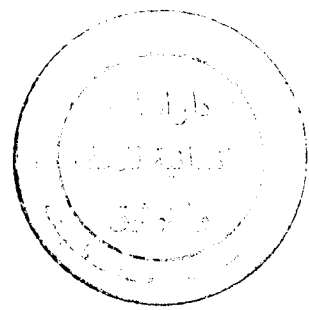


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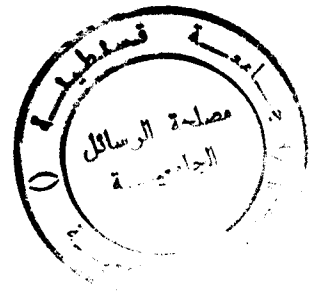
THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON WORKER-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ABSENCE FROM WORK. A CASE STUDY IN AN ALGERIAN TRACTOR FACTORY

A THESIS PRESENTED TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF KEELE
FOR
THE DEGREE OF Ph.D.
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Handwritten number: SH.0/45

THE UNIVERSITY OF KEELE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
DECEMBER 1982

Handwritten initials and number: HAR 337



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ABSTRACT

This study deals with worker-management relations in a tractor factory (Sonacome) in Algeria. It is concerned with the absenteeism of workers as part of the impact of economic development on workers' behaviour. Their absence from work emerges out of the discontent generated by the conditions of work, and by the difficulties of meeting objectives.

To understand the features which lie behind workers' absence, has entailed on the one hand an examination of the economic and political structures brought into existence after Algerian independence, and on the other the socio-cultural values inherited from the past which dominate the behaviour and thoughts of individuals.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part is a theoretical examination of the socialist economic and political structures that emerged immediately after independence in order to develop the country rapidly and eradicate inequality between people. This development however, is hampered by the socio-cultural features maintained by the traditional way of life. The second part presents the findings extracted from interviews and observations made within the factory and deals mainly with the external causes of absenteeism such as family problems, migration, transport, previous job etc. Here also internal causes of absenteeism are discussed and the system of control within the factory which is the source of conflict between workers and management over wages, participation, work conditions, and

type of supervision. The study deals with these major causes of dissatisfaction in Sonacome which lead to absenteeism and job turnover in the workforce.

Acknowledgement

I have received help from a number of people, either at the University of Keele or at the factory under study. And I am very grateful to all the people who have helped me in finishing this thesis. My deep and sincere appreciation is due to my supervisor Dr. Paul Bellaby who offered unlimited help by commenting on and correcting the content of this thesis.

I wish also to thank Dr. Harry Christian tutor in the Sociology Department and Professor Ronald Frankenberg the head of the Department for their help. Among members of the Computer Centre who helped, my thanks are due especially to Dr. A.F. Grundy who helped me in processing the data.

Secondly my gratitude goes to the officials in Sonacome factory who permitted me to do my field work and to all the 100 workers who responded genuinely to my questions. And thirdly my appreciation goes to the Algerian ministry of higher education who supported me morally and financed the study.

I would also like to thank my friends for their encouragement and support, especially my colleague Ali B. who provided me with much information needed about Sonacome and Algerian industry. Also my friend J. Lloyd for his help with constructive conversations and the correction of the English. I also wish to thank Mrs. Carolyn Busfield who typed the thesis with speed and accuracy.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.L.P.	L'Armée de libération nationale
A.N.P.	L'Armée nationale populaire. The national popular army
A.M.L.	Les Amis du manifeste et de la liberté, created in 1943
BNASS	Bureau national d'Animation du secteur socialiste
C.G.T.	Confédération générale du travail
C.N.R.A.	Conseil national de la révolution Algérienne
C.M.	Contre maître
C.E.	Chef d'équipe
E.N.A.	Étoile nord-Africain. Created in 1924
F.L.N.	Le Front de libération nationale. A single party formed during the war and continued as the only party for Algeria
G.P.R.A.	Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne. The Algerian provisional government, created in the late fifties during the war. Located outside Algeria until independence in 1962.
G.S.E.	Gestion Socialiste des Entreprises. The socialist management of enterprises, created in 1971
GOSPLAN	The State Planning Commission, created in 1921.
M.T.L.D.	Movement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques created in 1946.
M.N.A.	Movement National Algérien, created in 1954
N.E.P.	The New Economic Policy, created in 1921
O.P.	Ouvrier Professionnel. A category which has three degrees corresponding to "skilled" worker, but including non-manual skills
O.S.	Ouvrier Spécialisé "semi-skilled" worker, a category which has two degrees
O.S.	Organisation spéciale, created by the revolutionaries in 1947
P.A.G.S.	Parti de L'avant-garde socialiste, created after independence in order to replace the Algerian communist party.

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P.C.A.	Parti communiste Algérien, banned in 1962
P.P.A.	Parti du peuple Algérien, created in 1937
SONACOME	Société Nationale de Constructions Mécaniques. National Company of Mechanic Construction.
SONATRACH	Société Nationale pour la recherche, la production, le transport, la transformation et la commercialisation des hydrocarbures. National Company for research and development of hydrocarbons belongs to the public sector.
S.N.S.	Société Nationale de Siderurgie. A State Corporation of the iron and steel industry
SN SEMPAC	Société Nationale des Semouleries, Meuneries et Fabriques des Pâtes Alimentaires et Couscous: the National Pasta and Couscous Company
SNED	Société Nationale d'Édition et de Diffusion. The State Publishing Company
UDMA	Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien, created in 1946
UGTA	Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens, created in 1956
USTA	Union des Syndicats de Travailleurs Algériens, created in 1956

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to determine the relationships between workers and management, with special reference to absence from work, in an Algerian tractor factory (Sonacome).

When we talk about worker-management relations, we are above all referring to the socio-economic development that is happening in Algeria and seeing inefficiency and worker absenteeism as the result of a rapid change in production which goes ahead of parallel changes in society.

So, absenteeism is treated here as an index of disjunctions in socio-economic development. How, broadly, can we characterise the transformation of Algeria since independence in 1962? It is the conjunction of three processes - decolonisation, an attempt to build socialism in one country and rapid industrialisation.

First, the policy of decolonisation that followed immediately after independence sought to "purify"* the economy by nationalising and otherwise excluding foreign interests. This however has suffered for lack of skilled personnel and advanced technology, a problem which leads to a continued dependence on advanced countries. That is to say, Algerian development depends to some extent on foreign experts and technicians and also on the imported technology from these countries, especially France and West Germany. This dependence on the ex-colonial regime forms common ground between the private sector and the bureaucrats who are culturally influenced by the old capitalist regime. This situation does seem to reinforce the position of bureaucrats and wealthy individuals who appear as the dominant class in the country, and behave

in a way which frustrates the policy of socialism and this indirectly induces workers dissatisfaction.

Secondly, the rulers of Algeria paint a picture of transition from capitalism instituted in one sector of a dual economy under the French colons (who canalised the economy towards cash-crops and light industry and reforming agriculture. The key question is how far this transition has been carried through in the consciousness of managers and workers. The answer is not a matter of yes or no, because the Algerian transitional policy towards socialism is still far from being achieved. Whatever the regime formally claims, and whatever the sincerity of these claims, in reality the workers are still separated from the means of production and they consider themselves wage labourers, as is the case in capitalist countries. Their participation in the work process is limited and their share of the social welfare and economic wealth which the state provides is far behind their expectations.

Low awareness of the working population and the weakness of the party to defend socialism, leads to the domination of bureaucrats and of the bourgeoisie in the private sector, which creates conflict between workers and managers and frustrates the rapid transition to socialism.

Thirdly, the transformation could be characterised as a shift from a predominantly pre-capitalist agrarian society to an industrialised society, organised on "state socialist" lines. However the traditional values of client-patron relations and regionalism remaining from the pre-capitalist system seem to affect the workers' behaviour in Sonacome. Arguably they deal with each other according to kinship and nepotism, rather than rules and rational values, and absenteeism and turnover may be a consequence of the conflicts of role and interest this engenders.

The rate of absenteeism and job turnover may increase or decrease according to the degree of worker integration into the new social structure and social order. The differences between individuals and groups in relation to background, occupation, and general beliefs will tell us about the individual's adaptation to the new social system of socialist management based on bureaucratic norms.

As far as the worker's background and his occupation are concerned; in the former there is a difference in the attitudes of workers who migrated from the countryside to work in industry, and those of urban workers who are used more or less to working in a regular industrial job. The latter division is based on differences in occupation held by each individual. This in turn gives rise to new rules and procedures which are incompatible with the old values. It appears from our contract with workers that their behaviour is chiefly "agricultural" and based on traditional beliefs and values, rather than on bureaucratic norms. Even if this is not always the case, there is some division of the workforce into those with traditional backgrounds and those with modern ones. But this absence of homogeneity among workers brings them into conflict with management. The formal rules and procedures have been borrowed from more advanced societies rather than having developed gradually according to Algerian social organisation, and are applied by a few technocrats who share in different degrees the same traditional background as the majority of the workers and are themselves unfamiliar with rational industrial organisation.

The worker does not consider official organs such as the workers' council, or the instructions of group chiefs as representing the general values that maintain collective interests, but instead reacts toward formal collective rules, by using "... personal relations with management,

loyalties of kinship and neighbourhood."¹

As was found in a craft industry in America studied by Blauner, the traditional ways of things and policy is implicit and unwritten."²

The Algerian formal structure is also affected by relations which are based on mutual respect and services which individuals provide to each other. They render obligations to relatives or use favouritism, all of which do not comply with bureaucratic rules. This behaviour is encouraged because of the absence of bureaucratic habits.

The absence of real bureaucratic habit encourages the use of kinship, regionalism and patronage to penetrate the work situation in Sonacome. The continuation of these features into the rational context increases the resentment and grievances of workers. Strikes take place, despite the fact that strikes are not permitted in Algeria. For example on the 18th of May, 1981 in a car plant owned by the Sonacome company, workers went out on strike accusing management of unjust behaviour with regard to workers' interests in the plant. A weekly editorial of "Revolution and work " (Revolution Et Travail) August, 1981 explained the worker's case: first, management discriminates against individuals by treating workers unequally in work promotion, and on the basis of their region of origin. Second, management exercises a coercive power upon workers by humiliating them, or dismissing them without good reasons, also managers are accused of using factory property for their own interests. Third, managers favour some workers at the expense of others by permitting absence or falsifying absenteeism files.³

Recently a survey has been made in a branch of the SN Sempac which showed that new workers have a higher rate of absence, of more than 10% than the old workers who have only a 5% absence rate. This could

be due to the above difficulties which faced workers, causing dissatisfaction with management policy. The survey also demonstrated that, the excuse for this absence was provided by an average of one sickness note each day throughout either the plant or workers.⁴

This kind of behaviour in Algerian institutions is caused by the workers' dissatisfaction with the work conditions and by management's failure to integrate workers fully into the new situation of work. It is obvious that there is different behaviour and attitudes between rural and urban workers, between the educated and the illiterate, between skilled and semi-skilled workers. If we consider the family ties, general beliefs, religion etc. as factors of integration, an evaluation of those would determine the degree of adaptation to the factory situation.

The Sonacome workforce is made up of groups which are heterogenous in background and way of life, which is related to the environment in which they were brought up and to the kind and degree of education they received. Therefore we would expect a lack of integration to the factory situation among workers with a rural background and who are illiterate and inexperienced in industrial work. Job aspirations for promotion, high wages, a job with prospects for the future, are unknown in this group and its behaviour is more or less submissive, accepting things as they are and not aggressive in seeking to change the conditions of work. This would lead us to expect that the group has a lower rate of absence and turnover on this account. Yet we have to remember that this group has more obligations towards its domestic life than urban workers, which equally may lead to absence.

On the other hand the urban worker is more experienced in industrial

work, more highly skilled and more educated. Thus job aspirations are high among this group. It makes more demands and is also more reluctant to accept unsatisfactory working conditions. This may lead to high absence and turnover when these expectations are not met. However, generally there is a consensus among management to improve conditions and to implement rules and instructions correctly, and it is violated only by some elements in the social organisation.

This study is divided into two parts, the first part includes the social, political and economic changes that happened in Algeria since French rule. When the worker's organisation was not mature, its rights were usurped under an unequal society dominated by a few foreign or indigenous employers who were interested in extracting profit as much as they could. The workers and peasants suffered most from this unequal society, when the final revolution was launched, working people were in the front line and colonial rule was ended in 1962.

The new regime for independent Algeria claimed to be socialist in order to secure the worker's interests and to involve him in managing and controlling his work. The theoretical discussion in part one, starts with a brief review of the historical background which is viewed as having a great effect on socio-economic development.

Throughout the first part, it is my intention to take a relatively comprehensive approach which might throw light on the topic of the thesis and on the data collected from the factory, it includes five chapters. Chapter One deals with the historical structure of Algerian organisation. It analyses the socio-economic and political conditions that shaped Algerian society through its history. It begins from the French colonial rule to the period after independence. This

chapter illustrates the socio-political background that led to the birth of a socialist regime, how the struggle over power continued after independence and finally how Boumediene reinforced state power by depending on the army and technocrats in order to achieve political stability and economic development.

Chapter Two concentrates on explaining the trade union movement and its struggle to improve work conditions both before and after independence. However this chapter also deals with the factory's formal structure and analyses the socialist management scheme as it is envisaged in the social policy laid down in the National Charter, and comments on how this scheme functions in practice, exploring why workers are still not involved in real terms in controlling and managing the enterprises.

Chapter Three is concerned with Algerian socialism, how it is conceived by officials and how it functions in reality. The chapter provides an account of the origins of Algerian socialism and how it consists of a mixture of policies which allow different forms, i.e. capitalism, socialism, Islam, to live together. After discussing 'scientific socialism' by giving the example of the soviet union and describing how the economics of 'scientific socialism' have influenced Algeria, I pass to 'Islamic socialism' and how Islam has influenced the behaviour and attitudes of people. And thirdly I describe how a 'state capitalism' is maintained in Algeria by keeping close relations with capitalist regimes and allowing the private sector to grow at the cost of an increasing separation between the State and the working population.

I shall argue that the bourgeoisie have penetrated the state apparatus through the senior management staff in order to protect their interests, and they use personal and informal relations with each other based on kinship and blood relations that is maintained by the form of old traditions.

Chapter Four, is concerned with the theory and literature on absenteeism, it tries to show the socio-economic and cultural background that determines the workers' behaviour. Two approaches have been examined, one is related to the restlessness of workers, the second is related to the factory social structure which defines the relationships between workers and management. It also examines the conflict that arises between workers and managers in a developing country like Algeria.

Chapter Five, entitled "Absenteeism and its causes" tries to illustrate some causes that influence absenteeism in the advanced societies. It also gives evidence of factors that could effect absenteeism in the Sonacome factory.

The second part of this thesis is an empirical study carried out in the tractor factory in 1979, and analyses the data by statistical procedures.

This part includes three chapters, it begins with Chapter Six which describes the factory formal structure and the way samples have been chosen. This chapter deals mainly with the way the data was collected, its distribution and the difficulties faced by the researcher which forced him to modify the questionnaire.

Chapter Seven "External factors of absenteeism" analyses the findings by referring to external causes that have affected absenteeism in Sonacome, such as migration, family problems, transport, previous job etc.

Chapter Eight deals with the internal causes, it starts by giving an idea about the control system under a socialist regime, and analyses the workers attitudes towards officials, i.e. managers, supervisors and the members of the trade union. It also looks at the effect of wage

level on workers' stability in Sonacome. This chapter includes an appendix of four individual cases which illuminate the situation of work and of the lives and behaviour of the workers.

Notes to Introduction

- * This is a notion used by H. Bounediene
- 1. B. Blauner, Alienation and Freedom. 1964 by the University of Chicago, p.76
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. El Thawra W'el-Amal (Revolution and Work) 3rd August, 1981 No. 333 p. 4 Arabic version
- 4. Ibid., p.6

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE BEFORE 1962

Before the French invasion of Algeria on 14th June 1830, it was under Turkish rule. Many Algerians rejected the Turkish regency and in some areas the Algerian peasants refused to pay taxes to the central government.

Algiers fell to the French on 5th July 1830, and the urban population came under French occupation and failed to provide significant resistance. So the task of the resistance was passed to the non-urban population, i.e. the Algerian tribes. The tribes were divided into the Juads (war chiefs), and the marbtin (religious chiefs) and these two groups were linked by the religious parties - the brotherhoods.¹

As Algeria was primarily an agricultural society, the French expanded their occupation to seize the land inside Algeria. In order to defend the land, the tribes organised themselves under one or other of the chiefs. But the lack of coordination and solidarity between the tribes in national terms led to their failure to maintain the independence of the countryside.

According to Bruno, 'the Algeria of 1830 was locked in a complex system of alliances, of blood bonds, of factions, and of groups'.² This division between the groups caused difficulties in uniting their actions, Abdelkader in his resistance to the

French faced these difficulties when he was forced to fight some of the tribes to break their local ties and bring them onto his side.³ At the same time the French used these differences among Algerian groups in order to set one against the other, as was the case in the revolt of Mokrani in 1871 where the split between the aristocracy which supported Mokrani, and the religious democracy which supported Rahmania⁴ enabled the colons to crush the revolt quickly.

Why in 1830 did Algeria not take collective action in their resistance to the French? Collective action was not of course achieved until the successful revolution in 1954-62.

Colonna, Bruno seem to agree that the tribal society^{of that time} was based on kinship ties and patron-client relations. Also the tribes of the countryside were largely independent of urban society and had little link with the central government. At the same time, the French invasion was not systematic, which gave the impression that it was not very substantial and would not last long. So, Algerians did not take it seriously apart from a few such as Abdelkader and Ahmed Bey of Constantine, who nevertheless failed to generate adequate support.

After 1871 the French administration consolidated its grip on Algeria and subjected a 'large part of the native population to the power of the settlers'.⁵ They then used the tribal chiefs and clergymen as a tool of control, and took advantage of the traditional structure of the rural population by appointing a person well-respected who came from a noble family or was a religious leader, to rule local affairs.

So, the French used the feudal form of kinship organization in order to maintain control of these tribes. The towns were already under control.

In the early years of the first world war the struggle changed from a tribal form to a political one. But this time the struggle was initiated in the towns by the urban bourgeoisie now forming a class, who tried to secure their position by using the modern French model; les Manifeste des Jeune Algeriens, L'Etoile Nord Africain and the reformist ulernas had borrowed the ideals of equality, fraternity and freedom from France and used them for their own benefit. They tried several political ways to bring about changes in Algeria and to transfer power legally to the indigenous population. The three main groups involved were: the Assimilationists who insisted on equality and the improvement of the native population, the Etoile Nord Africain party who emphasised independence and immediate transfer of the land and enterprises to peasants and workers, and the Reformists who concentrated on the cultural issue, arguing that Arabic and Islam must be reintroduced and applied in schools. The different emphases among these groups did not affect their respective claims to represent the entire population of whatever background, which was perhaps the major cause of their coming closer to each other in the 1940s-50s, This eventually produced a unified party of liberation (FLN) in 1954-56.

The collapse of tribal resistance

The nineteenth century was shaped by a series of revolts raised by the nationalists and led by religious chiefs after the fall of Algiers

The first revolt (1832-47) was led by Emir Abdelkader who was a son of a religious family, his father being the head of a (Zawiya) holy lodge in the Guetma near Mascara. When Abdelkader announced his revolt surrounded by his tribes, he presented himself to them as an Emir of believers (Emir Al-Muminin).⁶ Abdelkader's revolt was the longest one and lasted seventeen years, he was not a religious man only, but he was a soldier, and described as an original politician and statesman.⁷

The revolt of Abdelkader taught the French how to play on the tribal divisions, and by the end of 1830s, the French colonels had made several vague peace treaties with Abdelkader, which perhaps they were not serious about. Also they tried to convince the Algerian population that they were there to free them from the Turkish oppressors, while at the same time they cooperated with the Turks against the Revolutionaries. Again they exploited tribal division and collaborated with one against another. In particular they used reward as a means of attracting these tribal chiefs to cooperate with them - by supplying them with arms to fight other tribes.⁸

Abdelkader controlled two thirds of the population in the year of 1837-39 mainly in the south and launched the holy war (Jihad).⁹ However, this did not last long, because of

divisions between the tribes and the destruction of some of the tribes in revolt. Also he faced hostility from the sultan of Morocco in whose province his troops were settled at this time.

After the defeat of Abedlkader in 1847, the French continued to play on Algerian tribal divisions, in order to weaken the tribal system. At the same time they were reinforcing their occupation. Therefore the succeeding revolts were limited to the tribal region and short lived, and mainly led by clergymen¹⁰ in the east of Constantine and the south in 1852, in Kabylie between 1854 to 1858, in the Aures and Oran regions in 1858, in the Kabylie region again in 1864 and 1865, in M'sila and Boussaada in 1870, in Biskara in 1879 and in the western Aures in 1879.¹¹

After these revolts the peasants and their leaders were exhausted and most of them fled to the countryside and to poor areas, while the colons extended their occupation and this time concentrated on introducing new socio-economic and political measures in order to transform the property system and to impose new order. Colonna writes:

'The land tenure laws of 1873 and 1887, following the decrees of 1863, arrived at the breaking of 'native' property and at the collapse of the tribal structures, extension of civilian administration which subjected a large part of the native population to the power of the settlers, increase of native taxation, abolition of traditional justice, prosecution of the holy lodges, and the establishment of an official clergy, controlled by the state.'¹²

The early assimilationist movement

By the turn of the twentieth century new movements arose. This time the resistance did not take direct action, but rather demanded reform, as already mentioned. Native intellectuals tried through cooperation with the settlers to bring about changes in the unjust social order. These intellectuals drew on the French ideal of equality and sought to introduce it in Algeria. However, these ideals were not in the interests of the colons, who did not want to risk their privileges in Algeria. So, even those intellectuals who wanted to embrace French nationality in order to have the same opportunity as the French, did not find the idea welcomed by the settlers. This group of muslims had acquired French education, and came originally from noble families such as caids and clergies.¹³ So, it is possible to assume that the assimilationist movement started by the group of les manifeste jeunes Algeriens in the first world war, aimed to secure their privileges and to regain their nobility without a mass base support, which gave the impression that they were not seeking improvement for the entire population, but were demanding the right to have socio-economic and political equality with their counterparts among European settlers. Quandt suggests that these demands 'usually presented as petitions by the most westernised segments of Algerian society, generally met with failure.'¹⁴

The failure of the Jeune Algerien's movement was due to French intransigence and lack of cooperation with the nationalists.

It led to a more radical movement. After the first world war new political groups emerged among the nationalists especially among those who had been serving in the French army, and accused France of not keeping its promises towards equality and freedom of the indigenes. Under these pressures France had chosen Emir Khalid as the representative of the nationalist groups such as Jeune Algerien, les intellectuels des villes, Kemalistes.¹⁵

Emir Khalid as a nationalist and religious man opposed the idea of the Jeunes Algeriens like Soualah, Benthami, Bouderberba, Tamzali, for Emir Khalid Francisation did not mean assimilation, in other words total integration with France. The Algerians could become French citizens by preserving their culture.¹⁶

As the grievances grew among the reform movement, they created the "federation des Elus" in 1926, which was taken over by Ferhat Abbas in the 1930s who changed its name into les Amis du manifeste et de la Liberté (A.M.L.) in 1943, and then to union démocratique des Algeriens Musulmans (U.D.M.A.) in 1944.¹⁷

Etoile nord Africain

The second movement was created in France and based upon Algerian migrant workers. The aim of the movement first of all was to defend the material, moral and social interests of the north African Muslims...and to educate the members of the association".¹⁸ The Etoile Nord Africain (E.N.A.) created in 1925 by Hadj Abedlkader, and led by Messali Hadj who

revolutionised the movement, claimed independence and equality for the Algerian people and condemned the colonial oppression.¹⁹

The party was dissolved in 1929, its leaders arrested and in 1933 reappeared, but soon dissolved again. In 1937 the party was transformed into a party of the Algerian people (P.P.A.), then to the movement pour le triomphe des libertes democratiques (M.T.L.D.) in 1946.²⁰

The Ulemas

A third movement was founded in the 1930s among the Ulemas and led by Ben Badis. It presented itself as the only defender of Islam and of Arabic culture in Algeria. As Colonna points out

"The ulemas never carried out direct political action. Yet the temptation to interpret their movement as a political party is great."²¹

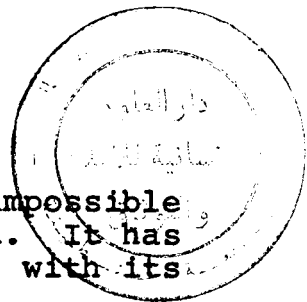
The ulemas' main objectives were on the one side to resist assimilationists and on the other purify Islam of mysticism and superstitions. Their preaching of true Islam was extended into social and political life which were needed for the protection and progress of the community.²²

So, on 5 May 1935 l'association des Oulemas Algeriens was created and launched an attack on the Marabouts "because they had betrayed Islam (by encouraging superstition) and the nation (by dealing with the invader)".²³ And against the assimilationism of Ferhat Abbas who wrote:

"An Algerian fatherland does not exist; we are children of a new world, born of the French spirit and French efforts."²⁴

Ben-Baddis replied

"The Algerian nation is not France, it is impossible to be French, even if it wants assimilation. It has its territory determined, which is Algeria, with its actual borders."²⁵



Events leading to the formation of F.L.N.

Despite the differences in emphasis between these political groups, the events intensified from 1930s onward and forced the parties to compromise with each other. An important factor was the failure of the Blum-violette project which promised to improve the Algerian conditions. These promises of action from Paris frightened the colon population in Algeria, ... and great pressure was brought to bear in order to sabotage these liberal plans. This however shifted away the belief that full assimilation of Algerians into French life would be the surest path of progress."²⁶ Thus the Islamic congress held in 1936 included the assimilationists represented by Bendjelloul and Dr. Tamzali, the Ulemas represented by Ben-Badis and Al-Uqbi, L'Etoile nord-Africaine represented by Messali Hadj and the communists represented by Ben Ali Boukhort.²⁷ The meeting was attended by more than 5000 muslims, opened by Tamzali followed by Bendjelloul who declared their loyalty to France.²⁸ The congress voted for a list of demands which was presented to the French Interior Minister.

"demanding the repeal of discriminatory laws, the detachment of Algeria from France, respect of personal status, separation of Church and State, merger of the two education systems, European and indigenous, freedom of education in Arabic and freedom of expression for the Arab press; equal salary for equal work; aid to the fellahin, a single electoral college for elections by universal suffrage."²⁹

The emphasis of the ulemas was cultural. They demanded the opening of mosques for muslims, arabic language at schools, permission for the ulemas to eradicate from Islam mysticism and Sofism. According to Bruno, these principles survived within the FLN declaration during the war - and after, *i.e.* in the Soummam charter (1956), Tripoli congress (1962) and in the Algier's charter (1964).

On the other hand the radicals also opposed the assimilationists and Messali Hadj called on the people

"To be grouped in a mass around their national organization (North African Star) which would defend and guide you in the path of emancipation." ³⁰

Thus, the continuous failure and frustration these groups suffered before 1954, led eventually to a more violent group who abandoned peaceful means as a way of achieving independence. This happened only after the second world war. A critical event was the police reaction to a public demonstration in 1945 in three cities, as a result of which many lost their lives. From that time a group of revolutionaries and politicians were prepared for a long and violent revolution.

Quandt distinguishes revolutionaries and politicians among those who prepared for the 1954 revolution. Politicians came from highly professional occupations, such as doctors, lawyers etc. like Messali Hadj and Ferhat Abbas, whereas most of the revolutionaries came from lower status occupations. "Several revolutionaries at one time or another were workers, either in small industries or on the land." ³¹ Such as Khider, Bitat, Guerroudj, Youcef, Oumeziane. Among the revolutionaries *were*

some who served in the French army, like Ben Bella. They "were bound to be reminded continually that the colons of Algeria would never accept them as equals". Revolutionaries who spent some years as common workers seem to have developed a rather strong identification with the "impoverished muslim masses" or the "exploited peasantry".³²

According to Quandt

"... at least three fourths of the revolutionaries gained their initial political party experience under the tutelage of Messali and his colleagues". He carries on to say, "A few were more attracted to Ferhat Abbas, the communists or the reformist ulema."³³

The revolutionaries abandoned peaceful means in 1947 and instead

"organised themselves into a new clandestine group dedicated to the use of violence, the Organisation Special (O.S.)."³⁴

Amar Oumrane put it this way

"We were formed by our history - the constant revolts against France, the humiliations, the suffering, the shocking and revolting inequalities - all of this educated us. The nationalist parties sent deputies to the French assembly, but their action always ended in failure."³⁵

When it eventually came, the 1954 Revolution was the result of colonial politics. To understand it we have to identify the political tendencies of groups which dominate Algerian politics to this day. According to Quandt:

"between 1936 and 1954 the leadership of the nationalist forces within Algeria passed first from the hands of Liberals to the radicals, then from the radicals to the revolutionaries. Each of these developments was associated with a changing consensus as to the nature of the political problems of a given historical period."³⁶

On 1 November 1954, the Front de liberation national (F.L.N.) was announced by the revolutionaries, and at the same time they launched several attacks on French units. As the number of the revolutionaries was limited and perhaps ill organised, the other parties hesitated to join the action even if they sympathised. Messali created a counter party to the F.L.N. the Movement Nationale Algerien (M.N.A.); Dr. Bendjelloul tried to explain the Algerian case to the French authority, and a number of revolutionaries were arrested or killed.

By 1956 most of these politicians came to terms with the F.L.N. which for its part softened its position towards liberals and communists in order to attract them to join in and it then could legitimately claim to represent all the Algerian people.

In 1955 the F.L.N. supported the politicians of the U.D.M.A. and the M.T.L.D. in their demand for independence.³⁷ This was perhaps in order to gain international recognition, At the same time the F.L.N. called on all groups to unite and join them. As military action carried out by the F.L.N. increased, the French authorities abandoned their dealings with the moderate nationalists, and by 1956 most of these groups had joined the F.L.N. In the same year a congress was held among the internal revolutionaries in the Sommam valleys. Three principles were adopted

- (i) the primacy of the interior revolutionaries over the exterior
- (ii) the primacy of the political over the military
- (iii) collegiate decision making.³⁸

A revolutionary member of the F.L.N. comments on the congress that

"The congress of the Soummam was a second November 1. Up until then I was afraid of dying for fear that the organization of the revolution might collapse. After 1956 I had no fear since solid structures were rapidly set up." 39

The unification of all parties and their cooperation towards achieving independence was not mobilized without confrontations and differences of opinion / and policies which were transformed into a sectional conflict, which arose in the last years of the revolution and continued after independence.

The Struggle for power after Independence

After independence in 1962, Algeria was faced with serious conflict among the members of the political elite who came from different backgrounds and held different political views. Mouloud Gaid points out that:

"Tendencies existed within the assembly because deputies had different basic political formations. Some had been with the P.C.C. some with the M.T.L.D. some with the U.D.M.A. or Ulema, and this basic education had left its mark. With my French schooling I could not easily give up my cartesian way of reasoning, and those from Arab schools were different in some ways. But when faced with specific problems we could usually understand each other easily."⁴⁰

So, the division between the elite group into several political groupings such as the liberals, radicals, and revolutionaries, as well as personal differences, helped to create difficulties in reaching a compromise policy for independent Algeria. The Tripoli programme held in June 1962 represents the main socio-economic and political package adopted by the national council of the Algerian revolution. The authors of the programme were Redha Malek, Mohamed Ben Yahia, Mostafa Lacheraf, and Mohamed Harbi, who were assisted by other intellectuals and encouraged by Ben Bella.⁴¹

The programme was on the whole "socialist". It sought to demask the attitude of neo-colonialism. It emphasised agrarian reform, nationalisation of foreign credit and external trade in the first step, and the nationalisation of natural resources. In this they tried to explain the aim of the Evian accord adopted by the G.P.R.A. which were considered by

the Tripoli programme to be a new colonialism. In the Evian accord French interests would be preserved along with what was called "total cooperation" between the two countries. This was taken by the drafters of the programme as a guarantee that the French would maintain Algeria's dependence on France economically and culturally. The G.P.R.A. however did seem to agree with the terms Of the Evian accords, Quandt points out that

"the program foresaw a state subscribing to socialist principles, in which the large means of production would be collectivised and rational planning would be introduced'.

At the cultural level the program^{mt} cited that

"Algerian culture was to be 'national, revolutionary, and scientific', and Islam in its modern, progressive form would be a central component of the Algerian personality'.⁴²

As we have seen the socio-economic issues were successfully tackled in the Tripoli programme, but, however, the political issue was more complicated and perhaps far from being resolved. For example some of the resolutions adopted by the Soummam Congress such as the primacy of internal policy over the exterior was not favoured by the politicians in the Tripoli congress. Also they criticised the Evian accord as we have said. The result was tense conflict between the three political forces. As Quandt said "Liberals continued to fight Radicals, Revolutionaries opposed both while falling out among themselves".⁴³

It was stated in the Tripoli programme that socialism was a technical method which would be followed for Algerian development.

In September 1962 three months after the publication of the Tripoli programme, Ben Bella was elected President by the National Constituent Assembly and charged to form a government.

It is worth mentioning that it was the moderate elements from the FLN mainly, and some members of radicals and other liberals who approved the Tripoli programme and it was supported by the Etat Major,⁴⁴ which played a major role in the selection of Ben-Bella's government. The conflict between the Etat major and the G.P.R.A. in the early days of independence ended in favour of the Etat major which was under the command of Boumediene and considered to be well organised, and, therefore, it was supported by Willayas 1, 5, 6 and also by some eminent members of the G.P.R.A. such as Ben-Bella and Khider.

Ben-Bella was chosen president with the support of the Etat major, but the split, among the elite was obvious. Even within the government, division among groups was clear, although they compromised in order to avoid physical confrontation which had already taken place in some regions among the army factions.

Ben-Bella's government was made up of the liberals represented by Francis and Boumedjel, the radicals by Bentoumi and Boumaza, the revolutionaries by Ben-Bella himself, also Oumezegane and Bitat, the military most notably by Boumediene Medaghri, and Bouteflika and the intellectuals by Khemisti and Benhamida.⁴⁵

The Algerian political system under Ben-Bella was dominated by three main figures, Ben-Bella himself as president of state, Khider as the Secretary General of the F.L.N. and Houary Boumediene as minister of defence. The conflict started by some misunderstanding between Ben-Bella and Khider who said once

"... he did not oppose a multiparty system so long as other parties worked within the framework of the constitution." ... Two months after Khider's overture to the communists, however the minister of information announced that the PCA would be banned in Algeria, not because of anticommunism, he asserted, but simply because no other parties would be allowed to organise."⁴⁶

Khider did well in the first year as Secretary General, he managed to subordinate the U.G.T.A. to the F.L.N. by reaching an agreement with the "elected leaders of the U.G.T.A. who would accept the authority of the political bureau."⁴⁷ He also tended to enlarge the party which would "have the authority over all political structures in the state."⁴⁸

In 1963 Khider resigned and Ben-Bella took over the control of the F.L.N. because as he explained, the State should not be influenced by the F.L.N.. When Khider resigned, he did seem to pull with him to the opposition some influential elements such as Ben Tobbal, Boussouf, and Boudiaf, with others who were criticising the government openly.⁴⁵ From that time on, Ben-Bella's government was seeking support from other groups, such as the U.G.T.A., and the army. He gained the support of the trade union because of the measures he took in the "charte d'Alger" in which spontaneous self management was legitimised, and workers and peasants were invited to participate in controlling and managing their own work.

The major resolutions concluded in the Algier's charter were to have a 'new economy, new party and new state'.⁵⁰ Ben Bella to some extent succeeded in having a new economy by introducing the self management scheme, nationalising some private property and creating some national corporations like Sonatrach, and succeeded in creating one party as the vanguard of the society. But to have a new state was more complicated. Ben-Bella attempts to get rid of his opponents and to reduce the influence of the army by placing his allies in higher positions created suspicion and tension within the State.

The Algier's charter, was an impressive piece of drafting carefully planned and well documented, but to put it in practice required a competent and unified state machine with tolerance and compassion which was lacking in Algeria at that time. As a result a coup d'état took place on 19 June 1965 by the army led by colonel Boumediene who personally felt threatened by the previous regime.⁵¹

Boumediene's regime did not reject the policy introduced by the Tripoli congress and the Algier's charter. His policy was rather to consolidate the state in order to achieve stability.

Quandt summarises Boumediene's policy as follows

"Emphasis was placed on the need for order, stability, planning, efficiency, legality, economic development, hard work, the reinforcing of state authority, consultation, and technical competence, as a criterion for recruitment."⁵²

The policies launched by Boumediene when he came to power succeeded to some extent, in spite of the political turbulence in that time.

As is often the case in third world countries, where the army plays a significant role in politics, Boumediene in power depended on the national army to maintain stability. Under Ben-Bella's government as minister of defence he had reorganized the army and recruited new, educated officers.⁵³ Thus, the council of the revolution which was announced immediately after the coup mostly consisted of military officers. It was made up of one radical, three revolutionaries, and twenty two officers who come mostly from the interior villayas.⁵⁴ Boumediene's lower-ranking state apparatus also depended on the national army, made up of 60,000 men, 10,000 gendarmes, 3,500 in the airforce and 1500 in the navy.⁵⁵

The French left 23,183 Algerians trained for administration functions, many of whom were provided to fulfill what they called the "constantine plan" that had been offered by De Gaulle in 1958 in order to stop guerilla warfare. By 1969 the bureaucracy had increased under Boumediene's regime to 186.738.⁵⁶

The increase in the power of the military and technocrats meant the decrease of the F.L.N.'s role which was favoured under Ben Bella. Boumediene favoured the army over the party, because he considered the army "the symbol of past unity, of the common war, of the national liberation ... The army which had made the revolution could only serve the revolution."⁵⁷

Boumediene tended to speak of the army as ~~at one with~~ the people. He described the army in his speech in Oran in 1966

"In truth our djounouds are the sons of peasants and workers who fought for the recuperation of land and factory." 58

According to Leca and Vatin the Algerian army had progressed technically between 1962-67⁵⁹ To the present day in fact the Algerian army has played an effective role in the economy beside its military role. It serves and controls the economic establishments with officers and specialists. For instance it implemented the agrarian revolutionary charter of 1971 and participated in the development of the 1970s projects.⁶⁰

The involvement of the Algerian army in politics extended to the provincial level, where in some provinces the head was an army officer, like Mayor Hoffman who became Wali d'Alger, and djelloul wali (prefect) in the South.

We have already seen that the party under Ben-Bella became confounded with the State. A significant event in this process was that in 1963 Khider resigned from the General Secretarianship of the F.L.N. The one-party state idea was confirmed by the Algiers charter which stated that

"The achievement of the party programme would be assured within the state framework by participating in the state establishments, especially in the control positions" ... These principles must be registered in the reality, of the legislative structure of the state, i.e. the state president must be the head of the party too."⁶¹

As Leca and Vatin point out, Boumediene's regime followed the same tendency to concentrate personal power as under Ben Bella.⁶²

Boumediene's policy only embraced the party in the influence of the army, but also reduced the party's effectiveness by giving the army control over recruitment to the party. For instance,

"The general rules of 24 January 1968 which fixed the composition of commissions which were charged with controlling the applications from new markets and for renewals of membership in the party, introduced this arrangement at the department and federation level, and ensured that a representative of the army must be present at three levels, i.e. department, federation, and the Kasma".⁶³

This shift of power to the state and the problem of bureaucracy to which it yet gave rise was foreseen by the Tripoli programme and again by the Algier's charter. To avoid the 'deformation of bureaucracy' the regime introduced several measures including self-management and cooperation between the party and UGT.A. A further encouragement to bureaucracy was that the state's aim since 1965 was to create an independent economy and develop the country very rapidly on a broad front by an industrial revolution which could spur an agrarian revolution, both revolutions being cemented by a cultural revolution.

Boumediene's economic measures were put into effect in 1966, when he nationalised private property especially foreign, and established in their place a dozen state corporations. In 1967, he launched the programme of industrial revolution.

In the same year there was a reform of communes - the lowest ties of public bureaucracy. Assemblies were selected in 676 communes, by the party on the basis of the candidate's party competence, devotion and morals.⁶⁴

In 1969 there was a reform of villayas. The regional departments are the link between commune on the bottom rung of public bureaucracy and the state at the top. After the reform the head of the willaya must be appointed by the state.

By 1971, three further major events had occurred - the first was the launch of the agrarian revolution which was intended to break up large private land holdings and reorganize them into cooperatives. This programme included the building of one thousand agricultural villages, a goal yet to be achieved. The second was nationalisation of the remaining French hydrocarbon interests. This was considered to be the main basis of the industrial revolution. The third was the announcement of the socialist management of enterprises which would involve workers' participating with management in managing the enterprises.⁶⁵

Boumediene's main goal was to develop the country rapidly, and to offer jobs, schools, hospitals etc. to people. He declared in 1973 that

"for us, development is a policy, and the policy is development, if we succeed in this field all the other problems will only be secondary."⁶⁶

His development policy was based on the hydrocarbon wealth. This had an effect on the general direction of the policy.

"The magnitude of the plans for industrialisation and their anticipated impact naturally led to the state taking control of the whole economy, in order to direct their execution itself. (...) for purposes of efficiency national corporations were set up in all sectors where the size of investments and international markets, and the complexity of technical and administrative problems excluded management by the workers."⁶⁷

By 1972 some sort of stability was achieved, beside the establishment of the main basis of economic development. At the same time social reforms were undertaken such as the launch of the national health service, the reform of higher education, and the public debates over the national charter in the summer of 1976.

These measures appeared to consolidate the socialist principles that Boumediene intended to achieve. However, his death in 1978 revived the struggle for power between the radical left, represented by Saleh Yahoui, and Abdelaziz Bouteflika who favoured the liberal line. As the two rivals could not resolve their ideological differences, "the army's nominee, Chadly Benjedid, emerged as the compromise choice."⁶⁸ He eliminated both contenders,^{and} tried to effect a compromise between the two lines and to preserve the gains of socialism.

Conclusions

The present regime in Algeria still has difficulty in achieving stability and in carrying out socialist policies effectively. This is partly because of the continued struggle for power between the army and the bureaucracy on the one hand, who under the umbrella of the state exercise power and act as guardians of general development, and the party and the U.G.T.A. on the other hand who occupy the second position and are used as a tool to serve the policies of the state. This conflict has an impact on the economy and leads to discontent expressed by strikes and political demonstration.

Another source of the difficulties is that the reform of industrial and agricultural relations was relatively unsuccessful. It failed to end contradictions and inefficiency within the public sector of the economy. The socialist management scheme has been one such reform. It attempts to bring workers and management together to achieve collective management. Relations between workers and management will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter One

1. F. Colona, Cultural Resistance and Religious Legitimacy in Colonial Algeria. Economy and Society, vol. 3, 1974, p. 242.
2. E. Bruno, L'Algerie cultures et Revolution. Editions Du Seuil, 1977, p.98.
3. Ibid.
4. Tidjania one of the tribes collaborated with the French against another one. See Bruno, Julien.
5. F. Colona, op.cit., p.240.
6. C.A. Julien, Les Africains, editions J.A. 1977
7. Ibid. p. 22.
8. Ibid. p. 24.
9. Julien, op.cit.
10. Colonna, op.cit.
11. The most famous names of these revolts were as follows. Ouled sidi sheikh in the south, Lalla Fatma in grande Kabylie, Rahmania, Medjena, Mokrani, Boumzeg, Mohamed Ben Yahia, Bouburma, and BouAmama. See Lecca and Vatin L'Algerie politique institutions et regime presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques 1975.
12. Colonna, op.cit., p.240.
13. These were chiefs of Muslims, employed by the French settlers. See Lecca and Vatin, op.cit.,
14. W. Quandt, Revolution and political leadership in Algeria, 1954-1968. The M.I.T. Press 1969, p.5.
15. E. Bruno, L'Algerie cultures et Revolution. Editions du Seuil, 1977, p.195.
16. J.C. Vatin, L'Algerie politique. Histoire et societe cahiers de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, armond colin 1974, p.173.
17. Colonna, op.cit., p.195

18. C.A. Julien, L'Afrique Du Nord En Marche Nationalism Musulmans et souveraineté Francaise, Julliard, 1972, p.106.
19. Bruno, op.cit., p.196.
20. See Bruno, Julien, Vatin, op.cit.
21. F. Colonna. op. cit.
22. Colonna, op.cit., p.237.
23. ibid.
24. About the life and the movement of Ferhat Abbas see R. Italiander. The New Leaders of Africa. Translated from the German by J. McGovern, Prentice-Hall, 1961, p.18.
25. Julien, op.cit., p.105.
26. Quandt, op.cit., p.6.
27. Julien, op.cit.
See also J. Berque, French North Africa The Maghreb between two world wars. Translated by Jean Stewart. Faber and Faber, 1967.
28. ibid.
29. Julien, op.cit., p.118.
See also, Bruno, op.cit.
30. Vatin, op.cit., p.207.
31. Quandt, op.cit., p.21.
32. ibid., p.79.
33. ibid., p.79.
34. ibid., p.82.
35. This statement given by a revolutionary and reported by Quandt, op.cit., p.85.
36. ibid., p.85.
37. ibid., p.97.
38. Quandt, op.cit., p.100.

39. This statement was given by Mohammedi Said who was a leader of the FLN. See Quandt, op.cit., p.101.
40. Interview conducted by Quandt, op.cit., p.202.
41. Quandt, op.cit., p.25.
42. Quandt, op.cit., p.166.
43. ibid., p.173.
44. The Etat Major General was the united military forces located in Morocco and Western Algeria, and the other was in Tunisia and in eastern Algeria, under the command of Boumediene in the west and Mohamedi Said in the East. See Quandt, op.cit., p.132-33.
45. ibid.
46. This idea borrowed from the Italian newspaper and quoted by Quandt, p.212.
47. ibid., p.212.
48. Khider's previous statement contradicted the second one which confined to the Tripoli programme, see Vatin, op.cit., p.15.
49. Leca and Vatin, op.cit., p.385.
50. The Algier's charter, part four, Arabic version, p.138.
51. See Vatin, op.cit.
52. These terms were selected from Boumediene's speeches reported by Quandt, op.cit.
53. See Quandt, Koultchitzki and Leca and Vatin, op.cit.
54. ibid.
55. According to Leca and Vatin "the army included about 60000 men, from which at least 4000 officers (among them 150 majors and 25 colonels, but the last two estimations appear over estimated)."
56. M. Lazreg, The Emergence of classes in Algeria, Westview Press, 1976, p.162.
57. Leca and Vatin, op.cit., p.391.
58. ibid., p.388.
59. ibid., p.393.
60. ibid., p.400.

61. The Algier's charter, Arabic version, p.113.
62. Leca and Vatin, op.cit.
63. Leca and Vatin, op.cit., p.39.
64. The two aspects of Algerian Socialism Civilations, 1978, vol. 28, part I, p.6.
65. J.R. Nellis, Algerian Socialism and its critics Canadian Journal of Political Science, xiii:3 Sept. 1980.
66. The two aspects of Socialism, op.cit., p.4.
67. ibid., p.6.
68. Hugh Roberts, The Algerian Bureaucracy. Review of African Political Economy, No. 24, 1982, p.54.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ALGERIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT AND SOCIALIST MANAGEMENT

I - The Trade Union Movement

The general union of Algerian workers (U.G.T.A.) has its roots in the international trade union movement. The French Confederation des travailleurs (C.G.T.), established in Algeria in 1884, was especially for the French settlers.¹ This movement however had its impact on the Algerian workers movement.

Some Algerians adhered to the C.G.T. and became activists, especially after the first world war, when Algerian workers emigrated to France in search of work. Indeed, the first Algerian political party (L'ETOILE NORD-AFRICAINE) was created in 1924 by the emigrants in France.² The aim of the party was to demand independence through formal channels, and since then the political movement for independence has grown and spread among the indigenous population either within the country or in France itself.

In 1934 the militants and unionists organised a public demonstration in the capital (ALGIERS). The French reaction to that demonstration was an oppressive one which put restrictions on all political groups, such as Ulama, Nationalists, Unionists, and Communists, and forbade any gathering.

In 1937 a commission of Muslims in Algeria appealed to the French government to improve socio-economic and cultural conditions for the indigenous population.³ At the same time the trade union of Algerian workers was developing very fast politically.⁴

In 1945 after the second world war a public demonstration was held in many cities. The French reaction again was a violent one, in one operation forty thousand civilians were killed in three cities: Setif, Guelma, and Kherratta. From that date, Algerian politicians both in the trade unions and in the Nord-African party abandoned peaceful means of achieving independence.⁵

Between 1945 and 1954 the Algerian members in the C.G.T. fell sharply from 250,000 to 60,000.⁶ The fall was because the Algerian trade union leaders in that period felt that, the French trade union did not represent the interests of the Algerian working population. And as the Algerian politicians were seeking to create an independent trade union, workers responded by deserting the C.G.T. and instead adhered to the F.L.N. or to M.T.L.D. under Messali. By 1956 Messali had initiated an independent workers organisation called U.S.T.A. which attracted more workers who used to be members of the C.G.T.. Thus in the fifties when the revolution was imminent, the C.G.T. tried to create an independent trade union of Algerians, for both Europeans and indigenous workers which would be affiliated to the C.G.T. This was not accepted by most Algerian trade union leaders.

Therefore, on 16th February, 1956, Messali Hadj had the chance to launch l'union des syndicats de travailleurs Algeriens (U.S.T.A.) as an independent trade union. This was soon transformed into l'union general des travailleurs Algeriens (U.G.T.A.) its secretary general was Aissat Idir.⁷ This initiative was welcomed by the FLN who attracted the U.G.T.A. to join them in their political and military struggle for independence.

The creation of the U.G.T.A. in 1956 in the middle of the war managed to attract the majority of workers under its authority. For

instance, "the number of adherents in the U.S.T.A. decreased from 60,000 to only 15,000; in the U.S.G.A. nearly all were Europeans",⁸ and were incorporated in the U.G.T.A. which increased its number to 11,000 adherents, belonging to 72 sections, within one month of its creation.⁹

The rapid development of the U.G.T.A. and its support of the FLN, scared the colons, who sought to crackdown on the U.G.T.A., by arresting its leaders and seizing its documents. The arrests continued among the U.G.T.A. and workers as the strikes continued. It was the strike of 1957 by the railwaymen which led the colons to take revenge by killing, arresting and sacking a large number of the U.G.T.A. which provoked a general strike, including this time, according to Weiss, "50% of sales personnel, 100% of hotel personnel, and 80% of railwaymen."¹⁰

After 1957, it was difficult for the U.G.T.A. to operate openly inside Algeria, so, its leaders who escaped arrest, went to Tunisia or Morocco where they joined the leadership of the FLN outside Algeria. By 1958 the U.G.T.A. established itself in Tunisia and started its political activities this time not only to mobilise the Algerian workers but also to *proselytize* its case across the international proletariat.

The U.G.T.A. started its publication of the journal "l'Ouvrier Algerien" in November, 1958 in Tunisia, when the French authorities stopped its publication in France by "l'Amicale generale des travailleurs Algeriens in this year".¹¹

The U.G.T.A. leaders managed to make their voice heard among international trade unionists, and had easy access to the western trade unionists through the French unions. However the international trades union movement did not help much to support the Algerian case, but instead supported the French in the fight against Algeria. As

the executive committee of the U.G.T.A. points out "the English and Americans continued to supply the French army with B 26's which served to bombard the Algerian patriots."¹²

From 1958 onward the U.G.T.A. extended its relations with the international trade unions, such as, the Arab, African, communist trade unions. This success internationally encouraged the U.G.T.A. to prepare itself for government. So, if we listen to one of its members R. Dekkar (un secretaire national) who said in 1960 that

"For the FLN the task is to prepare soldiers for the war, for us it is to prepare militants for the post war re-construction."

He carried on to say

"For Algerian reform, for industrialisation we have our solutions and less than eight days after the cease fire, the U.G.T.A. will devote all its efforts on Algerian territory to applying these solutions."¹³

After independence in July, 1962, U.G.T.A. activity was directed to organising workers and peasants in order to maintain the functioning of enterprises left by the colons. U.G.T.A. involvement in the agricultural sector was limited because they were mainly representing the industrial workers concentrated in big cities such as Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Annaba etc. where they claimed to unite "500 syndicates consisting of 250,000 workers."¹⁴ However, the U.G.T.A. did try to include peasants into its membership.

The U.G.T.A. attempted to participate in the government at the end of 1962 and sought to place the means of production under workers' and peasants' control and to secure its autonomy. This was not easy because the new government was formed by the Oudjeda group who initiated and structured the Tripoli programme in which the U.G.T.A. did not participate. During the selection of the government, the U.G.T.A. stayed neutral and

did not approve the regime. Ben-Bella accused them of playing a negative role.¹⁵ In this atmosphere of struggle for power, Ben-Bella's government depended on peasants and unemployed people to undermine the U.G.T.A. claim to be the legitimate representative of workers. In the last few months of 1962, an intensified discussion was going on between the U.G.T.A. and the one-party government.

The government sought unification between the party and the U.G.T.A., but the U.G.T.A. preferred to stay autonomous. To resolve these differences, the party tried to weaken the "national bureau" of the U.G.T.A. by involving those regional union leaders who were interested in cooperating with the party, and proposed to negotiate an agreement with the U.G.T.A. which would define the relations between the party and the trade union.¹⁶

The president Ben-Bella and the party chief M. Khider shared the aim of building a new country on the principles of socialism, and under a single party.¹⁷ The party argued that the U.G.T.A. only represented a fraction of the total working population, because it did not represent the peasants, which accounted for 80% of workers, and unemployed, whereas the party itself did represent all workers.

In the first congress of the U.G.T.A. held from the 17th to 20th of February 1963, the party supported the members of U.G.T.A. who wanted to cooperate with them. Some members of the U.G.T.A. staff did accept the role of the U.G.T.A. as specified by the party to prepare workers to take responsibility for the state by giving them an economic and political training. "The party made it clear that, it had no intention of destroying the trade union movement which Algeria needed, but intended to assign to it a path and a task which was clear and precise."¹⁸

It has been suggested that Ben-Bella's government was not satisfied with the army's involvement in politics which gave them constitutional power. In order to keep the army out of politics, the party sought to ally itself with the U.G.T.A. When the party imposed its control on the U.G.T.A., the most competent and active members of the U.G.T.A. resigned or were expelled from their position. This loss of competent staff was felt by the regime, and it had also to please the opposition it had created. Accordingly, the regime, legalised the self-management movement initiated by the workers immediately after independence, by the March decrees of 1963.

The government faced the overriding or reorganising the economy the decrees of 1963 were also aimed at organising the economy step by step. First: the decree of 18th March, 1963 dealt primarily with "vacant property". On leaving, the French vacated land and factories. The state wanted this property to be regulated and socialised, and in order to prevent individuals from owning it, nationalised the property. Some regulations concerning empty property were initiated by the government immediately after they were elected. For example, the national office of empty property (B.N.A.S.S.) which was established as the legal authority to look after these empty properties.

The second step was the decree of 22nd March, 1963, which dealt with how to organise the self-managed properties. The state created rules which defined " the forms and functions of the various bodies of self management such as workers' assembly, workers' council, management committee chairman and director."¹⁹ This decree extended the self-management scheme to include remote areas at the regional level (Commune) presided over by a director who represented the

government, working hand in hand with workers' council. The decree also stated a warning to anybody either workers or authorities who hindered the function of self-management. The other thing this decree did was to establish a new office called "the national office for the motivation of the socialist sector" formerly the national office of empty property (B.N.A.S.S.).²⁰

The third decree of 28th March, 1963, aimed to establish an experiment with modern farming, which would be the lead for the development of the agricultural sector. The regulations adopted by the state were designed to assist the farmers financially and introduce a highly motivated management,²¹ which would encourage all participants to work as a team. The state was represented by the managing committee presided over by the general manager who had the authority to reject plans which did not conform with the national plan, for instance he was empowered to control buying and selling at the enterprise level and also to use his veto against all actions that did not correspond to the general policy of the country. The U.G.T.A. welcomed the decrees of March and especially the nationalisation that followed, in which the state provided the enterprises with the management of competent personnel. These actions were considered by some elements of the U.G.T.A. as a positive step towards socialisation of the means of production, because the U.G.T.A. was unable alone to organise workers and lacked skilled personnel to manage the enterprise. Others thought the interference of the state would lead to bureaucracy and inefficient management and this group wanted to be independent of the state.²²

The conflict which continued between the politicians within Ben-Bella's government, meant that the government persisted in having no

clear policy towards self-management, nationalisation etc. Thus the militants of the U.G.T.A. considered that they had a role to play in defining these policies.²³ Some difficulties which emerged during the period of Ben-Bella distorted the aims of self-management. The main victims of these difficulties were the workers who were still struggling to earn their daily bread.

The self-management scheme of the period of 1962-1965 faced insuperable difficulties because of the lack of trained and educated personnel, the closure of some plants, difficulties of supply of raw materials and the high selling prices owing to the increase of salaries, sporadic strikes, decrease in production etc.²⁴

In addition the self-management scheme had to cope with the inefficiency of "administration and banks which were accustomed to working with private business and not with new entities with little security."²⁵ These factors caused poor economic performance, workers dissatisfaction and opposition pressure, especially from the army. Ben-Bella's reaction to this was to ally with the U.G.T.A. by recognising its autonomy. But the settlement differences between the U.G.T.A. and the state did not last long, as the president Ben-Bella was removed by the Oudjeda group led by Boumediene in June, 1965.

The U.G.T.A. was one of the well organised groups who opposed the new regime, the most influential members, like H. Zahouane, M. Harby, and B. Hadj,²⁶ accused the regime of retreating from socialism and blamed them for creating corruption, bureaucracy etc. This opposition to the regime led to their expulsion or resignation. In 1968 the FLN launched an attack on the U.G.T.A. accusing them of subversion and sabotage.²⁷ In the aftermath the regime sought a solution to its labour relations problem. Both the U.G.T.A. and the state were looking for a way of

settling their differences. The reform of socialist management of enterprises launched by the government in 1971 was a step towards the improvement of labour relations in Algeria.

2 - The socialist management of enterprises: Theory and Practice

The socialist management of enterprises (Gestion Socialiste Des Entreprises) - GSE - is the new form of industrial relations that seeks on the one hand to end the conflict between workers and management, and on the other, to create harmony in general economic policy.

The regime of Boumediene was under pressure from the U.G.T.A. and the left in the early period of his presidency. Because he gave priority to nationalisation and building the state with the aid of the army and technocrats, this policy was interpreted by the U.G.T.A. as creating bureaucracy and corruption which caused workers' discontent. The GSE was introduced to resolve the differences between the U.G.T.A. and the state by involving workers in control and management of their enterprises.

The charter and the code of the GSE which appeared in November, 1971 have much in common with the previous experience of "autogestion". The latter was mainly concerned with agriculture under Ben-Bella's regime, while the GSE is mainly concerned with industry. The charter criticised the self-management experience for failing to increase production, to satisfy workers and peasants and to curb bureaucratic rigidity. Therefore the GSE aimed to end these features by:

"La suppression des contraintes bureaucratiques, par la mise en oeuvre d'une authentique décentralisation, par une refonte et une clarification des textes de conception et leur application réelle, il a provoqué la naissance effective de l'autogestion, rétabli pleinement le pouvoir des travailleurs, en leur restituant leurs droits et responsabilités et redonné tout son sens au mot lui-même."²⁸

As agriculture and industry go hand in hand and compliment each other, the charter mentions the agrarian revolution launched in the same year as the GSE, the charter points out that:

"la révolution agraire va permettre d'étendre a tout le monde rural, cette oeuvre de transformation profonde en réunissant les conditions d'un accroissement, d'une répartition équitable des revenus, d'une élévation de plus en plus sensible du niveau économique, social et culturel des masses laborieuses des campagnes. Elle supprimera l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme, éliminera les disparités économique et sociales entre les producteurs des villes et ceux des campagnes et assurera par la promotion des masses paysannes."²⁹

The charter emphasised that the role of the state is merely to achieve the aspirations of the masses, and therefore the masses are called on to participate in realising socialism.

Workers according to the charter have the right and the duty to defend their interests secured by socialist policies. The charter defined workers rights of:

"fair remuneration, a guarantee of social rights; equal pay for equal work, protection against unemployment, the opening of training programmes, and the promulgation of fair standard for advancement in all areas."

The charter notes that

"a national salary scale will be established that will set a minimum wage and harmonise rewards throughout the public enterprise sector."³⁰

The charter dismissed the distinction between the state and workers and noted that:

"Dans une société socialiste, l'entreprise du secteur public appartient à l'ensemble des travailleurs du pays à travers l'état qui est le leur."³¹

Thus, the workers are called on to be vigilant and committed to defining their gains. These gains, according to the charter belong to the whole nation and not to a specific class or group of individuals. And management in the public sector which represents the state is to use its skill and competence to help workers, but not to oppress or exploit them. Therefore, the workers' duties are to participate positively in managing and controlling their work efficiently according to the national plans. The charter points out that:

"..le producteur qui doit considérer l'entreprise comme son propre bien, puisqu'étant celui des masses laborieuses dans leur ensemble. Son devoir est de faire fructifier ce bien pour contribuer au développement de la société. Il le remplit en veillant à l'amélioration constante de la productivité, en accomplissant scrupuleusement les objectifs de production. Il a également le devoir d'éliminer tout gaspillage, de dénoncer toute malversation, de protéger fermement le patrimoine national contre toute atteinte."³²

The charter here treats workers and management as equal partners, working in cooperation together with the party and the U.G.T.A. The moral ideal of the state is to call upon the party and the U.G.T.A. to be the motor of workers education and training.

"Pour être apte à jouir de ces droits et à assurer ces devoirs, le travailleur doit accomplir un effort permanent pour développer sa conscience politique et ses capacités."

The charter notes that,

"L'aider à y parvenir est le rôle du parti, en général, et du syndicat, en particulier. Celui-ci a une mission capitale à remplir dans ce contexte."³³

The charter urged workers to participate in control of the enterprise with management, and for this reason the charter implies that there is no conflict between workers and management,

"each one in the enterprise combines both functions" i.e. production and management.³⁴

The charter emphasised "workers participation" and "association", the two concepts used by the charter in relation to the transformation of production relations.³⁵

The notion of association is used here as a way of transforming workers into managers and vice-versa through the elected assembly of workers. The U.G.T.A. - and the party - are also there to increase workers' competence and consciousness in order to create an alliance of

cooperation between all individuals in an enterprise. Thus the factory is not for profit only, but is also a "school of political, ideological and social education."³⁶

Workers' participation in a socialist enterprise is not limited to the enterprise level only, but includes production workshops. The workers' assembly by which workers legalise their participation varies in numbers according to the size and needs of the enterprise or unit concerned.

The numbers elected for the workers' assembly is made up of 7 to 25 members for a unit up to 30 workers.³⁷ A unit or an enterprise of below 30 workers should be combined with another, or referred to the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs.³⁸

According to the charter all workers in units or enterprises for both sexes of 19 years old, and who have worked for at least 6 months, have the right to vote.³⁹ The candidates for the assembly must be members in the U.G.T.A. for at least a year, have reached the age of 21 and occupy a permanent job. The number of candidates for the election must be double the number needed. The assembly is elected for a period of three years.⁴⁰

The workers' assembly plays a very important role, according to the charter, in carrying out the collective interests by "controlling the activity of the enterprise". The charter points out that

"L'assemblée des travailleurs intervient dans la détermination de la politique du personnel, notamment en matière de recrutement et de formation. Une telle prérogative est importante dans la mesure où elle permet d'éliminer tout risque éventuel de népotisme, d'arbitraire et d'une manière général, tout recrutement ou licenciement abusif."⁴¹

It is necessary to note that it is very hard for the workers' assembly to determine the policy of the enterprise, and if the charter and the code

safeguards the assembly's right to participate with management, that does not mean they determine the policy in the enterprise. Even if the role of the assembly extends to

"...celle-ci examine et se prononce sur les comptes previsionnels et le budget de l'entreprise. ...Contribuer a la definition de la politique generale de l'entreprise pour l'année à venir et d'exprimer leur point de vue sur la delimitation des categories de depenses. En se prononçant, d'autre part, sur le bilan et les comptes d'exploitation et de résultats, les travailleurs ont a porter un jugement sur la gestion globale de l'entreprise au cours de l'année écoulée, notamment sur le plan de la gestion financiere."⁴²

The workers' assembly holds two meetings a year at the enterprise level and four meetings at the unit level, and also each time a meeting is needed and called by two thirds of the assembly.

The relations between the workers' assembly and management according to the charter is a cooperative one, the charter treats management as the competent and skilled body which must provide the workers' assembly with qualified advisors. It mentions that an assembly of up to 25 members would be too large to perform its function properly and therefore, the assembly must have a permanent character, embodied in the use of 5 committees: (1) 'the economic and social committee': deals with marketing and supply and also "controls in a constant manner, the use of state resources and elaborate projects for the improvement of profits". (2) 'social and cultural affairs committee': the charter briefly defines the role of this committee as looking after social and cultural matters. (3) 'the personnel and training committee' is charged with managing "recruitment, salaries, training, fringe benefits (if any) set aside for the workers' benefit, and production improvement".⁴³ (4) 'the disciplinary committee' is charged with giving a preliminary opinion on all questions of discipline. Its role also is to preserve workers'

rights, to protect general interests and regulations from any abuse of authority or injustice." (5) health and safety committee: the charter does not explain the role of this committee, but the Code art. 56 specifies its role in assuring that health and safety regulations are applied and suggesting all the improvements needed. In addition it has the role of training personnel in preventive measures.

The last two permanent committees consist half of representatives of the workers' council and half of appointees of the management council according to their competence. (art 50).⁴⁴ If a comparison is made between the charter and the code that immediately followed it, the code deals specifically with industrial relations, and incorporates most of the statements made in the charter, but it excludes the autogestion of the agricultural sector⁴⁵ which was included in the charter.

The code regulates the relations between workers and management by setting out a number of articles which specify the rules and duties of workers, managers and the state within the public enterprise.

The code is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter defines the socialist enterprise, the second and the third deal with the rights and duties of workers within the enterprise, and explain the methods and ways by which the workers should participate in running the enterprise to increase production. Chapter four and five are devoted to explaining the relations between the workers' assembly and the management council. Five committees are elected by workers to represent their interests in the enterprise or in the unit. The power here is given to management generally and to the general manager specifically who has the right to determine the policy of the enterprise under the supervision of the state, see art 54, 55, 56. Chapters six and seven deal with the financial structure by which

the enterprise is directed and financed by the state on the basis of the advice of the local authorities in order to conform with the national programme. The last two chapters deal with the sharing of profits in the enterprise. In the event of profit being realised the shares would be divided into three parts: one part to the state, the second part for reinvestment in the enterprise and the third part to the 'supplementary income fund' for the workers.⁴⁶ But the percentage due to each group is not specified by the code.

Now let us look at some inequalities between workers and managers and factors preventing them from cooperating.

The charter considers that the unity of management is necessary in order to preserve harmony in the overall management of the enterprise and to conduct it on a rational basis. The functioning of a public enterprise which applies the scheme of GSE depends on three authorities working on an equal and cooperative basis. First the "tutelle" i.e. the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, second the management committee presided over by a general manager appointed by the tutelle, and third the workers' assembly which represents workers.

The common aim of these three bodies is to organise economic development. The state intervenes in order to involve workers in this development through their elected council. But at least for the time being, workers are not fully involved in the production process. Why? Because within the socialist enterprise, there is still a difference between those who manage and those who execute the work process in the enterprise.

The code that followed the charter defined the socialist enterprise as "state property" (art 3) supervised by a general manager (art 64), who is appointed by the state (art 62). The general manager is responsible to the state for all enterprise activities. Thus, these articles

illustrate that the role of the state is carried through by a general manager. And therefore the role of the state is more legal than real, as it is under monopoly capitalism. Carchedi notes that "under monopoly capitalism, we witness a disassociation between the legal ownership (which goes to the stockholder) and the real economic ownership, i.e. the power to dispose of the means of production, and of the labour power (which goes to the managers) or at least to the top managers."⁴⁷ In this respect Miaille considers social capital in Algeria to be state property, this social capital is defined by (art 2) in the charter: "A socialist enterprise is one in which capital is constituted entirely from public resources."⁴⁸ It seems however that the code does favour the representatives of management more than those of workers. The code appears to favour the management because of the workers inability to manage these enterprises effectively.

So, the power within the enterprise is acquired by the management council presided over by a general manager as a representative of the state. The management of the enterprise is made up of nine to eleven members depending on the size of the enterprise, one or two members are workers' council representatives. (art 61)

Thus, the management council of the enterprise, with its general manager, exercises authority over all the operations of the enterprise and the workers' council is subject to their power. The charter preserves the workers' right to elect representatives through the workers' council for a period of three years (art 23), these representatives have the right to participate in managing and controlling the enterprise.(art 28) But the following article seems to contradict the former articles by limiting the workers participation to merely giving advice and recommendations about

the improvement of production, supply, marketing etc. (art 29)

The charter therefore lays emphasis on cooperation and worker management partnership in working towards objectives. Despite this mutual cooperation, the conflict between workers and management persists and workers' participation is still merely an ideal. The management at the enterprise level have used their prerogatives and competence to enhance their power, and neutralised the workers' councils in two ways: first: the management usually tries to convince the members of the workers' council that they should use their role to mobilise workers and increase production yet dissuades them if there is any claim for a wage increase or improvement of their conditions, accommodation etc. The second tactic by management is that of intimidating members of the workers' council, especially those who are class conscious and activists, who seek to defend the rights of workers and collective interests as expressed in the charter. Such members are often accused of disciplinary offences which would lead to loss of job.

The relationship between management and the workers' council is one of sharply unequal power which conflicts with the idea that the workers are both producers and managers. At the same time the participation of the worker in decision making is limited to giving his idea, and to being consulted by management about events that might happen in the enterprise. On the other hand the dominant body is the management's council supervised by a general manager whose responsibility it is to decide what should be done, because he possesses final responsibility in the eyes of the relevant ministry. The charter notes that

"Le directeur général de l'entreprise agit sous l'autorité de la tutelle et est responsable du fonctionnement général de l'entreprise dans le cadre de ses attributions fixées par les textes législatifs et réglementaires et dans le respect des prérogatives confiées à l'assemblée des travailleurs." (art 61)

The other factor that encourages management to dominate workers is the low awareness of workers. Obviously the commitment to socialism which is required for economic development is to some extent absent, because of the various constraints faced by both workers and management. Especially the lag of social and cultural circumstances behind economic development. Rapid industrialisation in Algeria has resulted in some mistakes, and distorted the economic situation, most notably in creating an inequality between the price of goods and the wages of workers. In spite of the wage increase just after the application of the socialist management scheme in 1974, and the general increase in 1977 for the workers in the public sector because of the increase in the price of goods, shortages of consumption goods again pushed prices higher and higher. This situation undermined the national economy and created a black market where the price of goods was far higher than the worker could afford. This situation created further dissatisfaction among workers.

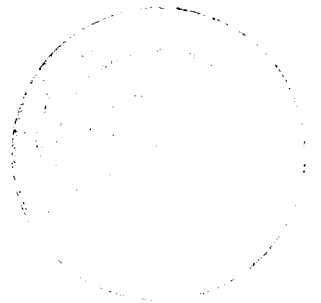
Management does seem to exercise a sort of traditional authority which differs from that which is officially meant to be applied in the enterprises. The prevalence of traditionalism in management appears when we consider how ineffective the rules of the charter have been when applied in practice. The charter's insistence on joint participation in the production process has as yet a disappointing degree of success and the state and its management therefore must change their operational style in order to achieve socialist development

Notes to Chapter Two

1. From 1884 to 1982 6 trade unions with 1968 members were formed. See the unpublished document issued by the U.G.T.A. Constantine branch p.6. N.D.
2. First appearance Etoile Nord-Africain was founded in 1919 by an initiative of Hadj Abdelkader who was a member of the committee of the French communist party, but it was at that time difficult to distinguish between trade union action and political action. See F. Weiss. Doctrines et Action syndicales en Algerie. Edition Cujas. Paris 1970 p.19.
3. The U.G.T.A. op.cit. p.9
4. J. Lecca and J. C. Vatin, L'Algerie politique institutions et regime. P.F.N.S.P. 1975 p.152
5. Even the assimilationist group led by Ferhat Abbas who were in favour of integration, changed and were looking for other means to have independence.
6. Lecca & Vatin op.cit.
7. The idea of linking the Algerian trade union to the nationalist movement was initiated by Aissat Idir in 1947. This idea was considered by the M.T.L.D. in its second congress held in April, 1953. The coordination of action between the U.G.T.A. and the FLN helped the FLN politically and economically in terms of "the solidarity of strikes of sabotage, providing the combatants with material and money and trying to explain their case to the European workers". See F. Weiss op.cit. p.30.
8. F. Weiss op.cit. p.30
9. ibid., p.31.
10. Weiss. op.cit. p.34
11. See Weiss, Vatin & Lecca, Favret op.cit.
12. This is the idea of the U.G.T.A., reported in its journal "L'ouvrier Algerien" in 1958. See Weiss op.cit. pp. 39-40.
13. ibid., p.45
14. J. Favret. Le syndicat, les travailleurs et le pouvoir en Algerie Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord, 1964 p.47
15. Weiss. op.cit. p.71
16. J. Favret. op.cit. p.48

17. F. Weiss. op.cit. p.79.
18. J. Lecca and J. C. Vatin. op.cit. p.157.
19. M. Raptis. Socialism, Democracy and self-management. Translated by Serrie and Sissons. Allison and Busby 1980 p.69.
20. M. Raptis. op.cit. p.70.
21. According to M. Laks, the state interference in order to socialise the self-management was not defined, and the idea of collective management was not clear.
See M. Laks, Autogestion ouvrier et pouvoir politique en Algerie (1962-1965) Ed. I. Paris.
22. J. Favret. op.cit. pp.53-54.
23. F. Weiss. op.cit. pp.328-329.
24. D. Helie. Autogestion industrielle en Algerie. Autogestion Cahier No. 9 + 10. 1969. See also M. Laks. op.cit.
25. idid.
26. See Jacquimot and Raffinot. Le capitalism d'etat Algerienne. F. M. Paris, 1977. p.84.
27. S. Koulichizki . L'autogestion l'homme et l'etat l'experience Algerienne. Paris Mouton. La Haye. 1974, p.258.
28. The Charter p.9.
29. idid., p.9.
30. J. Nellis. Workers' participation in Algeria's nationalized industries: La Gestion Socialiste des Entreprises, occational papers 30. N.P.S.I.A. p.16.
31. The Charter. p.11.
32. ibid., p.11.
33. ibid., p.11.
34. Nullis. op.cit. p.17.
35. M. Ghezali. La participation des travailleurs a la gestion socialiste des entreprises. p.p.u. 1981. p.13.
36. The Charter. p.17.
37. The Charter. p.39.
38. Ghezali. op.cit. p.44.

39. The Charter. p.39.
40. ibid., pp.13-14.
41. ibid., pp.13-14.
42. ibid., pp.12-13.
43. Nellis. op.cit. p.19.
44. The Charter. p.23.
45. See art. 1. in the Charter
46. See art. 83 in Chapter VIII. p.27.
47. About the new middle class that has emerged from industry. See G. Carchedi, Reproduction of Social Classes at the level of production relations. Economy and Society, Vol. 3, 1974.
48. The Charter.



CHAPTER THREE

ALGERIAN SOCIALISM: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Several concepts are used to explain Algerian socialism, these concepts are sometimes combined in a way unique to Algeria. For instance, socialism is at various times linked to one of the following terms:

'human', 'democratic', 'popular', 'authoritarian', 'nationalist', 'specific', 'scientific', 'islamic', 'autogestion', 'decolonisation', 'third world', and even 'capitalism'.¹

These concepts do exist in Algeria but the emphasis usually depends on the writer's ideological convictions. What Algerian officials usually mean by human, democratic, popular, specific etc. socialism is the method by which the socio-economic, political and cultural programmes are carried out in action. It is also the intention of Algerian politicians to learn from different experiences in the world and try to adapt their policy accordingly.

Three major models will be discussed in this chapter derived from the events that happened during and after the revolution. One is 'scientific socialism' as it is experienced in communist countries and especially the Soviet Union. Its influence on Algeria is felt more in the organisation of the economy than in ideology. The second is 'specific socialism' or as it is called by some 'Islamic or third world socialism', in which Islam is introduced as a socio-economic and moral system which includes equality, social and economic justice. The third 'state capitalism' is related to the divorce between the state, which claims to be working for the workers and the workers who are deprived of equal participation with management in the control of production.

According to Lane, for example, the state bureaucracy (under socialism) is a ruling class because of the dominant role it plays in the process of production.²

Religion plays an important role in Algerian socialism but it does not determine government policies as it does in the Arab Gulf states. It is used rather as the basis of traditional obligations that relate individuals to each other in terms of patron-client relations. Religion is not incompatible with and may encourage the capitalist spirit because Islam does not object in principle to private property.

Socialism generally with special emphasis on the term 'state capitalism' will be discussed in this chapter.

The Origins of Algerian Socialism

Algerian socialism was born after a difficult struggle for national liberation, in which a heterogeneous political leadership was temporarily united.

The leaders' immediate problem was to resolve their differences and settle on a common policy for reconstruction of Algerian society. Secondly there were debts to pay to the peasants and workers, who had suffered most during the liberation struggle. As the drafters of the Algier's charter put it:

"The national struggle against colonialism and imperialism found its support in the mountains. While the benefit of independence was experienced primarily in the cities and high plateau. This is a contradiction."

The solution of this according to the charter

"would be achieved by uniting peasants with urban and rural workers, which would meet one of the conditions for a successful socialism."³

In the summer of 1962 workers and peasants

"Spontaneously started running the factories and farms abandoned by their owners or their European technicians and managerial staff."⁴

This initiative by workers and peasants encouraged the politicians to advance the revolution in a socialist direction.⁵

Official socialist policy was derived from four main sources. The first was the Sommarn congress held in August 1956 where the return of the land to the peasants and the development of industry were projected. Although the emphasis in this congress was upon independence from colonialism, implicit in its statements was the view that Algeria would follow socialism after independence. The second event was 'the Tripolis programme' drawn up in June, 1962 by the conseil nationale de la révolution Algérienne' (C.N.R.A.). The points debated in the congress dealt primarily with the future policy of independent Algeria. The programme announced the revolution's objectives. They included a radical reform in agriculture and industry involving nationalisation of foreign private property and a limit on native private property together with nationalisation of banks, natural wealth etc., and a commitment to fight neo-colonialism and the internal bourgeoisie and to pursue a democratic and social revolution based on socialism.⁶

Thirdly, after two years experience of independence, the Algiers' charter was drafted at a party congress held in Algiers from 16th to 21st April 1964, in order to assess past experience and to set up a definite policy for the future that would overcome the differences which had arisen between the politicians. The charter reaffirmed the points adopted in the Tripoli programme and mainly the aspects of 'socialism', the 'state' and the 'party' which are the basis of the socio-economic and political ideology of the regime.⁷

The charter also recognised Islam as part of the Algerian cultural heritage and took it as the corner stone of Algerian character.⁸

How the Algerian government sought a compromise between Islam and socialism will be discussed later.

According to the charter, the state was to be seen as a system

"not merely which subordinate the minority to the majority, but also as an apparatus to impose in the interests of the people, equalitarian laws on the privileged."⁹

In practice, the aims of the socialist revolution must be achieved by state intervention either through the public bureaucracy or through party persuasion. The charter again called for the one party state discussed in the Tripoli programme. The charter did not regard a multi party system as a criterion of democracy or freedom but as harmful to the revolution because it would enable the infiltration of the bourgeoisie and reactionary policies and allow the enemy of the people to acquire power over the economy.

The fourth source of Algerian socialism was Boumediene's regime. In June, 1965 a new regime replaced Ben-Bella and a new council of the revolution was formed. It accused the previous regime of deviation from socialism and failure to achieve stability and economic development. The council of the revolution with the help of the army, aimed to restore stability and economic effectiveness and to ensure that the state and the party would work in harmony. In Algerian conditions, it was argued the party must yield to the state.¹⁰

The regime of 1965 also asserted that policy would be based on the Sonnam, Tripoli and Algier's congresses and a specific socialism was favoured by Boumediene's regime led by a

"collegial system which allowed considerable autonomy for the army and for the ministers."¹¹

Although socialism was the favoured option for the Algerian leadership, all of them, Ben-Bella, Boumediene, and now Chadly, insisted on an irreversible path towards socialism. But the difference of emphasis between revolutionaries or, it would be better to say, nationalists, liberals and the radical left, emerged as an element determining shifts in Algerian policy. Thus, we may ask now, what kind of socialism has been created in Algeria?

Algerian government policy has been judged according to its actions. Commentators have judged it in various ways. However, we can isolate three models for Algerian socialism.

One is "scientific socialism" (communism)

The second is "specific socialism" (Third world type)

And the third is the notion of "state capitalism"

"Scientific Socialism"

"Scientific socialism" was created by Marx and put into practice by Lenin in Russia, by Mao in China and in other communist countries as their ideological doctrine. It is based on rationality and rejects the claims of religion to possess "eternal truth".¹²

The most influential model in this context is that of U.S.S.R. The 1917 revolution was based mainly on Lenin's thinking and led by the Bolshevists, who transformed it into the leadership of the communist party which became the dominant force after the revolution. By 1918 an intensified discussion was going on among the Russian politicians and revolutionaries on how to organise the economy and social institutions under the "socialist state which is the proletariat constituted as the ruling class."¹³

The major problem of the soviet leaders of this time was "the workers

state" and Trotsky and his supporters believed that international communism would succeed by a democratic workers' state. In the period of 1917 to 1922 Lenin as the spokesman of the revolution was not sure if workers could by themselves run the state. His argument was that the Russian population were not only workers and in fact at that time workers represented a minority in comparison with peasants. This is similar to the Algerian situation in 1962, where peasants represented the majority of 80% of the working population.¹⁴

Lenin opposed Trotsky arguing that the state was not a workers' state;

"the workers' state is an abstraction,"¹⁵

because the state was not totally composed of workers, but later he agreed on the concept of a workers-peasants state, but one which was subject to bureaucratic deformation. To defend workers' interests against bureaucratic deviations, Lenin admitted the need for a trade union to educate, organise and mobilise workers and peasants to participate in building the socialist state. Lenin therefore confined the role of the trade union to communist party policy. He did not agree with Trotsky to put the economy in the hands of workers organised under their democratic trade union. Lenin's argument was that, if workers managed the economy under the trade union independently there would be no need for the party. He believed workers and peasants lacked competence and administrative skills which must be provided by the party and that the party must govern the state. Lenin does not distinguish between the party and the workers. For instance "at the tenth congress of the Russian communist party in March, 1921 Lenin insisted on the cooperation between peasants and workers. In such a country (with a minority of small farmers) a socialist revolution can triumph only on two conditions, first,

if it is given timely support by a socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries....* The second condition is agreement between the proletariat, which is exercising its directorship, that is, holds state power, and the majority of the peasants population."¹⁶ But as the revolution failed in the west, and disintegration between the workers (urban) and peasants (rural) continued, the communist party adopted what they called "the new economic policy" (N.E.P.) in March, 1921, which aimed to encourage the peasants to support the revolution and to improve their standard of living.

In the early years of the 1920's, the conflict within the party was deep, which affected the economy. For example, the N.E.P. was designed to assist peasants by reducing their taxes and reducing industrial prices.¹⁷ These actions in fact were not sufficient to compensate for the higher prices of industrial goods in comparison with those of agriculture. This situation however created the problem of marketing in which "manufactured goods lay down unsold... unemployment rose and wages were cut or paid irregularly."¹⁸

Moreover, in the early 1920's, the industrial and agricultural economy was in decline, stability was not achieved, satisfaction among workers and peasants was absent, and the prevalence of an apathetic bureaucracy which provoked the soviet leaders to condemn it. For instance Lenin constantly warned of the problems that bureaucracy could cause *for* the economy. At the tenth party congress he said:

"We do have a bureaucratic ulcer, it has been diagnosed and has to be treated in earnest... we need to understand that the struggle against the evils of bureaucracy is absolutely indispensable."¹⁹

To avoid these bad aspects of bureaucracy, Lenin insisted on the involvement of workers and peasants to participate in the execution of

work and attempted to control the functioning of the administration by creating the people's commissariat headed by Stalin who became the head of the red army after the death of Lenin in 1924.

In 1925 the fourteenth party congress was held, and the main issues discussed were:

"Socialism in one country, the course toward the peasantry, industrialisation policy, planning."²⁰

The resulting policies carried out under Stalin's supervision were:

"the nationalisation of the land, the means of industrial production, transport and exchange, together with the monopoly of foreign trade, which constitute the basis of the soviet social structure."²¹

To achieve a socialist state, Stalin pursued an authoritarian policy of eliminating opposition, restraining the claim of workers and peasants for high wages and rigid rationalisation of the functioning of the institutions by employing skilled and competent personnel to run them. It was at this point, because of these policies, that Stalin's state was accused of being divorced from the peasants and workers who it was supposed to serve, and of exercising its political and economic functions against them, thus constituting a bureaucratic state capitalism.²²

However, Trotsky, for example did not accept that the concept of "state bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R. represented a form of 'state capitalist'". He argued that "the bureaucracy has neither stocks nor bonds. It is recruited, supplemented and renewed in the manner of an administrative hierarchy, independently from any special property relations of its own. The individual bureaucrats cannot transmit to his heirs his rights in the exploitation of the state apparatus. The bureaucracy enjoys its privileges under the form of the abuse of power."²³

Many criticisms were thrown against the U.S.S.R. model for deviating

from Marxism by cooperating with capitalism or that the state itself was becoming capitalist, by exercising an oppressive regime, by not supporting progressive movements in the worlds etc. However, despite these criticisms, the scientific socialism of the U.S.S.R. was still the most influential model in the world. Lane points out that:

"The political institutions of most socialist countries have been copied, from the soviet model and been its imprint."²⁴

The open challenge to the soviet model came from Yugoslavia. Although the Yugoslavs have many aspects in common with the soviet model such as a single party which is "the ideological vanguard and organiser... of the workers movement,"²⁵ the Yugoslav model of socialist development does not necessarily depend on central state planning. They argue that the management of the economy under the supervision of the state and the party would isolate its management from the society. The Yugoslavs responded to rigid state bureaucracy under Stalin by experimenting with their own model of "self management" which aimed to enable workers to participate directly in managing and controlling their work through workers' councils which they elect. This experiment applied in Yugoslavia enterprises in 1950. In 1963 the experiment extended to include "all forms of employment (educational, commercial, social services). The first period was called "workers' self-management" while the latter was called "social self-management."²⁶

We do not need to discuss how the self-management system functions, but for the purpose of the study, we may look to this model, and how it is interpreted outside Yugoslavia.

Despite the popularity of the Yugoslav model of self-management, its application by other countries in the world is limited and if it is employed at all, it seldom applies to all the institutions of the society

but is experimented with in some only, and perhaps is used less in order to involve workers genuinely in control and participation in their work process than to make the policy of management more effective.

As Strauss and Rosenstein suggest:

"Management looks to workers' councils, not for advice on production but as means of estimating the impact of management policy upon the workers... Managers in both Yugoslavia and Sweden find council meetings useful as 'sounding boards' in which they can try out worker reactions before introducing changes."²⁷

Thus, the Yugoslav model of self-management has not changed the workers position much, the idea of workers' councils are used as a tool to serve state policy and they are subordinate to management. This is also the case in the socialist states of Eastern Europe. It is true of Algeria under the scheme of socialist management introduced in 1971 (see chapter Two) and even under the self management operated in agriculture immediately after independence.

Now, we may ask what Algerian 'specific socialism' has in common with 'scientific socialism'.

Ben-Bella affirmed that "Algerian socialism is a specific socialism which borrows from Marxism only its socio-economic analysis, but not its philosophic analysis based on atheism."²⁸ Muslims are imbued with religion and Islam plays a great part in Algerian life. So, the Algerian political leaders avoided the atheism involved in scientific socialism. Although the influence of the left under Ben-Bella was not negligible the press and some politicians alluded to scientific socialism. Some of the actions taken by the government seem to be in line with the principles of scientific socialism, such as a single party, nationalisation, and state ownership of the means of production, central planning etc. These measures were reinforced under Boumediene's government, especially

after 1971, when he launched the Agrarian revolution, nationalisation of the hydrocarbon resources and the socialist management of enterprises scheme.

Boumediene's regime was supported by 'le partie de l'avant garde socialiste' (PAGS) and its left wing members. But this does not mean that Algerian socialism is Marxist. Both Ben-Bella and Boumediene declared their support for specific socialism and for Islam as the religion of the state. Moreover the communist party has been banned since 1962.²⁹ Further, the idea of a class struggle used by Marxists was avoided by the Algerian leaders. The idea was considered to have "external applicability. That is to say, Algeria and other third world countries are viewed as proletarian nations, struggling against the bourgeois industrialised west. But internally the concept cannot and should not apply."³⁰

According to Bruno:

"For ten years, socialism as a word largely used in Africa, corresponds not to the scientific socialism, which European centralists refer to, but the many specific experiences: Mali, Ghana, Guinea, Congo, Somali, etc. And among these experiences, the Algerian is one."³¹

Koulitchizky discusses the privileged position of the FLN in Algeria and in other countries where a single party state exists. But the difference according to Koulitchizky is that the FLN is not a Marxist-Leninist party, and does not function in the framework of a proletarian dictatorship which is the case in the communist countries, so, for Koulitchizky, the single party in Algeria has a liberal democratic appearance which can be reconciled with other aspects such as Islam and capitalism.³² As was mentioned earlier, Algerian

socialism is based not on one ideology, but includes some aspects of scientific socialism, some of Islam and some capitalism. This eclecticism is based perhaps on the Algerian expression "take the good and leave the bad", for example, take the socio-economic structure from communism and leave aside its atheism, take the democracy from capitalism and leave aside its private mode of production, emphasise the revolutionary and moral aspects in Islam and leave the others to individual conscience. But this choice does not work properly and perhaps creates confusion, because when you want to take the good thing, it is difficult to separate it from the bad one. This mixture of the Algerian system arises not because it is in the society's general interest, but because of the need to conciliate the different groups and ideologies.

"Specific Socialism"

It might be argued that Algerian socialism is not merely a mixture of different ideologies, but a unique fusion of Western ideas with those of Islam. In short it might be a "specific socialism".

It is "specific" because it does not follow one universal pattern, but emphasises local conditions, and specific because it does not follow only one of the two world ideologies, i.e. socialism and capitalism. So, what does specific socialism in Algeria mean? The concepts of 'popular democracy', 'nationalism', and 'underdevelopment' are employed by officials. The first aspect provides a flexible structure and allows the public and private sectors of the economy to live together. The second aspect is the use of Islam and Arabic language as the natural core of the Algerian personality. The third aspect considers the party to be the vanguard of the society. We shall argue that this applies in theory rather than in practice, for the real power is in the hands of technocrats and the army.

Islam is the dominant aspect in Algerian politics, the politicians try to justify their actions in relation to Islam even if these actions really contradict Islam. The involvement of Islam in Algerian policy goes back to the early days of the struggle against the colons raised by Emir Abdelkader in the 1830s and 1840s, and was reasserted in the 1930s by Ben-Badis (the Muslim intellectual movement). In the final struggle against colonialism, the Algerian leaders used Islam in their propaganda to raise public support. The influence of Islam is considerable, as Colonna points out:

"It is known in Algeria that all parties, and virtually all movements have used Islam at one stage or another of their development."³³

After independence in 1962 and after the colons had left the country, workers and peasants, mostly from the urban areas, took over factories and farms previously owned by the colons. At that time Ben-Bella's government took the opportunity to associate "autogestion" with ideals found in the Islam tradition. Some officials linked Islam to socialism giving the example of Nasser in Egypt. The minister of Habbous (religious property) said:

"Islam is a socialist religion, it is a religion of equality."³⁴

These quotations from the "revolution Africaine" of Ben-Bella and Madani illustrate the point:

"We will present this socialism to the entire world, and we will say to the people, if you are taken with the socialism of Karl Marx, well, we take pride in the socialism of Mohamed In (the soviet union), you can laugh at religion, as you please, in Algeria, we have triumphed because of our religion; and we will conquer only through Islam."³⁵

Boumediene however, is less concerned than Ben-Bella to involve religion in politics and he talks about socialism as something which

will eradicate exploitation and achieve prosperity for the whole nation. At the Islamic summit meeting in Lahore (Pakistan) in 1974 he said:

"Human experience in many parts of the world has shown that spiritual links, whether Islamic or Christian, have not been able to withstand the affliction of poverty and ignorance, for the simple reason that men do not want to go to paradise with empty stomachs. Hungry people do not need to listen to religious verses. I'm saying that with all the respect I have for the Koran, which I learned at the age of ten. Hungry people need bread, ignorant people need knowledge, people who are ill need hospitals."³⁶

Boumediene also talks about specific socialism by saying that:

"We must be vigilant and prudent when we define our specific road towards socialism because the reactionary spirit would exploit this truth and grow excessive, until it does diversify socialism in its essence. That is why we try to draw lessons from different sources of socialism, that the socialist essence is unique and tends to liberate man from exploitation and to allow these who produce, to take the reins of economic and political authority."³⁷

Boumediene in the last passage talks about socialism which would liberate man from exploitation without mentioning Islam. This is despite the fact that Islam is officially the religion of the state. The constitution of September, 1963 included the phrase "Islam is the religion of the state."³⁸ The Algier's charter also recognised Islam as the state religion, even if it insisted on scientific socialism. And again the constitution of 1976 asserted that Islam is the religion of the state.

Therefore officially Islam is *highly* recognised, but in practice, it is limited to the actions of individuals who are free to exercise the Islamic rules or not as they wish, such as praying and fasting. State interference in religious affairs is limited to the ministry of religion which organises pilgrimages and sometimes organises religious ceremonies.

At the economic level, religion has no direct effect, rather the economy is dominated by the state. Politically the ministry of religion is subject to the authority of the state, and it is used to mobilise the population behind government policies. Without going into detail, it is worth mentioning that Islam in theory, as it cited in the Koran appears to stand in the middle between the two world systems; socialism and capitalism. As Rodinson points out "One would seek in the Koran in vain to find approval or condemnation of capitalism."³⁹ However the Koran insists that people should support each other and that there should be justice in society. It also forbids large or unlawful profits, and large amounts of wealth because these lead to self-pride:

"Muhammad... condemns wealth especially for inspiring men to pride, and turning them away from god."⁴⁰

Both Muhammad and the Koran according to Rodinson:

"were opposed to private ownership of land, at least in so far as this exceeded the scale of a holding cultivated personally by the owner. In general, the land ought to be 'nationalised' and small sections of it periodically allotted to cultivators only."⁴¹

But despite the Koran and the prophet's appeal for an equal and fair society, the Koran is not wholly against private property since it "lays down rules for inheritance."⁴²

Islam condemns the materialism implicit in not only liberal capitalism but also Marxism. As Koulitchizky suggests:

"In the name of Islam, the liberal system is condemned (selfishness which has complete liberty can rarely accommodate justice). In the name of Islam, Marxism is the same because Marxist experience in the big communist states has only succeeded to the extent that it has denied the moral principles of those countries."⁴³

Koulitchizky comments "the judgement of the council of Islamic affairs under the signature of Ibrahim Mohamed Ismail was to adopt

a middle way. For example:

"Islam does not disapprove of the rich to the point of depriving them of a right which they have already achieved, and its pity for the poor does not occur until interference is necessary. Its scientific theory will support judicious principles which guarantee the general interest and equity for all members of the human spectres. And this candle will lighten the way for removing the class differences of the nation."⁴⁴

Thus, the moral principles of Islam do play a great part in Algerian society, and as the state has chosen "specific socialism" it accepts or perhaps encourages this morality. The function of its institutions therefore "receive a certain imprint from the tradition and way of life of the nation."⁴⁵

"State Capitalism"

Critics of Algerian socialism, especially in Europe, view the system as essentially "state capitalist". In this view the leadership in Algeria - party, army and bureaucracy - constitutes a ruling class, which not only governs, but extracts surplus for private use from the economy.⁴⁶

According to these critics, Algerian state capitalism developed under Ben-Bella's regime when the small and medium bourgeoisie who appropriated the land and enterprise, left behind by the colons, infiltrated the state machine, occupying key positions and dominating the state apparatus and excluded workers and peasants from exercising power. The bourgeoisie strengthened its position by maintaining relations with the international market. Under Boumediene's regime this bourgeoisie strengthened its position in administrative institutions and nationalised industry.⁴⁷

Bettelheim defines state capitalism as "the system of capitalist relations of production that are articulated within state property."⁴⁸ In Algeria however, the state intervened to take control of the means of production through its functionaries. In principle they should eventually

be absorbed among workers as was discussed in the previous chapter. But the government's dependence on professionals drawn from the army and the technocrats in the administration, as the controllers of national capital, meant that it neglected the party (FLN) as the vanguard of the state. The absence of an effective party which could represent the aspirations of the masses and mobilise them, helps the small and the medium bourgeoisie to become a dominant force in Algeria.

In order to define this bourgeoisie and how it has influenced the regime, we may divide Algerian society into three major groupings, or 'social classes', according to income occupation and power. First the bourgeoisie: the Algerian bourgeoisie consists of various groups, there is the traditional bourgeoisie who own land, industrial and commercial enterprises, most of whom inherited their wealth during the colonial period. This bourgeoisie in fact is small amounting to 5% only of the population and politically weak.⁴⁹ As Miaille suggests it is dominated by the state. This group flourished after independence and is still growing with state encouragement to participate in building the society. Second: there is the small bourgeoisie who had worked as civil servants within the French administration and had been promoted after independence, along with the bureaucrats created within the newly established public enterprises, who were led by a small elite group. These were mostly educated in French and occupy a highly privileged position. Third: are manual workers in industry and agriculture, along with whom should be included "the 750,000 that it was admitted officially in 1974 were unemployed in the cities."⁵⁰

The relationship between the third group and the second one, is one of subordination according to prestige, wealth and occupation. The state

however is the determinant instrument of power and this is not in the hands of the working class, but in the hands of bureaucrats, who according to Gellner are allied with the traditional bourgeoisie.

State ownership of a major part of the economy was designed to speed up development and to socialise public welfare. It has not gone as far as was hoped, because this collective property in the means of production depends on those who are dominant and influential in the state. As Bettelheim points out:

"Who controls state property depends on the real relations existing between the working masses and the state apparatus."⁵¹

What is in fact found in Algeria is not a workers' state but state capitalism dominated by technocrats who possess the real power and "direct the massive state enterprises in precisely the same manner as capitalist owners. They extract the same surplus out of the workers."⁵²

As Algerian policy combines two forms of economy, a private sector and a public sector, the state owns juridically the means of production in the public sector in order to plan and control the work process collectively. But since power and expertise are found among managers who represent the state, it is difficult to generate participation on equal terms for workers and managers.

Does the state appear to be an instrument of the dominant class? Does it work for the interests of workers as it claims or not?

These questions must be analysed from two angles: the relations of production and the bureaucracy i.e. the question of where real ownership of the means of production lies, and whether one class exploits another economically; and the potentially separate question of the exercise of political power in a highly organised society.

1. The relations of production:

The relations of production are defined by M. Buraway as:

"The social relations of man and woman to one another; the relations of distribution and consumption of the product of labour and the relations through which surplus is pumped out of the direct producers, sometimes known as the social division of labour."⁵³

To understand the state structure according to the relations of production in Algeria, it is important to examine the Algerian transition toward socialism in which the state claims to

".. uphold a social policy benefitting the masses in order to raise the living standards of labour, eliminate illiteracy, improve housing, health, emancipate women and create a national economy."⁵⁴

This transition has come about through the intervention of the state to control the country's wealth and to reconstruct the process of production.

The structure which Algeria inherited from the colonial period was based on an unequal distribution of resources between an elite consisting of colons and other native born individuals. These two groups were running and owned most of the fertile land and small industry which was restricted to exports and to consumer goods, tobacco, textiles, leather, wine.

While the majority of the population were wage labourers and Khammes, the latter were the most disadvantaged group in this unequal society. They had been deprived of their land and forced to make a poor living, working on land owned by private landlords. Lazreg described the Algerian wage labourers and Khammes as

"Men who lived off the charity of their relatives and friends. They often had a miniscule plot of land on which they grew lava beans and raised chickens and a few goats. Their number was estimated to be 1,386,510 at the turn of the century."⁵⁵

These conditions of inequality and poverty forced peasants and workers to revolt against French administration. Thus, when the colons left the

country, workers and peasants seized the land and vacant enterprises to establish self-management mainly in the agrarian sector. This has been considered to be the start of the transition towards socialism, along with the state investment in heavy industry.

When, three years after independence Boumediene took power, he said:

"Socialism involves a long work of construction, which requires elaboration and the general establishment of a rational plan which functions according to the political, economic and social needs of the society."⁵⁶

This intervention of the state in industry meant state supervision and control of all the structures of the process of production. As in "eastern bloc" socialism, so in Algeria, wage labour remained the lot of the great majority of the gainfully employed population, excepting personal smallholders. Nominally, at least, state property was now workers' and peasants' property. But there remained a substantial private sector, even after Boumediene's nationalisation plans were realised. Further, those employed in administration positions in the public sector - in government or industry or farms - clearly had a greater measure of control over the means of production and distribution than did workers and peasants, and they reaped greater economic rewards on the whole. Do these resemblances to capitalism belie the true relations of production in Algeria?

The circumstances in which the Algerian government found itself after independence involved a lack of professionals and specialists who could run the administration. There was a struggle for power between different groups and some wealthy individuals escaped with their money abroad, while the rest kept theirs without investing it. All this meant that the government had to call upon the private sector to invest in building the national economy. This was in my view a step

backward for socialism in Algeria.

Two laws had been created, which concerned private investment. One was in 1963 under Ben-Bella's regime and the other in 1966 under Boumediene. Boumediene's regime gave more encouragement and assurance to the private sector. For example the private sector in the district of Algiers owned 19% of enterprises during the period of Ben-Bella (1963-1965), and 81% for the period between 1966-1971.⁵⁷ During the same period the private proportion of the whole economy was about 1400 enterprises distributed as follows: 18% created between 1963-1965 and 54% between 1966-1971. The others were mainly owned by foreigners from the colonial period.

According to Peneff, the two regimes, Ben-Bella and Boumediene, converged in their economic policies. Under both, nationalisation included only enterprises owned by foreigners. However, Boumediene's regime was more systematic and determined by nationalising most of the foreign property in order to create a strong public sector.

After 1971 with the full nationalisation of hydrocarbon and other key industries, the public sector became the dominant one in terms of the number of employees. But the private sector constituted a major part with more than 41% in 1975 of manufacturing industry and buildings.⁵⁸

This number may be compared with the number given by Jacquimot and Raffinot in 1969. According to them the industrial structure was distributed in each sector as follows:⁵⁹

Table 3:1
Structure industrielle par secteurs juridiques en 1969 (B.T.P. exclus)

	Emploi	Chiffres d'affaires
Secteur prive...	38%	42.4%
Secteur autogestion	12%	6.2%
Secteur national	50%	51.3%

(Source: ministere de l'industrie et de l'Energie, service du fichier industriel, Alger)

Structurally the public sector may be dominant: it represented for instance "90% of the country's heavy industrial and service fields and employed 70% of the industrial urban workforce in 1972."⁶⁰ On the other hand, the profitable consumer industries and distribution networks are in the hands of private capital. This resembles the situation in many developed capitalist societies where "basic" industries are state funded and controlled, largely because they are necessary for the growth of private capital, while in themselves requiring too great a capitalisation at too low or uncertain a rate of return to attract private investment.

The state monopolisation of the public sector includes ten different forms of property: self-managed enterprises, enterprises under the control of the state, national companies, nationalised enterprise, enterprise attached to a minister, attached to a commune, attached to a willaya, self-managed or national cooperatives and private cooperation."⁶¹

The state monopolises the process of these enterprises by legally owning the means of production and controlling them through bureaucratic officials i.e. managers or wali etc. This seems to be similar to the soviet system as Belloula points out:

"It is particularly the soviet system and to some extent the Algerian system where the power of management belongs essentially to the state representatives."⁶²

The intervention of the state in socio-economic development was necessary in the sense that the state was able to carry out the national interest better than any particular group or organisation. This monopolisation of the state is assumed necessary to limit the authority of management and to involve workers in the control of the factory, encouraging more cooperation, and more commitment to the factory's policy, which should lead to low absenteeism, turnover, grievances etc.

The state owns the enterprises and has legalised the socialist management scheme in order to protect the interests of workers and encourage their participation, but has vested the authority to run the enterprise from day to day with management. This measure has effectively undermined the possibility of workers' control. It may be the managers high qualifications and privileged position that has encouraged them to think of themselves as owning the enterprise, this attitude is reinforced by the low level of workers' participation in the work process, by differentiation in wages, and perhaps interference to undermine the position of the workers' council representatives. Workers under these circumstances do consider management as the owners of the enterprise, and see managers as depriving them of participation, equal wages, promotion, equal treatment. This is the basis of the divergence between workers and management in the public sector which is therefore not much different than the private sector.

The bureaucracy problem in Algeria

Bureaucracy is not a new phenomenon, it existed in simple forms in old societies. But the trend toward Bureaucratisation has greatly accelerated during the last century. In contemporary societies bureaucracy has become a dominant institution, indeed "the institution that epitomises the modern era".⁶³ According to Weber "a bureaucratic organisation is technically the most efficient form of organisation possible",⁶⁴ because of its efficient storage of information, well trained individuals and hierarchically arranged authority. For Parsons "bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge".⁶⁵ So, according to this view, individuals within the bureaucratic organisation are impersonal and impartial, in other words they rationally apply the rules and procedures objectively defined for them.

Recently a negative evaluation of bureaucracy has been raised by Marxists in the course of a critique of the function of socialist institutions. Socialist systems are usually accused of not functioning efficiently, not only because of the extremely routine nature within the job itself, but also because of "the quality of human relations" which are according to Marxists the fault of officials within the system who represent a "defining social group with collective material interest."⁶⁶

Two different interpretations have been discussed. One looks at the problem of bureaucracy as a deformation feature of socialism which is analysed outside the class struggle. While the second view sees the bureaucracy as a new class standing against the socialist principles and therefore "giving rise to the rule of a new kind of exploitation class".⁶⁷

Roberts, however prefers to refer to the bureaucracy in Algeria as merely a "social category" rather than a social group with a definite collective interest, which is the first view of Lenin, Trotsky, Mandel etc. when they explain Russian state socialism in its early years of transitional period. Roberts supports this model because "the Algerian bureaucracy does not function collectively... it does so only in so far as its various activities are coordinated and orchestrated by a central directing body, such as the government".⁶⁸ He rejects the idea that the bureaucracy represents an exploitative class by saying that

"In order for the manager of a state enterprise to engage in capital accumulation for his own account he must engage in criminal activity namely embezzlement or associated practices."⁶⁹

As he admits these criminal activities do exist, and they are not negligible. They have affected the economy and created discontent among the population. Roberts' view of surplus extraction is too narrow in any case.^{69a}

Roberts seems to attribute these bureaucratic deviations to the weakness of government and its traditional form of patron-client relations which springs from Islamic culture based not on rational performance but on blood allegiance. This is partly true as regards the level of awareness among the working population. Also one cannot ignore the deliberate tendency of these bureaucrats in their activity to undermine socialism and to protect their own interests.

Thus, it is true that in Algeria as in other third world countries, managers form a powerful tool for development, and therefore they play an important role in directing the economy and political policies and we can see local officials sometimes hinder rather than assist development .

The failure of the government to transform the total structure and to mobilise politically a large population to support the revolution, leads to the domination by management staff who to an extent support the private sector at the expense of the public part of the economy by dealing with the private in a more informal way and providing facilities for them, such as loans, and import or export guarantees.⁷⁰

The other aspect which leads to ineffective bureaucracy is due to the two different cultures i.e. Arabic and French. The number of bureaucrats in the state apparatus is very small in comparison with the working population. These bureaucrats carry out their operations in French, while the vast majority of the people who they deal with speak a number of languages i.e. classical arabic, dialect, berber, etc. The problem of language does to some extent divorce the bureaucrats from the masses whom they are supposed to serve.

The economic development of Algeria, especially in industry, has not paralleled development at the cultural level, where the traditional values and beliefs of the people still predominate when dealing with personal relations. These relations are not based on rationality but in many cases upon: "kinship, blood solidarity, (alwalaa, alḡabaya), beside the new patron-client relations developed among, for example, the ALN and the party."⁷¹

The Algerians are still influenced by the old arab-islamic values in believing in the support of relatives and neighbours, having a large family and to help the poor and the old, collective work (tawiza), honour (nif) etc. These values persist in modern Algeria and interfere with official rules.

Formal structures and patterns of communication on many occasions passed over or ignored in order to fulfil a family duty or to fulfil an obligation to a friend.

The breaking of formal rules of this kind in Algeria is substantial. The government explanation is that it is due to incompetent bureaucrats. Lecca and Vatin point out that

"the political regime wants well being for all but is betrayed by the incompetent functionaries who obtain power by working in regional or personal groupings."⁷²

Although the bureaucracy problem in Algeria extends to several spheres, for the purpose of the study, we may confine discussion to its function in a specific factory belonging to the public sector. Thus the bureaucrats here refer to all functionaries (non manual workers) in the public sector, either managers or simple clerks in the office, who have been accused of being inefficient and of monopolising the state apparatus. Nellis points out that

"there is nobody more concerned and annoyed with the bureaucracy's bad service and absurdly complicated procedures than the Algerian citizen, and there is no group more disturbed and concerned over its poor productivity and high maintenance costs than the top political leadership of the country."⁷³

It was because of the difficulties that such bureaucratic mismanagement caused the national economy as well as ordinary people, and the corruption that accompanied it, that the previous president said in a speech given in March, 1977

"Management is ... a battle to win, just as we have won that of investment... in truth, the problem of the management of the economy, and more particularly, of production and service units, will constitute our major concern for the coming years. This will be the priority task of the government."⁷⁴

This speech by the head of state with other declarations by senior

officials implicitly recognised the separation between the government politicians and the lower strata of bureaucrats at the local level, especially the head of a province (wali) or the head of public sector enterprise (manager) who are the people who represent state policy in local affairs. On some occasions these officials use the state apparatus for their personal interests.

Two opposing propositions can be advanced:

One, that bureaucrats form a powerful entity on which the society relies and in order to maintain this position of importance they are opposed to the success of the socialist regime.

Second, that the malfunction of management is logically related to the transition to a socialist society. It was Trotsky's view that the USSR under Stalin was not "state capitalist", because capitalist property relations had been eliminated (if not irreversibly). Stalinism was a "bureaucratic deformation" of the state of transition to communism, attributable, at base, to the economic underdevelopment of the USSR

Many apologies for Algerian bureaucracy express similar views. To be sure there is a tendency to attribute this "deformation" to individual mentalities and practices rather than to structural causes. However, we could argue that in Algeria property relations have not undergone the transformation effected of the October Revolution and that bureaucracy in Algeria is not so much a "deformation", structural or industrial, as a functioning component of state capitalism

Do these Bureaucrats form a class? And are they opposing socialism in spite of the trust and freedom given to them to serve and use the machinery of government for the interests of the people. "The state considers the interests of the state and workers are indissociable."⁷⁵

In theory the bureaucrats are merely workers executing the rules and regulations on behalf of the state for the interests of workers. But in reality this conception stays ~~as~~ rhetoric, ^{and} the bureaucrats, whether managers or simple clerks in the office and whether in production or public services, form a class different from that of workers. Their control of the administration make them the dominant group not acting according to the interests of the workers but rather according to their personal interests which does not correspond to the government policy of eliminating the idea of the distinction between manager and worker. Boumediene declares that "the workers have to ban from their minds the very idea of the existence of the boss and the workers".⁷⁶ But it would be better if this request was directed to managers rather than to workers. Because it is the latter who make the idea a reality, by acting in a way which gives the impression that they are bosses. As mentioned earlier, the Algerian bureaucracy does act for its interests and therefore it is fair to consider it as an exploitative class. Even if their distinction as a privileged group separated from workers comes from their position as ^a middle class situated between the low strata of workers and the leaders of the state. This intermediate position enables them to act in an independent manner on behalf of the state and thus gives them power to manipulate the state apparatus to serve their interests. How?

1. Distortion of rules:

As is well known the programme of Algerian socialism is to demolish the idea of boss and worker, and to equate these categories by involving workers in management and control. But this aim of equality does not fit with management attitudes where the majority feel that socialism in

Algeria, and aspects of socialist management for example, threaten their position and their interests in the country. However, as those bureaucrats are not powerful enough to challenge the government or oppose the regime openly they welcome the workers' participation scheme, while continuing to hold the key to production. They can put pressure on the government by giving it the choice between increasing production, or implementing worker participation. This attitude is not found only in Algeria but exists within most socialist countries. As Nellis points out:

"Managers in Hungary, which in 1974 introduced a workers' participation scheme into its factories, are said to be very opposed to the programme and willing to support its production only if everybody gets fired when there is failure to meet production targets."⁷⁷

This attitude of management to support effectiveness in production sounds fair if it is applied to all individuals in a particular plant. But this is not usually their intention, the Managers' aim perhaps is to protect their privileged position by excluding workers from any real control of production. In doing so, management pretends to accept formally workers participation and to implement it in a way which shows the unsuitable side of the policy. The bureaucrat's weapon in this situation is to create an atmosphere in ^{the} enterprise which discourages innovation, oppresses effective ideas, neglects problems found and places individuals in the wrong jobs.

The last factor for instance produces tension throughout the enterprise. Not placing the right person in the right job creates a double problem. First, a qualified person who is not occupied the right job cannot do his job properly and at the same time blames the authorities above him. Second, the person who is misplaced reacts

bitterly against the whole management *system*, expressing his anger in misjudgement and malpractices in the job he is responsible for.

There are many examples of this in Sonacome. Such as a manager *who does* not have the proper qualification, or clerk or worker *who is* given the wrong job, etc. The misplacing of individuals prevailing in Sonacome is found in other Algerian enterprises.

2. Imposing rules:-

It has been stated earlier that, the scheme of socialist management of enterprises gives the right to workers to participate in managing their plant. But since managers must guide the other workers, because the latter have not the skills necessary for running the plant, managers tend to behave like an elite and to dominate workers. The divorce this causes between workers and managers affects the successful functioning of the plant which depends on a measure of cooperation between the parties. It can be seen in advanced countries that the cooperation between the both sides is necessary for industrial success. And the separation between workers and managers is even more disruptive in Algeria where the means of production are believed to be owned collectively. Sometimes decisions are taken by management without taking into account the attitudes of workers at the bottom of the hierarchy, and they impose rules without consulting the workers' council. For example the leader of an assembly complained that his discipline committee which supposedly had the task of education and explanation was "being driven into a corner by management and being used as a tool of repression."⁷⁸ Another president of the workers council said:

"Management is not taking into account solutions suggested by workers representatives."⁷⁹

Not to take account of the attitudes and initiatives of workers is

counter-productive for the plant. In this situation workers would react against rules by slowing down production, disobeying their superiors, or going absent in order to get away from these unpleasant conditions.

As we have seen in this chapter, there is a problem in defining Algerian socialism and what was wrong after the overwhelming enthusiasm toward socialism during and after independence, when the revolutionaries and politicians attempted to direct it for the benefit of the working population who suffered most.

When socialism was launched after independence, the political and social conditions were not mature enough to resist the many serious attacks against it. As well as the individualistic tradition, politicians and revolutionaries were under constant pressure from different forces and were usually forced to compromise or to retreat from taking such revolutionary actions for the benefit of the working class. These difficulties are often expressed in vague and rhetorical analysis by different authors. So, the Algerian socialism combines several concepts drawn up from the different experiences of intellectuals and technocrats who are involved ideologically and economically with the private capital. And the actual government of Algeria is supporting the liberal line more than before, in order to soften the authority that was exercised under Boumediene. The private sector is taking over the production of consumer goods with more open trade and less control of foreign imports.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. See for example Koulichizki L'autogestion, l'homme et l'état. l'expérience Algérienne. Mouton, Lahye. 1974, Lecca and Vatin. l'Algérie politique. Institutions et Régime. Paris Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques. 1975.
2. D.Lane. The Socialist Industrial State. George Allen and Unwin. 1976. p.31.
3. The Algier's Charter p.33.
4. M. Raptis. Socialism, Democracy and self management. Translated by Marie J. Serrie and Richard Sissons. Allison and Busby, 1980. p.67.
5. Raptis. op.cit. p.17.
6. See W. Quandt. Revolution and political leadership in Algeria, 1954-1968, The M.I.T. Press, 1969. See also, Lecca and Vatin op.cit.
7. The Algiers Charter. Arabic Version.
8. ibid., p.31.
9. ibid., p.111.
10. The Algier's Charter. p.103.
See also Quandt, Lecca and Vatin. op.cit.
11. W. Quandt. op.cit. p.248.
12. "Communism... abolishes all religion and all morality instead of constituting them on a new basis, it therefore acts in contradiction to all past history experience". See Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the communist party. Progress publishers, Moscow, 1971 p.58.
13. D. Lane, op.cit. p.29.
14. F. Weiss. Doctrine et Action Syndicales en Algérie. Editions Cujas, 1970.
15. ibid., p.52.
- * This view of Lenin's is rejected by some Marxists as well as his theory of democratic centralism and the impossibility of building socialism in one country. See D. Lane op.cit. p.40.
16. Naomi Allen. Leon Trotsky. The challenge of the left opposition. (1923-25). Pathfinder Press, 1975, p.20.

17. Naomi Allen op.cit. p.23.
18. ibid., p.23.
19. Naomi Allen op.cit. p.31.
20. ibid. p.47.
21. D. Lane. op.cit. p.36.
22. Lane. op.cit. p.29.
23. ibid. p.37.
24. Lane. op.cit. p.74.
25. ibid. p.143.
26. ibid. p.151.
27. Lane. op.cit. p.153.
28. S. Koulitchizky. op.cit. Quote it from F. Berella. p. 105.
29. H. Roberts. The Algerian Bureaucracy. Review of African political economy. Number 24. 1982. p.41. See also his article Is Algeria socialist. Gazette Review of Literature on the Middle East. 1980.
30. J. Nellis Algerian socialism and its critics. Canadian journal of political science XIII:3. 1980. p.489.
31. E. Bruno. L'Algerie Cultures et Revolution. Editions du seuil. 1977. p.204.
32. According to Koulitchizky' Algerian socialism (1) for the time being is only a march towards socialism (2) is a human socialism (3) can be combined harmoniously with Islam (4) is conciliatory to the old metropolis. He also blames Ben Bella's regime for its ambivalence which is made up of three characteristics (1) its socialist aspect (2) its appearance as a liberal democracy (3) its reality as an underdeveloped regime (in the sense given by M. Duverger) See Koulitchizky op.cit. p.103, p.110.
33. F. Colonna. Cultural Resistance and religious legitimacy in colonial Algeria. Economy and Society Vol. 3, 1974. p.234.
34. Raymond Vallin. Muslim Socialism in Algeria. l'Afrique et l'Asie, No. 66. 1964. p.51.
35. ibid. p.60.
36. The two aspects of Algerian socialism. Civilisations, vol. 28, 1978, Part I, p.4-6.

37. Lecca and Vatin. L'Algerie politique. Institution et Regime. Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politique. 1975. p.59.
38. ibid. p.59.
39. M. Rodinson. Islam and capitalism. Penguin Books, 1966, p.13.
40. ibid. p.22.
41. ibid. p.20.
42. Rodinson op.cit. p.14.
43. Koulitchizky op.cit. p.105.
44. Koulitchizky op.cit. p.105.
45. Rodinson. op.cit. p.158.
46. See for instance Jacquimot and Raffinot, Nellis, Miaille, Gellner etc. op.cit.
47. M. Raffinot and P. Jacquimot. Le capitalism d'etat Algerien. Francois Maspero, 1977.
48. C. Bettelheim. Economic Calculation and Forms of Property. Translated by J.Taylor (Routledge direct edition) London, 1976 p.92. Note: Translation of calcul economique et formes de property, Paris, Maspero, 1970.
49. M. Miaille, Contribution a une reflexion theorique sur l'entreprise socialiste Algerienne. Revue Algerienne des sciences juridiques economiques et politiques. Vol. 9, No. 3, 1972 p. 665
50. Raffinot and Jacquimot op.cit. p.119.
51. Miaille. op.cit. p.334.
52. Nellis. op.cit. p.495.
53. Michael Buraway. Toward a management of the Labour process. Braverman and beyond. Politics and society. Vol. 8 Nos. 3-4. 1978.
54. M. Lazreg. The Emergence of Classes in Algeria. Westview Press, 1976. pp. 123-124.
55. Lazreg. op.cit. p.52.
56. This is from a speech by President Boumediene. Quoted by K. Mameri, Orientations politiques de l'Algerie. Alger, Sned. 1978, p.108.
57. Jean Peneff. Industriels Algeriens. Editions du C.N.R.S., 1981.

58. J. Peneff. op.cit.
59. Jacquimot and Raffinot. op.cit. p.99.
60. Nellis. op.cit. p.491.
61. Peneff. op.cit. p.22.
62. Belloula, De l'organisation socialiste des Entreprises. Alger. Sned 1977, p.63.
63. Peter M. Blau and Marshall W. Meyer. Bureaucracy in modern society Random Howse. 1971. p.10.
64. Quoted by Pugh, Hickson and Hining. Writers on organisations. Penguin Books, 1971, p.29.
65. Quoted by A. Gouldner. Pattern of Industrial bureaucracy. The Free Press, 1954. p.21.
66. H. Roberts. The Algerian bureaucracy. Review of African political Economy. Number 24. 1982. p.40
67. ibid. p.40.
68. Roberts. Is Algeria socialism. Gazelle Review of Literature on the Middle East. 1980. p.6.
69. ibid. p.6
- 69a. In Algeria state employees legitimately earn relatively large salaries and often have access to consumer goods at much reduced prices. They are able to accumulate wealth. The existence of a private sector in the economy gives them ample opportunities to invest it for their own gain.
70. Peneff. op.cit.
71. Bruno. op.cit. p.92
72. Jean Lecca and Jean-Claude Vatin. l'Algerie politique institutions et regime. Presses de la Formation nationales des sciences politiques. 1975. p.320.
73. Nellis, op.cit. p.421.
74. This is a speech by the president (H. Boumediene) reported in the daily newspaper, (EL Moudjahid, 31 March, 1977) Quoted by J. Nellis op.cit.
75. M. Miaille. Contribution a une reflexion theorique sur l'entreprise socialiste Algeriene. Revue Algerienne des science juridique, economique et politique. Vol. 9, No. 3 1972, p.665.

76. Nellis. La Gestion Socialiste des Entreprises . occasional papers 30. p.17.
77. J. Nellis. La Gestion Socialiste des Entreprises . occasional papers 30, Canada, 1976. p.29.
78. Nellis. op.cit. p.28.
79. ibid. pp.28-29.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Theoretical Approach to the Study of Industrial Absenteeism in Algeria

Absenteeism is one of the problems which arise in an organization, and has attracted many researchers, chiefly in developed capitalist industry.

Most studies of absenteeism have been based on empirical investigation made by psychologists and sociologists who have tried to assess the extent of absenteeism and analyze its causes. R. Sobol et al. point out that "The objective is to identify the social and psychological correlates of absenteeism in order to further our understanding of the relationships between individuals and work organisations from a scientific point of view."¹

It appears that there is still a lack of a theoretical framework which could provide a comprehensive analysis of absenteeism.

This chapter aims at discussing absenteeism in a particular factory (Sonacome) in relation to the total situation in which Algeria finds itself. This situation is that of the development of modern industry.² The Algerian government's policy like that of many countries in the Third World has attempted to encourage the rapid development of industry, based on socialist values. Algerian socialism has promised to end exploitation of man by man, and to develop the country rapidly in order to end unemployment and to improve the standard of living, but without perhaps taking into account "the existing reality which may and often

does invalidate these promises".³ This reality is the transition between two ways of life, from one based on agriculture to one based on industry.

Absenteeism in the Sonacome factory will be examined in relation to two main variables: agricultural background, and management and organisational structure.

1. Agricultural background

A great majority of the Algerian population depends on agriculture, table 4:1 shows the active population according to various branches of the economy for the year 1966, and indicates that 63 per cent of all workers were engaged in agriculture, in comparison with only 9 per cent in all other types of industry.⁴

Industrial work has different conditions and requirement from those found in agriculture. In agriculture, work is organised according to the seasons and most peasants and farmers work intensively only at certain times, such as the time of planting and harvesting. Apart from those two main periods, the peasants spend their time either looking after the farm, doing the secondary work of maintenance or grazing the cattle. At other times of the year, when the peasant is not involved in any of those activities, he often looks for a temporary job to maintain himself and his family.

Migrants are a significant component in the non-agricultural labour force. Furthermore, among those permanently employed in industry, many originally worked in agriculture, and it is only recently that they have experienced urban

Table 41

Employment in 1966 by sector of Activity

Sector of Activity	Number of jobs	%	%
Agriculture	1,209,00		62.7
Water, Gas, Electricity	4500	2.7	
Hydrocarbons & Natural gas	8600	5.2	
Mining and Quarrying	8630	5.3	
Building materials	7,320	4.5	
Building & public works	50000	30.4	
Metals and metalworking	10200	6.6	
Chemical industries	4550	2.8	
Textiles and Leather	6250	3.8	
Food industries	14900	9.1	
Other industries	8700	5.3	
Craft industries	40000	24.3	
TOTAL	164,350	100	8.5
Transport	46900		
Services	60000		
Commerce	220000		
TOTAL	326,900		
Administration (Exchange education)	67770		
Education	36800		
Local authorities	53000		
Army	70000		
TOTAL	227,570		11.8
Total employment	1,227,820		100

Sources: Information provided by the general plan Directorate

The above table indicates that the highest percentage of the Algerian working force was in agriculture 62.7% with only 8.5% in industry

life and come into contact with industry. This kind of worker tends to retain his old habits and agricultural behaviour.

Agricultural beliefs help to shape the workers' social life. He still believes in the separation of the sexes, for example in education which is not considered imperative for a girl. Marriage is arranged by parents in the countryside and the virginity of the girl is still considered by the family and by her husband to be an essential prerequisite. The norms of honour and shame, and the behaviour and attitudes based on them persist in many parts of the countryside.

Many people believe in healers and diviners who can relieve their mental and physical illnesses by religious practices, who claim to know the truth by supernatural powers and whose medicines are herbs. In this respect MacIver and Page point out that:

"The country man grows imbued with religion and with superstition. He must come to terms with inscrutable powers, and the limits of his own power make him susceptible to traditional beliefs."

They go on saying that

"The predominant occupation of agriculture has other attributes which impress themselves on the mentality of the country man and are reflected in his social life. He is not, like the urban wage earner, an employee working under immediate supervision at a task specifically assigned to him, whether he is a serf, his time and seasons, his various tasks and alterations of work and rest, are set for him not by a master but by the exigencies of nature."

Up to now, we have not explained why conditions differ between industry and agriculture, but have simply cited the individual's beliefs and behaviour in a country developing from agriculture to industry. It is well known that industry imposes its own

conditions perhaps more complex and hazardous than those found in agriculture. S.P. Parker et.al. describes industry and its effects as follows:

"The patterning of industrial structures and economic processes profoundly shapes the kind of people ... social identities and life styles. The socio-economic and political organisation of industrial society, and the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of its members interact in a complex way."⁸

And Durkheim E. comments:

"As the market extends, great industry appears. But it results in changing the relations of employers and employees. The great strain upon the nervous system and the contagious influence of great conglomeration increase the needs of the latter. Machines replace men; manufacturing replaces hand-work. The worker is regimented, separated from his family throughout the day. He always lives apart from his employer, etc. These new conditions of industrial life naturally demand a new organisation, but as these changes have been accompanied with extreme rapidity, the interests in conflict have not yet had the time to be equilibrated."⁹

The worker in agriculture looks to his family for help, while in industry he looks for help from his mates on the line. The work and behaviour of individuals in industry is fixed, whereas in agriculture it is diversified.

Workers drawn recently from the countryside may be expected to have high rates of absenteeism because of family responsibilities. The persistence of traditional beliefs and behaviour, means that priority is given to family obligations, not only the duty to provide money to the family but also the duty to participate and help a member of the family who is sick, or whose house, animals, or land need care.

On the other hand rural workers may be expected to be more compliant to their superiors. Their low skill, and unfamiliarity with work in industry give them little chance of finding a job elsewhere.

The better conditions in industry than in their previous job in agriculture are other factors which will make them comply with management. On the other hand if a seasonal industrial worker's current job does not fulfil his expectations and aspirations, this may lead to conflict in work expressed by absenteeism or leaving the job.

Agricultural work is not done on regular schedule, in contrast to services and industry where regularity and punctuality is required. We can agree with Brokeshire who notes that

"Older workers who have had no previous industrial experience have relatively high absence rates. Workers making the transition from agricultural employment to industry are often poor attenders."¹⁰

The reason for high absence among former agricultural workers according to Brokeshire, is that "many of them quit without notice periodically to return to seasonal agricultural employment, as if to protest against the regular rhythm of industry and its time-clock."¹¹ But the irregular attendance of a worker is not due only to his protest against the regular rhythm in industry, but involves his entire way of life: for example, an agricultural worker lives at a low cost and considers himself employed even if he does not work full time. While an urban worker regards himself as unemployed if he does not work full time,¹² because he cannot maintain himself

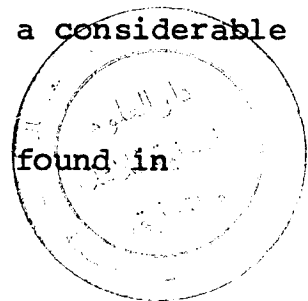
if he does not have a full time job.

2. Management and Organisational Structure

A second factor affecting work attendance is that of management and organisational structures. It has been said that the nature of management in industry is partly responsible for absenteeism and other forms of worker dissatisfaction.¹³ Workers used to break machines in capitalist factories, because they thought these machines benefited management only. Under socialism workers have been told "do not destroy today what will be yours tomorrow".¹⁴

Management's role in industry has been increasing with the advance of technology, and arguably managers have come to form a class separated from the owners, whether ownership is private as in capitalist systems or collective as in socialist systems. Managers or the so-called "new middle-class" can be distinguished from the two other classes i.e. workers and owners of the means of production under capitalism. In terms of role and authority, common interests which shape management attitudes and behaviour according to the social control system and cultural values of a specific society. S.R. Parker et al have tried to look at managers within an organisation in terms of the total socio-economic and cultural situation, which shapes their attitudes and behaviour. They point out that, "Differences in managers' social and cultural locations appear to make for a considerable difference in their personal behaviour."¹⁵

Parker et al distinguish between management found in



advanced industrial countries and that found in developing countries. A study made in south American countries shows that "work habits of management are quite different from those in north America or Western Europe",¹⁶ and go on to say "... and "what is really involved is a different way of looking at life in general and at economic activities in particular."¹⁷

Such beliefs and behaviour accompany the Algerian worker, when he moves from agriculture to industry i.e. to an organisation which represents a more rational system. It is in this way that traditional socio-cultural values are maintained within the Algerian enterprise. This in turn can cause a devaluation of the rational system and its ability to function properly, because traditional beliefs and old habits are maintained by the working people. Moreover the new values that are introduced in industry under the socialist system are perhaps misinterpreted. Rules and regulations which were initially meant to benefit the worker and to integrate him into the system, appear rather to be serving those who manage it. This immature awareness coupled with the lack of unity among workers, leads to an individualistic expression of dissatisfaction like absenteeism or leaving the job.

Absenteeism has been interpreted in various ways. It had been viewed as unorganised conflict in contrast to strikes going slow etc. which are organised.¹⁸ Scott et al. distinguish between involuntary absence, due to sickness or authorised leave, and voluntary absence, due to any other cause.¹⁹ They

argue that only voluntary absence can be regarded as an "index of collective conflict" while ... "involuntary absences will reflect conflict for an employee who is ill-adjusted to his working environment."²⁰

For D. Silverman "organised conflict is used to refer to ... strike action or other collective sanctions... unorganised conflict refers to an individual's means of expressing grievances, such as poor time keeping, absenteeism and, ultimately, moving to another place of work".²¹

Strikes and absenteeism are not necessarily separate or contradictory to each other. They may happen together and even if they do not, they both reflect discontent with the work situation.

Turner et al. conclude that "strikes, absenteeism, accidents, and labour turnover all involve withdrawal from a particular workplace situation".²²

Beyond these broad statements, social scientists have admitted that they find difficulties in determining what causes absenteeism, and perhaps that is why most of them give different reasons according to the specific case study. Though absenteeism remains difficult to determine as Moos describes it

"It may be difficult or impossible to establish the cause of absence of a worker. Absence from work may result from a series of causes none in itself sufficient to cause absence: undernourishment, over work, high taxation, a football match, illness of close relative, a quarrel with a foreman or with a fellow worker or at home, a surplus of income, a hangover, a slight attack of rheumatism or of flu

working with a new machine or with a newcomer, any combination of factors as these might induce a miner to stay at home rather than go to work. It may be an additional mile to cycle in bad weather, or against the wind which has raised the marginal disutility of work above unity. Only a scientific investigation into the background of an absence could yield a useful classification. One would have to consider his age group, marital status, skill, general state of health, social behaviour, home conditions, working conditions, and the distance between his home and his work etc."²³

Whatever the cause of a specific absence, it has been suggested that management play a major role in increasing or decreasing the workers' satisfaction with the internal work situation. Factors such as work environment, job security, skill, promotion, wages, interpersonal relations with managers, influence the worker's adaptation to work, and satisfaction with his job. If he feels insecure, or believes that his rights are not protected, or his welfare is not looked after properly by his superiors, he may well react against the situation by means of the easy alternative of absenteeism.

The workers' satisfaction with their workplace, it has been suggested, is related to the "mode of production" established under a particular system. The process of production in the Algerian context is politically motivated and inspired by socialist values adopted after independence (1962). In practice this means that workers manage and control the workprocess under the supervision of the worker's state. On this basis, it is intended to put an end to conflict between workers and management. So the state intervenes as

the representative of the workers, and it is assumed that workers are no longer working for an employer, but for themselves. However this theory does not dismiss the fact that, in the Algerian public industry, the means of production are owned and controlled by the state through its professional agents, that is to say management.

In examining positions within the state apparatus, it is essential to look at the social relations of control in which workers and managers are involved as agents of production performance. Although neither managers nor workers own the means of production legally, the whole enterprise is dominated by those at the top, i.e. managers and supervisors, as the immediate representatives of the state.

Thus, management has been viewed as playing a key role in handling workers and the work process, by creating an atmosphere of cooperation and exchange of views about the work situation. And in this way the management of any organisation can become a source of satisfaction to the worker and the success of the enterprise.

Behrend suggests two approaches for improving the workers' behaviour and morale, in order to decrease the rate of absenteeism. First, Person-centred management which, according to Behrend will improve the relations between workers and management. She emphasises the quality of supervision, as an important way of raising group morale. Secondly, a condition centred approach which assumes that specific circumstances cause

absenteeism and the need to modify those conditions which give rise to it or to adjust the organisation of work to them".²⁴

Behrend states that it is a management responsibility to deal with workers humanely and respectfully on the basis of the person-centred assumption, management and particular supervisors should concentrate on understanding unexplained absenteeism by visiting absentees in their homes and finding out the causes. This method is applied in a Japanese factory discussed by R. Dore.²⁵ To achieve a "condition centred management" Behrend suggests that management should pay close attention to the work conditions which may give rise to absenteeism such as training, transport etc. and classify the absentees according to their age, department, sex etc.

Behrend's view is parallel to that of Elton Mayo who argues that absenteeism is due to low morale and dissatisfaction caused by management incompetence. Mayo's findings in the Hawthorne study show that the supervisor's technical competence, management flexibility, which allows supervisors to deal with workers humanely, and ease of communication between workers and management, will create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual responsibility which management alone cannot achieve.

Mayo points out that a "small size work unit lends itself to the development of intimacy and a group expectation of individual regularity".²⁶ Mayo finds a high rate of absenteeism in larger work units because of the lack of a feeling of solidarity and team-work in such units. Where units are small

enough to have a sense of team work, the rate of absenteeism tends to decrease and production to increase. Mayo found in a plant in southern California that of a small group of workers "The foreman said that, their efficiency output per man hour runs 25% above that of the average for the plant".²⁷ Mayo was concerned with advising management to pay attention to the human characteristics of work, because as he says efficient workers are not a "herd of individuals" but a "well-knit human group". Mayo rejected the idea that the performance of workers can be predicted on the basis of a test before they start working, and favoured the idea of what he called "the leadman" who is directly responsible for workers and whose duty for example is to listen to a new worker, and introduce him to his friends. The leadman also helps workers with their work problems, and this for Mayo is essential for the adaptation of a worker and his successful satisfaction with work situation. This in turn leads to a decrease in absenteeism, turnover, and time-wasting and an increase in production.

Mayo points out that "Man's desire to be continuously associated in work with his fellows is a strong, if not the strongest, human characteristic and warns management that "Any disregard of it by management or any ill-advised attempt to defeat this human impulse leads instantly to some form of defeat for management itself".²⁸

It seems however that neither Mayo nor Behrend has taken into account the possibility of bringing workers up to

the level of management, and involving them fully in the work control system. They suggest that the best way of creating a satisfactory work atmosphere is through management effectiveness and competence. But perhaps this approach cannot eradicate the conflict between management and workers, where it stems from inferior work conditions and the unequal distribution of income and power between the two groups. The socialist idea that the worker is supposed to control and manage the work process and be incorporated in it may represent an answer to these forms of conflict.

In the socialist situation, the means of production is owned collectively and workers participate in managing and controlling their work. However the approach often exists only in theory and in practice management still possess most of the power and control the work process and are opposed to the interests of the workers. In this respect Braverman points out that "certain management theorists for a generation ... represent a style of management rather than a genuine change in the position of the worker. They are characterised by a studied pretense of worker "participation", a glacial liberality in allowing the worker to adjust a machine, replace a light bulb, move from one fractional job to another, and to have the illusion of making decisions by choosing among fixed and limited alternatives designed by a management which deliberately leaves insignificant matters open to choice".²⁹

Braverman tries to look at worker management relations from a wider perspective. He believes that the workers

dissatisfaction within an industrial organisation is not only due to the work conditions or management's incompetence but also resides in the system in which workers and management are bound together in an organisation with different positions and degrees of power. In an analysis of American car industry, he points out that "many workers at all occupational levels feel locked-in, their mobility blocked, the opportunity to grow lacking in their jobs, challenge missing from their tasks. Young workers appear to be as committed to the institution of work as their elders have been, but many are rebelling against the anachronistic authoritarianism of the workplace".³⁰

So the lack of opportunity and the deprivation of workers might lead to unrest, the expression of which is not coming to work. For Braverman "Absenteeism and quit rate", representing a "new worker attitude", tend to vary with the availability of jobs and may have partly reflected the decline in unemployment rate".³¹ Whereas for Dubois "Absenteeism is considered in terms of escape from the work situation, of getting money without working for it, and of the value set on leisure".³² These features are considered by Dubois to be general causes which include "The whole context of work".

What explanations should we seek for instability in Sonacome workers? The hypotheses we shall examine are that absence when it occurs in Sonacome has two main sources. One is related to the internal situation of the factory, where the worker is not happy with his wages, promotional

opportunities or the way in which orders are applied, that is to say where workers are getting low wages relatively to managers, promotion is slow and it is believed to be improperly distributed, and finally where there is distrust between workers and their superiors over the application of rules.

Arguably, the socialist management scheme introduced in the early seventies in order to fuse together workers and management, has been compromised by the fact that management has shown little enthusiasm to share its authority with workers. Against this workers also can be blamed for a lack of the necessary awareness and solidarity to act as the managers and controllers of the factory; as the scheme envisioned. However misunderstanding between workers and managers creates a situation where both sides, who are meant to work toward a collective goal lack this sense of cooperation and this may be expressed by absenteeism and low production.

The second source is related to the external situation of the factory, in which the lack of an industrial culture seems to have encouraged an irrational method of order to prevail in the factory, where traditional beliefs such as those concerned with kinship, neighbourhood and comradeship persist as the basis of the workers advancement. That is to say the Sonacome worker may still be lacking an industrial work-discipline and still have not yet grasped the rational method that should be operating in a modern factory like Sonacome. Moreover the increase in the cost of living, and

the lack of vital facilities like transport and adequate accommodation probably disappoint workers as well as some managers and raise the level of conflict expressed by absence or leaving for another job.

3. Absenteeism and socio-economic development

According to our case study, absenteeism in Algeria has two main causes. First the restless movement of workers which is due to rapid change in Algerian society. Second, management incompetence because of the shortage of professionals which creates patronage, disappointment and poor morale.

With regard to the restlessness of workers, it has been said that Algeria is in a period of construction, which means that there is high unemployment as well as considerable opportunity to find jobs, because of rapid development. This situation creates absenteeism and turnover, that is to say, on the one hand workers are experiencing anxiety about finding the job that suits their aspirations and expectations, and on the other hand the creation of jobs everywhere because of economic development encourages people to move and look for better conditions. For instance in 1968 the number of unemployed people was 932,000 and among them only 18% had worked before regularly. A high number of these unemployed people were young as shown by the census of 1968, where 44% were under the age of 25, and 34% between the age of 15 and 19 years.³³ Unemployment is decreasing especially in industry, for example, Benhouria points out that unemployment in the non agricultural sector was 34% in 1973, and this number is

expected to decrease to 20% in 1985.³⁴

Not to remain permanently in a job is a general tendency among workers in Algeria especially among the young who have relatively greater expectations and fewer family commitments.

Unemployment and rapid economic development has caused restless movement among workers particularly among the young who emigrated from city to city, and moved from rural areas to towns in order to work in industry. In the period between 1966 to 1973 nearly 850,000 individuals migrated to the cities. This migration has continued. It is estimated that between the years 1974 and 1977, 520,000 had emigrated to the cities. And this high rate of emigration to the cities has been followed by a rapid development in the non agricultural sector. It has been said that between the years 1966 to 1972 there were 500,000 jobs created in industry, representing an increase of 25%, while between 1969 and 1980, 1,100,000 jobs were created in the non-agricultural sector.³⁵

New-comers to industry were young and as we mentioned earlier these workers tend to be irregular in attending their jobs, and it is obvious that they are responding to events around them, looking and comparing jobs and would easily leave their current jobs under such pressures. Therefore it has been suggested that under the circumstances of change in a society, individuals will have a tendency towards absenteeism.

People employed in industry were perhaps expecting some changes in their style of life, and improvements in their living standards that could not be afforded with an agricultural job.

High wages, good accommodation and a regular job are the things most required by individuals in Algeria, which is what causes them to move around constantly. The opportunity is greater for those who are educated or skilled, or in a position to use nepotism.

The chances of obtaining satisfactory jobs are few, as can be seen in the complaints of those workers who were interviewed. The dissatisfaction was mainly directed towards elements in the management, who were accused of not dealing with workers as the rules of justice dictated, in respect to occupation, promotion, transfer, wages and so on.

It has been argued that management represents a rational system in Algeria, however it rarely functions properly because of the traditional norms followed by the bureaucratic class in order to reinforce their position. In this context patronage readily degenerates into corruption. Another indirect cause of workers dissatisfaction is probably an ideological one. As we have said Algeria is conceived to be a socialist state, where workers are considered to be part of the system, participating equally with management at the different levels of the enterprise. However in practice this does not happen and workers fill the subordinate role in which they are usually in the capitalist context. This formal right to participate in substantial decisions and the fact that it is not realized, is a further source of dissatisfaction for many workers.

4. Industrial Relations and Conflict

According to Dahrendorf "the conflict in advanced industrial society is guided by the theory of social class and class conflict."³⁶

In this context Dahrendorf rejects Marx's theory in order to replace it with a new one, which would fit these new facts unexplained by Marxist theory. He points out that class conflict within industry appears in the "sphere of production", the relations of production, or property relations in Marx's analysis.

Thus an industrial enterprise is a "nucleus of class war". While the approach taken by Dahrendorf is "The relevant feature is that an industrial enterprise is an imperatively coordinated association".³⁷ He argues that Marx focused on the property aspect because "It was legal possession of the means of production that provided both the foundation of capitalist power and the main issue of industrial conflict".³⁸ But he notes that this is not the only basis of industrial conflict, because it also arises in a situation where the means of production is in public ownership. If we take the industrial enterprise as an imperatively coordinated association, as Dahrendorf suggests, it would consist of two groups, capitalists and wage labourers, who find themselves facing one another, under one roof with common interests.

These interests articulate the worker and management in the continuance of the enterprise's existence. Both sides obtain their livelihood from the enterprise, and a third factor which may identify the interest of both sides is that the function of the enterprise is in the interest of the whole society. If the function of these factors is recognised by both sides, and if they concentrate their efforts in order to carry out the above aims, it would decrease the tension between them, and therefore decrease the rate of absenteeism, sabotage and

negligence and improve their behaviour within the organisation.

But as the enterprise also involves differentials between workers and management according to differences in status, positions, income, power and so on, which exist within most organisations a class conflict may arise in which workers attempt to improve their material status, to decrease the superimposition of authority and to participate in decision making, especially in a socialist country like Algeria, where the workers in a general sense are supposed to own the means of production and control the enterprise. Their ownership and control exists more in theory than in reality and workers we talked to, expressed their resentment and dissatisfaction with the way in which the mode of control is implemented.

Workers do not cooperate with management because they feel that they have been excluded from participation in decision making and control. This is especially the case where management are considered to be applying the rules unjustly in dismissing workers in the event of a strike or penalizing absentees by cutting wages and bonuses, or by not promoting undisciplined workers. Measures used in some cases unlawfully agitate conflict and increase dissatisfaction.

The weakness of the workers' council to defend the rights of workers, and in some cases their willingness to stand beside management against workers deepen the conflict between the two sides.

This division in Sonacome between workers and managers seems to be due initially to the distrust between the two groups and to the apparent failure of the government to bring together the interests of managers and workers. The situation is made worse by the low awareness workers have of socialist values which makes it difficult for them to

identify their own interests with those of management. This is similar to the situation of French peasants described by Marx in his essay on the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in which he observed that the French government claimed to be defending the peasant class, whereas that government was in fact serving the bourgeoisie. It boasted that its goals were to fuse the classes together in order to achieve unity among all groups. But unfortunately that did not happen because as Marx explains, the absence of interrelations among peasants and the bad state of communication which encourage peasant isolation, resulted in their failure to organise themselves effectively.

Similarly in the Algerian situation, the social structure is unclear, the state personnel prove themselves to be incompetent by their application of rigid and ill-fitted policy which serves their own interests, neglects workers rights and prevents interrelationships developing among workers.

The struggle of the labour class against the capitalist class in capitalist countries is organised formally by employers associations and trade unions, which defend the interests of each group. There is also an informal organisation by workers in order to organise strikes, to slow-down work, and to push their trade union committees to struggle against management. This conflict within industrial organisation arises mainly from inequality between the small number of managers who control the work and supervise it, and the large number of workers who are subordinated to them and involved directly in production.

As Dahrendorf expresses it in the case of management power:

"The modern state, for practical purposes, consists of a relatively small number of persons who issue and execute orders which affect a large number in whom they are themselves included."³⁹

While Scott et al puts it this way:

"The dichotomy between workers and staff personnel which is found in so many industrial plants is a reflection of the differing occupational roles of the two groups."⁴⁰

The differentiation between management and workers in power, prestige and income is obvious and it has been suggested that management, forming what is called "the new middle class", plays the main role in the change and development of society. Management has a general tendency toward supporting the higher class whether in the form of the government or a multinational corporation, rather than the lower class of workers.

The power and prestige of management is great in the Third World where there is a scarcity of professionals and they play almost the role of a ruling class with the help of the socio-political apparatus.

Three features contribute to the position of management and perhaps prevent it from functioning effectively. First: the countries of the Third World are generally subordinated to the international market, and a country as a whole is exploited by the multinational companies owned by the biggest countries.⁴¹ Secondly the internal "bourgeoisies" are exploiting the precarious social and political situations of third world countries whether the regimes are socialist or capitalist, while the ordinary people are usually the ones who suffer. And thirdly the specific features of the cultures of underdeveloped countries, in their emphasis on religion and traditional pattern of life, preserve the problems that the society is attempting to solve, i.e. exploitation, irrationality, nepotism, patronage, etc.

We can say in general that the causes of absenteeism are different when they occur in a factory functioning in the Algerian context. The specific causes will be further examined in the following chapter.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. This study was carried out by Sobol and Baumgartel in an airline employing about 12,500 people in the U.S.A. The study dealt with the background to absenteeism. See Baker and McEwan. Industrial Organizations and Health. vol. I. London, Tavistock, 1969, p.280.
2. The amount of investment in industry for the third year plan (1967-69) was 9.4 billions of Algerian dinars. This amount has increased to 27 billions of dinars for the four year plan (1970-73) or 43.5% of the total amount of investment. For more detail see, L'Algerie En Europe No. 292 Avril 1979 pp.6-9. See also A. Benachenhou, Planification et developpement En Algerie 1962-80. Alger. 1980. La Micro Industrie Au Service du L'Industrialisation de l'Algerie. Etude du secretariat social d'Alger.
3. See M. Lazreg, The Emergence of Classes in Algeria. A study of colonialism and Socio-Political Change. Colorado: Westview Press. 1976.
4. This table shows the distribution of employment provided by M. Trebous. Migration and Development: The case of Algeria. Development Centre Studies. 1978.
5. ibid., p.21.
6. Maciver and Page distinguish between the countryman and townsman and they believe that the culture and the way of life determine the individual's behaviour. See their book "Society". Macmillan and Co. 1961, p.318.
7. ibid., p.318.
8. Similar conclusions are reached by S.R. Parker, The Sociology of Industry, George Allen and Unwin, 1967, p.11.
9. Durkheim again believes that the industrial situation is different from and more complicated than its counterpart in agriculture. See The Division of Labour in Society. Collier. Macmillan Publishers, 1933, p.370.
10. This is a study of absenteeism carried out by M. Brookshire who considers it a universal problem. See her pamphlet absenteeism. California. Institute of Industrial Relations, 1960. p.20.
11. ibid., p.26.
12. M. Trebous, op.cit.
13. Dubois blames management for workers dissatisfaction. He thinks that, sabotage and absenteeism that happen in industry are provoked by management. See his sabotage in industry. Penguin books, 1976.

14. ibid., p.169.
15. Parker, op.cit., p.116.
16. Quoted by Parker et al. from Lauterbach, A. (1961), "Managerial Attitudes in Western South America", in Managerial Attitudes in Chile. (Santiago, Univ. of Chile).
17. ibid., p.116.
18. R. Hyman, Strikes, Fontana, 1972, p.53.
19. W.H. Scott et.al. Coal and Conflict. Liverpool University Press. 1963, p.48.
20. ibid., p.47.
21. For Silverman, absenteeism is a kind of conflict like many others found in the industrial situation, such as strikes arising from discontent.
22. For workers unsettlement in a particular situation of work. See Turner et.al. Labour relations in the motor industry. George Allen and Unwin, 1967, p.92.
23. S. Moos. The Statistics of Absenteeism in Coal Mining, The Manchester School - 19 - 1951, p.92.
24. H. Behrend, Voluntary Absence from Work. International Labour Review, 79, 1959, p.133.
25. On the relationships between workers and management in a Japanese factory. See R. Dore, British Factory - Japanese Factory. George Allen & Unwin 1973. He found that management in the Japanese factory is more effective than in the English factory, because of the mutual respect between the two sides. See our discussion in chapter four.
26. E. Mayo, The Social Problems of An Industrial Organization. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949.
27. ibid., p.99.
28. ibid., p.99.
29. Braverman here takes a different attitude from the previous authors. He thinks that workers discontent in a factory is not simply due to management incompetence, but involves the whole system of control. Originating from the capitalist mode of production. See his book, Labour and Monopoly Capital. Monthly Review Press, 1974.

30. ibid., p.39.
31. ibid., pp.31-32.
32. P. Dubois, Sabotage in Industry, Penguin Books, 1976, p.32.
33. For more detail about unemployment in Algeria see, T. Benhouria, L'Economie De L'Algerie. Francois Maspero, Paris, 1980, p.36.
34. ibid., p.381
35. ibid., p.381. See also, Bruno Etienne. L'Algerie Culture et Revolution. Edition Du Seuil Paris, 1977, p.92
36. R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959, p.242.
37. ibid., p.242.
38. ibid., p.243.
39. ibid., p.291.
40. Scot et.al. Coal and Conflict. Liverpool University Press, 1963,p.41.
41. Stanley M. Davis, et.al. Workers and Managers in Latin America. Lexington, Mass; Health, 1972, p.xii.

CHAPTER FIVE

Absenteeism and its causes

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In recent years absenteeism has attracted the attention of many researchers, chiefly in the field of industrial organisation. The high rate of absenteeism and its cost for the organisation and for the society at large has encouraged social scientists to contribute to studying the phenomenon. But even so, the participation of sociology, economics, psychology, industrial relations, personnel and general management, in this field is still limited.

Absenteeism in any organisation can be seen to reflect the individual's satisfaction generally. This satisfaction is related to various aspects and depends on the internal work situation and the social situation external to work, which may influence the behaviour of the individuals involved in work.

In the context of factors affecting absenteeism, we may demonstrate some studies which have tried to explain the causes of absenteeism, such as Lyman W. Porter et al.

who have analysed the various elements in the work situation as they related to the withdrawal behaviour of workers. They consider four categories of factors:¹

1. Organisation wide Factors: *Porter* et al. consider here that pay and promotion are very much related to withdrawal from work.
2. Immediate work environment factors. The work situation in which the worker finds himself has a great effect on his

attitude towards his work. So *Porter* et al. consider here supervisory style, work unit size, and the nature of peer group interaction as factors affecting absence.

3. Job content factors: *Porter* et al. here relate absenteeism and leaving a job to what the job offers to workers. Such jobs can be a source of satisfaction and happiness or a continual source of frustration and dissatisfaction. However it has been said that work performance and job satisfaction depends to a large extent on job content. For instance if a job takes place in a friendly atmosphere where there is good supervision and good conditions, absenteeism and turnover would be low. On the other hand if these factors are lacking, workers may be expected to be unhappy and will tend to absent themselves or leave the job. Lyman et al. discuss four factors in relation to job content; the overall reaction to job content: task repetitiveness, job autonomy and responsibility, and role clarity.
4. Personnel factors:- The fourth and the last type of factors considered by Lyman et al. is what they call factors unique to the individuals, which have an effect on absenteeism and job turnover. Such as age, tenure with the organization, similarity of job with vocation interest, personality characteristics and family considerations.

Porter et al's analysis concentrates on exploring the factors which may have significant impact on the worker's satisfaction and lead to withdrawal from his work. The same argument has been

brought up by many other writers, who seem to base their analysis on the above factors mentioned by *Porter* et al. with of course different approaches and arguments.

For example, Richard W. Beatty et al. analysed the absenteeism of hard-core unemployed, referring to the four factors mentioned by Lyman et al.²

On the other hand H. Behrend in her analysis of voluntary absence from work, tried to explain absenteeism in relation to morale on the argument that it constitutes an unspoken protest against conditions of work and of life in general.³

She compared absenteeism and strikes, saying that absenteeism is not a spectacular symptom of industrial unrest like strikes, but the amount of time lost through voluntary absence is far greater than the time lost through industrial disputes. She pointed out that the number of work-days lost through strikes in Britain as a percentage of total time scheduled to be worked, was about 0.04 percent in 1956 and 0.15 per cent in 1957. In manufacturing industry there is a voluntary absence rate of ten times that caused by strikes.⁴

Behrend was surprised to find that the management does not pay too much attention to absenteeism, which may be because many managers, either ignore or condone absenteeism, Behrend suggested that this could be due partly to the lack of exact knowledge of its consequences. She analysed the links between the amount of absenteeism and the specific characteristics of the work situation with respect to the level of employment,

wages, sex and family responsibility, age, *length* of service, type of work, conditions of work, size of industrial units, incidence of pay day, external factors and psychological factors.

These factors could be the main basis of Lyman et al's factors mentioned above, and which are also similar to the factors mentioned by Margaret Oldham who referred to the factors which influence absenteeism as,⁵

1. External Factors
2. Institutional Factors
3. Personal Factors

It is obvious from the previous literature that not only does the work situation lie behind the absenteeism phenomenon, but we have to look also at non work life, and at the workers perceptions of how the two interrelate.

Marjorie Brookshire indicates that the causes of absenteeism are difficult to obtain and she cited three causes which can give rise to absence.⁶

1. Situation external to the work relationship.
2. Personal and economic characteristics of the work itself
3. Situations in the work relationship that affect the attitude of workers.

Factors affecting absenteeism in Sonacome

As we have already noted earlier absenteeism is not an easy problem to limit, because there are various factors which can cause the worker to be away from his work. We can quote an idea from a publication of the American Medical Association mentioned by Marjorie Brookshire "A worker on the job must be both willing and able to be there; if one of these conditions is not satisfied, he will be absent".⁷

As a worker cannot always control the circumstances of his behaviour, his absence from work is the result of underlying causes. Most writers on absenteeism divide these causes into the internal, external and personal problems. The worker's ability and willingness to attend his job regularly depends very much on these three categories, which are interrelated as Brookshire reports: "external situations tend to be more conducive to absence if the worker is dissatisfied with working conditions in the plant".⁸ She carries on to say "likewise, the workgroup itself tends to take on a characteristic preference for tardiness, absence, or quitting without notice where morale is low".⁹

So the unwillingness of the worker to attend his work can be related to the internal and self problems. On the other hand the inability of the worker to be at work can be related to external and personal problems. But whether the causes of absence are evident to the worker or hidden from him, they are the result of the wider socio-economic, and political conditions and therefore these will be the focus of our analysis.

Socio-cultural effects on absence

Taking into consideration the various factors of absenteeism such as sickness, injury, age, family situation, qualification, type of work, wage and salary, conditions of work, type of supervision, character of individuals, the distance between the home and the factory, type of previous job, type of accommodation, means of transport, jobs available elsewhere, which are very much related to lateness, absenteeism and job turnover, most of the previous literature stresses the different factors without analysing the whole socio-economic situation of the problem. Only by also taking account of socio-cultural economic and political aspects, can lead us to understanding the substantial roots of absenteeism.

Our analysis of the factors already mentioned will be related to the situation in Algeria, taking into account the reasons of absence given by the individual when returning to work. And related to the circumstances outside and inside work which may affect the rate of absenteeism. For example when the worker claims that he was absent because of ill-health, it might be because of his unpleasant work or because he was looking for another job. If he says that he was absent because he missed his bus or coach, it could be that he was doing some other work at home, and wants to give an acceptable reason, and so forth.

So the underlying causes of absenteeism in the case of Sonacome are very difficult to gauge, and vary from one person to another depending on the workers' family situation, education, and individual character.

The relationships between these aspects and the worker's behaviour within Sonacome are very important. If we look at the Algerian family, we find first there is a great distinction between the family in the countryside and the family in the city. i.e. traditional family and modern family, poor family and rich one. The individual who lives in the city is more skilled than the one in the countryside, and more dissatisfied with his work, because he has higher expectations, also the city worker is usually more independent and has less family demands, so he may be less likely to be absent.

In the case of family we have to distinguish between the migrant worker from the countryside who works and lives in the city with or without family, and between the worker who was born and lives in the city, which will be explained in more detail in chapter six.

The migrant worker who leaves his family behind in the country has specific problems which are different from his mates who live in the city. Therefore the causes of absenteeism will be specified in a particular way. If the migrant worker claims that, he was delayed or absent because of transport, a sick member of the family, or some imperative work at home. These causes may not be shared by the city worker, who goes absent to look for another job somewhere else, or just for leisure, which occurs chiefly among young workers who prefer to see a football match on special occasions, than go to work, or even prefer to go to see a good film with a friend than attend the job.

This different attitude of migrant and non migrant workers

towards the work situation is further shaped by a different attitude taken by management to each group. For example the low grade, heavy and hot jobs with low wages are often given to the migrants. Even so a high rate of absenteeism also exists among city workers. Thus unfair treatment by supervisors creates resentment among workers which is expressed by absenteeism etc.

The hidden factors of absenteeism include:

1. sickness and accident
2. competing obligations
3. avoiding unpleasant work and conflict at work
4. leisure
5. seeking another job

1) Accident and sickness

Accident and sickness are the most common causes of absenteeism in Sonacome plant and are considered difficult factors for management to overcome.

If we assume that, management can do something about accidents by making sure safety measures are properly applied, adjusting the machines to suit workers, and improving the conditions of work generally, these measures can reduce absenteeism caused by accidents.

Sickness on the other hand may be said to be a more complex phenomenon and more difficult to reduce. Because as A.M. Adelstein points out "absence claimed or certified to be the result of illness is markedly influenced (and sometimes

entirely determined) by socio-economic and management conditions. The sickness is to be seen not only in the bodies and minds but also in the structure and organisations in which they function.

Adelstein notes that "sickness is more than disorder of the body. It has social implications, and the threshold varies with custom, tradition, and many other social factors".¹⁰

R.C. Browne C. Codrington et al, *and* A.M.

Adelstein argue that management is responsible for the accident and sickness that occurs in a factory. That is to say management takes the responsibility to train workers, to adjust machines, and to provide a satisfactory working environment, where management and workers can work in cooperation and with mutual involvement in the factory social system. For instance R.C. Browne discusses the Robens report on safety and health at work, and points out that, "about 1000 people are killed per year in industry in the United Kingdom",¹¹ and "the cost of accidents is estimated to be £200-900 million a year". In another passage Browne reports that to secure industrial safety Robens recommended that "accidents will be prevented only by a sense of responsibility combined with continuous education, together with a stiff pinch of self discipline".¹²

C. Codrington et al. also base their article on the Robens report quoting para 43: "the Robens committee considered that 'the promotion of safety and health is not only a function of good management but it is, or ought to be, a normal management function just as production or marketing is a normal function'.¹³

Adelstein considers that "short term absence is primarily a problem for management"; and argue that "the present policy of differential (higher) payments for injury and illness certified as due to employment should be revised; also that "Management and unions should agree on a policy which encourages convalescents to do what work they can".¹⁴

P.I. Powell et al. find that carelessness is the major cause of accidents, their findings show that "90 per cent of accidents are caused by carelessness" and "it was my fault, I was careless"¹⁵ is a general belief among workers, supervisors and management.

C.A. Oakley reports that roughly 20 per cent of accidents in American factories are attributable to artificial conditions such as inadequate lighting, ventilation, ceiling and walls. Which caused falling and stumbling etc. The same study shows that "193474 of the accidents which occurred in British factories during 1939 involved the loss of three or more days, 1104 were fatal".¹⁶ According to H.M. Vernon each year half the people in Great Britain have an accident requiring first aid treatment.

Another study made by Hill, J.M.M. and Trist, E.L. comparing the rate of accidents between an American Iron and Steel factory and a British one reports that "The American lost time accident frequency rate per million man-hours worked for the year 1949 was reported as 7.2, whereas the British equivalent was 32.6".¹⁷

This high percentage of accidents in the British factory

could be further reduced, if appropriate methods were used as Hill et al. pointed out. We may further compare a case study made by Hill et al in "Park Gate" Iron and Steel company Limited of Rotherham near Sheffield, employing 3500 people of which the writers selected 289 workers who remained within the factory for the whole period of four years,¹⁸ and considered as stable working population.

During the four years period studied, 124 accidents were incurred among the 289 workers, who stayed in the factory (involving a loss of 14,478 days of work). Table 5:1 shows the type of injuries in Park Gate Factory, compared with those in Sonacome.

Type of injuries in Park Gate	number of accidents	%	Type of injuries in Sonacome	number of accidents	%
Handling objects	27	22	Diverse causes	311	23
Hit by falling objects	25	20	Hand tools	266	20
Falls of employees	24	19	Shock against objects	196	15
Stepping on or striking objects	22	18	Handling objects	176	13
Hand tools	8	6	Hit by falling objects	165	12
Burns	7	6	Fall of employees	135	10
Vehicles	3	2	Machines	102	7
Machinery	2	2			
Occupational Disease	2	2			
Miscellaneous	4	3			
TOTAL	124	100	TOTAL	1351	100

Whereas, the overall accidents incurred in Sonacome for the year 1977 was estimated to be 1351, with over 203784 hours lost and more than 6000000 Dinars of wage lost, among a total workforce of 3,298.¹⁹

In comparing the both cases, the tables indicate that, the four common accidents which represent the highest percentage in the British factory, a proportion of 79%, are attributed to the first four categories of handling objects, hit by falling objects, falls of employees and stepping on or striking objects, whereas in the Algerian factory the first four categories are attributed to diverse causes, handling tools, shock against objects, and handling objects accounting for 71%. The lowest category of accidents is similar in both factories, which is related to machinery accidents, with 2% in Park Gate factory compared with 7% in Sonacome.

Table 5:2 The part of the body injured in both cases

Type of body region in Park Gate	Detail of Component	Number of accident	%	Type of body injured in Sonacome	Number	%				
Contact	Hand	29	56	Hand Mains	534	40				
	Foot	18		Eye Yeux	255	19				
	Head	13		Foot Pieds	210	16				
	Eye	9		Head Tete	78	6				
	Total	69		Trunk Corps	109	8				
Connecting	Wrist	6	27	Arms: M.sup	85	6				
	Arm	7		Legs M.inf	80	6				
	Ankle	12		13						
	Leg	9								
	Total	34								
Central	Back	4	13							
	Shoulder	4								
	Chest	3								
	Abdomen	1								
	Misc	4								
Multiple Injuries	Total	16	4							
		5								
Grand total		124	100		1351	101				

For the type of body region injured, the tables above show that in both factories, a high rate of accidents are attributable to the contact body region, (hand, eye, foot, head) combined with connecting body region (wrist, arm, ankle, leg), amounting to 83% in British factory and 80% in the Algerian factory (Sonacome). While the central body region, accident rate is 13% in Park Gate, and 20% in Sonacome.

The writers have not considered accidents according to the aspects of age and skills relevant to their study because "The model age of the group at entry was within the 21-30 age range" ... Though the range of skill is considerable, it is on the whole weighted towards the more highly skilled."²⁰

However, in Sonacome the two aspects (age and skill) have a considerable effect on the level of accidents.

Table 5:3 shows accidents according to the workers level of skill in 1977

	Total number of workers	number of accidents	percentage of all accidents	rate of accidents per worker
Skilled	564	574	42%	1.02%
Semi-skilled	870	637	47%	0.73%
Group chiefs & Foremen	945	69	5%	0.07%
Clerks and staff	919	71	5%	0.08%
	3298	1351	99%	1.9%

The highest rate of accidents within Sonacome is among skilled workers, with an average of 1.02% among those dealing with machines and furnaces; while among semi-skilled workers, it represents 0.73% of accidents; whereas the rate of accidents declines among

individuals who are not working in manual production, as table 5:3 shows.

Table 5:4 Accidents according to worker's age in 1977²¹

Age	total number of workers	number of accidents	percentage of all accidents	rate of accidents per worker
20-30	1818	785	58%	0.43
31-40	892	397	30%	0.45
41-50	496	140	10%	0.28
51-60	92	29	2%	0.32
TOTALS	3298	1351	100%	1.48

The age of the worker has no effect on the rate of accidents per worker which fluctuate with age, Table 5:4 indicates that the great majority of accidents is among youngsters between the age of 20-40 representing 0.43 and 0.45 respectively, while the lowest percentage of accidents is among the age of 41-50 and it increases again among workers of 51 to 60 years of age

In both cases the rate of accidents in relation to the number of absences accounts for the lowest percentage, of 7% in Sonacome and 2% in Park Gate, with permitted absence (5%) in Sonacome and (2%) in Park Gate.²²

However, the cases differ in the period of study, 4 years in the case of Park Gate (1947-1951) and only one year in Sonacome, and also in the number of individuals involved, 289 were selected out of a working population of 3500 persons in Park Gate, while in Sonacome the whole population of 3298 employees were studied for the year 1977.²³

Table 4.5 shows also, the difference between the two firms, in respect to the number of days lost. Certified sickness represents the highest percentage in both cases, of 44%, in Sonacome and 52% in Park Gate.

Thus, it may be noted that, even in an advanced industrial country like Great Britain, the office of health economics showed for the year 1963, there were "over 9¼ million claims for sickness benefits" with "a total of nearly 300 million working days lost" at a cost exceeding £160 m.*²⁴

Behrend found that, certified sickness absence represented in three plants studied in 1948 a percentage which "ranged from .6 to 3.6% for men" which means that "men on an average lose five days a year".²⁵

Another study, about absence showed that, "advance in medical science have resulted in a great decrease in

the number of cases of tuberculosis which is reflected in the reduction of number of working days lost by this illness, from 25.8 million in 1954, to 3.12 million in 1968. On the other hand according to the improvement of the insurance scheme, "Over the last decade there has been an increase of about 9 per cent in the number of working days lost amongst the insured population. Days lost through certified sickness in 1959 were 282.49 million, rising to 286.95 million in 1964, and reaching 327.57 million by 1968".²⁶

In spite of this large rate of certified absence, the study showed, there is as well a large rate of uncertified absence, estimated to be 450 million working days lost in 1968. Even so, there are "many who attend work regularly who are not healthy".²⁷ They may suffer from various diseases but remain at work for the sake of not losing their jobs.

As we are dealing with the last period of 1975 to 1978 in Sonacome, we have to mention that the rate of absence caused by sickness in 1975 is included with the rate of absence by accident for the same year. The statistical evidence available in the management files showed that the days lost by sickness and accident are respectively 27,554 days in 1975, representing 51% of all forms of absenteeism, and 23,846 days in 1976 representing 42%. In 1977, 27,966 days were lost representing a percentage of 44%, and in 1978 the days

Table 5:5 shows forms of absence (frequency, total time lost, mean time away in Park Gate and Sonacome)

Forms of absence in Park Gate	number of absences	%	number of days lost	%	mean days lost per absence
Accidents	124	2	2476	15	20
Certified Sickness	658	12	8805	52	13
Uncertified Sickness	746	14	1061	6	1
Permission	119	2	182	1	2
Sufficient Reason	835	16	1180	7	1
No reason	2820	53	3251	19	1
TOTAL	5302	99	16954	100	3

Forms of absence in Sonacome	number of absences	%	number of days lost	%	mean days lost per absence
Accidents	1894	7	9908	16	5
Certified Sickness	5157	19	27966	44	5
Uncertified Sickness	10087	38	11612	18	1
Permission	1264	5	5574	9	4
Sufficient Reason	4643	17	4817	8	1
No reason	3611	14	3805	6	1
TOTAL	26656	100	36682	101	2

lost by sickness were 25229, representing 42%.

These figures show a nearly constant percentage except for the year 1975, because in this year sickness is combined with accidents. This could be, because the management did not differentiate between sickness absence and accident absence. However, this involuntary absence, because of sickness or accident must be justified by a medical certificate within three days in case of sickness, and within four days in case of accident, and both are paid for.

If the worker fails to justify his absence, this would be regarded as voluntary absence, in which the worker will be deprived of recompense, or he would in some cases be presented before the disciplinary committee.

As S. Moos pointed out the workers failure to obtain a doctor's certificate, will be considered as a voluntary absence, and he would be deprived of recompense or could be referred to the disciplinary committee to review his case and he may be dismissed.²⁸ But this is very rarely the case in Sonacome because of the socio-cultural problems which face the Algerian worker outside the plant. For instance if he leaves his work to go home because a member of his family is sick or his home needs some work, or in the case of the countryside worker, if a neighbour dies, or a celebration is at hand, he would not go to work, considering these as duties.

Thus the members of the disciplinary committee usually

take into account these problems, and try to make the worker understand the requirement of modern work conditions. These problems will be discussed in more detail under the topic of competing obligations.

Illness unsupported by a medical certificate is also taken into account by the disciplinary committee, because the individual who has been absent without a doctor's certificate and gives illness as an excuse, would be very difficult to judge, as regards the genuineness of his case. Committee members know that there is a shortage of doctors, and health service centres which can provide the workers with the required certificates, especially for the countryside worker who needs to travel sometimes as much as 15 k.m. and may spend a whole day in order to get a certificate, and so lose money and time to get it. Thus most workers fail to provide this acceptable excuse.

2) Competing Obligations

In recent years, the cost of living has increased rapidly in Algeria, and low paid people and particularly those working in the agricultural sector have suffered most from this increase.

The need for cash spending caused the peasant to abandon their jobs in agriculture and seek work in the cities, or to work in two jobs in order to meet his obligations. The worker for example who has got a piece of land needs to work on it from time to time, or to build or repair his house, or has got a temporary job in the evening. This is the case among skilled workers and technicians, for instance, who may repair tractors or cars for private individuals in their spare time, and if the job needs more time they would absent themselves from their regular work. Because the money they earn from this extra work is likely to be much higher than the daily wage he earns in his job.

These extra functions have great effects on the worker's behaviour and on the rate of absenteeism. The other point which must be cited here, concerns domestic obligations. As is well known, the Algerian family consists of a large number, up to six individuals on the average.

Table 5:6 shows the distribution of the family in size and sector

Source: R.G.P.U. 1977²⁹

	TOTAL	URBAIN		RURAL
		Ensemble	dont metropole urbaines	
à 6 personnes	51.9			
1 à 6 personnes	51.9	51.3	49.9	52.4
7 à 10 personnes	36.4	37.0	27.0	36.0
11 personnes et	11.7	11.7	12.7	11.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(La taille moyenne du menage est de 6.65)

It appears that the Algerian family is large compared with other industrial societies with an average of 6.65 persons. Algeria is not sufficiently affluent (developed) to overcome problems which arise from the social and economic changes of the whole society.

After 1967 when Algeria became socially and economically stable, the majority of people emigrated to the cities from the rural areas, in order to work in industry, leaving behind their families. However the worker who emigrated to work in industry faces many problems. In the first place the situation of work in industry was different from the one which he was used to. If he was free in his farm to do work as and when he liked, this is impossible in industry and he has to adjust his previous beliefs and behaviour generally, and adapt himself to the new situation. But very few people can manage to adapt themselves successfully. Those who do are usually young people who have not left

any family behind in migrating to the city. However, despite adaptation, they are still not satisfied with their promotion, wages, type of supervision etc.

and these problems may lead to absenteeism and job leaving.

On the other hand absenteeism occurs also among workers who have large families living with them, or which they have left behind in the countryside. Even if it is true that the rate of absenteeism is lower among the people who have family responsibility, this is because the worker cannot move from one job to another without wasting time and money with little prospect of finding a better job, especially if he is unqualified.

Moreover, the older more responsible workers are more privileged than younger workers and may be permitted to be absent, even when they do not ask permission beforehand. The excuse given by an older worker after returning to work would be accepted. While that given by a younger worker might be rejected by the management.

This unequal attitude and treatment by management will lead to different reactions among workers in terms of absenteeism, turnover, lateness, negligence and sabotage, depending on whether they are an advantaged or disadvantaged group.

3) Avoiding unpleasant work (conflict at work)

The workplace is the second most important location for the worker after his home, and therefore the factory in which the worker spends much of his time, should be convenient and pleasant for its individuals in order to ensure unity and stability in the work force and in the pattern of attendance. The internal conditions of work usually reflect the kind of job, type of supervision and the type of rules practised. These conditions may increase or decrease the tensions and conflicts within the factory. First, type of jobs: The physical environment of the factory differs from one section to another depending on the work to be done, with respect to heat, dust, noise, lighting etc. and whether the work is heavy or dangerous. We may expect the rate of absence to increase or decrease according to the worker's ability to work under his particular conditions. We can distinguish between the conditions of work and the type of work, in which the former refers to the physical environment like light, heat, etc. while the latter refers to the specific characteristics of a job. As Behrend puts it in referring to Baldamus, she believes that reactions to job characteristics are not "subject to the wearing-off effects of adaptation but crystallise into consistent likes and dislikes" while "conditions of work do not produce any definite emotional attitudes" and "workers get used to them in time".³⁰ Behrend comments on this by saying that "A new comer may be

affected by the environment of his job, but not the seasoned worker". In addition she says, "if this hypothesis is true, no close association is likely between absenteeism and working conditions, except for newcomers".³¹ This is true to some extent, because the Sonacome worker seems not to be disturbed by the physical conditions, as he is by characteristics of work like pay, promotion, supervision etc. which seem most to determine whether the worker is pleased with his job or not.

Second: Type of supervision:- Absenteeism is also very much affected by the flexibility of supervision. The relationships between workers and their supervisors plays a very significant role on the stability of the work situation generally. Charles Perrow, summarised this by saying "good leadership will lead to high morale, high morale will lead to increased effort resulting in higher production". In addition "It will also reduce turnover (leaving the organisation) and absenteeism, thus raising productivity by minimizing both training time and the disruption caused by absent workers".

In addition Charles Perrow noted that "If the relationships between the leader and members are bad, tasks are unclear, and the position of the leader is not clearly established (what Fielder calls low position power), then attention to impersonal relations will be wasted; what is needed is strong direction."³²

In this context we may note, the recent success of the

Japanese economy may be attributed mainly to management and to the type of supervision exercised in the Japanese factory. Ronald Dore summarised the differences between authority in British and Japanese factories and derived the conclusion that Japanese authority is more democratic, more helpful to team work, and even when problems occur at home, more organised, clearer with their subordinates, and work harder than in English factories:

These aspects existing within the Japanese factory causes it to function smoothly and reduces conflict between managers and workers. Therefore this leads to some reduction in the rate of absenteeism and turnover.

Some evidence expressed by the writer in comparing the two factories was that, "English Electric work discipline is based on rules reinforced by formal sanctions; Hitachi work discipline is based on rules reinforced by exhortation designed to recall workers to the path of their original virtue."³³

It seems that Sonacome work discipline is in theory similar to the Japanese, but in practice more like the English. In theory, Algerian workers and managers work as a team and share decisions. There is exhortation, as in Hitachi, to work for collective goals. In practice, however, as in English Electric, workers and managers form distinct castes and control is exercised over workers by managers using rules and sanctions.

Although the Japanese organisation is rational it is not impersonal, in the sense that Japanese management are interested in the general welfare of the worker and his general social situation and not merely in the immediate requirements of the job. While in English Electric and Sonacome there is a separation between a person's work and his general social situation.

So it is not surprising to find for instance some misconduct and dissatisfaction among workers as well as among supervisors who cannot achieve the programmes planned by the management. In that these supervisors have authority over the worker to ensure that he does the job properly, but if the worker wants more help from the supervisor, the latter cannot meet these demands because he cannot report on complaints which are more or less not his responsibility, such as with regard to accommodation, wages, etc. Or supervisors may take a tough line with workers without listening to them because they consider workers to be unreasonable in their demands.

This behaviour by Sonacome's supervisors seems far from the one practised by Japanese supervisors who cooperate with their workers even in their personal problems. *Ronald Dore* records the story of a troubled person whose workmate and foreman participate in helping to overcome the problem. Noting that if a subordinate is in some personal

trouble, the supervisor usually makes no move himself.

If "The troubled worker was himself too diffident to come to him, frequently one of his workmates would volunteer the story of what was wrong and ask the foreman to help. Only at that point would he take the man aside for a heart-to-heart talk".³⁴

Despite the differences between Japanese and British policy on the one hand and that of Algeria on the other, the real problem does seem to be inherent in the management's effectiveness and its tactics in handling problems. That is to say in a specific work situation, management plays a major role in reducing tension and differences between different types of workers. If managers and supervisors take account of the workers immediate circumstances and use persuasion and cooperation rather than coercion and the exercise of their authority, this would lead to job satisfaction and a decrease of absenteeism.

However if a worker believes, he owns the plant in which he works, he knows on what basis the factory is functioning, the regulations are clear, and that superiors are there to help him. This will perhaps influence the worker to accept the organisational values, and encourage him to react positively in accordance with the collective interest.

4) Absence because of leisure

As far as leisure is considered, the individual can do whatever he likes and please himself, however, "at work a man's time is not his own and his behaviour is not responsive purely to his own whims",³⁵ as Keneth Roberts expresses it. But leisure also is becoming more important than ever before and is as necessary as the work. Stanley Parker points out that "experts in the various social sciences agree that both work and leisure are necessary to a healthy life and a healthy society" and he refuses "the view that work is the real business of life and that leisure is just a waste of time".³⁶

Civilization creates new elements of enjoyment and means of spending time, such as theatre, cinema, sports, cars, easy transport, and many other activities which are regarded as signs of increasing individual status. Also these elements are considered to be basic human rights, especially in advanced countries.

But absence in relation to leisure in Sonacome's case refers to the concept of leisure as it is conceived in Algerian society, which may differ from what is understood by leisure in western or other countries. For instance in Algeria there is widespread playing of cards, or dominoes, watching football matches, or staying away from work until the worker finishes the personal money, he has accumulated are common aspects differing from one person to another depending on the individual's conditions outside

work, and the type of work he does. And there are differences between a worker with and without family responsibilities, a comfortable worker and a poor one in an interesting job and in an uninteresting one. These factors are closely associated with the previous aspects mentioned:

1. Absence through watching a football match or a film; concerns young workers and irresponsible ones, who do not care about their work and taking a day off to see a good film is considered very necessary by them, and chiefly those who are living with their families. So that the worker in this case is not worried if he loses his job, particularly if he is dissatisfied with his work. Such behaviour can be taken as an indication that he is prepared to leave his job.
2. Playing cards and dominoes; most of the time wasted on leisure is on playing cards and dominoes. Algerian cafés are usually full of these games because of the lack of other types of enjoyment. Absence is related to the habit to these games, because when the individual starts playing he concentrates on the game and forgets about the time of his work. This of course prevails among workers who also tend to be absent deliberately, or try to find excuses for leaving the job.
3. Staying away from work until the money already earned

is finished; this aspect prevails also among young workers and those who live in the countryside whose living standard does not require too much finance. The emigrant worker usually leaves his work behind for his family when he feels that, the cash available with him can keep him for a while with his family, and extends his holiday or permitted time until he finishes that money. Then he will either go back to his previous job or, if this is not possible starts seeking for another job.

This situation is found especially among Algerian emigrants to France, who go to work in France for one year or more, save money for that year and come back to their families where he will usually stay until their money runs out and only then go back to work, so beginning the cycle over again.

Young workers tend to do the same, and the explanation of this is usually to be found in the social and economic conditions. As far as the extended family still exists, there is always a tendency to be dependent on one member of the family (father, older brother, or brother), in addition the new economic development of the country leads many individuals not to remain stable in one job. However, a worker who is dissatisfied with his job and wishes to move to another one, would usually practise being late or absent, until he leaves, or is sacked.

5) Absence to look for another job

Skill and experience is usually required in having a job in industry. That is why, the skilled workers are the most unstable group in Sonacome. There are shortages of those skilled workers, and great demand for them in Algeria in general and factories such as Sonacome in particular. The socio-economic development of the country as a whole, and the continual creation of various economic projects to some extent encourages the worker to be absent to look for another job. If he finds one, and this is usually the case with skilled workers, he would leave his present job immediately, usually because of a difference between the projects in the type of work, salary offered, and location according to the worker's residence. These three aspects encourage the worker to leave one job in order to fulfill the needs, which he has not been able to in his previous job.

1. Type of work:- Differences in jobs available within the same factory may create enthusiasm, and competition among its members, in order to obtain promotion and to increase the level and the degree of job status, in which case it is very hard for the management to satisfy everybody. So absenteeism and turnover can be high among dissatisfied workers, and chiefly if the worker is not placed in what he feels is the right job, in which case he would be anxious and tend to leave this job. As we observed earlier, in Sonacome many workers complain about being misplaced in their jobs.

2. Wages and salaries offered:- Distinction between wage and salary is related to the distinction between the function performed by each group. As William F.

Coventry pointed out "wages" refer to manual workers of all kinds, and "salaries" to office staff and administration generally".³⁷

In Sonacome, the wage of individuals is paid in cash according to the number of hours worked, monthly or half monthly. But an individual's salary is paid monthly through a postal account. So long as the wages and salaries concern everybody, workers typically raise the wage problem, accusing management and supervisors of not paying them fairly and equally. In this respect supervisors are involved in reporting the efficiency and obedience of the worker, and make suggestions about who is to be promoted, but instead, and in many cases, it creates discontent and unrest among the lower grade workers. This may produce negative behaviour against supervisors especially considering that, supervisors are often not fair in their judgments and often promise that after a period a worker will be promoted, but this does not happen. Another accusation made by workers is that, supervisors are using nepotism and black-mail with regard to their power to promote workers. These factors lead the worker to neglect his work, and to start to be absent in order to look for another place of work.

3. Location of residence:- Accommodation plays a very significant role in the stability of the worker at work. The nearer his residence to the place of work, the more comfortable the worker is. This has been observed by management in recent years, who find that the majority of absent workers were among those who are living far away from the factory, moreover, most of those workers left their jobs, found another job near their living place. Because most of those workers living far from the factory suffer from family problems, or from difficulties with transport etc., which increase the rate of their absence. Therefore management decided not to recruit new workers who live farther than 25 k.m. away from the factory.

This limited distance is covered by the factory's transport and of course everyone is expected to be living with his family. By this means the management intend to cut off the double problem that it faces, i.e. accommodation and transport. But unfortunately, it appears that, the problem still arises, in the sense that some workers living outside the area of recruitment would apply for a job using the address of relatives living within the legitimate area, in order to get a job, but when the worker starts his job the problem of absence because of distance from work re-emerges.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Lyman and Steers referred absenteeism and job turnover to four factors, which cause dissatisfaction among employees. See psychological bulletin 1973, 80, Bf.I p.77.
2. Recharad W. Beatty and James R. Beatty. Longitudinal study of absenteeism of hard-core unemployed psychological reports, 1975, 36.
3. Hilde Behrend tried here to show that absence is not as simple as it appears, it has its impact on production and individuals. She attempted to measure the level of absence by analysing some psychological and social causes which influence absenteeism. See the article "Voluntary absence from work. International Labour Review, Vol: 79, 1959, pp.109-14.
4. ibid., p.110.
5. Margaret Oldham, Withdrawal from Work. Management Bibliographies and Reviews, Dec. 1978, pp.1-17.
6. Marjorie Brookshire. Absenteeism. California. The Institute of Industrial Relations, 1960.
7. ibid., p.25.
8. ibid., p.25.
9. ibid., p.26.
10. Adelstein in this paper refers the causes of absence from work to a wide perspective, determined or influenced by the socio-economic and management situations rather than to disease. See his paper Absence from work attributed to sickness Brit. J. Industr. Med. 1969, 26, p.169.
11. R.C. Browne Safety and Health at work; The Robens Report. Brit. J. Industr. Med., 1973, 30, p.87.
12. ibid., p.91.
13. Concerning safety in industry see the discussion of C. Codrington and J.S. Henley. The Industrial Relations of Injury and Death: Safety Representatives in the Construction Industry, Brit. J. Indust. Rel. 1980. p.301.
14. Adelstein, op.cit., p.170.
15. P.I. Powell, etl.al. 2000 Accidents. A Shop floor study of their causes. Report No. 21 National Institute of Industrial Psychology 1971

16. Oakley, G.A. Men at Work. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946, p.215.
17. J.M.M. Hill and E.L. Trist. Industrial Accidents Sickness and other absences. Tavistocks Pamphlet, No. 4. 1959, p.1.
18. ibid., p.7.
19. These statistics were reported by management in its magazine. "Le Moteur". Bulletin D'information No. 5. pp.8-11.
20. Hill and Trist, op.cit., p.7.
21. Management figures at Sonacome gave only the total number of absences, broken down by age and part of body injured. Here we have computed rates of accidents per worker in the factory as a whole. See table 5:4.
22. This is a comparison of accidents happening in Sonacome and those referred to by Hill and Trist in an English factory.
23. Le Moteur, op.cit.
24. Office of Health Economics. Work lost through sickness. Leeds: John Washington, 1965, p.3.
25. Behrend, op.cit., p.22.
26. Although there is an improvement in medical services, this does not do much to reduce absence through sickness, much of which is due to the unsatisfactory job situation. See David Moody, Absence Minded. Personnel Management, Nov. 1971, p.38.
27. ibid., p.28.
28. S. Moos, The statistics of Absenteeism in coal mining. The Manchester School vol. 19, 1951, p.92-93.
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32. Charles Perrow, Complex organisations: A critical essay, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972, p.106.

33. See R. Dore, British Factory - Japanese Factory.
George Allen and Unwin, 1973, p.261.
34. ibid., p.236.
35. Keneth Roberts, Leisure, London, Longman, p.6.
36. Stanley Parker, The future of work and Leisure
London, McGisbon and Kee 1971, p.12.
37. William F. Coventry, Management made simple. Books
W.H. Allen and Co. 1970. p.202.

CHAPTER SIX

The Worker Inside the factory and the Method used

1. Distribution of the workforce:

(Sonacome) National Company of Mechanic construction was created by ordinance No. 67-150 of 9th August 1967. The company is divided into various branches and employed 50,000 workers in 1980 with an investment of four to five billions of Algerian dinars.

The Sonacome tractor factory in the district of Constantine is one of the most important branches and was created in 1969 and employed 3299 workers in 1978.

The workforce in Sonacome is divided into four groups, table 6.1 shows the distribution of workers in number and percentage.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Total number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Staff (cadres)	74	2.24
Management (administration)	854	25.88
Maintenance (soutien)	869	26.34
Production (production)	1502	45.53
Totals		99.99

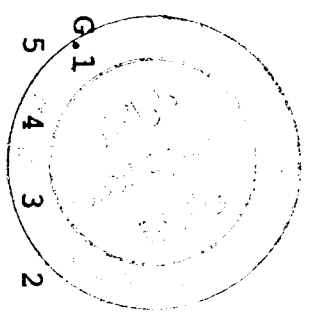
The first two groups in the table constitute management personnel, headed by a top management team of 74 individuals who undertake the supervision and management of the factory.

Department, section and office managers are supported by 854 clerks who work in offices. Among the latter group are 170 females.

Table 6:2

The distribution of manual workers by category in each department

Group Category	G.3	G.2										TA							
		Cadres	13	12B	12A	11B	11A	10	L	9	8		7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Department																			
Production Dept	1																		
Foundry	3			1	5	13	19	4	11	42	70	43	142	37	2	1			353
Steel works	2		1		5	15	21	2	32	31	45	66	53	53	11	1			284
Mills	1				12	47	59		51	55	167	34	232	110	68				717
Assembly	1			1	5	15	21	5	52	32	34	5	79	13	22				242
Totals	8		1	2	27	90	120	11	146	160	316	148	507	213	103	2			1596



The third group in Table 5:1 consists of 869 middle managers - technicians and professionals - who occupy positions of superintendents, foremen, group chiefs and chargehands.

The fourth group of 1502 manual workers are distributed in four production departments. Their task is to execute the work process and participate with the top management team in decision making through their representatives in formal meetings. Manual workers are supported by the maintenance section who are also production workers repairing, adjusting and controlling machines.

Table 6 : 3

The technical service division is divided in the following way

Group Category	G.3		G.2.						G.1.						TO TA L					
	Staff	13	12B	12A	11B	11A	10	L	9	8	7	6	5	4		3	2	1	L	
Service																				
Technical service	1																			
Study	5						1	2	3	1	4	1		4						10
Method	2		2	4	5	33	13	57	17	13	14	21	20	7	6	3	1			102
Ordinance	3			2	3	5		10	7	44	7	66	2	19		16				161
Control	2				2	4	12	18	12	62	28	24	2	10						138
Totals	13		2	6	10	43	27	88	37	123	50	111	28	36	6	19	1			411

The technical service divisions consist of a number of workers who repair and operate the machines, analyse and measure production, and generally plan the production process.

This group is divided into time-keepers, (controlleurs), professionals, specialist and work assistants.

2. Distribution of the sample and work conditions

Now we turn to the sample of 100 workers drawn from the above two groups. The sample is taken from the four production departments in the plant as the following table shows.

Table 6:4

The distribution of the sample according to skill and workplace

	Foundry		Steel-works		Mills		Assembly		Totals	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
skilled	11	30	12	32	3	8	11	30	77	100
semi-skilled	9	14	15	24	24	38	15	24	63	100
TOTALS	20	20	27	27	27	27	26	26	100	100

$$x^2 = 11.805 \quad P < 0.05 \quad df = 3$$

The impact of work conditions such as temperature, cleanliness, safety, noise, presence of cafeteria, have not much effect on the worker's absenteeism, job turnover, and dissatisfaction. The most important factors that seem to trouble Sonacome workers are those which have an immediate impact on their standard of living, and their general situation of work. That is to say, social and economic conditions, such as the amount of wages, the type of job and the kind of relations with superiors.

Most Sonacome workers have come to the tractor factory from agriculture as we have said in chapter three. There is also a high number of them who are young and who have never worked before, or who used to work in France. Thus workers frequently point out that the physical conditions of work do

not bother them, that they expected to find it harder than it is, because their work in Sonacome is easier in comparison with agricultural work or the work which some of them did in France.

These comments by workers on the conditions of work, were expected because the work is not difficult except in the Foundry department where the following comments were recorded;

"We are going to catch some disease from this work, because we do not get the proper treatment."

"I have been here for two years now, the doctor told me not to work in the Foundry, but management did not want to transfer me."

"I can work wherever they put me if I get high wages."

"We work hard down here, but we do not get paid better than others."

The workers interviewed are all males chosen according to their skill and place of work.

In order to give a picture of the conditions of work generally, we have to describe these conditions briefly in each department with reference to the respondents point of view.

First in the Foundry: we interviewed 20 workers 11 of them skilled, and 9 semi skilled. The foundry produces the raw materials of smelted iron and aluminium to make the engine and its parts; these products are then sent to the metalworking department and the mills.

The foundry is the most difficult place of work, because of dirt, heat, noise, accidents, and the unhealthy atmosphere. According to the workers, the building was badly designed

without fresh air and with inadequate safety measures.

Workers expressed their attitudes about work conditions as follows:

"The headphones given to us in order to protect us from the noise are not adequate, they are made from plastic, very tight and hot, and we cannot use them".

"Management is not interested in improving the work conditions, but they just push for more production."

"A group chief admitted that the conditions in the foundry were not very good, he explained that, management is planning to improve these conditions by raising the ceiling of the building and building more windows for light and air, which he considered were the main problems here.

Generally speaking the work in the foundry department is difficult and unhealthy and undesirable for most workers. There the materials are worked by hand rather than by machines and most of the work is handled, moved or carried by workers with the aid of simple tools but is not craft work. The performance of some of the work is merely carried on by hand, with the help of small power tools such as electric drills, and screddrivers, cutting machines painting pistols, and conveyors which carry the engines and components to other places.

Thus accidents and illnesses arise among people who work in the foundry which causes young people to refuse to work there. Supervisors also do not seem to like a young person to work in the foundry, because they believe he is likely to get an illness sooner or later. A section chief said that, "It is a crime to put a young man to work in the foundry." Therefore the majority of workers in this department do seem to be relatively older and more prone to absent themselves.

During the interviews, I found some machines not working and I asked why? The answer was that the operator was absent, and the foreman could not find another worker to replace him. This situation creates delays and disruption in the workprocess which is programmed. Added to this is the problem of machinery breaking down and not being able to be repaired. As well as the lack of spare parts, which is found in the four production departments.

Second, the steel-works^{*} department. 27 workers were interviewed from this department, 12 skilled and 15 semi-skilled. The steel works department is divided into three sections; first the sheet-iron section, concerned with making plates of steel for the tractor body and some other parts which pass to the forgery. The latter section is concerned in making the other components of the tractor by cutting steel bars into shapes as needed. Like the chassis, transmission, gear box and other components which are then sent to the Mill department.

The third section is concerned with welding two or more components together by a source of energy chosen according to the type of metal, such as welding, carbonic gaz welding and electric power (brassage) and then sending them to the Mill department too.

The steel works department has generally good conditions compared to the Foundry, because the work is light except in the Forgery section, where the work is heavy, but with accidents relatively simple such as injuries to hands and legs.

* This department might be called "metalworking" in Britain

On the other hand, its workers are highly skilled; they complain that they are not properly used in the right place, and not paid according to their performance and speciality.

Thirdly, the Mill department, this department is the largest one in the plant. 27 workers were interviewed from it, 3 skilled and 24 semi-skilled. Workers in the Mill department are distributed between 374 machines to fulfil various operations of dressing, cutting and pressing moulding parts that are made in the foundry and steel works. Such as the cylinder heads of the tractor engines, cylinders braces, connecting rods, transmissions, gear boxes and others. These parts are sent to the Assembly department for the final process.

The Mill department is considered the most attractive place, chiefly by the young workers, because of the good conditions offered. The workers are dealing with a special machine and make a definite number of products on the Assembly line.

Generally the work in this department does not involve much effort, it is clean and not too noisy and so acceptable to most workers. On the other hand the work in the Mills does not need highly skilled workers, and this usually discourages youngsters who aspire to make progress to higher positions of work. The following remarks demonstrate attitudes of workers towards their work situation.

"I like the job, but there is no promotion, and not enough wages.

I started working in the foundry I complained, they said to me if I stayed in the foundry I would be promoted. I preferred to be transferred, so I'm here now for one year without any promotion, I suppose I was wrong to come here."

"The only thing, we are here for is to gain skills, and if the money is not satisfactory, I can go somewhere else after having the skills."

"What I like in my job is the total freedom, I have a number of components to be done and that is it."

These comments show that workers are not very conscious of work conditions, as they are so obsessed to get money, or to be promoted in their skill which can be used elsewhere, when they decide to leave to get another job.

Fourth, The Assembly department; 26 workers were interviewed, 11 skilled and 15 semi-skilled. The Assembly department takes charge of assembling all the parts made in the different workshops in order to complete the workprocess of 20 tractors and 29 engines a day.

However the production target is hardly ever reached due to several causes. The lack of rationalisation and efficiency which is found in Sonacome create an atmosphere of conflict between workers and management.

Individuals are not like machines, which you can plan and programme according to their speed and capacity. The plans depend on the will and commitment of individuals as they are related to social and economic strategies.

The quality or quantity of production does not only depend on the parts and components that arrive from other

departments, it depends also on the individual's commitment to the social situation.

Our findings show that the number of tractors and engines supposed to be produced each day were rarely completed, because of the lack of spare parts, delays and inefficiency in work, breakdown of machines and absenteeism. We saw some tractors driven out, without any head lights and without some other necessary parts, which were not available.

The worker's dissatisfaction over his wages, supervision, promotion and the general situation of work is a prime cause of such low and faulty production. These observations forced us to concentrate on the worker-management relations and to look at the general situation inside and outside the plant, taking the above factors into consideration.

Workers describe the work situation as follows:

"The worker here tries to do his best, but the spare parts are not always available."

"In this factory, nobody seems to care about efficiency or honesty in work."

"We should produce 20 tractors a day, but now, we are producing only 12 to 14 because of the spare parts scarcity, and management negligence."

"We are working here with no future, no progress, many promises about pay, bonus, houses. But in practice nothing has happened."

"Our main problem here is the low wages which cannot allow us to live a decent life."

"Here there is no respect for the rules or to each other, so it affects the production."

"I have been here for two years now without any promotion, when I asked for it, they said, work or go whenever you like."

These comments are evidence of the worker's discontent toward the work situation, stemming from management repression and the lack of solidarity among workers to engage in collective action in order to change or improve their situation which is reflected in inorganised forms of conflict such as absenteeism leaving the job and negligence.

3. The choice of the study

First of all, I was interested in the behaviour and reactions of workers in the factory towards the system of control, and work itself. I wanted to know if their absence from work and low production was due to the internal situation, that is to say, worker-managers relations, work atmosphere, job distribution and so on. Or was this absence and inefficient production due to the external problems such as family problems, transport, housing etc.

These features were expected to influence workers behaviour in the factory with the help of some latent features such as beliefs and the general way of life which had an impact on behaviour and commitment to the work conditions.

A questionnaire (see appendix A) was used as an interview guide to collect this information combined with my observations as a participant in the interview.

The choice of Sonacome to be studied had three reasons. First, I had previously written a dissertation on training and its effect on production for my B.A. in 1975, about the factory and had observed that workers did not have good relations

with managers, that complaints and quarrels took place at different levels and caused discontent and resentment among workers.

Second, Sonacome factory is a public enterprise, and workers and management are subordinated to the same conditions and are working towards the same objectives. Therefore they are expected to cooperate and commit themselves to socialist values. Thirdly, the factory is located near the city where I used to live, this means, I knew some managers personally as friends and also, I knew some workers as relatives or friends which made it easy for me to have a clear picture about the function of the factory.

Nevertheless, the factory under study is supposed to represent the development objectives at large, and our concern is then invited to know the overall mode of behaviour, and the causes of workers absenteeism, where the socialist principles that Algeria is committed to fulfil seems not to correspond fully and efficiently with the central planning policy. These are the main objectives of choosing this study.

4. The interview and its difficulties

The interview has been used to back up the theoretical assumptions that have been discussed in part one. The questionnaire contains in all of 45 questions, most of which are open ended (see appendix A). Four questions dealt with the family situation, eleven with the nature of the job, nine with absence and migration, eight with worker-management

relations, four with workers interaction, five with the practice of socialist management, and four were concerned with wages.

The interview took place from April to September 1979 and more than one month was taken up with gathering information from management files and the annual reports for the period 1975 to 1978. Therefore our analysis of the factory is based on three sources; first the information and analyses supplied by management; second, our observations, as participant with workers and managers in the course of working, eating and travelling with them, talking in cafes and playing cards. The third source is that of the interview which was conducted mainly in the factory.

However some workers preferred to be interviewed outside the factory in their own home. Some workers in the factory refused to talk, and sometimes the interview was interrupted by officials such as the foreman, or a member of the workers' council.

Sonacome workers are obsessed with privacy and prefer to be interviewed alone, even those who are very loyal to management. But generally workers are full of distrust and are scared of saying anything against management in front of officials. The interview took place in an office supplied by management as in the foundry or during work.

Each interview lasted half an hour to forty five minutes but as the questions were open ended some respondents took more than one hour, because I tried to give them time, to

explain each point, and to allow extra time for important questions as when they criticise officials like foremen, or the trade union. Even so I had to make sure that the interviewee was not exaggerating and saying things that were not true.

For example some workers have personal disagreements with officials and when you ask them about officials, they start swearing and insulting them. A worker in the Assembly department wanted to transfer to another section within the department, when his supervisor refused his request, he became arrogant and aggressive. He described the general manager as an ignorant man who was a traitor under French rule, and thinks that he should not be there and that supervisors do not know anything about their responsibility. He ignores the workers' council altogether because he believes this council does not exist in that, it does not do anything for the workers.

A technician in the steel works department had been given a job which was not his speciality, and when I interviewed him, he considered all workers were misplaced as was the case with himself. Recognising that an interview with an outsider can serve as an opportunity 'to let off steam', and exaggerate one's normal attitudes, I did not encourage this kind of response and have tempered my use of certain interview material to allow for exaggeration.

I often tried to approach the interview by a general discussion about the worker life and his work situation before

starting asking him the formal questions. Each interview would begin with a short explanation of project, I also tried to assure the respondents that my interest was in knowing how the factory functioned, what problems were disturbing them, although I also usually emphasised that, I would be grateful to hear everything they had to tell me.

I used the questionnaire as an interview guide and notes were made about important points which did not arise a direct response to the questionnaire. These notes were written on separate sheets and later attached to the end of the questionnaire.

Questions were asked in local arabic dialect with repeated explanations of the terms until I made sure the interviewee understood what was being asked. Sometimes the worker deviated in answering a question and I would not stop or interrupt his talking, but if he did not answer the point which I wanted, I would ask him again.

The case study of 100 workers was not strictly outside the factory, some others were sent to my office by their supervisors, while others were interviewed during their work in order not to lose any production. But I tried to spread the sample in order to cover all types of workers, from skilled to semi-skilled or unskilled, young to old, rural to urban, emigrated, not emigrated and so forth.

As the data is open ended, for computer processing, it needed to be coded by assigning numbers to the response, so that they could be statistically analysed. Then I transferred the data onto a computer file.

For the cross tabulation; I used the chi-square distribution in order to test the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the observed distribution and that of one expected by chance.

In order to illustrate the statistical analysis we will give an example, by determining the level of absenteeism used in the interview according to the four production departments, where the sample was gathered.

Table 6:5

Distribution of absentees within the four production departments

Absences	Foundry		Steel-works		Mills		Assembly		Totals	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Frequent unexcused	9	33	4	15	7	26	7	26	27	27
Occasional unexcused	9	18	15	31	12	24	13	27	49	49
Never absent without excuse	2	8	8	33	8	33	6	25	24	24
Totals	20	20	27	27	27	27	26	27	100	100

$$x^2 = 8.1 \quad P. > 0.05 \quad df = 6$$

The one hundred workers interviewed were asked, how often they did absent themselves from work in the last year. The overall answers obtained from the four production departments are divided into three levels of absence. The frequent unexcused absence is limited to one day absence every two weeks ~~an~~ average, the occasional unexcused absence is estimated to be once every month ~~an~~ average, and never absent without excuse means the respondents are absent only involuntarily.

There are difficulties in assessing the degree of absence in Sonacome, especially if we consider the management's action towards absent workers. Recently the management has attempted to reduce the rate of absenteeism by taking oppressive measures, against the absent worker by cutting the wage for the day taken off, or reducing the share of bonuses and incentives, or depriving him of other facilities like accommodation, promotion and perhaps not permitting him to be away from work on legitimate grounds. These oppressive measures exercised by management in order to decrease absenteeism may cause tension and dissatisfaction among workers who perhaps depend on absence as an outlet. Moreover, workers, we talked to could not see any justification to cut their bonuses because of absence, or deprive them of houses when in fact this absence was partly due to the problem of inadequate accommodation and many workers did absent or left their jobs because of the lack of accommodation, (see chapter *Seven*).

CHAPTER SEVEN

External Factors of Absenteeism

The Migrants Background

Migration is a social phenomenon found among human beings and among animals. The stimulus for moving is to improve the conditions of life and to escape natural disasters and enemies. Moreover, many people do migrate without any clear purpose, to satisfy their curiosity.

The patterns of migration in Algeria include all these types which is evident from Algerian history. While the wars were still going on between Algerian tribes and the French army (1830-1870) French governors confiscated the property of those who opposed them. Every tribe which rebelled and lost in war was forced into the forest or to the poorest land, or to the countryside in general.¹

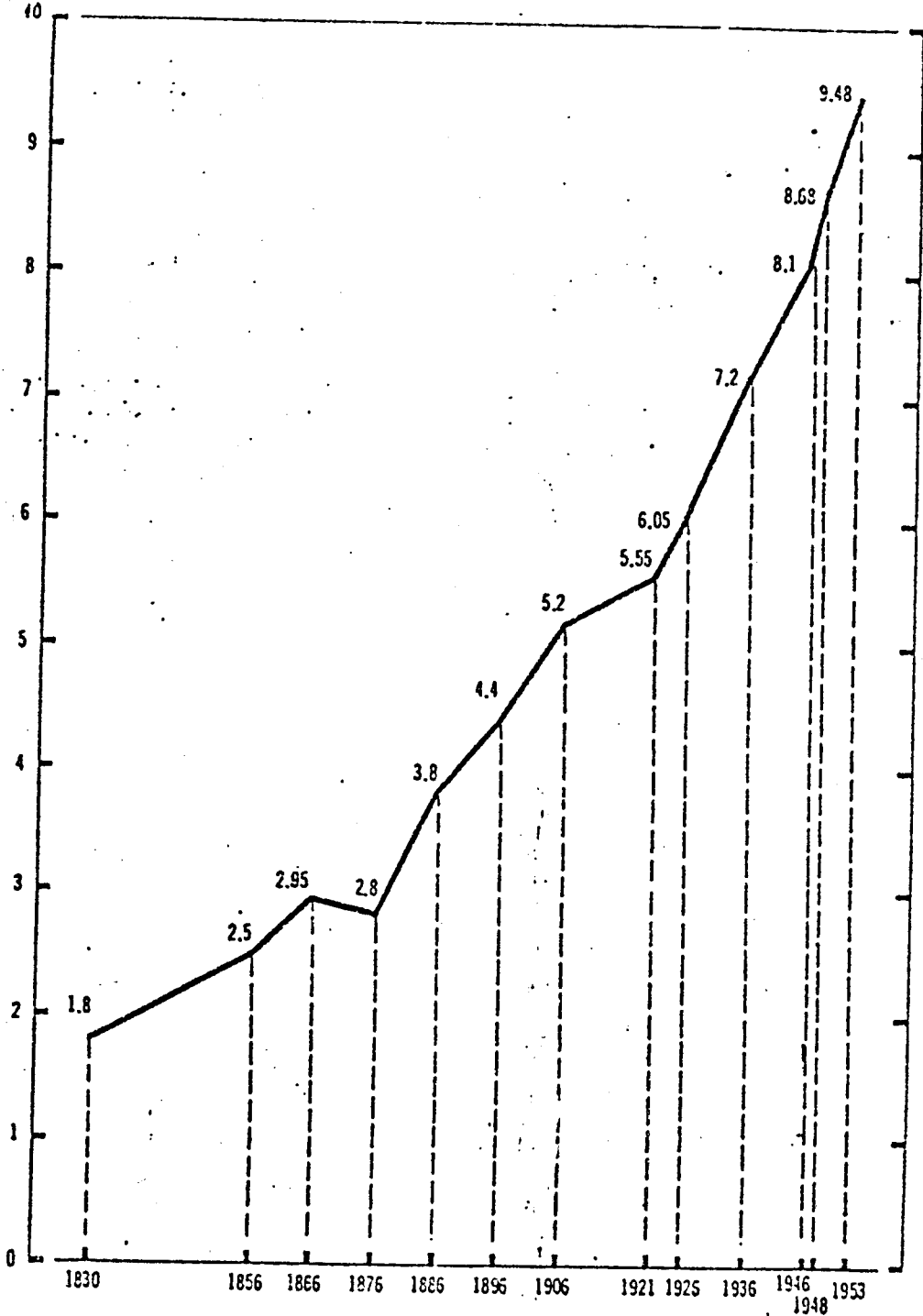
During this period the population increased very slowly and even decreased in the decade of 1866-1876 from 2.95 millions to 2.8 millions as a result of the war and the hardships, it brought. / After 1870 the situation became stable, but there was a clear division in the population. The French army together with their European colleagues and some of the indigenous population were concentrated in the main cities and towns.²

The urbanised part of the country was divided into three parts, namely the east (Constantine), the middle (Algiers) and the west (Oran). The high plateau and the fertile land with its gardens and chateaux was distributed among the colons and

Table 7:1*

Diagram. 1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH IN ALGERIA FROM 1830 to 1954

population (million)



some nationals who were loyal and worked for them. On the other hand the majority of the indigenous people were evicted to hills and forests, and even the forests were controlled and could only be used for grazing or cultivation with permission.

In the period from 1930 to the present we can epitomize Algerian migration by saying that, the Algerian towns received a large number of migrants from the countryside.³ Table 7:2 shows the total number of population living in the towns at successive dates.

Year	percentage of people living in towns
1930	5%
1960	25%
1966	31%
1973	36%
1977	42%
1980	44%

After 1900 certain socio-economic changes emerged in the towns, such as the building of roads, and schools, and mining also developed. Some land was cultivated to grow cash crops for export. Some mosques were handed over to missionaries to be used as churches.

During that period, population began to grow slowly, for development brought prosperity in the cities and towns but many people in the countryside remained untouched and poverty forced them also to migrate to towns, at least

seasonally. In summer they used to go to the country for the harvest and to come back to the towns later. Although the majority of the people worked hard, they lived in poverty.

During the period of the first and second world wars, the French economy was severely effected and their industries were damaged. The French government was confronted with a shortage of manual workers. It was then obliged to take Algerian people to France for work, and since then Algerians have been allowed to go to work in France. The majority of Algerian workers stayed there for one or two years, and then coming back with some money to see their families for two or three months and thereafter returned to France. Until recently, Algeria had more than 600,000 workers in France. The Algerian government has created many jobs and the priority has been given to the Algerians overseas with the aim of getting these workers back home.

From 1962 to date, a new type of migration has emerged among people who were housed in camps by the French army under unbearable conditions. As soon as Algeria became independent, people moved from these camps to the countryside, to occupy their land and houses which were previously destroyed. They rebuilt their houses, bought some animals with the assistance of the government, and started a primitive life, which included small plots of land and a few animals.

However this migration to the countryside involved only a small minority and represented the people who were illiterate and poor. After a few years of independence many of them were attracted by the glamour of the towns and migrated. However

now the conditions in towns are becoming difficult for the migrants in many ways. In the early days after independence it was easier for a large proportion of literates, and rich people to migrate from camps, villages, and even from one city to another endeavouring to find a better position or better life.

Algeria has considerable natural resources and a relatively small population, therefore the majority of these migrants have better opportunities for success in life than many living in the countryside.

Most important here is that Algerian migrants moving from the countryside to towns do not want to sell their property or leave it finally. When an individual moves, he leaves his property to one member of his family such as a parent, brother or sister, or if he has none of these, to one of his relatives.

He still remains attached to his property by maintaining an exchange of visits. The migrants treat the countryside and villages as places to take a holiday. They visit their relatives two or three times a year and take with them presents for the members of family such as clothes, coffee and sugar. On returning to the city they bring with them reciprocal presents such as fruits, or anything grown on the land.

Some migrants also entrust their land or other property to someone who by agreement takes half the produce. The prosperity of migrants has encouraged others to migrate. This contact between the relatives who live in the towns and those who live in the countryside facilitates migration. The mutual

assistance and encouragement has driven more people to migrate in order to have better life, education and regular work.

So far as the sample obtained by the researcher is concerned, migration is not very important, first because the Sonacome factory requires skilled workers who can read and write, attributes more or less confined to townpeople, and second because the recruitment of the workforce in Sonacome prefers people living near to the factory in order to avoid the problem of accommodation and transport. This means that most workers can be expected to come from urban areas in the Constantine district and its surrounding villages.

A sample of workers were asked to determine the distance between the factory and their home

Table 7:3

Absentees birth place in k.m.

Absences	1 k.m. - 20		20 +		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused	15	37	12	20	27	27
Occasional unexcused	16	39	33	56	49	49
Never without excuse	10	24	14	24	24	24
	41	100	59	100	100	100

$\chi^2 = 3.554$ $P. > 0.05$ $df = 2$

The result in table 7:3 indicates that distance of home from work is not a major cause of absenteeism.

The following table examines absenteeism among migrants and non migrants in the Sonacome sample.

Table 7:4

Have you migrated from home?

Absences	Yes		No		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused	14	24	17	32	27	27
Occasional unexcused	31	53	18	44	49	49
Never without excuse	14	24	10	24	24	24
	59	101	41	100	100	100

$$x^2 = 0.95 \quad P > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Table 7:4 indicates that absenteeism is not significantly associated with migration. A clear majority in the sample are migrants. We might expect migrants to absent themselves to visit relatives in the countryside. However, migrants are as likely as non-migrants to claim that they have never been absent without a valid excuse, and, contrary to expectation, it is non-migrants who admit in slightly larger numbers to frequent absences.

As has been mentioned, Algerian migration has its roots in the past, so the sample includes workers who moved to Constantine and its surrounding villages in the fifties and sixties to live there rather than simply to work in the factory on a temporary basis.

Table 7:5

When did you migrate?

Absences	Before the factory started operations		After that date		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Frequent unexcused	6	32	8	21	14
Occasional unexcused	7	37	23	58	30
Never without excuse	6	32	8	21	14
TOTALS	19	101	39	100	58

$$\chi^2 = 1.972 \quad P > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Not all the 58 migrants for whom this information was available had migrated in order to work in the factory.

Nineteen had been pushed or pulled to migrate before the factory started its operations. The majority of the respondents emigrated when the factory opened. They represent 67% of the total. They are more often absent without excuse than those settled longer in the neighbourhood of the factory, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Migration to the cities has various causes. First, the vast majority of Algerian people are young, 57% are 1-19 years of age; secondly, high unemployment is another factor, for instance in the Constantine region 42% of the total population is unemployed, and 32% in the Algiers region, the lowest percentage being in the western part of the country in Oran, where 21% are unemployed.⁴

"The ten largest towns have absorbed 75% of the internal migration, which also often passed through smaller towns."⁵

Trebouss points out also that

"In 1960, 90% of the men and 96% of the women were illiterate, only 11% had their primary school certificate, 1% had passed the first part of their baccalauriat and less than 1% had a university degree or the equivalent".⁶

These factors make the problem of migration more severe, because the large number of migrants received by the Algerian cities was a consequence of the economic and social development, which took place in these centres and the improvement of the country's economy in general.

The priority given to industry has meant that many industrial schools and universities have been built, and other establishments created in towns and cities. While the villages and countryside have not benefited equally from this development, which perhaps has been the root cause of migration to the cities.

Table 7:6

Why did you emigrate from home?

Absences	Push		Pull		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%		
Frequent unexcused absence	0	0	7	37	7	22
Occasional unexcused	11	85	6	32	17	53
Never without excuse	2	15	6	32	8	25
Totals	13	100	19	101	32	100

$$\chi^2 = 6.868 \quad P < 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

The result in table 7:6 shows that in some cases workers were "pushed" to migrate because of difficulties in finding a permanent job in their local areas. For others a permanent job in industry found mainly in the cities "pulled" them to emigrate.

Those who are "pulled", or attracted by industrial work can be expected to express dissatisfaction if their aspirations are not realised. This may be reflected in the sample among those who reported frequently absenting themselves without excuse (7 of those "pulled", but none of those "pushed"). Conversely, we may expect a more passive reaction to work among those who are merely "pushed" into migrating. This may be reflected in the fact that among those "pushed" into migrating in the sample, the great majority admitted to occasional absences without excuse, perhaps indicating the lack either of commitment to the rules or of defiance against them. Numbers in this table are of course small and the findings merely suggestive.

More significantly the problem of finding accommodation affects the worker's stability. Many workers live in the shanty towns, especially those on low incomes who migrated recently. Even those living in modern houses complain of inadequate accommodation because some of these houses are over crowded, or they do not have the necessary facilities like electricity, and water. And this causes the worker to keep seeking elsewhere for improvement - and for a place where he can live with his family in better accommodation.

We asked workers if they were settled in their job and obtained a high percentage of respondents saying that they are not settled, 64%, against 36% saying that they are settled as table 7:7 shows.

Table 7:7

Absences	Settled		Not Settled		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absence	7	19	20	31	27	27
Occasional unexcused	20	56	29	45	43	49
Never without excuse	9	25	15	23	24	24
Totals	36	100	64	99	100	100

$$x^2 = 1.78 \quad p > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Unsettled workers show a definite but insignificant tendency to absent themselves without excuse, especially "frequently". Some of the reasons for feeling unsettled and their specific affects on absenteeism may be inferred from answers to the question:

Table 7:8

If you are not settled, why?

Absences	Accommodation		Family Problems		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absence	20	33	7	18	27	27
Occasaional unexcused	28	47	21	53	49	49
Never without excuse	12	20	12	30	24	24
Total	60	100	40	101	100	100

$$x^2 = 2.195 \quad p > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Two major factors caused unsettlement and increased the rate of absence in Sonacome; Accommodation for 60% of the sample and family problems for 40%. The rate of absence among those complaining about accommodation was 80%. The problem of housing seems to trouble most workers, rural and urban. For instance the rural workers complained of living far away from their family. They could not bring their families because of the lack of accommodation.

An urban worker tends to complain of inadequate housing because houses are small or they have not the necessary facilities like light and water. These workers often live in shanty towns on the outskirts of Constantine. The scarcity of accommodation in Algeria generally and in Constantine especially affects the majority of the population and not only workers.

A study carried out by "Organisme National de la recherche scientifique" (O.N.R.S.) in 1976 on the question of accommodation in Algiers, indicates that the average number of individuals in each room was 2.3 persons. The study excluded the population who were living in shanty-towns and huts, which would be more crowded than ordinary houses.⁷

The second factor which seems to trouble Sonacome workers is family responsibilities, where for the majority the wife's responsibility is limited to the house, it is the man's duty to look after the family. One would expect that the worker with family responsibilities would have less absence than the single worker, because absence means loss of wages and perhaps the job itself. This is especially so for workers who have a

large family, as is the case for the Sonacome worker, where the average family is 6.55 person.⁸

Behrend found that "single men lost more time voluntarily than married men ... The absence frequency rate decreased among married men as the number of dependents increased".⁹

A parallel result was found by E. Durkheim when he examined the phenomenon of suicides

"Unmarried persons seem to commit suicide less than married ones."¹⁰

Durkheim gives the result found in France during the period 1873-78,

"There were 16,264 suicides of married persons while unmarried persons had only 11,709."¹¹

Durkheim thus does not consider the family responsibilities to be a major cause of suicide. He criticised certain authors for thinking that

"Marriage and family life multiply the chances of suicide."¹²

Table 7:9.

Absences	Single		1 - 4		5 +		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absence	3	9	16	42	8	27	27	27
Occasional unexcused absence	19	59	17	45	13	43	49	49
Never absent without excuse	10	31	5	13	9	30	24	24
Totals	32	99	38	100	30	100	100	100

$$x^2 = 11.486 \quad p < 0.05 \quad df = 4$$

Among the Sonacome sample absenteeism is most frequent where workers have relatively small families. While it falls for those with the largest families, it is lower still among single workers. Behrend's hypothesis is then not supported.

A possible reason for the relatively high absence without excuse among family men is that, by custom, a woman cannot go out alone unless her husband gives permission or goes with her. Thus if a member of the family is sick, it is not the duty of a mother to take her child to hospital or to a clinic, but that of the father.

These customs run counter to the reasonable expectations that family men will be more reluctant than single to take the risks of unexcused absence.

In addition to migration, accommodation and family responsibility, there are also other factors which can increase the rate of absenteeism among the working population. Experience in a previous job, the opportunity to find a job elsewhere and distance from the workplace are taken as external factors which play a part in the expectation and aspirations of the worker.

1. Previous job

Sonacome's workforce has been drawn from different occupations, has been selected according to skill and previous experience, and on various other criteria, such as the level of education in the case of young recruits who have to be trained by the plant according to its needs.

As I have explained elsewhere Algeria is in a process of transition. This transition has created such competition between individuals and enterprises, that it has increased the worker's desire to look for a better working environment which can satisfy his socio-economic expectations. As A. Touraine points out:

"There is no absolute dividing line between the workers life inside and outside the firm ... And any change in one must also affect the other".¹³

If a worker absents himself or leaves his job, it is not only due to his present work conditions, but to the difference between these conditions and those of his previous job. A worker leaves one job after another in order to find a better situation than in his previous one, or at least a job which can satisfy his needs. If the job disappoints him this can lead the worker to attend his job irregularly or to abandon it permanently.

It has been suggested that expectations differ from one worker to another. For instance, a worker of rural origin will come to work in Sonacome with rural expectations i.e. low standard of living, low motivation and more submissive to social control. He tends to accept work conditions even if he is not satisfied, which is in contrast with an urban worker who shows his dissatisfaction by complaints, absenteeism, or leaving his job as soon as he finds another one.

The type of previous job affects the expectations of a worker, which determines the level of a worker's satisfaction with his subsequent job. A study made by Gadourek in the

the Netherlands found that "ex-agricultural workers have a tendency to be absence-prone".¹⁴

The cause may be that these workers perhaps found it difficult to adjust themselves to the new pattern of work in industry.

The same result was found by Brokshire M. "workers making the transition from agriculture to industry are often poor attenders".¹⁵

Table 7:10

Previous job

Absences	Industry		Agriculture		Never Worked Before		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absence	19	28	3	20	5	28	27	2
Occasional unexcused	28	42	9	60	12	67	49	4
Never absent without excuse	20	30	3	20	1	6	24	2
Totals	67	100	15	100	18	101	100	10

$\chi^2 = 8.87 \quad p > 0.05 \quad df = 4$

Table 7:10 shows that absenteeism is not significantly associated with whether the previous job was in industry or in agriculture.

It is possible that there is similarity between workers with industrial experience and workers whose previous jobs were agricultural/raising the absence level of the former and another increasing the absence proneness of the latter. However, it is notable that it is quite inexperienced labour that is most often absent without excuse.

2. Chance of finding another job elsewhere;

The actual situation in Algeria does not correspond to the aspirations and expectations of people who wish to improve their conditions of life.

High unemployment (see chapter 4) the practice of nepotism and regionalism (see chapter 3 about bureaucracy) and the high demand for skilled individuals, disappoint the vast majority of unskilled workers, who are forced to accept the conditions of work, whatever they are or be without a job. However these circumstances encourage skilled workers and individuals with social contacts to absent themselves without risk, because they are confident of finding a job elsewhere even if they lose their jobs.

We asked the respondents about the chances they thought they had of finding another job.

Table 7:11

If you left this job, would it be easy to find another one?

Absences	Easy		Difficult		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absence	12	32	10	26	22	29
Occasional unexcused absence	19	50	19	49	38	49
Never absent without excuse	7	18	10	26	17	22
Total	38	100	39	101	77	100

$\chi^2 = 4.337$ $p. > 0.05$ $df = 2$

Only 77 workers who answered this question because it was a sequel to a question asking whether the interviewee wanted to leave his job, and the 77 all said they did.

Absence without excuse is not significantly associated with the chance of finding another job. Whether it is "easy" or "difficult". There is however a difference among frequent unexcused absentees; 32 per cent of those who said it was easy to find another job as against only 26 per cent of those who said it was difficult were frequent absentees. The second group is also more likely to say they have never been absent without excuse. The first group appears to be confident workers, who are skilled, young and urban. While the second group seems to be among rural, old, and unskilled workers, who have less actual chance of finding a job if they leave their present jobs.

In the Foundry department an old worker said

"who would accept me at this age I am lucky to have this job."

Another worker in the assembly department said,

"It is still only three years to my retirement, so I have to wait."

while a third worker in the same department said

"I would love to move from this place, but there are no jobs for old workers like me."

These worries and uncertainties about finding a job outside among old workers, can be contrasted with the situation for the younger workers especially in towns where the tendency towards seeking a job is the norm. These workers are unstable, they

find it difficult to remain in the same job, even if they are not sure of finding another job elsewhere.

3. Distance of Residence

Distance from work and problem of transport may be considered one of the important causes of absenteeism. Management has extended the outreach of its transport from 15 kilometres in 1977 to 25 kilometres in 1978 and hopes to extend it to 50 kilometres by 1979.*

Sonacome factory is located 3 kilometres outside Constantine district, where the majority of the workforce are located while others live with their families in small towns around Constantine, such as El-Khroub, Hamma-Bouzioune, Didouche Mourad, Barika and Ouled Rahmoume. These small towns are not further than 20 kilometres from the factory, this means there is a considerable proportion of workers who do not have the problem of transport, and this fact is expressed in the management's official report

Table 7:12

How far do you live from your place of work?

Absences	1 to 20		20 +		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absence	18	26	9	28	27	27
Occasional unexcused absence	32	47	17	53	49	49
Never absent without excuse	18	26	6	19	24	24
Totals	68	99	32	100	100	100

$$x^2 = 1.492 \quad p. > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

* This is the management plan, cited in the annual report

There is a slight tendency for those living further from work to take more unexcused absence.

Transport is treated by management as one of the three most important causes of absenteeism (i.e. pay, accommodation and transport). In fact workers probably give "transport" as their reason for absence to management only when they fail to prove that sickness or family problems are the cause.

In response to the question "Why did you absent yourself from work?" four causes were given by respondents (see table 7:13).

Table 7:13

Why did you absent yourself from work?

Absences	Family		Sickness		Work Conditions		Transport		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absences	8	31	10	48	6	33	3	60	27	39
Occasional unexcused absences	16	62	11	52	7	39	2	40	36	51
Never absent without excuse	2	8	0		5	28	0		7	10
	26	101	21	100	18	100	5	100	70	100

$$X^2 = 7.844 \quad P. > 0.05 \quad Df = 6$$

In fact here we are interested in looking at the transport factor, and whether it affects the worker's attendance or not. It has been shown earlier that distance of residence does not affect the regular attendance of workers first because the majority of workers are living within a distance of 20 k.m, and this area is covered by transport, and secondly because the emigrants from rural areas are located near the factory and provided

with transport, which means that the transport "excuse" of absence is unlikely to be its "cause". And that is why transport in table 7:13 is an insignificant cause of absenteeism, in comparison with the family problem, sickness, and work conditions.

Transport has the lowest percentage, among frequent unexcused absentees, only 11% belonging to transport in comparison with 37% to sickness. Among occasional unexcused absentees, the transport cause represents only 10% in comparison with the highest 40% because of family responsibilities. While among the group who never absent without excuse, transport and sickness have no representatives, and work conditions take the highest percentage of 71%, against only 23% because of family responsibilities.

Work conditions and family responsibilities are considered by management as personal matters, if any worker absents without an advance permission, his absence would be illegitimate. If this is true, why for instance, do more workers absent themselves without excuse when they have a family problem? This is mainly due to the fact that the family responsibility is socially and morally respected and must be looked after by the father. For example in case of a serious illness of one member of the family, the father is responsible for taking the person to hospital, and the doctor produces a sick note, not to the patient but to the father, in order to legitimate his absence.

Family or sickness excuse are not necessarily genuine, it is no doubt, family responsibility to a worker is very important, he may give up his job in favour of looking after his family.

But there is also to some extent exaggeration on stressing family problems, sickness, transport or whatever, and there is also an unspoken protest against the unsatisfactory conditions in work, in respect to supervision, wage, work conditions and so on. These factors will be discussed in the following chapter, according to the socio-economic situation of the case.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. For more detail about the French settlement in Algeria see Jean Allemand, Un peuple qui jamais ne Renonça. le communist. 1969.
2. Concerning Algerian population growth and development see Abdenour nouri "La population Algerienne. El-djeich No. 191. Avril 1979. pp.27-33, see also Rene Gallisot, Precolonial Algeria. Translated from "L'Algerie precolonial" Centres d'Etudes et de Recherches Marxistes (C.E.R.M.) Sur le Feodalism Editions socialiales 1971.
- * Table 6:1 provided by M. Trébous. Migration and Development. The case of Algeria Development Centre Studies, Paris, 1970, p.18.
3. Talar Benhouria, L'Economie De L'Algerie. Francois Maspero, Paris, 1980, p.368.
4. Trebous, op.cit., p.17.
5. ibid., p.17.
6. ibid., p.24.
7. This is a study about the crisis of housing in Algeria carried out in Algiers by (O.N.R.S.) Organisme Nationale De la Recherche Scientifique. La question Du Logement A Alger. Office Des Publications Universitaires, Alger, 1976.
8. This is a result extracted from the second general census of the Algerian population in 1977. For more detail see, L'Algerie en quelques chiffres. Secretariat D'etat au plan, Direction des Statistiques et de la comptabilite Nationale, 1978, p.4.
9. H. Behrend, Voluntary Absence from work, International Labour Review, vol. 79, 1959, p.118.
10. Durkheim findings showed that, the tendency to suicide of married persons at the age of 25 has in a ratio 1:3 with suicide among unmarried persons of the same age. See E. Durkheim, Suicide. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952, p.177.
11. ibid. p.171
12. ibid. p.171
13. Alain Touraine, Workers' attitudes to technical change, Paris, 1965, p.117.
14. See Gadourek, J.K. 'Absence and well being of workers'. Assen [Netherlands] Van Gorcum, 1959, p.
15. See also, M. Brookshire in her pamphlet, Absenteeism. California Institute of Industrial Relations 1972

CHAPTER EIGHT

The control system and the worker management relations

From one point of view it may be argued that any industrial organisation contains two groups of individuals.¹ Those who occupy a position of dominance and those in position of subjection. And therefore conflict between workers and management even in a socialist system exists in terms of interests and power.

The character of the tasks which the workers are engaged in and the physical environment in which they have to work, differ from those of management. Where state-socialism is adapted as in Algeria, the leadership aims to represent the nation or the proletariat. As Bendix noted

"The exercise of authority in industry ... represents the supreme authority₂ of the state ... as the authentic voice of the people."²

Also considering the socialist system Bendix pointed out that

"All the people are said to work for themselves rather than for any exploiter), because they own the means of production and hence work for their own society, in which power is exercised by₃ the representatives of the working class."³

Thus, in a socialist regime the means of production are owned collectively, and the decisions are made and carried out collectively. As Bendix points out:

"Success is regarded as a collective accomplishment, in which managers as well as workers have the right and the duty to participate ... (Bendix continues) Most attempts to increase present satisfactions of work consist in promises of participation in collective achievements of the future or in benefits and appeals

which have the character of distinctions received in return for a service to the nation."⁴

But these ideas proclaimed in theory have not effectively been performed in practice, because as Bendix said in the case of the Russian system,

"The effectiveness of managerial control depends either upon a substratum of mutual trust or upon the institution of additional controls where that trust does not exist."⁵

A problem in socialist economic management is how to reconcile participation at the enterprise level with a centrally directed plan for the economy as a whole. Central planning can stifle local initiative. As Spulber suggests:

"the soviet norms ... are of dubious value in ascertaining performance either as a producer or as a seller. The enterprise's complex connections to its tutelary organs e.g. supervisor, managerial agency (such as a ministry), planning board, state budget, state bank are tailored to its specific needs according to the planned goals. The unification of all economic activities under a single, all absorbing, edict managed corporation operating with compulsory instructions for each division, subdivision, or plant, creates a business environment, extremely unfavourable for manifestation of initiatives from lower levels."⁶

At the same time, socialism holds out the promise to workers of personal involvement in decision making and a more or less equal stake in the products of cooperative work. How do workers respond where theory and practice seem to an outside observer to be in tension, if not outright contradiction with each other? Much will depend on how the local system of managerial control operates.

One possibility, is that workers perceive a direct contradiction between socialist theory and practice in the

enterprise. The Algerian workers may expect access to management, a role in decision-making, equality of power and rewards with management etc.

If this is so, and other things are equal, perceive violation of all or any of these expectations will generate dissatisfaction. Even so, whether worker dissatisfaction will lead to absenteeism and turnover, depends on the extent to which workers see a form of collective action (e.g. workers council), as affecting a tangible prospect of redress and improvement. In the case of absenteeism it will also depend on whether management can make the economic costs of absenteeism outweigh the psychological costs of dissatisfaction.

In the Sonacome study we looked at the relationships between workers and managers and to what extent workers were involved in the social system of control.

We asked the sample of workers if they could see management easily whenever they liked, because the existant situation seemed in contradiction with what was supposed to be applied in the plant.

The workers were asked, whether they could see the management or not, how often, and why they wanted to see it. Also other questions were asked in order to find the worker's attitudes towards their superiors and the workers' council. The division between workers and management will be evident in the workers' attitudes toward management in the Sonacome plant.

1. The Workers' attitudes towards management

The worker-management relationships and their interaction within the bureaucratic structure is based on the system of control which is exercised by two official bodies, i.e. management and the workers' council. The former includes all non manual workers who in one way or the other perform the job of supervision and control, either in the workshops or in the offices. The latter is a group of workers and managers elected from the two groups in order to represent the collective interests and to assist management in controlling, and supervising the workprocess.

The members of the workers' council are chosen according to their relations with the local administration, the party and the army. These three official bodies are the representatives of the state which organises and supervises the elections. Thus the workers' councils in fact are separate from the workers, because the members of the workers' council owe their positions to these groups and derive their power from them as well. The participation of workers in managing and controlling the workprocess is limited, to the extent of attending the official meetings that are arranged by management and the workers' councils. Perhaps in reality these meetings are held in order to mobilise workers and to make them more cooperative. But at the moment the Algerian worker may still not be at the level of participating fully and consciously in production. His attitude towards management and toward socialist values in the enterprise depend

on his ability and willingness to be involved in the system of control.

The continued mobility between town and countryside in Algeria (see chapter six) has shaped the peculiar characteristics of workers who are more or less similar to the Russian worker in the nineteenth century described by Bendix. "The industrial workers were in reality peasants who returned to their land as soon as they left factory employment."⁷

Furthermore;

"... workmen in Russian factories are at the same time landowners, who are not factory workmen by profession, the wages they earn in factories ... are only accessory to what they get by their agricultural labours. The workmen loves his land, and does not like to leave it permanently for the factory; he has, therefore, continual intercourse with his village, and goes there yearly to see his relatives and neighbours, and still more to cultivate his own little farm ... in making a contract with the manufacturer, he always has in view that, in case of failure, he can always return to his village, where he will get board and lodging."⁸

The worker's cultural beliefs in the Algerian society, and his low political awareness, are reinforced by a high rate of un - and - under-employment. These factors mould his attitudes towards work in industry.

The conflict that arises in Sonacome between workers and management is not a political conflict led by the avant garde of the party or the workers' trade union, oriented to changing the mode of production, and securing the workers interests. Rather the conflict that is found in Sonacome takes place between workers about individual interests especially the wage-packet and the improvement of their situation, and managers who are the representatives of

the state. Managers hold the key positions in the factory in maintaining law, and ensuring work is done properly.

Workers' representatives on the Workers' Council are equally committed to upholding the law and state policy.

This situation in turn leads to the domination of management by absorbing the workers representatives and making them work against workers who elected them. That is why, the scheme of socialist management does little to improve the workers' situation. This may be reflected in the high labour turnover and absenteeism which are the expression of worker dissatisfaction.

As far as Sonacome workers are concerned, it appears that the majority distrust officials and also they do not seem to pay much attention to politics by getting involved in managing and controlling the plant. Sonacome workers are fighting for a job with an acceptable wage. The officials in the factory of the trade union (U.G.T.A.) and the party (FLN) who are supposed to mobilise workers, seem to be failing to do so, because of an insufficient degree of consciousness to grasp the revolutionary objectives of socialist management.

Thus the lack of accord between workers and officials is probable, especially if we take account of the workers' view that managers are a distinct group which takes advantage of its position in order to serve its own interests.

Workers' attitudes toward managers were sought as follows: What are the causes of workers discontent? To what extent

are rules respected? And what are the workers' attitudes to work?

In answering questions of this kind, we have first of all to investigate the internal causes of workers absence which could be due to defects in worker-management relations. For instance rigidity in communication may be a factor where a worker who has a problem, has to follow the hierarchical channel of authority, starting by asking permission from his immediate superior (group chief), who may or may not allow him to see his foreman. The latter can permit the worker to see the department manager for a serious matter, or send him to the office concerned.

The Sonacome workforce seems to have a wide range of complaints and problems that need to be solved by management. How do managers respond to these complaints and which group is most affected by the internal conditions of work? It can be expected that the level of skill and the conditions of work are major factors in workers' discontent.

It could be argued that, where there is little opportunity for workers to improve their economic conditions, and to express their difficulties at work this will deepen their grievances and aggravate their relations with their immediate superiors. i.e. group chiefs, foremen, and councils. Most respondents we talked to suggested that the only way of achieving ones own goals is through unfair influence, and nepotism, were mentioned by some.

It is very difficult to blame anybody in a situation where unemployment is enormous and the social values based on kin connection is very strong. Under these circumstances anybody would use any advantage he had to achieve his own interests. The common belief among workers is that the best chance of getting what you need is to know management, or a friend of the managers, or someone who can put pressure on them either by bribes or by using regionalism.

Apparently no one admits, he gets his job, his promotion, or his transfer by bribery. But I have heard some rumours that there were some workers who got their jobs by paying certain amounts of money. We do not know, if that was true or not, but what is certain is that many workers admit, and they are proud to talk about it, that they have used influence to get the job or a transfer, such as through a brother, an uncle working in a high position in the government, or an engineer or a director who influenced the management to get him a job or accommodation. These allegations are not always true, some individuals use this in order to gain respect from their mates, sometimes to reinforce their position in the hostile environment of an unjust order.

There are also luck and merit in achieving personal objectives, for example in the case of accommodation, the factory has few workers who get their houses. To merit a house depends on the number of children you have and the number of years spent in the factory. According to workers' allegations these conditions are not respected, "if you are lucky or you have influence you can get it" as they say.

Workers pointed to some individuals by name who got their houses without meeting any of the conditions.

In case of promotion or indisciplined behaviour the judgment depends on luck and the workers' relations with his superiors. The latter in fact cannot dismiss or punish a worker, what he could do is to produce a report in a case of serious indisciplined behaviour, like fighting, insulting others or breaking machines. Similarly for promotion the supervisor cannot promote or transfer workers, but he can report on them to the committee concerned. The judgement of this committee depends very much on the emphasis of the report, so in fact the supervisors can do a lot to help or to harm workers.

These supervisors, according to the workers' point of view are behaving ruthlessly, and they do not always respect the rules themselves.

Merit on the other hand is used to challenge the unfair methods described above. There are few, but some supervisors who are revolutionaries, alongside some members of the workers' councils who are working fairly for the good of the workers and the factory as a whole. Their ideology is based on merit and they insist on rejecting the dominant traditional beliefs.

However, the traditional beliefs of supporting relatives, friends, neighbours perhaps at the expense of formal rules persist. This caused dissatisfaction especially among those who had not relatives or friends in a position of influence.

This kind of behaviour aggravated the situation and increased tension and despair among workers who considered management to be a privileged group who benefited themselves at the expense of workers. The respondents made the following remarks:

"There is no equality between workers and management, all privileges are given to the officials". (skilled workers in the assembly department)

"They talk about workers' right to participate in the control of the factory, while the worker is despised by the management oppression." A revolutionary worker on the council.

"They talk about equality and merit, how could you possibly see this, if most things are done through influence (Benaamiss)* and bribery, if you do not know important people, you cannot get anywhere."

The educated individuals are more advantaged, they are usually unstable, they wait for the right job to come along or work temporarily in order to maintain themselves, while they are looking for the right job with prospects. As the society is in process of change socially and economically, the problem of unemployment seems not to affect the educated, skilled, as much as it does the less skilled workers. It happens sometimes that the management takes in skilled people who have been in a training school or used to work in France. These workers complain of not getting the job which they used to do, and this situation is resented, especially if it is known that a worker "is paid for what he does ... not for what he can do."⁹

The chance of rising from one grade to another in

* dialect word meaning use of influence with kin.

Sonacome is slow and uncertain because it depends in most cases on the worker and his relations with superiors. These relations depend on the worker showing respect to the immediate supervisors, or working hard, in submitting to orders without question. In this way he may gain sympathy and could be promoted.

Management generally and supervisors on the line specifically have been accused of using nepotism in promotion and transfer. In the foundry and steel work departments workers complain of demotion and rigid supervision. These workers consider themselves a disadvantaged group and unlucky, because many of them complain of not getting the right job and the right grade.

These workers brought their qualifications from outside, They accepted a job in Sonacome on the understanding that they were skilled (O.P. 3), when they started working, they found themselves paid as semi-skilled (O.P.1) Management's reason for demoting some of these workers with previous experience was that, workers who come to the factory with qualifications from outside must be tested in the factory school training for some days, and these workers were classified according to the factory standard. Workers do know this but they resent it strongly because as they argue their work is hard, hot and exhausting but they are not paid accordingly.

The other problem workers usually complain about is supervision. Many of the supervisors used to work as

professionals third degree. They were promoted to group chiefs and since then they broke their relations with workers and become part of the management. An example is a skilled worker in the Foundry department who became a group chief. This supervisor has been described as the toughest one in the department, he is rigid and strict, he does not mix with workers outside as he used to do, he does not want to be too friendly with workers. This group chief is disliked by many of his men and sometimes challenged by men who provoke him by not working as hard as he desired. They try to waste time by going to the toilet, talking to each other or stopping work whenever they find the opportunity to do so.

The attitude of this supervisor fits the type described by Bourdieu "... Among some highly skilled workers ... who succeeded in their working lives, they ... keep aloof from the mass of unskilled workers and labourers" ... He comments "that a narrowing circle of social relations is one of the indices of embourgeoisement".¹⁰

Workers' discontent either because of low skill or because of maltreatment by supervisors could increase the rate of absenteeism.

Table 8:1

The sample distribution according to skill and workplace

Workplace	Skilled		Semi-skilled		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Foundry & Steel-works	23	49	14	26	37	37
Mill and Assembly	24	51	39	74	63	63
Totals	47	100	53	100	100	100

$$x^2 = 6.207 \quad P.<0.05 \quad df = 1$$

We have already discussed the conditions of work in the four production departments in chapter ~~five~~. And there were similarities between the foundry and steel-works departments, both being noisy and hot and requiring relatively heavy work, and high skill. While in the mill and assembly departments the work is more or less light, less noisy and cleaner, but of low skill. Work in the foundry and steel work is dependent on the motivation of the workers to a greater degree than in the mill and assembly where machines and the flow of work into and out of the department pace the workers' output. That is why we have grouped them into two sets according to the above reasons.

Among skilled workers slightly less than half of the respondents (49%) worked in the foundry and the steel-works departments, whereas among semi-skilled (74%) worked in the mill and assembly departments. We have already suggested above that work conditions and the type of supervision

are perhaps the major causes of workers' discontent which lead to absence. The reasons of workers absence are given in the following table.

Table 8:2

The reasons of absence according to the workplace

Reasons of absence	Foundry & Steel-works		Mill & Assembly		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family problems	16	43	14	42	30	43
Illness	9	24	12	36	21	30
Supervision, grade, looking for jobs	12	32	7	21	19	27
Totals	37	99	33	99	70	99

$$x^2 = 1.607 \quad P. > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

70% of the total sample absented themselves from work during the previous year. In the foundry and steel-works departments, the highest proportion (43%) went absent because of family obligations, as was the case (42%) in the mill and assembly departments. According to the other causes, there is a shift in the result, illness which includes accidents is smaller (24%) in the foundry and steel works departments, which are described as dangerous and have an unhealthy atmosphere. Whereas in the mill and assembly (36%) were absent because of illness. This unexpected result can be explained by the importance of other causes such as supervision, grade, looking for jobs in the former departments. The respondents priority in the

reasons they gave for absence in the foundry and steel-works was supervision, grade and looking for job (32%) while in the mill and assembly it represents only 21%. The number is too small to yield a significant result, so our finding is merely suggestive.

Wages may have been a frequent cause of complaint and may have been a factor in absence, but workers may have been afraid to admit it. A technician in the steel-works department said "the general manager has given orders to the supervisors to report any worker who complains about wages". Another worker in the assembly section says, "our problem is wages, we have been warned by the supervisors not to complain about wages".

As far as family problems are concerned, Table 8:3 shows the rate of absence among married and non married respondents.

Absence	Single		Married		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused absence	2	9	25	32	27	27
Occasional unexcused absence	13	59	36	46	49	49
Never absent without excuse	7	32	17	22	24	24
Totals	22	100	78	100	100	100

$$\chi^2 = 9.439 \quad P. < 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Wages are paid according to work done, not to marital status and family responsibilities, and tax allowances favour family men to only a small degree.* Thus the burden of low wages falls disproportionately on married men.

* They are £4 a month for a wife and £2 for each child.

Absenteeism here is associated with the family situation. Married respondents have more absence than single ones. Only 9% of single workers were frequently absent without excuse, in comparison with 32% of married men. 32% unmarried and 22% of married men said they were never absent without cause.

As the family situation is considered an outside factor (see table 7:9 in chapter 5) here we are dealing with the internal situation where supervision, conditions of work, and grade are our main concern.

In between workers and management are the supervisors on the line who are originally workers and moved to the position of management by promotion. Since promotion they are considered and treated by workers as managers. They seem to have the real power in the factory, and their application of rules rationally appears to be resented by workers: Ingham found what workers like best in the small firms is "... the friendly worker management relationships". While the thing workers dislike in the large plants is "... the unfriendly nature of the authority relationships."¹¹

The respondents complaints about the rigid supervision and the unfriendly atmosphere are shown below, when they asked why they complain to the supervisors only and not to the trade union.

Table 8:4

Reasons for complaining to the supervisors rather than other authorities

Workplace	Following the rules		Supervisors have the power		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Foundry & steel-works	15	32	32	68	47	100
Mill & Assembly	29	56	23	44	52	100
Totals	44	44	55	56	99	100

$$x^2 = 6.073 < P. 0.05 \quad df = 1$$

Supervisors are perhaps well aware of the formal social structure, they know it is on their side and saves their interests. So, in order to reinforce the legitimate authority, supervisors have to make sure the instructions are understood and respected by workers. Obedience to rules would make their jobs easier. The other possibility is that, the top management staff depend heavily on the supervisors in the line without involving the workers' representatives in any serious problems.

A minority of the respondents (32%) in the foundry and steel works departments said they complained to their supervisors (not to higher management or the workers' council) because "they have to follow the rules". but the great majority (68%) of this group said sarcastically that they did so because the supervisors were the only bosses in the factory. Algerian workers as Bourdieu wrote "tend to react with pain to the cold or brutal impersonality of work relations, perhaps especially in the case of relations with their

superiors, but the fear of dismissal is such that the aspiration towards more human relations remains at the level of nostalgia." ¹² Among the group of workers in the Mill and Assembly departments more than half (56%) complained to their supervisors in order to follow the rules.

The supervisors' monopoly in Sonacome at the work-shop level does not necessarily mean they have the power to do what they want. Their authority in fact is limited to the extent of achieving the objectives of the enterprise planned by the high authority of the state and management.

Dubin writes, "that the supervisor is a leader of an organized group in an organization whose efforts are directed toward achieving organizational goals."¹³ For Dubin supervisors in an enterprise are victims of the situation, their position between workers and management make it difficult for them to satisfy both sides. He points out that "the foreman lives posed between the two worlds of management and labour". He carries on to say "Donald Wray called the foremen "marginal men of industry". Fritz Roethlisberg called them "masters and victims of double talk."¹⁴ He mentions in another passage that "the foreman no longer hires, pays, promotes, demotes or fires his men ... True the foreman can recommend for promotion and demotion, but union rules about seniority and bumping are apt to have a good deal to say about what actually happens."¹⁵

However, in the Sonacome situation, the socialist management policy combines the role of supervisors with that

of the workers' council which are directed towards achieving a common goal. That is perhaps why no one mentioned the councils as an alternative channel where workers can express their grievances. This explains the inability of the workers' councils to offer any concrete benefit to workers. Workers claimed that wage increases, promotion, transfer is done by supervisors and them alone. The respondents accused the members of the councils of doing nothing for them, though sometimes they were under pressure which they explained as a conspiracy between management and the council.

A worker in the steel-works department puts this way.

"We have heard that, workers can only get and defend their rights through the councils; but in fact our council did nothing of what should be done. Instead of being beside the workers, they are now doing what they have been told by the management, and sometimes stand against workers. Because when they do so, they are expected to benefit some rewards for themselves. Such as raise in wage, promotion, and so on, and workers are ordered to complain in case of need to the supervisors."

These allegations will be investigated in the next section in the workers and their council relations.

2. Workers attitudes towards the workers' councils

The socialist management scheme was implemented in the early seventies in Algerian enterprises, in order to reorganise the socio-economic institutions under the general union of Algerian workers (U.G.T.A.) and the National party (FLN) apparatus. The government stressed the idea of councils as a form of workers participation in managing the enterprises.

This arrangement of affiliating workers and management together consists of five committees at the enterprise level, which look after the workers interests by reporting their grievances to the management council, and protect them from unjust actions.

In each department workers elect their own representatives who act as a channel for negotiation with management on matters that arise in the workshops. But the fact that the workers' councils have not got the power to resolve the workers grievances and are unable to keep in touch with workers limits their effectiveness.¹⁶ The effectiveness of the councils is also limited by the low awareness of the Sonacome workforce. The majority of the members of the councils are relatively uneducated or have just the primary school certificate and their experience in industry is very limited.

The candidates for elections to the council are chosen by the party and the trade union because members of the latter know them personally or because they are active workers.

The inability of the council members to understand their

roles put them into an inferior position in comparison with management. They rely on the management council to advise them on what they should do or to explain the rules. Further there is a lack of real support from manual workers in circumstances where the workers' council tries to act on their behalf. For instance the strikes which took place in 1978 organized by the activists in the councils caused disturbances and political instability which worried officials, and when as a result these activists were dismissed, other workers did not take any real action to defend them. A member of the council said that the council tried hard to meet workers demands, and claimed they did gain some increase in wages, and retrained some workers in order for them to be promoted, while also offering houses to other workers. But he considered that "workers do not appreciate our efforts."

This however is due to the fact that the hopes that workers have in the councils they have elected are often disappointed. That is to say workers do not feel they are benefiting from the councils which are passive and do not engage in significant activity. Another factor is that concerned with the domination of management over the workers councils. There are two means by which the management maintain control in the factory and stifle significant opposition from the councils. One is that the workers' councils role in the enterprise is restricted by the charter itself which gives the power to the management council. In turn, the management council is restricted by having to

refer upward to state officials in taking decisions that might veer from normal procedure. Similarly for the Indian factory worker, Holmstrom writes, "The ways in which the union can work most effectively depend largely on the kind of management it has to deal with ... in the public sector, ... managements cannot commit themselves without referring to high authority, reaction from that authority is slow and uncertain and affected by large scale politics."¹⁷

So, the idea of integrating workers with management in order to contribute in an efficient policy, has proved to be at the expense of workers, because the management is well-armed with skill, education and authority and easily able to dominate the workers' councils.

The second strategy adopted by management is the attempt to use the relationship of council representatives with workers to influence the workforce and further management policy. For example the councils instead of defending the workers interests, have been used to mobilise workers to increase production, and to inform them, for instance, that the management cannot afford houses for every worker, or cannot increase wages. On the other hand top management neglects complaints that are reported by the councils, while they pay attention to those reported by supervisors. This means that the councils are often seen by workers to be impotent, and to be working hand in hand with management against workers. This is why the workers lose confidence in their councils and become opposed to each other. Some workers we

talked to went so far as to say that, the councils should be abolished because they have no significant role in doing what they should do.

Thus, the workers in Sonacome do not seem to be happy either with management or with the workers' council. Is this attitude due to a misunderstanding of the councils? and to what extent does the worker participate in managing the enterprise by attending meetings and giving suggestions?

The following tables show the workers reactions towards the councils and the degree of his participation.

Table 8:5

How the worker understands the councils?

Workplace	From meetings		From radio Friends & other		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Foundry & Steel Works	20	51	19	49	39	100
Mill & Assembly	24	55	20	45	44	100
Totals	44	53	39	47	83	100

$$\chi^2 = 0.844 \quad P > 0.05 \quad df = 1$$

The result above indicates that the respondents knowledge of their councils came from various sources. The respondents in both types of work setting have a slightly higher proportion who acquire understanding from council meetings, with the rest getting their information from the media and friends.

Some workers understand the idea of socialist management only generally without having a clear idea about the specific role and the purpose of the councils.

Among the mill and assembly departments Council representatives explain to the workers that they are the owners of the factory and are responsible for its progress. This slogan raised again and again in the meetings either by the councils or by the managers, has not much influence on workers attitudes.

Table 8:6

Making suggestions.*¹⁸

Workplace	Tried to make suggestions		Have not tried to make suggestions		Other		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Foundry & Steel works	14	33	22	52	6	14	42	9
Mill & Assembly	7	15	36	78	3	7	46	10
Totals	21	24	58	66	9	10	88	10

$$x^2 = 8.093 \quad P. < 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

The respondents were asked to state their attitudes towards efficiency and to what extent they participate in improving work conditions. The table above shows that few respondents make suggestions. Workers in the foundry and steel-works departments complain that when they tried to make suggestions (33%) their views are usually neglected. But as mentioned earlier, the vast majority (52%) are unable to offer any suggestions because of their limited knowledge about the system of control generally, and because of their passive attitudes towards participation. Some of the respondents admitted to being there to do what they have been told without question.

The respondents' attitudes is further illustrated by the next question about meetings and why they do not attend them.

Table 8:7

How often do workers go to workers' council meetings?

Workplace	Regular		Occasional		Never		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Foundry & Steel works	13	28	11	23	23	49	47	100
Mill & Assembly	19	36	16	30	18	34	53	100
Totals	32	32	29	27	41	41	100	100

$$X^2 = 2.666 \quad P. > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

It should be noted that, these meetings are held in the factory and during working hours which means workers are paid for the time lost in meetings. Moreover, workers are expected to attend these meetings. Many workers resent the fact that they are expected to attend these meetings and take every opportunity to slip away.

Two general meetings, a year at the factory level and four at the workshops level are held under the supervision of workers' councils. These meetings are the main sources for knowing the plant policy.

Officials as well as workers gather together formally under the supervision of the workers' councils and of management in order to mobilise workers and to sort out their grievances. But as we have said earlier, workers have lost confidence in the councils and their ability to improve low wages, slow promotion, lack of houses. They make many promises without concrete action.

A large minority of the total respondents (41%) have never attended meetings. What this means in fact is an actual separation between workers and their council. Although the workers dislike of attending meetings may be attributed to various causes, and it is perhaps true that these meetings are boring, nevertheless the low consciousness of workers about the long term objectives of these meetings would to some extent prevent them from appreciating the concrete benefits of workers' councils.

The individual reasons given by workers for being absent from meetings are because the councils are using patronage and favouritism, do not defend the interests of workers i.e. stand together with management.

Table 8:8

The reasons for being absent from meetings*¹⁹

Profession	patronage & favouritism		they stand together with management		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
skilled	18	62	11	38	29	100
semi-skilled	23	49	24	51	47	100
Totals	41	54	35	46	76	100

$$\chi^2 = 7.942 \quad P < 0.05 \quad df = 1$$

Workers' unhappiness with the way their councils are handling the situation at work appears to lie behind the valuation of the job.

Workers in Sonacome do seem to look for personal and immediate improvement in material terms, rather than to a total socio-economic development of the country. For instance when officials i.e. (management or councils) talk about social justice, development, participation, commitment, workers may be do not seem to listen, as they do when these officials talk about wage increases, promotion, transfer, benefit from houses and so forth.

Workers sometimes see contradictions between what these officials say to them, and what happens. They are annoyed by the embellishment of workers rights equality, social justice.

Workers do not feel benefited from what is claimed to be their rights.

The respondents claim they do not attend the meetings because the councils are using favouritism and patronage in dealing with workers so there is no point in listening to them if the rules which they are talking about are not respected. The second reason for not attending meetings is that the councils are working hand in hand with management rather than with workers, i.e. they stand together with management. The table above indicates that the vast majority (62%) of skilled workers give the former reasons, while for the semi-skilled respondents the higher percentage of 51% give the latter reason. This possibly reflects the immediacy to skilled workers of competition for promotion.

The following comments by a technician in the steel works department, illustrate the workers attitudes towards their representatives (councils).

"The workers' council committees are not doing any better to the workers conditions. Their views are probably not respected by management. So, how can you expect workers views to be respected. The councils here are only in name, they do not have any real role to play when you need them."

"For example a few weeks ago a worker fought with his group chief, eye witnesses said the group chief was picking on him and he usually tries to provoke him, but when the incident happened, the worker complained to the councils, they turned him down accusing him of using violence and saying he should pay for his actions. The worker commented, this is the role of our councils, they are with management not with workers."

This is the kind of problem that arises and causes tension among workers who tend to escape this unfair social order by

not attending their work regularly and as soon as they find another one, they leave it.

3. Workers' attitude towards Wages

Wage policy;

We have seen in the last sections that the attitude of most Sonacome workers toward their officials, either managers or the trade unions, is based on some sort of antagonism and distrust. The findings show that there is a divorce between workers and their counterparts management. This lack of cooperation perhaps widens the gulf between the two groups. Government policy on the other hand constantly insists on bringing workers and management together in order to orient the industrial relations towards a policy which can secure the workers' interests. For example the policy in Sonacome is fixed by the government in order to harmonize the wage structure with that of development objectives and also to prevent exploitation of the workers who are newcomers to the industrial order.

In this section we shall look at the wage policy and how it affects workers' stability in Sonacome. We may ask what are the differentials between wages? and what is the individual worker's reaction as far as his wages are concerned?

Before explaining the workers' point of view about wages, it is important to review the key elements of the wage policy in Sonacome over the period 1975-1978.

In 1978 the Algerian government fixed legally a general minimum wage in order to protect workers, especially

those underpaid.²⁰ For instance the difference in wages between low skilled workers and highly skilled had been wider than it was after the application of the wage scheme. In 1975 the Sonacome management annual report summarized the wage structure according to average pay in the production department.

Table 8:9

The wages in this department was distributed by categories (skill)

	categories	Salaries Moyens
semi-skilled	Manoeuvre	3.28 D.A.* ²¹
	Ouvriers specialises 1 degree	3.29
	Ouvriers specialises 2 degree	3.76
	Ouvriers professionnels 1 degree	4.33
	Ouvriers professionnels 2 degree	4.84
	Ouvriers professionnels 3 degree	5.52
skilled	Contre-maitres	8.11
	Chefs d'equipes	6.42
	Technicians	8.27
	Agents technique	6.68
	Agents Du Bureau	5.68

The worker's only chance to advance his wages is by improving his skills which depend on his discipline and dexterity at work and gain promotion. For delay in promotion, management blames the worker for lack of discipline, absence or lateness, and dissatisfaction in production.

The workers meriting promotion got it, according to management. In 1975, 1675 cases were studied by a special committee established for this purpose. And 1436 workers were promoted, 263 advanced by two echelons (grades), and 1233 by one echelon and 177 workers did not benefit from this promotion. In 1976, 2393 workers were studied, 2001 did benefit by promotion, 1690 were advanced by two echelons, 311 by one echelon, and 392 were not promoted. The management's reason for not promoting these workers was because of their lack of discipline, absenteeism, and poor production.

How did this promotion take place? On what basis was it given? This is difficult to say because the committee responsible for promotion, judges the workers' merit according to the points the worker obtains from his superiors on the line during the year. This seems to be rational, but what probably disturbs workers is the secrecy that prevails in the factory, sometimes the worker does not know whether he is doing right or wrong, and he suspects that the criteria given by management are abused. The other thing is that promotion does not perhaps take seniority seriously into account. It might seem unfair for a worker who has been in the factory longer than his mates if the latter get

higher pay than he does

The new statutory wage scheme enacted by the government in 1978 fixing a minimum wage in public industry, seems to have been a relief to management, who predicted that the new scheme would put an end to the difficulties that management was facing in defining the level of wages rationally.²²

However in practice, these difficulties remain, because even if the minimum wage is fixed, the increase of wages depend on the grade and degree of promotion, the worker can reach, and promotion is still in the hands of managers.

Table 7:10 shows the wage distribution according to category (grade) and echelon (ladder) of the worker per hour and month.

Group 2 corresponds to skilled workers, and group 1 to "semi-skilled workers". The former group gets an average wage of 2010.03 D.A.²³ which is about 200 pounds per month. Whereas the first group gets an average of 1077.23 D.A. which is nearly half the pay of the skilled workers in the second group. Again pay for the personnel staff is double that of the second group of skilled workers and four times higher than that of the semi-skilled workers in the first group.

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	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
01	344	355	363	373	372	376	381	386	390	
105	650.45	676.84	692.10	709.26	709.26	716.99	726.41	735.98	745.81	
02	349	363	377	386	386	394	396	404	406	
112	665.40	692.40	718.79	746.41	746.41	755.48	759.01	764.98	774.00	
03	361	377	392	397	402	407	412	417	423	
120	680.28	718.79	747.59	756.92	766.45	775.99	785.52	795.05	804.80	
04	375	390	411	417	423	428	434	439	446	
130	714.98	756.01	783.61	795.05	806.49	816.92	827.46	837.00	846.46	
05	392	422	438	455	465	474	479	487	486	
145	747.39	804.53	818.84	867.50	882.76	898.01	913.26	928.51	945.87	
06	418	448	475	484	493	501	511	520	520	
160	796.96	854.15	869.41	918.74	935.35	952.24	974.89	991.48	1008.27	
07	444	479	505	519	530	540	550	560	569	
180	846.53	919.26	934.39	989.59	1010.50	1029.56	1048.63	1067.90	1084.81	
08	479	519	541	552	573	588	604	626	636	
200	919.26	999.53	1034.47	1076.32	1093.46	1111.08	1149.97	1174.47	1187.78	
09	519	569	614	630	640	661	679	684	704	
225	999.53	1094.86	1140.15	1201.16	1231.46	1260.24	1309.97	1321.18	1339.78	
10	529	629	681	688	717	734	752	770	787	
250	1084.86	1199.45	1248.38	1324.74	1367.09	1411.44	1438.76	1465.08	1480.00	
11A	629	709	744	763	803	823	848	862	888	
280	1199.45	1344.19	1454.74	1498.89	1591.00	1669.13	1697.86	1743.49	1807.22	
11B	709	809	844	868	885	911	928	939	974	
310	1344.19	1489.15	1612.98	1654.53	1694.97	1736.81	1778.06	1820.00	1864.30	
12A	780	881	930	959	1004	1029	1052	1079	1096	
350	1489.15	1679.71	1773.47	1820.80	1866.56	1914.25	1961.89	2009.97	2082.09	
12B	881	944	970	1000	1076	1092	1118	1144	1110	
375	1679.71	1799.83	1849.45	2001.95	2091.90	2092.00	2191.69	2191.69	2224.79	
13	944	1007	1035	1108	1136	1164	1192	1220	1248	
400	1799.83	1919.95	1973.33	2026.72	2102.51	2169.88	2172.69	2224.09	2377.88	
14	1007	1057	1086	1163	1193	1221	1251	1280	1308	
420	1919.95	2061.28	2104.89	2161.08	2217.38	2274.57	2332.87	2404.65	2495.77	
15	1057	1097	1158	1220	1250	1280	1311	1342	1373	
440	2019.95	2201.54	2266.95	2324.05	2383.25	2440.43	2499.99	2598.66	2617.38	
16	1097	1146	1178	1242	1274	1306	1338	1371	1403	
460	2091.54	2184.36	2305.99	2368.00	2429.01	2490.02	2551.03	2612.05	2673.07	
17	1146	1197	1230	1264	1291	1324	1358	1391	1424	
480	2104.96	2284.20	2345.12	2409.94	2472.86	2537.48	2600.60	2665.43	2723.17	
18	1197	1246	1280	1315	1350	1385	1420	1455	1490	
500	2188.80	2375.62	2440.45	2509.18	2573.91	2640.44	2707.37	2774.10	2840.97	

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Ech Cat	01 05-78										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
01	395	399	403	408	412	416	421	426	430	436	439
105	755.91	760.13	768.36	777.89	785.52	793.15	802.68	812.21	819.84	829.37	837.00
02	410	415	420	424	429	434	439	443	448	453	457
112	781.71	791.54	800.77	808.40	817.33	827.46	837.00	844.62	854.16	865.65	871.32
03	427	432	438	443	448	453	458	463	468	473	478
120	814.17	823.65	835.09	844.62	854.16	863.69	873.22	882.76	892.29	901.82	911.35
04	451	456	461	466	472	478	483	488	494	500	506
130	859.88	869.41	878.94	888.48	899.92	911.35	922.81	934.33	944.86	955.30	964.74
05	504	512	520	528	536	545	553	560	568	576	587
145	960.93	976.18	991.43	1006.68	1021.94	1039.10	1054.35	1070.70	1082.45	1098.20	1119.97
06	538	547	556	564	573	583	593	606	617	628	640
160	1029.95	1046.91	1060.07	1075.32	1092.48	1111.55	1134.43	1165.40	1176.37	1197.34	1230.82
07	580	593	605	618	630	644	666	669	691	694	707
180	1105.83	1130.61	1153.49	1178.38	1201.16	1227.85	1250.73	1278.52	1298.34	1323.18	1347.97
08	644	658	672	686	700	714	728	743	756	771	785
200	1277.85	1324.54	1381.24	1407.93	1464.62	1521.31	1588.00	1616.60	1641.39	1669.99	1694.68
09	700	740	757	773	788	804	821	836	852	867	884
225	1382.25	1410.08	1443.30	1479.80	1502.40	1532.31	1565.32	1599.93	1624.48	1653.05	1686.43
10	805	823	840	858	876	893	911	928	945	963	981
250	1594.81	1659.13	1691.34	1720.16	1752.51	1788.31	1826.51	1868.11	1907.74	1936.06	1970.39
11A	902	921	941	961	981	1000	1020	1040	1060	1080	1089
280	1715.35	1755.98	1794.11	1832.24	1870.37	1908.50	1946.63	1984.76	2022.89	2061.02	2099.15
11B	959	979	1001	1024	1046	1068	1091	1114	1137	1160	1205
310	2044.65	2146.54	2186.68	2288.52	2390.50	2492.51	2594.51	2696.51	2798.51	2899.51	2999.51
12A	1112	1140	1165	1190	1215	1238	1263	1288	1311	1335	1361
350	2159.67	2273.92	2322.19	2426.85	2532.12	2637.39	2742.66	2847.93	2953.20	3058.47	3163.74
12B	1196	1228	1249	1275	1301	1327	1353	1380	1406	1432	1458
375	2289.45	2391.77	2501.94	2610.92	2720.06	2829.20	2938.34	3047.48	3156.62	3265.76	3374.90
13	1236	1304	1332	1360	1387	1415	1443	1471	1499	1526	1555
400	2312.34	2426.81	2539.95	2652.98	2766.04	2879.10	2992.16	3105.22	3218.28	3331.34	3444.40
14	1339	1368	1398	1427	1456	1485	1514	1543	1572	1601	1630
420	2513.34	2635.53	2665.43	2720.72	2776.01	2831.30	2886.59	2941.88	2997.17	3052.46	3107.75
15	1404	1435	1465	1496	1526	1557	1588	1618	1649	1680	1711
440	2676.87	2795.97	2839.23	2903.87	2968.51	3033.15	3097.79	3162.43	3227.07	3291.71	3356.35
16	1461	1499	1531	1564	1597	1630	1663	1696	1729	1762	1795
460	2846.74	2951.99	2999.92	3064.03	3128.14	3192.25	3256.36	3320.47	3384.58	3448.69	3512.80
17	1532	1565	1599	1632	1666	1700	1734	1768	1802	1836	1870
480	2940.91	2983.83	3048.65	3113.47	3178.29	3243.11	3307.93	3372.75	3437.57	3502.39	3567.21
18	1594	1629	1664	1700	1736	1772	1808	1844	1880	1916	1952
500	3040.11	3105.85	3171.59	3237.33	3303.07	3368.81	3434.55	3500.29	3566.03	3631.77	3697.51

Like other countries in the third world, Algeria's policy of fixing wages is to secure the basic needs of workers (food, housing, clothing etc.) The distribution of wages in a factory such as Sonacome is established according to skills and responsibilities as a basis for a rational reorganisation of the general wage structure in state-controlled enterprises.²⁴ This was expected to improve workers conditions thus in turn to increase satisfaction.

4. Absence because of wages.

Analysis of respondent's absence because of their wages is influenced by their level of skill, It may be said that, low skill means low wages and low wages means less interest in attending work regularly. On the other hand, high skill means high opportunity to find another job elsewhere. These assumptions will be looked at through the workers' reaction towards his wage and skill.

Wage differentials in Sonacome according to skill, responsibility and the type of work have raised the problem of conflict between workers and management and especially with the supervisors who effectively control workers' promotion. Wages are the main concern for workers, this is why absenteeism has a strong connection with the level of a worker's wages. His satisfaction at work seems to depend on his skills, which itself determine his wage level.

Table 8:11

How can the skill level affect workers' absence?

Absences	Skilled		Semi-skilled		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequent unexcused	15	41	12	19	27	27
Occasional unexcused	18	49	31	49	49	49
Never without excuse	4	11	20	32	24	24
Totals	37	101	63	100	100	100

$$x^2 = 8.414 \quad P. < 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Absenteeism in the sample is associated with the worker's skill. Table 8:11 indicates that the result is statistically significant. Those who are less skilled may be expected to absent themselves more if their aspirations for promotion are not realized. This assumption is not so evident in Sonacome. The higher rate of absence is among the skilled (56% as against 44% among semi-skilled). Conversely, we may expect highly skilled workers to be satisfied and less often absent because they are getting higher wages.²⁵

What this result reveals is a peculiar situation in Sonacome, the frequent unexcused absence among skilled workers rather than among semi-skilled is perhaps due to the importance of those workers in Algeria, and their confidence about finding another job elsewhere in case of dismissals.

In answering questions, we tried to investigate how wages affect workers' stability in Sonacome.

Table 8:12

Have you ever complained about your pay?

Profession	Yes		No		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Skilled	14	38	23	62	37	100
Semi-skilled	44	70	19	30	63	100
Totals	58	58	42	48	100	100

$$X^2 = 8.603 \quad P. < 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Although the previous result (see table 8:12) demonstrates that frequent unexcused absence rate is higher among skilled workers than semi-skilled, discontent and complaints are usually raised among low paid workers who are less skilled. Among the semi-skilled more than two thirds (70%) said they had complained about pay while among skilled workers the higher proportion (62%) did not complain.

More than half of the respondents complained about their pay. The next table reveals why most respondents seem to be unhappy with their wages.

Table 8:13

Could you tell me why you are complaining about pay?

Profession	Not equal to the work done		Lower than the cost of living		Complained to be promoted		Total No
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Skilled	4	22	9	50	5	28	18 100
Semi-skilled	13	30	17	40	13	30	43 100
Totals	17	28	26	43	18	30	61 100

$$X^2 = 0.463 \quad P > 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Workers in Sonacome work five days and half a week i.e. 44 hours, and get between 3 and 8 dinars per hour.²⁶

Workers with low pay probably cannot afford the average cost of living in the city, especially bearing in mind that male workers are the only breadwinners of the family. i.e. wives do not provide any additional income to the family.²⁷

The level of skill here is not significantly associated with the worker's complaints. However, certain trends are noticeable. The 61 workers out of 100 answering the question, give three reasons for complaining.

The first reason is that the worker feels his wages are not equal to the effort he gives. Among this group (22% are skilled and 30% semi-skilled). The second reason is related to the cost of living, respondents felt that their wages did not correspond to the high cost of living (50% skilled as against 40% semi-skilled). The third reason is related to the level of promotion, the respondents in this group relate wages to promotion as they had not been promoted which means no increase in their wages, so they persistently complained about promotion (about equally among semi-skilled and skilled workers).

So, generally the great majority of Sonacome workers are not happy with their wages especially among less skilled workers. Is it due to the respondents beliefs that the factory could pay more? or is it because workers feel deprived as a result of bad judgment in promotion? How far do workers worry about their families, and about supporting them? The next questions

will explore the respondent's opinion towards their pay.

Table 8:14

Do you think the factory could pay workers more?

Profession	Yes		No		Do not know		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Skilled	18	49	11	30	8	22	37	100
Semi-skilled	40	63	6	10	17	27	63	100
Totals	58	58	17	17	25	25	100	100

$$x^2 = 7.282 \quad P. < 0.05 \quad df = 2$$

Most workers felt that the factory could pay more than it did. However skilled workers were less likely to take this view than semi-skilled. This may be attributed to their own higher pay or to their greater awareness of production costs in the plant, because of higher position in the hierarchy or better education.

Some skilled workers in fact admit that they are getting more than their contribution to the plant. While semi-skilled workers who are getting low wages and not well aware of the complexity of work are perhaps overwhelmed by anxiety and worries about their low wages, lack of opportunities to better themselves and the small chance of finding a job outside. Discontent over methods of pay and supervision is widespread. However workers often claim that wages can be improved if there is greater efficiency and more cooperation between workers and management.

Low production is explained by management as due to the lack of discipline among workers, while workers blame management for inefficiency and maldistribution of jobs.

Table 8:15

How can the factory pay more?

Profession	By offering incentives		cutting down the waste of time		giving high wage, getting high production		Totals
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Skilled	4	22	7	39	7	39	18 100
Semi-skilled	14	33	7	16	22	51	43 100
Totals	18	30	14	23	29	48	61 100

$\chi^2 = 4.07$ $P > 0.05$ $df = 2$

61 workers out of 100, more than two thirds 70% of the semi-skilled against 38% of skilled said they had complained and were asked this question. Generally workers believe that low pay offers without considerable incentives caused harm to production and to the reputation of management. The respondents think, if there is shared profit, as managers usually promise, if there is no delay in spare parts and quick repair to the broken-down machines and thirdly if there is a fair and equal distribution of jobs and promotion, the wage problem would be reduced and the complaints which lead to absenteeism or leaving the job would be reduced.

The result in table 8:15 is not statistically significant, but discontent among the respondents is obvious. The suggestions are given by the respondents: the first group thinks that the factory was making profits, which should be shared with workers as incentives (22% skilled, and 33% semi-skilled). The second group believes that gaining wasted time by a fair and effective supervision would increase production and therefore the factory could pay more. 39% of skilled as against 16% of semi-skilled. While the third group feels that paying an acceptable wage would definitely increase production. (50% of semi-skilled against 39% of skilled) The latter group think that the low production in Sonacome is due mainly to the workers' frustration with their wages which is believed to be inadequate for the family's subsistence.

Table 8:16

Have you any worries concerning your family because of your pay?

Profession	Yes		No		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Skilled	16	43	21	57	37	100
Semi-skilled	46	73	17	27	63	100
Totals	62	62	38	38	100	100

$$X^2 = 8.342 \quad P < 0.05 \quad df = 1$$

The respondents' worries about their families because of low pay are significantly associated with skill. Nearly two thirds 62% of total sample answered 'yes', the great majority (73%) of semi-skilled said yes against only 27% who said 'no'. Whereas among the respondents who are skilled, the majority 57% are not worrying about their pay, as against 43% who are worried.

Discontent among the respondents is related to low wages especially for low skilled workers. High wages are associated with responsible jobs such as the job of foremen or group chiefs, or more skilled like technicians and professionals with second and third grades. While specialised or qualified workers who are considered as semi-skilled earn low wages.

Sonacome workers whether skilled or semi-skilled seem to be unhappy with the pay, absence and high job turnover reflect this. Neither skilled nor semi-skilled workers seem to be satisfied in Sonacome. We may therefore expect the wage level to be not the only reason for workers' discontent but rather that this includes the total policy. It has been said that Sonacome factory is paying less than other factories in the public sector, and seems not to care to pay higher wages in order to keep its qualified personnel. It is also blamed for not encouraging its workforce by increasing incentives and bonuses in order to minimize the rate of turnover.

For instance in 1977 the total number of those who left the factory was 562 workers, only 35 workers were semi-skilled workers, whereas the rest of 527 were highly skilled as the following table shows.

Table 8:17

The distribution of workers left the factory in 1977 by the level of skill, number and percentage.²⁸

Profession	Total Number	Total Percentage
Professionals (O.P.)	90	16%
Foremen (C.M.)	90	16%
Technicians (A.A.T.)	275	48%
Clerks (S.DAC)	73	13%
Others (O.S. O.P.)	34	6%
	562	99%

The reasons given by the management's report are:

95% left because of wages

51% left because of accommodation

40% left because of transport

As the management admitted that they cannot pay more and also they cannot offer other facilities like accommodation which are provided by other enterprises like (S.N.S.) National Steel and Iron Company and (Sonatrach) National Oil and Gaz Company,²⁹ which attract the most highly skilled individuals in all specialities.

The other reason perhaps is that of incentives and bonuses, Sonacome workers were not making much profit to increase their bonus. There was also a lack of opportunity to work extra hours. The over-time working in Sonacome is to meet the production target programmed, rather than to help workers who need those extra hours to meet their family obligations. That is why perhaps management tries to find ways of cutting down over-time hours. In 1976 for example, 46824 hours worked as over-time in order to complete the quantity of production programmed. The management's actual tendency is to cut over-time hours and instead recruit more workers which is more profitable to the factory, and reduces unemployment as is the general policy of the country.

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. The "Elite Theory" as applied here is a common theme in the writings of Mosca, Mechels, Pareto and more recently Dahrendorf. For critical discussion, see, T. Bottomore, Elites and Society, Penguin Books 1964.
2. Bendix, (R), Work and authority in industry; Ideology of management in the course of industrialization (Harper Torchbooks. University Library) New York (1963)
Note: first published New York, Wiley, 1956, p.10.
3. ibid., p.2.
4. ibid., p.2.
5. ibid., p.10.
6. Michael Burawoy, Toward a management of the labour process. Braverman and Beynon, Politics and Society, vol. 8, N.3 (1978)
6. N. Spulber, Socialist Management and Planning. Indiana U.P. 1971, p.70.
7. Bendix, op.cit., p.
8. ibid.
9. Mark Holmstrom discusses the Indian worker's situation where the factory hierarchy is based on skill and job classification. See Holmstrom South Indian factory workers. Cambridge University Press, 1976, p.53.
10. This is an anthropological study of the Algerian worker situation in the sixties. See, Pierre Bourdieu, Algeria 1960; the disenchantment of the world, The sense of honour, the Kabyle house or the world reversed. Essays translated by R. Rice (Studies in Modern capitalism) Cambridge U.P., 1979. Note: translation of his Algerie 60, p.37.
11. Geoffrey Ingham, Size of Industrial Organisation and Worker Behaviour. (Cambridge Papers in Sociology No. 1). Cambridge U.P. 1970, p.101.
12. Bourdieu, op.cit., p.37.
13. Robert Dubin et.al. Leadership and productivity California, Chandler Publishing Company 1965. p.2.
14. ibid., p.62.
15. ibid., p.115.
16. See Chris Harman, Bureaucracy and revolution in Eastern Europe, Pluto Press Limited, 1974, where he discusses the workers' councils in Poland and Hungary and reaches similar conclusions

17. According to the Polish workers councils, S. Chelstowski et.al. point out that, "The conditions in which the newly elected councils have to work are decisive ... As the secretary of the party organization at Zeran said during a meeting, Bureaucracy and workers' councils cannot be continued together". They commented "It is not surprising if the bureaucracy defends itself and tries to torpedo existing councils with all possible means". Quoted by Chris Horman, op.cit., p.12.

See also Mark Holmstrom, South Indian Factory workers, Cambridge Univ. Press. 1976.
18. Chi-square for tables 7:6, 7:7, 7:8 are calculated only for the workplace variable, differences according to skill, migration, absence variables are too small to yield any significant result.
19. Chi-square for table 7:9 is calculated only according to skill. The other relations with independent variables are too small to yield valid results.
20. See The Moteur, No. 7, p.7. also see the management report of 1978.
21. Dinar is the Algerian currency. 10 Dinars are worth slightly more than one pound. The semi-skilled are paid per hour whereas the second group are paid monthly.
22. See the management report (1978).
23. This is an official schedule of payment found with supervisors
24. This seems to be like the wage policy introduced in Egypt under Nasser in the early sixties. See the political economy of Nasserism. by Mahmoud Abdel-fadel. London: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
25. A similar finding was made by R.D. Shepherd et.al. "Absence from work in relation to wage level and family responsibility". Brit. J. Industr. Med. 1958.
26. One Algerian Dinar = 100 centimes or about 10 pence in English. The worker gets more than 30 p per hour for the lowest paid and up to 80 p for the highly paid, like technicians and skilled workers. See table 7:10.
27. Most Algerian women at work are widows or have handicapped husbands, unless they are educated. A worker believes that there is no need for his wife to work if he is working.

28. The management annual report of 1977.
29. These companies cannot provide all their workforce with the facilities they need. But relatively they are better than Sonacome in paying more and providing more facilities.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER EIGHT : FOUR CASE STUDIES

I have selected four cases on the basis of family situation, age, residence, place of work and skill. I believe that these factors can reflect the workers discontent, which lead to absenteeism or leaving the job.

The first case chosen is one of a migrant and with a relatively large family and skilled. Whereas the second case concerns an urban, semi-skilled worker who is old. The other two cases are chosen in order to represent different types of workers. The third case represents those green workers who come from agriculture to industry without any experience i.e. they are young, and less skilled. The fourth case is a completely different one, it deals with supervisors who are highly skilled, highly paid and represent the authority in the plant.

The selection of those cases was made in order to bring to light the conditions of work, and the difficulties the worker faces outside (see chapter ~~seven~~) and inside of work (see chapter ~~eight~~) and the workers' behaviour under those circumstances.

Case One

Ahmed is a middle aged worker in his thirties, who used to work in France as a skilled worker, and was quite satisfied with his previous job with respect to wages and type of work. Like many Algerian youngsters he went to France as a manual worker and stayed for two years with an interval for holidays of two to three months each year to see his family. He is married with four children, thus in spite of his satisfaction with his job and wages in France, his dream was to find a job and to settle down with his family in Algeria as is the hope and aspiration of most Algerians working abroad. In 1975 Ahmed decided to get a job in the Sonacome Factory as a skilled worker, his job was not exactly the same as his previous one, but he was satisfied with it. He got on well with supervisors and they promised to promote him or change his job at an appropriate time.

Ahmed comes from a rural area at a distance of 90 kilometres from the factory. So he lives in a hotel and visits his family weekly in a car which he bought in France. Ahmed's family is living with his mother and her younger children and his father is still working in France.

Like many Algerian parents Ahmed's father believes in an extended family and also considers himself the family head, in which case, he does not depend on his son, but does not mind his son depending on him. This mutually understood relationship in the family makes it possible for Ahmed not to

care too much about preserving his job, in order to maintain his family's subsistence.

Ahmed's job in Sonacome did not help the family much financially, because his wage of 950 Algerian Dinars (D.A.) was not much in comparison with the wage he used to get in France of 2500 D.A. Ahmed did not expect such a fall in wages on leaving France for Algeria and tries to maintain himself while waiting for conditions to improve, by depending on his father's wage. He said his wage was just enough to keep his car running and to pay for his hotel and food, perhaps allowing him to save a few dinars for buying things when he goes home. In most cases when he returns to work his mother gives him some money to put petrol in the car.

Ahmed says his wage is just enough to maintain himself, and he wishes he was without a family. But as he has got a family, and his job does not allow him to fulfil his duty towards it, Ahmed usually interrupts his regular attendance at work in order to do family duties. He is thinking of going back to France or giving up his job, because he thinks his job does not make any improvement in the family's standard of living.

It is obvious from this that a previous job which established an acceptable standard of living can shape the *attitude* and behaviour of the worker. Individuals constantly look ahead and expect to have, and do more than they used to, and if the reverse happens as in the case of Ahmed frustration and disappointment with the job develops to the extent of blaming

the officials responsible, who are liable to be accused of not seeking to improve the workers' situation.

Ahmed has become negligent, he confessed that he does not care any more about being absent, or working hard, because as he explains to obey the rules and work hard does not change his financial situation which is the urgent problem for him. However his current job cannot fulfil his needs, and his good relations with supervisors do not improve his material conditions, so his effort to work is limited and this causes him to be absent. The supervisor's good treatment of some workers is only a tactic to maintain good relations with them, rather than a sign that they will promote them, or increase their wages which are what the worker's desire.

Ahmed cannot tolerate his bad financial situation and has lost confidence with the supervisors who promised him promotion and improvement. This failure to provide it led him to resign in 1977. The slight increase of wages according to seniority and incentives he was given were not enough to meet his family obligations. That is why Ahmed left his job in Sonacome in 1977, and went to France again, however his emigration papers had expired, so the French authorities sent him back after a few months. After that Ahmed is convinced that he has to take a job again in Sonacome, and to accept the situation as it is, or have no job at all.

Ahmed now is working in Sonacome as a skilled worker and his continuing absence is due to family obligations. He tried to bring his family to live with him, to save time and money,

but the problem of housing, near the factory forced him to accept the ongoing situation.

Case Two

Salah is a semi-skilled worker in the foundry department, who is in his early fifties and living in Constantine district near the factory with his wife and five children.

Salah is a very keen and ambitious worker, who experienced different types of manual jobs before coming to Sonacome. He worked in agriculture under a French landlord during French rule, and migrated to Constantine during the war. Since then he has done various jobs in building and small enterprises.

In 1973 he left a small private enterprise where he was working with 20 other workers, without family allowance, or good wages and without any security in his job. He says, it was because of these causes that he left his previous job to work in Sonacome which is a public enterprise.

Salah came to Sonacome in order to feel secure and to gain some social benefit, such as family allowances and reasonable wages, and accommodation. He started working in the Sonacome firm in 1973 as an unskilled worker, then was promoted to semi-skilled worker. He stayed a semi-skilled worker for a long time. Salah came to Sonacome with high aspirations. As we have said he is quite an old worker, who therefore does not have much opportunity to find another job if he leaves this one. Thus, he is considered now, to be a veteran worker with more than six years service.

Salah's situation seems to represent that of the majority of workers at Sonacome. He was one of those workers who do

not trust officials, and feels insecure under management rule. He considers managers to be employers, who have the power to do what they like. Salah is one of many workers who refused to be interviewed in the plant, because he was afraid of being sacked, for saying what he believes to be the truth. When I met him in the plant, and told him, I was intending to ask him some questions about the function of the plant and how he is coping with the work situation, he welcomed the proposal but suggested if I wanted to produce a full report and obtain the truth, it would be better for us to meet during a weekend outside the factory. I therefore arranged to meet him in a café, where we could talk freely. Salah considers officials and the work situation unsatisfactory and blames management for not seeking to improve working conditions.

He complains about wage and the small house with two bedrooms for the seven members of the family. His accommodation prevents him from concentrating on his work, since he is not able to relax or sleep comfortably. He explained the children have no space to play or to work and they are all living on top of each other. He has complained about this to the officials and although they promised to help, nothing has been done.

Case Three

Ommar was one of the newcomers to industry. He was a semi-skilled worker (O.S.) trained in "the factory training school" for six months before starting his job as an "Ebarbage worker"* in the foundry department.

Ommar was a very strong young man in his early twenties, newly married without children, he lived in the country not far from the factory but he came from a family of peasants. His father was still living on agriculture with his two married sons and other young children. This large family usually causes some discomfort for youngsters who aspire to be free from family obligations.

Ommar claimed that his wife and himself were going to get divorced, although they had just got married, because of his wife's resentment at living with his family and the quarrels arising within the family each day; he also blamed the management for not offering accommodation, and not allowing him enough wages to satisfy the family's demands. He seems to be dissatisfied with his job and with supervisors. That is why his behaviour was described by his supervisors and the members of the workers' council as irresponsible and undisciplined, despite the fact that he was an active and intelligent person. He did his job correctly and quickly according to his supervisors own accounts. However, he worked

* The "Ebarbage" section modifies engine components before final assembly by turning, drilling and *grinding them.*

in sparks, stopping when he was tired and even leaving his machine unattended. He did not comply with the rules, and did not listen to his superiors' orders or advice. This became costly, because within two years in the factory, he stood before the discipline committee three times, was suspended from work for several days twice, warned many times, and even had a fight with his group chief which cost him the loss of one grade from a specialised worker second degree (O.S²) to a specialized worker first degree (O.S¹).

What does this behaviour mean? and why was this worker not happy with his work? Two possibilities can be tested in this case; one can be related to the worker's lack of adaptation to the industrial conditions, because as we have said earlier, Ommar was born and grew up in an agricultural atmosphere perhaps different from the one in industry. Maybe he used to work in agriculture with his brother and father as a helper and not permanently. He worked when he wished to and stopped whenever he felt tired.

Agricultural work usually does not need much concentration and persistent work, thus, when Ommar was faced with a regular job in industry, he perhaps still behaved as if he was in agriculture. That is why when he started work, he worked fast and hard, when, after a while he became tired, he took a rest which is regarded as unlawful behaviour in the industrial situation.

The second possibility is related to the unpleasant atmosphere at work - low wages, slow promotion, unfriendly

social life, and unsatisfactory job. These are causes upsetting Ommar who appears to be rebelling against the work situation, expressing his dissatisfaction by behaving "freely" i.e. he worked when he liked, he went to talk to his mates or to the toilets whenever he liked without consulting his supervisors. He said the supervisors did not respect workers and do not treat them equally, so he thought why should the workers obey.

He was not worried about losing his job or being warned, not because he could find a job elsewhere, but because he had no family obligations, and whenever he stopped his job, he went back directly to his family in the country where he could find free food and shelter with his parents. This may have seemed better than doing an unsuitable job.

Ommar as other youngsters was very keen on doing better if there were opportunities. He tried and waited for promotion which he could not get. He asked for a transfer because he thought supervisors in that department did not get on with him. He asked for wage increases, He did not get either. These are causes for Ommar's absenteeism and misbehaviour.

Case Four

Supervisors in Sonacome are described by the majority of workers as not competent, good only for shouting like slave drivers, dishonest with workers, behaving ruthlessly and unlawfully against workers. They are accused of being cowards and servile to managers, behaving as bosses with no respect for the rules which they themselves should comply with.

Worker-supervisor relations in Sonacome are not usually cooperative, but of course there are some exceptions such as 'Bachir' who is a foreman in the Mill department who had been promoted to this position by merit and seniority. He had been in the factory for more than five years. He started in Sonacome as a professional worker second degree (O.P²) after his school-training for one year as a machine fitter. He was promoted to (O.P³) and to group chief and to foreman.

Bachir is aged thirty, married with two children, living in Constantine near the factory. He can be described as a man happy with his job, with his men, and with his family. He is a member of a group of families - an elite - which is relatively wealthy and influential in Constantine. The only thing that bothers him, is the low wages, not only for himself but also for the majority of workers, especially the low skilled. He sympathises and tries to help, but it is difficult for him to help his men properly. He cares and sees that the situation should be improved if they want the factory to survive.

He said that, the low production and the wasting of time

might be compensated if there was an improvement of the worker's conditions. The workers' complaint against supervisors did not apply to him. He believed that life is what you make of it. i.e. the workers should cooperate with him, not deceive him because he likes them. He helps and cooperates with them, and he is honest with them, and for that reason he is very popular among workers.

I followed him, I observed his behaviour, in the workshop, he did not stand all the time watching what workers were doing. He checked and asked sometimes if a worker needed anything, if there is nothing wrong, he kept at a distance or at his small office by the corner of the department, looking at some files or writing something.

The smooth functioning in his section was perhaps related to the conditions of work in the Mill department, where the workers were working on the line and their work was well defined, and some workers worked on a specific machine; moulding, piercing holes, or washing or whatever, which meant that the quantity and quality was limited by the machine. So in this case the foreman did not have much to do. In this situation some supervisors were disliked for their interference with workers. But Bachir seemed to handle the situation carefully and wisely. For instance, a young worker, 19 years of age, having worked on the line for a year, broke something in his machine twice which meant that the flow of production was disrupted because of this worker. The worker should have been reported to the discipline board and could face a penalty

of dismissal. Nevertheless this did not happen thanks to the kindness and understanding of this foreman who investigated the case, and solved it by cooperating with workers, and not rushing to send the worker directly to the discipline committee which would have consumed time and caused worries.

There were not many supervisors of this kind. His ability to compromise between the pressure which comes from top management and that which comes from workers is perhaps because he comes from a high social stratum and was confident of himself and his position. A second reason is that the work situation under his command did not require him to supervise men closely or much stress on the work to be done. As we have said the work in the Mill department is defined by the machine itself, and does not need the same degree of effort to push for efficiency, as is the case in the Foundry department for example, where rigidity and thorough control is needed.

By contrast Nabil, one of the supervisors in the Foundry, has a different attitude. He believes that rules should be obeyed and tries to apply them rationally and lays emphasis on carrying the production programme through.

Perhaps the situation of work in the Foundry requires strictness, but it was nevertheless resented by workers. Nabil is a group chief in his late thirties with four children, he is not educated as Bachir, but he can read and write, and was promoted from a professional third degree to a group chief. Since then he cut off his relations with workers and perhaps identifies himself with management.

Nabil works in the casting section of the Foundry department which is the most dangerous and unhealthy place, where accidents involving falling over and being hit by objects and being burnt are likely. In addition there is dust, noise, heat and so on. What Nabil had to do was to check the work, and to keep workers busy all the time or "press their necks" as workers put it. This behaviour was apparently despised by workers and some of them tried to provoke him deliberately, and called him traitor, referring to the fact that he was trying to appear before his foreman, as a man who could be trusted in order to gain personal advancement. That is perhaps why Nabil was behaving differently from Bachir.

The difference can be related to background and personality. First of all Nabil was less educated and perhaps he was not in a position to use other means such as personal or informal influence in order to advance himself. So his advancement depended entirely on his actions and the efficiency he could directly produce even if it was at the expense of workers. This however depended on his succeeding in convincing workers to cooperate with him, whereas he in fact drove them away from real cooperation in that they were scared of being dismissed or sent before the discipline committee for a small mistake.

Workers took the opportunity of his absence to sabotage equipment, spoil goods, or delay production. One worker explained how some of his colleagues were sabotaging production. Some workers kept their machines running and pretended to work, but produced nothing, until they saw the group chief coming, when

they started working again. Others hid the spare parts and products to cause losses. He emphasised that some workers did not work hard because they believed that if they worked hard the supervisor got more benefit from it than them.

Thus, the conditions of work and the type of supervision can influence the behaviour of individuals towards work and towards each other.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to look at the influence of socio-economic development on worker-management relations through the medium of absence from work. Since 1962, Algeria has been undergoing a complex transformation: one of (more or less thorough) decolonisation, one of a shift from capitalist organisation of production in some sectors to socialist organisation, and one of transition from a pre-capitalist agrarian perspective in the greater part of the country to socialist-industrialism in the more rapidly growing part of the economy. In such a transition changes take place rapidly and this was especially the case in Bourmediene's period (1965-1978).

Development in the Algerian case is carried on according to socialist principles which seek to end the exploitation of man by man and to secure the future of everyone. This is a key factor in industrial development as it is in other countries in the third world.

As Bottomore describes the situation:

"... all the doctrines which shape the plans and policies of the underdeveloped countries invoke an ideal conception of society - a classless society, a welfare state, a cooperative commonwealth - which includes much more than an industrial economy, although the development of industry is presented as the chief and essential condition for achieving it."¹

The first chapter tried to examine the Algerian social structure since French rule, and traced the gradual development of the political movements. 1954 was the turning point of Algerian politics, when most of the political groups united under the umbrella of the FLN - and launched their physical struggle for independence. In 1956 the FLN

managed to embrace under its political control the Algerian workers organisation (U.G.T.A.) who had already broke off relations with the French workers confederation (C.G.T.) and formed their own socio-economic and political structure based on socialist principles which was already projected in the congress of Omed Soummarn held in 1956.

After independence the Algerian government was confined to the socialist path and sought to emancipate the worker and involve him in managing and controlling the work process. However the self management introduced immediately after independence (1962-65) faced difficulties, and failed to achieve the production target or to satisfy the worker.

In 1965 a new president stepped in with more enthusiasm to develop the country by following the same values of socialism but concentrating more on industrializing the economy. New legislation for regulating industrial relations was formed under the name of the socialist management scheme launched in 1971 - and applied in 1973 - which was not different in principle from self management.

Chapter two analysed the historical background of the Algerian workers organisation movements, and showed how workers and peasants participated effectively with politicians in the struggle for independence under the authority of both the U.G.T.A. and the FLN.

After independence, the leaders of the trade union attempted to develop the socialist policies for the interests of the working population. The self management scheme was introduced for this purpose, but unfortunately it did not last long because the government policy which favoured socialising the economy and fusing workers and the organisers of the state bureaucracy, turned out to be ineffective, especially under Boumediene. In order to improve industrial relations between workers and management the government introduced the scheme of socialist management of enterprises. So, the second part of chapter two analyses

the legal framework in which the industrial enterprises function referring to the national charter. This section provides a description of the charter as it is seen by the politicians, and comments on its weaknesses, relating to the fact that the responsibilities of workers and management are distributed unequally, which contradicts the main principle of socialism.

The failure of the G.S.E. to cause workers to participate seriously in managing the enterprises is due in part to the technical division of roles given by the government to managers, which strengthens their position, and in part to the paternalistic behaviour that prevails in the enterprise which encourages the use of personal relations and is detrimental to the development of equality.

This plays a major part in workers dissatisfaction and in causing the response of absenteeism and leaving the job.

Chapter three discusses socialism in Algeria as it is projected by politicians and in terms of its practical realisation. After discussing the origins of Algerian socialism, three models appear to exist together as a compromise between different political tendencies. The democracy which Algeria seeks to apply is a vague policy, which has to complete with other aims. Politicians usually insist that Algeria's is a "specific socialism". What does this mean? And what is the combination of experiences which are applied according to the Algeria Arab-Islamic values. It is because of this mixture that the socialist ideal of creating an equal and just society, has been more effective on paper. In reality the socialisation of the means of production is still not achieved, inequality between individuals in power and wealth persists, and the agents of the state and ordinary citizens are still far apart.

These factors are symptoms of state capitalism rather than state socialism.

Chapter four is a theoretical examination of the literature considering the various circumstances which can cause instability at work. In an industrial situation, both workers and their supervisors are bound to be subordinated to an impersonal structure which determines the roles and behaviour of individuals.

The level of absenteeism in an industrial organisation, seems to depend on the conditions both inside and outside the organisation itself and to the workers ability to accept these conditions. Many studies of industrial relations consider absenteeism as a personal problem, or an outcome of the management's inability to adopt a proper policy to satisfy workers.² This assumption is not always true. As we have discussed in chapter four, the Algerian workforce is mainly drawn from the rural areas, and workers are used to working in agriculture and have little experience of industry. According to the functionalist view these workers lack adaptation to the impersonal work conditions in industry, and their lack of commitment to industrial work would cause instability and frustration.

However could that really be the only reason for the absenteeism of Sonacome workers? This may play a part in the workers behaviour but it is not the whole truth. Individuals are not static, their behaviour and beliefs are influenced by the environment and the circumstances surrounding them. They have the ability to adjust themselves accordingly. Holmstrom discusses the case of the Indian worker:

"... Industrial workers in countries like India are not "committed" to industrial work and/or town life, and cannot adapt easily to bureaucratic organisation. This assumption has its roots in functionalist modernization theory, and the idea of folk-urban continuum, which sees the urban worker as someone uprooted from

an integrated traditional society, where social groups were in balance with each other and with their environment, and roles, and expectations were clear. He becomes a "marginal man" unable to adjust to a hostile environment, pulled back emotionally to the land a prey to alienation and anomic."³

However, Holmstrom refutes this theory by saying that:

"with regard to urbanization, this view is no longer worth attacking: it is psychological guesswork, which exaggerates the impersonal horrors of the city and of the pastoral contentment of country life, and under-estimates human powers of creative adaptation. But the same kind of argument is applied to industrial organization, implying not only that one kind of hierarchical managerial structure - whether capitalist or state controlled - is necessary for industrialization (which I doubt), but that workers must accept its legitimacy and identify, with their roles in the production process; that they must see their future in this kind of structure, that they must have the right attitudes".⁴

On this view absenteeism among workers is not due to the workers' background only, but to the contradiction between workers and employers inherent in ^{the} capitalist enterprises.

Certain apparent 'causes' of absenteeism, are in fact reasons or justifications that workers give and managers usually accept for individual absences. Among these reasons are family problems, transport difficulties, lack of accommodation. When the incidence of these difficulties was measured objectively for members of the sample, it did not always appear to affect the likelihood of unexcused absence. Other factors, which may be described as 'external' to the plant, such as age, previous job, how recently the worker had migrated to the town, seemed also not to be strongly associated with absenteeism. On the other hand, aspects of the mode of control internal to the plant, and how workers react to this, seem to affect absenteeism quite sharply.

Among thirteen variables external to work investigated, only two were associated with absenteeism, i.e. the family situation, and the

period of migration. Whereas for the internal factors, among sixteen variables, nine were significantly associated with absenteeism, which means the internal situation to the factory is the major cause of workers' dissatisfaction.

For instance, the high mobility between the countryside and big towns does not effect the rate of absence. The findings show that there is no strong connection between absence and the distance between home and the factory (see table 7:3). Again previous job which was expected to shape the social and economical life of individuals and therefore would cause absence, if workers did not meet their expectations, did not affect absence significantly. (see table 7:10)

The internal conflict that arises between workers and officials over power and interests appears to be the chief cause of absenteeism in Sonacme.

The findings therefore support the assumption that conflict between workers and management over inequality in power, wealth, status etc. are the main source of workers dissatisfaction, which cause frustration and less commitment to work discipline. The findings do not support the view that the traditional mode of behaviour derived from agricultural life is a major cause of workers absenteeism. Although agricultural background can influence to some extent individuals attitudes, this does not mean workers cannot adapt themselves to industrial conditions.

Workers can adjust themselves to the industrial environment if the internal situation is satisfactory. That is to say the conflict that arises within the factory between workers and their counterpart management is significantly associated with dissatisfaction and varies according to skill, workplace conditions, type of authority, relations with officials, pay etc.

It is worth mentioning that at least two factors explaining absence in Algeria seem to operate differently in the West. First, it is the more skilled workers in Algeria who are more frequently absent; the opposite is the usual finding in Western studies. Secondly, male workers in Algeria not only often give family reasons for absence, but seem objectively to be influenced by their family circumstances to a degree found rather *among* women than men in the west. Peculiar circumstances in Algeria explain these findings. Skilled workers are more mobile than unskilled, and factories are less successful than generally in the west in retaining a skilled labour force: high turnover and high absence seem to go together in the skilled Algerian worker. Again Islamic men believe it is their responsibility to accompany a child or their wife for medical treatment or any other public visit, and of course a member retains an obligation to family property in the countryside that must be discharged occasionally.

The workers' attitudes towards the system of control is not satisfactory. Rigid supervision, the ineffective role of the councils who represent workers and low wages, are major causes of the Sonacome worker's discontent, expressed by absenteeism or leaving the job.

Instability was found among highly skilled workers such as technicians and skilled workers. This is perhaps due to the specific situation in Algeria where people who seek improvement are usually found among educated or skilled men who have the opportunity to get jobs elsewhere. For example the total number of workers in 1979 was 3,200 on average, while the number of workers registered since the opening of the factory nine years previously reached 6,068,⁵ nearly half of workers having left their jobs for one cause or another.

So, absenteeism when it occurs in a developing and socialist society like Algeria, may involve a special kind of conflict generated both by the differentiation in power and authority between workers and management, and by the mode of culture that determines the individuals behaviour in a traditional society.

Absenteeism in the Sonacome plant has various motives but, we can summarise them here in two broad areas;

First: factors that pull workers towards absenteeism (external causes) which relate to the pace of socio-economic change in the country as a whole, causing competition and aspiration to better personal standards of life. Also domestic obligations and opportunities to find jobs elsewhere are likely to pull workers from their original jobs.

Second: factors that push workers into absenteeism (internal causes) which are concerned with the work situation i.e. the mode of control in the factory and the degree of commitment to the system of control.

The second part of this thesis reveals the importance of these causes. However, our understanding of workers' reasons for absenteeism is restricted to their responses to a questionnaire used in an interview. It may have been distorted by the distrust that managers and workers evidently have towards each other.

First the workers instability in the same job in Algeria in general and in Sonacome in particular has some logic. How can we expect workers to be loyal to the job and to the system if this system hardly meets their basic needs? The government endeavours to meet its promises in providing jobs, schools, houses and free health services to everybody and creating equal opportunity between parts of the country. But it seems to be failing to do so, there is a disparity

in different developments in different regions, different wages in different enterprises, and different opportunities and advantages among different people.⁶

As the society is in process of change economically and socially there is no guarantee that a job will secure a person's future. The prospect of finding a suitable and stable job is remote and can be found easily only for those who gain some success in education or skill, and who are required for the development.

This situation gives the educated or skilled individuals the chance to take advantage of moving around in order to get the right job, whereas for unskilled workers the chance of finding a job in industry is slim especially for rural workers, and those who succeed in having a job in industry are considered to be lucky. The cause of their absence is mainly domestic responsibility such as taking a child to hospital, working in the garden or difficulties in transport etc. While for educated and skilled individuals, absence is likely to be influenced by the hope of finding a better job, doing a second job privately, or studying to improve their grades.

However, all workers, educated/non-educated, skilled/unskilled, urban/rural were discontented with the mode of control in the enterprise. Chapter four and five discussed how management could play a major part in satisfying its workforce and could reduce the rate of absenteeism.

Behrend discussed absenteeism as a protest against an unsatisfactory work situation. She considers the managements failure to prevent absenteeism was because many managers, either ignored or condoned it. Behrend refers this partly to the lack of exact knowledge of the consequences of absenteeism. Similar remarks are made by Mayo who

believes that absenteeism is due to the low morale and discontent caused by management incompetence, or what is called by Dubin the supervisors responsibility to deal with workers properly in order to achieve management objectives. Dubin puts it this way, "to integrate organizational objectives with individual member needs, he must have human-relations competence. To accomplish his other assigned tasks, including the performance of technical operations, he must possess technical competence."⁷

In addition to the lack of skill and competence of management in Sonacome, there is a contradiction between the theory and practice of socialist management policy. Workers and management in theory participate and cooperate towards achieving mutual interests, but in practice, workers participation is limited and ineffective which is due to various causes - lack of awareness, a paternalistic way of life, and management domination.

These features participate to a great extent in upsetting the socialist policy of development. And in fact the political organizations such as the party (F.L.N.), the general union of workers (U.G.T.A.), and the management who are responsible for mobilising and emancipating workers seem to have difficulties in maintaining a rational authority which would serve all groups equally. For example, corruption and nepotism found in the society has been explained simply as a social evil that must be eradicated, as a natural consequence of rapid development, or as an outcome of an awareness of socialist principles. But it will only stop when people realise it is not in their interests to use nepotism and seek favours.

These problems are frequently discussed by the media and politicians without a serious action being taken to stop them. This contributes to loss of confidence in these politicians and creates apathy among the public towards these defectors.

Gerald A. Heegar has referred to the significance of leadership in the third world:

"In speaking of the vital importance of leadership in raising the level of performance, we are alluding to the critical performance, we are alluding to the critical place of authority in national development. If leaders are to inspire a population, and to direct a society to higher levels of performance their words, and actions must carry an aura of legitimacy. If a people are to gain satisfaction from the ways in which the policy performs, they must first accept it as right and proper that the inherent functions of the political system can and must be performed in new ways. In short, if a policy is to resolve its identity crisis through more effective governmental performance and a rise in political capabilities it must also resolve any issues of legitimacy."⁸

So, it is worthwhile to suggest that the urgent priority for ensuring development in Algeria is to organise the state machine under the leadership of the party (FLN) which at the moment does not seem to play its role effectively. An active and revolutionary party that knows its responsibility would compromise with all groups and work towards achieving the socialist policy set up in order to serve the majority of workers and peasants. Secondly workers must be organised under the leadership of the general union of Algerian workers (U.G.T.A.) and educate workers in taking the responsibility of control by themselves.

Thirdly, the party must ensure the workers' participation with management in carrying out the socialist management scheme rationally and effectively which means ensuring workers' views are heard by officials and put into action freely and fairly. This in turn may ensure commitment and efficiency, and decrease absenteeism. Fourthly: both the party and the national union of workers must raise the political consciousness of the workers and encourage them to control their work.

This thesis is perhaps the first of this kind in Algeria. It is an attempt to look at the Algerian socio-economic development which has produced instability among the workforce and created conflict between workers and management over the system of control.

Obviously this study is just a beginning, and there is a need for more studies in order to provide a serious and deep understanding of Algerian development, especially bearing in mind that the Sonacome factory is a special case. It stands as the leading industry in Algeria, it is relatively big, belongs to the public sector, and uses more or less advanced technology.

These conditions in fact are specific and may be considered strange to the general environment, where most industries are craft, and most workers work in agriculture. Therefore the modern structure of industry in Sonacome requires new conditions for its work, and new attitudes from its workforce. How is this situation met in Sonacome?

Perhaps a better understanding of absenteeism and the restlessness of workers in the job would have been achieved by getting to know the situation of individuals in more intensive case studies. The traditional way of life remains part of the Algerian picture, a person who works in craft industry or agriculture has a temporary job which ends when the season ends or sporadic opportunities for employment cease. This however means that the worker is obliged to accept this fact and to adapt himself to it. He saves while he is working for the time that he is out of work. Thus, the workers background needs closer examination in order to find out to what extent absenteeism is influenced by this traditional behaviour inherited from agriculture. Secondly: the conflict in any organisation between workers and management usually emerges from

the unequal distribution of wealth and authority, which generates dissatisfaction and might lead to absenteeism. To understand the underlying causes of absenteeism in Sonacome it is necessary to study the social structure and to what extent this structure affects individual's behaviour. And therefore absenteeism in Sonacome needs to be studied by looking at the cultural and ideological aspects that influence the functioning of socialist policy and bureaucratic system. Two points can be taken into account here: one, workers and management share the traditional beliefs which preserve personal relations in dealing with individuals, this however generates the patronage and nepotism which contradicts the bureaucratic structure. Two, the background of management and their "middle class" attitudes may be reflected in their tendency to protect their own interests. Obviously this behaviour would prevent them supporting the socialist principles which attempt to make workers the equal of management. These points are beyond the scope of this study and need to be investigated in the future.

notes for the Conclusion

1. T.B. Bottomore, Elites and Society, Penguin books, 1964, p.109.
2. The inability of management to deal with workers humanly and fairly, would lead to absenteeism and job turnover. This was discussed by several authors. See for instance Elton Mayo, The social problems of industrial civilization. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1949. See also, Brookshire, op.cit., and Behrend, op.cit.
3. Mark Holmstrom, South Indian Factory Workers, Cambridge University Press 1976, pp.142-43.
4. ibid., p.143.
5. Unpublished management record file.
6. see also, the paper about the socio-economic resolution adopted by the IVth Congress of the FLN Jan. 1979.
7. Robert Dubin, Leadership and productivity. Chandler Publishing Company 1965, p.73.
8. Gerald A. Heeger, The politics of underdevelopment St. Martin's Press, 1974, p.134. Quoted from Lucian W. Paye.

APPENDIX A

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DATE:

NUMBER

A. Family Situation

1. Single Married Divorcee Widowed

2. Have you emigrated from home? Yes No

3. When did you emigrate?

Family of Origin

	Place of Birth	Profession	Place of Work	Place of Living Now	Period Living There	Number Alive	of Children Dead
Self							
Wife							
Father							
Mother							
Brother(s)							
Other(s)							

B. Nature of Job

- B.1 Have you ever been employed elsewhere?
- B.2 If yes, would you said what kind of job it was?
why you left it?
- B.3 When did you first come to work here at Sonacome?
- B.4 Are you doing the same kind of work here as you did in your previous employment?
- B.5 What kind of work are you doing now?
- B.6 Have you ever thought of leaving your present job at Sonacome?
If yes, why?
- B.7 If you left this job, would it be easy to find another one?
- B.8 What do you think of the distribution of jobs in this factory?
Is it fair
Is it unfair
If it is unfair, why is that?
- B.9 How did you choose your job?
Why was that?
- B.10 How do you think you are getting on with your job?
- B.11 Do you find it physically tiring?
If yes, why?

C. Migration and Absence

- C.1 Have you ever been absent from work in the last year?
- C.2 If yes, why did you absent yourself from work?
To see the family
Through illness
To look for another job
Work difficult
Low salary
No friends

C.3 Did you ask permission to be absent?

C.4 Have you ever been out of your job for more than a month?

If yes, when was that?

For how long?

Why?

C.5 How far do you live from your place of work?

C.6 Is your family living with you?

If not, why does your family not live with you?

C.7 How often do you go to see them?

C.8 Why did you emigrate from home?

C.9 Do you feel settled now?

If not, why?

D. Relation with Management

D.1 Have you ever been to see the management in the last year?

If yes, how often?

What was it you went about?

D.2 Have you ever met the manager in the last year?

If yes, where?

How did you meet him?

For what?

D.3 When you have a problem, where can you go to complain?

Superior

Workers' Council

Manager

D.4 Why did you go to that one, not to the others?

D.5 How often do you go to meetings arranged by management? Would you say you went

Regularly

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

D.6 When did you last go to one?

If you don't go, why not?

D.7 Where do you get your orders from?

D.8 How do you get on with Foreman?

E. Relations with Fellow Workers

E.1 In your job, how often do you talk to your workmates?

Where?

About what?

Why is that?

E.2 Do you associate with workmates after work?

If yes, could you tell me more about it?

E.3 What sort of workers do you want to talk to?

The same job?

The same region?

The same level?

Everyone

E.4 Is there any exchange of visits between you and them?

F. The Practice of Socialist Management

F.1 Could you tell me what you understand by "socialist management"?

Could you please give a little bit of detail, how did you understand it?

F.2 How do you feel about the practice of socialist management?

Is self management

a good thing,

a bad thing,

of no importance?

Who is it good / bad for?

Why do you say that?

F.3 Do you think this factory is run as efficiently as it might be?

If no, have you ever made any suggestions for improving efficiency?

F.4 Do you think those who are responsible are concerned to make

work efficient or don't they care?

If not, why not?

F.5 How often do you go to workers' council meetings?

Regularly

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

If never, could you tell me why?

G. Pay

G.1 Have you ever complained about your pay?

How often?

Tell me about it?

G.2 What do you think about pay differentials between management and shop floor workers?

Would you say managers earned

Too little

Too much

About right

G.3 Do you think the factory could pay workers more?

How?

Could you give more details please?

G.4 Have you any worries concerning your family because of your pay?

Could you explain in more detail please?

Who do you have to support?

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