DEVELOPMENTAL PRESSURE AND POLITICAL LIMITS -
A TUNISIAN ILLUSTRATION
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Lars Rudebeck

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"Underdevelopment" and "development"

If "underdevelopment" is defined as essentially a problem of underutilization of human and material resources in relation to needs, then, obviously, efforts to overcome underdevelopment will have to be directed toward greater mobilization of such resources. Politically, this is a problem of changing and strengthening the structures and institutions of society in such ways that people will be encouraged and enabled to work hard and intelligently enough to create a surplus, which is then saved and re-invested in their own national economy for purposes of their own progress. This is, in bare essence, what political development is about in most of the countries of the Third World today - with obvious variations due to different historical situations and different levels of development. The challenge to the political systems of these countries is dramatically harsh and unequivocal: either they develop adequate responses to the tensions and contradictions of underdevelopment or the societies they hold together will sink into stagnation, disorganization, and complete dependence upon others. That a fairly great number of Third World countries today are not very far from such a grave and dangerous situation is testimony to the strength of both external and internal vested interests in underdevelopment as well as to the strength of all kinds of other barriers to change. Still, the very fact of mounting difficulties and stagnation or much too slow progress is, in the long run, likely to increase the pressures for change on the political systems of the various countries. Historical experience and general knowledge of present conditions in the world teach us that the adaptation of political systems to such pressures may take both evolutionary and revolutionary forms, depending upon the circumstances in each particular instance. It seems to be an inescapable fact of history, however, that qualitative change from agrarian to industrialized society by peaceful evolution is the exception rather than the rule. This holds true both for capitalist and
socialist historical models of development. Consequently, one of many important questions facing the countries of the Third World today is whether liberation from direct colonial rule in itself was enough of a revolutionary change to clear the road to the future. This is a difficult question, to say the least, and it will probably remain posed, until history has given the answer(s). I have raised it here only to set the stage for a much more limited undertaking than any attempt to answer it. Let me begin by trying to delimit my proposed task.

It is a simple thought, at least on the surface of the matter, that underdeveloped countries can be systematically developed, only if their political systems touch and mobilize the masses of their peoples. The thought is even contained in the definition of underdevelopment suggested above. But the task itself is not simple. A glance at capitalist and socialist historical precedents is enough to convince us that several apparently necessary conditions of development can hardly be repeated in the various countries of the Third World today. Still it seems obvious that socialist experience has more to give in the crucial sense that basic structural changes on the national level will have to be consciously initiated by political means. It is out of the question, today, to sit down and wait for more or less spontaneous social and economic development. Politically initiated development policies, however, have a kind of logic, as well as limits, of their own. My purpose in this paper is to give a partial illustration of this political logic and these political limits with the support of some data from Tunisia. This is a limited purpose in several ways, but particularly because I shall not take into direct account the very obvious, very important, and usually very badly balanced connections between any given political system in the Third World and its international environment. I still hope that what remains within the limits of my purpose is important enough to deserve an analysis of its own. The international implications should be clear enough to enable the reader to

fit the picture into its larger framework. For initiating basic structural changes on the national level by political means probably, in most cases, also leads to challenging the established capitalist order on the international level.

Outline of an hypothesis

In 1967 I published a study of the development of the Tunisian political system during the first half of the nineteen-sixties. The theoretical point of departure for my book was the general idea that there exists a fundamental connection between policy and politics - a connection between the concrete political goals pursued within any political system and the way in which that system functions. As the main object of analysis was Tunisia's only political party, the Parti Socialiste Destourien (until 1964 the Neo-Destour Party), and its role in the total political system of the country, it was necessary to provide a logical link between my general point of departure and the concrete political systems of economically underdeveloped countries. This link was provided by an intermediary assumption, which I formulated by drawing upon Gabriel Almond's by now well known ideas about functions and structures of political systems. According to this intermediary assumption, the basic functions of one-party systems are performed in different ways and by different structures, depending upon the extent to which each system has the characteristics of what I then called "elite" or "mass party" systems. These characteristics were operationally defined in such a way that the degree of party involvement in the performance of essential political functions became the main criterion of position on an imaginary scale running from "elite" to "mass party" systems. The more consistent this involvement, the closer to the "mass


party" end of the scale was the given political system said to be. The intermediary assumption was then concretized and specified into the basic theoretical idea of the book— the hypothesis that systematic and conscious efforts to overcome underdevelopment by planning are closely connected with the growth or existence of "mass parties" as more or less effective instruments of mass mobilization. The book is an attempt to test this hypothesis against the Tunisian reality of 1960–1966.

There were good reasons for choosing the political system of Tunisia to be the object of such an analysis, as Tunisia offered an exceptional opportunity to test the basic hypothesis. The almost semi-experimental situation providing us with this opportunity first occurred in 1961, when "planning" and "socialism" became official Tunisian policies and began to be concretely implemented soon afterwards. Not long after this concrete implementation of the officially proclaimed ideas in the field of economic development policies had been initiated, important changes also began to occur in the organization and functioning of the one party and the political system in general. These changes could be visualized as a distinct movement, along the "scale" mentioned above, toward a more mobilization oriented political system in Tunisia. I believe that I succeeded in documenting this movement in my book, particularly through close empirical study of the regional and local levels of the system. Thus, my basic hypothesis was supported.

Before proceeding further with the argument from this point, it will be useful to halt in order to suggest a few modifications of the approach used in my first study of Tunisian politics.5

The first remark is terminological. It concerns the distinction between what I have called "elite" and "mass party" systems, a distinction which I think is basic to the analysis of the political systems of the Third World. The terminology, however, is open to debate. In using the two terms "elite" and "mass

5. Cf. ibid., postscript to the second impression, pp. 258–267.
party" system, I pointed out that they were both rough and tentative. I used them in order to stress that the "mass" type is concerned with the mobilization of the "masses", whereas the "elite" type is more exclusively oriented toward the maintenance of political power through the reconciliation of established "elite" interests. But naturally the leadership constitutes as much of an elite in the "mass party" as it does in the "elite party", although its social origin often is different. Maurice Duverger, for instance, has made a well known distinction between four basic elements of party organization: the caucus, the branch, the cell, and the militia.6 The "elite party", as I used the term in my previous work, is primarily based on the caucus, and the "mass party" on the branch, at least after the achievement of independence. Other students of African politics have made similar distinctions.7 But there are some difficulties involved here. The term "elite party", in particular, often seems to carry connotations of a revolutionary avant-garde party. This naturally restricts its usefulness in denoting oligarchic status quo regimes such as the Liberian regime. The term "mass party", on the other hand, is less likely to cause misunderstandings, but still does not always seem to convey the intended sense of political mobilization. In this essay, I shall therefore experiment with the terms "vested interest (in the established order) oriented" systems and "mobilization oriented" systems - the intention being both to divert attention from party to system and to emphasize fundamental differences in the social bases of support sought by these two types of systems, which - it should be remembered - hardly exist in pure form anywhere.8 This attempt


8. Cf. the terms "reconciliation" and "mobilization" systems in Apter, op.cit.
to introduce a slightly different terminology has no other justification than a desire to be as clear and explicit as possible. It is only an experiment in trying to convey an idea.

The second remark also concerns the basic distinction between the two kinds of political orientations just discussed. In my book on Tunisia, the argument is presented in the too narrow terms of one-party systems. There is no logical justification for this, but only the rather vague justification that one-party systems were frequent, at least in Africa, at the moment of writing, and that it seemed important to emphasize that one- and multi-party systems could be conceived of as performing very similar functions, although through different structures. There are still many one-party systems in Africa, although fewer than in 1966, and it is still essential to discourage multi-party ethnocentricity. But these facts should not allow us to forget that the distinction between "vested interest oriented" and "mobilization oriented" political systems can logically be applied also to, for instance, military or even some multi-party regimes.

With these changes of terminology and scope, I hope it will now be possible to extend the analysis by (1) bringing out more clearly the model, implied in my previous work, of relations between developmental strategies and structural change in the political system, and (2) by then suggesting some political implications of current attempts in Tunisia to organize the entire agricultural sector of the economy into producers' cooperatives.

Systematization of an hypothesis

In *Party and People* I tried to test my hypothesis of a close connection between conscious and far-reaching efforts to

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9. In May 1969 there were forty-two independent African states, of which only thirteen could be classified as pure one-party states. Of the remaining twenty-nine states, nine had military regimes, whereas the majority of the rest were rather difficult to fit into any simple typology.

10. Cf. Rudebeck, *op.cit.* (refers here and in the following notes to *Party and People* and not to the article mentioned in note 7), second impression, pp. 262 ff.
overcome underdevelopment by planning and the existence or growth of mobilization oriented political systems by indicating systematically how and through what structures political functions could be expected to be performed in different kinds of systems and then demonstrating that political performance in Tunisia had been moving toward a more mobilization oriented type of system under the impact of the new planning policies. I thus focused upon the various stages of the political process going on within the political system, but only indirectly upon the system itself as a variable in its own right. In order for this latter task to be carried out more explicitly, it is necessary to move beyond Almond's early formulations, and to look at the entire political system as one variable interacting with others. I believe that the theoretical foundations for such an undertaking can be found in the works of such modern political scientists as David Easton and Karl Deutsch. What I find particularly fruitful in these works is their emphasis upon the political system as the totality of social interactions involved in the allocation of values or setting of goals for a given society. The political system - or the manner of organizing productive forces, if we prefer that kind of terminology - is, looked upon in this way, continuously faced with the necessity of responding to tensions and contradictions and to changes in the demands and supports emanating both from itself and from its environment. A dialectic relationship between the system and these pressures is established through feedback from the responses. As already mentioned, the results of this interaction between the political system and the tensions to which it is subjected may range from small evolutionary adaptations to revolutionary changes. This all depends upon the strength of the pressure-creating tensions, the objectively existing alternatives in handling them, and the combined strength and flexibility of the established system. It is also important to note that the political system (those in command of it) may react to pressures both by changing the structures of the system and by attempting to change the environment, for instance by breaking down cultural and social

barriers to efficient resource utilization or by challenging the international environment. This is sometimes called induced modernization.

The two variables under consideration here, then, are the political system itself and the development strategy chosen by those who control it, the latter perhaps best defined as a "within-put" in Easton's useful phrase. Besides being mutually dependent upon each other, it is obvious that these two variables are both affected by, and themselves affect, other factors, such as, for instance, the international environment in all its political, economic, and ideological aspects. Still the influence of the two variables upon each other is probably basic and important enough to be considered separately. It is possible to illustrate this interdependence by dichotomizing an imaginary "vested-interest-oriented-to-mobilization-oriented" scale of political systems and combining it with a similarly divided "comprehensive-planning-to-adaptive-planning" scale into the following crude four-field table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>mobilization orientation</th>
<th>vested interest orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>comprehensive planning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adaptive planning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. "Comprehensive planning" is used here as a short expression for conscious, far-reaching, and systematic efforts to overcome underdevelopment by planning. "Adaptive planning" is used as a short way of denoting a development strategy which assumes that an adaptive, liberal attitude toward the international economic system and the "market" will ultimately remove the causes of underdevelopment. It would also be possible to use such terms as "radical" and "conservative" ("moderate"). It is recognized that some kind of planning exists in most countries of the Third World.
By systematically investigating the performance of political functions on different stages of the political process, as I did for Tunisia in *Party and People*, it should be possible to decide, approximately, the horizontal position of any system in the four-field table. The vertical position is determined by the economic policies of the regime in question. Both logically and empirically it appears reasonable to expect a kind of balance between development strategy and political system - between policy and politics - in squares (1) and (4), whereas political systems found in either of the two squares (2) and (3) would tend to move toward (1) or (4), depending upon the relative strength and character of the party structures and the forces standing for different economic policies. If it is true, as suggested earlier, that the situations in which most of the Third World countries find themselves make the chances of development dependent upon the political mobilization of human energy, it would also follow that the balance in square (4) can only be sustained in those (most probably) exceptional cases where a capitalist transition to a modern national economy turns out to be possible. If it is also true that the contradictions of squares (2) and (3) will tend to push the systems in other directions, something approximately like the situation in (1) would remain as the most hopeful combination for a country faced with the task of pulling itself out of a state defined and experienced as underdeveloped, under the conditions of the present historical period. Ideally, such a square-(1)-situation may briefly be characterized as one in which the planned modernization policies require the mobilization of popular energy, at the same time as the mobilization itself generates modern demands which can hardly be satisfied without conscious planning for the satisfaction of the interests of the people. In most real cases, the picture will surely look quite different, with coercion and repression taking the place of mobilization, and talk about planning taking the place of planning. But, as I shall try to indicate later in this essay, there are probably limits beyond which such substitution cannot go without threatening the entire social system.
By studying possible combinations of the two variables in the table, we may make it possible to account for political systems which appear "inconsistent" with the simple scale running from "vested interest oriented" to "mobilization oriented" systems. It might, for instance, facilitate understanding of political events in Ghana, from the introduction of "African socialism" up to the present time, if we visualize them as a movement, caused by the increasing isolation of the leadership from the masses, from a dynamic equilibrium in square (1) to an unstable situation in square (2) and then a further movement, with the coup d'etat of 1966, to square (4), which is marked by greater stability than (2) but perhaps less dynamism than (1). Furthermore, the introduction of "African socialism" toward the end of the nineteen-fifties may itself be viewed as an effort to move Ghana out of an unstable square-(3)-situation characterizing the country during the first few years of independence, when the Convention People's Party was still a mobilization oriented party, whereas the economy remained quite liberal.

Another illustration is provided by Tanzania. It is possible to interpret what happened in that country early in 1967, with the Arusha Declaration and subsequent new policies, as a movement from square (3) to (1), made necessary, among other things, by the tensions caused through political mobilization of expectations that could not possibly be satisfied through the mechanisms of the "free market" in a country such as Tanzania.

To mention just another example, before returning to the case of Tunisia, it is a tempting thought that also the pressing political problems of a great country like India could be expressed, at least partially, in the terms of the four-field table. The idea would be that India's political system seems to be a very clear example of a vested interest oriented system, and that this fact makes it very difficult, perhaps impossible, to mobilize the people enough for the fulfillment of the development plans, although these are quite comprehensive and systematic. The conclusion of the argument, which of course

cannot be substantiated here, would be that drastic structural change in the political system seems to be necessary in order to involve the Indian people in the task of modernizing their own country.

As far as independent Tunisia is concerned, the development of the political system from 1956 to 1961, when the planning decision was made, and up to 1966, may be described as a movement (consistently close to the center of the table) beginning in square (3), where the system was located immediately after independence, and continuing to a situation of the kind indicated by square (4), with a loosening grip of the party structure over the system combined with a laissez-faire economy. Mainly because of the absence of any kind of economic growth produced by this liberal or disorganized economy, "Tunisian socialism" and "planning" were proclaimed fairly abruptly in 1961 and also quickly implemented with considerable energy and consistency, thus moving the system to square (2). But the new economic and social policies were dependent upon the activation of the people and their energy, which, still according to our basic assumption, produced a movement just across the line to (1).

Thus, the simple four-field table given above makes it possible to capture a fundamental aspect of the dynamics of political development. My hope is that the over-simplification of the problem, as presented in the table, is justified through gains in terms of clarification and systematization of some basic relationships.

Political mobilization in Tunisia 1961-1968

The brand of "socialism" which was introduced in Tunisia in 1961 does not have any complicated theory. Its ideology is pragmatism, and its essence is its rejection of the idea of "class struggle" and its emphasis on "cooperation", "discussion", "freedom", and the "promotion of man". This is regarded as distinctly Tunisian and all importations of "foreign ideologies"
are explicitly rejected. But despite this ideological softness, "Destourian socialism" as it is often called with reference to the name of the party, did in practice bring with it a considerable amount of political mobilization. This mobilization can best be described as a strengthening and vitalization of the channels of communication between "base" and "summit" in the political system. The most important and organizationally successful part of this consciously directed evolution has probably been the institutionalization, on the regional level, of thirteen elected party committees, presided over by young and competent governors, and functioning in close cooperation with both the administration and the political officials on the national, regional, and local levels. In this way, there exists in Tunisia a political apparatus, held together from the center, but with ramifications in the whole country. Through it, it is possible to reach the majority of Tunisians with the political program of the leadership, and also to receive reactions and establish somewhat of a dialogue. I think it is safe to say that the existence of this apparatus has been a most important factor contributing to the maintenance in Tunisia, during the nineteen-sixties, of a fair degree of political stability combined with a fair rate of social and economic change. Without being able to prove it beyond doubt, I am also inclined to believe that it has been the decisive factor.

To sum up then: the planning policies were introduced without any ideological motivation but because of sheer economic necessity, and they, in their turn, necessitated the revitalization of the party structures. This is the developmental logic which imposed itself upon Tunisia's political system during the

16. A good statement of the official ideology is found in the first part of the Plan Quadrennial 1965-1968 (Tunis 1965), pp. 12 ff. A more recent attempt to sum up its essence was made by Bourguiba in a speech held in Bucharest during an official visit to Romania in July 1968. The speech was printed in l'Action, July 13, 1968. Numerous other speeches by Bourguiba could also be cited.

17. The increase of the gross domestic product during the first five years of independence just barely kept pace with the population increase. Agricultural and industrial production stagnated and capital left the country. Cf. Rudebeck, op. cit., p. 68 and note 6, p. 55.
nineteen-sixties and pushed the country in the direction of square (1) in the four-field table. But the dynamic balance in that square is not sustained automatically. It depends instead upon the continuous and adequate response of the political system to the pressures of the situation. In order to develop a country, it is necessary to mobilize the energies of its people. But, on the other hand, if people are mobilized only to find that nothing or very little happens to satisfy their modern demands for bread, freedom, and dignity, then we may reasonably expect either revolutionary instability, widespread apathy, or suppression in order to preserve "stability". Thus, the political limits of any square-(1)-situation are defined by the ability of the system to mobilize enough energy, capital, and support to meet demands, which are partly the result of previous mobilization and partly the result of inevitable pressures for development in an economically underdeveloped country today. If the existing structures do not suffice for the purpose of meeting these demands, radical structural changes - evolutionary or revolutionary - will again become necessary in order to maintain the system in the neighborhood of square (1). I would like to advance the hypothesis that Tunisia, despite previous progress in the field of political mobilization, was getting dangerously close to such a situation toward the end of 1968 - mainly because of the structural incapacity, up to then, of the agricultural sector of the economy to mobilize sufficiently the human energy of the rural population and the potential resources of their land. The estimates vary, but whatever statistics we use, this typical Third World problem clearly stands out as fundamental. It is enough to note that, in addition to widespread unemployment, about half of those over fifteen in the young and rapidly growing Tunisian population were occupied with agriculture in 1968, without being able to feed the country well and much less to produce a large enough surplus for vitally necessary investments (cf. p. 18 and note 33). Other political symptoms, such

18. The Swiss political scientist Raimund Germann suggests in a recent study of the Tunisian administration that this political mobilization has been rather more limited than it appears in my own Party and People. Germann arrives at his conclusions by studying the state machinery, which, he finds, has gradually taken over the party, rather than the other way around. We probably have to accept a certain complementarity of "truths" in this respect. See Raimund E. Germann, Verwaltung und Einheitspartei in Tunesien, Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Genossenschaftswesens (Zürich 1968).
as intellectual unrest, have probably not been unrelated to this basic structural problem of an unresolved agricultural question. But before we proceed to a closer examination of this question, it is necessary to say a few words about the social class structure of the Tunisian political system.

**Tunisia's political and administrative elite**

Regardless of Marxist or non-Marxist orientation, social scientists who have studied the social composition of the Tunisian people seem to agree that Tunisia is ruled and governed by a political and administrative elite of what we might call predominantly middle and lower middle class origin, although the term "middle class" itself is sometimes rejected on theoretical and/or empirical grounds. The major point, however, is that this elite, formed during the long political struggle for independence under the leadership of Bourguiba, has issued neither from the old haute bourgeoisie of the capital city nor from the mass of landless or next to landless peasants, but from the settled olive-growers of eastern Tunisia (the Sahel), and from artisans, teachers, and similar groups, later also including the few organized workers. The following quote from Jean Duvignaud, a well-known French sociologist intimately acquainted with Tunisia, sums up the generally accepted picture of the social class background of the present Tunisian leadership:

... le trait qui caractérise la Tunisie moderne, est l'apparition d'un groupe dominant politique qui,
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depuis la prise de pouvoir au moment de l'Indépendance se comporte en classe dirigeante et tente de structurer un pays qui ne l'a jamais été, sauf artificiellement, au moment de la domination coloniale. La naissance de cette "nouvelle classe" est inséparable de la formation du parti destourien ... en 1934 ... D'où viennent les cadres du Néo-Destour qui vont constituer l'armature de cette classe? Comme le note Berque "la Tunisie nouvelle se reconnaît dans l'homme de l'olivier" (Jacques Berque, Le Maghreb entre deux guerres, p. 212). Car se sont tous des hommes du Sahel ou du Cap Bon, fils de petits propriétaires, d'artisans, nés dans ces bourgades, à Monastir, comme Bourguiba, à Ksar Hellal, dans les îles Kerkena, comme Ferhat Hached, à Sfax comme Ben Salah, dans un village du Cap Bon comme Messadi, aujourd'hui tous deux ministres.24

Fils et petits-fils d'hommes attachés à la terre et propriétaires depuis longtemps de petites parcelles, d'artisans plus ou moins installés. Gens de ce Sahel qui est en somme le Piémont de la Tunisie, sa pépinière d'hommes actifs. Un Sahel dont le paysage n'est pas sans rappeler celui de l'Attique ...

This political and administrative elite has taken upon itself the "historical project"25 of bringing Tunisia into the modern world as a viable nation, master of its own destiny in the sense of being able to use its human and material potential for purposes of conquering the present underdevelopment. According to this official ideology, there is consequently no basis for class struggle in Tunisia, as the ruling elite is able to express and direct the interest of the entire nation in development and modernization. The opposite view, that the interests of the ruling elite are antagonistically opposed to those of the masses of the people, in particular the small and landless peasants, has been taken by some Marxist critics of Bourguiba's regime.26 At least partly, the conflict between these two ways of looking at the same facts is quite abstract, and I do not

24. Ferhat Hached was the leader of the Tunisian labor movement, until he was murdered by French terrorists in December 1952. Ahmed Ben Salah is the leading Tunisian politician after Bourguiba, at present in charge both of the Ministry of Planning and of the Ministry of Education. Mahmoud Messadi held the post as Minister of Education, until it was taken over by Ben Salah in 1968.

25. The term is used by Zghal, op. cit., p. 1. I think it conveys a fairly exact notion of what is being attempted in Tunisia at present.

26. This view has been expressed in the oppositional student paper Perspectives (published in Paris) and it was also the view of many of those who were tried and convicted to heavy jail sentences in September 1968. Cf. note 19.
think it is possible, on empirical grounds, to make a definite choice between them. The choice would have to be ideological. Although it is obvious that the official view glosses over important contradictions, it also seems quite obvious that the opposite view cannot be verified, nor falsified, except by the future. This does not mean, however, that we are left totally without possibilities to push the analysis a little further. For regardless of the degree of realism in the claims of the elite to represent the long-term interests of the whole nation, it is quite clear that the mass of rural proletarians in Tunisia do not take a very active part in the articulation of these (and thus of their own) interests. This, too, can be seen against the historical and sociological background of the political and administrative elite. Writing on the same topic as Duvignaud in the piece quoted above, the Tunisian sociologist Abdelkader Zghal has pointed out how the historical experience of the national liberation movement in Tunisia never imposed upon the political elite the task of formulating a clear policy on agriculture. For our purposes here, it will be useful to quote also Zghal at some length:

"En 1934, après la grande crise mondiale de l'économie capitalist, les intellectuels de la bourgeoisie traditionelle furent obligés de céder la direction politique et idéologique du mouvement de libération nationale à une nouvelle équipe d'intellectuels de la petite bourgeoisie formée dans les Universités françaises... Cette nouvelle équipe, qui arriva à la direction politique du mouvement de libération nationale après la phase pionnière et envahissante de la politique agricole coloniale, était moins polarisée sur les problèmes agraires que les deux équipes précédentes. Les revendications strictement politiques et la mobilisation de toutes les catégories sociales pour soutenir ces revendications étaient le principal objectif de cette nouvelle équipe qui, pour renforcer le mouvement de libération nationale, encourageaient en même temps la création d'un mouvement syndical"


revendicatif et d'une association de paysans prolétaires. C'est ainsi qu'à la veille de l'Indépendance la direction politique du mouvement de libération nationale n'avait pas une politique agricole ni une politique économique en général. Pour reprendre des expressions de Mao, on pourrait dire que sous le régime colonial, la contradiction antagoniste (système colonial, mouvement de libération nationale) empêchait l'expression des contradictions non antagonistes (paysans-propriétaires, ouvriers agricoles). Mais dans cet ensemble de forces organisées dans le cadre du mouvement de libération nationale la grande muette était — et reste encore — la paysannerie sans terre et sans travail régulier. (Emphasis supplied.)

It is not difficult to find empirical support for Zghal's assertion that the Tunisian peasants are politically inarticulate as a group, stratum, or class. This stands out as a fact in most of the sociological investigations which have been carried out by Zghal himself and by other young Tunisian social scientists in independent Tunisia. The political inarticulateness of the peasants can also be inferred from the undecisive and hesitant agricultural policies of the regime, at least up to the end of 1968. At that time, though, tensions seemed to have accumulated in the system to the point of pushing the Tunisian leadership further in the direction of structural reform than they had ever ventured before. In order to make this development comprehensible, I shall try to characterize, in some relevant aspects, the organization of agriculture in Tunisia up to 1969, before turning our attention to the current attempts at reform.

Agricultural policy in Tunisia before 1969

The agricultural problems of independent Tunisia have been well and thoroughly analyzed by several Tunisian sociologists and geographers. This achievement of the young Tunisian social


30. What is being attempted in Tunisia since the beginning of 1969 is much more comprehensive and far-reaching than the nationalization, in 1964, of all land owned by foreigners.
scientists deserves to be emphasized as something quite unusual in itself for a country in Tunisia’s situation. Thanks to the efforts made by these colleagues, it is a comparatively easy task to summarize the main features of the situation before 1969.

On the eve of independence, the rural population of the country could be divided into three easily distinguishable categories. First there were about 4000 French families (colons), each owning farms of an average size of 200 hectares. Then there was a second category made up of about 5000 Tunisian families, whose farms averaged 80 hectares each. The land owned by these two minorities, altogether over a million hectares of the very best land in Tunisia, was used and cultivated with modern although often quite extensive methods. The great majority of the rural population, however, consisted of 450,000 families, owning an average no more than 7 hectares of traditionally cultivated land each, yielding barely enough to maintain life. This large group also included a very considerable number of under- or unemployed persons - the different estimates ranging from about 200,000 to about half a million. During the first four or five years of Tunisian independence the situation did


32. Of the 16 million hectares of land covered by Tunisian territory, 9 million have been classified as possible to use for agricultural purposes. Of these 9 million, only 4.5 have been classified as arable.

33. 200,000 has been the more or less officially recognized minimum figure all through the nineteen-sixties. Zghal, "Changement de systèmes politiques ...", op.cit., p. 20, mentions an estimate of about 500,000, whereas Sethom, op.cit., p. 56, says that about 40 per cent of the male rural population are un- or under-employed. The total population of Tunisia increased from about 3.6 million in 1956 to over 4.8 in 1969. Of this population over 50 per cent are under 20 years of age.
not change much, except in so far as a certain concentration of private Tunisian land ownership began to occur. As far as unemployment is concerned, it is probable that the number had not changed much as late as in 1968, although all available estimates are very rough. This particular problem, of course, must be seen against the background of the rapid population increase, which makes it very difficult to create even enough new jobs to keep the situation from deteriorating. But in connection with the general revision of economic policies around 1961, it was decided to introduce modern methods of cultivation on the land owned by the many traditional small-holders. This was to be done by buying the farms still owned by the French colonists and by organizing them into cooperative model farms from which rational methods of production would spread among the peasants and encourage them to join cooperatives. This was the beginning of the Tunisian agricultural producers' cooperatives, the Unités Coopératives de Production (U.C.P.), which will soon be described in greater detail. An important step forward in this program was taken in 1964, when all remaining land owned by French and other foreign (mainly Italian) farmers was nationalized and then to a great extent gradually combined with old tribal lands and Tunisian small-holdings into producers' cooperatives.

From 1964, then, the dominant factors of the situation seemed to be given. They included the existence of two modern sectors, one state/cooperative and one private Tunisian, and also the large traditional sector with its feeble productivity. The hope of the Tunisian leadership was that the large private landowners would adapt their methods of cultivation voluntarily to the social and economic needs of the country, particularly by giving up their exclusive emphasis on extensive grain-growing and switching to more diversified and labor-intensive fields of production, and also by investing in badly needed projects of soil and water conservation. If these hopes had turned out to be realistic, as they in fact did not, it would perhaps have been possible for the combined weight of the two modern sectors - i.e. the producers' cooperatives and the privately owned larger farms - to bring about enough of an increase in production and a reduction of rural unemployment to hold off further structural reforms for at least a few more years. What happened
was instead that the majority of the larger private land-owners were perfectly happy to go on as before, as the existing situation gave them no reason to be dissatisfied from a private point of view. This left the state and the cooperatives with almost the whole burden of making the necessary investments in the transformation of Tunisian agriculture, at the same time as the continued existence and even expansion of the larger private properties severely restricted the possibilities of effective action on an important portion of the land most suitable for agricultural diversification and intensification.34

The rural unemployment remained and the total agricultural production of the country did not increase much.35

On the 30th of June 1968, the cooperative system of agricultural production had been gradually extended to about one third of the arable land in Tunisia (1,586,078 hectares to be exact) of which slightly less than half (697,883 hectares) were organized in so called pré-coopératives, meaning that the state retains ownership of the land while leasing it to the cooperators during a period of transition. The system encompassed altogether 77,768 cooperators (not counting family members) of which 58,277 were members of formally constituted producers' cooperatives, and the rest members of pré-coopératives.36 The great majority of the formally constituted cooperatives were found in northern Tunisia, where they incorporated about 40,000 cooperators on

34. Habib Attia, "Problématique de la modernisation de l'agriculture dans le Maghreb," Revue Tunisienne de Sciences Sociales (Vol. 5, No. 15, December 1968), p. 16, mentions that 80 per cent of the investments in agriculture in 1968 were of public origin. In this respect, the behavior of the private land-owners in Tunisia is strongly reminiscent of the behavior of their colleagues in Chile, as described by Frank: "... when agriculture is relatively bad business, as it is now, these capitalists insofar as possible use their landholdings not to help the hungry by producing more food but to help themselves to do better business in another temporarily more profitable sector of the economy." Andre Gunder Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America. Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil (New York and London 1967), p. 114.


about 665,000 hectares. Most of this was previous colon land but now combined with neighboring small peasant properties, often on very poor land, into larger units of production, i.e. U.C.P.

We see, in other words, that a very large majority of the producers' cooperatives still around the middle of 1968 were concentrated to the previously predominantly grain-growing farming areas of northern Tunisia. But even in the North, the efforts of the cooperatives to diversify and intensify cultivation were necessarily limited to about half of the best lands, as the other half was distributed between approximately 3000 land-owners with properties of an average size of slightly more than 200 hectares, a figure which among other things indicates the increased concentration of land ownership among Tunisians compared with the situation in 1955. Many of these land-owners were absentee farmers who leased away their land and lived more or less comfortably from the rents, often combined with incomes from other activities. In addition to the 40,000 cooperators and the 3000 larger private farmers, there were, in the North, at the same time about 64,000 peasants sharing between themselves about as many hectares as each of the other two categories, but of much inferior quality. Considering the long-term explosiveness of such a situation in a country where industry cannot be expected, for a long time to come yet, to be able to absorb the rapidly growing rural population, and considering also the low productivity of the traditional agricultural sector and the very modest productivity combined with low labor intensity of the modern private sector, it is easy to understand the temptation felt by the Tunisian leadership to extend the system of producers' cooperatives. For these cooperatives had, despite many difficulties, already proved themselves to be at least as productive, much better able to diversify, much more able and willing to invest, and several times as labor intensive as the private modern sector.


38. Ibid. Cf. also above, on the situation on the eve of independence.

As for the organization of agriculture in the rest of Tunisia around the middle of 1968, most of the small number of producers' cooperatives not found in the North, as well as the majority of the pré-coopératives, were found in the semi-arid central and southern parts of the country, where efforts have been made to introduce irrigation combined with extensive dry-farming and cattle-breeding on the previously collectively owned tribal lands.\footnote{40} In the eastern parts of the country, olive-growing on private land has for centuries dominated the economic life, as emphasized by Duvignaud in the article quoted earlier. Here, the French colonialists never managed to establish themselves as land-owners, and up to the winter of 1968-1969, the Sahel, the governorate of Sfax, and also Cap Bon, the north-eastern tip of the country, have been strongholds for small and medium-sized private Tunisian agriculture. But since 1964, attempts have been made to prepare the extension of cooperative farming, both to these areas and to the private farmers of the North, through the introduction of coopératives de services - a less comprehensive form than the U.C.P. and mainly concerned with the coordination of purchases, sales, and some important services. It is a different matter, as we shall soon see, that this preparation hardly seems to have been sufficient to convince all the olive-growers of the Sahel of the necessity to abandon age-old habits and structures. Nor was the experience of the service cooperatives satisfactory from an economic point of view, as they hardly contributed to the expected diversification of cultivation or increases in production. The report submitted to the constituent congress of the Union Nationale de la Coopération (U.N.C.), opened on the 24th of January 1969 in order to create a new formal framework for the cooperative movement, emphasizes strongly the problem of the service cooperatives - including both the olive districts of the Sahel, the vegetable and fruit districts of the North-East, the date-producing oases of the South, and the grain-growing areas of the North, in the official indictment. In all these parts of the country, the service cooperatives had proved to be insufficient.\footnote{41}

\footnote{40. Cf. Attia, "L'évolution des structures agraires ...", op.cit., pp. 45 ff.}
\footnote{41. Rapport sur le moment coopératif en Tunisie, p. 11.}
Cette méthode (coopératives de service) n'a cependant pas réalisé les espoirs qu'on attendait d'elle, puisqu'elle n'a pas contribué efficacement à l'acroissement de la production et à sa diversification. De plus, en y adhérant les grands propriétaires terriens du Nord, des régions côtières et du Sud (Cap-Bon, Sahel et Oasis du Jérid) ont en trouvé un excellent alibi pour voiler leur inaptitude à suivre les étapes du progrès scientifique que connaît actuellement l'agriculture. L'État et le Parti réexamineront sans doute cette méthode au cours de cette année.

The nature of this "re-examination", to be undertaken by the state and by the party, will now in its turn be examined here in the light of what happened during the first months of 1969.

Re-examination of agricultural policy

During the first months of 1969 it seemed to become clear that the Tunisian regime intended to push the cooperative reform to the point where all agricultural land of any importance would be included in producers' cooperatives. Officially, this goal was to be reached before the end of 1969.42 Slightly less officiously, the end of 1970 was sometimes mentioned as a probable time limit. One of the most striking aspects of this determined policy is the suddenness with which it became the official goal of the government.

In No. 15 of the Revue Tunisienne des Sciences Sociales, which carries the date of December 1968 and deals specifically with agricultural modernization and city-countryside relations in North Africa, the articles on Tunisia certainly point very clearly to the necessity of structural reforms, and in particular to the necessity of extending the cooperative system, but they hardly manifest much optimism for the near future. Still the previously mentioned report to the constituent congress of the U.N.C. announced in January of 1969 that the party and the state would encourage the "généralisation du système (coopératif) dans tous les secteurs",43 as this was the most rapid way to achieve the desired goals. But even this report and Bourguiba's own speech at the constituent congress44 are

42. Interview with Mr. Tahar Kacem, Director of the Union Natio- nale de la Coopération, March 3, 1969.
44. COOP, No. 4, pp. 8-9.
slightly less determined in tone and style than the speeches of the national leaders and the editorials of the party's daily newspaper *L'Action* soon became after the beginning of February - perhaps in reaction to the manifest opposition of at least some groups of the people in some of the olive-growing districts in the Sahel. On the 2nd of February, for instance, the *L'Action* editorial spoke of the "nécessité de passer rapidement à l'action pour la mise en place définitive des unités de production agricoles", and on the 28th of the same month the novel term "réforme agraire" was used in a summary of a speech made by the Minister of the Interior. When Bourguiba himself spoke of the structural reforms in agriculture as something obviously necessary at a meeting of the Conseil du Plan on the 17th of March, and when even he used the revolutionary sounding term "réforme agraire" in his speech to the Central Committee of the party on the 22nd - a speech in which he refused to yield to the criticism that the reform had gone "too fast" - then the lingering hopes of some land-owners that they would be able to remain untouched by the reform probably vanished for good. There is a striking contrast in this regard between Bourguiba's firm speech to the Central Committee and, for instance, his New Year's message to the people, delivered less than three months earlier, in which agricultural questions were treated very lightly and certainly without giving the impression of any imminent agrarian reform. It is also interesting to note an interview statement, made soon after his election, by the newly elected director of the U.N.C. to the effect that all agricultural land would not necessarily be organized into cooperatives within the near future. "Tout dépend des études et des résultats attendus de ces études." This interview was printed in the issue for February of the party.

45. In the town of Ouardanine, there were anti-cooperative demonstrations on the 27th of January, 1969, which caused the police to intervene, killing at least one person. See Le Monde, January 29, 1969, and *L'Action*, January 31, 1969.
47. Ibid., March 18, 1969.
49. Ibid., December 31, 1968.
organized students' journal, but it was probably given in January. Its tone is close to that of Bourguiba's speech at the constituent congress, and there is a subtle but clear difference between it and the firm official attitude which developed during February and which was definitely confirmed in March. The interview thus gives another illustration of the rapid evolution set in motion by the U.N.C. congress.51

In spite of the suddenness with which the concrete intentions of the government became clear to the public, it is true - as readily pointed out by Tunisian officials - that "coopération" has been an official policy in Tunisia as long as "Tunisian socialism" has. In fact, cooperation is often said to be the most specific aspect of this "socialism", a point which Bourguiba did not fail to emphasize in his speech to the constituent congress of the U.N.C.52 It is also true that the 4-year plan for the years 1965-1968 mentioned the necessity to "généraliser" the structural reform of agriculture,53 as well as it is true that there seemed to be increasing attention given to producers' cooperatives in the columns of L'Action during the fall of 1968.54 It is nevertheless a fact that the determination of the political leadership to push the conversion of private agriculture into cooperatives during 1969, in the face of strong vested interests and psychological reticence, came as a surprise to many.

It is easy to understand the objective, economic reasons given for the reform, and also the practical reason that 1969 is the starting year for the third development plan, covering the period 1969-1972. These reasons have even been appreciated by the World Bank, if we are to judge from the fact that this economically minded institution has granted an $18 million loan to support the development efforts of the producers' cooperatives

51. In the interview mentioned in note 42, Mr. Kacem emphasized that private farmers no longer were able to get credit in the banks.
52. COOP, No. 4, pp. 8-9.
54. L'Action, November 7 and 26, and December 10, 1969, for instance.
in northern Tunisia. It is quite possible, though, that the loan was given as much on political as on economic grounds, which leads us on to the thorny question of how the new agricultural policy of the Tunisian government is to be interpreted politically. Were the members of the political and administrative elite pushed to take this controversial step, because it appeared necessary to the successful completion of their "historical project" of building a modern Tunisia, or did they rather act in terms of their own interest in maintaining political domination for themselves? Put in this way, the question is almost impossible to answer without resort to arbitrary axioms. But it is worth pointing out that both alternatives assume such tensions and contradictions in the previously existing status quo that the political system was forced to respond vigorously, either with repression or change. A closer look at the nature of the Tunisian producers' cooperatives in agriculture will make it easier to understand, at least partially, the nature of that response.

The agricultural producers' cooperatives in Tunisia

One very recent source of information about the basic organizational and political principles of the Tunisian producers' cooperatives is available in the form of a small manual published by the U.N.C. in February of 1968. This manual describes, in simple words, the aims of the cooperatives, how they are formed, the position of the individual member, how the cooperative is to be run, how the cooperators are remunerated, how the surplus is to be divided, etc. A great deal of information is also available in various reports on particular cooperatives studied by Tunisian sociologists.

57. See, for instance, Alouane, op.cit., and Haraguchi, op.cit.
The U.C.P.-members (cooperators) have varying backgrounds: either they are previous land-owners, small or large, who have put their land in the cooperative more or less voluntarily, or they are people who did not own any land before but have now received shares in their cooperatives based on previous colon, state, or collective land. In the original producers' cooperatives, formed around the farms of the colon, the previously landless members are normally people who used to be employed as agricultural workers by the colon. There is also a distinction to be made between those who live in the cooperative community, thus contributing both land and labor, and those whom we might call absentee cooperators, who have gone away but retain their shares and expect to collect part of the annual profit. In addition to these different kinds of cooperators, who are all members with one vote each in the general assembly, there is also a number of agricultural workers who live in the cooperative and get paid for their work per day. These workers are given priority, as soon as new shares are distributed or if any member would like to sell his.

Like the agricultural workers, every cooperator who takes part in the work of the farm receives an advance payment on the annual income according to how many days of labor he puts in. The remaining profit at the end of the year is then, at least theoretically, distributed as follows:

- 5% legal reserves
- 5% statutory reserves
- 20% funds for financing
- 10% social projects
- 60% to be divided between the owners of shares in the cooperative, each receiving dividends in relation to his number of shares

It does not appear that these rules are always followed very strictly. Even so, however, the principle of retaining private ownership of the cooperatively cultivated land is important, not only from a tactical point of view, but also as a possible

57a In the North there are usually about 80 full members on a cooperative farm of a little over 1000 hectares and in the rest of the country, before 1969, about 260 members on 3300 hectares.

58. Statuts type ..., article 34, and Ce que le coopérateur ..., pp. 15 ff.

source of difficulties in the cooperatives created after the beginning of 1969. This is so, because most of the earlier cooperatives were formed by small-holders and agricultural workers around a state-owned nucleus, usually made up of former colon land. Thus the social and economic differences between the various members of these cooperatives were fairly small. But the nucleus of a typical new cooperative, particularly in the North, is a large Tunisian-owned farm standing for many shares, which means that there will be great economic and social differences between the members. Dividing 60% of the annual surplus between the owners of the land, in proportion to their number of shares, is a way of cementing these differences. It is not certain that a true spirit of cooperation will develop in such cooperatives. On the other hand, it is of course quite possible, technically, to readjust the relation between investment funds and dividends. In this regard, much will depend upon the relative strength in the future of the forces standing for different economic policies in Tunisia.

Concerning the administration and running of the cooperative farms, each cooperator has one vote in the annual general assembly, which, among other things, elects both a small control commission and a committee in charge of the daily management of the farm. The managing committee is called administrative council and its members elect among themselves the president and the vice-president of the cooperative. The president also appoints a director with some professional training who is usually suggested to him by the authorities, either through the channels of the state or those of the regional cooperative union. Although the law also provides for close administrative supervision of the cooperatives by the Ministries of Planning, Finances, and Agriculture, it is fair to say that the formal framework for a democratically functioning system of agricultural management has been set up with the producers' cooperatives. But still it is perhaps in this regard that the difficulties have been the greatest so far.

60. Statuts type ..., chapters III, IV, and V.
61. Loi numéro 63-19 du 27 mai 1963, II:III (Tutelle administrative), articles 41 and 42.
The general reasons for the difficulties appear rather obvious. The cooperative reforms in Tunisia have not been the result of a spontaneous mass movement. On the contrary, they have had to be more or less imposed on a passive peasantry, in addition to facing political resistance from quite influential groups of land-owners and their political allies with vested interests in a "moderate" approach to social change. The Tunisian reformers have thus been caught between two fires: they have not had the active confidence of the groups with an objective long-term interest in radical structural reforms, but neither have they had the confidence of the opposite groups, whose suspicions they have aroused without being willing and/or able to challenge them. The result has been a somewhat vacillating line - at least up to 1969 - and less mobilization of popular energy and capital within the cooperatives than would have been the case, had the reforms had the spontaneous and convinced support of the masses. The passiveness of the cooperators has been illustrated through several sociological investigations of the concrete functioning of already established cooperatives. The following answers, for instance, were received from a sample of forty-four cooperators, selected by chance from a total of 144 active members of two different cooperatives in northern Tunisia: 63

1. Did the cooperators have the impression of taking part in the management of the cooperative?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Had the impression of taking part</th>
<th>44%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not have that impression</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Did the cooperators regard the general assemblies as useful?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>73%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useless</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evasive answer</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62. Cf. also Germann, op. cit., pp. 152 ff., where "basic problems and difficulties" of the cooperative movement are analyzed.

3. Had the cooperators expressed the desire to join the cooperative or had they, in one way or other, been made to feel obliged to join?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Had expressed the desire</th>
<th>Had not expressed the desire</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coop. 1</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coop. 2</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answers to these questions naturally cannot be regarded as anything but illustrations. They have no automatic claim to representativeness. I have still quoted them, as they seem to fit into a general picture, emerging from several reports and investigations, of initial hesitation among the cooperators. But the picture is not without nuances, as the second table above indicates. It should also be mentioned that Zghal has reported some promising data about the positive attitudes of the graduates of the Tunisian École Nationale Supérieure d'Agriculture toward agricultural reform, as opposed to the rather indifferent attitudes of some graduates of the École Nationale de Coopération interviewed by Alouane. The attitudes and the behavior of these official "cadres" toward the peasants are of course of fundamental importance, both as factors influencing the result of the productive work carried out in agriculture and as symptoms of the general spirit in which it is undertaken. In general, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the social distance between the peasant and the "cadre" may often be considerable in Tunisia.

64. In addition to most of the articles already cited and in addition to my own direct impressions, another essay by Attia could also be mentioned: "Structures sociales et écolution en Tunisie Centrale," Revue Tunisienne de Sciences Sociales (Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1966), pp. 5-38.


66. Cf. note 64. This impression is also emphatically conveyed by Germann, op.cit., for instance pp. 138 ff.
The social distance is partly, but not exclusively, a reflection of differences in the general level of life. That level has remained quite low for the majority of the members of the cooperatives constituted before 1969, although it seems fairly clear that most of them have a little more material security now than before. But the great question is of course if the new cooperatives—covering all agricultural land in the country—will be productive and labor intensive enough to satisfy the members at the same time as they generate a re-investable surplus. All factors considered, it should be easier under the new system than under the old one to force a surplus from the previously private farms, thus facilitating the progressive transformation of the entire agricultural sector of the economy and contributing to a greater national share in industrial investments. Short of coercion and sheer repression, the willingness of the peasants to participate with their labor in this experiment is, however, a necessary condition of success. This willingness will, to a great extent, depend upon the material benefits the peasants except to gain in the form of increased income and security for themselves and their families. But the creation of these benefits will, in its turn, be greatly dependent upon the previous existence of that willingness to participate. Some third variable, fairly independent of the other two, will obviously have to be introduced in order to break the circle. This third variable is the political confidence of the peasantry in what is being proposed to them, and their willingness to accept the political elite of the country as their own representatives. Thus, the question just asked can be re-formulated in the following terms: is the "historical project" of the political and administrative elite of Tunisia also the project of the rural masses and can it therefore be expected to mobilize these masses to a sufficient degree? As already pointed out, it is hardly

68. See, for instance, Gemmert, op.cit., pp. 192 f. and Rapport sur le mouvement coopératif, pp. 9 ff.
possible, at the present stage, to give a scientific answer to that question, although it is quite possible, as I have already done, to point to a number of factors which indicate that success is hardly going to come automatically. In a few concluding remarks I shall therefore only try to fit the Tunisian case into the broader framework which was the point of departure for this essay.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, I would like to emphasize again the broader purpose implied in this presentation of detailed facts about Tunisia, although I hope it has been evident all through the essay. That purpose has simply been to illustrate, empirically, two ideas which I believe to be of some importance to the analysis of what is often called political development:

1. The view of the political system as a structured totality of social interactions, constantly responding to and reacting upon negative and positive pressures arising both within the system itself and from relations between the system and its environment. (Cf. p. 7-8).

2. The four-field table on page 8 as an attempt to systematize relationships between two political variables which are highly relevant to the situation of most Third World countries today.

If these ideas are sound, the determined policies with regard to agricultural reform in Tunisia in 1969 can be viewed as an attempt by the political and administrative elite to respond to the tensions and contradictions of the status quo by creating the structural framework for further mobilization of the energy of the rural population and the resources of their land. The limits of the existing structures had been reached, and the

69. Cf. the following quote from Zghal, written a short time before the new reform policies were announced: "La menace non organisée des paysans sans terre sur l'équilibre de la société et sur la stabilité de l'État fait que la légitimité de la pratique du pouvoir dépend de plus en plus de la capacité du pouvoir à remodeler les structures de la société pour intégrer dans le circuit de la production cette masse menacée des paysans sans terre." Zghal, La participation de la paysannerie maghrébine à la construction nationale (mimeographed, Tunis 1968), p. 40.
developmental logic of the situation therefore imposed this
effort to maintain the Tunisian political system in the neighbor-
hood of square (1) in the four-field table, which is intended
to sum up two basic conditions favoring development in the Third
World today and also mutually reinforcing each other. These two
conditions are, as we remember, the existence of a consciously
planned development strategy and the political mobilization of
the people in favor of this strategy. It is, of course, also
implied in this argument that the development strategy is such
that a mobilized and conscious people can be expected to support
it.

It seems fairly safe to conclude that the bold acceleration of
agricultural reform in Tunisia during 1969 can be expected to
give the country another breathing-pause in its race to maintain
the dynamic balance between demands for rapid change and enough
political stability to keep the system together. But the
question remains posed, how far the limits of the system's
social structure can be stretched without qualitative change,
when faced with harsh developmental requirements. The same
question has recurred in slightly varying formulations through-
out this essay, and each time I have repeated that it cannot
be well answered in a scientific manner. Nor would I, personally,
be prepared to attempt a political answer, and this for two
reasons mainly: both because it is a very problematic task and
also - more important - because finding political solutions to
the problems of Tunisia is the task of the Tunisian people and
not that of an outsider.

Let me just add that our difficult and recurring question has
an important international aspect, too, as Tunisia's system is
just a small part of a predominantly capitalist international
political and economic system, which imposes definite limits
upon Tunisian possibilities to penetrate deeper into the
dynamics of square (1) or perhaps even to remain on the border-
line of the square. 70 But, as pointed out in the beginning,

70. Tunisia has had to pay a very high price for her capital
investments in terms of dependence upon the international
economic system. According to Current Economic Position and
Prospects of Tunisia, International Bank of Reconstruction
and Development (mimeographed, Washington 1968), the inflow
these problems are outside the scope and purpose of the present essay. They deserve a detailed treatment of their own.

70. (cont.) of private and public foreign capital into the country in 1967 was estimated at about $152 million, whereas the outflow of capital, in the form of interest and repayments of previous loans, during the same year was as high as about $65 million. Another measure of the dependence upon foreign capital is the foreign debt service ratio (interest plus repayments in percentage of export earnings). According to the same source, this ratio was 23 percent for Tunisia in 1967 and expected to rise to 24 percent in 1968. This places Tunisia among the most highly indebted countries in the world. Only India and a few Latin American countries seem to have a higher debt service ratio, whereas Tanzania, to mention an example of an opposite tendency, managed to keep her ratio as low as 4.6 per cent in 1966 without recourse to export earnings from oil or other natural resources.
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