which Mohamed Saïl was also a member. She fired a revolver at a police informer, but without hitting him. She signed texts in Le Libertaire and La Voix Libertaire and joined the Spanish Revolution in 1936. She committed suicide in France upon learning of the death of her companion.

tenced to six months' imprisonment in 1934 for assault and battery against a fascist. In fact, Mohamed Saïl's address was published many times in the newspapers to which he contributed, to indicate where to send money for subscriptions or donations, but also to collect leaflets. He was also secretary of the Union Anarchiste group of Aulnay-sous-Bois and identified himself with the "anars of Aulnay" in a very short bill published in Le Libertaire[25] about a street fight in which his "comrade Mario" had routed some "young gumshoes of the PPF", the French People's Party (1936–1945) of fascist tendency and violently anti-communist, who had provoked him because he was displaying a trade union badge.

His home at 10 rue d'Amiens was the object of police surveillance, which Saïl facilitated, either through a lack of discretion or simply in a spirit of provocation. Thus, the police reported a black flag flying on the day of May 1st, marked with the inscription "Groupement d'Aulnay-sous-Bois Ni Dieu ni maître". The police reports describe it as "very active, dangerous [...] a real social danger[26]".

Mohamed Saïl was a tireless political organizer. He founded in 1923, with Sliman Kiouane, the Action Committee for the defense of Algerian natives, affiliated to the FA. In 1929, he launched the Committee for the Defense of Algerians against the provocations of the centenary. In 1931, he obviously participated in the protest against the holding of the Colonial Exhi-

[25] Le Libertaire, no 548, May 9, 1937. This bill is not included in this anthology, because it is too anecdotal.

[26] Note that the police report indicates 16 rue d'Amiens, Aulnay-sous-Bois, which is undoubtedly an error. See "Saïl, Mohamed, Ameriane ben Ameziane," Dictionnaire international des militants anarchistes, online, July 1, 2009; Philippe Bouba, Guillaume Davranche and Rolf Dupuy, "SAÏL Mohamed (Saïl Mohand Ameziane, dit)," Dictionnaire des anarchistes, online, April 11, 2014. In the 1930s, another postal address is attributed to Mohamed Saïl — 41 rue Bisson, Paris, 20th arrondissement — where it is specified that one can pick up leaflets, but it is probably the local of a permanence for a militant group, and not his home.

bition in Paris, in chorus with the Anarchist Union, the Association of Anarchist Federalists and the General Confederation of Labor — Revolutionary Syndicalist (CGT-SR)[27].

In 1932, he was accused of inciting military personnel to disobedience, because of an open letter in support of conscientious objectors:

I respond wholeheartedly to the appeal launched by some comrades, objectors and refractors, whom I know well by the way, asking for public and individual declarations of their refusal to serve. I have nothing to add to the manifesto which I published in the Semeur a few months ago, in which I took a position as clear as definitive against militarism, patriotism and statism. For nearly four years, in time of war, I was an insouciant, then a deserter, and I did not claim to belong to any label since that time[28].

The Sower Against All Tyrants was a newspaper criticizing Italian and German fascism and "police crimes", but it devoted its pages above all to defending conscientious objection, insubordination and antimilitarism. He published, for example, lists of names of conscientious objectors imprisoned in France or in other countries, as well as the report of the 1931 congress of the International War Resisters.

Mohamed Saïl was therefore prosecuted and the Secours Rouge, a communist rights organization, demanded an amnesty in the newspaper La Défense. Mohamed Saïl signed an "Answer to Secours rouge[29]" to reject this support and denounce the Stalinist violence of which the communists were accomplices[30]. The Communist Party newspaper did not

[27] Sylvain Boulouque, "Saïl Mohamed, un anarchiste algérien en France", Migrance, no 3, 1994.

[28] Le Semeur contre tous les tyrans, October 6, 1932. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find the first text to which Mohamed Saïl refers.

[29] See p. 63.

[30] Boulouque, "Saïl Mohamed, un anarchiste algérien en France", loc. cit.

For Her As For You, Stand Up, Algerian People![1]

A cry of hatred and disgust as much as of despair and revolt has just burst forth from the chest of a young woman for your deliverance.

Hear well, my Moslem brothers, it is a woman, a Frenchwoman, an anarchist, who, exasperated by the abominable regime of exception which oppresses you and prevents you from being men like the others, fired a revolver at a policeman who was at the Labour Exchange of Algiers. It is for your cause, Muslim people, that an anarchist is suffering in the prison of this city. However, she has only expressed her indignation in your place, you who are men!

In the correctional court or in the court of assizes where her gesture must bring her, it is all the atrocities that you undergo, since one century that one "civilizes" you, which will be evoked.

But you, Algerian people, slave people, will you remain indifferent to this cause which is yours? Will you leave this woman, this sister, defenseless in the midst of the draconian organization that is about to crush her, when she herself sacrifices her freedom to defend your freedom? That would be a most cowardly crime. Be ready, therefore, to answer the call of the French and Algerian workers' organizations, be ready to fight if necessary against all those who would prevent you from demanding justice and liberation for a sister who must be sacred to you.

[1] L'Éveil social, no 2, February 1932.

sure them of their solidarity in the struggles they will undertake for the common liberation. They know that French and Algerians have only one enemy: their master. Fraternally united, they will know how to get rid of him to celebrate their emancipation together.

P.-S. This article will be printed in several thousands of leaflets, they are free to any individuality or anarchist and federalist syndicalist group wishing to distribute it. They can be ordered from Saïl Mohamed, 41, rue Bisson, Paris, 20th, or from the headquarters of the Confédération générale du travail — Syndicaliste révolutionnaire (CGT-SR), 33, rue de la Grange-aux-Belles, Paris, 10th.

The Algerian Section of the CGT-SR

hesitate to call him a provocateur: "In Vincennes, where he was rampaging, he operated with a sign that read "Ravachol, everywhere!" Such a formula is enough for us to see what we are dealing with, an individual who can have nothing in common with the communists. It is well because this provocateur was known to the police and, as such, he was arrested, for he could no longer serve at large, being burned[31]."

There is nothing new in this betrayal of the communists, since Victor Serge already noted at the beginning of the 20th century that "the social-democratic politicians" do not hesitate to use, "against their enemies — the anarchists, eternal impediments to dancing in circles — the most vile and deadly weapon: slander. […] It is a tradition and it is a tactic. […] Let any anarcho, pushed to the limit by the daily vexations of the honest gent, do something, and you will hear them scream: provocateur! It is forbidden to move, under penalty of being soiled. It is forbidden to rebel against the arbitrary, under penalty of being called a snitch[32]". The anarchist André Prudhommeaux, who directed the newspaper Terre libre at the time, denounced the maneuver in a text entitled "Saïl Mohamed and the Autruchos-Marxists[33]".

In February 1934, the Kabyle anarchist was found alongside 2,000 Algerians on the barricades of the Gare de l'Est and the Canal Saint-Martin, to confront the demonstrations of the fascist leagues. The same year, he set up the Section des Indigènes Algériens of the CGT-SR[34]. He was arrested in Saint-Ouen by

[31] L'Humanité, April 4, 1934, quoted in "Saïl, Mohamed, Ameriane ben Ameziane", loc. cit.

[32] Victor Serge, "Agents provocateurs", Le Révolté, no 50, 24 July 1909. Reprinted in Victor Serge, Le Rétif. Articles published in "L'Anarchie" 1909–1912, Paris, Librairie Monnier, 1989, p. 209–210.

[33] La Voix libertaire, April 21, 1934, quoted in "Saïl, Mohamed, Ameriane ben Ameziane", loc. cit.

[34] Probably the same entity as the Groupe anarchiste des indigènes algériens, also mentioned in some writings about it. It should be noted that the speakers at the political meetings of these groups in the Paris region spoke

the police after speaking at an anti-fascist rally in April. The officers found a pistol on him and proceeded to search his home, which led to the seizure of "an old Mauser rifle and an empty grenade brought back from the front by the husband of Saïl's companion, a war widow," according to the Comité de défense sociale (of which he was a member)[35]. This served as a pretext for keeping him in prison for several months[36].

As soon as the revolution broke out in Spain in the summer of 1936, Mohamed Saïl joined the Sébastien-Faure centurie of the Durruti column. He was appointed delegate of the International Group and led the offensive on Quinto. He signed at least one "Letter from the Front"[37], but unfortunately was wounded in the hand by enemy fire during a reconnaissance mission. The November 18, 1936 edition of the newspaper L'Espagne antifasciste published this short article in the "Research" section: "We are happy to report that our comrade Saïd [sic] Mohamed is safe and sound. He is at present in Barcelona", in the hospital.

He was finally repatriated to France in 1937, where he participated in several demonstrations in support of anti-fascist Spain, but also against the banning of the Algerian People's Party (PPA) and against the repression of Tunisian demonstrators. In March, he attended a rally at the Mutualité in Paris, where revolutionary organizations were meeting to protest against the banning of the North African Star, an association based in continental France and led by Messali

in French and Arabic (Bouba, L'anarchisme en situation coloniale, op. cit., p. 259).

[35] This may have been the Comité de défense sociale based in Algiers, an initiative of Maurice Gilles, one of the members of the Precursors, who also left Algeria for France in 1911.

[36] Bouba, Davranche and Dupuy, "SAÏL Mohamed (Saïl Mohand Ameziane, dit)", loc. cit.

[37] See p. 101.

"civilization" that was imposed on them a hundred years ago? No. Subjected to the duties of citizens, he does not possess the rights. He remains subjected to the odious regime of indigeneity which makes all Algerians diminished beings.

For him, no freedom of association, of thought and of the press, but criminal courts, repressive tribunals which rain down on the unfortunate Arabs fines and administrative duties, arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation. It is the Inquisition in the twentieth century.

For him, no right to vote, but two years of military service, while the French only do eighteen months.

For him, the requisition for unhealthy work, but no schools for girls and only a few for boys.

For him again, the crushing taxes, the bullying of the Arab feudalists, in agreement with the administration and the government, but no housing, no hygiene, no labor laws.

Economically and politically, the Algerian people are absolutely slaves, twice slaves. They really only have two rights: to suffer and to pay, to suffer in silence and to pay without a fuss.

It is the centenary of such a state of affairs that the Arab aristocrats and the French plutocrats, satisfied and happy, are commemorating at this moment in Algeria.

The Algerians who were able to leave this inhospitable country are in solidarity with their brothers who remained on the other side of the Mediterranean. They wanted, on the occasion of this centenary, to enlighten metropolitan public opinion, to make it aware of the odious regime imposed on a whole people. They ask this opinion to help them to conquer the rights enjoyed by all other French citizens, since greater and heavier duties are imposed on them. They demand in particular: the abolition of the indigénat, the right to unionize, freedom of the press, the extension to Algeria of all French social legislation.

They hope that their appeal will be heard especially by their brothers: the French workers. And, on the other hand, they as-

To Public Opinion[1]

At the time when the celebrations of the centenary of the conquest of Algeria are taking place with unprecedented pomp and circumstance, it seemed to Algerians living in France that it was useful, even indispensable, to make the metropolitan public opinion hear some truths in the midst of the concert of official praise which tends to cover with its noise the complaints of a suffering people.

Certainly, it would be beautiful to commemorate a centenary if this one had for goal to magnify a beautiful act: the emancipation of the Algerian people. Unfortunately, the centenary that we celebrate in Algeria does not have this high significance.

What has changed since the government of Charles X[2] imposed "civilization" on Algeria by force of the sword a hundred years ago? The colonizers and merchants have followed the route traced in the blood of the Arab people by the conquerors; the former have dispossessed the natives and bent men, women and children under their yoke; the latter have endeavored to acquire natural products for nothing while selling at a high price what they brought. Concessionaires and bankers came to double the old slavery and, united to the native feudalism, made reign in the conquered country the hardest exploitation.

Thus this people, who asked nothing from anyone, saw added to the tyranny of their former masters that of the new masters. Did they, at least, get some benefits from the

[1] La Voix libertaire, no 55, March 15, 1930.

[2] Charles X (1757–1836), king of France (1824–1830), he approved the colonial military offensive against the regency of Algiers in 1830.

Hadj, a former communist who had turned away from the party because of Stalinism[38].

Mohamed Saïl was arrested again in September 1938 for distributing anti-militarist leaflets, which led to him spending eighteen months in prison, where he returned in 1939 for the same reason. His home at 10 rue d'Amiens was again searched and the authorities seized and dispersed the books in his valuable library. He was detained again for a short time in 1941, in the camp of Riom-ès-Montagnes (Cantal), from which he apparently managed to escape[39].

During the German occupation, he discovered his vocation as a forger of documents. In the early 1950s, Mohamed Saïl still tried to set up Algerian anarchist groups, for example the Commission syndicale aux questions nord-africaines, founded in 1951 within the FA. He also supports the trend of Georges Fontenis, during conflicts that tear the federation. Born in 1910, this trade unionist and very dynamic militant of the FA insisted on the centrality of the class struggle and tried to push the organization towards libertarian communism, which led to the adoption of a new name, Fédération communiste libertaire (FCL). This organization will firmly commit itself to the anti-colonial struggle. The "traditionalists" of the FA reproached "fontenism" for its sectarianism and relaunched the federation in a pluralist perspective in 1953, creating a new journal, Le Monde libertaire. Mohamed Saïl, for his part, supported his comrade's maneuver and wrote to him: "My old Fontenis, you are young for most of the so-called majority comrades, and that is why you are unaware that you, yourself, are in the true traditional line of anarchism."[40]

[38] He also founded in 1937, in Nanterre, the PPA. See Mesloub Khider, "Saïl Mohamed: exemplary Algerian revolutionary pioneer", L'Algérie patriotique, 29 October 2018.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Bouba, Davranche and Dupuy, "SAÏL Mohamed (Saïl Mohand Ameziane, dit)", loc. cit.

With his most famous text published in Le Libertaire in 1951, "La mentalité kabyle" (see p. 115), he joins the long anarchist tradition initiated by Pierre Kropotkine with L'entraide and taken up by his heirs Pierre Clastres, David Graeber and James Scott, among others, and which consists in finding in history and anthropology experiences of human societies that are close to the anarchist ideal. In this respect, the history of Kabylia offers an interesting example, as the region has long fought for its autonomy, among others under the influence of Kahina, queen of a Berber tribe finally defeated in 693 and beheaded by the Muslim invader[41].

Pierre Kropotkine emphasized the political importance of the djemaa, this traditional community assembly of Kabylia: "All men of age take part in it, in the open air, or in a special building lined with stone seats, and the decisions of the djemaa are taken unanimously: that is to say, the discussions continue until all those present accept or admit to submitting to some decision[42]. The function of this assembly was to appoint officials (the scribe, the treasurer, etc.), to decide on taxes, to distribute common land, including for the poor, to plan and organize collective works (roads, wells, mosques, militias for protection against brigands, etc.), to help the poor by providing food thanks to the money of the common accumulated by fines, the profit of the communal vats (olive oil) or even donations. The colonial regime in French Algeria, on the other hand, responded by restricting the powers of the village commune and encouraging individualism[43].

[41] Carme, "Mohamed Saïl, ni maître ni valet", loc. cit.

[42] Pierre Kropotkine, L'Entraide. A factor of evolution, Montreal, Écosociété, coll. "Retrouvailles", 2001, p. 193.

[43] Pierre Kropotkin, L'État. Its Historical Role, Marseille, Le Flibustier, 2009, p. 78.

opened, for the French bourgeoisie, an era of colonial banditry which is not closed.

So, for your cynical parade, gentlemen of the bourgeoisie and your henchmen of all stripes, and in spite of the high pretension of the Napoleon and Chiappe[5], who hopes to muzzle the colonial "subversives", the Algerian anarchist group is decided to demonstrate to public opinion your crimes, your ignominy that you want to baptize with the word "civilization".

**

[5] Jean Chiappe (1878–1940), director of the Sûreté générale from 1924 to 1927 and then prefect of the Paris police.

Douars[4] with many villages, numbering thousands and thousands of people, are entirely deprived of education. The majority of women live in absolute ignorance. The result of this despicable policy is, in the Algerian masses, an ignorance of beasts of burden, an ignorance wanted and maintained by the French administration.

Civilization, isn't it! Oh, cowardly rulers! The agent of this administration, with the natives, is a sinister individual named caïd, a despicable individual, a snitch, he buys his office of policeman and exercises a real terror on his unfortunate compatriots. A venal scoundrel, the caïd is always for sale. Woe to the one who, having committed a minor offence, cannot buy his silence! Woe to the native who does not please him! He will be acquainted with the courts of exception, sooner or later.

Did the French colonization bring technical progress to Algeria? It built only one railway line, with only one track. In most of the colony, the natives are obliged to make long and arduous walks to get around. In the countryside, there is no postal service for the natives; if they want to get a letter or a parcel, they have to lose several days to go to the city and return. The roads and bridges are very rare, and the natives pay crushing taxes.

Nice progress, really!

The soil of Algeria is rich, and the French industrialists and big businessmen rapacious, without scruples. They have not hesitated to completely destroy the once flourishing Algerian civilization, part of the great Muslim civilization. They put in its place fierce oppression, arrogance, misery, death. Their civilization!

Inaugurated by a pure and simple theft — the refusal of France to pay for a delivery of wheat -, the conquest of Algeria

[4] From Arabic dawār: administrative unit in North Africa (originally a grouping of tents, e.g. of Bedouins, often from the same family).

The autonomist fibre still vibrates among many Kabyles, which explains their often strong distrust of the central state of Algeria and the political forces that are dominant there, including the Islamists. Kabylia, much like the Chiapas of the Zapatistas in Mexico in the 1990s, was to arouse new interest among anarchists during the bloody crisis of the years 1990–2000, when the djemaa regained importance after the unrest and revolts against the Algerian central authority. In 2001, the Black Spring saw revolts against Algerian central authority, and popular assemblies emerged again: they could last two days and tended towards consensus (a modified procedure for a 75% majority). Most often, women were formally excluded, but eventually found their place after a few months[44].

Obviously, Mohamed Saïl knew none of this, as death caught up with him in April 1953, in the form of lung cancer, at the Franco-Muslim hospital in Bobigny, in the Paris suburbs. He was buried in the Muslim cemetery in the same city, after an argument between his companion and family members, who insisted on a religious ceremony. As Mesloub Khider noted, in an article devoted to the Kabyle anarchist in L'Algérie patriotique in 2018: "Unfortunately, he died a few months before the November 1954 insurrection [in Algeria]. No doubt he would have certainly taken part in the struggle for independence, if he were still alive at the time of the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution[45]." Finally, the journalist emphasized the importance of this character, who was not well known in his own country and for whom the denunciation of colonialism was always accompanied by a critique of nationalist, communist and Islamist statist solutions.

[44] David Porter, "Kabylia's 2001 Horizontalist Insurrection," in Barry Maxwell and Raymond Craib (eds.), No Gods, No Masters, No Peripheries: Global Anarchisms, Oakland, PM Press, 2015; David Porter, Eyes to the South: French Anarchists & Algeria, Oakland, AK Press, 2011.

[45] Khider, "Saïl Mohamed", loc. cit.

The Calvary of the Indigenous Algerians[1]

> "All men are born free and equal in rights." It is the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen that tells this. But it is easy to prove that this equality has never existed for us indigenous[2] Algerians. Here are our rights, as understood by the bloodthirsty scoundrels, the rapacious pirates who, under the pretext of colonization, have brought us the so-called "benefits" of their "civilization".

They consist in seeing the lands on which we were born, that from father to son we fertilized with our labor, that gave us enough to live freely and proudly, monopolized by our "benefactors". It is true that we have the "right" to work on these lands that were stolen from us, ten to twelve hours a day for a paltry salary of five francs. But life is expensive in Algeria, very expensive for us and our families.

We have another "right" that is not contested, on the contrary, by the entrepreneurs of patriotic mass graves, it is the

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 242, August 16, 1924. All notes are by Francis Dupuis-Déri.

[2] The category of "indigène" to which the Muslim and Jewish populations were subjected was defined by the Code de l'indigénat, which made them subjects of France rather than French citizens (Laure Blévis, "L'invention de l'indigène", Français non citoyen", in Jean-Pierre Peyroulou et al [ed.], Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale, 1830–1962, Paris, La Découverte, coll. "Poche", 2014, pp. 212–218). On the spirit of the Code according to Mohamed Saïl, see "À bas le Code de l'indigénat."

What has this generous France brought us, whose greatness of soul is proclaimed everywhere by cowards and imbeciles?

Ask a simple native, try to gain his confidence. The man will immediately tell you the lamentable situation of his brothers and the absolute deficiency of the French administration in front of the problems of vital importance. Almost the entire indigenous population lives in the greatest physical and moral misery. This misery spreads widely. In the cities of Algeria, at night, there are only disguised people lying under the arcades, on the ground. In the building sites, the mines, the farms, the unfortunate natives are subjected to exhausting work for wages that barely allow them to feed themselves.

Commanded like dogs by real brutes, they do not even have the possibility of resorting to a strike, any attempt in this sense being violently broken by imprisonment and torture. Having no rights as French citizens, subject to the odious and barbaric Code de l'indigénat, the natives are dragged before special repressive tribunals and condemned to very harsh sentences for peccadilloes that would only lead to a simple admonishment in the metropolis.

Any indigenous press being forbidden, any association being quickly dissolved, there remains, in Algeria, no possibility of defense for the unfortunate natives despoiled and exploited with the last scoundrel that can exist.

They were obliged to perform two years of military service, because they constituted a considerable reservoir of cannon fodder for the butchery of war. During the "war of right[3]", a great number of them were immolated to the victory of this France which is indeed for them the most appalling of the marastres.

With the lowest of scoundrels, the French government destroyed all the indigenous schools in the country, replacing them with French schools in ridiculously insufficient numbers.

[3] An ironic qualification of the First World War.

The Centenary of the Conquest of Algeria[1]

To fully appreciate the words of Mohamed Saïl, let us recall what the newspaper Le Temps wrote:

[The celebration of the centenary of French Algeria] evokes an event that has had incalculable consequences for the greatness, security and prosperity of our country, that has in some way exalted national destinies, and that has earned us the most substantial success in our entire history. [Without our exotic empire, on which the sun does not set, we would not be a world power. [...] Abd el Kader, a chivalrous warrior worthy of our great soldiers, was able to fight us before he loved us: by fighting against us during the heroic period of the conquest, the Algerian natives were fighting, without knowing it, against themselves. They quickly realized it. They understood that French hegemony meant French peace, order, and prosperity; that anarchy and barbarism would be replaced by civilization and progress[2].

Next year the government and the French bourgeoisie will celebrate the centenary of the conquest of Algeria. On this occasion, we will see patriots and chauvinists of all sorts having a field day; the folliculars appointed by the great brainwashers will proclaim, in massive columns, the civilizing virtues of France.

[1] La Voix libertaire, no 30, September 21, 1929.

[2] "L'Algérie française," Le Temps, May 4, 1930, quoted by Émile Carme, "Mohamed Saïl, ni maître ni valet," Ballast, no. 2, Spring 2015.

right to go and die on the battlefields for the defense of the so generous France. In 1914 and the years that followed, we largely "profited"[3]. from it. We were even armed against our brothers of race who had the courage to resist the invader. It is undoubtedly in the name of the "right of peoples to self-determination".

We must also suffer, without saying anything, all the vexations that the whim of the administrators and the offices are determined to impose on us. Italian fascism is no more odious than the methods of colonization employed by the officials of the French Republic. It is therefore not surprising that, with their spoils starving, having no other choice than to beg or to slave like convicts for a miserable wage, a great number of natives flee this civilization "with a hard-on".

Many thought that, since they were good at defending France, they had the right to find something to live on its soil by working. In fact, the condition of the native who works in France is not to be compared to that of the one who stays in Algeria. When he arrives, even if he is without work, he finds near the Algerians an assistance which is hardly practiced in other environments. He falls, obviously, under an exploitation, but all the same less savage than that which he undergoes in his country. Naturally, the big owners, the slave traders of Algeria and Tunisia, do not look kindly on this emigration which brings them big profits. So, to prevent it, they resort to political scoundrels who have nothing to refuse them. And what a government of the National Bloc with Poincaré had not

[3] Mohamed Saïl criticizes here the colonial practice of France to enlist soldiers in its colonies to deploy them and sacrifice them on the battlefields of Europe or elsewhere. It is estimated that more than 170,000 Algerians were drafted into the French army during World War I and that more than 25,000 of them lost their lives or went missing in action. If the expression "Senegalese riflemen" is well known, the practice obviously went beyond Senegal and France: Great Britain had units composed of soldiers from India, Spain of soldiers from Morocco, etc.

done, the government of the Bloc des gauches with Herriot[4] was not afraid to attempt.

Thus, one could recently read in Le Quotidien that a regulation was going to be instituted for "the admission of indigenous workers to the metropolis". The purpose of this regulation is, as one of the members of the commission, Mr. Marius Moutet,[5] declared, "to permit the judicious progressive penetration of indigenous elements whose physical and professional aptitudes meet the requirements of the various branches of national activity in the metropolis. "The Commission wanted the native who comes to work in France not to be exposed to leaving his home without having the prior certainty of finding in France at least the equivalent of what he is giving up."

The interministerial commission, whose work was chaired by M. Duvernoy,[6] director of Algerian affairs at the Ministry of the Interior, also decided to create in France assistance and protection organizations for indigenous workers. "From now on, Algerian and North African workers, before embarking for France, will have to produce a certificate of engagement stamped by the Ministry of Labor, a medical certificate and an identity card with a photograph issued by the mayor or administrator of the commune where the native is domiciled. [...] The Ministry of the Interior has decided that these measures will be applied as of October 1, 1924."

[4] The Bloc National was a coalition of right-wing parties in power in France from 1919 to 1924. Raymond Poincaré (1860–1934) was a French politician who served as President of the Republic from 1913 to 1920. The Bloc des gauches, also known as the "Cartel des gauches", was an opposition coalition whose main architect was Édouard Herriot (1872–1957), also leader of the Radical Party. The Cartel des gauches won the legislative elections of 1924, marking the entry of communist deputies to the National Assembly.

[5] Marius Moutet (1876–1968), a French politician of socialist sensibility and a specialist in colonial issues. A critic of a certain colonial violence, he advocated an assimilation approach. He was Minister of the Colonies from 1936 to 1938.

[6] Georges Charles Clément Duvernoy (1881–1926).

Any civilization is honorable when it bears the seeds of solidarity and the spirit of love; it is a disgrace, and this is almost always the case, when it bears the opprobrium of the vices of modern society.

The lay or religious missionary hides the chain of slavery under his frock and in his hand. From Bugeaud to Lavigerie, and from Painlevé to Viollette, one can only see theft, rape and murder[4]. It is a method. The men change, the methods remain the same.

We appeal to the natives of Algeria; we beg them to open their eyes and look ahead. We tell them to join the groups of advanced ideas. Let them teach their children the right to revolt against the colonial tyrants! For this, let them educate themselves. Let them not forget that resignation is the worst of evils, and that the only way out of their slavery is union against the colonial oppressor!

[4] Charles Lavigerie (1825–1892), priest, then bishop of Nancy, and finally archbishop of Algiers in 1866 and of Carthage and primate of Africa in 1884. Founder of the order of the White Fathers. Thomas Robert Bugeaud (1784–1849), Governor General of Algeria from 1841 to 1847. Paul Painlevé (1863–1933), mathematician and politician, Minister of War in 1917 and from 1925 to 1929, one of the leaders of the Bloc des gauches. He was president during the Rif war and the fighting against the troops of Mohammed ben Abdelkrim el-Khattabi (known as Abdelkrim), considered the leader of the struggle against colonialism. Maurice Viollette (1870–1960), lawyer and politician, governor general of Algeria from 1925 to 1928.

because they use weapons to defend themselves. They are also savages, because they have neither the defects nor the vices of their enemies. They are pursued and killed in the slaughterhouses of colonial finance. Civilization is coming! Long live France.

As soon as the conquest is over, the defeated wretches are and remain parked on their territory. We have an example of this in Algeria. The poor devil of a native is not even allowed to escape from his civilizing masters. He is illegally denied the right to emigrate. Thus, a ministerial circular, at the center of the law, forbids indigenous Algerians to head for the metropolis.

"Work where your European torturer has fixed you. If you refuse to create on his behalf, if you stand up, in the name of justice and humanity, you will go to prison!" If you accept the tutelage, they will make schools for you, where they will teach you the thesis "of the right of the peoples to govern themselves"; they will tell you that your homeland does not exist, but that there is a new homeland, which you must serve until death if it were necessary; You will be taught that you must be a soldier to defend the goods you don't have, and that you must learn to be killed to protect those who have robbed you; you will be told that there is a mystery of the Holy Trinity for the greater honor of the bishops and archbishops, and the greater profit of a few ruined or very rich officers, greedy for honors and prebends.

You will have courts presided over by your own thieves elvcte uoseec lao-dr[3]; your own thieves and these thieves will judge and condemn you if you steal from their fellow men a sack of barley or corn from the last harvest; you will be forced to do forced labor on your own land and on behalf of your thieves.

[3] Despite our research and consultations with several people from Algeria, we have not been able to clarify the meaning of this passage.

So, as of October 1, the administrators will be able to prevent the departure for France of those whom they embarked when it was a matter of going to fight those whom they called barbarians. I know, and others will know if they have not yet realized, where the barbarians are. They are the hypocritical politicians who have nothing to envy to Mussolini. And to make this hypocrisy clear, I tell them that the native leaves his country only because he can no longer live there, because he is abominably pressed, exploited. He is a slave that they want to keep for those who have stripped him of his native land.

What he gives up in Algeria, Mr. Marius Moutet, "socialist" deputy, is a little misery.

This is what an Algerian begs of you and adds: "Beware that one day the pariahs will get fed up and will not take the guns that you have taught them to wield to direct them against their real enemies, in the name of the right to life, and not as in the past for a so-called motherly and criminal fatherland."

Down with the Indigeneity[1]

This is the call of distress, this is the cry of pain that the outcasts of the Algerian land launch to all the truly human beings, to all the honest people who have a sensitive soul and a just heart.

Like all human beings, we were born to live freely: with the same organic constitution, the same body composition, our flesh suffers like theirs when it is bruised by hunger and our spirit feels the excruciating pain of oppression when it rages. Men of heart, understand at last our sad condition, imagine the torments that we incur and with us demand the abolition of the odious regime of indigeneity which consecrates our slavery.

We say to our dominators: Algeria belongs to us as any land should logically belong to those who work it, who toil to make it produce. It is our native soil, that from fathers to sons we fertilize with our labor: you came to dispossess us, to steal our goods and, under the pretext of civilization, you oblige us now, not to die of hunger, to slave like convicts, for your profit, against a salary of famine.

We are covered in rags, our dwelling is too often a miserable "guitoune"[2], a stable, a bollard: we eat what we can, every other day sometimes, the bad days are numerous, we are not sufficient for ourselves, family life is forbidden to us because it is impossible to support. A great part of us have never known the maternal caresses, the sweetness of a happy home, the tenderness of happy children, the savages taste this happiness: nothing of that for us, we are less than the savages. Our

[1] Le Flambeau, no. 22, November 1 to 15, 1924.

[2] Makeshift shelter, camp tent.

Colonization![1]

The Moroccan war[2], despite its bluff of victory, is not yet over. Already, the colonizing nations by force are sharing the bear's skin before they have killed it! Civilization! Civilization! What does this word mean? The history of all colonizations will teach us without question: it is summed up in intensive serfdom; it is theft, piracy, rape that always accompany it!

All this is learned, imposed on the colonial losers. The subjugated natives are children, big children who lived freely and simply, with their traditions. They were born and died outside the deceptive complications of modern societies. And now, under the pretext of colonizing them, they are robbed, plundered and stripped.

The soldier arrives: he holds the force, he defines the right, he also dedicates all the truths. After the battle, raids, robberies and plunder. In the name of civilization, he burns, massacres, carries away. He starves the old when he doesn't kill them; he takes women for his pleasure; he is interested in children when he doesn't stain them with his soldierly slime.

Algeria has been colonized; the Arabs, a brave and valiant race, have been civilized by inquisitional methods: kidnapping of crops, sequestration of goods, this is the method. And as they get angry, they are called bandits or rebels. Bandits, because they oppose the plundering and thefts of the foreigners; rebels

[1] Le Flambeau, no 3, July 1926.

[2] French colonial war waged from 1907 to 1934 in Morocco to crush the resistance. In addition, there was the Rif war between 1921 and 1926, in which Spanish and French colonial troops confronted tribal armies in northern Morocco.

deputy, its caïd, its cavalrymen and its indigénat to quickly put them back to reason.

The travel permit was re-established, the natives were reduced to the state of serfs, taillables and corveables at mercy, a mixed commune in the City of Light, in the middle of Paris, in the 20th century, you have to admit that this is progress.

**

life is empty, without objects, prey to the torments of hunger, to continuous humiliations and death at the end, as a deliverance for sure.

This is your civilization, rulers! It is also the ignorance, the stupefaction in which you maintain us to better keep us under your yoke. Before the conquest, our country had several thousand Koranic schools; had a literature; arts, sciences were cultivated; solidarity, mutual aid were practiced; a certain well-being existed. You brought us the confiscation of our goods and we are starving; you have built superb buildings and we are short of housing; railroads criss-cross the country and our feet bleed on the road.

To stifle our groans, to strangle our possible cries, to better ransom us above all, you have imagined the inhuman, unjust Code de l'indigénat which is a disgrace for a modern nation.

By the powers you give to your corrupt and rapacious administrators, you allow them to commit countless abuses against us. Pressured by the personnel of your military offices and your mixed communes, we, sheared by your repugnant caïds[3], dogs sold, ferocious as much as servile and cowardly. Your courts of exception have mercilessly condemned those who, a few times, in a burst of anger, have raised their heads.

It is even more unfair that our conscripts continue to do three years of military service, while the sons of Europeans do only eighteen months.

[3] In his text "Le centenaire de la conquête de l'Algérie", Mohamed Saïl writes: "The agent of this administration, with the natives, is a sinister individual named caïd, a despicable individual, a snitch, he buys his position as policeman and exercises a real terror on his unfortunate compatriots" (see here, we underline). In "Le caïdat en Algérie au xixe siècle", Abderrazak Djellali specifies, about the word "caïd", that "the notion is vague and imprecise [and] translates the idea of omnipotent agents and a homogeneous administrative body […]. Etymologically, the word caïd comes from the Arabic verb (qad) to guide. The caïd is the one who comes first and guides, it also means to manage and direct" (Cahiers de la Méditerranée, no 45, 1992, p. 38).

We have had enough of your regime of misery, servitude and boners. We have had enough of your humiliations and insults. Like all people, we want our right to life.

Our patience is wearing thin, the ordeal has gone on too long. Beware, rulers, of the awakening of the slaves!

After the victory of law and liberty, the travel permit was once again re-established for these poor natives.

The formalities to be fulfilled are so numerous, so difficult and so costly that only a few privileged people return to France, where thanks to the workers' organizations of their French comrades they obtain a fairer remuneration for their work than at home.

Yes, very costly formalities, it is necessary to go through many intermediaries, a field guard, a caïd, a khodja, an administrator, and most of these characters do not work for nothing. The bakchich[6] was in full swing, the sweat of the burnous[7] trickled down in full view of the government of the Third Republic, pockets were emptied, debts were incurred and the lucky native who disembarked in Marseilles had paid out more than 500 francs. It will be necessary to work hard and firm and to tighten the belt to pay his debts. During this time, the children will wait, beg or eat the grass in the fields.

As for those who remain in the country, and this is the great majority, they are even more miserable. Delivered hand and foot to the good pleasure of the 100 hectares and the colonial "exploiters" of any scale, they work fourteen and fifteen hours a day for the colossal salary of 4 or 5 francs and that at the time when the barley costs 18 francs, the double, the oil 5 francs the liter and the beans 25 francs the double. We leave aside meat, wheat, butter and other sweets reserved only for their lords and masters.

To the poor natives, flour and barley bran only, and not yet to their satisfaction. And if the Algerian natives of France show themselves to be a bit restless, if they organize and if they want to improve their conditions and those of their comrades, the Mixed Commune of Paris is there with its administrators, its

[6] Amount paid in exchange for a service, bribe.

[7] A large, sleeveless, hooded woolen coat worn throughout the Maghreb. The expression "to make the burnous sweat" means "to exploit a worker, an employee".

A Mixed Commune in Paris[1]

Our cry of alarm of last September was not heard[2]: the famous decree-law has been applied for five months and our Algerian indigenous comrades, elevated to the rank of great proletariat by the sequestration [and] expropriations of the mercantile[3], no longer have even the supreme resource of providing their starving marmaille with a meager barley cake by renting out their arms outside of the colony, in the factories of this France which they have nevertheless contributed to save, as they say, from the "Germanic horde."

They are now in a position to appreciate the benevolent solicitude and paternal kindness of the democrat Steeg,[4] of the League of Human Rights and of the Bloc des gauches, led by Herriot [and] Blum,[5] great defenders of the weak and the oppressed!

[1] Le Flambeau, no 29, May 1, 1925. The title is an ironic allusion to an administrative unit of colonial Algeria. Alongside the "indigenous commune" and the "commune de plein exercice," the "mixed commune" was generally in an agricultural zone and had a majority Algerian population. See Christine Mussard, "Reinventing the Commune? Genesis of the Mixed Commune, an Unpublished Administrative Structure in Colonial Algeria," Histoire@Politique, vol. 27, no. 3, 2015.

[2] The author is probably referring to the text "Le calvaire des indigènes algériens", see here.

[3] Probably a reference to the word "mercanti", which means dishonest merchant or horse trader.

[4] Théodore Steeg (1868–1950), French politician, member of the Radical Party.

[5] Léon Blum (1872–1950), trade union leader of the French section of the Workers' International (SFIO), socialist politician and head of the Popular Front government from 1936 to 1937.

The Ideal of the Communist Party[1]

Here is the text of a convocation, by pneumatic, of the Chaouch[2] Hadj Ali[3] to an Algerian adherent to the party of thieves, said to be a communist[4]: "Comrade, you are obligatorily summoned to attend our meeting for the organization of a Congress of Algerian natives adherent to the CP". Yes! You still have the nerve to call yourself anti-bourgeois! You thus convene your whoremongers[5] for the price of 0.75 francs; if they numbered 700 or 800, it would be kif-kif. It is all the same revolting that this money is lost in this way: there is enough to feed a good family of those who are dying of misery. Yes! The young comrade would be obliged to attend your meeting, or else he would be in danger of refusing to obey! You are so used to using the police to take over the cooperatives! But the police will find it easier to be under your orders to recruit your members. It would not be surprising if, before long, you

[1] Le Libertaire, no 341, November 24, 1924.

[2] Usher of the legations and consulates of France in the Middle East. By extension, any bureaucrat, bailiff or brutal supervisor.

[3] Mohamed Saïl is probably referring to Hadj Ali Abdelkader (1883–1957), a communist activist born in Sidi Saada, Algeria, a member of the central committee of the French Communist Party (PCF) and founder of the association l'Étoile nord-africaine, which broke its ties with the PCF in 1927.

[4] As a good anarchist, Mohamed Saïl was very critical of the Communist Party, its authoritarian practices and its hierarchical organization. In his text "Réponse au Secours rouge" (see here), he pinned the "red fascism" and recalled that the government of Moscow "tortures and imprisons the best revolutionaries in the prisons of Russia". He also evokes "Pope Stalin".

[5] Client of a prostitute.

were to force these poor fanatics to wear petticoats instead of underwear.

Finally, you give all the proofs of your barbarity. Only those slave drivers who show no dignity are willing to spit in your face instead of listening to your crap.

It's starting to get bad with your French voters, after the recognition of your bourgeois Russia by its little French sister. Alas, you still have the habit of giving birth to other new policies, but to enslave the Arabs, this time with the complicity of the barbarian Hadj Ali.

Poor khodjas[6]! No chance! The first screwball that comes along makes you spin like a weathervane, and yet the thing is quite clear: you only have to ask how many rubles your Moscow brothers get for filling your head in the name of their revolution. I, in turn, would like to know in which factory the bandit kings work: Cachin[7] and his altar boys. As for their guards Monmousseau[8], Semard[9] and the whole clique, I know their places and their salaries: journalists for lies and slanderers via the place of deputy. I find only one good revolutionary among them, the little Polish captain[10]. As for the little chicks, they start with a yes-or-no attitude, waiting for their grandfather's inheritance, of course they are revolutionaries in sleeves and false collars, but in the meantime the poor convicts

[6] An official who assists the kaid.

[7] Marcel Cachin (1869–1958), French communist politician. In 1924, he was a member of the steering committee and the political bureau of the PCF. He was imprisoned in 1927 for his opposition to the war in Morocco.

[8] Gaston Monmousseau (1883–1960), French worker, trade unionist and politician. Initially an anarchist activist, he became general secretary of the Confédération générale du travail unitaire (CGTU) in 1922 and a member of the PCF around 1925.

[9] Pierre Semard (1887–1942), trade unionist and general secretary of the PCF from 1924 to 1929. He was shot by the Germans.

[10] Mohamed Saïl may be referring to Joseph Kolorz (1900–1938), known by the pseudonym Marcel Dumont, who left Poland to join France in 1922 and became a member of the PCF the following year. He was killed at the Battle of the Ebro in 1938 during the Spanish Revolution.

of Solovetski[11] send you the cry for amnesty, they who dared to raise their voices against all dictatorships. As for us, their brothers in misery, we cry out to you: "Down with the two prisons: Biribi[12] and Solovetsky! Down with the politicians, the fighters, the hypocrites for authority, against welfare and freedom!"

[11] A detention camp set up in 1923 on the island of the same name in the White Sea, intended mainly for the internment of members of the left-wing opposition: anarchists, revolutionary socialists and Mensheviks.

[12] In reference to the colonial prisons in North Africa where rebellious soldiers were sent to live in appalling conditions.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Mohamed Saïl, Francis Dupuis-Déri
The Strange Stranger
The Collected Writings of a Kabyle Anarchist (Texts Collected and Presented by Francis Dupuis-Déri)
2020

"L'Étrange Étranger: Écrits d'un Anarchiste Kabyle par Mohamed Saïl (Textes Réunis et Présentés par Francis Dupuis-Déri) (Lux Éditeur, 2020), was translated from french to english and revised by MXS, an anarchist from Algeria.

theanarchistlibrary.org

The North African Tribune[1]

Anarchist Group of Algerian Indigenous People

Some brave comrades from France and Algeria have had the generous idea to publish with me a North African edition of Terre Libre. It is necessary that this edition lives and prospers, because it is painful for me, an Algerian indigenous militant, to see some of my compatriots enrolled in the troops of the infamous fascism where, taking advantage of their ignorance, people without scruples set them up cowardly against their brothers in misery.

The aggression of the Victor Méric club[2], by the fascists helped by the Algerians whom they paid for such a sad task, is for me a very sad memory.

Wherever it was possible, I made my compatriots understand what adventure they had embarked on, and in this way I destroyed many of those nests of vipers where the fascists recruited their henchmen.

Nevertheless, there is still a good job to be done, and this is what we are going to work on.

Among the Algerian workers, there is already a strong current of sympathy towards our ideas. It is this current that we must develop. This is very easy if many comrades bring us the moral support that we expect from them. I therefore appeal to all for a wide diffusion of Terre libre nord-africaine.

And forward for the total liberation of all workers in all countries.

[1] Terre libre, no 12, April 1935, North African edition.

[2] Victor Méric (1876–1933), anarchist and antimilitarist writer and journalist.

The "French Civilization" in Algeria[1]

In our time, so fertile in scandals, swindles or brigandages of all kinds, it is useful to denounce sometimes the painful situation in which are the peoples that, under the pretext of civilization, certain powers hold under the yoke. For, of all the crimes against humanity, colonialism is not the least. I would like to sketch, in these few lines, the state of a typical colony after more than a century of occupation. I want to talk about Algeria.

On the conquest itself, I will only make a few quotations which demonstrate the "chivalrous" character of the conquerors.

Colonel Combes, of the 47th line, wrote from Oran on June 18, 1836: "We were able, by means of brave allies, to set fire to everything that could be burned on our road and in a large radius; the countryside was in an instant a vast ocean of fire. This maneuver was continued in the following days."

Colonel Schmidt, of the 53rd of the line, wrote from Médéa, May 18, 1841: "The duke of Nemours visited my capital; he is happy that they don't know in France how this poor city was treated: it is no more than a heap of ruins."

From Captain Canrobert (future marshal), January 1, 1842: "We surprised by night a rather large quantity of Kabyles' dwellings and took away several kinds of herds, women, children and old men… The soldier, poorly or not supervised,

[1] Terre libre, no 20, December 1935.

excited moreover by the lure of plunder, indulges in the greatest excesses which singularly vitiate his character."

From Commandant de Lioux, 43rd of the line: "Bougie, April 23, 1843. We have just returned from a new expedition; our column had the mission to ravage everything in its path, and several leagues around its successive bivouacs. Indeed, much has been destroyed; whole villages, large and real villages have disappeared by fire, and several thousand feet of fig trees, olive trees and others have been cut down."

We also know the feat of the valiant Colonel Pélissier, who had 800 natives smoked out in caves. I go on and on, and even more "civilizing" ones!

After this glorious campaign, the gentle France was able to take over the country of the defeated Algerians and establish a regime of which I will give some glimpses.

Expropriated from the plains and fertile lands, the natives are pushed towards the uncultivable mountains. In these regions, roads and bridges do not exist or are reduced to a minimum; the railroad is, for the most part, only a distant dream and, in order to pick up a letter, a parcel, a money order, the native must sometimes walk three or four days, because the postal service is, like the rest, established for the use of the inhabitants of the large centers.

Since most of the Arab schools were systematically abolished, the government of the Third Republic, for whom the ignorance of the indigenous people was a factor of submission, did not see fit to replace them with French schools. In the towns or villages where these schools exist, out of a million children of school age, only 60,000 are likely to attend them; the others are reduced to hanging around in the streets and retain an ignorance and a backward mentality which deliver them like animals to the most shameful exploitation. I insist on the fact that, in spite of this, the native is subjected to a crushing tax which only benefits the coffers of the administration and its

parasites, without the slightest advantage being granted in return.

The social laws do not exist for the native; the right to unionize and freedom of thought are rigorously refused to him. He is not a citizen: he is a subject and, as such, does not participate in electoral operations. Universal suffrage does not exist for him; but, on the other hand, recruitment and conscription exist: military service is compulsory.

The regime of exception and the scurrilous laws that support it make Algeria a land where authority weighs more heavily than in countries with dictatorial regimes, such as Italy or Germany.

If the native comes to France, he is reduced to silence, because wherever he is, the screws are tightened. When, after a stay in the metropolis, the idea comes to him to return to his country, woe betide him if he has not behaved like a submissive slave: he is catalogued and kept in check when he arrives there.

This is why many of us, anarchist or revolutionary militants, remain exiled in France, a country supposedly of freedom, far from our native soil where we would have something to live on, many of us having goods that we could enjoy if we didn't know that over there we would be placed in front of this dilemma: either to submit shamefully or to live in the shameless exploitation of the colonial rapacious.

From the moral point of view, the pure-blooded Algerians, that is to say the Kabyles, are fundamentally libertarian, refractory to all militarism. In their native country, they practice free trade and solidarity on a vast scale. The right of asylum is sacred to them. In their hearts, filled with native pride, a revolt rumbles and takes shape which instinctively pushes them towards everything that is liberation of the individual, and this in spite of the fierce repression which strikes them. Nothing will stop their impulse. Their submission, more apparent than real, weighs on them and they judge without indulgence the

sinister puppets of so-called civilized people who have abused too long a clumsy and arbitrary authority.

What have you brought, colonialists of all kinds, what have you done, in more than a hundred years, you who meddle in civilizing the peoples you claim to be barbarians? You have built beautiful buildings to house your henchmen and your minions, but miserable natives sleep outside.

The streets of Algiers, the city of light, are teeming with beggars who are trampled underfoot by the expropriators of their parents.

Theft, robbery, arson, the murder of a people too weak to defend themselves, that is your work, that is your civilization in its sad reality.

Down with the Code of the Indigeneity![1]

In the name of the Group of Algerian Anarchists, we have received from our good comrade Saïl Mohamed the following article, which we gladly insert, for it is a timely reminder to the leaders of the Popular Front government of the immense work that remains to be done in what patriots of all kinds call overseas France, to make the natives at least political equals of their French "protectors. In North Africa, in French West Africa[2] as well as in French Equatorial Africa,[3] in Madagascar as well as in Indochina, "tens of millions" of indigenous people are waiting for an end to the odious regime of exception that oppresses them. There at least, the Popular Front government can easily accomplish the urgent task that is required. It need only be inspired by the methods advocated in the opposition by those who compose it today…

Men of heart, understand at last our cries of pain, our calls of distress and demand with us the total abolition of the ignoble Code de l'indigénat, which slowly undermines the moral and physical of the Algerian people, and is a stain on the honor of the so-called "republican and democratic" France.

[1] Le Libertaire, no 506, July 24, 1936.

[2] Administrative zone (or general government) grouping several French colonies in West Africa, whose administrative center was in Dakar, Senegal.

[3] Administrative zone (or general government) grouping several French colonies in Central Africa, whose administrative center was in Brazzaville, Congo.

You who shudder when an injustice occurs in your surroundings, who protest energetically when a victim of fascism groans in a jail, who revolt when, at the other end of the world (Algeria is only 750 kilometers from the metropolis), an innocent person agonizes, victim of a repression, you cannot remain deaf to our call and be insensitive to this monstrous iniquity an entire people, whose only crime is to have been defeated and dispossessed by force, languishes in miserable living conditions and undergoes a slavery that dishonors our century.

For what is the Code de l'indigénat? It is simply this set of laws which put the Algerian native at the mercy of the metropolis, which demand crushing duties and burdens, but which in exchange give no rights. It is formally forbidden for the French overseas to form a union to defend themselves against an employer who exploits and oppresses them. For him, no freedom of opinion, no freedom of the press. Its schools are rare, and education is at such a low level that very few can take advantage of it and remain in a complete ignorance which allows shameless exploitation. The indigenous people do not have the right to vote, so a dictatorship is imposed on them, which hunts them down and holds them to ransom. The crushing taxes are swallowed up in part in shady affairs, because, despite their importance, the native villages are in their generality deprived of light, post office and telegraph, and there are hardly any passable roads.

To hide this negligence, the rulers invoke this reason as absurd as it is ridiculous: "In order to be put in the rank of the "civilized", the native must renounce his personal status which gives him the right to marry several women." Because in France, you see, there is no harem, but hypocrisy in sexual matters exists more than in Algeria. And from the religious point of view, when the lay ministers kneel cynically and without faith before a cardboard or plaster god, what do they have to reproach the unfortunate bean who practices rites that are no

more ridiculous than those of other religions, because they are all equal and are founded only on the credulity of their followers.

But now, in 1936, the Popular Front government wants to alleviate this evil; only to alleviate it, not to cure it completely, even if it has the power.

Does it believe that with a bone to gnaw, it will calm the revolt that is rumbling? Does he not think that the "sidi[4]" who was taught to die for the merchants of patriotism on the battlefields of the last slaughter could perhaps push his revolt to total deliverance? Doesn't he see that over there the fascists are working, that the fruits of their propaganda are beginning to appear at an accelerated rate. Are the supporters of Hitlerism going to be the only beneficiaries of the negligence of the rulers, who do not want to realize that their harmful policy towards an oppressed people throws them hand and foot into the arms of fascism.

We who were born and have lived in Algeria and who know the temperament of our compatriots say: "Beware, if you do not give equal rights to the natives, if you deny them education, you will be guilty of the revolt of a burdened people who have been suffering for a hundred years and who will be capable of attempting the worst adventure to regain their freedom." We see this danger so much that we believe it is our duty to give you the alert.

We are not politicians, but simple workers who see much further ahead than is commonly believed.

Our call must be heard by all those for whom freedom is not an empty word.

Down with all fascism!

[4] From the Arabic sîdî, meaning "my lord", but also referred to the "Arabs" in a pejorative way, in the mouths of the colonists. Mohamed Saïl wrote: "In order to better treat the 'sidi' as ignorant, he was systematically prevented from learning" (see "The ordeal of the North African workers (5)", p. 137).

not been to school much, but he was a credit to those who claimed to be educated.

During the Nazi occupation, he made false identity cards so that fellow students in danger could flee.

A year ago Mohamed Saïl entered the Franco-Muslim hospital of Bobigny and G. Fontenis[3] was soon to say a final farewell to him after some incidents due to his family's persistence in giving him a religious funeral.

We would like to pay tribute here to his courageous companion who continues, since his death, to spread our beloved Lib.

The Mohamed Saïl Group of Aulnay-sous-Bois

[3] George Fontenis. About him, see the end of the introduction, p. 24.

Saïl Mohamed, for the Anarchist Group of Indigenous Algerians

Letter from the Front[1]

Farlete,[2] October 30, 1936

To my good comrades of the CGT-SR-AIT,

I wrote to you recently telling you that we were a dozen or so friends of the General Confederation of Labor-Revolutionary Syndicalists (CGT-SR) in the International Group. There are currently 52 of us, coming from all over France, and to celebrate this small grouping of comrades on the battlefield, we improvised a rag painted in red and black, with the inscription: CGT-SR, FAF[3], AIT[4], in large letters, and planted it there, in front of the trembling fascist scum. Yes! We are there, hearing very well, from our positions, the sirens of the factories of Zaragoza. This is to tell you, purely and simply, that we are not far from the goal.

Mohamed Saïl (front row, middle) in Spain with members of the international group of the Durruti Column, 1936. Source Unknown.

Without glasses, much less with binoculars, we see the city very well with our simple eyes. Understand who will (except Clément Vautel[5], Larocque[6] and other comedians who entertain the gallery!)

[1] Antifascist Spain, no 17, November 4, 1936.

[2] Commune of Spain a few dozen kilometers from Saragossa.

[3] French Anarchist Federation.

[4] International Association of Workers (anarcho-syndicalist organization).

[5] Clément Vautel (1876–1954), a Belgian journalist and novelist but naturalized French.

[6] Possibly the French-Canadian Robert Larocque (1889–1978), also known as Robert de Roquebrune, who spent several years in Paris, even

> case they are at their side against the unleashed hyenas.
>
> North African comrades, there is a category of "roumis" totally disinterested who fight mercilessly for welfare and social justice, against racial discrimination. Yes! know, comrades, that the anarchists are your real friends who ask you nothing else but to be at their side, to lead the common struggle against Capital, the State, and the Colon, which are only one monster, under the same hat.

The loss of Mohamed Saïl has caused a great emptiness. He knew how to make them true revolutionary activists. His presence is still felt among us.

His life was a complete abandonment of his person in favor of the idea he defended.

In 1914, as a young man, he was opposed to the war that was imposed on him and he had a very difficult time (internment).

In 1934, he was in the vanguard of the fight against fascism, he was interned and the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) carried large signs: "Free Saïl!"

In 1936, he left for Spain and proved to be a tireless fighter in the Durutti column. He played a great role in the International Group. Wounded he returned to France and communicated to all comrades his enthusiasm for the magnificent Spanish libertarian communist achievements.

In 1939, after distributing anti-war leaflets, he was interned again and began his tenth year in prison. His home was searched and part of his library, which he loved, was stolen.

This is another aspect of Mohamed Saïl: the desire for knowledge. All his life, he worked to educate himself. He had

colonist generously grants a starvation wage and ten to fourteen hour workdays. Beware of the strong heads! Daring to start a strike with factory occupation is punished not by prison, but by the salutary bullet of a CRS… in the name of a beneficent civilization! Moreover, in the absence of the presumed culprit, the arrest of a hostage is customary. These are the common exploits of murderous colonialists, eager for carnage…

Let everyone recognize that the workers from overseas countries, who come to France to seek a little more well-being and freedom, are truly brave men who deserve much respect.

Unfortunately, when they come into contact with their brothers in misery in the metropolis, whom they clearly distinguish from the killers from overseas, they are often met with incomprehension or disdain. Hence their distrust of the "roumis" (without however generalizing).

However, North African workers shun political parties in France, because they remember the exploitation. The unions, likewise, do not interest them much. And yet, these workers know how to be, during strikes, in the vanguard of the class struggle. They fight fiercely alongside the workers against the state and the employers, and also against the republican bourriques. The 1st of May has shown it!

The revolt rumbles in these ulcerated men. The anarchists, who alone have the right to affirm that they are leading the right fight, will not fail to make known to the overseas workers that in any

Believe me, brave comrades, I am not writing to you from Perpignan or any other border town, as is the rule among the piss-copies of the fine fascist, republican or even democratic press. I'm not even writing from Farlete, but from much further away, near Zaragoza.

But by the way, what does the big news press say? Here I don't read it, but as I know that it won't change its food, I address it with the disgust of a fighting militiaman fed up with its servility and its dirty lies. My old mother thinks she is beautiful at 80 years old, just like the dying fascism that thinks it is still alive.

As for the question of the militarization of the militias,[7] shout it out to anyone who will listen without risk of being denied: in all the columns directed by anarcho-syndicalists, and they are the most numerous: "Militiamen, yes, soldiers, never!" Everything is freedom with us, and this freedom makes us disciplined men, braving death and torture. We will never march with the baton, but we will never pale before the enemy.

Militarization? In the columns of the politicians nothing surprises us, but with us there are only comrades without God or Master, all on an equal footing. Durruti[8] is our guide and our brother. He eats and sleeps with us, he is less well dressed than we are, he is neither a general nor a caïd, but a militiaman worthy of our friendship. Ranks, bragging rights and ambition

wrote in the magazine L'Action française and met with figures of the French extreme right, including Charles Maurras.

[7] During the Civil War, the Republican government wanted to "militarize the militias" composed of anarchist and Trotskyite volunteers, among others, by incorporating them into the Spanish army loyal to the Republic and imposing on them the exclusion of women from combat units, a military hierarchy, a chain of command and discipline.

[8] Buenaventura Durruti (1896–1936), Spanish anarchist and one of the main figures of the anarchist militias during the Civil War. His troops, which numbered 3,000 anarchists, were called the Durruti Column. He died of a stray bullet in Madrid under murky circumstances, and hundreds of thousands of people attended his funeral in Barcelona on November 23, 1936.

are the dream of all kinds of knaves, not of those thousands and thousands of anarcho-syndicalists who make the beauty of libertarian Spain.

Until next time, and on behalf of my comrades, I send you all our fraternal greetings.

Saïl Mohamed, Without Rank or Number, Like All His Comrades

A Year Ago our Comrade Mohamed Saïl, An Exemplary Activist, Passed Away[1].

A few weeks before his death, he was still sticking the Lib[2] at Aulnay. We told him to rest, we felt he was weak. There was nothing to do. He wanted to fight, he wanted to fight to the end.

His life was an eternal struggle. He lived our ideal, he was part of all the actions. He paid hard.

For our ideal, he spent eleven years of his brief existence in the prisons and camps of the Republic. Even there, he found the way to convert. Everywhere, at every moment, he had only one goal: to spread the seeds of revolution around him.

He embodied social anarchism, libertarian communism, for him the two terms were synonymous. His struggle was proletarian and revolutionary.

He suffered in the deepest part of himself the unjust life, the bad life imposed by the powerful of the time. He suffered especially for his Algerian brothers, for his colonized brothers of the world. Here is what he said to them (Le Libertaire, no 273):

> All the fertile plains are taken away from the workers, and, as a reward, the "elected" bourgeois

[1] Le Libertaire, no 390, May 20, 1954.

[2] The newspaper Le Libertaire.

do not listen to the sterile criticisms of those who have never done anything. With you, I am in my true family."

May his companion and his relatives receive here the testimony of our sympathy.

Saïl will always remain in our memories as the very type of militant, ready for all sacrifices, never discouraged.

The National Committee

Burial Thursday, April 30, at 4 pm. Meeting point Muslim Cemetery, in Bobigny. Bus Porte de la Villette.

Paris-Banlieue[1]

The Success of our Talks
10th District

The educational controversies[2] of the Anarchist Group continue and are well attended. Young communists, socialists and sympathizers come to the talks. They should take note that from now on they will be held on the first and third Mondays of the month, and that on Monday, January 18, 1937, at 8:30 p.m., at the Café du Bouquet de Montmartre, on the corner of rue Buffault and Faubourg-Montmartre, a controversy will take place. Books, newspapers and a collection of pamphlets will be available for consultation.

Aulnay-Sous-Bois

Our anarchist meeting was a great success. Is this a reason for Magne[3] to totally betray the spirit of it and try to divide us?

French and Spanish anarchists, Trotskyists, we form a revolutionary front that nothing, not even Magne's slander will break.

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 529, January 1, 1937.

[2] These were probably contradictory debates organized at the time by anarchists and other socialists.

[3] Probably Charles Magne (1897–1967), a socialist politician, then city councilor of Gannat, a small town in the center of mainland France. In 1937 he ran unsuccessfully in the cantonal elections under the banner of the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO).

We have no confidence in Blum's government nor in Caballero's[4]. We trust only in mass action to bring down Franco[5] there, fascism here.

Our objective, unlike yours, is not the preservation of the bourgeois republic and the exploitation of the proletariat by capitalism, but the social revolution, with the abolition of the wage-earning system and the State.

Facing the fascists, the militia. Facing the bosses, not advocating compulsory arbitration -that treason-, but pushing for the only chance of victory: the insurrectionary general strike. Weapons to Spain? Yes. Meetings, yes; but also street demonstrations and strikes to force Blum, if necessary, that is our slogan.

But with this mass action, what happens to the social peace, so dear to your hearts as new converts? This would lead us to the social revolution which your führer Stalin does not want at any price, neither in France nor in Spain. For, grassroots communists, know this: if the USSR delivers arms to Valencia, it refuses them to Barcelona and the anarchists[6]; it fears that, with Franco down, the anarchists will use them to consolidate the proletarian revolution.

[4] Francisco Largo Caballero (1869–1946), Spanish trade unionist and politician, member of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the General Workers' Union (UGT), then head of government and Minister of War, and supporter of strong disciplinary control in the army.

[5] Francisco Franco (1892–1975), one of the three Spanish officers who led the attempted coup d'état that led to the Revolution and the Civil War of 1936–1939, from which he emerged the victor and imposed a bloody dictatorship.

[6] During the Spanish Civil War, the Republican camp received financial aid from Mexico and arms from the USSR, but these were destined for government troops, not for the anarchist militias.

Our Old Comrade Saïl Mohamed is Dead[1]

Having come to libertarian ideas in his youth, Saïl Mohamed was always an exemplary militant. Agitator, propagandist, fraternal militant, he had made a rule of intransigence, rejecting any gesture which could have had a mercantile character, despising his personal interests.

A fighter in the Spanish Revolution in the Durruti column, a militant of every moment, he paid for his activities with eleven years in prison and camps.

At the Liberation, he found himself among the youth to reconstitute the movement and the group, which he led in Aulnay-sous-Bois, is one of the most active in the Paris region. Saïl was a tireless propagandist of the Libertarian, a man of all devotion and of all hard knocks.

Saïl had not forgotten his brothers of race and the heroic struggles of the Algerian people. Thanks to him, in large part, the Anarchist Federation (FA) had been able to find a large echo in North African circles.

Recently, when dubious elements had tried to destroy the unity of the movement, Saïl Mohamed took the lead of the healthy reaction that allowed the FA to continue stronger than ever.

A few days before his death, when atrocious sufferings nailed him to his bed in the Franco-Muslim hospital, he declared to the comrades of the Committee of the Parisian region: "Continue, young people, you are on the right path,

[1] Le Libertaire, no 358, April 30, 1953.

that constitute the words pronounced. We also know, now, what color the money is that the editors of Juvenal receive; it is red with the blood of the natives martyred by the rapacious high finance and protected by a bloodthirsty army that has nothing to envy the SS or other Russian or American armies. It is time, gentlemen of Juvenal, that someone nailed you in the mouth. The Anarchist Federation (FA) will help the indigenous peoples that you scorn in this enterprise.

The Martyrology

Following numerous arrests of progressive activists, a large number of them were charged with various offenses, including undermining the external security of the state, and sentenced to heavy prison terms.

These detainees, who number nearly 400, are incarcerated in the prisons of Algiers, Blida, Bouira, Tizi Ouzou, Bougie, Akbou, Saint-Arnaud, Sétif, Batna, Constantine, Orléansville, Oran, Mascara, Mostaganem, Tlemcen and Laghouat.

After the bullying they were subjected to in the civil prison of Algiers, Tizi Ouzou, Orléansville, Sétif, we have just learned that the political prisoners of Bougie have seen their situation worsen to the point that they had to go on hunger strike for five days. Ten of them were put in a cell for ninety days after having undergone an initial detention.

To the Algerian Workers[1]

To better lull you to sleep, the rulers of the Fourth Republic pompously grant you the right to vote which, in reality, will only serve to reinforce a dying capitalism whose deputies are the proudest stooges.

Under the pressure of the evolved Algerian masses, the dirty clique of caïds and marabouts is disappearing when, as cunning scoundrels, the political parties hurry to replace them by other yes-men in the service of capitalism whom they call deputies to better deceive you.

These are, of course, more flamboyant labels, but, in reality, it's all the same, because official and unofficial scoundrels are the same dada [subject] of the regime that pays them handsomely, and you pay the price.

Jealous of the laurels of Pope Stalin, who is in the process of imposing his dictatorship on the Arab world, such as Iran and Turkey, which he wants to take over, undoubtedly by virtue of the right of peoples to govern themselves, our communists who have left France are trying to poison you with a false doctrine whose aim is to take advantage of your credulity.

All the political parties, by making you believe that they are your defenders, are parasites who live richly on your back. A member of parliament earns 350,000 francs a year, plus the little extras, for a few hours of talk per month, while you, creators of all wealth, toil from morning to night for a salary that is barely enough to prevent you from starving.

[1] Le Libertaire, no 22, March 25, 1946.

Comrades Algerians! Open your eyes! Don't serve as guinea pigs for unscrupulous upstarts who take advantage of you and dominate you. Enough of brainwashing. Your place is among the anarchists who ask you neither place nor prebend, but only to fight with them for the total suppression of the regime of exploitation and domination of man by man.

Algerian workers, so that there are no more caïds, deputies or marabouts sleeping the people, come with us!

All together, we will build a classless regime, libertarian federalism, where there will be neither masters nor servants, but only equal men.

Stand up for the social revolution that will rid us forever of the dominators and exploiters. Algerian comrades, let's go forward for a new world! Neither God nor Master, and let us all shout together: "Long live Anarchy!"

**

correspondents would like to know the intentions, if not the policy, of the French government. But the Quai d'Orsay, like Matignon, remains silent. They don't know what to do. The threat surrounds French families living in the countryside, in small villages. The government, alas, does not have the possibility, nor the courage, to reassure them. Does it even know what it wants?

It carries on its weak shoulders a very heavy responsibility.

Certainly, all is not lost. He could try to limit the damage, to go upstream. But there is no more time to lose, no more mistakes to make, and he must act quickly. We only ask him to be fair and firm. To be clear-sighted and authoritative. To give the appropriate response to a campaign of systematic denigration, outrageous blackmail and open threats.

Virtuous verbiage! But why this explosion of hatred? the reader will ask, astonished by this recourse to the colonialist authority. Only because a colonial leader has publicly pronounced some courageous words, words that we do not deny, as far as we are concerned. Bourguiba[4], leader of the Tunisian Neo-Destour, declared as follows: "The peoples of North Africa are suffering, without receiving any help, the cruelest and most greedy colonial domination the world has ever seen."

The neo-Desturian leader asserted that "North Africa, in fact, was only liberated in allied communiqués" and that "encouraged first by America's return to its internal affairs, and later by the rivalry between the Russian Empire and the United States, France re-established its complete and merciless colonial yoke. In Algeria, in particular, repression is as daily as our daily bread.

One understands now why the colonialist assassins could not admit without reacting to this crime of lèse-bourgeoisie

[4] Habib Bourguiba (1903–2000), Tunisian statesman and founder of the Neo-Destour, a Tunisian (not Moroccan) political party active from 1934 to 1964.

The North African Calvary II[1]

Valets of the Executioner

While in Lyon, the workers, in spite of the Stalinist warning, demonstrate their solidarity with the 14 Algerians of Landy who are on trial for strike actions, there are individuals, and even newspapers, to ironize on the following fact: French colonialism is responsible for the death of 90,000 Malagasy, 45,000 Algerians, 17,000 Africans, and that in the space of five years!

Juvénal, an organ of blackmail of high finance, is in particular at the forefront of the capitalist press for hire[2]. Cynically, this sheet laments the fate of the French established in the colonies to shamelessly exploit the natives. Juvenal asks: "What does he (the French government) want to do? Does it want to start again in North Africa the Indochinese adventure?" And all this because Pleven[3] has not yet entirely gagged anti-imperialist propaganda! But Juvenal specifies his "position"? See rather:

The French populations established in North Africa are going through a period of discouragement and anguish. They feel abandoned, left to their unfortunate fate. The letters we receive from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia make the same sound, express the same anxiety, the same revolt. Our

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 283, 5 October 1951.

[2] Le Juvenal, a weekly pamphlet published in Paris from 1932 to 1962, whose title refers to the Roman satirical poet of the same name.

[3] René Pleven (1901–1993), politician and deputy from 1945 to 1958 of the Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance (UDSR).

At the Time of the Elections[1]

Algerians Do Not Vote!

The emancipation of the workers will only be the work of the workers themselves. The emancipation of the colonial peoples will only be the work of the colonized themselves.

Do not entrust your rights to upstarts in search of armchairs, to traitors who will forget their promises as soon as they are elected, to feudalists, to agrarians.

Voting is Surrender

Parliamentarianism is a deception on the international (UN), national and Algerian level. On the national level:

The American Parliament accentuates its warmongering position (votes asking to designate China as aggressor. China as aggressor = war).

The Russian soviets are dead: their popular essence is entirely lost to a totalitarian bureaucracy and its leader, the tyrant Stalin, who provides America with the chrome and manganese weapons for future massacres.

The French Parliament ratified all the laws of misery and repression or anti-worker laws, voted the crushing military budgets and became the servile lackey of America at war.

The Italian, English, Belgian, etc., Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, etc., parliaments are only the echoes of the voice of their Western masters.

It is always through struggle that important structural reforms have been won

[1] Text of a leaflet of the North African Libertarian Movement (MLNA), which takes up central elements of the writings of Mohamed Saïl, who may have been its editor. Reproduced in Le Libertaire, no 255, February 9, 1951.

The Algerian rump parliament, almshouse of the imperialist status, concentrates in it all the above-mentioned vices aggravated by its colonialist tare.

"The governor is responsible for his acts before the government of the Republic" (article 5 of the Algerian statute).

"The Algerian Assembly is free, after homologation, to extend metropolitan law to Algeria, either purely and simply, or after adaptation" (Article 14).

We have seen how the Algerian Assembly adapted the Agricultural Social Security by sabotaging it, how the mixed communes were suppressed without being suppressed. How could it be otherwise? Seventy delegates total more than 200,000 hectares. Flinois[2] wants to reduce the social budget for the benefit of the army; and the Algerian Assembly will vote.

Moreover, the rigged ballot boxes, the police pressure, the make-up, will make "your elected officials" not what you would have wanted them to be, but what the proconsul of the Empire will have made them.

And yet you know what disgusting results free votes give elsewhere.

No. Make the future exploiters understand that they represent only themselves. Don't give a blank mandate to those who tomorrow will be the servile agents of American private capital or Russian state capital, of war, of nationalist or colonialist exploitation.

But work for the advent of an egalitarian and free organization in which the workers (who have become the owners of the means of production) and the consumers will themselves manage production, distribution, through their unions and cooperatives, and in which the Commune will be managed by all and for the benefit of all.

An organization which will be made from the bottom to the top, by the free association and federation of the workers

[2] Marcel Flinois, politician, then president of the Algerian Assembly.

real transposition in France of the classic racist and colonialist methods in Algeria.

In Marseilles, two chemical factories went on strike in protest and sent a motion to the Prefect of the Rhone department, energetically condemning the unacceptable racial exclusion systematically imposed on North Africans in France.

Everywhere the protest is organized, everywhere, as in Carvin, in the Pas-de-Calais, the workers' riposte to the racist provocation of the French government is prepared, a provocation destined to bring down the magnificent morale and the militant bite of the Algerian workers emigrated in France.

In Lyon

Fourteen Algerian workers, arbitrarily imprisoned in Lyon, will be judged on September 28. Resolution of the Defense Committee:

"The solidarity of the people of France, which has just won the acquittal of the 16 Martiniqueans of Basse-Pointe, must obtain the acquittal of the 14 of Lyon, imprisoned because they are workers and because they are Algerians." (Documents collected by the Anticolonialist Commission of the Fédération Anarchiste [FA].)

Since the elections of June 17, 1951, the services of the caïd Belhaddad[3] of Beni Mellikeche have employed an original means of sorting out the constituents. In this way, when one of the latter is one of the caïd's favorites, he is given a piece of paper bearing the caïd's stamp by the intermediary of a mezzouar (village chief). He is served with alacrity. On the other hand, the inhabitants who are known to have ideas somewhat different from those of the representative of the administration are categorically refused any official document and even access to the office of the caïd.

The khodja (secretary of the caïd), a pretentious young man, welcomes the fellahs with hateful apostrophes. Recently, a worker went to ask for a life certificate for his children, the khodja refused him and made him leave because he could not show the famous stamped paper. The caïd Belhaddad is currently on leave, but he lives very close to his office. Are the khodja and the mezzouar acting on his instructions or independently? In any case, he himself refused to issue an identity card to one of our brothers, named Meziane Mahmoud, and even told him, "You can take the Good Lord, the Governor General and Messali with them."

Metropolis

In France itself, for some time, the prefecture of Avignon has been organizing intimidation maneuvers against Algerian workers in the region of Bollène, who have particularly distinguished themselves by their combativeness in the struggle they are waging for their national liberation and the improvement of their fate as shamefully exploited migrant workers.

Thus, on several occasions, groups of CRS burst into the Algerian workers' camps and, under the pretext of checking their identity, indulged in the usual bullying which is the sign of a

[3] Mahdi Belhaddad (1918–1978), the first Muslim to have obtained the post of sub-prefect and then prefect in French Algeria, then caïd of the civil services of the commune of Beni Mellikeche.

in their associations, in the communes, the regions, the nations and in a big international federation of the workers, realizing the order of the freedom and the general happiness, affirming and putting in agreement the interests of the individuals and the society.

Mouvement Libertaire Nord-Africain 6, Rue du Roussillon, Alger

The Kabyle Mentality[1]

On many occasions, I have spoken in these columns about the libertarian and individualistic temperament of my Berber compatriots of Algeria. But today, while the Ali Baba cave of overseas is cracking and sinking, I believe it is useful to assert, against all the professional pessimists or dreamers breaking into lucrative positions, that Algeria freed from the colonialist yoke would be ungovernable in the religious, political and bourgeois sense of the word. And I challenge all the scoundrels pretending to the crown to bring the least valid and honest reason to their unhealthy aspirations, because I oppose them palpable and controllable precisions, without denying however that their politics has some success when it is about action against the colonialist tyrant.

One must see the Algerian native, the Kabyle especially, in his environment, in his native village and not judge him on his behavior in a meeting, demonstrating against his mortal enemy: colonialism.

For the Algerian native, discipline is a degrading submission if it is not freely consented. However, the Berber is very sensitive to organization, mutual aid and comradeship, but as a federalist, he will only accept orders if they are the expression of the desires of the common people, of the base. When a village delegate is appointed by the administration, Algeria considers him an enemy.

Religion, which once bent him to the goodwill of the marabout, is in decadence, to the point that it is common to

[1] Le Libertaire, no 257, February 16, 1951.

The North African Calvary I[1]

Strikers Besiege the Gendarmerie of Descartes

Although despite the agitation created, the last trial in Bône, which took place on August 26, saw a relatively cruel verdict against 83 Algerian anti-imperialist fighters, the colonialist offensive was accentuated, and "exemplary and episodic" repression was replaced by "systematic and permanent" repression. Will we be surprised, in these conditions, of the strength of the popular responses?

The official cost-of-living indices are more or less the same in Algeria (2.046) as in Paris (2.091), however the disproportion between salaries is much more acute. Strikes were also repressed much more violently.

Following the arrest of two of their comrades, several hundred strikers demonstrated in the streets of Descartes and besieged the gendarmerie.

The gendarmes used tear gas canisters and demanded help. Reinforcements from Tlemcen and Sidi Bel Abbès cleared the gendarmerie after having to knock down several barricades.

The Collabos

In Colomb-Béchar, Dublineau, Philippeville,[2] Laghouat, Oued Zenati, the colonialists, with the help of their native henchmen, perpetrated new crimes. An example taken from the life of the locality of Tazmalt:

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 282, 28 September 1951.

[2] Today, respectively Béchar, Hacine and Skikda.

of all the workers: the FADRL, grouping extremely diverse organizations, concretizes, indeed, the will of union and action of the Algerian people.

Our anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, anti-statist position were known to everyone, it is easy for us — and pleasant — to be able, at least on this point, to agree with the editorialist of L'Algérie libre, when he comments favorably on the creation of the FADRL. Does not Messali Hadj[4] himself, whose nationalist-statist position is unequivocal, state the following: "It is my duty to emphasize that the common objective on which the various parties have agreed constitutes only a minimum program of action. The union achieved within the Front is a limited union."

It is, above all (for the participants) and above all (for us), to ensure the absolute defense of the victims of repression, a defense that must translate into the fight for the total eviction of the colonialists from Algeria. "The suitcase or the coffin", some say, "the suitcase or the coffin", we say with them! In this respect, from now on, our position is clear: to do everything to chase away the sordid representatives of French imperialism, to try everything so that the Algerian people become aware of the fruitfulness of libertarian communism! This is the real fight.

The layman, who has followed the reading of my articles, must have realized that the colonialists always begin by sowing terror, then maintain the terror to keep their booty. It is therefore purely out of politeness that I call them apaches, whereas monsters is more accurate.

[4] Messali Hadj (1898–1974), a former communist rejected by Stalinism, Algerian independence fighter, founder of the North African Star in 1926, an association based in metropolitan France, of the Algerian People's Party (PPA) in 1937 and of the Algerian National Movement (MNA) in 1954.

see the representative of Allah join the infidel in the same abjection. Everyone still talks about God, out of habit, but in reality no one believes in him anymore. Allah is in rout, thanks to the permanent contact of the Algerian worker with his brother of misery of the metropolis, and some Algerian comrades are also for much in this fight against the obscurantism.

As for the nationalism that I often hear Algerians reproach, we must not forget that it is the sad fruit of the French occupation. A rapprochement of peoples will make it disappear, as it will make religions disappear. And, more than any other, the Algerian people is accessible to internationalism, because it has the taste for it or because its wandering life inevitably opens its eyes. Kabyles can be found in the four corners of the world; they like it everywhere, they fraternize with everyone, and their dream is always knowledge, well-being and freedom. Also, I refuse to believe that nationalist clowns could become one day ministers or sultans with the aim of subjecting this people, rebellious by temperament.

Until the arrival of the French, the Kabyle never agreed to pay taxes to any government, including that of the Arabs and Turks whose religion they had embraced only by force of arms. I am particularly insistent on the Kabyle, not because I myself am Kabyle, but because he is really the dominant element in every respect and because he is capable of leading the rest of the Algerian people in revolt against any form of authoritarian centralism.

The most amusing part of the story is that the band of 40 thieves or political charlatans represents to us the nationalism of overseas in the form of an Arab union with the Muslim emblem and with political, military and spiritual leaders in the image of the countries of the Levant. I must admit that the Arab god of our sinister Algerian puppets has done things well, since the Jewish-Arab war revealed to us that the leaders of integral Islamism are nothing but vulgar sellouts to the Americans,

the British, and the Jews themselves, their so-called enemies. A treacherous blow for our Algerian dervishes, but salutary for the people who begin to see clearly.

Just think, a good little Algerian government of which they would be the kings, a government much more arrogant than the one of the roumis, for the simple reason that an upstart is always harder and more ruthless than an "arrived"! Nothing to do, Algerians do not want the plague, nor the cholera, nor a government of roumis, nor that of a caïd. Besides, the great mass of the Kabyle workers knows that a Moslem government, at the same time religious and political, can only have a feudal character, therefore primitive. All the Muslim governments have so far proved it.

The Algerians will govern themselves in the manner of the village, of the douar, without deputies or ministers who fatten themselves at their expense, because the Algerian people, freed from the yoke, will never want to give themselves another, and their federalist and libertarian temperament is the sure guarantee of this. It is in the mass of manual workers that one finds robust intelligence and nobility of spirit, whereas the horde of "intellectuals" is, in its immense majority, devoid of any generous feeling.

As for the Stalinists, they do not represent any force, their members are recruited only from among the cretins or refuse of the people. For the native has little enthusiasm for putting a label on himself, whether it be false or superfascist.

For the collaborators, policemen, magistrates, caïds and other slavers of Algerian cheese[2], their fate is settled in advance: the rope, which they are hardly worth.

For all these reasons, should my compatriots be considered genuine revolutionaries bordering on anarchy? No, because although they have an indisputably federalist and libertarian temperament, they lack education and culture, and our propa-

[2] Profit, profit, booty.

All these imprisoned people have left behind them wives, children and parents who find themselves deprived of their support from one day to the next. It is the duty of all conscious workers of the metropolis to come to the aid of those who suffer in this way for an Algeria where it is particularly important for us to create the foundations of libertarian communism.

In describing the horrors of colonialism, in order to enlighten the reader, I have been obliged to speak of the past in order to clarify the horrors of the present and, all things considered, the glorious years of the conquest were surely less harsh for the Algerians than the refinement of cruelty that they undergo today.

Yes, for us, the history of French domination, from 1830 to the present day, is nothing but an endless ordeal and one has to be very clever to distinguish the past from the present of a daily "tyranny". Is it not true that the devastation of several regions of the department of Constantine by the bombs of the aviation of the very communist Minister of the Air, Tillon in 1945, is largely worth the ravages made by the French troops of 1842 in Kabylia? In the past, it took several months to sack a region and murder a few hundred innocent people. Today, several regions are swept away and 10 000 natives are killed in a few hours.

In the past, the natives walked on foot for lack of a railroad; now they continue to walk on foot because they cannot afford anything. Beautiful buildings have been built? Out of curiosity, go to Algiers and see how many natives sleep under the bridges. Our ancestors ate bread in abundance; nowadays, I repeat, many families eat barley bran, and not yet to their satisfaction, because all the fertile land has been stolen by the "civilizers".

The FADRL

Exceptional event of importance for the anticolonialist struggle, the creation of the Algerian Front for the defense and the respect of freedom deserves to hold the attention

Prisons in North Africa[1]

Helping the Algerian People

Throughout North Africa, exactions are added to exactions, murders follow murders, crime is the law. The smallest villages are periodically the scene of bloody colonial misdeeds. Palestro, Hamman, Bou Hadjar, Draâ El Mizan, Laghouat, Khroubs[2], Aïn Beïda, Kenadsa, Oued Zenati, Ghardaïa, etc., have just been "civilized" again by the drunken brigands this week. The repression is thus relentless on a whole people, trials follow trials and heavy sentences hit Algerians such as in Bougie, Oran, Bône.

To this day, there are still more than 343 prisoners in the colonialist bastilles, distributed as follows:

Alger: 150 Prisoners
Orléansville[3]: 19 Prisoners
Oran: 45 Prisoners
Mascara: 13 Prisoners
Tizi Ouzou: 42 Prisoners
Bougie: 15 Prisoners
Setif: 12 Prisoners
Constantine: 3 Prisoners
Akbou: 3 Prisoners
Saint-Arnaud: 1 Prisoner
Blida: 37 Prisoners
Tlemcen: 3 Prisoners

Other detainees are being prosecuted for multiple offences, and we must support them against repression and arbitrariness.

[1] Le Libertaire, no 281, September 14, 1951.
[2] Today El Khroub.
[3] Today Chlef.

ganda, which is nevertheless indispensable to these rebellious minds, is lacking.

This is what our anarchist companions of the North African Federation are working for.

The Calvary of the North African Workers I[1]

The superfascist-style governmental system and the antiquated way of working that the indigenous North Africans endure under the yoke of the colonists are the main reason for the massive exodus of my compatriots to the metropolis.

Yes, North Africa, though one of the richest countries, has become for the natives a land of hell, a prison that degrades man's dignity: frankly speaking, "free" life in North Africa is equivalent to that of the prisons in Europe!

Many, even, are the sons of the rich who come to France to share the cause of the workers, rather than accept the humiliation reserved for their racial brothers, since the native has only the right to serve, to pay and… to shut up!

And it must be said, "brave Frenchmen of France", that without this escape to the metropolis, where my compatriots, at the price of multiple deprivations, manage to loosen the embrace of theirs in the native country, entire families are reduced to feeding on barley bran and other dishes that a metropolitan dog would refuse to swallow…

All the fertile plains are taken away from the workers and, as a reward, the "elected" bourgeois colonist generously grants a starvation wage and ten to fourteen hour workdays. Beware of strong heads! Daring to start a strike with factory occupation is punished not by prison, but by the salutary bullet of a

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 273, June 15, 1951.

ble, all surrounded by gardens, forests of immense olive trees the size of the plane trees of Perpignan. We were all stunned by so much beauty, but the orders were imperative and I thought I was conscientiously fulfilling my mission by not leaving a village standing, not a tree, not a field. The harm my column did in its path is incalculable. I believe that this is the only way to bring about the submission or emigration of these inhabitants, who are to be pitied in the end, since they are between two parties, for one of which they cannot decide without incurring the vengeance of the other.

In this expedition, about 3,000 head of cattle and 200 prisoners were taken from the Kabyles; more than 10 large villages were burned, more than 10,000 olive and fig trees were cut down or burned, etc.

My campaign of skull-clearing is far from over and, more and more, I have many proofs in store that will banish the past, present and future rulers of a Republic that has nothing to envy the most bloodthirsty barbarians. Down with colonialism.

General De Bar, as incapable a man as could be, was recalled to Algiers and, as this insurrection thwarted the later plans of the governor who, wanting to advance south, could not leave his rear in arms, General Changarnier was given the mission of penetrating with all the battalions he could muster into these mountains, of which the Pyrenees cannot give an idea because of their difficulty, and of bringing about the submission of the Kabyles at all costs. It was a very difficult thing and of a very doubtful success; also the general undertook it only with reserve.

Seven columns left from Milianah and Cherchell, to ravage the country, to take away as many herds as possible and especially women and children: the government wanted to frighten the populations by sending them to France. The general entrusted me with the command of the strongest column composed of five battalions, and I had the happiness of fulfilling my role successfully. I maneuvered in such a way as to throw back onto one of the columns of Cherchell the herds and populations that were fleeing before me and I made this column take or I took myself 5,000 to 6,000 head of cattle and 70 women or children, as well as a precious booty, weapons, etc. In addition, there was no serious resistance and the population, led by the El Berkani family, had dispersed far away, leaving us the houses, which were all burned.

Returning to Milianah, the general left two days later, by the most distant mountains, and I had again the command of a column, I will say the most important by its composition and by the nature of the country which I had to traverse. Since I have been in Africa, I had not seen and I did not suspect that there were as many and as large centers of population as those which I met in the mountains of Beni Bou Aïch and Beni Bou Melek, etc. There, no more isolated gourbis on the sides of the mountains, built with branches and repaired as soon as they were destroyed, but villages similar to our French villages in the most beautiful positions and sometimes almost inaccessi-

CRS[2]… in the name of a beneficent civilization! Moreover, in the absence of the presumed culprit, the arrest of a hostage is customary. These are the common exploits of murderous colonialists, eager for carnage…

Let everyone recognize that the workers from overseas countries, who come to France to seek a little more well-being and freedom, are truly brave men who deserve much respect.

Unfortunately, when they come into contact with their brothers in misery in the metropolis, whom they clearly distinguish from the killers from overseas, they are often met with incomprehension or disdain. Hence their distrust of the "roumis" (without however generalizing).

However, North African workers shun political parties in France, because they remember the exploitation. The unions, likewise, do not interest them much. And yet, these workers know how to be, during strikes, in the vanguard of the class struggle. They fight fiercely alongside the workers against the state and the employers, and also against the republican bourriques. May 1st showed it[3]!

The revolt rumbles in these ulcerated men. The anarchists, who alone have the right to affirm that they are fighting the good fight, will not fail to make known to the overseas workers that in any case they are on their side against the unleashed hyenas.

Comrades from North Africa, there is a category of totally disinterested "roumis" who fight mercilessly for welfare and social justice, against racial discrimination. Yes! know, comrades, that the anarchists are your real friends who ask you nothing

[2] Compagnies républicaines de sécurité, specialized corps of the national police in France, generally assigned to the control and repression of demonstrations.

[3] In his text "Le calvaire des travailleurs nord-africains (2)" (The ordeal of North African workers), Mohamed Saïl evokes a confrontation between Algerian demonstrators and police officers on May 1 in the 12th arrondissement of Paris.

else but to be at their side, to lead the common struggle against Capital, the State and the Colon, which are only one monster under the same hat.

**

Colonial Hell[1]

Civilization

Yes, "civilizers" is the slogan well chosen by the French rulers to justify the most horrible crimes on the peaceful populations of North Africa, while the basket of crabs of all the well-meaning flanked by the dowagers in rupture of the national prestige go singing to whom better the benefits of the generous, peaceful, saving France: scoundrels!

It is good to publish some documents. Here is a letter of the battalion chief De Lioux (Milianah, April 23, 1843):

We have just returned from a new expedition to the Beni Abbas, Beni Bou Seid, etc., belonging to the large tribe of the Beni Menasser, which we have not yet managed to subdue.

Our column had a mission to ravage everything in its path, and several leagues around its successive bivouacs. Indeed, much was destroyed; whole villages, large and real villages disappeared by fire, and several thousand feet of fig trees, olive trees and others were cut down. I cannot explain this last kind of devastation, if one really wants to occupy the country or only demand contributions from it. Besides, we have not experienced much resistance from the enemy…

From Lieutenant-Colonel Forey (Milianah, April 26, 1842):

You have read in the newspapers that MM. De Bar, L'Admirault and others were emphatically announcing the submission of the Beni Menasser; this was not the case, and, far from it, the insurrection had spread to all the mountains that extended towards Tenez and the Dahra.

[1] Le Libertaire, no 279, August 17, 1951.

previous articles[2] and the coup de grace that I am delivering in the present.

In 1830, Algeria was conquered as a result of France's refusal to pay for a delivery of wheat made by the bey of Algiers, which earned the French consul a blow from a fly swatter… I therefore pass the pen to an official representative of the "civilizing" country who will put the nose in their mouths… to the scoundrels without confession. Here is a letter from adjutant-major Canrobert, dated January 1, 1842 from Koliah.

We have just made several raids in the mountains of the small Atlas. We have surprised at night a fairly large number of Kabyles and taken several herds, women, children and old people. These operations which, I must admit, are a great resource for the army's supplies, are from a military point of view of the most unfortunate effect. The soldier, poorly supervised or not supervised, excited moreover by the lure of plunder, indulges in the greatest excesses which singularly vitiate his character[3].

The quotation of this letter is the beginning of a series of others which will follow, old warhorse, I intend to take the defense of my unfortunate oppressed compatriots, if it is necessary at the price of my freedom and even my life, without any weakness, and it is with a deep emotion, I am sure, that the damned overseas will welcome the total disinterestedness of a humble representative of the Anarchist Federation (FA).

[2] The series "Le calvaire des travailleurs nord-africains" (The ordeal of North African workers), includes six articles, and is preceded, in the same newspaper, by "La mentalité kabyle" (The Kabyle mentality).

[3] Mohamed Saïl has slightly modified the passage that he had already quoted and whose original version can be found in Campagnes d'Afrique. 1835–1848, Paris, Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1898, p. 255–256.

The Calvary of the North African Workers II[1]

Let us examine today the major reason which separates the North African workers from their French counterparts and we will arrive at the motto dear to the rulers: divide and conquer. While a whole people is bending under the yoke of a ferocious colonialism, in France, the hired press invents ignominies against the North Africans with the sole aim of gnawing away at the working class in its most militant element.

When a Frenchman cuts a woman into pieces, rapes her daughter or martyrizes a child, the rotten press finds it almost normal because it is so used to it, but when a "sidi" steals a croissant because he can't find a job, or when he opposes a bit of virility to the brutality of a cop, the newspapers headline in big letters and the radio cries scandal.

I saw with my own eyes peaceful compatriots, walking along the Champs-Élysées, being picked up because a meeting of North Africans had been banned more than a kilometer away, at the Salle Wagram. On May 1, when the fight between the Algerian demonstrators and the police was still going on in the 12th arrondissement, North Africans were being rounded up all over Paris[2]. Of course, I am speaking only of recent events, but my compatriots have always endured the

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 274, June 22, 1951.

[2] The Paris police attacked Algerians in trade union demonstrations such as those of the Confédération générale du travail (CGT), a maneuver denounced by other demonstrators.

worst vexations in the middle of Paris, the City of Light and the city of barricades.

And the common people go, shrugging their shoulders, to the great joy of capitalists and politicians, our common enemies. Robbed and hounded in their native country, bullied and scorned in France, the so-called land of freedom, the North African workers have a valid reason to withdraw into themselves.

And yet, each time a danger threatens their class brothers, they are always the first to launch themselves into the salutary battle. In February 1934, I was surrounded by more than 2,000 compatriots and we formed an impenetrable barrier against fascism in front of the Gare de l'Est and the Canal Saint-Martin. In the 15th district, in Clichy, everywhere we were beheading in the street those whom my compatriots called "li croia des fous"[3]. I will not speak here of the patriots in chambers who embrace the "liberators" of the Nazi yoke, nor of the merchants of the temple, the servants of Stalin, who are only interested in the North Africans for political reasons. For the memory of 1945, when 10,000 fellahs[4] fell in Constantinois under the bullets of the Minister of War Tillon[5], condemns the red Jesuits forever. And yet, my compatriots, in spite of the setbacks that embitter them, know that in this "gentle France" there are men

[3] The anti-parliamentary demonstrations of February 6, 1934, referred to above were organized by Catholic, royalist, nationalist and fascist leagues, more specifically by Action française, Solidarité française and Jeunesses patriotes, as well as veterans' organizations, including the Union nationale des combattants and the Croix-de-feu. The day degenerated into riots and resulted in 15 deaths and 500 injuries. The expression used by Mohamed Saïl undoubtedly refers to the Croix-de-feu.

[4] North African peasant.

[5] Charles Tillon (1897–1993), a communist activist involved in the Resistance during the occupation of France by the German army, and a minister in General Charles de Gaulle's government in 1945. Mohamed Saïl refers to the massacre perpetrated by the colonial authorities against independence demonstrations during popular gatherings celebrating the end of the Second World War.

The Calvary of the North African Workers VI[1]

Civilization! (Letter to the French)

To legitimize the most villainous gangsterism against my compatriots, the French rulers continue to use the most crude lie. They call themselves "civilizers", but this only fools the morons, who are unfortunately too numerous in this France of 1951.

The term "civilizers" is a deception just good enough to make the most stubborn asses laugh; the history you have written, oh sad sires, wants the Moors of Spain who went as far as Perpignan, and even as far as Poitiers, and who were the builders of the Alhambra of Granada to be the destroyers of your sordid huts and to be part of the fathers of your so-called "French" civilization! So shut your mouths and admit that you are nothing but sinister puppets devoid of any scruples, heartless cads, slaves of the golden calf, professional thieves and murderers without any other excuses.

For Hitler, France was a savage country that had to be civilized at all costs. For Stalin, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, etc., were backward countries that also had to be brought to their senses… and the "civilization" spiel followed its course at the expense of the idiots who ignored themselves and applauded.

At worst, and to please your pitiful pride, let us admit that you are the civilizers of North Africa, and this, despite the irrefutable proofs to the contrary that I have brought in my six

[1] Le Libertaire, no 278, August 3, 1951.

judgment came as a result of the provocation called "conspiracy" directed against Algerian nationalists[2].

Let's not forget that in North Africa, "conspiracy" is the equivalent of the cry "death to the cows" that the common Frenchman can utter in the street of Paris and get away with three hours on the bus or a simple recrimination from the cop on duty!

Imprison, assassinate, oh! bloody clowns, but the revolt of the people will continue its march forward until its total liberation. Your jails and prisons are, for the immense majority of the oppressed that we are, the true freedom, the liberation of conscience, the relief of an ulcerated heart that one day soon will cry "vengeance".

Greetings to you, brothers of misery, victims of colonialism. Shame on your murderers!

N. B.: Write to Saïl Mohamed, Commission Ouvrière, 145, quai de Valmy. Leaflets addressed to North African workers in France can be collected from the office.

[2] Young militants of the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (MTLD) party, launched in 1947 by Messali Hadj, created the Secret Organization or Special Organization (OS), which was clandestine and responsible for sabotage and attacks. In 1950, the police repression that succeeded in neutralizing the OS led to the trial of nationalists in 1951 and 1952. To the accusation of "conspiracy", the defense lawyers replied by evoking the "police plot" and the "colonialist plot". See Sharon Elbaz, "L'avocat et sa cause en milieu colonial: la défense politique dans le procès de l'Organisation spécial du Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés en Algérie (1950–1952)", Politix, vol. 16, no. 62, 2003.

who are likely to lend them a hand. The anarchists are at the head of those.

The Calvary of the North African Workers III[1]

An Indispensable Clarification of the Conduct of North Africans in France

After underlining the ingratitude of capitalism and of the French State which, in order to free themselves from the German yoke, massacred our poor compatriots, we shall speak of the reproaches, as muddy as they are ridiculous, which are too often made to North African workers.

My compatriots have the habit of living grouped in certain districts; this is only the fact of any people emigrated abroad. We touch there the bottom of the problem, because the North African, most of the time illiterate, by his education, his morals and his origins, is not French.

On the other hand, it must be emphasized that traditional solidarity encourages the North African to find and help his own people, and this is, I believe, a quality that many so-called civilized people can envy us. When we speak of the North African, we always paint a sad picture of him. If he dresses badly, sometimes gets drunk, fights, etc., it is unfortunately the sad fruit of a villainous regime: colonialism, reinforced by the vices of certain French workers who rub off on those they meet. The art of sanding wine has always been one of the cherished teachings of French civilization, and isn't the dumbing down of workers the surest guarantee of their inertia? As far as clothing is concerned, our compatriots probably prefer, with their meager wages as laborers, to feed their children first, rather than to

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 275, 29 June 1951.

"sidi" as ignorant, he is systematically prevented from learning. And to better stultify him, he is forbidden to educate himself socially.

A land of hell, a cursed land that rejects its sons towards a sky they believe to be more hospitable. They come to France and fall just as badly, because without education and without a trade, they are doomed to work as laborers who exhaust themselves and starve to death. In Paris, as elsewhere, North Africans are only hired for hard and unhealthy work, for a derisory salary proudly approved by the three political centers. Many companies refuse to hire North Africans for the simple reason that they are generally rebellious and want to be respected by the chief "garde-chiourme" or other arrogant "m'as-tu vu". Those of my compatriots who can read and write and who seek to improve their lot by trying to learn a liberating trade are forbidden the use of a tool or machine. Yet, I assert that most of my countrymen are gifted with intelligence and that, even illiterate, they are capable of becoming skilled workers in record time. They all seek to improve their skills, but are stubbornly denied the means to do so. There are professional schools in Paris, but they demand a degree of education that my compatriots do not have, because if the colonialist bandits have managed to take over North Africa by murder, theft and fire, they intend to leave the country without schools, the better to dumb down its people and to exploit them mercilessly while forbidding them freedom of press and thought.

P.-S. One hundred and thirty-five militants of the Algerian People's Party (PPA) have just been sentenced in Bône (Constantine) to sentences ranging from six months to ten years in prison, with fines ranging from 20,000 to 1,500,000 francs. This

The Calvary of the North African Workers V[1]

I have read reports, alas incomplete, written by generous men on the crimes perpetrated daily in North Africa. These men are not in the shoes of the poor fellah [peasants] who suffers in silence, nor even in the shoes of the somewhat emancipated native who still dreads the terrible vengeance of the so-called "commune administrators" who intend to banish him from society if he has the misfortune to raise his head or to say what he thinks.

Colonialism is a despicable, abominable crime, a degrading shame that a "Frenchman of France" cannot imagine.

While everything has been stolen from us, we pay crushing taxes for uncultivable mountains, which we cultivate anyway so as not to starve. So let's not talk about profit in this cursed country where the native loses everything and gains nothing. Certainly, there are rich people, but not a rich class. At most, a few lucky ones, including the regime's sell-outs, politicians, businessmen and other slavers. But the countless majority has only its arms to work and its eyes to cry. Their whole soul is bruised by this life of a muzzled dog.

The prisons are full. No more room in the prisons. Long live the concentration camps which are being built everywhere! The republican and democratic France civilizes in turn, without weakness. It is for her that we must die, isn't it?

Crushing taxes, bullying, vexations, but no schools to educate and enlighten the victim of colonialism. To better treat the

[1] Le Libertaire, no 277, July 20, 1951.

think of buying tuxedos. As for the fighting spirit and the taste for struggle, these are qualities that will be useful one day at the barricades, when the people of France — for the moment emasculated — will wake up.

As far as villainy is concerned, official statistics show that the proportion of North African crimes is insignificant.

In the end, all peoples are equal, and it is a sign of bias to cast anathema on some and glorify others. It seems to me more logical to look for the deep reasons for the clumsiness of North African workers who, in fact, are mostly uprooted, rather than systematically blaming them. If, for the self-righteous, we are incurable undesirables, what are they waiting for, the "sovereign people", to put pressure on their rulers so that all Europeans move out of our country (and, if necessary, after having destroyed their so-called achievements, but giving back our lands)? We assure you that it would be with glee that we would pack up. And then we would see who, of the two peoples, would gain at the exchange and would be freed from all servitude. The federalist and libertarian instinct of the North African would be clearly visible. But the operation is, alas, a mere chimera. And since we elbow each other daily, let us rather seek to understand each other in order to better unite against the common enemy: capitalism and the state.

The Calvary of the North African Workers IV[1]

Emigration

In order for my compatriots to live like the common man, out of the 25 million natives populating North Africa, at least 24 million would have to escape, the other million being sold-out collaborators, rich people happy with their lot, or simply undiscriminating idiots.

But how to move illiterate women and children, who don't understand a word of French, when it is often difficult to make oneself understood? What to do with old people who can no longer work and who, according to custom, are in charge of the children? And the money for travel, housing, the threat of unemployment in a foreign country, and many other obstacles that are always the share of the poor, not to mention the prejudices that are difficult to eradicate among humans in a capitalist or statist regime.

In spite of this, those of my compatriots who are lucky enough to loosen the grip bring women and children to France, and it is not uncommon to meet many of them, especially in the suburbs of big cities. Personally, I am against this way of acting, because the North African who comes to France with his family is obliged to submit to the dictatorship of the employers and the police, lest his family fall into misery. One does better when one is at home, and in North Africa solidarity would be in full play. Many of them, married in their native country, find it more radical to divorce and remarry here than

[1] Le Libertaire, no. 276, July 6, 1951.

to return overseas where life is unbearable under the crushing boot of arrogant slave-owning colonialists.

Let it be known once again that North Africa, always defeated, has never admitted defeat under any conquest, and there is more than one, from antiquity to the present day. At all times, its people have stood up, unanimously, with arms in hand, against all oppressors. What is significant is that there has never been a "Berber central state", but "federalist communities" against which all conquerors, from the Romans to the Spaniards, without forgetting the Arabs and the Turks, and surely tomorrow the French, have broken.

To make clear the rebellious character of my North African compatriots, I am obliged to go back in time, to show the courage of a whole people: under Arab and Turkish domination, only the citizens of a few large cities submitted to central power. Almost the entire North African population refused to pay taxes. The governments were obliged to leave the population with its own way of organizing itself, which even today consists of "voluntary" tithes used only for local mutual aid controlled by the base.

Another significant fact: the bey of Tunis[2] and the sultan of Morocco[3], scorned in their authority, saw in the French a means of re-establishing a faltering power. This was a bad calculation, which only served the interests of French capitalists. That is why I am convinced that the day will soon come when my compatriots will discover their first cousins, the anarchists. Their conceptions are very close, and together they will make the starving and oppressors of wherever they come from go down.

**

[2] Governor under the Ottoman Empire.

[3] King of Morocco.