

BEN BELLA

ON

WORKERS'

CONTROL.

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BEN BELLA SPEAKS ON WORKERS CONTROL IN ALGERIA.

INTRODUCTION BY THE BRITISH AID TO ALGERIA COMMITTEE.

The British Aid to Algeria Committee has much pleasure in presenting this small leaflet to the British public. The speech and the Decree published here mark a new and important step forward in the Algerian Revolution along the socialist path mapped out in the Tripoli Programme of the F L N. It deserves our aid and support.

The British Aid to Algeria Committee will be sponsoring a prominent delegation to the coming International Conference for Technical Aid to Algeria, to be held in Algiers in the last week of May. Similar delegations will be coming from almost every country in Western Europe.

Algeria needs particularly technical aid, technicians, teachers, and other skilled workers. The Conference will launch a Europe-wide campaign for this aim. But to get a delegation there as well as our other numerous tasks we urgently need your financial aid.

Mr Will Griffiths, M.P., has kindly agreed to act as our treasurer. Please send any donations to him at the House of Commons.

Many prominent figures in the Labour Movement, the academic world, and elsewhere are supporting our Committee. BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP IN PARTICULAR.

The Committee will gladly supply a speaker to your organisation. Contact :

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CONTENTS :

Ben Bella speaks on Workers Control in Algeria: Page one.  
Decree dealing with the organisation and management of industrial , mining and artisan enterprises as well as vacated agricultural undertakings: Page four.

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BEN BELLA SPEAKS ON WORKERS' CONTROL IN ALGERIA.

( WE PRINT BELOW THE FULL TEXT OF A SPEECH MADE BY BEN BELLA OVER RADIO AND TELEVISION IN ALGIERS ON MARCH, 29th., 1963, FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE DECREE WHICH WE PRINT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS SPEECH.)

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Working men and women of Algeria, as I speak to you the Official Journal of the Democratic and Popular Algerian Republic is publishing the text of some of the most, if not the most important decisions which the Government has taken since its constitution.

It concerns a decree bearing on the organisation and management of industrial, mining and artisan enterprises as well as vacated agricultural undertakings.

Already last week, more precisely Friday March 23, the Official Journal published a significant text defining the meaning of "vacated properties" once and for all. Those who imagined that the Government of revolutionary Algeria would wait, arms folded, in face of manouvres which aimed at nothing more nor less than liquidating the "vacated properties"; well, they were mistaken.

I have said it before and I repeat it now. It was not we who drove away the former exploiters of this vast sector of the Algerian economy which then became "vacated properties". It was not we who sought to asphyxiate the Algerian economy. It was the former exploiters who left, seeking to make their exodus a way of sabotaging and blocking the possibilities of reconstructing independent Algeria. We had to stem in the briefest possible time the disastrous consequences of this sabotage.

To those who left, the Provisional Government appealed that they return. How many of them returned?

Before anyone starts to invoke great principles, let them tell us clearly how many of them responded to the appeal of the Provisional Government to return and to participate in the reconstruction of the country.

Could the government that issued from the Algerian Revolution stand arms folded before such a challenge? If it had done so, it would not have been worthy of the Algerian Revolution, it would not have been worthy of speaking in the name of the Algerian people. Moreover the working masses of the country, they understood their duty. Almost everywhere, they organised themselves spontaneously and moved in to replace the absconding exploiters. In this respect, the decree of October 22 and November 23, 1962 setting up Management Committees, did no more than ratify a state of affairs which the working masses, in their patriotic and revolutionary spirit, had created throughout the extent of the country.

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Did the decrees of October 22 and November 23, 1962, close the door to those who had left, neglecting their duties toward the land which had nourished them? In no fashion. Revolutionary Algeria has its traditions of generosity. The decrees of October 22 and November 23 1962, left them the possibility of returning and even of being reinstated in their enterprises and undertakings which they had abandoned, but on condition that they gave sufficient guarantees for honest and productive management of the enterprise and on condition of accepting sincere collaboration with the Management Committees.

How many of them returned and agreed to collaborate with the Management Committees?

What national government, worthy of the name, would have permitted the situation to deteriorate? It was high time that Algeria went to work. It was high time that the government which issued from the Algerian Revolution organised the management of the enterprises and undertakings abandoned, betrayed by their former exploiters. The Algerian workers had proved their capacity to fill the gap. It was necessary to give them the opportunity to continue in their efforts.

It then proved to be impossible to organise anything in a sector in which "vacated" could be continually placed in question, in which "vacated" could be made the object of pressure, of bargaining, of the business of influence. It was necessary to definitively settle the question of the "vacated properties". It was necessary that the sector of "vacated properties" be defined, determined, once and for all!

It was in this spirit that we passed our decree of March 18, 1963, dealing with the regulation of the "vacated properties". This decree which the National Constituent Assembly approved in its session of March 26, 1963, barred any appeal from a ruling taken prior to March 22, 1963, that a property had been "vacated". All enterprises of an industrial, commercial, artisan, financial and mining character, all agricultural and forestry undertakings, all the offices, real estate or portions of real estate which, on the date of March 22, 1963, had been ruled to be "vacated", were, once and for all, definitively, "vacated properties" and from this fact their management passed, once and for all, definitively, to the Algerian workers.

From now on we will not speak any more of "vacated properties" but of enterprises and undertakings of self-management.

Once defined as "vacated", once determined as the key sector of the Algerian economy, we must turn, seriously, to the problem of the management of this sector which we wish to use as a "pilot" for our socialism.

Two solutions are offered. Should we place management in the State? Should we place it with the workers?

In fact no hesitation is possible. The principles of self-management of the enterprises by the workers has already been inscribed in the reality of the Algerian Revolution by the spontaneous, conscious action of the labouring masses. The powerful movement of the Management Committees, which multiplied throughout the country, awaited simply legalisation in all its revolutionary extension.

The decrees which the Official Journal of the Democratic and Popular Algerian Republic is publishing today legalises and institutionalises the enterprises of self-management being run by the democratic collectivity of the workers.

With the General Assemblies and the Workers Councils, with the Management Committees, the Algerian workers are taking their destiny in their own hands. It is the workers, in their General Assemblies, who will decide on the plan of development for their enterprises within the framework of the National Plan. It is they, the workers, who will establish, examine and adopt the bookkeeping accounts. It is they who will determine bonuses for output. They will participate in the management of the national funds for investment and the balancing of employment.

Working men and women of Algeria, I would like to stress the national funds for balancing employment.

As you know, there are unemployed, many unemployed in Algeria. There are jobs, many jobs with poor or little pay in Algeria. There is heavy labour which exhausts a person and other work that is, not so bad. There are rich regions, but also poor ones in Algeria.

It is through the national funds for the balancing of employment that the solidarity of the working men and women of Algeria expresses itself. It is through these funds that the workers of the Mitidja and those of the Aures express their fraternity. From the east to the west, from the north to the south, the Algerian workers, through the national funds for balancing employment, express once again the unity of the Algerian nation.

Working men and women of Algeria, I would also like to speak about the Director, who constitutes one of the instruments of your self-management.

This Director will be selected on a moral and professional level. He will be nominated by the State, but this nomination will be submitted to your approval.

Because it is necessary that within your enterprises of self-management someone should represent the national collectivity to which you belong and safeguard its interests. It is necessary that within your enterprises of self-management there should be someone who can serve as a transmission belt between our enterprises and the State, someone responsible for the National Plan of development.

This Director, whose nomination is subject to your approval, this Director is a worker like you and will share your troubles and joys and participate, with you, in the socialist construction of our country.

Make his task easy. Help him. Protect him like one of your own.

Working men and women of Algeria, It is up to you and only you to prove to the world that the Algerian Revolution wants to be and can be in the vanguard of the socialist experiments of our times. Close your ranks, demonstrate to the world that you are masters of your destiny, united, vigilant and conscious of your duties and your rights; organise yourselves so that everywhere, over the whole Algerian territory, the General Assemblies of Workers can join together and that everywhere throughout the Algerian territory, the Management Committees democratically elected, can harness themselves to the exalting task of the socialist construction of our country.

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DECREE DEALING WITH THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
INDUSTRIAL, MINING AND ARTISAN ENTERPRISES,  
AS WELL AS VACATED AGRICULTURAL UNDERTAKINGS.

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The President of the Council, head of the Government of the Democratic and Popular Algerian Republic ... the Council of Ministers agreeing, decrees:

Section I -- FOR THE ORGANISATION OF SELF - MANAGEMENT.

Article 1: The industrial and mining enterprises as well as the vacated agricultural undertakings shall be self-managed by the following organs:

1. The General Assembly of Workers,
2. The Workers' Council,
3. The Management Committee,
4. The Director.

However, by the decision of the President of the Council, certain enterprises or undertakings of national importance can be integrated into the public sector and be managed by public or semi-public organisms, or by national companies.

Sub-Section I. The General Assembly of Workers.

Article 2: The General Assembly of Workers is formed of the permanent workers on the enterprise or undertaking; chosen in conformity with the criteria defined in the articles 3, 4 and 5. The number of its members is defined yearly according to the degree of the development of the productivity of the enterprise or undertaking.

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Page five. Decree...

The plan of development and productivity of the enterprise or undertaking conforms to the National Plan of Development.

Article 3: To be a member of the General Assembly of Workers, a worker must fulfil the following conditions:

- be of Algerian nationality;
  - be over 18 years of age;
  - not to have been deprived of civil rights;
  - to have accomplished effective work for which he presents adequate physical aptitudes;
  - having no other principal resources than the earnings of his work in the enterprise or undertaking;
  - having been present for an unbroken period of at least six months.
- However, permanent workers who left the enterprise or undertaking to take part in the war of liberation are exempted from this last obligation;

Article 4: Seasonal workers cannot be members of the General Assembly nor enjoy the rights or prerogatives attached to this membership.

Article 5: The director after advising the competent services as well as the Council of Communal Enterprise and Self-Management;

- fixes the list of members of the General Assembly of Workers and issues them with membership cards;
- determines annually the optimum number of permanent workers, technically necessary to accomplish the economic programme of the enterprise or undertaking.

Article 6: Each member of the General Assembly of Workers has the right to a single vote. He cannot have a substitute.

The vote must take place by secret ballot. It is necessary that two-thirds of the inscribed members be present for the deliberations of the General Assembly of Workers to be valid.

The decisions are taken by a simple majority of members present.

Article 7: No worker having the right to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly of Workers can be excluded, except for a grave fault

The proof of the grave fault falls upon the Workers' Council or the General Assembly of Workers if there is, no Workers' Council existing.

Article 8: The General Assembly of Workers must be convoked by the Workers' Council or the Management Committee at least once every three months.

It can be convoked extraordinarily on the initiative of one-third of its members.

In the enterprise or undertaking consisting of less than 30 members, the General Assembly of Workers shall take the place of the Council.

Article 9. The General Assembly of Workers:

- adopts the enterprise's or undertaking's Plan of development within the framework of the National Plan as well as the annual programmes of equipment, production and sales;
- adopts rules in regard to the organisation of the work and in regard to the determination and division of tasks and responsibilities;
- approves the books at the end of the accounting period;
- elects the Workers Council where this body is set up.

Sub-Section 2. Workers Council.

Article 10. The Workers Council, chosen from among the members of the General Assembly of the enterprise or undertaking, shall have at a maximum 100 members and at least one member for every group of more than 10 and less than 15 workers.

Article 11. Two-thirds at least of the members of the Workers Council must be engaged directly in production in the enterprise or undertaking.

The conditions for voting are the same as those given in article 6 for the General Assembly of Workers.

Article 12. The members of the Workers Council are elected for three years and their number is renewable each year by one-third.

Article 13. The Workers Council meets at least once a month on the decision of the Management Committee. It can notwithstanding meet in extraordinary assembly on the initiative of one-thirds of its members.

Article 14. The Workers Council:

- adopts the internal rules for the enterprise or undertaking;
- decides on the sale and purchase of equipment in the framework of the plan of development adopted by the General Assembly;
- decides on the exclusion of members with the right of appeal before the General Assembly;
- decides on the admission of new permanent workers, in the limits given in articles 3, 4 and 5 of the present decree. In the case where there is no Council, the director can substitute himself. In the admission of new workers, former combatants or victims of the repression must have priority;
- examine the accounts at the end of the accounting period before their presentation to the General Assembly;
- elect and control the Management Committee.



Sub-section 3: The Management Committee.

Article 15. The Management Committee consists of 3 to 11 members elected by the Workers Council from its own members and of whom two-thirds at least must be engaged directly in production.

The Management Committee designates each year a President from among its members.

The renewal shall be effected each year at the end of the accounting period and by thirds as is laid down for the Workers Councils.

Article 16: The Management Committee assumes the tasks of managing the enterprise or undertaking and particularly:

- elaborates the plan of development of the enterprise or undertaking in the framework of the National Plan, as well as the Annual Programme of the plant, of production and sales;
- establishes the accounts at the end of the accounting period;
- prepares the decisions for the Workers Council;
- decides on the short-term loans in the framework of the annual programme of the plant, of production and sales;
- decides on the method of buying the necessary products to supply primary products, seeds, etc. in the framework of the annual programme of production;
- decides on the method of sales of products and services;
- rules on the problems posed by production, including the engagement of seasonal workers.

Article 17. The Management Committee meets at least once a month and oftener if the interests of the enterprise demand it, on its convening by the President.

It can admit to its meetings, with a consultative voice, members of the Workers Council or General Assembly of Workers concerned with the propositions and suggestions previously submitted to the Management Committee and concerning the functioning of the enterprise.

Article 18. For the deliberations of the Management Committee to be valid, it is necessary that two-thirds of its members, including the director, should be present.

In the case of an equal vote, the president shall have a casting vote.

Article 19. The president of the Management Committee:

- presides and directs the debates of the Management Committee;
- countersigns the minutes of the meetings of the Management Committee, of the Workers Council and the General Assembly of Workers;
- countersigns all financial documents and cheques;
- convokes, on the decision of the Management Committee, the Workers Council and General Assembly of Workers;
- represents the enterprise or undertaking towards third parties, and has the power to fully represent them legally after authorisation by the Management Committee.

Sub-section 4. The Director.

Article 20. The Director:

- represents the State inside the enterprise or undertaking;
- watches over the legality of economic and financial operations of the enterprise or undertaking, particularly;
- opposes plans of development which do not conform to the National Plan;
- applies his veto in the case of non-application of articles 3, 4 and 5.
- opposes the diminution of the initial value of the means of production of the enterprise or undertaking;
- assures, under the authority of the president, the daily functioning of the enterprise or undertaking in applying the decisions of the Management Committee and of the Workers Council, and the conformation with the laws and regulations;
- signs all financial documents and cheques;
- holds the funds in cash with which to effect current payments;
- initials the accounts at the end of the accounting period;
- establishes and stocktakes the fixed and movable stock according to the regulations and procedures laid down by the supervising organism;
- ensures the functioning of the Secretariat of the Management Committee as well as of the Workers Council and General Assembly of Workers, and ensures that the minutes are drawn up and sent in copy to the supervising organism.

Article 21. The director is a member of the Management Committee with a deliberative vote. He can never be president. The Management Committee can charge him with presenting reports to the Workers Council and General Assembly of Workers.

Article 22. The director, who must show the moral and professional qualities required for his job, is nominated and dismissed by the supervising organism, after agreement with the Council of Communal Enterprise and Self-Management. He can only be relieved of his functions as director for a grave fault or obvious incompetence or if the Council of Communal Enterprise and Self-Management retire him with his consent.

SECTION TWO --- THE ORGANISMS OF ENTERPRISE AND SELF-MANAGEMENT.

Article 23. In every commune a Council of Communal Enterprise and Self-Management is created, composed of the presidents of the Management Committees, a representative of the Party, of the UGTA (unions), the ANP (army) and of the administrative authorities of the Commune. In case of necessity, an intercommunal Council can be created in place of the Communal Councils, but without power to substitute itself for more than five Councils.

A representative of the supervising organism may assist at all its meetings.

Page nine. Decree....

Article 24. The Council of Communal Enterprise and Self-Management:

--- aids in the creation and the organisation of organs of management in enterprises and undertakings;

--- interests the workers in the problems of self-management;

--- co:ordinates the activity of enterprises and undertakings of self-management in the Communes;

--- makes and appeal to the supervising organisms for technical and financial aid in the matter of management and control;

--- gives or withdraws its agreement to the director designated by the supervising organism, conforming with article 22 of the present decree

Article 25. The Council of Communal Enterprise and Self-Management elects its president from among the presidents of self-management enterprises and undertakings. It shall meet on the initiative of its president, at least once in three months.

Article 26: The members of the Workers Councils, of the Management Committees of enterprises and undertakings, or of the Councils of Communal Enterprise and Self-Management, cannot receive any special remuneration for the accomplishment of their duties, it being understood that the time devoted to the deliberations and work of these bodies will be considered as normal work time and remunerated on the same scale.

Article 27. The members of the above bodies exercise the functions devolving upon them only in the meetings of the bodies of which they are members and cannot extend the said functions outside the sessions of the said bodies unless expressly mandated by the body to which they belong.

Article 28. Any person who knowingly blocks the functioning of a Management Committee, will be liable to a penalty of five years imprisonment and a fine of from 1,000 to 10,000 francs, or one of the two penalties.

Article 29. The measures of the present decree become effective with its publication and must be put into full effect with a maximum delay of one year.

Article 30. The present decree on the organisation of the self-management of vacated enterprises and undertakings annuls all contrary measures.

Article 31. The Presidential Circulars shall state precisely the methods for the application of the present decree.

Article 32. The Ministers of Justice, the Interior, National Defence, Finance Agriculture and the Agricultural Reform, of Industrialisation and Power, of Labour and Social Welfare, are charged, each in what concerns him, with the application of the present decree which shall be published in the Official Journal of the Democratic and Popular Algerian Republic.

Algiers, 22nd. March, 1963.

(Signed.)

(Translated from ALGER REPUBLICAIN, 30th March, 1963)