



WORK OF ART—Graceful bow of the Italian luxury liner Michelangelo towers above workers at shipyard launching site in Genoa.

Ben Bella Unpopular In Mountains

By MICHAEL GOLDSMITH
Of the Associated Press
FORT NATIONAL, Algeria—Premier Ahmed Ben Bella's popularity has not penetrated into the Kabylie Mountains, the rugged mountain chain east of Algiers inhabited by some two million Berbers.

Crowds of friendly inhabitants gather around any stranger who visits the overcrowded hill-top towns and villages.

All seem anxious to show they had no part in Ben Bella's march to power.

"He wants to be a dictator," said a Berber on Fort National's main street. A dozen bystanders agreed vigorously.

A storekeeper who once drove a taxi in Paris said "You can't rule Algeria by force. We proved it to the French, and if necessary we'll prove it to Ben Bella and his army."

Wilaya 3 in Control
The regular army of Col. Houari Boumedienne, which put Ben Bella in power, has made no attempt to move into the Kabylie Mountains. The tough and disciplined guerrillas of Wilaya (region) 3 hold control there.

Unlike the disorderly Wilaya 4 west and south of Algiers, Wilaya 3 never disintegrated into marauding bands. Acts of violence against European or Algerian civilians are unheard of in the Kabylie since the Algerian war ended March 19.

Fort National was the center of some of the bitterest fighting. Many villages were destroyed, farms were burned and thousands of Moslems were killed or simply disappeared.

Now the French army is seeking a reconciliation. French soldiers are helping with the reconstruction, building roads and repairing the communications system.

'Never Hated French'
"We never hated the French people," said a local Moslem official. "What we hated was the humiliating colonial system and the terror regime of some French troops, particularly the Foreign Legion and the paratroopers."

"We had to fight for our independence and our dignity, but now we have won we hold our hand in friendship to the people of France."

More than 100,000 Kabylie men continue to work in France, supporting their families here with remittances. European settlers, who mostly fled before independence, are beginning to return in small numbers.

Belkacem Krim, chief negotiator of the Evian peace and cooperation treaty with France, is the local hero. Krim, now one of Ben Bella's leading opponents, is respected and admired by the Kabylies, who regard him as their spokesman in the capital.

No Ben Bella Slogans
A 150-mile trip through the mountains failed to disclose any of the "Long Live Ben Bella" slogans common elsewhere in Algeria. The walls in the Kabylie bear slogans praising Krim and "cooperation."

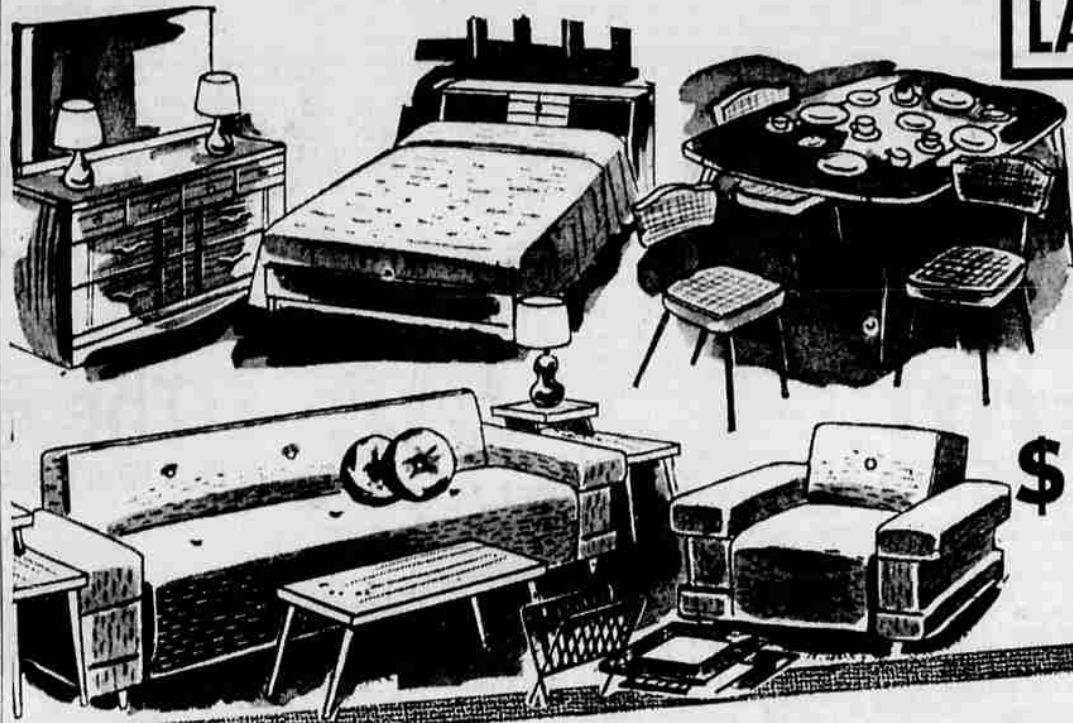
The Kabylies have their own language, distinct from Arabic. Nearly all speak French, but colloquial Arabic is virtually unknown. When a European stranger walks into a cafe buzzing with Kabylie conversation, the talk instantly switches into French. "It is their way of politeness," the cafe owner said.

Boumedienne's army wants to press on with the "Arabization" of all Algeria.

"If they try it here, they'll really run into trouble," said a young man in the cafe. "We are Algerians and we are Kabylies. But no amount of force will ever turn us into Arabs."

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