

The Calvary of the Indigenous Algerians

Mohammed Sail

1924

“Men are born and remain free and equal in rights”. It is The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen that tells us this. But it is easy to prove that this equality never existed for us, indigenous Algerians.

These are our rights, as understood by the bloodthirsty rascals, the greedy pirates who, on the pretext of colonisation, have brought us the “benefits” of their “civilisation”.

They consist in seeing the lands on which we are born, that from father to son we have fertilized of our labour, which gave us enough to live freely and proudly, be monopolized by our “benefactors”.

It is true that we have the “right” to work on these lands that were stolen from us, some 10 to 12 hours per day for a ridiculous wage of 5 Francs. Yet life is expensive in Algeria, very expensive for us and our families.

We have another “right” that the patriotic entrepreneurs of charnel houses do not contest, to the contrary. It is the right to go die on the battlegrounds to defend the oh so generous France. We have, in 1914 and the years that followed, fully “enjoyed” this right. We are even getting armed against our brothers of race whom have the courage to resist against the invader. It is surely so in the name of “the right of a people to self-determination”.

We have to suffer, too without saying a word, from all the aggravations that the fantasy of the administrators and the committees carry out against us.

Italian Fascism is no more odious than the colonial methods used by the civil servants of the French Republic. There is, then, nothing surprising that, their remains starving, having no other alternatives but to beg or slave away like convicts for a meagre pittance, a very large number of natives run away from this “cudgel” [TN: à coups de triques] civilisation.

Many have told themselves that, since they were good at defending France, they had the right to find on its soil, by working, enough to make a living. In fact, the condition of the indigenous living in France is nothing to be compared with the condition of the one that stayed in Algeria.

When he arrives, even if he is jobless, he finds with the Algerians an aid that is hardly ever given in other circles.

He finds himself, obviously, exploited, but less so than what he endured in his country.

Naturally, the big proprietors, the slave traders of Algeria and Tunisia don’t see with a good eye this emigration that offer them large benefits. Also, to stop it, they resort to crooked politicians that have nothing to refuse to them.

And what the National Bloc of Raymond Poincaré didn't do, the Lefts Bloc of Herriot didn't fear trying.

Thus we could read recently in *Le Quotidien* that a regulation will be instituted for the "admission in the *métropole* of indigenous workers". This regulation aims at, as declared Mr. Marius Moutet, a member of the committee, "allowing the progressive and judicious penetration of indigenous elements responding, by their physical and professional capacities, to the requirements of the various sectors of the national metropolitan activities".

"The Committee wanted that the native who comes to work in France would not be exposed to leaving his household, without first being sure he would be able to find in France at least the equivalent of what he abandons."

The interministerial commission, whose work were chaired by Mr. Duvernoy, director of the Algerian Affairs in the Ministry of the Interior, has also decided the creation, in France, of organisations to aid and protect indigenous workers. "From now on, the Algerian and North-African workers, before boarding for France, would have to provide a certificate of commitment from the Ministry of Work, a medical certificate and an ID card with picture, delivered by the mayor or the administrator of the municipality where the indigenous is domiciled."

"The Ministry of the Interior has decided that these measures will be applied starting October 1st 1924."

Therefore, from the 1st of October, the administrators will be able to prevent the departure to France of all those they previously boarded when it was a matter of fighting against those they named barbarians. I know, and other will know if they haven't yet realised, who the barbarians are. They are the hypocritical politicians that are just as good as Mussolini. And to really show this hypocrisy, I assure them, the indigenous leaves his country only because he cannot live there anymore, because there he is oppressed, exploited. He is a slave that they want to keep for those that have stripped him of his native land. What he abandons in Algeria, M. Marius Moutet, "socialist!" deputy, is a bit of misery.

Here is what an Algerian tells you: "Be careful, one day the pariahs will have had enough and will take the guns you taught them to wield, and direct them against their true enemies, in the name of the right to Life, and not, as before, for a criminal so-called motherland."

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