

#### IV. Camus and the World of His Vision

Camus once noted in his *Notebooks*, “We must serve justice because our condition is unjust, increase happiness and joy because this universe is unhappy. Likewise, we must not condemn others to death because we have been given the death sentence” (qtd. in Bronner 150). Therefore, starting from the absurdity of the world, Camus reaches at a point where the absurd is tried to combated, if not defeated, with the help of human morality. And it is because of this reason that he is often hailed as a moralist. Sartre emphasizes the same aspect of Camus’s philosophy when he writes in the obituary article on Camus’s sudden death:

He represented in our time the latest example of that long line of *moralistes* whose works constitute perhaps the most original element in French letters. His obstinate humanism, narrow and pure, austere and sensual, waged an uncertain war against the massive and formless events of the time. But on the other hand through his dogged rejections he reaffirmed, at the heart of our epoch, against the Machiavellians and against the Idol of realism, the existence of the moral issue. (“Tribute to Albert Camus” 173)

Hence, after having a thorough analysis of the concepts of the absurd and its consequent revolt, the thing that comes forth is that Camus’s purpose, unlike most of the so-called philosophers, is not to provide an abstract theory which boasts of its absoluteness and infallibility, but an ethics of relativity and perfect equilibrium which recognizes its limits and is ever eager to amend itself. Moreover, if only philosophy is the sum total of abstract notions and thoughts contemplated either in seclusion or in comfortably decorated rooms, Camus is not a little bit of the philosopher. He himself claims this fact, “I am not a philosopher, and I know how to speak only of what I

experienced” (qtd. in Bronner 148). He is a man of action who, instead of putting his energies in writing lengthy philosophical treatise like *Being and Time* or *Being and Nothingness*, puts his energy in solving the problems of the times. Further, if he appears to be a philosopher, his philosophy is generated and directed through the happenings or mishappenings of his times. Sartre asserts this fact about Camus and assumes his works as “a literature that tries to portray the metaphysical condition of man while fully participating in the movements of society” (qtd. in Foley 108). No doubt, Camus’s early works appear to deal with the philosophical aspect of human condition in general; his later literary output is committed to the day to day issues of national and international importance. As a writer, Camus feels it the duty of the writers to commit for the day, as he says, “I prefer committed men to literature of commitment. . . . I should like to see them less committed in their work and a little more so in their daily lives” (qtd. in Foley 110). And this commitment to life, whatever and however it was, gives a chance to theorize Camus’s vision and ideology.

Generally speaking, Camus’s later works touch the questions of political violence, the relation between politics and morality, freedom, justice, and democracy, the colonial problem and the Algerian War, and capital punishment. These issues, time to time dealt with by Camus, collectively comprise this chapter.

Though we get a glimpse of Camus’s views about political violence in both *The Rebel* and in the articles published under the title “Neither Victims nor Executioners”; his elaboration on the topic can be extracted from the polemics related to the well-known ideological quarrel between Sartre and Camus. Apart from it, *The Just Assassins* demonstrates the acceptable conditions for the unavoidable political violence.

As has been already discussed in the previous chapter while dealing with “Neither Victims nor Executioners” and *The Rebel*, Camus denounces murder on the part of the real rebel, because murder betrays the primary value of human solidarity on which rebellion is formulated. But Camus is equally conscious, having witnessed the dark years of Occupation, that it is almost impractical and crazy to dream of a rebellion against tyranny without having put blood on your hands. However, there is a great difference between the attitude of Camus and that of his contemporaries, especially Sartre, towards political violence. While Camus never legitimizes violence in any form, Sartre and others give theoretical legitimacy, without bounds, to revolutionary violence. It is because of this difference between ideologies that Camus rejects the Stalinist terror initiated in the name of proletarian revolution which, the Communists argue, will bring human justice somewhere in the future. On the other hand, Sartre clearly declares that he can’t oppose the USSR. Though not a member of the Communist Party, Sartre readily compromises with the concentration camps of USSR for the sake of a remote hope of freedom. He writes, “To keep hope alive one must, in spite of all mistakes, horrors, and crimes, recognize the obvious superiority of the socialist camp” (qtd. in Bondy 26). He even tries to remain aloof about the Soviet camps scandal, as Francois Bondy quotes Sartre from *Les Temps Modernes* of the July 1950 issue: “As we were neither members of the party nor avowed sympathizers it was not our duty to write about Soviet labour camps; we were free to remain aloof from the quarrel over the nature of this system, provided no events of sociological significance had occurred” (25).

Likewise, Merleau-Ponty seems to repeat Sartre as he, highlighting in *Humanism and Terror* that politics is inevitably immoral and violent, declares:

We do not have a choice between purity and violence but between different kinds of violence. In as much as we are incarnate beings, violence is our lot . . . Violence is the common origin of all regimes. Life, discussion, and political choice occur only against a background of violence. What we have to discuss is not violence, but its sense or its future. (109)

Hence, neither Sartre nor Ponty talks about the limits of the revolutionary violence and the due sacrifice which is required in its return for the sake of its sanctity. Camus's stand is quite different from that of Sartre and Ponty. He doesn't deny the undeniable tendency of violence, but defends only such a limited violence which denies its justification. For Camus, the rebel who chooses murder must be ready to sacrifice his own life. The rebel, in unavoidable situations, murders and sacrifices his/her own life not because that sacrifice compensate the murder, but solely to prove that murder is unjustifiable, anti-rebellion, and immoral. In this way, there is a marked difference between Camus's limited defence of political violence and the absolute defence of revolutionary violence claimed by Sartre, Ponty, and Simon de Beauvoir. The reason for this conflict between Camus and Sartre is that – while for Camus one's conduct, action, and means define one's ends, Sartre permits to adopt any means for a just cause. Talking about Sartre's position on this issue, Bondy argues that Sartre “held and holds the view that a state run on revolutionary principles must be judged on the basis of its ‘project’ and its essential need to defend itself against a hostile world . . .” (27). Camus puts this ideological conflict between others and himself in beautiful words in his November 4, 1944 article of the *Combat* and articulates:

We are all in agreement about ends but differ as to means. Rest assured that we all bring a disinterested passion to man's unachievable happiness. But there are some who think any means of achieving that end are proper, while others disagree. We belong to the latter group. We know how quickly means can be mistaken for ends, and we do not want just any kind of justice. . . . The point is to serve man's dignity by means that remain dignified in the midst of a history that is not. (*Camus at Combat: Writing 1944-1947* 102)

However, Camus is not impractical, as he has been targeted to be, about his concept of means and ends. Here also, he talks about a limited and inter-proportional importance of means and ends. Thus, remembering a conversation with Koestler, Camus writes in his *Notebooks*:

The end justifies the means only if the relative order of importance is reasonable – ex: I can send Saint-Exupery [the famous aviator and author of *The Little Prince*] on a fatal mission to save a regiment. But I cannot deport millions of persons and suppress all liberty for an equivalent quantitative result and compute for three or four generations previously sacrificed. (qtd. in Bronner 83)

Therefore, for Camus, the far-fetched just ends can never justify violent means adapted to those ends. Camus sounds like Mahatma Gandhi in his philosophy of ends and means as the concept defining the relationship between ends and means is a prominent feature of Gandhi's ideology. In his thought provoking book, *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi has tried to make the freedom fighters of India realize the fact that to achieve the goal of national freedom, they have to observe the purity of their means and reject

the violence of British Empire as an alibi for more violence on their part as he gives confirmation to it by stating that:

Your belief that there is no connection between the means and the end is a great mistake. Through that mistake even men who have been considered religious have committed grievous crimes. Your reasoning is the same as saying that we can get a rose through planting a noxious weed. . . . The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. (58)

### ***The Just Assassins and the Question of Political Violence***

These difficult questions of the limited political violence and the sanctity of means and ends have been tried to be answered in the play *The Just Assassins*. Published in 1949, the play deals with the ideology and commitment of the military wing of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party. It revolves around the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergei by Kaliayev and his consequent surrender and hanging. Camus calls this group of assassins the ‘scrupulous assassins’, because they do not accept murder enthusiastically but with a painful reluctance. This reluctance is due to their realizing the fact that murder contradicts pure rebellion and their goal of human justice and happiness. John Cruickshank rightly confirms:

Again, in history as in the play, Kaliayev and the other members of the group (apart from the invented character, Stepan, who is said to represent the attitude of such terrorists as Bakunin, Nechayev and Shigalev) sought to redeem murder in pursuit of their political aims by accepting their own execution. Each was prepared to sacrifice his own

life for a life he destroyed. That is why Camus termed them . . .  
 ‘scrupulous assassins’. (Introduction, *Caligula and Other Plays* 26)

As the play goes on, Kaliayev, the hero of the play and the all time model for Camus’s ideas about revolutionary violence, abandons the first attempt of throwing the bomb on the Grand Duke’s carriage, because the carriage carries not only the Grand Duke but also his wife and his young nephew and niece. Kaliayev’s action is justified by all the other members except Stepan who argues in the tone of a totalitarian revolutionary and claims that everything is just, even the murder of innocent children, which brings the success of the revolution closer. However, Kaliayev can’t accept this justification of killing the innocence. But he tries to justify (with certain reluctance) the murder of the tyrant Grand Duke by sacrificing his own life in return. Therefore, in the second attempt, he kills the Grand Duke and makes himself arrested to be executed.

The importance of the play lies at two points. One, when Kaliayev denies killing the children and another, when he sacrifices his own life. While the first point indicates the proportional relationship between the means and the ends; the second one declares the limits of political violence. After the aborted attempt, everybody tries to make it clear to Stepan that Kaliayev did justly by not killing the children. Dora argues that the Organization will lose its power and influence if it forgets its basic ethics and tolerates the idea of “children being blown to pieces by our bombs” (Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* 185). But Stepan abruptly puts forth his totalitarian policy and says, “Not until the day comes when we stop being sentimental about children, will the revolution triumph and we be masters of the world” (Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* 185). Stepan resembles those communist revolutionaries who, in the name of realism and devotion for the absoluteness of history, reject limits

in their revolutionary endeavours. Therefore, when Annenkov argues, “. . . you must not say that anything is justifiable . . . thousands of us have died to prove that everything is not justifiable”, Stepan interrupts him and says, “Nothing that can serve our case should be ruled out” (Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* 186). He violently shouts at all the others and cries out:

There are no limits! What it really means that you don't believe in revolution! . . . No, you don't believe in it – any of you! If you had your whole heart in it, if you were sure that our sacrifices and our triumphs will be the foundation of a new Russia, freed from tyranny . . . how could the death of two children be weighed in the balance against such a faith? Surely you'd feel justified in doing anything and everything that might bring that day nearer . . . so, if you won't kill those two children, it simply mean that you're not sure you are justified . . . so you don't believe in the revolution! (Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* 187)

But Kaliyev sniffs in Stepan the failure of their just revolution and its tendency to turn into an equally tyrant and murderous reality. He stops Stepan and says, “I am ashamed of myself, Stepan, but I can't let you go on . . . I am ready to kill to overthrow tyranny, but behind your words I can see the threat of another kind of tyranny . . . and if it ever comes into power, it will make me a murderer! It's justice that I try to fight for!” (Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* 187).

Further, he rejects the fable of a future justice achieved through the murder of present innocence. Therefore, when Stepan argues that he is ready to murder innocence so that one day innocence will govern universally, Kaliyev cries out:



. . . but I love the men who are alive today . . . who walk on the same earth as I do! It is for *them* that I am fighting, and it is for *them* that I am ready to lay down my life! I shall not strike my brothers in the face for the sake of some unknown . . . distant city. I refuse to add to the living injustice around me for the sake of a . . . dead . . . justice! . . . I want to tell you something that the simplest peasant knows: killing children is a crime against a man's honour, and if the revolution should ever break with honour . . . then I should break with the revolution.  
(Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* 188)

At this point of discussion, it is essential to note the contrary views of Sartre on political violence and the relation between ends and means, made explicit through his play *Dirty Hands* (1948). Like *The Just Assassins*, the play deals with the question of the legitimacy of political violence. But while Camus's sympathies are with Kaliayev, the idealist revolutionary, and not with the realist Stepan, Sartre's sympathy goes to Hoederer, the revolutionary realist, rather than to Hugo, the idealist. Hoederer, articulating Sartre's views, says:

How you cling to your purity, young man! How afraid you are to soil your hand! All right, stay pure! What good will it do? Why did you join us? Purity is an idea for a yogi or a monk. You intellectuals and bourgeois anarchists use it as a pretext for doing nothing. . . . Well, I have dirty hands. . . . I've plunged them in filth and blood. . . . But what do you hope? Do you think you can govern innocently?  
(Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays* 218)

Hence, Camus's revolutionaries are different from that of Sartre's. The Socialist Revolutionaries in *The Just Assassins* never ignore the paradoxical situation they are put into. They realize that murder is unavoidable in the case of tyranny. But

they also realize that it is equally inexcusable. That is why Kaliyev flinches away at the idea of his being accused as a murderer. He embraces his own death so that life and innocence can be triumphed. His death supports not nihilism but the life giving force.

However, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, there appear inconsistencies in Camus's limited defence of political violence. First, the murders committed in self-defence or against a murderous tyranny don't require self-immolation of the murderers. Camus himself accepts this argument in the case of the murders of Nazis, committed by the resisters. Second, life is denied in both cases – both in murder and in self-sacrifice. Herbert Hochberg argues that Camus's theory fails to provide value to life. He says, “. . . on the basis of the absolute value of life Camus has rejected suicide, capital punishment and murder. He ends by acquiescing in certain cases to all three, for the suicide of the just assassin is suicide in the form of self-imposed capital punishment” (qtd. in Foley 94)

In fact, Camus's purpose in eulogizing Kaliyev's self-sacrifice is to make the contemporary revolutionaries (who under the flag of revolution murder innocent masses) realize that murder has its own limit and responsibilities. He suggests that even in the instances of legitimate violence, limits have to be observed so that a just rebellion doesn't degenerate into an unjust one.

Many critics have criticized Camus for his controversial stand on the justification of political violence. Concentrating his argument on the issue Philip Thody remarks in his book, *Albert Camus 1913-1960*:

. . . to recommend that all conscientious rebels commit suicide after they have been obliged to kill in the service of the revolution is rather an impractical suggestion. No political organization fighting against a

tyranny could possibly succeed if its leaders follow Kaliyev's example. (127)

According to such criticism, Camus favours to splatter more blood to wipe the stain of the blood splattered earlier. The horror of this endless sequence of murder and suicide is once realized by Dora. When Annenkov comments that death is the only way for a revolutionary, Dora clearly replies, "Don't say that! If death is the only way, then we have chosen the wrong path. The right path leads to life . . . a life where the sun shines. You can't be cold all the time. . ." (Camus, *Caligula and Other Plays* 220).

Although there might be some reality in the arguments of these critics, yet they are providing one-sided appearance of Camus's theory. In reality, what exactly interests Camus in Kaliyev is not his physical death, but the fact of his willingness to die and to accept the responsibility of the act he commits. This idea of personal responsibility is wanting not only in Camus's times but also in contemporary scenario. While Kaliyev and his comrades can't bear the killing of two children, even the children of a tyrant, to attain a just end, modern revolutionaries don't hesitate in using thousands of innocent children as suicide bombers! Moreover, most of the times, political violence is used, not to attain justice for the people, but to gain political power. For example, the atomic bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki claimed millions of innocent lives. But no responsibility was taken by America and her collaborator countries for this heinous act.

Further, Camus's theory of 'ends and means' has a contemporary relevance too. Today, suicide bombers kill thousands of innocent people in the name of justice and freedom. According to Camus this type of violence is impermissible because it destroys the limits. I would like to add the point that if Camus were alive today, he

would have shocked by the crimes committed on national and international levels in the proxy of revolution. He would never have accepted either American diplomacy about Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran etc. or the Islamic Jihad.

### **Camus on Capital Punishment**

Apart from his conception of limited and scrupulous political violence, Camus further contributed to the question of political violence through his essay on capital punishment i.e. “Reflections on the Guillotine”. Though we can get the glimpse of his ideas about capital punishment from *The Stranger*, *The Plague*, *The First Man*, and some articles published in the *Combat*, it is through this essay that Camus makes a theoretical and final attempt to define his position about death penalty. Published in 1957, the essay is a fine example of Camus’s rejection of the state-sponsored murder i.e. capital punishment, in any circumstances. There is one thing which must be discussed before writing about “Reflections on the Guillotine”. It is the process of transition or the path covered by Camus from the position of a staunch supporter of death penalty to the position of a staunch supporter of its abolition.

It is not that Camus is in a defiant opposition to the capital punishment from the earliest. After the Liberation of Paris in August 1944, the most difficult task for Camus was to answer how to deal with the Nazi collaborators whose policies or actions, directly or indirectly, resulted into innocent deaths. Initially, Camus supported the post-liberation purgation and argued that to pardon the criminals of liberty was to forget or ignore the sacrifices made by the victims. In an article published in the underground *Combat*, Camus clearly writes, “Rotten branches cannot be left attached to the tree. They have to be lopped off, reduced to sawdust, and scattered on the ground” (*Camus at Combat* 4). In another article, “Time for Justice”, Camus argues that his support for immediate trials and capital punishment for the

Nazi-collaborators is not the product of hate but the product of a desire for justice. Francois Mauriac, the fellow-resistant of Camus, rejects the purgation-trials and asks for charity for the collaborators. But, Camus rejects Mauriac's charity for the sake of human justice. Though he accepts that purgation would add more blood in the already blooded France, "pardon seems no better" and "it would look like an insult" to the sacrifices of the French people (*Camus at Combat* 169). Camus further argues that he or Mauriac or anyone else doesn't have the right to decide on pardon. He says, "I shall join M. Mauriac in granting open pardons when Velin's parents and Leynaud's wife tell me that I can. But not before" (*Camus at Combat* 169).

However, towards the end of 1945, Camus had totally changed his mind and later accepted that in their arguments about death penalty, "Mr. Francois Mauriac was right" (qtd. in *Camus at Combat* xiii). The reason for this change was the failure of purge trials. While justice was rapid and severe for lesser crimes, it was painfully slow and lenient in crimes committed by Vichy officials and important collaborators. Later, Camus signed many petitions to save lives of the Nazi-collaborators, not because he didn't hate them but because he hated capital punishment more than the anti-Semites and collaborators. Hence, "Reflections on the Guillotine" is the elaboration and theoretical depiction of Camus's war against capital punishment.

Whenever has Camus talked about execution, whether it is in *The Stranger* or in *The First Man*, he always mentions his father's experience who witnessed an execution. Likewise, "Reflections on the Guillotine" opens with the same experience of his father. The incident occurs in 1914 in Algiers where a murderer is condemned to death. The crime of the murderer is a heinous one – he murders the members of an entire family, including children, before robbing them. Disgusted by the crime,

Camus's father decides to witness the execution. But when he really witnesses the execution, his anger turns into repugnance as Camus reflects:

What he saw that morning he never told anyone. My mother relates merely that he came rushing home, his face distorted, refused to talk, lay down for moment on the bed, and suddenly began to vomit. He had just discovered the reality hidden under the noble phrases with which it was masked. Instead of thinking of the slaughtered children, he could think of nothing but that quivering body that had just been dropped onto a board to have its head cut off. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 175)

It is very important to note that though Camus begins his argument against the capital punishment with a dreadful story capable of diverting anyone's mind against execution and includes in his essay many more horrifying and breath-taking experiences of decapitation, his purpose has never been to emotionally persuade the reader against death penalty. Rather, he wants to take his argument at home by arguing logically and rationally.

Taking his argument further, Camus argues that executions are committed in the name of society while society is kept ignorant, by the officials and the journalists, about the true awfulness of executions. Therefore, instead of doing something good to the citizens, capital punishment "is obviously no less repulsive than the crime" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 176). "This new murder", Camus continues, "far from making amends for the harm done to the social body, adds a new blot to the first one" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 176).

Making a comparison of this primitive rite with that of cancer or any other dreadful disease which people dare not discussing, Camus stresses upon the need to

talk about this so-called “regrettable necessity” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 177). This contrastive attitude of Camus is not the consequence of any fault in Camus’s nature but the result of a responsibility felt by him as a human being. He wants to expose “the obscenity hidden under the verbal cloak” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 177). His purpose is to make the people familiar, imaginative, and thoughtful about the hidden horrors of execution, since it is in their name that death punishment is accepted as a regrettable necessity. Camus is confident that it is because the public is put into ignorance and in dark by the authority that it accepts absent-mindedly the condemnation of a man. But if only people are made acquainted with the brutal mechanism of this state-authorized murder, “then public imagination, suddenly awakened, will repudiate both the vocabulary and penalty” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 177). Victor Hugo’s words are worth quoting here to support Camus’s argument. Hugo writes in his world famous book, *The Miserables*, “One can have a certain indifference on the death penalty as long as one has not seen a guillotine with one’s own eyes” (qtd. in “Last Guillotine Goes on Show”).

The legitimacy of capital punishment, upheld by its proponents, is based on two arguments. First, death punishment has its exemplary value i.e., in Camus’s words:

We all know that the great argument of those who defend capital punishment is the exemplary value of the punishment. Heads are cut off not only to punish but to intimidate, by a frightening example, any who might be tempted to imitate the guilty. Society is not taking revenge; it merely wants to forestall. It waves the head in the air so potential murderers will see their fate and recoil from it. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 179)

Second argument recommending death penalty is the law of reprisal. Camus's arguments against death penalty are based upon a thorough analysis of the two above-said arguments. With the pace of his arguments, Camus concludes, sharing his friend Koestler's conviction, that "the death penalty besmirches our society" and it should be abolished immediately (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 179).

Analyzing the first argument i.e. the exemplary value of death punishment, Camus observes that it fails on its threshold for many reasons. Primarily, society itself doesn't believe in the deterrence argument. Otherwise executions, instead of being acknowledged in hushed and metaphoric language, would have been made more accessible for common masses. To put it in nutshell, society "would exhibit the heads . . . [it] would give executions the benefit of the publicity it generally uses for national bond issues or new brands of drinks" (Camus, "Reflections on the Guillotine" 180). In other words, for the penalty to be truly exemplary, it must be frightening. Further, instead of putting the execution-news in humane phrases, the authorities should publish copies of the stunning eyewitness accounts and breath taking medical reports describing the state of the condemned fellow during and after (not only just after but even after hours of the execution since guillotined body doesn't die immediately but in installments) the execution to be read in schools and universities. Camus even suggests that apart from permitting the public to attend the ceremony of execution, the authorities should put the whole affair on television so that those who are unable to attend the execution can be benefitted through live telecast. He himself provides, in this essay, many terrifying reports given by the eyewitnesses. For example, an executioner's assistant describes an execution he witnessed in the following terms:

It was a madman undergoing a real attack of delirium tremens that we dropped under the blade. The head dies at once. But the body literally



jumps about in the basket, straining on the cords. Twenty minutes later, at the cemetery, it is still quivering. (qtd. in Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 184)

But these types of experiences, which appear capable of horrifying and withdrawing the future murderer from committing a murder, are never introduced openly. Executions are put in newspapers as news with decorated language. Therefore, Camus rightly asks, “Whom do they hope to intimidate, otherwise, by that example forever hidden, by the threat of a punishment described as easy and swift and easier to bear, after all, than cancer, by a penalty submerged in the flowers of rhetoric?” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 185-186).

The second objection made by Camus against the deterrence argument is that it fails to verify the effect of death penalty on the would-be murderers. Since maximum numbers of murders are committed in a state of frenzy or because of an obsession, the exemplary value of execution fails to intimidate a person from the crime. Moreover, the hardened criminals don't change their minds in the fear of execution. However, Camus doesn't deny the fact that the fear of death is the most powerful instinct of human nature. But he is equally confident about the power of passions like love, revenge, honour, pain etc. which have the power to overcome the fear of death. We can approve this argument with the help of instances of 'honour killing' practiced in our society. In India, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan, inter-caste marriages are considered as taboos and, therefore, are not approved by the society. Hence, in most of the cases of inter-caste marriages, in spite of having the knowledge that they will be given death penalty by the court, the relatives of the couple murder them in the name of honour. Honour, for them, becomes a higher value which defeats the fear of death penalty. Moreover, instead of

intimidating criminals for further crimes, executions may arouse a kind of fascination or anger which can motivate further crimes. Referring to the similar point, Roger Hood, Professor Emeritus of Criminology and Fellow of All Souls College, University of Oxford, while addressing a conference on the topic of “Abolition of Death Penalty in India”, organized by the Jindal Global Law School, argues, “Experience tells us that deterrence is an irrelevant consideration in such cases and executions often perpetuate the anger and resentment that fuelled such crimes in the first instances” (Venkatesan).

Denying any relationship between the levels of serious crimes and that of the presence or absence of death penalty, Camus explains that criminal data of those countries that have abolished death punishment and those that haven't, show that “there is no connection between the abolition of the death penalty and criminality” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 192). Whether the guillotine exists or not, crime is still there. “Similarly”, in Camus's words, “murder has been punished with execution for centuries and yet the race of Cain has not disappeared” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 193). Equally, murders have not increased in numbers in those countries which have abolished death penalty. With such evidences at hand, Camus questions the validity of capital punishment on the ground of its intimidation value.

Camus is prepared to answer the question of the conservative proponents of execution. He assumes these proponents arguing against his reasoning as he expresses his resentment in these words :

“Nothing proves, indeed”, say the conservatives, “that the death penalty is exemplary; as a matter of fact, it is certain that thousands of murderers have not been intimidated by it. But there is no way of

knowing those it has intimidated; consequently, nothing proves that it is not exemplary.” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 193)

This uncertainty is enough for Camus to disapprove capital punishment. Moreover, the deterrence argument seems to him working in an irrational sense. The criminal is decapitated not only for his crimes but also for the future crimes which might or might not be committed by other murderers. Camus puts it in this way:

However, the condemned is cut in two, not so much for the crime he committed but by virtue of all the crimes that might have been and were not committed, that can be and will not be committed. The most sweeping uncertainty in this case authorizes the most implacable certainty. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 193-194)

This reasoning reminds us about the execution of Meursault in *The Stranger* whose decapitation is demanded, surely not on the basis of the murder he committed, but on the argument that such a hard-hearted fellow will be a threat for the stability and peace of the society. The prosecutor claims for Meursault’s head and argues, “. . . the wholly negative virtue of tolerance must give way to the sterner but loftier virtue of justice. Especially when the emptiness of a man’s heart becomes, as we find it has in this man, an abyss threatening to swallow up society” (Camus, *The Stranger* 101). Hence, Meursault is executed to teach others (however, it is not sure whether others learn or not the desired lesson) that the persons like him are not allowed to live in the so-called civilized society.

This dangerous contradiction is confirmed not alone by Camus but by the State also which condemns death penalty and accepts with embarrassment its futility and necessity. The Supreme Court judge of India, Mr. A. K. Ganguly, during a

conference termed death penalty as “barbaric”, “anti-life”, “undemocratic”, and “irresponsible” but equally “legal” (Venkatesan).

Camus further claims that instead of having the proofs of its deterrence effects, capital punishment gives ample proofs of its negative and inhuman effects on those who are directly related to it, especially the executioners and the officials. Talking about one such example among the many given ones, Camus argues that sometimes hundreds of people are ready to offer their services as executioners without pay. This shows the deadly instinct aroused by the guillotine in them, which they, if not all of them then at least one or two out of them, will satisfy in the outside world.

In this way, Camus opines that this ghastly exercise, however punishes the culprit in the most frightened way, fails to give the surety of its exemplary value. Instead, it is capable of debasing or deranging those who take part in it. Therefore, the need of the time is to call it by what it really is – “a revenge” (Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 197).

This “law of retaliation” is, Camus claims, “as old as man” and is based on the simple arithmetic that whoever has “done me harm must suffer harm; whoever has put out my eye must lose an eye; and whoever has killed must die” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 198). But Camus rejects this argument since it is not based on reason but on an emotion of violent kind. And law is made not to strengthen such type of emotions which are harmful but to correct them. Justice Ganguly seems to qualify Camus’s argument when he asserts that “sentencing structures should be in consonance with constitutional goals” (Venkatesan). Camus further claims that though the law of retaliation claims to give justice to the victim, decapitation is not simply death. Execution is also murder but of a more terrible kind because it is pre-meditated. Camus writes in the “Reflections on the Guillotine”:

But beheading is not simply death. It is just as different, in essence, from the privation of life as a concentration camp is from prison. It is a murder, to be sure, and one that arithmetically pays for the murder committed. But it adds to death a rule, a public premeditation known to the future victim, an organization, in short, which is in itself a source of moral sufferings more terrible than death. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 199)

For example, in India, the three assassins of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi were kept in prison for more than twenty years with the unbearable burden of capital punishment. During these years, surely they died every day. In this way, Camus is justified in his argument that the devastating fear imposed on the condemned for months or years is a punishment more terrible than death, and one that was not imposed on the victim. Hence, in Camus's words, ". . . a man is undone by waiting for capital punishment well before he dies. Two deaths are inflicted on him, the first being worst than the second, whereas he killed but once" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 205).

However, in stark contrast to Camus, Simon de Beauvoir finds vengeance, such as that exhibited during the purge, as an acceptable response demanded by man. In an essay entitled "An Eye for an Eye", de Beauvoir argues that certain crimes are so horrifying that they dehumanize the very identity or personhood of the victim. She suggests that what makes certain crimes exemplary is that they involve the refusal to identify the very personhood of the victim: a crime becomes "a scandal from the moment that one human being treats other human beings as objects; when by means of torture, humiliation, servitude or murder, he denies their status as human beings"

(qtd. in Foley 104). In such cases, death remains the only penalty that can express the idea that such dehumanization is not acceptable.

No doubt, de Beauvoir seems more reasonable and at a time Camus himself has shared these ideas, Camus's question is different and demands an answer about the pre-meditated dehumanizing condition, not only of the condemned man, but of his family members who also die daily with their dear one, waiting long years for the gallows.

Providing an extra force to his argument, Camus formulates that the law of retaliation can be accepted only when the avenger i.e. the society, which inflicts executions in the name of justice, is absolutely just. Camus notes that among the intellectuals during the purge trials, "seventy five percent of the judges who had presided over [the purge trials] had held office under Vichy" (qtd. in Foley 197). Hence, the society which represents the innocent victim should itself be innocent for having the right to award such a severe punishment. But the reality is that society is far from being completely innocent, and as no one is born as a criminal, society has its own share in creating some of its criminals. Camus goes to the extent of saying that "every society has the criminals it deserves" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 206). Analyzing the correlation between crimes and the paradoxical attitude of the state towards certain serious problems like inhuman conditions of slum-dwellings and alcohol subsidies, Camus makes the state equally responsible for certain crimes. No doubt, he is in no way ready to sympathize or to reduce the culpability of such monsters who brutally kill innocent children; however, he tries to go deep into the roots of the causes for such crimes as he argues:

But those monsters, in decent dwellings, would perhaps have had no occasion to go so far. The least that can be said is that they are not

alone guilty and it seems strange that the right to punish them should be granted to the very people who subsidize, not housing, but the growing of beets for the production of alcohol. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 207)

Camus is justifiable in his argument as most of the crimes, not only in France alone, but in all over the world, have direct or indirect link to alcohol. Hence, he is right when he says that “the State that sows alcohol cannot be surprised to reap crime. [Yet] instead of showing surprise, it simply goes on cutting off heads into which it has poured so much alcohol” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 208). However, Camus’s purpose is not to free the criminal from his/her responsibility or to eulogize his/her innocence. He frankly accepts that certain people are irremediable, beastly, and a permanent danger for every citizen and they must be suppressed. But he equally insists that “death penalty, to be sure, doesn’t solve the problem they create” but merely “suppresses the problem” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 211).

Giving his arguments, Camus declares that the failure of such an irreparable punishment to provide either an exemplary value or a distributive justice is enough for its elimination. The most emphatic argument of Camus against capital punishment is that the state is not hundred percent sure that among all the condemned none is innocent and remediable. This fear of Camus is confirmed recently in a fresh research by the Law School of Colombia University. It is found that the American State of Texas, in 1989, wrongfully executed Carlos Deluna for a crime he was not guilty of. The defence team’s plea to the prosecution “that the real offender was another man who bore close physical resemblance to the accused went unheard” (“Unpardonable Sin”). In a recent example, Tory Davis in Jackson, Georgia was executed in September 2011. However, there was no clear evidence of his innocence but there

was too much doubt also. Till his last moment Davis claimed himself innocent. While over one million people from all over world plead through a signed-petition on Davis's behalf, still the court dismissed the petition. It even rejected Davis's offer of a polygraph test. Such instances put the State into a paradoxical situation, because the State, knowingly or unknowingly, claims the life of an innocent person in the name of securing innocence. This possibility of such 'miscarriage of justice' as it is often termed is enough for Camus to justify the abolition of capital punishment.

Camus admires the initiatives of England and Belgium where the possibility of error in judgement has been considered as enough for the abolition of death penalty. Camus furthers his argument and asks, "If justice admits that it is frail, would it not be better for justice to be modest and to allow its judgements sufficient latitude so that a mistake can be corrected?" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 216-17). However, the State desires to forgive or forget the mistake made by it on the grounds of the weakness of human nature, but denies the profit of that same weakness of human nature to the accused. This is not justice, since justice means the recognition of solidarity felt by all humanity in its happiness as well as in its wretchedness. Thus, Camus rejects capital punishment on the philosophical grounds as well. He seems to argue that the absurdity of human condition is common for all and the sole reason for this absurdity is the presence of the all powerful death. And since humanity finds its solidarity in its revolt against death, it appears paradoxical to Camus that the State is killing its members in the name of the same solidarity.

Another argument given by Camus against this irreparable punishment is its snatching the chance of any amendment on the part of the accused as he gives vent to it:



Such a right to live, which allows a chance to make amends, is the natural right of every man, even the worst man. The lowest of criminals and the most upright of judges meet side by side, equally wretched in their solidarity. Without that right, morality is utterly impossible. . . . But pronouncing the definitive judgment before his [the criminal] death, decreeing the closing of accounts when the creditor is still alive, is no man's right (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 221).

Camus continues with the argument that at least today, in the midst of twentieth century, society is not absolutely good. He is absolutely right in arguing that in our times, State crimes have surpassed individual crimes. Take the example of India. Till today, from the date of Indian independence, millions of people have been either murdered or deported in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, the Eastern states, and the Naxalite-affected states. No doubt, the State has political reasons, logic, and historical realism on its side to prove itself innocent, but human logic disapproves its criminality. In the light of rational and logical opinion, such a State loses its right to give judgement on the lives of its accused.

Camus concludes his essay with repeating the ideas from "Neither Victims nor Executioners" and stresses that we should refuse the absolute law and the irreparable judgement of capital punishment for the advancement of the society. He expects that "in the unified Europe of the future the solemn abolition of the death penalty ought to be the first article of the European Code we all hope for" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 230). Camus's dream is fulfilled today as "the European countries have done away with capital punishment and the abolition of capital punishment is now a condition for membership of the European Union" (Balakrishnan). At present, ninety

eight countries of the world have abolished this inhuman practice for all crimes, forty seven countries haven't used it for last ten years, and seven countries have abolished it for all crimes except under exceptional circumstances such as war-time crimes. However, forty two countries including U.S.A., China, Japan, India and others still practice death penalty as a punishment.

One thing worth noting here is that Camus is not on the devil's side. He repeats, ". . . I do not believe, nonetheless, that there is no responsibility in this world and that we must give way to that modern tendency to absolve everything, victim and murderer, in the same confusion" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 230-31). He knows that such an attitude will lead towards a society where only brutality will reign. Therefore, the need of the times is to make such laws that help men to purge themselves without being crushed eternally. Camus sounds like Mahatma Gandhi who has termed the prisons not prisons but remedial homes where convicts should be treated with human tenderness and love that have the power to change even the hard-hearted murderer. Therefore, he expresses his faith in the reformatory theory of justice.

Camus has been criticized in a recent article "Further Reflections on the Guillotine", written by Ronald J. Allen and Amy Shavell. Allen's purpose of the article is to show the other side of the picture. Criticizing Camus, he argues, "Truth is both stranger and crueler than fiction, and reading about some of my client's inhuman acts left me unclear as to what it meant to be human . . ." (625). Allen, mechanically, tries to justify the capital punishment and makes certain points. To Camus's argument against death penalty because of the risk of innocent executions, Allen talks in the terms of probability and says, "Even if some innocents are executed, it would take but a small deterrent effect to overwhelm those wrongful deaths with the savings of

innocent lives – namely, those individuals who are not murdered because of the deterrence of the crime of murder” (627).

But how can Allen forget that the deterrent effect is simply based on probability factor which might have chances of failure, while the execution of the innocents is a reality? Tabish Khair makes a genuine effort to bring this argument at home when he writes:

Perhaps the strongest *legal* argument against capital punishment remains the one first made by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Sephardic scholar, Moses Maimonides, who noted that it is better to acquit a thousand guilty persons than to put a single innocent man to death. Given the history of prejudices that have influence and still effect verdicts in even the best of legal courts, this argument is hard to dismiss. (3)

In his criticism against the abolition of death penalty, Allen further argues that even if there is no deterrent effect of capital punishment, a decision not to execute the culprit may result in the deaths of other innocents. To prove his point, Allen gives the example of a prison inmate Edward Montour Jr., who, while serving his punishment for murdering his eleven week old daughter, beat a guard to death and claimed:

The court knows now little I value human life. . . . It is self-evident that I would kill again if another opportunity was afforded me. I am anti-social, homicidal and without remorse and will remain a potential threat. The state can kill me, I don't care. (qtd. in Allen 628).

But Allen is forgetting that Camus is never in the favour of letting free to such criminals. Moreover, every murderer is not like that and can be improved with love and human care. And even if an accused shows no signs of improvement or remorse, he/she can be put in solitary confinement with rigorous penalty. I want to add the

recent case of Ajamal Kasab, the only survivor-accused in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, in which about one hundred and seventy people were killed and at least three hundred people were injured. The Supreme Court of India, considering this terrorist attack among the rarest of rare cases, has pronounced death punishment for Kasab. No doubt, Kasab's crime is unpardonable and arouses nothing but contempt and disgust. But, it is also true that his execution can never deter any future terrorist attack, because Kasab is already dead for himself and for his masters. Moreover, his death will make him a martyr in the eyes of the terrorists. Therefore, the need of the time is not to execute him but to put him in solitary confinement with rigorous penalty.

To conclude, it can be opined that a murder is a murder whether committed by an individual or by the State. It does never have any justification. Those who are favouring this dehumanizing act are forgetting the fact that there is no humane way to kill a human being. And we Indians, by giving way to death penalty, though only in the rarest of rare cases, are forgetting Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy that an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.

### **Imperialism and the Algerian Camus**

In addition to the vision of a world free from both the authorized political violence and the state-sanctioned murder, Camus's vision also includes a just and free world – free from the colonial clutches and national or international dictatorship. He dreams for a world in which each nation, whether small or large, enjoys its dignity and sovereignty without being subjugated or exploited by other countries. Camus's articles published in the *Combat* repeatedly deal with these issues.

Camus, again and again, makes an appeal for international peace that can be achieved only through international democracy. He can't tolerate even a single instance of totalitarianism. It is because of this reason that he criticizes the world

apathy, and especially French apathy, towards the problem of Spain. He questions how the French government, which has witnessed four dark years of Fascist dictatorship, can tolerate the same in its neighbourhood and maintain diplomatic relationship with the dictator, General Franco, in the name of political realism? Emphasizing this paradox, Camus writes in his article:

At a time when free men everywhere are celebrating the defeat of fascism, one has to ponder the paradox that the entire Iberian Peninsula remains under fascist rule, while the rest of the world appears to regard this as natural. . . . All people of all nationalities who rejected Munich and Hitler reject Franco. If it is true to say that total war must inevitably lead to total victory, then we are bound to say that our victory will not be complete as long as Spain remains enslaved.

(*Camus at Combat* 220-21)

Moreover, Camus's play, *State of Siege*, which deals with the totalitarian tyranny, is set in Spain. When Gabriel Marcel questions this in his article "Theater: Albert Camus's '*State of Siege*'", Camus bluntly responds him in his article "Why Spain?". He refutes Marcel and says:

Why Spain? I confess that if I were you, I would be rather ashamed to ask it. . . . Why this place, where for the first time Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco demonstrated to a world still asleep amid its comforts and its miserable morality what totalitarian methods were like? . . . Why Spain? Because a few of us refuse to wash that blood from our hands.

(*Camus at Combat* 298)

Hence, Camus strictly desires that the world which despises Hitler and Mussolini must reject Franco as well. Dictatorship must be replaced for democracy

because “democracy is the social and political exercise of modesty” (Camus, “Democracy Is An Exercise in Modesty” 123).

One thing which is noteworthy here is that democracy for Camus is not merely a parliamentary body elected by people and which thinks itself infallible, self-righteous, and faultless. There is no difference between totalitarian dictatorship and such democracy, since both aggravate human suffering. Camus claims, “For my part, I’d like to state that their minds are filled with pride and that they are capable of achieving everything, except the liberation of mankind and real democracy” (“Democracy Is An Exercise in Modesty” 123). True democracy, on the contrary, can’t be based on absolute ethics, whether political or philosophical. True democrats realize their limitations. They know that “they don’t know everything”, and refuse to aggravate the misery of others “in the name of a theory or a blind messianism” (Camus, “Democracy Is An Exercise in Modesty” 123-24).

As has been earlier mentioned, Camus dreams of having the sway of such democracy on the both national and international levels. But he realizes that in the present international political reality, such a dream can never be realized. Confronted with the reality of veto power limited to five countries i.e., U.S.A., Russia, China, England, and France, Camus contemplates that this is another facet of imperialism which ends every chance of international democracy. He writes, “The world would in effect be ruled by a directorate of five powers” (*Camus at Combat* 172). And this is what happening today. The veto powers like America, France, and England are using their dictatorial powers to impose their decisions on other countries and are enjoying a permanent monopoly over the world politics. Rejecting, and openly castigating this unfortunate reality, Camus appeals France to be no part of such a shameful grandeur. But such just voices are rarely heard in this selfish world.

The second step, which Camus wants every nation to take to ensure international democracy, is the total elimination of imperialism as he says:

The best course open to us is to plead unremittingly in favour of an international democracy that will harm the interests of no one while fostering solidarity among nations. That is how we can best serve the cause of world peace, the precariousness of which we sense even more acutely than before, if such thing is possible, now that the war is over.

*(Camus at Combat 239)*

However, it is both surprising and unfortunate that such a lover of international democracy is often observed and criticized by many as the sympathizer of French imperialism in Algeria. Many critics, including Camus's contemporaries and some post-modernists, find him prejudiced, partial, and impractical in his dealings with the Algerian war for independence. But, before going through the Algerian problem and Camus's response to it, it is very essential to be acquainted with the relations of Camus with Algeria. Camus belonged to the class of the millions of *pied-noirs* of Algeria who were mostly the descendents of the poor and dejected French refugees, settled in Algeria after the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. Hence, like many other *pied-noirs*, Camus's relation with Algeria was not that of a colonizer but that of a son. Like his parents and two of his grandparents, Camus was Algerian by birth and his love for Algeria was not based on economic or political grounds but purely of an emotional basis as is found between a child and a mother. At a place Camus wrote, "I have had a long affair with Algeria, which will undoubtedly never end, and which keeps me from being completely lucid about it. . . [Algeria] is my true country" (qtd. in Boudraa 187). Camus never differentiated between himself and the natives, and he

befriended with both the *pied-noirs* and the natives. Talking about the same, he writes:

As for me, I have passionately loved this land where I was born, I drew from it whatever I am, and in forming friendships I have never made any distinction among the men who live here, whatever their race. Although I have known and shared every form of poverty in which this country abounds, it is for me the land of happiness, of energy, and of creation. And I cannot bear to see it become a land of suffering and hatred. (Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 140-41)

Further, in spite of having a French citizenship, the economic condition of most of the *pied-noirs*, including Camus's family, was no better than that of the native Algerians. Camus's father, who was killed in the First World War in 1914, was a cellarman and his mother an illiterate charwoman. However, one can argue that the condition of the maximum of the Arabs and the Berbers was still worse than the poorest of the *pied-noirs*. Still, one can't deny the fact that Camus was the first French who exposed the reality of the French colonialism and the despicable condition of the native Algerians.

From 1935-1937, Camus was the member of the Communist Party in Algeria and brought forth the local Algerian problems. Moreover, the basic reason of Camus's joining the Communist Party was its anti-colonial and anti-Fascist propaganda. But in reality, it forgot the first mission to strengthen the second. Therefore, to the distress of the Communist Party in France, Camus objected "the party's association (in the Popular Front movements) with the Radical Socialist Party, which was so clearly a bastion of colonialism" (Lottman 156). Further, Camus fully supported the Blum-Viollette bill, introduced in the French parliament by Blum's Minister of State,



Maurice Viollette. If passed, the bill would have provided voting rights and French citizenship to at least two lakh Moslems who were either war veterans or educated. This was the first initiative towards assimilation of the native Algerians with French Algerians. But this initiative totally failed as the French Algerians opposed the bill and the bill never came into existence. This reaction of the *pied-noirs* disillusioned the moderate Muslims who favoured assimilation, and therefore, strengthened their sentiment of a separate Algerian Nation. In such dubious situations, Camus was with the Moslem nationalists and was expelled from the party for the same reason. He defended his dissident position by arguing that the party failed to understand the Algerian problem and let its people being oppressed by colonialism.

Apart from his political affair with Algerian problem, Camus gave voice to the wounds of Algeria in his journalism. After the expulsion from the party, Camus joined the socialist newspaper the *Alger republicain* in 1938. In June 1939, Camus gave full coverage and support to Sheikh El Okbi, who was being tried for allegedly involved in the assassination of the Mufti of Algiers in 1936. Finally, El Okbi was acquitted of the charge. Amar Ouzegane, the FLN fellow-nationalist, observed that “by obliging the government to back down by releasing El Okbi, Camus participated in a just anti-colonialist combat, and was therefore not a dupe” (qtd. in Lottman 198).

The most outstanding contribution of Camus to the Algerian emancipation is his series of articles depicting the destitution the Berbers of the Kabylie region of Algeria. Published between 5<sup>th</sup> June and 15<sup>th</sup> June 1939 under the title “Miseries of the Kabylie”, Camus’s articles present a heart-rending account of the dehumanized condition of the Kabylies. Camus records, “In Tizi Ouzou I saw children in rags fighting with Kabyle dogs over the contents of a rubbish bin” (qtd. in Guerin 82). His reports carry on the horrifying wretchedness of the region and how the inhabitants

were dependent on charity, grass-roots, and herbs for their mere survival. Although, the cause of their problems was overpopulation, Camus quickly enquires about the root cause of their miseries i.e. colonialism. He writes, “Here was an over-populated region which had to import wheat but had no way to pay for it; its best lands had long ago been taken over by French settlers (qtd. in Lottman 198). Giving the factual depiction of the reality, Camus further writes, “At least fifty percent of the population are living on grass and roots. . . . At the school in Azerou-Kollal, 35 of the 110 pupils have only one meal a day. . . . Tizi Ouzou has one local doctor for 45,000 inhabitants” (qtd. in Guerin 82).

Towards the end of his articles, Camus asks “Is it to be a bad Frenchman to expose poverty in a French territory?”, and also tries to answer this question by saying, “For if colonial conquest could ever find an excuse, it would be in the extent to which it helps the conquered peoples to keep their personalities” (qtd. in Lottman 199). Soon after, the Second World War was declared and the French government banned both the PPA (People’s Party of Algeria) of Messali Hadj and the Algerian Communist Party. Camus protested the prosecution of the PPA in the *Alger republicain*, because the government’s prosecution paved way for the separatist instincts of the Algerian nationalism. Camus proposed:

It is surprising to see the blindness of those who prosecute these men, for every time the PPA has been attacked, its prestige has grown a little more. The rise of Algerian nationalism is accomplished by the persecutions carried out against it. . . . The only way to stop Algerian nationalism is to get rid of the injustice which gives birth to it. (qtd. in Lottman 205)

Consequently, the French authorities did nothing to eliminate the poverty of the Moslems, but shut down the newspaper.

The similar kind of Camus's concern for the Algerian people can be witnessed in his *Combat* articles published within May 13, 1945, and May 23, 1945. These articles were instigated from the bloodshed splattered in the Setif and Guelma massacres. The problem rose from the French government's decision to exile the Algerian nationalist leader Messali Hadj. It was very disheartening as on one side, France was celebrating its victory over Nazism, on the other side, it was suppressing the nationalist sentiment of the Algerian people. In their protest against the partial attitude of French Government, the Algerian nationalists marched across Algeria. Unfortunately, the protests in Setif and Guelma turned violent, resulting in the deaths of about one hundred Europeans. But instead of pacifying the situation, the French army responded with merciless repression, killing about seventy five thousand Muslims. Though, the metropolitan France seemed to be uninterested in the bloodshed carried out by the French government, Camus could not tolerate this injustice and gave full coverage to the issue in his *Combat* articles.

Camus's tone in these articles is same as is witnessed in his Kabylie articles. The first article i.e., "Crisis in Algeria", notes that contrary to the prejudiced outlook of the French metropolitans, Algeria exists as a reality as Camus depicts:

. . . the Arab people also exist. By that I mean that they aren't the wretched, faceless mob in which Westerners see nothing worth respecting or defending. On the contrary, they are a people of impressive traditions, whose virtues are eminently clear to anyone willing to approach them without prejudice. (*Camus at Combat* 200)

He further makes it clear that the hungry people of Algeria are demanding nothing but economic, political and social justice, and France has to provide it, since it has experienced the same miseries from the Nazis. Blind repression against their demands will not work out. Therefore, “let us try to understand the reasons for their demands”, urges Camus, “and invoke on their behalf the same democratic principles that we claim for ourselves” (*Camus at Combat* 201). Trying to go into the depth of the Algerian crisis, Camus argues in his next article, “Famine in Algeria”, that the most “obvious crisis afflicting Algeria is an economic one” (*Camus at Combat* 201). He exposes the colonial reality of French administration in Algeria and claims that compared with a million Europeans, the eight million native Algerians have been devoid of their land, happiness, and justice. He asks France for immediate measures to curb the inhuman condition of its fellow human beings. Camus writes, “To quell the cruelest of hungers and heal inflamed hearts: that is the task we face today. Hundreds of freighters filled with grain and two or three measures of strict equality: this is what millions of people are asking of us. . .” (*Camus at Combat* 205).

It is important to point out that Camus doesn't talk merely about economic reforms, but political reforms as well. He frankly claims that the French policy towards Algeria is “distorted by prejudice and ignorance” and fails all the attempts of assimilation which once were favoured by almost all the native Algerians (*Camus at Combat* 207). He reasonably claims that only political justice and equality can bring Algerian crisis to an end. Camus goes on to speak very positively about the nationalist leaders like Ferhat Abbas, Aziz Kessons, and their nationalist political party which rejects the assimilation offer of the French government as “an inaccessible reality . . . and a dangerous instrument designed to serve the interests of the colonization” (*Camus at Combat* 213). These leaders demand nothing less than recognition of

Algeria as a free and democratic nation limited to France by ties of federalism. However, Camus laments that the French government, instead of working for such a reasonable and modest proposal, chooses “to respond with imprisonment and repression” which is nothing but stupidity (*Camus at Combat* 214).

Finally, Camus emphatically blames Europe as “it has managed to produce the longest, most terrible reign of barbarism the world has ever known”, and declares that it can save itself only by providing justice, liberty, equality, and all the democratic rights which it itself enjoys (*Camus at Combat* 216).

In addition to these articles, Camus never fails to speak and work for the Algerian problems. In 1951, he made an affidavit in defence of fifty six Algerians being tried for their connections with Messali Hadj’s more radical party, MTLD (*Mouvement pour le Trioumphe des Libertes Democratiques*). On July 14, 1953, during a demonstration by supporters of the Messali- group who were demanding the liberation of Messali Hadj, the French police fired on the group. This clash ended with seven Moslems dead, forty four wounded, and eighty two policemen injured. Once more, Camus sent a protest letter in the newspaper *Le Monde*. He protested the charges put against the Moslems, since violence had been directed not against the French police but against the North Africans “in a racism which dares not say its name” (qtd. in Lottman 526). Camus demanded an inquiry to determine who in the government had ordered the police to open fire. But such types of pleas were never heeded by the French government which ultimately resulted into the arm-insurrection of the FLN (National Liberation Front of Algeria) against the French rule.

In 1955, when the problems regarding Algeria aggravated, Camus contributed two articles in *The Express* and suggested for round table negotiations involving all factions in the conflict. He urged for the dismissal of the then Algerian government

and proposed for fresh and fair elections in which Algerians should be given legitimate representation. He further favoured the democratic identity of Algeria, related to France only in the terms as an autonomous state is related to a federation. By the time, the FLN started using violence, not only against the French Algerians, but against the moderate Algerian nationalists also. In August 1955, the FLN massacred “more than one hundred European Algerians and moderate Algerian nationalists in the town of Philippeville” (qtd. in Foley 153). Repeating its Setif-response, the French army killed the Algerians in a disproportionate and indiscriminate way. These happenings shook Camus from within and he came forth with his peaceful propaganda of civilian truce to solve the Algerian problem. In his open letter, “Letter to An Algerian Militant”, written in October 1955, to his friend Aziz Kessons, Camus declared, “Believe me when I tell you that Algeria is the cause of my suffering at present as others might say their chest is the cause of their suffering” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 126). He reemphasized that the French Algerians and the Arabs were not enemies and they were “condemned to live together” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 127). Denouncing violence and separatism instigated by both sides, Camus claimed that such activities were suicidal. He talks about reforms and dialogue to solve the problem because “war is a deception and . . . bloodshed, if it sometimes makes history progress, makes it progress towards even greater barbarism and misery” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 128).

The most significant intervention of Camus in the Algerian conflict is his idea of civilian truce. He suggests that all sides in the conflict should agree not to harm the civilian population. Camus understands very well that it is not that the common Algerians, including both the *pied-noirs* and the natives, don't want to live together peacefully; but it is they who are always targeted for the selfish political ends of a

few. Therefore, to protect the innocents on both sides, a civilian truce is must. He writes in *The Express*: “. . . a truce until a solution is finally arrived at, a truce to the massacre of civilians on both sides! As long as the accuser does not show an example, the accusations are vain . . . there is no other solution but that of which we speak. Beyond it, there is only death and destruction” (qtd. in Foley 156).

In the meantime, a group of both Europeans and Muslims in Algeria, such as Charles Poncet and Amar Ouzegane, framed itself. Concerned by the escalating violence in Algeria, this group decided to ask Camus to write its manifesto regarding the civilian truce. As a result, a meeting in Algiers was held in February 1956 in which Camus was the keynote speaker with his ideas entitled as “Appeal for a Civilian Truce in Algeria”.

The ideas expressed in this lecture have the same tone of reconciliation and peace which have been witnessed earlier. Camus’s purpose, here, is not to judge the righteousness of the political demands of either of the camps, but to appeal for “a truce insofar as innocent civilians are concerned” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 132). He explores his purpose and says:

What do we want? Simply to get the Arab movement and the French authorities, without having to make contact or to commit themselves to anything else, to declare simultaneously that for the duration of the fighting the civilian population will on every occasion be respected and protected. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 134)

The reasons for this truce are both humanitarian as well as practical. The humanitarian argument, given by Camus, is that whatever or however great a cause is, “no cause justifies the death of the innocent” (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 134). The practical purpose of the truce is to initiate or frame a platform for fruitful

discussion. Camus argues that though the situation in Algeria is bleak, yet there are people who still hope for a peaceful reconciliation as he articulates:

On this soil there are a million Frenchmen who have here for a century, millions of Moslems, either Arabs or Berbers, who have been here for centuries, and several vigorous religious communities. Those men must live together at the crossroads where history put them.  
(*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 136)

Camus realizes that the path of his appeal is not so much optimistic amidst the bloodshed; however, he suggests that his appeal can lessen the number of innocent deaths. He claims:

. . . we can propose, without making any change in the present situation, that we refrain from what makes it unforgivable – the murder of the innocent. The fact that such an agreement would unite French and Arabs . . . would give it a serious chance of succeeding in both camps. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 137-38)

But as can be expected from the selfish colonists and politically stimulated militants, neither the French officials in Algeria, nor the FLN showed any serious interest in Camus's appeal. This failure results in Camus's decision to withdraw himself from the polemical discourse on Algeria. But before quitting this all-destructive battlefield, Camus made his final statement about the Algerian question in his article "Algeria 1958", and "Preface to Algerian Reports", both published in 1958. Almost repeating his arguments about Algeria, Camus disapproves both of the extremist camps and writes:

But I have long been alert to Algerian realities and cannot approve, either, a policy of surrender that would abandon the Arab people to an



even greater misery, tear the French in Algeria from their century-old roots, and favour, to no one's advantage, the new imperialism now threatening the liberty of France and of the West. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 111)

This doesn't mean that Camus desires the status quo. On the contrary, he dreams for an Algeria where equality, liberty, and fraternity prevail. He talks about integration and federalism instead of providing Algeria the status of an independent Muslim nation. Camus supports the political, economic, and social democracy for Algeria which should be given by the French government. Otherwise, "Algeria will be lost" forever with the dreadful consequences for both the Arabs and the French (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 153). This is the last warning given by Camus before resuming his silence. However, as is witnessed through the negative responses of both the FLN and the French government, Camus has no option but to keep mum on the Algerian affair. Therefore, when targeted by many metropolitan intellectuals for his silence on Algeria, Camus rebuts them in the "Preface to Algerian Reports" and claims, "I decided to take no further part in the constant polemics that have had no result other than to harden the uncompromising points of view at loggerheads in Algeria and to split even wider a France already poisoned by hatred and sects. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 112)

He further comments that it is the duty of a writer to estimate and weigh the pros and cons of one's articles in such furious times. Giving a little personal touch in his arguments, Camus writes:

In my case, if I am aware that in criticizing the course of the rebellion I risk justifying the most brazen instigators of the Algerian drama, I never cease fearing that, by pointing out the long series of French

mistakes, I may, without running any risk myself, provide an alibi for the insane criminal who may throw his bomb into an innocent crowd that includes my family. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 113)

Camus has been criticized as impractical and partial by many writers, including his contemporaries as well as by some post-colonial writers, for his stand on the Algeria affair. Of course, the most eloquent critic of Camus among his contemporaries is Sartre. Sartre justifies the FLN violence which, he thinks, alone can end all the miseries of Algeria. Therefore, he seems to allude to one of Camus's *The Express* articles, "Terrorism and Repression", in which Camus argues that both the FLN terrorism and the French repression are "purely negative, doomed to pure destruction, with no future but an intensification of both fury and folly" (qtd. in Foley 161). Sartre's most eloquent criticism of Camus's proposal of civilian truce can be discerned from his speech made at a rally, "for peace in Algeria", published in the March-April 1956 edition of *Les Temps Modernes*, under the title "Colonization is a System". Though Sartre nowhere makes a direct reference to Camus, it is self-evident that his target is Camus when he discusses the "neocolonialist mystification" and mocks the economic, social, and psychological factors which the so-called neocolonialists consider as the root causes of Algerian conflict. Beginning his lecture with a warning to the Algerian natives, Sartre says, "I would like to put you on your guard against what might be called 'neocolonialist mystification'. Neocolonialists think that there are some good colonists and some very wicked ones and that it is the fault of the latter that the situation of the colonies has deteriorated" (*Colonialism and Neocolonialism* 9). In contrast to this view, he robustly argues that colonialism is a system in which, even "the purest of intentions, if conceived within this infernal circle, is corrupted at once" (*Colonialism and Neocolonialism* 10). Rejecting the

neocolonialist idea, Sartre clearly says that “it is not true that there are some good colons and others who are wicked. There are colons and that is it” (*Colonialism and Neocolonialism* 10). And even if there are some good colons, he argues, the Algerians can never be happy under “French bayonets” because “the necessary reforms can be implemented neither by the good colonists nor by France herself, as long as she intends to maintain her sovereignty in Algeria” (*Colonialism and Neocolonialism* 9). Sartre, therefore, approves the independence of Algeria as a separate nation from France, and supports the FLN’s fight against French colonialism.

Exposing the reality and consequences of the French colonialism in Algeria, Sartre argues that the best of the Algerian land has been snatched from the natives. They have been deprived of their culture, prosperity, and food. Moreover, the colonists in Algeria never try to assimilate with their Muslim brothers and live in a superiority complex. He further explains that colonialism is in the blood of the colonists:

The [colonial] system exists, it functions: the infernal cycle of colonialism is a reality. But this reality is embodied in a million colonists, children and grandchildren of colonists, who have been shaped by colonialism and who think, speak, and act according to the very principles of the colonial system. (*Colonialism and Neocolonialism* 17)

In such vicious situations, therefore, if ever the French government does efforts to make social or economical reforms, the sole beneficiaries will be none other than the colonists. Hence, criticizing Camus’s idea of economic and social reforms, Sartre sarcastically calls Camus “our tender-hearted realist who suggested massive

reforms to us, saying: “The economy first!”” (*Colonialism and Neocolonialism* 16).

Contrary to Camus, he demands for Algeria political independence first, and says:

Yes, the fellah is dying of hunger, yes, he lacks everything: land, work and education; yes, he is afflicted with illness. . . . And yet it is impossible to begin with economic transformations because the poverty and the despair of the Algerians are the direct and necessary effect of colonialism, colonialism lasts. That is what all aware Algerians know. And they are all in agreement with these words of a Muslim who said: “One step forward, two steps back. That is colonial reform”. (*Colonialism and Neocolonialism* 16)

No doubt, Sartre is true in his assessment of the Algerian situation, and appears more realistic than Camus. However, it is a mistake to assess Camus as a sympathizer of colonialism, since he is the first, among their group, to criticize French or any colonialism in the world. Moreover, in his earliest articles, he clearly states that political democracy is the essential requirement along with the economic and social reforms. Annie Cohen-Solal also finds Camus as “the great missing figure of the Algerian war” and makes a comparison between Camus’s and that of Sartre’s response to the Algerian problem:

At the time of the first civil unrest in Algeria, Sartre and Camus had been cast in the public roles of rival brothers, roles which were expected to live up to. They were really locked in a bizarre logic, one which followed inverted and parallel movements: Camus, the native son, sensitive, torn, and fully apprized of the Algerian reality, progressively turning into a mute, missing figure. Sartre, in contrast, born in metropolitan France, was the outsider, the theorist who would

become the archetypal leftist Intellectual, the prophet of the Algerian war. (43-44)

Among the post-colonial critics of Camus, Conor Cruise O'Brien's criticism can be considered as the starting point of examining Camus as a colonial writer. In his book *Albert Camus: Of Europe and Africa*, published in 1970, Cruise O'Brien blames Camus as partial and pro-colonizer who ignores the Algerian struggle for independence and always favours the European culture to dominate over the Algerian culture. He criticizes Camus's Mediterranean culture as an obscure fantasy. On February 8, 1937, Camus gives a lecture "The New Mediterranean Culture", in which he insists upon the reality of the Mediterranean culture which is the assimilation of the East and the European culture. Talking about the multiculturalism of North Africa, Camus emphasizes:

North Africa is one of the few countries where East and West live close together. And there is, at this junction, little difference between the way a Spaniard or an Italian lives on the quays of Algiers, and the way Arabs live around them. The most basic aspect of Mediterranean genius springs perhaps from this historically and geographically unique encounter between East and West. (*Lyrical and Critical Essays* 194)

Camus further praises the assimilating tendency of the Mediterranean culture through an eagerness showed by its people to learn Latin language when they already know a language. Cruise O'Brien quotes this passage from this lecture to argue that Camus wants to maintain the superiority of Latin culture and language over the Eastern culture and language. But he forgets the fact that Camus is not talking about the preference of Latin language in the Arabic population but about the open heartedness and assimilation tendency of the Mediterranean culture, which doesn't

hesitate to accept culture and language from either East or West. Hence, Cruise O'Brien ignores Camus's internationalism by rejecting his new Mediterranean culture.

In the Algerian matters, Cruise O'Brien assumes Camus as partial. He argues that though Camus wrote extensively about freedom, justice, and violence in abstract terms, his actual position was that of an unjust man. Comparing Camus's paradoxical stand for the Hungarian and the Algerian problems, he writes:

. . . his actual positions were political and partisan. The violence of the Hungarian rebels and of the Anglo-French expedition in Egypt raised no problems. It was violence "on the right side". . . Freedom was an absolute for the Hungarians, and their violence in asserting their will "to stand upright" was "pure". The violence of the Algerian Arabs, who thought that they were making the same claim, was "inexcusable". . . (qtd. in Apter 499)

The same criticism is made by Camus's contemporaries also to whom he replies in a letter to *Encounter* in 1957. He explains:

There was not in Hungary, installed for more than a century, more than a million Russians . . . whose lives, whose rights . . . the Hungarian revolution menaced. The Hungarian problem is simple: the Hungarians must be given back their liberties. The Algerian problem is different: there, it is necessary to assure the liberties of the two peoples of the country. There is also another difference . . . not a single Russian voice has been raised to demand justice for the Hungarian people. Many French voices have for a long time now been raised in support of the Algerian Muslims. (qtd. in Foley 160)

O'Brien goes on the extent of suggesting that Camus's writings legitimize colonialism. To him, the semi-absence of Arabs and the constant dominance of the French characters in Camus's fiction are indicators that Camus was on the side of the colonizers in the Algerian war.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said has extended the post-colonial criticism of Camus. He sees Camus as the representative of "Western dominance in the non-European world" (*Culture and Imperialism* 209). Said's criticism is based mostly on the Algerian settings and the not-so-important characterization of native Algerians in Camus's fiction. He blames Camus as a French-colon whose works must be considered as a "metropolitan transfiguration of the colonial dilemma: they represent the colon writing for a French audience whose personal history is tied irrevocably to this southern department of France" (*Culture and Imperialism* 223). But, both Cruise O'Brien and Edward Said ignore the outstanding journalistic work of Camus on Algeria. Moreover, Camus's fiction deals with the general and universal problems of such concepts as the absurd and the revolt and has no political purpose.

Said further argues that Camus denies the reality of Algerian nationality based on Muslim sentiment. Here, he refers to Camus's comments in his article "Algeria 1958", where Camus writes:

. . . one has to admit that, as far as Algeria is concerned, national independence is a conception springing wholly from emotion. There has never yet been an Algerian nation. The Jews, the Turks, the Greeks, the Italians, the Berbers would have just as much right to claim the direction of that virtual nation. At present the Arabs do not alone make up all of Algeria. . . . The Algerian French are likewise, and in the strongest meaning of the word, natives. It must be added that a

purely Arab Algeria could not achieve the economic independence without which political independence is but a deception. (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 145)

Said grudges that Camus is wrong in ignoring of the reality of an Algerian Muslim nation. He claims:

Of course there was [an Algerian Muslim nation]. After the liberation in 1962 one of the principal tasks of the FLN [National Liberation Front] was to reestablish the integrity, the centrality, the paramountcy and sovereignty of the Muslim Algerian identity. With the creation of a new governmental structure of Algeria came an educational program focused first on the teaching of Arabic and on Algerian history, formerly either banned or subordinated to programs stressing the superiority of French civilization. (*Reflections on Exile* 395)

However, it can be argued that Camus was right in his assessment of Algerian history which had been a constant platform for successive colonization culminated into the French conquest in 1830. Moreover, instead of the Muslim and Arabs, the natives of Algeria were Berbers whose identity and culture was ignored totally by the Muslim sentiment. Therefore, there is no exaggeration in saying that Muslim Algeria is nothing but another chapter of colonization in Algeria. Camus knew this truth and that is why he rejected the idea of an Algeria based on Muslim identity. Moreover, the history of the post-independent Algeria is not that of progression of democratic ideas, but that of military rules and violence generated by religious fanatics. The minorities in Algeria, including the Berbers, Jews, Christians, and others have suffered the most from the narrow vision of the one nationality, one language, and one culture observed by the Algerian government. In a press conference in Egypt in 1995, the Algerian



Foreign Minister Mohamed Dembri declared, “. . . as a reference text defining identity and belonging, the constitution stipulated that Algeria is Arab and Muslim. Therefore, no one who has another identity has the right to speak in the name of Algeria” (qtd. in Boudraa 188). I don’t know how Edward Said can expect from Camus to accept and favour such a religion-based nationality in a multicultural and multi-religious land like Algeria.

Emily Apter, another post-colonial critic of Camus, supports Cruise O’Brien’s “exposure of Camus’s moral double standard vis-à-vis Europe and North Africa” (500). Like other post-colonial critics of Camus, Apter also criticizes Camus for his sub-human depiction of the native Algerians in his fiction. She writes:

Even if the argument is made that Camus’s blunted North Africans are simply extensions of the wounded, mummified personas of their European counterparts (a mummification venerated as part of the high seriousness of the Absurd), their radical de-characterization carries serious political consequences; confirming the negation of a subject people at a time of colonial war. (504-05)

Moreover, Camus’s “more celebrated emotions of existentialism – ontological nausea, aborted self-knowledge – are reserved for the Europeans” (Apter 505). Like many critics of Camus who consider him unrealistic and utopian, Apter dissects “Camus’s notion of French Algeria as a consummate oxymoron; a cosmopolitan hallucination of hybridity hatched in full view of decolonization” (506). Likewise, she rejects Camus’s conception of the new Mediterranean culture as an “impossible construct” because it imagines a new world without national bounds (510). This seems impractical to her, both on national and international levels. She concludes with

the argument, which seems, if not fully then at least partially, impractical in today's world scenario of multiculturalism and internationalism. She asserts:

Camus's never-never land of French Algeria (an Algeria "made in France"), like so many artificially federated nation-states in the Balkans, was an impossible political artifact. It was an oxymoron in Camus's time, and it remains an oxymoron now, that is, an Islamic nation-state unable to negotiate co-existence with French-identified sectors of its citizenry. The failure of Camus's cosmopolitical hybrid . . . offers a kind of object lesson for the future of globalization theory or transnational identity-formation. (516)

However practical Apter's criticism of Camus's may appear, it can't disfigure Camus's reputation as a devotee of democracy. Moreover, as has been repeated so many times by Camus himself, he can never approve religious fanaticism, narrow nationalism, and political violence in the name of political realism.

Stephen Eric Bronner, another scholar of Camus, also finds him failed on practical grounds. He argues that even after realizing the reality of *pied-noirs'* response to the rights of the natives, Camus ignores the reality and denies to choose within the provided options. He writes, "His choice was a refusal to choose between the only serious alternatives available, and, in the context of the time, his vacillations were less than irrelevant: they actually hindered bringing the conflict to a close" (116).

However, Bronner ignores the humanist in Camus, who rejects to be either a victim or an executioner. He can't support the French colonialism since it has dehumanized the Algerian people, nor can he accept the offer of the FLN, which approves the fanatic nationalism based on religion. One can compare Camus with

Mahatma Gandhi who was asked in 1947 to choose between Indian partition and British Imperialism. How can one expect that such a prophet of non-violence and religious solidarity could make a choice between those two; whereas in both cases, he foresaw the blood of his countrymen being splattered? Gandhi never approved the partition of India, and when the selected nationalists of Indian Congress, including Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, were celebrating the independence of India, Gandhi was in Calcutta, serving thousands of people affected by the Indian partition. So is the case of Albert Camus. It can't be expected from such a devotee of non-violence and human-solidarity to make a choice between the FLN and the French colonialism. Like Gandhi, he foresaw the fate of millions of *pied-noirs* (not the few rich who protested against the reforms and democratic rights for the natives, but those poor French-Algerians who simply wanted to live in peace and harmony), who would be uprooted forever from their homeland Algeria with the victory of the FLN. That is why Camus approved the third front which talks about dialogue, ceasefire, peace, democratic rights, equality and fraternity.

Almost all of Camus's critics have used his statement, made on the occasion of his Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, as a proof of his political immaturity. During an informal question and answer session with a group of students at Stockholm University, an Algerian student asked Camus why he intervened so frequently in Eastern Europe but never in Algeria. Camus responded with the argument that the accusation was false and he had never spoken of anything so readily than Algeria. He further pleaded:

I have always been a partisan of a just Algeria, where the two peoples can live in peace and in equality. I have repeatedly called for justice to be done for the Algerian people, that they be granted a fully

democratic regime. . . . I have always condemned the use of terror. And I must also condemn the use of terrorism which is exercised blindly, in the streets of Algiers for example, and which would one day strike my mother or my family. I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother before justice. (qtd. in Foley 163)

Almost every critic of Camus, including de Beauvoir, Cruise O'Brien, Susan Dunn, and even Oliver Todd, finds this statement unfortunate and partial on Camus's part. But they forget the reality behind this statement. When Camus says that the FLN bombs can kill his innocent mother, he is not talking particularly about his mother but about any innocent fellow, either the native, or the French Algerian, targeted by the militants in the name of justice. How can these critics forget that the Camus, who clearly rejects Stepan's arguments, in *The Just Assassins*, of killing two innocent children in the name of justice, can approve millions of innocent deaths in the name of same justice?

Nabil Boudraa appears justifiable, who, in his essay "Was Edward Said Right in Depicting Albert Camus as an Imperialist Writer?", logically defends Camus and claims that Camus "may have disappointed various groups of people during the Algerian War, his political standpoint does not necessarily make him an imperialist" (197).

Though, whatever Camus's defenders argue in justifying him for his hesitation in approving Algeria as a free entity, I personally find myself in disagreement, at least partially, with Camus on this point. To the extent that he opposed the Algerian independence as a Muslim nation, I agree with his position since such a nation can never flourish the democratic ideas for which it demands its legitimacy. Such a nation can never respect and accept the democratic rights of other ethnic groups and cultures.

Being Indians, we ourselves have witnessed the bloody pogrom resulted with the origin of Pakistan as a nation based on religious fanaticism. With the birth of Pakistan as a Muslim nation, Indian history witnessed its bloodiest massacre in which millions of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and other ethnic groups lost their lives, dignity, and identity forever. Having this fact in mind, one can assume that Camus witnessed beforehand the future of millions of non-Muslim Algerians. And it is because of this reason that he strictly opposed the formation of Algeria as a Muslim nation. But he didn't make it clear. Instead of explaining the truth of such nation, he argues that there was nothing like Algerian nation. Here, he forgets the fact that in the earliest times, there was no nation in the world and that every nation takes its time to realize the necessity of its being independent and sovereign nation. If Camus's argument is accepted, India should never have been recognized as an independent nation, because, here in India, there are numerous cultures and religions which are equally competent to claim for a nationality. Moreover, all of these cultures and religions are not natives but intruders at one or another time. However, with the passage of time, these cultures assimilated themselves into a nation against British imperialism and established India as a free, independent, and democratic country, where every citizen, of whatever religion or culture he/she may be, has been given equal democratic rights. In addition to it, India, in no way finds the need to be connected with her former colonizer i.e. the British Empire. Therefore, Camus forgot the reality that to be a nation doesn't require single religion or single culture. The notion of a nation requires respect and acceptance of every religion and culture and it can be well attained without the help of a colonizer. Therefore, instead of questioning the reality of Algerian nationality, Camus, along with his rejection to the FLN agenda, should have put forth the concept of an independent Algeria, totally free from the mainland France, where each citizen,

of whatever religion or culture, is guaranteed democratic rights. If the *pied-noirs* loved their native land of Algeria, they shouldn't have afraid of its independence. I prefer that Camus should have used such type of language while dealing with the Algerian problem, since the need of the time for Algeria was not to be connected in any form with the main land France, but to attain and maintain her independence and her multi-cultural dignity with providing its citizens all the democratic rights.

To sum up, it can be argued, stressing Carroll's assessment of Camus, that Camus's was a "long struggle against philosophical, religious and political ideologies that promise salvation in the future at the expense of living human beings in the present. Like Sisyphus, Camus never succeeded in his task – but that was never the point. The struggle itself was" (59-60).

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