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Colonial Remainders: France, Algeria, and the Culture of Decolonization (1958-1970)

A dissertation presented

by

Andrew Harold Bellisari

to

The Department of History

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

History

Harvard University

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Colonial Remainders: France, Algeria, and the Culture of Decolonization (1958-1970)

Abstract

The phenomenon of decolonization profoundly reshaped the twentieth century. Within the span of three decades following the Second World War, the majority of countries formerly colonized by European powers became independent nations. But this history, so often told from the abstract perspective of high-level diplomacy, tells us little about how decolonization was actually experienced on the ground. This dissertation examines the cultural and social dimensions of decolonization in French Algeria to understand how transfers of power operate and postcolonial sovereignty is constructed on a local level. In short, it asks: how does one decolonize a colony?

"Colonial Remainders" argues that the messy logistics of colonial divorce in Algeria fostered an unexpected culture of cooperation between French officials and Algerian nationalists that allowed for precarious but pragmatic moments of collaboration in the years surrounding Algeria's independence. This dynamic permitted a relatively successful transfer of power following a conflict better known for terror, torture, and *terre brûlée*. Based on two years of archival fieldwork and interviews conducted in France and Algeria, this project uncovered the experiences of people, the fate of institutions, and the circulation of objects that were caught up in the dynamics of decolonization but whose stories fit neither within the borders of newly emergent states nor the temporal dichotomy of a "before" and "after."

This dissertation re-evaluates the history of decolonization by examining such stories as the fate of a contested collection of French impressionist artwork, a group of wary French and

Algerian military officers forced to work together to maintain a tenuous ceasefire, and the controversial ownership disputes that erupted over Algeria's vast colonial-era infrastructure following independence. While this project focuses on the experience of French Algeria, it lends nuance to the common view of decolonization as a process marked foremost by intransigence and violence and reconsiders the claim that post-independence cooperation between newly independent states and former colonial powers was a mere Trojan horse of neocolonialism. At its core, this work sheds light on how transitions happen, not just politically, but also socially and culturally.

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Andrew H. Bellisari
Cambridge, Massachusetts
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Introduction

One can choose one's friends, but not one's enemies. We are what we are, the Algerians what they are, but it is with us that they will make peace, and with no one else. And we with them, and only with them.

Germaine Tillion, *France and Algeria: Complementary Enemies* (1961)[1]

The yellow fat-tailed scorpion (*Androctonus australis*) is one of the deadliest scorpions in the world. The genus's name, *Androctonus*, means "man killer" in Greek. The sting from a yellow fat-tailed scorpion delivers a potent neurotoxin capable of triggering impaired consciousness, pulmonary edema, and cardiogenic shock.[2] In less than seven hours, severe envenomation can kill an individual. Every year yellow fat-tailed scorpions account for thousands of human casualties and hundreds of deaths. Indigenous to North Africa, *Androctonus australis* can be found as far afield as the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, and the Indian subcontinent. Throughout these regions, treatment for yellow fat-tailed scorpion envenomation has always been a significant public health concern, one heavily reliant on the timely administering of species-specific anti-venom. In the summer of 1962, however, the world nearly ran out of its supply.[3] The only place on earth that manufactured anti-venom for *Androctonus australis* almost stopped production in July of that year:

[1] Germaine Tillion, *France and Algeria: Complementary Enemies*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961), 183.

[2] "*Androctonus australis*," Women's and Children's Hospital Clinical Toxinology Resources, University of Adelaide, http://www.toxinology.com/fusebox.cfm?fuseaction=main.scorpions.display&id=SC0043 (accessed 5 July 2017); and Jean-Philippe Chippaux, "Emerging Options for the Management of Scorpion Stings," *Drug Design, Development and Therapy* 6 (2012): 165-173. https://doi.org/10.2147/DDDT.S24754 (accessed 5 July 2017).

[3] Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (ANOM): 81/F/1632: "Rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de la Santé Publique sur la situation actuelle de l'Institut Pasteur d'Algérie" (22 October 1962).

the branch of the Pasteur Institute located at 1 Rue du Docteur Laveran in Algiers—capital of a newly independent Algeria.[4]

Algeria celebrated independence from France at noon on 3 July 1962, ending 132 years of colonial occupation. What began as an insurrection launched by the relatively unknown *Front de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Front [FLN]) on 1 November 1954, became a revolution for national liberation that drew France and Algeria into seven and a half years of war. The war itself ended on 18 March 1962 with the signing of a negotiated settlement between the FLN and the French state in a town better known for its bottled water than its role in diplomatic history: Evian-les-Bains. Known as the Evian Accords, this agreement called for an immediate ceasefire and laid out a roadmap for Algerian independence that ended a conflict since immortalized in the popular imagination by such representations as Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*. For many, Pontecorvo's masterpiece is both an entrance into—and exit out of—any conversation about the Algerian War of Independence and its narrative has become the narrative of the war itself: the anticolonial struggle *par excellence*, a dirty conflict marked by guerrilla warfare, ruthless counterinsurgency operations, urban terrorism, and torture that implicated both sides and spared few from its sanguinary violence. It also presents a narrative that suggests freedom from colonial rule was only a matter of time. The film's final scene, in which protesting Algerian women in traditional white *haïks* hurl defiant ululations at French riot police straining to control the crowd, captures the perception that the tide of history had broken against French colonial rule. When independence did come by popular referendum in July 1962, it was perceived as having been

[4] ANOM: 81/F/1632: "Rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de la Santé Publique sur la situation actuelle de l'Institut Pasteur d'Algérie" (22 October 1962). To this day, the Institut Pasteur d'Algérie remains one of the world's leading providers of anti-venom serum for *Androctonus australis*. Chippaux, "Emerging Options for the Management of Scorpion Stings," 171.

inevitable. For most, this is where the story of decolonization in Algeria ends. Rarely, then, do discussions of decolonization consider the availability of scorpion anti-venom.

Algeria was modern France's oldest and most entrenched settler colony—one that had long been considered an administrative extension of the French state itself. In a common refrain used by supporters of France's presence on the southern shore of the Mediterranean: *Algérie, c'est la France*. As with most other institutions in formerly French Algeria, many of the doctors, researchers, and administrators who worked at the Pasteur Institute were white settlers of European descent. Known colloquially as *pieds-noirs*, there were nearly one million in Algeria when the Evian Accords were signed. Uncertain of their place in post-independence Algeria, the Pasteur Institute's employees joined the steady exodus of settlers who left for mainland France against a backdrop of destabilizing sectarian violence orchestrated by the dissident *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* (Secret Army Organization [OAS])—a rightwing paramilitary group made up of *pied-noir* ultras and disaffected officers from the French military who vowed to keep Algeria French at all costs. More than a century of French policy privileging this community had marginalized the colony's indigenous population of nine million Algerian Muslims and firmly integrated European settlers into Algeria's economic, social, and administrative life. Their mass departure in the spring and summer of 1962, therefore, had significant effects on the functioning of a nascent Algerian state. The laboratories of the Pasteur Institute, like the galleries of the Fine Arts Museum in Algiers or the switching stations of the national railway company, were in danger of closing completely. This is not to suggest that Algeria's sovereignty was dependent on the maintenance of settler colonialism, but rather to underscore how French colonialism and Algerian independence were entangled and interconnected in intimate and occasionally unexpected ways. Indeed, decolonization did not end with independence. As the French ethnologist Germaine Tillion

observed in 1961, it was a process that would require the commitment and energy of both the French and the Algerians to sort out.

The intensity of France's colonial project in Algeria linked colony and metropole in ways that had profound consequences for decolonization. As this dissertation will explore, the construction of Algerian sovereignty entailed more than just lowering flags and changing street names. Instead, it involved a process of transition that included the participation of both colonizer and colonized who, despite recent hostility, were obliged to work with one another to create provisional institutions of governance, maintain a fragile ceasefire, manage massive infrastructural networks, rearticulate cultural identities, and tackle a host of logistical complexities that were central not only to undoing French colonialism, but also to fashioning Algeria into an independent nation-state. This dissertation uses the social, cultural, and political history of French withdrawal from Algeria to understand how transfers of power operate and postcolonial sovereignty is constructed on a local level. In short, it asks: how does decolonization function in practice?

"Colonial Remainders" argues that the messy logistics of colonial divorce fostered an unexpected culture of cooperation between French officials and Algerian nationalists that allowed for precarious but pragmatic moments of collaboration in the years surrounding Algeria's independence. This dynamic permitted a relatively successful transfer of power following a conflict better known for terror, torture, and *terre brûlée*. Over the course of six chapters, this project looks at surprising instances of cooperation, confrontation, and compromise, such as the joint French-FLN Provisional Executive that became responsible for running Algeria during its last few weeks under French rule and its first few months of independence, a group of wary French and Algerian military officers forced to work together to maintain a tenuous ceasefire, a contested collection of French impressionist artwork that challenged postcolonial identities on both sides of

the Mediterranean, the battles over memory and memorialization prompted by decisions to remove colonial-era commemorative monuments in Algeria, and the ownership disputes over Algeria's infrastructure that provoked uncomfortable questions about the meaning of independence and the limits of sovereignty. By analyzing decolonization as series of complex negotiations that extended well beyond independence, we can uncover the experiences of people, the fate of institutions, and the circulation of objects that were caught up in the dynamics of decolonization but whose stories fit neither within the borders of newly emergent states nor the temporal dichotomy of a "before" and "after." This approach not only lends nuance to the common view of imperial disintegration as a process marked foremost by intransigence and violence, but also reconsiders the claim that cooperation between newly independent states and former colonial powers was a mere Trojan horse of neocolonialism. The mechanics of conflict resolution, cultural identity formation, and state-building that are central to the story of decolonization are also necessary for understanding larger histories of war, occupation, and socio-political change from the Age of Empire to our current moment of contested sovereignties and changing borders. At its core, this is a history that attempts to shed light on how wars end and transitions happen, not just politically, but also socially and culturally.

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Decolonization was not a discrete moment with a clearly defined endpoint. Rather, it was an unbounded, constantly re-defined process that straddled the chronological meridian of independence. As such, our story starts in 1958 and ends a dozen years later in 1970, with Algeria's transition to independence in 1962 as the hinge on which many of the case studies in this dissertation turn. This periodization allows us not only to reunite colonial and postcolonial

narratives at the very moment that they splintered apart, but also to look back to a point in time when the path of decolonization in Algeria was still being debated and when neither French withdrawal nor Algerian sovereignty had taken their final forms. In doing so, we can rescue the contingency of decolonization by tracing how the colonial situation affected decisions made by local French and Algerian actors in the months around independence and how these decisions in turn influenced the course of imperial disentanglement in the decade that followed.

In 1958, Charles de Gaulle returned to power in France and the FLN formed its external political arm, the *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne* (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic [GPRA]). While these two developments by no means guaranteed independence, or even an end to the war itself, they did herald an important departure in strategy for both sides that would lead to negotiations. The settlement at Evian that resulted four years later would play an important role in structuring Franco-Algerian relations. Many histories of decolonization in Algeria, however, see the Evian Accords in one of two ways: either as having been an ineffectual agreement quickly undermined by the chaos of OAS violence, settler exodus, and FLN political discord that occurred in the spring and summer of 1962; or else as a successful neocolonial maneuver that perpetuated Algerian dependency on France—*décoloniser pour mieux rester*.[5] Instead, the Evian Accords should be seen from the perspective of 1962, when the agreement promised a range of future possibilities. Even though both Paris and Algiers would do much to limit some of these possibilities in the years after, this dissertation argues that the decisions

[5] "Decolonize to stay longer." On the Evian Accords as ineffectual, see: Guy Pervillé, "Trentes ans après: réflexions sur les Accords d'Évian," *Révue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 79, no. 296 (1992): 367-381; Guy Pervillé, *1962: La paix en Algérie* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992); and Jérôme Hélie, *Les accords d'Évian. Histoire de la paix ratée en Algérie* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1992). On the Evian Accords as neocolonial, see: Hartmut Elsenhans, "La signification néocoloniale des Accords d'Evian," in *Les accords d'Evian en conjoncture et en longue durée*, ed. René Gallissot (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1997), 33-47. On the idea of "*décoloniser pour mieux rester*," see: Tony Chafer, "'Décoloniser pour mieux rester': le cas du Sénégal" in *Démontage d'empires*, ed. Jean Fremigacci, Daniel Lefeuvre, and Marc Michel (Paris: Riveneuve Éditions, 2012), 315-336.

made at Evian were not as easy to discount as previously thought and would have generally unacknowledged implications for both France and Algeria throughout the better part of a decade.[6] We end, therefore, in 1970: five years after Ahmed Ben Bella is overthrown by Colonel Houari Boumediene, one year after the death of Charles de Gaulle, and the year that Franco-Algerian relations began seriously foundering over the question of natural gas and petroleum rights in the Sahara. It is also the year that many of the post-independence complexities discussed in this dissertation were resolved, recalibrating the relationship between the two countries in a way that focused less on the immediate aftermath of independence and more on a future marked by other interactions.

But if decolonization was a process that extended beyond independence, what kind of process was it? Decolonization marked not only the end of one reality, but also the beginning of another. As a phenomenon that existed in the liminal space between polities, decolonization was a transitional and transformative process more than it was a terminal one. As Frederick Cooper has argued, there were "alternative visions" for how empires might be transformed and multiple paths for how they might end, noting that agency and negotiation were central to the story of decolonization.[7] Looking back at the transitional process in Algeria from the point of view of French and Algerian actors on the ground can remind us how the independent nation that took shape after 1962 did not emerge *ex nihilo* from the antechamber of national liberation, but rather was the product of ongoing interactions between representatives of the former colonial power and

[6] This builds on the opinion of Charles-Robert Ageron who, in contrast to Guy Pervillé, underlined the importance of not discounting the later diplomatic successes of the Evian Accords: Charles-Robert Ageron, "Les Accords d'Evian (1962)," *Vingtième Siècle* no. 35 (July-September 1992): 3-15.

[7] Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 4; and Frederick Cooper, "Routes Out of Empire," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37, no. 2 (August 2017): 406-411.

the newly independent state over patrimony, property, and people necessitated by the practical imperatives of independence. Decolonization, therefore, was a generative process, one that by its very nature functioned on contingency, collaboration, and compromise—even in the seemingly "worst case scenario" that French Algeria often exemplifies in both popular imagination and scholarly discourse.

To that end, this dissertation engages with a growing body of historical literature that not only re-evaluates how we think about decolonization, but also traces its various trajectories.[8] Recent work, for example, has examined how postwar schemes for welfare and development in the empire structured postcolonial "afterlives" in both former metropole and former colony.[9] In the Algerian case, Muriam Haleh Davis has shown how Algerian policymakers continued to follow the general intent of the Constantine Plan well after 1962, noting how Algerian nationalism and French colonialism "continuously resonated, circulated, and borrowed from one another."[10]

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[8] In the Algerian case, Philip C. Naylor's wide-ranging monograph on the political and diplomatic history of Franco-Algerian relations between 1830 and the 1990s was among the first to do so. Naylor has also described Algeria's decolonization as a "postcolonial decolonization," articulating the idea, supported by this dissertation, that decolonization continued beyond Algeria's date of formal independence as the two nations negotiated and renegotiated the terms of the Evian Accords: Phillip Naylor, *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000). Regarding decolonization and post-independence trajectories, historians looking at Algeria have begun tracing the history of European settlers who stayed in Algeria after independence as well as those schoolteachers, engineers, and civilian and military volunteers (*coopérants* and *Volontaires du Service National Actif*) who participated in the various programs related to Franco-Algerian technical and cultural cooperation. In particular, see: Pierre Daum, *Ni valise, ni cercueil. Les Pieds-noirs restés en Algérie après l'Indépendance* (Paris: Solin-Actes Sud, 2012); Catherine Simon, *Algérie, les années pieds-rouges. Des rêves de l'indépendance au désenchantement (1962-1969)* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2009); *Ingénieurs en Algérie dans les années 1960. Une génération de la coopération*, eds. Aïssa Kadri and Mohamed Benguerna (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2014); Aïssa Kadri, *Instituteurs et enseignants en Algérie, 1945-1975. Histoire et mémoires* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2014).

[9] For example: Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), which illustrates how decolonization affected conceptions of social welfare in postwar and post-imperial Britain; and in the French case, Amelia H. Lyons, *The Civilizing Mission in the Metropole: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State during Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). Also, Jessica Pearson, *The Colonial Politics of Global Health: France and the United Nations in Postwar Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), which looks at colonial healthcare policy and its legacies in French West and Central Africa.

[10] Muriam Haleh Davis, "Producing Eurafrica: Development, Agriculture and Race in Algeria, 1958-1965" (PhD diss., New York University, 2015), 2.

Decolonization also involved competing claims to authority as colonial powers and nationalist movements vied for control over the instruments of sovereignty, such as healthcare and cultural production.[11] Some historians have taken a more literal view of decolonization as a process of "disassembly." For instance, the French historians Jean Fremigacci, Daniel Lefeuvre, and Marc Michel have insisted on the idea of the "dismantling of empires" ("*démontage d'empires*") to give more breadth and flexibility to discussions of imperial disintegration both geographically and temporally.[12] Their focus on "dismantling" suggests a physicality to decolonization that can be found in such things as the displacement of colonial archives, the postcolonial careers of imperial administrators, or the fate of educational institutions following independence.[13] But it also suggests a false sense of finality. Imperial "dismantling" necessitated an equally important process of state building—one cannot be separated from the other. This project seeks out the tangibility of these twined processes by emphasizing that the path decolonization took in Algeria depended on the material procedures of transferring sovereignty, involving such disparate things as provisional institutions, impressionist artwork, dismantled statues, railroads and rolling stock, war memorials, and vials of antidote.

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[11] On healthcare and sovereignty, see: Jennifer Johnson, *The Battle for Algeria: Sovereignty, Health Care, and Humanitarianism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). On the intersection of culture, patrimony, decolonization, and the idea of sovereignty, see Sarah Van Beurden's recent work on the negotiations between Belgium and Zaire over the return of Congolese artifacts from the Royal Museum for Central Africa near Brussels: *Authentically African: Arts and the Transnational Politics of Congolese Culture* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015); and "The Art of (Re)Possession: Heritage and the Cultural Politics of Congo's Decolonization," *The Journal of African History* 56, no. 1 (March 2015): 143-164.

[12] Jean Fremigacci, Daniel Lefeuvre, and Marc Michel, "Introduction," in *Démontage d'empires*, 7.

[13] Jean Fremigacci, Daniel Lefeuvre, and Marc Michel, "Introduction," in *Démontage d'empires*, 7-14. On archives, see also: Todd Shepard, "'Of Sovereignty': Disputed Archives, 'Wholly Modern' Archives, and the Post-Decolonization French and Algerian Republics, 1962-2012," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 869-883.

At first glance, tracing such histories may seem like an unconventional approach, but as Jordanna Bailkin reminds us, the history of decolonization depends on "where we look," and the story of colonial divorce is written in multiple archives.[14] The archives of decolonization are anything but self-evident. They are also anything but well organized. This is particularly true in the case of French Algeria, where the archival record concerning decolonization itself is notoriously divided not only between various ministerial archives in France, but between France and Algeria themselves. This dissertation relies not only on the major institutional archives of the colonial and postcolonial state, such as French Ministry of Foreign Affairs outside of Paris and the national archives of Algeria, but also on local collections found on either side of the Mediterranean, such as the files of the French national railway located in Le Mans or the personal archives of former officers from the Algerian *Armée de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Army [ALN]) at the Musée Régional du Moudjahid in Tizi-Ouzou. Following this paper trail allows us to see that decolonization was neither singular nor monolithic, but rather occurred in multiple sites simultaneously and implicated a diverse array of participants at every level of colonial society—from French museum curators at the Louvre and FLN policymakers in Tunis to *moudjahidine* in the *bled* and *pied-noir* train conductors in the railyards of Algiers. Moreover, it also forces us to reconsider where and when decolonization took place. The archival record of Algerian decolonization underscores the continuity that existed between the colonial and the postcolonial, illustrating that decolonization necessitated continued contact across new borders by old interlocutors to sort out the challenges precipitated by colonial divorce. Ironically, these sources invite us to return to a frame of analysis that has become rather *démodé*—that of transition.

[14] Jordanna Bailkin, "Where Did the Empire Go? Archives and Decolonization in Britain," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 896.

Indeed, early histories of decolonization focused on its political and diplomatic aspects and what was referred to, mostly by British policymakers, as "transfers of power."[15] In the past two decades, however, scholarship has greatly nuanced the social, cultural, and political stakes of decolonization, moving us beyond such narratives.[16] Consequently, most dismiss the "transfer of power" model, and the intricacies of transition more broadly, as "political" events of a process driven foremost by the colonizer's initiative. Yet, hardly any historical event is purely "political." This dissertation adapts the older framework of transition to show how the "political" history of Algeria's decolonization had important social, cultural, and economic dimensions. The joint provisional institutions established to oversee Algeria's referendum on self-determination and maintain the ceasefire between the French army and the ALN were intensely personal affairs that functioned (or failed) on the presence (or absence) of goodwill and cooperation between former adversaries. Logistical questions concerning how to separate state institutions, like a fine arts museum or a national railway, provoked profound questions about cultural identity and economic sovereignty in both former colonizer and the formerly colonized. These discussions emanated from the very practical difficulties unleashed by decolonization, some of which were foreseen by French and Algerian policymakers, but many of which were not. As will be seen, decisions that would have important consequences for both countries were often decided on the spot out of necessity. Following independence, the Provisional Executive, left to its own devices while the FLN's internal leadership vied for power in the Algerian countryside, promulgated decrees that would

[15] Farina Mir, "Introduction," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 844. Also: *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization, 1940-1960*, ed. Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).

[16] See: Prasenjit Duara, "Introduction: The Decolonization of Asia and Africa in the Twentieth Century" in *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*, ed. Prasenjit Duara (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-18; and for a more recent analysis of this shift, see: Farina Mir's introduction to the June 2015 AHR Roundtable on "The Archives of Decolonization": Farina Mir, "Introduction," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 844-851.

have lasting implications for property law and Franco-Algerian technical cooperation. Faced with the French army's unilateral decision to start dismantling colonial-era commemorative monuments, French and Algerian administrators had to work together to formulate policies that would affect the politics of postcolonial memory and commemoration. And, in need of experienced employees to maintain the economic infrastructure of the new state, Algerian nationalists worked out solutions with the French government to incentivize French railway workers to stay on the job following independence—sometimes against their will—so that Algeria's trains could keep running. This focus on transition illustrates how, *pace* Todd Shepard's view that French decolonization in Algeria "allowed the French to forget that Algeria had been an integral part of France since the 1830s and to escape many of the larger implications of that shared past," the logistical imperatives of colonial divorce further bound France and Algeria together.[17]

This study of transition also returns agency to the colonized. Although transitions to independence were often orchestrated by the imperial power, the process nonetheless required the implicit acceptance and cooperation of nationalist movements. In the Algerian case, however, historians such as Hartmut Elsenhans have contended that the Evian Accords and the institutions it created were merely the implements of neocolonialism—a rhetorical claim that was also made by the FLN's more doctrinaire elements during its party congress in Tripoli in May 1962.[18] Certainly, French administrators attempted to leverage decolonization in their nation's interests and did so from a position of relative power and influence. Yet, while nationalist policymakers

[17] Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

[18] Hartmut Elsenhans, *La guerre d'Algérie 1954-1962. La transition d'une France à une autre. Le passage de la IV à la Ve République* (Paris: Publisud, 2000); and "Le Congrès de Tripoli: projet de programme pour la réalisation de la révolution démocratique algérienne (adoptée à l'unanimité par le C.N.R.A. à Tripoli en Juin 1962)" http://www.el-mouradia.dz/francais/symbole/textes/tripoli.htm (accessed 3 July 2015).

may have had reservations about French intentions, the FLN also commanded significant influence across the colony and was not without the means to sway decolonization's outcome. In the final months of French Algeria, nationalists became engaged partners in their future nation's transition to independence. Labeling the results of these efforts as "neocolonial" denies Algerian nationalists the agency of having made the decisions they did. The route out of empire necessitated unlikely instances of cooperation and compromise, and this dissertation argues that the seemingly neocolonial aspects of decolonization in Algeria—such as the creation of a Provisional Executive, or the institutionalization of technical cooperation, or a willingness to trade French artwork across the Mediterranean—were in fact instrumentalized by the FLN not only to hasten decolonization itself, but to strengthen Algeria's own constructions of sovereignty, be they political, economic, or cultural.

Such reconsiderations can particularly benefit our understanding of a history which remains controversial and fraught with the perils of a living memory barely fifty years old. It is common among historians of decolonization, such as Raymond Betts or Martin Shipway, to describe the troubled history of France's decolonization in Algeria as "chaotic," or simply a "catastrophe."[19] In particular, this history suffers from the dominant presence of numerous traumatic memories: the use of torture and terrorism that took place during the war itself, the panicked exodus of French settlers and their uneasy integration into metropolitan French society afterwards, the terror campaign unleashed by the OAS in a last-ditch effort to keep Algeria French, and, in the immediate wake of independence, the massacre by the FLN of tens of thousands of *harkis*—the Algerian Muslim auxiliaries who had served with the French army.

[19] Raymond Betts, *France and Decolonisation, 1900-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 113; Martin Shipman, *Decolonization and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 5.

These histories have rightly dominated much of a history that has long been ignored by historians in France until the end of twentieth century.[20] Moreover, the efforts of interest groups organized by *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* in France have ensured that the tragic experiences of these groups, and their painful nostalgia for an *Algérie Française*, remain at the forefront of a national, although increasingly politically conservative, memory. And in Algeria itself, the FLN, as the still-dominant political organ of the government, has made the narrative of suffering and triumph during Algeria's War of Independence a powerful totem of the nation's collective consciousness. It is the goal of this dissertation, therefore, to look beyond the *idées fixes* of fleeing settlers and slain partisans that have so deeply imprinted themselves onto the modern memories within France and Algeria and reveal a parallel history of uneasy local cooperation, lingering colonial-era collaboration, and the complicated legacies of institutions and objects that changed ownership. This reassessment can act as a counterweight to postcolonial trauma narratives and challenge the totalizing qualifications often associated with the drama of Algerian decolonization. By exposing local instances of interdependence, confrontation, and reconciliation that emerged from the crucible of decolonization, we can see that instead of producing two, distinct nation-states with discriminate histories, decolonization redefined the relationship between them, maintaining inter-connections more often than it severed them. In short, our perspective shifts: where once decolonization was the end point, now it is the place from which we can begin to investigate how

[20] In particular: Charles-Robert Ageron, *La décolonisation française* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991); Raphaëlle Branche, *La Torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962*, (Paris: Gallimard, 2001); Jean-François Guilhaume, *Les myths fondateurs de l'Algérie française* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992); Guy Pervillé, *De l'Empire française à la décolonisation* (Paris: Hachette, 1991); *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français*, ed. Jean-Pierre Rioux (Paris: Fayard, 1990); Benjamin Stora: *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1991) and *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1993); Sylvie Thénault, *Une Drôle de justice: les magistrats dans la guerre d'Algérie*, (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2001) and *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005).

the repercussions of colonial divorce reverberated across boundaries, forcing us to reconsider not only the imperial project itself, but the postcolonial realities that emerged from its destruction.

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Our story opens with a brief history of French colonialism in Algeria and an overview of the Algerian War of Independence from the outbreak of revolution in November 1954 to the signing of the Evian Accords in March 1962. In exploring the course of the conflict, chapter one analyzes how policymakers within the FLN and the French colonial state came to accept negotiation and transition as an exit out of empire. This realization, however, prompted debates over the nature, duration, and scale of Algeria's transition to independence. Different visions of transition emerged as the agents of French colonialism and Algerian nationalism sought to leverage the anticipated transitional period to their own ends. The chapter highlights how competing ideas of what an independent Algeria might look like came to shape the Evian Accords and the provisional institutions it created.

With negotiations concluded and an uneasy peace established, the second chapter showcases how plans for a transitional period were put into practice by examining the socio-political history of the institution that became responsible for Algeria's administrative affairs between March and September 1962: the *Exécutif Provisoire* (Provisional Executive). Comprising an executive council of twelve men from the colony's European and Algerian Muslim communities (including members of the FLN), the Executive would govern French Algeria in concert with colonial authorities until the planned referendum on self-determination in July and, afterward, act as the caretaker government of a fully independent Algeria until the country's first legislative elections could be held. Installed in the newly constructed administrative complex of

Rocher Noir located outside of Algiers, these men worked around the clock to hammer out the details of Algeria's transition to independence and lay the ground work for the sovereign nation to come. Although short-lived and little-remembered, the Executive responded to the urgent challenges of transition, not only maintaining administrative continuity between the colonial and the postcolonial, but enacting policy that would shape Algeria's future. By charting the day-to-day operations of the Provisional Executive, the chapter argues that far from being unprepared for the challenges of decolonization, French policymakers and their Algerian interlocutors were able to find common ground, resolve conflict, and ensure that a relatively peaceful transition to independence could take place.

Moving from the administrative offices of the Provisional Executive outside Algiers to the towns and villages of the Algerian countryside, the third chapter investigates how the transitional period in the spring of 1962 played out on a local level. The agreement signed at Evian established the official end of hostilities between the French army and Algerian nationalist forces. To ensure that both sides would respect the ceasefire during the politically fraught four-month transition to independence, the Evian Accords included articles that established the creation of the *commissions mixtes de cessez-le-feu* (mixed ceasefire commissions). During this time, the Provisional Executive set up dozens of commissions across Algeria comprising officers from the French Army and the ALN—men who only a few weeks earlier had been fighting one another. Between April and July 1962 these commissions brought together former enemies in bi-weekly meetings to resolve incidents that threatened the precarious truce in Algeria and investigate sensitive but essential questions such as the release of prisoners, the exchange of materiel, and responsibility for armed provocations, kidnappings, and disappearances. Using the original minutes of commission meetings and interviews with Algerian members of the mixed ceasefire commissions, this chapter

examines the social history of the commissions by looking at their daily functioning and the (sometimes unlikely) interpersonal networks that were forged between members. Furthermore, this chapter will analyze why some delegations succeeded and others failed as each attempted to navigate the delicate process of decolonization's endgame on the ground. While much of the history surrounding the final months of France's presence in Algeria underscores the chaos and brutal violence that accompanied the bitter exodus of Algeria's French settlers, this chapter lends nuance to the existing historiography by excavating a parallel history of precarious cooperation between old enemies who tried, against all odds, to maintain a fragile peace and ensure Algeria's transition to independence.

Proceeding beyond the dividing line of independence, the fourth chapter adopts a cultural history lens to analyze the effects of decolonization on ideas of national and postcolonial identity. In May 1962—two months before Algerian independence—French museum administrators removed over 300 works of art from the Fine Arts Museum in Algiers and transported them, under military escort, to the Louvre in Paris. The artwork, however, no longer belonged to France. Under the terms of the Evian Accords it had become the official property of the Algerian state-to-be, and the incoming nationalist government wanted it back. The fate of Algeria's art would be negotiated for close to a decade before France returned nearly all of the artwork to the Fine Arts Museum in Algiers, where today it makes up one of the largest collections of European art in Africa. This chapter examines not only the French decision to act in contravention of the Evian Accords and the ensuing negotiations that took place between France and Algeria, but also the cultural complexities of decolonization: What does it mean for artwork produced by some of France's most revered artists—Monet, Delacroix, Courbet—to become the cultural property of a former colony? Moreover, what is at stake when a former colony demands the repatriation of artwork emblematic

of the former colonizer, deeming it a valuable part of the nation's cultural heritage? The negotiations undertaken to repatriate French art to Algeria expose the awkward cultural refashioning precipitated by the process of decolonization and epitomize the lingering connections of colonial disentanglement that do not fit neatly into the common narrative of the "end of empire."

The fifth chapter continues the exploration of decolonization's cultural implications by examining the afterlives of colonial-era commemorative monuments that were either removed from Algeria or left in place. Until 1965, when the majority of France's remaining troops departed Algerian soil, the French army undertook a massive campaign to locate, remove, and repatriate the hundreds of statues, war memorials, commemorative monuments, plaques, cannons, church bells, and military souvenirs that had once made up French Algeria's imperial patrimony. This chapter not only examines the French military's decision to salvage, abandon, or purposefully destroy the cultural detritus of France's colonial project in Algeria, but also investigates what became of those objects that were sent to France. In many cases, commemorative monuments repatriated from Algeria were reinstalled in municipalities with colonial connections, thus raising new questions about postcolonial memory in a France that has often been diagnosed as suffering from "amnesia." Additionally, this chapter documents the parallel operation initiated by an independent Algerian state to demolish, camouflage, or repurpose sites of colonial commemoration left behind by the French. Today, these "colonial ruins" remain in Algeria, often transformed by layers of plaster or reworked by Algerian artists and rededicated. The efforts of both French and Algerian policymakers during the prolonged process of decolonization resulted in hundreds of colonial-era monuments and memorials scattered across both sides of the Mediterranean, often altered, adapted, and re-memorialized for their new postcolonial physical and political spaces, but nevertheless provoking uneasy debates about colonial memory.

While decolonization precipitated many profound transformations of state sovereignty, independence in its most basic form required mastery of the state's most fundamental tools of that sovereignty: infrastructure. The final chapter looks at the logistics of decolonization in Algeria by examining how infrastructure and other state property previously managed by French expertise was devolved to Algerian control after independence. Functioning railways, hospitals, schools, and power utilities were vital not only for Algeria's successful transition to independence, but also for its legitimacy as a postcolonial regional leader. Popular accounts of French decolonization in Algeria indicate that after more than seven years of war and the bitter exodus of nearly 700,000 European settlers, a newly independent Algeria was left without the resources or the manpower to function adequately. While the Algerian economy was severely affected by the war and the social dislocations that followed, chapter six re-evaluates certain received ideas of postcolonial state formation in Algeria to reveal a history in which Algerian and French policymakers formed a precarious working relationship throughout most of the 1960s to ensure that essential services were maintained despite economic and political tensions between the former colonizer and the formerly colonized. The chapter begins with an examination of how the handover of infrastructure and other French-owned state property (radio stations, gas and electric utilities, schools, and government buildings, etc.) was negotiated—and in some cases fought over—by France and the newly formed People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. The chapter investigates this process in depth by focusing on the case of the colonial-era railway, the *Société Nationale de Chemins de Fer Français en Algérie* (French National Railway Company in Algeria [SNCFA]), which until 1970 continued to operate with significant French shareholder control. In 1962, the SNCFA was the largest railway in any French colony and one of the longest and most well developed in Africa. By tracing the history of how the railway and its immense assets were managed in the post-independence period,

the chapter hopes to give tangibility to the logistical complexities of decolonization and demonstrate that wholescale postcolonial nationalizations were more often the exception rather than the rule. Indeed, over the course of the 1960s, Algerian administrators were even able to cement political legitimacy by successfully negotiating with French policymakers behind closed doors to obtain the concessions and technical competency necessary for the smooth functioning of vital social infrastructure, despite the often-caustic political rhetoric of the day.

These various case studies reveal much about the nature of decolonization and transitions. But before there was a transition, there was a ceasefire, and before there was a ceasefire there had to be a negotiation. And before there was meaningful negotiation there was a revolution.

Chapter One

Visions of Transition:
From Revolution to Decolonization

> How did anyone think that the transfer of [Algerian] sovereignty would be done with the wave of a magic wand?
>
> Vitalis Cros, *Le Temps de la Violence* (1971)[1]

Introduction:
The Road to Transition

Algeria's independence was decided off the battlefield as much as it was on it—from the backrooms of *fin-de-siècle* Swiss hotels to the dingy living quarters of a public works garage tucked away in the Jura Mountains. As the French state and the FLN fought one another over Algeria's future, they also debated and discussed what that future might look like. At the beginning of the seven-year struggle that erupted in early November 1954, the arc from anticolonial insurrection to the creation of an independent Algerian nation-state was by no means guaranteed. Rather, the agreement signed at Evian that ended the conflict in March 1962 was the product of competing ideas of what France and Algeria could—and should—become, as well as the gradual acceptance that some formal transitional process was necessary for Algeria's path out of empire.

With the return of Charles de Gaulle to power in May 1958, French policy toward Algeria slowly shifted from one of maintaining the *status quo ante* of French Algeria toward one of self-determination in the hope that eleventh-hour political and social reforms coupled with renewed military force might undercut the FLN's momentum and pave the way for an Algeria federated with France. The FLN meanwhile waged a war of attrition and sought to consolidate its political victories in the court of international opinion by establishing a provisional government in Tunisia,

[1] Vitalis Cros, *Le temps de la violence* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1971), 197.

transforming its armed revolution into "diplomatic" one.[2] Still, neither side would fully gain the upper hand militarily or politically, obliging colonial authorities and revolutionary leaders to seek the negotiating tables of Lucerne, Evian, and Les Rousses. Although this evolution did not necessarily assure the end of war or colonial rule, the acceptance of a negotiated settlement forced both colonizer and colonized to wrestle with the implications of independence. The nature of French colonialism in Algeria had so tightly bound colony to metropole that imperial disentanglement would involve finding solutions to a host of logistical complexities, from transportation and banking to healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Ultimately, the once-indistinct concept of postcolonial transition required that policymakers contemplate the parameters of an actual transition.

Each side had different visions of what an eventual transition to independence would entail. To French planners, a transitional period would be a gradual process. The liminal space between empire and independence would be structured by provisional institutions that would take stewardship of the colony and provide ample opportunity not only to coordinate the handover of administrative services to a newly-trained cohort of Algerian technocrats, but also to prepare a close post-independence partnership that would ensure that a sovereign Algeria would remain under continued French influence. To the FLN, the very concept of a transitional period was a neocolonial gambit. Nonetheless, it had its utility. In negotiations with France, the Front would seek a shorter handover period and would maneuver to place its members in positions of power within the proposed transitional institutions, thereby not only preparing young FLN cadres for positions in the nascent state's administration, but also providing a means for the FLN to further consolidate its power in postcolonial Algeria.

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[2] See: Matthew Connolly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

This chapter will briefly trace the history of Algeria as a French colony and the war that was fought for its independence between 1954 and 1962. In so doing, it will also outline the history of how negotiators and policymakers within the FLN and the French colonial state came to the realization that independence for Algeria would have to be accompanied by provisional institutions responsible for its transition.

War and Peace

The shots that rang out in the early morning hours of 1 November 1954 heralded the uncertain beginning of a revolution that would plunge France and Algeria into seven and a half years of brutal warfare and civil discord. Orchestrated by a nationalist group calling itself the *Front de Libération Nationale*, the attacks marked a significant departure from the previous strategies that had defined nationalist politics in Algeria. Although generating a good deal of press, the attacks—by the FLN's own admission—had been badly coordinated.[3] The Front's second in command for the Oranais region was killed on the first day and the response from the French security services was swift and brutal. It was an inauspicious beginning to independence.

The FLN's actions, however, provoked consternation within a French government that had suffered a humiliating colonial defeat at Điện Biên Phủ in Indochina only six months earlier and now found itself in the process of negotiating imperial withdrawal from Southeast Asia in addition to facing down growing nationalist sentiments in Tunisia and Morocco. Algeria was modern France's oldest and most important settler colony—one that had been considered an integral part of the French nation since the middle of the nineteenth century—and few within the French

[3] John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 160-161.

government seriously considered the possibility of retreat. A week following the attacks, Prime Minister Pierre Mendès France proclaimed in the National Assembly that:

> One does not compromise when it comes to defending the internal peace of the nation, the unity and integrity of the Republic. The Algerian departments are part of the French Republic. They have been French for a long time, and they are irrevocably French…between them and metropolitan France there can be no conceivable secession.[4]

Indeed, to French citizens in the metropole and settlers in Algeria—not to mention to a good percentage of Algeria's Muslim population—anything other than continued French control seemed unlikely.

Once an outer province of the Ottoman Empire, Algeria became the cornerstone of French efforts to renew its overseas empire following the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. Under orders from King Charles X, the French military invaded Algeria on 14 June 1830 in response to the striking of a French emissary at the hands of the country's Ottoman regent, Hussein Dey.[5] Three weeks later, on 5 July, Algiers fell and the Dey surrendered to General Louis de Bourmont's *Armée de l'Afrique*. Nonetheless, armed resistance to the occupation was persistent and determined. After more than a decade of near-continuous insurrection under the leadership of Sufi scholar Emir Abdelkader, the French army eventually succeeded in neutralizing organized opposition by indigenous leaders. With the "pacification" of northern Algeria complete by the late 1840s, the French government began promoting the settlement of its newfound colony

[4] "Débats Parlementaires, Assemblée Nationale, " *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (13 November 1954), 4961.

[5] In 1827, Hussein Dey summoned the French consul to Algeria, Pierre Déval, to explain his country's failure to repay outstanding debts of nearly seven million francs. During the French Revolution, the Dey of Algiers had provided much-needed supplies of wheat to keep the revolutionary armies of France on the move. Now the bill had come due and the French state demurred. Frustrated by Déval's patronizing circumlocutions concerning the state of France's financial obligation to the coffers of Algiers, the Dey violently struck the French consul with the handle of his ornate flywhisk. This slight to Déval's honor provided the pretext for a French naval blockade of the Bay of the Algiers and, once diplomatic channels across the Mediterranean deteriorated, the invasion of coastal Algeria.

and by 1861 approximately 200,000 European settlers (colloquially known as *pieds-noirs*) lived in French Algeria.[6] In 1848, French lawmakers incorporated Algeria's littoral provinces of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine into the metropole as full administrative departments. As a consequence, several Algerian cities were considered properly "French" long before other parts of the mainland, such as Nice or Savoy.[7]

By 1954, when the FLN launched its bid for Algerian independence, the colony had a population of about ten million, including nine million Algerian Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Arabs, Kabyles, Tuareg), one million settlers of European descent—some of whom had families that had lived in Algeria for more than four generations, and approximately 130,000 Jews of Sephardic and Ashkenazi origin.[8] But even though the colony was ostensibly a part of the metropole, this was only true of its white European settlers and, later, of Algerian Jews who were made full citizens by decree in 1870. In contrast, Algerian Muslims were nationals of France, but did not enjoy the rights and privileges of full citizenship. Rather, after 1875, they were subject to another legal code, the *Code de l'Indigénat*, and were governed under a separate personal status regime for adherents of traditional Islamic jurisprudence.[9] Over time, the mechanisms of French settler colonialism dispossessed indigenous smallholders of their land, while colonial

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[6] Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 85.

[7] Both of which were annexed from the Kingdom of Sardinia by Napoleon III in 1860.

[8] For general population approximations, see: K. Sutton, "Algeria's Population Growth, 1954-66," *Geography* 54, no. 3 (1 July 1969): 332-336.; For an estimate of Algeria's Jewish population circa 1954: Benjamin Stora, *Les trois exils, Juifs d'Algérie* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 2006), 136.

[9] Instituted in Algeria on 9 February 1875, the *Code de l'Indigénat* spread to the rest of the French empire by the end of the nineteenth century. Among its provisions, indigenous subjects could be punished for any verbal, written, or physical expression of disrespect towards French colonial officials or the French state, the "habitual failure to pay taxes," illegal settlement outside of areas of habitation designated for the indigenous population, and any unauthorized discharge of firearms during the celebration of Islamic holidays. Punishments included fines, imprisonment, and execution. For more information, see: Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *De l'indigénat. Anatomie d'un « monstre » juridique: le droit colonial en Algérie et dans l'Empire français* (Paris: Zones, 2010).

policies aimed at cultural assimilation undermined the traditional structures of Algerian society. Moreover, colonial taxation policy placed an undue burden on Algerians, compounding the effects that land expropriation had on the pauperization of indigenous society.[10] Wrought by decades of war and colonial reconfiguration, these social, economic, and cultural disarticulations had dire consequences, affecting Algerians' lives as much as their livelihoods: by the end of the nineteenth century the colony's indigenous population suffered a devastating population decline that suggested just how vulnerable local society had become to famine, epidemic, and resettlement in the wake of French occupation.

During the first half of the twentieth century, educated indigenous élites attempted to reform the inequities of the colonial system from within, but were blocked by the powerful influence that Algeria's settler population exerted over Parisian lawmakers. Despite attempts to enact legislation favorable to Algerian Muslims in the aftermath of the First World War—partly in recognition of the sacrifices they made in the trenches of the Western Front—nationalists became increasingly aware that the French state had little interest in creating a society in which Algerian Muslims would be treated as full citizens.

France's humbling occupation by Nazi Germany in the Second World War meant that the forces of Free France, led by a relatively unknown brigadier general named Charles de Gaulle, became reliant on the resources, manpower, and territory offered by the empire to reclaim the metropole and unseat the collaborationist Vichy regime. Until the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944, Algiers provided the headquarters for de Gaulle's provisional government following the

[10] Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 90-91. The colonial government subjected Algeria's indigenous population to French systems of taxation as well as to those that had been collected by the Ottoman Regency, which the French called *impôts arabes* (Arab taxes). European settlers, however, were exempted from paying not only the *impôts arabes*, but also land taxes to encourage immigration and settlement. By the start of the twentieth century, Algerian Muslims paid nearly half of all taxes in French Algeria.

American-led landings of North Africa in November 1942. At war's end, there appeared to be another opportunity for Algerian Muslims to demand rights and recognition: in addition to demonstrating the weakness of the French empire to its subjects, the war had rekindled an international conversation about colonized peoples' right to self-determination.

On the very day of Germany's surrender, 8 May 1945, coordinated demonstrations by nationalist groups celebrated victory in Europe and called for independence across Algeria. Around the eastern cities of Sétif and Guelma, however, these manifestations of popular will devolved into intercommunal violence between European settlers and Algerian Muslims that sparked off a region-wide insurrection. The French military responded with harsh reprisals that claimed somewhere between 7,000 and 40,000 Algerian lives.[11] Throughout the postwar period, French intelligence services maintained close surveillance on any nationalist movements that tried to organize either Algerian Muslims in Algeria or those *émigrés* living in mainland France. The creation of an Algerian Assembly in 1947 permitted Algerian Muslims an opportunity to participate in the political life of the colony, but nationalist élites who sought open debates about reform found the political system rigged against them—quite literally so: colonial officials arrested candidates of nationalist parties and manipulated election results to ensure that Muslim representation would never be significant enough to control the assembly's legislative agenda.[12] By the early 1950s, armed struggle seemed to provide the only means of liberation. For the FLN, nothing short of full independence would be acceptable.

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[11] Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 149. The true number of Algerian Muslims killed by the French military in the aftermath of the Sétif uprising may never be known. As Ruedy notes, different sources reported vastly different casualty statistics: the French government's estimate placed the number of dead at 1,500 while French military authorities counted 6,000-8,000; Algerian nationalists claimed 45,000 martyrs and American sources reported the range reproduced above (7,000-40,000).

[12] Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 152.

In 1954, however, the FLN was a relatively unknown entity in the world of Algerian nationalist politics. For the first half of the twentieth century, the trajectory of Algerian nationalism shifted from attempts to secure internal reforms to the idea of an autonomous Algeria federated with France to calls for outright independence. Algerian political and religious élites undertook the earliest efforts to organize calls for reform and resistance. Among these, reformist Islamic scholars known as the *'ulamā* were the first to articulate the idea that Algerian Muslims belonged to a distinct nation with its own distinct culture and that any meaningful association with France was a fiction. Although never explicitly calling for independence, the '*ulamā*—led by Sheikh 'Abd al-Hamid Ben Baddis—saw Algeria's national deliverance as wedded to a renewed devotion to, and identification with, authentic Islamic traditions in opposition to French cultural assimilation. These ideas, however, ran counter to the beliefs of the political élites who saw compromise, accommodation, and assimilation with France as the best solution to the plight of Algerian Muslims.

Labelled *évolués* (literally the "evolved ones") by the colonial administration, the latter group comprised educated, gallicized Algerian Muslims from the professional classes. The *évolués* were represented foremost by Ferhat Abbas, a pharmacist and politician from Kabylia, who called as early as 1936 for Algerian Muslims to receive the full rights of French citizens, but did not initially support Algeria's independence from France. In the face of continued French intransigence, however, the position of the *évolués* evolved. During the Second World War, Abbas drafted the Manifesto of the Algerian People, which sought several reforms including: "the condemnation and abolition of colonization," a right to self-determination, and internal autonomy for Algeria under its own constitution.[13] To garner support for these demands, Abbas created the

[13] Ferhat Abbas, "L'Algérie devant le conflit mondial—Manifeste du peuple algérien," 10 February 1943, https://texturesdutemps.hypotheses.org/1458 (accessed 6 May 2018).

Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté (Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty [AML]) in March 1944. The AML became popular, but the French state dissolved the group following the events of May 1945 and arrested Abbas. Freed in March 1946, Abbas created a new party, the *Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien* (Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto [UDMA]), which would go on to be one of the leading voices of nationalist sentiment in postwar Algerian politics until the revolution.

Ironically, the first true nationalist movement that explicitly sought independence was not founded in Algeria, but rather in France. In 1926, Ahmed Ben Messali (known as Messali Hadj), a former non-commissioned officer in the French army and handicrafts peddler from the western Algerian city of Tlemcen, co-founded the *Étoile Nord-Africain* (North African Star [ENA]) and became its secretary general. A member of the French Communist Party, Messali relied on the support of France's activist left to finance his movement and the large population of Algerian migrant workers in Paris to fill his movement's ranks. Open calls for Algerian independence still appeared extreme in the 1930s and the ENA alienated itself from more moderate strands of Algerian nationalism. Although the French state banned the *Étoile* in January 1937, that did not stop Messali Hadj from reformulating his nationalist movement under a different name—the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* (The Algerian People's Party [PPA])—two months later. Despite a more restrained approach, the PPA was nonetheless forced underground by 1939. Following the Second World War, Messali Hadj established yet another organization to front the now outlawed PPA, the *Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques* (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms [MTLD]). The aim of the MTLD was to pursue reformist electoral politics within the framework of those French and Algerian legislative bodies open to Algerian Muslims while secretly striving for independence.

Each new iteration of Messali Hadj's nationalist undertaking attracted a cohort of activists increasingly determined to win independence. The most extreme expression of this militancy was represented by the *Organisation Spéciale* (Special Organization [OS]), a paramilitary unit established by the MTLD following the Sétif massacres to explore the possibilities of armed rebellion within Algeria. The OS orchestrated operations that targeted concrete symbols of the colonial regime, but the French security services rapidly dismantled the network by the early 1950s. Several of its young, ambitious members managed to escape the French dragnet, including future revolutionaries such as Ahmed Ben Bella—a decorated veteran of the Second World War and amateur soccer star from the western town of Meghnia. Growing frustrated with Messali Hadj's leadership and the general sense of paralysis among the broader coalition of Algerian nationalist movements, these OS veterans broke from the MTLD to form a group whose goal was immediate armed revolution. They would call themselves the *Front de Libération Nationale*.

The FLN's original leadership committee comprised men of modest means and education who mostly hailed from the Algerian countryside. Later known as the *chefs historiques* of the revolution, the Front's executive committee included six "internal" members who oversaw operations inside Algeria and three "external" members who established a cell in Cairo to marshal support for their cause in the Arab world. Mohamed Boudiaf led and coordinated the internal group, assisted by Moustapha Ben Boulaid, Mourad Didouche, Krim Belkacem, Rabah Bitat, and Larbi Ben M'hidi. The external group included Ahmed Ben Bella, Hocine Aït Ahmed, and Mohamed Khider. Some of these men would go on to prominence in the post-independence governments of Algeria, while others would be marginalized from the political system of a liberated Algeria. Some did not live to see the end of the war.

Eventually, leaders from both the UDMA and the MTLD would rally to the FLN in the mid-1950s. Men like Ferhat Abbas, who would serve as the first president of the FLN's external political wing, lent much needed gravitas and political experience to the movement. Other nationalists, however, resisted the FLN's call. Messali Hadj, in particular, responded by forming yet another nationalist organization—the *Mouvement National Algérien* (Algerian National Movement [MNA])—in direct opposition to the Front. The FLN saw the MNA not only as a competitor for the hearts, minds, and resources needed for their revolution, but as a faction that French authorities could exploit in their attempt to undermine and divide the struggle for national liberation. These latent fears of competition and co-optation pervaded future conversations about the form and function of Algeria's transitional institutions. Although the FLN ultimately eliminated the MNA, the conflict that erupted between the two groups for control over the loyalties of Algerian Muslims produced some of the greatest violence in a war that did not lack for violence.

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As the FLN-led insurrection grew larger throughout 1955, the French government responded by increasing its military presence in Algeria. By 1957, the French fielded more than 355,000 troops led by General Raoul Salan, former commander-in-chief of French forces in Indochina and a fierce defender of France's imperial interests.[14] The forces under Salan's leadership included some of the French military's most élite, battle-hardened soldiers from the airborne infantry and the Foreign Legion, many of whom had also served in Southeast Asia and saw the struggle in Algeria as a chance to redeem France's tarnished military prestige. These freshly deployed units began sweeping counter-insurgency operations to target the FLN's military

[14] Charles R. Shrader, *The First Helicopter War: Logistics and Mobility in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999) 41.

arm, the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Army [ALN]), and quell the insurrection by any means necessary. Employing tactics first developed in the fight against the Việt Minh, the French army regularly used torture—in the form of electric shock and waterboarding—on suspected FLN militants to extract information and break cells.[15]

By the end of 1956, the FLN had grown from a small clique of revolutionaries uncertain of its ability to win over the masses to a nationalist movement that had succeeded not only in gaining support internally among Algerian Muslims, but also externally in the court of international opinion. In this latter arena, the FLN mobilized support from its Maghrebi neighbors—the newly independent Tunisia and Morocco—as well as Nasser's Egypt. It also found patrons from the Communist Bloc, such as Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito and North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh, as well as from the world's newly independent nations that made up the recently founded Non-Aligned Movement—Nehru's India and Sukarno's Indonesia chief among them. Moreover, the seemingly endless Algerian crisis provoked concern among France's allies in the West. In July 1957, a young United States senator from Massachusetts, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, made an impassioned speech on the floor of Congress in defense of Algerian independence.[16] Through effective lobbying, the FLN even succeeded in placing the question of Algerian sovereignty on the dais of the United Nations.

Early attempts at peace talks between the FLN and the Fourth Republic in 1956 went nowhere. The clandestine representatives of France who met with FLN delegates in the smoke-filled backrooms of Rome and Belgrade still pressed the idea of Algerian federation with France,

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[15] On the French army's use of torture in the Algerian War, see especially: Raphaëlle Branche, *La Torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie*, (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

[16] John F. Kennedy, "Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy in the Senate, Washington, D.C., July 2, 1957," John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, https://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/JFK-Speeches/United-States-Senate-Imperialism_19570702.aspx (accessed 20 March 2018).

although they introduced, for the first time, the idea of an autonomous Algerian executive to manage this transition, thus setting a precedent for the establishment of an interim government.[17] Nonetheless, FLN leadership refused to consider any peace offer from Paris that did not guarantee full independence. Mutual intransigence at the bargaining table, coupled with mutual hopes for a stunning military victory that would overwhelm the enemy, imperiled any prospect for a negotiated end to the conflict.

Meanwhile, the war took its toll on both sides: French counterinsurgency tactics included large-scale internment, reprisals against non-combatants, and the undeclared use of napalm that devastated Algeria's Muslim population.[18] The French also targeted the FLN's leadership: on 22 October 1956, Ben Bella and five other founding members of the FLN—Hocine Aït Ahmed, Mohamed Boudiaf, Mohamed Khider, Rabah Bitat, and Mostefa Lacheraf—were captured during a flight from Morocco to Tunisia when the aircraft in which they were travelling was forced to land at a military airstrip in Algeria by the French air force. Ben Bella and the others would remain in prison until after the signing of the Evian Accords. The FLN, for its part, decided to unleash a wave of urban terror in downtown Algiers in the fall of 1957 to shift the focus of its struggle from hit-and-run operations in the countryside to an environment where the death of civilians and the deployment of repressive counter-insurgency tactics would make Algeria front page news. In metropolitan France, revelations about the military's widespread use of torture, the ever-increasing demand for young recruits, and growing pressure from the international community to end the conflict eroded popular support for the war. Moreover, France's postwar parliamentary regime was ineffectual at managing a war that government spokesmen insisted was not a war at all and

[17] Rédha Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian: Histoire des négociations secrètes, 1956-1962* (Rouïba, Algeria: Éditions ANEP, 2002), 25-26. Malek was a member of the GPRA delegation that negotiated at Evian.

[18] An estimated 2 million Algerians were interned in "regroupment" camps across the colony, Ruedy, 189.

many within the French military establishment began worrying that France's fight in Algeria might end as Indochina did: in disaster. By May 1958 suspicions among diehard French military officers and *pieds-noirs* that the Socialist-led government in Paris might consider independence for Algeria precipitated massive demonstrations in Algiers calling for Charles de Gaulle to return from retirement and form a new government. The President of the Fourth Republic, René Coty, fearful that a military coup might be possible for the first time since Bonaparte, buckled under the pressure and invited the General to form a government. Five months later, de Gaulle oversaw the drafting of a new constitution that enhanced the powers of the French executive and founded the Fifth Republic. Under this new constitutional regime, Algerian Muslims received full French citizenship for the first time. It was too little, too late.

In what seemed like a direct reaction to de Gaulle's consolidation of power and renewed fear that his government would continue a policy of Algerian integration, the FLN announced on 19 September 1958 that it had formed the *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne* (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic [GPRA]) in Tunis. Fronted by the respectable and venerated Ferhat Abbas, this government-in-exile would serve as the international face of the revolution and become the interlocutor with which the FLN hoped France's new leadership would be forced to negotiate.

Restarting negotiations would not be easy. In October, Charles de Gaulle called for a *paix des braves* ("peace of the brave") in an attempt to broker a truce, but the FLN ignored the overture.[19] De Gaulle remained ambivalent about his stance on Algeria during most of his first year in office: the month after his return to political life, de Gaulle travelled to Algiers to reassure

[19] Originating in France's early modern colonies in North America, a *paix de braves* was an honor agreement between colonial administrators and rebellious Amerindian leaders that recognized the bravery of indigenous warriors and promised amnesty for those engaged in an insurrection if they laid down their arms and returned to their homesteads.

the colony's settler population and, to much fanfare, delivered a speech in which he famously declared "*Je vous ai compris!*" ("I have understood you!").[20] Europeans and Algerian Muslims interpreted de Gaulle's words differently. Both assumed he meant to change France's Algerian policy in their respective favor. This calculated ambiguity would set the tone for de Gaulle's cautious, if not inevitable, acknowledgement of Algerian independence.

At the outset, however, President de Gaulle believed that France could resolve the Algerian crisis and neutralize the FLN through two different, but related strategies: a significant increase in military operations to cripple the ALN and a massive plan for economic renewal to win the hearts and minds of Algerian Muslims. The latter initiative was announced by de Gaulle on 3 October 1958 during a visit to the Algerian city of Constantine. Known thereafter as the "Constantine Plan," the French state proposed a five-year, USD $4 billion development program that promised increased investments in education, housing, industry, and agriculture aimed at Algeria's indigenous population.[21] It was the foundation of de Gaulle's broader project for an "*Algérie Nouvelle*" defined by social reform, technocratic management, and close federation with France.

In tandem with the Constantine Plan, the French military went on the offensive. De Gaulle replaced an increasingly partisan Salan with General Maurice Challe, an air force staff officer who launched an immense search-and-destroy campaign that would succeed in limiting the ALN's ability to organize any significant military action within Algeria. By the summer of 1959, France came as close as it ever would to winning the war on the battlefield. Yet, despite increased military success, the political situation had turned against France decisively. The FLN, following the

[20] Charles de Gaulle, "Je vous ai compris" (speech, Algiers, 4 June 1958), Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA), http://www.ina.fr/video/I00012428 (accessed 6 May 2018).

[21] Ambassade de France, *The Constantine Plan for Opening New Frontiers in Development* (New York: Service de Presse et d'Information, 1961), 3.

Maoist dictum to "fight while negotiating and negotiate while fighting," refused any offer to accept a ceasefire before assurances of independence were guaranteed, further increasing pressure on France to come to terms.[22]

Ironically, the events that conspired to consolidate French resolve against the nationalist movement ended up opening the door to a recognition of an "Algerian Algeria." Those who protested in the streets of Algiers in May 1958 hoped that the one-time savoir of France would commit himself to saving French Algeria, but it was de Gaulle who first seriously considered the possibility of self-determination for Algeria. In a televised address to the French public on 16 September 1959 concerning the ongoing conflict across the Mediterranean, de Gaulle outlined what he perceived as the three possible outcomes to the current crisis: Algeria's complete independence from France (*sécession*), its complete integration into metropolitan France with total parity between its European and Algerian Muslim citizens (*francisation*), or a form of continued association with France.[23] De Gaulle preferred the last option, but in proposing these three outcomes the President of the Republic unequivocally affirmed the right of the "Algerian people" to decide their fate through self-determination (*autodétermination*).[24] What might have appeared as a realistic—even conservative—evaluation of the situation precipitated a backlash of settler

[22] Cited in James Jeffery Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 118.

[23] Charles de Gaulle, "Discours sur l'autodétermination de l'Algérie" (speech, Paris, 16 September 1959), INA, http://fresques.ina.fr/jalons/fiche-media/InaEdu00088/allocution-du-general-de-gaulle-du-16-septembre-1959-en-faveur-de-l-autodetermination.html (accessed 14 January 2018).

[24] In de Gaulle's formulation, "*peuple algérien*" should be understood to mean all the inhabitants of French Algeria, i.e. European settlers and Algerian Muslims. Charles de Gaulle, "Discours sur l'autodétermination de l'Algérie" (speech, Paris, 16 September 1959), INA, http://fresques.ina.fr/jalons/fiche-media/InaEdu00088/allocution-du-general-de-gaulle-du-16-septembre-1959-en-faveur-de-l-autodetermination.html (accessed 14 January 2018).

resentment and provoked quiet consternation among an officer corps wary of being betrayed once more.

A month following de Gaulle's speech, *pied-noir* ultras founded the first of a series of organizations that would take militant action in defense of *Algérie Française*: the *Front National Français* (French National Front [FNF]). In January 1960, these elements provoked a nine-day crisis known as the "Week of the Barricades" during which activist settlers organized massive demonstrations in the heart of downtown Algiers, throwing up makeshift fortifications in the streets and battling with gendarmes as sympathetic French paratroopers looked on. Although de Gaulle succeeded in quelling this attempt at counter-insurrection, resistance to the idea of Algerian self-determination grew throughout 1960. The FNF renamed itself the *Front de l'Algérie Française* (French Algeria Front [FAF]) and began attracting significant support from the colony's *pied-noir* population as well as certain politicians in the metropole and, more importantly, from officers in the military.

By year's end, a real political solution to the Algerian question was needed. After a first attempt to open talks with the GPRA disintegrated in June 1960, de Gaulle made another televised speech on 4 November that reiterated his belief in self-determination. During the address, he clarified his Algerian policy as having taken "a new path" that "leads no longer to the government of Algeria by metropolitan France, but to an Algerian Algeria."[25] To the shock of many viewers, de Gaulle then referenced the idea of a future, if still ambiguously defined, "*République algérienne*."[26] To support this plan, the General called for a referendum on 8 January 1961 that

[25] Charles de Gaulle, "Allocution du 4 novembre 1960" (speech, Paris, 4 November 1960), INA, http://fresques.ina.fr/de-gaulle/fiche-media/Gaulle00216/allocution-du-4-novembre-1960.html (accessed 14 January 2018).

[26] De Gaulle, "Allocution du 4 novembre 1960."

would authorize the French government to pursue a policy of Algerian self-determination.[27] Implicitly, this policy would mean negotiating in earnest with the FLN. Despite significant abstentions by both *pieds-noirs* (in protest to the very idea of self-determination) and Algerian Muslims (instructed to do so by the FLN for appearance's sake), the referendum passed with seventy-five percent approval from a war-weary populace.[28] In many ways, the measure marked the beginning of the end for French Algeria.

The Shape of Things to Come

The first official mention of any autonomous executive body responsible for the administration of Algeria came in the wording of the bill put before the French people on 8 January 1961.[29] In addition to setting forth a policy of self-determination in Algeria, the law gave power to the French government to reorganize Algeria's public powers and refers to the establishment of an Algerian "executive organ" that would have jurisdiction over the territory's departments.[30] The creation of such a political body before the end of hostilities concerned the GPRA, which saw the

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[27] The referendum asked voters the following: "Do you approve the bill submitted to the French people by the President of the Republic and concerning self-determination for the populations of Algeria and the organization of the public authorities in Algeria prior to self-determination?" "Décret n° 60-1299 du 8 décembre 1960 décidant de soumettre un projet de loi au référendum," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (9 December 1960), 11043.

[28] Conseil Constitutionnel, "Décision n° 61-4 REF du 14 janvier 1961," 14 January 1961, http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/acces-par-date/decisions-depuis-1959/1961/61-4-ref/decision-n-61-4-ref-du-14-janvier-1961.108907.html (accessed 8 February 2018).

[29] "Loi no. 61-44 du 14 janvier 1961 concernant l'autodétermination des populations algériennes et l'organisation des pouvoirs publics en Algérie avant l'autodétermination," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (15 January 1961), 578-579.

[30] The law provided provisions to: "Assign to the Algerian populations and their representatives the responsibilities for Algerian affairs, both through the establishment of an executive organ and deliberative assemblies with competence for all Algerian departments, as well as through that of regional executive and deliberative bodies and appropriate departmental." "Loi no. 61-44 du 14 janvier 1961 concernant l'autodétermination des populations algériennes et l'organisation des pouvoirs publics en Algérie avant l'autodétermination," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (15 January 1961), 578-579.

implementation of any Algerian executive on which the FLN was not represented as the means by which a "third force"—that ever-present colonial bogeyman—could undermine the revolution. It appears that the French never considered seriously the idea of creating an executive before a ceasefire was signed, except as a bargaining tactic in negotiations with the GPRA.[31] Until the Evian agreement was concluded in March 1962, a French Delegate General continued to run the administrative affairs of the colony.[32] Nonetheless, the law gave the French government permission to organize the colony's public powers and it would provide the legal instrument by which Algeria's transitional authorities, such as the Provisional Executive, would be created.

With the referendum's imprimatur of popular approval, President de Gaulle called upon Georges Pompidou—the former director of Rothschild Bank and the man who would later succeed de Gaulle as president of France—to begin the first tentative steps for opening negotiations with the FLN. Among many other pressing concerns, these negotiations would necessitate conversations about the form, duration, and organization of the colony's transition to independence. For policymakers in France and within the GPRA, this meant seriously considering for the first time what an "*Algérie de demain*" would look like. And for both parties, the shape of any transitional institution could very well shape the future of Algeria.

For all the FLN's accomplishments—winning international recognition and support, securing a popular base amongst the majority of Algerian Muslims, and forcing the world's most recent atomic power to the negotiating table—the Front had focused little on the shape of things

[31] Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 79.

[32] President Charles de Gaulle created the position of Delegate General after assuming power in May 1958. It replaced the older office of Governor-General, but maintained the same powers and responsivities. Three Delegate Generals oversaw the administration of French Algeria between June 1958 and March 1962: General Raoul Salan (7 June 1958-12 December 1958), Paul Delvourier (12 December 1958-23 November 1960), and Jean Morin (23 November 1960-19 March 1962).

to come. That Algeria would be a democratic republic influenced by the political and economic tenants of *tiers-mondiste* socialism seemed probable, but little thought and even less ink was expended on the administrative dimension of the new nation's institutions—institution that would, by necessity, be inherited from the colonial state. As Jeffery James Byrne has asserted in his analysis of the FLN's ideological makeup, the Front "had never excelled at formulating and disseminating a comprehensive political doctrine."[33] Consequently, the Front's leaders had difficulty articulating what they thought an independent Algeria should look like. By their own admission, members of the FLN regarded this as their movement's greatest weakness.[34]

To gain the broadest possible support in the international community, the FLN had held off openly aligning itself with Marxist-Leninist doctrine until later in the war. Even then, the FLN had no discrete ideology of its own upon which the foundational elements of a new state would be constructed. Instead, the FLN's struggle was focused more on the concrete goal of winning independence first. Everything else could be decided later. But "later" was fast becoming "now." Despite early agreement within the GPRA that a period of transition would be needed in preparation for de Gaulle's vote on self-determination, none of its members presented a vision for how such a transition should be managed.[35] Like many of its populist predecessors, the FLN neglected to think about the construction of the Algerian nation. Revolution was the ends as much as the means, but continuous revolution alone does not a nation-state make.

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[33] Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, 120.

[34] Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, 52-53.

[35] Aïssa Kadri, "L'Exécutif Provisoire, les enjeux d'une transition chaotique" in *La guerre d'Algérie revisitée: Nouvelles générations, nouveaux regards*, ed. Aïssa Kadri, Moula Bouazziz, and Tramor Quemeneur (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2015), 214.

That is not to say that the FLN had no administrative experience. Indeed, the Front succeeded in constructing a "counter state" that existed in parallel to French colonial authority. To respond to the imperatives of organizing the revolution, the FLN created and maintained a robust "politico-administrative" apparatus. Its most important institution was created in August 1956 during a pivotal meeting of the revolution's leadership held in the Soummam Valley. There, among the forested mountains of Kabylia, the gathered members formed the *Conseil National de la Révolution Algérienne* (National Council of the Algerian Revolution [CNRA]), a parliament to which the movement's various organs would be answerable and in which its popular sovereignty would be vested. It comprised thirty-four members who would meet annually and who would be responsible for overseeing the general course of the revolution. Additionally, the CNRA would have to approve of any negotiation with France or any decision to declare a ceasefire. The Soummam congress also partitioned Algeria into six administrative zones known as *wilayas* and established regional chains of command. Before the French military gained the upper hand in limiting FLN/ALN activity within the borders of the colony, local FLN administration had penetrated areas of Algeria that had been little touched by French colonial bureaucracy. Here at the margins, the Front's political commissars established rough forms of civil government that engaged in the administrative functions of dispensing justice through "revolutionary tribunals," collecting (and sometimes forcibly extracting) taxation from rural populations, setting up schools and training centers, providing healthcare, and enforcing discipline.[36] At the top of the Front's administrative structure, FLN leadership preoccupied itself with the logistics of sustaining a revolution that required bureaucratic *savoir-faire*: funds needed to be collected and transferred, medical supplies needed allocating and distribution, and arms shipments needed brokering and

[36] James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 211.

clandestine transport. To handle these matters, the GPRA in Tunis appointed ministers to manage foreign affairs, economic affairs, social affairs, cultural affairs, arms and supplies, information, and the interior. Many of these individuals, such as Krim Belkacem, Saad Dahlab, Lakhdar Bentobbal, and M'hammed Yazid would be involved in the coming negotiations with France. To an extent, mastering these administrative functions helped turn the FLN from a mere nationalist movement into a "proto-state" capable of substantiating its claims to sovereignty to the Algerian people and the international community.[37]

Nonetheless, the FLN's bureaucracy was born out of necessity and its administrative machinery—grounded in the immediacy of winning independence—was ill-suited to constructing durable political institutions capable of governing an independent Algeria outright. Despite projecting a united front to the world, the FLN was divided, both literally and ideologically. By 1960, the Challe Plan had succeeded in cutting off the Front's internal elements from reliable contact and resupply with the outside. Communication between the GPRA in Tunisia and ALN commanders in the field broke down frequently, forcing the latter to take matters into their own hands, prosecuting the war against France as they saw fit and building military fiefdoms supported by local clientele networks. Having to face the French army alone, internal commanders often resented the Front's external elements whom they accused of sitting out the war in Tunisia and Morocco. To survive in this environment, the FLN's administrative machine in the Algerian countryside "became an authoritarian and militarized 'neo-beylik,' controlled by personal loyalties and run more by force than by deliberation."[38] Fears of conspiracy and betrayal were rampant and threats of revolt from within not beyond consideration. In addition to limiting the military capacity

[37] Jennifer Johnson, *The Battle for Algeria: Sovereignty, Health Care, and Humanitarianism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 3.

[38] McDougall, *A History of Algeria*, 211.

of the FLN, French counter-insurgency tactics also targeted its ability to govern. A year after de Gaulle returned to power, French intelligence reported that the Front's "administrative function has completely disappeared" inside the colony.[39]

While the FLN's nascent bureaucracy proved successful at organizing and financing a revolution, it never had to oversee a massive administrative state. And field-level operations, while effective, did not necessarily scale up. Within the Front, ideological rifts between different factions—notably between the more accommodationist GPRA and the more doctrinaire general staff of the ALN—prevented any firm consensus on the shape of future governance, which would have important consequences for how negotiations with France unfolded. Although the FLN's ideology moved steadily to the left throughout the conflict—openly adopting a more radical position on economic and political reform along socialist-inspired lines—little thought was given to how these politics might one day affect administrative policy. Thus, to avoid exacerbating internal conflict, many of the public pronouncements made about a future Algeria were aspirational, ambitious, and ambiguous. Ultimately, FLN leadership provided little guidance about how to organize the basic civil and social institutions needed to facilitate the handover of the colony's day-to-day operations or how to prepare Algerian Muslims to fill posts that would likely be vacated by the French.

A month after the referendum of 8 January, Pompidou traveled to Switzerland under a false passport to meet with two representatives of the GPRA at the upscale Hotel Schweizerhof in Lucerne. Olivier Long, a Swiss diplomat, brokered the meeting between de Gaulle's envoy and Ahmed Boumendjel, a lawyer by training and a member of the CNRA, and Taïeb Boulahrouf, a former veteran of the *Organisation Spéciale* and the GPRA's representative in Rome. In a private

[39] Cited in McDougall, *A History of Algeria*, 211.

suite, the delegations discussed the broadest points that formal negotiations should address: the guarantees of self-determination and the nature of a ceasefire, the future status of the Algerian Sahara (where the French had discovered petroleum in 1956), and guarantees for the colony's European settler population and those Algerian Muslims who had fought in the French army.[40] In the afternoon, the discussion turned to managing the transitional period. This period would begin after political negotiations had been concluded and a ceasefire declared and last through the vote on self-determination. Pompidou proposed that an "executive commission," "headed by a Frenchman and composed of Europeans and Muslims," should oversee the transition.[41] The exact number and makeup of its members would be decided by future negotiations, but all of them would be "either technical experts headed by politicians or just politicians straight out."[42] The GPRA representatives did not register any opposition to the broad outlines of this idea, although they would later protest the thought of a Frenchman leading any interim executive.

These preliminary meetings in Switzerland continued through early March, until it was decided that formal negotiations should be held in the French spa town of Evian later that spring. In the intervening time both GPRA and French policymakers began drafting their own plans for Algeria's transition to independence. For the FLN, a transitional period should be as short as possible. Moreover, it should position the Front to take uncontested control over Algeria following independence. For the French, the transition should be a slow handover that would maintain French technical expertise on the ground for as long as possible and involve all of Algeria's future stakeholders: European, FLN, and non-FLN alike.

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[40] Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 92.

[41] Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 93-94.

[42] Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 94.

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After returning from Switzerland, the GPRA's envoys reported back to the CNRA. In preparation for Evian, the CNRA tasked Ahmed Francis, a doctor who served as the GPRA's finance minister, with establishing a commission to study the issues expected to be discussed in the formal deliberations and with devising a negotiating strategy for the GPRA's diplomats. Among its many recommendations, the report presented by the Francis Commission further developed the GPRA's ideas about a transitional period and the "executive commission" proposed by the French government. The Commission agreed that a provisional government should "run the country and prepare the referendum" as long as its creation was not contingent on the dissolution of the GPRA.[43] Rather, the GPRA should remain in Tunis, but not participate in the provisional executive once it was established. The executive's members should include both Europeans and Algerian Muslims. Among the Algerians, a group affiliated with the FLN and one considered to be "neutral" (i.e. apolitical) should be represented. No other nationalist representation, however, should be included. The executive should also have control over the colony's central administration. Although it should maintain top-level colonial cadres in place, the number of Algerian Muslims working in the civil service should be increased dramatically during the transitional period so that trained Algerians would be able to take over following independence. Francis's plan also envisaged doubling the number of Algerian Muslim prefects and deputy prefects in the colony, as well as the dissolution of the old municipal councils with commissions appointed by the executive. For the referendum on self-determination, the commission's report recommended that it be supervised by international observers, that the colony's European

[43] Francis Commission report, cited in Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 113.

population be excluded from the vote, and that only two choices be included on the ballot: *francisation* or independence. De Gaulle's preferred option of "association" should be avoided. While still limited in its scope, the Francis Commission represented one of the GPRA's first attempts to think through the mechanics of decolonization.

In parallel to these efforts, French administrators in the Ministry of Algerian Affairs began sketching their own plans for an "intermediary period" that would prepare Algeria for independence.[44] A 30-page draft proposal, dated May 1961, envisioned an ambitious two-phase progression to Algerian sovereignty that would take place over a period of two to three years. The first phase comprised a "preparatory" period that would last a few months, beginning with a ceasefire settlement and terminating with a referendum on Algerian self-determination. During this period, a provisional executive would take over the public affairs of the colony, promote the "algerianization" of the civil service, and organize the referendum. Thereafter, a "transitional" period would begin during which French authorities would confer sovereignty to Algeria, but maintain an administrative and advisory presence through several interim Franco-Algerian commissions. These mixed commissions would oversee the gradual transfer of powers to an Algerian government that would include members of the FLN, representatives from Algeria's other nationalist "tendencies" (i.e. Messali Hadj's MNA), and delegates from Algeria's European settler population.

For French technocrats, a transitional period in Algeria was "indispensable" for psychological, political, and legal reasons. Psychologically, to "calm tempers" following the announcement of a ceasefire; politically, to coordinate policies of cooperation between the French state and the FLN; and legally, to ensure "impartial control of the referendum [on self-

[44] Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (ANOM): 81/F/152: "La période intermédiaire" (17 May 1961).

determination].”[45] Moreover, a transitional period would “allow for the creation of new structures [and] inevitable adjustments; in short, a trial period for the system [of independence].”[46] French administrators hoped that the time gained between the cessation of hostilities and the announcement of independence would not only ensure the “orderly” construction of an Algerian state but, more importantly, safeguard the guarantees granted to Algeria’s European settlers and prevent their “massive exodus.”[47] This last point would prove to be wishful thinking.

The linchpin of this entire process was the provisional executive, which would be responsible for the governance of Algeria during the first phase of the transition. Conceived of as having mixed European and Algerian Muslim representation, its final composition remained the subject of debate: should the colony’s Delegate General serve as the executive’s president or should an Algerian member preside over the body? Should the French government even maintain a presence on the executive, or should it operate independently, but under the authority of a High Commissioner who would retain “last resort” veto powers? However it would be configured, this interim government was both “legally justified” and “politically desirable” in the eyes of the Ministry of Algerian Affairs. As noted above, the referendum of 8 January gave the French government the legal power to organize the colony’s public powers and create an “executive organ” in Algeria—one that would constitute a sanctioned body to which independence could be formally granted. From a political standpoint, the French proposal saw the provisional executive as the ideal conduit through which an independent Algerian state could be constructed, noting:

[45] ANOM: 81/F/152: “La période intermédiaire” (17 May 1961).

[46] ANOM: 81/F/152: “La période intermédiaire” (17 May 1961).

[47] ANOM: 81/F/152: “La période intermédiaire” (17 May 1961).

> The existence of a provisional executive would facilitate the creation of an Algerian state following the referendum. The problem of "decolonization" posed by Algeria is…complicated by the absence of parastatal structures that elsewhere, notably in the states of the [French] Community, eased the passage from large decentralization to autonomy and then independence…[T]he day after the referendum, a provisional executive could assure the continuity of administrative action and carry out the authority conferred to a new state.[48]

Ironically, the very need for a provisional executive to account for Algeria's "absence of parastatal structures" was itself a product of French settler colonialism, which had excluded the meaningful participation of Algerian Muslims from the colony's civil administration for more than a century. Instead, French Algeria's settler population dominated the civil service, filling posts in every branch of the public sector: from high-level ministerial cadres to conductors on the national railway. Following the mass departure of the *pieds-noirs*, this divergence would have profound consequences for decolonization and an independent Algerian state.[49] The creation of a provisional executive was an attempt to head off this looming problem by placing Algerian Muslims in positions of administrative power. But these belated efforts to "algerianize" the colony's public institutions would hardly be sufficient to manage the immense demographic shifts to come.

Indeed, while the provisional executive was touted as "the best solution" to the problem of organizing French Algeria's public powers during the transition, this early proposal also outlined

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[48] ANOM: 81/F/152: "La période intermédiaire" (17 May 1961). The French Community restructured the postwar French Union, a political entity created by the Fourth Republic in 1946 to reform and reorganize France's overseas empire. The French Union abolished forced labor and the *Code de l'Indigénat* as well as extended modest political representation to the Union in the form of a legislative assembly based in Paris. The constitution of the Fifth Republic sought to create a more autonomous collectivity of French colonial possessions and proposed the creation of the French Community to replace the French Union. A referendum held throughout the French empire on 28 September 1958 to ratify the constitution offered the choice of continued association with France or immediate independence. French Guinea was the only colony to vote against membership in the French Community. In retribution, the French state orchestrated a swift and destabilizing withdrawal of the colonial administration in Guinea and cut off any form of technical or financial assistance to Conakry. The Community's remaining member states transitioned to independence more gradually. Most attained sovereignty in 1960 on the condition of close and continuing ties with the French state that would have lasting consequences for the economic and political development of former French West and Central Africa in particular.

[49] These consequences are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

its possible disadvantages. Chief among them: reservations that the FLN would reject such a plan, especially one that gave a seat at the table to its nationalist competitors. Moreover, policymakers worried that establishing such a governing body would be too difficult and too complicated a task to pull off in such a short amount of time. Would it be worth it? Might it not be better to delegate local affairs to a series of regional mixed commissions and retain the upper levels of administration in the hands of the French Delegate General? In the end, however, the French state endorsed the idea of a provisional executive.

To defend their plan, French policymakers pointed to a precedent established by the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the British and Egyptian governments jointly ruled Sudan as a condominium—a political accommodation occasioned by the establishment of Britain's protectorate over Egypt in 1882. But following Nasser's overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy in 1952, Egypt moved to end British rule over Sudan by revoking its own sovereign claim to govern the colony. Since Britain's jurisdiction over Sudan legally depended on Egypt, the dissolution of Egyptian rule would precipitate the dissolution of British rule. Thus, in February 1953, the Egyptian government announced its intention to abrogate its sovereignty over Sudan and negotiate a treaty with Britain outlining a plan for Sudan's independence. Among its provisions, the Anglo-Egyptian treaty included a transitional period overseen by Sudan's British Governor General who in turn would confer with a newly created consultative body known as the Governor General's Commission. This Commission comprised six members: two Sudanese (one proposed by Britain and one by Egypt), one Egyptian citizen, one citizen of the United Kingdom, and one Pakistani citizen.[50] Together the Governor General and the Commission would manage

[50] United Kingdom. *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Egyptian Government concerning Self-Government and Self-Determination for the Sudan. Cairo, 12 February 1953* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1953).

Sudan's affairs until a referendum on self-determination could be held. In its broadest strokes, Sudan's transitional period would largely mirror Algeria's. There was, however, one important distinction: in the Sudanese case the Governor General's Commission was advisory in nature and held no administrative decision-making power whereas the ultimate version of the Provisional Executive in Algeria would wield broad public powers within the colony, albeit in general agreement with a High Commissioner.

This original French plan for a transition was minutely detailed but unrealistic. It attempted to use the transitional period—and more specifically the provisional executive—to "ensure by law…the association of Algeria with France" and promote the possibility of a pluralist future for Algeria while subtly marginalizing the FLN from post-independence power.[51] By designing the transition in this way, French technocrats did envisage a neocolonial future for their colony. Much of this outline however, would change substantially as the political reality evolved throughout 1961. Nonetheless, the plan proposed in May established the overarching structure of the actual transitional period that extended from mid-March through early July 1962: a ceasefire followed by a transitional power-sharing period leading to a referendum on self-determination and, ultimately, French recognition of Algerian sovereignty immediately thereafter. And from this starting point, discussions about the nature of Algeria's transition to independence would begin in earnest later that very month—discussions that almost did not take place.

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Less than a month before the Ministry of Algerian Affairs formulated its transition plan, a conspiracy unfolded in Algeria that threatened to scuttle the future of a negotiation settlement. De

[51] ANOM: 81/F/152: "La période intermédiaire" (17 May 1961).

Gaulle's January referendum on Algerian self-determination was the final insult for the militant partisans of a French Algeria. The resulting outrage and sense of betrayal among the *pied-noir* population of Algiers provoked public unrest and the FAF was banned for seditious activities. In protest, General Challe resigned his commission as commander-in-chief of the armed forces in Algeria and secretly made his way to Madrid where he joined his former comrade-in-arms General Raoul Salan along with prominent civilian ultras, Jean-Jacques Susini and Pierre Lagaillard. Together they formed an underground paramilitary terrorist group that devoted itself to the singular objective of keeping Algeria French at all costs—the *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* (Secret Army Organization [OAS]). Styling themselves as latter-day centurions defending France's outpost of Western civilization in North Africa from what they perceived as the twin threats of Islamic extremism and international communism, the OAS conspired to overthrow de Gaulle.

Generals Marie-André Zeller and Edmond Jouhaud joined Salan and Challe in their plot to cross the Algerian Rubicon and, with the support of dissident elements within the French army, launched a military putsch in Algiers during the early morning hours of 22 April 1961. Using the élite First Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment as its main instrument, the OAS swiftly gained control of the capital's key communications posts, detaining the colony's military commander and the Delegate General, Jean Morin. Afraid that paratroopers might appear in the skies above Paris, French legislators enacted a state of emergency and armored cars took up positions along the Champs-Elysées. Support for the *putschistes*, however, faded when military commanders in Oran and Constantine failed to join the plotters in Algiers. And de Gaulle, donning his general's uniform, made an emotional appeal on television and radio that succeeded in securing the loyalty of the French army's rank and file. By 25 April the attempted coup had largely unraveled with most of its conspirators arrested or forced underground. The OAS, however, did not disappear. Until June

1962, the organization would dedicate its lethal energies to undermining peace in Algeria at every turn, targeting civilians and infrastructure in a spiteful campaign of retribution and scorched earth.

It was against this backdrop that formal negotiations between the GPRA and the French government began at the Hôtel du Parc in Evian on 20 May 1961. Located on the southern shore of Lake Geneva, Evian was selected for its proximity to the Swiss border, over which representatives of the GPRA traveled by helicopter from the Emir of Qatar's château near Lausanne. The French delegation comprised half a dozen experienced Gaullist technocrats led by Louis Joxe, the Secretary of State for Algerian Affairs. The Algerians, by comparison, were relatively inexperienced as diplomats, but had gained international recognition by eloquently making the case for Algerian independence to the world and successfully lobbying foreign governments for support. They were led by the urbane, but unwavering revolutionary Krim Belkacem, one of the original founding members of the FLN and the GPRA's first foreign minister.

Negotiations focused on four main questions surrounding the nature of Algerian independence: guarantees for the *pied-noir* settler population expected to remain in Algeria, sovereignty over the Sahara, the status of France's military bases and its nuclear testing privileges on Algerian soil (the French had detonated their first atomic bomb in the Sahara in February 1960), and the framework that would govern future association between France and an independent Algeria. That these talks would lead to the total independence of the territory that currently makes up modern-day Algeria was not certain. The French initially retained a desire for some kind of Franco-Algerian commonwealth over the Sahara and even proposed a plan for the partition of Algeria between zones for Europeans and Algerian Muslims.[52] In particular, debates over the future of property rights and guarantees of dual citizenship for European settlers animated these

[52] On French plans to partition Algeria, see: Arthur Asseraf, "'A New Israel': Colonial Comparisons and the Algerian Partition That Never Happened," *French Historical Studies* 41, no. 1 (1 February 2018): 95-120.

early negotiations. The Algerian delegation took a hard line on both points, reflecting the FLN's ideological shift towards socialist ideas of post-independence land distribution, which had gained the movement important internal support among Algeria's rural populace. The FLN leadership also considered the Sahara to be an integral part of any future Algerian homeland, even if France claimed that Algerians had historically only inhabited the littoral provinces. Ultimately, both France and the FLN hoped to retain possession of the Sahara for petroleum and natural gas rights.

Despite a hopeful start—an editorialist for the magazine *Jeune Afrique* assumed that an agreement would be signed in less than a month—mutual intransigence over the future status of French settlers and the Algerian Sahara brought proceedings to a close after only thirteen meetings.[53] Peace talks were resumed a month later six kilometers down the road at Lugrin, but these also quickly disintegrated. By the end of summer 1961, a negotiated peace settlement looked impossible.

Yet, for both sides, it became increasingly clear that some agreement had to be reached—lest both the FLN and the de Gaulle administration lose the confidence of their supporters. Internal fracturing in both camps did not make this an easy prospect. Within the FLN, the general staff of the ALN, led by Colonel Houari Boumediene, accused the GPRA's negotiators of having been too flexible. In Paris, de Gaulle had to balance *pied-noir* interests with his desire to extract France from the Algerian quagmire with dignity while simultaneously waging war against both the ALN and the OAS. The OAS threat also put pressure on the FLN. Throughout Algeria, OAS commandos launched a terror campaign indiscriminately targeting Algerian Muslims and liberal Europeans who supported independence. FLN leaders feared that OAS violence might lead to a complete breakdown of civil order in Algeria and if the OAS ever did succeed in removing de Gaulle from

[53] Cited in Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 120.

power—as it had come close to doing only a month beforehand—then there would be no hope for a peaceful settlement.

That summer the CNRA met in Libya to discuss how to proceed beyond the current impasse in negotiations. In a shift that provoked concern among French policymakers, the Council voted to replace Ferhat Abbas as president of the GPRA with a figure portrayed in the contemporary press as far more radical: Benyoucef Ben Khedda. The son of a *qāḍī* from the Tellian Atlas, Ben Khedda trained as pharmacist and served as the secretary general for the PPA-MTLD. Although he cut a rather revolutionary-looking figure in public by wearing his stylish Sol-Amor sunglasses indoors, Ben Khedda was no less willing to come to terms with the French than was Abbas. Nonetheless, he did insist that his diplomats resist compromising too much in any future negotiations, especially concerning the future of the Algerian Sahara. He also seemed wary of a transitional period and its interim executive, proposing rather that the GPRA should abandon a referendum on self-determination and seek direct independence from France in exchange for an immediate ceasefire. "We feared the transitional period above all," Ben Khedda later wrote.[54] Aware of the growing tensions within the FLN, he was concerned that a transitional period would only provide more time for back-room maneuvering and palace intrigue as Algeria prepared for independence. Should these rifts within the FLN grow any larger between the ceasefire and the referendum, the French might be able to exploit them during a critical moment, leveraging the position of the proposed provisional executive as a plausible alternative to govern the future nation.

Despite these last-minute reservations about a referendum and a transitional period, de Gaulle's administration remained firm on the need for the semblance of a legal decision based on the popular will of the people. Therefore, between October and December 1961, French and GPRA

[54] Benyoucef Ben Khedda, *La fin de la guerre d'Algére—les Accords d'Evian* (Algiers: Office des Publications Universitaires, 1998), 26-27.

representatives made mutual overtures and held secret meetings in Basel to highlight those areas of disagreement that had scuttled their previous attempts. Among these points was the shape and nature of the provisional executive that would manage the transitional period. If a provisional executive were to be created, the GPRA insisted that it be headed by an Algerian Muslim and not by the colony's Delegate General. Additionally, the GPRA should be involved in the selection and approval of the provisional executive's members, that the interim government be given wide powers over the colony's civil administration in addition to the authority to maintain order and, to accomplish this latter duty, control over an armed security force comprising French and Algerian soldiers.[55] The French, eager to further progress towards a settlement, agreed.

The Basel meetings led to a new round of preliminaries before another official attempt was made back at Evian. These meetings were to be held at Les Rousses, a village nestled among the Jura Mountains located less than a kilometer from the Swiss border, inside the cramped quarters of a public works garage used to park snow clearing equipment known as the "Chalet de Yéti." Between the end of January and mid-February 1962, French and Algerian negotiators toiled cheek-by-jowl, spending long nights working through the issues of Algeria's territorial sovereignty, the future of the *pieds-noirs*, the presence of French military bases, and the main sticking point of the negotiations until that point: the status of the Algerian Sahara. Compared to the formal atmosphere of Evian, the intimacy and relative discomfort of the Chalet de Yéti helped build empathy between adversaries now forced to work long hours through a haze of near-constant cigarette smoke in a very small room. Significant progress was made, including France's willingness to forego claims to the Sahara in exchange for continued French access to petroleum rights. By 5:00 am on 17

[55] Ben Khedda, *La fin de la guerre d'Algére*, 30.

February a rough framework of an agreement had been assembled and the delegations decided to reconvene in Evian in early March 1962. This time the negotiators would succeed.

On 7 March 1962, with a late winter storm churning the waters of Lake Geneva, Krim Belkacem and Louis Joxe met once more with their teams at the Hôtel du Parc. The negotiations continued for twelve days until, on 18 March, a formal agreement comprising over 90 pages was signed. At noon the next day, military units on both sides were ordered to hold their positions. The fighting stopped. The signing of the Evian Accords assured peace, but an uneasy peace it was.

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On paper the Evian Accords seemed a masterstroke of compromise. They opened with a declaration of a joint ceasefire to be maintained by a series of mixed ceasefire commissions across Algeria comprising officers from the French military and the ALN.[56] This was followed by five chapters and a series of declarations of guarantees and principles. The first chapter stipulated the formation of the Provisional Executive to oversee Algeria's transition to independence and organize a vote on self-determination to take place within six months of the ceasefire, the second protected the rights of French settlers in an independent Algeria (and offered the option of Algerian citizenship after three years), the third chapter affirmed France's right to maintain a military presence in Algeria for three years following independence (including nuclear testing facilities) and to use its naval base at Mers-el-Kébir for a lease of fifteen years, the fourth chapter pledged that France and Algeria would resolve future differences by means of peaceful litigation (including recourse to the International Court of Justice), and the fifth chapter guaranteed France's immediate recognition of an independent Algerian state following the results of the referendum on self-

[56] On the functioning of the Mixed Ceasefire Commissions, see Chapter 3.

determination. The various declarations of guarantees and principles that followed delved into these issues more concretely and structured the framework of future Franco-Algerian technical cooperation, cultural exchange, financial assistance, and exploitation of the Sahara's hydrocarbon resources (which gave substantial rights to French oil companies).

With regard to the transitional period itself, a decree issued the next day outlined the form and function of the two main interim institutions created by the first chapter of the accords: the Provisional Executive and the High Commissariat. The Provisional Executive comprised twelve members nominated and jointly agreed upon by the negotiators at Evian: six were Algerian Muslims from the FLN, three were Algerian Muslims with no affiliation to the FLN, and three were liberal *pieds-noirs*. The president of the Executive would be an Algerian Muslim, the vice president a European settler, and the remaining members would serve as delegates responsible for different aspects of the colony's administration, among them: general affairs, economic affairs, agricultural affairs, financial affairs, administrative affairs, public order, social affairs, public works, cultural affairs, and the postal system.

The decree also assigned the Provisional Executive three primary responsibilities during the transitional period: the administration of the colony's public affairs, the maintenance of law and order, and the preparation of the referendum on self-determination. To accomplish these tasks, the Executive was granted expansive powers to make regulations on matters pertaining to the internal affairs of Algeria. It could promulgate decrees and ordinances, establish a budget, appoint and remove civil administrators, nominate prefects and deputy prefects, provide social assistance, and direct internal security operations (excluding the French military). As the Provisional Executive was seen to be the forerunner to Algeria's independent government, it was also responsible for promoting Algerian Muslims to positions of authority within the existing

administration.[57] For the maintenance of law and order, the Provisional Executive had control over the colony's law enforcement establishments and the *gendarmerie*. The Evian Accords also granted the Executive its own security force known as the *Force Locale* (Local Force)—a multiethnic military composed of French soldiers transferred from the regular French army and Algerian Muslim recruits, some of whom had served as French auxiliaries. Although anticipated to comprise 60,000 men, the Local Force never grew much beyond its initial strength of 40,000. In the end, the Provisional Executive would have to rely on the well-trained gendarmerie and the peace-keeping efforts of the mixed ceasefire commissions. Keeping order and eliminating OAS terror would be among the Executive's biggest challenges.

The office of the High Commissioner replaced that of the Delegate General, but retained its function as the principal representative of French sovereignty in Algeria. The Provisional Executive would share power with the High Commissariat in an occasionally tense relationship. The High Commissioner supervised the activities of the Executive, especially those that overlapped with its own areas of responsibility—namely, the referendum and public order. While the Executive had autonomous decision-making powers in theory, the Commissioner also retained a kind of soft veto: the Executive was obliged to reconsider any matter upon the High Commissioner's request.[58] Through the High Commissioner, the French state maintained responsibility over Algeria's foreign policy, external defense and security, justice, education, telecommunications, ports and airports, the printing and circulation of currency, economic relations between Algeria and other countries, as well as maintaining law and order "in the last

[57] "Décret n° 62-306 du 19 mars 1962 portant organisation provisoire des pouvoirs publics en Algérie," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (20 March 1962), 3036-3038. See Annexes II and III for the text of the Evian Accords and the subsequent decree pertaining to the creation of Provisional Executive and High Commissariat.

[58] "Décret n° 62-306 du 19 mars 1962 portant organisation provisoire des pouvoirs publics en Algérie," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (20 March 1962), 3036-3038.

resort."[59] Unfortunately, during the final months of French Algeria, everything would be "in the last resort."

Now with tenuous peace achieved, the time came to give form to the transitional period and Provisional Executive. It was a job that almost no one wanted.

[59] "Décret n° 62-306 du 19 mars 1962 portant organisation provisoire des pouvoirs publics en Algérie," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (20 March 1962), 3036-3038.

Chapter Two

Twelve Anxious Men:
The Provisional Executive and Algeria's Transition to Independence

Now is the hour of realism, of wisdom, of generosity…Now is the hour of men who know how to take charge of their responsibilities and see things for how they are. The French and the Muslims [of Algeria] must seize this great opportunity that has come. For the love of God, do not let it pass you by. History shall not forgive you.

Christian Fouchet (June 1962)[1]

We only have two options: succeed or perish.

Abderrahmane Farès (March 1962)[2]

Introduction:
High Noon at Black Rock

Independence came to Algeria at twelve noon on Tuesday, 3 July 1962. It happened in the once-sleepy seaside town of Rocher Noir—a small commune located forty-five kilometers east of Algiers and known in Arabic as Boumerdès. Renamed by French settlers for the imposing spit of black rock that jutted out into the crashing waves of the Mediterranean, Rocher Noir had been transformed a year earlier from a modest hamlet of *pied-noir* villas and sandy farm plots into a massive concrete metropolis, conceived by colonial administrators for the purpose of colonial administration. And here, on a balcony overlooking the vast complex of modernist office blocks that had so recently served as the nerve-center for the colony's transition to independence, Algeria's first president looked on as an Algerian Boy Scout helped a *moudjahid* raise the crescent and star over their sovereign nation for the first time.[3]

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[1] Christian Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain: au service du Général de Gaulle. Londres 1940, Varsovie 1945, Alger 1962, Mai 1968* (Paris: Plon, 1971), 189.

[2] Abderrahmane Farès, *La cruelle vérité: l'Algérie de 1945 à l'Indépendance* (Paris: Plon, 1982), 96.

[3] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 134.

That man was not Ahmed Ben Bella—although most historians would designate him as Algeria's first president. Nor was it Benyoucef Ben Khedda, the president of the FLN's diplomatic wing—the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic—which had recently signed the Evian Accords with France, bringing seven and a half years of war to an end. Rather, it was an avuncular 51-year old former notary and one-time deputy in the French National Assembly from Kabylia named Abderrahmane Farès. Four months earlier, Farès was languishing in a French prison cell on vague charges of "endangering national security" when, in a sudden reversal of fortune, the signatories of the Evian Accords appointed him president of the interim government that would be given the task of overseeing Algeria's transition to independence: the Provisional Executive.[4]

The terms of the Evian settlement created the Provisional Executive to govern French Algeria in concert with colonial authorities until a referendum on self-determination could take place and, afterward, to act as the caretaker government of a fully independent Algeria until elections for a national constituent assembly could be held. Headed by Farès and a *pied-noir* vice president named Roger Roth, the executive comprised a council of ten delegates drawn from both the colony's European and Algerian Muslim communities. Among the latter, these delegates included members of the FLN as well as Algerian notables with no FLN affiliation. Installed in the administrative complex of Rocher Noir, these twelve men had only four months to hammer out the details of Algeria's transition to independence, organize the referendum on self-determination, and prepare the ground work for the sovereign nation to come. Following independence, they would continue their work for two and a half months longer than expected, functioning as the *de jure* government of a new Algeria while factions within the FLN battled one

[4] Archives de la Ministère des Affaires Etrangères—Nantes (AMAE-N): 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Fiche biographique—Abderrahmane Farès" (no date, c. March 1962).

another in the countryside for control of the nation's future. The decisions made by the members of the Provisional Executive during this time would have important and lasting consequences for the independent state that emerged at midday on 3 July 1962.

Much like Farès, however, the role of the Provisional Executive has faded from the broader story of Algeria's decolonization. This is in part because the violence and uncertainty that marked the spring of 1962 have greatly overshadowed other events in the same period. Moreover, the history of the Provisional Executive was a short one. The executive functioned for only twenty-eight weeks, from its creation following the announcement of the Evian Accords on 19 March until 25 September 1962 when it formally transferred its powers to the first national assembly of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. In total, a mere 190 days. But these were crucial days for Algeria. In the weeks leading up to the referendum that would approve Algeria's independence, the OAS attempted to sabotage the ceasefire concluded at Evian by unleashing a wave of murderous retribution. And even with independence proclaimed, internal divisions within the FLN imperiled the new nation with fierce infighting that threatened civil war. Over the course of these six turbulent months the Provisional Executive managed Algeria's public affairs, providing continuity of government across the meridian of independence and laying the institutional foundation upon which the new Algerian state would be constructed. In short, it provided stability where little existed.

It may seem bold to label anything about the final moments of French rule and the first months of Algerian independence as stable. Yet, beyond the Provisional Executive's legal and political role as the link between Algeria's colonial and postcolonial regimes, it became a conduit for on-the-ground conflict resolution and the only institution that had both the responsibility and, more importantly, the authority to organize meaningfully the structures that, in the short-term,

would govern Algeria's independent future. Compared to processes of decolonization elsewhere, the executive represents a rather exceptional institution—one designed to respond to the imperatives of transitioning to full sovereignty a territory that, juridically speaking, had been considered an integral part of the French nation for over a century and was home to 1 million settlers of European descent. Conscious of this reality, it brought together disparate elements of a colonial community on the brink of immense change, forcing one-time adversaries to work together to maintain the functions of the state in the face of unprecedented uncertainty and violence and pave the way for the construction of an independent nation. In doing so, it proved that the links between France and Algeria might not be so easily dissolved and provided valuable administrative experience to a young cadre of rising Algerian bureaucrats, some of whom would go on to positions of prominence in an independent Algeria.

Few histories, however, have given much thought to the governmental institutions created by the Evian Accords to steer Algeria across the finish line of decolonization. Those that have are generally not kind in their evaluations of the Provisional Executive's performance. Historians writing on the Algerian War of Independence consider the Provisional Executive to have been ineffective, weak, and unable to cope with the combined crises of OAS terror, *pied-noir* exodus, and internal FLN conflict that marked the spring and summer of 1962.[5] The French historian Guy Pervillé has called the powers wielded by the interim government "a legal fiction."[6] Others have portrayed the institutions created by the Evian Accords as an effort to replicate neocolonial structures of administration—an anxiety shared by certain FLN contemporaries who saw the Provisional Executive as a political bridgehead through which some eleventh-hour "third force"

[5] Notably: Guy Pervillé, *1962: la paix en Algérie* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 74-75; and Gilbert Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du F.L.N., 1954-1962* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), 637.

[6] Pervillé, *1962: la paix en Algérie*, 74.

might materialize.[7] Others still, however, have put forth more favorable interpretations of the executive's brief existence. The Algerian historian Aïssa Kadri has argued that the Provisional Executive prototyped democratic institutions and represented an unrealized opportunity to create an independent Algeria based on political pluralism.[8] This latter view is perhaps overly optimistic, but rightly emphasizes that the Provisional Executive did indeed incubate several administrative institutions upon which the new Algerian state would be reliant.

In many ways, the Provisional Executive was a weak institution, by design and by circumstance. It was, after all, provisional. But, as will be seen, its perceived weakness was part of its strength: ignored by nationalists fighting amongst themselves to claim power in an independent Algeria, the Provisional Executive continued the work of governance, maintaining a tenuous peace, formulating policy, passing decrees, and signing international protocols with France that would have far reaching consequences for the future of the country's property rights, finances, education, and technical cooperation with its former colonial ruler. Using archives from the Ministry of Algerian Affairs, the minutes of the Provisional Executive's meetings, and the memoirs of those involved, this chapter will chart its day-to-day operations and look back on an institution long considered to be a quaint but ineffective interlude in the inevitable course of Algeria's decolonization. The Provisional Executive should instead be seen as a relatively successful attempt at managing the administrative complexities of colonial divorce—one that demonstrates how, far from being unprepared for the challenges of decolonization, French and Algerian interlocutors were able to find common ground to ensure that a relatively peaceful

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[7] Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du F.L.N.*, 637; and Rédha Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian: Histoire des négociations secrètes, 1956-1962* (Rouïba, Algeria: Éditions ANEP, 2002), 226.

[8] Aïssa Kadri, "L'Exécutif Provisoire, les enjeux d'une transition chaotique" in *La guerre d'Algérie revisitée: Nouvelles générations, nouveaux regards*, ed. Aïssa Kadri, Moula Bouazziz, and Tramor Quemeneur (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2015), 228.

transition to independence could take place. A transition that, after more than seven years of warfare, threatened to be more destabilizing than it was.

Suicide Mission

Seventy-two hours after the ink had dried at Evian, Abderrahmane Farès was summoned to meet Louis Joxe at the Ministry of Algerian Affairs. Not even a day earlier, Farès had been behind bars at Fresnes Prison listening to reports of the ceasefire agreement on Europe 1. While incarcerated, Farès had already heard rumors that he had been tapped to lead the Provisional Executive.[9] Now he listened as Joxe explained that both the French government and the GPRA had nominated him to assume the presidency of the interim government responsible for Algeria's transition to independence. A meeting at the Elysée with Charles de Gaulle a few days later sealed Farès's fate. Like so many others upon whom de Gaulle had bestowed thankless tasks, Farès could hardly refuse. He had a week to assemble his staff and report to Algeria, where news of the Evian Accords had set off a wave of violence. As the new administrative power of Algeria, the Provisional Executive became not only a target of the OAS, but also of suspicion and skepticism from the colony's wary Muslim population and the international community—both waiting to see if peace would really come to Algeria. As Farès noted in his memoires, de Gaulle had conferred upon him "a truly sacrificial mission, if not a suicidal one."[10]

Upon first inspection, Farès seemed an unlikely candidate to shepherd Algeria to independence. *Time* magazine described Farès as "a rotund bon vivant" and with his balding egg-shaped head, close-cropped mustache, and penchant for wearing three-piece worsteds, he appeared

[9] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 87.

[10] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 94.

more Poirot than presidential.[11] To his colleagues, however, he was "intuitive," "cordial," and "sparkling with intelligence."[12] Although personable and exuberant among friends, Farès was mild-mannered and unassuming in public. For most of his political career, he had remained on the margins of Algeria's nationalist scene. This was likely why the French and Algerian negotiators at Evian had selected him. Farès was neither revolutionary nor reactionary, rather he had built a reputation as a moderate reformer who had sought to reconcile Algeria's European and Muslim populations through politics.

A native of Kabylia, Farès came from a modest Berber family of distinguished marabouts. During the First World War, his father had fought, and died, at Verdun.[13] Energetic and well educated, Farès played soccer for Algeria's first indigenous soccer club, Mouloudia Club d'Alger (MCA), and at twenty-five became the first Muslim notary public in the colony. Following the Second World War, he became a member of the Constituent Assembly that framed France's postwar constitution. Using this experience, he took advantage of what little opportunity existed for Muslims to enter politics in Algeria and won a seat on the Algerian Assembly in 1948, eventually becoming the legislative body's president in 1953. After the start of the Algerian revolution, Farès initially supported a policy of assimilation with France in the hopes of finding a political solution to the conflict. But in the face of France's continued unwillingness to seek a negotiated solution and the French military's unrestrained tactics on the battlefield, Farès quietly rallied to the FLN. As with so many others, the Algerian drama brought death to his doorstep: a

[11] "The Transition Team," *Time*, 30 March 1962.

[12] Bernard Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix, Algérie 1958-1962* (Paris: Plon, 1972), 316-317; Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 160.

[13] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): " Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Abderrahmane Farès" (no date, c. March 1962).

French commando raid had killed Farès's brother-in-law and his nephew was taken prisoner and summarily executed in the countryside near Médéa.[14]

Throughout his career, Farès moved frequently between Paris and Algiers, cultivating an impressive list of contacts and confidants in both the French government and among Algeria's revolutionary élite. This gave him a rare ability to move between worlds that were often at odds with one another. It would not be unusual for Farès to dine one evening with Larbi Ben M'hidi, a high ranking member of the FLN, and another with Colonel Roger Trinquier, the notorious counter-insurgency strategist who zealously defended the French army's use of torture.[15] Careful never to betray his various allegiances, Farès supported Algerian independence while managing to maintain a position of confidence among French statesmen who saw him as a viable go-between: both Guy Mollet and Charles de Gaulle used Farès for secret approaches to the Front.[16] For its part, the FLN used Farès as an unofficial "banker" for its operations in Europe. From Paris, Farès helped transfer funds collected from Algerian migrant communities in the *banlieues* to bank accounts in Switzerland. Reportedly, he handled over million dollars a month.[17] It was for this activity that Farès was arrested in November 1961. Although freed from Fresnes, Farès now found himself condemned to another kind of penitentiary: the fortress-like compound of Rocher Noir, from where the Provisional Executive would govern Algeria's affairs.

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[14] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 75.

[15] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 67, 75.

[16] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 64; "The Transition Team," *Time*, 30 March 1962.

[17] "The Transition Team," *Time*, 30 March 1962.

Table 2.1 Composition of the Provisional Executive

Function	Name	Affiliation
President	Abderrahmane Farès	N/A*
Vice President	Roger Roth	European
General Affairs	Chawki Mostefaï	FLN
Economic Affairs	Bélaïd Abdesselam	FLN
Agricultural Affairs	Cheikh Mohammed	Non-FLN
Financial Affairs	Jean Jérôme Mannoni	European
Administrative Affairs	Abderrazak Chentouf	FLN
Public Order	Abdelkader El Hassar	Non-FLN
Social Affairs	Hamidou Boumediène	FLN
Public Works	Charles Koenig	European
Cultural Affairs	Cheikh Hadj Brahim Bayoud	Non-FLN
PTT	Mohamed Benteftifa	FLN

*NB: The presidency of the Provisional Executive was considered a "neutral" position in terms of representation, despite Farès's personal FLN affiliations.

Farès's profile was representative of the men who served on the Executive: well-educated liberal professionals whose careers had been marked by the political struggles that defined postwar French Algeria. The Provisional Executive, however, was a diverse body and these men also represented the discrete interests of their groups: the GPRA loyalists who hoped to retain power and avoid a takeover by Ben Bella's opposing political faction, the non-FLN moderate nationalists who hoped to mitigate the revolutionary forces that were likely to marginalize them after independence, and the liberal European settlers who hoped against hope to build an independent Algeria in which they would continue to play an important role representing the new nation's *pied-noir* minority. Despite these differing allegiances, the men of the Provisional Executive embraced the process of mediation and bridge-building that, in their eyes, was necessary to transition Algeria to independence.

Chawki Mostefaï, 39, served as the leader of the Executive's FLN members. An ophthalmologist by training, Mostefaï received his medical degree in Paris in 1950, joining the

Parisian Committee of the FLN in 1954.[18] Mostefaï eventually became the FLN's chief of mission in Morocco before accompanying Ahmed Boumendjel, his close friend and veteran GPRA negotiator, to Evian.[19] In the Executive, Mostefaï defended the FLN's priorities, but he was also keen to seek compromise. For this willingness, he would later suffer the wrath of the Front's more dogmatic elements for the role he played in negotiating a truce with the OAS in June 1962. Of Mostefaï, one French official wrote: "He was a tenacious and sometimes incisive partner, but his intellectual value, his perfect knowledge of France…and, I think I can say, his sympathy for our country made finding common ground possible."[20]

In addition to Mostefaï, the GPRA appointed Bélaïd Abdesselam, Mohamed Benteftifa, Hamidou Boumediène, and Abderrazak Chentouf to serve on the Provisional Executive. Bélaïd Abdesselam, 34, was a medical student at the Faculté de Médecine in Grenoble and played an important role mobilizing Algerian Muslims studying in France as a committee member of the FLN-affiliated *Union Générale des Étudiants Musulmans Algériens* (General Union of Algerian Muslim Students [UGEMA]).[21] Of all the Provisional Executive members, Abdesselam would go on to have the most successful career in Algerian politics, serving as Minister of Industry and Energy under Houari Boumediene and later as prime minister between 1992 and 1993. Mohamed Benteftifa, 44, was a pharmacist who had served as a municipal councilman in Blida and had been

[18] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Chaouki ben Foudil ben Lakhar Mostefai" (no date, c. March 1962).

[19] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire— Chaouki ben Foudil ben Lakhar Mostefai" (no date, c. March 1962).

[20] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 317.

[21] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Belaid Abdesselam" (no date, c. March 1962).

active in the MTLD.[22] Hamidou Boumediène was the Executive's youngest member at 32 years old. A radiologist, he practiced in the eastern Algerian city of Perrégaux (modern-day Mohammadia) before being expelled from the colony for suspected contact with communist activists.[23] Abroad, he brokered contacts between French liberals and the FLN in Casablanca and oversaw an FLN medical council that conferred nursing certificates to candidates looking to serve with the ALN. Boumediène's intelligence file revealed that he was an early supporter of negotiations with the French and declared in 1961 that "the French would always be welcomed in Algeria."[24] Abderrazak Chentouf, 43, had been an appellate lawyer in Algiers before joining the FLN and serving as the chief of staff to Lakhdar Ben Tobbal, GPRA Minister of the Interior and one of the principal FLN negotiators at Evian.[25] More well-known was Chentouf's wife, Mamia Aïssa, who played an important role in the revolution mobilizing women's organizations and representing the FLN abroad in China and North Vietnam.[26]

The non-FLN Algerian Muslims who served on the Executive were emblematic of the kind of indigenous notable who supported independence, but had been wary to rally to the FLN and for such ambivalence had benefited from continued contact with colonial authorities. Among this contingent there was the French-educated legal professional, the landed estate-owner and

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[22] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Mohamed Benteftifa" (no date, c. March 1962).

[23] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Hamidou Boumediène" (no date, c. March 1962).

[24] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Hamidou Boumediène" (no date, c. March 1962).

[25] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Abderrazak Chentouf" (no date, c. March 1962).

[26] Leïla Boukli, "L'engagement d'une vie: Mamia Aïssa-Chentouf," *Mémoria*, 24 November 2012. https://www.memoria.dz/d-c-2012/figures-historiques/l-engagement-d-une-vie (accessed 12 February 2018).

agriculturalist, and the pious religious notable from an ethnic minority. Abdelkader El Hassar, 44, was the unofficial leader of this group within the Provisional Executive. Considered a "liberal nationalist," he had organized the *Jeunesse Communiste* in Tlemcen and had been a member of Ferhat Abbas's UDMA.[27] A lawyer, El Hassar served as the president of the Tlemcen Bar Association before his nomination to the Provisional Executive.[28] Cheikh Mohamed, 55, was a prominent farmer, livestock breeder, and property owner from a distinguished family near Mostagamen.[29] As President of the Chamber of Agriculture in the city of Tiaret and head of the regional council of Oran, Cheikh Mohamed maintained influence in both Muslim and European communities and had cultivated friendly contacts within the colonial administration.[30] Cheikh Bayoud Hadj Balimi, the oldest member of the Executive at 65 years old, was a Mozabite religious leader, councilman for the Oasis department in the Sahara, and former delegate in the Algerian Assembly who had acquaintances in various nationalist groups, but belonged to none of them. At one point approached by the FLN, he refused to accept an official position with the movement.[31] An "active personality and excellent orator," Cheikh Bayoud was a champion of traditional Mozabite culture and held considerable influence in the M'zab and throughout the Algerian Tell.[32]

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[27] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): " Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Abdelkader El Hassar, dit 'Djilali'" (no date, c. March 1962).

[28] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Abdelkader El Hassar, dit 'Djilali'" (no date, c. March 1962).

[29] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Cheikh M'hamed" (no date, c. March 1962).

[30] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Cheikh M'hamed" (no date, c. March 1962).

[31] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Cheikh Bayoud Hadj Balimi" (no date, c. March 1962).

[32] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Cheikh Bayoud Hadj Balimi" (no date, c. March 1962).

Farès was already quite familiar with the European members of Executive, who comprised liberal professionals turned politicians. Roger Roth, 49, served as the Executive's vice president and principal liaison to French Algeria's settler community. A *pied-noir* from an old Alsatian family, Roth had served as an ensign in the French navy before obtaining his doctorate of law and practicing as a solicitor in the coastal town of Philippeville (modern-day Skikda), where he later won election as mayor.[33] As mayor, Roth rallied to de Gaulle during the putsch of April 1961 and for his open support of independence became a target of OAS hatred. To intimidate Roth, angry ultras once ransacked Roth's study and blew up his prized sailboat.[34] Yet, despite such misfortune, one French official at Rocher Noir recounted that "never did I hear [Roth] express himself vindictively."[35] Farès described his second-in-command as having "an eternal smile."[36] Considering the situation that faced the Provisional Executive, Roth's optimism was a rare commodity.

Jean Jérôme Mannoni, 54, was a Corsican doctor who traded a promising career in medicine for one in colonial politics. Elected as a delegate to the Algerian Assembly, he eventually became its vice president.[37] Mannoni represented the kind of liberal European settler whose political moderation and desire for reconciliation had placed him squarely in the crossfire of conflicting furies. In Mannoni's case, quite literally so: he lost both of his legs to the Algerian

[33] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Roger Roth" (no date, c. March 1962).

[34] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 317.

[35] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 317.

[36] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 131.

[37] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Jean Jérôme Mannoni" (no date, c. March 1962).

conflict. In May 1958, an FLN terrorist attack in Sidi-Mabrouk claimed one.[38] Three years later, an OAS bomb mangled the other.[39]

Lastly, Charles Koenig, 40, was a *pied-noir* high school teacher who served as mayor of Saïda in addition to president of the departmental council for the southern Oranais region. More popular among his Muslim constituents than his European ones, Koenig openly supported independence and had dedicated his career to expanding access to education for Algerian Muslim schoolchildren.[40]

Behind each of these delegates was a support staff of dynamic assistants and deputies from the colony's Muslim and European populations, many of whom had graduated from high-ranking metropolitan universities and the Grandes Écoles. The Provisional Executive proved a training ground for young Algerian Muslim élites in particular, providing future administrators with experience running a government. Men such as Mohamed Khemisti, Abdelkader Zaibeck, Smaïl Mahroug, Missoum Sbih, Abdelatif Rahal, and Abdelmalek Temmam would assume important positions in Algeria's post-independence governments under Ben Bella and Boumediene. Farès's first chief of staff, Mohand Mahiou, was a graduate of the prestigious Institut National d'Études Supérieures Agronomiques de Montpellier (SupAgro). When Mahiou was named prefect of Médéa, Farès replaced him with Mohamed Khemisti, who would later serve as Algeria's first

[38] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Jean Jérôme Mannoni" (no date, c. March 1962).

[39] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Jean Jérôme Mannoni" (no date, c. March 1962).

[40] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Notices sur les membres de l'Exécutif Provisoire—Charles Koenig" (no date, c. March 1962).

Minister of Foreign Affairs.[41] Abdelatif Rahal, educator and former member of Ferhat Abbas's UDMA, served as Mostefaï's chief of staff before becoming Algeria's first ambassador to France.[42] Mohamed Benteftifa named Abdelkader Zaibeck, the future Minister of Telecommunications under Ben Bella, as his deputy assistant.[43] Koenig chose Benelhadj Djelloul, the young deputy prefect of Mécheria, to run his office.[44] In these duties, Djelloul was supported by Mohamed Allem, one of the rare Muslim public works engineers in French Algeria, and Mohamed Douag, head engineer at the commissariat of construction. To oversee the functions of the Local Forces, Abdelkader El Hassar relied on Omar Mokdad, former officer in the French army and prefect of Saida, and Lieutenant Colonel Abdelhamid Djebaili, future head of the Algerian Joint Army Staff School.[45] Additionally, to direct the economic affairs staff, Abdesselam chose Smaïl Mahroug, a rare Catholic Algerian who would later serve as Minister of Finance in the 1970s.[46] Evaluating these men, Algeria's new High Commissioner considered them more important than the FLN's *chefs historiques*, for "more than their elders…they had to go confront and resolve the problems of modern administration for tomorrow's independent Algerian government."[47]

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[41] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du lundi 4 Juin 1962 à 15H.45" (4 June 1962); Kadri, "L'Exécutif Provisoire, les enjeux d'une transition chaotique," 217.

[42] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du lundi 4 Juin 1962 à 15H.45" (4 June 1962).

[43] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du lundi 4 Juin 1962 à 15H.45" (4 June 1962).

[44] Kadri, "L'Exécutif Provisoire, les enjeux d'une transition chaotique," 218.

[45] Kadri, "L'Exécutif Provisoire, les enjeux d'une transition chaotique," 218.

[46] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du lundi 4 Juin 1962 à 15H.45" (4 June 1962).

[47] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 161.

Figure 2.1



Christian Fouchet
Source: Assemblé Nationale

Figure 2.2



Abderrahmane Farès
Source: Author's Collection

Figure 2.3



Roger Roth
Source: Assemblé Nationale

Figure 2.4



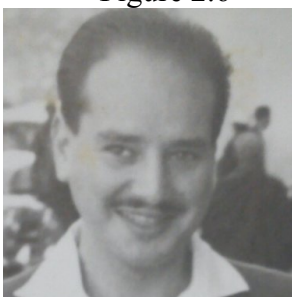
Chawki Mostefaï
Source: INA

Figure 2.5



Jean Manoni
Source: INA

Figure 2.6



Hamidou Boumediène
Source: LinkedIn

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The Provisional Executive confronted these problems in concert with the office of the High Commissioner. For this position, de Gaulle selected an early loyalist from his Free French days, Christian Fouchet. Fouchet accepted the post with much personal reservation. Although then serving as France's ambassador to Denmark, Fouchet had previously been the Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs under Pierre Mendès France and knew intimately the challenges of decolonization that awaited him in Algeria.

"Do you want to be High Commissioner?" de Gaulle had asked Fouchet in February 1962. "*Mon Général*," Fouchet replied, "surely, I do not *want* to do it."[48] But Fouchet, like his colleague in the Provisional Executive, could do nothing but accept. His consolation was a quip typical of de Gaulle's worldview: "*Allez* Fouchet…*ad augusta per angusta*."[49] To glory through difficulties.

A tall and imposing man with iron-grey hair and a "piercing gaze," Fouchet was known for his "cannonball serve in tennis," a fondness for quoting the plays of Jean Giraudoux, and a tendency to sweat profusely in the Algerian heat.[50] And like Farès, Fouchet had also lost a nephew to the war: a twenty-year old airborne lieutenant killed in action.[51] As ambassador to Denmark, Fouchet had crossed paths with a nascent OAS when the group threatened to blow up a French navy destroyer visiting Copenhagen.[52] Now, as newly-appointed High Commissioner, the OAS had marked Fouchet for death.[53]

To support Fouchet, de Gaulle assigned Bernard Tricot, his personal councilor on Algerian affairs, to serve as the High Commissariat's general secretary. Tricot was the Gaullist technocrat *par excellence*: discreet, loyal, shrewd. A native of Auvergne, Tricot rose through the ranks of the French bureaucracy to become a member of the Conseil d'Etat. Under Pierre Mendès France, Tricot had been given responsibility over Morocco and Tunisia's transitions to independence and it was with the clear-eyed realism of a technocrat that Tricot accepted self-determination as the

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[48] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 141.

[49] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 143.

[50] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 95; "The Transition Team," *Time*, 30 March 1962; Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 162.

[51] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 137.

[52] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 137.

[53] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 145.

only logical solution to the crisis in Algeria. He was one of the first among de Gaulle's advisors to advocate such a policy and is credited with having converted several skeptical cabinet members. As personal aide to de Gaulle in all matters Algerian, Tricot had worked behind the scenes with Joxe at Evian and knew intimately what was at stake during the transitional period. Fouchet said of Tricot, "I have never again in my life encountered a man endowed with a similar work ethic and a calm so unflappable."[54] Farès remembers Tricot as being "a veritable encyclopedia" and "always very calm and impenetrable whatever the circumstances."[55]

Tricot served as an unofficial thirteenth member of the Provisional Executive. Even though the Evian Accords had stipulated that the High Commissioner himself would attend plenary meetings of the Provisional Executive, Fouchet desired to remain aloof so as to maintain possibilities for mediation.[56] As the High Commissioner's representative—and some would say, as the real High Commissioner—Tricot became the voice of the French government in meetings of the Provisional Executive.[57] Minutes of these sessions reveal that delegates often looked to Tricot for clarity on the High Commissioner's thinking and broader French policy. They also reveal that Tricot's tone could be rather patronizing in his attempts to intervene on behalf of Paris. When the Executive's delegates put forth radical or unorthodox proposals—such as massively sanctioning the French Algerian police force for its suspected ties to the OAS—Tricot often advised the Executive to reconsider its options, suggesting alternative solutions deemed more

[54] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 146.

[55] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 137.

[56] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 315.

[57] Claude Krief, "Farès en échec," *L'Express*, 17 May 1962.

acceptable to the High Commissioner.[58] Moreover, Tricot was not beyond expressing doubts over the accuracy of information presented by Algerian Muslim delegates in meetings, only to be proven wrong later. Nonetheless, the Provisional Executive maintained its independence, despite Tricot's nannying. Delegates overrode de Gaulle's *éminence grise* on several important matters, not the least of which was the nature of the question to be asked in the referendum on self-determination.[59]

In addition to French oversight, the Executive also had to contend with supervision from the GPRA in Tunis and, later, pressure from the CNRA in Tripoli. Before leaving for Rocher Noir, Farès traveled from Paris to Rabat to meet with Benyoucef Ben Khedda, the GPRA's president, and Saad Dahlab, the provisional government's polished Minister of Foreign Affairs. Ben Khedda gave Farès and his FLN colleagues in the Executive a wide remit, stating: "We trust you completely…your task will be difficult and thankless, the main thing is to get through the referendum. […] You will be on the ground, it'll be up to you to deal with whatever events you encounter."[60] Nonetheless, Tunis expected to remain informed of the Provisional Executive's actions and to receive advanced notice of its decisions. Having staked its reputation on the Evian Accords, the GPRA needed the Provisional Executive to succeed—if only to ensure GPRA-loyalists would be in positions of administrative power in the wake of independence. Dahlab warned Farès of the growing divisions between the military and civilian leadership within the FLN.[61] Though discord among different factions had long percolated—between internal versus

[58] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

[59] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

[60] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 92-93.

[61] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 92.

external elements or the GPRA versus the ALN General Staff—the seeming inevitability of independence hastened a scramble for leadership. Following the signing of the Evian Accords, a faction led by Ahmed Ben Bella and supported by Colonel Boumediene began attacking the GPRA for its "surrender" at the Hôtel du Parc. Ben Bella even convinced the FLN's governing body, the CNRA, to sanction the GPRA during a party congress in Tripoli that May. Maintaining influence in Algeria through the Provisional Executive was a means by which the GPRA hoped to avoid being outmaneuvered by its rivals after independence. In the months surrounding the referendum, the Provisional Executive became increasingly caught between either side of a growing showdown for power that would deteriorate into near-civil war.

Added to these concerns, the more immediate threat of OAS violence promised to fulfill Farès's grim prediction that the Provisional Executive's mission would be a suicidal one. In the weeks before the conclusion of the Evian Accords, General Raoul Salan formulated a plan to sabotage any ceasefire agreement by launching a massive terror campaign. Known as "Instruction No. 29," it was essentially a declaration of war against the French state. The directive called for a "general offensive" in the days prior to the establishment of the Provisional Executive "to paralyze the powers that be and make it impossible for them to exercise authority."[62] The plan also targeted well-known moderates in the European and Algerian Muslim communities to neutralize efforts at civil reconciliation during the transitional period.

Rocher Noir, as the seat of the new transitional authority, became a natural target of the OAS. Despite its isolated location outside Algiers, a double perimeter of razor wire, and round-the-clock patrols by crack French paratroopers, the threat of an attack against the administrative

[62] Raoul Salan, "Instruction N° 29/OAS" in *OAS Parle*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Collection Archives Julliard, 1964), 169-178.

compound loomed ever-present. Only a few days after Fouchet's arrival, the OAS nearly succeeded in detonating a truck laden with explosives and cinderblock underneath the windows of his office.[63] During his tenure as president, Farès often received anonymous phone calls delivering threats that Rocher Noir's drinking water had been poisoned or that a bomb had been placed in a vegetable-seller's truck at the local marketplace.[64] Indeed, physical safety was such a concern that the Provisional Executive dedicated a considerable amount of time to discussing Rocher Noir's security protocols at its first plenary meeting on 13 April 1962.[65] Wedged between the craggy shoreline of the Mediterranean and an inhospitable interior marked by sectarian conflict, the Provisional Executive found itself between nothing less than a rock and hard place.

Figure 2.7



Entrance to Rocher Noir
Source: Author's Collection

[63] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 160.

[64] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 106.

[65] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du vendredi 13 avril 1962 à 15H" (13 April 1962).

"Our Universe of Dust and Concrete"

When Abderrahmane Farès arrived at Rocher Noir with his family at the end of March, much of the administrative complex remained under construction. Work to pour concrete, lay plaster, and install electrical wiring proceeded day and night to complete what would soon become a metonym for the new epicenter of authority in Algeria. The installation of the Provisional Executive in such a place seemed almost too apt a metaphor for the labors that awaited Farès and his colleagues.

The idea for a new administrative capital was the brainchild of Paul Delouvrier, a devotee of postwar French urbanism who served as French Algeria's Delegate General between December 1958 and November 1960.[66] Upon arriving in Algiers, Delouvrier soon discovered that his offices—located in the old Government General building near the central post office—were too close to the "pressure" of the city's European and Algerian Muslim inhabitants.[67] In particular, *pieds-noirs* often chose the Place de Forum opposite the building's entrance to demonstrate their discontent with de Gaulle's slow creep toward self-determination. Wary of settler influence and eager to safeguard his civil servants from civil strife, Delouvrier resolved to move the administrative center of colonial authority outside the city limits and began scouting locations for alternate sites in secret.[68] The tumultuous events of Barricades Week in January 1960 confirmed Delouvrier's fears and provided a justification to construct a new base of operations far away from

[66] Following his posting to Algeria, de Gaulle appointed Delouvrier as Delegate General for the Region of Paris. Between 1961 and 1969, he would oversee the implementation of massive urban planning projects around suburban Paris and across the Île-de-France.

[67] ANOM: 81/F/452: "La nouvelle capitale administrative de l'Algérie" (no date, c. autumn 1961).

[68] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 159.

the colony's settler-dense urban centers. The attempted coup of April 1961 further underscored the benefits of decentralizing the administration.

Rocher Noir was selected for its relative distance from Algiers, its proximity to the military airbase at Reghaïa, and its tranquil seaside setting. Construction began in May 1961 under Jean Morin, Delouvrier's successor as Delegate General. Inspired by postwar *villes nouvelles* and modeled in part on Brasilia, Rocher Noir was to be functional, state-of-the-art, and self-contained.[69] Designed by French architect Louis Gabriel de Hoÿm de Marien—later of Tour Montparnasse notoriety—Rocher Noir boasted sleek mid-century aesthetics complemented by modern amenities, such as air conditioning, for approximately 1,000 civil servants. In addition to living and working quarters for its future occupants, the architectural plans provided for a school, a restaurant, a hotel, its own water supply, a railway station, and a helicopter pad.[70] Within four months, 190 housing units and offices for 150 administrators were constructed on land once occupied by vineyards and orange groves. By January 1962, 800 more offices were slated for construction. Although originally envisaged as a modernist outpost for the technocratic administration of de Gaulle's *Algérie Nouvelle*, it soon became the besieged headquarters of decolonization. "Part planned community, part administrative city, part entrenched camp—such was Rocher Noir in the spring of 1962," recollected Tricot.[71]

Although at the time Rocher Noir was quite possibly the most swiftly built site in Algeria (if not in metropolitan France), the additional housing and office space promised by the new year

[69] ANOM: 81/F/452: "La nouvelle capitale administrative de l'Algérie" (no date, c. autumn 1961).

[70] ANOM: 81/F/452: "La nouvelle capitale administrative de l'Algérie" (no date, c. autumn 1961).

[71] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 310.

never fully materialized.[72] The OAS threatened contractors and disrupted work constantly.[73] But construction continued throughout the springtime nonetheless, churning up clouds of fine ochre dust that invaded the half-finished offices into which the members of the Provisional Executive, the High Commissariat, and the French Armed Forces High Command installed themselves.

Discomfort and scarcity stalked the corridors of Rocher Noir: too few typists, never enough office space, dwindling supplies of letterhead, anonymous threats, cars stolen, telephone lines cut.[74] Despite these hardships, the Provisional Executive was a "silent hive" of activity.[75] If anything, the cramped quarters and specter of OAS terrorism drew Rocher Noir's disparate inhabitants into an odd fellowship—a "comradery of difficult days"—that helped construct the culture of cooperation necessary for the transition.[76] Fouchet's memoirs detail the unlikely alliances and surprising working relations that the conditions at Rocher Noir engendered between one-time adversaries:

> The whole thing housed the most astonishing human swarm that one could dream up. The most typical French paratrooper…looking battle-hardened in his camouflaged uniform, a veteran of months or even years of combat in Algeria…rubbed shoulders with the Algerian National Liberation Army soldier who came from the *maquis du bled* and became a bodyguard for the FLN [delegates]. The brilliant, freshly sharpened graduate of the ENA [École Nationale d'Administration] now…worked alongside the young Algerian of the same age whose apprenticeship had been provided by clandestine war or revolutionary

[72] Samia Henni, *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (Zurich: gta Verlag, 2017), 248.

[73] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 102.

[74] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 21 avril 1962 à 9H20" (21 April 1962); "Séance plénière du samedi 26 avril 1962 à 9H20" (21 April 1962); Krief, "Farès en échec," *L'Express*, 17 May 1962.

[75] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 130.

[76] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 310-311.

> action…and who was preparing to become, almost overnight, a minister's chief of staff.[77]

The Provisional Executive existed foremost to help ease these kinds of transitions, but some transitions were "often quicker than human psychology could tolerate."[78] This was particularly true of men who for years had found themselves on opposite sides of a war and now worked directly for their former enemy. In one of the early meetings of the Provisional Executive, a member of the French police was asked to present a report on the security situation in Algeria. Normally, "rather steady" he was "troubled" by his encounter. "Here was this man," Tricot recalled, "who had fought against all manner of violence—foremost against the FLN—who was brought to make a report before a group which counted among its membership notable participants of the Front."[79]

Mutual suspicion and unease abated, however, as Rocher Noir's occupants settled into a working alliance built on interpersonal relationships. "These were tomorrow's leaders," Tricot insisted, "and it was necessary to get to know them."[80] Mohamed Khemisti often passed his spare time in conversation with Tricot in a small orange grove to escape what otherwise had become "our universe of dust and concrete."[81] In such interactions, the French technocrats of the High Commission and the young revolutionaries supporting the Provisional Executive found that, for better or worse, the colonial situation had given them a means "to talk about the problems of

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[77] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 161.

[78] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 319.

[79] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 319.

[80] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 313.

[81] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 313.

tomorrow, if not in agreement, at least in the same terms."[82] Tricot, "with a mixture of melancholy and satisfaction," not to mention a touch of colonial paternalism, observed the extent to which French culture had "an extraordinary force on [the young Algerians]" who were now poised to take over the administration.[83]

And take over the administration they were ready to do, even in the face of great personal danger. On the night before their first meeting with Fouchet, the members of the Provisional Executive met with Farès in his villa at Rocher Noir. Expressing concerns for their safety, Farès reminded them that anyone who wanted to back out still could—the formal decree finalizing the Provisional Executive's membership has not yet been signed. No one did. According to Farès: "All the delegates and their staff were convinced that they were building the foundations of the new Algeria."[84] For the next 190 days, these men of diverse backgrounds, but common cause, managed the affairs of Algeria. They debated budgets, re-organized the civil service, allocated social aid, attempted desperately to control the security situation, and prepared the arrangements for the referendum on self-determination. For this last task, they would deliberate on everything from the date of the vote to the wording of the question to the color of the ballots.

[82] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 313.

[83] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 313.

[84] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 130.

Figure 2.8



President Farès (standing center) gives a press conference with Christian Fouchet (sitting center)
Source: https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/2015/03/19/algerie-evian-executif-provisoire_n_6899798.html

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In the first weeks of the Provisional Executive's existence, two problems reigned supreme: re-organizing Algeria's public administration and re-establishing public order. Until these two matters were addressed, preparations for the referendum would be impractical. To accomplish both, the Executive faced the central challenge of preparing two pillars of colonial domination—the bureaucracy and the police force—for the very thing they had been constructed to prevent: independence. The manner in which the Executive would carry out these missions would affect how these institutions functioned in an independent Algeria. As Farès proclaimed during their second plenary meeting, "common sense suggests that what is done now will be an indication of what will be done tomorrow."[85]

[85] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 14 avril 1962 à 16H" (14 April 1962).

On 19 April, the Provisional Executive drafted a decree giving it the power to sign regulations and delegate authority within the Algerian civil service.[86] Officially, each delegate became the head of service for the administrative department(s) that corresponded to his area of responsibility. In some cases, however, the Provisional Executive's take over provoked resistance and hostility from within. Despite attempts to integrate Algerian Muslims into the colonial administration as part of the Constantine Plan, Algeria's civil service remained overwhelmingly composed of European settlers, many of whom either harbored sympathies for the OAS or were simply antagonistic to the idea of Algerian independence.

Consequently, *pied-noir* functionaries in some services sabotaged the machinery of state by slowing work, destroying files, and going on strike. By mid-April, the Executive received reports that certain banks, post offices, and welfare services were refusing to issue payments, cash checks, or process pensions.[87] Then on 24 April, the OAS organized an administration-wide wildcat strike that brought most public services to a standstill.[88] Such subversive action threatened to paralyze an already fragile economy. It also provoked the ire of the colony's European and Algerian Muslim inhabitants alike. Letters poured in demanding, "How can you tolerate functionaries that go on strike when ordered to by the OAS?"[89] In response, the Provisional Executive instituted "severe sanctions" for those functionaries who organized strikes for "political

[86] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Réunion du jeudi 19 avril 1962 à 15H" (19 April 1962).

[87] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance privée du mardi 24 avril 1962 à 11H" (24 April 1962).

[88] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 26 avril 1962 à 15H45" (26 April 1962).

[89] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mardi 24 avril 1962 à 15H40" (24 April 1962).

reasons," such as withholding pay, immediate transfer to the metropole, or outright dismissal."[90] In one of the few meetings attended by the High Commissioner himself, Chawki Mosetfaï appealed directly to Fouchet about the ever-worsening situation, warning him of the "pre-insurrectional attitude of paralysis within the administration."[91] Although cautioning restraint, Fouchet agreed that something had to be done. The Provisional Executive subsequently undertook a massive house-cleaning operation to transfer, dismiss, and even detain civil servants suspected of being OAS infiltrators. Fifty prominent administrators were sacked, including the chairman of the Joint Committee for Veterans Affairs, while the director of Électricité et Gaz d'Algérie (EGA) was placed under house arrest.[92] Entire organizations, such as the General Association of Students, were completely dissolved.[93] Although admitting that such measures had a "certain utility," Tricot lamented that they "also have the disadvantage of being taken in haste and lacking in discernment. I was sorry to see some missing places in the delegation of railwaymen that I received frequently: some of its members had been expelled from Algeria on the basis of old intelligence, without taking into account their recent efforts at conciliation."[94]

The Provisional Executive's corresponding campaign to nominate Algerian Muslims to positions of responsibility within the administration was therefore not merely the result of progressive policies; Algerian Muslims could be trusted to ensure the smooth functioning of

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[90] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 26 avril 1962 à 15H45" (26 April 1962); "Séance plénière du samedi 28 avril 1962 à 9H45" (28 April 1962); "Séance plénière du samedi 12 mai 1962 à 17H30" (12 May 1962).

[91] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 12 mai 1962 à 17H30" (12 May 1962).

[92] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 334.

[93] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 334.

[94] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 334.

government in a way that *pied-noir* administrators at the time could not. Although the composition of the public sector remained largely white and European even after independence, the number of indigenous functionaries increased during the transitional period despite limitations in time, resources, and qualified individuals. The Provisional Executive made the most significant changes at the prefectural level by appointing Algerian Muslims to run Algeria's departments. In the months before independence, the Provisional Executive vetted and nominated dozens of prefects and deputy prefects for approval by the Conseil des Ministres in Paris.[95] To some degree, Algerian Muslims had more influence in this role than they would have had in the central bureaucracy—prefects had significant control over local security, administration, and public assistance. Having Algerian Muslims running affairs at the departmental level also helped to reassure local inhabitants, most of whom lived far from the colony's traditional centers of power, that there would be some continuity following the referendum.

These sorts of maneuvers bolstered the Executive's delicate public image, especially among Algerian Muslims. Despite its interim nature, inhabitants of French Algeria still considered the Executive to be a responsible governing entity vested with legitimate power. Private citizens wrote letters to the Provisional Executive or called Rocher Noir directly to express their concerns, give vent to their frustration, or make desperate appeals to its authority.[96] Some, such as the representative for Oran in the French National Assembly, René Mekki, or the prominent *pied-noir* writer Jules Roy, considered the Provisional Executive powerful enough to beg Farès to secure an

[95] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): (13 April 1962); "Séance privée du samedi 12 mai 1962 à 10H" (12 May 1962); "Séance plénière du samedi 12 mai 1962 à 11H" (12 May 1962); "Séance plénière du jeudi 17 mai 1962 à 15H30" (17 May 1962); "Séance plénière exceptionnelle du lundi 21 mai 1962 à 17H10" (21 May 1962); "Séance plénière extraordinaire du mardi 29 mai 1962 à 18H" (29 May 1962).

[96] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mardi 24 avril 1962 à 15H40" (24 April 1962); Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 106.

unlikely pardon from de Gaulle on behalf of General Edmond Jouhaud, recently condemned to death for his role in the *putsch des généraux*.[97] Most, however, saw the Provisional Executive as the only institution with the resources to exercise control amid the anarchy of Algeria's final days and they demanded that it take appropriate action.

Occasionally, foreign governments and corporate interests did too, forcing the Provisional Executive to confront questions that inevitably affected the future of Algeria while it was still operating under French sovereignty. The Executive's impermanence, however, gave it the flexibility it needed to respond to certain challenges. When expedient, Farès and his colleagues could make decisions that ran contrary to the radical pronouncements coming out of Tripoli or they could prevaricate, claiming that their status as a provisional entity prevented them from making far-reaching policy.

For example, in anticipation of independence, the Provisional Executive renewed an agreement that had been signed between the French government and the *Compagnie Algérienne de Méthane Liquide* (CAMEL), a Franco-British enterprise that operated a natural gas liquefaction plant outside of Oran. Bélaïd Abdesselam, the FLN delegate in charge of economic affairs, studied the dossier and approved it. Abdesselam, of all people, knew the implications that such a decision would have: after the agreement was signed, he turned to Farès and reportedly said, "We are going to be labeled ultra-colonialists. It does not matter, the future will prove us right. What we have done is a start for the industrialization of our country."[98]

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[97] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 14 avril 1962 à 16H" (14 April 1962); "Séance plénière du samedi 21 avril 1962 à 17H10" (21 April 1962).

[98] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 131.

In another instance, the Executive judiciously refrained from entertaining any conversation about the future of Algeria's borders. Two weeks before the referendum, the Moroccan Minister of Justice, M'hamed Boucetta, traveled to Rocher Noir to present the Provisional Executive with a letter from King Hassan II. It concerned the GPRA's alleged promises to the Sultan to rectify the Algerian-Moroccan border following independence. After a cordial dinner with Boucetta, Farès called a meeting of the Executive to discuss a response to the letter. The Executive demurred diplomatically. Using its transitionary nature to avoid making any decision, the Executive proclaimed that its mission was to maintain the current borders of Algeria until the installation of a "legal government" could address the issue.[99] The phrase "legal government" here is curious considering that Executive was indeed the legal government of Algeria and would become such immediately following independence. Yet, its use illustrates the extent to which its members understood the ambiguous boundary of their authority and how best to instrumentalize it.

Until the referendum, however, the Provisional Executive still functioned in concert with the High Commissioner. Although united in their common mission to facilitate Algeria's transition to independence, the working relationship between the two was not without occasional tension. Delegates often bristled at the High Commissariat's scrutiny of its affairs and on matters that concerned both institutions, joint working committees were formed that slowed the decision-making process.[100] One frustrated delegate denounced them as nothing more than "stonewalling committees."[101] Even the reliably cautious Tricot agreed. Given the accelerating pace of violence during the spring of 1962, both the High Commissioner's office and the Provisional Executive

[99] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 132.

[100] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mardi 24 avril 1962 à 15H40" (24 April 1962).

[101] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

were barely able to keep ahead of events. Ensconced in the relative safety of Rocher Noir, the members of the Executive were keenly aware of how their progress (or lack thereof) was perceived by the colony's population, many of whom faced mortal danger daily. "We are currently living in two worlds," El Hassar declared in one meeting. "There are two planets: the Executive is on one…and the population is on another […]."[102] In another session, Benteftifa noted ominously: "Reading the press and seeing what we have promised to do, public opinion in general, [and among] the Muslim population in particular…considers the Executive's shortfalls to be harmful. They are telling us: 'If you don't do something…*eh bien*, in a week you'll see […].'"[103] No shortfall was more harmful or more conspicuous than the Executive's desperate attempts to maintain law and order.

That unenviable task fell foremost to Abdelkader El Hassar, delegate in charge of public order. The Evian Accords had made maintaining civil peace the Provisional Executive's responsibility and only in the "last resort" could the High Commissioner intervene with the French military. But as Fouchet once quipped: in Algeria, everything was a "last resort."[104] Throughout April and May, the OAS had made good on Salan's threat to paralyze Algeria. In addition to blindly attacking the colony's Algerian Muslims and their European allies, the organization undertook a campaign of "*terre brûlée*" (scorched earth) that targeted the colony's vital infrastructure and promised to "return Algeria to 1830."[105] To combat the OAS and keep order in

[102] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance extraordinaire du jeudi 26 avril 1962 à 9H45" (26 April 1962).

[103] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mardi 24 avril 1962 à 15H40" (24 April 1962).

[104] Fouchet, *Mémoires d'hier et de demain*, 163.

[105] Bertrand Le Gendre, *Entretiens avec Jean-Jacques Susini, Confessions du N° 2 de l'OAS* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2012), 175.

the streets, the Executive had three resources at its disposal: the colonial police, the newly created Local Force, and certain metropolitan security forces such as the gendarmerie and the élite *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité* (CRS). Each had limitations that prevented the Provisional Executive from ever gaining the upper hand effectively.

Like the central administration, the police in French Algeria was riddled with OAS infiltrators or officers sympathetic to the organization's destructive aims. Similarly, El Hassar argued to sanction or dismiss suspected personnel and re-organize the security forces. In his opinion, the police constituted "the tip of the spear" for the OAS.[106] That a portion of the police would rally to the OAS, or at least turn a blind eye to its activities, was to be expected: for years, police officers in Algeria had been an integral part of France's war against the FLN. Like their compatriots in the military, some also saw self-determination as betrayal. Unlike the military, however, these men were *pieds-noirs* who had fought the war in their own precincts and neighborhoods. Far from an asset, the colonial police constituted a liability for the Provisional Executive. Rocher Noir received reports from Sidi-Bel-Abbès that some officers were taking hostages and stealing weapons in full view of their colleagues.[107] Hamidou Boumediène, the delegate for social affairs, underscored the situation in his hometown of Perrégaux, where he claimed it was necessary to change the entire department.[108] The question was, however: who would take their place? The Executive counted only 1,905 Algerian Muslim police officers in the

[106] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

[107] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

[108] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

entire force and many of the European officers deemed acceptable nonetheless decided to join the growing exodus of *pieds-noirs* to France.[109]

The Provisional Executive thus undertook a massive campaign to increase the number of able-bodied men to support trusted detachments of metropolitan police units in the battle against the OAS.[110] Recruits were mainly Algerian Muslims, who comprised the bulk of the *Unités de Force Locale* (Local Force Units [UFL]) and the police auxiliaries. The Local Force, in particular, was the Executive's chief peace-keeping instrument. Envisaged as an embryonic Algerian army of tomorrow, it comprised 23,000 men seconded from the French army and divided into 114 company-sized units led by a mixed officer corps of vetted Europeans and Algerian Muslims.[111] The UFL were in turn reinforced by 110 auxiliary gendarme units and the *Groupes Mobiles de Sécurité* (Mobile Security Groups [GMS]), which together counted another 16,000 mainly indigenous troops.[112] To train, arm, and deploy these 39,000 men, El Hassar worked in close coordination with longtime de Gaulle loyalist Vitalis Cros, who served as the beleaguered Prefect of Police for Algiers.[113] While the Local Force managed to provide vital reinforcement in urban centers where OAS terrorism was most concentrated, such as Algiers and Oran, the UFL never fully succeeded in their mission to keep order. Delayed implementation coupled with low morale and internal tension rendered it woefully unprepared to face the sanguinary cycle of violence and

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[109] Vitalis Cros, *Le temps de la violence* (Paris: Presse de la Cité, 1971), 196.

[110] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 28 avril 1962 à 9H45" (28 April 1962); "Séance plénière du vendredi le 11 mai 1962 à 18H" (11 May 1962).

[111] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 14 avril 1962 à 16H" (14 April 1962).

[112] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 14 avril 1962 à 16H" (14 April 1962).

[113] Cros, *Le temps de la violence*, 188.

retribution unleashed in the wake of the Evian Accords. Moreover, many of the Local Force's Algerian recruits—eager to show last-minute loyalty to the FLN—deserted, despite orders to the contrary from the FLN itself.

Given the stakes, deliberations on security matters were often intense. What is most surprising, however, is how the Executive's FLN delegates suddenly began sounding like wartime French policymakers during these discussions, using language and proposing solutions based on the methods deployed by the French state against the FLN. In plenary meetings, FLN delegates labeled OAS attacks "terrorist activity" and proposed that an aggressive system of *quadrillage* be implemented to "annihilate" OAS terror in "at least 60-70 percent of cases."[114] Echoing sentiments from Benteftifa and Chentouf, El Hassar proclaimed: "It is logically impossible for the OAS to perpetrate its action and its crimes if every ten or fifteen meters, in front of every block, every street is watched by our force."[115] Ironically, *quadrillage*—a counterinsurgency tactic that involved dividing territory into constantly patrolled grids—was a system popularized by General Salan to combat the FLN during his tenure as commander of French forces in Algeria.

Desperate to protect the colony's civilians at any cost, the Provisional Executive considered a series of unorthodox proposals, such as arming Algerian Muslim self-defense groups or reactivating the *barbouzes*—the ragtag network of hired assassins that the French state had secretly employed in the winter of 1961 to dismantle the OAS by fighting fire with fire.[116] The Executive

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[114] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance extraordinaire du jeudi 26 avril 1962 à 9H45" (26 April 1962).

[115] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 26 avril 1962 à 15H45" (26 April 1962).

[116] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance privée du vendredi le 11 mai 1962 à 17H30" (11 May 1962). The term *barbouze* derives from French slang for "one who wears a false beard" and is used to refer to undercover police officers or members of the intelligence community. In the context of the French state's fight against the OAS, *barbouze* referred specifically to members of the clandestine group tasked with destroying the Organization through extralegal means.

even contemplated reconstituting the infamous Commando Georges, a French counterinsurgency unit made up of former FLN guerrillas, and deploying it to hunt down the OAS.[117]

Although the Executive never adopted these more unconventional schemes, it did endorse a counterinsurgency strategy that nonetheless relied on a repertoire of French colonial repression: *quadrillage*, curfews, road blocks, *cordons sécuritaires*, internment, house-to-house searches, and nighttime raids. Tactics once decried during the war by French liberals and Algerian nationalists alike now became indispensable in the fight against another kind of terrorism. And the forces that normally received public opprobrium for their methods—the military, the gendarmerie, the CRS—now became the unlikely guarantors of Algeria's transition to independence, lest public order breakdown and reignite war. Informal reporting to the Executive even suggested that Algeria's Muslim population had particular confidence in the metropolitan CRS—the once dreaded riot police—as its officers were considered more professional and less vulnerable to OAS infiltration.[118] Truly, the final act of decolonization had turned the world upside down in more ways than one. But such a situation served only to underscore the real gangrene of colonialism: even those who had experienced the horrors of French counter-revolutionary warfare learned all too well how to crush a paramilitary insurrection.

Occasionally, the Provisional Executive intervened directly to defuse potentially dangerous situations through local diplomacy. Farès recounts two incidents where the Provisional Executive orchestrated the surrender of two armed groups that threatened to destabilize the countryside south of Algiers. The first was that of Colonel Si Chérif Ben Saïdi, a temperamental turncoat who had

[117] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 26 avril 1962 à 15H45" (26 April 1962).

[118] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 26 avril 1962 à 15H45" (26 April 1962).

abandoned the ALN and offered his services to the French in 1957.[119] Placed in charge of organizing an indigenous militia to take on the FLN, his force of local Algerian recruits proved formidable against the Front's guerrillas. The ceasefire, however, jeopardized his future in an Algeria run by his former enemies. Despite the end of the war, Si Chérif still commanded upwards of 800 armed, loyal men who patrolled the region around Bou Saada in the Hauts Plateaux. Although courted by the OAS, he was unwilling to join its ranks. Equally wary of any rapprochement with the FLN, Si Chérif approached the Provisional Executive for protection. Farès named Mohand Mahiou, his chief of staff, as prefect of Médéa to act as a liaison between the Executive and Si Chérif in order to negotiate the surrender of Si Chérif's men. A similar incident involved Abdellah Selmi, who controlled a militia loyal to Messali Hadj's MNA around Bou Saada as well. A nationalist rival of the FLN, Selmi had allegedly placed his men at the disposal of the OAS out of spite. Farès used Mahiou once again to contact Selmi and arrange the conditions of a surrender to the Executive, which took place at Médéa on the afternoon of 23 May alongside the disarmament of Si Chérif's group. Farès's willingness to negotiate with the FLN's rivals created tension within the Provisional Executive: Mostefaï was apparently furious that Farès had not alerted Tunis in advance of his decision to negotiate with Selmi.[120] Mostefaï, however, would shortly find himself the target of FLN ire over the role he played in concluding an unlikely negotiation with the Executive's primary antagonist: the OAS.

[119] Following independence, Si Chérif escaped to France where he was fully integrated into the ranks of the French army as a captain.

[120] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 108-110.

Race to the Finish

Despite the challenges that faced Algeria's transitional authorities, the security forces under their control made progress: a massive dragnet operation across Algeria had led to the capture of several top-ranking members of the OAS. General Salan was arrested in an Algiers safe house on 20 April—a year to the day his failed coup against de Gaulle had been put in motion. Although the Organization's leadership began splintering, the group's death spiral threatened to inaugurate its worst paroxysm of destruction yet. Violence that had long been unrestrained now metastasized into an even more blind and undirected terror: drive-by assassins targeted elderly Muslim housemaids on their way to work, cars packed with plastic explosives detonated downtown, and mortar rounds fired from rooftops crashed into the casbah of Algiers. The evening of Salan's arrest, OAS commandos retaliated by murdering dozens of Algerian Muslims. And on the morning of 2 May, a massive car bomb exploded in the port of Algiers, killing 62 dock workers and injuring over 100 more.[121]

Respecting the Evian ceasefire, the FLN had shown restraint in the face of OAS provocation. But popular demands for reprisals prompted some commanders within the Front to seek revenge. In the wake of the port bombing, FLN gunmen responded by attacking café-bars that members of the OAS were known to frequent. And in the countryside, less disciplined elements kidnapped scores of settlers or extorted protection money to avoid such a fate. As public order continued to disintegrate, the possibility for a retaliatory *mise en abîme* not only threatened the tenuous peace, but the very prospect of a referendum. Violence in the streets would keep voters from both communities at home, lowering turnout and delegitimizing the legal measure meant to

[121] "Les dockers musulmans n'ont pas repris le travail, les représailles risquent d'être plus difficiles à éviter," *Le Monde*, 4 May 1962.

secure independence. It became increasingly apparent that a diplomatic solution was needed to bring the violence to an end.

Although the OAS had cultivated a terrifying aura of invincibility, its strategy of scorched earth was a political dead end. No one recognized this more acutely than the Organization's new leader, Jean-Jacques Susini, a twenty-nine year old student ideologue known for his intellect and persuasive rhetoric.[122] Hoping to save face as well as himself, Susini intimated to liberal acquaintances within the settler community that he might be willing to negotiate with the FLN directly. In Susini's mind, the OAS was the FLN's mirror image and his armed partisans were merely "Algerian nationalists" of a different stripe. Therefore, any cessation of hostilities should be decided "between Algerians." To broker such an exchange, Susini's intermediaries turned to President Farès who, unbeknownst to his FLN colleagues in the Executive, risked the first delicate overtures toward a truce.

On 18 May, Farès and Susini met eleven kilometers southwest of Rocher Noir in a secluded farmhouse outside of Alma (modern-day Boudouaou). Over whiskey and coffee, the unlikely pair discussed the issues that Susini insisted should guide any future negotiation with the FLN, among them: an expanded role for Europeans in the government of Algeria, the integration of *pieds-noirs* into the future Algerian armed forces, certain veto powers for the European community, and a redesigned Algerian flag.[123] Susini hoped that any agreement reached with the FLN through Farès would supplant the Evian Accords and create a future Algeria in which former members of the OAS might play a significant role. It was a flight of fancy, but one which Farès encouraged rather

[122] Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 350.

[123] Susini apparently desired that a redesigned Algerian flag would echo those of the British Commonwealth, with the French tricolor appearing in the canton. Fernand Carréras, *L'Accord FLN-OAS: des négociations secrètes au cessez-le-feu* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1967), 54-60, 102.

imprudently. In return for Farès's consideration, however, Susini suspended all OAS operations for a fortnight to demonstrate that he held the group's confidence and that it was capable of acting in good faith. Hopeful that such progress would endear his efforts to the GPRA, Farès secretly informed Tunis. A wary Ben Khedda told Farès to cease immediately. Farès persisted, nonetheless, hoping to achieve the reconciliation he always thought possible between the two communities. On 1 June, he met with Susini again in the presence of Jacques Chevallier, the liberal-minded former mayor of Algiers.

Farès's backroom diplomacy, although well-intentioned, produced a backlash of anger from the Executive's FLN delegation when its members learned a week later that unsanctioned negotiations had been undertaken with the OAS in their name. Mostefaï, as the chief FLN representative, was livid at Farès for having gone against Ben Khedda's express directions. But the OAS, in an effort to put pressure on the Front, had resumed its terror campaign and on 7 June set fire to the library at the University of Algiers, destroying an estimated 500,000 books. Reports swirled that the OAS had yet crueler designs for the country: a coordinated attack on Algeria's oil infrastructure in the Sahara was rumored, as well as a plan to mine the sewer tunnels under Algiers. Uncertain of the Organization's potential, worried that the Provisional Executive might lose the public's confidence, and with mounting pressure from Fouchet to find a solution, Mostefaï agreed that a negotiated settlement might be the only chance for a peaceful transition to independence.

The next day, on 8 June, Farès, Mostefaï, and Benteftifa left Rocher Noir to consult with the leadership of an increasingly fractured FLN. Through an electrical storm, the trio flew to Tripoli where an assembly of the CNRA had just ended. During the CNRA's meeting, the long-fomenting frictions within the FLN finally materialized: Ahmed Ben Bella, recently freed from French prison and enjoying immense popularity as a national hero, maneuvered to secure his

political dominance by accusing Ben Khedda and the GPRA of "compromising with the most gangrenous elements of colonialism" at Evian.[124] Ferhat Abbas, who remained bitter at Ben Khedda for having replaced him as GPRA president, rallied to Ben Bella along with Colonel Boumediene and the ALN General Staff. In response to the Evian Accords, the CNRA adopted the "Tripoli Program" at Ben Bella's insistence—an ideological manifesto that outlined a more revolutionary future for Algeria and obliquely condemned the "anti-revolutionary deviations" and "petit bourgeois attitudes" of the GPRA.[125] With the GPRA's leadership position subsequently jeopardized, Ben Khedda and his team returned to Tunis just before Farès and Mostefaï arrived in the Libyan capital. Ben Bella, however, was still at the hotel to meet them.

According to Farès's account, Ben Bella gave his assent to negotiations, but ordered that any agreement should be verbal and not written.[126] Mostefaï, however, remembered Ben Bella as having been more inscrutable, stating that he deferred any decision to the GPRA and would accept whatever Tunis decided out of "solidarity."[127] Ben Bella's reasons for passing the buck were likely strategic. Should negotiations fail, Ben Bella had one more arrow in his quiver to use in his attack on Ben Khedda's leadership. Should Mostefaï succeed, the FLN would get a peaceful referendum, but Ben Bella remained untainted from having made a pact with the devil. In both cases, Mostefaï's affiliation with the Provisional Executive put distance between the OAS and the FLN and allowed the Front to disavow his actions down the road.

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[124] Carréras, *L'Accord FLN-OAS*, 173.

[125] Cited in David Ottaway and Marina Ottoway, *Algeria: The Politics of a Socialist Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1970), 17.

[126] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 125.

[127] Mostefaï cited in Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 256.

Upon reaching Tunis from Tripoli, Farès and Mostefaï persuaded Ben Khedda that negotiating with the OAS was the only way to stop the effusion of blood. In the aftermath of Tripoli, Ben Khedda was himself wary of associating the GPRA too closely with any plan that involved the FLN's greatest enemy. Nonetheless, he decided that the negotiations that Farès started should be concluded by Mostefaï as the principal representative of the FLN within the Executive. He insisted, however, that any agreement could not supplement, challenge, or alter the Evian Accords. Rather, Mostefaï's dialogue should be an "interpretive commentary [of Evian] engaging the FLN vis-à-vis the European community."[128]

Mostefaï and Farès returned to Algeria with Krim Belkacem in tow and an official, if ambiguous, mandate to negotiate with the OAS. Through the mediation of Jacques Chevallier, Mostefaï met with Susini on 15 June at another farmhouse near Alma.[129] To his credit, Mostefaï wore down the young OAS firebrand: the FLN would adopt none of Susini's outlandish propositions concerning any post-independence role for the OAS or agree to any further guarantees for the European population other than those that had already been negotiated at Evian. Mostefaï, however, did offer to make a public statement on behalf of the FLN that guaranteed the rights of the *pieds-noirs* and promised a policy of amnesty for OAS adherents after the referendum. In exchange for this public declaration, the OAS would lay down its arms. It was not much, but Susini had few alternatives left. Despite his group's deadly efficiency, the noose around the OAS grew tighter by the day. Moreover, the Organization's old leadership began interceding from behind bars: both Jouhaud, already condemned to death, and Salan, facing trial and possible execution for treason, had sent word quietly that the time had come to end the fight. Although popularly labelled

[128] Carréras, *L'Accord FLN-OAS*, 117.

[129] Carréras, *L'Accord FLN-OAS*, 194-195.

an "accord" between the FLN and the OAS, the agreement between Mostefaï and Susini was nothing less than an act of surrender.

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon on 17 June, Mostefaï addressed Algeria's *pied-noir* population, declaring that an agreement had been reached with the OAS and announcing a policy of *tabula rasa* and reconciliation so that the two communities might pass through "the door of the future" together.[130] Later that evening, a spokesman for Susini made a broadcast on the Organization's pirate radio station verifying the authenticity of the accord and calling for the cessation of hostilities. Accompanying this message were cryptic lines of code meant for OAS commandos in the field: "For the sand fox and the fennec, the lighters should not be lit tonight" (translation: do not blow up the Saharan oil wells), and "The swimming pools shall remain full" (i.e., do not blow up Algeria's dams and reservoirs).[131] The following day, Algiers knew a peace that had eluded it for more than half a decade. Although individual partisans of French Algeria would carry on their fight privately, the OAS mostly respected the "truce." Rogue elements, however, committed one final act of retribution in the very last days of French Algeria: on 25 June, members in Oran—who had largely seceded from Susini—blew up the British Petroleum oil depot in the city's port, sending billowing clouds of acrid black smoke across the Mediterranean.

If Mostefaï had accomplished the impossible, it was because of the Provisional Executive's ability to occupy a space of ambiguous authority. Not quite representing the French government and not quite representing the FLN, the Executive's liminality provided a medium through which otherwise determined enemies could negotiate. The OAS was loath to talk to a French state it

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[130] "Le Dr Mostefaï: l'amnistie fera table rase du passé," *Le Monde*, 18 June 1962; Chawki Mostefaï, "Déclaration Mostefaï" (speech, Algiers, 17 June 1962), INA, http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF89031945/declaration-mostefai-video.html (accessed, 1 March 2018).

[131] "L'O.A.S. d'Alger: ordre de suspendre les combats," *Le Monde*, 18 June 1962; Carréras, *L'Accord FLN-OAS*, 226.

considered treasonous, but unable to contact the FLN directly. Similarly, the FLN had no desire to parley with the *pied-noir* ultras it considered fascists, but did not mind if its cutouts in the Executive did. Farès and Mostefaï were far enough removed from the Front's leadership quarrels to act as politically dispensable liaisons, but retained enough gravitas thanks to their important positions within Algeria's interim government to be considered viable intermediaries. And as a multiethnic "indigenous" institution, the Provisional Executive could claim to act symbolically on behalf of "all Algerians." As weak and ineffective as the Executive might have been at maintaining public order through force, its perceived expendability ultimately allowed it to achieve an unlikely peace. With the truce thus secured, the referendum itself could proceed in relative calm.

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A month earlier, the Provisional Executive had begun examining the essential logistics of the referendum: what kind of question would be put to voters, when would the vote take place, and who would be eligible to participate. In a plenary meeting on the afternoon of 9 May, a debate emerged over the number of questions that should be placed on the ballot. Should voters in Algeria be asked one question or two? Tricot believed that a proper interpretation of the Evian Accords provided for two questions: 1) should Algeria become independent? and 2) if yes, should Algeria enter into a policy of cooperation with France as defined by the Evian Accords? This formula, he stated, would "permit everyone to make their opinion known," producing three possible outcomes: the maintenance of a French Algeria, Algerian independence with cooperation, and Algerian independence without cooperation.[132] The Provisional Executive, however, preferred that voters be asked only one question—one that linked independence to the issue of cooperation: "Do you

[132] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

want Algeria to become an independent state cooperating with France under the terms outlined by the declarations of 19 March 1962?" At the insistence of Cheikh Bayoud, delegate for cultural affairs, this question would appear in both French and Arabic on the ballot.[133]

In Farès's opinion, limiting the referendum to one question not only simplified the voting procedure, but also avoided the possibility for a "bitter electoral campaign" during which the Provisional Executive would have to dedicate resources to promoting both a "yes" vote for independence and a "yes" vote for cooperation.[134] A one-question formula also prevented elements hostile to the referendum—be they partisans of French Algeria or non-FLN nationalists—from sabotaging it by strategically voting for the one option that would do the most harm to the Evian Accords: independence without cooperation. Moreover, posing more than one question added to the Executive's logistical challenges. Then, as now, French voting procedure involved placing slips of paper with preprinted responses into a sealed ballot box. Mathematically, Tricot's preference for two questions would necessitate providing each eligible voter with four separate ballots, each printed on different colored paper. This would increase not only the cost of the referendum, but also the chance for miscounted and erroneous votes. An exposé penned by the Executive a few weeks later noted that such an electoral operation had "never been attempted in Algeria…or elsewhere in France."[135] Therefore, for reasons of "political realism," the Provisional Executive unanimously endorsed a one-question referendum.[136] Outmaneuvered, Tricot relented.

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[133] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

[134] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962).

[135] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière extraordinaire du mardi 29 mai 1962 à 18H" (29 May 1962).

[136] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière extraordinaire du mardi 29 mai 1962 à 18H" (29 May 1962).

Although the debate over the number of ballot questions is seemingly arcane, the Provisional Executive's decision had important ramifications for Algeria's future: if Algeria were to become independent, then its future leaders would be bound by the referendum's imprimatur of popular sovereignty to a policy of cooperation with France. Although both French and Algerian policymakers would do much to undermine the content of the Evian Accords in the years to come, the Provisional Executive ensured that the question of cooperation would survive the referendum and become the paradigm that defined Franco-Algerian relations in the pivotal years immediately following independence.

Subsequent deliberations also fixed the date for the referendum for 1 July, which was a Sunday—the day on which French elections are traditionally held.[137] Initial discussions had proposed that the vote take place over the course of three days to allow Algeria's more remote regions ample time to return results. The Executive eventually dismissed this idea, however, on the grounds that more time would require requisitioning more security and created more opportunity for something to go wrong.[138] Lastly, all French nationals of voting age who were residents of Algeria would be eligible to vote. This included Algerian refugees outside of the country, who would be invited to vote at special polling locations in Tunisia and Morocco or by mail.[139] To oversee the integrity of the vote and validate the results, the Provisional Executive formed a mixed Central Control Committee. Kaddour Sator, former French deputy and lawyer in the appellate court of Algiers, chaired the commission supported by three electors: Alexandre

[137] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du lundi 4 juin 1962 à 15H45" (4 June 1962).

[138] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 10 mai à 18H" (10 May 1962); "Séance plénière du jeudi 31 juin 1962 à 15H45" (31 May 1962).

[139] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 10 mai à 18H" (10 May 1962); "Séance plénière extraordinaire du mardi 29 mai 1962 à 18H" (29 May 1962).

Chaulet, Amar Betoumi, El Hadi Mostefaï (no relation to Chawki Mostefaï); and three magistrates: Jean Guyot, Ahmed Henni, and Abdelatif Rahal.[140]

To organize the referendum, the Provisional Executive was allocated 8.5 million New Francs and access to French Algeria's vast propaganda machine.[141] In preparation for the anticipated ceasefire, the French state had drafted a policy directive in February 1962 that divided control of Algeria's public information infrastructure between the High Commissariat and the Provisional Executive. The Executive was permitted to use the colony's broadcasting facilities at *Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française* (RTF), the French-owned *Société Nationale des Entreprises de Presse* (SNEP), and was given editorial control over several propaganda publications including *Actualité d'Algérie*, *El Manahdir*, *Messages d'Algérie*, and *Femmes Nouvelles*.[142] To combat propaganda and fake news circulated by the OAS, the French state also gave the Executive censorship and seizure rights in consultation with the High Commissioner's office.[143] Moreover, the French state provided guidelines for the information campaign intended to structure the transitional period that included themes to emphasize—peace, cooperation, and friendship—as well as themes to avoid: repatriation, the future, and the continued presence of the French army in Algeria following independence.[144]

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[140] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 3 mai 1962 à 15H30" (3 May 1962); "Séance plénière du mercredi 9 mai 1962 à 15H30" (9 May 1962); "Séance plénière du jeudi 10 mai à 18H" (10 May 1962).

[141] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du jeudi 7 juin 1962 à 16H" (7 June 1962).

[142] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/42: "Note sur l'organisation de l'information pendant la période transitoire" (7 February 1962).

[143] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/42: "Note sur l'organisation de l'information pendant la période transitoire" (7 February 1962); AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière du samedi 14 avril 1962 à 16H" (14 April 1962); "Séance plénière extraordinaire du mardi 29 mai 1962 à 18H" (29 May 1962).

[144] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/42: "Note sur l'organisation de l'information pendant la période transitoire" (7 February 1962).

Access to these resources also allowed the Executive to organize the referendum campaign in the run-up to 1 July. Although the referendum was foremost a manifestation of popular will, the transitional authorities delegated voter mobilization to the colony's political parties to give self-determination an appearance of pluralist participation. It also provided a brief opportunity for Algeria's inhabitants to conceive of what a multi-party system might look like in an independent country. The FLN, which the Evian Accords had legalized as a party, naturally did the most to mobilize voters to support independence. But European parties, such as the *Parti Communiste Algérien* (Algerian Communist Party [PCA]) and the *Parti Socialiste Unifié* (Unified Socialist Party [PSU]) not only promoted independence and preached reconciliation, they also outlined platforms for the future. The PCA, for example, presented a program based on land redistribution and "the nationalization the economy's key sectors."[145] Yet, the participation of political parties also created challenges to the Executive's pluralist mission. This became apparent in the minor scandal that surrounded which parties were authorized to assist in the referendum's organization.

To take part in the referendum campaign, political parties needed to register with the Central Control Committee by midnight on 8 June.[146] Ultimately five parties were recognized: the FLN, the PCA, the PSU, the *Comité Blida-Mitidja de Soutien aux Accords d'Évian* (Blida-Mitidja Support Committee for the Evian Accords [CBMSAE]), and the *Mouvement pour la Coopératio*n (Movement for Cooperation [MPC])—a party created by the French state to support General de Gaulle's Algerian policy and to counter the OAS. Other parties, however, were excluded. The Central Control Committee rejected the applications of the Algerian SFIO and a newly

[145] Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix*, 347.

[146] "Arrêté du 2 juin 1962—Constitution de la liste des partis ou groupements admis à participer à la campagne électorale pour la consultation d'autodétermination," *Recueil des Actes Administratifs* (5 June 1962), 921; AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière extraordinaire du samedi 9 juin 1962 à 12H15" (9 June 1962).

reconstituted PPA, now serving as a political front for Messali Hadj's MNA, on the basis that they did not submit their requests in the proper manner.[147] While the SFIO's exclusion appears to have been legitimate based on the requirements for registration, that of the PPA was almost certainly a calculated maneuver by FLN affiliates within the Central Committee and the Provisional Executive to deny the Font's chief nationalist rivals any role in what was to be its biggest propaganda coup: mobilizing millions of Algerian Muslims to vote for independence. Deliberations within the Provisional Executive reveal that this decision not only sparked indignation in the metropole and in Algeria, but also created tension among the delegates.[148] The European and non-FLN members of the Executive suspected that their FLN colleagues had been given orders from on high. When pressed, the FLN delegates even admitted that they would not mind finding a solution to allow the SFIO to participate. But when Vice President Roth asked Abdesselam about the PPA, the FLN delegate for economic affairs stated plainly: "One could say that for the SFIO, it was an oversight, an error. But this is not true for the PPA."[149]

The exclusion of the PPA rightly exposed the Provisional Executive to accusations of acquiescing to the FLN's desire to marginalize its nationalist rival and solidify power in a post-independence Algeria. According to Roger Roth, "great reserves of ingenuity and skill were required to defuse the situation."[150] In the end, the decision not to include Messali Hadj's

[147] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière extraordinaire du samedi 9 juin 1962 à 12H15" (9 June 1962).

[148] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière extraordinaire du samedi 9 juin 1962 à 12H15" (9 June 1962).

[149] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/44 (Papiers Tricot): "Séance plénière extraordinaire du samedi 9 juin 1962 à 12H15" (9 June 1962).

[150] Cited in Kadri, "L'Exécutif Provisoire, les enjeux d'une transition chaotique," 220.

nationalist movement as part of the referendum campaign set the stage for Algeria's single party future under FLN political consolidation.

Despite this last-minute complication, the referendum itself took place in remarkable calm on 1 July 1962. That evening, exit polls overwhelmingly predicted the long-expected result of independence. At 10:15 a.m. on 3 July, the Central Control Committee delivered its final, authenticated tally to Rocher Noir: 5,975,581 to 16,534 in favor of independence.[151] Forty-five minutes later, President Farès received a telegram from President de Gaulle announcing that France "recognizes the independence of Algeria" and that "from this day forth, sovereign authority over the former French departments of Algeria is hereby transferred to the Provisional Executive of the Algerian state."[152] At noon, the members of Algeria's Provisional Executive became the country's first government.

[151] AMAE-N: 21PO/A/43 (Papiers Tricot): "Procès-verbal de la Commission Centrale" (3 July 1962).

[152] Archives Nationales de la France—Pierrefitte (ANF): AG/5/1802: Copy of letter from Charles de Gaulle to Abderrahmane Farès (2 July 1962); Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 134.

Figure 2.9



Farès raises the Algerian flag on 3 July 1962
Source: Etablissement de Communication et de Production Audiovisuelle de la Défense (ECPAD)

Present at the Creation

That same afternoon the race for Algeria's leadership began. At half past 4 o'clock, the plane carrying Ben Khedda and his ministers touched down in Algiers. The exuberant crowd gathered outside Maison Blanche airport was so large that Farès and his retinue had trouble making their way onto the tarmac to greet the GPRA. From the airport, Ben Khedda and Krim Belkacem drove past an almost endless line of cheering citizens to the capital where they established a makeshift headquarters in the recently emptied prefecture building. That evening Ben Khedda went on television to address the nation, stating that "the problem of the hour is the state" and that

the GPRA was the "bearer of national sovereignty."[153] In form and function, the GPRA was moving swiftly to act the part of Algeria's new government and it seemed as if the Provisional Executive's tenure would soon end. What is surprising then, is that Farès and his team remained in power for far longer than expected.

A few days after Ben Khedda's arrival, the Provisional Executive met with the GPRA to coordinate how the two institutions should work together. Toward the end of the meeting, Farès made an unanticipated announcement: although the Evian Accords required the Provisional Executive to govern Algeria until elections for a constituent assembly could be held, Farès proposed to resign and hand over responsibility for the country's administration to the GPRA. Ben Khedda, however, quickly rejected this idea and the meeting adjourned. Farès returned that evening to Rocher Noir with Saad Dahlab who disclosed to his colleague: "We have bigger fish to fry, old boy. You know better than us the interior situation of the country. If we are able, we shall come visit you from time to time."[154]

While this may appear like an odd turn of events, Farès's proposal to dissolve the Provisional Executive, and Ben Khedda's refusal, underscores just how complex and uncertain Algeria's political situation had become by July 1962. Farès's suggestion came from the assumption that with Algeria's independence secured, the Provisional Executive's primary objective had been accomplished and power should be transferred to an institution widely considered to be more authentic and popular than itself. Following the signing of the Evian Accords, external observers expected the GPRA would transform itself into a proper government. After all, several foreign governments had already recognized it as such. And not only had the

[153] Cited in Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 135-136.

[154] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 138.

GPRA negotiated the agreement that outlined Algeria's transition to independence, but its members had been installed as delegates on the Provisional Executive. The stage seemed set for Ben Khedda to become the nation's new leader. Outward appearances, however, were deceptive.

The GPRA's influence had been gradually undermined by the leadership crisis within the FLN—a crisis that the CNRA had failed to resolve during its party congress a month earlier in Tripoli. On the assembly's agenda was a proposal championed by Ben Bella to elect a Political Bureau (*Bureau Politique*) that would take over the FLN in preparation for Algeria's independence, essentially replacing the GPRA. Ben Khedda's clan was naturally opposed to the idea and took offense when a list of proposed members for the Political Bureau excluded anyone of importance from the GPRA.[155] After sustaining numerous attacks by Ben Bella and his allies, the GPRA left the proceedings in a fit of indignation, postponing a vote on the Political Bureau indefinitely. With the FLN's leadership divided and the GPRA's position uncertain, Ben Khedda was more intent on establishing his political power base in Algiers and the Kabylian stronghold of Tizi-Ouzou, taking over the day-to-day operations of the country from the Provisional Executive would only be a distraction.

Moreover, the Executive itself had become something of a political liability for the GPRA. Although initially hoping for its success, Ben Khedda and his ministers became wary of associating themselves too closely with an institution that had been labeled a "neocolonial conception" by Boumediene.[156] Even the pragmatic Dahlab worried that the head of the Executive might "become a new Tshombe."[157] And Ben Bella himself had "reason to feel suspicious" about an institution

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[155] Ottoway, *Algeria: The Politics of a Socialist Revolution*, 18.

[156] Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 226.

[157] Moïse Tshombe (1919-1969) was a Congolese nationalist leader who led a secessionist movement in the mineral-rich province of Katanga following Congo's independence from Belgium in 1960. Favoring continued ties with

which he feared might be encouraged "to remain in power for ever to act the part of arbitrator."[158] No sooner had Mostefaï concluded his truce with the OAS, then he too became ensnared by the FLN's internal divisions. Despite having received implicit approval from Ben Bella and Ben Khedda to proceed, Mostefaï and his FLN colleagues found themselves denounced for having compromised with criminals and assassins.[159] So chagrined was Mostefaï by this harsh disavowal of his actions that only five days before the referendum he proffered his resignation to the Executive in protest.[160] In solidarity, Mohamed Benteftifa, Hamidou Boumediène, and Abderrazak Chentouf also threatened to resign (Abdesselam was away in Tindouf just then). Although Farès and Fouchet managed to convince the FLN delegation to stay on through the referendum, Mostefaï later withdrew from politics for the rest of his life, dismayed by his experiences.

Consequently, the GPRA likely felt uneasy accepting power in so convenient a fashion from the Executive. Nonetheless, its decision was perhaps a strategic error: had the GPRA accepted the Provisional Executive's invitation and proclaimed itself the legitimate caretaker of the country, it may have succeeded in crystalizing its power more effectively, avoiding the armed conflict that broke out later that summer and forestalling the steady marginalization of the GPRA. With the GPRA unwilling to govern Algeria, however, the Provisional Executive remained in control of the new country's administration. After returning to Rocher Noir, Farès noted that the

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Belgium, Tshombe defended Katanga against UN intervention with the help of European mercenaries, many of whom had previously fought in Algeria in the French army. Despite reintegrating Katanga into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tshombe was ousted from politics following General Joseph-Désiré Mobutu's coup d'état in 1965. Ironically, Tschombe died while under house arrest in Algiers after being kidnapped on orders from his political rivals. Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 226.

[158] Robert Merle, *Ahmed Ben Bella*, trans. Camilla Sykes (New York: Walker and Company, 1967) 124, 132.

[159] Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du F.L.N.*, 641.

[160] Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 260.

Provisional Executive's delegates seemed resigned to their fate. They were, in his words, "not out of the woods yet."[161]

The same day that the GPRA arrived from Tunis, the French army opened Algeria's frontiers in recognition of independence and 30,000 men of the ALN's so-called "border armies" began a triumphant march into the country's interior from neighboring Morocco and Tunisia.[162] Renamed the *Armée Nationale Populaire* (People's National Army [ANP]), this external force was loyal foremost to Houari Boumediene's General Staff and, by extension, to Ben Bella. Although well-equipped with Chinese-manufactured Kalashnikovs, the ANP had no combat experience—unlike the battle-hardened ALN units of the interior that for years had borne the brunt of France's counterinsurgency campaign while cutoff from the outside. Consequently, some of the ALN's old *wilaya* commanders resented the ANP. During the war, they had supported the GPRA's efforts and following the ceasefire had established a working relationship with the Provisional Executive and the Mixed Ceasefire Commissions. This was especially true of the ALN officers in *wilayas* II (Constantinois), III (Kabylia), and IV (Algerois). Yet, not all bore a grudge against Boumediene: *wilayas* I (Aurès), V (Oranais), and VI (Sahara) rallied to Ben Bella and welcomed the arrival of the ANP. And within each *wilaya*, local commanders with flexible loyalties sought only to preserve their wartime influence in an independent Algeria.

As the fault lines of Algeria's post-independence political landscaped widened, Ben Bella entered Algeria from Morocco and set up his own headquarters in the western city of Tlemcen on 11 July. From there Ben Bella's "Tlemcen Group" began building its own political coalition in

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[161] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 138.

[162] Charles R. Shrader, *The First Helicopter War: Logistics and Mobility in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999) 152.

opposition to the GPRA's "Tizi-Ouzou Group." In a speech given at Oran the day after, Ben Bella summarized the sentiments of intransigence and political self-importance evident on both sides: "I am for unity, but not at any price."[163] Then on 22 July, in a move intended to solidify Ben Bella's position and further delegitimize the GPRA, the Tlemcen Group unilaterally announced that it was forming the Political Bureau, claiming that the CNRA had in fact voted unanimously for its adoption during its congress in Tripoli.

With the FLN's various political and military components so divided, a violent showdown between the different factions became increasingly likely and elections were postponed. On 25 July, fighting broke out around Constantine between the commander-in-chief of Wilaya II, Colonel Salah Boubnider, and his political commissar, Major Si Larbi. Although evidence suggests that the confrontation emerged from a personal dispute, it took on national importance since Boubnider was opposed to the ANP and the formation of the Political Bureau, while Si Larbi supported them.[164] Further tensions erupted within and between the *wilayas*, between the *wilayas* and the ANP, and among several other self-interested armed parties that steadily deteriorated into a near-civil war that would claim thousands of casualties by the beginning of September 1962.[165]

The Provisional Executive thus found itself "stuck between two fires: the real situation of the country and the political situation."[166] Although these two were intertwined, the "real situation" encompassed problems directly related to the wellbeing of Algerian's new citizenry: unemployment, refugee resettlement, housing, public order, public utilities, infrastructure

[163] Cited in Ottoway, *Algeria: The Politics of a Socialist Revolution*, 19.

[164] Ottoway, *Algeria: The Politics of a Socialist Revolution*, 21.

[165] Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du F.L.N.*, 670.

[166] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 139.

maintenance, public health, social welfare assistance, and the start of the September 1962 school year. With Algeria's larger political situation rapidly deteriorating throughout the summer and with no other institution willing to take responsibility, the Executive struggled as best it could to stabilize the internal workings of the country. Farès recounted how "brave Chentouf," delegate for administrative affairs, labored tirelessly to maintain contact with the country's prefects and deputy prefects so that Rocher Noir could respond to the needs of Algeria's far-flung civil administration.[167] Meanwhile, Charles Koenig, delegate for public works, ensured that public services, transportation, and energy utilities continued to function after independence despite personnel shortages in the public sector precipitated by the mass exodus of *pieds-noirs*. And Hamidou Boumediene, delegate for social affairs, worked "day and night" to ensure that desperately needed supplies of medicine and food reached local authorities.[168]

In policy matters, the Executive made two significant decisions that would have lasting consequences for Franco-Algerian affairs. The first was the decision to undertake negotiations with the French state that formalized the cooperation agreements outlined in general terms by the Evian Accords. Talks concluded at the end of August with the signing of nine agreements in Paris, including: a protocol regulating the status of French civil servants working in Algeria, a protocol regulating financial operations between French and Algerian institutions, a legal protocol, a protocol concerning the future operations of the *Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes* (Common Organization of Saharan Regions [OCRS])—a colonial-era entity that had overseen the economic development of Algeria's Saharan departments, as well as two conventions regulating Franco-Algerian cooperation in the domain of oil and natural gas exploitation, and an accord

[167] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 138.

[168] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 139.

concerning the future application of the colonial-era petroleum code.[169] Up until its last day in power at the end of September, the Executive negotiated and signed protocols with France that addressed the handover of French-owned school buildings to Algerian authorities, technical cooperation with regards to transportation infrastructure, the future ownership of Air Algérie, and the status of French doctors and biologists working in Algerian medical institutions.[170] Even after Ben Bella came to power, these agreements structured subsequent negotiations between the French and Algerian governments, further solidifying a policy of technical and economic cooperation in the months and years to come.

The Provisional Executive's second major policy decision was one that would have important, if unintended, consequences for property rights in the fledgling nation. On 24 August 1962, the Provisional Executive promulgated an ordinance regulating the status of property left vacant by settlers who had fled Algeria (*biens vacants*). Since the springtime, European settlers had steadily left for mainland France, apprehensive of a future in an independent Algeria. The exodus continued throughout the summer as the security situation worsened and by August only 300,000 of nearly one million *pieds-noirs* remained. This massive departure worsened an Algerian economy already affected by seven years of war and more than a century of colonial spoliation, not least because settler-owned farms, factories, and businesses now lay dormant. In response to this situation, local coalitions of Algerian Muslims took matters into their own hands, tending fields, continuing workshop production, and operating local businesses with varying degrees of intent. Some workers, loyal to their old employers and uncertain if they would return, labored out of habit and a lingering sense of duty, while others saw an opportunity to claim valuable property

[169] *Accords passés entre la France et l'Algérie de juillet 1962 au 31 décembre 1963* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1964), 8-43; Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 131.

[170] *Accords passés entre la France et l'Algérie de juillet 1962 au 31 décembre 1963*, 44-58.

and improve their economic lot. Regardless, these organic efforts at what would later be called "self-management" (*autogestion*) by the Algerian government had particular importance to the agricultural sector, which was anticipating the start of Algeria's first harvest since independence in a few months' time. Recognizing that regulation of some kind was desperately needed to organize the management and allocation of abandoned property, the Provisional Executive decided to outline a formal procedure.

The result was "Ordinance No. 62-020 of 24 August 1962 Concerning the Protection and Management of Vacant Property," which sought to forestall any hindrance "to the economic life of the Nation and its local municipalities."[171] The decree gave prefects responsibility for the management of abandoned property in their regions. In theory, it also gave owners notice to resume occupation of their property and businesses within thirty days from the date of its promulgation, after which the property would be officially declared abandoned and a formal requisition by the state undertaken. After that time, establishments of an industrial, commercial, artisanal, financial, or agricultural nature that had ceased activity for more than two months would be inventoried and reopened with the approval of the Executive's delegate for economic affairs. A managing director responsible for running the business would then be nominated and placed under the control of the departmental administration. More controversially, this decree also applied to residential property. In this instance, the intent was to place vacated homes under the control of local authorities to protect them from squatters and parcel out property in response to Algeria's mounting housing crisis. Interestingly, it appears that the ordinance was in part drafted in consultation with officials from the French embassy, who hoped to mitigate some of its effects. Some of its details—such as

[171] "Ordonnance n° 62-020 du 24 août 1962 concernant la protection et la gestion des biens vacants," *Journal Officiel de l'État Algérien* (7 September 1962), 138-140.

the explicit mentioning of a 30-day waiting period—were in fact suggested by the French embassy's economic and financial mission, which had worked with Bélaïd Abdesselam, delegate for economic affairs, to craft the decree.[172]

In reality, the general instability that plagued Algeria in the late summer made the *biens vacants* ordinance incredibly difficult to enact as intended. Although decreed at the end of August, the ordinance was publicly announced for the first time on 7 September 1962—two weeks after it had been signed into law. Reports of the ordinance reached France even later, giving property owners on the other side of the Mediterranean no time to submit claims. Quickly, the ordinance became the dubious legal measure by which local administrators, under pressure from ANP officers, attempted to seize property from settlers, many of whom still lived in Algeria. Apocryphal tales abound of *pieds-noirs* leaving for an afternoon or a weekend only to return home to find their locks changed and an Algerian Muslim family installed by order of the local ANP commander. Appeals to prefects in these cases were often futile. By November 1962, the Consulate General of France in Algiers recorded approximately 3,200 cases of "illegal occupation" of settler residences in the region around Algiers alone.[173] Following Ben Bella's assumption of power in late September, the *biens vacants* ordinance—contrary to its original intentions—was used as the legal basis for several other measures passed in October 1962 that further confiscated property belonging to *pieds-noirs* or Algerians with suspect allegiances who had left the country.[174]

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[172] Sciences-Po, Archives d'Histoire Contemporaine, Fonds Jean-Marcel Jeanneney (JMJ) 34: "Gestion par les autorités algériennes des enterprises arretées et des biens vacants" (10 September 1962).

[173] Sciences-Po: JMJ 33: "Biens vacants et réforme agraire—Annex I" (23 November 1962).

[174] These are the "Décret du 22 octobre 1962" and the "Décret du 23 octobre 1962." Sciences-Po: JMJ 33: "Biens vacants et réforme agraire—Annex I" (23 November 1962).

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Despite the Executive's efforts, its effectiveness at managing Algeria's "real situation" was ultimately limited by the "political situation." By the end of July, three centers of competing power authority existed in Algeria: the Provisional Executive in Rocher Noir, the GPRA in Tizi-Ouzou, and the *Bureau Politique* in Tlemcen. President Farès, aware that the Executive's mandate had always been tenuous, now wondered: "whom to obey? A moribund GPRA or a disputed Political Bureau?"[175] Farès was not necessarily asking to whom should the Provisional Executive capitulate its administrative agency—it was clear that neither Ben Khedda nor Ben Bella cared about running the country in the short-term—rather, Farès was asking which political group the Executive should orient itself toward so that it did not end up on the wrong side of the coming political showdown. Following the GPRA's rebuff, the answer increasingly became Ben Bella's newly formed Political Bureau, backed by Boumediene's steadily advancing ANP.

At the behest of Mohamed Khemesti, Farès's chief of staff and a confidant of Ben Bella, the president set off for Tlemcen by helicopter from Rocher Noir on 20 July. There, Farès met with Ben Bella, Ferhat Abbas, Mohamed Khider, Ahmed Francis, and other members of the Tlemcen Group. Aware that the Provisional Executive had been much excoriated by the Ben Bella's faction, Farès agreed to arrange the Political Bureau's entry into Algiers in exchange for a public declaration from the Tlemcen Group recognizing the legitimacy of the Provisional Executive. Like Ben Khedda, Ben Bella was still largely unconcerned by the Provisional Executive and granted Farès the recognition he desired in a statement made to *Le Monde* on 24 July, declaring: "We lend our trust and support to Mr. Farès and his collaborators, particularly to the members of the Executive of European origin, who have faced every obstacle maintaining faith in the new Algeria.

[175] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 139.

Let them be convinced that we will not forget them."[176] With money provided by the Provisional Executive, Ben Bella made his triumphant entry into Algiers the next day, forcing Ben Khedda's hand and precipitating his resignation from the GPRA shortly thereafter.

The two factions came to a tenuous agreement on 2 August that recognized the existence of the Political Bureau, set a timeline for constituent elections, and scheduled a meeting of the CNRA one week after the elections had been held. Yet this political ceasefire did not quell the armed conflict between the *wilaya* commands and the ANP, which continued throughout the countryside. Frustrated and dismayed at the bloodletting between nationalists, Algerian civilians took matters into their own hands, organizing public demonstrations on 1 September and demanding an end to the fighting with the slogan "*saba'a snin, barakat!*" ("seven years [of war], enough!"). A week later, on 9 September, Boumediene's ANP reached Algiers, effectively ending the conflict.

It was at this moment that Ben Bella recognized the Provisional Executive's utility, for it alone had cultivated the local contacts in the departmental administrations necessary to complete the Political Bureau's ascendency in Algeria. Throughout most of September, Ben Bella began attending meetings of the Provisional Executive. Working with Farès, Abdesselam, Chentouf, and Manoni, the Executive organized meetings with mayors, prefects, and deputy prefects around Algiers, Oran, and Constantine to reestablish authority over municipalities and restore order.[177] All that remained now was to form Algeria's first popularly elected government.

Although the Provisional Executive had been tasked by the Evian Accords to hold elections for a National Constituent Assembly no more than three weeks after independence, the uncertainty

[176] Cited in Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 140.

[177] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 142.

and instability that plagued Algeria during July and August repeatedly forced the Executive to postpone their organization until late September. Once installed in power, however, the Political Bureau, under Ben Bella's direction, drafted a single list of candidates which excluded many of the Tlemcen Group's opponents, especially those associated with the now dissolved GPRA. Algerians went to the polls on 20 September 1962 and elected 196 deputies to the country's first legislature.[178] Ferhat Abbas became the assembly's first speaker and Ahmed Ben Bella became its first prime minister (*président du conseil*). Of the newly elected representatives, 16 were Algerians of European origin.[179] Several members of the Provisional Executive were also elected to the National Assembly, including: Roger Roth, Jean Manoni, Charles Koenig, Mohamed Khemisti, and Abderrahmane Farès himself. A week later, during the assembly's first meeting on 27 September, President Farès took the speaker's podium and made a few brief remarks before handing Abbas a letter transferring the powers of the Provisional Executive to the newly elected government "in accordance with Chapter V of the Evian Accords."[180] As he descended, Abbas proclaimed the creation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

[178] Assemblé Populaire Nationale de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire, "Liste des députés de l'Assemblée Constituante 1962," http://www.apn.dz/fr/les-membres/ancienne-legislature/liste-des-deputes-de-l-assemblee-constituante-1962/140-les-membres-de-l-apn-ancienne-legislature/264-liste-des-deputes-de-l-assemblee-constituante-1963 (accessed 19 March 2018).

[179] Assemblé Populaire Nationale de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire, "Liste des députés de l'Assemblée Constituante 1962," http://www.apn.dz/fr/les-membres/ancienne-legislature/liste-des-deputes-de-l-assemblee-constituante-1962/140-les-membres-de-l-apn-ancienne-legislature/264-liste-des-deputes-de-l-assemblee-constituante-1963 (accessed 19 March 2018).

[180] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 148.

Conclusion:
The Ephemeral Republic of Rocher Noir

Algeria's path to independence passed through Rocher Noir. Although short-lived and little remembered, the Provisional Executive provided the administrative foundation upon which Algerian sovereignty was built. Handed a thankless task and facing impossible odds, the Executive succeeded in running the affairs of the country while preparing it for nationhood. After independence, it not only provided crucial administrative stability while the FLN's competing factions fought amongst themselves, but also prevented a true power vacuum from forming in the wake of French withdrawal. Far from a "legal fiction," the Provisional Executive enacted decrees and made decisions that had lasting implications for Algeria. Indeed, three of the policies most often associated with Algeria's post-independence governments had their point of origin in the Provisional Executive: continued cooperation with France, the algerianization of the civil service, and the creation of a legal instrument for far-reaching property reform. All would become important hallmarks of both the Ben Bella administration and the early Boumediene regime. Moreover, many of the Provisional Executive's staff would go on to positions of prominence in both governments, providing the nascent Algerian state with the bureaucratic experience and continuity necessary to command Algeria's lingering colonial administrative structures.

As an interim government, the "ephemeral republic" that ruled from Rocher Noir existed between polities at the hinge of history.[181] Although suspected of being a "neocolonial" project, the Provisional Executive became partially coopted by Algerian nationalism, and did much to

[181] The phrase *république éphémère* has been used recently by the Algerian journalist Mustapha Benfodil in summarizing the work that Aïssa Kadri has undertaken on the Provisional Executive. Although the Executive was never a republic in the functional sense of the term, the possibilities that such a description evokes are compelling. See: Mustapha Benfodil, "La république éphémère de Rocher Noir," *El Watan*, 19 March 2018, http://www.elwatan.com/hebdo/histoire/la-republique-ephemere-de-rocher-noir-19-03-2018-364633_161.php (accessed 19 March 2018).

further and resist both. The Provisional Executive's impermanence may have limited its "real" authority, but it also gave it the ability to assume a liminal political and social space useful not only for its own ends, but to its varied interlocutors as well. The Provisional Executive could be different things to different actors at different moments. This flexibility allowed the Provisional Executive to interact with the various factions that could influence the path of Algeria's decolonization: the French state, the GPRA, the Political Bureau, the OAS, the local administration, the *wilaya* commanders, rogue militia leaders, business interests, foreign governments, and not least of all the Algerian Muslim and European settler populations. More importantly, the Provisional Executive's liminality provided a space that cultivated a culture of tenuous cooperation, conciliation, and compromise. Like a junction box, the Executive existed between Algeria's competing interests, providing a space through which they could maintain open channels of communication with one another. And its perceived weakness, expendability, and seeming unimportance to the bigger picture of Algeria's future allowed the Executive's members to operate on their own terms, especially after the referendum. Indeed, the fact then that the Provisional Executive acted as independently as it did, for as long as it did, demonstrates the surprising agency that it could muster as a governing institution. After all, the Provisional Executive's decision to back the Political Bureau ultimately secured Ben Bella's political ascendency.

In many ways, the Provisional Executive's mission was complemented and facilitated by the physical space of Rocher Noir itself. Half-built and under siege, the atmosphere within the administrative compound helped generate solidarity between onetime adversaries who were initially forced into a partnership of convenience. Such a dynamic may not have been possible had Algeria's transitional authorities been in Algiers. There its members would have been not only

more susceptible to the partisan impulses of the capital's European and Algerian Muslim communities, but also the targets of their anxiety and rage. Yet, in the far-removed confines of Rocher Noir, unlikely partnerships could form and deals could be brokered away from public scrutiny. The architectural historian Samia Henni has claimed that Rocher Noir was "an inherent part of France's colonial violence in Algeria."[182] Ironically, it became the site that oversaw the dismantling of the very colonial project that France had sustained by violence for more than a century. Today, the residents of Boumerdès inhabit the modernist housing blocks constructed for Rocher Noir's administrators, their reinforced concrete design having survived an earthquake that devastated much of the city in 2003. And the building that once housed the offices of the Provisional Executive itself is used by the University of Boumerdès, having recently been classified by the Algerian government as a historical monument.[183]

Above all, however, the Provisional Executive functioned on the cooperation and goodwill of its individual members, men who represented very different segments of the colonial political *milieu*: the modest, but well-educated revolutionary élite; the nationalist, but moderate indigenous notables; and the privileged, but progressive European settlers. Despite their differing experiences within Algeria's colonial situation, they shared a belief not only in mediation and bridge-building, but also in Algerian independence. And while the delegates sought to defend and further their group's discrete interests, they nonetheless believed that the Provisional Executive could construct the foundations of a future Algeria. Occasionally, this required acting in opposition to certain interests, whether negotiating a truce with the OAS or crafting property regulations that would

[182] Henni, *Architecture of Counterrevolution*, 286.

[183] Mustapha Benfodil, "La république éphémère de Rocher Noir," *El Watan*, 19 March 2018, http://www.elwatan.com/hebdo/histoire/la-republique-ephemere-de-rocher-noir-19-03-2018-364633_161.php (accessed 19 March 2018).

adversely affect settlers. In both the areas of public administration and public order, the Provisional Executive's delegates worked best when they worked behind the scenes—leveraging their networks, negotiating agreements, and arbitrating disputes. And they did so under incredibly difficult circumstances: civil unrest, death threats, limited resources, and relative isolation from many of Algeria's urban centers. Yet, the work of the Provisional Executive epitomized the culture of decolonization that emerged during Algeria's transition to independence.

Much like the institution they served, the men who once ran Algeria found themselves quickly sidelined by Ben Bella's consolidation of power. In early July 1964—nearly two years to the day Abderrahmane Farès announced his country's independence—the former president was detained coming out of the National Assembly and placed under house arrest in a remote corner of the Sahara's "Triangle of Fire."[184] Kept incommunicado for a year, he was released in June 1965 following Boumediene's overthrow of Ben Bella, whereupon Farès retired from political life for good.[185] Roger Roth served as vice president of the National Constituent Assembly and briefly replaced Ferhat Abbas as speaker after the latter's fall from grace and arrest. To escape the fate of his colleagues, Roth left Algeria for France in 1964 and spent the rest of his days as a respected notary in Essonne.[186] Chawki Mostefaï eventually made good on his threat to resign from the Executive, leaving on 3 August 1962 to return to an unassuming life as an optometrist.[187] Hamidou Boumediène, left an increasingly politicized Algeria for Morocco to practice radiology, returning

[184] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 151.

[185] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 156.

[186] "Roger Roth, notaire et député en Algérie," *Annuaire Officiel du Notariat*, http://www.annuairenotariat.fr/roger-roth-notaire-et-depute-en-algerie/ (accessed 19 March 2018).

[187] Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 139.

to Algeria some years after to become the first dean of Oran's Faculté de Medicine.[188] As of this writing, Bélaïd Abdesselam remains the only member of the Executive still living. He was also the only one who truly succeeded at navigating Algeria's fraught post-independence political landscape, serving as Minister of Industry under Colonel Boumediene and eventually becoming the country's head of government in 1992—right as Algeria once more teetered on the brink of civil strife and bloodshed.

For all the violence and volatility that colonial disentanglement precipitated in the spring and summer of 1962, the infrastructure of state within Algeria continued to operate—if only just. The banks remained open, the lights stayed on, social aid was distributed, and the trains continued to run. Algeria at the dawn of independence would face many challenges as its new administrators confronted the economic, social, and cultural legacies of French colonialism, but by understanding how the machinery of the imperial *ancien régime* functioned and by coopting it at a pivotal moment, the Provisional Executive ensured that the new nation, for all it had suffered, was poised to manage the trials of its newfound sovereignty. The fleeting republic of Rocher Noir, however, would not have succeeded at all if the imperatives of decolonization did not also foster cooperation among unlikely interlocutors away from the colony's centers of power. Moving from the corridors of the Provisional Executive to the Algerian countryside, the next chapter examines how a culture of decolonization emerged on the ground between old enemies in another overlooked institution of transition: the Mixed Ceasefire Commissions.

[188] M'hamed Bey Omar, "Professeur Hamidou Mohamed Boumediene, premier doyen de la Faculté de Médecine d'Oran-Algérie est décédé," *LinkedIn*, 5 January 2017, https://fr.linkedin.com/pulse/professeur-hamidou-mohamed-boumediene-premier-doyen-de-bey-omar (accessed 19 March 2018).

Chapter Three

Yesterday's Enemies:
Decolonization and the Role of the Mixed Ceasefire Commissions

What good is it to proclaim a ceasefire if, when the fighting stops in the mountains, civil war breaks out in the cities?

Robert Buron, *Carnets Politiques de la Guerre d'Algérie* (1965)[1]

Introduction:
The Dangers of Peace

Mist greeted the third full day of peace in Algeria. In the forest of Tigounatine a light drizzle fell on Lieutenant Rachid Adjaoud, dampening his surplus French army fatigues, as he followed the narrow line of his unit through thickets of cedar and Aleppo pine down from the foothills of the Djurdjura. Since nearly the beginning of the war the crags of Kabylia had seen the lion's share of hard fighting, but in the last seventy-two hours calm had descended on the province along with a dense fog. Four days earlier, Adjaoud's unit had spent the evening of 18 March huddled around the radio post, dialing in stations across the Mediterranean for reports of the peace agreement that had been reached over a thousand kilometers away on the shores of Lake Geneva between the French government and representatives of the FLN. Broadcasts from Tunis, Cairo, Radio Tangiers, Monte-Carlo, and Europe 1 all carried the same news: a ceasefire would begin the next day at noon. All units were to remain in their positions until further orders. At 11:45 am on 19 March, Adjaoud listened as the last bombs fell from two French-piloted North American T-28s. Then silence. The war was over. Now, as his unit moved down through the forest towards the

[1] Robert Buron, *Carnets politiques de la Guerre d'Algérie par un signataire des Accords d'Evian* (Paris: Plon, 1965), 251.

village of Chorfa, the sharp crack of automatic gunfire cut through the mist. One of their men, the unit's elderly cook, was mortally wounded—the first victim of the ceasefire.[2]

But the shots had not been fired by from the barrel of a hostile gun. Rather, they had come from a friendly unit under the command of Captain Si Amara.[3] Seeing only the outlines of French uniforms through the haze, Captain Amara had ordered his men to open fire. But why? The ceasefire had already been in effect for days. Perhaps Captain Amara had acted preemptively against what he assumed was a rogue French unit patrolling in contravention of the ceasefire to cause trouble. Perhaps he saw an opportunity for an ambush and some last-minute score-settling with an old enemy in a remote corner of Kabylia. Or perhaps, after more than seven years of war, the order had come instinctively. No matter the reason, Captain Amara's actions might very well have imperiled the fragile peace that had just been concluded only days earlier had Rachid Adjaoud's unit not been fellow fighters in the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (ALN). This incident reveals much about the ambiguities and the dangers of the ceasefire that was meant to maintain peace between the French military and the ALN until a vote on Algerian self-determination could take place later that summer. But above all else, it shows that it is one thing to announce an end to hostilities, but quite another to enforce it.

It is worth remembering that independence for Algeria was not a foregone conclusion. As we have seen, between the ink drying on page ninety-three of the Evian Accords and the last ballot cast in the referendum on self-determination there we four long, anxious, uncertain months; four months marked by violence and desperation that threatened the tentative peace. In the spring of 1962, there was a very real chance that the ceasefire would not hold and that Algeria would plunge

[2] Rachid Adjaoud, *19 Mars 1962: Les commissions de cessez-le-feu* (2008), 2.

[3] Adjaoud, *19 Mars 1962*, 2.

even further into the bloody chasm that had been opened by the OAS and widened by the FLN's retaliations.

To ensure that both sides would respect the ceasefire during the politically fraught transition to Algerian independence, the Evian Accords included articles that established the mixed ceasefire commissions (*commissions mixtes de cessez-le-feu*). Comprising officers from the French army and the ALN—men who only weeks ago had been fighting one another—the commissions were meant to provide an open channel of communication between former belligerents who throughout Algeria remained positioned only a few kilometers from one another, well-armed and extremely wary. Between April and July 1962, these commissions brought together the enemies of yesterday in weekly meetings to resolve incidents that threatened the precarious truce in Algeria and to investigate sensitive, but essential questions such as the release of prisoners, the exchange of materiel, and the responsibility for armed provocations, kidnappings, and disappearances. Using the original minutes of commission meetings and interviews with Algerian commission members, this chapter examines the daily functioning of the mixed ceasefire commissions and analyzes how they succeeded, or failed, to navigate the delicate process of decolonization's endgame *sur le terrain*.

The history of the mixed ceasefire commissions is little-known, in part because the spring of 1962 was anything but peaceful. The historians who do mention the mixed ceasefire commissions do so in passing and with derision. At best, the commissions are considered to be a well-intended institution overtaken by events.[4] At worst, they are considered to be an embarrassing failure along with the other institutions of the transitional authority: the Provisional Executive and

[4] Gilbert Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du F.L.N., 1954-1962* (Paris: Fayard, 2002).

the Local Forces.[5] The documents, however, reveal a different story: one of rare cooperation during a moment when little collaboration seemed possible. It is a story, however, that is contingent on an analysis of its principal actors and the circumstances in which they found themselves. The success, or failure, of these commissions depended almost entirely on individual personalities, education, abilities to communicate, acts of good faith, and a willingness to trust the other side. Where the commissions succeeded, these traits were well represented, even if moments of tension were well recorded. Where the commissions failed, it was often because one side or the other did not believe they could accomplish anything of value, did not perceive their interlocutors to be viable partners, or still harbored distrust of the other side. The functioning of the mixed ceasefire commissions was also dependent on where the commissions were located. Regional demographics, the experiences that different provinces had during the war, and the local command structures of the French army and the ALN all affected how well the mixed ceasefire commissions operated.

A detailed examination of the inner-workings of these commissions will reveal that far from failing, they not only forestalled a resumption of open hostilities, but also paved the way for continued Franco-Algerian military cooperation after independence. The story of the mixed ceasefire commissions represents a rare glimpse into how decolonization was institutionalized at the most local level and presents a social history of the individuals on either side of a conflict that spared few from the horrors of guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency. Tired, nervous, war-weary men from opposing sides of a seven-year conflict and hailing from different social and cultural backgrounds were forced to undertake the grueling task of keeping the peace in a society tearing itself apart and investigate the near-daily litany of incidents that marked the final weeks of French Algeria: a kidnapped settler, a murdered Muslim notable, an exchange of prisoners, an angry

[5] Guy Pervillé, *1962: la paix en Algérie* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992); Jean Monneret, *La phase finale de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000).

crowd, a stolen car, an anonymous shot fired in the night. Sometimes they did fail spectacularly, while in other cases their successes seemed insignificant compared to the cataclysm of French colonialism's *Götterdämmerung* unfolding in the streets of Oran, along the quaysides of Algiers, and amid the outlying farms and villages of the *bled*. Much of the history surrounding the final months of France's presence in Algeria underscores this chaos, but the pages that follow seek to lend nuance the existing historiography by excavating a parallel history of precarious cooperation between old enemies who tried, against all odds, to maintain a fragile peace and ensure Algeria's transition to independence.

Managing the Ceasefire

The very first section of the Evian Accords addressed the implementation of the ceasefire and the means by which it would be maintained.[6] The ceasefire would begin at noon on 19 March 1962 and prohibited any further armed provocation. The ceasefire agreement also stipulated that units of the ALN were to remain positioned in their current locations. Members of the ALN could travel outside of their designated positions, but only in civilian dress and unarmed. As Algeria remained under French sovereignty until the results of the referendum were announced, the French army continued to enjoy freedom of movement. It was understood, however, that French military commanders would refrain from patrolling areas in which ALN units were stationed. The French army would also remain stationed along Algeria's eastern and western borders where, during the war, French military engineers had planted rows of anti-personnel landmines and erected electrified fences hundreds of miles long to prevent FLN reinforcements from crossing over from

[6] See Annex I for text of the Evian ceasefire agreement.

their bases in neighboring Morocco and Tunisia (the famed Challe and Morice Lines). At the start of the ceasefire French forces significantly outnumbered those of the ALN. By March 1962, the French military fielded an army of approximately 400,000 troops comprising French recruits and local Algerian auxiliaries, known colloquially as the *harki*.[7] The ALN, by contrast, counted slightly more than 14,000 fighters in Algeria itself.[8] Externally, however, a large and well-equipped FLN army commanded by Colonel Houari Boumediene waited on either side of the frontier.

To enforce the ceasefire, Articles 6 through 10 of the Evian Accords provided for the establishment of the mixed ceasefire commissions. A central commission would be located at Rocher Noir and would operate under the purview of the Provisional Executive which, in theory, was responsible for maintaining order during the transitional period.[9] Local commissions would be established elsewhere throughout Algeria and would report directly to the central commission. Commissions would have a minimum of two representatives for each delegation, headed by officers, and would be tasked jointly with investigating incidents that threatened the ceasefire and proposing solutions to them. They would have their work cut out for them.

The possibility that open hostilities could resume between the French army and the ALN was very real.[10] Throughout Algeria the situation on the ground remained volatile. Even Charles

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[7] Charles R. Shrader, *The First Helicopter War: Logistics and Mobility in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 41. The term *harki* comes from the Arabic *haraka* (حركة) meaning "movement," loosely interpreted as a movement of men or a "war party."

[8] Shrader, *The First Helicopter War*, 152.

[9] Located 45 kilometers to the east of Algiers, Rocher Noir (modern-day Boumerdès) served as the administrative seat of the transitional authorities: the Provisional Executive and the office of the High Commissioner of the Republic in Algeria. See Chapter 2 for more information about the Provisional Executive and Rocher Noir.

[10] Service Historique de la Défense (SHD): 1 H 1785 (D1), "Commissions Mixtes" (4 May 1962).

de Gaulle himself noted during a cabinet meeting that spring that "the application of the Agreements will be capricious."[11] Would local units on both sides take the ceasefire seriously?

The main source of instability came from the OAS. General Raoul Salan, the organization's leader, had anticipated that the "irreversible" would soon come.[12] Now that it had, he ordered a wave of terror aimed specifically at destroying the ceasefire. The plan was to provoke an equally bloody response from the FLN that would oblige the French military to intervene and, it was hoped, "hammer the pro-FLN Muslims."[13] As car bombs and drive-by shootings terrorized the Muslim population of Algeria's urban centers, the FLN retaliated in a more clandestine manner by kidnapping scores of *pieds-noirs* that it claimed were known OAS sympathizers. The case of disappeared persons became one of most contentious issues handled by the mixed ceasefire commissions. Moreover, there was the fear that the OAS might once again attract the support of the French military in Algeria. While the French high command had recalled those officers who had taken part in the attempted coup d'état of April 1961, there were no assurances that other commanders would not rally to the cause of *Algérie Française* and attempt an eleventh-hour defection to the OAS that would further destabilize the situation.[14]

The interior leadership of the FLN was also fractious. A long simmering rift between the FLN's diplomatic wing, the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) and the more doctrinaire General Staff of the ALN widened in the wake of Evian. To the hardliners, the

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[11] Cited in Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 523.

[12] "Le plan de l'O.A.S. pour saboter les accords. Salan: J'écarte a priori toute idée défensive au profit d'une offensive généralisée," *Le Monde*, 20 March 1962.

[13] "Le plan de l'O.A.S. pour saboter les accords," *Le Monde*, 20 March 1962.

[14] "Le plan de l'O.A.S. pour saboter les accords," *Le Monde*, 20 March 1962.

Evian Accords smacked of neocolonial compromise.[15] There was the concern that local commanders who had been fighting in the *maquis* for years would simply refuse to put down their weapons now that they were so close to victory. Furthermore, the announcement of the ceasefire compelled many of the Algerian Muslims serving with the French army to desert and join the ALN—lest they end up on the wrong side at war's end. Hoping to prove their mettle as last-minute guerrilla fighters, these defectors often acted beyond the control of local ALN officers, who referred to them as *les marsiens*—a play on words meant to deride the Johnny-come-latelies who became devotees of the FLN in the latter part of March ("*mars*" in French) and, as such, were treated as extraterrestrials of a kind ("Martians"). These defections would also become a persistent point of negotiating for the mixed ceasefire commissions.

In terms of organization, the ALN had a competent and unified command structure, but there were significant differences among the regional commands. After the Soummam Conference in 1956, the FLN divided Algeria into six political-military regions known as *wilaya* (see Figure 1). The *wilaya* system created a hierarchy fashioned after Maoist and Việt Minh models that subdivided regions down to the most local level and relied on joint planning by military officers and political commissars. But the completion of the French border fences severed contact between the external elements of the ALN leadership and those inside Algeria. As a result, *wilaya* commanders often functioned with a great deal of autonomy in the final years of the war and became competing centers of power once the war ended. The willingness to abide by the rules of the ceasefire was thus dependent on the temperament of local officers. Re-establishing contact with these commanders would be one of the first priorities of the central commission in Rocher Noir.

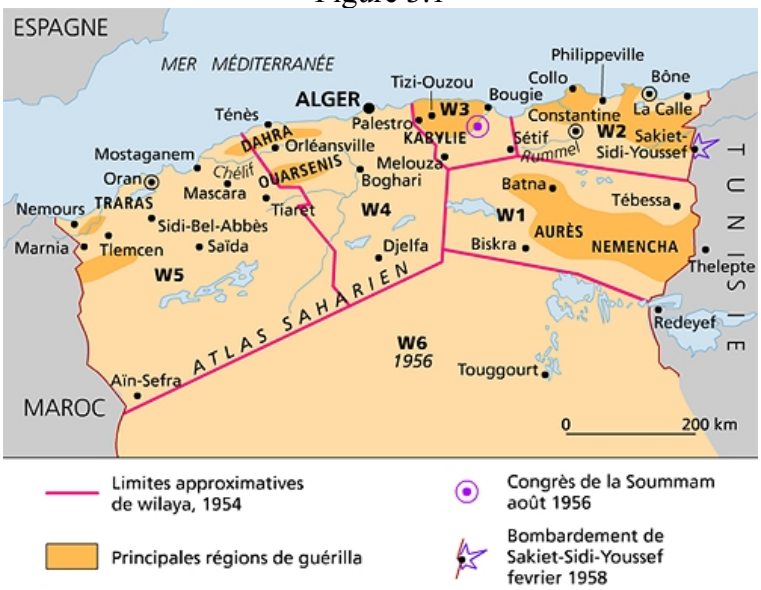
[15] Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du F.L.N.*, 638.

Lastly, there existed the simple reality that men under stress were prone to act rashly. Like Captain Amara, officers and soldiers on both sides had itchy trigger fingers, especially now that the formal fighting was over, yet no one quite knew what to expect next. Given the uncertain atmosphere of the transitional period, the unrestrained rampage of the OAS, and the emerging factionalism of the FLN, the right combination of unfortunate incidents might very well provide the kindling necessary to reignite tensions and push French and FLN leadership past the point of no return. Indeed, in anticipation of just such a scenario, French military planners secretly drafted a series of contingency plans in May 1962 to remobilize French troops stationed in Algeria. One operation, known as the Carrousel Plan, imagined the deployment of troops and air support across the greater Constantine region in north-eastern Algeria. French units were to control the principal arteries of communication, regroup and protect *pieds-noirs* and Algerian Muslim allies, and secure the main coastal cities of Bône (modern-day Annaba) and Bougie (modern-day Béjaïa) from the "enemy"—the ALN.[16] The study, prepared by Brigadier General Robert Frat of the 14th Infantry Division, was to be kept secret from all "civil authorities."[17] The existence of such a plan underscores just how fragile the ceasefire was in the imagination of certain French commanders. No one was taking any chances.

[16] SHD: 1 H 3605, "Mesures à prendre lors de l'application du cessez-le-feu et en cas de rupture de celui-ci par l'Armée de Libération Nationale" (May 1962).

[17] SHD: 1 H 3605, "Mesures à prendre lors de l'application du cessez-le-feu et en cas de rupture de celui-ci par l'Armée de Libération Nationale" (May 1962).

Figure 3.1



Map of FLN Wilayas
Source: Archives Larousse, "La Guerre d'Algérie (1954-1962)"

The mixed ceasefire commissions, however, were initially conceived of as a means to keep peace during the transition period, not a means to keep order. In theory, that responsibility fell to a newly formed armed force known as the Local Force Units (*Unités de Force Locale* [UFL]). French and Algerian negotiators at Evian agreed that a transitional force would be necessary in the wake of the ceasefire to maintain order in Algeria and ensure that the referendum on self-determination could be carried out securely. Numbering around 40,000 troops, the UFL were composed of a minority of French soldiers pulled from the regular French army and a majority of Algerian Muslim recruits, some of whom had also served with the French. Answering to the Provisional Executive, the multiethnic Local Force was intended to be the "Algerian army of tomorrow."[18] Unfortunately, the UFL had little success. French recruits despised the idea of being

[18] Soraya Laribi, "La force locale après les accords d'Evian (mars-juillet 1962)," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 3, no. 259 (2015): 80.

commanded by Algerian junior officers and many suspected that their new comrades-in-arms were secretly members of the FLN.[19] Morale among French soldiers was dismal and many of the Algerian soldiers defected to the ALN like their *harki* counterparts. Overtaken by the deteriorating situation on the ground, the Local Force proved ineffective. With the UFL rendered redundant during the transitional period, the mixed ceasefire commissions remained one of the only viable institutions capable of maintaining order since it allowed for direct communication between the two groups that still monopolized military power on the ground: the French army and the ALN.

As an institution of conflict resolution, the mixed ceasefire commissions in Algeria were rather unprecedented and it is unclear from where the inspiration came. While references to "*commissions mixtes*" exist elsewhere in the archival record of French Algeria, these tend to describe joint administrative committees comprising elements of the French and Algerian Muslim communities. The nearest approximation was the Mixed Armistice Commission (MAC) established by the United Nations to help maintain the various ceasefire agreements enacted after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Created by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1949, the Mixed Armistice Commissions monitored the demarcation lines set by the General Armistice Agreements, which ended hostilities between the newly formed State of Israel and neighboring Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.[20] A Mixed Armistice Commission was formed between Israel and each of the Arab nations and comprised equal representatives from the participating factions, with a chairman selected from the ranks of the international military observers assigned to UNTSO from Belgium, France, and the United

[19] Laribi, "La force locale après les accords d'Evian (mars-juillet 1962)," 81-82.

[20] Commander E.H. Hutchison (USNR), *Violent Truce: A Military Observer Looks at the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1951-1955* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1956), 6.

States (additional countries would later participate, such as Canada, Denmark, and Sweden).[21] Considered to be neutral parties, the military observers' responsibilities included investigating alleged violations of the ceasefire, supervising the execution of the armistice agreements, and reporting information to UNTSO headquarters in Jerusalem. The UNTSO hoped that the commissions would reduce border tensions by providing a forum in which belligerents could liaise with one another through an independent intermediary, but the Mixed Armistice Commissions had little real authority to enforce the ceasefire agreements and commission participants stonewalled investigations into cross-border incidents, such as raids and reprisals. In particular, Israeli authorities accused UN military observers of being overly intrusive and suspected them of pro-Palestinian sentiments.[22] By the mid-1950s, most of the Mixed Armistice Commissions had stopped meeting, although the larger peacekeeping mission of the UNTSO continues to this day.

Unlike the Mixed Armistice Commissions, the mixed ceasefire commissions in Algeria covered a vast amount of territory and were notable for the fact that no external presence was involved to observe the proceedings. Each of the former belligerents had to hold the other to account. This was easier said than done.

Setting up the Mixed Ceasefire Commissions

On the evening of 19 April 1962, the temperamental weather of the Djurdjura foothills stranded Lieutenant Yvan de Lignières in the remote village of Aït Bouhini.[23] The young officer had come to Kabylia from Rocher Noir in the company of two superior officers from the central

[21] Hutchison, *Violent Truce*, 6.

[22] Hutchison, *Violent Truce*, 79-80.

[23] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Fiche sur la mise en place des Commissions locales en Wilaya 3" (27 April 1962).

ceasefire commission: Major Mohamed Allahoum, head of the ALN central delegation, and Captain Radah Rahal, one of Major Allahoum's adjutants.[24] They had arrived earlier that day to liaise with local ALN officers in Wilaya III and begin establishing the regional mixed commissions. Now, the inclement weather had grounded the helicopter the central commission members had traveled in, and Lieutenant de Lignières was forced to spend the night among his newfound ALN colleagues.[25] Along with his two Algerian companions, he was invited to the nearby home where their earlier meeting had taken place. While that meeting had gone well there was still a hint of apprehension as the men, who had so recently found themselves on opposite sides of a war, sat down to dinner together. Suddenly, an ALN lieutenant about the same age as de Lignières motioned to a nearby shelf on which rested a copy of the book *La Grotte*. Published only the year before, it was a novel about the war in Algeria written by Colonel George Buis who had commanded French army units in nearby Bougie and who was now heading up the military cabinet of the High Commissioner in Algeria, Christian Fouchet. The ALN lieutenant thought very highly of the colonel's depiction of the war in Greater Kabylia, an observation that likely both surprised and reassured the lone French officer. Lieutenant de Lignière's Algerian interlocutor was none other than Rachid Adjaoud, newly designated member of the local ceasefire commission.[26]

Later that evening, as the central commission's pilot stood watch over the helicopter with a small band of ALN sentries, the men retired to an adjoining room.[27] There, Major Allahoum held a meeting with his ALN counterparts in Arabic. Having grown up in Tunis, Lieutenant de Lignières

[24] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Fiche sur la mise en place des Commissions locales en Wilaya 3" (27 April 1962).

[25] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Fiche sur la mise en place des Commissions locales en Wilaya 3" (27 April 1962).

[26] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Fiche sur la mise en place des Commissions locales en Wilaya 3" (27 April 1962).

[27] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Fiche sur la mise en place des Commissions locales en Wilaya 3" (27 April 1962).

had learned Arabic as a child and listened in discretely. He was therefore able to confirm to his French superiors that the ALN officers seemed sincerely committed to maintaining the ceasefire. Major Allahoum spoke to his men about the excellent working atmosphere at the central commission and instructed the officers of the local commission to ensure that they "stop the desertions" of Algerian auxiliaries from the French army and "refrain from responding to [French] provocations."[28] He then cautioned his men that if OAS terrorism continued unabated, the GPRA might give the order to break the truce.

A week and a half earlier, the central mixed ceasefire commission met for the first time at Rocher Noir. Colonel Jacques Navelet, a 50-year-old career military officer who had served in the Resistance and Indochina, led the French delegation. Major Allahoum, former head of ALN training operations in Morocco, led the Algerian.[29] In the weeks following the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the architects of Evian had handpicked the members of each delegation to maximize success. Of particular importance was the selection of the ALN officers who were to represent the Algerian side. Given the internal rivalries of the FLN, and the distrust that the Colonel Boumediene exhibited toward the Accords, the GPRA had to ensure that they chose officers who would be able to carry out their responsibilities despite the obstinacy of the more radical ALN General Staff waiting in Tunisia.[30]

The central commission convened on Friday, 6 April, the same day that the Provisional Executive formally assumed its functions and High Commission Fouchet arrived in Algiers. The atmosphere was "courteous," and one member of the French delegation seemed relieved that the

[28] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Fiche sur la mise en place des Commissions locales en Wilaya 3" (27 April 1962).

[29] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Commissions Mixtes" (4 May 1962).

[30] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Commissions Mixtes" (4 May 1962).

ALN representatives had expressed their "desire for efficiency and willingness for frank cooperation."[31] During their meeting, the central commission underscored the need to take action on four issues: establishing contact with ALN *wilaya* commanders and their subordinates; stationing ALN units within clearly demarcated zones vis-à-vis French units to avoid potential conflicts; ceasing the incitement of Algerian Muslim desertion from the French army; and making available lists of prisoners in accordance with the Evian ceasefire provisions. The French and ALN delegations agreed on all four points.[32]

Over the next two weeks, teams from the central committee flew by helicopter from Rocher Noir to establish contact with French and ALN commanders in the field. Armed with mimeographed copies of the Evian Accords, they outlined the ceasefire protocols and began assigning local officers to their respective delegations. This process was much easier for the French than it was for the ALN, whose local commanders were scattered and often beholden to their *wilaya* leaders. By the end of April, however, the central commission had established nearly twenty local ceasefire commissions spread across hundreds of square kilometers, from Constantine in the east to Oran in the west.[33] By the following month, representation existed in every *wilaya* and the number of commissions had doubled (see Table 1). The success of these commissions, however, rested almost entirely with the men who served on them.

[31] Archives Nationales de France – Pierrefitte (ANF): 5 AG 1 (1817), Telegram no. 1150 from Haut Commissaire République en Algérie – Cabinet Militaire (Colonel Georges Buis) to Ministre d'État Affaires Algériennes (7 April 1962) [Derogation].

[32] ANF: 5 AG 1 (1817): Telegram no. 1150 (7 April 1962) [Derogation].

[33] ANF: 5 AG 1 (1817): Telegram no. 1150 (7 April 1962) [Derogation].

Table 3.1 Location of Departmental Mixed Ceasefire Commissions, 25 May 1962[34]

Region	Location (Wilaya)	No. of Commissions
Oran	Aflou, Aïn Témouchent, Geryville, Le Telagh, Mascara, Mécheria, Mostaganem, Oran, Perrégaux, Relizane, Tiaret, Tlemcen, Saida, Sidi-Bel-Abbès (W.5)	14
Algiers	Tizi-Ouzou/Aït Ichem (W.3); Algiers, Arba, Aumale, Boufarik, Duperré, Médéa, Orléansville (W.4); Bou Saada (W.6)	9
Constantine	Aïn Beïda, Batna, Tébessa (W.1); Bône, Constantine, Djidjelli, Guelma, Philippeville (W.2); Akbou, Sétif (W.3); Biskra (W.6)	11
Sahara	Colomb-Béchar, Laghouat, Ouargla, Touggourt, (W.6)	4
	Total	38

A survey of the archival record has identified at least 86 officers of the French army and 73 officers of the ALN who made up around fifty known mixed ceasefire commissions. Ironically, the existence of detailed intelligence reports compiled by French authorities on the members of the ALN ceasefire delegations means that a more complete profile exists for the Algerian participants than the French officers who served as commission members.[35] While significant differences existed between these two groups in terms of experience, both French and ALN commission members were generally selected for their competency and a certain sense of diplomatic tact.

While most of the enlisted contingent of the French army supported President de Gaulle and the ceasefire, the officer corps was more susceptible to OAS persuasion. Thus, to ensure the

[34] This table does not reflect the sub-commissions that were usually established at the neighborhood level within larger urban centers such as Algiers or Constantine.

[35] The minutes of most meetings of the mixed ceasefire commissions contain the signatures of the members present along with a typed statement listing members' rank and family name. While detailed intelligence information related to ALN members exists in the archival record, it remains more difficult to parse through the French officer databases available at the Château de Vincennes, especially with regards to locating individuals with particularly common last names (e.g. Major Bernard or Lieutenant Roux).

success of the commissions, the French military had to find officers who did not secretly harbor renegade sympathies. For the most part, suspect officers had been rooted out and transferred back to France following the failed putsch by Generals Salan, Jouhaud, Challe, and Zeller in April 1961.[36] This meant that few of the officers assigned to serve in the local commissions had significant in-country experience and the archive shows that none were selected from units that had openly supported the *putschists*, such as the Foreign Legion or the elite airborne regiments. Thus, the general profile of French officers in the mixed ceasefire commissions tended to be loyal career military officers or younger junior officers who were less likely to feel antipathy toward their Algerian colleagues.

French officers serving on the mixed ceasefire commissions averaged between thirty-five to forty-five years old. Most had received a formal military education and a fair number had been awarded the Légion d'Honneur for their service.[37] They were taken from different branches of the French military: infantry, artillery, engineering, armored cavalry, and the supply corps. They held rank between second lieutenant (*sous-lieutenant*) and lieutenant-colonel, with lieutenants and captains being the most well-represented officer rank among members of the French delegations. Generally, officers holding the rank of captain or higher led their delegation. Occasionally, enlisted soldiers or non-commissioned officers supported the local commissions as secretaries.

The makeup of the Algerian delegations differed dramatically. Overall, they were younger than their French counterparts and less well trained in the ways of military protocol, but had been continuously engaged in the revolution since the late 1950s. The average age of ALN officers

[36] Rachid Adjaoud, interview by author, Seddouk, Algeria, March 16, 2015.

[37] Information on training, officer promotion, and Légion d'Honneur status obtained from: Direction du Personnel Militaire de l'Armée de Terre, *Listes générales d'ancienneté des officiers de l'armée active des armes et services en activité de service au 1er juillet 1962* (Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle & Cie., 1962).

selected by their commanders to serve in the commissions was between twenty-five and forty. ALN officers often tended hold lesser ranks than their French counterparts, ranging from officer-in-training (*aspirant*) to major (*commandant*). Those selected to serve were normally chosen from among the junior officers assigned to *wilaya* command post secretariats.[38] Given that French was the working language of the FLN and the ALN, this meant that officers in these roles had received an education and could communicate with their French counterparts who generally did not speak the Algerian Arabic dialect or Amazigh, which was prevalent in Berberphone regions such as Kabylia. Due to the clerical nature of their service, ALN officers from *wilaya* secretariats were already familiar with the administrative procedures required by the commissions. In addition, there were a number of ALN commission members who had served in the French military prior to the revolution and were therefore selected for their knowledge of the workings of French army protocol.

These differences in age, rank, and experience were apparent to the commission members. "I imagined two soccer teams," recalled Lieutenant Djoudi Attoumi, a friend and colleague of Rachid Adjaoud who was assigned to a local commission in Wilaya III. "One was made up of veteran players, the other novices. The difference in age was striking."[39] So was the apparent difference in experience: "Having attended the military academies and the officer war colleges, [the French] had a confident air about them."[40] In Attoumi's mind his interlocutors were stereotypes of military discipline, serious men who followed protocol: "impeccably dressed, close-

[38] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D5): "Liste nominative et fiches individuelles concernant les Chefs frontistes membres des Commissions Mixtes Départementales de cessez-le-feu dans le C.A.C." (25 May 1962).

[39] Djoudi Attoumi, *Avoir 20 ans dans les maquis: journal de guerre d'un combattant de l'A.L.N. en wilaya III (Kabylie), 1956-1962* (Sidi Aich: Éditions Ryma, 2007), 386.

[40] Attoumi, *Avoir 20 ans dans les maquis*, 386.

shaven, carrying attaché cases. They lived and breathed the classic strictness of the army."[41] A French military officer responsible for establishing contact with ALN representatives 560 kilometers away in the Sahara noted that his ALN contacts "were barely 30 years old."[42] He too noted their attire and attitude: "[they were] dressed in the European fashion, speaking fluent French, and clearly seeking to engage with us as equals. This is the New Algeria. The era of Old Turbans is over."[43]

More than just bringing together former enemies, the mixed ceasefire commissions were setting the stage for a faceoff between the representatives of colonial authority and those who for years had resisted that authority and were now on the cusp of overturning it. The psychological imbalance of power implicit in these meetings meant that establishing protocol and maintaining a professional working environment predicated on the equality of each delegation was vital to the success of the ceasefire commissions. Lieutenant Attoumi remembers being ordered to Bougie for a meeting with Major Allahoum and Major Arzeki Hermouche, the commanding officer of Wilaya IV. There, Major Hermouche explained the mission of the mixed ceasefire commissions and underscored the importance of maintaining discipline when interacting with Attoumi's soon-to-be "partners in the French army."[44] "It is an honor for you to be a part of this commission," the major explained, "we are counting on you to be loyal."[45] Major Allahoum then distributed a typewritten

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[41] Attoumi, *Avoir 20 ans dans les maquis*, 386.

[42] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Les Commissions locales de la Wilaya 6 ont été mises sur pied les 24 et 25." (26 May 1962).

[43] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1), "Les Commissions locales de la Wilaya 6 ont été mises sur pied les 24 et 25." (26 May 1962).

[44] Attoumi, *Avoir 20 ans dans les maquis*, 383.

[45] Attoumi, *Avoir 20 ans dans les maquis*, 384.

sheet with protocol guidelines for the ALN delegations. The protocol stressed three points: each delegation would be treated as equals, careful attention should be paid to precedence, and the ALN should follow French conventions when using military rank.[46] The use of proper titles and formal modes of address in French (e.g. *vous* vs. *tu*) meant a great deal, especially to ALN representatives. Impolite speech could set the wrong tone. But it appears that French members also took seriously the question of protocol. As Rachid Adjaoud notes: "Yesterday we were *fellagha* and now it was *mon lieutenant*. There was a great deal of respect…I was astonished."[47]

Figure 3.2



French officers meet with Rachid Adjaoud (at right with hands behind back)
Source: Used with the permission of Rachid Adjaoud.

[46] Attoumi, *Avoir 20 ans dans les maquis*, 381.

[47] Adjaoud, interview. The term *fellagha* (فلاقة) was used pejoratively by French authorities in North Africa to describe those considered to be "bandits" or "rebels." It likely derives from the Arabic word *fellah* (فلاح), meaning "farmer" or "peasant."

To further cultivate an atmosphere of neutrality and respect, no weapons were to be carried, and the central commission encouraged local delegations to wear civilian clothing to their meetings. For the ALN, this often meant that commanders used funds from the *wilaya* war chest to purchase suits, ties, shirts, and shoes for officers who only a couple of weeks prior had been fighting in threadbare surplus fatigues.[48]

Despite some initial difficulties contacting local commanders in the ALN, most of the departmental commissions had been established and regular meetings were underway by the first week of May. Clad in newly purchased suits and ties, commission members met in locations mutually agreed upon, generally places that were convenient and considered neutral ground: schoolrooms, farmhouses, and community centers. One local commission south of Orléansville even appropriated the meeting room of a local "*Circle Féminin*."[49] Local commissions usually convened once a week or once every other week depending on the regional situation and the proclivities of the delegation presidents. Commissions could also call emergency meetings to respond to incidents that posed an immediate risk to the ceasefire. The meetings themselves lasted between two to four hours and commissions kept thorough records of their activities. A designated secretary selected from one of the delegations was tasked with drafting the minutes of each meeting, which were then typed up and signed by the president of each delegation. Copies were made and transmitted back to Rocher Noir as well as sent up the French and ALN chains of commands.

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[48] Adjaoud, interview.

[49] SHD: 1 H 2110: "Procès-verbal de la réunion de mise en place de la commission mixte du cessez-le-feu pour la zone sud du Département d'Orléansville (Mintaqua 43) le 28 avril à 14 heures 30" (28 April 1962).

To facilitate contact, particularly in the case of emergency situations, Rocher Noir ensured that French military authorities in the field allocated considerable resources to the local commissions. Engineers installed dedicated telephone lines between the command posts of ALN and French units assigned to the commissions and vehicles, including helicopters, were placed at the disposal of delegation members to travel to meeting locations or conduct on-site investigations of nearby incidents. Since the ceasefire agreement restricted travel for uniformed members of the ALN outside of those areas where they were stationed on 19 March, the French military provided laissez-passers to representatives of the local commissions to get through French checkpoints to conduct commission-related business.

High ranking officials on both sides had an interest in ensuring that the Evian Accords would be respected. Superior officers from the central commission often attended the meetings of local commissions, particularly when tensions ran high.[50] On one occasion Lieutenant Adjaoud's delegation was brought to see the French commanding general of the Aïn Arnat helicopter base outside of Sétif where they were informed that the general wished to be notified personally if any French officers assigned to the surrounding local commissions gave the ALN delegations trouble.[51] Officials in Algiers and Paris also kept a close eye on the atmosphere of the meetings, noting in weekly communiqués the regions that were making progress and those that seemed to be foundering. As the clandestine war between the OAS and the FLN continued to intensify throughout the late spring of 1962, the mixed ceasefire commissions became increasingly involved in maintaining peace and disarming local conflicts, not just as mediators in military matters, but as arbiters in civil disputes. As one of the few institutions with the resources, manpower, and local

[50] SHD: 1 H 1785 (D1): "Fiche sur les difficultés rencontrées par la délégation du Front" (30 April 1962).

[51] Adjaoud, interview.

presence to respond to such incidents, it often fell to the mixed ceasefire commissions to resolve problems directly. But not every commission had equal success.

The Challenges of Cooperation

On 19 May 1962, the mayor of Bourbaki pleaded for help. The Muslim community had gone on strike, and the *pied-noir* population was up in arms over letters it had received from the FLN extorting money. Tensions were high and the mayor feared there would be bloodshed in his city located high up in the Haut Plateaux. With no other recourse, the deputy prefect of the region called on Lieutenant-Colonel Coelenbier and Lieutenant Hamdane of the local ceasefire commission in nearby Orléansville to intercede. Traveling forty-five minutes by car, the two officers and their delegations arrived to find thirty representatives of the European community and thirty representatives from the Algerian Muslim community crammed into the mayor's office. Over the course of that Saturday morning in May, the two delegations managed to defuse the situation. Working with leaders from each group, they convinced Algerian Muslim employees to return to their jobs on Monday. They also tracked down two regional ALN officers to investigate the letters demanding money, eliciting promises that the incident would not be repeated. With the potential for disaster diverted, Coelenbier and Hamdane wrote up their report and went home, but not before explaining to the community that solving local disputes was not really the sort of thing the mixed ceasefire commissions did.[52] Not two weeks later they were dealing with a group of

[52] SHD: 1 H 2110 (D1): "Procès-verbal d'un déplacement de la Commission Mixte du Cessez-le-feu d'Orléansville (Mantaqua 43) le 19 Mai 1962" (19 May 1962).

European settlers who had gone around tearing down posters promoting the upcoming referendum on self-determination.[53]

The conflict raging in urban centers like Algiers and Oran spilled over into the countryside: rogue elements of the French army, abetted by local *pied-noir* gangs, led clandestine raids against the Algerian Muslim population, while the FLN abducted European settlers, and Algerian soldiers continued to defect from rural units, taking their firearms with them. Add to these incidents a score of other offenses: theft, extortion, assault, an errant hand grenade through an open window, an Algerian flag flying off a public building, a sideways glance. Yet, in attempting to keep the peace, the mixed ceasefire commissions were also mitigating a clash of sovereignties.

Until the referendum of self-determination on 1 July, Algeria remained under French control, and from a juridical standpoint the French military maintained a monopoly on force, retaining the right to patrol roads and villages, set up checkpoints, search vehicles, and demand identity papers. In the wake of the ceasefire, however, the FLN was eager to exert its control in anticipation of Algerian independence. During the war the FLN had succeed in winning a good deal of support from the Algerian Muslim population, but its supremacy was by no means complete. Rival nationalist movements, such as Messali Hadj's MNA, presented existential threats from the margins, and certain colonial-era allegiances between moderate Muslim notables and local communities competed for FLN loyalty. Whatever its own internal divisions, guaranteeing post-independence primacy was a priority for the FLN during the four months between the signing of the Evian Accords and the referendum. Most of the FLN's manpower, however, remained outside of Algeria during this period. Consequently, local ALN officers took it upon themselves to expand FLN authority on the ground, establishing their own roadblocks, searching vehicles

[53] SHD: 1 H 2110 (D1): "Procès-verbal de la 8° séance de la Commission Mixte de contrôle du Cessez-le-feu pour la zone sud du Département d'Orléansville (zone 3 wilaya IV) le mardi 5 Juin 1962 à 8 heures 30" (5 June 1962).

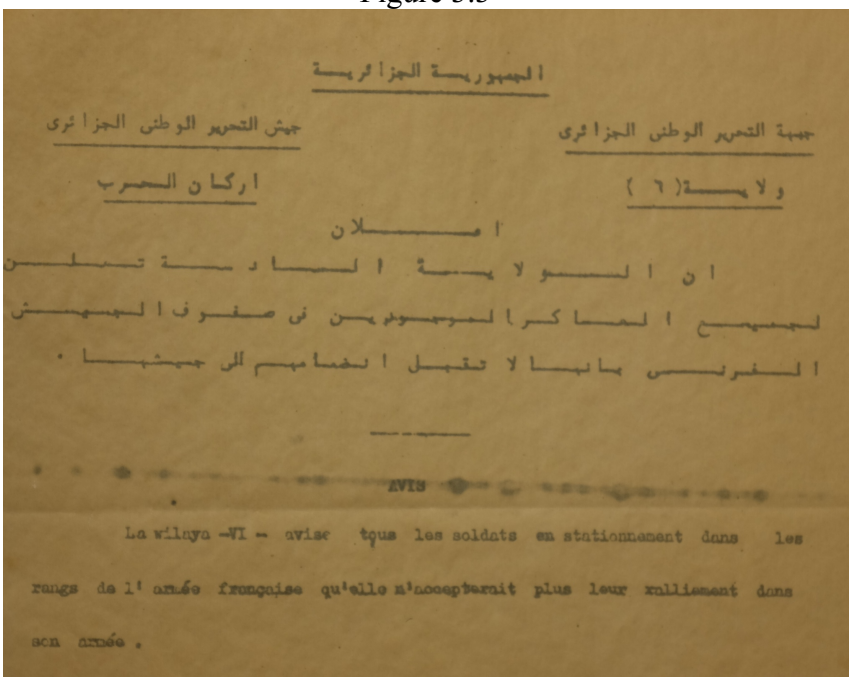
driven by Europeans, extorting money from rural *pied-noir* populations, and exerting control over local Algerian Muslim prefects and notables—often to the chagrin of the Provisional Executive. These actions naturally increased tension between the ALN and local French authorities. Moreover, the transitional period created an ambiguous political landscape that blurred the line between which entity had a mandate to manage the daily life of French Algeria's final moments: the departing colonial power determined to showcase its sovereignty to the last or the precocious nationalist apparatus ready to move in and take over? Coupled with the chaos unleashed by the OAS, the atmosphere proved ideal for misunderstanding, confrontation, and revenge.

Three main problems preoccupied the commissions between April and July: armed provocations that threatened the ceasefire, investigations into abducted persons, and the restitution of deserters and their weapons. Some of these issues were easier to resolve than others. The restitution of Algerian Muslim deserters from the French army was one of the easiest problems handled by the commissions. As noted above, ALN veterans had little respect for these recently converted revolutionaries. For the ALN, turning in deserters and their weapons to the French did little to undermine their own authority—after all, an ALN army of nearly 32,000 men equipped with Chinese manufactured Kalashnikovs waited patiently on the other side of the border.[54] If anything, removing over-eager, untested, and unreliable elements from the ranks of the ALN helped reduce the likelihood of future incidents and was an easy means to build trust with French commission members. On the recommendation of the mixed ceasefire commissions, *wilaya* commanders gave orders to turn over deserters and even distributed leaflets designed to dissuade future desertion (see Figure 3). Armed provocations presented a more serious challenge as these were carried out clandestinely and often resulted in the injury or death of French and ALN

[54] Shrader, *The First Helicopter War*, 150.

servicemen. Yet, if a local commission had established a healthy working relationship between its delegations, then even these incidents could be resolved with relatively little fallout. Rarely was a guilty party apprehended, however.

Figure 3.3



الجمهورية الجزائرية

جبهة التحرير الوطني الجزائري

ولاية (٦)

جيش التحرير الوطني الجزائري

أركان الحرب

إعلان

إن الولاية السادسة تعلن لجميع العساكر الموجودين في صفوف الجيش الفرنسي بأنها لا تقبل انضمامهم الى جيشها.

AVIS

La wilaya -VI - avise tous les soldats en stationnement dans les rangs de l'armée française qu'elle n'accepterait plus leur ralliement dans son armée.

ALN leaflet circulated in Wilaya VI[55]
Source: Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes

Nonetheless, delegations could use their respective chains of command to ensure that troublemakers on both sides were kept in line. The abduction of European settlers proved to be the most delicate and the most controversial issue. While exact numbers remain notoriously unreliable, an estimated 3,018 *pieds-noirs* were abducted between March and July.[56] The strategy of kidnapping settlers of European descent was a means for the FLN to strike back at OAS terror that

[55] SHD: 1 H 3209 (D1): "إعلام/Avis" (c. May 1962). Loosely translated, the text in Arabic and French reads: "Notice: Wilaya VI informs all soldiers serving in the ranks of the French army that it will no longer accept their defection to the ALN."

[56] Monneret, *La phase finale de la guerre d'Algérie*, 130.

targeted Algerian Muslims without having to resort to the kinds of destructive measures employed by militant partisans of French Algeria. It also allowed the FLN to settle scores, demand ransom, and obtain retribution for the thousands of Algerian Muslims who had been disappeared by the French army during the war. Once again, depending on the working relationship of a commission and the internal command structure of a particular region, ALN delegations could secure the release of *pied-noir* abductees on behalf of their French counterparts. The archival record shows that certain commissions had considerable success obtaining the return of kidnapped Europeans. While 1,245 ultimately would be released, a significant number remained missing after independence.[57]

The extent to which the local mixed ceasefire commissions functioned successfully depended largely on two factors: where the commissions were located and the composition of the commissions themselves. Regional demographics often dictated the kinds of incidents that commissions had to address. Unsurprisingly, areas with heavily mixed European and Algerian Muslim populations saw higher incidences of intercommunal violence, abductions, and theft. Therefore, commissions that operated in regions that had fewer European settlers fared better as incidents tended to involve only the French army and the ALN—confrontations that were easier to disarm in commission meetings between military officers. Moreover, commissions in rural areas performed better than those near large towns or cities, as there were fewer competing sources of authority. Generally, this meant that commissions in eastern Algeria, including Kabylia and the greater Constantine region (Wilayas II, III, parts of Wilaya IV), functioned better compared to other places. Central and western Algeria fared worse. The commissions located in and around Oran (Wilaya V), which had one of the highest concentrations of *pieds-noirs* in Algeria, saw the

[57] Monneret, *La phase finale de la guerre d'Algérie*, 130.

most dramatic breakdown in relations, especially around Mostaganem.[58] The Algérois region in the center (Wilaya IV), fared slightly better.

But even in regions that had a volatile mix of communities, commissions could succeed if delegation members exhibited good faith and a willingness to engage with the other side. In Orléansville, a city with a sizable *pied-noir* population, Captain Roger-Baptiste Blazeix of the 9th Infantry Division reported:

> At the instigation of Captain Mourad, the FLN delegation…demonstrated from the start a remarkable sense of cooperation between the French sovereign authorities and the ALN. Numerous incidents, particularly those between Muslims and Europeans, have been resolved through the personal intervention of Captain Mourad. Abductions and serious abuses against Europeans were relatively few and have often been resolved for the best, either by the release of the abductees or by assurances that local elements were not involved. However, exactions against Muslims have not always received the same response [from the French chain of command].[59]

The success of the commissions also depended on the good faith of delegation members and their belief that their participation was contributing toward something worthwhile. In Wilaya III, for example, Colonel Mohand Oulhaj, had shown himself amenable to the idea of the mixed commissions and enforced involvement among his regional officers. Elsewhere, however, some regional leaders remained suspicious of the commissions, despite the intervention of superiors sent from Rocher Noir. After years of fighting in the *maquis*, certain ALN officers believed that the mixed ceasefire commissions might be an elaborate ruse and feared that their French interlocutors were secretly members of military intelligence looking to destabilize the FLN. In his memoirs, Mohamed Teguia, an ALN officer serving outside of Algiers in Wilaya IV, claimed that "in the mixed ceasefire commissions there were only officers from the *Deuxième Bureau* on the French

[58] SHD: 1 H 2110 (D2): "Comptes rendus hebdomadaires" (April-October 1962).

[59] SHD: 1 H 2110 (D1): "Rapport sur le fonctionnement de la commission mixte de contrôle de la zone 43" (12 July 1962).

side."[60] French officers equally suspected their Algerian counterparts of bad faith. General Capodanno, who oversaw commission operations in Algiers itself, noted: "The FLN representatives feign ignorance as to the incriminating facts, or throw the responsibility onto the MNA or 'uncontrollable' elements. Our officers find themselves in an ambiguous situation, meeting with people who they know to be complicit in the murder and torture of our compatriots and who respond that they know nothing about it."[61]

Like all institutions of conflict resolution, the mixed ceasefire commissions were imperfect. The above reactions reflect the extent to which the success or failure of such institutions remains highly contingent on a precarious combination of personalities and populations, tone and temperaments, wills and worldviews. The historical actors who participated in them had not only found themselves on opposite sides of a conflict, but also on opposite sides of the colonial power dynamic. The mixed ceasefire commissions institutionalized the process of decolonization and not just in terms of arbitrating conflict on the eve of independence—they provided a unique proving ground on which competing claims to sovereignty were articulated, confronted, and negotiated. Sometimes with ease, sometimes not, but in a manner unique to the broader story of European imperialism's demise. And in a world on fire, the commissions underscored the importance of parallel narratives of cooperation and collaboration.

As a peacekeeping institution, the mixed ceasefire commissions succeeded in ensuring that full scale hostilities did not resume between France and the FLN, despite overwhelming odds. Moreover, they set the stage for post-independence collaboration. Bernard Tricot, Charles de

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[60] Mohamed Teguia, *L'Armée de Libération Nationale en Wilaya IV* (Algiers: Casbah Editions, 2002), 186. The term *Deuxième Bureau* originally referred to the military intelligence office within the General Staff of the French Army, but became widely used as a label for all French intelligence services.

[61] SHD: 1 H 2110 (D1): "Réunion des Commissions Mixtes" (8 June 1962).

Gaulle's *éminence grise* at Rocher Noir during the transition, noted in his memoirs that the mixed ceasefire commissions were "one of the institutions during this period that did the best work" and if military cooperation between France and Algeria continued to be successful after independence it was in no small part to the success of the mixed ceasefire commissions.[62] Recalling how he felt after his first encounter with French officers, Djoudi Attoumi remarked: "At the end of the meeting we laughed at the idea that we had found ourselves face to face with French officers...But history has shown us that all wars pass through this stage and that this would be the beginning of the end of this tragedy and a means to preserve our historic and cultural links with the French people."[63]

Conclusion:
Tomorrow's Partners

After four uncertain months, independence came at last with the referendum on self-determination. At noon on 3 July 1962, French forces stationed along the border stood down and the men of Houari Boumediene's frontier army entered Algeria for the first time. What they found, however, was a network of fellow officers who had already spent the last three and a half months engaging with the local populace, the French military, and civil authorities. Their experiences in the mixed ceasefire commissions had provided the ALN with open lines of communication to their opposite numbers in the French military and allowed for the cultivation of important person-to-person relationships (although generally only within the context of the commissions themselves). Following independence, these contacts often resulted in logistical and material support from the French army to the ALN as French troops evacuated barracks and abandoned stockpiles of supplies. Moreover, the imprimatur of the mixed ceasefire commissions had already established

[62] Bernard Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix: Algérie 1958-1962* (Paris: Plon, 1977), 319-320.

[63] Attoumi, *Avoir 20 ans dans les maquis*, 385.

the ALN as a legitimate powerbroker in the eyes of the local Algerian Muslim population. In many cases, this influence only exacerbated the coming struggle for internal power between local *wilaya* commanders and Boumediene's advancing ANP as well as between the GPRA and the Political Bureau and their armed supporters. Yet, once Ben Bella consolidated his faction's authority, the ALN's direct participation in the mixed ceasefire commissions likely contributed to the future Algerian state's ability exercise local control following independence.

Lastly, while many of the mixed ceasefire commissions disbanded in July, a small number continued to meet until December 1962. Eventually, these became the Liaison and Coordination Commissions.[64] Under the terms of the Evian Accords, the French military was permitted to maintain 80,000 troops in Algeria for up to five years following independence. Given that the continued presence of French soldiers on newly sovereign Algerian soil renewed the potential for conflict, French and Algerian commanders recognized the benefit of maintaining contact to facilitate the coexistence of the two armed forces. The French military remained in Algeria until 1965, but in those intervening years military advisors from the Eastern bloc and the Arab world began pouring into the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to provide technical assistance. Nonetheless, many Algerian officers remembered their French contacts, ultimately preferring military training from their former colonial interlocutors over that of the Soviets or the Egyptians; proving perhaps that yesterday's enemies might just become tomorrow's partners.

[64] SHD: 1 H 2111 (D1): "La Mission de Liaison et de Coordination en Algérie: d'Octobre 1962 à Octobre 1963" (15 October 1963).

Chapter Four

The Art of Decolonization:
Negotiating the Cultural Politics of Restitution and Sovereignty

The task at hand is to continue with the elimination of the inequalities and contradictions which still exist in our society after independence. Faced with immense tasks of construction at all levels, Algeria had to make efforts not only to bring about a new birth of national culture, authentic in its nature and dynamic and modern in its present form and future outlook, but also at the same time to shake off the aftermath of colonial domination.

Sid-Ahmed Baghli, *Aspects of Algerian Cultural Policiy* (1976)[1]

All culture is at once a link with the past and a reaching towards the future.

Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, *De la Décolonisation à la Révolution Culturelle* (1972)[2]

Introduction:
Eleven Crates from Algiers

On the morning of 14 May 1962, a unit of French gendarmes escorted eleven wooden crates to a military quayside in Algiers and placed them on a naval transport bound for Marseille.[3] From Marseille the cases were loaded on to a train for Paris, where on 23 May they were brought to the Louvre. The museum's curators examined the contents of the crates that had been so carefully transported from Algeria and discovered over 300 works of art, including work by such celebrated French artists as Monet, Renoir, Gauguin, Pissarro, Degas, Courbet, and Delacroix. According to an inventory drawn up by the curatorial team the cases contained 188 paintings and 136 drawings,

[1] Sid-Ahmed Baghli, *Aspects of Algerian Cultural Policy* (Paris: UNESCO, 1976),12.

[2] Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, *De la Décolonisation à la Révolution Culturelle* (Algiers: SNED, 1973), 215.

[3] This chapter has been adapted from an earlier manuscript published in the *Journal of Contemporary History* in accordance with SAGE Publishing's Open Access guidelines: Andrew Bellisari, "The Art of Decolonization: The Battle for Algeria's French Art, 1962-1970" *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 3 (July 2017): 625-645. Archives des Musées Nationaux (AMN): Z66 (Algérie): "Note concernant la mise à l'abri en métropole de certaines œuvres du musée national des beaux-arts d'Alger" (18 May 1962).

sketches, and charcoals.[4] The total value of the collection was considerable; the paintings alone were later estimated at approximately 28 million New Francs—today approximately US$50 million when adjusted for inflation.[5]

With the impending referendum on Algerian self-determination only weeks away, tensions in the streets of Algiers had reached a fever pitch and French administrators in Algeria had sent the collection to the metropole in a panic. But the artwork no longer belonged to France. Due to a technicality in the accords signed at Evian in March 1962 between the French government and the FLN, the majority of the artwork that had been transported from the Fine Arts Museum in Algiers (*Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Alger* [MBA]) had become the official property of the Algerian state-to-be, and the incoming nationalist government wanted it back. The fate of Algeria's artwork would be debated between diplomatic officials, museum administrators, and various local actors on both sides of the Mediterranean for more than seven years until the French government agreed to repatriate nearly the entire collection. Only in December 1969 did the artwork, which the Algerian press enthusiastically labeled "our artistic patrimony" (*notre patrimoine artistique*), return to Algiers amid a flurry of official ceremonies and an outpouring of national pride.[6] Today the collection remains on display at Algeria's National Museum of Fine Arts where it comprises part of the largest collection of European art on the African continent.

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[4] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Tableaux du musée national des beaux-arts d'Alger par ordre de caisses" (no date, likely May 1962).

[5] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Liste 'A': Peintures propriété de l'Etat algérien, entreposées au musée du Louvre, à retourner à Alger" (1967). Inflation between new francs and euros calculated from the Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, http://www.insee.fr (18 December 2014). Conversion rate between euros and US dollars calculated at www.xe.com (18 December 2014). This amount does not take into account the collection's contemporary 'appraised value', which could be significantly higher.

[6] "Propriété de l'Algérie: des œuvres d'art rapatriées aujourd'hui," *La République*, 2 December 1969.

The little-known story of how Algeria came to possess such an impressive collection of European art epitomizes the awkward realities of colonial disentanglement that do not fit neatly into the common narrative of the "end of empire." It also raises a number of compelling questions: What does it mean for artwork produced by some of France's most iconic artists—
Monet, Delacroix, Courbet—to become the cultural property of a former colony? Moreover, what is at stake when a former colony demands the repatriation of artwork emblematic of the former colonizer, deeming it a valuable part of the newly independent nation's cultural heritage? Such questions challenge our perception of postcolonial heritage struggles as ones primarily concerned with the restitution of indigenous artifacts hauled off to Europe by empire's scientific elite. They also challenge the received wisdom of what the postcolonial experience should have entailed, particularly as the anti-colonial rhetoric of national liberation—with its emphasis on decolonizing the mind as well as the nation—suggests that the valorization of the former colonizer's culture would have been an unlikely development.[7] Indeed, a month before Algerian independence, the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA) drew up the Tripoli Program. The CNRA represented the FLN's collective wartime leadership and the Tripoli charter, drafted in part by Ahmed Ben Bella, attacked the recently signed Evian Accords as neocolonial. In addition to calling for a rapid, socialist-inspired transformation of Algeria, it proposed a "new definition of culture" to combat the "cultural cosmopolitanism and Western impregnation that instilled contempt in so many Algerians for their national values."[8] Such an ideological platform was a stunning

[7] In particular, the work of Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1952) and *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Maspero, 1961); Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind* (London: J. Currey, 1986); and Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), which critiqued the psychological violence of colonialism and the detrimental effect that cultural projection by imperial powers had on indigenous societies and the postcolonial nation.

[8] "Pour une nouvelle définition de la culture" in "Le Congrès de Tripoli: projet de programme pour la réalisation de la révolution démocratique algérienne (adoptée à l'unanimité par le C.N.R.A. à Tripoli en Juin 1962)" http://www.el-mouradia.dz/francais/symbole/textes/tripoli.htm (accessed 3 July 2015).

repudiation of the work recently undertaken by the Provision Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA), and would foreshadow the intra-FLN conflict that erupted later that summer. Nonetheless, the fact that Algerian policymakers during both the Ben Bella and Boumediene administrations sought the restitution of artwork depicting Orientalist nudes, French countryside landscapes, and Christian panel paintings from the Renaissance illustrates that the reality of Algeria's postcolonial cultural refashioning was more nuanced than such ideological pronouncements would insinuate. This chapter, then, will examine not only the origins of the French decision to remove the artwork from Algeria and the ensuing negotiations that took place to return it, but more importantly, it will analyze what this episode reveals about the cultural complexities of decolonization.

The events described here span not only political boundaries, but also temporal ones. As these pages will illustrate, the controversies and negotiations surrounding the removal and restitution of Algeria's French art suggest that, rather than a discrete moment with a clearly defined endpoint, decolonization was a constantly re-defined process that straddled the chronological meridian of independence. This chapter uses the archives of the French national museums administration, which served as the administrative clearinghouse between the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Algerian Affairs concerning the Fine Arts Museum in Algiers. In addition to correspondence, these archives also contain the original inventories of the artwork taken from Algiers in May 1962, the various lists that were drafted and redrafted during the negotiation process, and the minutes of meetings between French and Algerian museum officials—all of which chart the tedious and contingent nature of restitution. It is important to note here that access to Algerian source material at the time of writing has been limited, particularly as it concerns official government documents and the archives of the Fine Arts Museum that remain in

Algiers. The opinions and reactions of Algerian policymakers, therefore, have not been parsed as carefully as those of the French, upon which this chapter has relied heavily. However, correspondence preserved in archives at the Louvre, and contemporary reporting by the Algerian press, reveals a complex dynamic at work: local instances of interdependence, collaboration, confrontation, and reconciliation that emerged from the crucible of decolonization.

This chapter will explore the history of the Fine Arts Museums in Algiers, its collection, and the basis on which that collection came to be considered the property of an independent Algerian state. It will also examine the aborted French plan to incorporate the MBA into the museum structure of metropolitan France as an eleventh-hour attempt to retain the artwork as French property. Lastly, this chapter will look at the French removal of the artwork, the negotiations that led to its repatriation, and the ways in which different groups on either side of the Mediterranean reacted to its return to Algeria. In doing so, one will be able to understand further how a particular culture of decolonization emerged during this period—one which has continued to influence not only modern relations between nations like France and Algeria, but also the cultural identities within them.

"Le Dernier Quart d'Heure"
The Plan to Nationalize the Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Alger

The Fine Arts Museum of Algiers was inaugurated on 4 May 1930 as part of France's yearlong centenary commemoration of the 1830 conquest of Algeria. The decision to create the new museum came three years earlier at the behest of Jean Alazard, an art historian at the University of Algiers and curator of the municipality's modest fine arts collection. He was supported in his endeavor by several well-connected *pied-noir* notables as well as a number of museum curators in Paris. Bending to public pressure and anticipating the impending centenary,

the Governor General of Algeria, Pierre Bordes, allocated seven million francs in December 1927 from the planning committee's generous budget in order to begin construction for a new fine arts museum.[9] Constructed on a leafy bluff overlooking the Mediterranean, the whitewashed art-deco building designed by Paul Guion was meant to represent the coming of age of France's most important overseas territory, one that had been considered an administrative extension of the French metropole itself since 1848.

The original fine arts collection was rather humble, comprising works "of vast dimensions and mediocre artistic quality," as well as a few finer pieces donated by wealthy French residents of Algeria.[10] However, with the promise of the new museum's completion, the Government General of Algeria put three million francs at the disposal of Jean Alazard in 1929 to purchase new art for an inaugural exhibition worthy of the upcoming anniversary.[11] It was at this moment that the MBA began acquiring its impressive collection of French masters: *Le giaour traversant un gué* by Eugène Delacroix (1849), *Femme à sa fenêtre* by Camille Pissarro (1884), *Paysage de Bretagne* by Paul Gauguin (1885), *Rochers de Belle-Isle* by Claude Monet (1886), and *Paysage de printemps* by Auguste Renoir (1877), among many others. Additionally, the French metropolitan government arranged for a number of pieces from the Musée du Louvre and the Château de Versailles to enter the new museum's collection as long-term loans in honor of the centennial. In the years following 1930, Jean Alazard focused on expanding the museum's catalogue by acquiring pieces ranging from Renaissance triptychs to charcoal drawings by Pablo Picasso. As a museum of fine arts, the MBA's collection was meant, foremost, to be an ecumenical representation of Western art, and

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[9] Dalila Mahammed-Orfali, *Catalogue des peintures, dessins, et graveurs (Ecole Européennes du XIVème s. à 1960) du Musée National des Beaux-Arts* (Algiers: Ministère de la Communication et de la Culture, 1995), 7.

[10] Jean Alazard, *Histoire d'un Musée* (Paris: Rodez, 1951), 1.

[11] Orfali, *Catalogue*, 7.

this was reflected by the inclusion of Italian, German, and Dutch artists into the museum's collection. Additionally, given the museum's location in North Africa, a large number of Orientalist paintings also entered the collection, including work by Théodore Chassériau, Eugène Fromentin, and Alphonse-Etienne Dinet (who converted to Islam and took the name Nasreddine). The majority of the collection, however, comprised artwork from the major French schools, and it would be the collection's seemingly undeniable French character that would later become the focus of the debates to transfer the art to the metropole and, later, to repatriate it to Algeria. Indeed, the artwork featured in the MBA was meant not only to reinforce the idea that Algeria was France, but that mid-century Algeria represented a new frontier of boundless possibility and a showcase of the future. "A young country needs young art," wrote the monthly art review *L'Amour de l'Art* referring to the emphasis that the museum's curators placed on late nineteenth-century impressionists and early twentieth-century modernists.[12] By the outbreak of the Algerian War for Independence on 1 November 1954, the Fine Arts Museum boasted one of the finest collections of French art outside of metropolitan France. Even as fighting raged in the mountains of the Aurès and the casbah of Algiers, the museum continued to purchase new pieces until Alazard's death in September 1960.[13]

[12] "Le Musée d'Alger," *L'Amour de l'Art* (November 1932).

[13] The relationship between imperial regimes and cultural institutions (particularly museums) has been well analyzed. The creation of the Fine Arts Museum in Algiers can thus be understood to fit into the larger patrimonial project undertaken by the French in Algeria since 1830, as Nabila Oulebsir has compellingly documented in *Les usages de patrimoine: monuments, musées et politique coloniale en Algérie, 1830-1930* (Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2004). Additionally, recent work by Caroline Ford and Astrid Swenson concerning the importance the French attached to Roman ruins in North Africa and Crusader sites in the Middle East similarly helps us better understand evolving ideas about heritage in the French empire and the musealization of colonial space: Caroline Ford, "The Inheritance of Empire and the Ruins of Rome in French Colonial Algeria," *Past and Present* Supplement 10 (2015): 57-77; Astrid Swenson, "Crusader Heritages and Imperial Preservation," *Past and Present* Supplement 10 (2015): 27-56.

Figure 4.1



Claude Monet, *Rochers de Belle-Île* (1886)
Source: Musée National des Beaux-Art d'Alger

Figure 4.2



Auguste Renoir, *Paysage de printemps* (1877)
Source: Musée National des Beaux-Art d'Alger

Figure 4.3



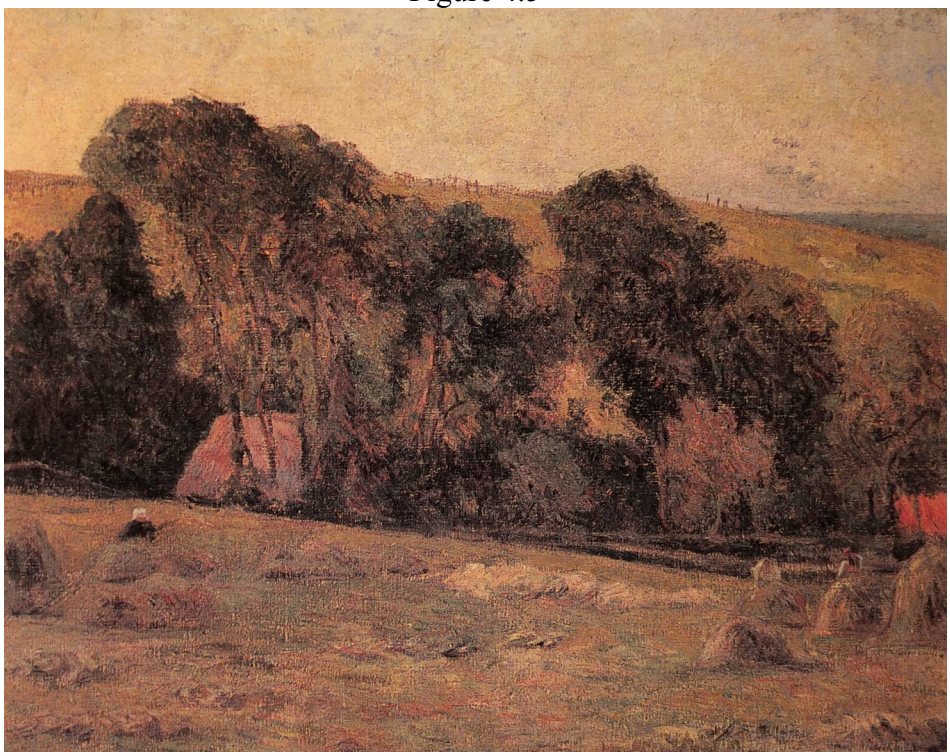
Eugène Delacroix, *Le giaour traversant un gué* (1849)
Source: Musée National des Beaux-Art d'Alger

Figure 4.4



Camille Pissarro, *Femme à sa fenêtre* (1884)
Source: Musée National des Beaux-Art d'Alger

Figure 4.5



Paul Gaugin, *Paysage de Bretagne* (1885)
Source: Musée National des Beaux-Art d'Alger

Yet, how did such an extensive collection of what was widely considered to be French cultural patrimony become the official property of a former colony, particularly one that had fought so hard to overthrow French colonial rule? The answer is not without irony. Even though the MBA had carried the title of "national museum" since its inauguration, the museum had always been administrated and financed by the Government General of Algeria. Designed to be an economically self-sufficient colony, Algeria was financially autonomous from the metropole and managed its own budget financed by revenue extracted from the colony through taxes levied on the local population, the export of agricultural products and natural resources, and the collection of customs duties. Therefore, the credits allocated for the creation of the museum and the acquisition of much of its artwork came not from the metropole, but from the colonial authority of French Algeria. The Organic Statute of 1947 further expanded Algeria's administrative autonomy, which in turn created a unique legal status exempting the colony from the application of any metropolitan ordinances that would have otherwise altered the administration of institutions in Algeria.[14] Given this state of affairs, the Fine Arts Museum of Algiers remained a colonial institution and was not incorporated into the metropolitan *Réunion des Musées Nationaux* following an institutional reorganization of museums that occurred in the wake of the Second World War. Only a decree submitted for approval to the French Council of State would be able to change the juridical status of Algeria's cultural institutions.[15] Decidedly a colonial institution, the museum and its collection—including those works of art donated by private individuals—would be devolved to Algerian ownership upon independence.

[14] "Loi no. 47-1853 du 20 septembre 1947 portant statut organique de l'Algérie," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (21 September 1947), 9470-9474.

[15] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Nationalisation éventuelle du musée des beaux-arts d'Alger" (7 April 1961).

On 18 March 1962, French representatives and members of the GPRA signed a ceasefire agreement at Evian, bringing the bloody, seven-year war to a close. Over the course of negotiations, French and Algerian representatives had agreed that all institutions and infrastructure previously financed by the budget of the autonomous colonial government of Algeria would be transferred to the future Algerian state.[16] On a more philosophical level, Algerian negotiators believed that those institutions that had been financed with revenue extracted from Algerian soil and Algerian labor were the rightful property of the indigenous Algerian people. While the accords never specifically addressed the museum and its collection, negotiators reasoned that a future Algerian state would logically assume responsibility over property previously administered by the Government General of Algeria. This included other kinds of infrastructure, such as roads, railways, and school buildings—all of which went equally unnamed in the accords—in the understanding that the vast majority of property and assets formerly controlled by the colony would be transferred to the new state as a condition of sovereignty.[17] The archival record shows that following independence French administrators repeatedly used the Evian Accords as their rationale for repatriating the French art.

As early as April 1961, the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs anticipated that such an agreement might be reached and initiated an attempt to incorporate the Fine Arts Museum into the metropolitan museum system—a process referred to as "nationalization" by museum officials. It

[16] "Déclaration de principes relative à la coopération économique et financière, Titre IV, Article 19 : Le domaine immobilier de l'Etat en Algérie sera transféré à l'État algérien, sous déduction, avec l'accord des autorités algériennes, des immeubles jugés nécessaires au fonctionnement normal des services français temporaires ou permanents. Les établissements publics de l'État ou sociétés appartenant à l'État, chargés de la gestion de services publics algériens, seront transférés à l'Algérie. Ce transfert portera sur les éléments patrimoniaux affectés en Algérie à la gestion de ces services publics ainsi qu'au passif y afférent. Des accords particuliers détermineront les conditions dans lesquelles seront réalisées ces opérations." "Accord de cessez-le-feu en Algérie," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (20 March 1962), 3026.

[17] For a more detailed look at infrastructure, and Algeria's railways in particular, see Chapter 6.

was a last-ditch effort to ensure that the European artwork housed in Algiers—the vast majority of which had been produced by French artists—would remain the property of France.[18] A proposal was drawn up to investigate the possibility of transferring all credits allocated to the operation of the museum to the metropolitan budget and having the French Council of State change the museum's official status. In June 1961, Michel Laclotte, the Louvre's Inspector General of Provincial Museums, traveled to Algeria on a fact-finding mission to study the feasibility of nationalizing not only the MBA in Algiers, but a number of other museums and cultural institutions across French Algeria.[19]

Even though certain high-profile individuals, such as the Minister of Cultural Affairs André Malraux, expressed initial interest in the project, it never materialized. The questions surrounding the juridical status of the museum—and the necessity to submit a request to the French Council of State in order to change that status—proved too complex, delaying a decision until it was too late. Furthermore, certain policymakers considered the potential cost associated with transferring the budget of the museum to that of the *Réunion des Musées Nationaux* too prohibitive.[20] While one report estimated that only 200,000 francs would have to be allocated for the 1962 budget, there still remained the question of what was to be done with the museum staff, not to mention the building itself, in the case of Algerian independence.[21] And lastly, with the resumption of negotiations with the GPRA at the end of 1961, the diplomatic situation had evolved to such an

[18] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Nationalisation éventuelle du musée des beaux-arts d'Alger" (7 April 1961).

[19] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Mission Laclotte" (1961).

[20] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Rattachement du Musée National des Beaux-Arts d'Alger aux Musées Nationaux" (30 May 1961).

[21] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Crédits se rapportant au Musée National des Beaux-Arts d'Alger" (1961).

extent that the project to nationalize the museum was eventually dropped for the sake of avoiding any logistical complication or political controversy that might compromise a negotiated ceasefire agreement.[22] Indeed, in a letter drafted on 21 March 1962, three days following the signing of the Evian Accords, the Minister of State for Algerian Affairs, proclaimed that the plan to nationalize the MBA had been "ruled out definitively."[23]

Despite the failure to nationalize the Fine Arts Museum in Algiers, French authorities on both sides of the Mediterranean were well aware that the decisions made at Evian placed a large collection of what they considered to be French patrimony in the hands of the independent Algerian state. Many officials felt uneasy at the prospect, but considered it a necessary sacrifice to secure the end to a nearly eight-year long war of attrition. The notion that artistic heritage was an integral part of French national identity was made explicit in the years following the Second World War, particularly in the aftermath of German designs to plunder French patrimony. André Malraux, in his role as France's first Minister of Cultural Affairs, was foremost involved in making such a notion official policy. Created by President de Gaulle in July 1959, Malraux's portfolio came with the express mission to promote French culture not only as a way for France to regain international preeminence in the wake of war and occupation, but also as a means to solidify internal unity at a moment when it was being threatened by past memories of collaboration and the present traumas of decolonization.[24] The synthesis of heritage, art, and national identity that came to represent Malraux's state-sponsored cultural policy might naturally have led to uncomfortable associations

[22] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Musées d'Algérie" (21 March 1962).

[23] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Musées d'Algérie" (21 March 1962).

[24] Herman Lebovics, "Cultural Policy" in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, ed. Edward Berenson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 347. See also: Herman Lebovics, *Mona Lisa's Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

between the ceding of French Algeria and the ceding of French art, in much the same way that Nazi looting had come to be so symbolic of France's wartime experiences a decade and a half prior. Many right-wing commentators in France would draw precisely this conclusion when France repatriated the majority of Algeria's art in 1969.

Others, however, like the archaeologist Henri Seyrig, who served as Director of French Museums from 1960 to 1962, thought that Algerian stewardship of French artwork might have positive consequences for Franco-Algerian relations. Against the idea of nationalizing the MBA from the start, he claimed that such reminders of France's cultural heritage "will never cease to inspire in Algerians an admiration and respect for French civilization, nor will they ever cease to demonstrate to foreigners the care that France took to give these African territories access to that which her arts have produced most nobly."[25] Even though Seyrig's suggestion meant abandoning a large collection of French art in Algeria, his proposal did fulfill another brief of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs as outlined by de Gaulle and Malraux: "to foster the most extensive audience for our culture."[26] The diffusion of French culture and civilization had been a hallmark of French overseas colonialism and in the wake of decolonization the maintenance of French influence in former colonies still preoccupied many French policymakers, particularly in the case of Algeria.[27] It would seem that, for some, France's "civilizing mission" might have a colonial afterlife.[28]

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[25] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): Henri Seyrig, "Note pour Monsieur le Directeur Général des Arts et des Lettres" (c. 1961).

[26] Lebovics, "Cultural Policy," 347.

[27] The Evian Accords specifically addressed certain cultural issues, such as language, education, and other forms of cultural exchange in the section entitled: "Déclaration de principes relative à la coopération culturelle." "Accord de cessez-le-feu en Algérie," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (20 March 1962), 3028-3029.

[28] For more concerning the history of France's *mission civilisatrice* (in theory and practice), see: Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

Notwithstanding views like Seyrig's, French officials continued to express uncertainty about the potential for unrest and instability following the referendum on Algerian self-determination scheduled for 1 July 1962. Concerned by the precarious security situation that developed in the spring, and the potential threat of pillage and vandalism that could follow the withdrawal of French authority, museum administrators in Algiers hastily drew up plans to evacuate the Fine Art Museum's most important works in an effort to protect them, regardless of their future ownership status.

Repatriation: A Delicate Affair

Following the announcement of the Evian Accords on 20 March 1962, French Algeria was convulsed with violence. Reflecting the anger and anguish of a dying society, extremist partisans of French Algeria instigated a wave of bloody retribution aimed at both Algerian Muslims and the French military, which, in their eyes, had betrayed the cause of *Algérie Française* by siding with de Gaulle. Despite initial restraint, the FLN retaliated, setting off a vicious cycle of urban terror, kidnappings, and last-minute score settling—all of which took place amid the backdrop of fleeing European settlers uncertain about their future in an independent Algeria. The fighting might have officially ceased between the French Army and the Algerian National Liberation Army (ALN), but peace in the streets remained elusive.

Officials in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, witnessing these tensions intensify on the eve of Algerian independence, cited two particular threats when later justifying their decision to remove artwork from the MBA in May 1962. The first was the danger posed by fellow Frenchmen. Unable to halt the inevitable, the OAS launched a scorched earth campaign to "return Algeria to

1830."[29] This campaign of terror explicitly targeted a number of cultural institutions, most famously the library at the University of Algiers, which members of the OAS set alight on 7 June 1962, destroying an estimated 500,000 books.[30] Earlier, the OAS had even targeted the Fine Arts Museum. On the night of 26 November 1961, OAS commandos bombed a large bronze statue by Antoine Bourdelle symbolizing "La France" located in the museum's forecourt, causing structural damage to the first floor gallery.[31] Consequently, French authorities had good reason to believe that the museum and its collection might become the target of another OAS attack in the final weeks leading up to the referendum on Algerian independence. There was also widespread fear that the Algerians themselves might target the museum. French officials were concerned that the museum's nudes and Christian artwork would offend Muslim sensibilities or else Algerian nationalists might target French artwork in order to exact some kind of post-independence revenge.[32] Over the course of the war and during the ceasefire period, Algerian nationalists had already vandalized a number of churches as well as certain statues and commemorative monuments that had been erected under the auspices of the colonial government.[33]

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[29] Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 918.

[30] "Un incendie criminel ravage l'université, plusieurs autres bâtiments publics sont détruits," *Le Monde*, 9 June 1962.

[31] Dalila Mahammed-Orfali, *Chefs-d'œuvre du Musée National des Beaux-Arts d'Alger* (Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo, 1999), 12.

[32] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Retour en Algérie des tableaux du Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Alger – Sort des dépôts de l'Etat en Algérie" (29 April 1963). Of note: while visiting the Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Oran in June 2014 the author discovered that a painting by seventeenth-century Dutch artist Cornelius van Poelenburgh (*Diane et Actéon*) exhibited evidence of vandalism targeting the female nudes depicted. However, it is not yet clear when, and under what circumstances, this damage occurred.

[33] The majority of incidents reported by French authorities in Algeria were generally sporadic and spontaneous in nature. Reports can be found in the Archives des Musées Nationaux (Z66 Algérie – "Monuments Commémoratifs") and in the military archives at Vincennes (1 H 1792; 1 H 1795; 1 H 2116).

Thus, with the tacit agreement of the Provisional Executive at Rocher Noir, the curatorial team at the Fine Arts Museum made the hurried decision to carefully place those works of art considered to be the finest in the museum's collection into eleven crates and expedite them to France.[34] Additionally, three other paintings from the museum that had been on loan to an exposition of French art in Tokyo earlier in 1962 were intercepted in Paris during their return from Japan and brought to the Louvre to join the other repatriated artwork.[35]

This policy of emergency repatriation, however, was never intended to be permanent—at least not by administrators at the Louvre. In a letter sent by Jean Chatelain, Director of French Museums, to Jacqueline Bouchot-Saupique, the curator of the Louvre's Department of Prints and Drawings, on 26 May 1962, Chatelain stated that the removal of the art from Algeria had been a precautionary "salvage operation in which we have intervened because of our technical expertise and not as part of an officially determined procedure."[36] Chatelain went on to clarify that Bouchot-Saupique was to make a detailed inventory of the collection of sketches she had received from Algeria so that there would be no "later doubt about its existence when we will have to return it."[37] Despite the intentions of French administrators, the legality of such a decision, as interpreted by the Evian Accords, remains murky considering that the French had removed the artwork before it had formally passed into Algerian possession with the recognition of Algerian sovereignty by

[34] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Retour en Algérie des tableaux du Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Alger – Sort des dépôts de l'Etat en Algérie" (29 April 1963).

[35] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Retour en Algérie des tableaux du Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Alger – Sort des dépôts de l'Etat en Algérie" (29 April 1963).

[36] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Récolement des dessins du musée d'Alger" (26 May 1962).

[37] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Récolement des dessins du musée d'Alger" (26 May 1962).

France on 3 July 1962. Such legal concerns, however, were not a priority for French, and later Algerian, officials who soon came to face an even greater problem.

It became clear almost immediately that, while the majority of the artwork removed from Algiers in the course of the emergency repatriation was indeed Algerian property, not all of it was. Some of the pieces brought to Paris in May 1962 were actually the property of France. Furthermore, not all of the artwork that remained hanging in the galleries of the Fine Arts Museum belonged to Algeria either. There was an immense administrative and logistical knot to disentangle concerning which country owned which piece of art and who was currently in possession of it.

The problem lay in the fact that the museum's collection had been classified into three principal categories of ownership.[38] The first comprised works that had been purchased with funds provided by the former Government General of Algeria, or else acquired by private citizens and donated to the museum. As outlined above, this was the collection of artwork that had officially become the property of the independent Algerian state following the Evian Accords. This category comprised the majority of pieces that France repatriated to Paris in May 1962 and therefore were to be sent back to Algeria. Other categories of art, however, still rightfully belonged to the French state. Works that had been loaned to the museum in Algiers by France from the collections of metropolitan museums (known as *dépôts de l'état*) remained French property. Most of the artwork in this category had been sent to Algiers in 1929 and 1930 in celebration of the centenary. Apart from about a dozen paintings that had been sent to France in May 1962 as part of the emergency repatriation, the majority of these works still remained in Algeria at the time of independence. Then there was the unique case of twenty-nine paintings from the *Récupération Artistique*—

[38] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Retour en Algérie des tableaux du Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Alger – Sort des dépôts de l'Etat en Algérie" (29 April 1963).

artwork taken by the Germans during the occupation of France and recovered by the Allies, but whose rightful owners could not be identified following the Second World War. These pieces had been loaned to the museum in Algiers in 1951 and 1952 by the French state and were repatriated to the metropole earlier in 1962.[39]

Given the harried circumstances under which the curators at the Fine Arts Museum had prepared the artwork's departure from Algiers, and the absence of complete records or catalogues on either side of the Mediterranean to determine provenance, it was not clear which pieces of art belonged to Algeria and which belonged to France. Thus began the tedious process of investigation, identification, and negotiation that commenced in the autumn of 1962 and continued for another seven years.

Negotiating Postcolonial Restitution

Despite Paris's fears that the museum would be pillaged following independence, the MBA remained unharmed. In October 1962, Jean Mallon, the former librarian of the Fine Arts Museum, was invited back to Algiers by the Algerian government as the newly appointed deputy director of Fine Arts. There he found that the Algerian staff employed by the museum prior to independence had stayed on, maintaining the building even after the French personnel had departed.[40] He also found over a hundred empty frames scattered among the museum's galleries and evidence that

[39] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Retour en Algérie des tableaux du Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Alger – Sort des dépôts de l'Etat en Algérie" (29 April 1963). These pieces re-entered the collections at the Louvre until such a time when a legitimate claimant could be located. To this day, many of them remain in the Louvre under the stewardship of the French state.

[40] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Premiers renseignements sur le Musée National des Beaux-Arts d'Alger recueillis au cours de ma visite de ce jour" (3 October 1962).

many other works of art were missing.[41] Upon contacting the French ambassador, Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, it became clear to Mallon that not even the French embassy in Algeria had been made aware of what had transpired five months earlier in May 1962.[42] Jeanneney immediately cabled the Quai d'Orsay for clarification, concerned that it was only a matter of time before Algerian representatives began asking questions. Indeed, reopening the museum and recovering the missing artwork was an immediate priority for the Algerian government, particularly following Ahmed Ben Bella's successful bid for power against his political rivals in the FLN during the summer of 1962. Ben Bella saw to it that there was no disruption in the museum's financing and named Jean de Maisonseul as the museum's curator in November 1962.[43] Maisonseul, a *pied-noir*, was an artist, urban planner, and close friend of Albert Camus who had supported the nationalist movement. Eight months after his appointment Maisonseul reopened the museum on 3 July 1963 as the National Museum of Fine Arts of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

It was partly due to Maisonseul's ability to act as a respected French interlocutor on behalf of Algiers that plans to negotiate the return of Algeria's property coalesced so quickly. Support for the restitution of Algeria's artwork also came from Jean Chatelain and, most importantly, André Malraux who, despite having initially supported the earlier project to nationalize the MBA, recognized the right of Algeria to its cultural property as a "pure and simple" application of the

[41] Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères – La Courneuve (AMAE-C): "Service de Liaison Avec l'Algérie" (29QO/90) – "Négociations sur les œuvres d'art": Telegram from AMBAFRANCE ALGER to MINALGERIE, 1209/10 (8 October 1962).

[42] AMAE-C: 29QO/90: Telegram from AMBAFRANCE ALGER to MINALGERIE, 1209/10 (8 October 1962). Similar diplomatic cables in this series reveal the extent to which the operation to repatriate the collection was initially compartmentalized within French administrative circles.

[43] Orfali, *Chefs-d'œuvre*, 12.

Evian Accords.[44] Formal negotiations to return Algeria's art began in September 1963 when Jean Chatelain sent Louvre curator Hélène Adhémar and civil administrator Hubert Delesalle to Algiers to meet with representatives from the Algerian government.[45] Over the course of three days the two parties began work on a proposal to determine the fate of Algeria's artwork in France and France's artwork in Algeria.[46] From these initial meetings, a mixed committee of French and Algerian negotiators drew up seven lists with the goal of organizing which art belonged to Algeria and which art belonged to France, as well as which pieces of artwork would be the subject of long-terms loans between the two countries and which pieces, although the property of the other, might be traded as retrocessions (see Table 1 below).

The establishment of these lists provided an outline for how restitution would proceed. But assigning an appropriate work of art to the correct list proved to be a logistical nightmare. Inventories, catalogues, and museum records were now scattered across two different countries and curators in France and Algeria were required to delve into the archives at their disposal to verify whether or not a particular painting or sketch had been a *dépôt de l'état* in Algeria or else purchased with credits from the former Government General. Disentangling the intricacies of colonial-era policy to ascertain provenance took years. Yet, during this process the amount of transparency and communication between both sides was notable and showed that French and Algerian officials were perfectly willing to maintain cordial working relationships despite the rhetorical bluster that often colored the postcolonial period. As correspondence between Sid

[44] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): André Malraux to Michel Debré (30 December 1968).

[45] AMAE-C: 29QO/90: "Rapatriement, cession et mise en dépôt d'œuvres d'art françaises et algériennes" (19 September 1963).

[46] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Tableaux des musées d'Algérie" (19 September 1963).

Ahmed Baghli, the director of Algerian museums, and Hubert Delesalle reflects, French and Algerian museum officials expressed a genuine desire to avoid mistakes and account for discrepancies. At times curators even removed frames and backings to ascertain a particular painting's provenance.[47] When a painting by Horace Vernet, a work belonging to France, could not be found among the collections in the Fine Arts Museum, the Algerian government used its own resources to try and locate it in Constantine.[48]

Table 4.1 Distribution of French and Algerian Artistic Property (c. 1963)[49]

List	Notes
A	ARTWORK BROUGHT TO THE LOUVRE IN MAY 1962, PROPERTY OF THE ALGERIAN STATE TO BE REPATRIATED TO ALGERIA
A'	ARTWORK BROUGHT TO THE LOUVRE IN MAY 1962, PROPERTY OF THE ALGERIAN STATE GRANTED TO FRANCE ON A 5 YEAR RENEWABLE LOAN
B	ARTWORK BROUGHT TO THE LOUVRE IN MAY 1962, PROPERTY OF THE FRENCH STATE TO REMAIN IN FRANCE
B'	ARTWORK BROUGHT TO THE LOUVRE IN MAY 1962, PROPERTY OF THE FRENCH STATE GRANTED TO ALGERIA ON A 5 YEAR RENEWABLE LOAN
C	OTHER ARTWORK REMAINING IN ALGERIA, PROPERTY OF THE FRENCH STATE TO BE REPATRIATED TO FRANCE
C'	OTHER ARTWORK REMAINING IN ALGERIA, PROPERTY OF THE FRENCH STATE GRANTED TO ALGERIA ON A LONG-TERM LOAN
D	ARTWORK FROM LIST C TO BE RETURNED TO FRANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

After a period of unexplained silence on the part of the Algerians, negotiations resumed in the beginning of 1965 to resolve outstanding claims and fix an eventual transfer. A joint committee

[47] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): Letter to Hubert Delesalle from Sid Ahmed Baghli (11 June 1967).

[48] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): Letter to Hubert Delesalle from Jean de Maisonseul (13 June 1967).

[49] As adapted from a number of reproductions used by both French and Algerian officials found in the Archives des Musées Nationaux, Z66. Not shown: additional list categories were added in 1967 that further divided the art already attributed to either France or Algeria by priority of return.

formed by Sid Ahmed Baghli and Philippe Rebeyrol, the Minister-Counselor for Franco-Algerian cultural cooperation posted to the French embassy in Algiers, re-examined the original 1963 exchange protocol and set in motion a new set of inquires regarding the lists established two years earlier.[50] After yet another year of delicate back and forth, a delegation of French and Algerian experts met in Paris for fours days in May 1967 to review the contents of the lists and make modifications before each party submitted them to their respective governments for final verification.[51] This led to an accord between France and Algeria signed on 11 July 1968 by Bruno de Leusse, the French ambassador to Algeria, and Algeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdelaziz Bouteflika.[52] According to the terms of the agreement, 157 paintings and all 136 drawings from the collection that had been sent to the Louvre in May 1962 were to be repatriated to Algeria. Algeria, in turn, was to expedite eighteen paintings back to France that had been identified as *dépôts de l'état*. The accord also authorized a number of trades, most significantly the retrocession to France of a lithograph by Antoine-Jean Gros, *Mamelouk à cheval* (1817), and the retrocession to Algeria of a marble plaque and a mosaic façade from the Tachfiniya madrasa in the western Algerian city of Tlemcen that had been housed at the Musée de Cluny in Paris. Barring last minute changes, the exchange—to be financed by the French state—was set for December 1968.

It was at this moment, however, that a small minority of French policymakers who had remained quietly hostile to the plan decided to act. They were led by the Minister of Foreign

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[50] AMAE-C: 29QO/90: "Projet de protocole concernant les œuvres d'art françaises et algériennes" (1 April 1965).

[51] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Procès-verbal des réunions tenues au Ministère des Affaires Culturelles (Direction des Musées de France) les 18, 22, 23, et 25 mai 1967, pour étudier le projet d'accord sur la coopération franco-algérienne en matière d'œuvres d'art" (29 May 1967). Representing France at the meetings: Jean Chatelain, Hubert Delesalle, Michel Laclotte, Pierre Rosenberg, and Jean-Michel Dabque. Representing Algeria: Habib Hamdani, Sid Ahmed Baghli, Jean de Maisonseul, and Messrs. Benouniche and Haddad.

[52] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Accord du 11 juillet 1968" (11 July 1968).

Affairs, Michel Debré. Debré had previously served as the first Prime Minister of the Fifth Republic until he resigned in protest over the signing of the Evian Accords and the abandonment of French Algeria. On Christmas Eve 1968 Debré ordered André Malraux to postpone the transfer of the artwork, demanding that Malraux investigate the possibility of removing certain works placed on List A, which consisted of artwork brought to France in May 1962, but rightfully the property of the Algerian state.[53] Despite opposition from Malraux and Chatelain, the transfer was cancelled. Only when Maurice Schumann, a Christian Democrat and Gaullist supporter, replaced Debré as foreign minister in June 1969 was the restitution allowed to proceed as planned. Six months later, on 2 December 1969, eleven crates arrived at the MBA with the first shipment of Algeria's French artwork.

Debré's actions anticipated the broader popular backlash that was to come when newspapers reported on the repatriation during the winter of 1969-1970. Officials in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Louvre might have been keen to maintain Franco-Algerian cultural ties and respect the agreements made at Evian, but many in the French public felt differently. The widespread perception, particularly on the political right, was that the Evian Accords were a travesty and that Algeria had treacherously ignored the promises made to *pieds-noirs* in the accords by nationalizing land and seizing property belonging to French citizens without indemnification.[54] The announcement of the planned restitution even stirred emotions in the French Senate.[55] The repatriation to Algeria of nearly 300 works of art worth millions came to be perceived as more

[53] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Note à l'attention de Monsieur le Premier Ministre" (30 December 1968).

[54] For a multi-perspective analysis of the Evian Accords and their legacy in France and Algeria, see: René Gallisot, ed., *Les Accords d'Evian en conjoncture et en longue durée* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1997).

[55] "La restitution des œuvres d'art à l'Algérie: une application des accords d'Evian," *Les Dépêches*, 13 December 1969.

than the "surrender" of precious French cultural patrimony to a former "adversary": it was considered symbolic of yet another betrayal of French Algeria.[56] While France's major newspapers reported the return with little editorial commentary, the conservative press condemned the restitution as a "scandal" and a "farce" and accused the government of having "chucked out" French national patrimony.[57] The extreme right-wing weekly *Minute* ran a multi-page spread with black-and-white reproductions of some of the repatriated paintings under the headline "Here are the paintings that Schumann has sold off to Boumediene."[58] The *Dépêche de Paris*, tapping into the belief that Algerian policymakers continuously took advantage of French goodwill, lamented "We continue to give, Algeria continues to take and receive."[59] And the far-right *L'Aurore*, while praising the initial decision to protect the art in 1962, described the restitution as a "sumptuous gift to the Republic of M. Boumediene" made just in time for Christmas.[60]

The response in the Algerian francophone and Arab-language press, however, was overwhelmingly positive. French-language papers financed by the Algerian state, such as *La République* and *An Nasr* (The Victory), lauded the return of "our country's property" and labeled the repatriated art "our artistic patrimony."[61] Even the rhetorically heavy-handed, government-

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[56] "Prenez garde à la peinture," *Bulletin d'information du GNPI* [Groupement national pour l'indemnisation], January 1970.

[57] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Coupures de presse" (1969-1970).

[58] "Les voici, ces tableaux que Schumann a bradés à Boumediène," *Minute*, 18 December 1969. Houari Boumediene seized power as leader of Algeria following a bloodless coup d'état in June 1965 that ousted President Ahmed Ben Bella. Boumediene remained in power until his death in 1978 and was succeeded by Chadli Bendjedid.

[59] "Négociations avec l'Algérie," *La Dépêche de Paris*, 14 February 1970.

[60] "Voici la liste des tableaux 'restitués' à l'Algérie" *L'Aurore*, 12 December 1969.

[61] "Propriété de l'Algérie: des œuvres d'art rapatriées aujourd'hui," *La République*, 2 December 1969; "Des œuvres d'art d'une valeur inestimable réintègrent le Musée National," *An Nasr*, 5 December 1969; "Après le rapatriement de nos œuvres d'art le Musée d'Alger devient le plus important d'Afrique et d'Asie," *La République*, 13 December 1969.

operated Arabic daily *Al-Sh'ab* (The People) deemed the Franco-Algerian negotiations a "great achievement," designating the returned works of art as "Algerian masterpieces" that ought to be appreciated for their "significant aesthetic and historical value" since many Algerians were "ignorant of their country's history."[62] It would seem that to many Algerians the romanticism of Delacroix, the realism of Courbet, and the impressionism of Monet could be appreciated as part of the nation's artistic heritage alongside the illuminated miniatures of Mohammed Racim or the postcolonial works of Abdallah Benanteur and Mohammed Khadda. Nonetheless, the valorization of artwork strongly evoking the religion, culture, and aesthetic values of Western imperialism, demands a more profound interrogation of how "patrimony" was perceived in the postcolonial context—particularly at a moment when Western culture was under rhetorical attack from the congress halls and university campuses of newly independent nations.

Considering that much of French Algeria's colonial infrastructure was absorbed into the administrative fabric of the independent Algerian state, it is not surprising that French ideas concerning patrimony were equally assimilated into the cultural vernacular of the postcolonial nation.[63] The modern concept of patrimony evolved from its classical Roman usage as the principle of family inheritance (*patrimonium*).[64] Understood in this way, might it be possible to see the artwork of the MBA as part of the genealogical patrimony of colonialism—a family inheritance from French Algeria to its postcolonial successor? The postcolonial nation acquired many of the

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[62] "Ist'ādat lūḥāt finīat qīmat min mat'ḥaf al-lūfr ilà al-mat'ḥaf al-waṭanī," *Al-Sh'ab*, 3 December 1969.

[63] Indeed, Nabila Oulebsir makes precisely this argument about Algeria and the rest of French North Africa in her section on extra-European concepts of patrimony in Nabila Oulebsir and Astrid Swenson, "Patrimoine: voyage des mots. *Heritage*, *Erbe*, *Beni culturali*, *Turâth*, *Tigemmi*," *Patrimoine Culturelle* 21-22 (2015): 10-23.

[64] Dominique Poulot, *Patrimoine et musées: l'institution de la culture* (Paris: Hachette, 2001), 4.

physical institutions necessary for sovereignty from the colonial regime and for newly independent nations museums possessed just as much discursive power as they did for their European and imperial counterparts. As the museologist Dominique Poulot claims, museums in the postcolonial context often responded to the imperatives of cultural development wrought by decolonization.[65] Perhaps, then, FLN policymakers desired the restitution of the artwork not merely to pry a cultural concession from a former colonial power as a legal entitlement, but to cement the independent Algerian nation as the legitimate heir to French rule—one equally capable of maintaining the cultural infrastructure necessary for sovereignty and the construction of a modern state.[66]

In anticipation of the scheduled repatriation, the Algerian government had spent considerable resources to renovate the National Fine Arts Museum as part of the Pan-African Cultural Festival (*Festival Culturel Panafricain*) that was held in Algiers in July 1969.[67] And on 2 December 1969 the Algerian Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs, in concert with the French embassy, presided over an official ceremony to welcome the collection back to Algeria. Hadj Ali, a representative from the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, praised the assistance of the French government, intimating that perhaps the same level of cooperation and good faith might be repeated in order to repatriate the vast collection of administrative archives that the French had removed from Algeria in 1962 and deposited in Aix-en-Provence.[68] The story of Algeria's archives

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[65] Poulot, *Patrimoine et musées*, 156.

[66] Indeed, an emphasis on cultural infrastructure and production as a function of "real nationhood" was stressed even in those settler colonies of the British Commonwealth that were seen as proximate to metropolitan imperial culture, such as Canada and Australia. See, for example: James Curran and Stuart Ward, *The Unknown Nation: Australia After Empire* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2010.

[67] "Après le rapatriement de nos œuvres d'art le Musée d'Alger devient le plus important d'Afrique et d'Asie," *La République*, 13 December 1969.

[68] "Après le rapatriement de nos œuvres d'art le Musée d'Alger devient le plus important d'Afrique et d'Asie," *La République*, 13 December 1969.

provides a telling counterpoint and underscores the complexity, and limits, of restitution processes and cooperation. The possibility of returning the archives was brought up alongside the issue of Algeria's French art, but seems to have been marginalized in favor of securing the art's return.[69] To this day the fate of Algeria's archives remains a contentious issue between France and Algeria.[70]

With the return of the museum's masterpieces, Algeria's National Fine Arts Museum opened its new galleries to the public on 14 April 1970. The inaugural exhibit put the entire collection of repatriated art on display, including the Christian works and Orientalist nudes whose destruction was so feared by French officials.[71] Perhaps most surprising was the place the museum gave to Orientalist paintings in a country whose revolutionary leaders had all but denounced French culture in their Tripoli Program of June 1962 and whose capital was styled throughout the 1960s and 1970s as the cradle of anti-colonial national liberation and the "Mecca of Revolution." But this irony was lost on contemporary commentators, at least in public.[72] Instead, the press covering the museum's reopening preferred to focus on the fact that Algeria could boast nearly 8,000 works of fine art representing seven centuries of history—at the time the largest collection in Africa, the Middle East, and the Asian mainland.[73]

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[69] AMAE: 29QO/90: Telegram 2727/29 from Philippe Rebeyrol (21 June 1966).

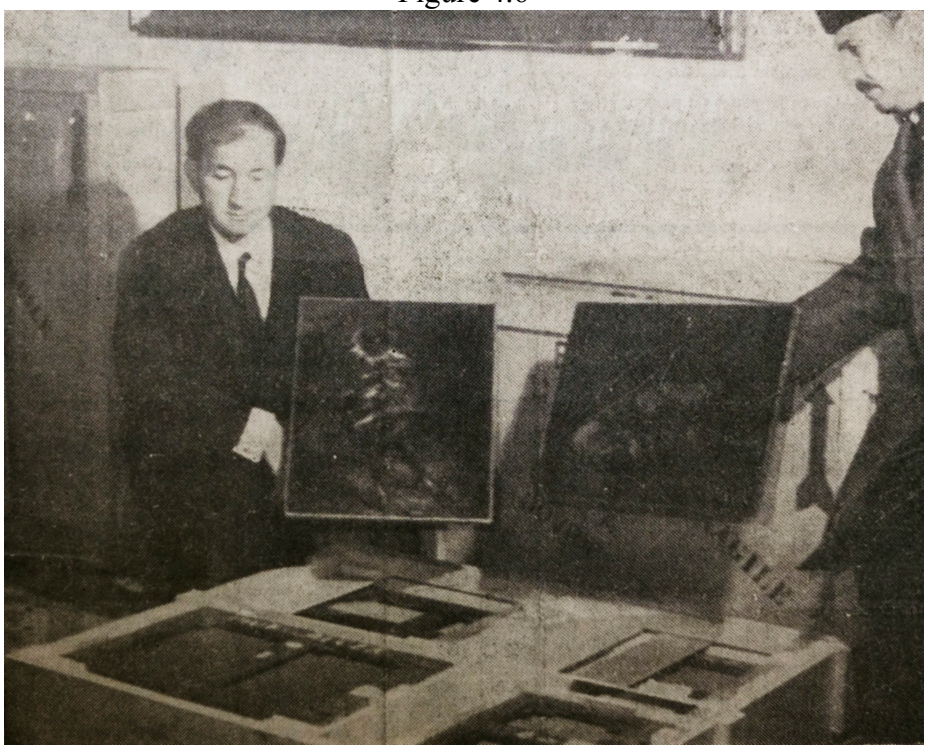
[70] For a detailed discussion of the debate surrounding Algeria's archives, see: Todd Shepard, "'Of Sovereignty': Disputed Archives, 'Wholly Modern' Archives, and the Post-Decolonization French and Algerian Republics, 1962-2012," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 869-883.

[71] "Le Musée des Beaux-Arts rouvre ses portes" *El Moudjahid* (14 April 1970).

[72] Due to the restricted nature of post-independence government archives in Algeria, it is hard to gauge whether there was indeed any discussion—or dissent—among Algerian policymakers concerning the wider existential implications of the art's repatriation, especially at a moment of increasing rhetoric over "arabization" in Algerian society.

[73] AMN: Z66 (Algérie): "Coupures de presse" (1969-1970).

Figure 4.6



Arrival of Artwork in Algiers, December 1969
Source: "Des œuvres d'art d'une valeur inestimable réintègrent le Muée National," *An Nasr*, 5 December 1969

Conclusion:
The Spoils of Independence

For most of the 1990s insurgency gripped Algeria, pitting the country's secular government, led by the FLN, against armed offshoots of the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut* [FIS]). During the conflict's violent nadir in 1995, the Algerian government ordered a detachment of troops to guard the Fine Arts Museum day and night while museum curators presided over the transfer of the collection's most prized pieces to the vaults beneath the Bank of Algeria. The Algerian state was concerned that the large collection of Western

art provided a tempting target for Islamists bent on destroying the museum's Christian artwork and nudes.[74]

The story of Algeria's French artwork poses more questions than it answers. Many are the battles over cultural restitution between former imperial power and former colony, but exploring the history of how a former colony came to claim stewardship over a large collection of artwork emblematic of the former colonizer's culture, history, and religion nuances the typical story of European empires carting off indigenous artifacts for the sake of knowledge and prestige. Here, the artistic patrimony of the colonizer is at stake, recasting the notion of postcolonial restitution. This consideration also invites us to re-evaluate the process of decolonization as one marked by mutual claim-making and cultural negotiation rather than one foremost understood through a lens of rupture and trauma.

In the wake of independence, the cultural artifacts of France's colonial occupation were not easily erased. But we ought not assume that their erasure was a foregone conclusion. Nor should we assume that such erasure was even a desired outcome of decolonization. The Algerian writer Kateb Yacine famously called the French language a "*butin de guerre*"—a spoil of war.[75] He argued that the use of French in Algerian literature, or even as a language of daily interaction between Algerians, did not assume the desire to mimic the former colonizer. Rather, the French language, "won" through the force of arms, was used and appreciated on its own terms. The same might be suggested for the collection of artwork welcomed back to Algiers in 1969. Such cultural refashioning meant that Algerians could appreciate the merits of French art, as well as French

[74] Dalila Mahammed-Orfali, director and curator of the Musée National des Beaux-Arts in Algiers, interview by author, Algiers, Algeria, June 5, 2014.

[75] Benamar Mediene, *Kateb Yacine, le cœur entre les dents: Biographie hétérodoxe* (Paris: R. Laffont, 2006), 144.

artistic heritage more broadly, without equating their acceptance of such things with an acceptance of French colonialism.

For French policymakers and museum officials, the Fine Arts Museum affair exposed one of decolonization's unintended consequences: a collection of mostly French art, placed in Algerian territory by French authorities and at the expense of the colonial regime, was to become the property of an independent Algeria. With the end of French Algeria near inevitable by 1961, a concerted effort was made to save this significant part of French patrimony by nationalizing the museum. While this plan was unsuccessful, it does illustrate the importance that French administrators attached to the museum and its collection of art, both as physical assets and as symbols of French cultural identity. Nonetheless, once the project was abandoned, Paris ultimately recognized the legal basis for Algeria's claim as outlined by the property transfer clause in the Evian Accords. Such an outcome was not necessarily certain, however, especially at a time when Franco-Algerian relations in the postcolonial period were strained by such issues as Algerian nationalization of French-owned businesses, continued French nuclear testing in the Sahara, and the ambiguity surrounding Algeria's administrative archives. The negotiations that took place between France and Algeria highlight the critical roles that contingency and individual actors played in this example of postcolonial restitution.

The historian Joshua Cole has put forward the compelling notion of decolonization's "family romance," stating that the experience of French colonialism in Algeria produced "intense…even intimate historical relationships" that evolved into "powerful linkages whose singular effects could not be effaced by the political disaggregation that we call decolonization."[76]

[76] Joshua Cole, "Intimate Acts and Unspeakable Relations: Remembering Torture and the War for Algerian Independence," in *Memory, Empire and Postcolonialism: Legacies of French Colonialism*, ed. Alec G. Hargreaves (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 136. See also Cole, "Remembering the Battle of Paris: 17 October 1961 in French and Algerian Memory," *French Politics, Culture, and Society*, 21, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 21-50.

The restitution of French artwork to Algeria provides a tangible example of such a relationship and reveals an alternate narrative of decolonization, one that challenges the postcolonial *idée fixe* of "decolonizing the mind." Rather than seeking to expunge the cultural imprint of the former colonizer, Algerians—or at least those acting in an official capacity—accepted the cultural legacy bequeathed to them through a diplomatic technicality and negotiated for the return of their state's rightful property. A "spoil of war" perhaps, but a national treasure nonetheless. Moreover, negotiating restitution was also about negotiating postcolonial sovereignty.[77] The route out of empire was not a linear path and decolonization was anything but a science—it required both confrontation and cooperation and involved a plurality of voices that expressed conflicting desires. On some level, it was an art.

[77] For comparable legacies in the Belgian Congo and in former French and British Africa see work by Sarah Van Beurden and Berny Sèbe, respectively: Sarah Van Beurden, "The Art of (Re)Possession: Heritage and the Cultural Politics of Congo's Decolonization," *The Journal of African History* 56, no. 1 (March 2015): 143-164. And for an analysis of another seemingly counter-intuitive post-colonial development regarding the rehabilitation of imperial culture in Africa, see: Berny Sèbe, "From Post-Colonialism to Cosmopolitan Nation-Building? British and French Imperial Heroes in Twenty-First Century Africa," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 5 (2014): 936-968. In the Franco-Algerian case, similar negotiations concerning cultural patrimony took place over the fate of colonial-era commemorative monuments in French Algeria (see Chapter 5). Moreover, contemporary debates concerning the aesthetic value of colonial-era buildings and their future in Algeria have seen the creation of local organizations, such as the Association Bel Horizon d'Oran, which argue that even the architecture of French colonialism should be considered part of Algerian patrimony and therefore worth protecting (see: http://www.oran-belhorizon.com).

Chapter Five

Dismantling Empire:
Ruins and Ruination across the Mediterranean

He knew that this happy crowd was unaware of something that one can read in books, which is that the plague bacillus never dies or vanishes entirely, that it can remain dormant for dozens of years in furniture or clothing, that it waits patiently in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, handkerchiefs and old papers, and that perhaps the day will come when, for the instruction or misfortune of mankind, the plague will rouse its rats and send them to die in some well-contented city.

Albert Camus, *The Plague* (1947)[1]

Introduction:
Imperial Debris

On 3 July 1962 the Provisional Executive formally declared Algeria's independence from France. Four days later, a detachment of French military engineers assembled in the heights above downtown Algiers in front of the Palais d'Été—the Moorish revival residence built at the turn of the century for France's administrative rulers in Algeria—to begin the long process of removing the visible remainders of French colonialism. At nightfall the unit, with the aid of an eight-ton crane, removed a line of nine statues from the palace's entryway: generals, admirals, *maréchaux de France*—all of them the former governor-generals of a French Algeria that was no more. The operation took until midnight, when the final bust was hauled down. Like the rest, the statue was taken to a French military base where it joined a growing collection of colonial artifacts awaiting transport back across the Mediterranean to the former metropole.[2] Having fought a protracted war of attrition against the FLN, the French were leaving Algeria, dismantling their colony statue-by-statue.

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[1] Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Robin Buss (London: Penguin, 2001), 237-238.

[2] "Les statues qui ornaient l'entrée du Palais d'Été iront dans des musées de France," *La Dépêche d'Algérie*, 9 July 1962.

Until 1965, when the last of France's remaining troops departed Algerian soil, the French army undertook a massive campaign to locate, remove, and repatriate the scores of statues, war memorials, commemorative monuments, plaques, cannons, church bells, and military souvenirs that had once made up French Algeria's imperial patrimony. This chapter will not only examine the French military's decision to salvage, abandon, or purposefully destroy the cultural detritus of France's colonial project in Algeria, but it will also investigate what became of those objects that were sent to France. In many cases commemorative monuments repatriated from Algeria were reinstalled in municipalities with colonial connections, thus raising new questions about a postcolonial memory in France that historians have diagnosed as suffering from "amnesia" or an officially imposed "doctrine of oblivion."[3] Additionally, this chapter will document the parallel operation initiated by an independent Algerian state to demolish, camouflage, or repurpose sites of colonial commemoration left behind by the French. Today, these "ruins" remain in Algeria, often transformed by layers of concrete or reworked by Algerian artists and rededicated. Others remain intact, either cared for by choice or merely forgotten about. The efforts of both French and Algerian policymakers during the prolonged process of decolonization resulted in dozens of colonial-era monuments and memorials scattered across both sides of the Mediterranean, often altered, adapted, and re-memorialized for their new postcolonial physical and political spaces. The story of what became of French Algeria's commemorative "debris" exposes the awkward cultural refashioning precipitated by the forces of decolonization.

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[3] 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: Berghahn, 2010), 279. The concept of "colonial forgetting" is deeply entrenched in the historiography of French imperial history, particularly as it relates to Algeria. See, for example: Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1991); Sandrine Lemaire, "Du joyau impérial à l'amnésie nationale: l'image de l'Algérie dans les manuels scolaires français," *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 26, no. 1 (2004): 31-57; and Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Aphasia, Race and Disabled Histories in France," *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2010): 121-156.

The process of decolonization set in motion a circulation of people and objects that, despite their relocations, maintained strong entanglements across newly formed borders. Symbolic though it may be, tracing the history of France's commemorative monuments across the meridian of Algerian independence provides a concrete example of this process. It shows, in a very particular way, how decolonization was experienced on the ground. Moreover, it gets to the heart of the question "how does one decolonize?" What is taken? What gets left behind? Too often historians speak of "empire building," but less so of what it means to dismantle one.[4] Historians of decolonization are so frequently concerned with asking the question "why?" that seldom do they ask the question "how?" In doing just this, we can assume a critical vantage point and move beyond vague glosses like "colonial legacy" or "colonial vestiges" and sharpen our "sense of how to track the tangibilities of empire."[5]

To study these tangibilities, Ann Laura Stoler has put forth the concept of colonial ruin and ruination, arguing that a careful analysis of empire's material inheritance and its effect on postcolonial societies can lead to a better understanding of colonial afterlives and the durability of colonial influence. The French colonial experience in Algeria left behind many sites that can be considered "colonial ruins," both real and abstract: from the still radioactive stretches of vitreous desert that are the remnants of French atomic weapons testing in the Sahara to the shape of contemporary Algerian cities as a legacy of 132 years' worth of expropriation and urban transformation. This chapter, however, focuses on commemorative monuments for three reasons. First, they are ruins in a literal sense. Memorials of stone and statues of bronze that no longer have

[4] A notable exception, in the French case, has been Jean Fremigacci, Daniel Lefeuvre, and Marc Michel, eds., *Démontage d'empires* (Paris: Riveneuve Éditions, 2012), which examines some of the logistics involved for certain discrete moments of transition across France's colonial empire and beyond.

[5] Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 12.

a place in the imperium they were constructed to commemorate. As Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle note, a "ruin is a ruin precisely because it seems to have lost its function or meaning in the present."[6] Second, commemorative monuments are useful objects with which to chart histories of rupture and transition. As the visible *lieux de mémoire* of the old regime, they are generally the first sites to be attacked, altered, or removed. This dynamic is common in histories of revolution and iconoclasm, from the French Revolution to the fall of the Soviet Union. As Katherine Verdery has written, "because political order has something to do with both landscape and history, changing the political order…often means changing the bronzed human being who both stabilizes the landscape and temporally freezes particular values in it."[7]

While this was certainly true in French Algeria, what occurred in 1962 and the years immediately following does differ in one very profound way from most other histories: in Algeria the French decided to dismantle the monuments to their political landscape themselves. As this chapter will show, it was French pride and paranoia that divested Algeria of its colonial remainders more so than the sledgehammers and pickaxes of the postcolonial nation-state. The former colonial power was therefore, rather ironically, the agent directly responsible for divesting Algeria of its imperial detritus. And lastly, commemorative monuments are a useful unit of analysis because where they do remain, either in France or Algeria, they continue to provoke debates that can directly challenge constructed postcolonial narratives. As Stoler herself notes: "To think with ruins of empire is to emphasize less the artifacts of empire as dead matter of remnants of a defunct regime than to attend to their re-appropriations, neglect, and strategic and active positioning within

[6] Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, eds., *Ruins of Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 6.

[7] Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 6.

the politics of the present."[8] In the wake of Algerian independence, many of these commemorative monuments became flashpoints of memory in both Algeria and in the former French metropole. Having already been vested with this totemic iconography of memorialization that is so important in crafting narratives for posterity, the removal, relocation, re-appropriation, or destruction of such monuments carried important symbolic weight. The fate of colonial-era mementos occupied French and Algerian policymakers alike and the decisions they made had profound consequences for partisans of competing narratives of history in each country. The concept of colonial ruin also brings with it the notion of "rot" and "ruination": the persistent, often corrosive, effect that colonialism's past has on postcolonial societies. This phenomenon is well documented in postcolonial studies as primarily affecting the formerly colonized. However, by looking at how the repatriation of commemorative monuments also affected French society, this concept can be expanded in order to understand that the "rot that remains" can be as true for the metropole as it is for the former colony.

The pages ahead will look at the history of commemorative monuments in French Algeria, the context in which the decision to remove them was made by French policymakers, and the fate of those monuments that were repatriated to the metropole as well as those that remained in Algeria. In exploring the afterlives of this colonial flotsam, this chapter will examine the controversy sparked by the rededication of a statue of Joan of Arc from Oran in the northern French city of Caen and the debate in an independent Algeria over what was to be done with the monumental French war memorial that commanded views of downtown Algiers. By looking at sources that reveal the fate of objects caught up in the dynamics of decolonization, it becomes possible to look across the dividing line of independence and examine how the process of

[8] Stoler, *Imperial Debris*, 11.

decolonization operated between local actors on either side of the Mediterranean who had to sort out the very real problem of imperial debris. In doing so, one discovers that the cultural story of decolonization tells quite a lot about the political one. Let us then take the decision made by French policymakers to cart off their country's colonial patrimony in Algeria. From a dusty collection of military paraphernalia to monumental war memorials, French decolonization precipitated a fire sale of empire: everything had to go.

Figure 5.1



Entrance to the Palais d'Été, Algiers
Source: Author's collection

Figure 5.2



Marble busts removed from the entranceway of the Palais d'Eté
wait for transit to France at Camp Sirocco outside of Algiers, July 1962
Source: Alain Amato, *Monuments en Exil*

"Repatriating" Colonial Patrimony

The construction of commemorative monuments in French Algeria was a relatively late phenomenon in the colony's history. As the historians Jennifer Sessions and Jan Jansen have shown, French authorities commissioned few commemorative monuments in the colony itself during much of the half century following the conquest of Algeria in 1830.[9] This was linked foremost to the initial uncertainty surrounding France's long-term occupation of Algeria, and later to the fact that Algeria was largely administered by the French military until 1870. As such, most official monuments were erected in the countryside, often placed at the sites of battles to commemorate victories won and comrades lost.[10] With the exception of Algiers and Constantine, few commemorative monuments were constructed inside urban centers, and those that had been, were often the result of local and individual initiatives.[11] The founding of the Third Republic in 1870 saw the administration of the colony (with the exception of the Sahara) pass into civilian hands. Algeria represented the largest, and most entrenched, settler presence in the French empire. By end of the century French Algeria counted an estimated 600,000 settlers of European extraction (commonly referred to as *pieds-noirs*).[12] Now in control of local budgets and commemorative activities, the *pieds-noirs* that made up the new civilian regime in Algeria precipitated a "commemorative explosion" that saw at least thirty-four important monuments constructed

[9] Jennifer E. Sessions, "Ambiguous Glory: The Algerian Conquest and the Politics of Colonial Commemoration in Post-Revolutionary France," *Outre-Mers* 94, no. 350-351 (2006): 91-102; and Jan C. Jansen, "1880-1914: une 'statuomanie' à l'algérienne" in *Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale, 1830-1962*, ed. Abderrahmane Bouchè, Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, Ouanassa Siari Tengour, and Sylvie Thénault (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2013), 261-265.

[10] Jansen, "1880-1914: une 'statuomanie' à l'algérienne," 262.

[11] Sessions, "Ambiguous Glory," 100.

[12] Philip C. Naylor and Alf A. Heggoy, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 15.

between 1884 and 1914.[13] While municipal subscriptions financed many of the commemorative monuments during this period, a large number were also *travaux d'art*, or public artworks financed by the state itself and sent to Algeria. As Jansen notes, the emergence of commemorative iconography in this period helped forge founding myths of conquest that legitimized a sense of public space for a European settler population that had appropriated, often violently, that space from Algeria's indigenous population.[14]

The aftermath of the First World War and the impending centennial of France's conquest of Algeria provided further opportunities for commemoration and memorialization throughout the colony. Following the fervor for memorialization in the metropole, municipal authorities in French Algeria erected an estimated 200 war memorials (*monuments aux morts*) to those European settlers who had fought and died in the trenches.[15] Many of these memorials also acknowledged the service of the nearly 173,000 Algerian Muslims that the colonial regime had conscripted to fight for France.[16] The most famous of these was the art-deco *Monument aux Morts* commissioned by the city of Algiers and inaugurated in the city's center in November 1928.[17] A creation of the sculptor Paul Landowski, the monument was meant to solemnly honor the common sacrifice of *pied-noir* and Algerian Muslim alike by depicting two soldiers on horseback—one French, the other a North

[13] Jansen, "1880-1914: une "statuomanie" à l'algérienne," 263.

[14] Jansen, "1880-1914: une 'statuomanie' à l'algérienne," 264.

[15] Jan C. Jansen and Augustin Jomier, "'Une autre "Union Sacrée?' Commémorer la Grande Guerre dans l'Algérie colonisée (1918-1939), " *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 61, no. 2 (2014): 43.

[16] Jansen and Jomier, "Une autre 'Union Sacrée?'," 32.

[17] Jansen and Jomier, "Une autre 'Union Sacrée?'," 48-50.

African *spahi*—raising the cenotaph of an unknown soldier above a winged Victory.[18] The yearlong commemoration of French Algeria's centenary in 1930 also occasioned the commissioning of several public monuments, including the construction of a large stele in the coastal city of Sidi-Fredj that memorialized the site where French troops first disembarked in Algeria on 14 June 1830. A month before the Musée des Beaux Arts opened in May 1930, French authorities inaugurated the Musée Franchet d'Espèrey, a military museum located in the casbah of Algiers that housed the relics and war trophies of France's conquest and subsequent "pacification" of Algeria and the Sahara.[19] By the outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence in November 1954, the number of monuments, public and private, commemorating France's colonial oeuvre in Algeria was substantial. In the aftermath of the conflict a good deal of it would be gone.

Figure 5.3



Monument aux Morts, Algiers
Source: Author's collection

[18] Landowski is perhaps best known for his work in Rio de Janeiro: the 38 meter-high statue of Christ the Redeemer at the summit of Corcovado.

[19] The museum was named after the First World War general, Louis Franchet d'Espèrey (1856-1942), who had been born in the Algerian city of Mostaganem.

Figure 5.4



Paul Landowski's *Monument aux Morts* in Algiers
Source: Author's collection

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Even before the Evian Accords were signed, French military officials had begun raising questions about the future of French Algeria's colonial patrimony. Common sense suggested that memorials and museums dedicated to the memory of France's conquest and colonization of Algeria would not survive long in the post-independence period. Captain Jacques Vichot, director

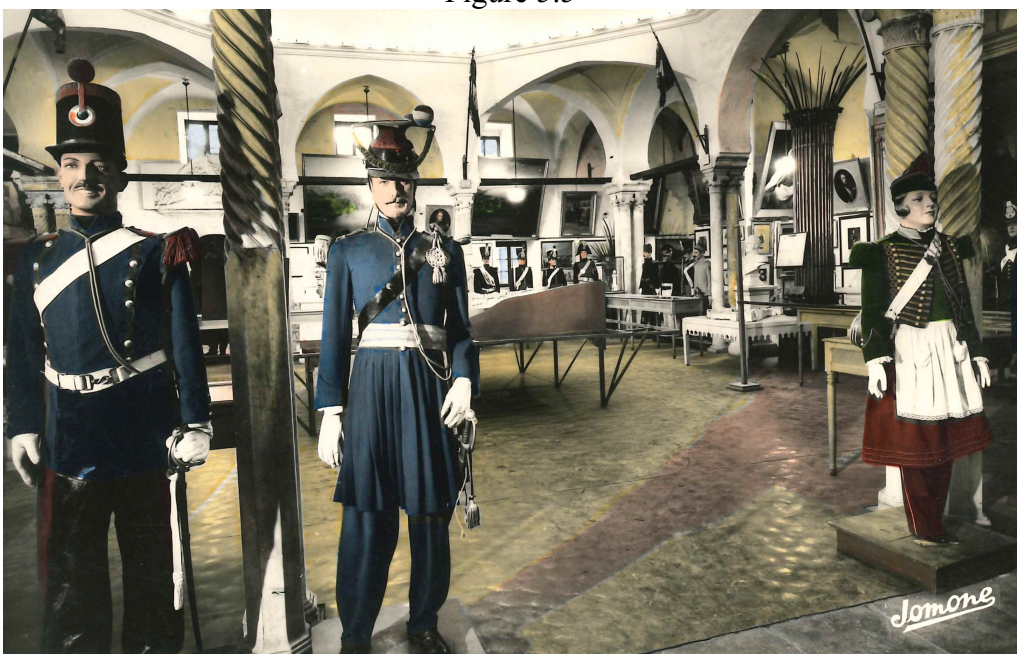
of the Musée de la Marine in Paris, was the first to broach the subject. Writing urgently to his colleague Captain Henri Pacaud, commander of French naval forces in Algiers, Vichot inquired about the possibility of repatriating the collection of military memorabilia housed at the Musée Franchet d'Espèrey before the vote on self-determination.[20] Vichot was in turn acting on the advice of Jean Brunon, a board member of the Musée de l'Armée who had previously helped the French military orchestrate similar operations in Indochina, Tunisia, and Madagascar.[21] Vichot hoped that Captain Pacaud might be able to convince other military commanders in Algeria to save the museum's collection of battle standards, oil paintings, moth-eaten uniforms, sabers, muskets, and cannons before such artifacts of imperial conquest fell into the hands of the Algerians, at which time, Vichot prophesized, "everything that we posses over there [will be captured]…our historical souvenirs will be subjected to insults, destroyed, or thrown into a landfill."[22]

[20] Service Historique de la Défense (SHD) 1 H 2116/D2: Letter from Capitaine de Vaisseau Jacques Vichot (Directeur des Musées de la Marine) to Capitaine de Vaisseau Henri Pacaud (Commandant de la Marine à Alger) (12 March 1962).

[21] SHD: 1 H 2116/D2: Letter from Capitaine de Vaisseau Jacques Vichot (Directeur des Musées de la Marine) to Capitaine de Vaisseau Henri Pacaud (Commandant de la Marine à Alger) (12 March 1962). Indochina, Tunisia, and Madagascar became independent from France in 1954, 1956, and 1960, respectively.

[22] SHD: 1 H 2116/D2: Letter from Capitaine de Vaisseau Jacques Vichot (Directeur des Musées de la Marine) to Capitaine de Vaisseau Henri Pacaud (Commandant de la Marine à Alger) (12 March 1962).

Figure 5.5



Interior of the Musée Franchet d'Espérey, Algiers
Source: Author's collection

Vichot's concerns seemed to have touched off even greater fears within the French Ministry of the Armed Forces, for on 6 June 1962—less than one month before Algerian independence—General Michel Fouquet, the supreme commander of French forces in Algeria, handed down a priority order to his officers in the field instructing them to undertake an immediate survey of monuments, museum collections, and military souvenirs in preparation for their eventual repatriation to the metropole.[23] The campaign was to be methodical and systematic and the future transport of objects across the Mediterranean would be financed by the military's budget.[24] While the most valuable pieces in the Musée Franchet d'Espèrey were evacuated by the end of June 1962 and shipped to the Museum of the Army at the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris, other conspicuous mementos of France's colonial past in Algeria were not so easily transported. Commemorative

[23] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/1: "Transfert en métropole de Souvenirs Militaires actuellement en Algérie" (6 June 1962).

[24] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/1: "Rapatriement sur la France des statues et monuments d'Algérie" (20 December 1962).

monuments weighing thousands of kilos scattered across hundreds of thousands of square kilometers required a more labor-intensive approach. In order to prioritize which monuments to dismantle and repatriate, orders from the Ministry of the Armed Forces instructed French officers to gather information that took into account not only the location, size, weight, building material, and "aesthetic value" of a particular statue or monument, but also to determine the "psychological effect" that an object's removal might have on the local population.[25] This point is telling, if vague. It remains unclear exactly whose psyche the removals might affect: Algerian Muslim or *pied-noir*? It might be assumed, however, that the overt dismantling of French commemorative monuments by the military would further dishearten the colony's European settlers, many of whom were already convinced that the French authorities had abandoned them along with the struggle to keep Algeria French. While a few monuments had been dismantled and transported to French military bases by the end of June, most remained standing on 1 July 1962. As the date of the referendum approached, French military forces had been overwhelmed by the precarious security situation in Algeria and had done little apart from draw up a list of commemorative monuments to be collected and repatriated sometime after independence.

The results of the referendum on Algerian self-determination were, as predicted, overwhelmingly in favor of independence and on 3 July 1962, Charles de Gaulle announced France's recognition of Algerian sovereignty. The subsequent celebrations that broke out across Algeria quickly targeted symbols of French colonial rule. In Algiers, young men draped statues with Algerian flags and hung pro-FLN slogans across public monuments.[26] A statue of Joan of Arc in front of the Grande Poste was "veiled" in a *haïk*—the traditional female face covering worn in

[25] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/1: "Transfert en métropole de Souvenirs Militaires actuellement en Algérie" (6 June 1962).

[26] Alain Amato, *Monuments en Exil* (Paris: Éditions de l'Atlanthrope, 1979), 19.

Algeria.[27] In Sidi-Fredj, a crowd swarmed the debarkation monument hurling stones. Limbs and heads were removed from other statues, while chisels and hammers struck away commemorative plaques.[28] This "war of the statues" crystalized an already significant French anxiety: that following France's withdrawal Algerian nationalists would take the first opportunity available to them to systematically erase the symbols of French sovereignty in Algeria. In the wake of such "vandalism" came a renewed sense of urgency among certain French officials to begin collecting and sheltering French commemorative monuments.

Provisions in the Evian Accords had permitted a limited French military presence in Algeria for up to five years following independence, which meant that French military authorities could still undertake operations to repatriate commemorative monuments from Algeria, albeit in coordination with the newly independent Algerian state. However, during the summer of 1962, fighting between different factions of the FLN cast doubt over who would ultimately represent the new state and many French units simply took the initiative themselves to dismantle commemorative monuments and house them in the parade grounds of their barracks. These operations began as early as 7 July 1962 and took place mainly after nightfall to avoid public scrutiny.[29] Early orders insisted upon the "great discretion" that ought to be taken while removing certain objects.[30] Over the next several months, French army units set out from their remaining bases across Algeria to record, dismantle, and cart off what they could of the former colony's

[27] See the photo essay on Algerian independence by French photographer Marc Riboud: Marc Riboud, Seloua Luste Boulbina, and Malek Alloula, *Algérie/Indépendance* (Paris: Le Bec en l'Air, 2009).

[28] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 19.

[29] "Les statues qui ornaient l'entrée du Palais d'Été iront dans des musées de France," *La Dépêche d'Algérie*, 9 July 1962.

[30] SHD: 1 H 2116/D2: "Transfert en Métropole de certains souvenirs militaires d'Alger" (22 March 1962).

commemorative patrimony: from the mountains of Kabylia where an oval plaque commemorated the site near which 600 French soldiers perished during a blizzard in the winter of 1852; to downtown Algiers where the entire five and a half ton equestrian statue of the Duc d'Orléans was removed from the Place du Gouvernement; to Tamanrasset, the southernmost city in Algeria, where the mummified heart of French missionary Charles de Foucauld was entombed in the desert sand. By August 1962 news of these salvage operations began reaching the metropole, setting off an unexpected phenomenon: having heard of the French decision to uproot Algeria's commemorative monuments, private citizens, town councils, and veterans' associations across metropolitan France wrote to the Ministry of Culture in the hopes of acquiring one of their own—often well before much of this artwork had even left Algeria.[31]

To handle the quickly growing number of requests the French Ministries of Culture, Algerian Affairs, and the Armed Forces formed an inter-ministerial committee headed by the Ministry of the Interior.[32] This committee handled petitions on a first-come, first-served basis in order to facilitate demands and relieve the French military of its mounting logistical problem as garrisons began overflowing with accumulating colonial debris. The first requests for statues came from high profile politicians acting out of personal interest or on behalf of their constituencies. Since France permits politicians and administrators to hold multiple offices, it was not uncommon for influential senators, representatives in the National Assembly, and other ministers of state based in Paris to intercede on behalf of the small towns where they also served as mayors and local councilmen. In making requests some cities claimed a historical connection: a certain colonial

[31] Archives des Musées Nationaux (AMN): Z66 (Algérie), 1/3/H: "Protection et affection des monuments commémoratifs en Algérie" (17 August 1962).

[32] AMN: Z66 (Algérie), 1/3/H: "Affectation des monuments commémoratifs en Algérie" (13 October 1962).

general had been a son of the region, or else a significant number of residents were recently repatriated *pieds-noirs* looking to obtain a piece of their abandoned history.

Figure 5.6



French soldiers dismantle part of the Foreign Legion memorial in Sidi-Bel-Abbès, October 1962
Source: Alain Amato, *Monuments en Exil*

The champagne mogul, Jean Taittinger, made one of the first demands, asking for a statue for the city of Reims where he was mayor.[33] Louis Jacquinot, former Minister of the Sahara, and following Algerian independence, Minister of French Overseas Territories, personally wrote André Malraux, the Minister of Culture, to obtain a statue of Joan of Arc for the city of Vaucouleurs in northeastern France. According to local legend, the warrior saint had begun her famous trek to meet Charles Valois from the village in 1429.[34] Malraux wrote back with assurances

[33] AMN: Z66 (Algérie), 1/3/H: "Note à l'attention de Monsieur Landis, adjoint au Directeur des Musées de France" (30 August 1962).

[34] AMN: Z66 (Algérie), 1/3/H: Letter from Louis Jacquinot to André Malraux (27 September 1962).

that Jacquinot would be given the very best statue of Joan of Arc that could be found in Algeria.[35] The mayor of Limoges also personally wrote Malraux to request a bust of native son Maréchal Thomas Robert Bugeaud, the French general who had mercilessly suppressed Algerian resistance to French occupation in the 1840s though violent counter-insurgency raids targeting the indigenous population.[36]

A study of the requests filed by the Ministry of Culture reveals that applications for statues and commemorative monuments came from as many municipalities in the north of France as from the south, the region where the majority of *pieds-noirs* had settled in the metropole following Algerian independence. This suggests that requests for monuments were not coming solely from traditional bastions of nostalgia for French Algeria. While many requests were often tethered to some kind of historical point of reference, colonial or otherwise, other cities in France made requests for more practical reasons: many had had their public monuments destroyed during the Second World War, some from Allied bombing, others dynamited by the Germans. Thus, the return of commemorative patrimony from Algeria presented an opportunity for postwar France to rebuild one historical legacy with the remains of another. In a period normally associated with what Jan Jansen has termed the French state's "politics of concealment" vis-à-vis the memory of French Algeria, the broad interest in acquiring the remnants of France's colonial patrimony is telling.[37] Even if that interest was not directly motivated by colonial nostalgia, the importation of such colonial iconography meant that reminders of France's past in Algeria were, at the very least, visible throughout post-Algeria France. Perhaps most notable then was the active role that French

[35] AMN: Z66 (Algérie), 1/3/H: Letter from André Malraux to Louis Jacquinot (5 November 1962).

[36] AMN: Z66 (Algérie), 1/3/H: Letter from Louis Longequeue to André Malraux (27 February 1962).

[37] Jansen, "Politics of Remembrance," 277.

ministries played in facilitating the collection, repatriation, and rededication of this patrimony. One incident in particular illustrates how a decision made by an overburdened administration tasked with sorting the unanticipated logistical problem of Algeria's commemorative debris quickly evolved into a battle over memory by those still bitter at the perceived abandonment of French Algeria.

In the Shadow of Joan of Arc: Conflict and Commemoration in Post-Algeria France

On 17 December 1962, the inter-ministerial committee formed under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior allocated a statue of Joan of Arc to the city of Caen in Normandy.[38] It was one of a dozen or so allocated at that particular meeting. While Louis Jacquinot had used his personal connections with André Malraux to claim the imposing statue of Joan of Arc that had been the target of post-independence vandalism in Algiers, there still remained a statue of Joan of Arc on horseback that had been salvaged from Oran. Colonial authorities had originally erected the statue on the esplanade in front of the city's cathedral and dedicated it on 10 May 1931 to commemorate the centenary of Oran's conquest by the French on 4 January 1831 as well as the 500th anniversary of Joan of Arc's execution by the English in Rouen on 30 May 1431.[39] Sculpted in gilded bronze by Joseph Ebstein, a *pied-noir* from Batna, the statue was immortalized by Albert Camus's description of it in *The Plague*. In November 1962, French forces located and dismantled the statue for repatriation.

[38] AMN: Z66 (Algérie), 1/3/H: "Affection de la statue de Jeanne d'Arc, précédemment érigée à Alger" (25 April 1962).

[39] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 64.

Figure 5.7



The statue of Joan of Arc in front of the Cathédral d'Oran, c. 1960
Source: http://popodoran.canalblog.com/archives/2014/05/06/29810989.html

In the wake of Algerian independence, Caen had received a modest number of repatriated *pieds-noirs* and they were among the first to lobby for the statue's relocation to city.[40] Given the strong Catholic rhetoric often employed by more radical *pieds-noirs* in their defense of French Algeria during the war, the choice of Joan of Arc was meaningful. Closely attached to ideas of Catholic militancy and French nationalism, the Maiden of Orléans had long been used as a symbol of conservatism in France and remains one of the contemporary far-right Front National.[41] During the conflict in Algeria some high ranking officers in the French army interpreted the war they were fighting through the vernacular of a resurgent postwar militant Catholicism advocated by

[40] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 64.

[41] "La mythification de Jeanne d'Arc, de l'Action Française au FN," *Le Monde*, 6 January 2012.

reactionary groups in the metropole, such as *La Cité Catholique*.[42] Espousing the need to undertake counter-revolutionary warfare against the enemy, this small but powerful faction saw the defense of French Algeria as the frontline in a larger conflict to protect Western Christendom from the twin evils of Islam and international communism that they believed Algerian nationalism represented.[43] When the tide of history broke against them and Algerian independence became an ever increasing likelihood, many such men joined the OAS to continue the fight. In one of his final radio broadcasts as leader of the terrorist organization, General Raoul Salan, the former commander-in-chief of French forces in Algeria between 1956 and 1958, proclaimed that "with our eyes fixed on the example of Saint Joan of Arc, we shall embark on this ultimate Crusade upon which depends the fate of humanity."[44] The virgin warrior was a potent symbol for those military officers and *pieds-noir* ultras who believed that France had been fighting for a higher purpose in Algeria.

The petition to obtain the statue of Joan of Arc was supported by the mayor of Caen, Jean-Marie Louvel, a senator affiliated with the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (a Christian-Democratic party) and a supporter of French Algeria who had abstained from voting in the first referendum on Algerian self-determination that was conducted in metropolitan France in January 1961. With the municipality's request for a statue granted, an organizing committee allocated 40,000 New Francs to install Joan of Arc on a new stone plinth in the Place de la Résistance and a rededication ceremony was planned for Sunday, 10 May 1964.[45] Preparations for the ceremony,

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[42] J.G. Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 98.

[43] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 98-99.

[44] Cited in Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 99.

[45] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 64.

however, soon became a battleground between the political left and right over the perceived memorialization of France's colonial past.

Raymond Jacquet, the local prefect, was the first to express uncertainty.[46] Initially showing little enthusiasm for the rededication ceremony, he hesitated to support the event. A longtime socialist, Jacquet was concerned that the civic ceremony might be exploited by far-right elements to protest the loss of French Algeria.[47] His fears were confirmed by the actions of the city's small association of *pieds-noirs*, labeled by the regional press as "anti-governmental" and much more "politically engaged" than its parent organization ANFANOMA (*Association Nationale des Français d'Afrique du Nord, d'Outre-Mer et de leurs Amis*), which had also taken an interest in the ceremony.[48] This local chapter published, and widely distributed, a communiqué calling for *pieds-noirs* across France to attend the inauguration ceremony, hoping to turn the event into a "great celebration of repatriates."[49] This association also sent invitations to several high-profile individuals known for their prior support of French Algeria, some of whom were known sympathizers of the OAS. Guests of honor included the wives of General Salan and General Edmond Jouhaud, two of the principal conspirators along with generals André Zeller and Maurice Challe who organized the failed Algiers putsch in April 1961; Colonel Roger Trinquier, a counter-insurgency theorist known for his advocacy of torture who had commanded units in Indochina and Algeria; Colonel Jean-Robert Thomazo, a militant supporter of French Algeria who had presided over the *Front pour l'Algérie Française* (FAF)—the political forerunner to the clandestine OAS;

[46] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 66.

[47] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 66.

[48] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 66.

[49] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 66.

and Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour.[50] This last invitation was particularly problematic: Tixier-Vignancour was a former Vichy official, lawyer, and extreme rightwing politician who had defended members of the OAS in court against treason and conspiracy charges, including General Salan and Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Bastien-Thiry, the mastermind of the failed assassination attempt on Charles de Gaulle at Petit-Clamart on 22 August 1962. A year later Tixier-Vignancour would run against de Gaulle as a far-right independent candidate in the 1965 presidential campaign, publicly criticizing de Gaulle's abandonment of French Algeria. Jean-Marie Le Pen, himself a former officer having served in Indochina and Algeria, and future leader of the rightwing *Front National* party, would manage the campaign.

Labor syndicates and leftwing political parties were outraged that chauvinistic partisans of French Algeria had seemingly hijacked the rededication ceremony. In the days leading up to Sunday, 10 May, a coalition consisting of the SFIO (*Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière*), PSU (*Parti Socialiste Unifié*), CGT (*Confédération Générale du Travail*), and CFTC (*Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens*) released a joint statement calling on local authorities to ban the planned rally of *pieds-noirs*. They claimed that the *rapatriés* were too easily swayed by the extreme right and accused them of "holding the fraternal hand of those who would exploit their difficulties for purposes so foreign to democracy."[51] The statement was keen to declare that the coalition did not "lump together North African repatriates," but its writers were clearly wary of the *pied-noir* community and its plan to use the ceremony as an occasion to memorialize itself and, by extension, the memory of French Algeria.[52] This left-leaning coalition

[50] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 67. See also: Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia, *L'Extrême-droite en France: De Maurras à Le Pen, Volume 1* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1998).

[51] *Ouest-France*, 8 May 1964.

[52] *Ouest-France*, 8 May 1964.

also announced that, in protest to Sunday's inauguration, its members would lay a wreath the Friday before at the foot of the war memorial that shared the Place de la Résistance with the statue of Joan of Arc. The same day, the prefect Raymond Jacquet formally recused himself from the event and banned any official military presence at the ceremony given the political orientation that the presence of Mmes Salan and Jouhaud might lend to the proceedings.[53] As concerns mounted a headline in *Le Monde* warned that the ceremony "risks provoking incident."[54] Even the sympathetic Louvel decreed that no public manifestations would be permitted in the streets in order to avoid any particular political interpretation of the day's events. He claimed that his decision was "apolitical" in nature. With only a day remaining, ANFANOMA backed down and announced that it would cancel the appearances of its controversial guests to avoid the "false political character being attributed to the attendance of certain political personalities."[55] With calm returning to Caen, the rededication ceremony went on as planned.

On the day itself an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 *pieds-noirs* attended.[56] Louvel arrived as the sole official authority and unveiled the freshly re-gilt statue of Joan of Arc clad in plate armor with sword and battle standard held high.[57] In the background the municipal band struck up *La Marseillaise*. Louvel then gave a short speech in which he declared: "It is thanks to this saint that the strong wind of fraternity must now blow across France and extinguish her quarrels, may the

[53] "L'inauguration de la statue de Jeanne d'Arc ramenée d'Oran risque de provoquer des incidents," *Le Monde*, 8 May 1964.

[54] "L'inauguration de la statue de Jeanne d'Arc ramenée d'Oran risque de provoquer des incidents," *Le Monde*, 8 May 1964.

[55] "Avant l'inauguration de la statue de Jeanne d'Arc à Caen," *Le Monde*, 9 May 1964.

[56] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 67.

[57] Footage of the ceremony: "Wreaths laid at base of Joan of Arc monument in Caen, Lower Normandy, France," *Associated Press Television*, http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/9001af7ac09ac4c6e7166b16a44ce7e4 (accessed 3 February 2017).

hour of healing and reconciliation finally come."[58] His allusion to reconciliation set off a cry of "*Amnistie, amnistie!*" among the crowd, in reference to those dissident French military officers, such as Salan and Jouhaud, still in prison for their treason and thus excluded from the general amnesty to combatants on both sides that had been granted by the Evian Accords. At the end of the twenty-minute ceremony the assembled participants sang a timid *Chant des Africains*—a song traditionally sung by the colonial army in North Africa and which had been adopted by the *pied-noir* community in French Algeria as a kind of unofficial anthem.[59] That evening, at a banquet held for some 600 guests, Colonel Thomazo made a surprise appearance to deliver the apologies of Mme Jouhaud. He also invoked the following year's presidential elections and insisted on the need to support the candidacy of Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour.[60] Apart from this brazen political attack against de Gaulle, no other incident was reported.

The Joan of Arc affair reveals a particular kind of "colonial rot"—one in which memories from the former colony threaten the ruination of the former colonizer. The wound of French Algeria still festered in the *pied-noir* community, threatening to reignite the controversies that had divided the nation only three years earlier. In this case the repatriation and rededication of a commemorative monument from Algeria had unwittingly endangered the official narrative of France's withdrawal from Algeria, one that had been carefully constructed by de Gaulle's policymakers in the months leading up to the referendum of July 1962. As Todd Shepard has shown, many people in France "had come to imagine their acceptance of decolonization as a

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[58] Amato, *Monuments en Exil*, 67.

[59] "A Caen aucun incident n'a marqué l'inauguration de la statue de Jeanne d'Arc ramenée d'Oran," *Le Monde*, 11 May 1964.

[60] "A Caen aucun incident n'a marqué l'inauguration de la statue de Jeanne d'Arc ramenée d'Oran," *Le Monde*, 11 May 1964.

victory" and considered President de Gaulle's role in negotiating Algerian independence to have been a great and daring accomplishment.[61]

Figure 5.8



Yves Sainsot, President of ANFANOMA,
speaking at the fiftieth anniversary of the statue's inauguration in Caen, 11 May 2014
Source: http://popodoran.canalblog.com/archives/2014/05/06/29810989.html

[61] Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 13.

Having jettisoned its colonial ballast, France was now, in the words of one contemporary commentator, "free to look at France."[62] Charles de Gaulle himself claimed that 1962 was "the year of grace" and that "France's revival was in full flower."[63] This narrative excluded the minority who had opposed independence and placed them outside the ever-progressive "tide of history."[64] Thus, only "fascists"—represented by the terrorist OAS—clung to the cause of French Algeria, an interpretation that the leftist organizations in Caen seemed to have evoked in May 1964.[65] By extension the nearly 700,000 European settlers who fled Algeria in the spring and summer of 1962 were similarly labeled. In the aftermath of their mass exodus, many *pieds-noirs* perceived the French state to be indifferent to their plight (despite government-led job and housing initiatives) and formed a close-knit community that, in turn, constructed its own narrative: one of abandonment and survival, of a lost homeland, lost property, and lost futures.[66] This was true of the *pied-noir* community in Caen, which seemingly attached its fate with that of Joan of Arc: brave patriots who had been betrayed while defending France. The anti-Gaullist rhetoric of the extreme right thus tapped into a sense of frustration and disappointment first felt when de Gaulle finally conceded the principle of Algerian sovereignty in 1959 and began efforts to end the war. It is no surprise then that even in Normandy a small group of *pieds-noirs* would seek to memorialize something as totemic as the Joan of Arc statue from Oran—a city itself inscribed in the *pied-noir*

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[62] Cited in Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 545.

[63] Cited in Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 544.

[64] Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 2.

[65] Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 13.

[66] Jansen, "Politics of Remembrance," 278.

matyrology as the scene of a massacre against Europeans on 5 July 1962.[67] The controversy that the rededication ceremony precipitated illustrates that even while an official narrative worked to discredit those who sought to commemorate the loss of France's colonial past, this "doctrine of oblivion" was not effective at stopping political claim-making over matters of memory and history at a local level. What is perhaps most ironic is that far from intentionally masking any remembrance of French Algeria, the policy of repatriating and distributing commemorative monuments from Algeria meant that administrators in Paris played an important, if perhaps accidental, role in preserving and provoking that memory across mainland France.

The Politics of Commemoration in Post-Independence Algeria

The spring of 1963 saw the first shipments of dismantled monuments from Algeria begin arriving in France. It also marked a development in official Algerian policy towards French commemorative monuments: local Algerian prefects began asking French military authorities to remove memorials to the First and Second World Wars from their regions. Despite the concerted effort to identify and dismantle scores of monuments by France's remaining military units in Algeria, French authorities had not prioritized the removal of war memorials. As in France, hundreds had been erected during the interwar period and again following 1945. Scattered across

[67] The violence that broke out in Oran on 5 July 1962 remains one of the most controversial events surrounding Algeria's transition to independence. In the final months of the war, Oran had been an OAS stronghold and tensions between the city's European and Algerian Muslim inhabitants ran high. During the independence celebrations that day shots rang out that precipitated a panic leading to furious crowds of Muslims entering Oran's European quarter to seek revenge on what was believed to be a final OAS provocation. European men, women, and children were indiscriminately killed. Despite a French army presence in the city, troops were ordered to remain in their barracks now that Algeria had formally become independent. The exact number of European dead remains notoriously uncertain. According to various sources, anywhere from 200 to 2,000 were killed. To this day, 5 July 1962 remains a date of great importance to *pied-noir* associations in France and has become the topic of various *pied-noir* conspiracy theories. See: Fouad Soufi, "L'Histoire face à la mémoire: Oran, le 5 juillet 1962" in *La Guerre d'Algérie dans la mémoire et l'imaginaire* (Paris: Bouchene, 2004), 133-147.

towns and villages of varying accessibility to a foreign army operating in a newly independent country, their initial collection and repatriation posed logistical and diplomatic difficulties. But there was a psychological component as well. The French military felt uncomfortable taking them. War memorials—particularly as they were conceived of in France following the horrors of the First World War—were a very particular sort of commemorative monument, one ostensibly dedicated to shared sacrifice and solemn remembrance, rather than triumphant nationalism.[68] Romanticized military logic held that German bullets and mortars made no distinction between European and Algerian Muslims. Compared to other forms of imperial iconography, war memorials, especially those that explicitly referenced the contribution of conscripted Algerian Muslims, were supposed to be ecumenical symbols of solidarity.[69] Indeed, while contemplating the removal of the war memorial that overlooked the city of Constantine, Brigadier General Frat believed that the monument represented "nothing that could hurt…Algeria's legitimate feelings of independence."[70] As proof of this he noted that in the six months following independence the memorial—an imposing arch modeled after that of Trajan's in the nearby ancient city of Timgad—had not been damaged or vandalized in any way. Only a few busts of French statesmen had gone missing from the memorial, and these had been carted off by departing European settlers.[71]

The removal of these memorials at the behest of Algerian authorities was not a foregone conclusion. Many of the Algerians who had fought with the FLN during the War for Independence

[68] For a detailed analysis of the typology and semiology of French war memorials of the interwar period see: Antoine Prost, "Monuments to the Dead" in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past, Volume II: Traditions*, ed. Pierre Nora (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 306-330.

[69] Jansen and Jomier, "Une autre 'Union Sacrée?'," 45.

[70] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1: "Monument aux Morts de Sidi-M'Cid" (21 December 1962).

[71] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1: "Monument aux Morts de Sidi-M'Cid" (21 December 1962).

had also fought in the French army during the Second World War. This was particularly true among the older generation of nationalists, such as Ferhat Abbas, a veteran who had been a proponent of integration with France before turning towards the struggle for independence. But even younger, more staunchly anticolonial members of the FLN had also served with some distinction in the Free French Forces, including Krim Belkacem and Ahmed Ben Bella. Ben Bella himself often boasted that none other than Charles de Gaulle had decorated the young Algerian serviceman with the Médaille Militaire after the brutal uphill assault against German fortifications at Monte Cassino in the spring of 1944.[72] A decade later, both would come to form the "Historic Nine" who founded the FLN.

Figure 5.9



Monument aux Morts, Constantine
Source: Author's collection

[72] Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 74.

Elsewhere in France's former empire, particularly in West Africa, veterans of France's colonial armies formed potent constituencies that, even in the post-independence period, still professed attachment to war memorials constructed by the French in capitals like Bamako.[73] It remains unclear whether the majority of Algerian veterans felt similarly, but the experiences of Algerian veterans in the French military cannot be dismissed easily. As Thomas DeGeorges has argued, many of the *moudjahidine* who had fought for France in the Second World War were proud of the role they had played in defeating Nazism and often linked the Algerian War of Independence as a continuation of their earlier fight against fascism in Europe.[74] As an article written in the official newsletter of former *moudjahidine*, *Awal Novembre* ("First of November"), declared: "Algeria was not stingy in giving its own children (blood) in the path of defending life and human dignity and truly participated in this dire war."[75] DeGeorges notes that this perspective mirrored that of French veterans of the Second World War, except that to the Algerians the war's end was perceived to be incomplete in the face of continued French intransigence vis-à-vis any meaningful postwar reform.[76] The service and sacrifice of Algerians during the Second World War was therefore integrated into the identity of the Algerian struggle for independence. Naturally, more caustic rhetoric also existed that suggested that France had only used its Muslim subjects as cannon fodder in the world wars and following the proclamation of independence in July 1962, a number of war memorials had indeed become targets of postcolonial iconoclasm. These included

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[73] Greg Mann, "Locating Colonial Histories: Between France and West Africa," *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 2005): 424.

[74] Thomas DeGeorges, "The Shifting Sands of Revolutionary Legitimacy: The Role of Former Mujahidin in the Shaping of Algeria's Collective Memory," *The Journal of North African Studies* 14, no. 2 (June 2009): 276.

[75] Cited in DeGeorges, "The Shifting Sands of Revolutionary Legitimacy," 277.

[76] DeGeorges, "The Shifting Sands of Revolutionary Legitimacy," 277.

Paul Landowski's *Monument aux Morts* in Algiers, from which the names of the French war dead were hacked away.[77] The rest of the memorial, however, remained untouched and would remain so for over fifteen years.

Nonetheless, General Frat interpreted positively the remarks made by Algeria's first foreign minister, Mohamed Khemisti, who spoke in the autumn of 1962 about "the fraternity established on battlefields and the definitive links it forges."[78] Moreover, Khemisti's successor, and Algeria's current president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, expressed to the French ambassador, Georges Gorse, that he objected to any general measure to remove war memorials.[79] Bouteflika was concerned that such an operation would be interpreted as an "unfriendly gesture towards our country," although he admitted that certain monuments "might shock current tastes."[80] Whatever the reasons, it appears that the opinions of policymakers in the new state were relatively nuanced with regards to the place French war memorials might have in an independent Algeria. In the case of the monument in Constantine, the local prefect, Mohamed Kassa Haderbache, assured General Frat that he would assume personal responsibility for protecting the memorial if the French decided to leave it.[81] To this day, the *monument aux morts* overlooking the city is still considered an important part of Constantine's urban patrimony. And in Oran, the local administration has seen

[77] Henry S. Grabar, "Reclaiming the City: Changing Urban Meaning in Algiers after 1962," *Cultural Geographies* 21, no. 3 (2014): 403.

[78] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/1: "Monument aux Morts de Sidi-M'Cid" (21 December 1962).

[79] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/2: "Monuments aux Morts" (4 June 1963).

[80] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/2: "Monuments aux Morts" (4 June 1963).

[81] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/1: "Monument aux Morts de Sidi-M'Cid," Préfet de Département de Constantine to Monsieur le Général Commandant la 14° D.I. (29 December 1962).

fit to preserve a memorial located in the courtyard of the Lycée Pasteur dedicated to its students and alumni, European and Algerian Muslim alike, who perished in 1914-1918 and 1939-1945.

Despite these attitudes, the Algerian Ministry of the Interior released a directive toward the middle of May 1963 instructing all local prefects to begin asking French consuls to remove war memorials from their districts.[82] The French ambassador inquired after his Algerian interlocutor and learned that in light of this development the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also changed its position. On 22 May 1963, Bouteflika sent a communiqué to the French embassy explaining that his ministry now considered the removal of French war memorials to be "inevitable" for "psychological reasons."[83] He also confirmed that orders had been given to local prefects to facilitate the work of French military authorities so that the operations could be conducted as effortlessly as possible. This was the first time that the Algerian government had officially requested the French to remove commemorative monuments from its territory. This policy shift undoubtedly reflected the breakdown in relations between Paris and Algiers that had occurred earlier that spring.

On 18 March 1963—the first anniversary of the signing of the Evian Accords—the French detonated a 10-kiloton atomic bomb, codenamed *Emeraude*, at its subterranean testing facility in the Algerian Sahara. It was the first atomic weapons test since independence. While the Evian Accords granted France the right to continue its atomic program on Algerian soil, Algeria and its international allies across the Third World saw it as a neocolonial provocation. A few days later President Ahmed Ben Bella issued the March Decrees—three edicts that greatly expanded the collectivization of French-owned agricultural land and the nationalization of certain French-owned

[82] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/2: "Monuments aux Morts" (4 June 1963).

[83] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/2: "Monuments aux Morts" (4 June 1963).

businesses. The Evian Accords allowed for the possibility of nationalization, but only on the condition of proper indemnification. None ever came.

Ben Bella's decision was considered as much a response to the French nuclear test as it was an attempt to stimulate what many in the FLN leadership saw as the Algerian Revolution's loss of momentum since independence.[84] Algerian policymakers hoped that such an expansion of its socialist-inspired economic policy would not only quell growing internal discontent, but also signal to the communist bloc that Algeria was willing to pursue socialist reform in exchange for development assistance.[85] Since President de Gaulle cared little for the property rights of *pieds-noirs*, Franco-Algerian relations eventually normalized once officials in Paris gained assurances that the Evian Accords' core guarantees of continued strategic and economic cooperation would be respected.[86] But for the time being, relations had cooled significantly.

In this atmosphere of renewed rhetorical zeal, it seems probable that the Algerian Ministry of the Interior believed that demanding the removal of French war memorials was complementary to the general tenor of the March Decrees. It would appear, however, that rather than dismantle and destroy the monuments themselves, the Algerians preferred the French to do it for them. It is unclear whether this was done for reasons of efficiency, since the French had already manifested the will and the manpower to execute such operations, or whether the Algerians, having observed the French desire to salvage commemorative monuments, preferred to let the French remove them rather than risk a diplomatic incident by doing it themselves.

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[84] James Jeffrey Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 154.

[85] Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, 156.

[86] Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, 155.

The French ambassador balked at the "unpleasant character" of this policy, but there was little he could do in the face of mounting requests except instruct his consuls general throughout Algeria to act as liaisons between local authorities and the French military units still stationed there.[87] In coordination with the French high command in Algeria, the ambassador sent instructions that when a memorial could be transported that it be removed entirely, possibly to a nearby French cemetery, if not out of Algeria all together. If a memorial proved too difficult to dismantle and relocate, then its commemorative plaques should be removed and brought to the local consulate. The memorials themselves could then be photographed for posterity before being "abandoned to the pickaxes" of local authorities.[88] Many French officers, however, preferred to do this job themselves. Using explosives or heavy steam rollers they often destroyed those statues and monuments that were too large or too heavy to transport back to France, or else were considered as not having enough aesthetic value to merit repatriation.[89] In the words of one report, the act of destroying monuments was, in its own way, a method to protect them from future vandalism.[90] The Algerians could not vandalize a memorial that did not exist.

The Algerian request to remove French war memorials also coincided with the growing desire within the new nation to begin memorializing Algeria's own war dead—the oft evoked "one and a half million martyrs" that the FLN claimed had died in the struggle for national liberation.[91]

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[87] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/2: "Monuments aux Morts" (11 June 1963).

[88] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/2: "Monuments aux Morts" (11 June 1963).

[89] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/1: "Destruction des monuments du souvenir Français" (23 April 1964). The French also destroyed part of the collection from the Musée Franchet d'Espèrey not slated for repatriation by dumping the artifacts into the Mediterranean. See: SHD 1H2116/D2: "Repli en Métropole du Musée Franchet d'Espèrey" (25 June 1962).

[90] SHD: 1 H 2116/D1/1: "Destruction des monuments du souvenir Français" (23 April 1964).

[91] The number of Algerian causalities remains a controversial figure. In contemporary Algeria, official FLN rhetoric claims 1.5 million Algerians died in the War for Independence. Despite considerable losses on the Algerian side, this

As 1963 marked Algeria's first year of independence, FLN officials at all levels began organizing public commemorations to celebrate and mourn. Given the nature of these ceremonies many municipalities might indeed have had their "psychological reasons" for wanting to remove any visible reminder of France's colonial presence and re-appropriate the space formerly dedicated to a French war memorial in order to honor their own *chouhada*.[92] Moreover, since French war memorials were often erected in town squares and other prominent locations, their removal freed up desirable civic real estate for Algerian monuments. Ironically, many of the memorials that were erected in the place of French ones followed the same stylistic conventions as their predecessors. As Emmanuel Alcaraz notes in his study of postcolonial Algerian war memorials, the very concept of local *monuments aux martyrs*—a practice little seen elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East—was directly inspired by the French example.[93] While these were not direct imitations, there were many similarities, particularly with those *monuments aux morts* dating from the interwar period. These included dedications in Arabic that announced how a particular town's martyrs had "died for Algeria," a formula reminiscent of the inscriptions often found on French memorials proclaiming that soldiers were "*morts pour la France*" and, perhaps most striking, the listing of the town's war dead by name—a very important feature of French World War I memorials. Unlike French memorials, however, Algerian ones were not secular and often carried verses from the Qur'an—in particular, the Surah Al-Imran (3:169): "But do not think of those that have been slain

figure is likely exaggerated. A number of studies by both French and Algerian historians have tried to estimate the true number of deaths in a war that profoundly touched Algeria's civilian population and consensus tends to place the number of Algerian dead at 300,000-400,000. See in particular: Xavier Yacono, "Les Pertes algériennes de 1954 à 1962," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 34, no. 34 (1982): 119-134.

[92] Plural of "martyr" in Arabic (singular: *chahid* / شهيد).

[93] Emmanuel Alcaraz, "Les monuments aux martyrs de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne: monumentalité, enjeux de mémoire et commémorations," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 237 (2010): 138.

in God's cause as dead. Nay, they are alive! With their Lord they have their sustenance."[94] But while the insistence on *martyrs* over *morts* may be linked to Islamic tradition, these monuments still helped to forge Algeria's broader patriotic cult in the years following independence.[95] As Hue-Tam Ho Tai has noted, nations are most in need of *lieux de mémoire* when they are in their most liminal states—such as the first years of independence—and therefore require "instant antiquity" to buttress the national project against both internal and external destabilizing forces.[96]

Those French commemorative monuments that the French did leave behind provided other opportunities for physical re-appropriation. The majority of early commemorative efforts in Algeria were local initiatives and the recycling of old French memorials was an economical, if not poetic, commemorative solution.[97] Practices generally included removing dedications, adding inscriptions, or completely covering the monument—sometimes so much so that the form of the original monument could hardly be distinguished. In Oran, city officials repurposed the base of a monumental French war memorial from which the French military had removed a troika of stone infantrymen—two French and one Algerian—for repatriation to Lyon. Covered in glazed tiles to hide its original function, the rectangular monolith was rededicated in the 1980s as the *Stèle du Maghreb*—a monument to North African unity. As with the construction of new memorials on the sites of old ones, repurposing colonial monuments helped structure Algeria's post-independence physical space around a new commemorative iconography of national liberation in an attempt to

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[94] Raphaëlle Branche, "The Martyr's Torch: Memory and Power in Algeria," *The Journal of North African Studies* 16, no. 3 (September 2011): 435.

[95] Alcaraz, "Les monuments aux martyrs de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne," 128.

[96] Hue-Tam Ho Tai, "Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 2001): 921.

[97] Alcaraz, "Les monuments aux martyrs de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne," 125.

reclaim imperial forms of spatial orientation for the present. Indeed, as Hell and Schönle suggest, the collapsing of *ancien régimes* makes ruins such as these the ideal sites from which "the becomings of new forms, orderings, and aesthetics can emerge."[98]

It was in Algiers, however, that the most symbolic appropriation was made. Despite having the names of the European war dead erased, Paul Landowski's *Monument aux Morts* remained remarkably untouched well into the 1970s. Too large for the French to dismantle they left it where it stood in the center of downtown Algiers, commanding views of the central post office from atop a terraced park. It was not until Algiers played host to the third All-African Games in July 1978 that Algerian officials addressed the symbolic inconvenience of the memorial's presence. The FLN called upon Kabyle artist M'hamed Issiakhem, an advisor to the games' organizing committee, to devise a solution.[99] A popular, although possibly apocryphal, tale purports that the FLN originally ordered Issiakhem to destroy the Landowski memorial, but the artist's appreciation for the work stopped him from "massacring a masterpiece."[100] Regardless, Issiakhem proposed to erect a protective shell around the memorial and then encase it in a layer of cement. On the new façade Issiakhem sculpted a number of powerful revolutionary allegories, most prominently a pair of fists breaking through iron manacles.

Obscured from view, but still intact, Issiakhem's monument provides a tangible representation of the ambiguity that surrounds postcolonial histories. The remarks of one former FLN veteran about the monument are telling: "This monument [dedicated to French and Muslim soldiers] must maintain its original purpose, even if I know the French never cared for the '*bougnoules*' who were

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[98] Cited in Hell and Schönle, *Ruins of Modernity*, 8.

[99] Grabar, "Reclaiming the City: Changing Urban Meaning in Algiers after 1962," 403.

[100] Grabar, "Reclaiming the City: Changing Urban Meaning in Algiers after 1962," 409.

their cannon fodder.[101] A serviceman, no matter his nationality or his faith, deserves every respect."[102] It also gives physicality to the concept of "colonial rot." Indeed, in 2012—the fiftieth anniversary of Algeria's independence—the cement casing around the *Monuments aux Morts* began cracking, forcing workers to expose parts of the Landowski memorial for the first time in over thirty years.[103] Repairs stalled and a number of contractors ditched the project. Algerian officials seemed indifferent to the plight of the monument and the contemporary Algerian press began drawing uncomfortable allusions between the state of contemporary Algeria and the crumbling façade of Issiakhem's work.[104] Ultimately, the concrete shell surrounding the French memorial was restored, but its crumbling represents, perhaps, the repressed fear of every postcolonial nation attempting to negotiate the harrowing morass of history and identity politics: that the colonial past lurking in the discursive ambiguity of such ruins might one day rematerialize.

[101] *Bougnoule*: a pejorative ethnic slur for dark skinned individuals, specifically those from the former French overseas empire, deriving from a French corruption of the West African Wolof word *ñuul* ("black").

[102] "Le mémorial d'Issiakhem risque de s'effondrer," *El Watan*, 10 May 2012, http://www.elwatan.com/-00-00-0000-170006_148.php (accessed 10 June 2015).

[103] "Le mémorial d'Issiakhem risque de s'effondrer," *El Watan*, 10 May 2012, http://www.elwatan.com/-00-00-0000-170006_148.php (accessed 10 June 2015).

[104] Nadir Iddir, "Qui sauvera l'œuvre de M'hamed Issiakhem?" *El Watan,* 1 January 2013, https://www.djazairess.com/fr/elwatan/401534, (accessed 10 June 2015).

Figure 5.10



Issiakem's outer shell over the Monument aux Morts in Algiers (restored), May 2016
Source: Author's photo

Conclusion:
The Missing Names of Sidi M'Cid

On the evening of 22 January 2013, the national soccer teams of Algeria and Tunisia faced off against one another in the African Cup of Nations. While the inhabitants of Constantine watched the match on television, unidentified thieves hiked up to the heights of Sidi M'Cid overlooking the city. There they proceeded to the First World War memorial that dominates the bluff and stole two of the memorial's four bronze plaques on which the names of Constantine's

war dead had been inscribed. Between 1914 and 1918, 809 Constantinois died in the Great War.[105] They were third-generation French settlers and newly arrived immigrants from Italy. They were Jews, Sephardim whose families had been residents of Constantine since the Reconquista and Ashkenazi who arrived from eastern France after a newly united Germany annexed Alsace following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Many more were Algerian Muslims who were conscripted to defend the distant colonial homeland across the Mediterranean in places named Artois, Somme, and Chemin des Dames. The only distinction that separated European settler from Algerian Jew or Algerian Muslim on the memorial was alphabetical: the name Jean-Baptiste Nicolas follows Benjamin Melki and Ahmed Kroufi. All three were killed within days of each other at Verdun in May 1916.[106]

When news of the plaques' disappearance broke, there was a surprising uproar in the national press. Articles denounced the theft as "the most savage incivility," but noted that it was merely the latest indignity to beset a public monument that had long become the "image of abandonment, insecurity, uncleanliness, and advanced degradation."[107] A petition went up on Facebook accusing government élites of turning their backs on the city and demanding that the state pledge to protect "the symbols of our collective memory."[108] Only a month earlier, the Arab

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[105] Ambassade de France en Algérie, "Un monument, une histoire: Hommage aux combattants de la Première Guerre mondiale" http://www.ambafrance-dz.org/Commemorations-du-11-novembre-a-%D9%90Constantine (accessed 5 January 2017).

[106] Serge Gilard, "Liste alphabétique des noms inscrit sur le Monument aux Morts" http://www.constantine-hier-aujourdhui.fr/images/divers/liste%20tables%20monument%20aux%20morts%20alpha.pdf (accessed 5 January 2017).

[107] "Le Monument aux morts livré au vandalisme," *El Watan*, 13 February 2013, http://www.elwatan.com/archives/article.php?id_sans_version=203102 and "Profanation du Monument aux Morts à Constantine Irréparable," *Liberté Algérie*, 28 February 2013. http://www.liberte-algerie.com/lalgerie-profonde/irreparable-120155/print/1 (accessed 5 January 2017).

[108] "'Alaa khalfiat takhrib nusb tidhkari 'aridat tutalib biwaqf takhrib wanahab alathar b'Qacentina," *Al-Fajr*, 19 February 2013, http://www.al-fadjr.com/ar/culture/238405.html (accessed 5 January 2017).

League had named Constantine as the Capital of Arab Culture for 2015. The announcement heralded the possibility of a major redevelopment scheme that many hoped might bring attention to the city's aging infrastructure as well as the local administration's seeming indifference towards the city's rich patrimony, a fact underscored by the recent vandalism. With visitors and dignitaries from across North Africa and the Middle East set to descend on the city in two years, an agreement was reached between the Algerian and French governments to replace the plaques. The new ones, financed by France, were chiseled in marble instead of cast in bronze and on 11 November 2015 representatives from the Algerian, French, and German governments gathered in Constantine to rededicate the monument. It was the first time since the end of French rule that Armistice Day had been celebrated in Algeria.

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France's decolonization of its commemorative debris in Algeria precipitated a process of commemorative re-appropriation that affected the former colonizer as much as it affected the former colony, albeit in different ways. As Stoler herself writes, colonial rot, like debris, "is not where one always expects it to be."[109] Despite the measures undertaken by the French and the pronouncements made by nationalists to the contrary, Algeria did not become a postcolonial tabula rasa. And neither did France. On both sides of the Mediterranean the inheritors of French Algeria's colonial ruins were forced to grapple with "the psychological weight of remnants, the generative power of metaphor, and the materiality of debris" that represents empire's afterlife.[110] In postcolonial France, the rededication of returning statues revealed that the "rot" of militant *pied-noir* dissent still moldered in the metropole. Algeria, meanwhile, represented the more common

[109] Stoler, *Imperial Debris*, x.

[110] Stoler, *Imperial Debris*, 12.

experience of "colonial rot": that of recently independent nations coming to terms with the detritus of empire as local actors and state officials sought to construct a postcolonial present on the foundation of a colonial past.

In a sense, the effort by French authorities to locate, dismantle, and repatriate a large number of commemorative monuments meant that Algeria was bequeathed fewer imperial ruins of this kind. But the French desire to repatriate statues, busts, museum collections, and war memorials speaks to the profound anxiety that decolonization created in the mind of the colonizer as well. All the more so in a colony that had long been considered an integral part of the metropole. Now, if Algeria was indeed no longer France, then its commemorative patrimony served no purpose. Yet, these testaments to a "France that was" could not be abandoned to ignominy of their supposed postcolonial fate either. Captain Vichot, like many other French officials, assumed they knew the fate that awaited the physical remnants of France's occupation of Algeria: destruction, vandalism, latter-day iconoclasm. Better to erase the French past than give the nationalists the pleasure. Considering the cost in terms of manpower, time, labor, logistics, and financial resources the French operation to move thousands of kilos of stone and bronze should not be take lightly—few other remnants of the French presence received this attention. Repatriation, however, was as much about preservation and posterity as it was about protection. But repatriation is an ironic term for the undertaking orchestrated by the French army—repatriation assumes that someone or something is returning to its country of origin. In reality many of the statues and memorials being "repatriated" to France had not originated in the metropole, much like the *rapatriés* of Algeria's European community.

Such a desire to save, even publicly display, these cultural remainders of colonialism lends nuance to the contemporary analysis that historians of empire have made about colonial "amnesia."

The requests made by municipalities across France to obtain a statue, bust, or monument is a telling phenomenon. The irony, of course, was that in many cases the very allocation of statues made by French civil servants perpetuated a particular memory of French Algeria that de Gaulle's administration would have preferred to keep suppressed. As a result, the rededication of a repatriated monument, such as the statue of Joan of Arc in Caen, could ignite a memory battle and provide a rallying point for critics of de Gaulle's past Algeria policy. As Hell and Schönle have noted, "ruins foster imaginary communities, invented traditions, and resonant political rhetoric."[111] This was true of France's *pied-noir* population. In some cases, but certainly not all, this group appropriated the monuments repatriated to metropolitan France as monuments to French Algeria and the marginalized plight of the *pieds-noirs* themselves. Their narrative, however, did not align with the one being constructed by the Fifth Republic in the wake of Algerian independence. In Caen, the planned invitation of family members of those French generals who had attempted to overthrow de Gaulle in 1961 was a brazen provocation and represented the rot of internal opposition that had marked France's painful withdrawal from Algeria. The emergent extreme-right politics to which former partisans of *Algérie Française* attached themselves continue to eat away at contemporary France's conception of postcolonial republicanism as secular, assimilated, and colorblind.

The way Algerian officials dealt with French commemorative monuments also lends nuance to postcolonial narratives of decolonization and national liberation. In the wake of independence, many Algerians did target the symbols of the colonial *ancien régime*: monuments vandalized, memorials profaned, dedications whitewashed, and statues decapitated. Yet, wholesale destruction was, for the most part, avoided. This, of course, had much to do with the fact the French

[111] Hell and Schönle, *Ruins of Modernity*, 10.

authorities removed statues precisely to avoid this scenario, but the process of repatriation was a long one and often had to be coordinated with local authorities following independence. Many commemorative monuments were simply left in place and suffered only minimal damage. Eventually, Algerian authorities took a proactive measure by asking the French to remove those that still remained, but even after the last French military units withdrew in 1965 a substantial number of commemorative monuments in Algeria were left behind. Those that survived hide in plain sight, retooled for other purposes or left as they were. In the case of the Landowski monument its perception as an artistic masterpiece, and its original function as a site of universal remembrance, meant that an unorthodox form of preservation, rather than outright destruction, would be its fate. Indeed, in cases where a monument came to represent a narrative of collective memory and shared sacrifice, such as Algerian participation in the First and Second World Wars, they became subsumed into part of the postcolonial community's own patrimony and were persevered, if later neglected. And the very nature of these monuments would directly inspire Algeria's own campaign of memorialization to commemorate the fallen of its war for independence, enlisting colonial-era practices, and even colonial *lieux de mémoire*, into the service of postcolonial national renewal and the construction of sovereignty.

Chapter Six

Switching Tracks:
Infrastructure, Independence, and Interdependence

> Sovereignty has been reconquered, but everything remains to be done to give content to national liberation.
>
> The Tripoli Program, June 1962[1]

Introduction:
Infrastructure and Sovereignty

Seventy-two hours after President Abderrahmane Farès hoisted the Algerian flag over Rocher Noir, Jean-Marcel Jeanneney landed at the nearby military airfield in Réghaïa with letters credentialing him as France's first ambassador to a newly independent Algeria. Jeanneney was a fifty-one-year-old economics professor who had served as Charles de Gaulle's Minister of Industry. Although he had been the first of de Gaulle's cabinet to support independence in Algeria, he had resigned his position as a courtesy following the dramatic departure of Prime Minister Michel Debré in April 1962. Jeanneney was all but ready to return to his life as an academic at the Faculté de Droit in Paris when the General summoned him to the Elysée Palace for a meeting. There, among the Gobelins tapestries and inlaid kingwood of the Salon Doré, de Gaulle reminded his former minister of the progressive opinions he had once voiced in cabinet meetings concerning the Algerian question: "You were the first to take a position in favor of Algerian independence. *Eh bien*, now you must go and help make it so as the ambassador to Algeria."[2] Jeanneney was

[1] "Le Congrès de Tripoli: projet de programme pour la réalisation de la révolution démocratique algérienne (adoptée à l'unanimité par le C.N.R.A. à Tripoli en Juin 1962)" http://www.el-mouradia.dz/francais/symbole/textes/tripoli.htm (accessed 17 August 2017).

[2] Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, "Recherche de la vision d'époque" in *Les Accords d'Evian en conjunction et en longue durée*, ed. René Gallissot (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1997), 25.

taken aback by the request, but he could not refuse the General. He responded: "Is that an order?" "Yes," replied de Gaulle.[3]

Jeanneney's ambitious mission as France's first ambassador to Algeria was to ensure that the conditions agreed to at Evian for Franco-Algerian cooperation would be successfully managed. President de Gaulle intended cooperation with former colonies to become a cornerstone of France's post-imperial foreign policy and the successful transition of Algeria to independence would be cooperation's most challenging test case.[4] In the wake of war and OAS terror, and amid the more immediate crisis of fleeing settlers and FLN infighting, a daunting task awaited Jeanneney on the other side of the Mediterranean. Thus, it was on 6 July 1962 that Jeanneney and his diplomatic entourage set up France's first diplomatic post in Algeria in the very offices emptied only two days previously by the departing colonial authorities inside the administrative complex at Rocher Noir.[5] Nearby the Provisional Executive began its life as the de facto, if tenuous, sovereign authority of Algeria. And beyond the razor-wire perimeter lay the uncertainty of independence.

That uncertainty was best epitomized by the empty corridors of municipal prefectures, the emergency rooms that lacked trained doctors and proper supplies, the power plants that relied on skeleton crews to avoid city-wide blackouts, and the railway switching stations that struggled desperately to make the trains run on time. Although an independent Algeria was poised to take control over an impressive network of colonial-era infrastructure, much of it was in a precarious

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[3] Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, "Recherche de la vision d'époque," 25.

[4] On De Gaulle and cooperation as foreign policy, see: Alfred Grosser, *French Foreign Policy Under De Gaulle*, trans. Lois Ames Pattison (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1967), 46-63.

[5] Anne Liskenne, *L'Algérie indépendante: l'ambassade de Jean-Marcel Jeanneney (juillet 1962-janvier 1963)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2015), 40.

condition. As France's most important settler possession, colonial authorities had invested heavily in Algeria for more than a century: deep water harbors that serviced the major cities of the littoral, thousands of kilometers of rail that linked the east to the west and the coast to the interior, tramways, highways, schools, hospitals, libraries, research laboratories, and long stretches of freshly constructed pipeline that promised to transport untold millions of metric tons from the oil fields so recently discovered under the sands of the Sahara. Most of this infrastructure had been developed primarily to safeguard settler supremacy, exploit natural resources, and marginalize indigenous communities in the service of transforming Algeria into the extension of France that colonial statesmen had always claimed it to be. At the dawn of independence, Algeria inherited material assets worth nearly 4 trillion French francs—assets that would be invaluable to restructuring the economy for the benefit of a sovereign Algerian state.[6]

Yet, after seven and a half years of war and the sudden, frenzied departure of nearly 70 percent of Algeria's European population, the country was beset by economic instability, a dangerous security situation, widespread material damage, and the loss of most of its skilled labor force. And while the Evian Accords that Jeanneney had come to promote promised technical and financial assistance to aid Algeria's transition, certain factions within the FLN had serious ideological misgivings about the perceived neocolonial nature of cooperation. Moreover, there remained a good deal of ambiguity regarding just how the handover of former French Algeria's infrastructure would work, particularly as so much of it remained tethered to the metropole in July

[6] This assessment derives from a study undertaken in 1953 by the Région Économique d'Algérie, which established an estimate by surveying different public administrations and private enterprises. The actual total was calculated to be FF 3.891 trillion (or approximately USD $100 billion in 2017 dollars when adjusted for inflation). Cited in Abderrahim Taleb Ben Diab, "Bilan colonial: les entreprises (agricoles et industrielles) européennes en Algérie" in *Les Accords d'Evian en conjunction et en longue durée*, 49-50. Inflation between New Francs and euros calculated from the Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, www.insee.fr (as at 17 August 2017). Conversion between euros and US dollars calculated at www.xe.com (as at 17 August 2017).

1962. Indeed, despite the proclamation of independence, little appeared to have changed in the general functioning of many of Algeria's public services: the French and Algerian treasuries remained linked, Algerian radio and television facilities continued to broadcast metropolitan programming, and the French national railway company was still responsible for paying the conductors and engineers and stationmasters that worked on Algeria's rails. This situation was further complicated by the fact that while the Evian Accords underscored the principle of Algerian ownership, they never specified the terms of separation.

Decolonization precipitated profound transformations of state sovereignty, yet these transformations also provoked powerful uncertainties over the nature of sovereignty itself. Algeria may have been independent, but that independence was still largely contingent on colonial-era political, economic, social, and cultural frameworks. As Philip C. Naylor has remarked, "independence left Algeria existentially disoriented."[7] Such was the paradox of Algeria's transition to statehood: what good were the railways and the power grids and the air traffic control towers to Algerians if they could not get them to function at capacity, or else remained reliant on the expertise of the former colonial power? Independence in its most basic form required mastery of the state's most fundamental tools of that sovereignty: infrastructure.

While traditional definitions of sovereignty have emphasized the link between state power and territorial control, a number of scholars, notably Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, have conceived of a shift toward one that understands sovereignty as an issue of "internal constitution" within states over bodies and populations.[8] This conception of sovereignty is generally defined by the implicit or explicit threat of violence toward those bodies and populations

[7] Philip C. Naylor and Alf Andrew Heggoy, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 30.

[8] Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, eds., *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.

found within sovereign borders. This chapter extends this thinking by contending that the independent control of infrastructure is another expression of sovereignty, one that equally seeks to structure lives of citizens and their bodies. Controlling the mechanisms of transport, public health, education, communication, electricity, and even water treatment implies controlling the very populations that rely on these services and by extension fulfilling the role of the state not only as "a locus of territorial sovereignty," but also as "a regulator of social life….and cultural legitimacy."[9]

Such a conceptualization perceives sovereignty as expressed in multiple registers.[10] These different dimensions of sovereignty can be disaggregated so that rather than one monolithic principle, sovereignty becomes, in effect, a "matter of degrees."[11] According to Stephen Krasner, states can exercise four kinds of sovereignty: "Domestic sovereignty," referring to the organization of public authority within a state and to the level of effective control exercised by those holding authority; "interdependence sovereignty," referring to the ability of public authorities to control trans-border movements; "international sovereignty," referring to the mutual recognition of states; and "Westphalian sovereignty," referring to the expulsion of external actors, typically more powerful states or international institutions, from domestic authority configurations.[12] Krasner

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[9] Hansen and Stepputat, *Sovereign Bodies*, 2.

[10] Stephen D. Krasner, "Problematic Sovereignty" in *Problematic Sovereignty: Contested Rules and Political Possibilities* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 6-7. This serves as a corrective to older narratives of "positive" versus "negative" sovereignty as advanced by Robert H. Jackson in *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[11] Sally N. Cummings and Raymond Hinnebusch, eds., *Sovereignty After Empire: Comparing the Middle East and Central Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 1. In a similar vein, Samuel Huntington himself commented that: "The most important distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government." Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (London: Yale University Press, 1968), 1.

[12] Krasner, *Problematic Sovereignty*, 7-12.

argues that it is wholly possible to be weak in one category and strong in another. Sovereignty, therefore, is a dynamic concept, rather than a static one.

The contingent and dynamic nature of sovereignty is particularly important for studying the transitions to independence that former colonies undergo. As noted above, in many cases newly independent nation-states remained reliant on the financial and technical assistance of former colonial powers, not to mention beholden to the colonial-era administrative structures into which postcolonial citizens slotted themselves. Often, however, the reality that post-independence sovereignty was "incomplete" and dependent on continued linkages to former metropoles is cast as the product of neocolonial machinations. While former imperial powers did indeed exploit their positions of relative supremacy—Jacques Foccart's design for a "Françafrique" is but one notorious example—characterizing ongoing economic and financial cooperation as a mere Trojan horse of neocolonialism ignores two realities of post-independence transition. First, colonial states were not full-fledged states-in-waiting. After all, "the incompleteness and abnormality of the colonial state was in fact one of the central criticisms waged against imperial rule by nationalists."[13] To expect total sovereignty seems to expect too much. And second, such characterizations deny postcolonial citizens agency. As Frederick Cooper has argued in defense of his own work on the possibilities of federalism within the French empire following the Second World War, we should better interrogate what "liberation" meant to those who sought it and not reduce independence "to a choice between playing the imperialist's game and refusing it."[14] Indeed, rather than arguing that Algerian policymakers had no other option than to acquiesce to

[13] Cited in Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, eds., *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC: 2001), 12. See also: Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

[14] Frederick Cooper, "Routes Out of Empire", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 37, no. 2 (2017): 409.

the conditions of cooperation and technical assistance outlined by the Evian Accords or refuse such arrangements outright—as articulated by the spirit of the FLN's Tripoli Program—perhaps it is more useful to understand how an independent Algeria achieved its sovereignty progressively, fully aware that its own state-building efforts could be achieved through pragmatic reliance on continued French cooperation, despite rhetorical pronouncements to the contrary made on the international stage. Moreover, it is just as useful to understand French motivations for working with Algerian policymakers to ensure that the transfer of infrastructure and its attendant expertise was carried out successfully.

This final chapter lends nuance to ideas about sovereignty and the postcolonial state by delving into the logistics of decolonization and examining how infrastructure was transferred to Algerian control after independence. Functioning railways, hospitals, schools, and power utilities were vital not only for Algeria's successful transition to independence, but also for its legitimacy as a postcolonial regional leader. While the Algerian economy was severely affected by the war and the social dislocations that followed, this chapter re-evaluates certain received ideas of postcolonial state formation in Algeria to reveal a history in which Algerian and French policymakers formed a precarious working relationship throughout most of the 1960s to ensure that essential services were maintained despite economic and political tensions between the former colonizer and the formerly colonized.

The chapter begins with an examination of the economic situation in Algeria in the immediate wake of independence and outlines the inner-workings of the financial and technical components of Franco-Algerian cooperation. It will then explore how the handover and maintenance of vital infrastructure and other French-owned state property was negotiated—and in some cases fought over—by France and the newly formed People's Democratic Republic of

Algeria. Lastly, this chapter will consider the specific case of the French Algerian railway company, the *Société Nationale de Chemins de Fer Français en Algérie* (French National Railway Company in Algeria [SNCFA]), which until 1970 continued to operate under significant French shareholder control and the contributions of French employees. In 1962, the SNCFA was the largest railway in any French colony and one of the longest and most well developed in Africa. By tracing the history of how the railway and its immense assets were managed in the post-independence period, this chapter hopes to give tangibility to the logistical complexities of decolonization and demonstrate that wholescale postcolonial nationalizations were more often the exception rather than the rule. Indeed, over the course of the 1960s Algerian administrators were even able to cement political legitimacy by successfully negotiating with French policymakers behind closed doors to obtain the concessions and technical competency necessary for the smooth functioning of vital social infrastructure, despite the often-caustic political rhetoric of the day.

The Economic Consequences of Independence

Seven years of war had only exacerbated an economic reality that had been drastically affected by more than a century by colonial rule and uneven development. During the conflict infrastructure suffered attacks from both the FLN and the OAS. The former orchestrated routine acts of sabotage against railways, roads, pipelines, and machinery used in the French war effort, while the latter undertook a vindictive campaign of *terre brûlée*.[15] Apocryphal tales also abound

[15] Bertrand Le Gendre, *Entretiens avec Jean-Jacques Susini, Confessions du N° 2 de l'OAS* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2012), 175.

of spiteful *pieds-noirs* sabotaging equipment at their workplaces before leaving the country.[16] Consequently, the Algerian share of the French gross national product shrank by 35 percent in the final years of the war.[17] Vital sectors of the economy, such as construction, manufacturing, and public works were particularly affected—the construction industry alone declined by 55 percent between 1962 and 1963. By 1963, nearly 70 percent of the active male labor force in Algeria remained unemployed or underemployed.[18] The war took a demographic toll as well: an estimated 300,000 Algerians had died between 1954 and 1962, with 2 million more having been displaced or interned in "regroupment" camps by French military authorities.[19] During the conflict, turmoil and terror in the countryside had forced Algerian Muslims to seek refuge in the colony's large urban centers, where the majority had decided to stay after independence. This overcrowding only aggravated public services that, prior to independence, had strained to accommodate a steadily growing city-dwelling population.

Following the return of de Gaulle to power in 1958, the new administration announced an ambitious plan to invest heavily in Algeria as a means to address the colony's underdevelopment and demonstrate that continued association with France as an attractive alternative to

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[16] For example, one anonymous European pharmacist who left Kabylia in 1957 remembered how before departing for Paris he allegedly rented a truck, loaded up the entirety of his pharmacy's inventory, and dumped it all into a ravine. "Orly, terre 'pied-noir,'" *France Observateur*, 21 June 1962.

[17] John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 195.

[18] Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 195.

[19] This figure makes no distinction between civilians and FLN combatants given the notorious difficultly in differentiating between these categories in a conflict whose actors rarely made such a distinction themselves. Consequently, the number of Algerian causalities remains a controversial figure. In contemporary Algeria, official FLN rhetoric claims 1.5 million Algerians died in the War for Independence. Despite considerable losses on the Algerian side, this figure is likely exaggerated. A number of studies by both French and Algerian historians have tried to estimate the true number of deaths in a war that profoundly touched Algeria's civilian population and consensus tends to place the number of Algerian dead at around 300,000. See in particular: Xavier Yacono, "Les Pertes algériennes de 1954 à 1962," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 34, no. 34 (1982): 119-134.

independence. Known as the Constantine Plan after the city in which de Gaulle had announced it, it sought in its broadest outlines to advance the human and material development of Algeria and "give to all Algerians their share of what modern civilization can contribute in terms of well-being and dignity."[20] The scale of the project was remarkable—nearly 2 percent of France's GDP was allocated to the task—and nowhere in the developing world had such a mobilization of financial resources ever been organized before. As Muriam Haleh Davis has shown, the Constantine Plan's technocrats attempted to restructure almost every aspect of life in French Algeria: education, public health, housing, social security, land reform, agriculture, and heavy industry.[21] The plan envisaged the construction of 210,000 new homes, the re-distribution of 250,000 hectares of land to Algerian Muslims, the creation of 1,000 "modern villages" across rural Algeria, and 100 percent school enrollment for all Algerian children—European and Muslim—in seven years.[22] Most importantly, the Constantine Plan supported continued investment in infrastructure: railways, roads, ports, telecommunication networks and, most importantly, the exploration and exploitation of the Algerian Sahara's recently discovered petroleum and natural gas deposits. The broad developmental aims of French economic planning in Algeria would be adopted and maintained by the FLN following independence, but the Constantine Plan's immediate benefits were slow in arriving. Moreover, the developmental projects that promised the modernization of Algeria needed manpower to run them—and well-trained technicians, engineers, draftsmen, and administrators would be in desperate short supply by independence.

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[20] Ambassade de France, *The Constantine Plan for Opening New Frontiers in Development* (New York: Service de Presse et d'Information, 1961).

[21] Muriam Haleh Davis, "Producing Eurafrica: Development, Agriculture and Race in Algeria, 1958-1965" (PhD diss., New York University, 2015).

[22] *The Constantine Plan*.

While the war had serious consequences for Algeria's post-independence economic situation, it was the unanticipated exodus of Algeria's European settler population that eventually had the most profound effect on Algeria's near-term ability to maintain its essential services and social infrastructure. In 1954, there were a little over one million settlers of European descent living in French Algeria. By the beginning of August 1962, slightly more than 300,000 remained.[23] Gone with them was not only the expertise needed for the basic functioning of the country, but the physical bodies to do it.

Arriving in Oran in July 1962, Ahmed Ben Bella himself observed firsthand what this dramatic change meant for his country:

> Everything was deserted—communication centers, prefectures, and even the administration so vital to the country. When I entered the prefecture in Oran, I personally found just seven employees instead of the five hundred who had previously worked there. The departure of the French attained a proportion of 80 per cent, even 90 to 98 per cent in some technical services such as the highway department. And to that you must add the loss of all the statistical records burned or stolen…[24]

Despite comprising only slightly more than 10 percent of Algeria's total population, the *pieds-noirs* dominated Algeria's private and public sectors. In 1960-1961, for example, Europeans owned 369 businesses that employed more than 15 individuals, compared to 42 Algerian-owned business of a similar size. When the two populations are made equal for relative comparison, European industrial owners were approximately thirty-one times more numerous, artisans six

[23] As of the week of 6-12 August 1962. The major exodus occurred in the weeks immediately preceding independence. Nearly 97,000 Europeans settlers left during the week of 18-24 June alone. Sciences-Po, Archives d'Histoire Contemporaine, Fonds Jean-Marcel Jeanneney (JMJ) 33: "Mouvements Algérie-France de Civils Européens. Totaux Hebdomadaires: Juillet, Aout, Septembre 1962" (September 1962).

[24] Cited in David Ottoway and Marina Ottoway, *Algeria: The Politics of a Socialist Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1970), 10.

times so, and retailers three times so.[25] But while French Algeria had its share of wealthy land- and business-owning settlers, for the most part it was a colony of urban dwelling working- and middle-class *pieds-noirs* who were employed at every level of every branch of the economy: from bus drivers and punch card machine operators to engineers and mid-level managers. Algerian Muslims, on the other hand, were mostly unskilled laborers, farmers, artisans, and small shop owners (see Table 6.1). While this disparity between European and Algerian Muslim economic activity is perhaps not all that surprising when one considers the discriminatory regime that characterized settler colonialism in French Algeria since the nineteenth century, it does underscore the extent to which Algeria was reliant on the everyday labor of its settlers. Unlike other colonial spaces, such as in the British Raj, the European population in Algeria was large enough and concentrated enough on the ground that the French state had no need for the colony's indigenous population to manage strategic sectors like power, transport, and administration.[26] While the Constantine Plan had envisaged technical training and professional development for Algerian Muslims, by independence there was still no substantial middle class of indigenous subjects who had been groomed for the civil service or else filled basic, but vital roles as typists, tellers, and ticket takers. For example, Algeria counted 3,110 qualified European engineers at independence, but only 33 engineers of Algerian Muslim descent.[27] The flight of colonial cadres and skilled laborers immediately hampered the new state's ability to operate as a state.

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[25] This comparison is done by equating the Algerian population relative to that of the European, by dividing the Algerian population in these categories by nine, since the relation between the two populations in 1954 was approximately 9 Algerians to every 1 European settler. See: M'Hamed Boukhobza, "Le transfert social de l'indépendance – les mutations urbaines (1954-1966)" in *Les Accords d'Évian en conjoncture et en longue durée*, 72.

[26] For example, see: Davis C. Potter, "Manpower Shortage and the End of Colonialism: The Case of the Indian Civil Service," *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 1 (1973): 47-73.

[27] Catherine Simon, *Algérie, les années pieds-rouges: des rêves de l'indépendance au désenchantement : 1962-1969* (Paris: Découverte, 2009), 35.

Table 6.1 Comparative Urban Socio-Professional Structures in Algeria[28]

Profile	Europeans 1954	Algerians 1954	Algerians 1966	% Change in Algerian Population 1954-1966
Owners/employers	2.2%	0.4%	0.7%	+236.1
Retailers/artisans	17.2%	24.8%	12.3%	-7.6
High-level cadres	5.8%	0.3%	3.1%	+1,807.8
Mid-level cadres	11.1%	1.6%	6.0%	+590.5
White collar employees	19.6%	4.6%	12.5%	+403.3
Skilled laborers	18.1%	9.2%	6.2%	+25.2
Unskilled laborers	14.2%	55.3%	34.3%	+15.1
Other	11.8%	3.8%	24.9%	+1,145.8

The massive departure of French Algeria's *pieds-noirs* precipitated what M'Hamed Boukhobza has described as a "social transfer" that wrought socio-professional destabilization in the wake of independence.[29] In essence, inexperienced, undertrained Algerians moved into positions vacated by Europeans. This transfer most affected positions filled by high-level cadres (e.g. administrators, engineers, intellectuals), mid-level cadres (managers, technicians, functionaries, specialists), and state employees—exactly those responsible for manning the institutions of a sovereign Algerian state. In 1954, approximately 121,500 Europeans worked as functionaries employed by the colonial government; by comparison, only 29,242 Algerian Muslims filled such roles.[30] But, by the end of 1962, the majority of *pieds-noir* functionaries were gone.

[28] Adapted from Boukhobza, "Le transfert social de l'indépendance," 76.

[29] Boukhobza, "Le transfert social de l'indépendance," 67. The author identifies three periods of "social transfer" in Algeria connected to the war and the transition to independence: the first occurring during the war itself (1954-1962) which saw the massive displacement of Algerian Muslims from the countryside to urban centers; the second during the departure of the *pieds-noirs* in 1962; and a third in 1965-1966 following the *coup d'état* against President Ahmed Ben Bella led by Houari Boumedienne.

[30] Boukhobza, "Le transfert social de l'indépendance," 73.

Jeanneney's embassy attempted to take stock of this rapidly changing situation in the fall of 1962. Vitalis Cros, the embassy's Minister-Counsellor for Cooperation and former Prefect of Police for Algiers, estimated the number of French nationals in the Algerian public sector to be around 75,000 at the time of independence.[31] By the end of July, that number had fallen considerably, oscillating somewhere between 27,000 to 30,000 as the security situation worsened and many functionaries decided to take extended—and often permanent—summer vacations with their families to France. Only 22,000 French nationals remained in the public sector by the end of September and that number dropped again to fewer than 16,000 employees by the end of the calendar year.[32]

It should be remembered that the flight of Europeans affected different segments of the economy differently and while the European departure was dramatic, it was not total. Moreover, in some cases those who left in the spring and summer did return in the fall, although in much smaller numbers than those who departed Algeria for good. For the most part those who returned often did so to settle their affairs one last time before permanently settling in France. But of the nearly 300,000 Europeans who remained in Algeria beyond the summer's turmoil, many found themselves promoted out of necessity. In some cases, their relative expertise was no more advanced than that of some of their Algerian colleagues. René Vella was a twenty-something *pied-noir* electrical engineer from the eastern city of Bône (modern-day Annaba) who work at *Electricité et Gaz d'Algérie* (Electricity and Gas of Algeria [EGA]). Within two weeks of independence he had been promoted from fifth engineer to chief of the central power plant in

[31] Sciences-Po: JMJ 33: Vitalis Cros, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Haut Représentant de la République Française en Algérie. Objet: Coopération" (14 November 1962).

[32] Sciences-Po: JMJ 33: Vitalis Cros, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Haut Représentant de la République Française en Algérie. Objet: Coopération" (14 November 1962).

downtown Algiers. Although noting the intensity of his work, he maintained that "my way of acting or working did not change or evolve between 30 June and 1 July."[33] His Algerian coworkers at the plant considered him a *ouled bledna*—"child of our country": Vella and his colleagues had a job to do—keep the lights on—and they continued to do it, despite the chaos unfolding elsewhere in the country.[34] Although Vella would stay in Algeria until 1977 by choice, many other *pied-noir* employees who initially stayed on were looking for their own ways to get to France. It became increasingly clear to both Algerian authorities and French diplomats that something would have to be done.

In addition to the material deficit triggered by the departure of European settlers, a concomitant paucity of "intellectual capital" plagued Algeria following independence. Due to colonial-era inequity, qualified skilled labor among Algerian population was practically inexistent and to cope with the imperatives of independence the new Algerian state promoted thousands of untrained Algerian cadres into professional situations that they otherwise would not have been able to access during what Boukhobza defines as a "normal social evolution."[35] The colonial regime had given Algerian Muslims very little opportunity for professional advancement until the final years of French rule and despite increased efforts to educate Algeria's Muslim population, only 14.6 percent of Algerian children had been enrolled in French schools before the start of the revolution.[36] Although shocking, perhaps it is not surprising then that a census of public sector

[33] René Vella, "En charge de la production de l'électricité après l'indépendence: le démarrage de la Centrale d'Alger (juillet 1962)" in *Ingénieurs en Algérie dans les années 1960: une génération de la coopération*, ed. Aïssa Kadri and Mohamed Benguerna (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2014), 143-144.

[34] Vella, "En charge de la production de l'électricité après l'indépendence," 143-144.

[35] Boukhobza, "Le transfert social de l'indépendance," 77.

[36] Simon, *Algérie, les années pieds-rouges*, 35.

cadres undertaken in 1969 revealed that 52 percent of Algerians promoted to high-level positions had an education that did not exceed primary school and hardly 11.3 percent had received a higher education.[37] Nonetheless, the number of Algerian high-level cadres increased in size nineteen times from 1,332 before independence to 25,221 by 1966.

Lastly, in addition to depriving the new state of important professional, technical, and administrative expertise, the *pieds-noirs* took their money with them, precipitating a hemorrhage of much needed taxable income and private capital. During 1962, nearly 500 million New Francs left Algerian territory a month.[38] And between 1963 and 1965, the Algerian economy lost an estimated 4.5 billion Algerian dinars.[39] This depletion of monetary assets significantly reduced the Algerian state's financial assets and purchasing power, particularly since the money that was withdrawn was done so from postal accounts upon which the Algerian treasury depended for liquidity.[40]

What is remarkable then is that despite the economic and social instability precipitated by the war and its turbulent aftermath, certain segments of Algeria's infrastructure were managed surprisingly well in the chaos of immediate post-independence. This was due in no small part to the concerted effort undertaken by the Provisional Executive and the French government to maintain essential personnel in Algeria where possible to run vital services as well as the new

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[37] Simon, *Algérie, les années pieds-rouges*, 35.

[38] Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 195. Approximately USD $21.8 billion in 1964 or USD $171.6 billion in 2017 when adjusted for inflation. Inflation between New Francs and euros calculated from the Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, www.insee.fr (as at 17 August 2017). Conversion between euros and US dollars calculated at www.xe.com (as at 17 August 2017).

[39] Algeria remained in the franc zone for one year following independence, after which it adopted its own currency, the dinar. Nonetheless, the dinar remained pegged to the New Franc until the French government deregulated the franc in 1969.

[40] Sciences-Po: JMJ 33 (Service de la Coopération): "Situation du Trésor Algérien vis-à-vis du Trésor Français" (7 September 1962).

Algerian state's pragmatic approach toward French technical assistance. Together these policies helped ensure, among other things, that the trains ran on time.

An Outline of Franco-Algerian Cooperation

The cooperation clauses of the Evian Accords were vital to Algeria's post-independence success. Despite being denounced in the Tripoli Program as a "neocolonial platform that France is preparing to use in order to establish her new form of domination," the financial and material assistance promised by the Accords was perhaps the only way Algeria could truly claim the full sovereignty it sought from its former colonizer.[41]

The second chapter of the Evian Accords contained provisions on cooperation between France and Algeria, which stated that in exchange for the safeguarding of French interests in Algeria: "France will grant Algeria her technical and cultural assistance and will contribute privileged financial aid for its economic and social development." This statement was further expanded in an addendum to the Accords entitled "A Declaration of Principles Concerning Economic and Financial Cooperation." Article II of this declaration clarified that:

> French financial and technical aid will apply notably to the study, execution or financing of the public or private investment projects presented by the competent Algerian authorities; to the training of Algerian cadres and technicians; and to the assignment of French technicians. It will also apply to the transitional measures to be taken to facilitate the resumption of work by the regrouped populations. The aid may take the form, as the case may be, of allowances in kind, loans, contributions or participations.[42]

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[41] "Le Congrès de Tripoli."

[42] Ambassade de France, "Texts of Declarations Drawn Up in Common Agreement at Evian, March 18, 1962 by the Delegations of the Government of the French Repbulic and the Algerian National Liberation Front" (New York: Service de Presse et d'Information, 1962).

In other words, French cooperation would continue to finance the Constantine Plan's ongoing development projects, bankroll the nascent Algerian state, and provide the technical training and expertise necessary to run the country's administration and infrastructure. But while promising money and manpower was one thing, delivering it was another.

Transferring monetary aid to Algeria was in many ways the most straightforward component of French assistance and initially comprised two methods: financial aid provided as grants or loans and the temporary ability of Algeria to withdraw unlimited advances from the French treasury. For four months after independence, the treasuries of France and Algeria remained linked by the fateful logic of colonial-era organization. This arrangement, however ironic, provided a much-needed financial lifeline to a country that was otherwise bleeding money. The expenses of sovereign governing mounted quickly—the administration alone cost approximately 2.9 billion New Francs to operate.[43] Algerian debt ballooned, aggravating a financial situation that had been deteriorating even before the referendum on self-determination: in April 1962, the Algerian treasury reported a negative balance for the first time in its history.[44] Moreover, the ability of policymakers to report on the state of Algeria's finances accurately was paralyzed by the departure of all its punch card computer operators.[45] By the time the French government decided to curtail the Algerian state's power to draw unlimited advances from the

[43] Ottoway, *Algeria: The Politics of a Socialist Revolution*, 85.

[44] Sciences-Po: JMJ 33 (Service de la Coopération): "Situation du Trésor Algérien vis-à-vis du Trésor Français" (7 September 1962).

[45] Sciences-Po: JMJ 33 (Service de la Coopération): "Situation du Trésor Algérien vis-à-vis du Trésor Français" (7 September 1962).

French treasury in November 1962, an estimated deficit of 1.8 billion New Francs had been accrued.[46]

Direct financial aid to Algeria provided a more stable, long-term solution to Algeria's problem of liquidity. Piecemeal transfers of French financial aid to Algeria were standardized by an accord concluded on 26 June 1963, which promised 800 million New Francs annually (see Table 6.2). This aid package was divided into two categories: *aide libre* (free aid) and *aide liée* (linked aid). Free aid comprised financial assistance transferred by France to the Algerian treasury's development fund, the *Caisse Algérienne de Développement* (CAD), and could be allocated as the Algerian state wished. Linked aid was also offered as grant assistance but, as the name suggests, it was earmarked specifically for the continuation of projects started under the Constantine Plan and managed by the colonial-era *Caisse d'Equipement pour le Développement d'Algérie* (CEDA).[47] France also offered Algeria long-term loans of 10 to 20 years with favorable interest rates of 1 to 3 percent.

This financial assistance, however, seemed to provide blunt proof of Algeria's dependence on France. After all, nearly 45 percent of the *aide liée* sent to Algeria went to benefit projects managed by French enterprises. To the critics of the Evian Accords, such a reality seemed to give form to the Tripoli Program's dark premonitions that French financial aid would buy off the revolution's momentum with a "salvo of billions."[48] But while French financial support may have underscored Algeria's lack of sovereignty in one domain, it nonetheless allowed the Algerian state

[46] Sciences-Po: JMJ 33 (Entretiens Franco-Algériens): "Relations trésorerie–Situation des finances algériennes" (29 November 1962).

[47] Philip C. Naylor, *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation*. (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2000), 60.

[48] "Le Congrès de Tripoli."

to act independently in other areas of sovereignty—namely the ability to maintain a robust presence on the world stage from where it could vie for the ideological leadership of the emerging non-aligned movement. As Philip Naylor has noted, French aid "staved off not only financial failure but also political bankruptcy" in Algeria.[49]

Table 6.2 French Aid, 1963-1965 (in millions of New Francs)[50]

	1963	1964	1965
Public Aid			
Grants and loans	612	462	218
Cultural/technical cooperation	160	186	204
Economic/financial support	425	266	253
Subtotal	1,197	914	675
Private Aid	927	862	599
Total	2,124	1,776	1,274

Money could only stabilize Algeria's sovereignty crisis so much. Upon his arrival to Algeria, Jean-Marcel Jeanneney immediately observed the effect that the departure of French functionaries was having on the country to which he had just been named ambassador. Writing to the French Minster of Foreign Affairs, Jeanneney voiced his concern that the exodus had created "by the fatal chain of disorganization which it entails, a situation whose irreversibility will be more and more marked and the consequences more and more serious."[51] It thus became "a priority to ensure, using every measure possible, the functioning of Algerian services with their habitual French personnel."[52]

[49] Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 60.

[50] Adapted from Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 61.

[51] Sciences-Po: JMJ 34 (Cooperation Technique et Administrative): Letter from Jean-Marcel Jeanneney to Minister for Algerian Affairs, "Objet: coopération technique et administrative," (15 August 1962).

[52] Sciences-Po: JMJ 34 (Cooperation Technique et Administrative): Letter from Jean-Marcel Jeanneney to Minister for Algerian Affairs, "Objet: coopération technique et administrative," (15 August 1962).

The Algerian government—first under the Provisional Executive of Abderrahmane Farès and later under the direction of Ahmed Ben Bella—also realized the extent to which the departure of *pieds-noirs* had stymied the country's ability to operate its infrastructure. Indeed, Charles Koenig, the Provisional Executive's delegate for public works, told Ben Bella directly in July 1962 that "a large number of French Algerians had left the country and that it was indispensable for the country's economy that a large number of these French citizens remain or return to Algeria…to ensure that cooperation, in the noble sense of the word, was established…and not a mere Potemkin form cooperation of the neocolonial kind."[53] As early as August 1962, the Provisional Executive began sending the French embassy requests for trained personnel to fill vital posts in almost every branch of the Algerian public sector (see Table 6.3). These requests continued even after the constitution of the National Constituent Assembly and the election of Ahmed Ben Bella as Prime Minster the following month. Ben Bella's government also asked that technical missions headed by metropolitan experts travel to Algiers to provide guidance as to the best way the country could manage the administration and infrastructure it had inherited from the French. By November 1962 there were seven different technical missions in Algeria studying everything from how to restructure Algeria's administrative organizations, how to resolve problems relating to Algeria's social security program, and even how to train the Algerian gendarmerie.[54] While the Algerian state meant for most of these requests to be consultative and temporary in nature, some sectors—

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[53] Charles Koenig cited in Aïssa Kadri, "L'Exécutif Provisoire, les enjeux d'une transition chaotique" in *La guerre d'Algérie revisitée: Nouvelles générations, nouveaux regards*, ed. Aïssa Kadri, Moula Bouazziz, and Tramor Quemeneur (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2015), 223.

[54] Sciences-Po, JMJ 33: Vitalis Cros, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Haut Représentant de la République Française en Algérie. Objet: Coopération" (14 November 1962).

such as the energy utilities, the postal service, and the Algerian national railway— required a profound and wide-ranging commitment of on-the-ground resources.[55]

Technical cooperation to a newly independent Algeria manifested itself in two ways: the use of qualified French personnel to fill vacant positions in Algeria, complemented by the training (*formation*) of Algerian public sector employees and cadres. While both Algerian and French policymakers desired the eventual "algerianization" of infrastructure management, the initial primary objective of technical cooperation was "the maintenance of essential services."[56] In the short term, French involvement would be critical to the daily functioning of much of the public sector.

Table 6. 3 Chronological Summary of Algerian Personnel Requests for Technical Cooperation[57]

Date Requested	Service	Personnel Requested
8 August 1962	Finances	20
27 August 1962	Labor	13
4 September 1962	National Railway Service of Algeria (SNCFA)	391
8 September 1962	Port Authority	21
10 September 1962	Postal, Telegraph & Telephone Service	486
19 September 1962	Land Management	40
22 September 1962	Magistrature	5
22 September 1962	Public Works	13
28 September 1962	Electricity and Gas of Algeria (EGA)	1,084
c. September 1962	Public Services	12
3 October 1962	City of Algiers	24
5 October 1962	National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE)	7

[55] Sciences-Po, JMJ 33: Vitalis Cros, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Haut Représentant de la République Française en Algérie. Objet: Coopération" (14 November 1962).

[56] "La Coopération culturelle et technique entre la France et l'Algérie" (1966).

[57] Sciences-Po, JMJ 33: Vitalis Cros, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Haut Représentant de la République Française en Algérie. Objet: Coopération" (14 November 1962).

French personnel working in Algeria under the umbrella of post-independence cooperation were divided into four categories: public-sector employees that stayed on in Algeria after independence, specialized personnel transferred from the former metropole to Algeria, paid volunteers known as *coopérants*, and *coopérants militaires* who fulfilled their French national service commitment in Algeria as members of the *Volontaires de Service National Actif* (VSNA). While those who served in these different capacities all became known as *coopérants*, they differed as to their motivations for wanting to work in Algeria: many did it because it was their job, others because they needed one and the salaries offered by the French government for employment in Algeria were competitive, still more held anti-colonialist sympathies and saw their service in Algeria as contributing to the construction a revolutionary state from the ruin of French imperialism. Known as the *pieds-rouges*, they were a diverse mix of Communists, Trotskyites, activist Christians, and long-time supporters of Algerian independence who came of their own accord, attracted to Ben Bella's increasingly socialist-inspired plans for a new Algeria.[58] Lastly, a good number of the French public service employees who worked in Algeria under the aegis of technical cooperation had no other choice: they were forced by the French government to remain there, their repatriation to the French mainland a condition of their serving the Algerian state for a certain period of time. This policy, explained in more detail in the section that follows, affected functionaries working for state-owned enterprises such as EGA and the SNCFA in particular. This was done not only to ensure that essential services would continue to function in Algeria, but also to ensure that Algeria's transition to independence would be a successful one—one that would

[58] See: Catherine Simon, *Algérie, les années pieds-rouges: des rêves de l'indépendance au désenchantement: 1962-1969* (Paris: Découverte, 2009).

reflect positively on France and further promote de Gaulle's post-imperial foreign policy of cooperation and development.

Of course, France was not the only country to offer financial and technical assistance to Algeria. Paris faced competition from Moscow, Belgrade, Sofia, Cairo, Beijing and even Washington D.C—each looking for a new Mediterranean ally with significant geo-political potential. Ben Bella, foremost the pragmatist, was ecumenical in his acceptance of technical assistance from the different poles of the Cold War world into which his country had emerged. He stated as much to Vitalis Cros in a private interview in the fall of 1962: "We are turning our eyes to every side, because independence is not an end in itself and the Algerian people need achievements that can give them work in all fields."[59] Nonetheless, Ben Bella realized the practical advantages that French cooperation offered over similar proposals: French was a common language between Algerians and their *coopérant* interlocutors, French *coopérants* were more familiar with the structures of Algeria's public-sector infrastructure, and in some cases many of them had themselves been the ones who had operated much of it prior to independence. By 1963, more than 9,000 French *coopérants* of different backgrounds and motivations staffed nearly every major department and ministry in the Algerian administration (see Table 6.4).

[59] Sciences-Po: JMJ 34: Vitalis Cros, "Note pour Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Haut Représentant de la République Française en Algérie, Objet: Entrevue avec le Président Ben Bella" (9 November 1962).

Table 6.4 French Personnel in Algeria, 1962-1965[60]

Sector / Office / Ministry	Before 1 July 1962	After 1 July 1962	1963	1 Jan. 1964	1 June 1964	1 Jan. 1965	1 June 1965
President/Vice President*	---	---	41	57	65	41	53
Health	---	---	309	857	970	756	831
Labor	36,000	6,000	210	179	134	122	118
Tourism*	---	---	---	---	6	11	11
Interior	---	---	716	427	189	152	99
Justice	---	---	117	173	98	77	84
Economy	---	---	747	561	353	305	355
Public Works/Transport	---	---	1,032	575	452	427	506
Agriculture	---	---	358	420	304	305	317
PTT	6,500	1,500	1,323	1,103	672	544	500
Hospitals/Hospices	5,000	1,500	1,200	---	---	---	---
EGA	3,700	500	293	429	293	280	322
SNCFA	7,581	2,600	940	787	466	450	372
Municipalities	14,000	2,500	2,000	709	331	316	157
Total	72, 781	14,600	9,286	6,277	4,333	3,786	3,705

*Indicates offices created after independence

The continued presence of French technicians and French management was not always welcomed in a country acutely aware of its position as an emergent anticolonial icon and regional *tiers-mondiste* leader. Ben Bella and the government naturally desired to assert control over certain French assets quickly and in some cases evicted French personnel from their offices when French authorities delayed the transfer of infrastructure over which Paris preferred to retain control. Such was the case of the *Radiodiffusion-Télévision Algérie* (RTA) broadcasting studio, where Algerian soldiers evicted French technicians from the control room at gunpoint during a particularly tense standoff in October 1962.[61] Despite contemporaneous Algerian efforts elsewhere to claim stewardship over the private property of departed European settlers, dramatic encounters over

[60] Adapted from: Stephen Hessel, "La Coopération franco-algérienne en 1966" *Coopération et Développement* (July-August 1966): 11.

[61] Archives de la Ministère des Affaires Etrangères —La Courneuve (AMAE-C): 29QO/6: Négociations domaniales.

state-owned infrastructure were often the exception rather than the rule. Algerian leaders' decision to wrest complete operational control over the nation's radio and TV broadcasting capabilities from French supervision is understandable in a new country looking to control the means of communication and the tools of propaganda. And while public confrontations such as the showdown over RTA often ate up newsprint and prompted anxious back-channel negotiating, the more reasoned transfers of expertise, materiel, and property between France and Algeria tended to go unnoticed. This was in part because, in the beginning, Algerian policymakers rather preferred French expertise to run particularly intricate public services such as power utilities, the civil aviation authority, the railway, and even the national book importation and distribution enterprise. Even in the case of RTA, the French still managed to retain an important cultural toehold. The Algerian state might have control of the airwaves, but the new RTA administrators continued to order several hundreds of hours' worth of programming straight from France's media library, including a Sunday evening primetime costume drama about the eighteenth-century trial and execution of alleged murderer Jean Calas that aired to wide critical acclaim in Algeria in May 1963.[62]

The reality on the ground was therefore often more complex than rhetorical pronouncements would suggest. This was particularly true in the case of the Algerian national railway. At independence, Algeria was poised to take control of nearly 4,100 kilometers of track and a fleet of rolling stock that included 15 steam locomotives, 36 electric locomotives, 130 diesel-electric locomotives, 35 *autorails* (self-propelled railcars), and 10,598 railway freight and passenger carriages.[63] The SNCFA was also one of the largest public-sector employers in Algeria.

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[62] AMAE-C: 29QO/55: Telegram from Argod to SECRETALGERIE PARIS (29 May 1963).

[63] John C. Pawera, *Algeria's Infrastructure: An Economic Survey of Transportation, Communication, and Energy Resources* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 39.

Over 14,000 *cheminots* (railwaymen) worked on the railroad in 1961. But by the summer of 1962, that number had been cut in half, creating a critical shortage of labor. Despite the considerable shortcomings wrought by the difficult conditions of independence, the railroad remained the most important means of surface transportation in Algeria.[64] A newly independent Algeria, however, depended on the railway not just to facilitate the transportation of its citizens, but more importantly to carry goods and materials vital to the new nation's fledgling economy. Analyzing how this crucial piece of public infrastructure was transferred to Algerian ownership can illustrate how the above policies of cooperation operated in practice. One commentator, writing contemporaneously about Algeria's infrastructure, noted that even in the face of challenging operating conditions the railroad maintained reasonable service and did not "succumb to the chaos predicted by the departing Europeans."[65] What, then, was the reason for this relative success?

Decolonizing Infrastructure in Practice: The Case of the SNCFA

Proposals to construct a railway in Algeria date to the 1840s. As in other settler colonies with expanding frontiers, colonial planners and private entrepreneurs saw the railway as a means to open up Algeria, promote settlement, exploit and transport natural resources, facilitate communication, and provide mobility to the military. Under the Second Empire, Napoleon III issued an imperial decree authorizing the development of three major rail lines in Algeria, the first

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[64] Pawera, *Algeria's Infrastructure*, 42.

[65] Pawera, *Algeria's Infrastructure*, 35.

of which opened on 8 September 1862 between Algiers and Blida—making the railway in Algeria the third-oldest on the African continent.[66]

Figure 6.1



Map of Algerian Railway c. 1959
Source: *Chemins de Fer Français en Algérie* (1959)

Rather than directly financing the construction of the railway, the French government granted concessions to private companies to lay track and operate passenger and freight routes. The first, and largest, of these concessions was managed by the metropolitan *Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée* (PLM), which ran the most important lines between Algiers and Oran in the west and Philippeville and Constantine in the east. Following the fall of the Second Empire and the establishment of the Third Republic in 1870, new private companies set to work expanding the rail network across Algeria, but often in a manner that placed

[66] Centre des Archives Historiques de la SNCF (SNCF): Ouvrages: "Rapport présenté à Monsieur le Délégué Général du Gouvernement en Algérie par Paul Jusseau, Directeur Général des Chemins de Fer Algériens" (April 1959). The first opened in 1854 between Alexandria and Kafr-el-Zayat in Egypt; the second in 1860 between Durban and Harbour Point in South Africa.

profits ahead of practical planning. At the turn of the century, the colonial government in Algeria gained greater autonomy in fiscal and administrative matters, which permitted the construction of new railways in accordance with regional plans. As the railroads grew, some were consolidated by the private companies, while still others were taken over and operated by the French colonial government in Algeria.[67] On 31 December 1938, the French state nationalized all the railway companies in the metropole, forming the *Société Nationale de Chemins de Fer Français* (SNCF). The following year, this decree was extended to French Algeria, where the remaining railway companies in the colony were nationalized into the *Chemins de Fer Algériens* (CFA), a state-run entity managed by the Government General of Algeria. The CFA, however, would remain administratively separate from the SNCF until the 1950s.

By the beginning of the revolution, Algeria's rail infrastructure was modern and substantial: more than 215 locomotives operated across 4,000 kilometers of track managed by over 14,500 employees.[68] Steam and diesel-electric locomotives operated most of the network, although postwar modernization campaigns had been steadily promoting the electrification of certain lines. The colony's rugged terrain had historically posed challenges to the development and expansion of the rail network: only a quarter of the laid track was level, and the total length of Algeria's railway had sharper curves and steeper gradients than Switzerland's.[69] Despite efforts to improve the track, engineers still often held their trains to moderate or low speeds to accommodate the winding routes of the Tellian Atlas (a situation familiar to this day to anyone who travels by train in Algeria). And except for portions of the major east-west rail arteries, many of the routes across

[67] Benjamin E. Thomas, "The Railways of French North Africa," *Economic Geography* 29, no. 2 (April 1953): 96.

[68] SNCF: Ouvrages: "Rapport présenté à Monsieur le Délégué Général du Gouvernement en Algérie par Paul Jusseau, Directeur Général des Chemins de Fer Algériens" (April 1959); Pawera, 39.

[69] Thomas, "The Railways of French North Africa," 96.

Algeria were single tracked, which made traffic coordination and track switching more challenging. The railway, however, employed modern signaling and telecommunications equipment identical to that used by the SNCF in the metropole, including VHF (Very High Frequency) radio and SSB (Single Side Band) remote controls.[70]

In 1954, the CFA earned over 3 billion francs in ticket receipts, and nearly triple that in freight traffic.[71] In addition to carrying passengers, Algeria's railway transported everything from agricultural products such as cattle, grain, wine, dates, and palm fiber to important raw materials such as coal, iron ore, phosphates, crude oil, and natural gas products.[72] Although freight carriage made the Algerian railway most of its money, the CFA had run a deficit every year since before the end of the Second World War. The advent of commercial air travel and an increase in competitive trucking during the interwar period steadily ate into the Algerian railway's market share. Moreover, with the start of the revolution, the railway became a regular target of FLN sabotage, which destroyed materiel and damaged infrastructure, maimed or killed railway employees, and dissuaded passengers from traveling overland by rail.[73] By the end of the 1950s, persistent deficits and falling receipts prompted calls for reform.

The answer to the Algerian railway's problems had significant consequences for the post-independence handover. In February 1959, the government of Charles de Gaulle decided to wholly

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[70] Pawera, *Algeria's Infrastructure*, 33.

[71] SNCF: Ouvrages: "Rapport présenté à Monsieur le Délégué Général du Gouvernement en Algérie par Paul Jusseau, Directeur Général des Chemins de Fer Algériens" (April 1959).

[72] SNCF: Ouvrages: SNCFA, "Compte de gestion" (1959).

[73] According to one report, 48 railway agents were killed by "terrorist action" between 1 January and 30 June 1962. Although not explicitly stated, it should be noted that during the spring of 1962, the OAS was the likely culprit for such violence. SNCF: 68 LM 290: "Compte-rendu de la reunion du Conseil d'Administration de la SNCFA qui a eu lieu à Alger le 27 juillet 1962" (7 August 1962).

integrate the CFA into the metropolitan SNCF, creating the *Société des Chemins de Fer Français en Algérie* (SNCFA). A convention between the French state and the SNCF passed on 30 June 1959 divided the CFA's capital stock of 500 million francs between the French government (51 percent ownership at 255 million in shares) and the SNCF (49 percent ownership at 245 million in shares).[74] The French government desired SNCF control over the Algerian railway for two reasons: first, it gave the state greater flexibility to respond to the imperatives of the Algerian economy in a time of war and second, it permitted the state to better align railroad planning with the designs of the Constantine Plan, which aimed to extend and modernize Algeria's rail infrastructure considerably. Under the new arrangement, the French state would subsidize a good deal of the SNCFA's expenses. For example: whereas the French government covered only 60 percent of the metropolitan railway's expenditures on maintenance and safety installations, the French state contributed 100 percent of this cost to the Algerian railway.[75]

Prior to this change, the CFA was managed by the colonial government in French Algeria. With its integration into the SNCF, however, everything from the crossties to the carriages to the conductors themselves became a direct part of a state-owned French enterprise. This meant that unlike other kinds of infrastructure that could be devolved to Algerian ownership upon independence, the SNCFA would have to be disentangled from its French parent. That process gave rise to several uncertainties: What would happen to its rolling stock? What would happen to its personnel? More importantly, who would end up cashing out the pension checks and managing the retirement funds of its personnel?

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[74] SNCF: Ouvrages: "Constitution de la Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français en Algérie," *Revue Général des Chemins de Fer* (April 1960): 242.

[75] SNCF: Ouvrages: "Constitution de la Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français en Algérie," 242.

These and similar questions began drawing the attention of French administrators as early as January 1962, just as secret negotiations between the French state and the FLN increasingly transformed the likelihood of Algerian independence into a certainty. The SNCFA was among several public service entities in Algeria that had been nationalized by the French state after the Second World War, including the Bank of Algeria and *Electricité et Gaz d'Algérie*. But the broader problem that policymakers in Paris and Algeria faced was what to do with those state employees who would, undoubtedly, want to leave Algeria after independence. That prospect presented two main challenges. First, not only would those public-sector employees desiring to leave Algeria need to find similar employment in the metropole, but their unions would demand it. Second, the administrators were conscious of the consequences that such demands for re-assignment in the metropole would mean for eventual process of transition. While the ultimate number of departing *pieds-noirs* would surprise even French planners, they were still aware of how even a modest departure of technical expertise from the Algeria public sector would affect the new country. This was especially important if the French state intended to make good on its promise of technical assistance and showcase its policy of cooperation to the world.

The recently enacted *loi-cadre* of 26 December 1961 had already created a set of protective measures designed to "integrate into the economic and social structures of the nation" those French repatriates from overseas territories formerly under French authority—notably Morocco and Tunisia—who had left due to "political events."[76] But this statute, ironically, did not apply to the Europeans who had begun leaving Algeria in early 1962 because Algeria was still a sovereign part of France. Therefore, to integrate European functionaries from Algeria, French policymakers had to consider other administrative options. The most direct way was through a process known as

[76] "Loi n° 61-1439 du 26 décembre 1961 relative à l'accueil et à la réinstallation des Français d'outre-mer," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (28 December 1961), 11996-11997.

fusion—the merging of functionaries from Algeria with the metropolitan equivalent of their Algerian public-sector service.[77] By the spring of 1962, nearly 60,000 government agents in Algeria were identified as eligible for integration into an equivalent metropolitan organization.[78] Following the signing of the Evian Accords in March 1962, the French state passed a raft of legislation aimed at formalizing the process of integration. The first of these decrees was an ordinance promulgated on 2 April 1962 that simply extended the provisions of the *loi-cadre* of 26 December 1961 to Algeria.[79] Two more ordinances signed on 11 April 1962 further strengthened this commitment: the first declared that all repatriating *pieds-noirs* would be given priority for employment in the metropole, while the second specifically addressed public-sector employees working for state-owned enterprises in Algeria, guaranteeing them the right to integration.[80] This solution, however, was complicated by the fact that those public-sector entities in Algeria which had been nationalized represented entirely parallel state-owned institutions that in some cases made it more difficult to integrate employees from one into the other: pay structures, retirement benefits, and vacation allotments often differed between the metropolitan entity and its Algerian counterpart. As a result, conventions outlining the conditions of integration between the two would have to be negotiated individually, as was the case between the SNCF and the SNCFA.

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[77] Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (ANOM): 81/F/1813: "Procès-verbal de la réunion du 24 janvier 1962 consacrée aux problèmes des Rapatriés" (24 January 1962).

[78] ANOM: 81/F/1813: "Procès-verbal de la réunion du 24 janvier 1962 consacrée aux problèmes des Rapatriés" (24 January 1962).

[79] "Décret n° 62-365 du 2 avril 1962 les mesures prises en application de la loi 61-1439 du 26 décembre 1961 relative à l'accueil et à la réinstallation des Français d'Outre-mer sont applicables aux Français rentrant d'Algérie et du Sahara dans les conditions prévue par la dite loi," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (3 April 1962), 3487-3488.

[80] "Ordonnance n° 62-401 du 11 avril 1962 relative à l'emploi des Français rapatriés d'outre-mer," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (12 April 1962), 3786-3787; "Ordonnance n° 62-401 du 11 avril 1962 relative aux conditions d'intégration dans les services publics métropolitains des fonctionnaires et agents des service publics algériens et sahariens," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (12 April 1962), 3787-3788.

A convention drawn up between the administrative boards of the SNCF and the SNCFA on 14 May 1962 defined the way the SNCF would treat workers from the SNCFA. It promised full integration into the SNCF for all physically capable, full-time employees under 55 years old holding French nationality.[81] Paygrades would be carried over as would pension and social security benefits. SNCFA employees could request integration into the SNCF, understanding that they would be found an equivalent job in France (direct *intégration*), or else they could be administratively integrated into the SNCF while still maintaining their posts in Algeria at the SNCFA (an option known as *intégration-détachement*).[82] French planners secretly hoped that *cheminots* would chose the latter option and stay in Algeria as long as they were still given the security offered by full affiliation with the SNCF, but they underestimated the desire of French railway workers to leave Algeria all together.

These policies reflected a discernable tension in France's approach to the problem of state employees in Algeria. On the one hand, French policymakers recognized that the French state needed to provide support to those functionaries desiring to transfer to the metropole all the while trying to dissuade them from leaving Algeria in the first place. To accomplish its goal of ensuring that French expertise would remain in place, the French government and its state-owned enterprises that continued operating in Algeria adopted a carrot and stick approach: offer generous compensation and benefits for those workers who decided to stay, while disincentivizing a decision to leave. Often this approach gave state-employees in Algeria no alternative other than to stay. In

[81] SNCF: 505 LM 118: "Convention du 14 mai 1962" (14 May 1962). The convention is notably ambiguous concerning the status of Algerian Muslims. Under the terms of the Evian Accords, Algerian Muslims had the option to choose French nationality (and *pieds-noirs* Algerian nationality) in the three years following independence, but little exists in the current archival record about how, if at all, Algerian Muslim *cheminots* were made party or not to administrative integration into the SNCF.

[82] SNCF: 505 LM 118: "Convention du 14 mai 1962" (14 May 1962).

the case of the SNCFA, an addendum to the 14 May convention added the caveat that requests for transfers to the SNCF would only be accepted after six months from the date of the Algerian referendum on self-determination.[83]

This administrative change complemented a general ordinance passed by the French government on 30 May 1962, which decreed that "functionaries serving in Algeria following the possible transfer of sovereignty resulting from self-determination will be placed or maintained in a status of provisional assignment [in Algeria] as regards the status of their public function…during a period of three years as provided for by the general governmental declaration of 19 March 1962 relative to Algeria [i.e. the Evian Accords]."[84] While this ordinance explicitly stated that no functionary could be forced to remain in Algeria if he or she were to "express a contrary desire" it nonetheless established a minimum interval of six months before any transfer could be requested, effectively trapping workers in Algeria until the end of the calendar year. Unauthorized departure was disincentivized by guaranteeing employment with full pay and comparable benefits in the metropole to employees who remained in Algeria between 1 July 1962 and 31 December 1962. However, this guarantee was void should an employee leave beforehand. In the meantime, the French state would continue to pay salaries and benefits. During initial discussions of the similar policy included in the addendum to the SNCF-SNCFA convention, even the SNCFA's union liaison, M. Bodeau, acknowledged "the political necessity of maintaining the

[83] SNCF: 505 LM 118: "Avenant à la Convention du 14 May 1962 relative aux conditions d'intégration à la SNCF des agents du cadre permanent de la SNCFA" (24 September 1962).

[84] "Ordonnance n°62-611 du 30 mai 1962 relative à la situation des fonctionnaires de cadres de l'Etat en service en Algérie," *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (31 May 1962), 5284-5285.

French presence in Algeria" which, in his mind, justified "the strong desire felt by its trade union to see as few *cheminots* as possible return to the metropole."[85]

With the question of personnel temporarily stabilized, there remained the issue of how to hand over the rest of the SNCFA. Juridically, the SNCFA was only the custodian (*gestionnaire*) of the railway, its real estate, and its materiel.[86] The actual owner of the railroad's physical infrastructure had been the French state since nationalization of the Algerian railway companies was enacted in 1938. Therefore, the only process that was technically needed to transfer the railroad to Algerian control upon independence was to substitute the French government's majority shareholder interest in the SNCFA with the Algerian government's. Following independence, the French government proclaimed that the Algerian state would be replacing it as the majority stakeholder in the SNCFA and transferred its 51 percent in shares to the Algerian government. Nonetheless, under the provisions of the February 1959 ordinance that subsumed the CFA into the structure of the SNCF, the SNCF remained the minority shareholder of the company. As a result, the SNCF maintained its representation on the administrative council of the Algerian railway company. The SNCFA's situation in the fall of 1962 was thus an interesting one: 49 percent of its stock was owned by the national railway service of another country, the same one which paid the salaries and managed the pension benefits of the majority of its personnel, personnel who for the most part were non-citizens of the new nation. For all practical purposes, the SNCFA operated essentially unchanged from its colonial configuration during the first six months of Algerian independence—that is to say, it was *de facto* run by the French. It even retained the same name—*Société des Chemins de Fer Français en Algérie* —until a decree on 16 May 1963 dropped

[85] SNCF: 505 LM 118: "Extrait du P.V. de la séance du Conseil d'Administration du 3 mai 1962" (3 May 1962).

[86] SNCF: 68 LM 290: "Note relative à la situation juridique de la SNCFA dans l'hypothèse d'une souveraineté algérienne" (26 June 1962).

the "Français" and simply made the SNCFA the *Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Algériens*.[87] Not until 1970, however, would the Algerian government buy out the SNCF's remaining shares in the company and become the railway's sole owner.

Conclusion

When the celebrations of Algeria's newfound sovereignty had ended, Algerians from every social demographic—from FLN policymakers, to suddenly promoted cadres, to unskilled laborers in the countryside—faced the challenge of assuming control over their newly acquired infrastructure and negotiating with French authorities over the terms of its handover, operation, and maintenance. This reality, however, immediately presented Algerians with an irony of sorts: just how independent was their country if the technical expertise needed to keep the lights on, deliver the mail, and run the trains required assistance from the former colonizer? It seemed hardly rational to do without these essential services, for state building is nothing if not the "routine practices undertaken by inconspicuous government employees"—the very ones who daily manage a country's material and social infrastructure.[88] Albert Memmi himself wrestled with the irony of independence that faced the formerly colonized in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*:

> But to go all the way with his revolt, it seems necessary to him [the colonized] to accept those inhibitions and amputations. He will forego the use of the colonizer's language, even if all the locks of the country turn with that key; he will change the signs and highway markings, even if he is the first to be inconvenienced. He will prefer a long period of educational mistakes to the continuance of the colonizer's school organization. He will choose institutional disorder to destroy the institutions built by the colonizer as soon as possible. There we see, indeed, a reactive drive of profound protest. He will no longer owe anything to the colonize and will have definitely broken with him.[89]

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[87] "Décret n° 63-183 du 16 mai 1963 approuvant les modifications statuaires de la société nationale des chemins de fer algériens," *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne*, (28 May 1963), 542-543.

[88] Hansen and Stepputat, *States of Imagination*, 8.

[89] Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and The Colonized* (New York: Orion Press, 1965), 137-138.

Indeed, "to go all the way" may have seemed appealing to those in the FLN who were skeptical of the Evian Accords' provisions, but was something so drastic ever a viable option? The irony of independence—and by extension of post-independence sovereignty—is foremost that "full" attainment of it was structurally impossible. The edifices of colonialism had made it so. Algeria may have been a state-in-waiting for acceptance into international bodies like the United Nations, but on 3 July 1962, much of the new nation remained the way it had been just the day before. To function independently not only meant continued reliance on French expertise and assistance, it also meant the inheritance, administration, and stewardship of a material legacy constructed under French colonial rule: of roads and rails and resources. Ironically, the path to true independence may very well had lain through interdependence.

Similarly, those French administrators who wrestled with how to choreograph France's withdrawal from Algeria also had to contend with the realities of decolonization. Even the dramatic departure of *pieds-noirs* was not enough to unravel the complicated skein that linked France to Algeria. If anything, this exodus did more to ensure France's continued participation in the intricate logistics of Algeria's post-colonial life. The case of the SNCFA demonstrates the extent to which aspects of French sovereignty were maintained in Algeria in unexpected ways: in the ongoing effort to sustain a vital public service in the interests of cooperation, in the unintended consequences of colonial-era decisions over nationalization and state ownership, and in the very employees themselves to whom France continued to provide paychecks and pensions.

Writing on the afterlife of empire, Jordanna Bailkin contends that decolonization was not merely a military or diplomatic process, but a social phenomenon as well, one that could "intensify

the enmeshments" between the former colony and the former metropole.[90] Such was the case in Algeria: the very moment of rupture became a point of reconnection, when switching tracks meant still using the same rails.

[90] Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 4-12.

Conclusion

History and geography condemn France and Algeria to get along.

President Houari Boumediene (1977)[1]

It is unknown whether the remote facility located southeast of Beni Ounif near the Moroccan border had a supply of scorpion anti-venom in 1966. Presumably it did. Nestled among the rocky plateaus of the western Sahara, the outpost known as "B2 Namous" was 90 kilometers from the nearest permanent settlement, over 200 kilometers from the closest city with a hospital, and more than a two-hour journey by C-47 Skytrain to Maison-Blanche airport and the Pasteur Institute in Algiers.[2] By then, the Institute was back to fulltime operations manufacturing and supplying vaccines for rabies and sheep pox, in addition to *sérum anti-scorpionique*. Nonetheless, a welcome booklet issued that year prepared the visitor who trekked out to this desolate fringe of the Algerian Sahara to take several precautions against the desert's harsh climate and occasionally hostile fauna.[3] Among its recommendations, the visitor was advised to check shoes and clothing in the morning for hidden scorpions and coiled vipers and to be especially vigilant on the rocky trail that led southwest out of the confines of the camp into 4,800 square kilometers of the most top secret property in the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. Officially, the compound belonged to the rather innocuous sounding Technical Studies and General Enterprise Company (*Société d'Études Techniques et d'Entreprise Générale*), a subdivision of the French-owned

[1] Cited in Paul Balta, *L'Algérie des Algériens. Vingt ans après* (Paris: Éditions Ouvrières, 1981), 211-212; and Paul Balta, "Le rapprochement difficile—Des crises en cascade," *Le Monde*, 28 November 1981.

[2] Archives de la Ministère des Affaires Etrangères—La Courneuve (AMAE-C): 29QO/63 (Questions Militaires): "Centre d'Expérimentation Semi-Permanent de Beni Ounif-B2 Namous," (no date, c. 1966).

[3] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: "Centre d'Expérimentation Semi-Permanent de Beni Ounif-B2 Namous," (no date, c. 1966). "*Namous*" is the colloquial Arabic word for mosquito across North Africa (ناموسة).

electronics manufacturer Thomson-CSF.[4] In reality, it was home to Balthazar Battalion of the French army's technical section. Not listed among the site's hazards, however, was the danger that posed the greatest threat to any guest—the very *raison d'être*, in fact, for the compound's existence in this far-flung corner of an independent Algeria: outside of the Soviet Union, B2 Namous served as the world's largest center for the research and testing of chemical and biological weapons.[5]

Among the Evian Accords' provisions, the FLN had agreed to the French state's continued use of its colonial-era military bases in the Algerian Sahara until 1 July 1967.[6] These sites included the atomic weapons testing facilities at Réggane and In Ekker, the rocket launching installations in Colomb-Béchar and Hammaguir (from which France launched its first satellite in 1965), and the little-known Semi-Permanent Experimentation Center (*Centre d'Expérimentation Semi-Permanent*) at B2 Namous. After 1967, France would find alternate sites in the remnants of its colonial empire from which to test thermonuclear weapons and send rockets into space. The Pacific atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa in French Polynesia would host nuclear tests for thirty years from 1966 until 1996, and French Guiana would not only provide a strategic launching facility for France's growing space program in 1968, it would also become the main spaceport for the European Space Agency seven years later.[7] The testing of chemical weapons, however, required very particular meteorological and topographical conditions—ones that the seemingly uninhabited

[4] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: "Extrait du rapport SODETEG du 27 avril 67 au sujet de B2 Namous," (27 April 1967).

[5] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: "Fiche sur le Centre d'Expérimentation Semi-Permanent de B2 Namous," (16 January 1967).

[6] Although the issue of French military installations was clearly indicated in Title III of the Evian Accords, there is a popular myth, widespread in both contemporary France and Algeria, that these provisions were part of a "secret annex" to the negotiations. Of uncertain origin, this myth functions as a convenient way to explain how the GPRA agreed to the presence of French troops and the continuation of French nuclear testing after independence.

[7] On the connections between French Guiana as settler colony, colonial prison, and symbol of French technological prowess, see: Peter Redfield, *Space in the Tropics: From Convicts to Rockets in French Guiana* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

expanse of the Sahara provided.[8] French policymakers had considered relocating testing activity to the Pacific, but found the variable wind and temperature patterns of the open ocean too dangerous for the dispersal of chemical agents.[9] They also considered constructing a new research center in the desert of northern Chad, a former colony that had maintained a close post-independence military partnership with France, but decided that such an operation would be too costly.[10] Consequently, only a few months before the expiration date set by the Evian Accords, General de Gaulle spoke with Colonel Houari Boumediene—one military head of state to another—and came to a secret agreement that prolonged France's lease of B2 Namous in exchange for the transfer of French materiel valued at 21 million New Francs to the Algerian army.[11] An accord was drawn up on 27 May 1967 authorizing the French military to use its chemical weapons facility in the desert for another five years in "the most absolute secret."[12] It occurred just three weeks after French and Algerian museum officials met in Paris to discuss the handover of Algeria's French artwork.

Two years earlier, Colonel Boumediene had removed President Ahmed Ben Bella from power in a bloodless *coup d'état* on 19 June 1965, establishing himself as chairman of a

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[8] Of course, the Sahara was not uninhabited. French reports on B2 Namous make reference to the indigenous herdsmen who roamed near the installation.

[9] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: "Fiche sur le Centre d'Expérimentation Semi-Permanent de B2 Namous," (16 January 1967).

[10] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: "Fiche sur le Centre d'Expérimentation Semi-Permanent de B2 Namous," (16 January 1967).

[11] The conversation between de Gaulle and Boumediene was recounted by Pierre Messmer, de Gaulle's Minister of the Armies from 1960 to 1969, in Vincent Jauvert, "Quand la France testait les armes chimiques en Algérie," *La Nouvel Observateur*, 23-29 October 1997. On proposal to transfer materiel, see : AMAE-C: 29QO/63: "Note pour le Ministre au sujet des sites sahariens," (31 January 1967); and AMAE-C: 29QO/63: Draft letter to "Monsieur le Président [Boumediene]," (no date, c. March 1967).

[12] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: Telegram from French Ambassador to Algeria Bruno de Leusse, "Très secret, Diffusion strictement réservée," (27 May 1967); AMAE-C: 29QO/63: Telegram from MILFRANCE ALGER to RFFAB/MINARMEES PARIS, "Dispositions pratiques d'application des accords intervenus au sujet de B2 Namous," (26 June 1967).

Revolutionary Council and promising to accelerate the construction of Algeria's socialist economy and uproot French neocolonialism. Nonetheless, cooperation across the Mediterranean continued mostly uninterrupted until February 1971, when mounting disagreements between French oil companies and the Algerian government over oil prices led Boumediene to order Bélaïd Abdesselsam, his Minister of Industry and Energy and the former delegate for economic affairs in the Provisional Executive, to proceed with the nationalization of the country's petroleum and natural gas sector.[13] In some accounts, this event marks the end of France's privileged relationship with Algeria.[14] Yet, even amid the fallout, Boumediene expressed interest in renewing France's lease of B2 Namous the following year. This time, however, the Algerian government insisted that a small number of its own technicians be allowed to observe certain aspects of the French operations.[15] After all, "this too is cooperation," noted Colonel Abdelhamid Latrèche, Boumediene's unofficial defense minister.[16] It was also a way to impose Algerian sovereignty over France's military operations. The French army, eager to maintain its facility, agreed. On 12 May 1972 the two parties signed another secret accord that extended France's presence in the Sahara until 1978, after which France transferred the site to the Algerian army.[17]

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[13] Philip C. Naylor, *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 95-96.

[14] This is Naylor's view, in particular.

[15] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: Telegram from French Ambassador to Algeria Jean Soutou, "Diffusion strictement réservée," (2 May 1972).

[16] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: Telegram from French Ambassador to Algeria Jean Soutou, "Pour le Secrétaire Général,"(1 February 1972). Following his rise to power, Colonel Boumediene retained the title of Minister of Defense, the position he held prior to his overthrow of Ahmed Ben Bella. In practice, however, Colonel Latrèche, a career military officer who had served with the French and had received training in the USSR, became Boumediene's general secretary on matters of defense and national security.

[17] AMAE-C: 29QO/63: Telegram from French Ambassador to Algeria Jean Soutou, "B2 Namous," (12 May 1972).

When the story of France's chemical weapons installation in Algeria became public knowledge for the first time in 1997, it created little scandal between two countries that did not lack a history of post-independence backroom intrigue. For its part, Algeria was just emerging from a brutal civil conflict between the government and armed Islamic fundamentalists that had torn apart society and, by extension, nearly devastated domestic journalism. In France, the news provoked a bigger debate over the use of chemical weapons, which the country had stopped testing in 1987, than over the fact that its military had used them in the Algerian Sahara. Only much later did the story become tethered to a larger history of French exploitation and pollution. But at the time, one individual was particularly incensed: Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the ever-faithful foreign minister under Ben Bella and Boumediene and the man who soon became president of the Algerian Republic himself. According to contemporary reports, he was furious more that Boumediene had kept him out of the loop than that a former colonial power had experimented with chemical weapons in his own country.[18] Nonetheless, the news did prompt a bit of soul-searching. President Boumediene was supposed to have been the staunch *tiers-mondiste*, herald of anti-imperialism, champion of non-alignment, and fierce opponent of neocolonialism in Algeria and abroad. Why had he made such an agreement? Moreover, why had he allowed the Algerian army to participate? One part of the answer likely had to do with Cold War realpolitik. The other part has been outlined in this dissertation. From chemical compounds meant to heal to those meant to kill, from a priceless Monet and a dismantled war memorial to the meeting rooms of Rocher Noir and the stone farmhouses of Kabylia—decolonization occurred in multiple places at multiple times in multiple ways. Severing the ties that bound Algeria and France was no easy task and the very logistics required to do so often created new interdependencies as old networks reformulated across new

[18] Cherif Ouazani, "Algérie-France: secret d'État explosif," *Jeune Afrique*, 26 March 2013, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/137960/politique/alg-rie-france-secret-d-tat-explosif/ (accessed 4 November 2014).

borders and new expressions of sovereignty replaced old ones. Algeria and France, in Boumediene's own words, were condemned to get along.

Over the past six chapters, this dissertation has traced the various "colonial remainders" that emerged from the end of French Algeria and demonstrated that decolonization has always been a compelling, if imprecise term. At its core, it suggests the undoing of colonialism, but it has taken on more meanings that the term can accommodate. It suggests not just an opposite, but an opposition. It suggests not just destruction, but creation. It suggests not just revolution, but reclamation and restitution. And it suggests a process that is at once permanent and perpetual. One can decolonize something as concrete as a railway and one can attempt to decolonize something as abstract as the mind. And lurking behind the confidence of revolutionary rhetoric has always been the anxiety of neocolonial co-optation and the fear that independence's promises might remain unfulfilled. These are the images we are left with today. The debates that surround our popular, and even scholarly, connotations of decolonization have been in existence since Frantz Fanon. Since before Algeria was even independent. But the vague outlines of what Algeria would become after the end of colonialism had to be given form, and the very process of negotiating withdrawals and handovers and transfers shaped the trajectory of what came after more than any speech, any treatise, or any proclamation. Decolonization was in the details.

Indeed, the end of empire in Algeria was not merely about "undoing" a French presence. In many cases, nothing could be undone. Rather, quite the opposite was sought: the Provisional Executive provided continuity of governance between the colonial and the postcolonial, cooperation between former military adversaries helped established FLN power in the countryside, artwork heavily symbolic of Western culture and religion was enthusiastically welcomed back to Algeria immediately after the display of anti-colonial solidarity that was the Pan African Festival,

war memorials were discretely preserved, and French technical assistance was retained to ensure the new nation's economically vital infrastructure continued to function. Each of these cases, however, entailed a transition—one between French sovereignty and Algerian sovereignty, between one polity and another. Not just legally and politically, although in many cases these were the basic forms that such a transition took, but also culturally and socially. To accomplish this, the adversaries of imperialism had to engage with its erstwhile defenders. In that respect, the culture of decolonization was one of pragmatic if tenuous cooperation, and the process of decolonization, by its very nature, forced former colonizer and the formerly colonized together—sometimes begrudgingly, sometimes in good faith—to effect such a transition.

At first glance, the case studies that have been explored in this dissertation seem counterintuitive to the general narrative of postcolonial history. But the dynamics discussed herein have shown that the route out of empire was an interdependent process. The initiative, however, was not unilaterally imposed by France. Algerian nationalists were adept at balancing conflict and cooperation and, as we have seen, the FLN was an active participant in crafting the policies that structured the course of decolonization—from the clauses of Evian Accords to the ordinances of the Provisional Executive to the protocols established for exchanging the cultural patrimony of French colonialism. While many of these policies were the product of contingency and the logistical imperatives independence, each one presented an opportunity to readjust the terms of decolonization. Each of these "colonial remainders" reveals a parallel story, not just of unexpected cooperation, but of Algerian agency to maneuver around the rhetorical roadblocks of the age and leverage its own ability to build Algerian sovereignty. The outcomes of these maneuvers were not merely pragmatic concessions. Sometimes they were actively sought out and justified. In the end, Algeria the "Mecca of Revolution" could also be Algeria the custodian of Africa's largest

collection of European art, and Algeria the secret base for French chemical weapons testing. These identities need not be mutually exclusive or incompatible.

Such negotiations and exchanges worked out between local actors over people, patrimony, and property during the process of imperial divorce shaped the world that emerged in the decades after 1945. Investigating what would be taken, what would be left behind, and who made these decisions gives us greater insight into the nuanced continuities and discontinuities wrought by the delicate, often complex process of decolonization. This is not only essential for understanding our current moment of shifting borders and challenged political systems, but more broadly for understanding a world in which the legacies of decolonization still influence the relations of countries like Algeria and France and the objects, individuals, and institutions that circulate between them.

ANNEX I

TEXTS OF DECLARATIONS DRAWN UP IN COMMON AGREEMENT AT EVIAN
MARCH 18, 1962
BY THE DELEGATIONS OF
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC
AND THE ALGERIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT IN ALGERIA

Article 1

Military operations and all armed action throughout the Algerian territory will be brought to an end on March 19, 1962 at 12 o'clock noon.

Article 2

The two parties pledges themselves to prohibit any recourse to acts of collective or individual violence.

Any action of a clandestine nature and in violation of public order must cease.

Article 3

The combatant forces of the National Liberation Front in existence on the day of the cease-fire will be stationed within areas corresponding to their current locations.

Article 4

The French forces stationed on the frontiers will not withdraw before the proclamation of the results of self-determination.

Article 5

The stationing plans of the French army in Algeria will provide for measures necessary to avoid any contact between the forces.

Article 6

For purposes of settling problems relative to the application of the cease-fire, a joint Cease-Fire Commission shall be created.

Article 7

The Commission will propose measures to be taken at the request of the two parties, notably concerning:

— The solution of incidents that have been noted, after having proceeded to a documented inquiry
— The resolution of difficulties that it would be impossible to settle on a local basis.

Article 8

Each of the two parties is represented on this Commission by a field-grade officer and a maximum of ten members, including secretarial personnel.

Article 9

The seat of the joint Cease-Fire Commission shall be fixed at Rocher-Noir.

Article 10

In the departments [of French Algeria], the joint Cease-Fire Commission will be represented, if the necessities so indicate, by local commissions composed of two members for each of the parties, which will function according to the same principles.

Article 11

All prisoners taken during combat that are being held by each of the parties at the time of the entry into effect of the cease-fire shall be freed; they shall be returned within twenty days from the date of the cease-fire to the authorities designated for that purpose.

The two parties will inform the International Committee of the Red Cross of the place of internment of their prisoners and of all measures taken toward their liberation.

ANNEX II

TEXTS OF DECLARATIONS DRAWN UP IN COMMON AGREEMENT AT EVIAN
MARCH 18, 1962
BY THE DELEGATIONS OF
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC
AND THE ALGERIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC POWERS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD AND SELF-DETERMINATION GUARANTEES

A. The self-determination consultation will permit the electors to make known whether they want Algeria to be independent and in that case whether they want France and Algeria to cooperate in the conditions defined by the present declarations.

B. The consultation will take place throughout the Algerian territory, that is to say, in the fifteen following departments: Algiers, Batna, Bône, Constantine, Médéa, Mostaganem, Oases, Oran, Olréansville, Saïda, Saoura, Sétif, Tiaret, Tizi-Ouzou, Tlemcen.

   The results of the different voting offices will be totaled and proclaimed for the whole territory.

C. The freedom and the genuineness of the consultation will be guaranteed in conformity with the regulations fixing the conditions for the self-determination consultation.

D. Until self-determination has been realized, the organization of public powers in Algeria will be established in accordance with the regulations which accompany the present declaration.

   A Provisional Executive and a court of public law and order shall be set up.

   The French Republic shall be represented in Algeria by a High Commissioner.

   These institutions, in particular the Provisional Executive, will be installed as soon as the cease-fire comes into force.

E. The High Commissioner will be the custodian of the powers of the Republic in Algeria, in particular in matters of defense, security and the maintenance of law and order in the last resort.

F. The Provisional Executive will, in particular, be responsible for:

   – Assuring the conduct of Algeria's own public affairs. It will direct the administration of Algeria and will have the task of admitting Algerians to positions in the various branches of this administration;

   – Maintaining public law and order. For this purpose, it will have police services and a security force under its authority;

   – Preparing and implementing self-determination.

G. The court of public law and order will consist of an equal member of European and Moslem judges.

H. The full exercise of individual and public liberties will be re-established within the shortest possible time.

I. The F.L.N. will be considered a legal political body.

J. Persons interned both in France and Algeria will be released within a maximum period of twenty days from the date of the cease-fire.

K. An amnesty will be proclaimed immediately. Detained persons will be released.

L. Persons in refuge abroad will be able to return to Algeria. Commissions sitting in Morocco and Tunisia will facilitate this return.

M. The self-determination vote will take place within a period of not less than three months and not exceeding six months. The date will be fixed on proposal of the Provisional Executive within the two months following its installation.

ANNEX III

DECREE NO. 62-306 OF MARCH 19, 1962
PROVIDING FOR THE PROVISIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC POWERS IN ALGERIA

The President of the Republic,

On the report of the Premier, the Minister of State in Charge of the Sahara, Overseas Departments and Territories, the Minister of State in Charge of Algerian Affairs, the Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Armed Forces and the Secretary of State for the Sahara, Overseas Departments and Territories,

Taking into consideration the Constitution, in particular, Article 34 and 72 thereof;

Taking into consideration Law No. 56-258 of March 16, 1956 providing for special powers in Algeria, as amended and supplemented;

Taking into consideration Law No. 61-44 of January 14, 1961 concerning the self-determination of the Algerian populations and the organization of public powers in Algeria prior to self-determination;

Having heard the Council of Ministers,

Decrees:

TITLE I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The provisional organization of public powers in Algeria between the cease-fire and the establishment of the institutions resulting from self-determination and universal suffrage shall be regulated by the provisions of the present decree.

Article 2

The organization of public powers between the cease-fire and the proclamation of the result of self-determination shall be provided for by the institution of a High Commissioner, who shall be the depositary of the powers of the Republic, a Provisional Executive, which shall be responsible for the construct of public affairs specifically pertaining to Algeria, and a tribunal, which shall be responsible for punishing infractions of law and order.

Article 3

The High Commissioner and the Provisional Executive shall remain in permanent consultation, in the exercise of their respective functions, with a view to providing the conditions necessary for the exercise of self-determination and to ensuring the continuation of public services.

TITLE II

THE HIGH COMMISSION

Article 4

The Government of the Republic shall be represented in Algeria by a High Commissioner.

The High Commissioner shall be under the authority of the Minister of State in Charge of Algerian Affairs. He shall be appointed by a decree of the Council of Ministers.

Article 5

The High Commissioner shall be the depositary of the powers of the French Republic in Algeria. He shall be responsible in Algeria for protecting the interests of the State and, jointly with the Provisional Executive, for ensuring respect for the laws.

Article 6

The civil services over which the Government retains jurisdiction shall be under the authority of the High Commissioner.

The High Commissioner shall facilitate access of Algerians to positions in the services under his authority. He shall likewise facilitate the task of the Provisional Executive to permit the access of Algerians to administrative posts in Algeria.

The conditions under which the High Commissioner shall exercise his authority with regard to the judicial and educational services shall be laid down by decree.

Article 7

In the discharge of his responsibilities with regard to the defense and security of the territory and with regard to the maintenance of low and order, the High Commissioner shall be assisted by a general officer who shall be in command of all the armed forces in Algeria.

Article 8

The High Commissioner shall be assisted by administrative services, the organization of which shall be laid down by decree.

Should the High Commissioner be absent or be prevented from exercising his functions, these functions shall be exercised by the secretary general of the High Commissariat.

TITLE III

THE PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE

Article 9

The responsibilities relating to the conduct of public affairs specifically pertaining to Algeria shall be entrusted to a Provisional Executive, the composition of which shall be as follows:

A president,
A vice president,
Ten members.

Without prejudice to the powers which the French Government continues to exercise directly in Algeria, which are defined in Article 11 hereinafter, the Provisional Executive shall provide for the preparation and implementation of self-determination in Algeria.

To that end, it shall propose the members of the central control commission provided for in the regulations relating to self-determination.

It shall provide for the conduct of public affairs specifically pertaining to Algeria until the establishment of the institutions resulting from universal suffrage which shall be established after the exercise of self-determination.

It shall direct the administrative and civil service of Algeria, which shall be subordinated to it.

The present provisions shall in no way affect the condition for the implementation in Algeria of Article 34 of the Constitution.

Article 10

The territory of Algeria over which the Provisional Executive shall exercise jurisdiction shall consist of the following fifteen departments: Algiers, Batna, Bône, Constantine, Médéa, Mostaganem, Oases, Oran, Olréansville, Saïda, Saoura, Sétif, Tiaret, Tizi-Ouzou, Tlemcen.

Article 11

The public affairs pertaining to Algeria for which the French Government shall retain direct responsibility shall be:

Foreign policy, the defense and security of the territory, justice, currency, economic relations between Algeria and other countries, as well as the maintenance of law and order in the last resort, in agreement with the Provisional Executive, barring grave impediment;

Education, telecommunications, ports and airports, subject to the powers to be vested in the Provisional Executive by decree.

Decrees shall provide for appointment between the services of the French State and those of Algeria.

The powers of the departments and the communes of Algeria shall in no way be modified.

Article 12

The responsibility of the Provisional Executive shall be collective.

Within the Executive:

a) The President, assisted by the vice president, shall be responsible in particular for the preparation and implementation of self-determination.

b) The members of the Provisional Executive shall be respectively:

Delegate for general affairs,
Delegate for economic affairs,
Delegate for agriculture,
Delegate for financial affairs,
Delegate for administrative affairs,
Delegate for law and order,
Delegate for social affairs,
Delegate for public works
Delegate for cultural affairs
Delegate for the postal system

The decree appointing the members of the Executive shall specify their functions, in particular with regard to the administration of the services placed under the authority of the Executive.

Article 13

The President and the members of the Provisional Executive shall each form their official staff and shall submit it to the Executive for approval.

Article 14

The Provisional Executive shall have authority to make regulations on matters specifically pertaining to Algeria.

It shall make appointments to posts in the administrative services of Algeria.

It shall expedite the implementation of the policy of promoting Moslem Algerians and shall facilitate their access to administrative posts, in particular to positions of authority.

Article 15

The Executive shall assure the maintenance of law and order. The security force referred to in Title IV hereinafter, as well as the police services, shall be placed under its authority.

Article 16

Prefects and sub-prefects shall be placed under the authority of the Provisional Executive in matters pertaining to the functions of the latter; they shall be appointed after consultation with the Executive.

Article 17

Subject to the conditions laid down in the decree provided for in Article 1 of the Law of January 14, 1961, the Executive shall deliberate on the preparations and implementation of self-determination. It shall to that end take regulatory decisions.

The self-determination vote shall be held within a period of three to six months after the date of publication of the present decree; the date for the vote shall be fixed upon proposal of the Provisional Executive within two months following the installation of the latter.

Article 18

The High Commissioner of the Republic shall be informed in advance of the meetings of the Executive and of their agenda. He shall be furnished as promptly as possible with the minutes of the deliberations. He may attend the meetings and be heard at them.

He may request the reconsideration of any matter; this reconsideration shall then be obligatory.

The High Commissioner of the Republic and the Executive shall together set up working bodies in all spheres which the joint preparation of decisions is rendered necessary by the division of powers. This shall apply in particular to the preparation of self-determination and the maintenance of law and order.

TITLE IV

THE SECURITY FORCE

Article 19

A specifically Algerian security force shall be created. This force shall be under the authority of the Provisional Executive, which shall decide on the conditions for its employment.

Article 20

The security force shall have a total strength of 60,000 men. Its initial strength shall be 40,000 men. It shall consist of:

– Existing gendarmerie auxiliaries and mobile security units;

– Units formed of Algerian conscripts and, eventually, of cadres called from the ready reserves

The Provisional Executive shall have the power to complete the strength of the security force by calling up trained reserves.

Article 21

The head of the security force shall be appointed by decree in agreement with the Provisional Executive.

TITLE V

THE TRIBUNAL OF LAW AND ORDER

Article 22

A tribunal of law and order shall be established, consisting of an equal number of judges of ordinary civil status and judges of local [Koranic] civil status.

TITLE VI

REPATRIATION MEASURES

Article 23

Commissions installed in Algeria and outside Algeria shall be responsible for taking all administrative and other measures necessary for the repatriation to Algeria of Algerian refugees, particularly from Tunisia and Morocco.

The said commissions shall be composed of three members, one designated by the High Commissioner, the second by the Provisional Executive, and the third by the Office of the [United Nations] High Commissioner for Refugees, subject to the agreement of this international body.

Supervision of the repatriation of refugees at frontier crossing points shall be assured by the competent civil services.

TITLE VII

CONSEQUENCES OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Article 24

Immediately upon the official announcement provided for in Article 27 of Decree No. 62-305 of March 19, 1962 providing for regulations on the self-determination referendum, the legal measures corresponding to the results announced shall be taken:

If the solution of independence and cooperation is adopted:

The independence of Algeria shall immediately be recognized by France;

The appropriate transfers of power shall immediately be effected;

The regulations set forth in the general declaration and the annexed declarations shall enter into force at the same time.

The Provisional Executive shall organize, within three weeks, elections for the designation of the National Assembly of Algeria, to which the Executive shall hand over its powers.

Article 25

The Premier, the Minister of State in Charge of the Sahara, Overseas Departments and Territories, the Minister of State in Charge of Algerian Affairs, the Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Armed Forces and the Secretary of State for the Sahara, Overseas Departments and Territories, shall be responsible, each insofar as relates to his jurisdiction, for implementing this decree, which shall be published in the Official Journal of the French Republic.

Done at Paris, on March 19, 1962

By the President of the Republic:
C. DE GAULLE

Premier
MICHEL DEBRE

Minister of State in Charge of Algerian Affairs
LOUIS JOXE

Minister of State in Charge of the Sahara, Overseas Departments and Territories
LOUIS JACQUINOT

Keepers of the Seals, Minister of Justice
BERNARD CHENOT

Minister of the Armed Forces
PIERRE MESSMER

Secretary of State for the Sahara, Overseas Departments and Territories
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