

Edited by Rabah Aissaoui
and Claire Eldridge

ALGERIA REVISITED

HISTORY, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

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MAP OF ALGERIA



INTRODUCTION

Revisiting Algeria

Rabah Aissaoui and Claire Eldridge

On 5 July 1962, two days after President Charles de Gaulle's formal recognition of its sovereignty, Algeria declared itself an independent nation. Bringing to an end 132 years of French colonial rule, official independence celebrations were deliberately timed to coincide with the symbolically significant anniversary of the fall of Algiers to French forces on 5 July 1830. As a decisive moment in the troubled years that marked the end of France's colonial empire, the Algerian conflict provoked domestic political turmoil resulting in the collapse of the Fourth Republic and the return to power of de Gaulle in 1958. The implications on the international stage were equally significant as the War played out amidst the complex web of fluctuating Cold War alliances and power structures, and anticolonial struggles elsewhere.[1] The years 1954 to 1962 were even more disruptive at a human level, resulting in the deaths of some 250,000 to 300,000 Algerians, almost 25,000 French soldiers, and approximately 60,000 native auxiliaries.[2] This was in addition to the displacement of millions in Algeria during the fighting and the mass migration or 'repatriation' of Europeans (known as *pied-noirs*) to France in 1962. A source of profound trauma for a whole generation, these events produced major social, cultural and political developments whose effects are still being felt today in both nations. The legacy of the French colonization of Algeria and the War of Independence are thus key to understanding what Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire have coined 'the colonial fracture' on both sides of the Mediterranean.[3]

In the decades that followed independence and up until the 1990s, naming and remembering the War itself became a process marked by conflict and contestation but also by the absence of a meaningful collective memory on both sides of the Mediterranean.[4] Racial, cultural and religious demarcation lines inherited from the colonial period were re-appropriated and to some extent re-imagined through multi-layered and often conflicting or competing

memories. Individuals, groups or communities sought to present particular views and grievances, articulate specific interpretations of the colonial era and transmit distinct localized memories. This process of memory construction was as much about forgetting as it was about remembering, and about conceptions of identity shaped at the boundary between 'us' and 'them'. Certain testimonies were conveyed whilst other voices remained silent or were marginalized. Important historical developments and voices emanating from political groups and individuals that did not fit with specific official narratives and dynamics ceased to be visible or were excluded from public discourse and collective memories.

This multi-layered and shifting memory process overshadowed many complex political, social, historical and cultural developments that informed the shared past of Algeria and France during this period. Thus, the work of historians was all the more important in making sense of the past and of those different and often competing testimonies.[5] In France, while the authorities sought to turn the page of the Algerian War, activists within groups strove to be 'heard' at different times and in distinct ways: these included *pieds-noirs*; veterans of the French army who had served in Algeria; *harkis* – Algerians who had served in the auxiliary units of the French army; and also Algerian migrants and their children.[6] In French official discourse, naming this conflict proved highly contentious.[7] For years, the war was described as '*événements*' (events), '*opérations de maintien de l'ordre*' (operations to maintain law and order) and 'pacification'. It was only on 5 October 1999, thirty-seven years after Algerian independence, that the French Parliament voted unanimously to recognize this conflict as a war.[8] The memory of the Algerian War thus became a contested terrain on which identities and collective memories were constructed.[9] Groups clamoured to be heard and to seek recognition, 'justice' and, in many instances, reparation.

As a number of studies have argued, this was, *in fine*, a War of Independence or, to be more specific, the War of Algerian Independence whose legacy is still the subject of complex debates.[10] To many Algerians, this was a war of national liberation and a revolution that marked the end of 132 years of colonial oppression and led to the emancipation of a whole people. For historian Mahfoud Kaddache, the period between 1954 and 1962 represented the culmination of centuries-old resistance against foreign invaders, a cathartic historical 'moment' that enabled Algerians to 'regain' their sovereignty.[11] The war also constituted a constant source of inspiration for the National Liberation Front (FLN)-led regime as it sought to establish its political legitimacy and reinforce its rule in Algeria. For years, the regime imposed a rigid interpretation of Algeria's past and of the war, and celebrated the sacrifice made by *mujahidin* (fighters) of the Armée de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Army, ALN). It largely excluded alternative voices and interpretations of the war that did not align with the official account, and erased or underplayed the contribution of other Algerian political parties or organizations, including the Mouvement National

Algérien (Algerian National Movement, MNA) of historic nationalist leader Messali Hadj, as well as the important role played by nationalist militants amongst Algerian immigrants in the anticolonial struggle and the war.[12]

Thus, the three main – one would argue problematic – processes of memorialization identified by Paul Ricœur could be observed at different levels (individual, group and institutional) and at different 'moments' on both sides of the Mediterranean. There were some communities, groups and individuals whose 'blocked memory' marked by trauma and silence hampered a process of re-memorialization; others whose 'manipulated memory' shaped at the intersection of collective and personal identities was informed by ideology and a particular focus on commemoration; and there were a number of institutional groupings that cultivated and to a large extent imposed a particular memory ('obligated memory') that was instrumentalized for political ends.[13] The 'memorial turn' of the 1990s – particularly from the end of that decade onward – was marked by renewed debates about the legacy of colonization and the Algerian War as well as by a series of commemorative events both at an institutional and a local level that have continued to this day. As Benjamin Stora has shown, this '*retour de mémoire*' (return of memory) regarding the Algerian War was fostered by renewed media interest,[14] the publication of a significant number of academic studies, biographies and personal testimonies as well as films, documentaries, conferences and exhibitions on the Algerian War.[15]

'Revisiting' Algeria fifty years on from this major historical turning point provides an opportunity to critically re-examine important moments in the colonial period, the iconic war of decolonization that brought it to an end, and the enduring legacies of these years. This volume brings together a selection of contributions from the conference 'Algeria Revisited: Contested Identities in the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods' held in 2012 at the University of Leicester to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence.[16] Although it has not been possible to capture the full diversity of this highly international and multidisciplinary event at which more than seventy papers were presented, this volume aims to highlight a series of political, cultural and historical themes of particular academic and contemporary salience. In so doing it seeks to make a distinct contribution to current scholarly debates about the legacy of Algeria and France's shared histories. In particular, given the centrality of identity to these histories, this volume asks how we might re-imagine notions of conflict, alterity and belonging so as to better understand their myriad forms and functions in the colonial era and in the years that followed independence.

This book covers the colonial and postcolonial eras from a multidisciplinary perspective, and is divided into three main parts, each with a distinct set of concerns. The chapters in Part One explore a number of historical, political and cultural developments that informed conflicts, relationships and representations in colonial Algeria from the early twentieth century through to the end of the Algerian War. It considers the constantly shifting

balance of power between different groups in Algeria, illuminating attempts to take advantage of these fluctuations in order to re-fashion colonial relationships at particular moments in time. Turning to the postcolonial period in Part Two, the challenges Algerians have faced as they have sought to forge an identity as an independent nation and how this process has been represented culturally is dealt with through fiction and film. These contributions focus particularly on the contested nature of cultural and national identities. In Part Three, the chapters discuss the roles played by memory and forgetting and how these were used to foreground the ongoing efforts to grapple with the complex legacies of the prolonged and tumultuous relationship between Algeria and France.

Part One: Re-imagining Colonial Conflicts and Relationships

The chapters that comprise Part One offer different ways to understand conflict and the varying forms it may take. By focusing particularly on interactions between colonizers and colonized it foregrounds the impact of conflict upon those who participated in it and on society as a whole. Together, the chapters demonstrate the shifting dynamics within colonial relationships as Algerians sought, often unsuccessfully, to capitalize on wider contexts in order to exert leverage and turn the demands of the colonial authorities to their advantage. At the same time, the French were forced to continually adjust and adapt their policies and expectations in response to a series of domestic, colonial and international developments. These chapters also remind us that the violent nature of decolonization in Algeria was never a foregone conclusion and that there existed a range of equally, if not more plausible, alternative scenarios that were seriously pursued by a number of actors until very late in the day.

The proliferation of banditry among Algerians in the Constantinois (Eastern Algeria) during the First World War and the responses from the colonial authorities to these campaigns are used by Samuel Kalman to highlight the colonial implications of a conflict that is often conceived of in predominantly European or Western terms. In this first chapter, Kalman argues that although bandits were a common sight during the 1880s and 1890s, the phenomenon increased dramatically with the onset of war in 1914. Algerians formed 'criminal' associations dedicated to protesting against the poverty and immiseration of Arab/Berber life, seizing wealth and livestock from *colons* (large European land holders) and wealthy non-Europeans, and often actively protesting against colonial rule. As theft and violent crime increased in the Constantinois, threatening to provoke widespread rebellion throughout the region, the colonial administration and police/gendarmerie acted to contain the problem, using a combination

of legal methods alongside assault and intimidation in order to quell the unrest.

Employing a wealth of archival material, Kalman argues that between 1914 and 1918 banditry came to represent a new form of resistance to colonial rule due not only to the high numbers of deserters and those fleeing conscription who became outlaws, but also because of the increasingly politicized nature of the acts they committed. In this altered context, formerly petty crimes now became laden with political significance, raising the stakes for both sides and making the suppression of such crime intrinsic to the image of strength and order that the colonial authorities sought to project. This was especially important at a point where the vast majority of French resources were engaged in the defence of the metropole rendering the empire particularly vulnerable. Casting these men and their actions as 'precursors to the nationalist movement', Kalman draws our attention to the fact that new identities and allegiances were being forged in opposition to those that the colonial authorities sought to impose.

The debates over conscription and assimilation in the years preceding the First World War are the focus of Michelle Mann's chapter. Her study complements Kalman's discussion of conscription as a spur to 'proto-nationalist' sentiment by highlighting those voices in Algeria who saw the military draft as an opportunity to push for equality, not via separation, but rather through closer integration with France. On 3 February 1912, after decades of intermittent parliamentary debate, the French metropolitan government announced its plans to implement a programme of mandatory military service for Algerian colonial subjects. Four months later, a self-appointed delegation of French-educated Jeunes Algériens (Young Algerians) arrived in Paris to deliver to Prime Minister Clemenceau a set of demands relative to the new conscription decree.[17] In retrospect, what is fascinating about this 'Manifesto' of June 1912 is that the Young Algerians sought not separation *from* France, but equality through closer political and social assimilation *with* France. By demanding education, the suppression of the discriminatory measures and punitive treatment that applied to France's Algerian 'subjects', real access to French citizenship and fair representation in elected assemblies for Muslims in exchange for military service, the Young Algerians were employing the French rhetoric of assimilation in order to resist the inequities of colonialism. As argued in this chapter, their choice of demands, and the language in which they articulated them, point to the complex role of national identity, the paradoxical meaning of assimilation, and the shifting definitions of both, in the struggle for colonial reform.

Mann shows that the government of the French Third Republic saw military service as an equalizing, assimilative force and an essential component of republican citizenship. And yet the French, even as they began to perceive the necessity of drafting native Algerians, were starting to rethink the theory of assimilation which had been the rhetorical basis of their colonial policy since shortly after the conquest of Algiers. The issue of

conscription forced French officials to grapple with the contradictions between assimilation as an imperial logic of hegemony, as an administrative principle, and as a social and cultural reality. In reverse fashion, Mann claims, the vagueness of the notion of assimilation in metropolitan colonial discourse enabled educated Algerians to use the issue of conscription to articulate resistance to colonial inequalities in the very language of colonial rule. The persistence of this dynamic, in turn, hints at the existence of a profoundly rooted and increasingly anguished discourse over the boundaries of French and Algerian identity, which deserves further exploration.

Borrowing the language of the colonizer, the Young Algerians thus sought to use military service as a bargaining chip to obtain the long-promised benefits of assimilation. This important development that shaped colonial politics in colonial Algeria in the early twentieth century is further explored by Rabah Aissaoui whose chapter focuses on the early twentieth century but also on the years that followed the First World War. He shows that the rise of the Young Algerians, a movement which included the emblematic figure of Emir Khaled (1875–1936), the grandson of Emir Abd el-Kader (1808–83), as a leading member marked the emergence of a new Algerian political voice that was to have a significant impact during the interwar period (particularly between 1919 and 1923) and thereafter. The movement developed a political programme that denounced the abuse of colonial rule in Algeria. It also demanded significant reforms of the colonial order, the granting of more political rights for the colonized and the gradual integration of Algerians into the French nation. Its development, however, was marked by profound ideological tensions that led to internal conflicts and splits which gradually eroded its effectiveness in the political field. Nevertheless, its discourse and action, as well as its influence on Algerian parties and organizations that emerged later in the interwar years, reveal the extent to which the political climate was rapidly changing in colonial Algeria and how much political engagement among Algerian activists was simultaneously evolving. The Young Algerians asked important questions about the nature of French colonial rule and colonial relationships in Algeria, about what it meant to be Algerian *and* French, and about the role that religious identity should – or should not – play in the political realm. Their discourse and actions, as well as the French colonial response to their mobilization highlighted some of the profound contradictions that existed within the republican conception of citizenship within the French empire.

The remaining chapter in Part One addresses the question of boundaries between national, political and gendered identities. By exploring the tensions that marked the relationship between representation and agency, and between loyalty and resistance at historically significant junctures during the Algerian War, it further complicates our understanding of what constitutes resistance to colonial rule. Interrogating notions of political representation, conflicting loyalties and political expediency at the heart of France's parliamentary institutions Arthur Asseraf uses his chapter to chart the role played by Algerian

deputies in the French National Assembly in the dying days of colonial Algeria between 1958 and 1962. Apparently 'fully integrated into the heart of the Republic', these men and women were cast as potent symbols of successful assimilation, touted as the fruits of France's colonial civilizing mission and as a source of optimism regarding the future fate of French Algeria. Asseraf's study resituates these deputies at the centre of Algeria's decolonization process and shows that their rise and fall highlighted a dramatic French shift from a policy of integration to one of separation. He argues that the image of Algerians fully integrated into the heart of the Republic cast a powerful spell on France's political class. Conscious of their symbolic importance to metropolitan ideas about Algeria, French politicians sought to influence and control these deputies for political ends. Yet far from being simply *beni oui-oui's* (literally 'yes men') who acquiesced to the demands of the French, these Algerian men and women used their positions to attempt to advance their own agendas, while also trying to create new spaces for participation for Muslim Algerians. Yet despite being vocal actors both in the media and in the National Assembly, these men and women were ultimately sidelined when Algeria's fate was finally decided, overtaken by events and evicted from parliament in 1962 as 'France reinvented itself as a European nation'.

Part Two: Identity Construction and Contestation

The debates covered by Part One problematize notions of identity, political participation, representation and resistance. They show how different Algerian actors, groups and organizations actively contested imposed categories that were brought to bear on the colonized during French rule. In the second part of the volume consideration is given to processes of identity construction and contestation from Algerian and French perspectives, focusing primarily on the postcolonial period through literary, visual and political discourses.

The first two chapters centre on the intimate links between language and identity as Blandine Valfort and Rachida Yassine consider respectively how the poet Jean Sénac and novelist Assia Djebar grappled with the notion of French as a language of colonial domination but also of subversion. For both scholars, alienation and ambiguity emerge as crucial themes in the works they address. As Valfort argues, in the 1950s and 1960s French-language Algerian literature highlighted the complex nature of hybrid identities and the problematic character of this form of expression in Algeria. On the one hand, French was the language of the colonizer which intensified notions of cultural domination and spoliation for Algerians. On the other hand, French was claimed as a language of resistance and agency, a language that could convey the richness of Algerian identities, voices and experiences,

and that could also be appropriated as the language of national liberation in their fight against colonial oppression.[18]

Resituating debates about language, identity and sexuality in Algeria during those two decades, Valfort's study focuses on how Sénac's position as a perpetual outsider – the product of his status as an illegitimate child, a homosexual and a '*gaouri*' (Algerian pejorative term for a foreigner/infidel) who remained in Algeria after independence – informed his understanding and articulation of identity. Valfort shows how the work of Sénac illustrates the different aspects of his search for an identity. Born in Algeria of a Christian, Spanish mother and an unknown father, and despite being widely viewed as a '*gaouri*', he fully supported the struggle for the independence of his native land. Parallel to this quest for an Algerian identity, he also sought to shed light on his own personal mystery – that of his absent father which left him branded as a 'bastard'. Those personal concerns were compounded by the fact that he chose to wear his homosexuality on his sleeve, as shown in his unfinished novel *Ebauche du père* (Rough Draft of the Father). Sénac's work therefore reflects a search for a collective Algerian and Arab identity which is both idealistic and empirical. It also explores notions of individual identity since it portrays a subject who, as a '*gaouri*', a 'bastard' and a homosexual, must confront the norms of traditional Algerian society. Thus, Sénac's French language writing, which is inherently linked to his own personal journey, sheds light on the question of identity, both collective and individual.

Questions of language, gender and identity also lie at the heart of Rachida Yassine's study of the literary works of Assia Djebar, the Algerian woman writer and film-maker whose oeuvre is indissociable from Algerian history and women's place therein. Yassine explores Djebar's attempts to work through the complexities of being 'an Algerian female subject writing in French about Algerian women who do not speak French and cannot speak for themselves'. Addressing the thorny issue of linguistic identity in Algerian postcolonial literature through the feminist and anti-colonialist narrative of *L'Amour, la Fantasia* (published in English as *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*) Yassine argues that Djebar's narratives bring Algerian female subjectivity to centre stage, endeavouring to construct a voice outside of patriarchal constraints and to locate strategies for speech through the critique of colonialism. In this study, she demonstrates Djebar's attempts to work through the legacies and implications of the French colonial presence in Algeria, notably her dilemma as a woman writer who must come to terms with the history and culture of Algeria and with herself as a postcolonial, Algerian, female subject. Yassine's chapter shows that, like most Maghrebi Francophone writers, Djebar had to grapple with the ambiguity and alienation that the use of French entails. It furthermore highlights the author's reflections on the cultural and subjective duality which are the inevitable outcomes of the colonial encounter, foregrounding the paradox and dual nature of her use of French, as well as her attempts to wrest identity out of the vagaries of biculturality and patriarchy.

The theme of giving voice to those otherwise denied opportunities to speak also underpins Samira Farhoud and Carey Watt's chapter on the Algerian author Maïssa Bey. This study examines the ways in which Bey's novels convey the complex and problematic nature of Algerian identities shaped – directly or indirectly – by the haunting legacy of French colonialism and Algeria's troubled post-independence period. It focuses on four important novels written by Bey between 2002 and 2010, during the difficult years that followed the darkest moments of the Civil War and four decades after independence (*Entendez-vous dans les montagnes . . .* [*Can You Hear in the Mountains . . .*, 2002]; *Bleu, blanc, vert* [*Blue, White, Green*, 2006]; *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* [*Stone Blood Paper or Ashes*, 2008]; and *Puisque mon cœur est mort* [*Since my Heart is Dead*, 2010]). Farhoud and Watt explore the suffering, pain and trauma of the characters portrayed in these novels, considering the extent to which these themes are redolent of Bey's own personal experiences. In so doing, they highlight the ability of the novelist to articulate the anger and disappointment felt by many Algerians in light of the FLN regime's failure to live up to its revolutionary promises and ideals. They equally foreground notions of intertextuality and hybridity that enable Bey to challenge and transcend narrowly defined identities, to foster new imaginings and to offer original ways of conceiving multi-layered identities. At the heart of Bey's corpus lies the concept of '*encontre*' (encounter), which evokes the opposition or even the confrontation embodied in a colonial/postcolonial interaction. As Farhoud and Watt argue, in Bey's texts *encontres* are shaped by frustration and revolt, but also by a sense of hope in the possibility of an identity that challenges official discourse and aims to be universal.

Together, these three chapters on Algerian literature explore how identity is defined, negotiated and articulated, as well as the boundaries between the notions of self and other. All furthermore highlight the different ways in which the legacies – linguistic, cultural and political – of the colonial era continue to inform and shape the postcolonial present. Yet while literature plays a key role in our understanding of the development of Algerian culture(s) in the post-independence period, it is also important to consider the place of Algerian cinema as a marker of national identity in the post-independence nation, which forms the focus of Patricia Caillé's chapter. Tracing the evolution of the nation's cinematic output, Caillé presents the Algerian film industry as possessing an initially promising but ultimately unachieved postcolonial potential. At its heyday in the 1970s and early 1980s, Algerian cinema seemed to be striving towards an ideal: the nationalized film industry produced films – some of which were formally and thematically very bold – that promoted and/or critiqued a national project. But due to the withering of state support followed by years of terror during the civil war in the 1990s, film production and distribution came to a halt compounding the decline of the Algerian film industry. Yet, in spite of these challenges, Caillé's study points towards a more nuanced

and arguably more positive understanding of Algerian cinema production by suggesting that we reconceptualize the notion of 'national cinema' so that it is defined less as a set of institutions or a body of work and more as a 'configuration of networks of relationships across the Mediterranean'. This transnational re-imagining of Algerian cinema draws together the previous three chapters in its emphasis on the continual but not unproblematic flow of cultural influences between France and Algeria in the postcolonial period.

The importance of cinema in the construction of Algerian identities is further explored by Sophie Bélot in her consideration of Gillo Pontecorvo's iconic film *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), particularly its representations of women's political engagement and acts of resistance against the colonial power during the Algerian War. As Julia Clancy-Smith has shown, the social construction of Algeria that formed part of the French colonial project was, from 1870 onwards, also founded on specific forms of representation of Muslim women.[19] During that period, Algerian women remained marginalized culturally, socially, politically and economically even as their status became the focus of conflicting ideologies expounded by the colonial authorities and by Algerian political activists and nationalists.[20] According to Feriel Lalami, views on the role of Algerian women changed markedly in the 1950s due to their involvement in the political sphere and particularly in light of their contribution to the struggle for independence.[21] Indeed, the complex roles played by women during the Algerian War challenged, subverted and reconfigured established representations of Muslim women.[22] As Ranjana Khanna has shown in her study of *The Battle of Algiers*, women were at the centre of the struggle and the film. Algerian cinema, she adds, 'grew out of an extremely politicised context. A rejection of stereotypes, of propaganda, of the pernicious portrayals of the colonised . . . brought about a cinema through which the drama of revolution became reflected in the drama of filmmaking'.[23] Bélot's exploration of the representation of women in the film tackles some of those concerns by focusing on a number of important themes that pertain to the identity and agency of Algerian women during the war. Prior to 1954, women played a vital if indirect role in this resistance supporting, provisioning and hiding men who engaged in acts against the colonial system, something touched upon by Samuel Kalman in his discussion of banditry in the early twentieth century. Several decades later many women would reprise these tasks during the War of Independence. However, as Bélot's contribution shows, they also undertook more active combatant roles as famously portrayed in *The Battle of Algiers*. Moving beyond the often clichéd and reductive depictions of this event, Bélot's chapter offers a new reading centred on the notion of secrecy, understood in a Derridean way as a form of 'non-belonging'. In so doing she adds nuance to our conceptions of female resistance and the implications of this for identity construction and articulation.

Part Three: Remembering Algeria

The contributions that form this section engage with the contested terrain of memory, a particular preoccupation in France in recent years. The re-emergence of the War of Independence into public consciousness in the 1990s following many decades of official silence has brought forth a range of competing and often contradictory perspectives. This in turn has posed a series of questions regarding who possesses the authority and legitimacy to speak on behalf of this still contentious past. Jennifer Sessions' chapter focuses on multiple memories embodied in a single physical object, the equestrian statue of the Duc d'Orléans. Drawing on historians' insights into the political function of commemoration, as well as recent work by geographers on the ways sites of memory become 'invisible' yet constitutive of social identities, she charts the trajectory of the statue from its creation and initial placement in Algiers to its current home in the Parisian suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine. Examining the statue's tumultuous history from its commissioning at the duke's death in 1842 to its resurrection in *pied-noir* memory, Sessions traces the changing significance of this object over time and space. This enables her to elucidate the ways in which different groups have invested and reinvested the statue with symbolic meanings in relation to their own agendas as they seek to assert control over the object and its associated history.

Reflecting their pivotal role in shaping the landscape of postcolonial memory politics in France, the *pieds-noirs* also form the subject of the chapter by Claire Eldridge. Complementing Sessions' focus on commemoration as a site of struggle between competing historical visions and groups, this contribution explores the influence and evolution of one of the most visible and durable memory carrying communities connected to the war. The chapter takes as its primary focus the ways in which *pied-noir* activists and associations engaged with and were affected by the events surrounding the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence in 2012, which equally marked half a century since the arrival of the former settlers in France. By disaggregating the national commemorative picture it becomes possible to nuance our understanding of the impact this pivotal historical moment had on those intimately associated with the events being publicly remembered. Taking stock of the position and priorities of *pieds-noirs* in 2012 also facilitates a consideration of the challenges facing this ageing community of activists, particularly with regard to the issue of memory transmission between generations. As the chapter underlines, fifty years on from Algerian independence there is much commonality in terms of the issues facing different memory carriers connected to the war even as there is considerable variation in the ways each group is choosing to respond to these challenges.

The final chapter of the volume, 'Culture as War by Other Means' by James McDougall, deals with the interplay between culture and politics in

postcolonial Algeria. McDougall explores the field of cultural production and the cultural politics of post-independence Algeria, particularly during and after the 'cultural revolution' of the 1970s, in relation to political economy and state-formation, as a way of better framing the conditions of production of contemporary Algerian culture. This leads him to examine how the cultural field, as a site of conflict and contestation in society, relates to political institutions and political economy in post-independence Algeria. His study highlights how the struggle for Algerian independence came to be characterized by a form of *unanimisme* (unanimity), by the conception of a cultural community whose contours were seen as reflecting those of the political community to be liberated, even if those contours were the subject of divergent and competing interpretations on a number of levels. This in turn reveals how a particular interpretation of the past and of Algerian culture – notably the vision of a people united in their struggle for emancipation – was promoted and nurtured after independence so as to create a legitimizing framework to expound rigidly defined conceptions of culture in the 1970s.

As the contributions in this book show, tensions between memory and history, the individual and the collective, culture and politics, and between individual-social agency and institutional concerns continue to inform identities on both sides of the Mediterranean. Although many things have changed in the five decades since Algerian independence, there remain scars from the colonial past that have not fully healed. As memories of the war continue to resurface, it therefore remains important to work across academic disciplines to shed light on this complex and rich but equally traumatic past. In a *Le Monde* article published on the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence, historian Raphaëlle Branche stated: 'Fifty years on from the Algerian War, it is time to speak up!', adding: 'Those of you who used to live or still live in Algeria, speak up: tell us all that you know even if it is fragmented and incomplete, because it is only by sharing all the information that truth will emerge, for all, and contribute to laying the foundations of a reconciliation that will not come at the cost of an *oubli forcé* [imposed forgetting]'.[24] By studying specific 'moments' across Algeria and France's colonial and postcolonial relationship, and through a discussion of the many voices that have been (and sometimes have not been) heard and stories that have been told this book aims to make a contribution to those current debates. Together with other recently published studies on the legacy of colonialism and the war in Algeria, it offers potential avenues for further reconsiderations and re-imaginings of past and present encounters across the Mediterranean.

Notes

1 For further discussion of this see, for example, Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of*

the Post-Cold War Era (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

2 Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 336–8.

3 Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire (eds) *La Fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005).

4 Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991).

5 As Ricœur points out: 'The historian opposes the manipulation of narratives by telling the story differently and by providing a space for the confrontation between opposing testimonies. We must remember, however, that the historian is also embedded in history, he belongs to his own field of research. The historian is an actor in the plot. Our condition dictates that we can never be in a state of pure indifference. The historian's testimony is therefore not completely neutral, it is a selective activity.' Paul Ricœur, 'Imagination, testimony and trust: a dialogue with Paul Ricœur', in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary debates in philosophy*, ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London: Routledge, 1999), 16.

6 Benjamin Stora, 'La guerre d'Algérie quarante ans après: Connaissances et reconnaissance', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 2:2 (1994), 131–9.

7 Serge Bernstein, 'Une guerre sans nom', in *La France en guerre d'Algérie: novembre 1954 – juillet 1962*, ed. Laurent Gervereau, Jean-Pierre Rioux and Benjamin Stora (Paris: Musée d'histoire Contemporaine-BDIC, 1992), 34–9. Stora, 'La guerre d'Algérie quarante ans après', 135.

8 This recognition of the conflict as a war had been a long-standing demand of associations of French veterans. This vote was followed by a re-evaluation of the benefits of veterans who had served in Algeria between 1954 and 1962 (*La Croix*, 6 October 1999).

9 It should be noted that whilst the introduction to the volume highlights the significance of the different terms used to describe the Algerian War, individual contributors have chosen the formulation that they deem most fitting for their chapter.

10 See, for example, Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005) and Benjamin Stora, 'Guerre d'Algérie: 1999–2003, les accélérations de la mémoire', *Hommes et Migrations*, No. 1244 (July–August 2003), 83–95.

11 Mahfoud Kaddache, *Et l'Algérie se libéra, 1954–1962* (Paris: Editions Paris-Méditerranée, 2003), 9.

12 Mohamed Harbi, one of the leading members of the FLN during the war who denounced the drift of the regime, fled Algeria and settled in France in 1973. He was later criticised by the Algerian regime for publishing a number of books that debunked official myths promoted by the FLN and that drew on his extensive knowledge of the inner workings of the nationalist movement (see Mohamed Harbi, *Aux origines du FLN, le populisme révolutionnaire en Algérie* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1975); *FLN: Mirage et réalités. Des origines à la prise du pouvoir (1945-1962)* (Paris: Editions Jeune Afrique, 1980);

Archives de la révolution algérienne (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1981)). His books were banned for more than twenty years in Algeria and he was denied an Algerian passport for 17 years (Benjamin Stora, 'Quand l'Algérie rend hommage à Harbi', Paris: *Jeune Afrique*, 17 February 2008; 'La mémoire meurtrie de Mohamed Harbi', *Le Monde*, 11 October 2002).

13 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 68–92; François Bédarida, 'Une invitation à penser l'histoire: Paul Ricœur, La mémoire, l'histoire et l'oubli', *Revue Historique*, Vol. 303, (3/619) (July–September 2001), 735.

14 See for example the series of articles on the violence perpetrated by the French army during the Algerian War published by the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* in the early 2000s. For a brief account of the contribution made by *Le Monde* to raising awareness of the Algerian War during those years, see Florence Beaugé, 'Comment "Le Monde" a relancé le débat sur la torture en Algérie', *Le Monde*, 17 March 2012.

15 Benjamin Stora, 'Guerre d'Algérie: 1999–2003, les accélérations de la mémoire', *Hommes et Migrations*, No. 1244, July–August 2003, 83–95. During the 1990s, several historic leaders of the FLN in exile intervened on a political level to help resolve Algeria's social, cultural and political crisis. In 1992 the Algerian military's cancellation of the second round of the parliamentary elections that the Islamist party Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front, FIS) was expected to win marked the start of the civil war. A provisional governing body, the Haut Comité d'Etat (High Council of State, HCE) was set up under the direct control of the military who sought to appoint a respected political figure to lead it. In January 1992, Mohamed Boudiaf, an FLN historic leader, returned from exile and acted as Head of HCE. He initiated an anticorruption drive in the country but was murdered on 29 June 1992. Two other historic leaders, the Kabyle Hocine Aït Ahmed and Ahmed Ben Bella – independent Algeria's first President – intervened as part of the Sant'Egidio platform for peace in Algeria in the mid-1990s in Rome to seek a political solution that could bring the civil war in Algeria to an end.

16 This multi-disciplinary event jointly organized by the universities of Leicester and Southampton gathered more than seventy scholars from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and North America at the University of Leicester between 11 and 13 April 2012. It explored a range of themes such as history, memory, culture, language, 'race' and ethnicity, gender, religion, exile and belonging – all of which have functioned, in specific ways, as sites of identification and contestation on both sides of the Mediterranean.

17 The Young Algerians were a reform-orientated political group comprising primarily French-educated Algerians that gained prominence in the early twentieth century. They advocated a further integration with France as a means to achieve greater rights and equality for the Algerian people.

18 This can be seen in the literary works of a number of Algerian writers such as Kateb Yacine, who famously declared that French in postcolonial Algeria should be considered as a *butin de guerre* (a spoil of war), Assia Djebar, Mouloud Feraoun, Mohamed Dib, Mouloud Mammeri and Taos Amrouche or

lesser known authors such as Mohammed Ould Cheikh and Djamila Debèche to name but a few.

19 Julia Clancy-Smith, 'Islam, Gender and Identities in the Making of French Algeria, 1830–1962', in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, ed. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 154–74.

20 See Feriel Lalami, 'L'enjeu du statut des femmes durant la période coloniale en Algérie', *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, 27:3 (2008), 16–27.

21 Ibid., 16.

22 Natalya Vince, 'Transgressing Boundaries: Gender, Race, Religion, and "Françaises Musulmanes" during the Algerian War of Independence', *French Historical Studies*, 33:3 (2010), 445–74.

23 Khanna, Ranjana, '*The Battle of Algiers* and *The Nouba of the Women of Mont Chenoua*: From Third to Fourth Cinema', *Third Text*, 12:43 (1998), 15.

24 Raphaëlle Branche, 'Cinquante ans après la guerre d'Algérie, il est temps de parler!', *Le Monde*, 5 July 2012.

PART ONE

Re-imagining Colonial Conflicts and Relationships

CHAPTER ONE

Criminalizing Dissent: Policing Banditry in the Constantinois, 1914–18

Samuel Kalman

From 1914 to 1918 the department of Constantine, and particularly the rural communes in Kabylia, experienced a sudden resurgence of banditry. Bandits had existed in Algeria for centuries, and had operated with impunity in many regions. Yet since the 1871 Kabyle rising, when unrest spread throughout the entire territory in a matter of months and tens of thousands of Algerians battled French troops in open warfare, none of the groups evinced any political aims, instead engaging in petty crime.[1] During wartime, however, banditry was a constant presence in Algeria, and particularly in the Constantinois, where deserters fled press-gang-style recruiters and government conscription, taking refuge in the mountains and forests of Eastern-Southern Constantine.

Police and administration alike worried that banditry in Constantine could inspire a full-scale rebellion against imperial rule across the countryside, yet simultaneously expressed the belief that bandit gangs contained a few deserters and petty criminals who would ultimately be brought to justice by superior French police and armed forces. However, in reconstructing their history, the overwhelming majority of sources are to be found in official archives, which can be notoriously unreliable. As Emmanuel Blanchard and Joël Glasman point out, colonial police/administrative records tend to be euphemistic and prone to exaggeration, at once bureaucratic in tone and supporting brutal violence in order to bolster imperial rule.[2] Expressions that were standard parlance in the metropole – police, order, crime, justice – took on a completely different meaning in Algeria.

Furthermore, banditry represented more than a simple rejection of fighting in the trenches or working in a munitions factory in Europe. For the wartime brigands were not the *hors-la-loi* (outlaws) of previous decades. If they used many of the same tactics as their predecessors (robbery, assault, looting), these actions took on an added significance from 1914 to 1918. Wartime banditry also appeared to be explicitly political, eschewing the rationale of prewar inhabitants who engaged in criminality for reasons of subsistence. The perpetrators were now armed deserters and *insoumis* (draft-dodgers) rather than disenchanted locals, possessing rifles and ammunition stolen from the camps that they fled.[3] Given the cultural and economic stultification engendered by French imperialism, bandits were no longer petty criminals, but directly engaged the colonial apparatus, and were perceived by the population as powerful figures that struck a blow against repression and exploitation, thus becoming precursors to the nationalist movement of the interwar era.[4] Neither were they traditional Algerian *bandits d'honneur*, seeking to avenge a wrong done to themselves or their family. Yet they were not what Eric Hobsbawm termed social bandits either: peasant outlaws motivated by economic crisis, lacking a political programme but eager to strike a blow at the state due to their poverty.[5] Rather, their refusal to accept army service represented a rejection of the demands of the colonial system, and their subordinate position within it. Police and gendarmes, administrators and mayors were acutely aware that, as Raphaëlle Branche notes, 'any crisis is effectively a litmus test of the colonial system'.[6]

Thus despite the confident tone displayed in official correspondence, law enforcement officials unleashed a massive counter-insurgency operation, designed to simultaneously eradicate banditry in the region by any means necessary, while criminalizing political dissent, no matter how minimal. Fearful that Muslims viewed the Great War as an opportunity to end imperial rule, given the lack of French military presence in Algeria, the authorities ramped up surveillance efforts, enforced strict censorship of Arab-language publications and soldiers' mail, and brutally repressed any signs of revolt, particularly the wave of outlaw activity in the Constantinois.[7] For the colonial authorities understood only too well their inability to influence Algerians and their communities, and their failure to penetrate rural *duwars* and *mechtas*.[8] They witnessed only what James C. Scott terms the 'public transcript', a performance designed to placate the colonizer, and were not privy to the 'hidden transcript' of private opinions that circulated in local communities through everything from humour to Arabic language conversation.[9]

In its initial stages, banditry mushroomed due to the rejection of conscription by *insoumis* and deserters across the colony. From 1830 onward, Algerian soldiers had served with distinction in the French army, even in the metropole during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1). Moreover, specifically *indigène* (native) units, such as the Zouaves, Spahis, Chasseurs d'Afrique and Tirailleurs sénégalais, kept order in various Algerian locales. Although senior officers were always French, a certain number of Muslims

received promotion to junior ranks – the Native Lieutenants, and entire families were recruited from Kabylia and the Tell (for the army regiments) and the Hautes plaines and tent regions (for the Spahis, which proved particularly attractive to the sons of the elite). Local militias, or *goums*, were also staffed exclusively by Arabs and Berbers. This recruitment pattern largely reflected the so-called Kabyle myth, wherein French commentators believed that Berbers were more talented and intelligent than Arabs, eschewing Islam in favour of Western-style mores.[10] However, by 1905 the insufficiency of the incoming class of North African soldiers, mainly the result of a reduction in benefits for indigenous troops, led to an increase in the term of service from one to two years. Necessity trumped regional preference, and all non-European candidates were accepted regardless of background. Moreover, by 1912 a combination of plummeting recruitment (due to a reduction in benefits to volunteers) and German belligerence in the region evinced during the Moroccan Crisis, led the government to adopt conscription, offering large bonus payments to attract recruits.[11]

The situation worsened measurably with the coming of the Great War. Controlling a global empire second only in size to Great Britain, the French army did not hesitate to employ colonial human and material resources in the struggle against Germany. Metropolitan authorities expected that subjects would pay the 'blood tax' in exchange for the French 'civilizing mission' and the promise of eventual assimilation, and over 500,000 imperial denizens served on the front lines. Hailing from Indochina, West Africa, Madagascar and North Africa, they were literally seen as cannon fodder by the high command, sparing white soldiers from the certain death that accompanied large-scale offensives on the western front. Unlike British officials, who displayed serious reservations about arming the colonized against a white enemy and primarily confined Indian troops to the Middle Eastern theatre, French officers evinced no such concerns, throwing imperial soldiers into the fray from the Battle of the Marne in 1914 onward. Considered a martial race of courageous and expert warriors, Algerians were deployed under Gallic commanding officers and alongside European counterparts assigned to specialized tasks (machine-gunnery, cannons, telephonists) that required skills perceived to be beyond the capability of the 'inferior' colonized. Hundreds of thousands from across the Empire, including 78,556 Algerians, were further drafted as labourers in metropolitan factories, charged with providing the munitions and material necessary for modern warfare. This placed a tremendous burden on Algeria, bereft of a substantial portion of the male population, and the threat of unrest and starvation (due to a lack of agrarian labour), along with German and Ottoman anti-French propaganda campaigns, prompted the Governor General to issue stern warnings against potential disturbances or anti-colonial activity.[12]

Yet the difficulties persisted, not least because of blatant corruption as recruiters desperately attempted to fill quotas, and *caïds* or local notables

often refused to hand over candidates. Moreover, the elite paid cash to replacements throughout the war, leaving the poor and unfit to serve. Once war was declared, the colonial administration instituted a lottery system in order to alleviate accusations of unfairness, but could do little to combat dishonesty and manipulation in the recruitment process. Thus by autumn 1914, desertions or outright refusal to report became common throughout the territory, and particularly in the Constantinois, where the topography aided escapees: high plains, voluminous mountain ranges and lush forests whose pathways were well known to local denizens but not the authorities. Within months, as news filtered back about heavy casualties at the front, press-gang tactics were increasingly used to fill extremely high quotas: tens of thousands of soldiers at five francs per head, on top of thousands of workers sent to French munitions factories.[13] Following the Battle of Artois in December 1914/January 1915, where Algerian soldiers led the charge and died by the thousands, the need became severely acute, only worsened by local perceptions of the conflict as a war of attrition with no end in sight. Worse still, official propaganda campaigns backfired; one emphasized that 'there is no battle in which our Tirailleurs have not participated, not one assault on a trench in which they are not found in the first rank'. Locals became convinced that fighting in the Great War constituted a death warrant, and recruiters were greeted with rioting. In Mascara, 500 mothers prevented conscripts from arriving at the recruitment centre, and Marabouts led crowds shooting at French officials and pelting them with rocks, and when the cavalry attempted to intervene, two were beheaded. The metropolitan response was total conscription: all Algerians born prior to 1890 were to serve in the army or munitions factories. The authorities were so desperate that they eventually began to siphon troops assigned to protect North Africa into front-line duty in France. Yet such manoeuvres did little to stop the flight: desertion rates ballooned from 237 in 1914 to 1,138 in 1916, while the conscription order created a full-scale rebellion in places like the Aurès, where entire tribes fled to the forest rather than submit to the French army.[14]

If *insoumis* simply fled their *mechta*, deserters escaped from army camps, and were often armed as a result, taking rifles and pistols with them. These were so prevalent that gendarmes and military police often faced a barrage of gunfire when attempting to arrest the missing conscripts. Some were brazenly shot and killed in broad daylight, as a warning to give the area a wide berth. To make matters worse, deserters joined up with prison escapees, violent offenders who also tended to carry weapons, and both came together in bandit gangs, sometimes with the participation of thieves operating in forests and hills throughout the Constantinois.[15] As a result, smaller criminal formations became both larger and better armed, and by 1915 permeated the department. In Sidi-Aïch and Akbou, the Kezzouli brothers held sway with a substantial bounty on their heads, along with the Lahlou gang, deserters who engaged in a reign of terror across the region from 1916 to 1918, including seven murders. They were active in the *communes mixtes*,

rural districts containing an overwhelmingly non-European population, yet under the exclusive control of administrators appointed by the colonial authorities. In the *commune mixte* of La Calle, the Younès and Rouchi gangs attracted dozens of deserters, while in Oued Marsa a smaller gang run by deserter Berrane Aissa and the Amar brothers committed violent attacks, including murder, and was so well armed that it drew dozens of soldiers to the region. In many cases, more experienced criminal leaders eventually split off from the mass of deserters, who were seen as a liability: careless, imprudent, and willing to give up their fellow bandits if caught in order to avoid jail time or worse from the Council of War.[16] This made the capture and detention of the leadership extraordinarily difficult, a job rendered far more troublesome by the trend of youth imitating the bandits in communities like Tarf and Blandon. Of course, there were also criminal gangs at work throughout Algeria from 1914–18, thieves and brigands who forged alliances with deserters in order to form ever-larger organizations.[17]

On the surface, and particularly considering the participation of thieves in certain gangs, the resulting crime sprees were simply matters of criminal investigation, and seemed not to differ from centuries-old bandit traditions in Algeria. Gangs frequently robbed merchants returning from the local market at gunpoint, stopped vehicles travelling on main highways and took cash or clothing, or stole livestock and food from local farms (both Algerian and European). Most of the time, the motive was simple sustenance, as bandits required everything from blankets to *burnous*, and could not obtain them in any other manner. One gang in Sidi-Aïch stole shoes and clothing, while in Lamy near Bône brigands took everything from pocket watches and guns to food and livestock. Nonetheless, they attacked up to a dozen times a month in a given *duwar/mechta*, and administrators frequently declared a road or region dangerous as a result.[18] Thus on 3 December 1914, eight well-armed bandits in the Soummam stopped six Muslim merchants from the village of Louta on the highway, and threatened to kill them if they did not immediately hand over their money and merchandise.

If they encountered resistance, whether attempts to flee the scene or a refusal to hand over money and goods, the aggressors often shot or stabbed one of their victims in order to encourage compliance. In some instances, the gang pre-emptively attacked before any non-cooperation ever took place. The attacks also occurred in villages themselves, 'terrorizing' locales like Acif-el-Hammam and Biskra with the theft of provisions or home invasions, and overwhelming the already overburdened authorities. Not infrequently, attempts to loot dwellings led to violence, and the murder of the inhabitants.[19] In one such instance, ten armed bandits shot and killed a woman in the Aïn-Diss *duwar* during the robbery of her brother-in-law's livestock. Encountering stiff resistance to the theft, the gang engaged in a firefight with the family inside the farmhouse, and the victim was caught in the crossfire.[20]

In other instances, the robbery had explicitly political overtones, such as the theft of a mail delivery, assaulting police officers or local guards, and

attacks on specifically European targets – sometimes accompanied by death threats against *colons*, the wealthy (and primarily rural) colonists that controlled Algerian politics and economy. Hence in December 1914 a Seddouk postman was robbed and shot twice and his head smashed with a stone in a far more lethal attack than others perpetrated in the same region at the time, while in November 1915 six heavily armed bandits targeted European workers at the Aïn Taha train station near Souk-Ahras, threatened them with death and relieved them of blasting powder. Naturally, robberies of European homes were also political in nature, and often included confrontations with the owners, who were threatened with death even if the gang did not successfully loot the dwelling.

Such actions sowed panic among *colons* in isolated areas, particularly given the paucity of law enforcement during wartime, and the perpetrators were seldom caught. In the village of Lavasseur, thirty-seven kilometres from Chateaudun-du-Rhumel, and guarded by a single *cavalier* (cavalryman), a few European police and a small indigenous force, a large number of bandits descended on the community in January 1917, overwhelming law enforcement and stealing thirty-eight ewes at gunpoint. As the males in the community were absent, serving on the front lines in Europe, the raid sowed panic among the remaining inhabitants (including an old man, ten women and fourteen children).[21] A far worse fate befell the European population in the Aurès, who had been evacuated from the area due to a crime wave in 1916, only to face pillage and rape upon their return in March 1917 at the hands of the Beni-Bouslimane tribe, which had deserted en masse and rejected both armed service and French imperialism in equal measure.[22] News of these events travelled quickly to neighbouring settlements and across the department. Lacking any real intelligence about bandit gangs, rumours were omnipresent, only further fraying settler nerves.[23]

A much more explicit political statement, sabotage seriously threatened European life and commerce in rural Algeria. Bandits frequently damaged water mains, a particularly dangerous act in regions with little access to potable supplies. Gangs also attacked worksites, cut and stole telegraph wire, and more seriously lifted explosives from the Beni Himmel mine in 1917, which one Sidi-Aïch gang attempted to load into firearms with disastrous results: one member dead, another losing four fingers on his left hand, and still another losing two fingers.[24] In each case, surveillance and guard posts were immediately authorized to prevent any future theft of company materials. Finally, bandits attempted to derail trains, often with deadly outcomes, frequently resulting in the death of passengers. In each case, the chosen targets were tied to the imperial economy or settlements, and the attacks thus carried extra weight.

The same was true of murders committed by bandit gangs, and particularly the killing of Europeans in isolated rural areas, which were designed to instil fear in the *colon* population. Not content with robbing a farm in Duvivier in October 1915, one group systematically fired on the residents and murdered

the owner, only days after they attempted an armed robbery in Bouhadjar during which members shot one victim and wounded another. More frequently the victims were guards, who represented both law enforcement seeking to capture bandits, and the imperial authorities that employed them to bolster the colonial order. Attempts to murder Spahis and gendarmes occurred on a regular basis throughout the war, particularly if they played a role in either the pursuit of a gang or the harassment of a local *mechta* or *duwar*. Having arrested Soummam bandit Chérif Otmane for the July 1915 murder of a young woman in Taourirt-Ighil, a rural policeman and three guards were attacked by bandits as they attempted to bring the prisoner to the Justice of the Peace in nearby El-Kseur. Shot multiple times by Otmane's gang, the policeman managed to reach a nearby guard post and survived the ordeal.[25]

Needless to say, collaborators and informants received similar treatment, seen as working with the colonial authorities against local villages and their *insoumis* or deserters. Caïds were routinely victimized for acting at the behest of European administrators and recruiters. In Aït Malak and M'Zalla, leaders were executed while attempting to present names for conscription to the army, along with notables who assisted them in the task. That no arrests were made only worsened the situation, spreading the notion that bandits had outmuscled the French imperial government.[26] Brigands further targeted informants working with the imperial authorities in order to intimidate police and their operatives. In October 1915, two Sidi-Aïch men were executed by gunshots to the eye and nose, *coups de grâce* designed to send a message to fellow villagers tempted to assist the police in tracking down outlaws. The victims had managed to infiltrate the Belkacem Chérif gang, participating in a variety of crimes and providing information to an officer, who authorities worried would also be a target due to his role in the investigation. In the aftermath, locals feared to leave their homes, and the authorities considered a variety of security initiatives, including the removal of all villagers to an undisclosed location in order to protect them.[27]

Prior to the Great War, criminal activity – including theft, murder and sabotage – had been dealt with in a routine fashion, whether the victims were European or Algerian. Police or gendarmes investigated the crime, and in rare cases when gangs overwhelmed local law enforcement, reinforcements were called in from neighbouring communities. However, the concept of maintaining the imperial order proved vastly different from metropolitan practice. In Algeria, and throughout the French empire, criminal investigation was twinned with the maintenance of colonial hegemony, a task shared with the gendarmerie, rural police and village guards, and indigenous auxiliaries. They were assisted in this task by a variety of Arab and Berber employees, from interpreters and scouts to informants and clerks, who rarely appear in the colonial archives, and yet were invaluable to the continued French domination of Algeria.[28] Moreover, unlike their metropolitan confreres, the army and police worked closely together in the colonial setting, with the

newly-formed Sûreté générale (a police organization controlled by the Governor General and charged with hunting down sedition) and its Service de renseignements (a special branch attached to the Ministry of War and military intelligence tracking movements and individuals deemed dangerous to the state) jointly monitoring local developments and preventing revolt. In this pursuit, they commanded indigenous forces: forest/farm guards or village beat cops. Further complicating matters, the police and gendarmerie were expected to issue regular reports to the Prefects, Governor General and Ministry of the Interior, yet relied upon their Muslim subordinates for all real intelligence, lacking the ability to speak Arabic themselves, information that could easily be manipulated at the behest of local notables.[29]

All of these problems became readily apparent during wartime, when the colonial administration and gendarmerie/police officials evinced tremendous concern with the proliferation of bandit activity, noting the acquiescence of locals in feeding and hiding brigands, and their staunch refusal to cooperate in the arrest and detention of suspects. Prefects and Mayors alike further reported the lionization of deserters and *insoumis*, and the concomitant perception that the French grip on Algeria had weakened during wartime. Fearing that banditry engendered nationalism and anti-Gallic sentiment, the authorities initiated a brutal crackdown across the department, criminalizing dissent from bandits and their communities and unleashing a campaign of intimidation, harassment and state-sanctioned murder in order to staunch anti-colonialism in rural *duwars*.

Given their inability to directly access the local population, due to the language barrier and the clear refusal of relatives and neighbours to divulge the whereabouts of wanted bandits, the administration initially attempted to bribe Algerians, paying cash to informants and for the capture of gang leaders.[30] However, in most cases the French military were dispatched in order to snuff out the threat. In certain instances, guard posts were deemed a sufficient palliative. Faced with heightened bandit activity throughout 1915, in November foot patrols and surveillance was increased for villages and highways in the Soummam. Six- to eight-man armed squads were utilized in sensitive areas, primarily those where violent incidents had recently occurred, while in certain locations night patrols provided constant vigilance. Simultaneously, in Bône-La Calle, 380 soldiers were dispatched to maintain order in *mechtas* throughout the neighbouring *communes mixtes* and on regional roads, while the gendarmerie increased border patrols to prevent the escape of bandits into Tunisia. In this way, local administrators sought to calm 'la masse indigène' (the native masses) while displaying a show of force that demonstrated French strength and willpower in the face of rebel 'criminals' and their local accomplices.[31] The Prefects of Alger and Constantine extended surveillance exercises throughout Kabylia, including *cafés maures* (Moorish cafes), market-places and places of business around

the clock, with any intelligence concerning bandits to be shared by local and regional authorities across Algeria.[32]

Heightened security further resulted in a dramatic increase in the responsibility and authority exercised by colonial administrators themselves. Faced with dozens of armed outlaws and agitated locals, mayors and their assistants in small towns or *communes mixtes* controlled the troops employed in the hunt against bandit gangs, and wielded legal powers normally enjoyed by Prefects to staunch the threat. Charged with snuffing out banditry in Kabylia, Deputy Civil Administrator Carayol for the Commune mixte of Djurdjura organized and led a band of twenty-five to thirty *goumiers* (indigenous soldiers serving in auxiliary units) in order to apprehend the Kezzouli brothers, in tandem with police units across the territory. Any local who resisted this official effort, or worse still aided or harboured a fugitive, would be sent to the Council of War in Tizi-Ouzou on Carayol's authority, and then incarcerated.[33] In the case of regional outbreaks, Prefects took charge, due to their ability to more easily coordinate personnel and troops in their jurisdiction. Faced with a series of attacks in Alger and Constantine, in July 1915 the Prefect of Alger (in tandem with his Constantine coeval) led a massive manhunt throughout the affected municipalities and surrounding forests. Local police had been seriously outgunned, culminating in the brazen June murder of a gendarme in Tizi-Ouzou by a bandit from nearby Acif-el-Hammam. Thus the Governor General charged both administrators with overseeing a combined effort of the army, *brigades mobiles, goumiers* and municipal administrations in order to capture the deserters.[34]

The number of troops deployed often far outweighed the actual threat. In response to a campaign waged in summer 1915 by approximately thirty bandits in Bouhadjar on the Algerian-Tunisian border, the local administrator arranged for three companies of Zouaves (six hundred men in total) and two platoons of Spahis to blanket the area for one month. The following year, the Governor General ordered the entire 11th Battalion of Zouaves sent to Rousched in response to a letter of complaint from Senator Paul Cuttoli, protesting the theft of four cows, two attempted burglaries, the sabotage of a water conduit and a single murder over the course of two years. It was hoped that such a massive presence, including patrols and surveillance around the clock, would flush out the *malfaiteurs* (culprits/wrongdoers) and prevent assistance from friends, neighbours and relatives.[35] Administrators also frequently requested troops to quell insubordination, a term used during wartime to connote desertion. Sidi-Aïch housed hundreds of *insoumis*, necessitating dozens of reinforcements, while in Bougie Zouaves were called in February 1917 after the assassination of a local *caïd*.[36] In certain areas deemed dangerous by commanders, mobile anti-bandit units were formed, mustering a number of officers with up to 200 or more troops, specifically targeting mountainous regions or dense forests. This was the case in July 1915 in the Akfadou forest near Haut-Sebaou and Soummam, where bandits engaged in a crime wave that culminated in the brazen public

murder of a gendarme, causing Prefects to draft soldiers from the army and gendarmerie along with local police into a comprehensive unit. In each case, inhabitants were tasked with paying the cost of feeding and housing troops, and the requisitioning of supplies, through taxes collected by the village *caïds*, which caused serious resentment among locals, who complained bitterly to the Prefecture about the imposition.[37]

Once in the field, troops divided into two units. The first initiated searches of any suspect dwelling in a *mechta*, including locales known to house 'criminals', which in practice included anyone suspected of anti-French leanings. Other squads went into the forest and/or hills to ambush the bandits or locate their hideouts, a very difficult proposition given the advantage enjoyed by locals who knew the terrain far better than the newcomers. Administrators and commanders also complained of troops being withdrawn too quickly. The Sub-Prefect in Bône wrote bitterly to his superiors in January 1916 that prominent outlaws had evaded capture for this reason; the military established sixteen guard posts in Edough, Tarf and La Calle, each with up to thirty troops, including cavalry and Spahis. Previously the scene of dozens of robberies and attacks, the presence of troops instilled complete calm and security, while uncooperative villagers were removed from the region and sent to neighbouring communities. However, the bandits themselves, the 'notorious' Younès and Rouchi gangs, were never captured due to the impenetrability of surrounding forests. Their prestige among the area's non-European inhabitants grew immensely as a result, leading to increased desertion rates and prison escapes across the region.[38]

Nonetheless, the operations did produce a certain level of success. Many bandits were captured and arrested, most often prison escapees serving sentences for violent crimes, but in rare instances an entire posse.[39] In September 1915, a massive manhunt resulted in the arrests of seventeen members of the Bouhadjar gang in La Calle, and subsequent trials of deserters before the Council of War, which meted out executions and harsh prison sentences for treason. Although few suspects were apprehended, a December 1915 sweep of the Akbou region, and a similar action the following month in Sétif, effectively drove bandits out of both areas. In direct communication with mobile units, local administrators pooled their resources, tracking gangs day and night. In many cases, outlaws were tried and convicted by French courts, their sentences ranging from a short prison term to a life sentence of hard labour, and in extreme cases to execution. One large-scale operation in Beni-Salah (Edough, La Calle and La Séfia) led to numerous convictions at a December 1916 trial in Bône, including two capital punishments, and a variety of prison sentences and revocations of *droit de séjour* (the right of residency, the removal of which forced the culprit to leave the territory) from five to twenty years.[40] The severity of the repression, along with the number of bandits jailed, effectively terminated outlaw activity in the region.

However, not all prosecutions were so effective. In September 1914, Moula Belkacem, the leader of a Kabyle bandit gang that included numerous deserters from the Tirailleurs, received a mere three year sentence, while three bandits who robbed a courier and shot a train conductor in Akbou were jailed for one to three years, and ultimately freed on appeal. Similar cases were simply dismissed outright, and the Administrator of the Soummam noted wearily in June 1918 that those regions with severe sentencing for banditry experienced a marked drop in criminal activity throughout the war.[41] Faced with such legal uncertainty, he (and many of his colleagues) petitioned for trial by the Council of War, which had exclusive jurisdiction over deserters and *insoumis* and was not bound by the criminal code, routinely sentencing offenders to death or life imprisonment.[42]

Given that sentences were frequently lenient even for the most serious crimes, police and gendarmes often dispensed with the legal system altogether. The authorities simply killed their intended target rather than arresting him, sometimes in a shootout, but on other occasions in more dubious circumstances. Denounced by informants in Le Séfia, gang leader Mohamed Younès was assassinated during a December 1915 operation, the same month that the head of the Ouled Selim gang Ali Boukharouba and his chief lieutenant were killed by troops in the mountains. In most such cases, no warning shots were fired, and troops or guards never attempted to arrest the bandits. Thus Younès was lured to a meeting of restitution with a local notable whose livestock he had purloined, only to be faced with twenty-three soldiers, and killed by multiple gunshot wounds in an ambush.[43] Whether a direct confrontation or an ambuscade, a significant number of bandits confronted by French or Muslim police, or gendarmes, were seriously wounded or killed in a variety of locales across the Constantinois.[44]

In most cases, the element of surprise was deemed necessary, due to the lack of cooperation of locals, the supposed cowardice of most Algerian leaders and guards, and the well-armed nature of the opposition. Colonial authorities suspected *caïds* and *goums* of tipping off bandits, and even providing money and food to gangs. In both Duvivier and Edough, for example, Forest Rangers functioned as middlemen, taking provisions from notables to bandits living openly in *gourbis* (huts) in the forest. Even when *caïds* refused material aid, they were perceived to be ruining investigations through inertia, neglecting to act unless threatened with dismissal by their imperial masters.[45] Moreover, local populations refused to offer any assistance to authorities, leading to concerns that France would seem powerless if immediate disciplinary action was not taken. Brigands were believed to be sheltered with the complicity of neighbours, while parents acted to prevent military recruitment of their sons. Troops seeking to capture Abdelouhab Lahlou in January 1918 entered the home of close relatives only to find a crawl space complete with fresh provisions and firearms, while police discovered that Mohamed Younès had been hiding in plain sight in Ouled Azzaz with the aid of his parents.[46] Locals in Oued Marsa and

Lafayette also helped bandits, who lived openly and received food and provisions in what villagers considered a blow against the hated colonial authorities. Many offered armed resistance to European encroachment on their territory, attacking police or military recruitment offices. In various communities in autumn and winter 1914, inhabitants banded together to block army trucks from departing, pelted administrative buildings with rocks to protest against conscription, and physically attacked gendarmes.[47]

The most severe anti-conscription action occurred in the Sud-Constantinois in 1916, where rioting engulfed several communities, leading to numerous fatalities and widespread property destruction. The events began on 12 November, in the Batna region, whose local tribes had a long history of rebellion, first against the Turks and then the French colonial administration, and who had been particularly active in the 1871 Kabyle revolt. Various *communes mixtes* had experienced staunch opposition to recruitment drives in 1912, including a near-riot in MacMahon, and renewed opposition in the opening stages of the Great War, with one *caïd* bluntly stating that 'they can raise our taxes and seize our goods, but we will not give them our children'. Unsurprisingly, numerous recruits refused to report, a situation that devolved into open revolt in certain *duwars*, forcing the abandonment of the 1915 recruitment class. The trend accelerated in 1915–16 throughout the region with the announcement of renewed conscription, and the resulting increase in banditry manifested itself in rising crime rates: theft, kidnapping and murder in Aïn-Touta, Belèzma, Khenchla, Barika and the Aurès. In order to restore order, 400 troops arrived from Constantine to arrest *insoumis* and deserters, and to halt a spate of killings of both *colons* and Muslims, including politicians in Belèzma and Aïn-Beida.[48]

The ensuing riots were both a rejection of military conscription and French colonial hegemony. By September 1916, fathers in local *duwars* refused to allow recruiters to leave with their sons, and desertion quickly spread throughout the Sud-Constantinois region. Repressive measures taken by the French military failed to contain the threat, as too few troops were available to maintain order and Muslims perceived the authorities as weakened during wartime in any case. The climax came in November, in the form of a full-scale insurrection, with armed bands preventing conscripts from departing in villages near Belèzma and the attempted seizure of Bou Meguer by horsemen demanding an independent republic, destroying telephone wires and blocking roads.[49] Then on 12 November, the Ouled Aout bandit gang killed the Administrator of the *commune mixte* of Aïn-Touta (MacMahon) and the Sub-Prefect, before attempting to seize control of the largest town. Rebels pillaged stores, stabbed and beat inhabitants and torched buildings. The arrival of a team of twenty Zouaves resulted in pitched battles in the streets between the bandits and law enforcement, and news of the events quickly spread to neighbouring communities. In Tamarins, Muslims engaged in robbery and arson, killing a Forest Ranger and causing local *caïds* to abandon their posts and flee the jurisdiction. By late afternoon, villagers had blocked

roads and ransacked farms across the territory, and Europeans reported fires and detonations in various locales.[50] In the aftermath of the MacMahon riot, the Prefect of Constantine and army commanders engaged in extreme repressive measures, including aerial bombardments, *razzias* (raids) against rebel *mechtas*, and crop destruction. When order was restored, over one thousand accused were tried in Constantine and Batna, resulting in mass imprisonment in open-air prisons, where 143 deaths occurred during winter 1916–17, mostly from typhus. The destruction of area farmland and closure of markets also led to a severe famine.[51]

The combination of local non-cooperation, the failure to root out bandits in many locations, and the fear that both of these factors contributed to potential rebellion led to the implementation of ever more draconian measures to restore colonial order. The favoured tactic was *surveillance spéciale*, the forced removal of a bandit's family members and their imprisonment in a remote village. This process often involved force, with parents being taken from their homes by police. In Bougie the Prefect demanded the immediate removal of seven villagers accused of actively assisting a gang of deserters that had committed a string of robberies and murders in Amalou, where the population worked together to prevent their arrest. They were interned in M'Sila, while Zouaves seized all arms in the *mechtas*, closed a popular *café maure*, and recalled all Muslim elected officials, and a new special armed force would be sent to Amalou in order to 'make the *indigènes* understand'. Once taken, the villagers were held under military guard (often in the municipal jail) or deported to another commune, preventing all contact with the outside world. Authorities hoped that this 'administrative detention' would force bandits to turn themselves in to the gendarmerie. Although rarely effective, administrators and Prefects continued to use *surveillance spéciale* when searches failed and communities were perceived (often wrongly) to be working in concert to foil police investigations.[52] Moreover, certain officials argued for far sterner measures. In La Calle, the administrator demanded the construction of concentration camps to house any local deemed to be assisting bandits. The Sub-Prefect in Bône went even further, outlining a plan for the military occupation of any suspect *mechta*. Neither came to fruition, presumably due to a paucity of resources during wartime.[53]

In any case, heavy-handed police tactics resulted in serious complaints, voiced by Arabs and Berbers to both municipal and regional authorities, and in severe cases to the Governor General's office. This was hardly unique to Algeria as arbitrary arrest and confinement without regard to judicial process, as well as beatings administered to suspects, produced voluminous criticism in numerous locales, particularly in the Syrian Mandate.[54] As in Syria, the Algerian authorities blamed duplicitous locals. When police demolished the *gourbi* belonging to a *tirailleur* whose cousin was the bandit Djaïch Abdallah, authorities greeted his complaint by noting the relative's long rap sheet.[55] In La Calle, the administrateur admitted that soldiers regularly harassed inhabitants of certain *duwars* throughout the Commune

mixte, even uprooting them on various occasions, but justified the actions by claiming that the persecution merely responded to the aid given to bandits. In response to similar abuses in La Calle and Bougie, villagers petitioned the Governor General to intervene. In the latter case, popular anger was so acute that a gunfight broke out between two agents and a suspect during which two children were killed. Rather than express remorse, the Sub-Prefect blamed a family feud and claimed that the region's Kabyles were all trigger-happy. The administration particularly recoiled at 'the reprehensible attitude of soldiers vis-à-vis women', who were repeatedly manhandled in the Chiebra *duwar*, although municipal and regional officials continued to argue that 'an exceptional situation demands exceptional measures', from searches to *surveillance spéciale*. In agreement with his colleagues, in most cases the Governor General accepted their official explanation of events, no matter how severe the complaints or the treatment of the *indigènes*.[56]

In the final analysis, the success of administrative campaigns to end banditry in Constantine was decidedly mixed. Crime increased dramatically in the region after the declaration of hostilities, and the number of desertions and evasions remained high throughout the war. Although in many instances bandits engaged in simple robbery (frequently against Arabs or Berbers), such activity often resulted in attacks on European targets: murder, sabotage or assaults against law enforcement. To be sure, many leaders were arrested, and a large number of criminals and deserters hunted down by soldiers, gendarmes and police. Yet for all of the efforts to criminalize dissent through the ruthless suppression of banditry throughout the region, popular dissatisfaction with conscription, police methods and indeed French imperialism in general, severely weakened the campaign. Brigands remained active throughout the Constantinois in no small measure due to the assistance of villagers and relatives, from the provision of food and shelter to a universal refusal to assist gendarmes in locating and arresting the culprits. In many cases, bandits lived openly in a given *mechta*, symbols of the purported weakness of colonial power and the Algerian rejection of the metropolitan authorities. Although they adopted an official stance of calm determination, speaking in official correspondence about simple *malfaiteurs* who would be brought to justice, officials fully understood that banditry during the Great War was explicitly political, stymying conscription efforts while encouraging rebellion in the *duwars*, and directly foreshadowing postwar Algerian nationalism. It is thus unsurprising that they resorted to increasingly brutal methods to snuff out the troublemakers and minimize popular dissent; they were not fighting common criminals, but *insoumis* whose refusal to submit to the colonial system actively endangered it.

Notes

1 On the Kabyle rebellion, see John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992), 77–9.

2 Emmanuel Blanchard and Joël Glasman, 'Le Maintien de l'ordre dans l'empire français: une historiographie émergente', in *Maintenir l'ordre colonial: Afrique et Madagascar, XIXe-XXe siècles,* ed. Jean-Pierre Bat and Nicolas Courtin (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 12. Unfortunately, the same sources are often the only existent record of banditry in the colonial context. Clearly reports and dossiers cannot be read literally, but must be vetted for euphemistic language and exaggeration. However, many unwittingly contain information concerning local conditions and subaltern voices, and certain authors recount gruesome details without any attempt to obfuscate events or meaning. Thus despite their evident bias, official documents can prove quite useful in reconstructing cases of banditry, providing that the reader exercises demonstrable caution.

3 The term 'deserters' refers to soldiers who flee military service, usually from a base camp or training ground. By contrast, *insoumis* are those who refuse to report altogether, instead evading conscription or recruitment.

4 Gilbert Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée: la guerre de 1914–1918 et le premier quart du XXe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1981); Abdelkadar Djeghloul, 'Hors-la-loi, violence arabe et pouvoir colonial en Algérie au début du XXe siècle: les frères Boutouizerat', *Revue de l'occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 38 (1984), 55–63. As Daniel Branch relates, in Algeria 'colonialism drove a logic of extremes, obliterating the possibility of a meaningful, moderate nationalism'. In *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19.

5 Jean Déjeux, 'Un bandit dans l'Aurès, de 1917 à 1921', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 26 (1978), 35–54; Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Delacorte Press, 1969), 13–22.

6 Raphaëlle Branche, '"Au temps de la France": identités collectives et situation coloniale en Algérie', *Vingtième siècle* 117 (2013), 209.

7 Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Order after 1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 79.

8 *Duwars* were tribal tent encampments organized into family units, while *mechtas* were small villages.

9 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

10 On the Kabyle myth, see Patricia M. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Race in Colonial Algeria* (London: IB Tauris, 1995). The Zouaves were the native North African infantry, while Spahis were cavalry units specifically recruited among Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians. Conversely, the Chasseurs d'Afrique contained settler cavalry divisions

alongside indigenous ones, and the Tirailleurs sénégelais recruited exclusively in Sub-Saharan Africa.

11 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 85–8, Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 17–22, 31–5. The bonus payments also fulfilled a more sinister function. As Algerians were subjects rather than citizens, for whom mandatory service went hand-in-hand with citizenship, the cash payoffs differentiated colonial 'mercenaries' from their metropolitan counterparts.

12 Fogarty, *Race and War,* 2, 7–8, 25–7; Tyler Stovall, 'The Color Line Behind the Lines: Racial Violence in France During the Great War', *American Historical Review* 103 (1998), 738–42.

13 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 97–103, 260, 395–407; Fogarty, 23–7; Alain Mahé, *Histoire de la Grande Kabylie, XIXe-XXe siècles: anthropologie historique du lien social dans les communautés villageoises* (Paris: Editions Bouchène, 2000), 297–8. By 1918, the five-franc per head bounty had increased to seven. Cash payments from families for replacement soldiers reached up to 500 francs. See AOM Constantine 93/2515, p. 93. In total, 172,019 Algerians served in the armed forces during the Great War, along with 109,000 workers. Those serving on the front lines tended to be younger, while factory workers were older men.

14 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 395–407, 570; Fogarty, 25–7, 31–5; Fanny Colonna, *Le Meunier, les moines, et le bandit: des vies quotidiennes dans l'Aurès (Algérie) du XXe siècle* (Arles: Actes sud, 2010), 66; AOM Constantine 93/2515, 'Les Troubles insurrectionnels de l'arrondissement de Batna en 1916'. Although desertion rates fell to 605 in 1917, they mushroomed again to 948 in 1918. The latter figure undoubtedly corresponds to a huge increase in the number of Algerian dead and seriously wounded, from between 14,500 and 19,000 in 1914–16 to 33,500 in 1917 and 55,500 in 1918. In total 3,883 fled armed service throughout the war.

15 AOM Constantine 93/5321: Alger/20 December 1916, GGA to Préfet; 93/2515: 'Les Troubles insurrectionnels de l'arrondissement de Batna en 1916'; 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/8 February 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet (Bougie); Constantine 93/5326; 15 July 1915, Commissaire Chef de la Sûreté générale to Préfet.

16 AOM Constantine 93/5320: Tébessa/2 May 1915, Azazga/30 September 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte du Haut-Sebaou to Préfet and 'Etat nominatif des individus recherchés originaires des Communes mixtes de Port-Gueydon, Azazga, Sidi-Aïch et Akbou'; 93/5326: 'Rapport hebdomadaire sur la situation politique/La Calle', 5–11 December 1911; 93/5321: Oued Marsa/9 January 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Bougie); Alger/12 February 1917, Procureur générale to GGA; Akbou/ 10 September 1918, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; Bougie/24 October 1918, letter to GGA.

17 AOM Constantine 93/5326, Administrateur de la Commune mixte, 'Rapport hebdomadaire sur la situation politique et l'état d'esprit des indigènes de la Commune mixte de La Calle', 5–11 December 1915; Constantine/20 December 1915, Commissaire to Chef de la Sûreté générale. The situation was

so dire for local authorities in certain areas that officers recommended that the *duwars* be locked down, allowing no one in or out without special authorization, and a ban on all weapons and provisions outside of one's home village.

18 Attacks of all three types were frequent. See, for example, AOM Constantine 93/20183: Sidi Aïch/3 December 1914, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet; Sidi-Aïch/12 October 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de Soummam to Sous-préfet (Bougie); Administrateur de la Commune mixte du Haut Sebaou to Préfet (re. crimes on the Constantine side of the departmental border); 93/20066: Akbou/28 August 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet. For multiple attacks and concomitant official declarations, see AOM Constantine 93/5321: Biskra/26 December 1914, Mayor to Préfet; 93/5326: Bône/16 November 1915, Rapport du Capitaine Lizet, Commandant l'arrondissement de Bône; 93/20018: GGA to Sûreté générale de Constantine, 'Rapport annuel 1916'; 93/20066: Akbou/17 September 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet.

19 AOM/Constantine 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/3 December 1914, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet; Sidi-Aïch/22 December 1914, Administrateur de la Commune Mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet; 93/5321: Biskra/26 December 1914, Mayor to Sous-préfet; 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/12 October 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet; Sidi-Aïch/9 November 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Préfet; 93/5326: Bône/4 February 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte d'Edough to Sous-préfet.

20 AOM/Constantine 93/5322: Constantine/6 November 1917, Sûreté générale, 'Rapport spécial'.

21 AOM Constantine 93/20066: Constantine/21 December 1914, Directeur des postes et des télégraphes to Général commandant la division/Constantine; 93/5326: Alger/3 November 1915, Directeur des Chemins de fer algériens to Préfet (Constantine); Chateaudun-du-Rhumel/6 April 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; 93/5322: Meskiana/1 May 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; 93/5320: Chateaudun/4 January 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet.; 93/20066: Akbou/17 September 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet.

22 Colonna, *Le Meunier,* 68–70.

23 Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence*, 26. The phenomenon of 'information panic' was common currency throughout the French Empire.

24 AOM Constantine 93/20183: Constantine/31 October 1916, Directeur des Postes et des télégraphes to Préfet; Sidi-Aïch/5 March 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet (Bougie); Alger/24 March 1917, GGA to Préfet; Sidi-Aïch/8 May 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Bougie).

25 AOM Constantine 93/5326: Alger/22 October 1915, GGA to Préfet; 93/20183: Général commandant la division de Constantine, 'Minute', n.d. (June 1916); 93/20066: Akbou/27 July 1916, Adminstrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet; Akbou/19 September 1916, Administrateur de la

Commune mixte to Préfet; 93/5322: Constantine/11 November 1916, Commissaire de la Sûreté générale, 'Rapport'.

26 AOM Constantine 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/3 November 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet (Bougie).

27 AOM/Constantine 93/20066: Sidi-Aïch/29 October 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Préfet; 93/5321: Alger/13 November 1918, GGA to Préfet.

28 Bat and Courtin, *Maintenir l'ordre colonial*, 13, 17, 39; Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence*, 5.

29 Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence*, 33–6. Worse still, Thomas notes, Muslims were perceived by officers to be religious fanatics and ignorant peasants, easily led into disorder by shrewd political manipulators.

30 AOM Constantine 93/5326: Souk-Ahras/3 December 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de Souk-Ahras to Sous-préfet (Guelma); Guelma/27 November 1915, Sous-préfet (Guelma) to Préfet.

31 AOM Constantine 93/5320: Tébessa/17 December 1914, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de Morsott to Préfet; Constantine/19 January 1915, Préfet to GGA; 93/5326: Constantine/4 November 1915, Préfet to Sous-préfet (Bône); 93/20066: Sidi-Aïch/16 November 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet.

32 AOM/Constantine 93/20066: Alger/5 November 1915, Préfet/Alger to Préfet/Constantine; 93/5326: Guelma/27 November 1915, Sous-préfet to Préfet.

33 AOM Constantine 93/20066: Michelet/18 February 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte du Djudjura to Administrateur de la Commune mixte de Biban; Alger/24 February 1916, GGA to Préfet.

34 AOM/Constantine 93/20066: Alger/27 June 1915, GGA to Préfet (Constantine).

35 AOM/Constantine 93/5326: La Calle/4 September 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de La Calle, 'Rapport sur les opérations de recherches', 93/5322: Alger/25 May 1916, GGA to Préfet; 93/20183: Constantine/23 November 1916, Général Baschung/Commandant la division de Constantine to Préfet.

36 AOM Constantine 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/30 January 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Bougie); Bougie/9 February 1917, Sous-préfet to Préfet.

37 AOM Constantine 93/20066: Alger/24 February 1916, GGA to Préfet; Akbou/10 December 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; Constantine/27 November 1915, GGA to Préfet; Alger/27 July 1915, GGA to Préfet (Constantine); 93/20183: Constantine/15 May 1917, Général de Lartigue, Commandant la Division de Constantine to Préfet. Notables from various locales wrote to the Prefect demanding an end to the practice of demanding payment for police operations.

38 AOM Constantine 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/4 December 1916, 'Rapport sur la situation politique des indigènes du 26 novembre au 3 décembre 1916'; Sidi-Aïch/30 January 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-

préfet (Bougie); Bougie/9 February 1917, Sous-préfet to Préfet; Constantine/18 March 1917, Général de Lartigue to Préfet; Constantine/7 May 1917, Préfet to Général commandant la division-Constantine.

39 AOM Constantine 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/19 January 1915, Rapport du Brigadier/Sidi-Aïch sur une bande de malfaiteurs; 93/5320: Constantine/10 November 1915, Commissaire Chef de la Sûrete générale to Préfet 93/20066: Sidi-Aïch/18 December 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Préfet; 93/5326: Laverdure/4 February 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de Séfia to Sous-préfet (Guelma); 93/20066: Akbou/3 October 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet; AOM Constantine 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/29 May 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet (Bougie); 93/5320: Tébessa/9 June 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet.

40 AOM Constantine 93/5326: 'Rapport sur les opérations de recherches de la bande de malfaiteurs occupant la région forestière de Bouhadjar/Souk-Ahras, Ouled-Bechia, Reguegma, et La Cheffia', 4 September 1915; 93/20066: Akbou/10 December 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; 93/20018: GGA, 'Rapport annuel de 1916'.

41 AOM Constantine 93/20066: Akbou/28 September 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; Constantine/13 October 1916, Préfet to GGA; 93/20183: Sidi Aich/7 March 1918, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Préfet; 93/5321: Sidi-Aïch/18 June 1918, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet (Bougie).

42 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 85; AOM Constantine 93/5326: La Calle/4 September 1915, 'Rapport sur les opérations de recherche'; 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/6 November 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet (Bougie).

43 AOM Constantine 93/5326: Bône/22 January 1916, Sous-préfet (Bône) to Préfet. Concerning Younès's death, see AOM Constantine 93/5326: Laverdure/18 December 1915, Préfet to Sous-préfet (Bône).

44 See, for example, AOM Constantine 93/20183: Sidi-Aïch/19 January 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet; Sidi-Aïch/1 February 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet; AOM Constantine 93/5326: 'Rapport sur la mort du bandit Abdellali Ammar abbatu le 17 janvier [1916]'; Bône/14 March 1916, Sous-préfet to Préfet; La Calle/11 July 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Bône).

45 AOM Constantine 93/5326: Alger/30 December 1915, GGA to Préfet; 92/20066: Constantine/1 March 1916, Commissaire chef de la Sûreté générale to Préfet; 93/5326: Bône/29 May 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Bône); n.d. (May 1916), Général Baschung to Préfet.

46 AOM Constantine 93/5326: Souk-Ahras/23 November 1915, Admnistrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet; AOM/Constantine 93/5321: Akbou/22 January 1918, Administrateur de la Commune mixte d'Akbou to Sous-préfet.

47 AOM Constantine 93/5320: Tébessa/10 December 1914, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de Morsott to Préfet; 93/5326: Souk-Ahras/23 November 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Guelma); 93/5321: Oued Marsa/23 November 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Procureur de la République (Bougie); Bougie/9 February 1917, Sous-préfet to Préfet; 93/2515: 'Les Troubles insurrectionnels de l'arrondissement de Batna en 1916'.

48 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 569–72; AOM Constantine 93/2515: 'Les Troubles insurrectionnels de l'arrondissment de Batna en 1916', 3–4, 12–14, 61–98, 181.

49 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 591; AOM Constantine 93/2515: 'Les Troubles insurrectionnels de l'arrondissement de Batna en 1916', 98–101, 108–10, 113.

50 AOM Constantine 93/2515: 'Les Troubles insurrectionnels de l'arrondissement de Batna en 1916', 14–40.

51 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 591.

52 AOM/Constantine 93/20066: Sidi-Aïch/16 November 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte de la Soummam to Sous-préfet; AOM Constantine 93/5326: Alger/7 April 1916, GGA to Préfet; 93/5321: Akbou/18 February 1917, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Bougie); Constantine/June 1917, Préfet to GGA; Bougie/29 March 1918, Sous-préfet to Préfet; Akbou/6 April 1918, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet. In his monthly report for January 1916, the Sous-préfet for Sétif claimed that *surveillance spéciale* was responsible for a substantial decrease in crime. Given its lack of success in other locations, it is likely that the executions and patrols played a far greater role in the declining crime rate. See AOM Constantine: 93/20066, Rapport mensuel/January 1916.

53 AOM Constantine: 93/5326, Bône/10 November 1915, Sous-préfet to Préfet; La Calle/11 November 1915, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; 'Rapport hebdomadaire sur la situation politique et l'état d'esprit des indigènes de la Commune mixte de La Calle', 26 March–1 April 1916. Such plans were far from unique to Algeria. As Daniel Neep demonstrates, the authorities in Syria razed any village deemed suspect, and the murder of inhabitants by soldiers was not uncommon, particularly in reprisal for attacks against French officials or citizens. See *Occupying Syria Under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space, and State Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 50–8.

54 Neep, *Occupying Syria,* 72. Complaints were particularly numerous in Druze territory, where suspects were often forced into the so-called Coal Cellar, a cell 5 metres square in size and only 1.7 metres high. Many of those charged were not guilty, but rather victims of informants, who named them simply to receive a cash payment.

55 AOM Constantine 93/5210: Sétif/7 August 1917, Sous-préfet to Préfet.

56 AOM Constantine 93/20066: Akbou/9 January 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Préfet; Alger/7 February 1916, GGA to Préfet (Constantine); 93/5326: Alger/14 March 1916, GGA to Préfet; La Calle/ 27 March 1916 and 5 April 1916, Administrateur de la Commune mixte to Sous-préfet (Bône); Bougie/15 January 1917, Sous-préfet to Préfet.

CHAPTER TWO

The Young Algerians and the Question of the Muslim Draft, 1900–14

Michelle Mann

On 7 February 1912, the *Journal Officiel* discreetly announced the French government's plans to implement a programme of mandatory military service for Algerian colonial subjects.[1] Published in the form of a decree,[2] the first article of this seemingly anodyne piece of legislation rather bluntly explained its purpose: to proceed with 'the recruitment of non-naturalized indigenous Algerian Muslims . . . by voluntary engagement, re-engagement, and by a special draft . . .' According to detailed terms, after a yearly census and process of random selection Muslim Algerians would be obliged to serve in the French military for three years – as opposed to the two years demanded of French citizens – and would be paid at the same rates as professional colonial soldiers. Subsequent articles confirmed a number of exemptions for the sons of widows, orphans with younger siblings and 'all [the] young people . . . [who are] inapt for military service.' In addition, the report prefacing the decree hinted at the possibility of special categories of prioritized employment for former soldiers, and concluded with an assurance that 'the draft as here defined is only an option . . . and will only affect a tiny minority of [each year's] contingent.'[3] And indeed, in the first year of its enactment, only about 2,400 Algerian colonial subjects – 5 per cent of the eligible population – were actually called into service.[4]

Despite its initially cautious implementation, the 1912 conscription decree marked an important turning point in French-Algerian identity politics, and represented the culmination of decades of heated debate. Indeed, the question of colonial conscription in Algeria was highly

controversial for French legislators, settlers and Algerians alike; the years and months preceding the decree saw the publication of literally hundreds of polemical brochures and journal articles. As legislators and government officials debated the question of *le service militaire obligatoire des indigènes musulmans* ('obligatory military service for native Muslims') in news columns and chamber halls, various rumours of conscription's nefarious effects spread though Muslim communities in the western department of Oran and elsewhere: inhabitants feared the forced de-veiling of women, taxes on pious objects and other attacks on the integrity of Muslim North African culture.[5] Community leaders from the southern desert region known as the M'zab were particularly opposed to military service, on the grounds that exposure to a wider world would undermine Muslim cultural values and rend the social fabric of their communities: 'The introduction of obligatory military service in this country will fatally drive the Mozabite people to ruin,' lamented one Mozabite leader.[6]

Across the ideological divide, however, a small but growing number of French-educated Muslim Algerians took a rather different approach to the question of Muslim military service. This literate and vocal group insisted that all Frenchmen, regardless of race, colour or religion, should have the rights that belong to national citizens – including the right to fight and die for the French *patrie*. For these colonial subjects, who were known in the French press as the 'Young Algerians' (Jeunes Algériens)[7] the question of the Muslim draft represented an unprecedented opportunity for Algerian colonial subjects to gain the right to participate in French national political life on equal terms with European settlers.

Although often marginalized in accounts of Algeria's national awakening, the assimilationist programme of the Young Algerians was considered at the time to be extremely subversive of colonial rule in Algeria. When their political actions are taken into account, it becomes clear that the decree of 1912 was about much more than simple military logistics. The conscription debate became so heated precisely because it exposed the absurd circularity of assimilation's logic in colonial contexts, forcing French citizens and Algerian subjects alike to grapple with the existential question of whether Muslims could, or should, or even desired, to 'become' French.[8] In this context, the Young Algerians' vocal support of the Muslim draft was so subversive precisely because of its ability to highlight profound tensions between the assimilationist rhetoric of the French civilizing mission and the institutionalization of the legal, political and economic discrimination of Algerian Muslims under colonial rule.[9] The following sections will explore the reasons why the question of conscription became such a pressing issue at the end of the nineteenth century and discuss the Young Algerians' efforts to promote military service as a path to equality, before reflecting briefly upon the larger significance of the conscription question, both for the fate of assimilation as a French imperial policy, and for the history of Algerian nationalism.

From mercenaries to conscripts

Prior to the First World War, Algeria possessed the largest military force of any French colony. The Armée d'Afrique (African Army) was made up of almost 100,000 men, mostly Europeans and North African Jews. In addition, small numbers of Muslims served the French as mercenaries since the first days of conquest in 1830, their numbers growing slowly over the course of the nineteenth century as they fought in campaigns across the empire, from Mexico to Syria.[10] Prior to 1912, Algerian Muslims were recruited into this expansive force on a theoretically voluntary basis, paid as mercenaries and kept in separate 'indigenous' units. As opposed to the Colonial Army then operating in sub-Saharan Africa, where colonial soldiers outnumbered French troops by two to one, Muslims were a minority in the African Army, forming a corps of roughly 16,000 indigenous troops as opposed to 36,000 French troops and an additional 50,000 settler reservists in 1910.[11]

For much of the nineteenth century, this limited system of voluntary Muslim recruitment operated effectively. The 'brilliant conduct' of Algerian soldiers in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870[12] and their essential role in the conquest of Morocco earned them a reputation as 'an important reservoir of enduring men, valorous soldiers, who enjoy the scent of battle and who have given ample proof of their devotion and courage.'[13] Although the question of whether to increase recruitment by imposing a Muslim draft arose periodically in 1855, 1857 and 1864, conscription was never seriously considered for the pragmatic reason that the conquest of Algerian territories was still ongoing and it was deemed unwise to provide potential rebels with weapons and training.[14]

The establishment of a durable republican regime after 1871 led to a shift in thinking about the organization and function of Muslim military service. In line with French revolutionary legacy, Third Republic France subscribed to the concept of a 'nation in arms', the Rousseauian belief that the state was safe only when defended by its citizenry.[15] In an atmosphere of rising nationalistic fervour, the new government quickly introduced universal conscription as an effective means of promoting patriotism and national solidarity among France's locally-oriented peasantry.[16] This rise in militarism coincided with a period of intensive colonial expansion, that was justified in terms of a *mission civilisatrice* ('civilizing mission') by which colonial subjects would be slowly transformed into citizens through the imposition of French laws and cultural values.[17] If we are to believe the rhetoric of staunch republican and two-time prime minister Jules Ferry, speaking on the 'Algerian question' in 1891, France 'went into the Regency of Algiers [in 1830] to bring about the reign of civilization [and] to preserve the Mediterranean . . . from the domination of barbarism'. Nor was Ferry alone in his conviction that France had a noble and grand *mission civilisatrice* in North Africa, which could only be accomplished through the cultural and institutional assimilation of indigenous peoples into the French community

of citizens. 'Granted', he admitted, 'complete assimilation is the work of centuries . . . [but this] is the daily task of a great nation!'[18]

In the mid-1880s these two ideas converged to inspire a handful of reform-minded republican legislators to push for the conscription of Algerian Muslims as an excellent means of jump-starting the process of assimilation. Thus in the early 1880s, Colonel Robin proposed conscription in exchange for the extension of civil and political rights to Muslims, but he was unanimously opposed by his fellow African Army officers.[19] Likewise the Gaulier and Michelin Bill – proposed in 1889 but subsequently abandoned – would have established collective, automatic naturalization for Algerian Muslims in exchange for their compliance with military service. A version proposed earlier by Deputy Joseph Henri Michelin (a Boulangist republican of the Paris region) was especially radical for its time, for it even recommended that Muslims receive collective naturalization while retaining their religious personal status[20] and would have overturned the *Sénatus-consulte* of 1865 which had effectively declared Islam incompatible with French citizenship.[21]

The colonial reform movement was given further momentum in the wake of Jules Ferry's visit to Algeria in 1887. Ferry was primarily concerned about the colonial administration's brutal treatment of Algerian subjects and the 'unjust, poorly conceived economic measures' whose unhappy effects he had witnessed. However, he blamed these problems entirely on the 'limited' outlook of the settler population, rather than on Muslims' lack of political representation and civil liberties within the French-Algerian state. In fact, Ferry had been surprised in Algeria when he was approached by several indigenous notables who wanted to discuss the issues of Muslim naturalization and political representation.[22]

Ferry's early death in 1893 temporarily stalled the momentum of reformers, but his cause was soon taken up again by Albin Rozet, a deputy from the Haute Marne, and the Human Rights League (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme) which sought persistently to attenuate the expansive punitive powers given to administrators by a series of discriminatory laws known collectively as the *Indigénat* and the repressive tribunals.[23] Their ideas and convictions were echoed in metropolitan reformist publications and societies, most notably *La Réforme coloniale* (1902), *La Revue indigène* (1906), and later, through the Alliance franco-indigène (French-native alliance) created in 1913.[24]

Almost without exception, the assimilationist proposals of these early colonial reformers were adamantly opposed by European political leaders in Algeria, who scoffed at what they perceived as the dangerously naive idealism of the metropole. Settler representatives believed that Muslim Algerians were an inveterate enemy of the French presence and a constant threat to the security of European communities. They argued that the Muslim population was inherently unassimilable because of its backwardness and propensity for religious fanaticism. These sentiments were exacerbated

by memories of a major rebellion that had taken place in the mountains of Kabylia in 1871, when attacks led by Bach-Agha El Moqrani resulted in the death of 150 settlers and the destruction of numerous French farms.[25] Despite severe repression by the French Army, smaller revolts continued to occur. In 1901, a violent attack against the settler town of Margueritte seemed once again to confirm the fears of settlers that 'the day we try to turn the Arab into a soldier, we will turn him into an insurgent.'[26]

From the perspective of settlers, the conscription of Muslims was a dangerous threat, not only to colonial security, but also to the stability of colonial politics. Enfranchisement, the very element of conscription that made it so appealing to colonial reformers, also made it utterly unthinkable for those interested in maintaining the colonial status quo. Thus, rather than extending military service and its corollary political rights to Muslims, the colonial administration advocated continually for the maintenance of harsh repressive tactics and the expansion of police powers. Paul Azan, who had already served as a lieutenant in Algeria for five years at the time of his publication on Algerian policy in 1903, rejected Ferry's assimilationist vision outright. Although he insisted that he had Arab friends, he was mostly struck by how different Muslims were from Europeans. He believed that it was foolish for the French to expect Muslim North Africans to develop Western-style democratic institutions. He argued that assimilation was inherently dangerous, for it would lead to demands for political rights and ultimately allow the Arabs to govern the Europeans in Algeria. His counsel was to adopt a policy of 'association' which recognized the 'hereditary inaptitude of the native . . . for understanding and adopting our mores.'[27]

Although the arguments propounded by settlers and their representatives sufficed to stall the momentum of the colonial reform movement throughout the 1880s and 1890s, a shift in legislative opinion occurred between 1900 and 1910 as the concerns of metropolitan military strategists began to outweigh the interests of settlers. Under pressure to attenuate the burden of military service for French voters, and anxiously preparing for another encounter with a newly unified Germany, the War Ministry suddenly became quite eager to tap into the military potential of France's North African colonial subjects. In the impatient words of one polemicist, writing in a popular colonial gazette: 'we have, across the Mediterranean, but a short distance, a beautiful and rich colony with a growing indigenous population.' In Algeria, the author insisted, the French 'will find the necessary elements to make up for the military deficit of the metropole.'[28] Officers of the African Army stationed in Algeria likewise complained about the frustrating limits of voluntary recruitment methods: since many Algerians would only join companies with their friends, or near their homes, officers found themselves obliged to accept undesirable, substandard recruits, which 'poisoned' the morale of whole companies.[29]

Although hesitant to tackle the deeper political quandary inherent in the conscription question, the pressing needs of the French military continued

to weigh on policymakers. In 1907, the War Ministry decided to compromise with the colonial administration by finding a way to implement a Muslim draft while circumventing the issue of Algerians' political rights. According to this line of thought, even though Algerian Muslims were 'fanatic', 'independent-minded', and 'refractory', it would be an error for France to wait for them to 'evolve' before conscripting them. The government must simply 'proceed with tact and prudence, by avoiding anything that might stir up indigenous emotions'.[30]

Despite the vocal misgivings of settlers and African Army officers, who continued to warn that 'it would be profoundly imprudent to impose [conscription] on the *indigènes*', the War Ministry quietly began to lay the groundwork for a system of conscription that would differentiate between 'citizen-soldiers' and 'subject-soldiers'. In 1907 a ministerial commission was established to 'study the means of assuring indigenous participation in military service'. The report prepared by the commission offered an effective compromise between settler and military interests by placing rigorous limits on the extent of draft efforts: only 5 per cent of eligible males each year were to be called up, and dispensations were expected to be both generous and permanent.[31] The following year the commission began the delicate process of conducting a population survey without explaining to Muslim Algerians what it was for. Perennially concerned with the possibility of revolt, the Governor General insisted upon 'supervis[ing] personally to ensure that the survey is carried out without bringing the *indigènes* together in groups.'[32]

By 1911 the War Ministry had established a reasonably accurate count of the eligible male population, while the advancing conquest of Morocco provided additional impetus to move forward with the planned expansion of Muslim recruitment into the French armed forces. Thus, after almost six years of delicate footwork and quiet preparation, the conscription decree was promulgated on 3 February 1912. Although two subsequent decrees tried to smooth the transition by issuing vague promises of rewards for those who submitted willingly to military service, the legislature avoided any open discussion of political rights for Muslims. Ferry was more right than he could have known when he commented: 'in our African policy, we are at one of those turning points in history, when we must make a decision, adopt a system, take a definitive position . . . Will we do that sirs, or will we continue to let things slide?'[33] For the moment, the French response seemed to be a resounding silence.

Conscription and the Young Algerians

Despite the efforts of French legislators to sidestep the question of political rights by drawing a clear distinction between citizen-soldiers and subject-soldiers, the implications of the 1912 decree did not go unnoticed by the Muslim population of Algeria. In fact, from the time of the first investigatory

commission in 1907 until the start of the First World War in 1914, Muslim Algerians of all classes and regions participated in the public debates on conscription and its essential corollary, assimilation. They discussed it with each other in cafes, shops and fields, wrote about it in newspapers, held public meetings to debate it, plotted ways to thwart it, and even composed songs about it. The French parliamentary, military and colonial archives bear scattered but incontestable witness to this outburst of participation.[34]

Although most Muslim notables, appointed officials and rural populations voiced opposition to the idea of a draft, a small but growing number of traders, shopkeepers, property-owners, teachers, students, doctors and lawyers decided instead to speak out in support of military service. In Tlemcen, Constantine, Bône and other urban centres dotting the colonial Maghreb, an emerging cadre of French-educated Muslim Algerians began to argue forcefully that military service presented a rare opportunity for colonial subjects to demand the legal, fiscal and political rights hitherto reserved for French citizens.

Dubbed the 'Young Algerian Party' (Parti Jeune Algérien) by the French press, these reformers were in fact less an organized political party than a small and eclectic, loosely organized network of mutual acquaintances, comprised of Muslims and agnostic men who had been given access to a quality and style of education mostly reserved for Europeans: a handful of doctors, a few dozen lawyers, many more shopkeepers, merchants, students, small business-owners, interpreters and teachers.[35] Cadi Cherif Benhabiles described the Young Algerians as 'public writers, pharmacy boys who [go] after the daily grind, cane in hand and *shisha* in mouth, to meet in moorish cafes and discuss the news of the day.'[36] Numerically, the Young Algerians were insignificant, numbering perhaps 1,200 out of a population of more than six million.[37] They have often been classified as elites, and it is certainly true that their education opened opportunities for them that were closed to most of their fellow colonial subjects. As a result, they shared neither the experiences nor the opinions of many Muslim Algerians, who looked on them as *m'tournis* or traitors for having accepted a French education. But in fact many had worked their way up from humble origins, and though educated, had relatively limited opportunities for advancement. Thus, in Kabylia in 1909, out of the 13,000 students that had passed through the French-Muslim schools, 8,400 were cultivators, 1,600 were commercial agents, 1,700 were artisans, 400 were functionaries, 300 were servants, 250 were students and 150 were in the military.[38]

Many of these men appeared to accept the general theory of Arab decline preached in the colonial schools; especially those who moved on to higher studies in the *medersas* (traditional Islamic universities) or the *écoles normales* (French-style schools for training teachers). They tended to lament the barbarism and superstition of the rural peasantry in their writing, while praising France for having freed Algerians from the feudalism and arbitrary reign of the Ottoman Turks. Yet they hesitated to abandon completely their

identity as North African Muslims: although a negligibly small number of Young Algerians were naturalized as French citizens, the majority decided not to apply for naturalization, either on the grounds that it should be extended to all Muslims, or because they were loath to alienate themselves from their families, communities and customers. 'And what would my clients say?' responded one Young Algerian when questioned as to why he refused to exchange his *chechia* for the benefits of French citizenship.[39]

The press was the primary vehicle for the written expression of Young Algerian ideas. If an older generation of intellectuals (M. Bencheneb, Ismael Hamet) tended to produce neutral scholarly articles for prominent colonial ethnographic journals, a number of younger intellectuals instead began to collaborate in the pages of more polemical European reformist publications, and increasingly, to promote their own journals. Thus in 1893 appeared the first indigenous journal, *El Hack* of Annaba, whose goal was 'to uphold the interests of Algerian Arabs ... [while] frankly accept[ing] French domination'. Historian of the Algerian press Zahir Ihaddaden credits *El Hack* with representing the true origin of the Young Algeria movement, since the demands it articulated would continue to be repeated by assimilationist reformers well into the interwar period. In the decades preceding the start of the Great War, a number of other ephemeral indigenous and 'indigenophile' journals joined *El Hack,* appearing in both French and Arabic: *L'Eclair* (1895), *L'Algérie franco-arabe* (1898), *El Magrib* (1903), *Al Misbah* (1904), *Le Hilal* (1906); and more famously *El Hack d'Oran* (1911), *Le Rachidi* (1911), *L'Islam* (1912) and *L'Ikdam* (1912).[40] During the same period emerged the earliest fraternal societies and debating circles, organized by former students of the French-Muslim schools in a practice borrowed from Tunisia.[41]

Through journalism and civic activism, the Young Algerians strove to promote an egalitarian vision of French-Algerian society based on mutual respect, productive cooperation and common defence: 'The time for violence has passed', declared the reformist journal *El Hack* in 1911. 'Your ancestors fell gloriously on the field of battle for their independence, [now] let's continue the struggle on a political and economic terrain.'[42] Muslim support for conscription, they believed, would inevitably pave the way for important reforms such as tax equality, expanded education and employment opportunities, meaningful representation in government and the abolition of the repressive *Indigénat* system.

The political programme of the Young Algerians presented a dual challenge to the logic of the colonial regime. First, it represented an attempt to bypass the colonial hierarchy and appeal directly to the republican sensibilities of Paris. As Muslim reformers grew increasingly frustrated with what they viewed as the blind obstructionism of the civil regime in Algeria, they began to seek out the support of metropolitan legislators by emphasizing the gap that had grown between the current Algerian system and the values of metropolitan France. Municipal councillor and doctor Taïeb Ould Morsly,

who published his *Contribution à la question indigène en Algérie* in 1894, lamented the 'un-Republican' behaviour of many settlers:

> We really believe that certain Algerian Frenchmen have left on the other side of the Mediterranean that sentiment of generous chivalry which characterizes the descendants of the old Gauls at their peak, and that they are no longer the same as their brothers in France.

He concluded that the best way to solve the 'Muslim problem' was for the French government to step in against the abuses of the settlers by ensuring the equal rights of indigenous Algerians. 'For the *indigènes* of Algeria to love France', he wrote,

> There needs to exist a community of interest. French Algerians must stop seeing [indigènes] as pariahs, good only for paying taxes and providing labour. The indigènes of Algeria must forget that they were conquered . . . they must get in the habit of considering themselves as part of the same family . . . they must be attracted [to France] little by little, by good means: Justice and benevolence, without offending their prejudices or beliefs.
>
> For this to happen it is urgent to give them some rights, for it is impossible that they should have only obligations and duties, without any compensation. The status quo is unjust and inhumane.[43]

A little over a decade later, Benali Fekar, a French-educated indigenous lawyer, followed a similar logic in a detailed article he published in *La revue du monde musulman*. Like Morsly, he appealed to the grandeur of France by couching his demand for political reforms in the rhetoric of classic republican ideals: '[We] have a great hope in France, [that] grand dispensary of the ideas of liberty and justice in the Muslim world.' He insisted that 'France, conscious of the great role that has fallen to her, will not fail to meet her obligation to maintain her subjects in an enviable situation above all'.[44]

Not only did Muslim reformers appeal to French ideals by citing the injustices of an 'un-French' system, they also strove to counter the dominant perception of Muslims as fanatical and recalcitrant in the face of modernity by eloquently highlighting the parallels between North African Islamic tradition and the republican creed of liberty, equality and fraternity: 'The Muslim religion has wrongly been accused of being an obstacle to the assimilation and civilization of *indigènes*', commented Morsly, 'Nothing is more incorrect!' His refrain was later taken up by the Emir Khaled, grandson of the famous rebel leader Abd el-Kader. In a highly publicized speech delivered in Paris in 1913, Khaled argued that the Arabs came from a highly developed society which, like French society, had passed through cycles of barbarism while also profoundly contributing to the development of civilization: 'We are the sons of a race who has had its past, its grandeur, and

who is not an inferior race.' He rather wryly commented that the nomadic tribes of North Africa had practiced liberty, equality and fraternity for centuries, and that there was thus no contradiction between 'your most advanced philosophy and our most ancient faith'. Algerian Muslims deserved equal rights with Frenchmen because they played a fundamental role in the prosperity of the country: 'If you have brought us perfected ploughs and tools', Khaled pointed out, 'it is almost always our workers who grasp their handles'. Regardless of culture or religion, he argued, common military service under the French flag 'enters into history as a treaty of alliance by modifying the conditions of the unified peoples'. Speaking of the 1912 decree, he remarked pointedly that France could 'quite reasonably confer rights upon those who have accepted all of the duties, including the blood tax . . .'[45]

Khaled's speech represented the culmination of a seven-year campaign that had begun in 1907 with the first investigative commissions and draft-related censuses. After a group of conservative religious notables responded to French conscription proposals with hostile petitions, the Young Algerians responded by writing a petition of their own. On 31 January 1908 they submitted to the Governor General a letter declaring their 'absolute confidence in the metropole'. They promised that 'military service will be voluntarily accepted by us, for we see in it a proof of your confidence', and concluded with a patriotic flourish: 'May the sacrifice of our blood prove the rapprochement of our hearts!'[46] In an unprecedented action that sparked the ire of the colonial administration, they also sent a delegation to Paris in order to personally reassure the French government that Muslim Algeria was eager to accept the blood tax.

The established religious elite (known by the somewhat pejorative epithet 'Old Turbans') responded to the Young Algeria programme with scepticism, if not outright hostility. When M. Bentami, the first indigenous doctor and a prominent supporter of conscription, tried to speak at a meeting of notables, he was immediately shot down by Abd el Halim ben Smaïa, a professor at the Medersa of Algiers 'who enjoy[ed] the favour of the French government'. Without letting Bentami speak, the notables declared unanimously that 'the so-called Frenchies will succeed neither in their opposition, nor in their affirmation that conscription is useful for Muslims: they will depart with our wrath'.[47]

Convinced that the loyalty of religious elites had been bought by the colonial administration, the Young Algerians continued to appeal directly to Paris for the extension of political rights. Clearly disappointed by the terms of the February 1912 legislation, which gave Muslim conscripts a longer term of service and paid them as mercenaries, a self-appointed delegation of Young Algerians decided to travel to Paris again, this time to request the decree's revision. In early June, *Le Temps* reported that four Muslim municipal councillors had presented a petition to the French parliament, protesting that the new conscription law was unjust because it 'imposes a

new charge on the *indigènes* without the rights which are its necessary and indispensable corollary'. The petition requested 'the pure and simple retraction of the 3 February decree and its replacement with a law on indigenous conscription which is inspired by the ideas of liberty, justice, and equality'.[48]

During their stay in Paris, representatives of the Young Algerians met with the President, the Prime Minister, and a number of French legislators in order to demand four principal revisions to the 3 February legislation: equal taxation and budget allocation for Muslim communities, an end to the *Indigénat,* 'serious and sufficient' Muslim representation in the French parliament, and the option for conscripts to become French citizens while retaining their status as Muslims. They also requested that men be called up at twenty-one rather than eighteen, like French conscripts, and that the sign-up bonus be suppressed, 'because families will be proud to see their children serve in the ranks of the French Army without pecuniary compensation.'[49] In a well-organized collective effort, concerned Muslim fathers from several Algerian communes simultaneously sent hundreds of petitions to Parliament. Many were variations on the following polite but firm formula:

> Mr. President, sir,
>
> I have the honour to inform you of the following: my son Z . . . Amar has been called up for recruitment. I demand the rights of a French citizen, otherwise I refuse to give you my son.
>
> Your very humble and obedient servant,
>
> Z. . . . Abdullah[50]

Together, these actions constituted a powerful yet subtle argument that assimilation should be conceived of in terms of earned political rights rather than a struggle for cultural hegemony. Indeed, while France had been working quietly to develop a system of military service that distinguished Muslim subjects from French citizens, Muslim reformers had sought on the contrary to promote conscription as an equalizing and unifying force, as a means of setting aside resentments and working together to build a common French-Algerian future: 'Instruct us, assist us as you can in times of peace . . .' declared Khaled in 1913, 'associate us with your prosperity and with your justice. We will be with you in the hour of danger.'[51]

Despite these not inconsiderable efforts, and despite the warm reception they had received in Paris, the February 1912 decree contained little more than vague promises. Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré had officially responded to the Young Algerian delegation by declaring that they were 'justifiable compensations for the new burden of compulsory service',[52] but the attitude of many officials at the time is made clear in a candid letter from the Governor General to a local mayor, who had written in 1913 to protest over the imposition of conscription in Algeria. In the letter, the Governor reassures the mayor that: '[the authors of the decree] did not want military

service . . . to be considered as a blood tax, and they have wisely conserved its mercenary character . . . In addition, the government has never intended to attribute the rights of French citizens to *indigènes*.'[53] It seems clear that despite the high hopes of reformers, neither Paris nor the colonial administration had any serious intention of granting political rights to Muslim colonial subjects.

Conclusion: rethinking assimilation

As even this brief overview demonstrates, the question of the Muslim draft became inextricably tangled up in a deeper existential debate about the trajectory of colonial rule in French Algeria. Not only did it provide an opportunity for a nascent group of Muslim Algerian intellectuals to articulate resistance to the inequalities of colonialism in the very language of colonial rule, it also forced republican politicians to confront the tension between their desire to make the colonial state more equitable and their desire to see it succeed.

Esteemed specialist of Algeria Charles-Robert Ageron has characterized the period between 1900 and 1920 as an *occasion manquée,* a missed opportunity for France to create a durable French Algeria by curbing the abuses of the colonial administration and taking concrete steps to integrate Algerian Muslims into the national community of citizens. Though accurate in its assessment of the Young Algerians' generally sincere belief in republican principles, this characterization nonetheless overlooks the extent to which vested settler interests, and the ideology that legitimized them, dominated colonial politics and rendered meaningful reforms nearly impossible. Indeed, the most pressing concern of French colonial reformers was not to overthrow colonialism, but rather to ensure its long-term stability and reassert its ethical imperative by aligning it as much as possible with contemporary French legal standards.[54] As these reformers discovered slowly during the first decades of the twentieth century, the abuses proved to be almost impossible to curtail effectively without calling into question the economic and social structures of the entire Algerian colonial enterprise.

Thus, although the Young Algerian vision of military service as a pathway to enfranchisement initially seemed to dovetail with the commitment of French reformers to the development of a liberal republican imperialism, they had ultimately differing visions for the future of Algeria, which they both expressed though the idiom of 'assimilation'. While European reformers tended to envision assimilation as a lengthy process with a distant endpoint, Muslim Algerian reformers tended to emphasize the immediate political and legal aspects of assimilation by highlighting the injustices of the current regime. By using the issue of the Muslim draft to redefine assimilation in terms of politics rather than culture, the Young Algerians strove to counter the impact of the racial and civilizational essentializations that predominated in colonial discourse and shaped colonial policies at that time.[55]

Moreover, by appealing to Paris as a higher moral power with recognized political sovereignty, their actions threatened to undermine the authority and autonomy of the colonial administration. In this sense, their ardent support for conscription effectively exposed the tension between republican rhetoric and colonial reality, and ultimately, obliged Paris to choose sides. Perhaps this partly helps to explain why the metropole after 1900 became more willing to abandon the notion of 'assimilation', ceding autonomy to the colonial administration in a return to the philosophy of 'association' of the Second Empire.[56]

It is not without irony, then, that the 1912 draft legislation which had been intentionally designed to maintain the distinction between settlers and subjects, instead became a powerful vehicle for assimilation during the First World War, when it enabled France to recruit over 300,000 Muslim Algerians for the French war effort.[57] Upon their return, these men had undergone a powerfully transformative experience. They had been exposed to a wider world, shared the deprivation, pain and trauma of war with millions of French citizens and subjects, and learned a new political language of national citizenship. In a long-term perspective then, it is clear that the Muslim draft and debates surrounding it effectively galvanized French-Algerian contentious politics[58] and paved the way for profound transformations, both within Algerian society and between Algerians and the colonial state.[59]

Notes

1 During the era of French occupation (1830–1962) the colonial administration referred to Muslim Algerian colonial subjects pejoratively as *indigènes*. While the *Sénatus-consulte* of 1865 declared all *indigènes* to be irrevocably French, it also imposed a cultural barrier to naturalization by requiring Muslims to formally abandon Islamic law in favor of the French Civil Code in order to gain the representative rights and legal guarantees of citizenship. In contrast, after 1870 Algerian Jews were collectively naturalized as French citizens, while the European population in Algeria was granted all the rights of citizenship, including full parliamentary representation, significant legal protections, and a sizeable state budget. As 'subjects' rather than 'citizens', Algerian Muslims were denied the right to participate meaningfully in local and national electoral politics, excluded from budgetary decision-making, and subject to a series of illegal repressive laws known collectively as the *Indigénat*.

2 Article 83 of the law of 5 July 1889 declared that the future incorporation of indigenous troops would be determined by decree. Archives nationales d'outre mer (hereafter ANOM) 3 H 58: *Notice historique sur le recrutement des indigènes* (undated).

3 *Bulletin du Journal Officiel*, 7 February 1912, 1208–10.

4 Gilbert Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée: La guerre de 1914–1918 et le premier quart du XXe Siècle*, 1st ed. Travaux de droit, d'économie, de sociologie et de sciences politiques n. 130 (Geneva: Droz, 1981), 96–7.

5 *El Hack,* 15–21 October, 1911.

6 See Omar Ben Aïssa Ben Brahim, *Question mozabite: Le service militaire, conséquences de son application au M'zab. Mémoire présenté par le président de la Fédération des Élus Mozabites à l'occasion de la commémoration du centenaire de l'Algérie* (Algiers: Typographie de l'Art, 1930).

7 The term 'Young Algerians' was originally used to describe a small group of Frenchified Algerian Jews, but was applied to Muslims after 1900. Some commentators saw parallels between these intellectuals and the Young Turks, who were in the press at the time. However, the Young Algerian movement is more directly inspired by the societies and clubs started by a group of Frenchified Muslims in the regency of Tunis, known as the Young Tunisians. See Charles-Robert Ageron, 'Le mouvement "Jeune Algérien" de 1900 à 1923', in *Etudes Maghrébines,* ed. C.A. Julien (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 217–43.

8 For a further exploration of French-Algerian identity politics in the interwar period, see Jonathan Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria 1930–1954* (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2002).

9 On this point, see Zahir Ihaddaden, 'Les pouvoirs politiques et l'expérience de l'Emir Khaled', in *L'Étoile Nord-Africaine et Le Mouvement National Algérien: Actes du Colloque du 27 février au 1er mars 1987,* ed. Centre culturel algérien (Paris: Centre culturel algérien, 1988), 7–21; as well as A. Koulakssis and G. Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled, premier za'im? Identité algérienne et colonialisme français* (Paris: Harmattan, 1987). On the broader role of early Algerian intellectuals, see Rachid Bencheneb, 'Le mouvement intellectuel et littéraire algérien à la fin du 19ème et au début du 20ème siècle', *Revue française d'outre-mer* LXX (Jan–May 1983), 12–24; and Abdelkader Djeghloul, 'La Formation des Intellectuels Algériens Modernes, 1880–1930', *Revue algérienne des Sciences juridiques, économiques et politiques* 22:4, (1985), 639–64.

10 See Richard Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 17–20.

11 ANOM 3H 59: Service militaire des indigènes, 1906–1910. 12ème question: envoi en France.

12 One account declares that 'the turcos were prodigies of valour . . . . the 1st regiment charged with an indubitable fury against the Prussians spilling onto our lines, toppling the right wing of the 2nd German Corps. This supreme effort stopped for a moment the thrust of the German masses and allowed Marshal MacMahon to retreat'. See Bobigny, 'Le service militaire des indigènes de l'Algérie', *Revue française de l'étranger et des colonies* (Mar–Nov 1908), 130. Also see *Revue française* (November 1896), 625.

13 Bobigny, 'Service militaire', 130.

14 ANOM 3 H 58: *Notice historique sur le recrutement des indigènes* (undated).

15 George Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy: France, Great Britain and the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenport Press, 2001), 3.

16 Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). Rachel Chrastil,

Organizing For War: France 1870–1914 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

17 Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: the Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 12.

18 Jules Ferry, 'Discours sur la question algérienne au Sénat, 6 mars 1891', in *Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry,* ed. A. Robriquet (Paris: Colin et cie, 1898) Vol. 7, 197–214.

19 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée,* 88.

20 Archives nationales (hereafter AN) C5434: Law prop. 65–68 Algérie régime legal: naturalisation des indigènes, 5th Leg: 1899–93.

21 See Osama W. Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simonians and the Civilizing Mission in Algeria* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 218. In legal terms, personal status referred to the possibility of becoming a French citizen, and committing fully to the French Civil Code, while still openly obeying one's own religious laws, particularly in personal matters, when these did not interfere with the prerogative of French law.

22 Mershed, *Apostles*, 219–20.

23 See Vincent Confer, *France and Algeria: the Problem of Civil and Political Reform, 1870–1920* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966), 15–16; and Charles-Robert Ageron, 'Jules Ferry et la question indigène en 1892', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 10:2 (April–June 1963), 127–46.

24 Confer, *France and Algeria,* 68.

25 *Bulletin du Journal Officiel*, 22 November 1872, 7276; Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France 1871–1919* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1968) Vol. 1, 7.

26 Lt A. Raspail. *Étude sur le service militaire obligatoire des indigènes en Algérie.* (Paris: R. Chapelot, 1910), 6. On Margueritte see Christian Phéline, *L'aube d'une révolution. Margueritte, Algérie, 26 avril 1901* (Toulouse: Éditions Privat, 2012).

27 Paul Azan, *Recherche d'une solution de la question indigène en Algérie* (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1903).

28 Bobigny, 'service militaire', 131.

29 Raspail, *Étude sur le service militaire,* 8.

30 Bobigny, 'service militaire', 131.

31 Initially, at least, dispensations did in fact tend to be accorded with relative liberality, especially to family men and established members of prominent Muslim households. However, during the First World War as the needs of the French military increased suddenly and dramatically, policy shifted to emphasize equality of service for Muslim men regardless of family or financial status.

32 ANOM 3 H 60: handwritten report to the Governor General, October 1901. ANOM 3 H 58: circulaire of 28 October 1909, Governor General to prefects.

33 Ferry, 'discours au Sénat', 211.

34 Although generally speaking only traditional Muslim and Western-educated elites were able to leave written records of their opinions, many Algerians

nonetheless contributed to the debate on conscription through collective actions. One of the most common forms of resistance to conscription was *hijra* or self-imposed exile to a Muslim land. Thus, in 1911, when the inhabitants of Tlemcen believed they were about to be forcibly sent into combat in Morocco, hundreds of families sold their belongings, abandoned their property and attempted to travel to Syria. See the official report of the Governor General of Algeria, *L'exode de Tlemcen en 1911* (Beaugency: R Barrilier, 1914). As part of a larger project currently underway, I provide a more detailed analysis of Algerian reactions to the draft.

35 For a good, brief description of the Young Algerians, see John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: the Origins and Development of a Nation,* 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

36 Cherif Benhabyles, *L'Algérie française vue par un indigène* (Algiers: Impr. orientale Fontana frères, 1914), 110.

37 Ruedy, *Modern Algeria,* 105.

38 Millet, 'Les Jeunes Algériens', *Revue de Paris,* Nov–Dec 1913, 159–60.

39 Millet, 'Les Jeunes Algériens', 161. A *chechia* is a small, brimless hat similar to a fez, which was worn by some Muslims in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A symbol of both modernity and cultural identification with Islam, the *chechia* was integrated into the design of uniforms given to Muslim or African soldiers in the French army, where it served as a marker of difference between colonial and metropolitan troops.

40 For a generally comprehensive index of Muslim Algerian titles, see Zahir Ihaddaden's book *Histoire de la presse indigène en Algérie, des origines jusqu'en 1930* (Algiers: Entreprise nationale du Livre, 1983). For a discussion of *El Hack* specifically, see his article 'Aux origines du mouvement "Jeunes Algériens": le journal "El-Hack" d'Annaba (Bône)', *Revue Algérienne de Communication/ Al-Majalla al-Jazā'irīya li-l-Ittidusāl* 14 (1996), 11–31, which incidentally is also published in *Revue d'histoire maghrébine* 23:81 (1996). Finally, see Philippe Zessin, 'Presse et journalistes "indigènes" en Algérie coloniale (années 1890-années 1950)', *Le Mouvement social* 236:1 (2011), 35–46.

41 Ageron, 'Mouvement "Jeune-Algérien"', 222, 224. Some of the better known societies included the Rachidia, Cercle Salah Bey, Association des instituteurs indigènes and Khalduniyya.

42 'Appel à la jeunesse musulmane', *El Hack*, October 1911.

43 Taïeb Ould Morsly, *Contribution à la question indigène en Algérie* (Constantine: Jérôme Merle, 1894).

44 Benali Fekar, 'La representation des Musulmans algériens', *Revue du monde musulman* (Jan–Feb 1909), 21–2.

45 L'Émir Khaled, *Réflexions sur le rapprochement franco-arabe en Algérie* (Algiers: Gojosso, 1913).

46 Quoted in Millet, 'Les Jeunes Algériens', 168.

47 Millet, *Jeunes algériens,* 175–6.

48 *Le Temps,* 8 June 1912. The petition was signed by L'Admiral, Hadj Moussa, O. Bouderba and Dr Bentami.

49 The text of the June 1912 petition is reprinted in Benhabyles and, more recently, in C. Collot and J.-R. Henry, *Le mouvement national algérien, Textes 1912–1954* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 1978). There are also several different texts of the petition in newspapers and articles of the period, which alter some of the details. The four main requests are the same, however.

50 AN C7981: Petition from Batna, 8 May 1912.

51 Khaled, *Réflexions,* 19.

52 Confer's paraphrase, 64.

53 ANOM 3 H 63: Letter from the Governor General to the mayor of Rouiba, January 1913.

54 John Laffey, *Imperialism and Ideology: An Historical Perspective* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2000), 34–42.

55 On French racial essentializations in nineteenth-century North Africa, see Patricia Lorcin, *Imperial Identities, Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995). On the embodiment of these ideas in French policy towards Muslims, see Naomi Davidson, *Only Muslim: Embodying Islam in Twentieth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

56 For a complete analysis of the policy of association in Algeria, see Abi-Mershed's *Apostles of Modernity*.

57 On the unexpected but significant impact of the war on the question of assimilation from a colonial reformist's perspective see Victor Piquet, *Les réformes en Algérie et le statut des indigènes* (Paris, 1919).

58 Abada, Khadidja, 'Les "Jeunes Algériens": première génération d'intellectuels?', *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine/Al-Majalla al-Tārīkhīya al-Maghāribīya* 28 (2001), n. 102–3, 9–19.

59 For a fuller discussion of the early development of Algerian contentious politics, as well as an analysis of how the First World War impacted French colonial policies towards Muslims, see my forthcoming doctoral dissertation.

CHAPTER THREE

‘Between Two Worlds’: Emir Khaled and the Young Algerians at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century in Algeria

Rabah Aissaoui

Ours was but a sad dream, soon to be eclipsed by the sunrays of reality. We were the poor plaything of a mirage that caused us nothing but despair.

(EMIR KHALED, *L’IKDAM*, 16 MARCH 1923)

As Albert Memmi argued, the gravest shortcoming endured by the colonized was to be placed ‘out of history, out of the city’. Colonization took away from the colonized ‘any part that they might [have played] in wartime as in peace time, any decision that contributes to the world’s – and to their own – destiny, any historical and social responsibility’.[1] Much of the period in the nineteenth century that followed the French military invasion of Algeria in 1830 was marked by colonial expansion through military and administrative means, the suppression of rebellions and uprisings,[2] the marginalization of the colonized who became subjects of the French Republic and the establishment of an increasingly large European settler population whose rights were largely denied to the Muslim population. As Patrick Weil has claimed: ‘Never, outside Algeria, had the republican regime pushed so far the confusion between the letter of the law and the facts on the ground, and so much emptied of their meaning the very terms of nationality and equality’.[3]

It was within this fraught colonial context, at the turn of the twentieth century, that a group of reformist political activists, the Young Algerians (Jeunes Algériens), appeared on the political scene and made a lasting impact on Algerian politics.[4] This movement was influenced by its most prominent figure between 1913 and 1923, Khaled Ben El Hachemi El Jaza'iri, popularly known as Emir Khaled, who was the grandson of Emir Abd el-Kader (1808–83), the leading figure of Algerian resistance to French colonization between 1832 and 1847.[5] Emir Khaled's political engagement and legacy informed Algerian political developments in the interwar period and had, to some extent, an impact on the nationalist political activism that appeared amongst Algerian immigrants in France in the mid-1920s and which spread to Algeria from the second half of the 1930s onwards.

This chapter explores aspects of the discourse and actions of Emir Khaled and of the Young Algerians movement in the early twentieth century, a period characterized by the involvement of a small group of educated Muslims in Algerian political affairs who mobilized to voice their demands for reforms of the colonial order. The Young Algerians' struggle for 'Muslim' or 'native' rights established a new political climate in Algeria. Their activism contrasted with the docility of some pro-colonial Muslim notables favoured by the French colonial authorities, whom Emir Khaled described as '*Vieux Turbans beni-oui-oui*'.[6] Using modern political strategies, structures and methods (newspapers, political meetings, public addresses, increased participation in the electoral process and so on) the Young Algerians demanded rights for Algerians within the French Republic, denounced the abuse committed by the administration and European settlers and voiced their concerns about the 'suffering' and lack of rights for Algerians.[7]

This study explores some important political developments fostered by the Young Algerians with a particular focus on the key period between 1919 and 1923 which marked a turning point in the emergence of new forms of Algerian political activism. It examines some of the tensions and conflicts that marked the progression of this movement and discusses their actions and programme as well as the difficulties that they experienced during that period. This chapter assesses the hostility that they faced among settlers and the French authorities and the support that they received from the so-called '*indigénophiles*'. It discusses the shifting positions adopted by Emir Khaled and the Young Algerians on nationalism and the nation, an issue that was foregrounded prominently by the French authorities on both sides of the Mediterranean during the colonial period and which has continued to inform scholarly discussions to this day.

The emergence of the Young Algerians

The Young Algerians movement developed in Algeria with the emergence of a very small group of largely French-educated Muslims who had joined

Franco-Muslim sports associations in the 1890s and who, following the adoption of the law of 1 July 1901 allowing the free creation of associations, established Cercles Culturels Franco-musulmans (Franco-Muslim Cultural Circles).[8] According to Julien Fromage, the label 'Parti des Jeunes' could be attributed to Jules Ferry who, following a visit by a senatorial commission between April and June 1892, compared 'Algerian intellectuals' wearing European clothes to the 'Young Turks' exiled in Paris.[9] After his visit to Algeria, Jules Ferry, then president of the senate commission on Algeria, published a report in the national daily *Le Temps*, in which he largely dismissed the aspirations of those Algerian intellectuals. He stated that:

> The Arab people is not asking us to be associated with our political freedoms. Muslims do not have any notion of what a political mandate is, of contractual and limited authority. They don't understand anything about the *régime représentatif* [representative system] or the separation of powers but they have, at the highest degree, the instinct, the need, the ideal of a strong and just power.[10]

The emergence of the Young Turk movement in the Ottoman Empire, its role in the constitutional revolution of 1908 and the development of Young Tunisian and Young Egyptian organizations at the time led a number of Muslim political activists in Algeria to call themselves Young Algerians.[11]

In the 1910s, the movement was led by prominent militants including Dr Belkacem Bentami (an ophthalmologist based in Algiers), Dr Abdennour Tamzali and Dr Moussa Benchenouf (medical doctors from Algiers and Constantine respectively), Sadek Denden (printer and publicist), Hamou Hadjammar (co-director of the Jeune Algérien newspaper *Le Rachidi*, and later of *L'Ikdam*) and Ahmed Bahloul (a Paris-based physics teacher and holder of the *agrégation*).[12] By 1908–9, their political programme was taking shape and their action was promoted through a number of newspapers, including *L'Islam*, created in Bône in 1909 and transferred to Algiers in 1912; *El Hack* founded in Oran; and *Le Rachidi* in Djidjelli in 1910.[13] In their newspapers and political speeches, they often celebrated France's 'civilizing influence' on Algerians:

> [W]e have always duly claimed – in our articles and our speeches – that the pioneers of French civilization in Algeria could be found, largely, amongst the settlers and primary school teachers. They have endeavoured to take care of our moral education and raise our intellectual level. The example of their relentless and unremitting labour has shown us how to triumph over natural obstacles and has taught us the art of cultivating and making the land fertile . . . They are our educators . . . The Arabs, the Old Arabs who witnessed the French Conquest [*sic*] remain full of admiration when they look around them.[14]

The Young Algerians consistently called for the gradual assimilation of all Algerian Muslims within the 'French mother nation', and asked France to show generosity by granting social rights to all Muslims and introducing reforms to allow a greater number of 'worthy' Muslims to enjoy political rights. As Emir Khaled claimed: 'raised under the aegis of France, educated in your schools, we are applying your principles and the rights which have been granted to us for being loyal'.[15] They criticized the inequity of colonial rule in Algeria, the discriminatory Code de l'Indigénat (Native Code)[16] and the oppression and exploitation of Muslims by settlers and a number of '*Vieux Turbans*' ('Old Turbans'),[17] and consistently denounced the racism, discrimination and abuse of power brought about by French colonial rule in Algeria.

The Young Algerians benefited from the support of a small group of French liberals in Algeria who expressed their views in Victor Barrucand's bilingual newspaper *L'Akhbar*.[18] They were also supported by a number of liberal politicians and intellectuals in France who joined the Alliance franco-indigène (Franco-Native Alliance) created in February 1913 by economist Charles Gide and by the Paris-based, republican conservative newspaper *Le Temps*.[19] Their actions were also praised by organizations such as the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH, Human Rights League), the Franc-Maçons (Free-Masons) and Libre Pensée (Free Thought). Their allies included Members of Parliament such as Albin Rozet, Adolphe Messimy (leading member of the Parti Radical (Radical Party) and promoter of the conscription of Algerian Muslims), Abel Ferry, Georges Leygues and Jean Jaurès, as well as the nationalist parliamentarian Lucien Millevoye, authors Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, and Dr Paul Bruzon, director of *La France islamique*.[20] The death of Albin Rozet at the end of 1915 led prominent '*indigénophile*' politicians to coalesce and create a 'Franco-Muslim Action Committee' presided by Edouard Herriot, Parti Radical politician, senator and mayor of Lyon. The Committee's vice-president was Dr Henri Doizy, *député* (Member of Parliament) for Ardennes, and included prominent members such as Marius Moutet, head of the parliamentary commission on foreign affairs in 1919, and Senator Etienne Flandin, who was appointed Resident General of Tunisia in the same year. It aimed to 'defend the interests of North Africans in government circles and fight for the improvement of their moral, intellectual, economic, administrative and political situation'.[21]

In 1911, the Young Algerians made a number of demands at the time of the appointment of the new Governor General of Algeria, Charles Lutaud.[22] These centred on: the need to fight administrative corruption and open up civil service professions to Muslims; an end to discriminatory taxation; the abolition of the *Indigénat*; the extension of voting rights to Muslim 'intellectuals' in the *communes* (districts), their representation in Conseils Généraux (regional councils) and Délégations Financières (Algerian semi-consultative assembly) dominated by the settlers; and a fairer allocation of resources and investments. A few months after the adoption of the decree on

the conscription of Algerian Muslims in the French army (3 February 1912) they sent a delegation, led by Dr Belkacem Bentami, to Paris in June 1912 to present what was to become known as the Manifeste Jeune Algérien (Young Algerian Manifesto).[23] They were accompanied on their first visit by the *député* of Haute Marne, Albin Rozet, member of the Democratic Left Party and a supporter of reforms in the colonies. They initially met Adolphe Messimy, ex-War Minister and reporter of petitions concerning the conscription of Algerian Muslims; Georges Leygues, ex-Minister of the Interior, of Colonies and Education; Paul Deschanel, president of the parliament and future French President (January–September 1920); Antonin Dubost (president of the Senate) and the former Prime Minister Georges Clémenceau. They were received on 18 June 1912 by Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré and the Interior Minister, Théodore Steeg, and met President Armand Fallières on 2 July 1912.[24] During the meeting with Poincaré, they called for equality with the French in the duration of military service (two years instead of three), and for the abolition of the incorporation pay of 250 francs, that they argued turned Muslims into mercenaries. To reward Algerians for their acceptance of military service, they demanded the right for them to gain French citizenship without giving up their Muslim status, representation in the French parliament, broader representation in local councils and regional assemblies and the right for Algerian local councillors to vote in elections for the post of mayor and deputy-mayor.[25]

The conflagration of the First World War led to profound shifts in political culture for many Algerians. The two main revolts against conscription (the Beni Chougran revolt near Mascara in 1914 and the troubles in the south of the Constantinois region in 1916 and 1917) were violently repressed. Some 300,000 men (172,000 soldiers and 120,000 workers in the arms industry) were recruited and served in France during the war.[26] Their experience was marked by discrimination and paternalism, but it was also shaped by the discovery of metropolitan society and new forms of solidarity in the army and the workplace. As Emir Khaled argued, Algerian 'consciousness about freedom' was informed by obligatory conscription and the migration of 'thousands of native workers who crossed the sea . . . Mixing with the French, they learned the value of man and his rights'.[27] This also led many of those Algerians to experience a degree of disillusionment towards assimilation and to increasingly question aspects of the colonial order. As Meynier and Koulakssis point out, through their experience in the army and migration, those men developed a stronger sense of *algérianité* (Algerian-ness).[28]

In the aftermath of the war, the Young Algerians engaged more actively in politics. They took advantage of the modest reforms introduced by the law of 4 February 1919, known as the Jonnart Law,[29] granting electoral representation to a larger number of Algerians in Algerian assemblies and councils: 100,000 Algerians could now vote in the elections for General Councils and the Délégations Financières, and 400,000 could cast their vote

in the local council elections.[30] They took part in local and regional elections with some success despite the electoral fraud, intimidation and political manoeuvres orchestrated by settlers and colonial authorities to affect electoral outcomes.[31] In the municipal elections of 30 November 1919, the candidates on the list presented by departmental councillor Mustapha Hadj Moussa, including Emir Khaled, lawyer Kerrad Khelifa, *L'Ikdam* newspaper director Hamou Hadjammar and Kaïd Hammoud were duly elected against assimilationist candidates led by Dr Belkacem Bentami.[32] The electoral successes of the Young Algerians close to Emir Khaled continued until 1922 when the administration succeeded in orchestrating the defeat of Khaled and his allies during partial elections of *conseillers généraux* (general councillors).

Their election gave them a new platform to voice their political views, while their appeals for equality consistently made a distinction between the oppressive colonial authorities in Algeria and settlers[33] on the one hand and on the other, the French government in metropolitan France which they saw as just and more sympathetic to the plight of Muslims. Sadek Denden, then director of *L'Islam*, denounced the *Indigénat* as this 'Hydra around which gravitates a macabre horde [of] sharks of all sorts from the Algerian Administration, politics and finance' to 'knock the native down, rob him of his last plot of land, turning this country into a vast fiefdom populated by five million emaciated and ragged serfs'.[34] He asserted that France will 'shudder, start with indignation' when 'the humiliations, misery, all the abuse, the arbitrary rule engendered, vomited by this three-headed monster, the Native Code' is 'revealed to her in all its horror'. Sadek Denden also stated that:

> France . . . conscious of her civilizing and humanitarian role, will not subscribe to this monstrosity which is in blatant contradiction with the principles that have placed her as a leading nation in the world. From now on, she will treat us as her own children since we are subjected to the same duty to defend and die for the nation as the French and those who acquired French citizenship, or we will seek in exile a way out of our misery.[35]

These pleas, however, were largely ignored by the French government. Furthermore, their egalitarian political project inspired by French universalist values did not shield the Young Algerians from accusations and attacks by the colonial authorities and by the European settler press. They were accused of being 'pan-Islamist Young Turks' and 'half-Frenchified' Muslims with a 'primary school-leaving certificate' intent on undermining French rule in Algeria.[36] In 1919, the Gouvernement Général de l'Algérie (General Government of Algeria) denounced what they saw as the 'curious contradiction' that 'the leaders of the "Party of Intellectuals" who describe themselves as emancipated from a religious point of view proclaim the

necessity of maintaining and developing Islam as a factor of progress'.[37] Prominent pro-colonial journalists in Algeria such as André Servier in *La Dépêche de Constantine* and Paul Lafitte in *L'Echo d'Alger* accused the Young Algerians of being religious agitators intent on arousing 'fanaticism and superstition in the heart of Muslims'.[38]

The French newspapers that were more sympathetic to the plight of Algerian Muslims challenged those views. For *Le Temps*, for example, the Young Algerians expressed their deep and legitimate concern about the fate of Muslims in Algeria and were subjected to implacable surveillance by 'Arabophobes', but had never uttered a word against France.[39] This Paris-based newspaper accused the French authorities in Algeria of being 'backward' and 'prejudiced' and of echoing the deep antipathy of many settlers towards Algerians who had received a European education. They described the Young Algerians as people who 'went to our schools, who are aware of the value of our culture, who would like to see it spread to the mass of fellow Muslims to lift them out of barbarism and who demand reforms that are necessary to its expansion'. For *Le Temps*, it could not be otherwise, since

> Algerian natives do not have any historical past (*passé historique*) and, as a consequence, have no national consciousness. They form a people that is not numerous enough to consider independence in the current state of the globe. The last three generations have submitted to France. It is therefore natural that those among them who think, look for a better future for their race through their sincere participation in French life.[40]

In *La Revue de Paris*, Philippe Millet, editor of *Le Temps*, developed this analysis further in 1913 when he described the Young Algerians as people on whom Algeria and France should count, but also as men torn between the traditional Muslim society from which they had emerged and the 'modernity' brought about by the French presence in the colony.[41] For Millet, what characterized them was the fact that they did not or could not abandon Islam and that, despite their attachment to their religious identity, the sincerity of their adhesion to the idea of French domination in North Africa could not be questioned. In Algeria, which he saw as 'a new land where both civilizations can meet', the Young Algerians were 'men placed at the limit between two worlds', a situation which 'explains not only their feelings but also the difficulties they encounter either within themselves or in the outside'.[42] Millet added that 'they more often than not experience doubt because their own people are rejecting them and yet at the same time, France does not welcome them'.[43] Whilst their political discourse failed to find sufficient momentum to secure a wider audience in the Muslim population, they were, nonetheless, among the first Algerians to expose the plight of Algerian Muslims on the political scene and call for urgent reforms at a time when their every action and word was subject to intense scrutiny by the colonial authorities, settler politicians and the press. As Philippe Millet argued:

> Besides, the administrative regime under which they live leaves them with limited freedom of action; as native civil servants, they run the risk of being fired if they express any criticism; as private individuals, unless they are naturalized, they remain under the threat of internment, this Algerian version of the *lettre de cachet*.[44] Like squirrels in a cage.[45]

To some extent, their calls for rights for the Muslim population were often limited to the social and economic sphere, and their demands for political rights to be granted to 'worthy' educated Muslims were self-serving and reflected some of the prevalent colonial prejudice towards the 'Muslim mass'. However they showed significant interest in the condition of the poor *fellahs* (peasants) and concern for the plight of the forgotten Algerian population.[46]

Emir Khaled's political role

From 1913 onwards the arrival of Emir Khaled, grandson of Emir Abd el-Kader, on the political scene contributed to the emergence of the Young Algerians as a significant political force in Algeria. Born on 12 June 1875 in Damascus, he was the son of the Emir El Hachemi.[47] Khaled discovered Algeria at the age of seventeen when his family left Damascus and settled in Algiers in 1892. He soon became a student at Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris and was then admitted to the prestigious military college of Saint-Cyr on the condition that he would agree to become a French citizen ('*naturalisation*'), something he never did.[48] As he later stated: 'Proud of my race and jealously holding on to my religion, I am nonetheless French in my heart and soul'.[49] He completed his studies in 1897 and was posted in the First Regiment of Spahis in Medea, an indigenous unit, as a second lieutenant. Before he was able to join the Spahis, he was seconded to the Fifth Regiment of Chasseurs d'Afrique in Mustapha (Algiers) – a French unit in which 'natives' could not be in command – where he spent seven years. In 1904, he was finally posted with the Spahis regiment. Two years later, his squadron was sent as part of the expeditionary force to Morocco where his actions as a lieutenant (or more specifically as *lieutenant indigène* ['native lieutenant']) during the campaign won him the praise of the French military, decorations and, exceptionally, a promotion to the rank of captain ('native captain') on 10 December 1908.[50]

In spite of his military record in the French army during the First World War and in military campaigns in Morocco, as well as his recurrent declarations of loyalty towards France, Captain Khaled was perceived with hostility and suspicion by the colonial authorities and part of the military, particularly General Hubert Lyautey, Resident General in Morocco. Lyautey's allies intervened to prevent Khaled from being posted in Morocco and once called for him to be arrested. He was suspected by them of

harbouring hostile feelings towards the French colonial presence in Algeria, and of maintaining links with his uncle Emir Abd El-Malek in Morocco, who the French considered a threat to their rule.[51] In the following years, he was stationed with his regiment in Medea and was prevented from taking part in further military campaigns until the First World War. His repeated requests for extended leave were turned down, and at the end of 1912, he was posted as a batman officer to General Bailloud, and then to General Moinier of the 19th Corps.[52] During the First World War Khaled went on to serve in France before he was diagnosed with tuberculosis in June 1916 and discharged from active service in April 1918; he left the army in September 1919.[53] He drew pride in his military career, and often reminded his critics of the support that he enjoyed amongst some high-ranking French officers.[54] As *La République du Var* noted in 1914: 'He speaks our language not only with ease but also with distinction. His accent belongs to the highest society. His vocabulary is as colourful as that of a soldier. Should one be surprised? He has spent the last seventeen years of his life in our military barracks and camps'.[55]

Before the war, Khaled had already been involved in Algerian politics and supported the Young Algerians whom he described as 'the intellectual elite amongst the natives [that] against all odds, fights for the good of France and for improvements in the lot of fellow Muslims'.[56] Whilst, during the war, he maintained his interest in Algerian politics and met several reformist politicians in France, it was in the interwar period that he became fully engaged in the politics of the Young Algerians and stood as a candidate during elections. He deplored the fact that 'in our sad situation as subjects under the harshest and most arbitrary of special laws, we are forbidden from joining a European party',[57] and claimed that 'despite my age, I am proud to be a member of the "Young Algerians"'.[58] Khaled became a frequent contributor to their newspaper *L'Ikdam* and was introduced as political director in September 1921.[59] His prestige amongst Algerians, stemming largely from his family background, greatly helped the political fortunes of the Young Algerians. His involvement in this political organization that included many secular 'Frenchified' Algerians also inflected its programme. It gradually gave more importance to Islam, to the Muslim religious and cultural identity of Algerians and to Arabness. In 1919, Khaled argued that the law of 15 July 1865 – reinforced by the law of 4 February 1919 – allowed Algerians to apply for citizenship within the French status, but that few had requested French citizenship as it required them to renounce their personal status as Muslims. This, in his view, illustrated the importance Algerians attached to their religious identity,[60] and he stated: 'the solution is very simple: it is to be found in association' with France.[61]

Khaled also proposed a seven-point political programme which, he argued, reflected the demands of Muslim Algerians whose future lay with France: abolition of all arbitrary laws and measures and application of common law; representation of Algerians in both Parliament and Senate;[62]

compulsory education in French and Arabic; creation of an Arab university; abolition of the *communes mixtes*[63] and military territories; unification of the three Algerian *départements* with France; and accession of natives to French citizenship 'in their Muslim personal status *for a category to be determined* [*sic*]'.[64]

His growing political reputation and the views he expressed in his articles and speeches were a constant source of irritation for French settlers. He dismissed European critics who questioned his title of Emir inherited from his illustrious grandfather, and reminded them that 'the Idrissids, my ancestors, reigned in Morocco, in Spain, in part of France and in Algeria'.[65] Yet he often insisted on his loyalty towards France. In a speech to the delegation of French parliamentarians who attended the inauguration of the Algiers exhibition in May 1921, he argued that the political programme of the Young Algerians was 'essentially French: it only aims at the affirmation of *la plus grande France* [greater France]'.[66] Arguing that, through their sacrifice during the First World War, Muslims had acquired 'undeniable rights to join the great French family', Khaled wanted to see a *rapprochement* between Europeans and Muslims in Algeria 'to form one compact and united whole'. He also stated that 'we should no longer use this false appellation of '"Algerians and natives" [*sic*] for we are all *Français d'Algérie* [French of Algeria]'.[67]

There were, however, more complex characteristics to his political trajectory as his intervention during the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 showed. In the aftermath of the First World War, the Wilsonian principle of 'self-determination' had particular resonance among the colonized.[68] It was this principle which the French colonial authorities feared had 'throughout the world, awaken[ed] racial pride and hope of a national revenge among the peoples who had long lost their independence.'[69] In May 1919, a small delegation of Jeunes Algériens led by Emir Khaled submitted a petition addressed to American President Woodrow Wilson in Paris.[70] In this petition, they castigated colonialism and called for Algerians to be allowed to have 'delegates chosen by us to decide our future under the aegis of the League of Nations'.[71] The document referred to the colonization of Algeria by the French as an act of 'occupation', 'domination' and 'dispossession'. It castigated the settlers as 'neo-Français' (neo-French) and criticized the French administration's control on mosques and religious assets in Algeria. It evoked the honour of Algerians who in an 'unequal struggle . . . that had honoured our fathers . . . had fought during seventeen years with an energy and tenaciousness to expel the aggressor and live independently'.[72]

Faced with allegations made by the settler press and some metropolitan newspapers about the content of the petition, Emir Khaled asserted that he never invoked Wilsonian principles to ask for Algerian independence.[73] He stated that he remained proud of his decision to call for the appointment of Algerian delegates to the Peace Conference. In his view, events had shown that he was right since 'the British delegates arrived accompanied by

representatives of their dominions and their colonies . . . which was not a sign of weakness on their part'.[74] However, the significance of addressing demands directly to the President of the United States and to a supranational body should be highlighted. It prefigured a strategy that was later used by Algerian nationalists from the interwar period to the Algerian War of Independence to have their voice heard in the international arena and bypass an oppressive colonial order.

Internal tensions

With the partial opening up of the electoral arena to more Algerian Muslims, the creation by the Young Algerians of a 'Franco-Muslim Action League' in July 1919 aimed to build up popular support for their electoral programme. However, their political unity was soon to be undermined by internal conflicts stoked by the colonial authorities, particularly by Albert Lefébure, the Prefect of Algiers. Aware of divergences between assimilationist, 'Frenchified' Young Algerians led by Dr Belkacem Bentami (Aïssa Oulid, Dr Abdennour Tamzali, Omar Bouderba, Mohammed Soualah, Sadek Denden) and those, including Emir Khaled, who attached more importance to their Muslim personal status (Kaïd Hammoud, Hamdane Redouane, Hamou Hadjammar), Lefébure put forward the option of broadening access to French citizenship within the French status based on the 'Jonnart Law' of 4 February 1919 to win the support of those he saw as the more moderate Young Algerians.[75] The clash between allies of Bentami and those of Khaled led to the demise of the League.[76] The bitter rivalry that ensued, which was fully exploited by the colonial authorities, caused harm to both parties. Bentami muted many of his attacks against the settlers and called for the colonial authorities to act against Khaled.[77] On the other hand, *L'Ikdam*, which remained close to Khaled, denounced Bentami's betrayal and the 'phial of venom' that they 'poured on them'.[78] Nevertheless, the electoral prominence of Khaledi candidates at the expense of those supporting Bentami only served to emphasize the significant popular support enjoyed by Khaled. A reconciliation of both factions at the end of 1920 enabled the Young Algerians to present a common list of candidates and to go on and experience further electoral success in the early 1920s.[79] They also founded an association called La Fraternité algérienne (Algerian Fraternity) on 6 January 1922 to strengthen their political influence and their organization.[80]

However, frustrated by the limitations of their political action in councils and assemblies dominated by representatives of the European minority population and by the re-establishment of the disciplinary powers of *Indigénat* in the summer of 1920, harassed by the French authorities, the colonial press and pro-colonial politicians, subjected to constant and close surveillance by the police, Khaled resigned several times from his elected positions. In 1922, he warned the French that 'an evolution has taken place

in all minds; make sure that it happens with you and not against you'.[81] Further divisions and tensions within the Young Algerians movement appeared in 1923 and, combined with the electoral fraud orchestrated by the colonial authorities, led to their poor performance at the local elections of June 1923. By then, Khaled's disenchantment with France's Algerian policy was clearly noticeable. He argued that Muslims had been 'the pitiful victims of a hopeless mirage' and viewed the law of 4 February as 'nothing more than a deception, a smoke-screen, a machine to make the civilized world believe that Algerian natives have political rights'.[82] Although he occasionally intervened in political debates and later undertook some high-profile visits to Paris to give lectures, his gradual withdrawal from Algerian politics in 1923 and his subsequent departure for the Middle East weakened Algerian political activism at the time.[83]

The disappointment felt by Emir Khaled with his engagement in electoral politics in Algeria paved the way for a temporary *rapprochement* with the French Communist Party (PCF), before his withdrawal from politics in the mid-1920s. For the communists, Khaled came to be viewed as a potential ally, and no longer as 'an ambitious agitator' as he was described by *Le Paria*, the newspaper of the Union intercoloniale (Intercolonial Union) in 1922.[84] Under the influence of the Communist International the PCF had, by that time, revised its colonial policy and given its support to revolutionary nationalists in the colonies.[85] At the beginning of 1923, French military intelligence reported that the PCF was 'intensifying its propaganda in Algeria' and that 'the leaders of the Third International seek to enter into contact . . . with Emir Khaled'.[86] These contacts were facilitated by Ahmed Belghoul, a militant of the PCF and a member of the Union intercoloniale who acted as Emir Khaled's representative in Paris. The Union intercoloniale organized two conferences with Khaled in Paris. The speeches that he made on 12 July 1924 at the Salles des Ingénieurs Civils, in a meeting presided over by his supporter Ahmed Bahloul, and on 19 July 1924 in the Salle Blanqui, developed arguments that he had consistently presented as a Jeune Algérien.[87] While his personal intervention on the French political scene was short-lived, his name lived on amongst Algerian political activists and the PCF even after his withdrawal from colonial politics in the mid-1920s.

An unattainable emancipation 'under the aegis of France'

The developments in Algerian politics fostered by the Young Algerians and their leading figure Emir Khaled in the early twentieth century were marked by tensions and conflicts, as well as what was sometimes interpreted by colonial and political observers and actors as their contradictory and ambiguous relationship with nationalism. The nationalism that informed

political and cultural discourses at the beginning of the twentieth century in France was, to a significant extent, rooted in France's imperial culture which developed at a time when the concept of nationhood was still fluid.[88] The discourses and actions of Emir Khaled and of the Young Algerians were scrutinized by the French colonial authorities, French politicians and intellectuals (both supporters of the settlers and those described as '*indigénophiles*'), the press and European settlers through the lens of the national, which consistently excluded Algerian Muslims from the national sphere.

Yet the tensions and contradictions that marked the French authorities' view of Algerians were also noticeable. On the one hand, the administration remained largely averse to the idea that the Algerian population was capable of national sentiment, attached as they were to a conception of Muslims as tied down by what they considered to be their 'atavistic instincts'. Algerians in their view had 'an intrinsic inaptitude to extricate themselves from the narrow grip of their material interests', were entirely preoccupied with their 'material needs' and therefore 'remained completely indifferent to political events'.[89] For them, therefore, the activities of the Young Algerians were unlikely to find any echo among the population and were doomed to fail. They described Muslims as a '*masse indigène*' ('native mass') that did not constitute 'a favourable terrain for the germination of nationalism, an abstract conception ill-suited to their narrow realism, their specific social structure and especially to their complete inability to engage in concerted action and have any collective feeling'.[90]

On the other hand, the Young Algerians were accused by settlers and by the colonial authorities of undermining France's predominance in Algeria and of being nationalists.[91] The administration interpreted their declarations of loyalty to France as a sign of duplicity. In 1920, they argued that with the development of this movement, 'the embryo of a Muslim nationalist party' had appeared in the colony. Their vocal declarations of attachment to French patriotism were 'made with more ostentation than sincerity' to 'maintain appearances' and hide their 'secret tendencies'.[92] Their pleas for France to adhere to its founding republican principles, their challenging of certain colonial policies and practices, their calls for equality, reforms in the colony and rights for Algerians and their reference to Islam and to Algerian identity were interpreted as evidence that they were 'pan-Islamists' and enemies of the colonial administration, and therefore of France. Their activities were seen as a 'dangerous' form of nationalism which, they argued, undermined the French colonial project and French imperial rule. Of course Emir Khaled was aware of those contradictions: in the eyes of the administration he argued, one day 'we are fatalistic Muslims resigned to our fate', and the next 'hope and perseverance are our strength'.[93]

But for the authorities, the demands of Young Algerians constituted only one moment in the journey towards independence. They claimed that 'their leaders' ambitions to see equality between the two races, and a free,

spontaneous and conscious collaboration between the occupier and the occupied' was only the first phase.[94] Once that stage had been reached, the colonial authorities stated, they would emulate the Young Tunisians and demand 'all administrative posts for *indigènes* and "self-government" of the colony by natives, under the authority of an occupier reduced to simply exercising a right of control'. And in the third phase, they warned, Algerians would emulate Egyptian nationalists and back 'the dogma of full independence'.[95] By the end of 1922, Khaled's disillusionment with an 'unjust and ungrateful' France intent on protecting the colonial status quo was clear. He declared: 'the reign of a people, heathen but just, will last; that of the unjust is bound to disappear'.[96]

Conclusion

Beyond the academic debate about Emir Khaled's political stance, his importance as a political figure lies more with what he symbolized than with the shifting boundaries of his political engagement. As Abd el-Kader's grandson, and through his physical resemblance with his grandfather, he was able to draw on the mythical aura of his illustrious ancestor who had resisted French colonization for fourteen years and, to some extent, personify the spirit of resistance of the Algerian people. He explicitly described the resistance against the French invasion led by his grandfather as the 'Algerian war' ('la guerre d'Algérie') and referred to Algeria as his 'fatherland' when he stated, using language redolent of the patriotic language of the French Republic, that Emir Abd el-Kader was a 'chivalrous soldier who defended his fatherland until the last bullet'.[97]

His rhetorical skills, his refusal to accept French citizenship, his emphasis on the centrality of Islam, Muslim culture and identity to Algerians and his deep interest in the plight of the *fellahs* whom he described as 'a people who suffer in terror'[98] reinforced his prestige amongst the Algerian Muslim population. During his time in exile in Syria and at the time of his death in Damascus in 1936, the French authorities remained wary of his influence on Algerians. In a report sent to the French Prime Minister following his death, the Gouvernement Général de l'Algérie stated that: 'From 1919 to 1923, Emir Khaled played a political role of the first order in Algeria . . . His propaganda was all the more dangerous as he represented both the aspirations of the elite and the more realistic trends of the masses for whom he raised the hope of their future emancipation.'[99] In the 1930s, Algerian reformist politicians in Algeria – most notably the Fédération des Élus Musulmans (Federation of Elected Muslim Representatives) – described him as a 'great martyr who died in exile' ('grand martyr mort en terre d'exil'),[100] and claimed that they continued his action by demanding reforms within the French Republic. The Association des Oulémas Musulmans d'Algérie (Association of Muslim Ulamas [doctors of Muslim Law] of Algeria), the

Muslim cultural and political organization founded on 5 May 1931 in Algeria and led by Cheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis, acknowledged how Khaled's legacy informed their programme. In his obituary of Khaled published in *Ech-Chihâb* in February 1936, Ben Badis described Khaled as 'a hero of Islam, an illustrious Algerian' whose 'demands at the time do not differ much from ours today'.[101]

The communists drew on Khaled's prestige and on their initial contact with him in the early 1920s to develop their political activity in Algeria throughout the interwar period. In his absence and even though he had, to some extent, distanced himself from politics, Khaled was announced as the honorary president of the Etoile nord-africaine (North African Star) upon its creation in 1926 (under the aegis of the PCF) and the first meetings of the Etoile were organized under his name.[102] In metropolitan France, a number of Algerian nationalists from the Etoile nord-africaine saw in him a symbol of resistance to colonization. Emir Khaled left a lasting impression on a young Messali Hadj who heard Khaled's speech in Tlemcen in the summer of 1922, and who was to become the leading figure of Algerian nationalism from the mid-1920s to the start of the Algerian War in 1954. Messali, who heard another speech given by Khaled in the Salles des Ingénieurs Civils in Paris on 12 July 1924, later expressed his admiration for Emir Abd el-Kader's grandson and stated that 'the most audacious of demands made at the time was that of Khaled (that we should be treated on an equal footing with the French) even if he did not discuss the issue of independence'.[103]

Khaled's political life and his legacy became the subject of debates in political circles as well as in the press and in the French administration as early as the 1920s. On the one hand, Khaled received a substantial pension from the French government and challenged frequent accusations made by the colonial press that he was a nationalist: he often declared his loyalty towards the French nation and evoked his services as a French army captain decorated with the medal of the Légion d'honneur as a testimony of his attachment to France. On the other hand he refused to accept French citizenship, consistently expressed his attachment to his culture and his frustration at the sheer poverty and dispossession of Algerians in rural and urban areas and denounced the undue privileges of European settlers. He was a political actor who submitted a petition to President Woodrow Wilson castigating French colonialism and calling for the inclusion of Algerian delegates in the Paris Conference to 'decide our future destiny' under the aegis of the Society of Nations. He was also able to draw on the French notion of sacrifice when denouncing colonial oppression and asking Algerians to demand their rights: 'when you are all with us', he declared in a public meeting on 26 March 1922, 'we will go anywhere, even if this means risking our life for this'.[104]

As Hobsbawm has shown, political activists in the colonies 'sincerely spoke the language of European nationalism, which they had so often learned in and from the West, even if it did not suit their situation'.[105] Khaled

and his supporters spoke that language within the liminal colonial space that they inhabited. They were not so much placed at the limit 'between two worlds' – as Millet argued – as occupying the marginal political space where national possibilities were being imagined within the constraints of a colonial order that consistently suppressed alternative voices and dissent. His political life marked a particular moment in the development of nationalism in Algeria. This may well explain the influence that Khaled had on subsequent Algerian political movements, including the nationalists of the Etoile nord-africaine, in the interwar period, and why his legacy is still debated today.

Notes

1 Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé, Portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Gallimard Folio Actuel, 1985), 111.

2 Key illustrations of Algerian resistance to colonization include the military campaign led by Emir Abd el-Kader between 1840 and 1847, the Kabyle rebellions of the 1850s known today in particular for the role played by Fatma Lalla n'Soumeur and the uprising of Kabylia commonly known as the 'Mokrani Revolt' in 1871.

3 Patrick Weil, 'Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale. Une nationalité française dénaturée', *Histoire de la justice* 1:16 (2005), 109.

4 See, for example, Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France (1871–1919)* (St Denis: Editions Bouchene, 2005), 2 volumes; Charles-Robert Ageron, 'La Pétition de l'Emir Khaled au Président Wilson (mai 1919)', *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine*, 7: 19–20 (1980), 199–209; Mahfoud Kaddache, 'L'Emir Khaled, jeune étudiant et officier', *Revue de l'Histoire et de la Civilisation du Maghreb*, No. 10 (1973), 101–7; Ahmed Koulakssis, and Gilbert Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled, premier za'îm?* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987). Gilbert Meynier *L'Algérie révélée : La guerre de 1914–18 et le premier quart du XXe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1981); Julien Fromage, 'L'expérience des "Jeunes Algériens" et l'émergence du militantisme moderne en Algérie (1880–1919)', in *Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale (1830–1962),* ed. Abderrahmane Bouchène, Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, Ouanassa Siari Tengour and Sylvie Thénault (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2012), 238–44.

5 For a biography of Abd el Kader, see, for example, Bruno Etienne and François Pouillon, *Abd el-Kader le magnanime* (Paris: Gallimard/Institut du monde arabe, 'Découvertes Gallimard. Histoire', 2003); Ramdane Redjala, Smaïl Aouli and Philippe Zoummeroff, *Abd el-Kader* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

6 *L'Ikdam*, 11 August 1922. '*Vieux Turbans beni oui-oui*' was the phrase used by Emir Khaled to describe those 'Old Turbans' whom he considered to be yes-men under French colonial rule. He denounced those notables as 'lowly servants' of Algerian administration who 'exploited insatiably and implacably their poor brothers' (*L'Ikdam*, 10 November 1922). On the other hand, Emile Morinaud, the vocal Mayor of Constantine, stated that the 'Old school natives

that people like to call "*Vieux Turbans*" . . . are only old in their devotion to France' (Conseil Supérieur du Gouvernement, 4ème séance du 30 Juin 1916) (Algiers: Imprimerie administrative Victor Heintz), 131, 135.

7 Ibid.

8 Julien Fromage, 'L'expérience des "Jeunes Algériens"', 241; Raoul Margat, 'De la capacité des associations déclarées (loi du 1er juillet 1901), Extrait de la *Revue Trimestrielle de Droit Civil* (1907), No. 1', Paris: Librairie de la Société du recueil C.-B. Sirey et du Journal du Palais, 1–2.

9 Julien Fromage, 'L'expérience des "Jeunes Algériens"', 239.

10 *Le Temps*, 30 October 1892 (Supplément du 30 octobre 1892).

11 On the origins of the Young Turks, as well as their emergence as a political force in the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century and their legacy see Erik J. Zürcher, *Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: IB Tauris, 2010). In 1909, for example, Benali Fekar, a Tlemcen-born jurist, described himself as a proud Jeune Algérien (Benali Fekar, 'La Représentation des Musulmans Algériens', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, January-February, 3: 1–2 (1909), 17).

12 For brief profiles of key Young Algerians, see Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée*, and Aïssa Kadri, *Parcours d'intellectuels maghrébins: Scolarité, formation, socialisation et positionnements* (Paris: Khartala, 2000).

13 The towns of Bône and Djijelli are now called Annaba and Jijel.

14 *L'Islam*, 19 December 1913.

15 *L'Ikdam*, 11 August 1922.

16 A series of punitive regulations, penalties and discriminatory measures imposed on North African Muslims in Algeria started with the order issued by Marshal Thomas-Robert Bugeaud on 12 February 1844 led to the introduction of the Code de l'indigénat (Native Code) in 1881. It evolved through the adoption of a series of orders, decrees and laws, and lasted in its various forms until the end of the Second World War. It aimed at reinforcing French colonial domination on Muslims in Algeria and providing land for colonial expansion. Its stringent rules, which were inconsistent with the French legal system, ensured that Muslims were given heavier prison sentences and were subjected to higher taxes, often arbitrary individual and collective punishments, and that travel was constrained (see Weil, 'Le statut des musulmans').

17 It should be noted however that a number of those Algerian conservative notables such as Si M'Hamed Ben Rahal and El Mekki Ben Badis (a relative of Oulema leader Abdelhamid Ben Badis), for example, belonged to this older *Bourgeoisie* but were not what could be described as '*Beni-oui-oui*'.

18 Victor Barrucand was a French writer and journalist. He bought *L'Akhbar*, an old Algerian newspaper in 1902, and as director and editor turned it into the first bilingual (French-Arabic) newspaper in Algeria concerned with the 'defence' of Muslim rights and interests (Céline Keller-Brousse, 'Victor Barrucand (1864–1934), écrivain, esthète et militant en Algérie', PhD Thesis, Paris: HESS). On Victor Barrucand, see Christine Drouot and Olivier Vergniot, 'Victor Barrucand, un indésirable à Alger', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et*

de la Méditerranée, 37:1 (1984), 31–6. On *L'Akhbar*, see Zoulikha Sadaoui, 'Un Témoin de l'histoire : L'Akhbar, doyen des journaux algériens de la colonisation (1839–1897), (1902–1934)', PhD Thesis, Université Paris 2 (1992).

19 Journalist Paul Bourde, in *Le Temps*, consistently exposed the condition of the 'Muslim subject' and called for a reform of France's colonial policies in Algeria.

20 Ahmed Koulakssis and Gilbert Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled, premier za'îm?* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987), 72–4.

21 *L'Ikdam*, 15 March 1919.

22 Charles Lutaud was Governor General of Algeria between 1911 and 1918.

23 It should be noted that in 1908, a Young Algerians delegation led by Omar Bouderba was sent to Paris to meet Georges Clémenceau, Président du Conseil (Prime Minister), to present their political demands as a condition for supporting Messimy's proposal to introduce compulsory conscription in Algeria (Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée*, 92).

24 *L'Islam*, 23 July 1912.

25 Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled*, 72–4.

26 Ibid, 82–3.

27 *L'Ikdam*, 23 March 1923.

28 Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled*, 72–4.

29 Charles Jonnart, who served as Governor General of Algeria between 1903 and 1911 and between 1918 and 1919, persuaded Prime Minister Georges Clémenceau in the last few months of the First World War to adopt a law granting further rights to Muslims to facilitate the recruitment of Algerian soldiers (Christopher Maurice Andrew and Alexander Sidney Kanya-Forstner, 'France, Africa, and the First World War', *The Journal of African History*, 19:1 (1978), 11–23, 15–17).

30 Benjamin Stora, Jeanne Marie Todd and William B. Quandt, *Algeria 1830–2000: A Short History* (Cornell University Press, 2004), 247.

31 Following an interview with Emir Khaled who had just been elected for a third time in 1922, journalist Ernest Mallebay wrote in *Annales Africaines*: 'the prefectoral authorities who considered that it was crucial to make him fail mobilized its entire army of civil servants and secret agents, gave them instructions and made promises of special favours and threats of disgrace.' *Annales Africaines: Revue Politique et Littéraire de l'Afrique du Nord*, no. 4 (26 January 1922), 602–4.

32 *L'Ikdam*, 27 November 1919. The election of candidates on Mustapha Hadj Moussa's list was annulled by the French authorities in 1920 (Gouvernement Général de l'Algérie, Direction des Affaires Indigènes, 'Rapport mensuel sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes pendant le mois d'octobre 1919', ANOM 11H46).

33 In response to accusations of separatism made against the Young Algerians by Emile Morinaud, the pro-settler *député* (Member of Parliament) for Constantine, Emir Khaled wrote: '[h]ow dare you accuse us of separatism

when you make every effort, you in particular, to gain a wider autonomy that would enable you to be in absolute control and have natives as your slaves' (*L'Ikdam*, 12 January 1923).

34 *L'Islam*, 19 December 1913.

35 Ibid.

36 Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled,* 71.

37 'Rapport mensuel sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes pendant le mois de décembre 1919', ANOM 11H46.

38 *L'Islam*, 6 January 1914.

39 *Le Temps*, 2 November 1913.

40 Ibid.

41 Philippe Millet, 'Les Jeunes Algériens', *La Revue de Paris*, 1 November 1913, 158–80.

42 Ibid.

43 *Le Temps*, 7 May 1912.

44 The *lettre de cachet* was a sealed letter containing a royal warrant for the arrest of specific persons under the French monarchy.

45 *Le Temps*, 7 May 1912.

46 A number of articles in *L'Ikdam* were devoted to the condition of poor Algerians and *fellahs*. See, for example, *L'Ikdam*, 2 December 1921, which called for measures to alleviate famine in Algeria and the ruin of many *fellahs*.

47 El Hachemi had spent most of his life in Syria where, through his actions and his loyalty to France, he had come to antagonize the Ottoman authorities in Damascus. He was the third son of Emir Abd el-Kader who had led the Algerian resistance to French colonization from 1840 until his surrender in 1847. Abd el-Kader then went into exile to Bursa (Anatolia) and finally settled in Damascus in 1852 where he spent the rest of his life and declared his loyalty to France. His defeat paved the way for French colonial expansion in Algeria (see Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled*, 57).

48 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée*, 221.

49 *Le Temps*, 3 January 1915.

50 Algerian Muslim officers who had not opted for naturalization could not normally be promoted beyond the rank of lieutenant. Khaled managed to gain the grade of captain in 1908 but two years later, in January 1910, he refused to accept French citizenship in order to be promoted to a higher military rank (Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled*, 356).

51 Emir Abd El-Malek, Abd El-Kader's grandson, had been a high-ranking Ottoman officer who later settled in Morocco. His support for Sultan Abd El-Aziz – who was considered to be close to the French – led him to be marginalized when Abd el-Aziz's brother, Moulay Hafid, deposed him and became Sultan of Morocco in 1908. In 1915, with the support of the Germans, Emir Abd El-Malek rebelled against French rule and moved to the Rif region (Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled*, 99–100).

52 *L'Islam*, 9 April 1914.

53 Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled*, 112.

54 In *L'Ikdam*, Emir Khaled published extracts of some of the letters of support he had received from high-ranking French army officers under whom he had served, including General Albert d'Amade and Colonel Jean-Marie Brulard, praising his 'loyalism' and his 'courage' (*L'Ikdam*, 12 January 1923).

55 Article by P. Rigal, *La République du Var*, reproduced in *L'Islam*, 9 April 1914.

56 *L'Islam*, 5 March 1914.

57 *L'Ikdam*, 30 March 1923.

58 *L'Ikdam*, 11 August 1922.

59 *L'Ikdam* replaced *L'Islam-Le Rachidi* in 1919. Emir Khaled's first contribution to *L'Ikdam* as political editor was in issue 45, 23 September 1921.

60 From 1865 to 1919, according to *L'Ikdam*, only 2,211 applications for naturalization had been made and 1,729 had been successful (*L'Ikdam*, 21–28 June 1919). Michael Brett described the *Sénatus-consulte* of 14 July 1865 which remained in force until the end of the Second World War as an act that established religion as a basis of discrimination. He stated that: 'this was the act which defined the native Algerian Muslim as a French subject but not a French citizen unless he renounced his rights and duties under Muslim law . . . On the one hand it ascribed to the Muslim population an inferior status, which provided a legal foundation for the various forms of political and administrative discrimination practised by the French against "their" *indigènes* [native Muslims]. On the other, it defined that inferiority as a product of Islam'; Michael Brett, 'Legislating for Inequality in Algeria: The Senatus-Consulte of 14 July 1865', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 51:3 (1988), 441. For a detailed study of the legal status imposed on Muslims in colonial Algeria, see for example Weil, 'Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale', 93–109; Laure Blévis, 'Les avatars de la citoyenneté en Algérie coloniale ou les paradoxes d'une catégorisation', *Droit et Société : Revue Internationale de Théorie du Droit et de Sociologie Juridique*, No. 48 (2001), 557–80; Claude Collot, *Les Institutions de l'Algérie durant la période coloniale (1830–1962)* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1987).

61 *L'Ikdam*, 21–28 June 1919.

62 Emir Khaled declared at an event attended by French President Alexandre Millerand in April 1922 that Algerian Muslims should have the same number of representatives in both Parliament and Senate as the European settlers (*L'Ikdam*, 22 December 1922).

63 The *communes mixtes* were civil districts whose population was largely Algerian and who were under the direct control of a colonial administrator. Unlike the *communes de plein exercice* which had a larger European population, they did not enjoy the benefit of French common law, and did not have a municipal council and a *juge de paix* (judge). In *communes mixtes*, the administrator had the authority to judge and sentence people. In *communes de plein exercice*, no more than a third of municipal

councillors could be Muslims. Following the decree of 7 April 1884, the proportion of Muslim representatives on the council was reduced to a quarter and no more than six Muslims could sit on a municipal council, regardless of its size. This was the case for the municipal council of Algiers which had forty representatives overall. See Weil, 'Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale', 96–7.

64 *L'Ikdam*, 22 December 1922.

65 *L'Ikdam*, 24 November 1922. The Idrissids of Fez are considered as the founding dynasty of the kingdom of Morocco. They ruled from the eighth to the tenth century and founded Fez as a major city and seat of power. This dynasty was established by Idriss, a great-great-grandson of Fatima and Ali, who fled the Baghdad authorities in the late eighth century and created the kingdom of Morocco. David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 92.

66 *L'Ikdam*, 6 May 1921.

67 *L'Ikdam*, 29 October 1920.

68 For a study of the impact of the Wilsonian moment on anticolonialist movements, see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Manela argues that '[t]he Wilsonian moment had encouraged Indian and other nationalisms to formulate their claims for self-government in language that resonated with a wider, international discourse of legitimacy' (217).

69 'Rapport sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes de l'Algérie, période du 1er novembre 1920 au 1er février 1921', ANOM 11H46.

70 The discovery of this petition led Charles-Robert Ageron to conclude that '[e]ven though Emir Khaled had to hide his political hopes after May 1919, the fact remains that he was indeed one of the first Algerian nationalists. Charles-Robert Ageron, 'La Pétition de l'Emir Khaled au Président Wilson (mai 1919)', *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine*, 7: 19–20 (1980), 203.

71 Charles-Robert Ageron, 1980, 'La Pétition de l'Emir Khaled au Président Wilson (mai 1919)', 199–209. First Lieutenant George B. Noble was a member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace on 23 May 1919. The petition was forwarded to President Wilson's secretary. It should also be noted that a few days before the opening of the Peace Congress in Versailles on 18 January 1919, the 'Algero-Tunisian Committee' led by the Tunisian Ali Bach-Hamba and his brother Mohamed addressed a memorandum to the Peace Congress and to President Wilson denouncing French colonial oppression in Tunisia and Algeria and demanding independence. See Claude Collot, and Jean-Robert Henri, *Le Mouvement national algérien: textes 1912–1954* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1978), 25–30.

72 '[Au] Président des Etats-Unis d'Amérique', published by Claude Paillat in 1979 and reproduced in Charles-Robert Ageron, 'La Pétition de l'Emir Khaled au Président Wilson (mai 1919)', 204–5.

73 *L'Ikdam*, 9 June 1922. See also Charles-Robert Ageron, 'L'Emir Khaled, petit-fils d'Abd El Kader, fut-il le premier nationaliste algérien?', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 2nd semester, No. 2 (1966), 9–49.

74 *L'Ikdam*, 5 May 1922.

75 This law was adopted by Parliament when Georges Clémenceau headed the French government as Président du Conseil (Prime Minister) and was supported by the then Governor General of Algeria, Charles Jonnart. It enabled a limited number of Algerians to obtain French citizenship and granted them some collective voting rights to elect some Muslim representatives in the Algerian assemblies dominated by European settlers.

76 Koulakssis and Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled*, 114.

77 Belkacem Bentami, Zerouk Mahieddine, Benchennouf Elhachemi and Mustapha Saïah Henni led a delegation to Paris in 1920 to ask the government to intervene against Khaled (*L'Ikdam*, 10 September 1920).

78 *L'Ikdam*, 4, 11 and 18 June 1920.

79 Emir Khaled called on Algerian Muslims to support Belkacem Bentami's candidacy to the seat of general councillor of Blida in September 1921 and stated that 'after having momentarily been deceived by certain bad advisors, he has, with honesty and loyalty, taken back his place amongst us that had remained vacant' (*L'Ikdam*, 23 September 1921).

80 La Fraternité Algérienne was registered as an association on 23 January 1922; its aim was to fight for the rights of Algerian Muslims (*L'Ikdam*, 11 August 1922).

81 Ibid.

82 *L'Ikdam*, 16 March 1923.

83 Emir Khaled's departure marked the end of his involvement with politics in Algeria. In a letter addressed to the press, he declared: 'Following a long and exhausting military career, having been declared unfit for service with total disability; wishing to have a rest that is essential to my health which has become fragile; and furthermore, wanting to devote all my attention to my family I am retiring from politics as well as giving up my posts as an elected member (*délégué financier*) of the general and municipal councils' ('Pour mieux servir la France en Syrie, le petit-fils d'Abd-el-Kader renonce à la politique', *Correspondance d'Orient: revue économique, politique & littéraire*, May 1923, 313–14). Emir Khaled died in Damascus on 9 January 1936. Whilst denouncing the abuse against Muslim Algerians, many prominent Young Algerians soon adopted a more conciliatory tone in their political discourse.

84 *Le Paria*, 1 December 1922, cited in Benjamin Stora, *Messali Hadj, 1898–1974* (Paris: Hachette, 2004), 50.

85 The communist daily *L'Humanité* even declared that Khaled had joined the Communist Party. Mahfoud Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I: 1919–1939* (Paris: Editions Paris-Méditerranée, 2003), 167. This claim made by *L'Humanité* remains, at this stage, unproven.

86 'Rapport', Archives Nationales, Paris, 2 March 1923, F/7/13412.

87 At that meeting, Emir Khaled called for Algerians to join French unions and parties that supported extensive reforms in Algeria.

88 It is worth noting that nationality as a political concept was popularized in French intellectual and political circles in the nineteenth century, and more specifically from the 1830s onwards, a period which coincided with the colonization of Algeria. On the development of the concept of nationality in France, see Gérard Noiriel, 'Socio-histoire d'un concept. Les usages du mot "nationalité" au XIXe siècle', *Génèses*, No. 20 (1995), 4–23.

89 'Rapport mensuel sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes, durant le mois d'août 1919', ANOM 11H46.

90 'Rapport sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes de l'Algérie, période du 1er novembre 1920 au 1er février 1921', ANOM 11H46.

91 See Philippe Millet, 'Les Jeunes Algériens', *La Revue de Paris*, 1 November 1913, 177.

92 'Rapport sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes pendant le mois d'août, septembre et octobre 1920', ANOM 11H46.

93 *L'Ikdam*, 13 October 1922.

94 'Rapport sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes de l'Algérie. Période du 1er novembre 1920 an 1er février 1921', ANOM 11H46.

95 Ibid.

96 *L'Ikdam*, 29 December 1922 and 16 March 1923.

97 *L'Ikdam*, 24 March 1922.

98 *L'Ikdam*, 10 November 1922.

99 'Événements de Syrie – Décès de l'Emir Khaled', February 1936, ANOM 9H42.

100 Ibid.

101 Article reproduced in *L'Echo de la Presse Musulmane*, No. 16, 28 February 1936.

102 'Rapport de Police', Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris, 21 January 1929, BA 56. Messali, *Les Mémoires de Messali Hadj*, 165–6.

103 Messali Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj (texte établi par Renaud de Rochebrune)* (Paris: Lattès, 1982), 201.

104 'Rapport sur la situation politique et administrative des indigènes de l'Algérie au 1er juin 1922', ANOM 11H46.

105 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 136.

CHAPTER FOUR

Weapons of Mass Representation:

Algerians in the French Parliament, 1958–62

Arthur Asseraf

From 1958 to 1962, seventy-one representatives from Algeria sat in the National Assembly (*Assemblée nationale*) in Paris, marking the climax of political assimilation as French Algeria reached its end. Among them were forty-nine 'Muslim Algerians' who made up the most advanced experiment in the integration of the colonized population into metropolitan institutions while the Algerian War raged on.[1] Roughly proportional to the size of the Algerian population in the French Republic, they embodied the political belief that Algeria was as French as the metropole on the other side of the Mediterranean, and that Muslims could be citizens like everyone else. In their honour, the Assembly closed for Eid ul-Fitr.[2] One of them, Nafissa Sid Cara, became the first female Muslim minister in French history, as well as the first female minister of the Fifth Republic. By July 1962, following the independence of Algeria under the National Liberation Front (FLN), they were ejected from both the Assembly and the Senate, and like much of the now problematic history of French Algeria, largely forgotten.

Treated as part of France since 1848, Algeria had regularly sent representatives to the metropolitan parliament since the 1870s, much like the Republic's other 'old colonies' of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, Guyane and Senegal.[3] Until the Second World War, however, these deputies and senators only represented a small proportion of the population:

European settlers, Algerian Jews and a thin smattering of naturalized Muslims who enjoyed French citizenship. The 'natives' (*indigènes*), 90 per cent of Algeria's population, had no place in the trans-Mediterranean body politic for the vast majority of its existence. Even after 1944, Muslim representation was limited: their representation (thirteen members) was equal in number with that of European voters despite the much greater number of Muslims, and they were segregated off into a second college in order not to upset the settler minority's hegemony.[4] Settler political figures vehemently rejected Muslim-majority representation until 1958. For this reason, European deputies from Algeria will occasionally appear in this study, but the focus will be on Muslim deputies, whose presence was far more problematic and novel.

The appearance of these forty-nine Algerian Muslims in the Palais-Bourbon in January 1959, for the first legislature of the Fifth Republic, might initially look like a tremendously progressive move. Looking back from the present-day situation, in which descendants of Algerian immigrants struggle to get elected to the French parliament, this story looks like what Todd Shepard has characterized as the Republic's 'colour-blind' attitude to race, a moment of tremendous openness at a time where the Civil Rights Movement was still fighting hard battles in the United States.[5]

From the perspective of Algeria's long colonial history, however, this experiment looks like too little too late. Not only were Algerians excluded from parliamentary representation until 1944 but, even then, the limited representation they enjoyed thereon was marred by mass electoral fraud organized by French authorities in Algeria under the Fourth Republic that blocked the parliamentary path for the development of Algerian politics.[6] The FLN's insurrection in November 1954, which launched the Algerian War, was made of young, radical Algerians disillusioned with the skewed electoral politics pursued by the previous generation of nationalist leaders. Through widespread violence, the FLN managed to interrupt any electoral politics in Algeria from 1956 when legislative elections were cancelled.

Thus, from the perspective of Algerian nationalist historiography subsequently shaped by the official FLN perspective, armed struggle was the only solution left by the early 1950s, and parliamentary politics faded into irrelevance after the beginning of the Algerian Revolution.[7] The only Algerian Muslims willing to work with the French after that point are dismissed as collaborators or, that most damning of political insults, *béni-oui-oui*, 'sons of the yes-yes tribe' whose only role was to assent to whatever the French authorities asked of them. From this point of view, the fact that Algerian parliamentary representation reached its highest point from 1958 to 1962 is irrelevant. As Frantz Fanon succinctly put it in 1959: 'In the French National Assembly sit eighty [*sic*] Algerian deputies. But today it is pointless (*ça ne sert à rien*).'[8] French historians have hardly been kinder, as the new presidential system of the Fifth Republic seemed to render parliamentary politics irrelevant, as highlighted in the work of Michèle Salinas.[9]

However, at the time, the election of the deputies was a serious political event in its own right, as the Muslim deputies served as living propaganda weapons for French Algeria. In 1958, the government of the nascent Fifth Republic intended the election of these deputies to resolve the problems of colonialism once and for all and mark the birth of a new Algeria, one that would finally look like any other region of France. While the deputies enjoyed little power to influence events in Algeria, they were meant to *look* important, thus representing Algeria in a symbolic if not a political sense. As highlighted in Ryme Seferdjeli's work, the government was particularly keen that this new Algeria would be one that would include Muslim women as both electors and representatives for the first time, leading to the election of three female Muslim deputies.[10]

Intended to hit the FLN, the experiment in Muslim representation backfired, and the French government became the main target of the weapons it had created. By attempting to co-opt pro-French representatives to legitimize French rule in Algeria, the young government of the Fifth Republic gave significant symbolic power to a small fringe of Algerian society. Botched legislative elections of November 1958 resulted in a cohort of deputies largely made up of the most virulently pro-*Algérie française* interests categorically opposed to independence. As de Gaulle gradually switched to a policy of negotiation with the FLN in the final stages of the war, Muslim deputies and their reactionary settler allies ended up vocally opposing the government in the Assembly.

Individually, the deputies were a colourful cast of characters, from Robert Abdesselam, international tennis star and regular member of the French delegation to the United Nations, to Ouali Azem, brother of popular Kabyle singer Slimane Azem.[11] Some of them have therefore been the subject of scattered research, especially the three female deputies, Rebiha Khebtani, Kheïra Bouabsa and Nafissa Sid Cara, but they have never been studied as a group.[12] Bringing together these narratives, this chapter will show how deputies were deployed as a weapon in an open struggle for the legitimate representation of the Algerian people.

Considering how little attention has been paid to them in academic research, it may come as a surprise that Muslim deputies were the object of considerable contemporary attention. They graced the front pages of *Le Monde* and made highly publicized speeches to the Assembly. They are effectively hidden in plain sight. This proliferation of highly public sources in the Assembly and the press tells us much about the appearance of the Muslim deputies as objects of living propaganda, but makes it difficult to discern the workings behind the scenes. In order to trace these stories beyond public appearances, this chapter makes use of the private papers of Prime Minister Michel Debré, who was in close personal contact with the Muslim deputies even after their ejection in 1962, and for the first time of the private archives of Nafissa Sid Cara (the only Muslim deputy to be appointed to a government post), as well as oral interviews.[13] For reasons of space, this

study focuses on the National Assembly and not on the deputies' colleagues in the Senate. The elections of the deputies through universal suffrage in November 1958 put problems of representation and democracy at the forefront of debates surrounding the deputies in ways that did not affect the indirectly-elected senators as much.

'The ill-elected': from the May 'revolution' to the elections of November 1958

The election of the Muslim deputies is rooted in the 'revolution' of May 1958 that ended the Fourth Republic. On 13 May 1958, a group of pro-French Algeria activists assisted by the army took control of the General-Government building in Algiers and called for the downfall of the government that had begun to consider negotiations with the FLN.[14] The coup leaders were keen to portray their takeover as a spontaneous, popular revolutionary uprising with impeccably republican credentials. General Jacques Massu called for a 'government of public safety' to create a new Algeria 'where the words freedom, equality, fraternity, justice will regain their meaning'.[15] This revolutionary project extended to Algerian Muslims as well. On 16 May, a carefully orchestrated demonstration swept the centre of Algiers, in which Muslims sang *La Marseillaise* with their European compatriots, an event which was hailed in the press as 'fraternization', the mystical birth of a new Algeria free of its colonial legacy.[16] As Malika Rahal has shown, these demonstrations of Muslim loyalty were hardly spontaneous, but actively organised by the army.[17]

The May 1958 revolutionaries' desire for a clean slate actively ignored Algeria's recent history. As shown in Michelle Mann and Rabah Aissaoui's chapters in this book, representation in the French parliament had been a standard demand of Algerian politicians since the early twentieth century, and one that had been repeatedly denied by settler interests, ironically the interests now most closely allied with the 13 May movement out of desperation. By 1958, few Algerians would have believed that parliamentary representation was the solution, especially coming from those who had refused it most vehemently beforehand but who now saw it as the only hope for the survival of French Algeria.[18]

However staged, these demonstrations tied the birth of the Fifth Republic to a desperate attempt to keep Algeria French by making all inhabitants of Algeria equal. Specifically, when the newly acclaimed de Gaulle, having freshly accepted executive powers, came to Algiers on 4 June 1958, he promised that all Algerians would elect their deputies like any area of metropolitan France. With these deputies, he promised, he would be able to 'do the rest' (*faire le reste*), though it was wonderfully unclear what the 'rest' exactly meant.[19] The democratic election of deputies was thus seen as the

Fifth Republic's remedy to the Algerian crisis and a weapon to undermine the FLN.

In the eyes of de Gaulle, the FLN had no democratic legitimacy, and parliamentary elections would hit a nerve. Starting as a small group of young men in 1954, the FLN was still struggling to be recognized as the sole speaker of the Algerian people.[20] The renewed assertiveness of the new French government forced the FLN to counter-attack. In September 1958, the leadership in exile in Cairo proclaimed itself the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA), aiming for international recognition.

For de Gaulle's plan to work, these new elections had to look different from previous ones. As legislative elections grew nearer in November 1958, de Gaulle made a great show to prove that elections this time would be free in Algeria: he wrote a public letter to General Salan forbidding the army from intervening in the electoral process, stressing the need for 'a real competition among several rival lists'.[21] At the very least, these elections had to look democratic. Yet the old system could not simply be wished away. As one newspaper euphemistically noted 'it is difficult to organize elections in a country at war'.[22] The FLN boycotted the election and, by this stage, most Muslims either supported the FLN or were too fearful of the consequences of collaborating with French authorities to risk running in a French election, meaning that few candidates were willing to participate.

To make matters worse, an extremely complex electoral system was devised for these elections. Instead of electing one deputy per constituency, as was done in metropolitan France, in Algeria each constituency elected a list with a fixed quota of European and Muslim candidates depending on the local demography.[23] For instance, in the heavily European city of Oran, competing lists had to include three candidates: two Europeans and one Muslim. On the other hand, in the overwhelmingly Muslim district of Tizi-Ouzou in Kabylia, the four candidates had to include three Muslims and one European.[24] Instead of eliminating racial barriers, the system re-inscribed Muslims and Europeans as separate categories by establishing quotas. The system was meant to be an improvement on the previous 'double college', in which European and Muslim candidates competed on separate lists for separate voters. Much was made of the fact that Muslims for the first time had more representatives than Europeans. However, the ratio was fixed at two-thirds Muslims, one-third Europeans, which was still heavily in favour of Europeans who only represented 10 per cent of the population.[25]

By early November 1958, before the elections had even begun, the situation had led to a complete crisis, which was extensively reported in French media. Three days before the deadline, no lists had been submitted.[26] Behind closed doors, a desperate scramble took place, in which French army officers rushed to convince prominent Muslim soldiers to run. Even one of the most prominent pro-French Muslim figures, Saïd Boualem, better known by his military title as *le bachaga* Boualem, had to be recruited by the army:

'it's not about politics', he was told by an officer, 'it's about presenting to the National Assembly seventy-one Algerian deputies that may proclaim to the Chamber and to France the determination of an entire population to remain French'.[27] These were not to be 'political' elections. The deputies were merely to be a lobby for French Algeria to the Assembly, to France and to the world. Muslim women were particularly sought out, as French authorities hoped to use them as a 'third force' against the FLN by convincing the outside world that only France could emancipate Muslim women by unveiling them.[28] For instance, a schoolteacher in Mascara, Kheïra Bouabsa, was plucked out of obscurity and encouraged to run as a deputy.[29]

Because no one wanted to run, the elections failed to appear legitimate before they even occurred. The competition in most constituencies was limited, or even non-existent, opposing different lists of pro-French candidates more or less chosen by the army. The press had been cautiously optimistic in the run-up to legislative elections. *Le Monde*, for instance, had featured a different Algerian constituency with its candidates every day throughout November. By late November, most newspapers were disillusioned, with the left-wing press proving particularly scathing: *Libération*'s front page ran 'Thanks to the comedy of the Algerian elections, 71 "deputies" parachuted by the men of May 13 to the Palais-Bourbon'.[30]

Yet de Gaulle could not retract these elections: the legitimacy of the emerging Fifth Republic was partly based upon the new regime's ability to successfully integrate Algeria into France, as promised in May 1958. The media attention that had accumulated around the Algerian elections meant that these deputies could not just be dismissed. Before they even took their seats, columnist Maurice Duverger in *Le Monde* called the future deputies 'the ill-elected' (*les mal élus*), noting that 'we will not be able to abandon them after having created them from nothing'.[31] This was to prove remarkably prophetic of the years to come. From the start, the deputies were failures, but important failures.

Allegories of Algeria

Before they even reached Paris, Muslim deputies were already in a problematic situation: they owed their position to elections with virtually no competition, and they had been chosen specifically because they were Muslim. When they took their seats in the first legislative session of the Fifth Republic in January 1959, they were not treated as normal representatives. Like their colleagues, they were elected to commissions, participated in debates and drafted laws, but their very presence on the benches of the Palais-Bourbon attracted considerable commentary. Guy Jarrosson, centre-right deputy of the Rhône, typically described them as part of 'the French miracle'.[32] The *bachaga* Boualem went on to be elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and took to leading sessions clothed in a traditional *burnous*, which led to

excited commentary on 'the presidential seat', occupied by 'the presence, so symbolic, of our friendly [*sympathique*] president Boualem'.[33] In these speeches, the Assembly was not simply a legislative institution but a symbolic space in which to perform a new Franco-Algerian relationship of equality; a synecdoche of the Republic.[34]

The three female deputies attracted particular attention. When Nafissa Sid Cara entered the Assembly as the first Muslim female minister, she sat behind Prime Minister Michel Debré as he made his speech on Algerian policy. Philippe Vayron, deputy of the Seine, described her as a living allegory of Algeria: 'I saw her on the Government's bench, in the seat usually occupied by the most important ministers of the Republic. I told myself: yes! It is in this seat that she must be since there is no greater role than to represent the dearest of our French provinces.'[35] *Le Monde* called her 'the symbol of the Algerian presence' and noted the elegance of her white hat.[36] In numerous photographs published in media at the time, Nafissa Sid Cara often appeared standing behind Debré on his visits to Algeria as the smiling, benevolent face of French authority in Algeria standing behind the stern prime minister.[37]

Similar attention focused on her two other colleagues, Rebiha Khebtani and Kheïra Bouabsa, who stood out in an overwhelmingly male Assembly: out of the nearly five hundred deputies for metropolitan France, there were only five women. While the FLN propaganda singled out the female Muslim deputies as 'traitors to religion and the fatherland', French metropolitan politicians lauded them as models for emancipated Algerian women.[38] In doing so they frequently commented on their headgear, particularly Khebtani's 'surprising blonde hair'.[39] In a context where unveiling was both politicized and fetishized, standing in the Assembly was the ultimate unveiling, out of the anonymous white *haïk* of tradition and bareheaded into the spotlight of modern democracy. This allegorical use of the deputies was not confined to national politics: in the struggle to gain international support in the UN against the FLN, Muslim deputies were used as international propaganda to 'swing vote' countries. Rebiha Khebtani went to the UN General Assembly, Nafissa Sid Cara was sent to Japan, and several deputies went on a tour of Latin America to convince foreign governments of the legitimacy of France's claims to Algeria.[40]

However, Muslim deputies' ability to speak for Algerians was contested within the Assembly. In June 1959, the head of the Communist Party, Waldeck Rochet, accused Muslim deputies of having been elected 'under the control of the army' and thus of not being legitimate representatives of the Algerian people.[41] To counter-attack, Muslim deputies brandished their ethno-religious identity as 'Muslims' to stress their ability to speak for Algerians. Mourad Kaouah, deputy for Algiers, tried to interrupt Rochet. When Rochet denied his request, several deputies exclaimed '*a Muslim* asks to answer you, Monsieur Waldeck Rochet'. Kaouah eventually left in protest, followed by a large proportion of the Assembly.[42] Ahmed Djebbour, deputy

of Algiers, also interrupted Rochet's speech with cries of 'Budapest', referring to the Soviet intervention in the Hungarian uprising of 1956, thus pointing out that communists did not exactly have a stellar record of free elections. Crucially, Kaouah's response was singled out because he was Muslim, thus making him particularly qualified to speak for Algeria against communists. Many deputies introduced themselves in their speeches as being 'of Muslim faith',[43] or as Ali Mallem, deputy of Batna, put it, 'an authentic Algerian'.[44] Far from portraying themselves as normal deputies, they used their symbolic status as a defence.

Muslim deputies' presence in the Assembly was thus anything but 'colour-blind'. Both they and their colleagues constantly referred to their 'Muslim' identity, manipulating a racialized religious identity to shore up the shaky legitimacy of French assimilation against the FLN's revolutionary programme.[45] Many deputies explicitly referred to their faith, quoting *suras* of the Qur'an in drafts of law, a surprising move in an officially secular Assembly that was, at the same time, hotly debating the involvement of the state in Catholic education.[46] The stark contrast between the treatment of public references to Islam and Catholicism in the Assembly was but the tail-end of a long history of French policies which excluded Islam from state secularism or *laïcité* in order to prioritize imperial control.[47] Far from ending colonialism as intended, the presence of Muslim representatives at the core of republican institutions highlighted the contradictions of France's policy towards Islam in Algeria.

Disloyal loyalists

Repeatedly emphasizing their status as 'Muslims' disguised the fact that the deputies were quite a diverse group. Some, like Robert Abdesselam, or *bachaga* Boualem, were men with deep contacts with French military authorities and pro-*Algérie française* activists in Algeria who already had a history of serving various positions within the French state.[48] Others, by contrast, had either been plucked out of total obscurity or were relatively independent, liberal-minded figures. In fact, some of the most passionate disagreements about Algerian policy in the Assembly were between Muslim deputies. In 1960 for instance, Abdelmajid Benhacine, a man only known in official records as an 'animal keeper' (*surveillant animalier*) was bold enough to claim that the FLN was a 'revolution contemptuously dubbed a rebellion'. This prompted Boualem and other *Algérie française* Muslim deputies to protest as the FLN had murdered members of their family.[49] Several deputies were indeed directly targeted by the FLN: Djillali Kaddari, representing Tiaret, was assassinated in 1962, and at least two others, Robert Abdesselam and Ahmed Djebbour, suffered assassination attempts.[50]

Yet some of their colleagues did not disapprove of negotiating with the FLN to bring peace to Algeria. When the French government concluded the

Evian Accords with the FLN in March 1962, the reaction of the Muslim deputies was split. When Mustapha Chelha, deputy of Alger-Banlieue, made a speech supporting the Evian process, he was attacked by Ahmed Djebbour of Algiers, and defended himself by claiming 'I represent the Muslims of Algiers that you do not represent!'[51] Once again, Muslim deputies struggled to define their legitimacy to represent the Algerian people, including against each other.

The relationship of some of the more radically pro-*Algérie française* Muslim deputies with their European Algerian colleagues was controversial. Most of the twenty-two European Algerian deputies were extremists of the 13 May movement, and would become infamous for their actions to prevent Algerian independence. Ali Bendjelida, deputy of Sétif, complained in an interview that 'everything is happening like it did at the time of the double college. Muslim representatives are supervised (*encadrés*) by their European leaders who still manipulate them too easily'.[52]

Pierre Lagaillarde, leader of the 'week of the barricades' that attempted to overthrow de Gaulle in January 1960, was deputy for Algiers and was stripped of his parliamentary immunity as a result.[53] Some of his Muslim colleagues made no secret of their support for his actions. Furthermore, in April 1961, when generals of the French army attempted a putsch against de Gaulle to stall negotiations with the FLN, Muslim deputies like Nafissa Sid Cara's brother Chérif were heavily involved and later testified in favour of putschist leader Raoul Salan.[54] Some Muslim deputies were involved with the anti-independence terrorist Secret Army Organization (OAS), as they can be found in articles by OAS publications like *L'Esprit public*, criticizing 'the ferocious racism of those who want to be the champions of "decolonization"'.[55]

Some of their colleagues vehemently disapproved of this political stance, and this division is reflected in the Muslim deputies' membership of parliamentary groups. Initially, they were all lumped together in an 'Administrative formation of representatives of Algeria and the Sahara', which belied their status as an indistinct lobby. Most of the Muslim deputies, along with their European Algerian colleagues, subsequently formed a parliamentary group named Unity of the Republic (Unité de la République), emphasizing its commitment to the integrity of the national territory and specifically to Algeria remaining a part of France. With sixty-six members, Unity of the Republic was one of the largest parliamentary groups in the Assembly, larger for instance than the socialist or communist groups.[56] However, other deputies did not follow suit: Ali Mallem, a prominent lawyer from Batna, joined de Gaulle's Union for the New Republic (L'Union pour la nouvelle République, UNR), along with a few others, while Hamza Boubakeur was affiliated with the Socialist Party.[57]

Unity of the Republic became quite the headache for the government. Initially, de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 was closely allied with the most extreme pro-*Algérie française* activists. However, his public

pronouncements on Algerian independence famously shifted after September 1959, as de Gaulle outlined the need for Algerian 'self-determination' (*auto-détermination*), although he still hoped they would choose to remain part of France. As de Gaulle gradually shifted to negotiations with the FLN to end the war, first secretly, then openly at Evian, his former allies became his most vehement enemies.

Through Unity of the Republic, this fringe had a large voice in Parliament and, what is worse, a large contingent of Muslims radically opposed to independence to express them, which was bad for the government's image. As de Gaulle dismissed the possibility that Algerian Muslims could ever be integrated as French citizens, allegedly saying that 'these people are not like us' ('*ces gens-là ne sont pas comme nous*'), some Muslim deputies accused him of racism.[58] The most vocal anti-independence Muslim deputy, Ahmed Djebbour, advocated more Arabic teaching in primary and secondary schools and more respect for the position of Islam in the French Republic, and in this was supported by his close personal friend Jean-Marie Le Pen.[59] While such a stance might seem surprising given Le Pen's subsequent political career in founding the anti-immigration Front National, at the time emphasizing the position of Islam in the Republic was a way of countering Algerian independence. Deputies thus used their status as democratically elected representatives of Algeria's Muslim population in a variety of directions, including against the government and against each other, belying the criticism that they were merely *béni-oui-oui* or yes-men. Nonetheless, their power remained largely confined to these symbolic claims.

Ignored and ejected

Whatever their political divisions, Muslim deputies all faced marginalization from decision-making. As largely inexperienced lawmakers, they were primarily put to work on issues directly affecting Muslims. Even then, however, their influence was somewhat limited. Nafissa Sid Cara's archives reveal her diligent work to reform the legal status of Muslim Algerian women in ways that often ran against the government's wishes, leading her to threaten to resign twice if the law was not implemented.[60] Muslim deputies' main legislative task was to reform Algeria's Islamic code, yet this huge project remained incomplete by the time of Algerian independence in 1962.[61]

Crucially, Muslim deputies remained completely marginalized from the government's Algerian policy, from its decision to negotiate with the FLN to its repression of Algerian political activity. For instance, following the massacre of Algerian protesters in Paris by the French police on 17 October 1961, Muslim deputies of all sides protested but were ignored. Nafissa Sid Cara's indignation was rebuffed by her governmental colleagues.[62] While the government enforced a complete media lockdown, Ahmed Djebbour interrupted the proceedings of the Assembly on 18 October 1961 demanding

the government make a statement on the events that had happened the day before. Referring to the curfew imposed on Algerians in the Paris area that had provoked the demonstration, he sympathized with the protesters, noting that 'in a Republic where the motto is freedom, equality, fraternity, discriminatory measures taken against Muslim masses are incomprehensible'.[63] Eventually, the government was forced to make a statement. Even socialist deputies on the opposite of the spectrum resented the government's silence and supported Djebbour's interruption.[64]

Muslim deputies' marginalization was only part of a larger, systematic contempt of parliamentary institutions by the new presidential regime of the Fifth Republic. De Gaulle used the new constitution to bypass Parliament, a privilege which he particularly used to avoid discussing Algeria, as pointed out in Michèle Salinas' work.[65] Nothing demonstrates the deputies' shaky legitimacy as much as their eviction. After the conclusion of the Evian Accords between the French government and the FLN in March 1962 leading to Algerian independence, the Muslim deputies became an embarrassing reminder of a now dated policy. When Algeria declared independence on 3 July 1962, the Algerian deputies were evicted from the Assembly by an *ordonnance*, that is, by direct executive order bypassing the legislative process.[66] A variety of political opinions viewed this use of the government's 'special powers' as unconstitutional and shocking proof of the bad relationship between the government and Parliament: 'these parliamentarians have been fired in a way that wouldn't be used to fire maids these days', noted *Le Monde*.[67] The President of the Assembly, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, embarrassedly issued a message of apology to his former colleagues.[68]

After the Evian Accords, Algeria was to become a foreign country and Islam a foreign religion. Le Pen exaggerated the situation by saying that 'the *bachaga* Boualem, vice-president of our National Assembly, will be forced to ask for his naturalization tomorrow'.[69] Debré, always more sympathetic to French Algeria, and privately disheartened by de Gaulle's policies, was replaced as prime minister by Georges Pompidou in April 1962.[70] While Debré had described France as a 'Muslim power' (*puissance musulmane*) in June 1959, Pompidou underlined the difference between 'our humanist and Christian world, and the Muslim world' as two fundamentally different civilizations in a speech to the Assembly in the spring of 1962.[71] The brief, fragile opening of metropolitan power for Muslims closed.

After the Evian Accords, the deputies' trajectories followed those of other pro-French Muslims abandoned by the French government, usually known as the *harkis*, after the name of the Muslim auxiliary soldiers recruited to fight against the FLN. At a cabinet meeting on 21 February 1962, Nafissa Sid Cara, in tears, begged de Gaulle to consider the plight of Muslims who had taken the French side. De Gaulle simply responded that they were 'exceptions' that the French government could not prioritize.[72] The fates of Muslim deputies after 1962 were as varied as their positions within the Assembly. Nafissa Sid Cara's former head of cabinet, Roger Benmebarek,

was tasked by Debré with following up on the fate of the deputies, and the report he filed is instructive.[73] Some, like the *bachaga* Boualem, founded agricultural communities in France and took an active role in the emerging *harki* movement. Ahmed Djebbour, a close friend of Le Pen, founded the National Front of Repatriated French Muslims (Front National des Français Rapatriés de Confession Islamique, FNFRCI), of which he was president until 1974, and his daughter was elected as a regional councillor for the National Front in 1986.[74] Others attempted to be relocated in the metropolitan civil service.[75] Si Hamza Boubakeur retained his post as rector of the Grand Mosque of Paris, a post still occupied by his son, Dalil Boubakeur. Some of them remained in Algeria, where they fared variously: Benmebarek notes that many of them suffered 'abuse', but others appeared to have been left in peace.[76] All faded into relative obscurity, and even Benmebarek was unable to locate six of them at all. Sid Cara herself was reduced to asking Debré for help with finding an apartment in Paris, as her former parliamentary indemnity ended in April 1963.[77]

Nafissa Sid Cara eventually received the *légion d'honneur* in 1994, a prestigious republican decoration, perhaps as distance from the messy experiment of Muslim deputies now allowed her to be cautiously and discretely celebrated as France's first Muslim female minister.[78] In general, the Muslim deputies' story has been forgotten because it proved embarrassing for both the French and Algerian governments. For the FLN, the fact that some Algerians 'collaborated' with the French even during the climax of the War of Independence is best dismissed, particularly if they were actually successful in attaining the highest echelons of the Republic. To the French Fifth Republic, the Muslim deputies raise uncomfortable questions about how much the birth of the regime was tied to a pervasive desire to keep Algeria French, and to the problematic situations that this created.

On the website of the National Audiovisual Institute (INA), there is an interview of Saïd Boualem talking to a reporter of the *Journal Télévisé* about his and his entourage's 'repatriation' to the Mas-Fondu in Camargue. The journalist addresses Boualem as 'Monsieur le Président'. The video's caption clarifies this title by identifying Boualem as the 'vice-president of the Algiers Assembly', which is inaccurate. Indeed, Boualem was not vice-president of the 'Algiers Assembly', a representative body for Algeria that met between 1948 and 1956, but of the French National Assembly in Paris. Whoever labelled the file misunderstood that Boualem had been not simply a figure of colonial Algerian politics but a metropolitan political figure of the highest order.

Conclusion

On closer scrutiny, the forty-nine Muslim deputies were more of a shiny, eye-catching number than a 'relatively successful' case of representation.[79] Beyond the surface their emergence was a story of military reaction, electoral

manipulation and widespread disregard for parliamentary institutions. Muslim deputies were neither assimilation success stories nor meek *béni-oui-oui* willing to assent to the whims of the French government, they were weapons in a war to legitimately represent the Algerian people. They occupied a peculiar political space opened up by the young Fifth Republic's desire to legitimize its rule in Algeria. At a time of imperial collapse, as the FLN's insurrection raised the costs of continued French presence in North Africa, authorities scrambled to co-opt a small group of pro-French or at least agnostic Algerians to the innermost levels of republican power. In the process, these figures imported the contradictions of the colonial Republic into the heart of the metropolitan parliament.

For decades, French authorities had denied Algerian Muslims the right to make political decisions, to elect representatives or to administer their own religious affairs. These decades of disenfranchisement, electoral manipulation and state control over Islam now backfired. The parliament found itself loaded with exactly what authorities had hoped for: a large group of ostensibly legitimate Muslim deputies, vocally pro-French, who proved themselves useless to counter the FLN and a thorn in the government's attempts to negotiate. As the young regime quivered, the presence of a large contingent of Algerians representing anti-independence interests in some of the most powerful republican institutions raised problems that had to be rapidly dismissed by their eviction from Parliament in 1962.

The trajectory of these deputies shows the limits of a 'colour-blind' Republic as colonial paradoxes rushed back to the metropole.[80] They were elected *because* they were Muslim, and that often turned out to be their only form of legitimacy within the Assembly. Under this symbolic status, they received heavy media coverage and support from right-wing politicians, but also had trouble affecting French policy on Algeria and being recognized as true representatives of the Algerian people, especially by left-wing parties. Their presence in the Assembly allows us to read both the impact and the superficiality of the policy of integration during this period. They were easily ejected by decree in 1962, after all, because they had held so little effective power in the first place. The Muslim deputies from 1958 to 1962 are a cautionary tale about the instrumental uses of symbolic appointments as propaganda weapons.[81]

Notes

1 The National Assembly is the lower house of the French parliament elected by direct universal suffrage, while the upper house or Senate is elected indirectly.

2 *Journal Officiel (JO* hereafter), *Débats,* 10 June 1959, 879.

3 Article 109 of the Constitution of 4 November 1848. For Senegal, this representation only applied to the 'Four-Communes', not to the majority of Senegal conquered in the nineteenth century. Third Republic representation

did not include the majority of French colonies acquired later like West Africa, Equatorial Africa, Indochina or Madagascar.

4 Under the Fourth Republic (1946–58) Algerian Muslims gained parliamentary representation, but elected their representatives separately. Europeans made up the 'first' college, and Muslims the 'second', both of which sent equal numbers of representatives to Paris. On Algerian representation under the Fourth Republic see Marc Roudaut, 'Les députés des départements d'Algérie sous la Quatrième République' (Masters thesis, Université Paris 1, 2013). During this period African colonies also gained limited representation under the *loi Lamine-Guèye*.

5 Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: the Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 14.

6 Mahfoud Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien. Question nationale et politique algérienne 1919–1951* (Algiers: ENL, 1993), 795. On this 'decade of political parties' see Malika Rahal, 'A local approach to the UDMA: Local level politics during the decade of political parties, 1946–1956', *Journal of North African Studies*, 18:5 (2013), 703–24.

7 Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*.

8 Frantz Fanon, *L'An V de la révolution algérienne* (1959) (Paris: La Découverte, 2011), 9. All translations are author's own.

9 Michèle Salinas, *L'Algérie au Parlement 1958–1962* (Toulouse: Privat, 1987). Salinas' focus is on debates about Algerian policy in Parliament, not on the issue of Algerian representation which only appears tangentially.

10 Ryme Seferdjeli, 'French "Reforms" and Muslim Women's Emancipation during the Algerian War', *Journal of North African Studies*, 9:4 (2004), 19–61. On Muslim women as targets of propaganda, see Neil MacMaster, *Burning the Veil: the Algerian War and the 'emancipation' of Muslim women, 1954–1962* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) and Diane Sambron, *Femmes musulmanes: Guerre d'Algérie 1954–1962* (Paris: Autrement, 2007).

11 The National Assembly website has begun compiling biographical notices for the lives of some Algerian deputies, but these remain fragmentary compared to their metropolitan colleagues; see http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/ (accessed 12 August 2015). I thank Claire Marynower for this information.

12 Seferdjeli, 'French "Reforms" and Muslim Women', MacMaster, *Burning the Veil*.

13 Nafissa Sid Cara's archives constitute the 103/AJ series in the Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine. I consulted the 2/DE series of Michel Debré's papers at the Centre d'Histoire de Sciences Po. Interviews were conducted with a former deputy, the families of two former deputies, who for reasons of privacy will not be named, as well as Nafissa Sid Cara's former director of cabinet Roger Benmebarek.

14 Michel Winock, *13 mai 1958: L'agonie de la IVème République* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006).

15 *L'Echo d'Alger*, 17 May 1958.

16 Winock, *13 mai 1958*, 185; see also Jean Ferniot, *De Gaulle et le 13 mai* (Paris: Plon, 1965), 385.

17 Malika Rahal, 'La situation politique en Algérie et l'opinion "musulmane"' in *Mai 1958: Le retour du général de Gaulle,* ed. Gilles Le Béguec, Jean-Paul Thomas and Bernard Lachaise (Rennes: Presse Universitaire de Rennes, 2010), 39–59. MacMaster, *Burning the Veil*, 114–51.

18 Fanon, *An V de la révolution algérienne*, 9. Benjamin Stora and Zakya Daoud, *Ferhat Abbas: une utopie algérienne* (Paris: Denoël, 1995), 293.

19 For a video of the speech, see INA, 'Le voyage à Alger du Général de Gaulle', *JT Nuit,* 5 June 1958, http://www.ina.fr/histoire-et-conflits/decolonisation/video/CAF88024184/le-voyage-a-alger-du-general-de-gaulle.fr.html (accessed 12 August 2015).

20 See Gilbert Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN 1954–1962* (Paris: Fayard, 2002). Also Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, and on the specific problem of the 'silence' of the majority of the Algerian population see Rahal, 'La situation politique'.

21 Letter from de Gaulle to Général Salan published in *Le Monde*, 15 October 1958.

22 *Témoignage chrétien*, 9 November 1958.

23 The closest equivalent to this system are the confessionally-divided constituencies of Lebanon. Contemporary documents make reference to Lebanese examples and thus illustrate that this connection is not coincidental. See for instance parliamentary debates discussing the Lebanese case in *JO, Débats*, 7 December 1960, 2ème séance, 4383.

24 'Ordonnance 58–964 du 16 octobre 1958 relative à l'élection des députés à l'Assemblée nationale dans les départements d'Algérie', *JO*, 17 October 1958, 9503.

25 De Gaulle, 'Discours de Constantine', quoted in *Le Monde*, 5 October 1958.

26 *Le Monde*, 7 November 1958.

27 Saïd Boualem, *Mon pays, la France* (Paris: France-Empire, 1962), 162.

28 MacMaster, *Burning the Veil*, 4. Diane Sambron, *Femmes musulmanes: Guerre d'Algérie*.

29 Seferdjeli, 'French "Reforms" and Muslim Women', 49. Oral interviews seem to confirm that most candidates were not spontaneous, and most had to be convinced if not coerced to run. One should be cautious of later reconstructions of events in 1958 once the brief experiment in representation had failed after 1962, but contemporary sources confirm this impression.

30 *Libération*, 11 November 1958.

31 Maurice Duverger in *Le Monde*, 8 November 1958.

32 Guy Jarrosson (Rhône, member of the Indépendants et Paysans d'Action Sociale or IPAS) in *JO, Débats*, 15 January 1959, Première séance, 32.

33 Julien Tardieu (Seine, IPAS), *JO, Débats*, 9 June 1959, 818.

34 I thank Malika Rahal for sharing her unpublished paper with me, 'Representatives of the Algerian colonized population at the French National Assembly (1945–1962)', presented at the Middle East Studies Association meeting, Boston, 2009.

35 Philippe Vayron (Seine, IPAS), *JO, Débats,* 15 January 1959, Deuxième séance, 51.

36 *Le Monde,* 17 January 1959.

37 AN, Archives de Nafissa Sid Cara, 103AJ/11.

38 Mohammed Harbi and Gilbert Meynier, *Le FLN: Documents et Histoire 1954–1962* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), 614–15; Sambron, *Femmes musulmanes*, 143.

39 *Le Monde*, 12 June 1959.

40 Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 664; AN, 103AJ/1. On Robert Abdesselam's UN activities see Centre d'Histoire de Sciences-Po, 1ABD/8. On diplomatic aspects of the Algerian War more generally see Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

41 *JO, Débats*, 9 June 1959, Première séance, 814.

42 *JO, Débats*, 9 June 1959, Première séance, 814–5, emphasis mine.

43 Ahmed Djebbour, *JO, Débats*, 29 December 1959, 3720.

44 Ali Mallem, *JO, Débats*, 9 May 1959, Deuxième séance, 832.

45 Naomi Davidson, *Only Muslim: Embodying Islam in Twentieth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

46 See *JO, Documents de l'Assemblée nationale*, Première législature, vol. 5, 159, which quotes verse 3:2 from the Sura Al-Imran. On contemporary debates on French secularism in 1959 see Jean-Pierre Delannoy, *Les religions au Parlement français, du Général de Gaulle (1958) à Valéry Giscard d'Estaing* (1975) (Paris: Cerf, 2005).

47 James McDougall, 'The Secular State's Islamic Empire: Muslim Spaces and Subjects of Jurisdiction in Paris and Algiers, 1905–7', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 52:3 (2010), 553–80. On the implementation of *laïcité* in Algeria see Raberh Achi, 'La séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat à l'épreuve de la situation coloniale: Les usages de la dérogation dans l'administration du culte musulman en Algérie, 1905–1959', *Politix*, 66:2 (2004), 81–106, and Anna Bozzo, '1905 et le paradoxe algérien', in *De la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat à l'avenir de la laïcité*, ed. Jean Baubérot and Michel Wieviorka (La Tour-d'Aigues: Aube, 2005) 17–27.

48 See Eric Belouet and Michel Dreyfus, *Robert Abdesselam, une vie criblée de balles* (Paris: Les Quatre Chemins, 2009), and Saïd Boualem, *Mon pays, la France*.

49 *JO, Débats*, 7 December 1960, Troisième séance, 4427.

50 *JO, Débats*, 20 March 1962, Première séance, 452–3. Belouet and Dreyfus, *Robert Abdesselam,* 215–25.

51 *JO, Débats*, 20 December 1962, Troisième séance, 485. See also Chelha's speech 10 June 1959, Deuxième séance, 867.

52 Interview of Bendjelida on 17 June 1959 in AN, 103AJ/3.

53 *JO, Débats,* Session extraordinaire, 2 February 1960.

54 Belouet and Dreyfus, *Robert Abdesselam*, 168. See http://www.asso-salan.fr (accessed 2 November 2009).

55 Ahcène Ioualalen in *L'Esprit public*, March–April 1962.

56 Unité de la République comprised at its largest 66 members, more than the socialist SFIO at 47 members or the Communist Party with 10 members.

57 For instance Ali Mallem, *JO, Débats*, 12 May 1961, 767.

58 De Gaulle was well known at the time for his alleged asides in private meetings, see Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States and the Algerian War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 201. For a public accusation in Parliament, see the one made by Robert Abdesselam, who was the child of a mixed Kabyle-French marriage; Belouet and Dreyfus, *Robert Abdesselam,* 156.

59 Ahmed Djebbour, *JO, Débats*, 25 November 1959, Première séance, 2999.

60 AN, 103AJ/3. Macmaster, *Burning the veil*, 295.

61 Algerian Muslims remained subject to Islamic law in matters of 'personal status', such as marriage and divorce. Islamic law was codified by the French in the nineteenth century, and it was this code that deputies were in charge of reforming; see Allan Christelow, *Muslim Law Courts and the French Colonial State in Algeria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

62 Neil MacMaster and James House, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 145.

63 *JO, Débats*, 18 October 1961, 2595.

64 René Schmitt (Manche, Socialist), *JO, Débats*, 18 October 1961, 2595.

65 Salinas, *L'Algérie au Parlement*.

66 'Ordonnance 62–737 relative au mandat des députés et sénateurs élus dans les départements algériens et sahariens' in *JO*, 4 July 1962, 6483.

67 *Le Monde,* 5 July 1962.

68 Henry Bergasse, *Histoire de l'Assemblée: des élections de 1789 aux élections de 1967* (Paris: Payot, 1967), 335.

69 Jean-Marie Le Pen, *JO, Débats*, 26 April 1962, 788. Boualem, *Mon pays, la France*.

70 Debré's private doubts about de Gaulle's Algerian policy are clear in a series of draft letters to de Gaulle in which he threatened to resign, 11–16 September 1961, in Centre d'Histoire de Sciences-Po, 2DE30.

71 Michel Debré, *JO, Débats*, 4 June 1959, 776; Georges Pompidou, *JO, Débats*, 26 April 1962, Première séance, 749.

72 Robert Buron, *Carnets politiques de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Plon, 1965), 157.

73 Roger Benmebarek, 'Note concernant la situation des anciens parlementaires musulmans d'Algérie', Centre d'Histoire de Sciences-Po, 2DE23. Djebbour later founded the FNFRCI (Front National des Français Rapatriés de Confession Islamique), of which he was president until 1974. Interview with son of deputy who relocated to Tarn-et-Garonne, 10 November 2009.

74 Valérie Igounet, *Le Front National de 1972 à nos jours: le parti, les hommes, les idées* (Paris: Seuil, 2014), 396.

75 Benmebarek, 'Note', CHSP, 2DE23.

76 Ibid.

77 Letter from Nafissa Sid Cara to Michel Debré, March 1963, CHSP, 2DE23.

78 Ibid. Sid Cara was named 'chevalier de la légion d'honneur' in 1994 and 'Commandeur' in 2000.

79 Shepard, *Invention of Decolonization*, 14.

80 Ibid.

81 Antoine Perraud, 'De Nafissa Sid Cara à Rachida Dati', *Mediapart*, 30 March 2008, http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/antoine-perraud/300308/de-nafissa-sid-cara-a-rachida-dati (last accessed 12 August 2015).

PART TWO

Identity Construction and Contestation

CHAPTER FIVE

Individual and Collective Identity in Algerian Francophone Literature:

Jean Sénac's 'Poetry on All Fronts'[1]

Blandine Valfort

(Translated by Teresa Bridgeman)

Many Algerian writers working in the French language found it painful in the decade between 1950 and 1960 to have to live through what Kateb Yacine called 'the second severing of the umbilical cord',[2] that is the anguish of a betrayal that was not only linguistic but also cultural. The widely imposed use of French, the language of the Other, added to the drama of a crisis of identity that has been portrayed by many writers.[3] During this period of extreme tension, the French language was the mark of a cultural dispossession and of an expropriating domination whose burden must be cast off, but it could also be converted into a transgressive language capable of expressing a desire for individual emancipation from the collective norm.

Writers in Algeria were in any case heirs to a double culture which raised complex linguistic and cultural questions that are analysed elsewhere in this volume with regard to the works of Assia Djebar and Maïssa Bey. Echoing the dilemma faced by these Algerian authors was the particularly acute heartbreak of some *pied-noir* writers whose ambivalent status led them to explore this

interweaving of heritages and to expose the limitations of any monolithic representation of Algerian society. One of the archetypal figures faced with this dilemma was, of course, Albert Camus. Far less known is the poet who was his friend until 1957 – Jean Sénac. Born in 1926 in Béni-Saf, of a Spanish Christian mother and an unknown father, Sénac was forced to come to terms with the contested identity of the *pied-noir*.[4] Despite his very militant commitment to Algerian independence, a commitment that led to his definitive break with Albert Camus,[5] the poet encountered a barrier of mistrust in some quarters of Algerian society, finding himself repeatedly relegated to the status of '*gaouri*'[6] and thereby branded an heir to the colonizers. Alongside this first rejection there came a second form of marginalization in response to his homosexuality and his combined call for the liberation of both the Algerian nation and his own body. The particular fate of this poet allows us to gauge the complexity of the drama of Algerian identity and reveals how collective and individual issues were bound up with each other.

The contested status of this *pied-noir* writer certainly exacerbated issues of national identity because he provided Algeria with a multicultural face that the partisans of a unique and exclusive Arabo-Islamic identity were eager to ignore. Jean Sénac would not permit himself to be confined to any single category, and in his writings the issue of freedom engages not only the mind but also the body. This is a poetic, sensual body which, as we shall see, is the object not only of aesthetic reflection but of a genuine war of liberation.

The contested identity of the *pied-noir* writer

Sénac's complex position as a writer in a colonized Algeria came on top of a family situation that was already extremely destabilizing in that he never knew the identity of his father. This fault line of identity runs through the poet's work, committing him to an endless quest for the Name. 'To know, would be to possess the Father when he is so cruelly missing from our lives', he confides.[7] The surname by which we know him is that of his adoptive father, Edmond Sénac, a Frenchman from the Gers region, whom his mother married in 1929 and divorced in 1933. But this short-lived male presence was not enough to fill the empty place in his life. Jean Sénac's family tree remains so incomplete that many a family saga could be written into it. His unfinished novel, *Ébauche du père, pour en finir avec l'enfance* (Rough Draft of my Father, To Have Done with Childhood), focuses on this autobiographical gap which serves as an endless source of subject matter.[8] In it, the writer tirelessly re-creates his origins, slipping on a succession of masks and engaging in the art of disguise to which his mother had accustomed him from the earliest age:

> My mother poured Carnival into our bloodstream [. . .] Through her, in our larval state, we learned to claim our colours with all the fervour of

> doubt. A woman who was a man, a rich man who was a poor man, a Black who was a White, a Spaniard who was French. Do we know who we are? My mother strove hard to show us that we are many people. She stuck the hedge of splinters in me, cruel questioning. Her taste for metamorphosis is the temptation of the infinite.[9]

The questioning of identity, despite the pain that accompanies it, nevertheless makes possible a continual reinvention of the self. This 'fervour of doubt' even becomes an act of faith: a closeness with a plural country that no adjective could circumscribe. The absence of the Name is double-edged because it is at once the 'temptation of the infinite', offering Sénac the advantage of a receptiveness to difference, and a 'hedge of splinters'.

However, the gaze of many Algerian citizens sought to close down this freedom of identity, passing judgement on him by assigning him origins. Sénac was labelled a *gaouri,* a term that marked his ostracism and relegated him to the ranks of the European colonizers. This hostile gaze acted as a reminder of his maternal country's criminal responsibility for the fate of a major historical figure in the person of Boabdil, the last Nasride ruler of Grenada. Sénac makes reference to this symbol of the humiliation endured by the Arabs at the time of the Reconquista in the poem 'Chant funèbre pour un gaouri' (Funeral Song for a *Gaouri*) from the collection *Citoyens de beauté* (Citizens of Beauty), composed between 1963 and 1966 and published in 1967. Having addressed his country's younger generation, expressing his regret for the irreparable gulf created by stereotypes and labels such as *gaouri, bicot, roumi* and *raton*,[10] the voice of Jean Sénac invokes a different song:

> Oh this song that for centuries
> Kept watch on me!
> The poverty of the old women, the pain
> Of adolescents at the gates of Grenada
> (On their lips Boabdil's lament bursts into flame!)[11]

It is painful for Sénac to be thus assimilated to a conquering Spain embodied by Ferdinand of Aragon, Isabella of Castille and the armies of the conquistadors. For his part, Sénac constantly lays claim to his Algerian-ness, a term that covers, under his pen, a comprehensive range of identifying characteristics:

> I am of this country. I was born Arab, Spanish, Berber, Jewish, French. I was born a Mozabite and a builder of minarets, a son of the great tent and a gazelle of the steppes. A soldier in his battledress on the highest crest keeping watch for invaders. I was born Algerian, like Jugurtha in his illegitimacy and rebellion, like Damya the Jewess – *al Kalhina*! – like Abdelkader or Ben M'hidi, Algerian like Ben-Badis or Yveton, like

> Bouhired or Maillot. There. I must spit out words as though they could act as bullets. I shall shout out for my empowerment. . . . like Djamila . . .[12]

The succession of proper names in this extract from *Ébauche du père* traces the fluid contours of a diffuse identity that is impossible to confine. The repetitions of 'like' and 'or' express an equivalence between the names of the great Algerian *fellaghas* and those of *pied-noir* fighters for independence such as Yveton or Maillot. Sénac's own name should therefore find its rightful place in this list of Algerians 'of the heart' who helped the subjugated Algerian people to re-conquer their freedom.

From 1950, Sénac moved in Algerian nationalist circles. He declared his political commitment in 'Lettre d'un jeune poète algérien' (Letter from a Young Algerian Poet), taking the view that the artist's place 'is on the barricades wherever revolt and intellect are still alive'.[13] The ideological positions he adopted became more explicit as the result, in particular, of his contact with Mustapha Bouhired and Mohammed Larbi Ben M'hidi.[14] In August 1954, he set out on a visit to France funded by a publisher's advance of 40,000 francs from Gallimard, which he had obtained with Albert Camus's support.[15] He made contact in 1955 with the activists of the French federation of the National Liberation Front (FLN), for whom he composed tracts, organized networks and handled liaison between the FLN and the rival Algerian National Movement (MNA) founded by Messali Hadj. Sénac also mixed with other activist poets, notably Malek Haddad, Kateb Yacine and Henri Kréa. His solution to the dilemma inherent to the choice between action and writing was to enter the fight armed with his pen, joining, in particular, the editorial team of *El Moudjahid*, the FLN newspaper clandestinely printed by Subervie, in 1957.

Sénac continued to write poetry while pursuing his militant activities during this period, as attested to by the opening words of his essay, *Le Soleil sous les armes* (The Sun under Arms), published in 1957: 'Poetry and resistance appear as the two sides of the same blade on which man tirelessly hones his dignity . . .'[16] The poet elects to make himself the herald and spokesman for his people. As a humble scribe, 'tak[ing] note of the constructed History of the people',[17] he evokes the superiority of the fighter over writers:

> Poets, let us be humble. The example set by our people is too lofty to tolerate a banal verbal demagoguery. Living wild in their *maquis*, they are laboriously putting together the terms for a better, democratic and social universe. Although we may sometimes aspire to enlighten them, let us not forget that we do so with the lanterns they provide, with the glorious bursts of light sparked off by their sacrifice. They are in their own way activists of the Word. Without our uneducated brothers we would be only as the Dry Tree. Let us respect the syntax of the resistants. Let us remain attentive to their breath, recorders with integrity. Nothing more.[18]

Warlike metaphors characterize a poetic action, a labour of writing that follows 'the course of the sword'.[19] This solidarity shown by Sénac for serious armed combat led to his break in 1957 with Albert Camus, ending a long friendship. The revolutionary fervour in Sénac that prevented him from condemning terrorist acts could not be reconciled with the 'civil truce' defended by the author of *L'Étranger* (The Outsider). In reply to Camus's assertion in his famous 1957 declaration to the students of Stockholm University that 'I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother before justice', Sénac wrote, in an undated draft fragment: 'Camus was my father. In having to choose between my father and justice, I have chosen justice'.[20]

The collections *Matinale de mon peuple* (Matinal of my People), composed from 1952 onwards and published in 1961, and *Aux héros purs* (To the Pure Heroes), published in 1962, bear witness to this direct involvement in the national effort of liberation.[21] Through cultural references and the valorization of the names of the *moudjahidin*, Sénac seeks to establish contact with the Algerian people's world of beliefs.[22] He constructs a revolutionary martyrology that includes the names of many *pieds-noirs*, for example Maurice Audin[23] and Alphonse Auguste Thuveny.[24] In addition, in 1962, in *Aux héros purs*, he adopted the pseudonym Yahia el Ouahrani (Jean of Oran), thereby imitating the *noms de guerre* used by the Algerian fighters. However, this revolutionary resolve, which demonstrates a deep-seated determination to provide support, was not always appreciated by his contemporaries who very quickly, yet again, dubbed him a *gaouri*. His desire to show his solidarity with the Algerian nation met with disappointment, as the title of his poem, 'Chant funèbre pour un gaouri' suggests. Despite this label and his associated rejection by society, the poet seeks in this poem to place his hope in future generations who may be capable of recognizing him as an Algerian of the heart:

YOUTH OF MY COUNTRY

Youth of my country,
I am writing for you in future years,
You who will come divested of your ancestors' anger,
You for whom I shall no longer be the oppressor.

You will not close the fountain to my thirst,
Nor cast down to my love
The watchful bone of your charnel houses.
Curse of chattering tongues! Demagoguery of the Clan!
That my name is Jean will no longer appear as a sign of injustice to you.[25]

As Fanette Lafitte reminds us, although public opinion occasionally expressed enthusiasm for his committed collections and radio broadcasts,

such as 'Le poète dans la cité (The Poet in the City) and 'Poésie sur tous les fronts' (Poetry on All Fronts), Sénac failed to establish himself fully in literary circles for what were essentially political reasons.[26] His sense of frustration and incomprehension, moreover, continued to pervade his work. Here, the issue of language, and in particular his lack of knowledge of Arabic, runs through the exploration of his identity. He attempts to resolve it by proposing a 'baton-passing' literature.[27]

The ambiguities of a 'baton-passing' literature

The linguistic situation of French-speaking writers accentuated what Jacques Derrida describes in *Monolingualism of the Other* as the universally-shared feeling of a form of dispossession.[28] The individual who had been deprived of his language by the colonial authorities experienced a more painful version of the linguistic exile shared, in Derrida's view, by all mankind, that is to say the inability to possess one's ancestral tongue in its entirety. Sénac's family background intensified this desire to rediscover his father's language. In *Ébauche du père*, the absent father's words increase the gulf that separates the writer from his people and fuel a linguistic questioning that finds no solace:

> You cut me off from many things that were so good without knowing it. Those unknown languages (the paternal ones!) have now come to haunt me again [. . .] See, they speak, and I don't understand them! You gave me my people and you deprived me of its language! Oh folly! I say that I am Algerian and they all laugh in my face. Oh derision! And I still hear you on the doorstep bargaining with Mohammed: 'La! La! Achra!' Mother! I don't know Arabic![29]

The poet is thus haunted by the language of his father, which in his dreams is, of course, Arabic.

For Sénac, a return to the bosom of his language appears improbable; in his orphaned state he therefore extends a real challenge to literature and to poetry, reminding the latter sharply of its function to 'remunerate the defect of languages'.[30] Stéphane Mallarmé, having observed the imperfection of language, had asserted the need to create a poetic language in perfect harmony with feeling and the world. We can understand that this linguistic discomfiture, as described by Derrida, and the desire to invent a more personal language should be expressed more strongly in the *pied-noir* poet's work. To remedy this deficiency, Sénac therefore seeks to establish more exacting parameters for poetry. The writer 'will deny himself the comforts and conveniences of a colonized language, a ready-stewed language in which his fruits could now only macerate', he writes in *Le Soleil sous les armes*.[31] For him, the need is to rework the French language in light of Algerian

reality and to transform the literature of the colonial period into a walkway leading to linguistic independence:

> If we acknowledge that our current literature is only a literature of Transition, as the Great Arab Work draws near, it would be fair to consider, to avoid all ambiguity, the following new definition: an Algerian writer is any writer who has definitively chosen the Algerian nation.[32]

A scattering of embedded Arabic words goes some way to taking his work along this path. Thus, the poet twice mentions the 'tzaghrit', referring to women's strident cries of joy, in his collection *Citoyens de beauté*. A title in the same collection, 'Arbatache', refers to the number 14 in Arabic, the poem being composed of fourteen fragments. Other Arabic expressions reflect the context of the War of Liberation, for example 'Yahia ach chaab' (Long live the people) or, again, the title, 'Istiqlâl el Djezaïri' (Independence of Algeria) in *Aux Héros purs*. Through this handful of Arabic expressions, Sénac attempts to conjure up a familiar world, a cultural home shared with his reader. However, such instances of hybridization are rare, for the author is unable to speak his people's language and remains 'in a strange country in [his] own country'.[33] In his narrative, *Ébauche du père*, Sénac returns to this phrase which had been used by Louis Aragon in the 1940s to evoke the paradoxical experience of a sense of exile in one's own country. The poet will not forget this other French-language legacy, inherited from the French Resistance writers under the German occupation.

Sénac, in his essay *Le Soleil sous les armes*, draws inspiration from the French literary canon, paying homage to the great writers of the French Resistance such as Aragon, René Char, Paul Éluard and others who carved out an essential place for the poet in the city. Sénac quotes Albert Camus's words at the time of the liberation of France on the role played by this committed poetry:

> What else can we ask of a poet today? In the midst of our dismantled citadels, there is still bread, and women, and proud freedom. In the desert of time, gathering together these true riches, Beauty, for which we thirsted desperately, finally rises up. It emerges from these 'Feuillets d'Hypnos' that blaze like the weapons of the resistance, and because it has been bathed in the blood of combat, we at last recognize it for what it is. Not the enfeebled beauty of the academies but one that can at last be our life's blood, red, dripping from a strange baptism, crowned with lightning bolts.[34]

The Algerian poet wishes to keep alive the words of the resistants, those revolutionary writers who rejected the gratuity of literary expression for a marching song. The first line of Virgil's *Aeneid*, 'Arma virumque cano' (I sing of arms and the man), would not be an inappropriate epigraph for Sénac's

works, a line previously employed by Aragon in 1942 to signal that his collection, *Les Yeux d'Elsa* (Elsa's Eyes), was in the epic tradition. In Sénac's view, far from changing poetry by condemning it to a form of prosaic pragmatism, commitment will reveal the profound meaning of the poetic act. For Sénac, speech must be performative, must have the force of the act so it can prepare for the coming of a new dawn. In the midst of the Algerian War, he is conscious of the urgent need for a renewal of poetic expression of the sort initiated by Aragon during the Second World War in his article 'La (Rhyme in 1940)',[35] published in the periodical *Poètes casqués 40*. It would indeed be fair to suggest that major crises in history tend to inspire writers to rework the sonorities of poetry and to redefine the position of the poet and his work. Jean Sénac's response is no exception and he sets down the principles of his commitment and his aesthetics which it will, from now on, be impossible to separate.

Once again rejecting narrow and monolithic definitions of identity, Sénac demonstrates the existence of the other face of France and of the French language through reference to his poetic predecessors: 'In those shattered moments, in the dusk where France in its Gorgon's mask was swooping down on our homes, what brotherhood we found in Éluard standing watch, in René Char!'[36] This homage to the Resistance poets exposes France's act of self-betrayal in repudiating the libertarian and humanist ideas upheld by the 'poets in helmets' of the 1940s.[37] The fellowship established by Sénac with his illustrious predecessors was, moreover, not solely literary in nature: he entered into a friendly correspondence with René Char from 1949 onwards and the latter wrote the preface for his collection, *Poèmes*, in 1954. Sénac's writing thus prevents the French language from being reduced to the language of the colonizer. While it is perceived by him as an alienating instrument that stifles the dreamt-of language of his father, it nevertheless remains a weapon of liberation for those with the skill to adapt it to this use following the example of the French Resistance poets. In this, he supports the concept of a 'baton-passing literature'[38] that reworks the French language to make it reflect the current struggle and includes himself among the 'transitional writers' who are preparing the way for the coming of the 'Great Arabic Work'.[39]

However, despite this political and poetic commitment, Sénac was still perceived as being 'guilty of having dipped his black feet in the couscous steamer' by many Algerians.[40] It was in these bitterly ironic terms that he responded in 1967 to those public figures, among them Kateb Yacine, who criticized his activities and those of the Union of Algerian Writers of which he was the secretary from 1963 to 1965. It is probable that Yacine considered Sénac to be too close to President Ahmed Ben Bella's leadership. The literary quality of his writings was also called into question, not least in reaction to the line, 'your beauty is that of a management committee', addressed to an independent Algeria whose political ideology infuriated him.[41] The poet considered it appropriate at this point, as he writes in the *Révolution*

africaine article quoted above, to 'return to [his] shadows, to [his] vices, to [his] aberrant images' that make up the 'bodypoem' (*le corpoème*) and express the body's cry for freedom which is inextricably bound up with political revolt.[42]

The fight for the liberation of the homosexual body

The writings of this *pied-noir* poet discussed so far reflect the various contested identities of colonial and post-colonial Algeria. To them should be added the voice of a gagged homosexuality. This additional form of marginality is a defining feature of Sénac's aesthetic, where poetry is not the expression of a pure mind but is truly the word made flesh, in the sacred sense of the term, and a verbalization of the body. In his work, Sénac's commitment can no more be separated from this intimate expression of desire than it can from his aesthetic. Sénac's poetry focuses on the prospective coming of the body and the word, liberated at last in a single breath that expresses the simultaneity and symbiotic coexistence of word and flesh. The poet anticipates, to a certain extent, Michel Foucault's discourse on repression at the beginning of *The Will to Knowledge*. This discourse is a transgressive critique of the efforts of the middle-class family to set the rules determining the relationship with the body and to identify all sexual 'deviancies'. Situating his argument within the context of class conflict, Foucault strengthens the link between sexuality and politics, between the liberation of the body and revolution:

> Because this repression is affirmed, one can discreetly bring into coexistence concepts which the fear of ridicule or the bitterness of history prevents most of us from putting side by side: revolution and happiness; or revolution and a different body, one that is newer and more beautiful; or revolution and pleasure. What sustains our eagerness to speak of sex in terms of repression is doubtless this opportunity to speak out against the powers that be, to utter truths and promise bliss, to link together enlightenment, liberation, and manifold pleasures, to pronounce a discourse that combines the fervour of knowledge, the determination to change the laws, and the longing for the garden of earthly delights.[43]

During the final years of his life, Sénac presented himself as a victim of this repression and effectively viewed himself as a pariah, choosing to sign some of his post-1968 texts with the pen name 'Cloistered-in-Algiers' in a play on his street address in the rue Élisée Reclus.[44] This marginalization only increased his hunger for subversion and his strengthened sense of ostracism was accompanied by a greater crudity in erotic expression. But, well before

this radicalization, we find him already associating revolution with a 'newer, more beautiful' body, as can be seen in the collection *Citoyens de beauté*.

In the poem 'Chant funèbre pour un gaouri' from that collection, the lyric subject addresses the 'youth' of Algeria and expresses the various facets of an erotic fantasy: that of a union with the young Algerian lovers observed on the breakwater at Algiers harbour. This sight intensifies the desire to be totally integrated into the Algerian nation and to act as one body with it:

> I can now sign only with an avid gaze
> On the sand while
> Your muscles offer each other life!
> And my flesh is undone . . .[45]

An unfulfilled sexual drive invades the poem. Confusion of identity and the feeling of illegitimacy cloud its melody. Only orgasm, the union of bodies, has the potential to open the doors to a few moments of clarity of vision:

> A confusion of rhythms invades my memory and
> Tangles my roots. Where is
> My heart? I have
> Only a jangle of cart bells. I have
> Only a swarm of wasps in the place
> Where my body sang.
> I no longer have any jolt, awareness, other than orgasm.[46]

But this marriage of identity with Algerian youth, symbolized by the sexual act, has not really taken place. Six years after independence, in 1968, this desire remains unfulfilled, as demonstrated by the poet's cry in *A-Corpoème* (A-Bodypoem):

> This poor body also
> Wants its war of liberation![47]

Two collections – *Le Mythe du Sperme-Méditerranée* (The Myth of the Mediterranean Sperm) and *A-Corpoème* – written in 1967 and 1968 respectively and published posthumously, illustrate the comprehensive shift of commitment to the erotic register.[48] In them, the body's choice becomes radicalized in the face of the mistrust shown towards Sénac by Algerian society, which has failed to embody the ideals of the Revolution.

Indeed, once again, fixed categorizations of identity were being imposed on people's thinking. Sénac deplored the authoritarianism of the post-revolutionary period which generated a monolithic Arab-Muslim definition of Algeria, especially after Houari Boumediene's *coup d'état* of 1965. At no point, though, did he espouse the dichotomous version of events that opposed the values of a supposedly 'libertarian' West to those of a supposedly

'intolerant' East. Sénac's political demand for a liberated body did not subscribe to this binary logic which has since been challenged by numerous critics following the example set by Jarrod Hayes and Frédéric Lagrange.[49] We need only, for example, consider the audacious eroticism of Abû Nuwâs in the eighth century for these fixed categories to be shaken. Indeed, Sénac opens the section, 'La Source et la vague' (The Spring and the Wave) of his collection *Dérisions et vertige* (Ridicule and Dizziness) with some lines from Abû-Nuwâs, quoted by Emir Abd el-Kader.[50] Lagrange equally reminds us that it was the nineteenth-century colonizers who attempted to curb the infamous 'oriental vice'. The historical and cultural facts thus contradict a certain number of Western prejudices, but they also discredit the arguments of fundamentalists on the subject of Arabic-Muslim identity. The rigid principles called for by the latter must be recognized as being less ancient than they claim, antiquity being, for such traditionalists, a measure of value. In any case, the repressive discourse from which Sénac's writing attempts to escape is also Christian; the education he received from his mother, a fervent Catholic, strongly marks his writing where Christian morality is repeatedly associated with his awareness of sin.

Other disappointments added to this feeling of repression, contributing to the radicalization of the poet's expression. The year 1967 was particularly trying for Sénac, who was obliged to withstand various attacks mounted against him (in particular from Kateb Yacine) and who attempted in vain to mobilize Algerian writers during the Six-Day War. In a letter dated 10 July 1967 and addressed to Mohammed Rezzoug, Director General of the RTA (Algerian National Radio and Television), Sénac explains that he tried on the morning of 5 June to arrange an emergency meeting with the Union of Algerian Writers on the 'Palestine war' in order to organize 'daily news flashes' on the radio. Having failed in this, the poet decided to take a step back for a time: 'I am keeping a little apart in my "family *douar*":[51] all our intellectual elites have so sickened me by their fierce egotism and their complete lack of civic feeling which is quite simply a betrayal of our people'.[52]

Sénac nevertheless returned to the public stage in August to create his new radio programme 'Poésie sur tous les fronts'. He also wrote, during May and June, his first 'bodypoem', 'Diwân du Noûn' (Book of *nūn*), which would be published in the collection *Avant-Corps* (Fore-Body) in March 1968. Sénac offers his readers 'A writing made of Sex, of honeyed opal, flaming'[53] where the page 'bursts into ejaculatory strophes'.[54] This upsurge of words and physicality combines the erotic, the political and the poetic in a union that is generated through multiple symbols, a number of which are religious.[55]

Religious questioning is in fact to be found throughout Sénac's poetic quest. He is haunted, as Dominique Combe has shown, by the image of a *deus absconditus*, a hidden god to whom poetry attempts to 'give body and presence'.[56] The poet repeatedly refers to Jacob's biblical combat with the Angel, narrated in Genesis chapter 32, which takes place before Jacob and Esau are reunited. On crossing the Jabbock river, the patriarch has to face a

mysterious attacker who strikes him on the hollow of his thigh. Calling for an end to the fight, Jacob's adversary gives him the name 'Israel' because he has been victorious over God and men. So Jacob names the ravine 'Peniel' meaning 'Face of God' because he has encountered the Eternal there. Jacob's change of name expresses, in the Bible, a change of status. In Sénac's poem, this episode can be understood in the light of his Poetics of the Sign – that of the Arabic character *nūn* (as it is most commonly transcribed in English) – which he set out to develop through the École du Signe, surrounding himself with artists such as Abdallah Benanteur, Mohammed Khadda, Jean de Maisonseul, Louis Nallard and others. A very rich dialogue was thus initiated between painting and writing, as is demonstrated in particular by Khadda's artistic reflection on the links between 'calligraphy and modernity'.[57] *Nūn* is used as a suffix to indicate certain feminine forms in Arabic, echoing the sexual orientation of the poet, but it is equally the isolated letter that opens sura 68 of the Koran, also known, for this reason, as the *nūn* sura. This sura's title, 'Le calame' (a sharpened reed that served as a pen in early civilizations) is, moreover, a reminder of the activity of writing. Sénac's aesthetics of the Sign ascribe a singular presence to the word: it is palpable and can itself feel, because it is embodied. The act of writing is an act that stages the body in all its sensuality, or even its eroticism. But the word also *makes a sign*: that is, it reveals an ontological truth which, too, is stamped with the seal of the sacred. The imprint of the Sign, of *nūn*, marks the body of the poet, just as the fight with the angel marks that of Jacob on his hip and condemns him to limp. The stigma of the Sign, for the poet as for the patriarch, is therefore accompanied by a vivid pain. Just as Jacob fights the Angel sent by God, the poet wrestles with the poetic word which takes on a mystic dimension and he must constantly re-conquer *nūn* to provide the word with a bodily presence. The mark of the Sign is therefore the proof at once of a divine punishment and of a victory – of being chosen – as Lafitte demonstrates:

> The letter perceived as a sign engraved in the poet's flesh, intrinsic to his existence, is a divine punishment commensurate with Jacob's wound but one that still provides redemption since it turns an impersonal discourse into the extension of a personal essence, of an internal truth. This letter, or this word, becomes the precise extension of the subject or, more precisely again, a matrix of this subject, a poetics that is also an ontology of the individual.[58]

References to this biblical episode in the poems 'Interrogation' (Questioning) and 'Étreinte' (Embrace/grasp/grip) from the *Diwân du Noûn* collection are accompanied by erotic imagery.[59] The encounter between Jacob and the angel is evoked in physical terms; the contact between the holy messenger and the patriarch occurs through touch, through a direct contact with the skin of the All-other:

It was not of feathers nor of spirit but of some material
Like flesh. And so soft when the grasp suddenly towards the light
Slipped (thigh or the elbow, the shoulder) that Jacob
Knew that this combat which slashed his
Cunning nomad's robe was not made of hatred and wove
Between them a tunic that was
Unique
And so that they could fit into it that suddenly their bodies came together
In a spiritual flesh
That was animal nevertheless and so beautiful![60]

The sensual contact with the divine messenger characterizes a real 'mystique of Eros'.[61] The Sign is, as in the biblical episode, an ontological revelation, but in Sénac's work it is expressed through a display of sexuality that is inherent to this conquest of identity.

The meaning of this re-appropriation of the figure of Jacob is, given the context of publication, also political and in this it takes on a more collective character. The comparison between the poet and the patriarch who receives the name Israel at the end of the biblical episode heralds the birth of a new man, like Jacob Israel, but in this instance he inhabits an Arabic cultural universe which he shares with the figures of Antar[62] and Bilâl[63] who appear in the poem. The episode blends with the context of writing as Sénac's text combines references to biblical locations (Peniel, the Jabbock ford) with those relating to the contemporary conflict on Palestinian soil (Gaza). The use of dialogue in the poem makes possible an exploration of the layers of meaning of the biblical reference:

17
All that (said Lila) did it happen over in Arab Palestine?
Yet that night (said Bilâl) God named Jacob Israel!
18
And all of us have defeated God!
[. . .]
That Palestine is here, it is our isle of thistles, it is Nanterre, Vietnam, Peniscola, La Cafét or Damascus.[64]

The mention of this episode is thus made to resonate with the revolutionary discourse evoked by the place names at the end of the quotation. The reality of the conflict in Palestine once again emerges in fragment 23 of the same poem:

(Caterpillars went by on the road, dragging guns.
Towards Jabbock.)
Gaza, oh my gazelle, has fallen! (had sung Lila. And towards Peniel we engaged our weapons.)[65]

We also encounter the figure of Jacob in another collection written in 1967, *Le Mythe du Sperme-Méditerranée*, but the general tone is much cruder and more brutal. At a time when independent Algeria was betraying the ideals of the revolution, Sénac responds to the general apathy by following the example of Allen Ginsberg, the gay mouthpiece of the Beat Generation in the United States, and creating what he calls 'a conscience-shock wire' using a liberated form of sexual expression to do so.[66] Sénac then claims to have received a new name from God, like Jacob:

> God in my bollocks sets to watch
> Adam, Jacob and Job – and the Jewish angel
> And the Arab angel. He has named me
> Provocateur of fucking so that the stars
> Fall one by one on the Assembly.[67]

The lines are blasphemous and the 'pain of the boomerang-genitals' turns the poetic word into a sacrilegious expression that subverts both religious discourse and the categories of identity that have been partly fixed by the event.[68] This staging of the body, which is sometimes highly physiological, summoning up all the humours (sperm, urine, pus and blood), takes us beyond strictly homosexual issues. It becomes the emblem of refusal, of a 'no' thrown in the face of a fossilized society, as can be seen in the poem 'Contre' (Against) whose title itself underlines this desire for resistance:

> Radioactive radiant queens for this is the only way to be radically
> against this
> Abominably pussy-like society.
> Receptacle of the fundamental negations, hatred against!
> Do not let them get a hold. Deny.
> Sumptuously.
> Procreative coitus, driving force of the perpetual abomination!
> Hatred and queenishness against![69]

The collection *A-Corpoème* also presents the reader with an ejaculatory act of writing that is at once orgasmic pleasure and an affirmation of the self, but also refusal and negation:

> I have created with my frenetic hiccoughs
> A word to name
> Pleasure and negation.[70]

Writing is inextricably bound up with commitment and an engagement to rally others. The collection, despite its predominantly erotic tone, is punctuated by 'news flashes' resembling those Sénac had attempted to organize on the radio in June 1967 during the Six-Day War. They function

here as a reminder of burning contemporary issues such as the Vietnam War or the conflict in Palestine.[71] Such interludes do not, however, threaten the coherence of the collection because it is not possible to separate what Hamid Nacer-Khodja calls the 'Internal poems' expressing the poet's intimacy from the 'External poems' expressing a militant commitment.[72]

Conclusion

Jean Sénac's work clearly demonstrates that the expression of the intimate is evidence neither of a narcissistic retreat nor of a form of desertion of collective issues. It is, on the contrary, bound to the political context and highlights the difficult linkage between individual identity and a collective identity under construction. The *event* allows the *advent* of a lyric voice bringing Algerian questions of identity to the fore. But this cry for freedom has not always been heard, and Sénac repeatedly reminds us of his sense of ostracism, even attributing symbolic meaning to his final street address in Algiers, rue Élisée Reclus,[73] where he was murdered on 30 August 1973, in a case which remains unsolved.

Certain questions of identity raised by the work of Jean Sénac remain unresolved. The issue of language has long been a sensitive one in Algeria, as the works of Assia Djebar and Maïssa Bey analysed elsewhere in this volume show. That this questioning should have continued for so long clearly demonstrates how hard it has been for Algerian writers to create a path or voice that takes them beyond the binary constraints and patterns that are too often imposed on them. The act of writing, whether in the form of *écriture feminine* or homosexual writing, attempts to reinvent itself beyond such limits and to escape fixed identities in order to create an intercultural dialogue. The writing of homosexuality claims to be particularly subversive and it overturns pre-established patterns. Nearly fifty years after the crudest collections produced by Sénac, this issue remains taboo. Discussion of it is almost non-existent in contemporary Algeria, in contrast to the rising voices in neighbouring countries, particularly Morocco, for example that of Abdellah Taïa.[74] The work of Jean Sénac displays a forgotten poetic and political commitment, a struggle for a multicultural Algeria and an avant-garde approach in its demands for queer status that have had no real successors.

Notes

1 *Poésie sur tous les fronts* was the title of a radio programme created and hosted by Jean Sénac and also of a collection of poetry edited by him and published by the Éditions Nationales Algériennes in 1965.

2 Yacine Kateb, *Le Polygone étoilé* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 181.

3 The writings of Malek Haddad come to mind, in particular the collection 'Les Zéros tournent en rond', in Malek Haddad, *Écoute et je t'appelle, poèmes précédés de Les Zéros tournent en rond* (Paris: Maspéro, 1961). Also the 'cloak of Nessus' described by Assia Djebar in *L'Amour, la fantasia* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995), 239. In Morocco, writers such as Abdelkébir Khatibi and Khaïr-Eddine have also set out to dismantle the French language the better to appropriate it for their own use.

4 The term *pied-noir* is used deliberately here despite the fact that this identity was constructed and claimed after independence. We cannot describe Jean Sénac as a 'French Algerian' because his mother was of Spanish origin. The writer mainly lays claim to a plural identity but, in an article published in 1967, he indicated that he had often been grouped with the *pieds-noirs*. Here he remarks, with not inconsiderable humour, that he had always been reproached for having 'dipped his black feet in the couscous steamer'. In his article, the term *pied-noir* is not associated with a claim to identity on the part of the writer. Rather, it evokes an imprisonment, a labelling imposed on him that would eventually lead to his repudiation by an independent Algeria. Extracts of the article appeared in *Révolution africaine*, 219 (24–30 April 1967), and are quoted in Sénac, *Pour une terre possible . . .* (Paris: Marsa, 1999), 274.

5 The correspondence between Jean Sénac and Albert Camus was published in 2004 in Hamid Nacer-Khodja, *Albert Camus, Jean Sénac ou le fils rebelle* (Paris: Paris-Méditerranée, 2004).

6 The term *gaouri*, which comes from Maghrebi dialect, designates a European from a Christian culture.

7 Jean Sénac, *Ébauche du père, pour en finir avec l'enfance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 17.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 59–60.

10 *Bicot* is shortened from *arbicot,* which combines the italianate *arabico* with *bique* (goat) and uses the pejorative *-ot* suffix. *Roumi* has the same meaning as *gaouri*. *Raton* (little rat), first used in the nineteenth century as a slang word for child thieves, now applies to Arabs and North Africans while retaining its sense of 'thieving' and 'rat-like'. Again, the *-on* suffix is pejorative.

11 Jean Sénac, 'Chant funèbre pour un gaouri', in *Oeuvres poétiques* (Paris: Actes Sud, 1999), 421.

12 Sénac, *Ébauche du père*, 20. In this passage, Sénac evokes the great figures of Berber tradition, Jugurtha and Damya. Jugurtha was a Numidian king during the second century BCE who fought against Roman rule. Berber tradition views him as the defender of Numidian culture, for example in Jean Amrouche's evocation of African genius, *L'Éternel Jugurtha* (1946). Damya, or Kahina (priestess soothsayer) was the Berber queen of the Aures mountains who is said to have resisted the Arab invasion at the end of the seventh century. Sénac also mentions the great figures who opposed French colonization. These include the Algerian Emir Abdelkader (Abd el-Kader elsewhere in this volume, but transliterated variously from Arabic script) who fought against the French armies from 1832 to 1847 and the Mokrani people

who rose up against colonial rule in 1871. The nationalist militants Mohammed Larbi Ben M'hidi, Mustapha Bouhired, Djamila Bouhired and Djamila Boupacha worked for Algerian independence, as did the *pieds-noirs* Fernand Yveton and Henri Maillot, while Abdelhamid Ben-Badis, president of the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema, defended the Arabic Muslim identity of Algeria.

13 Sénac, *Pour une terre*, 241.

14 See Hamid Nacer-Khodja's notes in Sénac, *Pour une terre*, 337. Larbi Ben M'hidi was an activist in the Algerian People's Party (PPA) and then became a senior member of the Special Organization (OS), a member of the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (MTLD) and the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action (CRUA). He was in charge of the FLN's Oran zone and supervised the action of the armed groups of the FLN in the 'Battle of Algiers'. Arrested on 23 February 1957, he was tortured and then killed. Mustapha Bouhired, too, was an FLN activist.

15 See Nacer-Khodja, ibid., 340.

16 Sénac, *Le Soleil sous les armes* (Rodez: Subervie, 1957), 9.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 52.

19 Ibid., 9.

20 See Nacer-Khodja's notes in Sénac, *Pour une terre,* 349–50.

21 Sénac, *Matinale de mon peuple*, in *Oeuvres poétiques,* 251–339. *Aux héros purs*, in *Oeuvres Poétiques*, 387–96.

22 The term *moudjahid* in Arabic means 'fighter' or 'resistant'. The plural *moudjahidin* was used during the Algerian War to describe the members of the Army of National Liberation (ALN).

23 Maurice Audin was a member of the Algerian Communist Party, who was tortured and killed by French authorities in 1957.

24 Alphonse Auguste Thuveny was a lawyer from Oran known for defending partisans of Algerian independence. He was killed in a car bombing in 1958.

25 Sénac, *Matinale,* in *Oeuvres poétiques,* 306.

26 Fanette Lafitte, '"Dans ce chant d'Arlequin, la Haute voix du cœur". Lyrisme et quête identitaire dans l'œuvre poétique de Jean Sénac', PhD thesis, Université Paris-Est, 2008, 6–7.

27 This was the title of an article dated November 1959, part of which was published in *Afrique-Action*, in 1961. See Sénac, *Pour une terre*, 294.

28 Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other, or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

29 Sénac, *Ébauche du père*, 105.

30 Stéphane Mallarmé, *Crise de vers*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 208.

31 Sénac, *Le Soleil*, 20.

32 Ibid.

33 Sénac, *Ébauche du père,* 111.

34 Sénac, *Le Soleil*, 22. Written during the war by René Char, the *Feuillets d'Hypnos* were published by Gallimard in 1946.

35 Louis Aragon, 'La rime en 1940', in *Les Yeux d'Elsa* (Paris: Seghers, 2004), 136–40.

36 Sénac, *Le Soleil*, 48.

37 The periodical, *Les poètes casqués,* was created by Pierre Seghers in 1939. It later had other titles such as *Poésie 40, Poésie 41*, and so on.

38 Sénac, *Matinale*, in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 306.

39 Incidentally, Sénac's position on this issue is not entirely consistent. He sometimes defends the concept of a relay, that is a succession (and not a co-existence) of the French and Arabic languages in Algeria, while elsewhere he promotes the idea of a necessary presence of Arabic, Berber and French in the literary field. Sénac therefore offers no definitive answer to the question of whether literature written in French continues to exist alongside Algeria's other languages, or if it is merely a baton-passing language, preparing for the arrival of poets writing in Arabic.

40 Sénac, *Pour une terre,* 274.

41 Sénac, *Citoyens de beauté*, in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 401.

42 See Sénac, *Pour une terre*, 294.

43 Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), 7.

44 Named after the nineteenth-century geographer and anarchist, *Reclus* means 'cloistered' or 'secluded'.

45 Sénac, *Citoyens de beauté*, 416.

46 Ibid., 417.

47 Sénac, *A-Corpoème*, in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 602.

48 In 1970, Sénac attempted to publish the second of these collections, contacting the Parisian publishers Gallimard, Bourgeois and Oswald. He was turned down by all of them, as Nacer-Khodja recalls in Sénac, *Pour une terre,* 367. The collection was eventually published in 1981 by Saint-Germain-des-Prés éditions.

49 See Jarrod Hayes, *Queer Nations: Marginal Sexualities in the Maghreb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Frédéric Lagrange, 'Male homosexuality in Modern Arabic Literature', in *Imagined Masculinities, Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East,* ed. Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb (London: Saqi Books, 2000), 169–98; and Frédéric Lagrange, 'Sexualities and Queer Studies', in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, Vol. 1, ed. Joseph Suad (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 419–22.

50 Sénac, *Dérisions et vertige,* in *Oeuvres poétiques,* 645.

51 A traditional collection of dwellings.

52 Sénac, *Pour une terre*, 276.

53 'Diwân du Noûn', in *Oeuvres poétiques,* 509.

54 Ibid., 511.

55 These three inextricable elements of Sénac's work have been discussed in Hamid Nacer-Khodja, 'Jean Sénac, érotique, poétique, politique' in *Oeuvres poétiques,* 787–802.

56 Dominique Combe, '"Le corpoème" et la quête du nom. Hommage à Jean Sénac', *Awal, Cahiers d'études berbères*, 12 (1995), 43.

57 Mohammed Khadda, 'Calligraphie et modernité', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, XXIII (1984), 129–35.

58 Lafitte, '"Dans ce chant', 198.

59 Sénac, 'Interrogation', in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 512–21; 'Étreinte' in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 522–9.

60 Sénac, 'Étreinte', 523.

61 See Combe, '"Le corpoème"', 48.

62 Antar is a great poet of the pre-Islamic period who lived during the sixth century.

63 According to Muslim tradition, Bilâl Ibn Rabah was a slave from Ethiopia who became one of the Prophet's companions. He is considered as the first muezzin.

64 Sénac, 'Interrogation', 517. The poet lists a number of symbolic locations here including Nanterre, in reference to the shanty town in this western Parisian suburb that was home to many Algerian families in the 1950s and 1960s. La Cafét was an Algiers café that suffered a bomb attack in 1957.

65 Ibid., 518.

66 Sénac, *Le Mythe du Sperme-Méditerranée*, in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 540.

67 Ibid., 539.

68 Ibid., 541.

69 Ibid., 544.

70 Sénac, *A-Corpoème*, in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 601.

71 Ibid., 571.

72 See Nacer-Khodja's biographical notes in Sénac, *Pour une terre*, 323–80. Dominique Combe, too, underlines the link in Sénac's work between erotic expression and political commitment. He suggests that 'refusal strikes at . . . the established moral and sexual, political and poetic order, against which poetry must rise up'. Combe, '"Le corpoème"', 52.

73 From 1968, Sénac signed some lyrics with the formulation: 'Alger-Reclus'.

74 Abdellah Taïa's key works include *Le rouge du tarbouche* (2005), *L'Armée du salut* (2006), *Une Mélancolie arabe* (2008) and *Le Jour du roi* (2010).

CHAPTER SIX

Algerian Female Identity Re-constitution and Colonial Language:

A Postcolonial Malaise in Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*

Rachida Yassine

This chapter addresses the thorny issue of linguistic identity, which is at the heart of critical concern in Maghrebian postcolonial literature. This issue will be investigated in and through the feminist and anti-colonialist narrative *L'Amour, la fantasia* by the Algerian writer, historian and film-maker Assia Djebar whose works are indissociable from Algerian history and women's place therein.[1] While many Maghrebian writers have tackled the question of linguistic identity in their own ways, debating the theoretical and practical implications of their use of French, Djebar puts emphasis on creating a new form of female subjectivity and shedding more light on the psychological and linguistic consequences of colonialism. Djebar's narratives bring Algerian female subjectivity centre stage, and endeavour to construct a voice outside of patriarchal constraints, in order to locate strategies for speech through the critique of colonialism. These narratives reflect Djebar's attempts to come to terms with the legacies and implications of the French colonial presence in Algeria, notably her dilemma as a postcolonial, Algerian, female subject writing in French about Algerian women who do not speak French and cannot speak for themselves. Like most Maghrebian Francophone

writers, Djebar has to grapple with the ambiguity and alienation that the use of French entails. For instance, as will be demonstrated, her autobiographical narrative *L'Amour, la fantasia* is pervaded by contradictory moments reflecting Djebar's efforts to work through the ambiguities of the postcolonial condition and of having to re-write the colonial undertaking in the language of the colonizer. This narrative also throws into relief the ways in which Djebar reflects on the cultural and subjective dualities which are the inevitable outcomes of the colonial encounter. It foregrounds the paradoxical and dual nature of her use of French, and of her attempts to wrest identity out of the vagaries of biculturalism and patriarchy.

The use of language as a tool of assimilation is a familiar aspect of colonial policies. As the Kenyan writer and critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o puts it, language is 'the most important vehicle through which [colonial] power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of physical subjugation; language was the means of spiritual subjugation'.[2] For this reason, rebellion against linguistic integration and alienation is a very important anti-colonialist strategy. For many postcolonial writers – both Francophone and Anglophone – linguistic identity is a thorny issue. In the specific context of postcolonial writing, alienation from the linguistic economy is already intertwined with other complex problems. In North Africa, for example, the seeds of the present cultural and linguistic alienation were sown in the nineteenth century, when the French colonizers made the French language compulsory at the executive and administrative level, while establishing French schools open to only a small number of the native population. As the French colonial empire had a policy of cultural assimilation, French schools were created for the 'élites' or '*évolués*' in the colonized countries. There remained only a few Arabic (Koranic) schools. When the Revolution broke out in Algeria in 1954, over 75 per cent of the population was illiterate.[3] The privileged few who had access to schools could express themselves better in the French language than in their mother tongue. As a result of the intensive teaching of French language, literature and culture, French is still the official language in many West Indian and African countries today. It is one of the two official languages in the Maghreb with Arabic being the other one; in Morocco, only in 2011 was Berber given the status of an official language alongside Arabic.

In the case of the Maghreb, for the native intellectual elite, French was the key to admission to another world, the world of the West, of progress and of power. But Arabic and/or Berber were the mother tongue and the language of the illiterate masses. To choose both French and Arabic, as some tried to do, was perhaps the solution to the problem. But it was a difficult choice and was made successfully by relatively few people. Frantz Fanon himself pursued this problem in his studies on Algeria and the depersonalization engendered by colonization. When he probed into the pitfalls of post-independence nationalism and the problematics of building a national culture, he paid particular attention to the estrangement of

the native intellectual. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967), for instance, he insists that underwriting the native intellectual's will to participate in the nationalist project is the very real desire to make contact with the people. In pursuit of this vital connection, the now-Westernized intellectual does not stop to re-evaluate those critical tools or foreign idioms which Fanon identifies as the 'claws' of the colonial legacy. Left unexamined, these 'claws', now 'logically reinscribed', would ensure that the personal and the national voice remained in some way unwittingly foreign and strangely exotic.[4] Fanon's studies were not the only ones to deal with this dilemma of the native intellectual elite. Many Maghrebian writers have described suffering a permanent nostalgia as a result of their inability to address their fellow compatriots in their own language. In *Le Polygone étoilé*, the Algerian writer Kateb Yacine equates his French educational experience with being thrust into '[t]he jaws of the wolf'.[5] The Moroccan writer and critic Abdelkébir Khatibi, on the other hand, uses autobiographical fragments combined with poetry and parable in *La Mémoire tatouée* to express his uneasy alliance with the French language and culture.[6] This language problem remains one of the most visible signs, in Algeria today, of the cultural and psychic damage brought about by colonization. The intensity of the problem is different in Morocco and in Tunisia, largely because the French administration in those countries did not discourage the learning of Arabic to the same extent as it did in Algeria. Arabization programmes initiated in the Maghreb in the 1970s and 1980s only succeeded in widening the immense gulf between the French-educated intellectual elite and the rest of the population.

Djebar was one of the most prominent Algerian literary figures of the second half of the twentieth century. She was born in the coastal town of Cherchell in colonial Algeria in 1936. She attended the primary school where her father taught French, and completed secondary school in Algiers. After studying at the Lycée Fénélon in Paris, she became the first Algerian woman to be accepted into the Ecole Normale Supérieure in France in 1955. Djebar has received many prestigious prizes, and in 2005 became the first author from the Maghreb to be elected to the Académie française. Djebar's narratives reflect the perpetual alienation of those postcolonial Maghrebian writers who want to re-connect with their origins through the medium of the French language. In her narratives the issue of language is firmly linked to that of identity. In *L'Amour, la fantasia*, for instance, she reflects on biculturalism and bilingualism and their critical role in the elaboration of postcolonial identity. She considers that the process of Western acculturation, resulting in her mastery of the colonizer's language and her access to public space, engendered a separation not only from self and country but from language itself. It also created a separation from a singular discourse within and through which she could inscribe a valid and coherent sense of identity. This issue assumes paramount importance in Djebar's double-binding practice: that is to say, her double gesture of re-constructing a feminine identity within a postcolonial context and within the problematic legacy of a bicultural heritage.

L'Amour, la fantasia is a complex and multidimensional narrative. It juxtaposes autobiographical fragments against episodes from the French conquest of 1830, the Algerian Revolution of 1954 and national liberation in 1962. Djebar then reverts to recollecting a double past: individual and collective. Her personal story is constructed in counterpoint to the history of the Algerian people co-opted by French colonialism. *L'Amour, la fantasia* is, therefore, composed of two narratives in which two types of discourse are interwoven: one autobiographical, the other historical. These two discourses contribute to Djebar's project of forging continuity between cultural identity and the historical past. Subversive in form and genre, the narrative is split into three parts each with a different title, while each part is divided into smaller sections. The last part consists of what Djebar refers to as 'Movements'. There are five 'Movements' of several units each and a 'Finale' composed of four sections. These parts, sections and 'Movements' abide by the conventions of a number of genres, styles and approaches: autobiography, historical documentation, reportages, commentaries on historical material, interviews and dialogues with Algerian women, and oral accounts transcribed and translated into French.

The ambivalence of postcolonial identity

In the opening scene of her narrative, Djebar evokes the first day she was taken to school by her father in the early 1940s: 'A little Arab girl going to school for the first time, one autumn morning, walking hand in hand with her father'.[7] As she herself puts it, this act symbolically frees her from female enclosure: 'At the age when I should have been wearing the veil, thanks to the French school, I can still circulate.'[8] However, her French education sets her on an ambiguous bilingual and bicultural journey. The sequel of this experience is the feeling of exile and dislocation that now looms over her adulthood. Djebar comes to believe that her French education and freedom of movement in public space has excluded her from all aspects of the traditional woman's world, thus alienating her from the majority of Algerian and Arab women. For this reason, she strives to bridge the gap that separates her from all aspects of this world. *L'Amour, la fantasia* reveals this attempt and represents the product of the writer's endeavour to re-establish links with the maternal world of her past. Trinh T. Minh-ha describes such an endeavour in the following terms:

> She who works at unlearning the dominant language . . . also has to learn how to un-write and write anew. And she often does so by re-establishing the contact with her foremothers, so that . . . life keeps on nurturing life, so that what is understood as the past continues to provide the link for the present and the future.[9]

Both structurally and discursively, Djebar's postcolonial/resistance narratives question French as an adequate medium for expressing Arab experiences and reflect ambivalence as an inevitable condition of postcolonial/Algerian subjectivity. This ambivalence is inscribed on the colonized subject by the colonial process. The postcolonial subject is torn between allegiance to his native culture and the desire to assume that of the colonizer. This dilemma is representative of the crisis of cultural 'integrity' ever-present in postcolonial/resistance narratives. However, by foregrounding the dual nature of her use of the French language, Djebar deliberately creates and undoes contradiction.

Djebar maintains that the French language has dispossessed her of her Arab linguistic and cultural heritage. For this reason, in seeking to subvert patriarchal colonial history and to give voice to Arab women she finds herself simultaneously alienated from the oral Arabic world of Algerian women due to her French education. However, she also views the French language as a source of power and dominance to which certain men, such as her father, had access during the colonial period and to which most women did not. The French language is, for Djebar, a means to gain access to the historical writings of the French colonizer and to reappropriate these writings in order to expose their occultation of what she terms '[l]a violence initiale' (the initial violence).[10] The French language is also a way for Djebar to exteriorize her inhibited emotions. However, it is equally a symbolic veil which persistently cuts the novelist off from her origins and from writing in her mother tongue. Her relationship to the French language as she depicts it in *L'Amour, la fantasia* is then a love/hate one. As she metaphorically puts it, the language of the former conqueror offers her what she terms ornaments, jewels, flowers, but these flowers are also described as 'the flowers of death', chrysanthemums on tombs. She furthermore describes French as cloaking her in the 'shirt of Nessus'.[11] In classical mythology, the story of Nessus tells of how Hercules slew the centaur Nessus, who attempted to rape Deianira, Hercules' wife. The dying Nessus gives Deianira a poisonous potion mixed with his blood under the guise of it being a love potion. Later, attempting to reclaim Hercules' affection, Deianira gives the latter a cloak soaked with the poisonous potion containing Nessus' blood, believing that it will make him love her again and not knowing the harm it will cause him. This garment burns the flesh of Hercules, causing him so much suffering that he builds his own funeral pyre. The story of Nessus' cloak invokes the myth of the fire ritual associated with fertility. We can analogize Djebar's own situation, in which writing in French at once produces agony and gives birth to this novelist's potential as amanuensis for Algerian women. French is for Djebar simultaneously a gift of love from her father who took her to school and the cause of her painful exile.

Although writing in French is celebrated by Djebar as liberating for the postcolonial subject, a striking ambivalence emerges. Liberating the self in the language of the colonizer is paradoxical and reveals a web of intractable conditions. For her, the audacious act of breaking away from tradition is

and can only be made in the colonizer's language: the language of the 'enemy', the violator of her country. Yet, it is also a language in which she suffers from a form of what she calls 'an aphasia of love'.[12] Expressing herself in the colonizer's tongue makes her words both a source of pain and something without which she cannot survive, hence the contradictory appeal and ambivalent status of this foreign and imposed but also liberating medium. Recalling episodes that involve writing in French, Djebar invokes her father's defiance of tradition when, away on a trip, he writes a postcard to his wife instead of sending the family the customary formal greeting. Writing his wife's name on the envelope, he affirms her individuality in opposition to the tradition that perpetuates women's anonymity:

> My father had quite brazenly written his wife's name, in his own handwriting, on a postcard which was going to travel from one town to another, which was going to be exposed to so many masculine eyes, including eventually our village postman – a Muslim postman to boot. Thus my father had dared to write the name of his wife.[13]

This parental cultural transgression has an important psychological significance for Djebar. It nurtured the cultural, linguistic and literary transgressions which distinguish her writings.

She also remembers her first adolescent love letters; they, like her father's postcard, were written in French. Paradoxically, the language of the colonizer becomes a language of intimacy and of female self-unveiling:

> But this stripping naked, when expressed in the language of the former conqueror (who for more than a century could lay his hands on everything save women's bodies), this stripping naked takes us back oddly enough to the plundering of the preceding century.[14]

For this reason, Djebar compares writing about herself in French to experiencing a live autopsy, drawing a connection between her body and the language she uses. The flesh, she maintains, metaphorically flakes off with her use of French, revealing a painful disclosure of the inner self. For the postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak such identity-construction processes express 'identity as a wound, exposed by the historically hegemonic languages, for those who have learned the double-binding practice of [their] writing'.[15]

L'Amour, la fantasia therefore problematizes its own medium of expression and reflects Djebar's efforts to wrest identity from the vagaries of biculturalism. She has to work through the ambiguities of the postcolonial condition of having to re-write the colonial undertaking in the language of the colonizer. Language thus becomes the place of inscription of a paradoxical colonial subjectivity. Exile and nomadism become figures for the inscription of an identity which ultimately derives its validity from the experience of alienation:

> [E]ven when I am composing the most commonplace of sentences, my writing is immediately caught in the snare of the old war between two peoples. So I swing like a pendulum from images of war (war of conquest or of liberation, but always in the past) to the expression of a contradictory, ambiguous love.[16]

The metaphor of the pendulum is highly suggestive of the ambivalence characteristic of the postcolonial subject. Significantly Djebar switches back and forth between a first- and a third-person narrative in many of the chapters, especially those to do with her experiences as a French-speaking Algerian woman living in Paris, and when she describes her relationships with men. In this way, she stylistically points to the incongruities and the splits framing her existence, and to the disjuncture between her identity as an Algerian woman and the identity the French language conferred upon her.

Nevertheless, the act of writing is emphasized by Djebar as a positive experience whatever the language it is carried out in. It is a process of self-liberation and self-understanding; it frees her from the cultural and linguistic exile imposed by colonialism: 'My night stirs up French words, in spite of the resurrected dead . . . And every dawn is brighter because I write.'[17] Hence, Djebar's strategy is to use the written word as a creative tool of self-expression and as a weighty weapon against both colonialism and patriarchy. Maintaining that language is part of a complex set of relationships between enclosure and freedom, she assumes the role of translator taking *kalaam* (oral words in Arabic) and converting it into *écriture* (writing in French).[18] The act of writing becomes part of a process of disclosure which promotes discovery, self-expression, self-affirmation and female bonding. She writes:

> Just like the Pentathlon runner, my body needs the starter. So, as soon as I learnt the foreign writing, my body began to move as if by instinct . . . as if the French language suddenly had eyes, and lent them to me to see into liberty; as if the French language blinded the male voyeurs of my clan and, at this price, I could move freely, run headlong down every street, annex the outdoors for my cloistered companions, for the matriarchs of my family who endured a living death.[19]

Djebar considers that the language of the colonizer to an extent cancels out the voyeuristic gaze of Algerian men. She also defines her relationship to the French language in terms of both the individual and collective liberation of Arab women. The French language, she proclaims, has allowed her to see into liberty and to open doors for her cloistered companions. She considers that she could not have become a writer had she not had access to the colonizer's language and schools, to *écriture* and public space. These advantages were inaccessible to the majority of Algerian women, as the latter themselves tell her: 'Alas, we are illiterate. We are not leaving written

accounts of what we have endured and what we have gone through!'[20] Djebar tries to employ her skills in the service of these women, thereby attempting to annex public space for all Algerian women.

Djebar symbolically expresses her endeavour in the concluding pages of her narrative, by introducing an incident described in one of Eugène Fromentin's travelogues, *Un été dans le Sahara* (1856) (*Between Sea and Sahara: an Orientalist Adventure*). In this travelogue, the French Orientalist painter and writer describes his encounter with a severed hand he finds near the corpses of two dead Algerian women, victims of the massacre of an Algerian village by the French army. Fromentin picks up the hand but later discards it. In her bid to resurrect Fromentin's Algerian woman, as well as to question his motives for being in Algeria, Djebar re-writes this scene in a different way. Suggesting that Fromentin has symbolically offered the amputated hand to her, Djebar postulates that it is not just the hand of an anonymous woman mutilated by the colonizing process, but a symbol of the loss of Algerian female agency and subjectivity. According to the discursive logic of Djebar's text, this hand becomes the site of a reinvested collective feminine identity that subsequently instigates the creation of a new active discourse for women. Djebar writes: 'Later, I seize this live hand, this hand of mutilation and memory, and I help it to hold the "qalam"'.[21] In Arabic, whereas *kalaam* means oral or spoken language, *qalam* means pen or stylus. Djebar is playing with the Arabic words *kalaam*/*qalam*, subtly bridging the gap between the spoken words of the women interviewed and the process of writing through which she converts their oral words into written ones. She is perhaps suggesting that not only is she giving voice to Algerian women by making them speak but, by the same token, she is making them write through her own written words. Her own writing is to be perceived as a collective act rather than an individual one; as though women's hands reach out to tell or to pass along their stories, and thus symbolically participate in the writing of *L'Amour, la fantasia*.

En/gendering subjectivity

Djebar takes on the role of a chronicler of Algerian women's experience during the War of Liberation. In contrast to *écriture*, to male French narratives of the conquest, Djebar presents *kalaam*, peasant women's narratives of the Algerian Revolution. Transcribed from interviews Djebar conducted in the mountainous area near her hometown of Cherchell, these narratives are oral and are described in Djebar's narrative as 'Voix': voices of the women who survived the war. Djebar maintains that by presenting their own account of history, Algerian women acquire the status of subjects, of narrators inscribing in their turn their own history and that of their Algeria. In her interviews, Djebar adopts a non-hierarchical approach comprising female bonding, shared tasks and responsibilities and ample

space for the interviewees to 'ask back'. For instance, in her 'bavardage' (chit-chat) with Lla Zohra, an eighty-year-old former female fighter, Djebar tells the latter the story of Fatma and Mériem, the two prostitutes murdered by the French troops in Eugène Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara:*

> 'And Fatma? And Mériem?' Lla Zohra interrupted, catching herself following the story as if it were a legend recounted by a bard. 'Where did you hear this story?' she went on impatiently, 'I read it!' I retorted. 'An eye-witness told it to a friend who wrote it down.'[22]

In this way Djebar attempts to break down the boundaries between herself and her female compatriots, boundaries which are characterized primarily by language and cultural experience. As Algerian women's stories and testimonies are translated into French, Fromentin's narrative of Fatma and Mériem written down in French is translated into dialectal oral Arabic and told to Lla Zohra. Such a strategy makes the boundaries between written French writing and dialectal oral Arabic lose their rigidity. The oral tradition enters into written history and the written text inserts itself into the female oral tradition. This strategy also illustrates Djebar's attempt to create a kind of unity between herself and the Algerian women. One of the structural techniques through which Djebar attempts to achieve this unity is the use of the first person pronoun in the part of the narrative entitled 'Buried Voices'. In this part, unlike in the rest of the narrative, the first person pronoun is used both by the illiterate Arabic-speaking women and by Djebar herself:

> I, your cousin, translate this story into our mother tongue, and tell it now to you, sitting beside you, little mother, in front of your vegetable patch. So I try my hand as temporary story-teller.[23]

The effect of this technique is two-fold: it creates in the narrative a number of female protagonists who act as agents of their own discourse, and implies solidarity between Djebar and her interviewees. Individual experiences are then rendered as collective ones. The narrative voice becomes plural as Djebar proceeds to speak in the names of those women subjected to oppression.

By giving written expression to Algerian oral history as recounted by the *mujahidats*, women who participated in the resistance during the War of Liberation, Djebar gives a voice to the surviving heroines of the Algerian Revolution. The chapters 'Voices' and 'A Widow's Voice' allow women who do not have a command of the French language to describe their experiences and events that occurred two decades earlier. On the one hand, they tell of experiences such as hiding in the woods, or being captured, jailed, raped and tortured by the French troops. On the other hand, they express their feelings of fear, pain and triumph as they relive these memories and thereby

experience the therapeutic agency of remembering as Homi Bhabha, for instance, views it. This critic states that remembering 'is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present'.[24] According to Bhabha, the theoretical re-membering of the colonial condition is called upon to fulfil two corresponding functions. The first, which Bhabha foregrounds as the simpler disinterment of offending memories, seeks to uncover the overwhelming and lasting violence of colonization. The second function is always, according to Bhabha, ultimately reconciliatory in its attempt to make the hostile and antagonistic past more familiar and therefore more approachable.

Djebar's endeavour in the third part of her narrative reflects the therapeutic objectives of the act of remembering as theorized by Bhabha. She writes: 'Suddenly the voice bursts forth. It drains off all the scoriae of the past.'[25] Djebar's interviews and her dialogues with Algerian women have psychodramatic undertones. The way Djebar depicts these episodes causes them to emerge as group therapy sessions where women talk, giving full vent to their stifled memories, feelings and desires, thereby enjoying the right to speak in their own voices and act as subjects of their own discourse. Moreover, Djebar incorporates the names of these women, Chérifa, Lla Zohra and Aîcha, among others, in order to bring them out of anonymity and to construct them as significant subjects whose female experiences have to be taken into account in Algeria's collective memory. Their versions of the story are brought to prominence to give these women grounds for reclaiming their own agency.

Intertextuality and the co-existence of a multiplicity of voices in tension and in play, as well as multiple points of view about the same event are an essential aspect of dialogism and dialogical writing.[26] Djebar uses dialogism in her re-writing of male/colonial representations of female subjectivity as another strategy for contesting the monologism of colonialism and patriarchy. *L'Amour, la fantasia* displays various forms of dialogism, notably intertextuality, direct speech and oral testimonies which Djebar integrates within her own autobiography. Various texts interplay in Djebar's narrative. Besides historical documents, letters, reports, passages from travelogues and epigraphs, paintings are major pictorial intertexts. Eugène Delacroix's paintings *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (*Women of Algiers in their Apartment*), his *Fantasia* and *L'enlèvement de Rebecca* (*The Abduction of Rebecca*) evoke the themes and metaphors of Djebar's narrative. Moreover, the long third part of the narrative entitled 'Buried Voices' is composed of the voices of several Algerian women. In the sections 'Voices' and 'A Widow's Voice', women are granted ample narrative autonomy: their autobiographical accounts, like the French and Arabic intertexts, confirm that 'a woman's memory spans centuries'.[27] By providing their own version of colonial history, Algerian women in Djebar's narrative acquire the status of subjects, narrating their own history and that of their own Algeria. These women

provide details and corrections which prove the presence and the important role played by women in the War of Liberation. Reference to this role is absent in the truncated accounts of the French officials and those of the national colonial elite.

However, Djebar's endeavour to retrieve the polyphonic memory and the feminine voice of the Algerian women raises a variety of issues. Among other things, these issues relate to this postcolonial writer's existential and discursive situation and the double bind this imposes. Hers is a paradoxical position: she is separated both by language and cultural experience from the women to whom she proposes to give voice and to write back into history. On the one hand, she was born into a privileged class that was ready, ideologically and economically, to offer her an education and to accept her emancipation. Furthermore, her training was exclusively Western, which almost totally alienated her from her native cultural heritage. Yet, on the other hand, Djebar purports to both give voice and speak on behalf of Algerian women who obviously belong to different social strata and do not share her Western training and education. Instead, most of them have lived in poverty, illiteracy and seclusion. Djebar is aware of her paradoxical position and, in *L'Amour, la fantasia*, she addresses the complex issues of representation this raises directly.

Throughout her narrative, Djebar constantly highlights the ambivalence of her subject-position as a Western-educated, Algerian feminist intellectual writing in French, and the risks and rewards of her pursuit. She continually points to the complexities embodied in her project, thereby echoing a number of the questions put forward by Spivak and Trinh. For instance, how can the historian/investigator avoid the inevitable risk of presenting herself as an authoritative representative of subaltern consciousness? Should the intellectual abstain from representation?[28] 'Can knowledge circulate without a position of mastery?'[29] As Djebar herself wonders:

> Can I . . . claim to revive these [asphyxiated] voices? And speak for them? Shall I not at best find dried-up streams? What ghosts will be conjured up when in this absence of expressions of love (love received, 'love' imposed), I see the reflection of my own barrenness, my own aphasia.[30]

This passage echoes Spivak's assertion that we listen for the subaltern but know that we will not hear her. Spivak considers that the gendered subaltern is a historical trace that cannot easily be retrieved in the production of subaltern counter histories. She also warns that, rather than hunting for the 'lost voices' of women in the historical archives in an act of retrieval, intellectuals should be aware that this kind of work will continue to keep the subaltern as female entirely muted, because the subaltern has no position of enunciation, 'no space' from where she can speak.[31]

Djebar is apparently aware that her endeavour to recover the voice of the *mujahidats* is merely an ascription of false presence onto a fundamentally

uninscribable, hence essentially unknowable subaltern. She asserts: 'I do not claim to be either a story-teller or a scribe . . . And what do I offer? Only knots of husks from the wounded memory. What do I seek? Perhaps the brook where wounding words are drowned.'[32] Djebar is equally conscious of the fact that her efforts to give voice to the subaltern are complicated by her use of French. Translated into French, Algerian women's voices exemplify the disjuncture between subalternity and full subjectivity. French is the emblem of what these women were fighting against during the War of Liberation. The language that enables Djebar to speak and have her own voice, the language that she uses to give voice to Algerian women and to question their oppression, is the very language that for so many years silenced the Algerians as a people. Furthermore, the women's voices in Djebar's narrative are transmitted not only from dialectal Arabic to French, but also from oral to written form. Instead of trying to cover over this double mediation, Djebar foregrounds its implications after transmitting the story of Chérifa, a young fighter who was imprisoned and tortured by the French:

> Strange little sister whom I henceforth inscribe – or veil – in the foreign tongue. I have ensnared your voice; disguised it with my French without clothing it. I barely brush against the shadow of your footsteps. The words which I thought I would give you are shrouded in the same mourning garb as those of Bosquet or Saint-Arnaud. Actually, these words are written via my own hand, since I consent to this bastardy . . .[33]

These lines reveal Djebar's uneasiness with what she is doing. She is problematizing her project by questioning whether or not her endeavour, realized through the medium of French words, is inherently and inevitably violent and thus silences women. Conscious of what Spivak has warned against as being the hegemonic possibilities of 'speaking for' voiceless women, Djebar acknowledges in this passage that her project – partly because it is written in French – will 'disguise' or 'veil' the women's subjectivity and voice rather than lay them bare for all the world to see. This is, in a sense, Djebar's acknowledgement that the subjectivity of the gendered subaltern has no enunciative position beyond 'native informant'.[34] This subjectivity exists as the unrepresentable in discourse, a shadowy figure on its margin.

Recasting the French language

L'Amour, la fantasia can be considered as Djebar's contribution to North African intellectuals' attempts to convert their bilingualism into a means of decolonization. Many of these intellectuals maintain that it is the word that takes precedence over silence, no matter what language the writer chooses

to use. Even if there are constraints, even when there are risks to be taken in writing in the language of the dominant Other, there are always means of converting such constraints into opportunities. For example, Abdelkébir Khatibi, the Moroccan writer and critic, maintains in his study *Le Roman maghrébin* (The Maghrebian Novel) that the use of the French language by North African writers can produce an irony. This irony would not only be a form of revenge on the part of the colonized who had been oppressed and seduced by the West, but would also allow the Francophone North African writer to distance himself with regard to the language by inverting it, destroying it and presenting new structures such that the French reader would become a stranger in his own language.[35] The same view is expressed by the Tunisian writer Abdelwahab Meddeb in metaphorical and highly original terms when he states:

> Writing in French hands us over to the 'other', but we will defend ourselves with arabesque, subversion, labyrinthine constructions, the incessant decentring of the sentence and of language so that the other will lose his way just as in the narrow streets of the Casbah.[36]

Such subversive techniques are illustrated by Djebar's narratives. In her attempt to come to terms with the dislocation engendered by her use of the colonizer's language, Djebar has 'taken possession' of the French language. She transforms it into a language of her own, a medium through which she re-writes established codes of self and Other, subject and object, of discourse previously employed by imperialist/patriarchal systems as a means of subjection. Hers is a resourceful French through which she attempts to weave together conflicting cultural codes rather than remaining subject to the exigencies of their separation. Linguistic hybridization or *métissage* is a prominent technique in *L'Amour, la fantasia* which uses French as a vehicle for expressing a hybrid consciousness. This technique makes Djebar's narrative a heteroglot one and renders its translation a real challenge because of the Arabic structures embedded into the French. Arabic in this narrative is literally encroaching on French. For example, when asked why her fourteen-year-old daughter is not veiled, Djebar's mother answers: 'Elle lit!'[37] For a French reader this expression would simply mean 'she reads' and hence many of its Arabic implications in Djebar's narrative will be missed. In North African Arabic this expression is polysemic. It simultaneously designates the act of reading, going to school and the idea of privilege. The expression also has religious connotations relating to the revelation made by the angel Gabriel to the prophet Mohammed in the cave as stated in the Koran in the Surat entitled 'Lis': in French the imperative form of the verb 'to read'. Djebar is therefore deliberately using the expression to challenge the French reader by accentuating the density of the poetics associated with reading and writing in the Arab culture. Similarly in North African Arabic the word 'nue' (naked), much used by Djebar in *L'Amour, la fantasia* refers

simultaneously to the state of being without clothes, the state of a woman going out without wearing the traditional veil, and the state of a woman not possessing gold and silver jewellery, hence belonging to a lower class. The symbolic act of Badra, the daughter of the Caïd of Mazuna, in the chapter 'The Naked Bride of Mazuna' can be better understood in light of the set of ideas associated with the word 'naked' in the Maghreb. Badra strips naked of her veil, her clothes and her heavy expensive jewellery made of gold, silver and precious stones in protest and as an act of transgression: she was forced to marry a wealthy man she has never seen before and during her bridal procession she was abducted by a group of outlaws whose male/voyeuristic gaze she counters by stripping naked.[38]

Djebar makes frequent use of Arabic popular expressions in order to recast the French language and make it capture the very tone and the feel of speech of her interviewees. The women's accounts are transcribed, transliterated and translated into French, but a French that is hybridized in various ways. For example, the women interviewed refer to the French army and the French people as *La France*. One of the women, Chérifa, says: 'La France est venue et elle nous a brûlés', literally meaning 'France came and burnt us'.[39] *França* in Algerian Arabic means both France and the French, revealing a conceptual difference in terms of the ideas of nations and their people. Lla Zohra, another interviewee, at a certain point of her account exclaims: 'Tout ce qui est passé sur moi!' This sounds very odd in French because it is a literal translation of the colloquial Arabic expression for saying 'tout ce qui m'est arrivé!' (Everything that has happened to me!).[40] At the syntactical level, Djebar reproduces speech patterns of dialectal Arabic in the French text such as when she uses sentences like: 'Ne pleurez pas sur moi!' (Don't cry for me).[41] For the French reader, although the meaning of the sentence is retrievable, the syntax is strange because the sentence should be 'Ne me pleurez pas'. Here, Djebar is using an Arabic sentence structure to put together French words, thus hybridizing the French language.

Arabic can be read between the lines of the French text in *L'Amour, la fantasia* as Djebar lets her ideas play themselves out in the space of linguistic and literary heterodoxy. The bilingual reader is aware that two language consciousnesses are present in the text. This suggests change, mutability and a persistent mobility between languages; not so much inherited from Babel as inflicted by the postcolonial order of things. By manipulating the French language to serve her own aims, by embedding oral Algerian Arabic structures within French, Djebar is implicitly delimiting the difference between the adulteration of language and that of identity. She is thus expressing a form of cultural affirmation and resistance. She is also opening up new semantic seams and expressing the fact that the paradox of having to write in the colonizer's language also provides a means for subverting and re-writing the discursive framework of oppression from the very space of its own elaboration. Heteroglossia in Djebar's narrative is a site of creative resistance to the dominant conceptual paradigms. Echoing Mikhail Bakhtin's

theory of dialogism, Djebar's writings promote a hybrid language space which suspends totalized theories of difference in order to valorize diversity in the face of a homogenizing Western discourse. According to Bakhtin's theory, in dialogic space two or more enunciative processes collide, yet neither is annihilated. Dialogism is both linguistic and socio-cultural:

> A dialogue of languages is a dialogue of social forces perceived not only in other static co-existence, but also as a dialogue of different times, epochs and days, a dialogue that is forever dying, living, being born: co-existence and becoming are here fused into an indissoluble concrete unity that is contradictory, multi-speeched and heterogeneous.[42]

Djebar, thus, goes beyond mimicking Western form and language. Although she uses this form and language in her re-writings of colonialist constructions, at the same time she exploits both to dismantle the assumptions of the very approaches she uses. In so doing she moves beyond the mere production of an alternative or counter-history to the questioning of the very system in which she has to operate. Dialogism in Djebar's narratives is constituted not just from languages but also from history and culture. Different historical and cultural consciousnesses are at play in these narratives. To write her polyphonic, dialogic discourse, Djebar uses many elements which may be thought of as modalities: the oral, the written, the autobiographic, the historical and the cinematographic. Using several innovative linguistic and literary techniques, Djebar transforms colonial language and subjects it to different variations. In this way, she redefines Francophone history, culture and literature by translating into the colonizer's language a different sensibility, a different vision of the world, in the process creating new paradigms for intercultural exchanges. Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* is centred on reviving, re-awakening, bringing out of silence and giving voice to the interred history of her people and her female ancestors. In this narrative, the notions of identity and language come together in a powerful way as Djebar explores the hybrid identity of the postcolonial North African subject living a liminal existence between Arab and French worlds. Djebar's narrative suggests that the postcolonial subject, who is caught in the middle, should accept his postcolonial identity as being necessarily dual.

Notes

1 Assia Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia* (Maroc: Editions Eddif, 1992). The English translations of Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* are taken from Assia Djebar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, trans. Dorothy S. Blair (London and New York: Quartet Books, 1989). Subsequent references to this edition appear in the notes. I will avail myself of this translation though occasional modifications of it will be indicated. All other translations are by the author unless otherwise specified.

2 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986), 9.

3 Pierre Nora reported that in 1939, out of 1,250,000 children aged six through fourteen, only 110,000 were in school. In the first year of the Algerian Revolution (1954–5) only 15.5 per cent of children in Algeria aged six through fourteen were schooled. Pierre Nora, *Les Français d'Algérie* (Paris: Julliard, 1961), 218. See also Charles Bonn, *La littérature algérienne de langue française et ses lectures* (Ottawa: Naaman, 1974), 156. For an extended study of language policy in Algeria see Mohamed Benrabah, *Language Conflict in Algeria from Colonialism to Post-Independence* (UK: Multilingual Matters, 2013).

4 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 148–9.

5 Kateb Yacine, *Le Polygone étoilé* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 181.

6 Abdelkébir Khatibi, *La Mémoire tatouée* (Paris: UGE, 1971).

7 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 15.

8 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 206.

9 Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 149.

10 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 56.

11 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 217.

12 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 125.

13 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 52 [My translation].

14 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 157.

15 Gayatri Spivak, 'Acting Bits/Identity Talk', in *Identities*, ed. Kwame Anthony Appiah and H. Louis Gates Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 147.

16 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 216.

17 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 218.

18 *Kalaam* in Arabic also refers to Muslim theology whence *Kalamulujiya* means logomachy.

19 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 208 [My translation].

20 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 172 [My translation].

21 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 259. The word *kalaam* is pronounced in Arabic with an initial /k/ sound, whereas *qalam* is pronounced with a glottal stop /ʔ/.

22 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 166.

23 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 167.

24 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 63.

25 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 115.

26 Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 262.

27 See Djebar's commentary in Clarisse Zimra, 'Afterword' in *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*, trans. Marjolijn de Jager (Charlottesville: Virginia University Press, 1992), 170.

28 Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice', in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (London: Routledge, 1993), 285.

29 Trinh, *Woman, Native, Other*, 41.

30 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 202.

31 Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', 306–7.

32 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 165 [My translation].

33 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 164–5 [My translation]. Bosquet and Saint-Arnaud were colonels in the French army during the conquest of Algeria and were responsible for the extermination of whole Algerian tribes.

34 Gayatri Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1988), 203.

35 Abdelkébir Khatibi, *Le Roman maghrébin* (Rabat: SMER, 1974), 70.

36 Quoted in Jean Déjeux, *Situation de la littérature maghrebine de langue française* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 1982), 103–4.

37 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 202.

38 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 83.

39 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 133.

40 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 174. If we used a literal word-for-word translation, the English version of Lla Zohra's statement would be: 'Everything that went on upon me'.

41 Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 186.

42 Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 365.

CHAPTER SEVEN

‘Encounters’ of Frustration and Hope in the Writing of Maïssa Bey[1]

Samira Farhoud and Carey Watt

> On that morning of the twenty-second of Dhou el-Hidja in the year twelve hundred and forty-five, the equivalent of the fourteenth of June eighteen thirty . . . . The child makes his way down the promontory. He begins to run. . . . He could raise the alarm. . . . How on that peaceful day could what was about to happen at that very moment have been imagined, the imminence of what was to unfold on the beach and change the course of so many lives, and for so many years?[2]

> What an irony of history! She, the daughter of ‘a glorious martyr of the revolution’, of a man executed for having driven France out of his country, here she is seeking refuge with those against whom he, the schoolmaster, the hero who is today so commemorated . . . had fought.[3]

These two quotations highlight the frequent ‘encounters’ and deep engagement with Algeria’s colonial and post-colonial history in the writing of Maïssa Bey.[4] The first is from *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre*, in which a child recounts the arrival of ‘Madame LaFrance’ in Algeria and the beginning of 132 years of colonialism that would profoundly mark the country and its people. The second is from *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes . . .*. Here, the narrator is the daughter of an anti-colonial ‘freedom fighter’ (*fellagha*) and she ironically seeks refuge in France in the 1990s – in the metropole of the former colonial overlord.

This chapter focuses on four of Bey’s works to explore how the author treats issues of identity among Algerians – often women and children – who

directly or indirectly 'encountered' French colonialism and Algeria's trials and tribulations in the tumultuous decades since its independence in 1962. The texts we will look at were written between 2002 and 2010: *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes . . .* (*Can You Hear in the Mountains . . .*, 2002); *Bleu, blanc, vert* (*Blue, White, Green*, 2006);[5] *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* (*Stone Blood Paper or Ashes*, 2008); and *Puisque mon cœur est mort* (*Since My Heart is Dead*, 2010).[6] All of these novels feature characters suffering, carrying historical scars and deep frustrations. In this sense they appear to mirror some of Bey's own experiences, which we will discuss further in Section I, below.

A large part of Bey's writing is about 'encountering' and coming to terms with one's personal and collective history in order to deal with complex issues of identity marked by the 'colonial encounter' and its post-colonial legacies. This notion of 'encounter' will be the key theme in this chapter and we would like to develop it further by drawing on Mireille Rosello's understanding of the term, which uses the French word *encontre* as in the expression *à l'encontre de*, meaning 'against' or 'counter to'.[7] This tends to stress the negative 'opposition' or 'confrontation' of an encounter, which is also present in the English word *encounter* and its distant Latin origins of 'in' and 'contra' (against). But the English noun also leaves open the possibility of 'an encounter' in the potentially positive sense of a casual or unexpected meeting, or even an amorous encounter.[8] That being said, even unpleasant and ostensibly 'negative' encounters with one's personal or collective past can ultimately be 'positive' if they lead to greater awareness, change and growth.

In this chapter we will consider and analyse several different types of encounter in Bey's writing – negative and positive as well as more complex and nebulous encounters. The first section of the chapter is 'Encounters with history: the past in the present', which explores how Bey's characters confront Algeria's colonial past and its intrusions into the present. The second looks at 'Discursive prejudices as oppositional encounter', both before and after the colonial dividing line of 1962. The third, 'Encounter as disillusionment: the Algerian people and their state', looks at post-colonial encounters within independent Algeria as a source of disillusionment, especially during the civil war of the 1990s. The fourth and final encounter considered, 'Linguistic and literary encounters: nourishing hope', is generally more positive since it allows for possibilities of enrichment and understanding that can occur through processes of linguistic and literary intertextuality – borrowing, mixing, syncretism and cosmopolitanism. Before engaging in a more detailed investigation of these different encounters, however, we should first provide some basic information about the four main Bey novels that form our corpus.

Corpus

As noted above, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes . . .* (2002) features a narrator – named 'She' – who flees her country for France in the context of

Algeria's full-scale civil war in the 1990s (1992–2002). In this short text of only eighty pages, 'She' travels by overnight train somewhere in France, sharing her compartment with a French male doctor about sixty years old and a young, blonde French girl named Marie who is fixated on her Walkman. The three strangers seemingly know nothing of each other and have no apparent connections, but they gradually reveal complex feelings and memories about Algeria. The train compartment is a closed space typical of classical tragedy,[9] and it becomes the locus for a chance 'encounter' and eventual exchanges between the three protagonists. Bey's writing is fed by this oppositional encounter in which Algeria and France perpetually meet and engage in dialogue, thereby creating new human links between 'partners in encounters'.[10]

France is the past executioner, as represented by the sixty-year-old doctor who had done his military service in Algeria, while 'She' represents the *fellagha* (her father); and Marie represents *pied-noir* European colonists. The apologetic tone of the doctor, the innocence of Marie and the serious voice of the narrator allow Bey to transcend time and the generations and explore a fateful period in Algerian collective memory: the years between 1954 and 1962. Interestingly, this is when Bey lost her own father: he was taken away by the French army in February 1957 and was executed two days later, after being tortured.

In *Bleu, blanc, vert* (2006) there are two characters, a male 'Lui' (Him) and a female 'Elle' (Her), who take turns telling a story that spans thirty years of their lives. 'Him' is actually named Ali while 'Her' is Lilas, and they recount their daily lives from the start of Algeria's independence in 1962 until 1992, when the civil war began. *Bleu, blanc, vert* is neatly divided into three parts, each covering a decade of Algerian history: 1962–72, 1972–82 and 1982–92. Across these three decades, Bey recounts the two protagonists' development from their childhood in 1962 in a series of diary-like entries, albeit without precise dates. The first entry or chapter is entitled 'Him', the second, 'Her', and so on through the three ten-year periods. At the beginning of the novel, Lilas and Ali laugh at the adult world that curtails their childhood freedoms. In 1962 Ali learns from his schoolmaster that students will now underline only in green because, if they 'were to write with a blue pen on the white page and were to underline in red, that would make blue, white and red. The colours of France. Those of the French flag.'[11] This issue of colours torments the child Ali's thoughts; he tells his mother how important it is to explain to other households that they should paint their buildings green, or at least the undersides of the balconies, in order to avoid any association with the colours of France.[12] By the end of the story Ali and Lilas move far away from their old home, which acts as a 'barometer of the social panorama',[13] because it lost its 'spirit of solidarity' and 'mutual help'.[14]

In *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* (2008) Bey has readers relive the arrival of French ships on Algerian shores in 1830 and the departure of the French in 1962 through the innocent eyes and voice of a child. The novel provides

a poetic account of an Algeria suffering from Bugeaud's 1845 'smoking out';[15] the 1945 massacres of Guelma and Sétif at the end of the Second World War;[16] the 1957 Melouza massacre of Algerians by Algerians during the anti-colonial struggle;[17] or from the torture practised by 'Madame LaFrance'[18] during the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62). It also gives numerous examples of how the French deployed a racist vocabulary to dehumanize Algerians.

Bey's *Puisque mon cœur est mort* (2010) returns to the dark period of Algeria's civil war in the 1990s and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The principal character and narrator is Aïda, a 48-year-old English teacher who is divorced and lives with her son, Nadir, a medical student. She leads a respectable life despite the intolerance and suspicion she suffers as a result of the climate created by Algerian Muslims who demonize divorced and/or independent women. Aïda's life is shattered by the disappearance and eventual murder of Nadir, who has his throat cut by an Islamic 'holy madman'. Her whole life then collapses and she teeters on the verge of madness before starting a diary addressed to Nadir. Her days then become structured by her daily visits to the cemetery where she meets other 'sisters in misfortune', women who mourn a lost father, husband, son or daughter. It is among these tombs that she meets a 'good' or 'excellent' woman Kheïra,[19] who is also a regular visitor to the cemetery and communes with her husband at his grave. Kheïra tells him of her difficulties with the authorities and her brothers-in-law, who are demanding a share of her inheritance because she has only daughters. It so happens that Kheïra works as a cleaner ('maid') for the family of the killer of Aïda's son. From this moment, Aïda becomes consumed with her writing and plans to avenge her son, but it is unclear if revenge could ever remove her grief.

I. Encounters with history: the past in the present

Maïssa Bey is the *nom de plume* of Samia Benameur, born in a village south of Algiers in 1950. Bey thus lived through the last twelve years of French colonial rule as well as Algeria's tumultuous history since independence. As noted above, her father was tortured and executed during the so-called Algerian War (1954–62), when she was only six years old. As an adult, Bey challenged Algeria's proposed amnesty for ex-militants known as *repentis* ('the repented') who were 'executioners and torturers' during the civil war of the 1990s.[20] Bey seems to share her characters' 'discomfort of identity' along with their disappointments and frustrations. This is evident in her novels, but is further developed in her use of the term 'stigma' (*stigmate*) in *L'Une et l'autre* (*The One and the Other*), her *récit de vie* or memoir that was published in 2009.[21] In this work the word is carefully defined and

deployed as the physical (bodily) and/or psychological marks of one's identity that are revealed in the gaze of the other, and they can overlap with broader collective identities.[22] Moreover, Bey points out that the emergence of one's identity occurs through a dialogue with history and the past, and in her case the imprint of colonial history was particularly strong.[23] In fact, one of the first stigmas revealed to Bey occurred during her childhood when she was referred to as a '*fellagha*'s daughter' at school, because of her father's activities during the War of Independence. This was also when she learned that she had an 'indigenous' (*indigène*) Bedouin background.

Bey's fascination with Algeria's history is clear in the novels under consideration here. In *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes . . .*, for example, Bey has her narrator 'She' insert fragments of her own personal and family history into the novel, and this is a way of inserting it into Algeria's collective history. 'She's' father was a 'freedom fighter' who died during the anti-colonial conflict, like Bey's own father. The father is like a ghost, not seen but very much present in the gaze and the voice of 'She'.

It is significant that 'She' is deeply immersed in German writer Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* (1995) at the outset of her train journey. It is feasible for author Bey to have 'She' reading the novel because it was an international best-seller that was translated into twenty-five languages in the late 1990s. More importantly, however, the novel is a partly autobiographical work that deals with themes of cross-generational understanding and accommodation in dealing with the tragedies of the past (the Holocaust in Schlink's case).[24] In Bey's corpus – as in the case of Schlink's *The Reader* – history, autobiography and fiction mingle and come together in very interesting combinations, with events of the past out of sequence in a fragmented narrative made up of snippets of conversation and memory. Here is yet another interesting kind of encounter in Bey's work: her personal 'je' (I) encounters the collective 'nous' (we) in her historical interrogations and interventions.[25] Bey, the author, creatively destabilizes existing histories while bringing formerly marginalized voices and memories – including her own – into the public sphere to make new, more plural and more inclusive history(ies).

Bey's history is evidently aligned with postcolonial histories that seek to break up elitist and masculine national or colonial histories to make space for the voices and 'fragments' of marginalized 'subalterns', including women, children and indigenous peoples. In *L'Une et l'autre* she refers to the Tunisian writer Albert Memmi's 1957 book *Portrait du colonisé, précédé par Portrait du colonisateur* (*The Colonizer and the Colonized*) and specifically the line 'the colonized survives for a long time in the decolonized'.[26] This is about the psychological residues and legacies of colonialism that Bey herself deals with in her fiction, and Memmi's insights anticipated the later and better-known calls to 'decolonize the mind' in the work of postcolonial theorists and activists such as Edward Said, Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty.[27]

In the train compartment in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* . . . the three characters – all with links to the colonial era – are obliged to share different and conflicting understandings of the past. They endure an 'encounter' in which it is impossible to conceal the prejudices and wounds of a past that has been suppressed by one side (France) and distorted by the other (Algeria). 'She' plans to journey in solitude, undisturbed by others, immersed in her novel. But her initial moments alone are soon compromised by the arrival of two companions in the compartment: first the sixty-something French doctor and later Marie. The reader learns that the doctor started his military service in Algeria at the young age of twenty, and that he was 'ready for service',[28] although he had never set foot in Algeria before. He also witnessed many acts of torture – possibly including the torture visited on 'She's' father.

Marie, who is from a *pied-noir* family, has preserved a nostalgic memory of Algeria before the 'events' of the Algerian War (or War of Independence). Marie is supposedly a French girl and yet she is not 'really' or truly French. She also believes herself to be Algerian, but she is not really Algerian either. Her name is Marie, like the Christian Virgin Mary, the 'immaculate' and innocent Mary. In short, she personifies the French heritage and *mission civilisatrice* in Algeria. But can we assume that this heritage is pure, 'virginal'? This is the context for Marie's timid participation in the discussion between 'She' and the French doctor. Marie repeats the words of her *pied-noir* grandfather and questions her two companions about the history of French Algeria, which she only knows second-hand through stories told to her. She asks the doctor questions about 'the war', bluntly employing a descriptor avoided by many French people. Most prefer to speak euphemistically of 'the events':

> Was it a real war? Because my grandfather . . . nobody really talks about it . . . I don't even know if he fought in it . . . no, I don't think so . . . he would have told us . . . He prefers to tell us about the way things were before. Before the events, as he calls them.[29]

Here we have a war that in some contexts is not considered a real war, and three characters of different ages caught between Algeria and France and separated by different generations. The doctor encourages the discussion by asking Marie and 'She' about the war. Marie talks about the war based on the experiences of her grandfather, passed down to her. She speaks in sentences that are interspersed and interrupted by ellipses and that do not fully conceal the difficulty she has in mentioning 'Arabs', as if it were blasphemous to do so.[30] Marie's grandfather was a schoolmaster like 'She's' father (and, indeed, Bey's). 'She' observes Marie's discomfort, listens to the doctor and responds to his questions through equally dislocated sentences, using silence to assist her in narrating her personal memory of her father's torture and eventual execution. According to French colonial records

he was shot while trying to escape: 'it is what they used to call fetching wood'.[31]

Silence, ellipses and gaps allow the reader to question those things that have been buried and that cannot be said, past and present; to experience the memory, both individual and shared, of a Mediterranean 'encounter' between France and Algeria in the 'interstices of writing'.[32] The reader grasps the complexity and the irony of these plural 'encounters' while also getting a fuller, more contested and more complex sense of history.

The ghost of a father who is tortured and then shot figures as an 'obsessive' image[33] in many texts by Bey. In *Bleu, blanc, vert* the shadow of Lilas's father is firmly embedded in her life despite his absence. She believes that her father's ghost has protected her during the destruction of a number of houses in OAS[34] attacks against Arab targets in Algiers: 'It is perhaps my father who is protecting us from where he now is . . . I was six-and-a-half when he left.'[35]

The ghostly presence of the father resurfaces in the lives of Lilas and her family throughout the novel. His past as a former resistance fighter (*moudjahid*), continues to influence their present and their future. This 'ghostly encounter'[36] closes a wound that had yet to heal. Likewise, the pain of Algerians' historical suffering is kept alive by disappointment and loss of hope in independent Algeria. The country became a caricature of what it set out to be during the independence struggle, as described by Ali, in *Bleu, blanc, vert*. We learn from Ali how the course of his life is dictated by a series of historical, political and sociocultural events. His narrative reveals his disappointment at the failures of independence and the vision of 1962, and a present darkened by civil war. Ali sarcastically mocks the new Algeria of the 1960s, which has betrayed the promises of independence and is turned into a holy land (the 'Mecca of the Revolution') – a beacon to anti-colonial movements and revolutionaries around the world – while it murders and imprisons its citizens.[37]

In *Puisque mon cœur est mort*, Bey's narrator Aïda voices the collective grief of Algerian mothers who weep for their lost loved ones and vainly seek answers to their tragedies in history books.[38] Aïda questions history, but history is plural and we must ask which history she is referring to: is it a dominant 'official' Algerian or French history or is it a potentially subversive public or oral history?[39] Is Bey once again implying that a new history is required? In *Puisque mon cœur est mort*, *Bleu, blanc, vert* and *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* . . . Bey presents an Algeria silenced and subdued by a fear to speak out and stunned by the incomprehensible fascination that terrorist groups seem to hold for the country's youth. Yet Bey persists in her efforts to understand.

Understanding the encounter between present and past by revisiting and resurrecting the past turns out to be an important endeavour. But it is strewn with pitfalls and dangers that result from the intertwining of Algerian and French history, in which too many aspects of the past have been suppressed. This leads to a twisted and contested history in the present. For Bey, writing

appears to be a duty: to express her historical suffering and connect it to the collective experiences of Algerians and readers elsewhere. She also wants to denounce violence, and counteract historical silences and omissions by adding or inserting new voices from the margins.

II. Discursive prejudices as oppositional encounter

In the novels under analysis, Bey traces tensions and misunderstandings between France and Algeria back to images and stereotypes that became grafted onto Algerian identity. The frustrations of Algerian men and women are discussed by examining today's prejudices in the light of those of the past. Bey implicitly contends that the root of individual Algerians' frustrations lies in their misfortune of having been a people subjected to 132 years of colonial occupation. This in turn created an 'interrupted' history and tremendous disappointment about Algeria's failure to achieve the ideals and promises of independence.[40]

Prejudice is not confined to Algeria's period of colonial occupation. It spread through space and time to become fixed in the rhetoric and images surrounding the Algerian 'other'. Negative stereotypes flourish on both sides of the Mediterranean, though Bey's writing concentrates on the deployment of French representations of Algerians. Derogatory terms and images applied to Algerians, French citizens or residents with North African ancestry, or even French people born in North Africa created 'stigmas' and scars that persisted harmfully over years and generations. Such prejudices against Algerians have led to a problematic or 'non-valid' identity in French and Algerian eyes. In the words of Amin Maalouf, the reflected image of Algerian men and women was 'murderous' on both shores of the Mediterranean.[41]

In *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* the small boy concealed behind a tree witnesses the humiliation of his father. The latter is kicked and beaten with rifle butts by French soldiers during the War of Independence. The boy also hears Arabs described as untrustworthy, inferior and uncivilized – like animals:

> That was also the day on which he learned that his father was nothing but a dirty *bicot*. A dirty *bougnoule*. A bastard of a *fellagha*. The child saw everything. Heard everything. But when his father came home in the evening, his face swollen, he didn't say a word. The next day, when they woke up, his father was no longer there.[42]

The father can no longer bear the insult to his honour and chooses to fight and die heroically as a resistance fighter – a *moudjahid* – in an attempt to erase the insult of his degradation before the innocent (and previously

admiring) gaze of his son.[43] Yet the pitiful image of the father remains etched in the child's memories and resurfaces when he 'encounters' the arrogance of 'Madame LaFrance' and her civilizing mission. For her part, Madame LaFrance is pained to hear France's fine language abused by 'lice-ridden little natives', 'countless verminous, ragged beggars, smeared with filth and stinking like beasts'.[44]

The pejorative portrayal of the figure of the Algerian was not confined to the argot of French colonial forces, it spread far and wide through the power and reach of global print capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (press chronicles, short stories, etc.). In Algeria and France this process was fostered by men of letters who considered themselves to be Algerian such as Auguste Robinet, the author of the Cagayous stories,[45] and Albert Camus. The latter reduces the Arab to the level of a beast in *L'Hôte*, a novella from the collection *L'Exil et le royaume*. Camus compares the Arab's enormous lips, which are full and almost negroid, to those of an animal ready to bite its schoolmaster host.[46] What is more, we never learn the Arab's first name, while we know that of his French host (Daru). The native Algerian is thus stripped of individual identity and humanity.

The discursive violence employed against Algerians reveals an oppositional 'encounter' between two peoples and 'civilizations' that are imagined as completely separate. One describes itself as the provider of 'civilization' while the other is 'guilty', unappreciative and disloyal in nature – much like the 'natives' depicted in Rudyard Kipling's famous 'White Man's Burden'.[47] 'The *bicots*, when they are not kneeling at your feet, are standing behind you, ready to stick a knife in your back!'[48] The child in *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* hears this admission from the mouth of a French officer. His 'encounter' with 'Madame LaFrance' is initially visual, as he sees her advance majestically towards the shore, and subsequently aural when he hears 'Madame LaFrance's' description of Algerians as *bicots*.

In *Bleu, blanc, vert,* Lilas and Ali decide to travel to France during the 1980s to escape their doubts concerning post-independence Algeria. Meanwhile, a group of 'second generation' French children of North African immigrants are embarking on a different journey: the March for Equality and Against Racism in 1983, dubbed the 'March of the Beurs' by the media.[49] These educated young people refused to accept the same fate as their parents, demanding recognition, rights and justice in France. From the opposite shore of the Mediterranean, Ali and Lilas set out to visit Paris as tourists. On their journey they discover a France that is different from the one conjured up in the romantic French novels devoured by Lilas (and Bey herself). At a particular point in the narrative, the two protagonists discover a new dimension to their identity: they are 'dirty Arabs'. An hotelier explains to them that his staff checked to make sure the pair were 'clean' before allowing them to take a room.[50] Lilas and Ali are perhaps more fortunate than the child in *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre*, who is the powerless witness of his father's humiliation during the War of Independence.

Lastly, there is the sudden, fleeting and shocking intrusion of a woman into the train compartment that 'She' shares with Marie and the doctor in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*. . . . The woman excitedly and irrationally screams about violent 'hooligans and thieves' who boarded the train and tried to attack sleeping passengers in the next car, saying 'I'm sure they're Arabs'.[51] 'She' wonders how the woman could be sure the men were Arabs since she only had a brief glimpse of them in the darkened shadows of the train's interior. Then she remembers how easy it is to blame 'Arabs' or 'Algerians', because existing stereotypes are already so well established. 'She' buries her head in her hands to erase the sharp and strident tones of the woman as well as the violence of the civil war that is wounding and tearing apart the country of her birth. In her flight from intolerance in her own land she encounters a different sort of 'murderous folly' embedded in deep-seated stereotypes and stigmas. 'She' cannot escape a colonial past that always seems to catch up with the present.[52]

III. Encounter as disillusionment: the Algerian people and their state

In the post-colonial period, hostile 'encounters' are no longer limited to those between France and Algeria, they now occur *within* Algeria itself. The corruption of the government, the civil war, the apparent passivity of young Algerians and the on-going deprivation suffered by the population led many Algerian writers, including Maïssa Bey, to write of Algerian frustrations and disenchantment with a country that seemed to have betrayed the promises of independence. One such example of this is in the departure of 'She' from Algeria in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* . . .. 'She' leaves Algeria because of the tumult of the civil war of the 1990s, and her own painful repeated flashbacks of violence and the death of her father. 'She' refuses to be described as an 'emigrant',[53] but remains 'exiled', and her confused and liminal state seems to express Bey's disillusionment with a troubled Algeria that has forgotten the inspiring ideals and promises of 1962.

In *Bleu, blanc, vert*, Bey's characters also apparently reflect the author's great consternation at the state of Algeria. The idealism of an independent Algeria imagined by so many Algerians turn into what Ali's brother calls an 'armchair' war: 'The Armchair is power. Whoever can sit down in the Armchair first becomes the ruler'.[54] The adult Ali sees through the hollowness of political speeches and freely employs wordplay and dark images to denounce a regime that has forgotten the values of 1 November 1954 – the beginning of the War of Independence. Ali criticizes the sea change in Algeria that occurred a few years after independence when 'the Party' (the FLN) outlawed all opposition parties, making the country a one-party state. He and his student friends reject the violence of the state through their black

humour, saying that those caught by the police receive 'the right to free accommodation', but in 'the premises of the police'. Their lodgings offer 'no conveniences' but they get unspoken (and ominous) 'services included'.[55]

Ali's father further exemplifies the dark side of this Algeria. He is quick to abandon his spouse for a young new wife after the former endured years of sacrifice and deprivations to support the family throughout the period of his incarceration by the French during 'the Revolution':

> She went to clean for the French inhabitants of the village. She had to . . . My mother helped the Revolution, too. She transported arms for the moudjahidin. She even stood up to French soldiers during the raids.[56]

But the father is ashamed of her – her full-length dresses and her *haïk* ('traditional' North African outer garment covering head and body). She no longer fits with his new life as a politician. Ali's mother is like many women of her generation and condition who have been rejected by their ambitious husbands: they impede the man's professional advancement while representing the past in the negative sense of tradition and subjection.[57]

Ali's father's betrayal of his first wife is merely one example among many of what Algerian women have endured since independence. In *Bleu, blanc, vert* the Family Code, which became law in 1984, is portrayed as a great act of disloyalty toward Algerian women and the female 'freedom fighters' who played a leading role in the liberation of Algeria. They were sent back into their homes and 'domestic space', denied sexual equality, and their status reduced to that of minors under guardianship.[58] After 1984, women without a husband – like Aïda in *Puisque mon cœur est mort* – were at risk of losing their homes and their children.

In *Puisque mon cœur est mort* Bey describes an 'encounter' with an Algeria afflicted by Islamic extremism. This has a pronounced impact on the country's mothers, the younger generation and, ultimately, on hope itself. Bey denounces new 'enemies of the encounter', embodied by small radical Islamic groups that do not seem to understand their own religion and a ruling class that is at once autocratic and corrupt. Islamic extremists persecute any voice they consider to be 'sacrilegious' while government personnel persecute 'terrorists', and Bey implies that this sorry state of affairs resulted from the incompetence of the Algerian government, which is derided as the 'sick man' of North Africa.[59] Bey dedicates her novel to the voices that have been silenced, and especially 'to those women who cannot all be named by me here':[60] to the mothers, sisters and daughters deprived of their loved ones.

Two such women are Aïda and Kheïra. Aïda, mourning her son Nadir killed by a Muslim extremist, meets 'the good' Kheïra, grieving for her husband, in a cemetery and the two women relate their stories of loss to each other. These stories and the space of the cemetery become a link between them: two women previously separated by their occupations – an

English teacher and a cleaner, respectively – are brought together through stories recounted in a space of death and despair. The 'encounter' brings Aïda the possibility of revenge and fleetingly gives her life meaning, since she dreams of killing Rachid, her son's murderer. Sadly, instead of eliminating Rachid, she ends up taking the life of Hakim, her son's friend, who had made a solemn vow to protect Nadir's mother.[61]

The tragic ending to this narrative expresses the absurdity of the civil war of the 1990s in Algeria. A mother longing for her murdered son accidentally kills Hakim, whose name means 'wise man' or 'medical doctor' in Arabic. This is indeed tragic and absurd, and made even more poignant by the fact that Nadir was studying to become a doctor.[62] Yet 'hakim' could mean 'judge' or 'ruler', too, and Hakim is also one of the ninety-nine names of Allah (al-Hakim, 'the all-wise'). Hakim could therefore represent Aïda's frustrations with the Algerian state or perhaps even the metaphorical killing of Allah in the actions and pronouncements of Islamic extremists.

In a more general sense there is absurdity in the fact that many true killers live and prosper while the victims embodied by Nadir and Hakim are betrayed through the July 1999 agreement for national peace and reconciliation. Aïda seems to speak for Bey in denouncing the supporters of this reconciliation and the inappropriate term applied to past executioners.[63] Described as *repentis* (repented) to make it possible for them to be reintegrated into everyday life, they are presented as 'lost'. Aïda deplores this classification because it purges the guilt of yesterday's executioners, providing them with a new identity as victims.[64]

In the face of this harsh reality where state failures and internecine violence eat away at the last hope for the future, love appears to be the only surviving rampart against a wave of hate and hostile 'encounters'. In *Bleu, blanc, vert*, for example, Lilas's love saves Ali from becoming like his father, who allowed himself to be contaminated by a nepotistic and despotic state system.[65] More interesting still is the case of Nadir's mother Aïda, who writes letters of love to her son after his tragic death. The act of writing becomes a point of contact between life and death, between mother and son, between existing histories and the voices of mothers who suffer in silence.[66] In short, Aïda encounters her son – and love – again through writing: 'He is in the movement of my hand which traces the letters on the page, presses down on the curves, but sometimes slips, as though it had suddenly encountered some protrusion. Together we go beyond the margins . . .'.[67]

IV. Linguistic and literary encounters: nourishing hope

Aïda's comments reveal how the act of writing can connect people and facilitate 'encounters', and the last section of this chapter explores several

different kinds of linguistic, literary or cultural encounters in Bey's writing. Some of these express opposition to cultural impositions and attempted civilizing missions, whether from French or Algerian sources. They also convey the pain and frustration that Algerians experienced. In a more positive and hopeful sense, we also look at how Algerians – and specifically writers like Maïssa Bey – can be empowered by their intertextual encounters with French language and culture, as new vistas open before them and new hybrid, heterogeneous and cosmopolitan cultures emerge. These can then create more possibilities for change and hope.

The encounters and the blending of languages in Algeria is part of a long and continuing story that dates back to the Phoenicians, Romans and Byzantines. Since the year 600 of the Common Era, however, the major forces have been the spread of Islam and Arabic in North Africa under the Umayyad dynasty (*c.* 661–750), Turkish culture under the Ottoman Empire (*c.* 1500–1800), then France's cultural imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries followed by Algeria's own national government insisting on an Arab Muslim identity in the 1960s. As represented in Bey's writing, these cultural encounters are often fraught and awkward. Bey's writing unlocks the trials encountered by her characters, especially the women and children, when they attempt to reconcile French or Arabic culture with their own local or family 'traditions'. The 'encounter' between different cultures initially occurred in the form of a clash that created resentment, whether related to the colonial-era civilizing mission or state efforts since the Ben Bella years of the 1960s to push Algerians of diverse backgrounds toward Arabic cultural conformity in the 1960s.[68]

In *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* the schoolmistress 'Madame LaFrance' humiliates the young boy by forcing him to pronounce his vowels correctly in front of his classmates, while simultaneously declaring his allegiance to the colonial motherland. The entire class bursts out laughing when he says the equivalent of 'Iyee liyeek miyee countree, France'.[69] In *Bleu, blanc, vert*, meanwhile, Bey's characters express frustration in trying to learn a classical, Middle-Eastern form of Arabic that is different from the local Algerian dialect.

The novel *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* is also significant because of its intertextual richness, which shows Bey's openness to the world and her keen awareness of the power of the written word – whoever penned it. The novel opens with two epigraphs from French sources, both about the desire – and struggle – for liberty and freedom. The first is from *La Marseillaise*, the French national anthem written in 1792 during the early years of the Revolution, while the second is from Victor Hugo's play *Ruy Blas* (1838).[70] However, at the bottom of the preceding page Bey inserted an interesting note to her readers: that they would find 'fragments' borrowed from various authors – some of whom constituted 'the glory of French literature' – here and there throughout the novel. This is ironic and potentially subversive, but Bey is careful to state that her use of these fragments is not an appropriation,

dispossession or any kind of ill-intentioned trickery; it is just an honest and respectful homage.[71] Despite the fact that the 'glories of French literature' were used by the likes of Madame LaFrance to try to 'civilize' Algerians during the colonial era, Bey has respect for the individual writers and works and uses them positively to enrich her novel.

At the end of *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* she expresses thanks to thirty writers, and the names of all but two are French.[72] Victor Hugo, Jules Ferry, Alexis de Tocqueville, Guy de Maupassant, Alexandre Dumas, Charles Baudelaire and Albert Camus are among them, and some expressed support for France's colonization of Algeria. Surprisingly, there are only two Algerian names at the end of the list: those of Mostefa Lacheraf, the historian and politician, and Kateb Yacine, the well-known Algerian novelist and playwright. Both were Algerian patriots who were not afraid to speak out against violence and injustice, while Lacheraf was particularly sensitive to themes of history, memory and the dangers of forgetting.[73]

Greatest thanks are reserved for French poet Paul Éluard (1895–1952), 'to whom this work owes its title.'[74] The line 'Pierre sang papier ou cendre' is from Éluard's poem 'Liberté', written in 1942 during the German occupation of France and featured in the collection *Poésie et Vérité* (*Poetry and Truth*).[75] Éluard was a proponent of writers being politically engaged, particularly after his involvement in the Spanish Civil War (1936–9). In 1936 he wrote that 'the time has come when poets have the right and the duty to be profoundly involved in the lives of other men and in public life.'[76] The appeal of Éluard's poem to Bey lies partly in its acclamation of liberty and what Éluard refers to as 'the power of a word', and some lines refer to the allure that the word – and ideal – *liberté* holds for children.[77] It also echoes the novel's theme of liberty, and the epigraphs borrowed from Hugo and *La Marseillaise*.[78] The fact that Éluard was a 'resistance poet', struggling against an occupation, also seems significant. Furthermore, like Kateb Yacine and Mostefa Lacheraf, Éluard was a critic of the political and military officials who headed nation-states.

Despite the fact that Bey writes in French, has taught French, and is thoroughly versed in French literature and culture, the extent of her homage to French writers is startling. Bey simply refuses to be trapped in the past or limit her horizons of possibility. Moreover, her careful and deliberate intertextuality does not stop at her openness to French literature, and texts and words from other languages and places are used to enrich her social imaginary.[79] For example, we have noted how she drew on German author Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes . . .* In *Puisque mon cœur est mort* Bey employs an epigraph (translated from Arabic) from the Palestinian 'national poet' Mahmoud Darwish, and she also deploys English quite freely. Bey even borrows Shakespeare's 'nothing will come of nothing' line to warn of the rise of radical Islam in Algeria.

From the lofty language of Shakespeare Bey's verbal and cultural agility takes the reader to Chopin's 'Valse de l'adieu' (The Farewell Waltz) and the

popular music of Eric Clapton. Aïda listens to the heartfelt acoustic version of Clapton's ballad 'Tears in Heaven' on Nadir's stereo – and on the night of what would have been her son's twenty-fifth birthday.[80] The song, of course, was written by Clapton (with help from Will Jennings) to help heal the wound left by the death of his four-year-old son Conor in 1991.[81] Through such literary and cultural encounters, Bey is able to transgress temporal and cultural boundaries and give greater depth to Aïda's pain by linking it with the tragic experiences of Shakespeare's characters or Eric Clapton.[82]

In encountering and embracing oral traditions as well as French, English and Arabic literary and cultural references, Bey steps beyond the boundaries of Algeria's – and her own – French heritage. She asserts the complexity and richness of this literature, while displaying her complex new identity. She is no longer 'one or the other', 'Arab' or 'Western', 'Algerian' or 'French'. She can be 'one *and* the other', at once more complex and more cosmopolitan.[83]

Conclusion

Bey's 'encounters' generally move from the negative to the positive and hopeful, turning pain, suffering and harmful colonial legacies in the direction of self-reflection, understanding, accommodation and growth. She knows that she must confront the frustrations and dangers of both the past and the present in her work, but this allows for the possibility of healing for herself and for society collectively. Her characters give voice to the suffering of 'ordinary' Algerians and enter their experiences into a new postcolonial historical record. And, as we have seen in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* . . ., Bey is able to articulate the angst, fear and confusion of Europeans too. She refuses to be constrained within national or colonial boundaries and frameworks, as her characters traverse cultural and political frontiers and her own writing is cleverly enriched by her deep engagement with other languages and literatures. So, too, are the minds and imaginations of her readers. As an *engagé* writer in the mould of Éluard, Yacine and Lacheraf, she consistently moves beyond bitterness to build a better, richer and more cosmopolitan social imaginary through her words, characters and novels.

Notes

1 Use of the term 'encounter' here, and throughout the chapter, is informed by Mireille Rosello's definition, which is discussed further below. See Mireille Rosello, *Encontres Méditerranéennes: littératures et cultures France-Maghreb* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006).

2 Maïssa Bey, *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* (La Tour d'Aigues: éditions de l'aube, 2011 [first published in 2008]), 11–12.

3 Maïssa Bey, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes . . .* (La Tour d'Aigues: éditions de l'aube, 2010 [first published in 2002]), 38.

4 The hyphenated term 'post-colonial' is used in this chapter in the chronological sense of coming after independence in 1962, rather than as a reference to 'postcolonial' theory and activism.

5 Maïssa Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert* (La Tour d'Aigues: éditions de l'aube, 2006).

6 Maïssa Bey, *Puisque mon cœur est mort* (La Tour d'Aigues: éditions de l'aube, 2011 [first published in 2010]).

7 Rosello, *Encontres Méditerranéennes*, p.13.

8 See *The Oxford English Dictionary* (online) s.v. 'encounter' (as a noun).

9 Denise Brahimi, 'L'histoire dans le roman: quelle (dis)solution?', *Expressions Maghrébines*, 2:1 (2003), 132.

10 Rosello, *Encontres Méditerranéennes*, 15.

11 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 13.

12 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 20.

13 Ana Soler, '*Bleu blanc vert* de Maïssa Bey: Regards croisés sur trois décennies d'indépendence algérienne', *Nouvelles Études Francophones* 24:1 (2009), 151.

14 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 177.

15 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 31–3. Many hundreds of Algerians were burned or asphyxiated when Bugeaud ordered fires to be set in the mouths of the Dahra caves where they had taken refuge.

16 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 105–6.

17 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 120–1.

18 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 146.

19 Kheïra literally means 'good' or 'excellent' in Arabic.

20 See Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 25, 35, 52 and *passim; Entendez-vous*, 20, 21, 38 and *passim; Pierre Sang*, 139, 146, 147 and *passim*; and *Puisque mon cœur*, 103, 142, 170 and *passim*.

21 Maïssa Bey, *L'une et l'autre* (La Tour d'Aigues: éditions de l'aube, 2009), 37, 40, 42, 54.

22 See the detailed discussion and definition in *L'Une et l'autre*, 36–8.

23 See *L'Une et l'autre*, 36.

24 See Nicholas Wroe, 'Readers' Guide to a Moral Maze', *The Guardian*, 9 February 2002, http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/feb/09/fiction.books.

25 For a more detailed discussion of the 'je'–'nous' nexus in the fiction of Maghrebine writers see Samira Farhoud, *Interventions autobiographiques des femmes du Maghreb: écriture de contestation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), especially the section 'Autobiographie et Histoire' in Chapter 1, 15–20, but *passim* in other chapters.

26 *L'Une et l'autre*, 37.

27 See Said's warning to 'third-world' writers to avoid falling prey to 'the strength of Western cultural discourse' in the introduction to *Orientalism* (London: Vintage, 1978). Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty were both key members of the Subaltern Studies collective that first sought to write South Asian 'history from below' (Marxist) in the 1980s and later shifted to postcolonial histor(ies) inspired by Said. For Chatterjee see *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), and for Chakrabarty see 'Postcoloniality and artifice of history: Who speaks for "Indian" pasts?' *Representations,* 37 (1992), 1–26. See also Ania Loomba, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in her book *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 231–45.

28 See Maïssa Bey, 'L'écriture, le seul territoire où j'arrive à me retrouver', *Horizons Maghrébins – Le droit à la mémoire*, 60 (2009), 51.

29 Bey, *Entendez-vous*, 55.

30 Bey, *Entendez-vous*, 52.

31 Bey, *Entendez-vous*, 72. See also Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *La torture dans la République* (Paris: Maspéro, 1972).

32 Bey, 'L'écriture, le seul territoire où j'arrive à me retrouver', 36.

33 Charles Mauron, *Des métaphores obsédantes au mythe personnel* (Paris: José Corti, 1963).

34 The OAS acronym stands for Organisation de l'armée secrète (Secret Army Organization), a renegade French army faction that used violence in its attempts to prevent Algeria's achievement of independence and scuttle peace talks near the end of the Algerian War.

35 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 39.

36 Rosello, *Encontres*, 185.

37 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 131–2.

38 Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 145.

39 For more on the historical struggles inherent in North African women's writing see Samira Farhoud, 'Femmes arabes au harem: la magie et le pouvoir de l'oralité dans l'écriture de Fatima Mernissi', *Présence francophone* 78 (2012), 138–55.

40 See Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011).

41 See Amin Maalouf, *Les identités meurtrières* (Paris: Grasset, 1998).

42 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 147. The racist colonial lexicon included a plethora of abusive terms such as *crouilles, bougnoules, ratons* and *bicots. Crouilles,* or *crouillats*, is a highly offensive term denoting North Africans. The French twisted the term *crouille*, which means 'brother' in North African Arabic (*akhuya*), to take on the connotation of a mischievous child in a paternalistic colonial context. *Bougnoules* is more generally applied to all 'natives' in contact with the French, but with darker skin (and hence inferior). *Ratons* (little rats) was first used in the nineteenth century as a slang word for child thieves, but was eventually applied to Arabs and North Africans generally, while retaining the sense of 'thieving' and 'rat-like'. *Bicots* is shortened from

arbicot, which combines the italianate *arabico* with *bique* (goat; i.e. less-than-human Arab animal). All contain pejorative morphemes (*ouille, ougn,* and the suffixes *oule, on* and *ot*). To French colonial forces *fellagha* was used pejoratively in reference to Algerian resistance fighters.

43 On the effects of such colonial degradation see Frantz Fanon, in *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952 [republished by Seuil, collection 'Points', in 2011]), 125.

44 See, in order, Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 45 and 54.

45 See David Prochaska's article, 'History as Literature, Literature as History: Cagayous of Algiers', *American Historical Review* (June 1996), 671–711. He argues for an interdependency between literature and history in Robinet's tales of Cagayous – that greatest of Algerian rascals. The Cagayous stories were published in the French-language press in Algeria (*Le Turco*, a satirical Algiers journal, *La revue algérienne*, etc.).

46 Albert Camus, *L'Exil et le Royaume* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 172.

47 The poem was written by the Briton Kipling in 1899 to welcome the United States as a member of the group of European imperial powers. This followed America's victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898, and especially its acquisition of the Philippines from Spain.

48 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 147.

49 Ahmed Ghayet, *La Saga des Beurs d'origine marocaine en France* (Casablanca: EDDIF, 1997), 17–18. See also Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

50 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 250.

51 Bey, *Entendez-vous*, 24–7.

52 On this point see Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, and Alec Hargreaves, *Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France: Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1991).

53 Bey, *Entendez-vous*, 34.

54 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 30.

55 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 86–7.

56 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 49–50.

57 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 102.

58 On the consequences of the Family Code in Algeria see Juliette Minces, *Le Coran et les femmes* (Paris: Hachette Pluriel, 1996).

59 This epithet had previously been applied to the Ottoman Empire, yet another former occupier of Algeria. The Ottoman state was branded as 'the sick man of Europe' in the 1850s to emphasize how it gradually lost its former glory and shrank territorially in the decades leading up to the First World War.

60 Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 5.

61 Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 196.

62 The name Nadir, incidentally, means 'rare' or 'exceptional' in Arabic.

63 Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 32.

64 Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 142.

65 Bey, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, 211–12.

66 See Farhoud, *Interventions autobiographiques des femmes du Maghreb* on this point.

67 Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 141.

68 Muhammad Ahmed Ben Bella (1918–2012) was Algeria's Prime Minister (1962–3) and its first President (1963–5).

69 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 45.

70 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 7.

71 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 6. The full statement in French is: 'Les lecteurs avertis reconnaîtront çà et là des fragments empruntés à des auteurs dont certains ont fait la gloire de la littérature française. Je tiens à préciser qu'il s'agit là tout simplement d'un hommage, et non d'une appropriation, d'une dépossession, ni même d'une spoliation.'

72 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 174–5.

73 See the obituary by Mohammed Harbi, 'Mostefa Lacheraf', *Jeune Afrique*, 29 January 2007, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/62180/archives-thematique/mostefa-lacheraf/ (accessed July 2016). Harbi is also an Algerian historian and was a member of the FLN during the War of Independence.

74 Bey, *Pierre Sang*, 174. Éluard also used a *nom de plume* like Bey: he was born Eugène Émile Paul Grindel.

75 The second stanza of 'Liberté' reads: 'Sur toutes les pages lues / Sur toutes les pages blanches / Pierre sang papier ou cendre / J'écris ton nom'. See *XXe Siècle: Les Grands Auteurs Français, Anthologie et histoire littéraire* (*Collection littéraire Lagarde et Michard*; édition mise à jour et augmentée, 1900–1995), edited by André Lagarde and Laurent Michard, with assistance from Raoul Audibert, Henri Lemaitre and Thérèse Van Der Elst (Paris: Bordas, 1988). The discussion of Éluard is on 380–7, with the full text of 'Liberté' on 385–6.

76 The quote is from *XXe Siècle: Les Grands Auteurs français*, 381.

77 Both texts also start with the recollections of children: 'Sur mes cahiers d'écolier' as the first line of 'Liberté' and 'L'enfant est debout sur un promontoire . . .' in *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre*.

78 It is interesting that Bey also invokes *La Marseillaise* in *Entendez-vous dans le montagnes* . . . . The title of the novel is a variation on 'entendez-vous dans les compagnes' (do you hear in the countryside?) from the anthem's first verse, while on page 17 the protagonist 'She' has a dream that paraphrases *La Marseillaise* and quotes nearly verbatim the line 'Entendez-vous . . . dans les campagnes, mu-u-u-ugir ces féroces soldats . . .' (do you hear in the countryside, the roar of those ferocious soldiers?). In this earlier work by Bey, however, the French volunteers are not defending their homeland (sons and women), but are instead the 'ferocious soldiers' besieging 'She''s (and Bey's) Algeria.

79 This is the sociological and philosophical concept of 'the social imaginary' in which 'imagination renders the relation of mind and world possible', and there

is much room for creativity. Anthony Elliott quotes Cornelius Castoriadis's line 'The imaginary is the subject's whole creation of a world for itself.' See Anthony Elliott, 'The Social Imaginary: A Critical Assessment of Castoriadis's Psychoanalytic Social Theory', *American Imago*, 59:2 (2002), 143 and *passim*.

80 Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 161–3.

81 'Tears in Heaven' (1991) is dedicated to Clapton's son Conor, who accidentally fell from a 53rd-floor apartment in New York City. Bey has Aïda recite some of the song's lines in English and paraphrase them in French. Bey, *Puisque mon cœur*, 162.

82 We should also remember the tragedy experienced by the boy's mother, Lory del Santo.

83 Cosmopolitan is used in the sense developed by Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006) and Abdelkebir Khatibi, *Amour bilingue* (Casablanca: EDDIF Maroc, 1992).

CHAPTER EIGHT

On the Shifting Significance of 'Algerian Cinema' as a Category of Analysis

Patricia Caillé

Nations are not simply phantasmagoria of mind. The term 'imagined' carries in its train connotations of fiction and make-believe, moonshine and chimera. The term 'invented community', by contrast, refuses the conservative faith in essence and nature, while at the same time conveying more powerfully the implications of labour and creative ingenuity, technology and institutional power.

ANNE MCCLINTOCK[1]

The conference 'Algeria Revisited' provided a welcome opportunity to focus not so much on 'national cinema' as on the ways in which such categories get constructed, based on what films, where, by whom and for whom. If *Omar Gatlato* (1976) is clearly a popular Algerian film in that it refers directly to the Algerian political and cultural context of the time, is *La Citadelle* (1988) by Mohamed Chouikh – with its representation of women in a more rural culture – an Algerian, a Maghrebi or an Arab film in the eyes of a European audience? While we can obviously be interested in and produce knowledge about Algerian films without having to account for Algerian cinema, we can still pose the question: what does 'Algerian cinema' stand for? How do national cinemas relate to or fit with regional ones? Algerian films may be analysed not only as Algerian but also as Maghrebi, Arab, Mediterranean, African and/or Amazigh cinemas, and this contribution

will explore the questions that Algerian cinema raised in the 1970s in Algeria and in France.

The history of Algerian cinema is intimately linked with the Algerian War of Independence as it is evoked in the emblematic *Battle of Algiers* (1965) by Gillo Pontecorvo, and in the fascination for a few short documentaries made by resistance fighters in 1957. Such a history tends to overshadow the productive film culture, including commercial and non-commercial film exhibition, that characterized colonial Algeria with its 450 cinemas. This cultural activity catered primarily to the communities of European descent, but not exclusively. When Algeria became independent, the industry was nationalized with the aim of using it to disseminate the ideals of the Algerian Revolution to the people. The institutional history of Algerian cinema is associated with the creation of the National Centre for Algerian Cinema (CNCA) in 1964 under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, which integrated the Cinémathèque algérienne run by Ahmed Hocine. The latter relied on an international network of institutions to collect over 5,000 films from around the world to supply the screenings that drew a large audience of cinephiles, initially in Algiers, and later in Constantine, Oran, Annaba and Sétif. Such a history is also associated in part with the Office for Algerian Newsreels (OAA) which was created in 1963 with Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina at its head, and with the Algerian National Radio and Television (RTA), which succeeded the Office for French National Radio and Television (ORTF) and produced many films after independence.

In 1964, cinemas with 35mm equipment were nationalized as part of the project to create a national cinema for the people, but three years later their management was handed over to the Assemblées Populaires Communales (APC), i.e. city councils. These councils did not have much autonomy or any control over programming, which was the prerogative of the Algerian Cinema Centre (CAC), nor did they have the means to reflect on what a film culture could be at a time when the cinemas were already in a bad state of repair. Even though nationalized cinema constituted a new start guided by the ambition to bring Algerian films to the Algerian people, the institutional development of the film industry highlights a lack of reflection on how to achieve this goal.

Eight elements that participate in the construction of national cinema

Film being both art and industry, the heyday of national cinemas has generally been associated with an industrial development that required state policy, funding and equipment. This explains why the national has been such a prominent category in the production of knowledge about cinema. Eight different elements can be considered to contribute to the construction

of a national cinema.[2] Thus, Algerian cinema, like other national cinemas, can be characterized by the following characteristics:

1. A number of long- and short-feature films 'originating' from a country and associated with their authors (i.e. the film directors) that provides a homogenous or heterogeneous construction of a 'national culture'.
2. A national film policy that regulates and supports, discriminately or not, national film production, distribution and exhibition on the domestic and international markets.
3. The construction, availability and maintenance of equipment and the training of staff.
4. The development of a film culture through commercial distribution networks, as well as through education in film, whether this is fostered by associations, schools, film libraries, cultural institutions, or festivals.
5. A relationship between film and television that may or may not contribute to the airing of the films included in the film culture.
6. The circulation and availability of these films via different media (VHS, DVD, VOD or streaming on the internet, etc.) within the country or outside it.
7. Film audiences that raise issues of spectatorship and reception.
8. The production of knowledge and discourse on film. Such discourses may be professional, promotional, journalistic or academic, and it is evident that the internet has altered dominant models of the production of knowledge in this context.[3]

However, it is not unusual for the country of production, the location of the shooting, the location in which the film takes place, the circulation and the reception of the films to constitute a series of very distinct spaces that overlap only partially, if at all.[4] This means that national cinema can thrive on a very limited number of these elements, with one or two films, the nationality of the film-maker and/or a few images of Algeria being sufficient to generate, almost automatically, a reflection on national cinema. So we need to ask: what are the elements that are constitutive of Algerian cinema?

To begin with, I will reflect on the effects of the inaugural image of Algerian cinema before analysing two distinct conversations. The first took place in Algeria in the 1970s and early 1980s, and involved Algerian intellectuals and academics whose purpose was to reflect on the obstacles to the implementation of a larger revolutionary project. The second construction developed concomitantly from the perspective of a politicized film culture in France through an ongoing conversation between Algerian film-makers and French film critics.

Algerian cinema in Algeria: giving meaning to the inability to live up to the ideals of the Algerian Revolution

Undoubtedly one of the most consensual ideas about Algerian cinema is that it was 'born in the "maquis"', an assumption that has had an impact on the construction of national cinema.[5] The myth-making inherent in this 'origin story' ties cinema, the Algerian War of Independence and the birth of a nation together in a knot that has never come undone. Born with 'gun in hand',[6] the roots of Algerian cinema can be found in a few short documentaries drawn from the sheer determination of a few roughly-trained independence fighters, the 'Farid Group' constituted in 1957 around René Vautier.[7] As Sébastien Denis argues, such images obviously could not compete with the international broadcast of reports shot by American television stations invited by the National Liberation Front (FLN).[8] From the outset, then, the power of Algerian national cinema was inscribed within an international circulation of images whose power was more symbolic than real, which does not necessarily mean that it was any less effective. But this conception of Algerian cinema has operated, in Algeria and beyond, as a rigid imaginary imposing a time frame, the terms of an agency and, to a certain extent, its construction as an object of knowledge. Oriented exclusively towards the future, the contribution of Algerian cinema to the building of a nation on the ruins of a vanquished colonial power had yet to be invented.

In the 1970s, Algerian cinema produced between four and seven long-feature films a year. But, notwithstanding a few very successful films like *L'Opium et le Bâton* (1969) by Ahmed Rachedi or a few popular comedies, Algerian films represented less than 3.5 per cent of the number of films screened.[9] This did not necessarily mean that Algerian audiences did not see Algerian films, as some of them were shown on television.[10] In the late 1970s, film production stalled altogether and 'Algerian cinema' became the object of an anxiety-ridden debate that generated a slew of books and articles. Some authors were academics trained in France, like Lotfi Marherzi who gained a doctorate in film and taught at various universities before moving into the private sector. Abdelghani Megherbi was trained in the social sciences and published extensively not only on film but also on issues around Muslim culture and Algerian identity. Trained as a lawyer, Wassyla Tamzali is a feminist writer who discussed the suffering of many women in post-revolutionary Algeria. She took part in the debates at the Cinémathèque in the 1970s, Algerian cinema being for her 'the sole expression that had survived the national religious ice age in the country' at the time.[11] The style of the contributions to the debate ranged from polemical essays like Rachid Boudjedra's to more academic research, the most significant being Lotfi Maherzi's *Le Cinéma algérien: Institutions, Imaginaire, Idéologie* (1979) and Abdelghani Megherbi's *Le Miroir Apprivoisé* (1985).[12] Most of the

contributions were published in Algeria,[13] except for Boudjedra's *Naissance du cinéma algérien* (1971).[14] Rachid Boudjedra is an Algerian novelist who lived in France at the time having been condemned to death in Algeria. Except for Younès Dadci's *Dialogues Algérie-cinéma: Première histoire du cinéma algérien* (1970),[15] the main concern was not to write a historical account of the development of Algerian cinema – it was probably too early to do so – but rather to take stock of where the experiment stood at that time, leading to a shared sense of 'crisis'.[16] These contributions provide a detailed exploration of a wide array of issues about the film industry, including the role of cinema in the Revolution, national film policy, film production, labour conflicts, film exhibition, audiences and film culture. Of these many debates, the following sections focus on exploring the role of cinema in relation to the Revolution, the issue of the War of Independence on film, national cinema as a mode of production and the question of audiences.

Most commentators agreed that the purpose of Algerian cinema was to contribute to the Revolution by educating the masses and fostering 'cultural emancipation'.[17] This basically meant that Algerian cinema should strive to develop the critical awareness of audiences who had been deprived of images of themselves during 132 years of colonization, leading to an ideological critique of the effects of colonial cinema.[18] The cinematic contribution to the 'utopian socialist' Revolution also consisted of the promotion of a hero, the Algerian people engaged in the quest for a new beginning that was characterized by a set of moral values such as nobility, generosity, pride and self-sacrifice.[19] The peasants, whose participation in the war was universally lauded, had become the model for the nation including for the men of the film industry. Pointing out the pride some film-makers could draw from their rural origins, Maherzi claims that 'the decolonized Algerian, the creator, the film-maker have undertaken a quest for the self, for oneself, for the people, for their history',[20] even though this lofty ideal soon became a source of tensions.

Without ever questioning the objectives of the Revolution, Wassyla Tamzali and Maherzi point out the highly ambiguous position of film-makers. While being considered essential to the development of the industry, they were actually deprived of power as they could not claim any subject position without compromising their self-fashioning as being at one with the people. Being one category of workers among others, an ideal they repeatedly adhered to, the possibility for them of making a film depended upon a hierarchical authorization in a bureaucratic system which they criticized. For instance, Megherbi deplored sending nineteen students abroad to get film training, fourteen of them as film-makers, when the industry desperately needed technicians.[21]

Many analyses agree that the nationalization of the film industry had never really been planned. In the new configuration of political power, the petty bourgeois and its bureaucratic state were blamed for having confiscated

the power of the FLN, for the very slow process of regulation and management, and for the total inefficiency of the industry.[22] This led to a critique of the idiosyncratic and self-serving management of the heads of the different institutions, namely Ahmed Rachedi and Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina, respectively at the head of the National Office of Commerce and Cinematographic Industry (ONCIC) and the OAA (the national news agency), as well as of the conflict between the administrative process of decision making and the industrial constraints that generated a formidable waste of energy and funding. But in the early 1970s, when staff within the industry were integrated into professional organizations under the control of the party via the newly created Union of Audio-Visual Arts (UAAV), few film-makers joined as most of them were not eager to toe the party line unconditionally.[23]

National cinema was thematic, with the War of Independence featuring prominently followed by the Agrarian Revolution.[24] The many post-independence films dealing with the war quickly generated much scepticism.[25] Many working in Algerian film claimed that the war was the only consensual topic left in the industry, and the only one that could get funded. At the same time they criticized films that relied too heavily on (idealized) memories at the expense of historical accuracy.[26] The weight of the war was regarded as thwarting the possibility to initiate a reflection or new projects, even though the promotion of the Agrarian Revolution in the early 1970s, coinciding with the reorganization of staff within professional associations, briefly became an opportunity to boost and redirect collective energies.

The 'Algeria Revisited' conference coincided with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of independence, and many papers dealt with *The Battle of Algiers*, an emblematic film that won the Golden Lion in 1966 in Venice and imposed the legitimacy of the Algerian struggle in Europe, to the dismay of the French delegation attending the festival. Yet many Algerian commentators at the time rejected the film on the ground that it was a spectacle, a big international coproduction like *Opium and the Stick* (1970) or *Chronicle of the Years of Embers* (1975) by Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina. The latter film won the Palme d'Or in Cannes in 1975, but could not be shown in Algeria because cinemas were not equipped for 70mm films. They also criticized such films because they were directed by non-Algerians or relied partly on foreign casts, which generated extra costs and led to the marginalization of Algerian technicians and actors.[27] In the same way, the question of the status and contribution of *émigré* film-makers was met with resistance by film-makers within the industry, which shows how the nationalization of the industry cannot be separated from a desire to consider cinema as limited to the national territory and Algerians living in Algeria. Such an exclusive stance could be read as stemming from the need not to dilute the ideals of a national cinema, as well as a corporatist reaction to protect film staff in Algeria, especially as emigration was looked down upon.[28] Reaffirmation of the necessary adherence of national cinema to the

goals of the Revolution legitimized such a nationalist and protectionist project.

With the stated purpose of educating the masses, 'Algerian cinema' in Algeria at the time was an all-encompassing term that included the newsreels of the OAA, the films produced by the ONCIC, and the films produced for television by the RTA. RTA films were regarded very positively in comparison with other types of film-making: the majority were shot in 16mm, which meant that production costs were lower, administrative and technical constraints were fewer and the crews were Algerian, all of which brought the RTA closer to the ideal of the Revolution even though the staff had been trained by the French ORTF under colonial rule[29].

In most of these accounts, the statistical, economic, industrial and cultural dimensions are raised to make a contrast with the mythic audience that Algerian cinema should ideally target, the nation. Rachid Boudjedra and Lotfi Maherzi deplored the lack of data on audiences, the secrecy of the government and the inaccessibility and unreliability of the few statistical figures they could obtain from the ONCIC or from the Ministry of Information.[30] According to this limited information, Algerian film exhibition in the early 1970s was doing well, managing to make a profit of one billion Algerian dinars in the late 1960s and drawing 45 million spectators in 1975, up from 32 million in 1972.[31] In the same way, Megherbi counted on the prospective growth of the Algerian population that meant new, younger and larger film audiences in his analysis of the future of the industry, but emphasized the detrimental impact of the absence of women in the cinemas.[32] Such figures, however, could not alleviate the deeply rooted sense of crisis.

Quite predictably, analyses of propaganda films produced by the French military to promote the imperial project and/or documentaries aimed at educating the indigenous masses, as well as of the representation of Algerians in French colonial films, led Algerian authors to denounce the self-serving goals of colonial cinema that sought to erase, or at best ignore, indigenous cultures and populations.[33] In post-1945 Algeria, cinema was a favourite pastime run by Europeans for the benefit of the 'colonizing caste', but at the same time, indigenous audiences that thrived on Egyptian films accounted for one-third of the audiences.[34] Audiences in newly independent Algeria were urban men who preferred American, European, Egyptian and Indian entertainment films to Algerian films that were probably too didactic, but also too few, to draw Algerians away from the international fare they had become accustomed to.[35] Little is said about the post-independence reception of French, American or Indian films by spectators who had enjoyed Egyptian films during the colonial period. Even though certain patterns of attitudes raised questions, there is little information about the film culture of filmgoers in relation to where they lived, their social category, age or gender.[36]

While the incremental political organization of the industry is described in detail, little is said about the handing over of the large network of cinemas to local authorities via the APCs (city councils), or their strategies and

management.[37] This decision quickly led to the disappearance of film screenings, the APCs having no real means, or arguably desire, to maintain the equipment and only very little control over programming. Whenever they had control, they chose westerns or popular Italian comedies over Eastern European films about the proletarian revolution. Film-makers blamed 130 years of colonization![38] The critiques targeted the ONCIC for the contradiction at the core of its mission: developing national cinema while considering that cinema should be profitable commercially. Profitability depended on the number of foreign films distributed. Commentators were also oblivious of the fact that the film industry in Algeria was confronted with basically the same issues as any other small national cinema: the capacity to draw audiences to more demanding national films when the supply of lush international entertainment could lure them to affordable, effortless and pleasurable fantasies.

There was a wide consensus about the inexorable decay of cinemas: the large number of seats in the theatres that had been torn open and could not be used, the poor quality of the film copies, the bad state of repair of the film projectors and the lack of training of the staff using the equipment. The strikingly unruly behaviour of real urban and largely male audiences, vividly captured in *Omar Gatlato* (1976), collided head-on with the imaginary target audience that film-makers were eager to reach. While education of the Algerian people was the main objective of Algerian cinema, clearly peasants did not go to the movies, except perhaps for Ahmed Rachedi and René Vautier's short-lived *ciné pops*, an experiment intended to take political films to rural areas.[39] The demise of exhibition alone, however, cannot account for the failure of the ambition to bring Algerian films to a wider audience.

Unlike the material, institutional, organizational and ideological obstacles to film production, analyses of actual films represented a comparatively minor part of the reflections, except in the case of Megherbi whose analysis was published later in the mid-1980s. He shows how the narratives of contemporary Algerian films can account for the loss of an ideal and the shift from a nation united in its common goal – i.e. to overcome colonial oppression and reclaim its freedom – to a socially and economically stratified culture. For instance, he saw in *Les Bonnes familles* (1972) by Djafar Damardji, a film that was not released in commercial cinemas, the rise of the arrogant and greedy 'techno-bureaucrat'. According to Megherbi, this attests to the end of a common objective and to the rise and implantation of a new urban bourgeoisie exclusively concerned with its self-enrichment.[40]

Tamzali, who similarly is more interested in films than debates about the industry, points out that adherence to a socialist project meant that questions of artistic and intellectual property could not be raised, nor could the issue of individual artistic process be debated.[41] In *En attendant Omar Gatlato* – a title that evokes the sclerosis of Algerian cinema before Allouache's film – Tamzali sought to reconcile the goal of cultural emancipation with an idea of

creation rooted in personal sensibility. She distinguishes two types of films. The first type aimed at constituting a filmic heritage of the War of Independence and at using its positive heroes to convince audiences of the necessity of a socialist revolution. The second type refers to more demanding films that contained the seeds of a renewal of national cinema, regardless of how they were produced, distributed and received. Tamzali focuses on the form, style and values of a wide range of films, from Mohamed Zinet's *Tahia ya Didou* (1971), an ironic tour of Algiers through the eyes of a former French soldier who comes back as a tourist, to Mohamed Bouamari's *The Charcoal Maker* (1972), a film about the transformation of a man who comes to accept the major leap into modernity imposed by the Revolution and what it entails for his family; from Abdelaziz Tolbi's *Noua* (1972), a 16mm film blown up to 35mm that drew much attention for its visual style and bold narrative of a young woman fleeing with her lover to avoid being married to a man she does not love, to Merzak Allouache's *Omar Gatlato* (1976), a first-person tongue-in-cheek account of the everyday life and dreams of a young man living in a housing project. Tamzali's goal is to show that a 'subjective' approach to film-making is more productive. This unacknowledged auteurism integrates interviews with the film-makers, documents the directors' intentions and argues against the centralization of the industry that led to excessive bureaucracy and stifled creativity. In doing this, her account devotes significant attention to Assia Djebar's *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1978), a docufiction that explores the silence of women concerning their participation in the War of Independence. Including texts, notes written by the director and an interview, Tamzali praises the new filmic language of a film that had been harshly criticized at the time.[42]

The commentators examined in this chapter never question the ideology that underlay the Revolution, and some accounts echo Fanon's views on culture, in particular his idealization of the peasantry or the necessity to focus on contemporary realities. In other words, all affirmed their support for the ideological goals of the Revolution and had no intention of engaging in a discussion of its foundation.[43] What these reflections have in common is the desire of these commentators to find an analytical grid that can account for the apparent dead-end of the Algerian film industry at the time they were writing. Rooted in personal observations and/or fieldwork in Algeria, the arguments were framed within a set of questions informed by research in the social sciences about the operation of the industry. Commentators reintegrated cinema within larger considerations about the penetration of the audiovisual media, and as part of a postcolonial transition.[44]

In light of the great difficulty in accessing archives in Algeria, such accounts represent a very valuable source of knowledge for today's readers. Maherzi's detailed description of the film industry, the insights it provides into the lived day-to-day experience of the film industry, the tensions and also at times the immobility and despair experienced by different categories of staff involved in film-making has informed new research.[45]

The exploration of these accounts highlights the extent to which Algerian cinema was conceived first and foremost as a mode of production which led participants in the industry to take on an (untenable) collective subject position rooted in a fairly abstract adherence to the principles of the Revolution. It emphasizes the narcissism inherent in such analyses that conceived of Algerian cinema as a totally unique experiment born from an ideal and detached from more global issues national cinemas were confronted with at the time. It also shows the ways in which the questions being asked about national cinema are split between the project to contribute to the highly symbolic production of Algerian films (at best a very marginal part of the operation of the industry) and all the other aspects of the operation of this industry, that led to a well-documented critique of the stalemate blamed on political shortsightedness and mismanagement. The analyses take stock of the gap between the actual audiences that throng to the theatres to enjoy international films and the ideal audience for Algerian films that are yet to come, without ever being able to reconcile the two. The sole alternative seems to be Wassyla Tamzali's more conformist and romantic view of a film culture rooted in the film-makers' personal exploration of Algerian culture. Such a position obviously draws on a more traditional conception of auteur cinema rooted in the artist's subjectivity, as there is no real discussion of film form in most accounts. Such a discussion, perhaps, would have meant raising the issue of the film-maker's subjectivity when commentators were trying hard not to do so.

Algerian cinema from without

After the French delegation marched out of the Venice Film Festival when *La Bataille d'Alger* received the Golden Lion in 1966, a few Algerian films were occasionally screened in French cinemas. However, none of them were released commercially, nor did they receive much critical attention. But a much more politicized French culture in the 1970s rejected the paternalism of French institutions, contesting the new economic order and the social conservatism that came with it.[46] As part of this process, issues of decolonization, immigration, racism and the history of the war began to be revisited in films such as *The Battle of Algiers* (finally released in France in 1971) and Lakhdar-Hamina's *December* in 1973. Of such films, the most commercially successful were *Avoir 20 ans dans les Aurès* by René Vautier (1972); the Franco-Algerian co-production *Élise ou la vraie vie* by Michel Drach (1970); and *Dupont Lajoie* by Yves Boisset (1976).[47] These films were not only about the war, they also dealt with the status and lives of North African immigrant workers in France and their experience of racism.

A number of festivals devoted to Algerian cinema organized in France provided opportunities to see a large range of Algerian films. In 1973, the Cinémathèque française organized a 'Retrospective of Algerian cinema' that

included thirty films, and an 'Arab Cinema Month' screened another ninety films in 1978. Both were fairly exhaustive surveys.

These events, initiated by the Cinémathèque française or *Cahiers du cinema*, targeted a more politicized elite film culture, and all of them led to long features on Algerian cinema being published in the French film journals.[48]

Interestingly enough, the production of knowledge in France in the 1970s ran parallel with critical reflections in Algeria. This goes to show the extent to which French critics were well attuned to and fascinated with the Algerian experiment, in particular the Agrarian Revolution. The feature published in *Cinéma* 76, for example, starts with 'Ideological points of reference' on the stakes of the Algerian Revolution and makes a similar argument to Lotfi Maherzi's on the struggle for power of a bureaucratic state representing the petty bourgeoisie that dominated the FLN. In 1978 and 1979, *La Revue du Cinéma: Image et son* devoted two issues, coordinated by Christian Bosséno, to a detailed account of the reorganization of film production at the end of the 1970s and its impact on the films being produced, as well as on commercial and non-commercial exhibition.[49] Combining analyses, interviews with film-makers and transcriptions of round-tables, the features published in the French film press highlighted an ongoing dialogue between French critics and participants in the Algerian film industry. Algerian film-makers who were invited to these French events expressed the same views and the same frustrations being articulated in Algeria about their incapacity to make the films they had envisioned because of red tape, the disorganization of the industry and the perverse effects of self-censorship. However, the vision of Algerian cinema that emerged via the French press was strikingly different from that of their Algerian counterparts.

Even though Mohamed Bouamari, who directed *The Charcoal Maker*, claims in *La Revue du Cinéma: Image et son* that Algerian film-makers 'are led through self-censorship to make films that support the main steps of official discourse rather than undertake an in-depth reflection',[50] the rampant doubts, trial and error and stalemate that characterized Algerian analyses of the situation were smoothed over in French film journals. The institutional cooperation with the Algerian Cinémathèque for the development of a new film culture in Algeria and for the promotion of Algerian cinema and its revolutionary experiment in France[51] fostered the circulation of films, Algerian film-makers, representatives of the Cinémathèque (initially Ahmed Hocine and then later Boudjema Karèche), and French film critics between Algeria and France. Such cooperation made Algerian film-makers and the Cinémathèque agents in the development of Algerian cinema. While film-makers seemed very uncomfortable with claiming authorship or personal credit for their vision of national cinema in Algeria, the debates and interviews provided them with a voice they used to claim a collective subject position in relation to what Algerian cinema should ideally become. They continued to denounce the deleterious effects of trying to imitate Western

cinema, called themselves 'workers of culture', and rejected the distinction between creation and technique, as well as the narcissism inherent in the relationship between film-makers and journalists.[52] Nonetheless, French film journals ended up structuring an auteurist representation of 'Algerian cinema'.

French film journals made the Cinémathèque the pulse of Algerian cinema, praising the total freedom it enjoyed in its programming and its essential role in the development and training of Algerian film-makers. In contrast, Algerian accounts regarded the Cinémathèque as a prestigious but fairly marginal institution that reached intellectual elites and not the rural masses.[53] Meanwhile, in Algeria, Maherzi deplored the development of an ideology of the 'personal gift' among film-makers and the 'stardom' associated with the screenings of Algerian films in art houses in Paris that instilled the idea of prestige and social mobility.[54]

In the end, in the eyes of French film critics, Algerian film-makers suddenly became a group of angry young men whose vision contained the seeds of a revolution in film. Films like *Noua* and *The Charcoal Maker* attested to their commitment and capacity to overcome the inertia of the system. While the programming of festivals included a large number of Algerian films, the promotion of Algerian cinema in France continued to be founded on a few films and film-makers such as Mohamed Bouamari who came to France as a child and whose first short film was on immigration. The way Bouamari struggled to make a living with odd jobs at the beginning of the 1960s, and was confronted with a racist French film industry, became emblematic of the fate of North African immigrants, while his filmography attests to both his commitment to a revolutionary cinema with *The Charcoal Maker* (1972) and to bold film aesthetics with *Premier Pas* (1979), a formidable film about a woman at the head of a city council.[55] In the same way, Mohamed Ifticène's stand against the RTA represented this capacity to defend an ideal even at the expense of personal interest.

These long features on Algerian cinema were published among other features on Cuban, Latin American or socialist (i.e. Eastern European) cinemas, situating them as part of a larger category of revolutionary cinemas. French critics also praised the endeavour to integrate Algerian film culture within a reflection about a larger international and politicized film culture that privileged Arab (in particular Egyptian) cinema, but also Cuban and other socialist films. In contrast, Algerian film-makers regarded Algerian cinema as a unique experiment and rejected such comparisons. Algerian film-makers also rejected the sequencing of 'Algerian cinema' into two generations: one that produced war films and another *djidid* ('new') cinema that emphasized the reality of the people, particularly through a focus on the Agrarian Revolution.[56] In reality, it was not possible to distinguish two phases or even two generations in such a short-lived history, all the more so as French critics tended to idealize the potentiality of *djidid* cinema, granting it an aesthetic dimension characterized by a 'personal expression' in a

'dialogue with audiences'.[57] Meanwhile, Christian Bosséno warned French film critics about the risks of developing a skewed vision of Algerian cinema based on too few films,[58] insisting that *Noua*'s experiment was also Tolbi's seventh film, with most critics never having seen his previous six films.

Conclusion

Obviously, the question of Algerian cinema as a nationalized industry can no longer be raised in the same terms following the dissolution of the state industry in the 1990s and the subsequent reorganization of film funding. Film-makers still rely on the Fund for the Development of the Arts, Techniques and the Cinema Industry (FDATIC) created in 1968 under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, although it has contributed to a fairly erratic film production. The production of films in Algeria continues in fits and starts: Ahmed Rachedi's latest biopics on revolutionary heroes, *Mostefa Benboulaid* (2009) and *Krim Belkacem* (the release of which seems to have been endlessly postponed), or Saïd Ould Khelifa's *Zabana!* (2012) attest to ongoing explorations of the War of Independence. However, such productions are not likely to bring Algerian or international audiences back to the cinemas. In this respect, Lyes Salem's *L'Oranais* (2014), with its striking depiction of war heroes turned politicians/businessmen in the postwar construction of the Algerian nation, constitutes a more transgressive vision of the loss of ideals in post-independence Algeria. Film exhibition in Algeria is derelict but the film circulated in the Cinémathèques across the country. The designation in 2007 of Algiers as 'Capital of Arab Culture' boosted the production of short and long-feature films for a few years. Meanwhile, Algerian cinema has been associated with a few auteur films that have drawn international attention having circulated in festivals and been distributed in France, in particular Tariq Teguia's striking *Rome plutôt que vous* (2006) and *Inland* (2008), or Salem's *Mascarades* (2007). The renovation of film theatres goes on, like the ex-Colisée in Algiers, renamed the Djamel Chanderli in 2012 for the screening of a series of documentary films that were the outcome of a call for projects. But beyond this there is no real political commitment to relaunch distribution and exhibition. Apart from Habiba Djanine's small annual workshop on documentary making in Béjaïa, Katia Kameli's short-lived workshop 'Bledi in progress' (2006) or more recently Thala's 'Alger demain', a collective created in 2010, there is no film training in Algeria.[59] The 2009 Pan-African film festival in Algiers promoted an international funding programme for film production aimed at African countries, run by the Algerian state, but the scope and sustainability of such initiatives remains uncertain. Algerian cinema has also been the object of research in Anglophone academia, from Sabry Hafez's analysis of the specificity of Algerian cinema (1995) to Guy Austin's recent *Algerian National Cinema* (2012).

The purpose of this analysis is much more limited in scope. Through discussions of the development of film policy, the organization of the industry and insights into the experience of Algerian film industry personnel, it has aimed to give some visibility to the question of situating the knowledge produced about cinema in Algeria. This constitutes an original and valuable point of entry into historically-rooted conceptions of Algerian cinema from the 1970s through to the mid-1980s. While promoting an ideological conception of national cinema, such research produced fairly extensive yet fragmentary surveys of production, distribution, exhibition and audiences considering the resources available. Within this context, questions about the overall organization of the industry centred on what mode of production would be best able to meet the objectives of the Revolution. Thematic and more rarely formal analyses of a large range of films remained a means both to question dominant images of Algerian culture at the time and to condemn the rise of a technocratic bourgeoisie at odds with the ideals of the Revolution.

The deeply-seated and pervasive frustration in Algeria expressed by these figures gave way to Wassyla Tamzali's and French critics' conception of Algerian cinema as a political experiment carried out by a group of engaged Algerian film-makers, leading readers today to regard the 1970s as the heyday of Algerian cinema. The main objective of this analysis may read like a well-worn truism about the extent to which conceptions of national cinema are primarily the outcome of national cultures, here Algerian and French. This comparative analysis of parallel discourses about the advent of Algerian cinema shows the discrepancy between two divergent constructions of the same object, in spite of an ongoing dialogue, plus the circulation of information, films and people between Algeria and France. The assessments of the Algerian film industry as they can be drawn from French film journals and from largely academic research and essays by intellectuals in Algeria are based on the same data, acknowledge the same deterioration and basically raise the same questions about the future. But Algerian cinema constructed from the standpoint of an elitist French film culture centred on a community of film-makers has *de facto* done away with the abstract project national cinema was meant to serve. The paradox is that this discourse has effectively brought this national cinema into being on the international scene at the same time as there were strong and legitimate reservations about the possibility of its existence in Algeria.

Notes

1 Anne McClintock, 'No longer in a future heaven: Women and Nationalism in South Africa', in *Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 104.

2 Patricia Caillé, '"Cinemas of the Maghreb": Reflections on the transnational and polycentric dimensions of regional cinema', *Studies in French Cinema* 13 (2013), 241–56.

3 See Roy Armes, *Cinémas du Maghreb: Images postcoloniales* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006); Abdou Benziane, 'Le Cinéma algérien: De l'état tutélaire à l'état moribond', *La Pensée de Midi* 1:4 (2001), 84–9; Rachid Boudjedra, *Naissance du cinéma algérien* (Paris: François Maspéro, 1971); Christian Bosséno, 'Le Cinéma en Algérie', *La Revue du cinéma* 327 (1978), 55–97; François Chevaldonné, *La communication inégale: l'accès aux médias dans les campagnes algériennes* (Paris: CNRS, 1981); Boudjema Karèche, 'La Cinémathèque algérienne: une activité exemplaire au service de la culture populaire', *Grand Maghreb* 20 (1982), 48–50; Lotfi Maherzi, *Le Cinéma algérien: institution, imaginaire, idéologie* (Algiers: SNED, 1980); Abdelghani Megherbi, *Les Algériens au miroir du cinéma colonial: Contribution à une sociologie de la décolonisation* (Algiers: SNED, 1982); Abdelghani Megherbi, *Le miroir apprivoisé: sociologie du cinéma algérien* (Algiers: SNED, 1985); Wassyla Tamzali, *En attendant Omar Gatlato: Regard sur le cinéma algérien* (Algiers: Editions ENAP, 1979).

4 For example, *Nahla* by Ferouk Beloufa (1974), about a singer in Lebanon, is integrated within Algerian cinema, the Algerian dimension being rooted in the nationality of the film-maker and funding for the film.

5 See Mohamed Bouamari and Mohamed Ifticène, 'Cinema algérien', *Cinéma* 73:176 (1973), 83; Claude Michel Cluny, 'Les films des travaux et des jours', *Cinéma* 76:207 (1976), 63; Mouloud Mimoun, 'L'impact des films d'intervention sociale', *Tiers Monde* 20:79 (1979), 597–603; Sabry Hafez, 'Shifting Identities in Maghribi Cinema: The Algerian Paradigm', *Alif, Journal of Comparative Poetics* 15 (1995), 47.

6 Algerian film-makers emphasized that these images were intended for an international audience. See the summary of a roundtable in Bouamari and Ifticène, 'Cinéma algérien', 83.

7 Most notably *Les Infirmières de l'ALN* and *L'Attaque des mines de l'Ouenza* made by a collective. Vautier (1928–2015) took a stance against colonialism with *Afrique 50* as early as 1950 and went to Algeria to join the FLN.

8 Sébastien Denis, *Le cinéma et la Guerre d'Algérie: La propagande à l'écran (1945–1962)* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2009).

9 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 200.

10 In 1976, Abdelaziz Tolbi claimed that his film *Noua* had been broadcast three times on television, the last two being by popular demand. Many other films were not shown on television, including Tolbi's early films (*Cinéma* 76 (1976)).

11 Wassyla Tamzali, *Une éducation algérienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), 149.

12 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*; Megherbi, *Miroir apprivoisé*.

13 On the percentage of Algerian films exhibited in the cinemas, see Maherzi's table: *Cinéma algérien*, p. 200.

14 Boudjedra's work was published by François Maspero, a well-known anti-colonial publisher and activist. *Naissance du cinéma algérien* was banned in Algeria for several years, a ban unrelated to the content of the book.

15 Younès Dadci, *Dialogues Algérie-cinéma: Première histoire du cinéma algérien* (Paris: Imprimerie Gutenberg, 1970).

16 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 10; Megherbi, *Miroir apprivoisé*, 172.

17 Tamzali, *En attendant*, 8.

18 Boujedra, *Naissance*, 9–20; Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 39–51; Megherbi, *Algériens*.

19 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 246–7; Hafez, 'Shifting identities', 55.

20 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 234.

21 Megherbi, *Algériens*, 173.

22 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 67.

23 In spite of a new impetus in 1974, the relationship between the FLN and the film industry became so strenuous that the party withdrew its financial support from the UAAV, leaving it without the means to operate. Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 119.

24 The Agrarian Revolution was a three-phase programme launched in 1972, aimed at standardizing the system of law that regulated agrarian property, organizing a collective management of farmlands and developing industrial farming and cattle breeding.

25 Boujedra, *Naissance*, 68–9; Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 273–82.

26 Ibid., 150.

27 Megherbi, *Algériens*, 172.

28 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 120; Mohamed Ifticène, 'Interview: "en Algérie, tout est à inventer . . ."', *Cinéma* 76:207 (1976), 80.

29 Megherbi, *Miroir apprivoisé*, 95.

30 Maherzi notes that he owes his statistics to the complicity of a few insiders at ONCIC, passing on such information being considered as illegal (*Cinéma algérien*, 23).

31 Boudjedra, *Naissance*, 53; Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 177.

32 Megherbi, *Algériens*, 61–3.

33 Megherbi, *Miroir apprivoisé*, 51–63; Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 51–61.

34 Sébastien Denis, *Le cinéma et la Guerre d'Algérie: La propagande à l'écran (1945–1962)* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2009).

35 Ahmed Bedjaoui, 'Interview: "Où va le cinéma algérien?"', *Cahiers du cinéma* (March 2003). François Chevaldonné notes in 1976 that the film industry aimed at producing ten films a year in the 1980s as a means to enable Algerian audiences to cultivate a taste for national films.

36 Megherbi regarded the absence of women in film theatres as a significant obstacle to the development of Algerian film exhibition; *Miroir apprivoisé*, 67–9.

37 Maherzi briefly mentions the disastrous decisions of the APCs (*Cinéma algérien*, 309–13). Megherbi notes how some Algerian children and teenagers attended screenings of French fiction films in schools, screenings that had an impact on their taste in films in the post-independence era (*Algériens*, 49–50). Created in 1971, the Fédération Algérienne des Ciné-Clubs was aimed at

extending the network of cine-clubs and training facilitators whose mission was to spread Algerian ideology to the masses. It remained very marginal and failed to rally existing cine-clubs that resisted such control.

38 Mustapha Badie, cited in Maherzi, *Le Cinéma algérien*, 306.

39 These were buses that travelled the country to screen revolutionary films, an initiative that quickly faltered because of conflicts between different state offices overseeing them.

40 Megherbi, *Miroir apprivoisé*, 85–137.

41 Tamzali, *En attendant*, 8.

42 Tamzali's assessment of *La Nouba* was at odds with many film critics and film-makers who disparaged the experiment and prevented its screening in Cannes. See Florence Martin, *Screens and Veils* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2011)

43 Megherbi, *Les Algériens*, 51.

44 Jacques Berque, *Le Maghreb entre deux guerres* (Paris: Seuil, 1970).

45 Sabry Hafez, 'Shifting identities', 187–99; Denis, *Guerre d'Algérie*.

46 Kristin Ross, *Mai 68 et ses vies ultérieures* (Paris: Editions complexe, 2005).

47 *Avoir 20 ans dans les Aurès* drew 333,000 spectators, *Élise ou la vraie vie*, an adaptation of Claire Etcherelli's popular novel (1967), 800,000 and *Dupont Lajoie* almost 1,400,000.

48 A special issue of *France-Maghreb* published in March 1973 is devoted to the first event at the Cinémathèque. Cervoni et al., 'Le Cinéma algérien', *Cinéma* 73:176 (1973), 80–9; Gaston Haustrate et al., 'Le Cinéma algérien: situation, évolution, entretiens', *Cinéma* 76:207 (1976), 36–96; Christian Bosséno, 'Le cinéma en Algérie', *La Revue du cinéma,* no. 327 (1978), 55–97; Christian Bosséno, 'Des maquis d'hier aux luttes d'aujourd'hui', *La Revue du cinéma,* no. 340 (1979), 27–52.

49 Bosséno, *Cinéma en Algérie*, 55–97.

50 Cited in Bosséno, *Cinéma en Algérie*, 51.

51 The French Cinémathèque, like similar institutions in Eastern Europe, sent a large number of films to its Algerian counterpart.

52 Ifticène 'Interview: "en Algérie, tout est à inventer. . ."' 78.

53 The Cinémathèque was not censored.

54 Maherzi, *Cinéma algérien*, 120.

55 Mohamed Bouamari, 'Entretien avec Mohamed Bouamari', *Revue du cinéma* no. 340 (1979), 46.

56 Mireille Amiel, 'Le cinéma algérien par ceux qui le font', *Cinéma* 76:297 (1976), 71.

57 Guy Hennebelle, 'Le 'Cinéma djidid' algérien', *Ecran* 73:16 (1973), 29.

58 Bosséno, 'Des maquis d'hier aux luttes d'aujourd'hui', 28.

59 See http://www.thalafilms.com/ (accessed July 2016).

CHAPTER NINE

The Algerian Woman in Conflict in *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966)

Sophie Bélot

The views of two of the most influential scholars in the field of Algerian studies, Frantz Fanon and Jacques Derrida, on the Algerian War (1954–62) and the civil conflict in the 1990s are significant for their ambiguous depiction of Algerian women based on their presence/absence. In *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), Fanon declares: 'revolutionary war is not a war of men'.[1] In contrast, referring to the Algerian civil conflict in the 1990s – which bears some similarities to the War of Independence,[2] Derrida defines it as a virile or masculine war. He adds: '[I]t is thus also, laterally, in an unspoken repression, a mute war against women'.[3] These statements reveal the intricate role of women in conflict, an idea that will be developed by examining Gillo Pontecorvo's film, *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) and what it reveals about the presence/absence of Algerian women in the War of Independence. Indeed, the presence/absence of women related to the dialectics of the public and the private in Algerian society brings to mind the notions of secrecy and revelation forming an integral aspect of Arabo-Islamic cultures, as advocated by Ruqayya Khan in *Self and Secrecy in Early Islam*. A Derridean philosophical stance proposes to move away from a dialectical position to capture the idea of non-belonging or separation informing the notion of the secret. This Derridean understanding will help us shed new light on representations of Algerian women in contemporary films dealing with the wars, especially Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*.

At first glance, Pontecorvo's film could accord to Derrida's idea of war as virile or masculine, for it is mainly seen as concerning France's military strategy and methods to dismantle the guerrilla organization of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algiers and capture its militants. The documentary-style of *The Battle of Algiers* brings to the fore its precise reconstruction of the eponymous historical events of 1957, described as 'the most famous period' and 'the most dramatic episodes' within the War of Independence.[4] The Battle of Algiers represented a turning point in the conflict in terms of the location (the capital, Algiers as opposed to the mountains) and strategy (urban guerrilla involving the civilian population, as depicted in Pontecorvo's film). Thus, at a time when Algeria entered into veritable warfare in the urban space of Algiers, women's involvement in the conflict became more intense and more complex. Concurrently, Algerian women's participation raised the suspicion of the French army and became the main focus of new initiatives.

The importance of the Battle of Algiers as a moment when Algerian women became one of the central preoccupations of the French army and administration cannot be overemphasized. From 1956, the French authorities proceeded with an emancipation campaign which sought to modernize and liberate Algerian women from what they viewed as Muslim patriarchy and seclusion. This was, therefore, a very ambiguous time for Algerian women, who found themselves the targets of both the French and the FLN strategies. Algerian women were pulled between two opposite forces, colonialism and independence. After the war, official (and scholarly) discourses remained mainly silent about the roles played by Algerian women in the conflict highlighting both the complexity of the issue and women's resistance to both French and FLN attentions. Yet, as Neil MacMaster attests: 'These Muslim women were not, as was often claimed, quiescent victims of Islamic patriarchy or the passive followers of European militants'.[5] This study will explore MacMaster's perspective by showing the ways in which *The Battle of Algiers* challenges a conventional gendered reading of war. It will be argued that the behaviour of Algerian women, as portrayed in the film, highlights the complexity of their contributions in the conflict. And that, furthermore, these contributions should be understood in ways that move beyond a passive-active interpretation as outlined by Fanon in his famous text 'Algeria Unveiled' (1959) which is deemed to have strongly influenced Pontecorvo's cinematic portrayal.[6] Drawing on the notion of secret, as defined by Derrida and understood beyond its habitual meaning based on a binary system, I will aim to show that this represents a defining characteristic of the Algerian women featured in Pontecorvo's film.[7] It will be emphasized that the representation of Algerian women is more complex than a binary model based on the idea of victim or active fighter would suggest. The Derridean notion of secret, as read in Algerian women's behaviours and sustained by subtle camerawork, will highlight the ambiguity underpinning the various portrayals of female participation in the liberation struggle.

Dominant images of Algerian women

Overall, the participation of Algerian women[8] is scarcely documented in French and Algerian historical records and cultural depictions of the war, with Tracy Sharpley-Whiting going so far as to say that their contribution is 'often forgotten, diminished in contemporary cultural memory'.[9] To some extent, Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* is no exception. Whilst it is one of the first films to offer a representation of Algerian women during the War of Liberation, it is considered by Djamila Amrane, the ex-FLN combatant, as only a 'tribute to women activists', which does not dwell on the complexity and contrasting realities of women's participation.[10] Indeed, representations of Algerian women in the film are too often reduced to a few, very specific scenes which, due to their length and their obvious portrayal of women in action, have become emblematic. Although other examples exist, as will be highlighted later, it is generally agreed that three main sequences in *The Battle of Algiers* propose a faithful re-enactment of women's commitment in the war. The first scene takes place early in the film when a veiled Muslim woman acts as liaison agent, hiding a gun in the folds of her garment for the main male protagonist, Ali La Pointe. The second sequence, perhaps the most famous of all, concerns the unveiling of three Muslim women and their transformation into Western women in order to pass unnoticed through military checkpoints and into the European quarter while hiding bombs in their baskets. The third sequence forms the final image of the film when an unveiled woman, one of the three bombers previously mentioned, dances in the street taunting the French troops with an Algerian flag during the demonstrations in Algiers in 1960.[11] This last image is a replica of Fanon's prophecy in *A Dying Colonialism*, while the first two representations mentioned above are very close to those described by Fanon in 'Algeria Unveiled'.[12] By identifying these sequences, I aim to emphasize their limitations by referring specifically to Fanon's depiction of Algerian women in his article 'Algeria Unveiled' and its influence on Pontecorvo.

Containing a detailed account of the roles played by women in the War of Independence, one can read in 'Algeria Unveiled' the following: 'Carrying revolvers, grenades, hundreds of false identity cards or bombs, the unveiled Algerian woman moves like a fish in the waters. The soldiers, the French patrols, smile to her as she passes, compliments on her looks are heard here and there, but no one suspects that her suitcases contain the automatic pistol which will presently mow down four or five members of one of the patrols'.[13] From this quotation, Fanon's influence on Pontecorvo is easily recognized as confirmed by scholars such as Sharpley-Whiting and Matthew Evangelista.[14] For Evangelista, there is no doubt that Fanon's work was Pontecorvo's main inspiration since Fanon's analysis 'predate[s] Pontecorvo's treatment', and he also notes that 'Pontecorvo and Solinas [the scriptwriter] read Fanon's work'.[15] Lindsey Moore corroborates this view; her reassessment of Fanon's study based on the ambiguities of his discourse brings a novel perspective to

the subject of Algerian women which, she claims, Pontecorvo's film 'deflects' by emphasizing their resilience through embodied experiences. However, Moore talks of a limited access to female subjectivity in Pontecorvo's film leading to a dominant representation of Algerian women as impenetrable.[16] In contrast, this study will accentuate and explain Algerian women's impenetrable subjectivity by referring to the Derridean notion of secret, conveying ideas of separation and isolation. Drawing also on the complexities and ambiguities of Fanon's discourse, this study will first highlight the presence of Algerian women in Pontecorvo's film, as opposed to their quasi-absence.

'Algeria Unveiled' is Fanon's most famous essay for its depiction of Algerian women in the service of Western and Islamic patriarchal ideologies. He addresses the issue of the veil and its multivalent and contrasting values. Fanon's exploration of Algerian women and the veil, as also portrayed in one of the main scenes in Pontecorvo's film, raises the issue of the agency of Algerian women. This chapter concurs with Sharpley-Whiting's vision of Fanon's writing being 'if nothing else, a testament to women's resistance to oppression from within and without'.[17] Fanon's text advocates female resistance against an anti-imperialist stance and a patriarchal social structure. Although Fanon criticizes the French colonizer's attitude towards the unveiling of Algerian women in the 1950s, his position at times also veers towards an essentialist position regarding the veil, what he refers to as 'the traditional patterns of behaviour'.[18] This ambivalence highlights the fact that the meaning attached to the veil is not static, nor is the meaning attached to women's bodies in patriarchal society, as revealed in the reinventing of their body patterns (for instance as militant and in masquerading) during the revolutionary action. Fanon's essay looks closely at the colonial authorities' mounting interest in the position and role of Algerian women that coincided with the beginning of the Battle of Algiers. This exploration of Algerian women is mainly directed at the veil, considered by Fanon as showcasing 'a society's uniqueness'.[19] This feature is also invoked furtively in Pontecorvo's film, inviting the audience to take more notice of the omnipresent veiled Algerian women, as will be done later in this study. Fanon exposes the occupier's perspective towards Algerian women wearing the veil, which signified humiliation, sequestration and seclusion, according to the colonial authorities. In other words, Fanon interprets this interest in their status by the fact that, most importantly, the significance of the veiled woman lay in her being the repository of the dominant values of Algerian society for the colonialists. For the French, the veil represents the foundation, or the essence – 'uniqueness' – of (a patriarchal) Algerian culture. To the Western eye, Algerian culture reposes on women's oppression and seclusion. Hence '[c]onverting the woman, winning her over to the foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining practical, effective means of destructuring [*sic*] Algerian culture'.[20]

Converting meant unveiling women, which meant destroying the structure of Algerian society and, therefore, inhibiting women's resistance, according to Fanon.[21] Every unveiled woman was a sign of liberation, as well as of French penetration into Algerian society. As Fanon strongly confirms: 'Every veil that fell, everybody that became liberated from the traditional embrace of the *haïk*, every face that offered itself to the hold and impatient glance of the occupier, was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer'.[22]

Although Fanon provides lengthy discussions of Algerian women's 'support' of the occupier's penetration, he also alludes to their resistance when declaring that 'the work of cultural destruction[,] had the effect of strengthening the traditional patterns of behaviour'[23]. Although he does not expand on this idea, his view brings to the fore the importance of the individual behaviour of Algerian women. Fanon mentions the involvement of women in combat activities – carrying grenades in handbags and acting as liaison agents – but, more importantly, his study reveals the inner tension experienced by Algerian women torn between supporting or challenging their dominant roles. I will show that the ambiguity which pervades Fanon's work is an aspect that Pontecorvo preserves in his filmic portrayal of Algerian women. However, it should be noted that despite this ambiguity, Fanon's work reverts to an essentialist and dominant view of Algerian women's constrained and confined behaviours. It is obvious that (female) resistance, for Fanon, is aligned with traditional Algerian culture. Women's resistance is, in fact, limited by their 'loss of ease and assurance' reflecting a shift in their body from being veiled to unveiled.[24]

In spite of its theoretical importance, Fanon's study has been criticized for constraining Algerian women's contribution within a limited set of roles, essentially carrying money, guns, bombs and identity cards, acting as liaison agents, standing watch or giving warning. Katherine Roberts refers to these portrayals as 'dramatic descriptions' fostering a mythic picture of women's participation. She defines Fanon's images as replicated in Pontecorvo's film as powerful but 'clichés'.[25] Roberts complains that women's war experiences are only partially recorded, an accusation corroborated by Amrane, Marnia Lazreg and more recently by Natalya Vince. Amrane contests two aspects of the representation of women offered by Pontecorvo's film. First the fact that they are shown only as executioners of (male) orders rather than initiators. Second, and most importantly for Amrane, women's roles were more significant and more diverse than portrayed in the film. She claims that as the FLN became more and more restricted in their movements and suffered from heavy losses, women replaced men in the fight.[26] But, if images of women planting bombs or carrying ammunition under their veil have become clichés, that of the woman as fighter is even more so. Particularly in the view of critics like Roberts, who sees the trope of the 'women as fighter' as a site of both celebration and containment. Roberts supports Lazreg's view that female participation in the conflict extended beyond combat and

included 'organising food supplies and hideouts, working as liaisons, and guides, collecting funds from other women, obtaining medical supplies, washing fighters' clothes and transporting weapons'.[27] While some, like Diane Sambron, question the commensurability of women's activities during the war with the conventional gendered organization of Algerian society, for others like Roberts, omitting these other (gendered) activities means reducing the multifarious identities of Algerian women to a single female figure.[28] This single female figure corresponds to the silent female militant whose subjective experience the spectator has limited access to in *The Battle of Algiers,* certainly in comparison with the male militants. Indeed, the one-dimensionality of female characters and the lack of depth in their portrayals that Roberts refers to is epitomized by the famous sequence in which three Algerian women masquerade in European clothes and style in total silence. However, a subsequent analysis of this scene will emphasize its ambiguity, which imbues the representations and discourses of Algerian women in the war.[29]

This is an ambiguity fostered by the contradiction between concealment and disclosure that structures the representation of women. On the one hand, women's participation in the Algerian War is under-represented or overlooked, but, on the other hand, it is simultaneously mythicized in representations such as those offered by Fanon from which Pontecorvo's work derives. In Fanon's eyes, the veil contributes to the idea of concealment, which resulted in the French occupiers instructing women to unveil in order to disclose (and dispose of) their Algerian values as well as their (feminine) essence and status.[30] Despite its aforementioned essentialist perspective, what is interesting in Fanon's essay is its concern with women at the level of the individual as is expressed through detailed observations of their feelings and bodily attitudes. He notes how women's experience of their body changes by losing assurance and ease when (un)veiled. Thus, I will argue that Fanon refers to the idea of the Algerian woman in conflict with her body as lying at the crossroads between veiling/unveiling and concealment/disclosure.

'A taste for the secret'

Khan supports Fanon's view by asserting that the tension between concealment and revelation affects the embodied self. According to Khan, this tension is integral to the notion of secret, or *sirr* in Arabic.[31] If concealment and revelation create an ambiguity (for Fanon) or an aura of secrecy around the representations of Algerian women, this notion of secret is also strongly linked to how the self and subjectivity is constituted, according to Khan. Thus, turning to Khan's study, the significance of the notion of secret in Algerian culture will be highlighted. On the other hand, the development of this notion in relation to Algerian women's individualities

will be made possible by considering Derrida's study, which will help subsequently to revisit and better understand Pontecorvo's representations of Algerian women in *The Battle of Algiers*.

Khan offers an analysis of religious and secular discourses in early Islam in relation to the notion of secret, which informs the creation of interpersonal relationships as well as how individual identity is constituted. Her study is suggestive in identifying and confirming the significance of the notion of secret as a vehicle to better understand the human self and personality in the Arabic world. Khan highlights the congruence of this concept with the Arabic world by stressing that: 'In a modern Western culture, we do not think of human secrets and secrecy as a domain for the examination and exploration of human self and identity'.[32] Despite the pertinence of her work for this study, Khan's use of the notion of secret remains too close to its Western definition, characterized by binary acts of concealment and revelation. Khan rests her argument on the idea that the outer physical body discloses the inner secret self despite the self's occasional intention to conceal. Similar to Fanon, her perspective perpetuates an essentialist conception of the embodied self (the self as keeper of an inner truth or 'uniqueness' for Fanon).

Specifically related to the War of Independence, in *A Savage War of Peace* (1977) Alistair Horne consistently refers to the notion of secret. For him, secrecy imbued the whole war, as information scarcely reached the French and Algerian publics. Horne reinforces Khan's exploration of the self and the notion of secret, validating this association within the more contemporary context of the Algerian War of Independence. He closely ties the concept of secret to Algerian culture, here to space and people, using the notion of 'secretiveness' to refer to an 'Algerian characteristic' related to the use of space: 'The high walls that surround the houses in Algeria, the delightful courtyards concealed in total privacy behind squalid exteriors in the Casbah, hint at an Algerian characteristic that also does not ease the path of an historian'.[33] Making a similar statement about Algerian men's and women's personalities, he adds: 'All these were characteristics that were to display themselves with emphatic relevance from 1954 onwards'.[34] Horne emphasizes that the level of secretiveness became heightened during the war. Regarding internal dissent and division within the FLN, for example, he explains: 'its greatest strength was the secrecy which . . . prevented the French from seizing an advantage'.[35] According to this observation, it seems that the physical body in this instance does not work to disclose an inner secret, as Khan (and Fanon) would imply but instead the body becomes impenetrable – an idea which relates to Derrida's sense of the notion of secret as separation. Horne's study of military strategies during the war is furthermore a perfect instance where Algerian women are under-represented or misrepresented. Indeed, he seems to reinforce the common vision of Algerian women as passive performers of decisions that cannot be questioned due to their secretiveness.

The veil, seen as a symbol of the status of the Algerian woman, was the main target of the French occupiers, according to Fanon. As already explained, unveiling was seen as an act of revealing, of disclosing the Algerian woman who was perceived as hiding behind her veil. Within this argument and this programme of unveiling, Algerian women's identities are at the core of the tension between disclosure and concealment that defines the dominant conception of secret. As Fanon claims: 'Hiding the face is also disguising a secret; it is also creating a world of mystery, of the hidden'.[36] It was generally believed that the secret that Algerian women were hiding behind their veils was linked to their role as keepers of Algerian culture. Unveiling them meant revealing them (and the Algerian culture) to the Western eye, as is illustrated in Pontecorvo's famous scene. The scene of feminine transformation into Westernized femininity is powerful in its direct reference to the strategy of unveiling women during the war. As already mentioned, when the three Algerian women unveil, they seem to reveal their (feminine/secret) beauty to the camera, which later attracts the attention of the French military men. The idea of beauty refers to their exterior feminine appearance corresponding to Western expectations, but the notion also aims towards something deeper, or different. It is obvious that this sequence highlights the cupidity of these French men, being attracted by a mere appearance of femininity, but failing to see beyond (to notice the women's roles as bomb carriers). What this scene primarily reveals is that Algerian women have succeeded in being more noticeable and less open to suspicion to the Western male eyes, but have also managed to keep their individuality intact. One is reminded of Khan's conception of the Arabic word *sirr*, for secret, as how the self is constructed, and also transformed.

The individuality of Algerian women is an aspect that the aforementioned sequence reinforces when the camera rests on the act of unveiling. The significance of this act of metamorphosis is underlined by the prominent presence of music without vocals. Nicholas Harrison mentions in passing the film's use of music as one of its remarkable qualities.[37] More generally, however, when critics such as Roberts dwell on the music, they note its standing in place of dialogue.[38] While this is a valid point, my interest lies rather in the strong link this music creates with the (bodily) movements of the Algerian women. The tempo of the drum music seems to follow these women as they perform their transformation. In this sense, the rhythmic and traditionalist characteristics of this music bring to mind the ritualistic trance dances North African women perform. Tony Gatlif's film *Exiles* (2004) is probably one of the most popular examples where the main female character performs the Zar trance dance with a group of Algerian women.[39] As in *The Battle of Algiers*, this is the longest scene of the film, with an emphasis on the ritualistic movements of women's bodies linked to the idea of transformation of the self, supported, in both films, by the tempo of the drum music. In *The Battle of Algiers* the emphasis on their bodies concerns the changes in their outward appearance, but they remain the same internally

as when they were veiled, for resting on their faces, the camera emphasizes their unaltered impassive and secret expression. It could therefore be argued that Pontecorvo's representations of Algerian women play on the notion of secret, understood not in its conventional usage, that is to say as something mysterious or hidden that can be disclosed, but as something that remains impenetrable or separate.

In his essay, 'I Have a Taste for the Secret', Derrida attests to the existence of this conventional type of secret at the conscious and unconscious level that can be revealed, 'but', as he claims, 'it is not the secret that I attempt to think' of.[40] Turning to Derrida's examination of the concept of secret will, therefore, be instrumental in considering this notion in relation to the representation of the Algerian woman during the War of Independence beyond the dialectic of keeping and revealing a secret that informs its Western conception. For Derrida's notion of secret challenges an essentialist view of the self and enables representations of Algerian women to be deciphered in a more nuanced way by focusing on their bodily behaviour. Derrida is not known for his studies on the secret, yet he devoted two publications to this notion: *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret* (1995) was followed by *A Taste for the Secret* (2002). In the former he looked at its history and semantics, and in the latter he suggested a philosophical and political interpretation of the term. Although his essay 'I Have a Taste for the Secret' (2002) does not directly refer to Algeria, Derrida once claimed in an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* that all his work is closely tied to Algerian culture.[41] It is therefore not implausible to read Derrida's consideration of the secret in the context of Algerian society at war, a situation that had great bearing on his political thinking.[42] The above statement can be verified against Derrida's conception of secret as pertaining to the ethical relation between the self and the other informed by difference, an issue at the heart of the relation between the French administration and the Algerian population, especially women. In *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret*, Derrida disavows the Greek meaning of secret attached to the mystic or the cryptic. Drawing instead on the Latin origin of the word, which means 'separate, set apart' (from *se-cernere*), Derrida infers that secret keeps individuals apart from the collective. Derrida expresses the idea of 'separation' or 'distinctiveness' through an abundance of oxymoronic structures, such as: 'we know in common that we have nothing in common', or 'everything that exists shares the unsharable'.[43] In other words, the secret as a common shareable phenomenon is associated with the idea of separation. As Derrida writes: 'I have a taste for the secret, it clearly has to do with non-belonging', something that is expressed through the 'shared/unsharable' chiasm.[44] The idea of 'non-belonging' informs, for Derrida, the singularity of the individual as conveyed in his illustrious phrase: 'the singular is singular . . . the other is other . . . *tout autre est tout autre*' (wholly other).[45] In this sense, any effort to determine the other, according to Derrida, is thwarted by the singularity and separateness of the secret. Secret as being separate needs

to be understood as contesting the idea of a shared identity which occludes differences under the logic of the same and, as such, erases individual singularity. The secret amounts to the fact that it is not reducible to truth within the (phenomenal) subject, as the secret is that there exists no secret (as understood in common parlance), but only singularity or radical difference. For Derrida's influential notion of secret is part of a philosophical and political strategy in the conception of an ethical relation between self and other. Separation and isolation in Derrida's mind are associated with the idea of 'non-belonging'.

This exposition of the Derridean secret is extremely relevant to the aforementioned scene in Pontecorvo's film where the efforts of the French officials and army to define Algerian women are thwarted. As the other, i.e. separated, Algerian women cannot be assimilated into the collective, the same. The definition of secret as non-belonging offers a reading of the representation of Algerian women in Pontecorvo's film as separate from any national determinations (French and Algerian) making them ambiguous and ungraspable. Moore comments that the 'Algerian woman becomes the privileged exemplar of cultural and political impenetrability'.[46] This position is fully illustrated in the act of transformation undertaken by the three Algerian women on which the camera lingers, focusing meticulously on their being unchanged, and thus ungraspable. This impenetrability can be read on the women's faces on which the camera concentrates insistently. Jeremy Gilbert, commenting on 'I Have a Taste for the Secret', quotes Derrida's observation about the meaning of the face as a key term which designates 'the radical exteriority of the other as the very point at which I encounter them'.[47] Directly quoting Derrida, Gilbert adds: 'But I must only *reach* it as the inaccessible, the invisible, the intangible. Secret, separate, invisible . . .'[48] Gilbert's quotation brings to mind the series of pictures of Algerian women taken by Marc Garanger. Commissioned by the French military in 1960, Garanger's role was to take identity pictures of Algerian women for the population census among other things. Garanger's pictures were published as *Femmes Algériennes 1960* (1982) showing Algerian women's faces as impenetrable, thus defiantly resisting the European invasive camera. As will be examined in the following section, the camera's focus on Algerian women's faces as a sign of intangibility, as well as power, is a recurring and equally compelling motif in Pontecorvo's film.

The secret Algerian woman in action

Following the crucial sequence culminating in successive explosions in the European quarter of Algiers, another key scene is worth dwelling on as a way to illustrate and expand on the Derridean understanding of secret. Pontecorvo's film is often talked about for its documentary-style, which is arguably most apparent in the scene where Colonel Mathieu lectures his

paratroopers using a short film made before the deadly terrorist attacks in the European quarter of Algiers.[49] This is a silent film with commentary by Mathieu, who aims to enlighten the French army on the unexpected bombings. This is a crucial and illuminating scene, very rich for its aesthetic form as well as its content. From an aesthetic point of view, these silent images running over Colonel Mathieu's commentary seem to fit the description of a documentary based on its realistic aspect. Moreover, we are supposedly presented with images depicting what really happened just before the explosions. These are the exact images the audience witnessed a few minutes earlier, and so they seem to belong to the fiction of the film we are watching. The fictive aspect of this short silent footage is reinforced by its relation to the silent cinema. Talking about the relation between silent and modern cinema, Michel Chion observes that: 'In the modern cinema they [silent voices] can represent, by a sort of proxy, the memory of a great Lost Secret the silent movies kept'.[50] Silent images are, therefore, related to the notion of secret in Chion's statement. As well as silent movies, Chion also refers to silent voices when he adds: 'So the presence of a mute character clues in to the fact that there is a secret'[51]. The silent voice, for Chion, refers back to the 'great secret' of silent cinema, but it also raises the issue of the silent voice's position in space, which is defined as 'omniscient, panoptic and omnipotent'.[52]

Chion's relation of the silent voice to the secret, and also to attributes of power, is pertinent to a Derridean reading of the representations of Algerian women in Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* where such women are often silent. It is true that silence is a strong characteristic of women's portrayal in the film, which many film scholars have noticed and criticized as corroborating Algerian women's oppression, occlusion and passivity in a Muslim society (as perceived by the French). For example, Amrane remarks: 'Women are almost totally silent throughout the whole film'.[53] Roberts interprets this silence as restricting women, rendering them as figures of containment.[54] Countering the stereotypical conceptions of Algerian women's silence, Lazreg employs the phrase 'the eloquent silence', explaining that: 'Negative images of women are so widespread and powerful that they deprive their victims of subjectivity and agency and stand for their identity'.[55] Lazreg aims to challenge the overdetermined or mythicized images of Algerian women by focusing instead on the complexity of their felt and lived realities. For Lazreg, Algerian women's silence is eloquent in the sense that it is an expression of their agency throughout their history; Algerian women are depicted as active agents rather than as passive victims. Lazreg identifies three types of eloquent silence: circumstantial, structural and strategic. These positions are all acts of resistance raising the issue of women's self-preservation and, therefore, of their self-identity or subjectivity. In its eloquent characteristic, silence can be linked to the notion of secret conveying Algerian women's active and singular aspects, as is also suggested by Lazreg. Thus, silence, like the veil, forms a defining aspect of Algerian women's lives

underpinned by the notion of secret, torn between disclosure and hiding. However, Lazreg shares Derrida's political stance by looking at silence as a strategic expression of Algerian women's identities and their individual singularities. The silence of Algerian women in Pontecorvo's film can also be seen as eloquent because it is an expression of their resistance or secret as linked to their lived reality as singular.

The relation of silence to space raised by Chion is equally pertinent to *The Battle of Algiers*. Chion's idea that the mute character 'might emerge from off-screen at any moment' is actualized in Pontecorvo's film with the representation of Algerian women.[56] On several occasions in the film, women appear at the left or right corner of the frame and disappear straight away off-screen. On other occasions, the camera shifts from a close-up shot of the woman to a distant one. Moving from an off-screen position, women appear on-screen running up or down the stairs of the Casbah and passing in front of the static camera. Another stylistic technique has women moving from the background to the foreground of the image or vice versa. Playing with the image (of women) in this way foregrounds the elusiveness of Algerian women. This elusive aspect of Algerian women marked by their public presence, which remains absent, can be read as a form of their secret defined as non-belonging.

This same play on presence/absence as non-belonging appears in the footage commented on by Colonel Mathieu. The main focus of this short silent film can be said to be on Algerian women as the audience is aware that the bomb planters Mathieu is looking for are three Algerian women disguised in European clothes. Algerian women pass and go unnoticed by the soldiers in the film within the film, as well as by the soldiers watching the film (and possibly to the audience in the auditorium). Mathieu's narration is revelatory when he says: 'A dangerous enemy moving both on the surface and below using well-tried revolutionary tactics and original techniques. It's an unknown, unrecognizable enemy which blends in with the people. It is everywhere. . . . Amongst all these Arab men and women are those responsible. But which ones? How to recognize them? Checking papers is ridiculous. . . . Watch the soldier. He's sure that basket contains something important. And he examines the contents very thoroughly! Maybe the bomb *was* there, in a false bottom. We'll never know'.[57] This commentary raises a few issues concerning the representation of Algerian women in the film. As singular individuals, Algerian women are ungraspable or impenetrable (to use a Derridean term), for Mathieu does not know if the women on-screen are involved in the resistance movement. These types of images are powerful because they make the audience wonder whether Algerian women's participation was not more multifaceted than has been claimed by scholars to date and as posited in the first section of this chapter. Thus, these images of women evade any categorization and highlight women's multiple singular involvements. Moreover, in this sequence the silent and elusive Algerian woman is shown as knowing more than Mathieu. The dominant

male voice-over of observational documentary is here challenged by his limited knowledge of the situation, which can be interpreted as reflecting the French officials' lack of comprehension of Algerian women as singular subjects.

In a 2003 article, Valérie Orlando shows how the French effort to subdue Algerian women failed by looking closely at two scenes in Pontecorvo's film. The first scene is the one analysed above and the second is the closing images of the film where the oldest Algerian bomber dances with the Algerian flag in the street. The latter is a prominent scene that is extremely evocative of Algerian women's secret-ness, as has been defined in this chapter. For Orlando, this image evokes female liberty, which she further defines by saying: 'Here, she has stepped out of the bonds of pre-ordained moulds in order to embrace a coming out'.[58] It showcases Algerian women's agency (moving in the street), change (in Western clothes, not wearing the veil) and individual strength (facing the army and the camera/audience). All these are markers of her strong personal and singular identity. Therefore, in accordance with the subject matter of both this piece and Orlando's article, the expression 'pre-ordained moulds' can be extended to incorporate Western and Algerian culture. This would mean that Algerian women are not only free from Western, but also from Muslim and patriarchal subjugation. The Western clothes and the Algerian flag are dual characteristics that stress the non-belonging of this woman to any party. As described by Orlando, it can be said that the Algerian woman has reached a site 'beyond the veil, beyond the interior walls of home, beyond the submission she had played under colonialism and under the phallocratic mores of her own culture'.[59] This is an in-between site for Algerian women where non-belonging is an act of resistance that entails embracing their own identity as singular subjects. This last image is symbolic in showing women on their way towards self-construction and individuation, as shown by the figure holding the Algerian flag while dressed in a Western style. Moreover, the tempo of the drum music accompanying the transformation of three Algerian women discussed above, reappears at the end of the film, establishing a crucial link between both representations of Algerian women. *The Battle of Algiers* ends on a close-up shot of feminine ambivalence, echoing a broader theme within the film's representations of Algerian women. Here, the emancipation of Algerian women lies in the fact that they have managed to resist appropriation by a single ideology.

A complex form of identity for Algerian women is thus represented in Pontecorvo's film. The striking aspect of these representations is that Algerian women are ungraspable or impenetrable (to refer to the Derridean terminology); they resist appropriation in the sense that the film depicts them as silent, elusive and, therefore, as 'non-belonging'. They do not belong to any side but the emphasis is put on their resistance. Recalling Derrida's idea of separation as a defining notion of secret, it can be argued that the above sequence presents Algerian women as an embodiment of secret-ness. Secret

should therefore be understood as a 'way of being' in the world for Algerian women that allows them to be in control of their own intentions, to take charge of their own actions and their own lives. Quoting Alex Segal – paraphrasing Kierkegaard – in his study of Derrida's notion of secret in literature, one can say: 'the absolute responsibility of my actions, to the extent that such a responsibility remains mine, singularly so, something no one else can perform in my place . . . implies secrecy'.[60] The secret for Derrida means to separate, to set apart; this is a separation from any ideologies, from any belonging, which for Algerian women here means belonging to either Eastern or Western ideologies. The separation of women emphasizes their Derridean difference and, hence, their Derridean secret, as somebody whose self cannot be subsumed under the logic of the same be it the French colonial system or the dominant Algerian social, political and cultural order.

Conclusion

A lack of documentary resources and the unreliability of historical documents means that the contribution of Algerian women to the War of Independence has been relatively inaccessible. In this sense Algerian women can be said to be invisible, or not discernible, and, as a consequence, secret. Inspired by Fanon's depiction of women's participation in the resistance movement, Pontecorvo's film offers an equally partial depiction of this involvement, limiting it to a few specific roles. This chapter has, however, argued that Pontecorvo's film does offer a complex representation of women's behaviours during the battle. It refutes the common idea that Algerian women appear mainly in three sequences and that their appearance is reduced to a mere fifteen of the film's 121 minutes, as argued by Amrane.[61] A close look at the film reveals women's presence almost in every scene, and it is also important to point out that they are mostly scenes in public spaces. It is a significant point that challenges the common perception that Algerian women are secluded, cloistered in the private space. Pontecorvo's film offers a representation of Algerian women's contribution to the War of Independence, but by trying to expose their roles, using Fanon's study as his template, Pontecorvo has managed to keep these women secret in the sense advocated by Derrida that '[o]ne can always expose to sight something that still remains secret'.[62] Pontecorvo shows women who are visible but resist deciphering; impenetrable and thus separate, distinct. Their secret-ness defies any attempt at appropriation. The idea of non-belonging also permeates Pontecorvo's filmic structure. It is neither a documentary nor a fiction, but a political work, or what Orlando calls 'a testament of truth'.[63] Just as this chapter has confirmed the separation of Algerian women from both Western and Arabic culture as a way to enhance their own intentionality/identity or singularity, so Pontecorvo's film is also separate; neither a documentary nor a fiction, but something in-between, a singular cinematographic world.

This study has therefore shown that the filmic representation of Algerian women's involvement in the War of Independence is more intricate than has usually been recognized. I have argued that a close reading of the surface image of cinematographic representation is necessary to fully grasp the significance of women's participation. These surface images give an indication of women's way of being in the world as conveyed by the subtle emphasis put on her bodily behaviour as an expression of her agency, a facet further emphasized by complex camerawork. A more thorough, empowering and complex characterization emerges that goes beyond the obvious representations of women as actively involved in terrorist attacks that most film critics have concentrated on. The use of camerawork in addition to the un/veiled, silent presence of women brings to the fore the idea of secret dominant in Algerian culture, as advocated by Horne and Khan. However, the notion of secret understood in a Derridean way as 'non-belonging' evokes a more subtle form of female resistance that frees them from the determination of identity. Read in this way, female participation brings to the fore the idea of an intimate or singular conflict fought by Algerian women involving their whole self, or, what can be called the secret of the I.

Notes

1 Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1959), 66.

2 For a discussion of the similarities between the War of Independence and the conflict of the 1990s and early 2000s see Benjamin Stora, 'Algérie: Les retours de la mémoire de la guerre d'indépendance', *Modern and Contemporary France* 10:4 (2002), 461–73.

3 Derrida quoted in Ranjanna Khanna, *Algeria Cuts. Women and Representation, 1830 to the Present* (California: Stanford University Press, 2008), 56.

4 Djamila Amrane, 'Women at War. The Representation of Women in *The Battle of Algiers*', trans. A. Clarke, *Interventions* 9:3 (2007), 341; Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace. Algeria 1954–1962* (New York: New York Review Book, 2006), 183.

5 Neil MacMaster, *Burning the Veil. The Algerian War and the 'Emancipation' of Muslim Women* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 36.

6 Frantz Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled' in Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 161–85. This depiction has been reiterated in accounts by female former FLN militants, including Djamila Amrane. The same dual image is furthermore found in Meredith Turshen, 'The Algerian Women in the Liberation Struggle and the Civil War: From Active Participants to Passive Victims', *Social Research* 69:3 (2002), 889–911.

7 Jacques Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2001)

8 Recent academic studies have challenged this traditional pattern. See, in particular, Natalya Vince, 'Colonial and Post-Colonial Identities: Women Veterans of the "Battle of Algiers"', *French History and Civilization* 2 (2009), 153–68; Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954–2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

9 Tracy Sharpley-Whitting, 'Fanon's Feminist Consciousness and Algerian Women's Liberation: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism', in *Rethinking Fanon. The Continuing Dialogue,* ed. N. Gibson (Amherts, NY: Humanity Books, 1999), 348.

10 Amrane, 'Women at War', 342.

11 In December 1960, the Algerian population mobilized by the FLN demonstrated in the streets of Algiers to show unity in the independence from the French occupiers.

12 Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled' in *A Dying Colonialism*, 161–85.

13 Ibid., 180–1.

14 Sharpley-Whiting, for example, mentions Fanon's article, 'This is the voice of Algeria' (1959) where he recognizes the transformation or modification of the veil, which 'was no longer a static cultural symbol'. Sharpley-Whiting, 'Fanon's Feminist Consciousness', 336.

15 Matthew Evangelista, *Gender, Nationalism, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 53.

16 Lindsey Moore, 'The Veil of Nationalism: Franz Fanon's 'Algeria Unveiled' and Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*', *Kunapipi* 25:2 (2003), 56–73.

17 Sharpley-Whiting, 'Fanon's Feminist Consciousness', 349.

18 Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled', 173.

19 Ibid., 161.

20 Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled', 164. A similar view is conveyed in Samuel Kalman's contribution to this volume, 'Criminalizing Dissent' in which he discusses the policing of several centuries-old traditions of banditry in Algeria by French authorities between 1914 and 1918 for the threat it could represent to French colonial hegemony.

21 Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled', 164.

22 Ibid., 168.

23 Ibid., 173.

24 Ibid., 173.

25 Katherine Roberts, 'Constrained Militants: Algerian Women "In-Between" in Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* and Bourlem Guerdjou's *Living in Paradise*', *The Journal of North African Studies* 12:4 (2007), 381–93.

26 Amrane, 'Women at War', 345.

27 Marnia Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 124.

28 Ibid.

29 James McDougall's chapter in this volume, 'Culture as War by Other Means', conveys the ambiguity in the behaviour of Algerian women by mentioning the

threat their adoption of Western attitudes was supposed to have had towards the 'authentic national identity' of an independent Algeria. McDougall goes on to talk about the reforms brought about to thwart this threat and to attempt to reinstall the ideas of authenticity and identity, 'a true Algerian-ness'.

30 Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled', 161–85.

31 Ruqayya Khan, *Self and Secrecy in Early Islam* (Colombia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 25.

32 Khan, *Self and Secrecy in Early Islam*, 3.

33 Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 7. One is reminded of the connection between space and gender in Arab culture. For example, the Algerian woman is kept indoors, or if outdoors, she is expected to wear the veil.

34 Ibid., 50.

35 Ibid., 128.

36 Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled', 168.

37 Nicholas Harrison, 'Pontecorvo's "Documentary" Aesthetics. *The Battle of Algiers* and the Battle of Algiers', *Interventions* 9:3 (2007), 389–404.

38 Roberts, 'Constrained Militants', 381–93.

39 Tony Gatliff (dir.), *Exiles* (2004).

40 Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 57.

41 See Khanna, *Algeria Cuts*, 46. Mustapha Cherif's corroborates this point in his edited collection by offering a set of essays looking at how Algeria had a considerable influence on Derrida's life and work. See Mustapha Cherif (ed.), *Derrida à Alger. Un regard sur le monde* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2008).

42 Benoît Peeters, *Derrida. A Biography*, trans. A. Brown (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 123.

43 Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 58.

44 Ibid., 59.

45 Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 58. 'Tout autre est tout autre' is a significant phrase in relation to the notion of secret as it appears in *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret* where it is a chapter's title and in *I Have a Taste for the Secret*.

46 Moore, 'The Veil of Nationalism', 66.

47 Jeremy Gilbert, 'Public Secrets', *Cultural Studies* 21:1 (2007), 27.

48 Derrida in ibid., 27.

49 Benjamin Stora, for example, talks about the film as a newsreel or whose value lies in its being a historical document. See Benjamin Stora, 'Still Fighting. *The Battle of Algiers*, Censorship and the "Memory Wars"', trans. M. Stevens, *Interventions* 9:3 (2007), 365–70.

50 Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, trans. C. Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 93.

51 Ibid., 96.

52 Ibid., 97.

53 Amrane, 'Women at War', 347.

54 Roberts, 'Constrained Militants', 381–93.

55 Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence*, 18.

56 Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 97.

57 Gillo Pontecorvo (dir.), *The Battle of Algiers* (1966).

58 Valérie Orlando, 'Historiographic Metafiction in Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Bataille d'Alger*: Remembering the "Forgotten War"', *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 17:3 (2003), 270.

59 Ibid., 267.

60 Alex Segal, 'Deconstruction, Radical Secrecy, and the Secret Agent', *Modern Fiction Studies* 54:2 (2008), 192.

61 Amrane, 'Women at War', 349.

62 Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 88–9.

63 Orlando, 'Historiographic Metafiction', 262.

PART THREE

Remembering Algeria

CHAPTER TEN

The Entangled Politics of Postcolonial Commemoration

Jennifer E. Sessions

'The equestrian statue of the Place du Gouvernement still exists . . . I have seen it!'[1] So writes Rémi Laven, a *pied-noir*[2] jazz musician, on a personal webpage recounting his re-discovery of a statue of Ferdinand d'Orléans, crown prince of France's July Monarchy (1830–48), which had stood on Algiers' central square from 1845 until the end of the Algerian War of Independence in 1962. It resides now on a small traffic circle in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, where Laven had stumbled upon it in 2003 (Figure 1). Commissioned from Franco-Italian sculptor Carlo Marochetti after the prince's accidental death in July 1842, and cast from bronze cannon captured at Algiers and Constantine in the 1830s, the statue commemorated the role of the Duc d'Orléans in the July Monarchy's conquest of Algeria.[3] 'Unfortunate' in his early death, Laven's website explains, the prince had become, in statuary form, 'part of the life of Algiers', silhouetted against the blue Mediterranean, the white Djemaa el-Djedid mosque, and the bustling Place du Gouvernement (Figure 2). 'Then came the war [of independence]', on which he refused to dwell, forcing the 'repatriation' of both the monument and Algeria's European residents.[4] Dismantled and shipped to France in 1963, the massive bronze was stored in a military hangar until the mayor of Neuilly 'took the happy measure of extracting the statue from its retirement and restoring it to a worthy setting' in the city where the Orléans family had one of its primary estates and the duke himself had died.

A surprising range of historical actors contributed to bringing Marochetti's *Duc d'Orléans* from Algiers to Neuilly: French military authorities, veterans' groups, cultural officials, members of the French royal family, local politicians in Neuilly and *pied-noir* associations, whose role in resurrecting



FIGURE 1 *Carlo Marochetti's equestrian statue of the Duc d'Orléans on its current site in Neuilly-sur-Seine. Author's photo.*



FIGURE 2 *Postcard of the Djemaa el-Djedid mosque and the statue of the Duc d'Orléans monument in Algiers, published by CAP c. 1914. Author's collection.*

the monument illuminates important, but overlooked dimensions of postcolonial memory in France. The statue has particular significance for *pieds-noirs*, especially Algérois like Rémi Laven, and it is tempting to interpret its restoration as an early salvo in the recent 'memory wars' over France's colonial past.[5] But in fact its reinstallation was not primarily the doing of repatriate activists. *Pied-noir* cultural associations embraced the project, but it originated with royalists and municipal politicians concerned about more local matters. And when repatriates sought to claim the monument as a celebration of their history, their claims had to be negotiated not only in relation to the evolution of collective memory of French colonialism, but also with important shifts in the relationship between the local and the national in postwar France. The monument's return and the multiple meanings attached to it by different groups reflect the entanglement of commemorations of French Algeria with other political and cultural processes that deserve closer attention.

Removed from its pedestal on the eve of Algerian independence in July 1962, the *Duc d'Orléans* was one of the most prominent of some 150 colonial monuments 'repatriated' to continental France to protect them from 'profanation' by newly independent Algerians after the French army's withdrawal.[6] Metropolitan entities had claimed twenty-five of these salvaged monuments by mid-1963, including Marochetti's statue, which was the subject of competing requests from military, repatriate and royalist groups.[7] A veterans' association was the first to claim the *Duc d'Orléans*, as a symbol of French military history. In the autumn of 1962, the National Federation of Light Infantry Veterans approached the Minister of Armies about relocating the sculpture to the Château de Vincennes in honour of the prince's role as founder and patron of the light infantry (*chasseurs à pied*) originally garrisoned there.[8] 'Given the memory of the *chasseurs à pied* that this statue evokes', the army and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs were happy to grant their request. The statue's weight made it impossible to lift onto the chateau grounds, however, and it was moved to a nearby military warehouse where it remained for the next decade.[9]

Repatriates had also advocated for the restoration of the statue soon after its return, but it was French monarchists, national cultural authorities and local officials in Neuilly-sur-Seine who finally brought the *Duc d'Orléans* out of storage. The individuals involved knew of the statue's colonial origins and of *pieds-noirs*' interest in it, but were themselves primarily concerned with its subject as a member of the Orléans royal family with historic ties to Neuilly. As the repatriate community and memories of French Algeria became increasingly politicized in the 1970s, Neuilléen officials foregrounded these local meanings in order to distance their project from growing controversies surrounding the colonial past.

The statue first came to Neuilly's attention in 1974 thanks to Jean-Pierre Babelon, noted historian of the French monarchy and curator of the Museum of the History of France at the National Archives, and Henri d'Orléans,

Comte de Paris, Louis-Philippe's great-great-grandson and pretender to the French throne.[10] To mark the comte's donation of the Orléans family papers to the archives in 1969–70 and the bicentennial of Louis-Philippe's birth in 1973, Babelon was preparing an exhibition about the king's life and reign. Intended to correct longstanding disdain for the comte's royal ancestor as a 'bourgeois' monarch, the exhibition presented Louis-Philippe as 'a reasonable man' whose experience of revolutionary violence had made him a pacifist.[11] The exhibition did nonetheless devote a section to Orléanist colonial policy that featured a small copy of Marochetti's equestrian statue. Researching the reproduction led Babelon to investigate Marochetti's original and then to join Henri d'Orléans in proposing that Neuilly restore it.

The treatment of the Algerian conquest in the National Archives' exhibit reflected royalists' ambivalence towards the colonial origins of the *Duc d'Orléans*. In seeking to recall glorious aspects of Louis-Philippe's rule that had been overshadowed by his overthrow in 1848, they could not escape the fact that the July Monarchy had pursued glory in large part by waging a violent war of aggression in North Africa.[12] The exhibition's organizers therefore framed the Algerian conquest in dynastic terms, downplaying its colonial consequences. Prefatory essays in the catalogue made no mention of the brutal North African war, and the brief introduction to the colonial section noted only that the king had shown an interest in Algeria by sending his sons to fight there. Otherwise, 'Louis-Philippe preferred prudence and saw in conquests and protectorates the source of future difficulties with indigenous peoples and above all with English economic and maritime interests'.[13] His colonial priorities, the passage emphasizes, had been ending the slave trade and improving conditions for slaves, while greedy slave owners, merchants and ship captains were responsible for obstructing abolition and seizing new colonial outposts. Catalogue entries for the small selection of objects tracing the royal family's involvement in Algeria glossed over the July Monarchy's colonization policy as well, and only two even mentioned European settlement in North Africa. The entry for Auguste-Louis Barye's reproduction of the Duc d'Orléans statue adopted a characteristically passive voice to explain that 'when it was decided to build a city on the Chélif river between Oran and Algiers', the town was named 'Orléansville' after the deceased prince 'whose loss everyone regretted'.[14]

Such elision of the processes of dispossession that created European towns like Orléansville (now El-Asnam) was consistent with broader French attitudes towards colonial Algeria in the early 1970s. The Algerian War of Independence was beginning to surface in French print culture, but even the gathering 'avalanche' of self-justifying personal accounts and 'journalistic' histories of the war paid little heed to the preceding decades of conquest and colonization.[15] Memories of the French Algeria to which the Orléanist campaigns and Marochetti's monument belonged, while not entirely silenced, were addressed only indirectly and in a way that avoided painful

questions of historical responsibility for the colonial society it had taken such violence to undo.

Henri d'Orléans had also been seeking a home for the *Duc d'Orléans* since its arrival in France in 1963. Inspired perhaps by the fact that his own eldest son had served in the Algerian War, the comte had first proposed moving the sculpture to the main square in Toulon, from which French forces had departed for Algiers in 1830. This location still held 'far too political' a meaning in the mid-1960s, however, and had to be 'abandoned'. When the *chasseurs'* Vincennes plan failed, he turned his attention to Neuilly, 'where [Ferdinand d'Orléans's] father had lived and where he met with his tragic death'.[16] Thus encouraged by the Orléanist pretender, Babelon approached Monique Pelletier, a member of Neuilly's municipal council, about installing the monument there. 'It is fairly handsome . . . in the style of the glorious statuary of the nineteenth century', Pelletier reported to the mayor, Achille Peretti, and proposed that the Orléans royal family's historic ties to Neuilly made it an appropriate site for the monument.[17]

This shift from consideration of the statue's Algerian roots to its subject's local, royal ties was not driven entirely by the political sensitivities surrounding French colonial history. Since the late 1960s, Henri d'Orléans had become increasingly concerned with his family's historical legacy. In addition to donating the royal papers to the National Archives, in 1971 he had converted the company that held the family's property into a non-profit association and then, in 1974, into an officially recognized public-interest foundation.[18] Although clearly aware of the statue's Algerian antecedents, his primary interest by this time was 'the privileged links that existed and still exist between the city of Neuilly and my family' that he hoped would 'be concretized by this statue whose fate has remained uncertain for so long'.[19]

Peretti's ready accession to Babelon's and Orléans's proposal in the fall of 1974 reflected his own complementary desire to promote Neuilly's status as a royal city at a time when rapid modernization was threatening the community's provincial identity. The explosion of the Paris region in the postwar decades had raised anxieties at all levels of government about the social, environmental and cultural consequences of the capital's 'monstrous growth'.[20] Local administrators struggled to provide housing, transportation, and services for an influx of young families and migrants from rural France and the (former) colonies, while the flood of newcomers and associated construction boom transformed the capital's social and physical geography. Historians are familiar with the politics of urban planning in the working-class periphery of Paris, including racialized debates about immigrant *bidonvilles* (shantytowns), the construction of large modernist housing projects, and efforts to segregate industrial suburbs from the increasingly bourgeois centre of the city.[21] But the capital's seemingly inexorable expansion was of equally pressing concern in its wealthier *banlieues* (suburbs), where leaders feared not marginalization, but absorption into the growing, increasingly diverse metropolis.[22]

A Companion of the Liberation, Achille Peretti was a leading figure in Fifth Republic Gaullism. He served as mayor of Neuilly from 1947 until his death in 1983, as deputy for the Seine and then Hauts-de-Seine from 1958 to 1977, as vice-president and then president of the National Assembly for much of the period 1964–76, and as a member of the Constitutional Council from 1977 to 1983.[23] Despite being parachuted into the municipality, the Corsican-born Peretti won over Neuilly's bourgeois notables by embracing and doggedly defending the city's provincial particularity. Throughout his tenure, Peretti used planning and zoning to defend Neuilly against the adverse effects of modernization and to insulate the city from its working-class neighbours in Boulogne-Billancourt, Nanterre and Levallois. Town plans drawn up during his administration prioritized the preservation of green space, low-density residential land use, and the construction of expensive corporate offices, while restricting industrial development and low-income housing projects in order to 'preserve [Neuilly's] privileged *cadre de vie*' (literally, 'frame of life', or physical environment).[24] The result of these efforts was to drive up real estate prices and cement the city's status as one of France's wealthiest, most exclusive communities, a 'rich ghetto' for the old aristocracy, traditional *grande bourgeoisie* (upper middle class), and new financial elites.[25]

Preservation of Neuilly's ties to the Orléans family contributed to this local politics of social distinction. Since the nineteenth century, French elites had used beautification campaigns and historic preservation laws to defend their own properties and interests, with important consequences in the realm of collective memory. 'The protection of elements of the *patrimoine* (heritage), whether private or public', sociologists Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot argue, 'is always also a protection of the memory of and the inscription of these [elite] families in the *longue durée* (long term)', which in turn defines the national heritage in their image.[26] In Neuilly, the classification of private homes, drives, and gardens as historic sites has served to maintain social and spatial segregation in the name of national heritage, while highlighting the city's royal history, through symbolic gestures such as a 1955 sister city agreement with Windsor, England,[27] legitimizing elite control over urban space. Restoring Marochetti's portrait of the former crown prince fit neatly into this broader preservationist strategy that defined Neuilly as a distinct community identified with French royalty.

Once Peretti agreed to pursue the relocation of the *Duc d'Orléans*, he moved quickly to secure approval from the army and Ministry of Culture. Classification as a 'historical monument' paved the way for the statue's transfer to the municipality and for state subsidization of its restoration costs.[28] The city then had to decide where to put the monument. In keeping with his view of the sculpture as a royal symbol, Peretti first proposed installing it on the grounds of Louis-Philippe's former estate in Neuilly.[29] The chateau itself had been largely destroyed in 1848 and the surrounding

park sold off, but a wing of the palace and a small section of the gardens survived, offering a 'historically pertinent' spot for a likeness of the king's son.[30] A commission of municipal and Culture Ministry officials convened in 1976 determined, however, that the small size of the remaining 'gardenette' would leave the statue looking 'relegated'. Other sites suggested by local historian and municipal director of cultural affairs Pierre Coulomb were dismissed as equally unsuited for a work whose character, size and vertical orientation required an urban setting of grand dimensions. André Donzet, the historical monuments architect assigned to the project, proposed the forecourt of the Hôtel de Ville (town hall) as most appropriately 'monumental' (see Figure 3). 'There it would be possible to create a parvis with an overall composition presenting both the statue and the Hôtel de Ville to best advantage and that would certainly enrich the urban setting.'[31] Peretti agreed, and the Municipal Council approved this site in July 1976.[32]

As at Vincennes a decade earlier, however, the statue's physical properties upset symbolic arrangements. According to Donzet's plans, an underground parking garage beneath the Hôtel de Ville required significant reinforcement to support the monument's weight.[33] This work, Peretti decided, would be too costly, at over a million francs, and too disruptive of the city centre. He therefore suggested the intersection of the boulevards Inkermann and Victor



FIGURE 3 *AMNS 25W 73, André Donzet, plan for the re-erection of the Duc d'Orléans monument in front of the Neuilly city hall, June 1976. Author's photo.*

Hugo. Deemed of a fitting size, but more 'leafy' than 'urban' by Donzet and the commission, this traffic circle was appreciated by the mayor for its 'similarities to the Place des Victoires in Paris, notably in its open perspectives on the adjacent streets and the neighbouring buildings'. But Peretti also saw an opportunity to defend local spatial privilege. 'The construction of a grand traffic circle' at the busy intersection, he explained to the Municipal Council, 'would allow us to kill two birds with one stone by improving traffic conditions and above all parking around this place, which is currently improperly clogged by tour buses serving the Club Méditerranée'.[34] Limiting parking near the luxury apartment buildings overlooking the square would eliminate loud and unsightly vehicles belonging to the mass tourism company from the area, an arrangement he hoped would satisfy neighbourhood residents' 'concerns' about this 'abuse' of their environs.[35] The council approved this final plan in March 1980, and work began to redesign the traffic circle, refurbish the statue and organize a formal inauguration ceremony for early 1981.[36]

At this late stage in the project, the statue's Algerian origins suddenly resurfaced and threatened to redefine Neuilly's local, royalist project in national, postcolonial terms. The city's plan to resurrect Marochetti's *Duc d'Orléans* coincided with the emergence of a new kind of memorial activism among Algerian repatriates. In the 1960s, *pied-noir* organizations had focused on practical questions of housing, employment and indemnification, but in the mid-1970s new associations concerned primarily with culture and memory began to form. Led by the Algerianist Circle (f. 1973), these groups sought to preserve and promote a French-Algerian history they saw as 'imperiled' by the passage of time and official 'lies' about the colonial past.[37] In the context of public ignorance or criticism of French rule in North Africa, these memory activists presented a 'pied-noir' vision of a progressive, harmonious, colonial society that served to both anchor repatriate collective identity and legitimize political demands for recognition and indemnification.

As scholars of *pied-noir* memory emphasize, the experience of physical displacement and the loss of material *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) have made place and Algeria's physical environment central to memorial activities that seek to 'recreate Algeria in France' through publishing picture books, memoirs and histories; re-enacting religious rituals and old forms of colonial sociability; and visiting Malta or, more recently, Algeria.[38] Less familiar are efforts to establish physical monuments to French Algeria that long predate the wave of highly publicized monument-building sparked by the 'memory wars' of the 1990s. The focus of this memorial activity in the years after independence was replacing family tombs and war memorials left behind in North Africa. As early as 1964, provincial sections of the National Association of the French from North Africa, from Overseas, and their Friends (ANFANOMA) began to work with municipalities to place markers in local cemeteries where *pieds-noirs* could gather to mourn and honour their dead on religious and political holidays.[39] In a parallel, more

ad hoc process, individuals and local groups sought to resurrect 'the décor of their daily life' in colonial Algeria, by finding new homes for repatriated objects ranging from church bells to war memorials.[40] One of the Algerianist Circle's early projects was an inventory by amateur historian Alain Amato of 'monuments in exile', intended to serve as a guide to 'the vestiges of our Algeria' and 'relics of our former *cadre de vie*' that had survived decolonization.[41] These efforts to recreate the remembered landscapes of French Algeria shaped *pieds-noirs'* initial responses to the re-erection of the *Duc d'Orléans* in Neuilly. The statue was among the first "'star" monuments' that Amato located,[42] and word spread quickly through repatriate associational networks that Neuilly and the Ministry of Culture were helping 'this monument to find once again a place worthy of the memories it evokes'.[43]

At the same time, repatriates were gaining prominence in national politics, as Jacques Roseau's Unified Assembly and Coordination of Rapatriates and the Despoiled (RECOURS) confederation began trying to mobilize a *pied-noir* voting bloc in 1976. No singular '*pied-noir* vote' ever actually emerged, but French political parties, locked in tight national races, began to court this potential electorate. In the 1978 legislative campaign, for example, the centre-right president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, appeared at a RECOURS meeting to assure repatriates of his attention to their problems, while socialist candidate François Mitterrand made satisfying repatriates' economic demands a central plank of his 1980–1 run for the presidency.[44] Exactly how these electoral tactics played out in Neuilly is difficult to discern. Few *pieds-noirs* settled in Neuilly proper, but Peretti had served on a parliamentary commission on repatriate indemnification in 1965 and his position in the national Gaullist party would have made him aware of the larger political context.[45] Whatever the source of their sensitivity, local officials were cognizant that 'repatriates from North Africa would appreciate Neuilly's gesture' in restoring an Algerian monument.[46] The statue's colonial origins and consequent appeal to *pieds-noirs* figured with greater prominence in Neuilly's framing of the Duc d'Orléans monument as repatriates' political profile rose in the 1970s, even if they remained secondary to Neuilly's royal heritage.

Initially, *pieds-noirs'* desire to see Marochetti's statue returned to public view was useful to municipal officials. Emphasizing 'how much the repatriates from Algeria are attached to this important souvenir of the French presence in North Africa' helped Peretti convince the Ministry of Culture to cover half, rather than the usual 35 per cent, of restoration costs, for example.[47] When Donzet's plans dragged, repatriate leaders helped the mayor pressure the government to accelerate his work.[48] *Pied-noir* activists' personal connections to the historical monuments official responsible for the project, himself a repatriate from Algiers who shared their desire 'to find once again a place of honour for the statue', seem also to have aided Neuilly's requests for additional state support.[49]

As the project neared completion in 1980, Peretti and Neuilly's cultural service publicized the restoration and planned an inauguration ceremony that would celebrate the statue as a symbol of both royal and repatriate histories. A pair of lengthy articles published in the municipal magazine, *Neuilly Indépendant*, in early 1980 situated the monument in both historical frameworks. On the one hand, they lauded the Duc d'Orléans for his 'brilliant' role in the Algerian conquest, recounted the statue's colonial origins, and emphasized Neuilly's desire to return it 'identically' to its condition in Algiers, down to the dedicatory plaque reading, 'The Army and the Population of Algeria to the Duc d'Orléans, Prince Royal, 1842'. On the other, the magazine reminded readers of the duke's leadership during the July Monarchy and compared Neuilly's conservation efforts to those of Versailles, which also cherished its historical ties to the French monarchy.[50] Members of the Orléans family and of dozens of national repatriate associations were invited to the inauguration ceremony, along with veterans' association leaders and municipal, departmental, regional and ministerial officials.[51] Both royalists and repatriates were pleased to be included, and saw the invitation as an official recognition of their respective histories. For the Comte de Paris, the unveiling would mark the moment 'the Duc d'Orléans, son of King Louis-Philippe, will return to where he lived with his parents'.[52] Repatriate leaders for their part expected an 'homage to the Prince who had raised our flag . . . over the Algerian soil' and 'an honour . . . to our *pays natal* (native country)'.[53]

Yet when the inauguration finally took place on 13 February 1981, *pieds-noirs*, who made up most of the audience on a freezing winter morning,[54] were profoundly disappointed. Repatriate publications noted some gratifying features of the proceedings: A military band sent by the chasseurs had played the *Sidi Brahim*, the regimental anthem that recalled an 1845 battle in Algeria, alongside the *Marseillaise*. Honoured guests included repatriate leaders and Si Hamza Boubakeur, the rector of the Paris mosque, celebrated by *pieds-noirs* for his loyalty to France during and after the Algerian War. Speeches by Peretti and Culture Minister Jean-Philippe Lecat each mentioned the statue's Algerian origins, and Peretti described its return as a 'reparation'. But neither, according to repatriate reports, had sufficiently acknowledged the statue's special meaning to their community, *pieds-noirs*' contributions to 'France's civilizing work in Algeria', or their subsequent suffering in exile.[55] 'If the first speaker [Peretti] alluded to the repatriate organizations once', Alain Amato remarked bitterly, 'the second [Lecat] ignored us entirely'.[56] Others charged that the ceremony had deliberately been scheduled to limit repatriate attendance or to preclude school trips to an event recognizing *pieds-noirs*' history.[57] Such complaints rehearsed well-worn elements of a self-justifying discourse of *pied-noir* victimization, but they were not wrong that the inauguration ceremony had done less to represent their perspective than they had been led to expect. Despite the perceived electoral advantages of appealing to the *pied-noir* community,

Peretti and Lecat had deliberately sought to distance themselves from repatriates as commemorating French Algeria became increasingly controversial in the months before the statue's inauguration.

In the most striking sign of rising tensions over repatriates' demands for historical legitimization, a memorial raised in Toulon to the 'martyrs of French Algeria' by supporters of the pro-French Algeria Secret Army Organization (OAS) was bombed by unknown protestors a week before its scheduled inauguration in June 1980. The bas-relief sculpture representing Lieutenant Roger Degueldre, an OAS commander executed in 1962 for the attempted assassination of Charles de Gaulle, was contentious enough itself, but the inauguration ceremony held on 14 June – the sesquicentennial of the French landing in Algeria – added fuel to the fire. A speech by Jacques Dominati, Secretary of State to the Prime Minister for repatriate affairs, was interrupted by shouts of 'Amnesty!' and 'Rehabilitation!' from OAS sympathizers, while others took the minister's presence at an event featuring OAS speakers as a tacit endorsement of pro-French Algeria terrorism.[58] Brought to national attention by these disturbances, Dominati's participation in the ceremony was denounced in the press and by Gaullists, Socialists and Communists in the National Assembly as a 'scandal' and a 'provocation'.[59]

The Toulon affair resulted in part from Gaullist opposition to Giscard's Union for French Democracy (UDF) in the intensifying presidential campaign.[60] But it also showed the potential dangers of visible alignment with *pied-noir* demands for historical recognition when efforts by OAS veterans and sympathizers to rehabilitate militants like Degueldre easily revived wartime accusations that settlers and other hard-line defenders of French Algeria were 'fascists'.[61] In finalizing plans for the inauguration of the Marochetti statue, therefore, Peretti tried to avoid overly close identification with the repatriates that might link Neuilly's statue with the martyrs' memorial. Even as he privately reassured *pied-noir* correspondents and emphasized to colleagues and the press that the repatriate presence would give the event 'national importance',[62] the mayor designed the ceremony to 'avoid all intrusion into the political domain' that might 'give rise to incidents ... of the sort that my excellent friend J. Dominati encountered in Toulon'.[63] Dominati was invited, but, the mayor explained, would be introduced simply as Secretary of State to the Prime Minister 'without mentioning your position as *chargé de rapatriés* [the ministerial official responsible for repatriates] for reasons that cannot escape a subtle politician like yourself'. Prime Minister Raymond Barre declined to participate at all, for political reasons that Peretti also saw no need to spell out.[64] Elaborate security measures were implemented to forestall any 'incidents of a political nature' during the event, as well. Police agents were assigned to guard against 'any depredations to the Monument or hostile inscriptions on the facades of the surrounding buildings' in the week before the inauguration, while city cleaning crews stood ready to repair any damage. During the ceremony itself, plainclothes policemen circulated

through the crowd to identify and arrest any troublemakers, and a large reserve force was stationed nearby 'to intervene rapidly and effectively in case of troubles'.[65]

At the same time, Peretti and his collaborators turned to the cultural liberalism of President Giscard d'Estaing as a way to make coded appeals to repatriate audiences without explicitly endorsing their increasingly controversial historical claims. The centrist Giscard espoused a pluralist conception of national unity that 'valorized the common bases of French civilization in the multitude of its "natural" local expressions' in order to transcend the nation's social and ideological cleavages.[66] This vision culminated in the designation of 1980 as the 'Année du Patrimoine', a year-long heritage celebration that encouraged each region and locality to 'express its own cultural identity', which together made up the 'single and diverse ensemble' of the nation.[67] This discourse of unity in diversity, which encompassed all aspects of French history while emptying them of any divisive ideological significance, offered a seemingly inoffensive framing for a restored colonial monument. In planning the inauguration, Peretti and Lecat therefore agreed that the presence of Dominati and Monique Pelletier, now a junior minister in the Barre government, would 'honour the repatriates', but any speeches should place the monument under the flag of the Année du Patrimoine.[68] Lecat's brief remarks described the restoration of the statue as 'first and foremost an act by [Peretti's] commune in favour of . . . its *patrimoine*'. 'At a time when municipal leaders' conscience of the stakes and values of the *patrimoine* is growing, the city of Neuilly demonstrates, by an original and symbolic gesture, the attachment of its inhabitants to the history of France, to our cultural values.' Peretti, after retracing the history of the monument and its path to Neuilly, concluded similarly that 'Through this monument, we honour France, one and indivisible in her history'.[69]

Pied-noir cultural associations initially saw Giscardian pluralism as an opening for their own reincorporation into the French nation. 'We are provincials without a province, Algerian-French or simply Algerians like others are Bretons, Corsicans, or Occitans', wrote Maurice Calmein, founder and president of the Algerianist Circle, in 1981: 'our dearest wish is to integrate ourselves into the heart of the French nation while having others accept our provincial identity.'[70] The liberal affirmation of 'regional particularisms' seemed to suggest the time had come for 'the French province of Algeria . . . to resume its place in the national collectivity'.[71] The failure of the Giscard government to deliver on this 'moral' promise, however, disillusioned repatriates, and by 1981, coded allusions to unity in diversity were insufficient for *pied-noir* attendees at the inauguration in Neuilly. According to the ANFANOMA journal *France-Horizon*, the ceremony 'was, in reality, an event to the glory of the Orléans family and of the French culture that makes up the patrimony of a Republic "one and indivisible" [*sic*]. And this last phrase raised a stir in the circle of repatriates', who

murmured audibly at the speakers' failure to mention the French presence in Algeria specifically.[72]

Nor did the rhetoric of liberalism and local *patrimoine* succeed in dissociating the restored monument from the *pieds-noirs* and their demands for historical legitimization in the eyes of the broader public. Even before the inauguration, public announcements of the event had highlighted the statue's colonial origins, named Dominati as *chargé des rapatriés*, and anticipated the emotions that the restored statue would inspire in repatriates.[73] Contrary to historians' claims that the Algerian War was still 'forgotten' at this time, many observers similarly identified the statue primarily in terms of its colonial past. Those on the left, especially, denounced its ceremonial unveiling by representatives of the state as an official endorsement of *pieds-noirs'* whitewashed vision of Algerian history.[74] *L'Humanité*, in an article reprinted by several other left-wing newspapers, dubbed the inauguration a 'ceremony of shame', and suggested that it embodied the full circle France had come from wartime violence and torture of Algerian nationalists to the exploitation and ghettoization of immigrant workers.[75] For the Nanterre communist daily *L'Eveil*, even defining the monument in terms of its relationship to the Orléans royal family did nothing to counter its colonialist symbolism, since 'the eldest son of King Louis-Philippe won renown in the late 1830s through the massacres and pillages that marked the "conquest of Algeria"'. Re-erecting a statue of such a man in the presence of government ministers thus amounted to a 'rehabilitation' of French imperialism and a clear statement that the President 'renounces none of that history', a point that 'will not fail to go straight to the heart of the families of the millions of Algerian victims of colonialist war, of racist barbarity'.[76] That such criticisms were likely inspired as much by political and social resentments of conservative, exclusive Neuilly among leftists in neighbouring working-class communities as by the Marochetti monument itself highlights the ways in which the politics of postcolonial memory were intertwined with contemporary local tensions.

Moreover, these attacks had little lasting effect in Neuilly, where Marochetti's equestrian statue has largely faded into the background of daily life. Cars breeze by without stopping through the renamed Place du Duc d'Orléans, now long cleared of the offensive Club Med buses, while recent guidebooks and the city's official website describe the statue only briefly without necessarily referring to its Algerian origins.[77] Like most remnants of nineteenth-century 'statuomania', the original political symbolism and even the subject of the *Duc d'Orléans* have evaporated for all but a few passers-by. The primary exception is *pieds-noirs* for whom the statue has become a site of self-described 'pilgrimage'.[78] Former Algérois, in particular, travel both physically and virtually to see this fragment of their former home, and repatriate groups occasionally gather at its feet to mark significant anniversaries tied to French Algeria and the Algerian War.[79] But even those who experience 'joy mixed with nostalgia' upon rediscovering the statue can

be disappointed by its new surroundings, much as *pied-noir* travellers are often saddened by the differences between contemporary Algeria and their own memories of the colonial period.[80] 'I really did have before me the statue come from *là-bas* [over there]', wrote one *pied-noir* visitor, but there was 'no mosque behind it nor blue sky above' anymore.[81] The gulf between its current setting and its remembered Algerian environment is a reminder of the statue's displacement, leaving only the impossible dream of returning to a lost place and time.

These variable interpretations of Carlo Marochetti's equestrian statue of the Duc d'Orléans reflect the multiplicity of meanings attached to the monument over the course of its journey from Algiers to Neuilly. More than a singular process of coming to terms with the colonial past, that voyage began in the multivalent decolonization struggle and ended with the convergence of *pied-noir* cultural activism with the local politics of postwar urban planning, national electoral politics and liberal regionalism in the 1970s. The history of French Algeria was woven through all of these contexts, but we have seen that the dynamics of postcolonial memory in France did not operate solely within colonial or imperial frameworks. The monument's resurrection in Neuilly highlights the permeation of the colonial past into even very local memories and civic identities in France, but also shows that postcolonial commemoration, like the history of colonialism itself, is entangled with multiple processes whose scale and concerns are local, national and even global.

Notes

1 'Histoire de la statue' (November 2003), www.remylaven.free.fr/histoire_de_statue.html (accessed 19 November 2014).

2 The term *pied-noir* refers to former European inhabitants of French Algeria who resettled in metropolitan France after Algerian independence. Originally pejorative, the label has been subsequently reclaimed by the community. The *pieds-noirs* are a sub-set of the larger group known as 'repatriates' (*rapatriés*), which also includes Algerian auxiliary troops who fought with the French in the Algerian War, known as *harkis*.

3 A second copy, originally located in the Cour Carrée of the Louvre in Paris, is now at the Musée Louis-Philippe in Eu (Seine Maritime).

4 'Repatriation' is a rather misleading term for this process insofar as many of the individuals concerned were not born in metropolitan France and, in some cases, had never even been to the metropole before resettling there. The same applies to monuments constructed by settlers in Algeria and transported to France after the war, although the *Duc d'Orléans* itself had been designed and cast in Paris.

5 See, among others, Benjamin Stora, *La guerre des mémoires: la France face à son passé colonial* (La Tour d'Aigues: Aube, 2007); Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (eds), *Les guerres de mémoires: la France et son histoire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010).

6 Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes (hereafter SHD), 1H 4415/4, général Kergaravat, note de service, 26 April 1962. Other notable repatriated monuments included statues of General Bugeaud and Jeanne d'Arc (Algiers), Sergeant Blandan (Boufarick), and General Lamoricière (Constantine).

7 SHD 1H 2116, 'Liste des principaux monuments commémoratifs ou statues érigés en Algérie se rapportant à l'action de la France depuis 1830' and 'Liste complémentaire des souvenirs militaires en Algérie', both n.d. [c. 1963].

8 Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris, dossier PM92000195 (hereafter MAP), Pierre Messmer, ministre des Armées, to André Malraux, ministre d'État chargé des Affaires culturelles, 20 November 1962; Jacques Duhamel, ministre des Affaires culturelles, to Jean Sainteny, 10 December 1971; 'Rapport présenté par M. l'Architecte en chef A. J. Donzet le 23 juin 1978, à l'appui d'un projet de travaux ayant pour objet: Restoration de la statue et reconstitution du monument', 31 October 1979 (hereafter Donzet report).

9 MAP, Malraux to Messmer, [illeg.] October 1963; Alain Amato, *Monuments en exil* (Paris: Éditions de l'Atlanthrope, 1979), 150–3.

10 Archives municipales de Neuilly-sur-Seine (hereafter AMNS), 345 W6, Monique Pelletier, 'Statue équestre de Ferdinand, fils de Louis-Philippe', 2 July 1974; Jean-Pierre Babelon, 'Note relative aux statues de Ferdinand, Duc d'Orléans, prince royal, fils aîné de Louis-Philippe', n.d. [c. 1979].

11 'Louis-Philippe, l'homme et le roi aux Archives nationales', exhibition pamphlet (n.p., n.d. [Paris, 1974]); Jean-Pierre Babelon, 'Louis-Philippe, l'homme et le roi', in *Louis-Philippe, l'homme et le roi, 1773–1850* (Paris: Archives nationales, 1974), 13.

12 Jennifer Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 67–124.

13 *Louis-Philippe*, 112.

14 Ibid., 118.

15 Anne Donadey, '"Une Certaine Idée de la France": The Algeria Syndrome and Struggles over "French" Identity', in *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France*, ed. Steven Ungar and Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 218; Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, 2nd edn (Paris: La Découverte, 1998), 221, 248, 255; Jo McCormack, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954–1962)* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 25–7.

16 MAP, comte de Paris to Jean-Philippe Lecat, ministre de la Culture et des Communications, 19 March 1979.

17 AMNS 345 W6, Pelletier, 'Statue équestre'.

18 MAP, comte de Paris to Lecat, 19 March 1979; www.fondation-saint-louis.com/page/conditions-de-sa-creation (accessed 4 July 2016).

19 AMNS 345 W6, comte de Paris, to Peretti, 16 September 1976.

20 Georges Coudray, speech to Assemblée nationale, 19 July 1960, *Journal officiel de la République française* (hereafter *JO*), 20 July 1960, 2013.

21 Tyler Stovall, *The Rise of the Paris Red Belt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Rosemary Wakeman, 'Nostalgic Modernism and the Invention of Paris in the Twentieth Century', *French Historical Studies* 27:1 (2004), 115–44; Annie Fourcaut, 'Les premiers grands ensembles en région parisienne: ne pas refaire la banlieue?', *French Historical Studies* 27:1 (2004), 195–218; Paul Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 76–120.

22 Pierre Coulomb, *Neuilly des origines à nos jours* ([Courbevoie]: M. Gonon, 1966), 329–30.

23 'Achille Peretti (1911–1983)', www.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche.asp?num_dept=5780 (accessed 4 July 2016).

24 Coulomb, *Neuilly*, 222–3; Pierre Flageollet, *Vie et histoire de Neuilly-sur-Seine* (Paris: Hervas, 1997), 37; Peretti, speech to Assemblée nationale, 14 October 1961, *JO*, 14 October 1961, 2547–8; Peretti, speech to Assemblée nationale, 12 November 1964, *JO*, 13 November 1964, 5348; Peretti, speech to Assemblée nationale, 10 November 1965, *JO*, 11 November 1965, 4628–30. Quote 'Neuilly en chronologie', www.neuillysurseine.fr/neuilly-en-chronologie (accessed 4 July 2016).

25 Adeline Fleury, *Neuilly, village people* (Paris: Éditions du Moment, 2008), 22–3, 117; Monique Pinçon-Charlot, Edmond Preteceille, and Paul Rendu, *Ségrégation urbaine: classes sociales et équipements collectifs en région parisienne* (Paris: Anthropos, 1986), 52–6.

26 Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot, *Les ghettos du Gotha: comment la bourgeoisie défend ses espaces* (Paris: Seuil, 2007), 17.

27 Coulomb, *Neuilly*, 325.

28 MAP, conservateur régional des Monuments historiques de l'Ile de France to Trésorier payeur général des Yvelines, 4 April 1980; commission supérieure des Monuments historiques, arrêté of 24 December 1974.

29 MAP, commission supérieure des Monuments historiques (3e section), procès-verbal du séance du 9 Décembre 1974; B. de Saint-Victor, note pour M. Feray, 12 November 1974; Marc Canaut to Donzet, 24 January 1975.

30 Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, *Les ghettos du Gotha*, 216; MAP, Jean-Pierre Leclerc, directeur du cabinet du secrétaire d'État à la Culture, to général Favreau, 10 March 1977.

31 MAP, Donzet report; compte-rendu of commission meeting of 30 April 1976, Donzet to Peretti, 7 May 1976.

32 AMNS, délibérations du Conseil municipal, 5 July 1976.

33 MAP, Donzet report.

34 AMNS, délibérations du Conseil municipal, 7 December 1979 and 27 March 1980.

35 AMNS 345 W6, Peretti to inhabitants of place du Duc d'Orléans, 12 January 1981.

36 AMNS, délibérations du Conseil municipal, 27 March 1980; MAP, C. Pattyn, directeur du Patrimoine, to conservateur régional des Monuments historiques

en Ile-de-France, 16 May 1980; AMNS 345 W6, 'Le statue équestre du Duc d'Orléans', n.d. [*c.* February 1981].

37 'Manifeste du Cercle algérianiste', 1 November 1973, *L'Algérianiste*, special issue (1975).

38 Andrea Smith, *Colonial Memory in Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), esp. 210–31; Claire Eldridge, "The Mobilisation and Transmission of Memories within the Pied-Noir and Harki Communities, 1962–2007," PhD thesis, University of St. Andrews, 2009, 60–5; Valérie Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord de 1956 à nos jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 335–56; Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De l'exode à l'exil: rapatriés et pieds-noirs en France. L'exemple marseillais, 1954–1992* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), 119–23, 183–200; Eric Savarèse, 'Amère patrie: Une note sur le retour des pieds-noirs en Algérie', *Critique internationale* 2:47 (2010), 77–90.

39 The first 'stèle des Rapatriés' (Repatriates stele) was inaugurated in Arles in December 1964. *France-Horizon*, December 1964, 1, 12.

40 Paul Belmondo, preface to Amato, *Monuments en exil*, 8.

41 AMNS 25W 73, Alain Amato, 'Notice d'information concernant le guide des monuments exilés', n.d. [1976].

42 'Guide des monuments exiles', *L'Algérianiste*, December 1976, 3; AMNS 25W 73, Amato to Peretti, 26 July 1976.

43 MAP, Gérard Faivre, président de la Maison des agriculteurs français d'Algérie, to Lecat, 28 March 1980.

44 Esclangon-Morin, *Les rapatriés*, 152, 236–42. On *pied-noir* voting patterns, see Emmanuelle Comtat, 'La question du vote Pied-noir', *Pôle Sud* 24:1 (2006), 75–88; Eric Savarèse, 'Un regard compréhensif sur le "traumatisme historique": A propos du vote Front national des pieds-noirs', *Pôle Sud* 34:1 (2011), 91–104.

45 Michelle Guillon, 'Les rapatriés d'Algérie dans la région parisienne', *Annales de géographie* 83, no. 460 (1974), 673; Yann Scioldo-Zürcher, *Devenir métropolitain: politique d'intégration et parcours des rapatriés d'Algérie en métropole (1954–2005)* (Paris: EHESS, 2010), 244.

46 AMNS 345 W6, Pierre Coulomb, 'Statue de Louis-Philippe' [*sic*], 4 September 1974.

47 AMNS 345 W6, Peretti to Lecat, 24 April 1980. Also in MAP.

48 AMNS 345 W6, Peretti to presidents of repatriate associations, 8 January 1981; Gérard Faivre to Peretti, 19 May 1980.

49 MAP, Pierre Dussaule to Louis Vayne, 9 February 1976.

50 'Deux statues: deux destinées', *Neuilly indépendant* (January 1980), 18; Achille Peretti, 'Éditorial. L'Année du patrimoine. Le Duc d'Orléans . . . et le libéralisme', *Neuilly indépendant*, March 1980, 3.

51 AMNS 25W 73, invitation lists, December 1979–January 1981. Repatriate guests were suggested by Colonal Jean Le Dentu, vice-president of the Algerianist Circle's Paris section and an honorary Neuilly municipal councillor.

52 AMNS 345 W6, comte de Paris to Peretti, 19 January 1981.

53 AMNS 345 W6, Jacques Vaysse-Tempe to Peretti, 5 February 1981; AMNS 25W 73, Le Dentu to Peretti, 9 January 1981.

54 'Rencontre à Neuilly', *L'Algérianiste*, 15 May 1981, xiv.

55 *Français d'Afrique du Nord et d'Outre-Mer*, 27 February 1981; *France-Horizon,* March 1981.

56 'Recontre à Neuilly', xv.

57 [Pierre Pujo], 'Rapatriée d'Algérie. La statue du Duc d'Orléans à Neuilly', *Aspects de la France*, 19 February 1981; AMNS 345 W6, Duconge (Centre de documentation historique sur l'Algérie) to Peretti, 12 February 1981.

58 France 3, *Le journal de Provence Méditerranée*, 14 June 1980, television broadcast, 02:25m www.ina.fr/video/RAC00003409 (accessed 4 July 2016); 'Gaullists mark Resistance day with two successes', *The Guardian* (London), 19 June 1980.

59 Pierre Messmer, speech to Assemblée nationale, 17 June 1980, *JO*, 18 June 1980, 1896.

60 'Giscard Cancels Speech Under Gaullist Pressure', *Washington Post*, 19 June 1980.

61 Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 263; Alexander Harrison, *Challenging De Gaulle: The O.A.S. and the Counterrevolution in Algeria 1954–1962* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 139–56.

62 AMNS 345 W6, Peretti to Jean Troullieur, 9 February 1981; Peretti to news directors, 4 February 1981; AMNS 25W 73, Peretti to Jean Terrade, préfet des Hauts-de-Seine, n.d. [January 1981].

63 AMNS 345 W6, Peretti to Lecat, 19 January 1981.

64 AMNS 345 W6, Peretti to Dominati, 20 January 1981; Peretti to Lecat, 24 December 1980.

65 AMNS 25W 73, 'Service d'ordre à l'occasion de l'inauguration de la statue du Duc d'Orléans le 13 février 1981', 7 February 1981; Ordre de service, 'Inauguration de la statue équestre du Duc d'Orléans à Neuilly-sur-Seine', 11 February 1981.

66 Yvon Lamy, 'Du monument au patrimoine. Matériaux pour l'histoire politique d'une protection', *Genèses* 11 (1993), 70. See also Patrick Garcia, 'Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, la modernité et l'histoire', in *Politiques du passé. Usages politiques du passé dans la France contemporaine*, ed. Claire Andrieu et al. (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 2006), 119–32.

67 'Interview de M. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing accordée au *Figaro Magazine* du 8 mars 1980, à l'occasion de l'Année du Patrimoine', www.discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/807005400.html (accessed 19 November 2014).

68 AMNS 345 W6, Peretti to Lecat, 24 December 1980.

69 AMNS 345 W6, text of speeches by Peretti and Lecat.

70 'Le défi algérianiste', *L'Algérianiste*, 15 September 1981, 5; 'Vers l'âge de raison . . .', *L'Algérianiste*, 16 June 1979, 3.

71 'Appellation contrôlée', *L'Algérianiste*, special issue, 1977, 7.

72 'La statue du Duc d'Orléans autrefois à Alger est maintenant réérigée à Neuilly-sur-Seine', *France-Horizon*, March 1981; Pujo, 'Rapatriée d'Algérie', 1.

73 Anne Nourry, 'La statue du Duc d'Orléans inaugurée une second fois', *France Soir*, 13 February 1981; 'Le carnet', *Le Parisien libéré*, 13 February 1981.

74 'Urbanisme. Trois ministres inaugurent, à Neuilly, la statue du Duc d'Orléans', *Le Monde*, 15 February 1981; 'D'Alger à Paris: 20 ans', *L'Aurore*, 14 February 1981; 'La statue du Duc d'Orléans inaugurée à Neuilly', *Le Parisien libéré,* 14 February 1981; 'Le Comte de Paris salue son ancêtre', *France Soir*, 14 February 1981.

75 'La cérémonie de la honte', *L'Humanité*, 14 February 1981. Reprinted in *L'Humanité dimanche*, 15 February 1981, and *Révolution*, 20 February 1981.

76 'La cérémonie de la honte', *L'Eveil à Nanterre*, 19 February 1981.

77 *Petit Futé Hauts-de-Seine* (Paris: Nouvelles éditions de l'Université, 2005), 174; Laurence Jankowski de Niewmierycki et al. (eds), *Le patrimoine des communes des Hauts-de-Seine*, 2nd edn (Charenton-le-Pont: Flohic, 1994), 304; 'Neuilly en chronologie'.

78 AMNS 345 W6, Mme Bain to Peretti, 20 March 1981.

79 AMNS 345 W6, Roland Blanquer, president of L'Algérienne, to Peretti, 19 February 1981.

80 Savarèse, 'Amère patrie', 83–4.

81 AMNS 345 W6, Jean Troullieur to Peretti, 30 January 1981.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Passing the Torch:

Memory Transmission and Activism within the *Pied-Noir* Community Fifty Years after Algerian Independence

Claire Eldridge

Anniversaries provide useful occasions for historians of memory, among others, to take stock. They enable us to assess how, or if, certain events are being remembered, to think about which stories are being told, whose voices are being heard, and who is listening. Marking fifty years since Algeria achieved independence from France, 2012 offers a particularly interesting example of this process. The semi-centennial was unquestionably an important historical juncture for both countries, but it was equally a challenging occasion for the French and Algerian governments as each sought to construct particular narratives about their turbulent shared history and its contemporary significance.[1] The fact that both nations also held major elections in 2012 provided an additional element of frisson as commemorative debates repeatedly became entangled with electoral politics and politicking.[2] This chapter aims to provide an overview of the tone and content of these national commemorations before disaggregating this picture in order to explore the ways in which one specific community, the *pieds-noirs* or former settlers from French Algeria, engaged with and were affected by the events of 2012. For *pieds-noirs*, 2012 signalled fifty years since Algerian independence but also since their million-strong mass

migration to France.[3] Over the course of the intervening five decades, *pied-noir* activists have mobilized to defend the material and cultural interests of their community and to secure a place for their history within France's national commemorative narrative. Through these efforts *pieds-noirs* have played a significant role within the evolving landscape of postcolonial French memory politics. By taking stock of the community's position and priorities amidst the 2012 commemorations, this chapter will underline the extent to which current debates regarding the Algerian War have been shaped by *pied-noir* activism while also highlighting the challenges faced by the community, particularly with regard to the thorny issue of memory transmission between generations.

National commemorations of 1962

In 2004, the half-century anniversary of the outbreak of the War of Independence on 1 November 1954 was celebrated in Algeria in a broadly straightforward and consensual manner as 'shorthand for idealistic courage and patriotism'. Commemorating the end of the conflict, however, proved more complex.[4] July 1962 signalled not only the independence of the Algerian people from colonial rule, but the start of a brutal struggle for power among rival factions within the National Liberation Front (FLN) that would ultimately see the army's choice, Ahmed Ben Bella, installed as President that autumn, only to be overthrown three years later by his former ally Houari Boumediene. For many Algerians the history of these early years have thus come to represent 'the confiscation of the fruits of independence by a self-serving politico-military elite'.[5] The lack of political transparency that has characterized FLN rule over the past five decades and the country's ongoing social and economic problems have further entrenched this perception, creating a deep disenchantment, especially among younger generations, with the official nationalist narrative of 1954 to 1962 as a glorious revolution by and for the Algerian people.[6] The extensive and extravagant state-orchestrated celebrations – which in addition to the main ceremony to mark the day of independence itself included abundant military parades, a light show at the port of Sidi Fredj (where French troops first landed in 1830), a Rio-style carnival in the town of Oran, and a musical spectacular in Algiers featuring more than 800 artists retracing the nation's history and attended by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika – unsurprisingly omitted these controversial elements. As did the sixteen-page spread purchased by the Algerian state in the 4 July issue of *Le Monde,* which was used in large part to outline the many achievements of the regime under Bouteflika to a global audience.

This celebratory narrative was, however, punctuated by critical commentary from the independent press in Algeria concerning both the official events (especially their cost given the country's precarious economic

position amidst falling oil prices) and the ruling regime's post-independence track record. Critical reflection was further evident in two academic conferences sponsored by the dailies *La Tribune* (in conjunction with the National Centre for Prehistoric, Anthropological and Historical Research) and *El Watan* pointedly titled 'Algeria fifty years on: free history' (1–3 July, Algiers) and 'Fifty years after independence: what destiny for which Algeria?' (5–7 July, Algiers).[7] Small-scale protests by a range of disaffected groups, including the families of those who 'disappeared' during the violence of the 1990s, were also staged at various points during the official commemorations.

Across the Mediterranean, the question for the French government was how to commemorate the loss of arguably their most significant imperial territory at the conclusion of a costly, bitterly divisive and ultimately humiliating military conflict that severely tarnished the country's international reputation. This was especially tricky given that the Algerian War and its legacies, which are understood in very different ways by the multiple communities in France with a connection to this past, continue to provoke controversy and acrimonious debate on a regular basis. These issues were underlined by the fact that no official ceremonies were held on either 19 March (the date of the signature of the Evian ceasefire accords) or 5 July. Nor were any French representatives invited to the 5 July ceremonies in Algeria. Although, at the close of the year the newly inaugurated President François Hollande, attempting to repair relations rendered fragile by, amongst other things, his predecessor Sarkozy's strong anti-repentance stance, used his first state visit to the country to acknowledge the 'suffering' imposed by colonialism.

In contrast to the reticence of the state, the anniversary was widely documented and discussed in the French media, via conferences and publications (115 books on the topic appeared between January and June 2012 alone), through exhibitions, concerts and other cultural endeavours, as well as through local or group-specific commemorative acts.[8] Perhaps the most notable public event was the exhibition 'Algeria: 1830–1962' held in France's national military museum at the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris. Combining historical artefacts with illustrations produced by the Algeria-born *bande dessinée* artist Jacques Ferrandez, the exhibition attracted 44,000 visitors over the course of its three-month run.[9] As Isabel Hollis notes, situated in the 7th *arrondisement,* a stone's throw from the National Assembly and other republican political institutions, the location of the exhibition symbolized how the War of Independence had progressively worked its way from the margins into the centre of French consciousness, a shift further highlighted by the prominence of postcolonial social and cultural issues within the concurrently unfolding presidential election campaign.[10]

French media coverage of the anniversary year was extensive, comprising a range of glossy supplements, souvenir issues and specially commissioned documentaries and debates, particularly around 19 March and 5 July. Echoing the aim of the 'Algeria 1830–1962' exhibit organizers to concentrate

on facts and avoid apportioning blame, media treatments focused on providing historical overviews that would be informative to a public whose knowledge of this period was assumed to be limited.[11] In keeping with wider commemorative trends, individual testimony was accorded a central place, with care taken to elicit a range of voices so as to represent all possible viewpoints. A classic example of this was the online documentary *Indépendances algériennes* (Algerians' independences) collaboratively produced by *Le Monde, El Watan* and France's National Audiovisual Institute (INA). Justifying the plurality of the title, the documentary comprised testimony from nine people including a *pied-noir,* a conscript soldier, a Muslim auxiliary, a former member of the Secret Army Organization (OAS), and members of the FLN and the National Liberation Army (ALN), including the France-based branch of the nationalist organization.[12] In this and other media portrayals, multiple perspectives were framed in a deliberately non-confrontational manner so as to create, according to Fiona Barclay, 'not a cacophony of competing interests, but a comprehensive memorial mosaic which would contribute towards a holistic view of the war'.[13] Some concerns were raised about the implications of this trend, notably by the historian Benjamin Stora who repeated his long-standing warnings regarding the risks of 'memory *communautarisme*' as a result of enabling each community to remain encased within its own recollections rather than entering into dialogue with others.[14] Yet whether judged positively or negatively, the tenor of the 2012 commemorations reflected the prominence of community-specific memory activism which has increasingly shaped how the Algerian War is represented, discussed and understood within the public domain.[15]

This present situation, however, took many decades to emerge. Beginning with a series of amnesties in the 1960s, successive French governments actively avoided commenting on or commemorating the War of Independence, fearful that any official engagement with this controversial past would reawaken the myriad divisions within society that had characterized the years 1954 to 1962. In the 1990s, however, the state was overtaken by developments, both domestic and international, which pushed politicians to consciously address the conflict and its place within the history and memory of the nation. At the same time, public interest grew rapidly as debates over different aspects of the conflict began to rage across various media. These debates were fuelled in no small part by the emergence of multiple memory-carrying groups, each with a particular connection to and thus interpretation of the war, and each effectively competing against the others to see their version of the past enshrined in official narratives, rituals and monuments under the patronage of a newly interested and invested state. Struggling to find a way to either reconcile or transcend these conflicting perspectives, the state instead opted for a more piecemeal approach, offering concessions or recognition to specific groups at certain moments.[16] Arguably, this has only intensified the sense of competition between different activist communities

since each measure enacted only partially satisfies the group in question, motivating them to continue campaigning, while simultaneously encouraging others to agitate for similar treatment. The *communautarisme* that Stora warns against is therefore in many ways an inevitable response to the unreliability of the state as a commemorative partner. Because the institutional spaces and relays normally available to groups of citizens wishing to preserve an aspect of the past were either absent or have developed only recently with regard to the Algerian War, memory-carrying groups have been forced to rely on their own resources and efforts. As one of the first communities to mobilize collectively in this way, the *pieds-noirs* have played a central role in this process. It is therefore instructive to examine the evolution of their memory activism and their response to the events of 2012.

The development of *pied-noir* activism

The escalation of violence that characterized the final stages of the Algerian War, the belief that they had been abandoned by politicians in Paris (particularly de Gaulle) who had sacrificed their homeland to the FLN, the sense of being forced from a place where their families had lived for generations, the suddenness of their departure and concomitant inability to take many personal possessions with them, combined with the sheer numbers seeking to leave in only a few short months made the process of migration from Algeria to France deeply traumatic for the former settlers. Having crossed the Mediterranean, the process of rebuilding their lives proved equally fraught and distressing. Although the French state did put in place wide-ranging, substantive and ultimately successful measures to ensure the socioeconomic integration of these newly arrived citizens, in the summer and autumn of 1962 the relevant services were simply overwhelmed by the volume of people in need.[17] The *pieds-noirs* furthermore felt themselves and their history to have been misunderstood by their metropolitan cousins. The settlers' imagined national community made it clear that they not only blamed them for the war and its associated violence, but that they resented their presence in France with all the cost and disruption it entailed. Collectively these factors nurtured a powerful sense of victimhood and injustice among *pieds-noirs*.

Seeking to productively channel these sentiments, community leaders created a series of associations through which to mobilize the wider *pied-noir* population. One of the largest and best known of these was the National Association of the French from North Africa, from Overseas, and their Friends (ANFANOMA) (f. 1956). Bodies like ANFANOMA not only proved very effective at lobbying the French state for additional material assistance on behalf of the *pieds-noirs*, they also succeeded in fostering a sense of unity and collective identity among the displaced settlers. Associations initially focused on the material needs of the *pieds-noirs,*

specifically housing, employment and compensation. However, as state intervention rendered these issues progressively less acute, activism was re-orientated in the mid-1970s by a younger generation of *pieds-noirs* towards the cultural realm. Through a new raft of associations and *amicales* (friendly societies), spearheaded by the founding in 1973 of the Algerianist Circle, *pied-noir* activists began to concentrate on defining, disseminating and defending the unique identity and patrimony they felt their community possessed. This consciously created and curated collective narrative presented the colonial era as one of progress and inter-ethnic harmony under the benevolent auspices of the French, with the pioneering settlers playing an instrumental role in the 'civilization' of the land and its people. Acknowledging few, if any, inequalities in French Algeria, the conflict of 1954 to 1962 was depicted as the result of the machinations of a handful of fanatics, rendering independence a tragic mistake forced upon the Algerian people against the wishes of the majority. *Pieds-noirs* were thus cast as innocent victims of a politically motivated decolonization, allowing them to dwell at length on the irreplaceable quality of the land they had left behind which was contrasted sharply with the present state of Algeria under FLN rule. Fostered via the growth of associative life, this collectively held understanding of the past was then inscribed across a variety of spaces from the literary and visual to the social and the physical. This entailed *pieds-noirs* producing journals and newsletters, publishing memoirs and novels, organizing conferences, circulating petitions and participating in protests, particularly regarding the treatment of the *harki* community (Algerians who served as auxiliaries in the French army). Associations also created regular opportunities for their members to gather in order to commemorate their past – often at the site of monuments designed and paid for by *pieds-noirs* – to celebrate and consolidate their present-day identity. Clearly not every settler who came to France chose to identify as a *pied-noir* or to participate in such activities, nonetheless there was a discernible body of people who engaged with and thus helped to build and sustain an activist community across the decades. As the public face of the *pieds-noirs,* it is this 'community' that is addressed and analysed here, rather than the totality of the former settlers.[18]

During the 1970s and 1980s, this activism took place against a backdrop of state silence regarding the War of Independence and the colonial era that preceded it. There were, for example, no public commemorations of significant dates and no ceremonies or monuments to honour those who had fought between 1954 and 1962, school curricula did not teach this element of French history, nor was it something that attracted significant amounts of either academic or popular attention. This broader context created space for an increasingly extensive and organized network of *pied-noir* associations to establish a consensual and widely adhered-to historical and cultural lexicon that effectively went unchallenged. That *pied-noir* activists developed a version of the past to justify their present position and validate their

worldview is not in itself remarkable; all memory-carrying groups engage in this process to some extent. What is noteworthy is the speed with which *pied-noir* associations solidified their shared narrative, the extent of the consensus established and the stability of this collective memory over several decades. More importantly, *pied-noir* activism in this formative period essentially set the agenda for contemporary postcolonial politics by providing a model of collective mobilization and a way of framing questions about memory and history that, as the War of Independence returned increasingly to public attention during the 1990s, other groups with a vested interest in this past simultaneously borrowed from and reacted against as they sought to advance their own strategic agendas. By getting there first, *pied-noir* associations were thus able to shape the terrain of postcolonial civil society. As will be discussed, while the narratives and positions established by *pied-noir* associations did not remain unchallenged, especially into the twenty-first century, they were not completely swept aside as new groups and types of activists increasingly entered the commemorative arena.

Pied-noir memory activism in 2012

In June 1987, approximately 40,000 *pieds-noirs* descended on the southern town of Nice for three days to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of their arrival in France. Those who attended the '25 years after' event were able to view exhibitions devoted to life in French Algeria, watch military parades and a reconstruction of the landing of French troops in 1830 at Sidi Fredj, attend film screenings and round-tables with notable *pied-noir* historical experts, and indulge in North African cuisine and worship at the specially convened open-air Mass. Visitors could also browse the various stalls set up by associations, several of which also became venues for unexpected reunions between former friends, neighbours and colleagues, many of whom had not seen each other since 1962. Ahead of the event, the association ANFANOMA predicted that Nice would show that the *pieds-noirs* represented 'a force that France will have to take account of from now on'.[19] Indeed, these three days in June were widely felt to have been a game-changing success for the community.[20] Outside of its personal and emotional appeal, associations felt that the '25 years after' event had provided an unparalleled opportunity for the *pied-noir* community to proudly proclaim its identity and to demonstrate its numerical strength, cohesion and vitality to the wider world.[21]

Quarter of a century later in 2012, a very different attitude prevailed. On the defensive, activists viewed the fiftieth anniversary as an attack rather than an opportunity. A national *pied-noir* gathering was held in Marseille at the end of June 2012, but on a much smaller scale to its inaugural sister event in 1987, and it received little publicity or commentary from associations. This was in keeping with the tone of association coverage more

generally which, rather than encouraging *pieds-noirs* to come together and positively proclaim a collective identity, centred on listing the suffering and injustices that continued to be inflicted upon the community. Convinced that 'from now on anti-colonialism is the official doctrine of the Republic', associations focused on denouncing the recognition being given to other communities that year while claiming that their own wishes were consistently ignored.[22] *France Horizon,* the newspaper of the association ANFANOMA, for example, was heavily critical of a series of 'scandalous conferences' taking place across France organized by historians of 'questionable' objectivity. The 'icing on the cake' was the 'outrageous' presence at such events of individuals who had participated in 'terrorism' during the war and who remained 'proud of their work', specifically the former FLN militants Zohra Drif and Yacef Saadi who were speaking at a three-day conference that spring in Marseille. *France Horizon* readers were thus encouraged to attend the counter-demonstrations being organized at this and two other conferences in Nice and Nîmes, a call that was repeated in other *pied-noir* publications including *L'Algérianiste* (the quarterly journal produced by the Algerianist Circle) and the magazine *Pieds-Noirs Yesterday and Today*.[23]

The supposed preponderance of media attention given to the FLN elicited a considerable amount of commentary within association publications where authors were particularly vexed by what they saw as the 'obliviousness' of these men and women to the suffering caused by their actions, specifically the 'kidnappings and tortures' to which they subjected their fellow Algerians, not least the *harkis*.[24] In a similar vein, the 'Algeria 1830–1962' exhibition was criticized for 'indicting the army' while 'minimizing the crimes of the [FLN] rebellion, as well as the suffering of the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis*'.[25] The recently elected Hollande was an equally popular topic. He was denounced both in advance of and after his state visit to Algeria for pursuing a 'repentance agenda' that was 'dishonouring' to France in light of the 'magnificent work accomplished in Algeria by five generations of [*pied-noir*] ancestors'.[26] While Hollande's decision to maintain his regular presence at the annual 17 October 1961 commemorations only added insult to injury given the legitimacy and profile that his newly acquired status as Head of State conferred upon the ceremony.[27] Summing up the anniversary year, ANFANOMA's Yves Sainsot thus described it as nothing more than an occasion for 'our most stubborn enemies to keep harping on about their old resentments and to keep trying to dishonour our memory'.[28]

In certain respects, there was nothing new here. *Pied-noir* associations have consistently argued that other communities, particularly Algerians in France, have received excessive and undue attention from politicians and the media, while their own community and its history languished in obscurity.[29] However, the return of the War of Independence to public attention, the increased willingness of the state to involve itself in the commemoration of these years, and the multiplication of memory-carrying groups seeking to establish a place within this newly opened up

commemorative space has considerably raised the stakes for the *pieds-noirs,* lending their complaints a new acuity. The response of associations to 2012 therefore needs to be considered in light of their growing conviction that in recent years they have been on the losing side of the commemorative battle as their 'enemies' have succeeded in securing state-sponsored recognition for versions of history that are anathema to their own. From a plaque to the victims of 17 October 1961 unveiled on the Pont Saint Michel on the fortieth anniversary of that night, to the creation of a national museum of immigration and the erection in 2011 of a stele to the victims of the OAS in the Père Lachaise cemetery, evidence abounds, in the eyes of *pied-noir* activists, that the commemorative tide is decisively turning against them.[30]

Particularly significant in this regard was the decision by then-President Jacques Chirac to rescind the controversial 'article four' of the 23 February 2005 law which stipulated that French school curricula should recognize 'the positive role of the French presence overseas, notably in North Africa'.[31] Having lobbied long and hard to get this symbolically important measure onto the statute books, *pied-noir* activists were deeply disappointed when it was abrogated. Regarded as yet another victory for the strengthening forces of anti-colonialism and the associated discourse of 'repentance', activists asked why it was that they were unable to secure the kind of recognition afforded through memory laws to groups such as Jews and Armenians, or to the history of slavery.[32] Following this high profile defeat activists struggled to regroup effectively with subsequent initiatives largely falling flat, including two attempts to federate existing associations into a more powerful union via the National Organization for the French of Algeria (CNFA) in 2006 and the National Rally for the French of Algeria and their Friends (RNFAA) in 2009.[33]

Coming on the heels of these developments, the decision of the Senate in November 2012 to enshrine the date of the ceasefire, 19 March, as the national day of commemoration for the victims of the Algerian War was interpreted by *pied-noir* activists as further proof of their community's progressive marginalization. For *pied-noir* associations the ceasefire did not mark the end of the conflict, but rather signalled an intensification of violence as demonstrated by the fact that more Europeans, and certainly more *harkis*, were killed after this date than in all the previous years of fighting. In light of the casualties, commonly cited by associations as 150,000 *harkis* and up to 25,000 settlers, commemorating 19 March was regarded as not only disrespectful towards those killed after that point but also tantamount to 'celebrating' a defeat like Sedan in 1870. The concerted campaign by the left-leaning veterans' association the National Federation of Veterans of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (FNACA), which consists primarily of former conscripts, to secure official recognition for this date in the national commemorative calendar has therefore been met with equally persistent and tenacious resistance from *pied-noir* associations.

In addition to forming a central plank of *pied-noir* activism for the past fifty years, opposition to 19 March has acted as an important catalyst for cooperation between associations. Militants from different organizations have regularly joined forces in order to circulate petitions and organize protests, particularly in response to decisions by an increasing number of municipalities to name local spaces and landmarks after this date – by September 2002, over 3,000 *communes* had a '19 March' square, street, bridge or park, while Paris followed suit in 2004.[34] The 'lively' debate surrounding the Senate's decision in 2012 demonstrated the ongoing sensitivity of the topic and its ability to arouse significant passions across the political spectrum. Indeed, the subject had previously been broached in 2002, during the fortieth anniversary, only to be shelved because it remained too controversial. That the final decision in 2012 was contentious was of little comfort to *pied-noir* associations who were forced to confront the defeat, at the highest political level, of one of their longest running and most unifying campaigns.[35]

Transmitting the *pied-noir* past

As the Senate debated, a small group of elderly *pied-noir* protestors gathered outside with their trademark 'No to 19 March' placards. Both the size of the demonstration and the advanced age of its participants pointed to the fact that *pied-noir* activism is starting to wind down with militants increasingly unable to maintain the vigour of previous years, let alone decades. Although the rhetoric of associations continues to centre on their 'unfailing devotion' to the cause of preserving *pied-noir* history and memory, the reality is a community that, fifty years on from its inception, is losing both its energy and its members.[36] This is apparent from the growing space within association publications devoted to obituaries for high profile activists. One such individual was Joseph Hattab Pacha, a former mayor of the second *arrondissement* of Algiers who had long been active in *pied-noir* circles before founding, with his sister Anne Cazal, the aggressively militant and far-right leaning association Véritas in 1996. Hattab Pacha's death in October 2009 produced the association's first regime change as the presidency passed to Jean-Marie Avelin, a 'young' activist of forty-two who had spent several years involved with the organization's youth section. Avelin used his first editorial in Véritas' monthly newsletter to paint a graphic picture of the vulnerable demographic profile of the association's members. In the guise of paying homage to the men and women who had been active within the association and indeed the wider community for many years, he spoke of those who 'continue to fight, while their limbs no longer obey them, when they can no longer prevail over the physical deterioration that prevents them being as mobile as they'd like'. Others, Avelin went on to say were 'hobbled by shortness of breath, a pounding

heart, blood pressure either too high or too low, palpitations, dizziness . . .' Although careful to praise the continued commitment of these 'valiant' combatants who had 'never given up', in spite of their 'numerous inevitable physical handicaps', the subtext of Avelin's piece was that this rapidly diminishing battalion of the aged and infirm were not the most effective foot soldiers to take the association's cause forward.[37] That same year, the editors of *Pieds-Noirs Yesterday and Today* candidly attributed their ongoing financial troubles, stemming from insufficient subscriptions, to 'the departure, unfortunately in ever increasing numbers, of our friends towards the *pied-noir* paradise'.[38]

Accelerating losses within the community have inevitably raised the question of who will take over from existing activists. It seems no coincidence that the Algerianist Circle chose 'transmission' as the theme of its annual conference in 2009, nor that younger activists were accorded a prominent place within the programme. Although not a new concern – the Algerianist Circle has been debating how to 'prepare our children to take the helm' since 1977, only a few years after it was formed – how to ensure the successful transmission of the past to subsequent generations is becoming an increasingly urgent priority.[39] Indeed if, as Aleida Assman argues, intergenerational memory normally fades after three generations, or within eighty to one hundred years, then for the *pieds-noirs*, and indeed other memory-carrying groups connected to the Algerian War, 2012 effectively marked the mid-way point within this trajectory, rendering it a particularly significant juncture.[40] Although probably unaware of this specific fact, ANFAMONA's vice-president Nicole Ferrandis nonetheless evoked its significance when she insisted at the end of 2012 that 'It's up to us to transmit, to leave traces, stories, testimonies', reminding her readers that '[i]t's up to us to assume [this task] with sincerity and determination'.[41] Similar calls have been voiced elsewhere, including by Bernard Cini, one of the younger participants in the Algerianist Circle's 2009 conference on transmission, who bluntly asked with respect to transmitting the *pied-noir* past: 'If we don't do it, who will?'[42]

Mounting anxiety within *pied-noir* associations concerning the issue of transmission tends to obscure the fact that there has already been one successful intergenerational transfer of memory within the community since current spokespeople belong to a different generation to those who led associations in the immediate aftermath of the war. The most obvious marker of this change was the shift in focus in the 1970s from material priorities connected to the re-establishment of lives disrupted by the migration from Algeria to France, to commemorative concerns. This transformation was signalled by the arrival of 'young' activists such as Algerianist Circle founders Jacques Villard (b. 1946) and Maurice Calmein (b. 1947) whose agendas self-consciously broke with existing patterns of associational activity represented by established bodies such as ANFANOMA.[43] Calmein, for example, was only twenty-six years old when he created the Algerianist

Circle in 1973, whereas ANFANOMA's long-standing president, Colonel Pierre Battesti, turned sixty-eight that year. Activists like Calmein, who was one month shy of his seventh birthday when the Algerian War broke out and an adolescent when his family migrated to France, obviously had a different perspective on these events to people like Battesti who had experienced the conflict and its traumatic end as adults. Yet because both cohorts shared the common denominator of having lived in French Algeria and lived through the identity-forming 'exodus' of 1962, this process of generation change was not experienced as a dramatic rupture. Instead, these broad-based historical commonalities proved sufficient to create a sense that all belonged to the same community, a process further aided by the continuation of major associations such as ANFANOMA alongside newer organizations like the Algerianist Circle. Consequently, according to Calmein's fellow activist Jean Scotto, the links between the first and the second generation remained 'strong', ensuring that the generational handover was 'successful'.[44]

Further facilitating this successful process was the fact that many *pied-noir* associations, conscious of the need to engage their descendants in their campaigns, had created structures explicitly intended to perpetuate commitment across the generations. ANFANOMA's first 'youth section' feature appeared in 1964, while in 1979 the Algerianist Circle formed the Algerianist Youth Movement (MJA) which presented itself and its mission in the following terms:

> We are the children of the exodus . . .
> We are, however, *pieds-noirs* . . .
> We are the custodians of the future . . .
> We are also the spiritual descendants . . .
> We claim for ourselves Algerian-ness.[45]

The intention of these bodies was to create a positively evaluated historical legacy so that those born after the Algerian War and in France could 'say without shame and without hiding it: "I am the descendant of *pieds-noirs,* of the pioneering builders of a country"'.[46] By formulating a sense of pride regarding the past it was hoped that subsequent generations would be motivated to actively defend and perpetuate this patrimony. According to this logic, any disjuncture between generations in terms of lived experience could be overcome by the notion of an emotional and historical lineage running from the first settlers, whose roots were firmly planted in the soil of French Algeria, to the present-day diaspora community.

Over the years, these structures have produced some highly committed activists who, despite being born after 1962, were nonetheless keen to take up the *pied-noir* cause. In 1984, Anne-Véronique Mendosa, daughter of the president of an *amicale* uniting settlers from the Algiers region, reassured her ancestors that 'I am proud of your history, of my history' which she had 'carved' into her memory.[47] A year later, ANFANOMA elected 21-year-old

Christiane Spozio president of its La Seyne regional branch. Born in France in 1964, Spozio, also the daughter of an activist, credited her father with creating in her 'the bond that connects me to this land [Algeria] I have not known'. Denying that her place of birth differentiated her from older activists, she went on to explain that, thanks to her father, she 'understood that being "pied-noir" was a way of life' and reminded her audience that 'many children of repatriates born after 1962 feel themselves to be "pieds-noirs" and proudly proclaim it'.[48]

Mendosa and Spozio emerged at a moment when *pied-noir* associations were strong and vibrant, as indicated by the tenor of the 1987 anniversary gathering in Nice. When he assumed the presidency of Véritas twenty-five years later, Jean-Marie Avelin was stepping into a very different context, both internally within the *pied-noir* associational movement and externally in terms of the prevailing commemorative climate in France. Thus although he espoused a similar pride in his lineage, he framed his presidential duties in a much less celebratory fashion, emphasizing instead the need to share 'the heavy burden' of competing against rival groups that was now 'crushing' older activists. Setting out the responsibilities of his peers towards older *pieds-noirs* in stark terms he stated: 'You have a choice: betray them, murder their still living memory, strike a great blow against their glorious past and throw them to the wolves . . . Or, make the generation that follows you understand them'.[49] Unfortunately, the need to replace current militants who are, quite literally, dying out, has peaked at the same moment that confidence in the availability of a steady supply of future activists has fallen sharply.

Activists have long been aware that outside of specific individuals with familial ties to the militant *milieu* and showcases orchestrated by themselves to prove that intergenerational transmission is alive and well, the involvement of 'third generation' *pieds-noirs* in associations has been patchy. In 1984, a questionnaire circulated by the Algerianist Circle sought to gauge the relationship between 'the youth' and the wider *pied-noir* community. Implying that not all were committed activists in the Mendosa or Spozio moulds, the questionnaire included options such as: 'You rue discussions about a subject [the war] that bores you, because you don't feel concerned by it'. Respondents could also assert that they felt they had nothing in common with other young *pieds-noirs* beyond 'an accident of history'.[50] Furthermore, while numerous youth-orientated organizations have been founded over the years, by no means all have flourished. In the 1990s, the groups Pied-Noir Roots and Children of *là-bas* both struggled to expand their memberships beyond a few hundred, while Christian Schembre quickly abandoned his Movement of Second Generation Pieds-Noirs in favour of political lobbying through the Pied-Noir Party (PPN).[51]

The further one gets from 1962, the more acute the issues surrounding mobilization and engagement become. In many respects this is a natural and inevitable process. 'It is normal not to have young people in associations', one

pied-noir descendant explained. 'Frankly, it would be unhealthy to get together for something we did not know [French Algeria] and which no longer exists'.[52] Some older *pieds-noirs* seem to agree, including Alphonse, who said that Algeria meant nothing to his France-born children and that he did not want to 'bother them with my story'.[53] Ironically, the rapid, state-facilitated socioeconomic integration of the *pieds-noirs* has often served to distance children from their familial heritage, making it difficult for them to appreciate the experiences, particularly the hardships, their parents faced in the 1960s. For Évelyne Joyaux (b. 1947) the impossibility of conveying the traumatic circumstances under which *pieds-noirs* left Algeria and came to France meant that those born after 1962 were unable to understand her and her parents' attitude to certain things.[54] A strong and understandable identification with France among the post-1962 generation has also undercut the notion of cultural distinctiveness that is central to so much *pied-noir* activism. In a telling comment, a young guest on the programme 'Being a *pied-noir* thirty years on [from 1962]' told the host that while her generation had lots of French friends, 95 per cent of her parents' acquaintances were other *pieds-noirs*.[55] In addition, the increasingly critical nature of public discourses surrounding colonialism, the Algerian War and the *pieds-noirs* makes it difficult for younger generations to position themselves with respect to these histories. They are caught, as Michèle Baussant explains, between wishing to remain loyal to their family while also being surrounded by official, educational and media discourses that present a negative image of that same history and its actors.[56] Together, these factors have progressively diminished the number of new activists rising through the ranks of associations.

However, it is not necessarily the case, as some *pied-noir* activists have complained, that their children are uninterested in the past. Interviews conducted by the sociologist Clarisse Buono demonstrated a strong attachment to Algeria as an ancestral land and a place about which they wished to know more.[57] What these descendants were less concerned with was participating in the battles being waged by older generations over issues such as preventing 19 March becoming an official day of commemoration or protesting recognition being accorded to other groups and histories by the state.[58] The studies of Buono and others further revealed that while the public collective lexicon established by associations makes the *pied-noir* past appear robust, private familial transmission has often been fragile and fragmentary, particularly beyond activist circles. In part this resulted from the trauma many families endured in 1962, which left them unwilling or unable to articulate the past to their children who, in turn, opted not to further enflame already visibly raw emotions by asking questions.[59]

In other cases, Algeria was perceived by *pied-noir* children as an exclusive club to which they were denied access because they had not grown up there. Paul, for example, recalled how his mother constantly spoke of Algeria as if it were 'an Eldorado, a paradise'. 'I feel excluded from this paradise', he told Baussant, 'I feel marginal, an outsider in relation to this history'.[60] Writing

to *Pieds-Noirs Magazine* in 1991, Yves Clément explained that although born in 1951 and thus still in 'short trousers' when he came to France, he nonetheless felt *pied-noir* 'to the tips of my toes'. As a result, he was keen to take on responsibilities within associations, but found his way blocked by older generations who felt they possessed a monopoly over the past; an attitude Clément found both incomprehensible and 'suicidal'. For him, being a *pied-noir* was not determined by place of birth, but was instead anchored in his embrace of his 'pioneering heritage', his determination to 'respect the toil of [his] ancestors' and his willingness to 'defend the truth' about this past to an often hostile and uncomprehending French public.[61]

The problem for Clément and other motivated *pied-noir* descendants is that current activists have made lived experience the lynchpin of their campaigns, using it to legitimate their historical narratives and to discredit competing interpretations. As Buono argues, '[j]ust as the French of Algeria had the illusion that the colonized country was their property and resented interventions by France as an intrusion, so the *pieds-noirs* reckon that France cannot write the history of Algeria since only they know it and have lived it'.[62] A point confirmed by veteran Algerianist Circle campaigner Pierre Goinard who stated 'those who have not experienced this complex Algeria cannot truly represent it'.[63] By making lived experience the touchstone of authenticity, *pied-noir* associations have essentially created a transmission cul-de-sac. New activists, no matter how committed, will always be limited by the fact that they did not personally experience the events they are charged with preserving. They are thus unable to escape being regarded as 'Algerianists to a lesser degree', even as the reliance of associational movements on them increases.[64] This leaves the community vulnerable to the collective memory curse of the shelf life first outlined by Maurice Halbwachs, risking a scenario in which 'the last "European" born in Algeria on the eve of independence will also be the last *pied-noir*'.[65]

The future of *pied-noir* activism

All of which points to a rather bleak future for *pied-noir* activists, and indeed the assessment of 2012 provided by associations was strongly marked by negativity. Yet, there were signs that things were not as bad as they first seemed. For all that *pied-noir* activists felt they were being ignored by the mainstream media, empirical research by Fiona Barclay has shown that, in fact, the community occupied a prominent place in the anniversary coverage. Although by no means the sole focus, moments central to the *pied-noir* narrative, especially departure from Algeria in 1962, nonetheless featured heavily in media discussions and representations. Perhaps most telling was the attention paid to events on 26 March 1962 on the rue d'Isly in Algiers when French troops fired on a crowd of demonstrating settlers killing forty-six and injuring 150, and on 5 July 1962 in Oran when between 500

and 1,000 Europeans were kidnapped or killed following violence which broke out amidst independence celebrations. Virtually unreported at the time in mainland France, both moments quickly became commemorative touchstones for *pied-noir* associations, not least because they facilitated a narrative of unrecognized suffering. That the two dates have now also risen to prominence within mainstream overviews of the war is testament to the often subtle ways in which *pied-noir* activism has impacted upon metropolitan consciousness.[66]

An even more tangible achievement for the community was the opening, in October 2012, of the Centre for Documentation on the French from Algeria (CDDFA) in Perpignan.[67] Located in the Sainte Claire Convent, the CDDFA site also houses the *mur des disparus* (wall of the disappeared), a stone facade bearing plaques listing the names of Europeans who died or disappeared during the Algerian War who have no graves, controversially amalgamating civilian settler casualties with members of the OAS. The Sainte Claire Convent is closely linked to the Algerianist Circle whose members raised a significant percentage of the €55,000 cost of the *mur*, while the association itself has agreed to donate all of its archives, which it has been collecting since 1974, to the CDDFA.[68] The establishment of the CDDFA – which joins the Centre for Historical Documentation about Algeria (CDHA) in Aix-en-Provence and the Centre for Pied-Noir Studies (CEPN) located in Nice – reveals two things about contemporary *pied-noir* activism. First, it demonstrates the importance of the local context. Associations have consistently failed to obtain a national marker devoted specifically to their community. The closest they came was a long promised but never realized National Memorial to Overseas France that was due to be built in Marseille. However, at the local level the *pied-noir* past has been successfully inscribed in a variety of ways including through the erection of steles and monuments, the establishment of regular commemorative ceremonies and rituals such as the annual Ascension Day 'pilgrimage' to the purpose-built cathedral of Notre Dame de Santa Cruz on the outskirts of Nîmes,[69] and even the creation of a *pied-noir* town, Carnoux-en-Provence.[70] Such initiatives both rely on and reflect the support that *pieds-noirs* have received at the municipal level, often from elected officials keen to secure their backing at the ballot box.[71] That Perpignan's mayor Jean-Marc Pujol has been so ready to accommodate and help finance *pied-noir* requests for an official presence within the town's commemorative landscape is undoubtedly linked both to the numerical strength of the former settlers within his constituency, but also his own status as a *pied-noir*. Therefore, in contrast to the unreliability of the state as a commemorative partner, local relationships have and continue to prove far more rewarding for *pied-noir* activists. This in turn points to the need to look at multiple levels of society in seeking to fully assess the state of memory activism.

Speaking at the opening of the CDDFA, Pujol described the museum-cum-archive not as a way of 'looking for revenge' but rather of 'emphasizing

that which the world wants to hide'.[72] His words echoed those of the current Algerianist Circle president Thierry Rolando who, at the same event, spoke of the *pieds-noirs* as having suffered a 'double punishment, that of being torn from their native land and of historical and media condemnation'. In the face of such treatment, the CDDFA was intended to stand as a living *lieu de mémoire,* animated not by 'pride' but by a desire to preserve the essence of the community's affective link to their lost homeland.[73] This underlines the second feature of *pied-noir* activism in recent years: a renewed impetus to anchor their historical interpretation in physical sites external to the community so as to better facilitate the preservation of this past beyond the lifespan of living witnesses.

Spurring on such efforts is an awareness of the problems relating to intergenerational memory transmission outlined above. This reminds us that although 2012 contained some under-appreciated positives for the community, a series of difficult challenges nonetheless remains. The level of activism is clearly on the wane as the passage of time takes its toll and associations struggle to attract new members. It is also true that for all they are not as neglected within public narratives as they claim, *pieds-noirs* are today faced with a very different commemorative climate. They are no longer able to dominate the stage as they did when the war was largely a taboo topic and when attitudes to empire amongst the French people were more in line with their own views. Instead, associations are today forced to jostle for space with a range of actors and communities many of whom enjoy greater levels of public sympathy than the former settlers. Furthermore, while transmission is an issue for any memory-carrying group, the other communities connected to the war have arguably shown more creativity in addressing it. In particular, descendants of *harkis* have sought ways to re-appropriate and re-imagine the history of their parents in accordance with their own emotional and intellectual priorities, rather than simply seeking to perpetuate the pre-established perspectives of older generations. Thus although being a 'witness of witnesses' for *harki* descendants carries a undeniable responsibility to make the history of their community better known and understood, figures such as the novelist Zahia Rahmani have nonetheless also been able to actively and imaginatively engage with this past as actors in their own right.[74] Transmission within the *harki* community therefore offers a broader array of potential models of participation for future generations than are presently visible within the *pied-noir* community.[75]

At the end of 2012, *pied-noir* associations remained defiant with Ferrandis proclaiming to ANFANOMA members that in spite of a bad year 'our true mission will continue' as a result of the community's 'inexhaustible devotion' to its cause.[76] But how effectively *pied-noir* activists will be able to respond to the many challenges they face, particularly the question of how to ensure the supply of committed members, and how able they are to retain their already diminished place within France's postcolonial memory landscape, remains to be seen.

Notes

1 For analyses of the fiftieth anniversary commemorations see Isabel Hollis, 'Algeria in Paris: Fifty Years On', in *France since the 1970s*, ed. Emile Chabal (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 129–42; Michèle Bacholle-Bošković, 'Quelles commémorations pour les cinquante ans de la guerre d'Algérie?', *French Cultural Studies,* 25:2 (2014), 233–45.

2 The French presidential elections of 6 May 2012 saw the Socialist Party candidate François Hollande oust the right-wing incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy, while legislative elections in Algeria four days later returned the FLN as the largest party, winning 220 out of 426 seats in the National Assembly.

3 For a more detailed breakdown of these statistics by month see Jean-Jacques Jordi, 'L'été 62 à Marseille: tensions et incompréhensions', in *Marseille et le choc des décolonisations,* ed. Jean-Jacques Jordi and Emile Temime (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1996), 66.

4 Natalya Vince, 'The 50th Anniversary of Algerian Independence is an Opportunity to Take Stock of the Country's Recent Past and the Actions of its Government', *LSE Blogs*, 19 July 2012. Available at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2012/07/19/algeria-independence/ (accessed 17 July 2015).

5 Vince, 'The 50th Anniversary of Algerian Independence'.

6 For an accessible and comprehensive overview of the history of Algeria since 1962 see Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

7 For further details regarding Algerian commemorations of 2012 see Bacholle-Bošković, 'Quelles commémorations pour les cinquante ans de la guerre d'Algérie?', 240–1; Vince, 'The 50th Anniversary of Algerian Independence'.

8 For a comprehensive list of French activities in 2012 see Bacholle-Bošković, 'Quelles commémorations', 233–45.

9 A good sense of the content of the exhibition can be gained from the catalogue, see Christophe Bertrand, Sébastien Dénis and Emmanuel Ranvoisy (eds), *Algérie 1830–1962,* with Jacques Ferrandez (Paris: Casterman, 2012).

10 Hollis, 'Algeria in Paris', 132. This chapter also contains a very good discussion of the 'Algeria, 1830–1962' exhibition and its limitations.

11 Fiona Barclay, 'Reporting on 1962: the Evolution of *pied-noir* Identity across Fifty Years of Print Media', *Modern and Contemporary France,* 23:2 (2015), 206.

12 The documentary is available at http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/visuel/2012/07/04/independances-algeriennes_1728358_3212.html (accessed 11 January 2016).

13 Barclay, 'Reporting on 1962', 205.

14 See, in particular, Stora's comments during '50 ans Accords d'Évian: portraits croisés de pieds-noirs', *Soir 3 journal,* aired 15 March 2012 (FR3). For examples of his previous comments on this subject see *Imaginaires de guerre: les images dans les guerres d'Algérie et du Vîet-nam* (Paris: Éditions de la

Découverte, 2004), 190; *Le livre, mémoire de l'histoire* (Paris: Préau des collines, 2005), 196; and *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie,* (Paris: Éditions de la Découverte 1991), 249.

15 For further discussion of this process see Claire Eldridge, *From Empire to Exile: History and Memory within the Pied-Noir and Harki Communities, 1962–2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

16 For example the 23 February 2005 law, article four of which sought to affirm the 'positive' impact of colonialism, was first mooted as Chirac sought to secure *pied-noir* support in his 2002 presidential run-off against Jean-Marie Le Pen.

17 The most comprehensive account of these measures and their effectiveness is Yann Scioldo-Zürcher, *Devenir métropolitain: Politique d'intégration et parcours de rapatriés d'Algérie en métropole (1954–2005)* (Paris: Éditions EHESS, 2010).

18 There are currently no comprehensive statistics on how many settlers belong to *pied-noir* associations and how this picture has changed over time. The most widely cited estimate is that in the early 1990s there were 400 to 800 associations to which 10–15 per cent of the total *rapatrié* population belonged. Unfortunately, the source of the data on which these estimates rest is not clear, nor is any sense given of how these figures compared to previous years. More recently, Jean-Jacques Jordi has stated that approximately 5 per cent of *pieds-noirs* belong to an association, although there is, once again, no indication of where this figure comes from. See Maurice Calmein, *Les associations pieds-noirs* (Carcassonne: SOS Outre-Mer, 1994), 15; Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De l'exode à l'éxil: rapatriés et pieds-noirs en France: l'exemple marseillais, 1954–1992* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), 179; Jean-Jacques Jordi, 'Archéologie et structure du réseau de sociabilité rapatrié et pied-noir', *Provence Historique,* 47 (1997), 177; Jean-Jacques Jordi, *Idées reçu: les pieds-noirs* (Paris: Le Cavalier bleu, 2009), 138.

19 '25 anniversaire rassemblement', *France Horizon,* 282 (May 1987), 14.

20 For commentary in this vein see, for example, Michel Sanchez, 'Nice 1987', *Pieds-noirs magazine,* 16 (June 1991), 8–9.

21 'Rapatriés: 25 ans de nostalgie', *Camera 2,* aired 22 June 1987 (A2).

22 Jean Monneret, 'Face à l'anticolonialisme d'État', *La lettre de Véritas,* 163 (September–October 2012), 4.

23 The two other events were the symposium 'Algeria 1962, why so tragic an end to the war?' held in Nice under the auspices of France's Human Rights League, and a *colloque* in Nîmes set up by the academic Gilbert Meynier focusing on the metropolitan-based branch of the FLN. See 'Cinquantenaire de l'exode, année de tous les dangers', *France Horizon,* 522–3 (April, May and June 2012), 10–11.

24 Yves Sainsot, 'Année de tous les dangers', *France Horizon,* 524–5 (July–August 2012), 1. The falsity of such a characterization is demonstrated by the interventions of Ali Haroun during the programme 'Débat: après la déchirure', *Spéciale guerre d'Algérie,* aired 11 March 2012 (FR2).

25 Monneret, 'Face à l'anticolonialisme d'Etat', 4.

26 Jean-Marie Avelin, 'Lettre ouverte au Président de la République', *La lettre de Véritas,* 163 (September–October 2012), 2–3.

27 On 17 October 1961, the metropolitan branch of the FLN mobilized thousands of Algerians for a peaceful march through the streets of Paris in protest over a curfew recently imposed by the Prefect of Police, Maurice Papon. The savage repression of the demonstration by police left up to 200 dead and many more wounded. After decades of silence, the event was brought back to public attention in the 1990s largely through the activism of descendants of Algerians who had participated in the original march. Since then, 17 October has become a commemorative focal point for the Algerian community in France. The increasing profile of this event has also made it a target for *pied-noir* activists who see it as the epitome of the willingness of the state to recognize its former enemies while ignoring its own citizens. The best historical account of 17 October and its memorial afterlives is Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For a flavour of *pied-noir* attitudes towards this night see the coverage in *La lettre de Véritas,* 164 (November–December 2012).

28 Sainsot, 'Année de tous les dangers', 1.

29 The content of *Pieds-Noirs Yesterday and Today* during the 1990s offers ample proof of this attitude.

30 Jean Monneret, 'Face à l'anticolonialisme d'État', *La lettre de Véritas,* 163 (September–October 2012), 4.

31 The full text of the law can be found at www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000444898&categorieLien=id (accessed 5 November 2014).

32 Under the 1990 Gayssot Law it is a crime in France to deny the Holocaust. It was also, until February 2012, a crime to deny that the 1915–16 killing of Armenians was a 'genocide'. In 2001, the Taubira law, named after politician Christiane Taubira, recognized slavery as a crime against humanity.

33 To gain a sense of the issues faced by these two organizations see Jean-Marc Lopez, '11 février une date à retenir', *Pieds-noirs d'hier et d'aujourd'hui,* 138 (February 2006), 5; 'Rassemblement', *Pieds-noirs d'hier et d'aujourd'hui,* 176 (July–August 2009), 10; 'Communiqué du RNFAA', *Pieds-noirs d'hier et d'aujourd'hui,* 191 (December 2010), 18.

34 Jan C. Jansen, 'Politics of Remembrance, Colonialism and the Algerian War of Independence in France', in *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, ed. Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2010), 279. For an example of *pied-noir* protests against 19 March see the television programme *Montpellier: 20 ans accords d'Evian,* aired 19 March 1982 (A2).

35 'Adoption au Sénat d'une journée de commémoration de la guerre d'Algérie', *20 heures,* aired 8 November 2012 (FR2).

36 Nicole Ferrandis, 'Chers lecteurs', *France Horizon,* 526–7 (November–December 2012), 12.

37 Jean-Marie Avelin, 'Mot du Président: ultime arrimage', *La lettre de Véritas,* 153 (May 2010), 2–3.

38 'Vous aimez votre magazine . . . vous aidez-le développer', *Pieds-noirs d'hier et d'aujourd'hui,* 188 (September 2010), 4. By issue 200 in October 2011, the magazine was reporting a fall in subscriptions of more than five hundred.

39 Maurice Calmein, 'Appellation contrôlée', *L'Algérianiste* (1977), 10.

40 Aleida Assman, 'History, Memory and the Genre of Testimony', *Poetics Today,* 27:2 (Summer 2006), 271.

41 Ferrandis, 'Chers lecteurs', 12.

42 Christian Lapeyre, 'Mémoire des Français d'Algérie: transmission interdite ou impossible?', *L'Algérianiste,* 128 supplement (December 2009), 5.

43 For further information on the agenda of the Cercle algérianiste see 'Manifeste', *L'Algérianiste* (1975).

44 Jean Scotto, Cercle algérianiste des Pyrénées Orientales, written correspondence with the author, 2 February 2007.

45 'Manifesto des jeunes Algérianistes', *L'Algérianiste,* 28 (15 December 1984), ii.

46 'Le défi médiatique', *Pieds-noirs magazine,* 12 (February 1991), 5.

47 Anne-Véronique Mendosa, 'L'Age de l'indépendance', *Aux Échoes d'Alger,* 10 (November 1984), 4.

48 Jean Augeai, 'La voix de la jeunesse', *France Horizon,* 263–4 (June–July 1985), 24.

49 Jean-Marie Avelin, 'Le mot du Président: profession de foi', *La lettre de Véritas,* 145 (September 2010), 2–3; Avelin, 'Mot du Président: Ultime arrimage', 3.

50 'Un appel du Secrétariat national à la jeunesse', *L'Algérianiste,* 27 (September 1984), xv. The results of the survey were not reported in subsequent issues.

51 Jordi, *Pieds-noirs,* 137; Christian Schembre, 'La deuxième génération ou naissance d'une identité', in *Les rapatriés d'Algérie en Languedoc-Roussillon, 1962–1992*, ed. Mohand Khellil and Jules Maurin (Montpellier: Université Paul-Valéry, 1992), 131–40.

52 Romain, interviewed in Michèle Baussant, *Pieds-noirs mémoires d'exils* (Paris: Stock, 2002), 441.

53 Clarisse Buono, *Pieds-noirs de père en fils* (Paris: Balland, 2004), 96–7.

54 'Il y a 40 ans déjà l'histoire déchirée des Français d'Algérie', *La case de l'oncle doc,* aired 18 March 2002 (FR3).

55 'Être pied-noir trente ans après', *Français si vous parliez,* aired 1 February 1993 (FR3).

56 Baussant, *Pieds-noirs,* 8.

57 Buono, *Pieds-noirs,* 152.

58 This is possibly because these alternative readings of the war years are now quite well established in mainstream narratives, enhancing their familiarity and legitimacy, at the same time as a diminished connection to the emotional specificity of the *pied-noir* experience renders them less personally threatening or offensive.

59 See, for example, the comments of Robert Guionie's daughter on this subject in 'Il y a 40 ans déjà', aired 18 March 2002 (FR3).

60 Baussant, *Pieds-noirs,* 435.

61 Yves Clément, 'Pied-noir, une affaire d'âge', *Pieds-noirs magazine,* 14 (April 1991), 7.

62 Buono, *Pieds-noirs*, 75.

63 Pierre Goinard, 'En finir avec la désinformation', *L'Algérianiste,* 52 (December 1990), 2.

64 Louis Grosard, 'Vingt ans après', *L'Algérianiste,* 17 (15 March 1972), 4.

65 Michèle Baussant, 'Identité passagère: Pied-noir, une figure de l'exil', in *La guerre d'Algerie dans la mémoire et l'imaginaire*, ed. Anny Dayan Rosenmann and Lucette Valensi (Saint-Denis: Éditions Bouchêne, 2004), 116.

66 Barclay, 'Reporting on 1962', 207.

67 The official website for the CDDFA can be found at: http://www.mairie-perpignan.fr/fr/culture/centre-national-documentation-francais-dalgerie-cddfa (accessed 29 December 2015).

68 'Le Mémorial des Disparus ne fait pas le tri entre les victimes', *L'Algérianiste,* 136 supplement (December 2011), 5; http://www.cerclealgerianiste.fr/index.php/le-centre-de-documentation/historique (accessed 12 June 2015).

69 The site houses a statue of the Virgin Mary which, legend has it, saved the people of Oran from a cholera epidemic in 1849. The statue was transported from Oran to Nîmes specifically in order to provide a focal point for the displaced Oranien community. 'Pilgrimages' to the site have been taking place since 1966. The best account of the evolution of this event and the attitudes of those *pieds-noirs* who attend is Baussant, *Pieds-noirs mémoires d'exils*.

70 The town and its importance to the *pieds-noirs* is discussed in Claire Eldridge, 'Le symbole de l'Afrique perdue: Carnoux-en-Provence and the *Pied-Noir* Community', in *France's Lost Empires: Fragmentation, Loss and la fracture coloniale*, ed. Kate Marsh and Nicola Frith (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2011), 125–36.

71 Illustrative of this strategy was Montpellier's socialist mayor Georges Frêche, who between 1977 and 2004 courted not only the local *pied-noir* population but numerous other prominent minorities. Emile Chabal, 'Managing the Postcolony: Minority Politics in Montpellier, *c.*1960–*c.*2010', *Contemporary European History,* 23:2 (2014), 237–58.

72 Jean-Marc Pujol, 'Il y a désormais en France, à Perpignan, un endroit où l'on se souviendra toujours de vous', *L'Algérianiste,* 137 supplement (March 2012), 4–5.

73 Thierry Rolando, 'Que vive dans notre coeurs l'Algérie française', *L'Algérianiste,* 137 supplement (March 2012), 2.

74 See Zahia Rahmani, *Moze* (Paris: S. Wespieser, 2003). The phrase 'witness of witnesses' comes from Giulia Fabbiano, 'Enrôlements en mémoire, mémoires d'enrôlement', in *Les Harkis. Histoire, mémoire et transmission*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, Benoit Falaize and Gilles Manceron (Ivry-sur-Seine: Éditions de l'Atelier – Éditions Ouvrières, 2010), 116.

75 For further discussion of creative memory activism within the *harki* community see: Eldridge, *From Empire to Exile;* Géraldine Enjelvin, 'A Harki's Daughter's Offline and Online "parole cicatrisante"', *Australian Journal of French Studies,* 45:2 (2008), 136–49; Géraldine Enjelvin and Nada Kovac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others": The Case of the *Harkis*', *History and Memory,* 24:1 (Spring/Summer 2012), 152–77; Nina Sutherland, 'Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mothers Speak through their Daughters', *Romance Studies,* 24:3 (November 2006), 193–201; Keith Moser (ed.), *A Practical Guide to French Harki Literature* (Lanham MD: Lexington, 2014).

76 Ferrandis, 'Chers lecteurs', 12.

CONCLUSION

Culture as War by Other Means: Community, Conflict and Cultural Revolution, 1967–81

James McDougall

idha-mā intaṣarnā bi-ḥarbi 'l-khilāṣ/ fa-thawratunā 'l-yawm ḥarb al-aṣāla
If we have won victory in the war of deliverance, our revolution today is a war for authenticity.

MUFDI ZAKARYA, *ILYĀDHAT AL-JAZĀ'IR*, 1972

Il y a tant de marge entre un changement de souveraineté et la transformation de la société!
What a difference there is between a change of sovereignty and the transformation of society!

AHMED TALEB IBRAHIMI, *DE LA DÉCOLONISATION À LA RÉVOLUTION CULTURELLE*, 1973

Contemporary Algeria's cultural production has been the focus of much insightful scholarship over the past three decades, but, for very practical reasons, especially during the 1990s, such work has not always been able to engage fully with the social and political realities of Algeria itself except at some distance. It might even be that studies focusing on memory and identity, near-ubiquitous terms in the recent literature on Algeria, have proliferated in proportion to the difficulty of closely situating such expressions of Algeria as a metonym for postcolonial cultural preoccupations

within an understanding of Algerian history viewed 'on the ground'. At the same time, studies of Algerian society and politics by political scientists, sociologists and historians, concerned with 'harder' questions of oil rents, factional conflict, democratization (or its failure), regional relations, and civil war have tended either to sideline culture, or to resort to somewhat clichéd images of it that, even when deployed in the course of otherwise excellent analyses, have sometimes reduced Algerian culture to being merely the expression – or, worse, itself a cause – of the conflict and violence that have so marked the country's contemporary history.

This chapter seeks to connect the field of cultural production and the cultural politics of post-independence Algeria, particularly in and after the 'cultural revolution' of the 1970s, to the 'hard surfaces' of political economy and state-formation, as a way of better framing the conditions of production of contemporary Algerian culture. This means examining the cultural field in terms of the role it has played relative to other fields of social action, namely political institutions (the state; the hegemonic struggle within the post-revolutionary polity; the role of cultural politics in expressing sectional and ideological interests) and political economy (the division of access to resources and to the means of distribution of resources). I do not mean to suggest by this that culture is only epiphemomenal, only a superstructural expression of basic material interests; but rather that the significance of the cultural field can only properly be apprehended in relation to these other dimensions of social life, which it shapes while also being shaped by them.

Antonio Gramsci, analysing the political situation of interwar Europe, wrote of the distinction and the transition between what he famously characterized as 'war of position', which in military science referred to siege or trench warfare, and in politics meant the long, attritional struggle of a revolutionary movement against entrenched class interests, and 'war of manoeuvre', which in the military sphere denoted frontal assault, and by analogy, in politics referred to the dynamic outbreak of collective action to seize physical territory and the apparatus of a state.[1] In the Algerian case, as in other colonial and postcolonial contexts, we might say that culture has often been a central means of waging 'war', in this broad sense of underlying socio-political struggle that sometimes eventuates in armed conflict, between competing groups and interests within society, and between society and the state. Furthermore, since as we know 'the state' is never a monolith, but only ever, when at its most effective, a coherent facade for bundles of institutions, processes and actors, with their often conflicting interests,[2] we also need to see 'the state' less as a single actor than as a site and a stake of these struggles, and cultural politics as a contested terrain on which they are played out.

In colonial Algeria, political struggle was defined and waged primarily in cultural-communitarian terms – and necessarily so, by all shades of political opinion including those who advocated a multi-confessional, democratic future for Algeria. That is, the struggle for liberation was conceived

overwhelmingly in terms of a single cultural community as the political community to be emancipated.[3] The anti-colonial struggle was necessarily 'communitarian' in this sense, rather than a struggle waged simply along class lines or for 'universal' values, because the main lines of social subordination and conflict within the colonial order were drawn along ethno-cultural or religio-cultural divides. This was the abiding force of colonial practices of governance that, in Algeria as elsewhere, imprinted their organizing categories of domination onto the ways in which that domination was eventually to be overthrown.[4] Anti-colonial struggle, both in the long 'war of position' throughout the colonial period and in the dynamic War of Independence that put an end to it, was a cultural/communitarian struggle because it had to be.[5] As Gramsci also wrote, one does not choose the kind of war one fights; one fights the war that circumstances impose.

This did not mean, however, that there was consensus within Algerian nationalism as to what the *content* of national culture or the meaning of community should be, nor over how the community's relationship to 'its own' national state should be governed. In particular, within the wartime National Liberation Front (FLN) there were inevitable major divergences over what both Islam and socialism should mean, who should articulate them, and what role they should play in the future regulation of society and state.[6] The political culture of *unanimisme* (unanimity) that characterized the revolutionary FLN, and then the outward face of the one-party state, was rooted in ancient practices of village-level social solidarity and communal politics out of which the guerrilla movement itself had grown. It also reflected more recent, religiously formulated norms of community cohesion and ideological conformity expounded by the Islamic reformist movement of the 1920s to 1950s, and widely propagated by them in educational and cultural activities. It was furthermore a practical necessity for an underground armed resistance movement that had, first, to overcome chronic divisions within and between different Algerian nationalist groups, and then survive the intense pressure of a counter-insurgency war.[7] But behind the necessary fiction of unanimity lay not only rival personalities, loyalties and interests, but also sharply diverging views and aspirations for the shape of state and society, competing versions of what Malika Rahal, following anthropologist Françoise Héritier, has called *entre-soi*, 'a definition of who "we" are . . . connected with a collective project of what togetherness is or should be'. Each contending version of Algerian *entre-soi* 'entailed a different form of polity, as well as a definition of who should – or should *not* – be Algerian, by defining the fundamental characteristics of shared identity and the basic rules of society'.[8] After independence, as the political struggle between factions in the emerging polity developed behind the institutionalized facade of single-party *unanimisme*, the cultural field continued both to serve as a terrain of struggle in itself and to provide a register in which other conflicts could be expressed. Indeed, during the crucial period of state-building and

regime consolidation between *c.*1967 and 1979 – that is, between the crises of the immediate post-independence years and those of the changing global, regional and domestic scene in the 1980s, as the single-party system established and entrenched itself – cultural issues would provide the only open arena in which such conflicts could be played out.[9]

Now remembered as in many respects a 'golden age' of contemporary Algeria, the 1970s was a time of promises for industrial development and agrarian reform, educational opportunity and rising standards of living. This was the heyday of the regime's domestic legitimacy and international influence, both incarnated in the popular and assertively Third Worldist revolutionary figure of president Houari Boumediene (1965–78), before the years of economic crisis in the 1980s under his successor, Chadli Benjedid, and the crisis and *coup d'état* that, deposing the latter, plunged the country into the 'dark decade' of war in the 1990s. Views of the period in the context of what followed thus tend to paint a distinctly rosy picture of 'the Boumediene years': as Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi puts it in his memoirs, this was simply and 'incontestably the golden age of independent Algeria.'[10] For many Algerians, and for influential scholarly analyses, the breakdown of state and society that followed is to be explained by the deliberate abandonment of Boumediene's project by Benjedid and those around him, the sudden irruption of Islamism onto the scene in the early 1980s, and the encouragement of the latter by the former.[11] The death of Boumediene and the reorientations of personnel, factional preponderance and policy orientation that followed undoubtedly marked a major rupture. But the break was far from total; there were important continuities across this watershed, and much of the societal and ideological conflict that broke into the open in the early 1980s had developed long before. After the implosion of the single-party system in 1988–9, and the collapse of attempts to manage the transition to a more pluralistic political system in 1990–2, it was the long-incubated social stresses of this post-independence attritional struggle as well as conjunctural pressures that erupted, again, into an open war of movement.

The 1970s was the decade of Algeria's 'cultural revolution', a third pillar of the state's social project alongside the industrializing and agrarian revolutions. Combined, the ambitious programmes of heavy industrialization and land reform were expected to transform Algeria's economy and deliver on the promise of socialist state-building to create prosperity and welfare for all, especially the working and peasant masses who had suffered most during the war, and in whose interests the FLN's authoritarian *dirigisme* was seen as working.[12] As the decade opened, Boumediene's regime, brought to power by the *coup d'état* of 19 June 1965 that ousted the charismatic President Ahmed Ben Bella, was completing its consolidation. Left-wing opposition to the 'putsch' against Ben Bella by the Organisation of Popular Resistance (ORP) had been rapidly neutralized in 1965, and found echoes only among members and sympathizers of the underground Socialist

Vanguard Party (PAGS), successor to the Algerian Communist Party (PCA), particularly among students and some labour organizers. An attempted coup in December 1967 by dissident army officers, led by one of Boumediene's erstwhile principal co-conspirators, Tahar Zbiri, was defeated; in April 1968, Boumediene himself escaped, unscathed, from an assassination attempt presumed to have been organized by opponents in exile.[13] Having thus established itself in power, in January 1970 the regime launched its first four-year development plan. The following year saw the dramatic conclusion to protracted negotiations with France over hydrocarbon resources, when in February 1971 the Algerian state nationalized oil and gas installations and took a controlling stake in French oil companies operating in the country. That November, the agrarian revolution was begun, and edicts on the socialist management of enterprises announced. These moves signalled the launch of the Boumediene regime's central development initiatives: hydrocarbon-driven, capital-intensive, heavy industrialization, along with land redistribution, welfare measures and infrastructure spending, funded by oil and gas revenues, would permit the building of a socialist economy under the aegis of the state for the benefit of a collectivist, revolutionary society.

This was the vision presented by Boumediene, speaking on the fifth anniversary of the 'revolutionary corrective movement' of 19 June in a televised speech that, appropriately in terms both of the symbolism of national integration and of the regime's developing control of social communication, was transmitted for the first time across the whole of Algerian territory. The third, cultural dimension of the revolution, he explained, was to consist of education and Arabization.[14] The cultural domain may have been ancillary to the economic dimensions of the regime's project, but there can be no doubting the importance to Boumediene and his planners of both expanding educational provision, and breaking with a system oriented towards training in French that was seen both as an unwelcome relic of colonialism and as a barrier to the genuine democratization as well as the nationalization of educational opportunity. While most ministerial budgets were increased by 3–4 per cent in 1970, spending on education rose by 20 per cent. When the National Commission for Educational Reform discussed the challenges of Arabization in April 1970, Boumediene attended the meeting in person, and told the commissioners that this problem 'represents a national imperative and a revolutionary goal. We can make no distinction between Arabization and the objectives of the revolution in other areas'.[15]

The programme of cultural revolution set Arabization and education within a broader campaign of cultural decolonization, a project for the recovery of 'the components of our national personality and the factors that make up its authenticity', as Boumediene put it in 1972.[16] Just as 'the battle for oil' signalled the 'recuperation of national riches' in the assertion of sovereignty over Algeria's natural resources, the cultural revolution pursued

the struggle to 'restore our national culture', to build the future 'by reconnecting with the past and with our ancestors', as Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, Minister of National Education, had told students in Algiers in September 1965.[17] This aspect of state- and nation-building was placed particularly under the auspices of two institutions, the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Original Education and Religious Affairs, the latter created in July 1970.[18] Envisaged as the necessary remedy for over a century of cultural alienation, as the means of returning Algerians to their 'true selves', it drew on the programme, inherited from the reformist *'ulamā* (sing. *ʿālim*, scholar of Islamic law) of the colonial period, of Arabism and Islam as the twin pillars of a true Algerian-ness, combined with the rationality of science invested in a moral universe of Islamic values for the articulation of an Arab-Islamic, 'authentically Algerian' modernity.[19] The cultural revolution thus advanced a very specific vision of the Algerian past, one which informed a particular project for Algeria's present and future, in which socialist progress was informed and legitimized by the state's appropriation of strategic resources in the cultural field: the definition and promotion of Islam and of Muslim values; the 'rediscovery' and memorialization of the national past; and the codification and teaching of the national language.

This meant adopting, co-opting and taming, but also redeploying, officializing and magnifying, the preoccupations and the rhetoric of an important constituency on the right of the FLN and outside it. Conservative religious opinion had taken exception to the ascendancy of an avowedly Marxist tendency in Ben Bella's regime and thus welcomed Boumediene's seizure of power, but had subsequently suffered in the regime's clampdown on independent centres of political thought and activism, especially after the attempted coup of December 1967. Thus the Jamʿiyat al-qiyam al-islāmiyya (Islamic Values Society), which had drawn attention to itself by publicly protesting the Egyptian regime's execution of the Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb in August 1966, was first banned from operating in the *wilāya* (governorate) of Algiers and then, in March 1970, dissolved by the authorities. Also in 1970, shortly before an ill-defined oppositional group referred to as Junūd allāh ('the Soldiers of God'), was said to have been dismantled by the police, the Minister of Religious Affairs, Larbi Saaduni, denounced the corrupting influence of foreign religious missionaries; in a move that surely had only symbolic importance, several American Methodists and French members of the Jehovah's Witnesses were expelled from the country. Later the same year, managers of restaurants and bars were called upon, for the first time since independence, to keep their premises closed in daytime during Ramadan. An annual campaign against the celebration of Christmas among Algerians denounced such practices as anti-revolutionary, and radio broadcasts of Catholic and Protestant services, which since independence had still been carried each Sunday on Radio Algiers, were ended. In December, a student protest about living conditions was turned into a students' march – the first – in support of Arabization, and the arrest

of several students associated with the PAGS the following month provided the pretext for the dissolution of the independent Algerian National Students' Union (UNEA), and its replacement with a students' union subordinated to the FLN.

This logic of incorporation would be followed in other domains too: workers', women's, peasants' and youth organizations had been or would over the following years be folded into the single-party system.[20] But the assertion of Islam as the state religion had, as Henri Sanson observed, a particular double edge: Islam was to be *the state's religion*, articulated by state-appointed authorities in support of the goals, and sanctioning the legitimacy, of the regime; it was also the *religion of the state*, defining 'national personality' and cultural 'authenticity', a source of legislation and a model of social morality that remained, as it had inevitably been in the colonial period, heavily politicized.[21]

This was a balancing act. The regime's denunciation of anti-revolutionary deviations, divisions, and 'relics of colonialism' was conventional enough for any Third World, anti-imperialist nationalism. But its co-option of a conservative, religious, moralizing language for advancing its goals of social mobilization and solidarity also offered a bridge to the agenda of those on the religious right who might otherwise be potential opponents – troubled by the social effects of rapid and disorderly urbanization, alarmed by demographic growth that saw a ballooning and unruly younger generation whose behaviour (as for social conservatives everywhere) seemed to portend moral dissipation and social breakdown, offended, above all, by the regime's infringement of property rights in its redistributive and industrializing policies. The conservatives of Jamʿiyat al-qiyam had vituperated, in their periodical *Humanisme musulman*, 'those who, defying our country's official religion and, what is more, the deepest sentiments of our people, dare to invite foreigners and enemies of God to Algeria, to this country, home of the only great contemporary revolution made in the name of God';[22] the true historical vocation of the revolution, for them, had been and remained to serve the cause of 'our independence, our freedom, our own personality, and especially our Islam . . .'[23] The equation of anti-colonial revolution and the FLN's state-building project with a 'war for Islam' and the sovereignty of God was a minority position in the mid-1960s, and remained so until 1979, when the Iranian revolution provided a major boost to such ideas. But already, a current of Algerian 'fundamentalist' opinion existed, influenced by the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, by the Pakistani ideologist Abu 'l-Aʿla Mawdudi, and, at something of a tangent to these Islamist thinkers but sharing some of their preoccupations – with the primacy of reconstructing the sovereignty and integrity of a global Muslim community, and within that community, reasserting Islam as a total ethical system, a code of social solidarity, and a political and 'civilizational' force – by the Algerian writer and educator Malek Bennabi, who had spent the revolution in exile in Cairo, returned to Algeria in 1963, and was a leading member of al-Qiyam.[24]

This current had its influence within as well as outside the state.[25] While for Boumediene – as his speeches show – the cultural revolution was an auxiliary aspect of socioeconomic development, his Minister of Religious Affairs throughout the 1970s, Mouloud Qasim, expressed a divergent perspective in the very first edition of the ministry's magazine, *al-Aṣāla* (Authenticity):

> The country is [today] undertaking an important, cultural and spiritual revolution, which will forever extirpate undesirable customs among us . . . If our people has accepted enormous sacrifices and struggled over years and years, it is not for luxuries and a life of superficiality. If we have struggled so, it has been for the recovery of our identity, our personality, and our authenticity.

In pursuing this struggle, it would be necessary to fight 'against those who stubbornly remain in error': francophone 'pseudo-intellectuals', Sufi 'obscurantist charlatans', Marxists who promoted 'ideologies that corrupt our Muslim society'. As Luc Deheuvels observes, Qasim's position 'subordinates the state, along with law, culture, religious observance, and science, to Islam, mobilizing the whole in the service of re-establishing an Islamic ethics'.[26] Or rather, the whole social project of the revolution is identified with a particular – modernist and neo-reformist, fundamentalist and prescriptive, moralizing and authoritarian – interpretation of Islam as a total social project, in which 'authentic culture' becomes both the means and the goal of a revolutionary 'restoration' of society to its 'true self.'

The concern of those mobilized around the agenda of the cultural revolution understood in these terms, then, was to 're-Islamize' the state, and through it, society, from above and from within. The logic of co-option, of bringing religion and culture, along with everything else, under the hegemony of the state apparatus, thus necessarily brought tensions over culture – and rivalries over position, access to resources, influence and preferment within the priorities of the state, expressed through cultural issues – into the factional politics of the state. Over the course of the 1970s, and increasingly as the economic and social ambitions of the revolution ran into difficulties, and then began to stall, the uneasy balance that was present from the outset between the state's hegemony over a religio-cultural agenda harnessed to its pragmatic ends, and the rightward pressure of those within and outside the state seeing themselves as committed to the pursuit of a 're-Islamizing' ideological agenda, tilted, albeit erratically, in favour of the latter. Already in the early 1970s, those responsible for the regime's religio-cultural messages were sensitive to those aspects of state discourse that were less congenial to their agenda. Boumediene's famous speech at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference summit in Lahore in February 1974, in which he stressed the priority of economics and poverty alleviation over religious concerns ('no-one wants to go to Paradise with an empty

stomach . . . A hungry people does not need to hear verses sung'), and which provoked anti-regime protests in Algeria, was not mentioned in *al-Aṣāla*.[27] Tensions mounted throughout the decade, in particular around central social and policy areas that were both important stakes in their own right, and that, increasingly as social change outran the regime's capacity to manage it, became 'lightning rods' for underlying factional and ideological divergences: demographic change, urbanization and youth culture; language policy and Arabization; and gender relations and family policy.

I shall focus here on the first of these, which (although less often examined in the literature than either language or family policy)[28] was perhaps the overriding challenge to the regime in the decades following independence. In 1972, the annual rate of demographic growth was reckoned at close to 3.5 per cent (in 1979 it remained at 3.2 per cent); 60 per cent of the Algerian population – some eight and a half million individuals – was under twenty years of age. Despite the rapid expansion of education, only some two and a half million were in school, and with the massive rural-urban migration that marked the postwar years, and continued apace through the 1970s, several million young people were already estimated to be out of school, out of work and on the streets.[29] This was the Algeria of *Omar Gatlato*, Merzak Allouache's 1976 film masterpiece in which the War of Independence is already a distant echo across the high-rise tenement blocks of a new, young and profoundly transformed Algeria. An Algeria where housing is already in short supply, where young men struggle with the 'virility' (*al-rajūla*) expected of them, expressed in slick haircuts and sharp suits, exorcized on the football terraces, frustrated in technicolor visions of courtship by the unconquerable distance across impassable streams of traffic that separate Omar from the girl in the final sequences of the film: *Omar gatlātuh al-rajūla* (Omar Manliness-Kills-Him). The complex, sensitive images of Algerian urban youth culture and masculinity in Allouache's film – in dress, sport, music, pastimes, work and relationships – contrast sharply with the stark denunciations that, by the mid-1970s, had become a leitmotif of the cultural revolution, beginning with a vigorous campaign 'against the degradation of morals' in the autumn of 1970 and particularly expressed thereafter in the annual Islamic Thought Seminars (formally 'Seminars for the Propagation of Islamic Thought') sponsored by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.[30] The tone had already been set by the al-Qiyam group, as Mokhtar Aniba, the director of *Humanisme musulman*, wrote in 1965:

> anti-Islamic ideas have turned a great number of our young people of both sexes, supposedly 'educated', into a youth that is immoral, vicious, undisciplined, . . . renegades [to Islam] and unconscious of their liberty so dearly bought. . . . Our Muslim Algeria must not be contaminated, or serve as a breeding ground, for anti-Muslim . . . ways of life. Let it be known that we are in favour of the natural health of our young people, a health in conformity with our personality . . . The young Algerian Muslim,

> this young man who must be able to understand his country's problems, and those of the Muslim world, so as to help his people, must be manly, turned to face in the right direction, healthy in mind and body. We must, as a matter of urgent necessity, concern ourselves with this moral bankruptcy of our young people . . .[31]

In 1970, Mouloud Qasim echoed the same ideas in attacking 'the wave of . . . sexuality, juvenile delinquence, and divorce' threatening the country; the official newspaper *El Moudjahid* denounced the rise of alcoholism, prostitution, suicide and divorce, associating such dangers with 'the signs of Western culture, carrying all the degenerate tendencies of that decadent civilisation'.[32] Qasim's keynote speech to the fourth Islamic Thought Seminar, held in Constantine that August, gave the remoralizing campaign an important historical dimension. During the colonial occupation, he claimed,

> we never ceased to be ourselves, proudly attached to the values of religion, language and tradition which constitute our personality, opposed to anything which might damage them or bring them harm. We fought, at that time, all the imported social diseases which were foreign to us. We did so with the strength of self-defence for the safeguarding of [our] identity and authenticity, opposed to everything that might detach us from our natural environment and depersonalize us. Society was unanimous in rejecting such corrosive influences. This self-defence was . . . our first weapon for the protection of our personality, the guarantee of our survival through the ages and vicissitudes of history.[33]

The colonial period is thus, somewhat paradoxically, seen almost as a 'golden age' of perfect unity and unanimity. After independence, however, the dangers appear: 'We must recognize that, after the elimination of our [colonial] adversary, this immunity began to disappear, the feeling of authenticity and identity was weakened, and many people became indulgent towards things which ought not to be indulged, if disaster is to be avoided.'[34] These dangers are purveyed by a host of internal enemies within Algerian society, corrupted by foreign influences: 'depersonalized persons' (*afrād mamsūkhīn* – transformed, or *de*formed individuals), 'renegades', '"liberals" of all kinds'.[35] And Algerian society faces these dangers at precisely the moment when 'we have barely taken charge of our own affairs and recovered our liberty of action as a free people and a sovereign country'.[36]

The same theme was addressed two years later, in the sixth Islamic Thought Seminar, by no less a figure than Mufdi Zakarya, the eminent nationalist poet and pan-Maghribi cultural and political activist who had written Algeria's national anthem. For the sixth seminar, held in Algiers in July and August 1972 under the theme of the rewriting and decolonization of history, 'so as to cleanse it from all conscious and premeditated impurities and falsifications',[37] Mufdi was commissioned by Qasim to compose an epic

poem, *The Algerian Iliad*, a panegyric for Algerian history 'from the most ancient times to the present day'. The long poem – 610 stanzas when published, and supposed to reach 1,000 when complete – is pervaded by the same sense of threatened social virtue. On the one hand, the alienation experienced during the colonial period, and remedied by the salutary cultural mission of the reformist *ʿulamā* (to whose movement Mufdi was at one time close, and who are said to have 'planted in the people the roots of authenticity')[38] is apparently overcome with the achievement of independence, the recovery of national sovereignty. At the same time, the entirety of the Algerian past is characterized by an inviolable moral, spiritual and cultural purity, providing the unbreakable unity of the people in resistance to every foreign aggression and their unswerving faithfulness to an idealized national selfhood. This perennial integrity of a Muslim Algeria immune to assault, firmly rooted in its history of resistance and Arab-Islamic civilization, is contrasted sharply with the present dangers, in the decolonized society of the 1970s, of fragmentation, moral dissipation and the ruin of the values which ensured, and enshrine, its 'authenticity':

> Our manliness refuses what is base, refuses the lackeys of vulgarity and their long hair
> This age has become effeminate, the 'hippies' are everywhere, spreading vice . . .
> Deviation has spread, like hashish, with powerful allurements to debauchery . . .
> Algeria was the land of men of strength, where then are departed bravery and virility? . . .
> This young generation is dissolute, its virtue ruined, a generation fallen to the dust
> Grief to Algeria and to the Muslims, if our young corrupt their souls
> This is the danger whose mounting tide threatens on all sides . . .
> Why should the colonialist be sad after our liberty, since he holds our moral strength as a captive in his hands? . . .
> Come, then, O France, return in peace, your children fill the land
> Tomorrow, with cries of joy, they will bid you welcome on our soil . . .[39]

In the face of such a prospect, the poet nonetheless sees hope in the 'war for authenticity', the 'war for our innermost selves' (*ḥarb al-ḍamīr*) to which he calls his compatriots:

> When a people violates God's covenant and betrays its faith, prepare to see it disappear
> If we have won victory in the war of deliverance, our revolution today is a war for authenticity
> We have joined battle for the raising up of Algeria, educating souls and struggling against ignorance

> Our people will forge a just nation from which perversion will be banished.[40]

Just as calls for social remoralization framed the cultural revolutionaries' views of youth in terms of a dissipated masculinity, threats to 'proper' femininity were no less grave. The fourth Islamic Thought Seminar in 1970 resolved that family law – the re-codification of which was subject to a tussle within the regime throughout the decade – should be based exclusively on the prescriptions of Islamic jurisprudence. In his opening speech, already referred to, Qasim presented a very conventionally conservative prescription for 'complementary' gender relations:

> The woman is mistress of the home, the protector of the hearth and the guardian of tradition . . . We must teach her everything of which she has need for the accomplishment of her task, educating her according to feminine morality thanks to which a woman is a woman, and not half-woman, half-man! 'To our eyes, a woman who gives birth to a child who becomes a pilot is preferable to a woman who becomes a pilot herself.' . . . This importance . . . is an honour for her and a homage paid to her role, to her place in family, society and nation. . . . [A] woman should [not] abjure her personality and become one of the deformed kind, that is to say, a mosaic and a mixture of diverse elements without homogeneity, thus becoming a curse on her milieu and an evil for her society.[41]

If the particular target here is mixed marriage – women who marry foreign men being 'though they be so few that one may count them on the fingers of one hand, nonetheless a disgrace to their family and to society as a whole' – there is a more general anxiety, here, at cultural and historical mixity. Other speakers in the same forum expressed this notion succinctly: as one woman member of the seminar's commission on national education, Oumissi Zemmour, declared 'Western and Muslim man are two different species . . . The division of the world into nationalities and blocs, most of them atheistic . . . makes marriage to foreign men or women impossible'.[42]

For Mufdi and Qasim, what was at stake was not only the inheritance, and the historical meaning, of the War of Liberation a decade after its end, but the necessity of renewing and perpetuating the revolution in the new social circumstances of independence; the cultural revolution was the means by which a 'true' national community must be 'restored to itself', not merely in the establishment of political sovereignty or the achievement of material well-being, but in the recovery of an imagined ancestral purity. This vision of the revolutionary vocation to be accomplished turned the nationalist struggle for liberation inward, against internal enemies seen as actual or potential corrupters and betrayers of the community. This was a view that would become entrenched and deepened through the later 1970s. An attempt to reverse sail somewhat in 1977 – by appointing bilingual ministers

of education and higher education, who sought to modify the pace of Arabization and revalorize bilingual (not to say bicultural) competence, at the same time as the Islamic Thought Seminar was held in out-of-the-way, historic Saharan venues and opened up to a greater mix of ideological tendencies – was resoundingly defeated by conservative pressure. A sharp radicalization came in 1979, when Abd al-Rahman Chibane, an inspector of Arabic in the education ministry known to be close to the fundamentalist current of thought, became Minister of Religious Affairs. By 1981, the exposition of Khomeini's doctrine of *vilayet-i faqih* ('guardianship of the jurisconsult', the religio-legal basis of the Islamic Republic) by an Iranian delegate to the fifteenth Islamic Thought Seminar was opposed among Algerian participants principally on the grounds, not that the state was legitimate on the nationalist and revolutionary grounds of popular sovereignty, but because 'the state corrupts', and the Islamic vocation transcended it.[43]

The cultural revolution had been intended by the regime to provide legitimation in the cultural and religious fields for its redistributive and technologically modernizing social project, and at the same time, in the expansion and Arabization of education, it was expected to bring the fruits of development to all the children of independence. But both the regime's developmental project and its capacity to contain divergent social pressures and constituencies within itself first stalled, in the late 1970s, and then broke apart, in the early and mid-1980s, under the pressure of regional events (the Iranian revolution and the rise of a more radical Islamism; the reversal of fortunes of statist, planned development projects in global credit markets and domestic achievements) and internal changes (the realignment of policy and factional preponderance after the death of Boumediene). And in these circumstances, the cultural revolution became more significant as the expression of an impulse of conservative reaction, in a context of rapid social, demographic and cultural change, than as an aspect of the progressive 'edification of a socialist Algeria'; less an ideological prop for the state's more crucial preoccupations with development than a dimension of the ideological struggle within society and the state for the dominant definition of Algeria's past, present and future. This was a struggle to construct a dominant worldview, a dominant legitimate language of politics and of development itself. Not merely ancillary to the more material domains of oil, gas, electricity and steel, 'culture' proved to be the site of a struggle to assert the place within the new division of privilege of a particular group of actors – arabophone and religiously-minded intellectuals who had, since independence, been largely outweighed in the apparatus of the state by a francophone, state-bourgeois technocracy. It may not be surprising, but it is significant, that the means of struggle as well as its goal as envisaged by these actors should have centred, in the language they produced to wage it, on the nature of Algerian society and its legitimate national culture. 'National identity', as sameness, true to a putative original inviolability, was sought as the unifying force of

community cohesion both across time and throughout society, a truth whose articulation in the present might enable the social position of particular actors as the legitimate guides of the community, the guardians of its law and of its conscience. Their vivid language of the threat to cultural authenticity as a foreign sickness, an imported social disease, the stress laid on 'authentic' masculinity and femininity, served to locate the challenges facing society in the sphere of individuals' behaviour and morality, rather than in that of the closed and repressive political system, or in the realm of economics.

This points to an important characteristic of the politics of independent Algeria under the single-party regime that held onto power until 1989, namely the extent to which struggles for ascendancy within the political system, unable to function through overt struggles between competing political platforms, were formulated in terms of culture, and in so doing, framed cultural politics in terms of moral prescriptions and exclusions, as conflicting visions of an Algerian *entre-soi*. The 'rediscovery' of the national past and the 'restoration' of society were particularly stressed, not because Algerians were suffering from a postcolonial 'identity crisis', but because these idioms provided readily available discursive space in which political contest could be articulated. When the single party and its fictions of unanimity came under stress, and then precipitately collapsed, in the 1980s, the cultural politics of exclusion and denunciation that had been incubated by this factional war of position during the 1970s all too readily provided the idioms for a sudden opening into mass politics articulated in sweeping, utopian, 'identity'-laden terms. Already in 1980–1, arabophone student protestors, disadvantaged in education and the job market, demanding immediate and concrete action on the regime's slogans of 'authentic' culture embodied in Arabic and Islam, were moving towards a more contestatory form of politics fusing the idea of a 'true' Arabic national culture with a more utopian and radical Islamism. At exactly the same time, the reaction to doctrinaire Arabization among berberophones and French-speakers in Kabylia had produced the Berber cultural movement, the 'Berber Spring', and another set of politicized identity discourses.[44] The ground was already laid, in the culturally-defined cleavages between Algerians and their conflicting conceptions of community, for the appalling war of movement that followed the collapse (or sabotage) of the attempt to manage a transition to political pluralism in 1989–92.[45] Not that the discourse of the 1970s led necessarily or directly to the horrors of jihadist and counter-insurgency violence in the 1990s; but in the language they adopted for engaging in the contests of post-independence politics within the single-party state, the 'cultural revolution' current within the Algerian political establishment was already mapping out a dangerous road to the future. The prescriptions and proscriptions of national cultural politics articulated in these terms, and with this tone, would, ultimately, do more to turn culture into a war zone, fought over in terms of mutual exclusion, than to make it a site for the *entre-soi*, the nation as an everyday living-together, of all Algerians.

Notes

1 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 229–39.

2 See, especially, Philip Abrams, 'Notes on the difficulty of studying the state', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1:1 (March 1988), 58–89; for incisive application to contemporary Algerian politics, Mohamed Hachemaoui, *Clientélisme et patronage dans l'Algérie contemporaine* (Paris: Karthala, 2013).

3 Amar Ouzegane, a leader of the Algerian Communist Party, for example, advocated 'an effective *Muslim* solidarity' as the basis of anticolonial struggle. 'Pour un Islam libre dans une Algérie indépendante', *Le jeune musulman*, 26 September 1952, emphasis added. For 'communitarian' politics among the francophone *élus* (often mislabelled 'assimilationists') in the 1930s, see Julien Fromage, 'Innovation politique et mobilisation de masse en "situation coloniale"' (PhD diss., EHESS, Paris, 2012). There were notable exceptions, especially visible in the *'querelle du M'* at the foundation (1955) of the Algerian students' union, the Union générale des étudiants musulmans algériens (UGEMA), when a minority opposed the inclusion of the 'M' insisted upon by other young nationalist leaders.

4 Crawford Young, *The African colonial state in comparative perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

5 On the Islamist re-appropriation of the revolution as a jihad for the constitution of an Islamic state, see Luc-Willy Deheuvels, *Islam et pensée contemporaine en Algérie. La Revue* al-Açâla, *1971–1981* (Paris: CNRS, 1991), 111–30; and Jean-Claude Vatin, 'Seduction and sedition: Islamic polemical discourses in the Maghreb', in *Islam and the political economy of meaning: Comparative studies of Muslim discourse,* ed. William R. Roff (London: Croom Helm, 1987), ch. 7.

6 In 1962, the Fédération de France of the FLN proposed a resolution advocating a secular republic at independence, a move that, as Mohamed Harbi points out, rang hollow in view of the instrumentalization of Islam for enforcing discipline and solidarity throughout the revolution (interview with the author, 2004); the drafters of the Tripoli programme in 1962, including Harbi, also favoured a secular constitution, but were vetoed on this by Ben Bella.

7 For recent work on the cultural origins of 'unanimism', see Jane Goodman, 'Acting with one voice: Producing unanimism in Algerian reformist theater', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52:1 (2013), 167–97; and Neil Macmaster, 'The roots of insurrection: The role of the Algerian village assembly *(djemâa)* in peasant resistance, 1863–1962', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52:2 (2013), 419–47.

8 Malika Rahal, 'Fused together and torn apart: Stories and violence in contemporary Algeria', *History and Memory* 24:1 (Spring/Summer 2012), 118–51, quote at 128–9. See also Omar Carlier, 'D'une guerre à l'autre, le redéploiement de la violence entre soi', *Confluences méditerranée* 25 (Spring 1998), 123–37, and 'Civil war, private violence, and cultural socialization:

Political violence in Algeria, 1954–1988', in *Algeria in Others' Languages,* ed. Anne-Emmanuelle Berger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 123–37.

9 This choice of periodization – between the domestic consolidation marked by the last coup attempt in the aftermath of independence, in December 1967, and the international watershed marked on one hand by the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, on the other by economic recession and the turn to neoliberalism in the global North – is deliberate; the near-congruence with the presidency of Boumediene (June 1965–December 1978) is significant but also fortuitous.

10 Ibrahimi, *Mémoires d'un Algérien*, vol. 2, *La passion de bâtir, 1965–1978* (Algiers: Casbah, 2008), 179. For the important contemporary role of social memories of this period, see Ed McAllister, 'Yesterday's tomorrow is not today: Memory and place in an Algiers neighbourhood' (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2014).

11 See Mahfoud Bennoune, *The Making of Contemporary Algeria, 1830–1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

12 On the developmental ambition of this period, its context, and its eventual shortcomings, see Jean-Claude Martens, *Le modèle algérien de développement: Bilan d'une décennie, 1962–1972* (Algiers: SNED, 1973); Mohamed Benissad, *Économie du développement de l'Algérie: 1962–78: Sous-développement et socialisme* (Paris: Economica, 1979); Bennoune, *Making of Contemporary Algeria*; Ghazi Hidouci, *Algérie, la libération inachevée* (Paris: La Découverte, 1995).

13 In October 1970, Belkacem Krim, one of the founding leaders of the wartime FLN and a principal opponent of Boumediene, widely thought to have been responsible for the 1968 assassination attempt, was murdered in Frankfurt.

14 Account and extracts of Boumediene's speech, 19 June 1970, in *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* (hereafter *AAN*) (1970), 252–3.

15 *AAN* (1970), 353–4.

16 Address to the nation, 1 November 1972, quoted in *AAN* (1972), 744–7 (from *El Moudjahid*, 1 November 1972).

17 Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, *De la décolonisation à la révolution culturelle, 1962–1972* (Algiers: SNED, 1973), 26.

18 After the absorption of the sector of 'original education' (*al-ta'līm al-aṣlī*), a successor to the independent schools founded in the colonial period, into the orbit of National Education, it was reorganized as simply the Ministry of Religious Affairs in May 1977.

19 On the pre-independence Islamic reformist movement, see Ali Merad, *Le réformisme musulman en Algérie, 1925–1940* (Paris: Mouton, 1967); Fanny Colonna, *Les versets de l'invincibilité: Permanences et changements religieux dans l'Algérie contemporaine* (Paris: FNSP, 1995); Kamel Chachoua, *L'islam kabyle: Religion, état, et société en Algérie* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001); and James McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

20 The General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA, 1963 – first created 1956), the National Union of Algerian Women (UNFA, 1963), the National Union of

Algerian Peasants (UNPA, 1973), and the National Union of Algerian Youth (UNJA, 1975), respectively.

21 Henri Sanson, *Laïcité islamique en Algérie* (Paris: CNRS, 1983).

22 Hachemi Tidjani, in *Humanisme musulman* no. 4 (April 1965), 53. Tidjani was commenting on lectures by Roger Garaudy and Maxime Rodinson in Algiers, but the group also denounced the presence of foreign technical advisors as new 'native experts'.

23 Mokhtar Aniba, 'L'Algérie musulmane', *Humanisme musulman* no. 5 (May 1965), 45.

24 For 'fundamentalism' in this period, see Deheuvels, *Islam*, 81–8. Bennabi wrote mainly in French, and had been a nationalist journalist before 1954. He produced a large number of works during and after the War of Independence which remained mostly unpublished, except in Arabic translations printed in Cairo or Beirut, but French-language copies were distributed by sympathizers, especially from 1968 onwards, through the students' mosque at Algiers University. Bennabi also wrote for the campus mosque's bulletin, *Que sais-je de l'Islam*. His thought has proved sufficiently flexible that subsequent interpreters have seen in him both an Islamist and an anti-Islamist. See for example Allan Christelow, 'An Islamic humanist in the twentieth century: Malik Bennabi', *The Maghreb Review* 17:1–2 (1992), 69–83.

25 For the trajectory towards radicalization, see Deheuvels, *Islam*; his major source, *al-Aṣāla*, was closed down by the regime in 1981, a year after the UNJA launched a campaign against the Muslim Brotherhood, and as the regime made corresponding attempts (notably in accelerating Arabization) to placate conservative opinion in cultural matters. Outside the system, the principal figures of Islamist opposition were the leading (and elderly) shaykhs Abd al-Latif Soltani and Ahmad Sahnun, both former members of the prewar reformist Association of *'ulamā*. On Islamism in this period, see Ahmed Rouadjia, *Les frères et la mosquée* (Paris: Karthala, 1990).

26 Quote from Qasim, 'Hādhihi 'l-majalla', *al-Aṣāla* no. 1 (March 1971), quoted in Deheuvels, *Islam*, 75–6.

27 Deheuvels, *Islam*, 237.

28 On these, see for example Mohamed Benrabah, *Language Conflict in Algeria* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013) and Khaoula Taleb-Ibrahimi, *Les Algériens et leur(s) langue(s)*, 2nd ed. (Algiers: Dar al-Hikma, 1997); Marnia Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence* (London: Routledge, 1994) and Mounira Charrad, *States and Women's Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

29 *AAN* (1972), 388.

30 The Seminars too were 'nationalized'; having originated in three modest meetings organized independently in 1969 by disciples of Bennabi in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, from the fourth seminar in 1970 they were brought within the official programme of the Ministry's activities and thus both considerably expanded in scope and funding while also being brought firmly under control.

31 Aniba, 'L'Algérie musulmane', 47–9.

32 Quoted in *AAN* (1970), 360.

33 This speech was published in the inaugural edition of *al-Aṣāla*: Mouloud Qasim, 'Inniya wa aṣāla/Identité et authenticité', *al-Aṣāla* no. 1 (March 1971), 6–20 (Arabic text; French tr., 3–8). Quote at page 4 (in the French).

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 4–5 (French), 11–12 (Arabic).

36 Ibid.

37 Qasim, Preface to Zakarya, *Ilyādhat al-Jazā'ir*. The Arabic text of the poem, with a French translation by Tahar Bouchouchi, was printed as a special supplement to *al-Aṣāla* no.11, under the title *Hymn of Hymns: the Iliad of Algeria* (*Nashīd al-anāshīd aw ilyādhat al-Jazā'ir*).

38 Zakarya, *Ilyādha*, 20 (in the French).

39 Ibid., 27–9, 32.

40 Ibid., 26.

41 Qasim, 'Inniyya wa aṣāla', 5–6 (page 14 in the Arabic).

42 Quoted in *AAN* (1970), 361.

43 *AAN* (1981), 710.

44 On the 'Berber Spring', the Berber cultural movement, and its subsequent political implications, see Hugh Roberts, 'Towards an understanding of the Kabyle question in contemporary Algeria', *The Maghreb Review* 5:5-6 (Sept.–Dec. 1980), 115–24; Salem Chaker, 'L'émergence du fait berbère', *AAN* (1980), 473–83; Gabi Kratochwil, *Die Berber in der historischen Entwicklung Algeriens von 1949 bis 1990: zur Konstruktion einer ethnischen Identität* (Berlin: Schwarz Verlag, 1996); Paul Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, *The Berber Identity Movement and the Challenge to North African States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

45 It should be noted here that anti-Islamist currents, too, while generally advocating a democratic and pluralist political community and a less prescriptive, less authoritarian, cultural politics, were also amenable, by the late 1980s, to a politics of exclusion that would lead to support for the 'eradicationist' tendency within the Algerian state during the 1990s.

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