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Memories of the Algerian War: A Historiography from Independence to the Present

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Memories of the Algerian War: A Historiography from Independence to the Present

A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements For
The Master of Arts in Teaching Degree,
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by

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On June 25, 1940, less than a year after World War II began, France fell to Germany in an unexpected defeat. Despite the devastation of the Second World War, France emerged as victors, if only symbolically. Nevertheless, their triumph was accompanied by the beginning of the period of decolonization which, in retrospect, would be characterized by a series of defeats. On September 2, 1945, nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh proclaimed independence for Vietnam from France, resulting in the first Indochina War (1946-1954). The principal countries involved Vietnam (French protectorate 1883–1939 and then as a possession 1939–45), Laos (French protectorate since 1893), Cambodia (French protectorate since 1863) and France.

During the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, France suffered a decisive loss to the Viet Minh communist revolutionaries, sending shockwaves across the globe. This marked the end of French military rule in Asia. France's colonial withdrawal, formalized by the Geneva Accords in 1954, resulted in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos signing peace agreements that secured formal independence from France.

While France was losing its colonies in Asia, its empire was beginning to crumble in North Africa as well. Algeria began its fight for independence on November 1, 1954, a few months after the Geneva Conference.¹ Algeria's neighbours, Tunisia and Morocco (both protectorates of France) also fought against colonial rule, achieving independence in March of 1956. However, Algeria's path to independence differed from Morocco and Tunisia because it was considered an "integral part" of France,² and thus an extension of the metropole. The fight for Algerian independence precipitated a war that lasted almost eight years, and took the lives of hundreds of thousands of

¹The date November 1 was chosen strategically because it was All Saints' Day. The FLN figured a majority of the French Algerians would be celebrating this Christian holiday and would not be prepared for an attack.

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

people. To grapple with the significance of this war for independence, we need to return to the beginning of the occupation — the French invasion of Algeria in 1830.

The pretext for the French invasion of Algeria in 1830 began from a “flywhisk incident” three years earlier when the Ottoman Dey, Khodja Hussein, demanded repayment for the loans he had given to the French during the Napoleonic Wars. When the French consul refused, the Dey called King Charles X a “wicked, faithless, idol-worshipping rascal,” a remark that triggered a “major diplomatic crisis” in France, with the press fomenting revenge. In addition to this inflammation of tensions, King Charles X was becoming increasingly unpopular in France and he reasoned that an invasion against Algeria would serve as a helpful distraction from what was happening domestically. As a consequence, France invaded Algeria on June 14, 1830 to punish this “grave insult,” to end piracy, and to reclaim Algeria for Christianity.³

The invasion was not without opposition, for there were many battles led by the Ottomans, who ruled the coast of Algeria, as well as a declaration of war against France, led by the western tribal leader AbdelKader in 1832. While Emir Abdelkader’s war ended with his surrender on December 23, 1847, the fight against French rule was just beginning. In October 1870, France established the *Crémieux* decrees which gave French citizenship exclusively to Jews in Algeria and not Muslims, causing the revolt of 1871 in Kabylia, led by El Mokrani. On March 16, 1871, 150,000 Muslims responded to the *jihad* (holy war) against French rule but, again, it ultimately failed and the repression that followed was devastating.⁴

By 1881, Algeria was officially integrated into the administrative structures of the Third Republic under the Minister of the Interior. In the same year began the implementation of the *Code de l’indigénat*, which were a unique set of repressive laws that applied only to those seen as

³Evans, 8-9.

⁴Evans, 16.

“Muslim.”⁵ This division between “Muslims” and the settler population in Algeria intensified when the French, in 1889, passed a law which affirmed that any persons born in France (now including Algeria) were automatically French citizens. However, this law applied solely to non-French settlers, predominantly from Italy and Spain, and excluded both Muslims and women. As such, this moment in 1889 was decisive for the trajectory of French Algeria in that a collective settler identity came into being — an identity which would define itself in opposition to Muslim Algerians.⁶

Leading up to the Algerian War, land dispossession by the French had catastrophic effects. From the 1830’s, land was obtained by the French either through faulty contracts or taken in response to revolts, and given to French-settlers and Europeans (called *colons*, and later *pied noirs*). By 1936, *colon* ownership was 7.7 million hectares of land, which was 40% of the land possessed by the Muslim populations prior to the French invasion.⁷ Owing to land displacement, hunger and deprivation became a commonplace of daily life for Muslim Algerians. However, it is important to note that for *colons*, wealth was largely concentrated in the hands of “a tiny clutch of people” while the rest were relatively poor. By the 1950’s, living standards in Algeria were 20% lower than in France, which resulted in social status — the division between Muslims and *colons* — carrying more weight. This occasioned further racism and violence.⁸ However, this racism was not confined to French Algeria.

Due to the loss of land and mandatory conscription during World War I, Muslim Algerians traveled to France in search of work (30,000 in 1914 to 130,000 in 1930 to 250,000 by 1950). The presence of Muslim Algerians in the metropole had the effect of “exacerbating differences”

⁵Evans 22.

⁶Evans, 20.

⁷Evans, 24.

⁸Evans, 26.

between French citizens and “Arab” migrants, leaving behind a collective French sentiment that North Africans lacked “civilization” and could ultimately never assimilate to be “French.”⁹

Back in French Algeria, from the 1920’s onward, Algerian nationalism was on the rise; however, what it would mean to be “Algerian” evolved through a series of reconfigurations. In 1926, Messali Hadj established the *Étoile Nord-Africaine* (ENA), the first party committed to Algerian nationalism. The ENA’s desire to form a separate Algerian identity, opposed to a French Algerian identity, became the building block of what would ultimately be the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN). Ferhat Abbas, by contrast, framed assimilation as a way for Algeria to transform from a colony into a French province. In light of his ambition for such a transformation, he felt discrimination against Muslim Algerians had to end in order to allow this process to come to fruition. Moreover, Abbas had a deep-seated belief in the French Revolutionary ideals showcased in 1789, and that was the French identity into which he thought he would be assimilating. A contrasting vision was held by Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Ben Badis. During the 1930’s centenary, which celebrated the French invasion of Algeria, Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Ben Badis responded with the formation of the *Jam‘iyat al-‘Ulamā’ al-Muslimīn al-Jazā’irīyyīn* (Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama) in May 1931. He wished to foster a religious and cultural rebirth. This distinctly Algerian identity would be grounded in Islamic and Arab values, connected to the *umma* (global Islamic community).¹⁰

At the end of World War II, frustrations ran high due to the double standards seen by Muslim Algerians with the *colon* celebrations of anti-Nazi liberalism paired with the realities of their lives in French Algeria. This striking hypocrisy was even more apparent to those who returned to French Algeria from fighting for the French in the war. Figures such as Ahmed Ben

⁹Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 50-53.

¹⁰Evans, 51-58.

Bella, Mohammad Boudiaf, and Mostefa Ben Boulaid, “began to look towards violent action as the only way forward.” The pervasive feeling of resentment towards the French coupled with this embrace of violence as a form of political struggle spawned the FLN — the principal nationalist movement that took hold during the Algerian War.¹¹

The Algerian War began on November 1, 1954 and ended on July 3, 1962, with Algeria gaining its independence from France. Competing memories of this war and France’s colonial past have emerged, and continue to emerge, as a way to divide France and Algeria. Various narratives of this shared history have been leveraged as a means to legitimize violence, as well as perpetuate racism and stereotypes in France. While France has consistently denied the harms of their colonial past, a point that is exemplified by the French legislation of February 2005, which stated that colonialism must be taught in a positive way in schools,¹² scholarship on France’s colonial past and the Algerian War has continued to evolve, since the war began.

To reflect how the scholarship surrounding the Algerian War has developed, we will examine the questions, methods, and research that informed the narratives of six historical works on the history of the war, with the earliest being published in 1977 and the latest being published in 2012.¹³ While all of these works adopt a postcolonial approach, we will see the passage of time has played a significant role in how historians are able to merge the theoretical intentions behind postcolonialism with empirical evidence.

Postcolonial historical writing “began when the experience of imperialism and colonialism began to be questioned, and this process invariably entailed the revision or rejection of previous historical accounts which narrated European expansion as largely unproblematic.”¹⁴ For the history

¹¹Evans, 95.

¹²Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) 295.

¹³This scope does not include the extensive history of Algeria written in French.

¹⁴Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 1999) 278.

of postcolonial writing, particularly regarding Algeria, Frantz Fanon was extremely influential, for he offered “one of the most powerful critiques of imperialism and colonialism.” His book, *Black Skin, White Masks*, first published in French in 1952, “directly confronted both European racism and its corrosive effects upon the colonized peoples.” Fanon, who worked in a psychiatric hospital in Algeria during the Algerian War, “came to empathize deeply with the Algerian independence movement.” Consequently, he published *The Wretched of the Earth* in 1961, which was “a revolutionary manifesto of decolonization.”¹⁵ Fanon's work was pivotal, not just because of the implementation of his theories by the FLN, but also due to his impact on historians who, now armed with his thought, could begin to counter Eurocentric narratives of colonialism. Thus, the scholarship surrounding the Algerian War has become increasingly interested in treating the history of French colonialism in Algeria critically. Further, the academic discourse has become attentive to tracking how this colonial history has impacted the trajectory of Algeria as a nation and the remaking of France, post independence.

When British historian Alistair Horne, author of *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (1977), began conducting research in order to write about the Algerian War, he recalls receiving hopeful praise from an ex-premier of France “who felt that no countryman of his could yet write a truly objective study, and that maybe ‘only an Englishman could’.”¹⁶ In *A Savage War*, Horne writes that there was a succession of books published from 1954 to the time of his research, but that the scholarship tended to be “partial” either in terms of who the historian decided to focus on or because they dealt with “only a portion of the overall picture” of the war. Furthermore, there was yet to be the publication of a “single-volume history of the war that [was] satisfactory in itself,” prompting Horne to begin his research “in an attempt to fill at least a corner of the void.”¹⁷

¹⁵Green and Troup, 279.

¹⁶Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (London: Macmillan London Limited, 1977), 15.

¹⁷Horne, 576.

We can begin to see how early scholarship after the war aspired to put together a comprehensive and objective narrative of the war. Moreover, Horne's research took shape at a time when publications available in English were essentially non-existent. So, *A Savage War* was groundbreaking in its attempt to expand the audience who could read and learn about the Algerian War.

Horne, who was transparent about his research methods, notes that "perhaps the greatest obstacle lay in the inequality of source material," with a majority of the material taken from French sources.¹⁸ The available sources, referenced in his bibliography, consisted of secondary literature, political periodicals, books and memoirs, with the majority of the publication dates spanning the late 1950's to the late 1960's. Horne gained considerable information from interviews, where he was told about or shown "other secret or sensitive sources." He met with well-known figures such as Pierre Mendès France, Guy Mollet, Benyousséf Ben Khedda, Senator Robert Lacoste, and President Habib Bourguiba.¹⁹ At the same time, he also made efforts to speak with Algerian citizens "who requested to remain strictly anonymous."²⁰ Given the centrality of interviews to his primary research, it is necessary to spotlight an important historiographical shift in the use of oral history that may have impacted Horne.

Prior to the 1970's, historians used oral history in much the same way as a documentary source — as factual evidence. But, towards the end of the 1970's "some historians sought to take oral history in a new direction, turning its perceived weakness, the subjectivity of individual memories, into a strength," — the oral historian as an interpreter. In 1979, Italian historian Luisa Passerini published "one of the most influential articles in the theory of oral history." In her work, which explored the effects of Fascism upon the Italian working class in Turin, she argued that oral

¹⁸Horne, 16.

¹⁹Horne, 18-19.

²⁰Horne, 577.

historians “should not ignore that the raw material of oral history consists not just in factual statements, but is pre-eminently an expression and representation of culture, and therefore includes not only literal narrations but also the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desires.”²¹ While I can only speculate how Horne interpreted the accounts he was given, the publication of his book and the time period of his research suggest that he may have missed this shift from literal interpretation to a mode of interpretation that treated oral history as representative of memory, ideology, and subconscious desire. When we consider the disproportionate amount of source material in favor of the French and the manner in which this may have impacted the narrative history of the war itself, this shift in perception on the use of oral history as evidence is particularly resonant.

Horne does not explicitly mention the use of archives in his research and a reason for this absence of formal archival information is, at the time he was writing, “France ha[d] not yet released official papers relating to the war[...]” and neither had Algeria. Despite this lack of archives, Horne was skeptical that the emergence of information would have any real impact on the telling of the Algerian War. He notes:

...so much has already been divulged in the writings and personal reminiscences of participants that it is to be doubted whether the overall picture of the war will be greatly changed when the secrecy barrier is lifted. The same may be conjectured about the unreleased Algerian source material, though for a different set of reasons.²²

While Horne, in 1977, was doubtful of how archival information would alter the “overall picture” of the war, his narrative, when compared to Martin Evans and John Phillips’ *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (2007) and Martin Evans’ *Algeria: France’s Undeclared War* (2012), suggests that with the passing of time and a release of information, the narrative of the war has changed in a

²¹Green and Troup, 231-232.

²²Horne, 576.

meaningful way. The scholarship has reoriented postcolonial narratives that, in light of the changing historical record, have used archival material to indict France for its past.

In *Anger of the Dispossessed*, Evans and Phillips illustrate how various narratives about Algerian history, beginning with the French invasion of 1830, were utilized in the past and continue to inform the present moment:

What animates these narratives is disagreement not only about what happened in the past, but also about what is happening in the present and what will happen in the future. Past, present and future are seen as one and have played a key role in justifying all kinds of violence. Thus, the past in Algerian history has been invoked to legitimize not just the appropriation of land by colonialism, but also the war of national liberation as well as Islamist and anti-Islamist violence.²³

A majority of Evans and Phillips' book is devoted to post-independent Algeria, highlighting how these historical narratives played a pivotal role from 1962 to the Algerian Civil War and to the years after the launch of the War on Terror. Evans and Phillips' research was informed by newspapers, magazines, websites (one of which included the official website of the former President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika (1999-2019)), combined with a wealth of secondary literature. The topics of their secondary material covers pre-colonial Algerian history, colonialism, decolonization, political Islam, democracy and imperialism, with most publication dates falling between the 1990's and the early 2000's.

Evans and Phillips track the larger historical narratives of those in power, as they pay attention to how Algerian people, particularly the younger generations, have been affected by this capacity for "myth making."²⁴ By conducting interviews with Algerians during the civil war (Phillips was a journalist in Algeria at the time), looking at song lyrics, and noting popular

²³Evans and Phillips, 4.

²⁴Evans and Phillips, 5-10.

jokes/sayings, they were able to draw attention to a shared feeling of abandonment and displacement, both in terms of economic status and not knowing the history of Algeria.²⁵

At the close of *Anger of the Dispossessed*, Evans and Phillips develop a critical lens towards the West at the turn of the twenty-first century, exhibiting its imperialism which had forced Algerians to remain under the corrupt regime of President Bouteflika. They quote Mohamed Harbi, an Algerian historian and former member of the FLN, who is uncertain about the future of Algeria because of the United States' involvement with the regime:

The regime has stabilized and with United States support they can do what they want. They are untouchable. But the regime has nothing to offer for the long term. It is not interested in asking where Algeria and Algerians will be in twenty years' time.²⁶

Evans and Phillips note that this is not a distinctly Algerian problem as:

Harbi's remarks could apply to a whole host of countries, especially given that Algeria is strategically positioned at the tip of the arc of insecurity stretching from Morocco through Africa and the Middle East to Pakistan and Indonesia. Living under regimes characterized by corruption and poor government, hundreds of millions of people feel downtrodden at home and ignored by the West, which is only too willing to turn a blind eye on the grounds of strategic interests.²⁷

By tracking various ways Algerian history and memories of the war have been manipulated from the colonial period to the present, in both France and Algeria, in concert with Western imperialism's encouragement of corruption and poor governance that only aggravates the Algerian people's suffering, we can see one example of how the passage of time has affected postcolonial scholarship on the Algerian War.

²⁵A popular Algerian joke circa 1996: "A young Algerian asks his father about the colours of the Algerian flag. He knows that the green stands for Islam and the red for the blood of our glorious martyrs but what does the white stand for? 'The blank pages in our history,' replies the father." Evans and Phillips, 265.

²⁶Evans and Phillips, 300.

²⁷ibid.

Another example of how time has impacted the historical narratives surrounding the Algerian War is displayed in *Algeria: France's Undeclared War*. Like Horne's *A Savage War, Undeclared War* is an attempt to write a chronological narrative of the Algerian War. However, what differentiates the two narratives is Evans' aim of writing a "chronological narrative of the Algerian Wars origins, intensifications and consequences."²⁸ With this intention of exploring its "origins," Evans begins his narrative with the French invasion in 1830, allowing readers to see the development of "long hatreds"²⁹ produced by French colonialism. By including the "consequences" of the Algerian War, which were not entirely comprehensible to Horne given the time at which he was writing, Evans makes clear that the war has a continued impact not just in Algeria, but in France as well.

When we look at the sources that informed Evans' research, we see a collection of scholarship which also reflect his deeper commitment to postcolonialism. Most of the publications range from the late 1980's to the early 2000's, including topics such as the histories of pre-colonial Algeria, the French conquest of Algeria, racism in French Algeria, as well as the rise of Algerian nationalism, decolonization, and the legacy of the conflict. Evans includes a list of Algerian memoirs, published in the late 1980's and 1990's, and the publication of documentary collections, all of which surfaced after Horne conducted his research.

Similar to Horne's research, oral history was important for Evans' work as well; however, the latter is interested in tracking the transmission and alterations of oral memory when shared across generations. Evans points to the use of oral memory as a way for Muslims to "remember" the devastation of French colonialism through generations. Muslims were told to "remember the

²⁸Evans, xi.

²⁹Evans, xi.

brutality of Bugeaud,”³⁰ “the humiliation of Islam, such as the conversion of the Ketchawa mosque...into a cathedral,” and “the dispossession of their land.”³¹ Evans participated in a three-year research project with the Universities of Dakar and Algiers, focusing on the oral history of Algerian and Senegalese veterans from the Algerian War of Independence. Through workshops at these universities, he saw how oral history across generations furnished complexities between memory and history.³² Evans is not explicit about how they approached this oral material, but, considering that he argues in his book that “the memory and meaning” of the Algerian War was “at the centre” of the Algerian Civil War,³³ it is possible that this research helped him in tracking how particular memories of colonialism and the Algerian War were utilized post independence.

By looking at the work of Horne, Evans, and Phillips, we can see how increased access and availability of information, alongside the development of oral history, has clearly informed how historians write about the Algerian War and the influence of French colonialism. In addition to these developments, there is another historiography that has been influential in the scope of this scholarship, and that is the introduction of gender into history.

Beginning in the 1960’s, gender began to emerge as an analytical frame in the telling of history during the 1960’s women’s liberation movement. During this time, women actively began working “to redress the absence of their lives and experience from most historical writing.”³⁴ These early approaches to studying women’s history — historical analysis of the patriarchy, Marxist examinations of gender and class, and radical feminist study of women’s subordination through male control over women’s sexuality — were mainly based on the idea that all women were

³⁰Marshal Thomas-Robert Bugeaud won a victory against Emir Abdelkader at the battle of Sikkak in July 1836 that was the catalyst for the Treaty of Tafinia which “freed the French to defeat the rest of the opposition in the east.” Evans, 13.

³¹Evans, 17.

³²Evans, viii.

³³Evans, 358.

³⁴Green and Troup, 253.

essentially the same.³⁵ This assumption of sameness, which embodied the concerns of white middle-class women, was heavily critiqued by women of color in the late 1970's. bell hooks, in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* (1984), wrote that “[t]here is much evidence substantiating the reality that race and class identity creates differences in quality of life, social status, and lifestyle that take precedences over the common experience women share — differences which are rarely transcended.”³⁶ Criticisms, such as these, led historians to examine the role of racial difference in history. However, the divisions of gender, race, and class soon found their limits in terms of categorization.³⁷

In an effort to further understand the influence of gender in history, historians began to categorize “women in the past in terms of ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, religious affiliation, and mental and physical disability.” Despite this widening of categories, “the political assumption that all women [could] be presented by ‘women’ still remain[ed].” One approach to this issue was the use of psychoanalysis, which suggested that the essential category of “‘women’ [could] not exist because of the fragmentary nature of identity.”³⁸

Sally Alexander, a psychoanalytic feminist historian, argues that “[p]sychoanalysis offers a reading of sexual differences rooted not in the sexual division of labour (which nevertheless organizes that difference), nor within nature, but through the unconscious and language...” Alexander, leaning on the work of French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, places an emphasis on “the power of language in order to examine the role of femininity and masculinity in working class language in the nineteenth century, and to show that women could not speak within the terms of radical popular speech.” But, while Alexander’s work looks to understand sexual difference

³⁵Green and Troup, 254-255.

³⁶Green and Troup, 255.

³⁷Green and Troup, 256.

³⁸Green and Troup, 256-257,

through the psychoanalysis of spoken language, historian and theorist, Joan Scott, takes a deconstructive approach to the focus of language and discourse.³⁹

For example, in *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988), Scott includes a chapter which concerns women workers in nineteenth century France. In this chapter, Scott examines discourses concerning these women through the writings of nineteenth century French political economists. She argues that in these writings, women “served at once as an object of study and a means of representing ideals about social order and social organization.” Through Scott’s deconstructive method, the women themselves are not the study, but the way in which they are spoken or written about is.⁴⁰

Scott’s approach to examining gender in French history has extended to research about France’s colonial past in Algeria. Through her work, she showcases a glaring contradiction between France’s egalitarian principles with the reality of their blatant racism, reflected in the discourse surrounding Muslims, particularly Muslim women. In her book, *The Politics of the Veil* (2007), she joins the historiographical approaches of both gender and postcolonialism to examine the controversy surrounding the veil in France, which began in 1989 and ultimately ended with the passing of a law in 2004 that banned the wearing of headscarves in French public schools.⁴¹

For her source material, Scott utilizes the council rulings on the headscarf controversies from 1989, 1994 and 2004. She also uses French and American political magazines and newspapers, as well secondary literature that look at the history of women in Algeria during French colonialism, theories about immigration, French secularism (*Laïcité*) and individualism, and the perceptions of Muslim women's sexuality. Throughout *Politics of the Veil*, Scott uses language and history to show how the racism and fear that was found in the discourse surrounding the

³⁹Green and Troup, 257.

⁴⁰Green and Troup, 257.

⁴¹Scott, 21.

controversy of the veil was not just from the rise in anti-islamic sentiments after September 11, 2001 and the War on Terror, but also from the French conquest of Algeria and the Algerian War itself.⁴²

Scott's methodological approach has also been utilized by other historians, one of whom is Todd Shepard, who was mentored by Joan Scott. In *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (2006), Shepard investigates French laws, and the discourse of French politicians, beginning from 1830 through 1962, about Algeria.⁴³

Throughout his book, Shepard charts the “disappearance of an imperial state that attempted until its last months, although fitfully, to make real the principles of race-blind equality and republican universality that were rooted in the history of France after the 1789 Revolution.” He shows that France was incapable of stifling the “growing support for the Algerian Revolution” after they achieved military dominance over Algeria following the invasion in 1830. He subsequently shows that the Fifth Republic, which began in 1958 under Charles de Gaulle, “ignored the ideological arguments of those who did not want to be French or ruled by France” and that these “efforts to avoid engaging with the challenges of Algerian nationalism continued until after Algerian independence.” Thus, he argues, “this silence allowed the foundation...of the now wholly “European” republic that emerged in the process of excluding Algeria and Algerians from France and French history.”⁴⁴

Shepard's source material consists of French laws, correspondences between French officials, reports, magazines and newspapers, as well as secondary literature on decolonization, the history of Algeria and French Algeria, Algerian women, sexuality, and French universalism. His

⁴²Scott, 41.

⁴³Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁴⁴Shepard, 15.

use of primary source material was of particular importance in order to show how France was remade into a “now wholly “European” republic.” By investigating the history and implementation of the terms “repatriate” and “refugee” in official French debates and newspapers in the years 1960 to 1963, he demonstrates that “repatriate” became distinctly used to represent *pied noirs* while “refugee” was used exclusively for Muslim Algerians.⁴⁵ By analyzing the French propaganda in magazines and newspapers, he shows that there were serious attempts by the French government to welcome *pied noirs*, and this was done by depicting them as fitting into the “traditional” French family unit. This, however, was not done for the Muslim Algerians who left Algeria, post independence.⁴⁶

When the analytical frame of gender studies is applied to the writing of historical narratives, as evinced by Scott and Shepard's work, both the shift of focus to be on "women" and the implementation of a feminist methodological approach to history is perceptible. With these novel analytical and methodological frameworks within the historical discipline, previously unexplored narrative pathways of inquiry in relation to French colonialism and the Algerian War have become navigable. In addition, this new historical topography will help in the gradual exposure of the racism and marginalization of Algerians in modern day France that has been embedded in the way the histories of these two nations, tied by colonialism, have been portrayed.

When writing this historiography, the works of history that we have encountered thus far lent themselves to a linear description. The newer texts emerged from the gaps in the historical record, as evidenced by Evans and Phillips' introducing a wider range of primary and secondary sources unavailable to Horne. Aside from the growing historical archive, novel analytical and interpretive lenses, such as a feminist framing in Scott and Shepard's historical works, underscores

⁴⁵Shepard, 229-235.

⁴⁶Shepard, 224-228.

the development of alternative ways of approaching historical narratives. However, there was one work, which I must make mention of, that did not neatly fit into this narrative progression: Benjamin Stora's *Algeria 1830-2000: A Short History* (2001).

While Stora's book was an outlier for the scope of this essay,⁴⁷ the space given to his work here does not reflect his presence within the scholarly conversation on Algeria. He is widely considered to be one of the world authorities on Algerian history. As a Jewish Algerian, who left his country and moved to France in 1962 after independence, he recognizes how the French colonial past and memories of the Algerian War continue to shape and divide both France and Algeria.

In July of 2020, French President Emmanuel Macron enlisted Stora to write a report with the purpose of a “reconciliation of memories between France and Algeria.” The report, published this January, included a series of approximately 30 measures on how to begin to acknowledge this shared history. Stora suggested, for example, the conversion of internment camps for Algerians in France into memorial sites, as well as the revision of French school curriculums in order to improve how French colonialism in Algeria is taught. Additionally, he called for the repeal of restrictions⁴⁸ placed on French archives which documented people who “disappeared” during the Algerian War.⁴⁹ His appointment and acceptance to not only write this report, but also to lead the

⁴⁷Benjamin Stora, *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History*, Trans by Jane Marie Todd (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). *Algeria, 1830-2000* contains the translations of three books by Benjamin Stora which were originally published in the French language: *Histoire de l'Algérie coloniale, 1830-1954*, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962*, and *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis L'indépendance*. The original versions of these texts were published in 1991, 1993, 1994 and 1995. While this book did not fit within the exact scope of the paper, its translation into English could be seen as following from Home's *A Savage War* where the goal — at least in part — was to expand the audience of the history of Algeria to English language readers.

⁴⁸“Mr. Macron's call for the opening of all archives dealing with people who disappeared during the war has also been contradicted by a recent tightening of the French administration's rules on documents considered confidential, including many pertaining to Algeria.” Quoted from Constant Méheut, “Report Aims at ‘Reconciling’ France and Algeria, Its Former Colony,” (The New York Times. The New York Times, January 20, 2021).

⁴⁹Méheut, The New York Times.

commission which will serve to review France's colonial history, testifies to not just his expertise, but also the impact of his work on the history of the Algerian War.

It is clear, both from the French government's invitation to a historian in order to reconcile with its past as well as the scholarly conversation preceding this moment, that the road to reconciliation is long. The diversity of approaches in retelling the histories of France and Algeria reveal important lessons about both history and knowledge. We have observed, through the difference between Horne and Evans' histories of the Algerian War, that the historical record evolves. This evolution involves the exposure of new material for examination as well as changing the participants who are consulted during primary and secondary research. Following this, historians of the Algerian War have witnessed shifts in the way oral testimony, as historical evidence, is interpreted. These shifts hold consequences for the students of history today and the forthcoming generations of students. Finally, we have recognized the importance of introducing novel analytical and interpretive lenses, such as a feminist outlook in Scott and Shepard, that shines light on historical subjects who are continuously neglected and made invisible to readers of preceding histories of the Algerian War.

The highly visible step of a sitting President inviting a French historian, born in Algeria, to write a report on the French colonial past in Algeria spotlights the recognition for new histories to be made public. However, while it seemed that France was moving in the right direction, its recent legislation, which banned the wearing of the veil in public spaces for those under the age of 18, suggests otherwise. This hypocrisy, seen time and time again, reminds us of not just the importance of historians who continue to illuminate the narratives of those who are ignored, but also how vital it is that these histories are made available to the public. If the Algerian War was made part of public memory, France could no longer hide behind secularism to validate its racism.

Below is a still photograph of Abdelkader who was declared *emir* (prince) of Algeria in 1832. Emir Abdelkader waged the first official war against France since their invasion of Algeria on June 14, 1830. The war lasted for nearly 15 years before Abdelkader was forced to surrender on December 23, 1847.

Étienne Moreau-Nélaton, *Célébrités du XIXe siècle I* (1860-1880), 4-NA-109, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105250401/f55.item>.



The picture below, engraved by Léon Morel-Fatio, was published in the weekly French newspaper, *L'Illustration* in 1871. The image depicts the initial attack on Bordj Bou Arreridj (a city in the Kabylia region) led by El Mokrani on March 16, 1871. In response to the passing of the *Cremieux Decree* (October 1870) which gave French citizenship to Jews in Algeria but not Muslims, this attack was the first of a series of revolts which spread across the Kabylie region, later to be known as the Mokrani Revolt.

Léon Morel-Fatio, *L'Illustration* (1871). See also: Rosa Moussaoui, "Histoire. Mars 1871, L'insurrection Algérienne D'El Mokrani," *L'Humanité*, March 12, 2021, <https://www.humanite.fr/histoire-mars-1871-linsurrection-algerienne-del-mokrani-701346>.



Messali Hadj was an Algerian politician and leader in the national independence movement. In 1926, Hadj established the Étoile Nord-Africaine (ENA) which was the first political party committed to Algerian Nationalism. In 1937, the ENA was dissolved by the French government after Hadj called for a revolt against French colonial rule in Algeria. Two months later, Hadj established the Parti Populaire Algérien (PPA) which was suppressed by the French government only to reemerge in 1946 under the name of the Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques (MTLD). Messali Hadj, leader of the MTLN, is pictured in Niort, France in 1952 after being expelled from Algeria and put under house arrest by the French authorities.

AFP/ Getty Images as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 110.



Ferhat Abbas was an Algerian politician and leader in the national independence movement. With a strong belief in the French Revolutionary ideals of 1789, Abbas spent his early political career advocating for the assimilation of Muslims into French society. After serving in World War II for France, his political views began to change. On February 10, 1943, Abbas prepared the “Manifesto of the Algerian People,” which not only condemned French colonial rule, but also called for self-determination and an Algerian constitution which granted equality to all Algerians. This proposal was rejected by the French government on June 26, 1943. In 1946 Abbas formed the Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien (UDMA), which advocated for cooperation with France in the formation of the Algerian state. Abbas (right) is pictured with his brother-in-law Ahmed Francis (left) in front of the French National Assembly in 1948.

Roger Viollet/Topfoto as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 97.



France invaded Algeria on June 14, 1830. In 1930, France held celebrations to commemorate the centenary of the French landing in Algeria. Below is a poster, created by French painter Léon Cauvy, which celebrates 100 years of French-Algeria.

Léon Cauvy, *1830 R. F. 1930, Centenaire de l'Algérie...* (1929), ENT DO-1 (CAUVY,L.)-FT6, Bibliothèque nationale de France, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9016630n.r>.



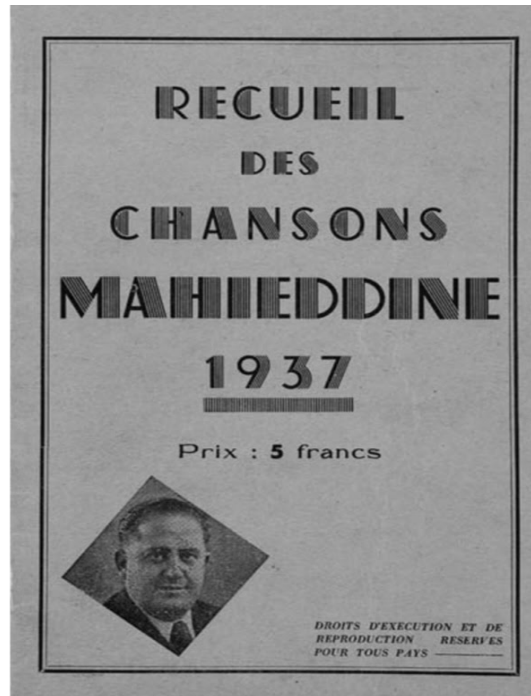
Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Ben Badis (pictured below) formed the Jam‘iyyat al-‘Ulamā’ al-Muslimīn al-Jazā’iriyīn or the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama (AAMU) in May 1931 in response to the centenary celebrations. His association consisted of religious scholars who advocated for the restoration of an Algerian nation that was grounded in Islamic and Arabic values. In the mid 1930’s, the AAMU joined other organizations, including the ENA, to collectively oppose French rule in Algeria.

Roger Viollet/Topfoto as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 53.



In 1936, the French socialist political party, the Popular Front, launched a campaign to elect their head of party, Léon Blum, as premier of France. Within their campaign, the Popular Front reintroduced the Viollette reforms which were a series of reforms for Muslims in Algeria. The Popular Front won the election and Blum took office in May of 1936. Below is the front and back cover of a song booklet as well as the lyrics to a song which was banned by the French government in 1937. The song was from the well known Algerian singer, Mahieddine Bachtarzi.

Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 201-202.



Lyrics:

For one hundred years they utter
That the Arabs are donkeys and understand nothing
And at the moment when we want to understand
By force they want to keep us blind . . .

Over the past year we have known a big hope
At the moment when the Popular Front was formed
You will have rights, you will have lots of things
Opprobrium will be finished, unhappiness will be finished

For more than a year we have waited
And our enemies still repeat to us: wait

Pictured below are Rabah Bitat, Mostefa Ben Boulaïd, Mourad Didouche, Mohamed Boudiaf, Krim Belkacem and Larbi Ben M'hidi, the six original leaders of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN). This picture was taken on October 24, 1954 and the FLN launched their first attack, beginning the Algerian War, on November 1, 1954.

FLN Leaders (1954), (Wikimedia Commons), accessed May 7, 2021,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Six_chefs_FLN_-_1954.jpg



The Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) launched a series of 17 coordinated attacks on November 1, 1954 in Algiers and the Kabylia region. During the attacks, the FLN scattered pamphlets on roads and throughout towns. These pamphlets served to identify the FLN as the authors of the violence and to introduce themselves to the people of Algeria. Below is an excerpt from their pamphlet.

Mohammed Harbi, *Les Archives de la révolution algérienne* (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1981) pp. 101-3 as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 114-116.

To the Algerian people,

To the militants of the National Cause!

...After decades of struggle, the National Movement has reached its final phase of fulfilment.

...a group of responsible young people and dedicated militants, gathering about it the majority of wholesome and resolute elements, has judged that the moment has come to take the National Movement out of the impasse into which it has been forced by the conflicts of persons and influence, and to launch itself into the true revolutionary struggle at the side of Moroccan and Tunisian brothers . . .

Our movement of regeneration presents itself under the label of:

NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

thus freeing itself from any possible compromise and offering to all Algerian compatriots of every social position and of all parties . . . the goal of joining in the national struggle.

GOAL

National independence through:

1. restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic, and social, within the framework of the principles of Islam;
2. preservation of all fundamental freedoms, without distinction of race or religion...

MEANS OF STRUGGLE

. . . by every means until the realization of our goal . . . action abroad to make the Algerian problem a reality for the entire world, with the support of our natural allies...the struggle will be long, but the outcome is certain...in order to limit bloodshed we propose an honourable platform for discussion with the French authorities . . .

1. recognition of Algerian nationhood by an official declaration;
2. opening of negotiation . . . on a basis of recognition of Algerian sovereignty, one and indivisible;
3. liberation of all political prisoners . . .

IN RETURN FOR WHICH

1. French cultural and economic interests will be respected, as well as persons and families;
2. all French citizens desiring to remain in Algeria will be allowed to opt for their original nationality, in which case they will be considered foreigners, or for Algerian nationality, in which case they will be considered as Algerians both in rights and duties;
3. the ties between France and Algeria will be defined by agreement between the two powers, on a basis of equality and mutual respect!

Algerians! We ask you to reflect on our Charter set out above. It is your duty to associate yourselves with it to save our country and give it back its liberty. The NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT is your front, its victory is yours.

Pictured is Zohra Drif in custody with the French authorities in September of 1957. Drif was a female operative for the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) during the Algerian War. She played a prominent role in the Battle of Algiers working as part of the FLN's bomb network. She is known most for her connection to the Milk Bar Café bombing in 1956 where she planted a bomb in the popular European cafe. When the bomb exploded, it killed 3 Europeans and injured dozens more.

AFP/Getty Images. See also: "Inside the Battle of Algiers: Memoir of a Woman Freedom Fighter with Zohra Drif," Inside the Battle of Algiers: Memoir of a Woman Freedom Fighter, accessed May 7, 2021, <https://as.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/as/research-centers/neareaststudies/events/fall-2017/zohradrif.html>.



In 1958, four years after the Algerian War began between the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) and France, Charles de Gaulle became premier of France. De Gaulle, with a hope of ending the Algerian War while maintaining French rule in Algeria, introduced a 5 year plan called the Constantine Plan. This plan promised several reforms for Algeria. Some of these reforms included the creation of 400,000 new jobs, the housing of 1 million people, and the redistribution of 250,000 hectares of land to Muslims. In his speech introducing the Constantine Plan, De Gaulle made clear that there were only two possible paths between Algeria and France: war or fraternity. In response, the FLN formed the Provisional Government of the New Algerian Republic on September 19, 1958 with Ferhat Abbas as President. Below is the front cover of the TIME magazine from the October 13, 1958 issue.

“TIME Magazine Cover: Ferhat Abbas - Oct. 13, 1958,” Time (Time Inc.), accessed May 7, 2021, <http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19581013,00.html>.



In January 1959, Charles de Gaulle was elected President of France. On September 16, 1959 De Gaulle made a speech where he offered self-determination to the Algerian people. He gave a series of three choices: choice one being the secession of Algeria from France, choice two being the complete fractionation of Algeria, and choice three being the formation of an Algerian government which received financial backing from France. Below is an excerpt from his speech where he offers Algerian self-determination.

Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et messages*, (Paris: Plon, 1970, III) p. 117 as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 262.

We can look forward to the day when the men and women who live in Algeria will be in a position to decide their own destiny, once and for all, freely, in the full knowledge of what is at stake. Taking into account all these factors, those of the Algerian situation, those inherent in the national and international situation, I deem it necessary that recourse to self-determination be here and now proclaimed...

In the name of France and of the Republic, by virtue of the power granted to me by our constitution to consult its citizens, granted that God let me live and that the people lend me their ear, I commit myself to ask, on the one hand, of the Algerians in their twelve departments, what it is they finally wish to be and, on the other hand, of all Frenchmen to endorse their choice...

After self-determination was offered by Charles de Gaulle in 1959, the Europeans in Algeria made barricades and seized government buildings as a way to protest self-determination. With a European population size of 1,000,000 and a Muslim population size of around 9,000,000, Europeans felt that if the future of Algerian and French relations was put to a vote, their voices would not be represented. These protests were called the Week of the Barricades. The image below was taken from Algiers in January 1960.

Michel Marcheaux, *Semaine Barricades Alger 1960* (1960), (Wikimedia Commons), accessed May 7, 2021, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Semaine_Barricades_Alger_1960.jpg.



On December 20, 1960 the United Nations recognized the Algerian right to self-determination. As a result, De Gaulle set the date for the vote which would decide the future of Algerian and French relations. In response, the French Army General, Raoul Salan, formed the Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS), which was a far right, paramilitary group whose focus was on maintaining French-Algeria. The OAS carried out numerous bombings and assassinations, even attempting to murder Charles de Gaulle, in their efforts to keep Algeria under French rule. Below is an OAS poster which held the caption: 'The OAS will win'.

Alain Gegson, CIRIP as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 306.



The end of the Algerian War featured one of the greatest migrations of people in the 21st Century with nearly one million Europeans leaving Algeria to go to France. By the Fall of 1962, 99% of the European population had left Algeria. Below is an image of settlers at an airport leaving Algeria in 1962.

Keystone France/ Eyedea/Camera Press as cited in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 321.



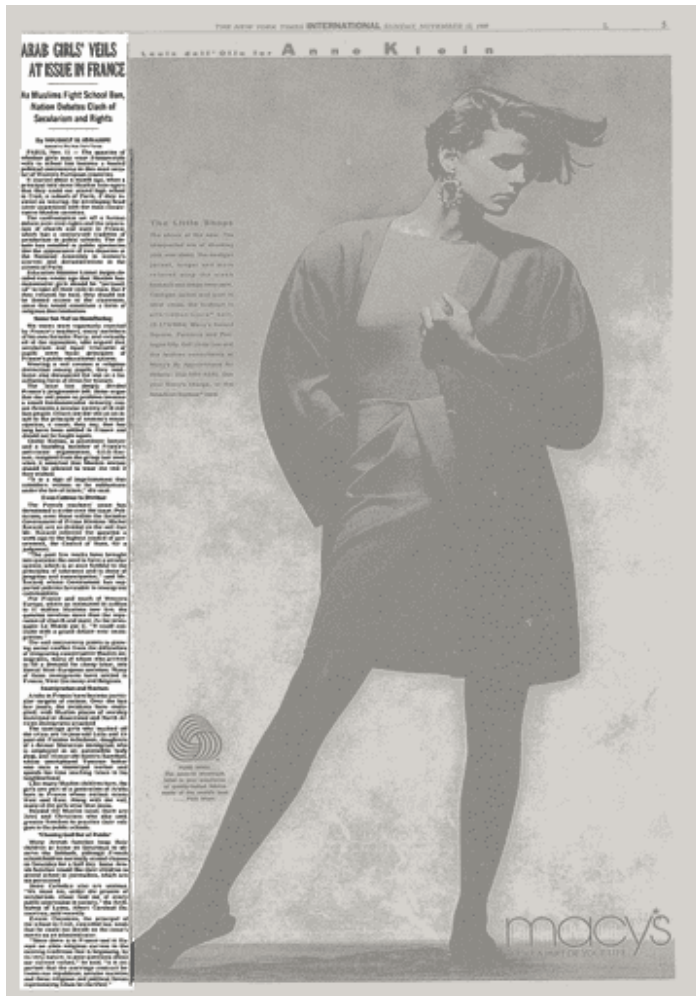
A ceasefire was called for March 19, 1962 after a successful second round of peace talks between the FLN and France. Algeria officially gained independence from France on July 5, 1962. Below is an image of a celebration of Algerian independence, taken on July 2, 1962. This celebration took place in front of the monument which commemorated the French landing in Algeria in 1830.

Marc Riboud, *Celebration of the Independence below the Monument Commemorating the French Landing in Sidi Ferruch in 1830, July 2nd 1962 (1962)*, Algeria, accessed May 7, 2021, <http://marcriboud.com/en/countries/algeria/>.



Below is an image of the New York Times article, *ARAB GIRLS VEILS AT ISSUE IN FRANCE*, along with the digitized version of the article. It was written by Youssef M. Ilbrahim and published on November 12, 1989.

Youssef M Ilbrahim, "ARAB GIRLS' VEILS AT ISSUE IN FRANCE," The New York Times (The New York Times, November 12, 1989), <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/11/12/world/arab-girls-veils-at-issue-in-france.html>.



The question of whether girls may wear Iranian-style veils to school has become a heated political controversy in this most secular of Western European countries.

It started about a month ago, when a principal told three Muslim teen-agers that they could not attend high school in Creil, a suburb of Paris, if they insisted on wearing the enveloping head cover associated with the most conservative Muslim societies.

The confrontation set off a furious debate over civil rights and the separation of church and state in France, which has a century-old tradition of secularism in public schools. The debate has resulted in public spectacles like the appearance of two deputies at the National Assembly in women's scarves and demonstrations in the streets of Paris.

Education Minister Lionel Jospin decided two weeks ago that Muslim fundamentalist girls should be "persuaded" to take off their veils in class. But if they refused, he said, they should not be denied access to the

classroom, since this would constitute a form of religious discrimination.

Some See Veil as Humiliating

His views were vigorously rejected by France's teachers, many members of his own Socialist Party, and virtually all of the opposition, who argued that secularism and equal treatment of pupils were basic principles of France's public educational system.

Wearing a veil creates a religious distinction among pupils, they said. Some also denounced the veil as a humiliating form of dress for women.

The issue has deeply divided France's progressive left. Some argue that the veil poses no problem because a small fundamentalist minority cannot threaten a secular society of 55 million people. Others see the veil as an insult to the principle of women's emancipation, a cause, they say, that has long been settled in France and should not be fought again.

Gisele Halimi, a prominent lawyer and a founding member of France's anti-racist organization, S.O.S.-Racism, resigned from the group last week when it asserted that Muslim women should be allowed to wear the veil if they wished. "It is a sign of imprisonment that considers women to be subhumans under the law of Islam," she said.

Even Cabinet Is Divided

The French teachers' union has threatened a strike over the issue. Politicians, even those within the Socialist Government of Prime Minister Michel Rocard, are so divided on the veil that Mr. Rocard referred the question a week ago to the highest council of government, the Council of State, for a judgment.

"The past few weeks have brought into question the need to have a secular system which is at once faithful to the principles of tolerance and to those of progress and emancipation," said Mr. Rocard, whose Government has supported policies favorable to immigrant communities.

For France and much of Western Europe, where an estimated 10 million to 11 million Muslims now live, the question involves more than the separation of church and state. As the newspaper *Le Monde* put it, "It could conclude with a grand debate over immigration."

The veil controversy points to growing social conflict from the difficulties of integrating conservative Muslim immigrants, many of whom who arrived to fill a demand for cheap labor, into liberal West European societies. Many of those immigrants have settled in France, West Germany and Belgium.

Immigration and Racism

Arabs in France have become particular targets of racism. Over the last few years, the incidents have multiplied, with Muslim places of worship destroyed or desecrated and North African immigrants attacked.

The teen-age girls who touched off the crisis are 14-year-old Leila and 13-year-old Fatima Achaboun, daughters of a devout Moroccan immigrant who is employed at an automobile body shop, and 14-year-old Samira Saeedani, whose unemployed Tunisian father was once a municipal worker and spends his time teaching Islam in his neighborhood.

Like many Muslim children here, the girls are part of a generation of Arabs born in France whose outlook mixes West and East. Along with the veil, many of the girls wear blue jeans...

The article, *French Assembly Votes to Ban Religious Symbols in Schools*, was published in the New York Times on February 11, 2004 and was written by Elaine Sciolino.

Elaine Sciolino, "French Assembly Votes to Ban Religious Symbols in Schools," The New York Times (The New York Times, February 11, 2004),
<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/11/world/french-assembly-votes-to-ban-religious-symbols-in-schools.html>.

The National Assembly voted by an overwhelming majority on Tuesday to ban Muslim head scarves and other religious symbols from public schools, a move that underscores the broad public support for the French secular ideal but is certain to deepen resentment among France's large Muslim population.

The 494-to-36 vote, with 31 abstentions, came hours after the minister of national education, Luc Ferry, said in a radio interview that the law would stretch much further than religious symbols and require all students to attend physical education classes and accept what is taught on the Holocaust and human reproduction.

Three weeks ago, Mr. Ferry, a philosopher and best-selling author, said bandannas and excessive hairiness would be banned from public schools if they were considered religious signs.

The draft law bans "ostensibly" religious signs, which have been defined by President Jacques Chirac and a government advisory commission as Islamic head scarves, Christian crosses that are too large in size and Jewish skullcaps. Sikh turbans are also likely to be included.

But the legislation also includes a lengthy preamble that demands that public schools guarantee total equality, including "coeducation of all teachings, particularly in sports and physical education." Schools, it said, are "the best tool for planting the roots of the republican idea."

On Tuesday, Mr. Ferry made clear that religious beliefs could not be used as an excuse to avoid gym or biology classes, and that questioning the veracity of the Holocaust would not be tolerated.

Mr. Ferry also said the law "will keep classrooms from being divided up into militant religious communities," noting that there had been a "spectacular rise in racism and anti-Semitism in the past three years."

In recent years, teachers have complained that some Muslim students have been so disruptive in rejecting the veracity of the Nazi slaughter of the Jews that it is impossible to teach the subject. Teachers have also said some Muslim girls have boycotted classes on human reproduction because they are too graphic, and have demanded sexually segregated gym classes. There are also reports that male and female Muslim students have demanded prayer breaks within the standardized baccalaureate exams at the end of high school and a ban on pork in school cafeterias.

In the Europe 1 interview, Mr. Ferry did not single out Muslims for censure, but he did not have to. Most Orthodox Jewish schoolchildren who would object to mixed-sex gym and biology classes, for example, go to private Jewish schools that are already sex-segregated, keep kosher kitchens and teach the Torah. The first -- and only -- private Muslim high school in all of France opened last fall in Lille.

Despite France's insistence that secularism must govern French schools, there are exceptions. France spends billions of dollars a year to finance private religious schools, most of them Catholic, for example.

Private religious schools that receive state financing are required to follow the national curriculum strictly, but policing by the state is not universal.

For example, at the Merkaz Hatorah School for Orthodox Jews in the Paris suburb of Gagny, which receives state financing and was vandalized in an arson attack last November, evolution is taught as a theory, not as fact.

"We don't teach that man comes from monkeys," said Jacques Benisty, the school's deputy director, in an interview shortly after the attack.

The Catholic catechism is taught and the crucifix is hung in public schools in Alsace-Lorraine, which is exempt from France's 1905 law strictly separating church and state because the area was still in German hands when it was adopted.

Meanwhile, during a brief debate in Parliament, before the adoption of the law, Alain Bocquet, a Communist Party deputy who voted against the law, said that it would "stigmatize" citizens of immigrant origin and "set things on fire rather than calm them down."

The draft legislation now goes to the Senate, which is also expected to pass it by a wide margin when it votes on March 2.

Below is an image of a demonstration at the Place de la Republique in Paris on October 19, 2019. One woman (right) holds a sign that reads “Don’t touch my headscarf.” On April 12, 2020, the French senate voted to ban the wearing of headscarves in public for anyone under the age of 18. In addition, the senate also banned the wearing of headscarves to accompany children on school trips as well as the banning of burkinis at swimming pools. This ban caused international outrage, resulting in waves of protests and statements against the French government. #Handsoffmyhijab and #PasToucheAMonHijab were taken up by Olympic fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad, US congresswoman Ilhan Omar, model Somali-Norwegian and thousands of other Muslim women in protest of the ban.

Dominique Faget/AFP via Getty Images as cited in Rokhaya Diallo, “Opinion | France’s Latest Vote to Ban Hijabs Shows How Far It Will Go to Exclude Muslim Women,” The Washington Post (WP Company, April 21, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/04/21/france-hijab-ban-vote-exclusion/>.



Textbook Critique

When reviewing *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, a textbook designed for the 10th grade Global curriculum, I found myself reaffirming the work that is yet to be done with regard to whose voices and stories are championed in the classroom. Out of over nine hundred pages, *one* page was dedicated to the Algerian War. When attempting to condense a war that spanned seven years into a single page, the content will obviously be lacking. However, in addition to this paucity of content, I found the language used to be a cause for concern.

Beginning with the section that serves to provide the context for the Algerian War, the writers start the story for Algerian independence in 1945. By doing this, they leave out the hundred years prior when Muslim people fought back against French colonial rule. The writers could have included the war waged by Emir Abdelkader in 1832, when he united Algeria to fight against France for nearly 15 years. They could have also mentioned the Mokrani Revolt, which was a series of revolts in 1871, that spread across the Kabylia region in response to the *Cremieux* Decree. In neglecting this crucial history, students are unable to recognize how French colonial history affected and informed the social, economic, and political climates that led to the Algerian War.

When describing the pretext for the Algerian War, they state: “Some of the colonists had lived there for generations. They were unwilling to give up their land without a fight.”⁵⁰ While they include how long the colonists (Europeans) had been in Algeria, this section does not include how long the Muslims had been in Algeria. This explicit contextualization of the European situation, and not the Muslim situation, reads sympathetically toward the colonizer. Why would the writers fail to include that Muslims had been in Algeria for over a thousand years? Further, the writers note that Europeans did not want to give up “their land” without ever providing information as to how they obtained said land. The writers do not include how the French stole land from Muslims in

⁵⁰Roger B. Beck et al., *World History: Patterns of Interaction* (Evanston: McDougal Littell, 2009) 899.

Algeria and gave this land to Europeans. This one-sided history, particularly one that seems to have been written from the perspective of the colonizer, does not set students up to begin thinking about the impact of over a hundred years of French colonial rule. Thus, students are not prepared to think critically about why the war for Algerian independence was even happening.

The Struggle section of the textbook pins the Algerian nationalist demonstrations in Setif as the origins of the post-World War II conflict between France and Algeria. While I was glad to see Setif included, I contend that starting the conflict here distracts from students' understanding of the history of resistance that preceded this moment. In this section, the writers could have mentioned the distinct rise of Algerian nationalism which happened in the late 1920's through the 1930's. By including political leaders such as Messali Hadj, Ferhat Abbas, and Ben Badis, students would be in a better position to understand the events and ideologies that informed the formation of the Front de Libération Nationale.

Within this section, the conflict between the FLN and France needs revision, not just in terms of the content, but also in terms of the word choice. The textbook states: "The FLN would use guerrilla tactics at home and diplomatic tactics internationally. The French sent over half a million troops into Algeria to fight the FLN. Both sides committed atrocities."⁵¹ The specific inclusion of "guerrilla tactics" when talking about the FLN's military strategy while saying nothing about the French strategy underscores a bias that the French military is the "norm." Further, the use of "guerrilla tactics," while not including any examples which highlight the FLN's military strategy, runs the risk of students operating on their associations of the word.

While this might not seem to be a major issue, I think it is important to consider that terms such as "guerrilla warfare" are most often used in curricula when describing non-European military strategies. While the term itself is not inherently problematic, when we consider how little space the

⁵¹World History, 899.

topic of decolonization occupies in the curriculum and pair this with how non-European strategies are seldom spoken about in ways which reflect their brilliance, the absence of examples proves to be dangerous. Thus, when we consider the sentence: “Both sides committed atrocities,” it is not inconceivable to say that students will be more readily able to recognize how atrocities could have been committed by the FLN and less likely with the French.

Throughout this critique, I have offered some suggestions for further content which could be included, as well as identified some language that could be reconsidered. While this was by no means exhaustive, it does reflect that there are clear opportunities, both big and small, where we can expand on not just the narrative of the Algerian War, but also on how we discuss decolonization in schools.

New Entry

While the Algerian War began in 1954, conflicts between Algeria and France date back over a hundred years. In 1827, Algeria was part of the Ottoman Empire and was under the control of **Dey** (King) Khodija Hussein. The Ottomans had given a loan to France to help fund the Napoleonic Wars (1801-1815) and in 1827, Dey Hussein asked for the repayment of their loans. The French Consul refused and, as a result, Dey Hussein called King Charles X, brother to Louis XVI, a “wicked, faithless, idol-worshipping rascal.” When the people of France heard about what the Ottoman Dey called their king, they were outraged. As a result, they called for military action against the Ottomans. Three years later, King Charles X invaded Algeria on June 14, 1830 to punish the “grave insult,” end piracy, and to reclaim Algeria for Christianity.

When France invaded Algeria in 1830, they were met by the Ottoman Empire’s military. The Ottomans only ruled the coastline of Algeria, while the rest of the country was divided among various tribal groups. Soon, after the Ottomans were defeated, the western tribes were unified by the schoolmasters and leaders of the Muslim religious groups in Mascara. Under their leadership, the western tribes made a plan to siege the French-occupied city of Oran.

One leader of the western tribes was Mahieddin. He was the director of the **zāwiyah** (religious school) near Mascara. Mahieddin was asked to lead the battle against the French troops in Oran but because he was too old, he asked his son Abdelkader to take his place. Abdelkader, already well known for his military strength and his dedication to the religion of Islam, accepted his father’s call and declared war against France in 1832.

In 1834, Abdelkader signed a treaty with the French General Louis-Alexis Desmichels, called the Desmichels Treaty, which marked the end of the battle in Oran and made Abdelkader the sovereign of Oran. With this treaty, Emir Abdelkader attempted to unify the rest of Algeria to fight

France. Emir Abdelkader and his army fought against France for nearly 15 years before he was forced to surrender on December 23, 1847 due to lack of support from the eastern tribes. At the time of this war, France had one of the most advanced militaries in the world.

After Emir Abdelkader's surrender, the opposition against French rule did not stop. In October of 1870, France passed a law called the *Crémieux* decree which gave French citizenship to Jews in Algeria, but not Muslims. In response, Mohamed El Mokrani led a revolt, later called the Mokrani Revolt, which spread across the entire Kabylia region. On March 16, 1871, 150,000 Muslims answered the **jihad** (holy war) against French rule. The Mokrani Revolt ultimately failed and the response to the revolt was devastating. The French took away 450,000 hectares of tribal land, executed or deported the leaders of the revolt, placed Qur'anic schools under surveillance, and categorized Arabic as a foreign language in spite of the fact that Arabi was widely spoken.

Since the 1830's, people from France, Italy, and Spain migrated to Algeria. These people were called Europeans or *colons*. Europeans lived on land that was taken from Muslims by the French as a result of the wars and revolts mentioned above. When Algeria was officially integrated into France in 1881, even more Europeans came to Algeria. During this same year, France began implementing a unique set of repressive laws called the **Code de l'indigénat** (Native Codes). These laws only applied to Muslims in Algeria and they dictated the amount of taxes they had to pay, where they could work, and what land they could own. The Native Codes made it so that Muslims in Algeria did not have the same rights as French citizens. For example, Muslims did not have due process under the law.

With the European population increasing, France passed another citizenship law in 1889 that gave any Algerian-born person French citizenship. However, this law explicitly excluded Muslims and women. The law of 1889 was a turning point because it established a combined

European identity as being both French and Algerian while simultaneously stating that Muslims were foreigners in their own country.

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