

ALGERIA, he holds an enduring sense of identity with it, because his JEWISH upbringing in a Muslim environment in colonial Algeria, is a dominant theme of his literary works. Publications include: *Isbilia* (1970), poems and short stories; *L'Echelle de Mesrod* (1984), short stories; *La Ville sur les eaux* (1992), a novel. He contributes to several literary journals and is a translator between French/Spanish literary texts. (Susan Fox)

Further reading

See LITERATURE, BERBER.

Berbers Berbers (*Imazighen* - sing. *Amazigh*) are the largest linguistic minority of the Maghreb. Berber (*TAMAZIGHT*), belonging to the Hamito-Semitic or Afro-Asiatic language family, is spoken all over the Maghreb. *Tamazight*-speakers are estimated at 12–15 million, about 20 per cent of Algerians (in KABYLIA, Aurès, Mzab) and 40 per cent of Moroccans (Rif, Central/South Atlas, Draa River area). TUNISIA has a small number on the Isle of Djerba and in the south (Chenini, Douz, Tozeur), Libya in the Nefousa Mountains and some oases (Ghadamès, Sokna, Awjila), EGYPT in the oasis of Siwa. About 500,000 Tuareg people also speak *Tamazight* in a wide area, throughout ALGERIA, Libya, MALI, NIGER.

The use of the term Berber in European languages, to describe these peoples, dates from the sixteenth century and was definitively consolidated after colonisation. Since it derives from Greek *barbaros*/Latin *barbarus*, i.e. extraneous, and carries with it the meaning of 'non-civilised', it has been recently rejected by those who prefer to call themselves *Imazighen*, 'free men', referring to their language as *Tamazight*. These terms were known in MOROCCO and Libya but not previously used north of the SAHARA, particularly in northern Algeria, where they are accepted today. The huge but scattered extension of *Tamazight*-speakers in the Maghreb leads some specialists to speak of Berber 'languages', underlining socio-linguistic differences among local variations. In the past, only a limited number of speakers were conscious of *Tamazight*'s linguistic unity, although broad areas of intercomprehension existed. The introduction of the terms *Amazigh*, *Imazighen*, *Tamazight* points to a changed social context: *Tamazight*/Berber-speakers have become aware of their linguistic unity and tend to assert their autonomy.

The present condition of *Tamazight* minorities varies politically, economically and socially. Berber is recognised as a national language in Mali and Niger, but the Tuaregs, once nomads, suffered most from the constitution of nation-states and their insurmountable borderlines, followed by years of armed rebellions and military and economic repression. In Morocco and Algeria, governmental denial and repression had lately made room for a more open attitude. However, neither recognise *Tamazight* as an official national language or provide it in school curricula. *Tamazight* was recognised as the second national language of Algeria in April 2002. In Algeria, demands for recognition of *Tamazight* in Kabylia are accompanied by ongoing repression. The issue of Berber minorities is intrinsically connected to

demands for pluralism, DEMOCRATISATION and state decentralisation. (Daniela Merolla)

Further reading

Bougchiche (1997); Brett and Fentress (1997); Chaker (1989).

Berber Spring (Printemps Berbère) Discussion of the BERBER problem was suppressed during the ALGERIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, to come to the fore again after independence had been achieved. Even if conflicts and rivalries of clan chieftains have sometimes taken on a regionalist aspect, questions of language, identity and culture mark the claims put forward on behalf of the country's Berbers by Kabyle leaders. The increasing use of Arabic combined with opposition to any official usage of Berber since 1962 have brought the *Amazigh* problem to the surface, above all in university circles and among Algerian émigrés. The repressive approach adopted has made itself felt in official discourse, which interprets any criticism as subversion. In the run up to the popular explosion of April 1980 known as the *Printemps Berbère*, it was possible to distinguish two currents within the Berber Spring. The first was an activist Pan-Berber movement that recruited its members from the whole range of society and propagated a political discourse heavily influenced by anti-Arab sentiment and calling for the establishment of an *Amazigh* nation. The second current was based in the universities and generally more moderate, concentrating on the teaching of TAMAZIGHT, linguistic and cultural planning and the publication of relevant works. Given the increasingly repressive measures against Berber activists, including arrests, disappearances, torture and imprisonment, all legal channels for dialogue with the authorities appeared to be closed. These developments led to violent incidents in KABYLIA and Algiers in the spring of 1980 and the creation of a climate that radicalised the entire situation. As a result, the protagonists spent the entire 1980s engaged in constant antagonism; demands were met by repression, which in turn encouraged more extreme demands. The Berber Spring called into question the regimes that had ruled Algeria since 1962, and no serious study of the country can be considered comprehensive unless it considers the roots and genesis of the Berber Spring. Indeed, the old patterns continue to assert themselves. The bloody repression and murder of Kabyles by state forces since April 2001 have come to be known as the 'Black Spring'. (Kamal Salhi)

Bernabé, Jean Born MARTINIQUE, 1942. Linguist, creolist, Professor of Languages and Cultures at the University of ANTILLES-GUYANE. He founded the *Groupe de Recherches et d'Etudes en Espace Créolophone* (GEREC, 1975) and the journal *Espace créole*, now *Espace créole, Espaces francophones*. Author of referential linguistic works on the CREOLES of Martinique and GUADELOUPE, in particular *Fondal-Natal* (1983). Equally known, alongside P. CHAMOISEAU and R. CONFIAIT, as one of the authors of *Eloge de la créolité* (1989; *In Praise of Creoleness*, 1993), the manifesto of the literary and cultural movement of *créolité*. Recently, one of the most enthusiastic promoters of the Creole CAPES, a French educational qualification. (Roshni Mooneram)