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Ubi Bene, Ibi Patria - The Identities, Displacements, and Homelands of the Juifs d'Algérie

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Ubi Bene, Ibi Patria

The Identities, Displacements, and Homelands of the *Juifs d'Algérie*

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Global and International Studies and French Studies
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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I am grateful for the cosmopolitan vision the course of my life has instilled in me. Composed of different identities, displacements, and constructions of homelands, the past 21 years have exposed me to this research project's central themes, and hence incited the interest to critically analyze all they entail. Without my parents, Orna Ophir and Roy Shacham, my identity would have not been what it is .

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I dedicate this senior thesis, the product of my experiences, thoughts and emotions, in three countries and with so many graceful interlocutors in three languages, not only to the *Juifs d'Algérie*, but also to all those who have lost a homeland, found another, and reconstructed an identity as a result. Last but not least, this work is dedicated to the memory of my beloved סבא grandfather, Avigdor Ophir. He passed away just before I left to spend my year abroad in Paris, but it is his incredible legacy of world openness that lives on in my mind and in the story I tell here.

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Introduction

The Latin proverb *ubi bene* (where life is good), *ibi patria* (there is the homeland) foreshadows this research's findings on identities displaced from the homeland. The word of homeland was coined in the 1660s, coming from the old English *hamland* meaning an "enclosed pasture," "a situation of a person's life in a contained space that progresses to various forms of growth which elevate humanity."¹ In an enclosed space, one has no choice but to discover whom one is within a certain land. The land, or this enclosed space, will then be defined as what one's life consists of. Having one's identity formulate on this ground, or 'enclosed space,' or simultaneously develop within a land that could become the home of this newly formed identity, makes the identity a function of the homeland itself. This importance of the homeland, apart from being an essential constructive part of one's identity, is often taken for granted as if it were solely the place where one is not only born, but receives one's subsequent nationality as well. The term identity itself seems too polysemic and not descriptive enough with regard to the diverse subjects it is supposed to cover. Identification, in fact, resonates with the construction of a relationship that is always in progress, involving an individual and his or her surroundings. Groups, norms, territories, and cultural attributes partake in the abstract poles of belonging to a family, culture, or a nation. In a certain sense, identifications are byproducts of socializations. In another, despite the importance of these determinations, displacements, and social incorporations, an individual should have the freedom to choose and alter his or her identity based on the groups in which one feels not only accepted but also essentially welcomed. This choice would have a legitimate social weight with its own validation, instated by interactions

¹ *Etymonline.com Homeland* accessed April 28th, 2018, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/homeland>.

with others according to a general adequacy with social and political realities of the time period in question.

This study addresses the question of homeland and identity by focusing on the case of Algeria and, especially, on the history and cultural character as well as political fate of its Jewish minority population before, during, and after the so-called *Guerre d'Algérie*. This dramatic episode was followed by different emigrations, to France (the original colonial power) and to Israel (the newly founded “State of the Jews”), leading to various versions of *nostalgie* and alternative queries into where one finds “wholeness” as distinct from “holiness” in this world.

Until 1962, when Algeria officially separated from France after an eight-year long war for independence (which was concluded with the Evian Accords), it was the motherland of a heterogeneous combination of various distinct local identities associated by one greater national identity. One was not simply Algerian, but Algerian Indigenous, European, Muslim, Jewish, all of them cultural factions and fractions of identities that, together, shared a homeland while establishing their own specific community, or rather ‘nation’ within it. The Algerian Jews, *les Juifs d'Algérie*, for instance, became internally divided by the diverse solicitations of being ‘Jewish,’ ‘French,’ and ‘Algerian.’ These classifications of which the contours, at first, seem flexible, strengthened an ensemble of cultural and social characteristics that were present in the culture and that typically forced one to belong to only one distinct category out of the three. Hence the mere being of an ‘Algerian’ posed a problem as it reinforced a territorial origin or one nationality; it thus excluded, in today’s vocabulary, the indigenous Jewish population as well as the Europeans who considered themselves Algerian in the sense of belonging to an independent, or dependent Algerian nation.

When disregarding the generally accepted assumption of the homeland's association with one's birthplace, Algerian sub-identities, such as the ones mentioned above, lost their land of origin as 'rightfully' theirs to claim. This complex seems to have been most prevalent amongst the Jewish Diaspora as its members obeyed their God's order to "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee"² thus linking a theological injunction to another, national one. Indeed, in times of colonization during which a nation is taken over by another, frontiers are blurred to the extent to which one can no longer be sure whether one's primary dedication is to the supernatural force of God or to the tangible land of a home.

The very first French stories in Algeria are misleading as they are often presented as positive and necessary events. The 'miserable situation' and particular character of the *Juifs d'Algérie* make their "emancipation" appear as if it was a humanitarian act, while it was really meant to secure the occupation of the country in question. It is said, that the metropolitan French Jews came to Algeria in order to "civilize" their distant coreligionists, making the *Juifs d'Algérie* not only a community just as notable as the colonizers but also, and more importantly to this research, colonizers by proxy. According to data collected by the so-called *consistoires* during the 19th century, they became "*auxiliaires de la domination française*" and prominent members of the colonial economic elite. We can agree, therefore, with Albert Memmi and George Balandier who came to conclude that "*quel que soit leur statut social, ils font partie de cette 'minorité numérique' mais 'majorité sociologique... qui a pour fonction de dominer.'*"³ That

² Genesis 12:1.

³ Pierre-Jean Le Foll Luciani, *Les Juifs algériens dans la lutte anticoloniale: Trajectoires dissidentes (1934-1965)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 20.

said, the *Juifs d'Algérie* were mostly unwilling agents of a dominating administration. Some silently suffered from a devastating European penetration into the territory, altering the organization of the community, daily religious practices, language, marriage, and governmental instructions.

The *Juifs d'Algérie* were not the only Jews present in North Africa. Jews were also established in other French colonial projects along the Mediterranean coast, such as in Tunisia and Morocco. However, while both Tunisia, with the Treaty of Bardo on May 12th, 1881, and Morocco, with the Treaty of Fez on March 30th, 1912, were declared *protectorats* by the French government, Algeria was a *département français*, not only 'protected,' but essentially a French department within itself. That is to say, while Morocco and Tunisia remained autonomous parts of sovereign states, Algeria involuntarily became a part of the French nation. And yet, I'd argue that the *Juifs d'Algérie* were both 'protected' and 'nationalized,' as they were both guaranteed France's protection while maintaining their particular *Judéo-Arabe* religious rituals and traditions, and also naturally adopted the French collective identity. Hence, the *Juifs d'Algérie* themselves became the *protectorat* within the geographical extension.

Evidently, Algeria was not the only country to have been colonized and forced to wage war in order to gain its independence. However, Algeria's destiny widely differs from that of its colonized relatives, such as Morocco and Tunisia, due to the extent to which its example was far more complex. A telling example of how the anti-colonial war could have been differently concluded is, perhaps, that of South Africa and notably Nelson Mandela's solution to overcoming apartheid on the other pole of the African continent. Mandela chose to accept the inevitable cohabitation of both colonizers and colonized, making South Africa the homeland of

both. Why is it then, that Algeria's approach to colonization turned out so different from that of Mandela's? I would argue that it is because the distinction between the colony and the colonial power was blurred in Algeria from the moment it was conceived as a *département français*, that is, not completely a colony, just as it was not completely independent, but as a de facto geographical extension of a colonizing power. In addition, Algeria was once a country of refuge, populated by groups who had other, or who would come to have other, designated homelands than the one in which they were born. Situated on the same Mediterranean coast, France was technically just a boat ride away for those of European descent; by the same token, Israel, the 'holy land' of the Jewish people, seemed to have been directly promised to those who considered themselves to be more Jewish than Algerian (or French, for that matter).

The even more complex *mélange* between nationality and religion is also of great importance for this broader project. Once the state of Israel was established as a national home for the Jewish people, the question of homeland became decoupled from that of birthplace or mother tongue. A similar *mélange* can be discerned between homeland and nationalism, the cultural and political movement which gave birth to the concept that Benedict Anderson, in his groundbreaking book with the same title, came to designate as "imagined communities." The imagined community, within a pluralistic nation, retains its firm, even if fictional, identity so that in reality it inspires two eventual extremes: assimilation or persecution, in other words, the syndrome of 'you're either with *'us'* or with *'them.'*' In colonial rule, moreover, the "imagined" becomes a mere imposition as its yearning loses its rational or, rather, legitimate place in an occupied land falsely owned. Perhaps, it is this imposition that further causes perennial uncertainty in its subjects, rather than citizens, as they will feel more frail, not to say split in their

identity and experience ever greater difficulty to envision the de facto colony as their imagined community, much less their homeland. Both Algeria and Israel provide concrete examples of such problematic relationships between people native to the land, who are made indigenous by the colonial arrival, and colonizers who had established their own imagined communities in an already inhabited homeland (whether of one existing homogenous community or several communities that in the meantime had found a way to coexist as a whole). The wide variety of local identities that are known to have (often violently) merged into one national identity, devoted from here on to the one homeland, testifies to a universal process of identification and estrangement whose effects range from extreme measures taken to complex compromises found.

Starting in 1870, the *Juifs d'Algérie* had a different nationality than that of their homeland. This historical fact leads us to the main questions that will guide us throughout this research: how is it that some people succeeded in finding a homeland in Algeria, France, and Israel, and did so regardless of place of birth, whereas others did not? And, could one, in principle and in fact, return to a land and feel at home even if one was not born there in the first place? Studying the *Juifs d'Algérie* who were exiled from the motherland of Algeria and found themselves in the constructed homelands of France or Israel, a remarkable observation imposes itself: it seems that for those who retained a substantial grasp of their original local identity, the national identity eventually developed as a function of the newly constructed homeland. To address such questions inspired by the experiences of the *Juifs d'Algérie*, one should first answer the preliminary question, namely: how does one construct an identity as a function of a homeland which lacks clear geopolitical borders? When hospitality is exclusive to the state and the public domain, then a stateless people has no room for being reciprocal in the generous act of

hospitality. It then seems that the essential vulnerability of an identity reveals itself when it is threatened by potential displacement, and that a functioning homeland for all will be composed by identities once considered 'Other' but no longer seen in that threatening light.

Inspired by Thomas W. Dodman's *Homesick Epoch: Dying of Nostalgia in Post-Revolutionary France* on nostalgia, I will focus on the importance of memory when approaching the different components of my research, since memory's deviations can, in the process, be expunged to create new identities. The memory of French Algeria, held onto by the various parties involved, therefore prevails as the most important to the process of identity formation. To gather the most relevant information derived from such individual and collective memory, we will draw on the literature of internationally renowned Jewish French Algerian intellectuals such as Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous. As Lynne Huffer points out in her essay *Derrida's Nostalgia*, for Derrida "nostalgia happens precisely because we cannot go home again"⁴; Cixous, for her part, agrees as she concludes that "returns are never proportional to us, which is why, for the most part, we miss them."⁵ Such observations render the nostalgic in an eternally displaced mindset where time and space no longer count as determining factors. In conversation with Derrida, my research will also reflect on Pierre Nora's *Les Français d'Algérie* and Derrida's extensive personal response to this work, in a 52 paged letter addressed to Nora himself. We can consider that each of these recounts bears witness to a life of an individual, who is in the process of finding his existence in a succession of lands and social groups all of which are organized around membership and a community thus imagined. A biographical study's aim is

⁴ Lynne Huffer, "Derrida's Nostalgia," in *Algeria & France 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*. ed. Patricia M. E. Lorcin (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), xxi.

⁵ Samuel Sami Everett, *The Algerian Works of Hélène Cixous: at the Triple Intersection of European, North African, and Religious Nationalisms* (Springerlink.com, 2017), 215.

to precisely restore the individual trajectories by generalizing them to the level of the trajectories of differing groups. With a biographical chronology, a complete stranger gets a glance at “*la famille, l’université, l’institution religieuse, la bande d’amis, la troupe de scouts... la prison et le camp d’internement.*”⁶ They hence give a sense of what it was like to feel Jewish, French, or Algerian in one common homeland, revealing a logic through which identity dynamically relates to a historical and cultural, as well as a political space.

We will also reflect on personal accounts collected from extensive interviews with subjects born in Algeria and displaced to the lands of either France or Israel (or both). Denis Guénoun, a Jewish playwright, dramaturgue and Professor of French literature at the Sorbonne, of Algerian descent who was born in Oran, Algeria, and would eventually convert to Protestantism in Paris, long after his family’s displacement; Henri Atlan, a world renowned Jewish biophysicist and philosopher, residing in both Israel and Paris, and born in Blida, Algeria, who would devote his career to the biomedical sciences and to tradition of Jewish mysticism and Talmudic commentary; Jean Pierre Lledo, a documentary film maker born in Tlemcen, Algeria, who stayed in Algeria until the 1990s, and now resides in Israel, which he claims to be his true homeland; Jacques Leyris, born in Constantine, Algeria, as the son of the renowned musician Raymond Leyris, also known as *Cheikh Raymond*, who was assassinated in Algeria in 1962 after the ceasefire was inaugurated, who now lives in the outskirts of Paris and likewise thinks of Israel as his homeland; and, lastly, Yossef Charvit, born in 1957 in Constantine, Algeria and residing in Israel since 1970, where he is a professor in the Bar Ilan University and specializes in the social and intellectual history of Mediterranean, North African, French, and Israeli Judaism.

⁶ Luciani, *Les Juifs algériens dans la lutte anticoloniale*, 26.

Conducted in Hebrew or French (or both), the first question raised during these interviews will inquire into this preference of language, revealing a conscious decision as to which tongue and idiom is most associated with the idea of home. Indispensable to my research overall, these oral sources will be central to the formulation of its central hypothesis as they will permit us to truly understand what other sources do not or cannot evoke or describe. Finally, to get a clearer sense of the general concepts guiding this project, we will make use of literature on identity, religion, and nationalism, which will be referred to throughout the thesis, whenever relevant for its argument. Starting from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, as Edward W. Saïd would say, is a social construction by human actors,⁷ a group of interpretative methods will be deployed in order to better understand the modern phenomenon of home and homeland in a comprehensive and holistic way. In so doing, the thesis will focus on analyzing practices of human subjects (investigating the reasons for why, how, or by what means people do the things they do), while also showing how these practices, thus reconstructed, can be used to generate observable outcomes.

Despite this research's focus on the relationships among displacement, identity, and homeland inspired by Algeria's colonial past, the Algerian War of Independence, and the fates of its subjects as they moved on, we must not overlook the severity of this *guerre sans nom* (nameless war), which remained unacknowledged for the war that it was, even some 40 years after it "ended." In reading through these rationalizations, one is reminded of Hannah Arendt's conclusions regarding the atrocities committed by operatives of the German Nazi regime (Eichmann among them).

⁷ Edward W. Saïd, "Knowledge and Power," in *Covering Islam*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1978), 129-153.

Displacement by war brings about a blurring of the contours of identities as they relate to national territory and homeland narratives. The underlying framework that defines France's domination over Algeria was that of violence, which was central to the colonial experience from the inception of Algeria's occupation in 1830 until its independence in 1962. For Algeria, the conclusion of the war was a vindication of the longstanding negation by the French of Algeria's claim to a national homeland. For France, the loss of a once geographical extension was a political, economic, and psychological loss, ranging from acute relief to bitter rage.

As this research concentrates on different specific geographical locations, distinct sections of the thesis will be dedicated to individual exiles from a homeland, including the initial exiles to Algerian as they found themselves embarking upon the task of constructing yet another. The first chapter will explain how the many Jews in Algeria coming from very different origins came to be known as the ensemble known as the *Juifs d'Algérie*. Their existence in the land of Algeria can be divided into three distinct time periods with their corresponding identities, which cover the pre-1830s, the years between 1830 and 1870, and the period post-1870. During these times, we encounter the *Judéo-Berbères*, the Arab speaking *Judéo-Arabes*, and the Europeanized Algerian Jews, respectively. The second chapter will be dedicated to the *Juifs d'Algérie* during the period known as *La Guerre d'Algérie*; it will consider their initial sense of belonging, the eventual choices of homelands, and the geographic and mental displacements these choices entailed. It will heavily rely on Pierre-Jean le Foll Luciani's *Les juifs d'Algérie face aux nationalités française et algérienne (1940-1963)* to get a clearer sense of the identity complex the war produced. The third chapter, finally, will analyze different Algerian Jews in the aftermath of their displacement to another homeland, and will strongly rely on personal accounts

collected from interviews conducted during the month of January, 2018, in Paris and Jerusalem. All chapters will draw from Benjamin Stora's *Les clés retrouvées, une enfance juive à Constantine*, a sort of an unconduted interview in which Stora answers several of this research questions. In addition, Stora's *C'était hier en Algérie: de l'Orient à la République, une histoire des Juifs d'Algérie* will provide historical background throughout the research, as unforgettable images fill this nostalgic scrapbook dedicated to the Jewish existence in Algeria.

The materials gathered in the interviews with the exiled and the wider information collected in the three chapters, summarized above, will subsequently be generalized in a conclusion which is divided into two parts. Doing so, will allow us to detect and interpret the broader phenomenon of the experiences made by Jewish and Muslim populations in their respective imaginings of community in the constructed homelands, in and beyond their actual places of birth. After having analyzing the biographical narratives of individual subjects, based on the literature and my interviews, I will concentrate here on their surroundings rather than personal experiences. I will examine the similarities and differences, whether they be aesthetic or cultural, between the homelands of Algeria and Israel, whose citizenship (in Algeria) was and is (in Israel) determined by the Jewish religious faith. In order to better grasp the significance of the homeland for the Jewish community I will borrow insights from Avishai Margalit's public lecture, entitled "Isaiah Berlin, Home and Homeland," which provides both an extensive historical and personal narrative of the creation of Israel and its significance. I will briefly invoke the differences and similarities between French Algeria and the State of Israel as colonial powers, and ponder the status of Muslim Algerians and Palestinians who, as peoples and populations, suffered a similar fate of being made indigenous in their very own land. In an

attempt to understand how an entity is preserved when the return to it is deemed impossible, this concluding section will further draw on some relevant motifs discussed by Bruce Lincoln's *Holy Terrors, Thinking about Religion after September 11*, which offers a clarifying account of the relationship between culture and religion in postcolonial nation-states. I will suggest that not only the migrations from France to Israel, the so called 'Aliyahs' after 1962, but also the more recent wave, following the 2015 attacks, which revived terrorism often attributed to anti-semitism in France and Europe as a whole, enable us to redefine and more forcefully address the disastrous racisms that our modern nations sustain until this very day.

With this latest twist of history, it seems the fates of the three homelands of Algeria, France, and Israel come together. Our analysis thus yields the paradoxical result of what an identity's displacement from the homeland entails, as the example of the *Juifs d'Algérie*, makes more than clear, and helps explain how a homeland or, rather a sense of home and belonging (*ubi bene, ibi patria*), can be constructed or reimagined, regardless of birthplace, wherever one goes. It also makes clear that, in this process, several and equally valid, historical narratives of home, of leaving and returns to a land, will, almost inevitably and not without tension, end up overlapping.

Les Juifs d'Algérie

The particularity of this research entails the ‘mutations’ of different identities throughout a very long history. One can envision a family tree, composed of identities belonging to the same root, but branching out due to differing circumstances. Religion, combined with nationality, can be identified as the seed from which such a tree stemmed. Planted on Algerian soil, the figure of the tree and its branches captures the relatively constant identifying characteristics of the different categories of people found in its region, country or nation. The figure would further symbolize that the transformation of each generation contributes to this research’s overarching claim that, in fact, identity serves as a function of the homeland. To tackle the questions of identity in relation to homeland and the experience of displacement, this research, as announced, will focus on three specific Jewish identities found in Algeria throughout a timeline made up of three eras. The *Judéo-Berbères*, present in Algeria since 586 BCE, the Arab Speaking *Juifs d’Algérie indigènes*, as categorized by the French, and the French *Juifs d’Algérie*, who in 1870 were made French citizens by a decree and who adopted France as their homeland as relinquished Algeria as their “home.” Retaining its geographical borders, yet continuously governed by different administrations, Algeria proves identity, specifically the Jewish identity, to be a function of the homeland. The ‘regeneration’ of the *Juifs d’Algérie*, a process of assimilation termed by the French colonial project, marked an unforeseen rupture between generations whose distinction and disconnection would, from here on, be burdened by much more than merely the separation by time.

The beginning of the Jewish presence in North Africa marks the starting point of this chapter’s itinerary. After the kingdoms of Israel and Judah came into existence, Jewish traders,

referred to as Phoenicians by the Greeks, traveled westward along the African coast. From 323 to 331 BCE, under the Ptolemaic Greeks, the Jews brought their technological, industrial, and commercial expertise to Alexandria, one of the largest and most economically important cities of antiquity. In 305 BCE, Jewish settlements spread across North Africa and composed a significant proportion of the major North African Canaanite settlement at Carthage (pronounced *Kart Hadash*, meaning “New City” in Hebrew). By the end of the Common Era, the Jewish population in North Africa approached two million, of whom a majority resided in the large cities of Saïd and Memphis, and the others across East and South Alexandria. They established ports that turned into trading centers along the Mediterranean coast and benefited immensely from the consequent economic exchange. One of the most prominent commercial sites was in Ikoshim, later known as Algiers.

In 813 BCE, by virtues of race and language, the Phoenician identity mutated into that of the *Berber* people found in the West of Egypt. Impressed with the erudition and technological acumen of the Jews, the Berbers welcomed the latter when they fled the intolerant policies of the Roman Emperor, Justinian the Great. The *Berbères* adopted the Jews’ semitic origins, and created our first category of *Juifs d’Algérie*: the *Judéo-Berbères*. Made up of various tribes, the *Berbères* retained their Hamitic languages, specifically Tuareg and Kabyle, and their militaristic culture. Together, as a mixed population, the *Judéo-Berbères* faced the invasions of the Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals (one of the German tribes that vanquished the Roman Empire), Byzantines, and finally the Arabs. As told by the Muslim medieval historian Ibn-Khaldun, this episode in history was led by Kahina (“Priestess” in Hebrew), a *Judéo-Berbère* queen who in 694 CE led the Djeraoura tribes, composed of *Judéo-Berbères*, to resist the Arab conquest of the

Maghreb (today's Algeria and farther West.)⁸ Although this is a story that heavily leans on legendary sources, Kahina has since been regarded as a symbol of the *Judéo-Berbère* culture by French colonialists, Algerian nationalists, Jewish nationalists, Berberists, Feminists, Muslim Arab historians, and this project.

Eventually in 701 CE, after a period of undisturbed hegemony free from foreign domination, the *Judéo-Berbères* failed to mobilize against an Arab army composed of 60,000 troops.⁹ Kahina was beheaded, and her soldiers faced the all too familiar choice of the Jewish people between assimilation and persecution. Following the Arab conquest, nearly all *Judéo-Berbères* were Islamicized and the 50,000 who refused were massacred. The converted, along with those who managed to evade persecution, began their cultural and linguistic assimilation into the Arab culture. They rapidly began developing familiarity with Arabic literature, grammar, science, and spoke Arabic as their daily language of cultural and traditional instruction. The *Judéo-Berbères* from here on became a function of their governing homeland as their identity slowly mutated into a daily endeavor to serve it. In 711 CE, the Arab army, this time joined by the converted, headed for Spain, where we find our next component of the *Juifs d'Algérie*.

There is a substantial lack of research on the seven centuries that followed the Arab conquest of Algeria; we must assume that this undocumented time in history consisted of the *Judéo-Berbères*'s progressive assimilation and construction of an Arabic homeland. Documentation pertinent to our research resumes in the late 13th century, during which Jews

⁸ "History of the Jews in Algeria ." *Holocaust | History of the Jews in Algeria*, 2009, Accessed April 25, 2018, www.projetaladin.org/holocaust/en/muslims-and-jews/muslims-and-jews-in-history/history-of-the-jews-in-algeria.html.

⁹ Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, "Jews and Berbers," *Amazigh.nl*, last modified May 20, 2008, accessed April 25, 2018, <http://www.amazigh.nl/awar/index.php?topic=12381.0%Bwap2>.

were targeted in Spain by an anti-semitic regime instituted centuries before by the Visigoth kings in Spain. They were “flogged, executed, their property confiscated, subjected to ruinous taxes, forbidden to trade, and, at times, dragged to the baptismal font.”¹⁰ These tortures inspired the Spanish Inquisition that persecuted those who did not follow the Catholic faith and which eventually exiled some 200,000 Spanish Jews on July 30th, 1492. The Spanish Jews, placed in a single category of so-called *Sephardim*, coming from the Hebrew name for those of Spanish origin, reached North Africa and added to a Jewish presence specific to Algeria until 1830.

The waves of Sephardic immigration transformed the geography of the Jewish diaspora. In 1507, the Spanish army conquered the ports of Oran and Mers el-Kébir together with the so-called Moriscos.¹¹ Jewish families and communities of Ladino speaking Jews resided in the conquered ports of Oran and Mers and by 1518 became one with the dominating Ottoman empire. Identifying with their new surroundings, the languages spoken by the *Juifs d’Algérie* expanded to include not only Berber and Arabic, but also Spanish, Ladino (a uniquely conservative dialect of Spanish), Italian (as Jewish Italian merchants from the Italian trading center of Livorno joined Algeria’s European Spring), and Hebrew. Having acquired this variety of languages, the dominantly Arab speaking *Juifs d’Algérie* became cultural associates and mediators between Algeria’s different cohabitants. The presumed territorial atmospheres were later described in vivid terms by another son of Algeria, the Nobel Prize winning Albert Camus, in his book *L’Été, Petit guide*:

¹⁰ “Hebrew History Federation.” *HHF Factpaper: Jews in Africa, Part I - The Berbers and the Jews*, www.hebrewhistory.info/factpapers/fp019-1_africa.htm.

¹¹ The Moriscos add an interesting perspective since, like the *Judéo-Berbères*, they witnessed a conversion and expulsion as well. Converted from Islam to Christianity by coercion, they were nevertheless expelled from Spain by a decree of King Philippe III on April 9th, 1609.

“La douceur d’Alger est plutôt italienne. L’éclat cruel d’Oran a quelque chose d’espagnol... Constantine fait penser à Tolède... Alger offre une ville arabe, Oran un village nègre et un quartier espagnol, Constantine un quartier Juif.”¹²

Associates of all, and thus either despised or preferred as allies, the *Juifs d’Algérie* were throughout their Algerian history assigned different protective statuses in order to place them as a neutral people or population on one side while “protecting” them from the other. Under the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, they were protected by the official status of *dhimmi*, meaning *protected*.¹³ Incorporated by the Pact of Umar and imposed by the Turks, the status protected all non-Muslim ‘people of the book’ from persecution. Still, although technically protected, their most basic rights were often severely jeopardized. As the arrival of the French Jews during the second half of the 17th century called for more trade opportunities and mediation, the *Juifs d’Algérie* avoided the marginalizing discriminations by becoming relatively economically successful. In fact, this economic thriving is related indirectly by the well-known tale of the debt that was owed to two Algerian Jewish merchants, Bacri and Busnachi, in a dramatic story that traces all the way back to France’s initial incentive to colonize Algeria.

Even prior to the French conquest of Algeria, Napoléon had deemed the Jewish people “a nation within a nation.” Accordingly, he formulated policies that intended to “govern, monitor, police and ultimately guide the masses of Jews in local communities towards morality, economic utility, and assimilation.”¹⁴ Given Napoleon’s incentive to politically emancipate Jews under France’s rule, he designed a representative body that could specifically address the matters relevant to the Jewish population within the empire. In 1806, he convened an assembly of

¹² Benjamin Stora, *Les clés retrouvées, Une enfance juive à Constantine*, (Paris: Stock 2015), 29.

¹³ “Dhimmi.” *Dhimmi - New World Encyclopedia*, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Dhimmi.

¹⁴ Joshua S. Schreier, “They Swore Upon the Tombs Never to Make Peace with Us: Algerian Jews and French Colonialism, 1845-1848,” in *Algeria & France 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*. ed. Patricia M. E. Lorcin (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 102.

notable metropolitan French Jews to discuss strategies to make this community just as European as Jewish. Together, they turned Napoléon's policies into a hierarchical and centralized system of so-called *consistoires* led by a *consistoire central*, which was established in Paris, the empire's capital.

In 1836, six years after the French colonization of Algeria began, the *consistoire* appealed to the French Minister of War to now install the surprisingly successful *consistoires* in Algeria as well, claiming that “the conquest of Algeria, in adding a new trophy to the glory of our nation, has torn from slavery a population stooped for centuries under the yoke of barbarity.” (Consistoire Central, 1836).¹⁵ The *consistoires israélites* in Algeria, established in Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, on November 9th, 1845, addressed the place and status of our second category of *Juifs d'Algérie indigènes* and forever changed the dynamics in and, eventually, also aesthetics associated with Algeria. One of this project's interviewees, Denis Guénoun, reflects on the complex terminology and rather absurd process of its definition:

“Les Juifs qui étaient indigènes, ça veut dire qu'ils étaient de l'Algérie [...] Quant le décret a été publié, on a demandé aux juifs d'aller se faire inscrire pour être naturalisé français, Alors tous l'ont fait, bien sûr, de très bon coeur, parce que la condition française était avantageuse, et aussi pour des raisons intellectuelles culturelles que la France c'était la liberté, le pays ou les juifs avaient le droit à vivre, etc... Mais, beaucoup ne parlaient pas français. [...] Ils ont dû prouver qu'ils étaient indigènes. Mon arrière grand-père quand il est allé déclarer lui même, sa femme, ses enfants, et petits enfants, il a dû prouver qu'il était indigène. Comment il prouve qu'il était indigène? Et bien, selon le truc juridique (*il rit*) c'est tellement drôle, il fallait des témoignages, qui attestent qu'il était indigène, qu'il était là avant la colonisation. C'est un peu ridicule tu vois? Il a eu des témoignages qui ne parlaient pas français non plus! Donc indigène ça voulait dire que ce judaïsme là, et pas un autre, qui a été naturalisé français. Alors pourquoi? C'est compliqué, ça c'est pas fait ni au Maroc alors que là à Oran c'est tout près du Maroc. Donc indigènes ça veut dire ça, mais pour nous ça veut dire des arabes. [...] Nous quand on disait des indigènes dans la langue courante des Français d'Algérie c'était pour des arabes. On disait des arabes mais

¹⁵ Ibid., 104.

ça paraissait un peu brutal, alors on disait ça, a priori, et on disait des indigènes. [...] C'était ambigu tu vois parce que nous aussi on était indigène..."¹⁶

Guénoun provides us with the enlightening insight that one in fact had to prove one's 'indigenoussness.' On the same topic, Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist originating from the French *département d'outre mer* of Martinique and considered one of Algeria's adopted sons due to the vast amount of work he dedicated to its cultural and political turmoils, also reflected on the indigenous category:

"La première chose que l'indigène apprend, c'est à rester à sa place, à ne pas dépasser les limites; c'est pourquoi les rêves de l'indigène sont des rêves musculaires, des rêves d'action, des rêves agressifs. Je rêve que je saute, que je nage, que je cours, que je grimpe. Je rêve que j'éclate de rire, que je franchis le fleuve d'une enjambée, que je suis poursuivi par une meute de voitures qui ne me rattrapent jamais. Pendant la colonisation, le colonisé n'arrête pas de se libérer entre neuf heures du soir et six heures du matin. Cette agressivité sédimentée dans ses muscles, le colonisé va d'abord la manifester contre les siens."¹⁷

Fanon thus explained why the remaining indigenous Algerians were capable of extremities triggered by the severe exclusion. By the end of the 19th century, 44,000 out of 54,000 Algerian Jews were indigenous and the remaining 11,000 were *prolétaires*, belonging to a middle lower class. These *Juifs d'Algérie indigènes* became the French Jews' personal project as Algeria became France's colonial project, further complicating the already established understanding of identity and homeland.

The French metropolitan Jews felt that the *Juifs d'Algérie* were long subjugated to persecution and would therefore be more susceptible to embrace all the potential benefits of French domination. Making it a priority to advance their inferior distant coreligionists, in 1841, Jewish Rabbinical courts (referred to as *beth din* at the time, from the Hebrew for "court") were

¹⁶ Denis Guénoun, personal interview, January 19, 2018.

¹⁷ Anne Mathieu, "Frantz Fanon, La négritude et l'émancipation." *Le Monde Diplomatique*, (1 Mar. 2009), accessed April 23, 2018, www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2009/03/MATHIEU/16934.

placed under French jurisdiction and linked to the *Consistoire Central* in Paris. Notified of the “Jewish suffering” in pre-colonial North Africa through the *Archives Israélites*, a prominent primary source and French Jewish journal initially published in 1840, French Jews were ready to convince a skeptical French government that the *Juifs d’Algérie* would ultimately prove useful to the French Republic. In order to sustain the metropole’s dedication to its Jewish Algerian brothers, the *Archives* stated that “the Israelite population has only found in France protection and liberty,” and “has attached itself to France with the ardor of sincere gratitude”¹⁸. Accordingly, the perception of the *Juifs d’Algérie* as victims spared by imperial generosity encouraged the metropolitan determination to assimilate them through naturalization.

Yet, the initial gap between the Western and North African populations and their collective identities, predominantly referred to in European culture as the difference between *Occident* and *Orient*, prevailed in minor details. The *consistoires*’ Chief Rabbi’s position was strictly reserved for the presumably more sophisticated French Jews found in or brought to Algeria, while the *Juifs d’Algérie indigènes* were allowed only irrelevant membership in the prefectures. Increasingly aware of what disenfranchised measures their imposed inferiority as indigenous could entail, the *Juifs d’Algérie indigènes* initially resisted the French implantation in Algeria, to the extent that in some cases, local Jews refused to allow French Jewish burials in Algerian Jewish cemeteries. Perhaps understandingly, as the *consistoires* intended “to inculcate unconditional obedience to the laws, loyalty to France, and the obligation to defend it,”¹⁹ the *Juifs d’Algérie* viewed them as an intrusive and impious force usurping the power from their communities.

¹⁸ Schreier, “They Swore,” 105, (AI 1843, 26).

¹⁹ “History of the Jews in Algeria.” *Holocaust | History of the Jews in Algeria*, (2009).

Nevertheless, as new generations were born into *l'Algérie Française*, the *Juifs d'Algérie*, who doubled in number from 10,000 in 1830 to 23,000 in 1847, were increasingly Europeanized through two specific institutions: the army and school. Until 1842, Jewish education in Algeria was reserved for only men and excluded young women from learning Hebrew or discussing sacred texts. The Jewish Algerian education system was composed of two specific programs: *l'école française*, and *l'école Talmudique* (also known as *l'Alliance israélite universelle*.) Intended to unite against anti-semitism and to embed the principles of the French civilization, equality and fraternity were the guiding principles of each. Students were instructed in either French or Hebrew (emphasizing the proper education of Judaism) or both.

Yet, with the French arrival and the implantation of its education system, a large number of Jewish *fillettes* started attending a school that, from 1882 onwards, was exactly modeled after the one Jules Ferry established in France and, hence, secular, obligatory, and free. The *Juives d'Algérie* were thus introduced to a whole new world whose republican ideals of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*, offered an unfamiliar horizon of uncharted possibilities. For one thing, their education completely modified the mental perspective of the young female Jewish Algerian students compared to the world they were born into.²⁰ For another, these educational practices dignified the French identity. And having been Algerian, French, and Jewish, through and through, the young female *Juives d'Algérie* acquired an openness for “the Other” that the majority of men were incapable of embracing.

Due to this research's disproportionate attention to female Jewish Algerians, it is important to emphasize the substantial role they played in our story. Indeed, the *Juives d'Algérie*

²⁰ Joëlle Allouche Benayoun, “Femmes juives d'Algérie” in *Juifs d'Algérie; Exposition du 28 septembre 2012 au 27 janvier 2013*, (Paris; Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme et Skira-Flammarion, 2012 - 2013), 216.

where the group that most quickly adopted the European virtue of education. Between 1896 and 1962, 20% of the hundreds of literary works published by *Juifs d'Algérie* were written by *Juives d'Algérie*: novels, poetry, autobiographies, and plays.²¹ However, and unfortunately, if a woman was to receive a Bachelor Degree and wished to find a suitable profession, she had no choice but to leave Algeria, making France more appealing and the greater resource as a homeland than her place of birth and home in Algeria. Yet, traditionally, the women of the Jewish Algerian community were expected not to use whatever educational achievements or degrees they had attained and rather to concentrate on helping their husbands. It was only in the *entre deux guerres* time period (1918-1939) that some managed to become teachers or doctors, and this always with a great deal of difficulty. At the same time, the *Juives d'Algérie*'s battle for greater equality, sustained by a sociological and psychological evolution and inspired by the adoption of France as a homeland, placed the two distant groups of female French Jews and *Juives d'Algérie*, both marginalized by gender, de facto in the same category, regardless of social location .

With the inauguration of the French education system taking up most of the public space, not only did Jewish Algerian customs and traditions relocated to *l'espace privé* from *l'espace public*, but also slowly transformed names and attitudes, embodying the signs of European symbolism. Rabbis progressively lost their influence in civil life as Algeria was increasingly secularized and subjected to the laws of the State. Yet with France's intervention, controversial as the colonial gesture it remained, the *Juifs d'Algérie* had now also the opportunity to embrace their potential of becoming what one might call "Westerners." They were offered and accordingly took up positions of higher esteem, excelled in their suddenly accessible education,

²¹ Ibid., 218.

and became readier to abandon not only the world of poverty, but also their status of an indigenous population that still legally differentiated them from those they were gradually becoming.

Shortly after Napoleon the III's first venture to French Algeria and the establishment of *l'Alliance Israélite universelle* in 1860, local Algerian Jewish representatives started presenting French officials with various petitions to no longer be considered as indigenous in their own land. Acknowledging such a possibility, the *sénatus-consulte du 14 juillet 1865 sur l'état des personnes et la naturalisation en Algérie* declared that all peoples indigenous to Algeria could potentially become French citizens. Composed of five distinct articles, the consulate addressed each collective identity indigenous to Algeria and the specific requirements for it to officially become French: "*l'indigène musulman est français: néanmoins, il continuera à être régi par la loi musulmane... Il peut sur sa demande, être admis à jouir des droits de citoyen français;*" "*l'indigène israélite est français;*" "*l'étranger qui justifie de trois années de résidence en Algérie.*" The fourth and the fifth articles, moreover, clarified the conditions that one had to be of "*l'âge de vingt-et-un ans accomplis, conférée par décret impérial rendu en Conseil d'État*" and that "*les formes dans lesquelles seront instruites les demandes prévues par les articles 1, 2 et 3 du présent sénatus-consulte.*"²²

As one of the Third Republic's guiding principles was that of *laïcité*, secularism, the most crucial condition for the French citizenship was the abandonment of the indigenous' *status personnel*. France made it an ultimatum that if one was to be of its nationality, public religion and privately practiced religion had to undergo a substantial detachment. Unwilling, and frankly

²² Benjamin Stora, *C'était hier en Algérie: de l'Orient à la République, une histoire des Juifs d'Algérie* (Larousse, 2016), 182.

not very interested in relinquishing their religious prerogatives, out of the 35,000 indigenous Jews, only between 200 to 300 solicited the opportunity, and only around 150 obtained it²³ in the five years that followed the 1865 consultation. According to Michel Abitbol, this massive refusal was linked to a sort of religious liberty unknown to the metropolitan French Jews, where religion was a given rather than seen as nuisance to be accommodated: “They felt that they hardly needed this [legal] emancipation which, in addition to its religious drawbacks, deprived them of their collective autonomy.”²⁴

According to the French minister of Justice at the time, Adolphe Crémieux, a French Jew himself, the Jewish religion forbids rebellion against the state and its laws. He proclaimed that one should not propose the French citizenship to the *Juifs d’Algérie* but rather impose it in the name of their new *Patrie* (the French term for homeland). Unaware of the potential upheaval such a proposition had in store, on October 24th, 1870, the *Décret Crémieux* was inaugurated and transformed the category of *Juifs d’Algérie indigènes* into the third category of French *Juifs d’Algérie*. The decree was signed in Tours by Léon Gambetta, Alexandre Glais-Bizoin, and Martin Fourichon, all well-known French statesmen, and declared the 35,000 “*israélites indigènes des départements de l’Algérie citoyens français*.”²⁵ The decree declared that their “*statut réel et leur statut personnel* would, from here on, be regulated by “*la loi française*” adding that “*tous droits acquis jusqu’à ce jour* would remain *inviolables*,” while it also abolished “*toute disposition législative, tout sénatus-consulte, décret, règlement ou ordonnances contraires*.”²⁶ Despite initial conflicts concerning the distinctions between Sephardic Jewish

²³ Luciani, *Les Juifs algériens dans la lutte anticoloniale*, 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁵ Stora, *C’était hier en Algérie*, 183.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

religious law and French law, within a generation, this last category of *Juifs d'Algérie* came to predominantly speak French rather than Ladino, Hebrew, or Arabic. The importance of language will be further analyzed in the third chapter, but for now, it suffices to reiterate its role in the identity formation:

“Speaking a certain language (including dialect, subdialect, and local accent) is also important, particularly if we understand this to include sharing not just language per se, but a repertoire of stories, proverbs, jokes, and formulaic expressions, or even a textualized canon. One might extend the sense of “language” further still to include nonverbal systems of signification like art, architecture, dance, and music, or one might treat these as separate genres. But in either case, the extent to which one engages with local idioms and signifying practices conditions one’s participation in culture.”²⁷

The French collective identity thus became an inherent component of the Jewish Algerian collective identity. Yet, while the *Juifs d'Algérie* were going through this transformation at times referred to as an identity “mutation,” their Algerian Muslims neighbors remained indigenous in their own but now Europeanized land, and, worse yet, witnessed their ancient cohabitants become one with the oppressors.

The time period between the French conquest of Algeria and the official naturalization of this *minorité numérique*’ *mais* *majorité sociologique* prompt a discussion on the relationship between the *Juifs d'Algérie* and the French civilizing mission. The possible justifications for why the *Juifs d'Algérie* should be the *indigènes* to be assimilated rather than the *Musulmans d'Algérie* were largely based on stereotypes of the religiously confined image of the female: the sequestered Muslim woman who “under thick veils, avoiding our civilization,” was limited to visible insignificance, in comparison to the Jewish woman, who “goes out with an exposed face, or happily entertains guests in her home for friendly evenings”²⁸ and follows the European

²⁷ Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 51.

²⁸ Schreier, “They Swore,” 106.

model. Moreover, the *Archives* advocated that the Jews' displacements throughout history sharpened their intelligence so that they could learn the language, culture, accents, and instructions of a governing body, whether tolerant or authoritarian. Faced with the choice to either cultivate "these men to the level of others regarding civilization and morality, or leave them stagnating for years to come in a demoralized, fanatic state" (Archives Israélites 1844, 691),²⁹ France's Third Republic secured this "regeneration" through its relatively inclusive ideals.

By becoming French however, the *Juifs d'Algérie* belonged not only to different but also contradicting collective identities: the Algerian, the French, and the Jewish, on the one hand, the colonized, the colonizer, and the religious, on the other. The artificial disjunction between the Jewish identity and the Algerian identity, mediated by the French identity, began in 1897 and 1898 with the rise of anti-semitism. The *Juifs d'Algérie* were denied both public and private access to various locations and became victims of daily targetings, while the French army, in which they served, stood idle. Strikingly reluctant in providing for the protection of its Jewish subjects, France committed its first failure as a presumed homeland and safe haven. Such lack of protection was supported by the French Europeans residing in Algeria, known as *Pieds Noirs* after their eventual displacement or return to France, who found the assimilation of the *Juifs d'Algérie* to be unjustified and unnecessary.

In 1871, anti-Jewish manifestations proliferated in the two territories once perceived as homelands. Both French and Algerian representatives such as Max Régis, elected mayor of Algiers at the age of twenty-five and leader of the Anti-Jewish party, and Adolphe Thiers, the

²⁹ Ibid., 104.

head of France's provisional government, called for the Crémieux decree's abrogation. Propaganda rife with xenophobic attacks targeted the *Juifs d'Algérie* to the extent that every municipal council in Algeria became controlled by anti-Semites. The hostile anti-semitic ambiance was not only present all around Algeria, as witnessed by the formation of an Anti-Jewish Party, but also in 1894 Europe, notably marked by the Dreyfus Affair, the most tense political drama to concern the Jewish people in French history, during which Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jew, was accused of treason and decommissioned from his military position.

In 1897, when Émile Zola was brought to trial for his article *J'accuse* published in *l'Horreur*, which exposed the injustice directed at Dreyfus, the response in Algeria was severe. Over 158 Jewish owned shops in Algiers were looted and burnt and two Jews were killed.³⁰ In 1899, it has been observed, thirty-six *anti-juifs* candidates won the municipal elections ... and four out of the six seats in the legislative elections went to Anti-Jewish representatives³¹: Édouard Drumont, who authored one of anti-semitism's foundations, *La France Juive*, and Charles Marchel from Algiers, Émile Morinaud from Constantine, and Firmin Faure from Oran. When the Republican forces won in 1902, anti-semitism lost its momentum, and the construction of France as a homeland resumed just in time for its greatest need in manpower: the two World Wars and *la Guerre d'Algérie*.

The conclusion of wars often depend on the extent of a nation's zeal. The World Wars were therefore an ideal opportunity for both the *Juifs d'Algérie* and France to assume the oath to defend the homeland and its citizens. In August of 1914, around 14,000 *Juifs d'Algérie* fought as French citizens in the Zouaves regiments; 1,700 lost their lives while 1,300 were imprisoned in

³⁰ Stora, *C'était hier en Algérie*, 96.

³¹ Exhibition Catalogue, *Juifs d'Algérie; Exposition du 28 septembre 2012 au 27 janvier 2013*, (Paris; Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme et Skira-Flammarion, 2012 - 2013), 15.

the name of the *Patrie*.³² Despite their prevalent dedication, worthy of a mausoleum constructed in Algiers' Saint-Eugène cemetery, nationalist groups (composed of more than 40,000 members), together with the *Pieds Noirs*, retained their anti-semitic stance. In the 1920s, the elections in Oran were dominated by virulent campaigns advocating an electoral program solely based on anti-semitism. Jules Molle was elected mayor of Oran in 1921 mainly on the basis of his promise “*votez pour moi, c'est voter contre les juifs!*”³³ He was re-elected in 1925. Constantly reinforced, anti-semitism culminated in the *émeutes de Constantine* on August 5th, 1934, during which 23 *Juifs d'Algérie* were murdered, 80 were injured, and about 200 Jewish owned stores were demolished in the streets of Constantine.³⁴

The gruesome event left the Jewish community petrified and abandoned. The only public representatives who were aware of the mere artificiality of the *Judéo-Musulman* tensions so effectively orchestrated by the French were the religious Jewish and Muslim Algerian leaders. They called for a reconciliation and advocated that both communities, which had originated in the very land on which they were turned against one another by a force from the outside, could coexist peacefully once again. In addition, individual *Juifs d'Algérie*, such as Henri Aboulker, Albert Confino, and Elie Gozlan established an *oeuvre sociale*³⁵, a social project, as an attempt to restore the lost kinship. We will return to Aboulker and Gozlan below.

The Jewish French Algerian generation that came of age during the *entre deux guerres* period was composed of individuals who identified as anti-colonialists and as advocates of Algeria's independence, provided their Algerian and French nationalities would have a place

³² Ibid., 18.

³³ Stora, *C'était hier en Algérie*, 139.

³⁴ Ibid., 132.

³⁵ Exhibition Catalogue, *Juifs d'Algérie*, 11.

within it. They supported the election of *le Front Populaire* and the many Algerians of Jewish origins who participated in the SFIO, *Section française de l'internationale Ouvrière*, founded by the PSF, *Parti Socialiste Français*, in 1936 further contributed to what came to be known as the Blum Viollette Project. Administered by the *Président du Conseil*, Léon Blum, and the governor general of Algeria, Maurice Viollette, the project attempted to create another version of the *Décret Crémieux* that would address the remaining people indigenous to Algeria, *les Musulmans d'Algérie*. Without obliging them to renounce their Muslim *statut personnel*, the decree intended to grant about 20,000 privileged Algerian Muslim³⁶ officers, professors, and landowners, the French citizenship in an attempt to reinstate a forgotten balance. Sadly, the proposal never made it to the Chamber of Deputies as the *Pieds Noirs* immediately opposed and manifested against it.

Shortly thereafter, although ill-prepared for the abrupt end of their seventy year long assimilation, the *Juifs d'Algérie* returned to their indigenous status. Ironically, France's protection of the *Juifs d'Algérie* ceased when Algeria itself was declared a *protectorat* rather than a *département* during World War II, when Jews all around the world were no longer considered a *protectorate* nor a geographical extension of the French homeland, but merely as an indigenous abomination, unworthy of European protection, to say nothing of European nationality. To ensure the legality of the hate wave to come, the *Loi Marchandreau*, which a year before, had condemned the incitation of hatred brought about by racism or religion, was abrogated on April 27th, 1940. On October 3rd, the Vichy regime, founded by Marshal Philippe Pétain, inflicted a *statut de fonction publique* on the the *Juifs d'Algérie* in preparation for the Crémieux Decree's abrogation on October 7th. This status, renamed as *statut des Juifs d'Algérie*

³⁶ Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism*. (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 172.

on November 20th, 1940, was composed of eight severely marginalizing articles. Deprived of their French nationality and no longer protected from anti-semitism, the *Juifs d'Algérie* were targeted by journals such as *Le Petit Oranais*, which violently propagated: “il faut mettre le soufre, la poix, et s’il se peut le feu de l’enfer aux synagogues et aux écoles juives, détruire les maisons de Juifs, s’emparer de leurs capitaux et les chasser...”³⁷ In sum, the marginalizing anti-semitic discriminations in Europe were not steadily encroaching upon the Jewish subjects in the colonies.

On December 15th, 1941, under Vichy authority, the Office for Economic Aryanization was created with the goal to eliminate all Jewish influence on the Algerian economy. As a result, a prominent majority of *Juifs d'Algérie* was dismissed from esteemed professions and successfully expelled from the economic sphere. Shortly thereafter, Jewish students were expelled from universities and public schools even though they composed over 37% of medical students, 24% of law students, 16% of science students, and 10% of arts students. By 1942, 19,484 students were officially excluded from public schools, and by the end of the year only 70 primary schools and six middle schools were operational.³⁸ The exclusion from school made Jacques Derrida reflect in 1999 on the traumatizing experience: “je me demande si je ne voyage pas tant parce que j’ai toujours été, comme de l’école, renvoyé.”³⁹ The *Juifs d'Algérie* were thus excluded from the inalienable protection of a homeland that haunted their collective identity for generations to come.

In June of 1940, certain Jewish combattants were directed from the metropole to camps in North Africa. Joined by French Jewish political prisoners, approximately 2,000 *Juifs*

³⁷ Stora, *C’était Hier en Algérie*, 140.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

d'Algérie, relegated to the condition of *prestataires étrangers* and were interned in Bedeau, in the south of Algeria, and Djelfa as well as in other labor and concentration camps across the country. Divided into two distinct groups, “foreign workers” and *internés*, that is, political prisoners, the latter group worked for ten hours a day, while they were poorly fed, housed in terrible sanitary conditions, sorely tortured, and inflicted with atrocities executed by camp guards for the slightest breach of rules. Like their co-religionists in Europe, the *Juifs en Algérie* were treated as inhuman and died from beatings, outbreaks of typhus, and from exhaustion and hunger. A year later, in August of 1941, the *Service Spécial pour le règlement de la question juive* re-applied the *Juif Indigène* status to 111,021 *Juifs d'Algérie* born after the inauguration of the *Décret Crémieux* and to 6,625 of foreign nationality⁴⁰ The *question juive* became thus the very symbol of the substantial, invidious national and international crisis that was not even nearly approaching its atrocious conclusion.

The *Juifs d'Algérie* responded to these torments by either increasingly turning inward, or, perhaps surprisingly, by ardently embracing France as their *Patrie*, thanking their God and homeland that they did not meet the same monstrous fate as their co-religionists in Europe. To expand on this paradox that could easily translate as a manifestation of self-denial: rather than weakening, the link between the *Juifs d'Algérie* and the metropole consolidated itself and the French nationality, in the eyes of many of these victims, and realized its utmost potential. They proudly proclaimed: “we are French and we state loudly that ... there is no power in this world that can affect the deep feeling that unites us to our country, to its culture, to its dead.”⁴¹ They

⁴⁰ Exhibition Catalogue, *Juifs d'Algérie; Exposition du 28 septembre 2012 au 27 janvier 2013*, (Paris; Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme et Skira-Flammarion, 2012 - 2013), 16.

⁴¹ Sheryl Silver Ochayon, “The Jews of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.” *The Jews of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*, www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/the-jews-of-algeria-morocco-and-tunisia.html.

simply assumed that the Germans pressured the French authorities into instituting racist laws, and placed the blame on the former rather than on the latter.

Led by Henri Aboulker, previously mentioned as a consolidator of the *Judéo-Musulman* collective identity as it had functioned in the pre-colonial Algeria, as well as by several French army officers, 315 *Juifs d'Algérie* joined the Algerian underground resistance, making up 80% of the resistance as a whole.⁴² They helped the American troops in Operation Torch, best known for liberating Algiers on November 8th, 1942, and enthusiastically welcomed and housed them. Befriended their liberators, they attentively followed the allied' forces' progress, and further potential.

Indeed, explicitly acknowledged by General Dwight D. Eisenhower and President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the *Juifs d'Algérie* were promised in November 1942 that the laws deferring their liberation (e.g., their continued forced presence in the Bedeau camps, even six months after Algeria's liberation) would soon be abolished. Roosevelt sent Jean Monnet, considered one of the founding fathers of the European Union, to mitigate François Darlan's anti-semitic positions and legislation. Serving as the deputy leader of the Vichy Regime, Darlan was the highest-ranking officer in North Africa at the time. Hence, when the Allies invaded Algeria, they gave him control over North African French forces in exchange for his joining their side and relinquishing his anti-semitic doctrines. He didn't get to act on the agreement as two months later, on December 24th, 1942, he was assassinated by Fernand Bonnier de la Chapelle, a monarchist opposed to the Vichy Regime. It was only in the following summer that all anti-Jewish marginalizing laws were abolished. The Crémieux Decree was reinstated and

⁴² Exhibition Catalogue, *Juifs d'Algérie*, 16.

l'Abolition du statut des Juifs was signed on October 20th, 1943. The *Juifs d'Algérie* were once again officially under French rule and of French nationality. On November 22nd, the *rétablissement* was signed by General Charles de Gaulle and Henri Giraud, the *général d'armée* who, after initially keeping the Vichy regime in place and assigning its authority to Darlan, was eventually convinced by Jean Monnet to break from Pétain's legislation altogether. The document was divided into six articles that ushered in a sort of apology for having betrayed an important segment of its abnormally dedicated citizens (*"les ordonnances du commandant en chef français, civil et militaire du 14 mars 1943 et du 18 avril 1943 portant abrogation des mesures prises à l'encontre des Juifs, des membres des associations secrètes ainsi que des magistrats, des fonctionnaires civils et militaires, des employés et agents des services concédés ou des entreprises subventionnées, relevés de leur fonctions."*⁴³).

It is important to keep in mind that and how the timing of Algeria's colonization, the World Wars, Algeria's independence, and the subsequent exiles all influenced the *Juifs d'Algérie's* national consciousness, first as adherents of an imperial France and then of an independent Algeria. Following their displacements, the ancestors and older relatives of those "faithful children of Crémieux" born into French Algeria, felt Algeria to be a *paradis perdu*, a lost Paradise.⁴⁴ Benjamin Stora recounts that before 1954, "les gens de là-bas se vivaient et se pensaient destinés à vivre sur place pour l'éternité. Ils n'imaginaient pas qu'il faudrait partir."⁴⁵ And yet, the younger relatives who did not define themselves as anti-colonialist or Algerian felt that Algeria was in fact France, without regard to its geographical borders on a world map.

⁴³ Stora, *C'était hier en Algérie*, 185.

⁴⁴ Mickäel Gamrasni, personal interview, January 20, 2018.

⁴⁵ Stora, *C'était hier en Algérie*, 149.

Hence the time during which one was born in the land of Algeria effectively determined one's assumption of identity as a function of the homeland. Whether of *Judéo-Arabe* heritage, or primarily French and only then Jewish (and possibly Algerian), the eventual displacements of the Jewish Algerian would either obstruct or reinforce the above identifications and conceptions. With names like Derrida, Cixous, and Stora, Jews had lived in North Africa for over 2,000 years. Some had arrived with the Phoenicians between 1100 and 146 BCE, others had sought refuge after their expulsion, along with the Muslim population, following the fall of Granada, the last bastion of Islamic Spain, an exile that was completed with the Reconquista in 1492. Put differently, the *Juifs d'Algérie* had a complex mosaic of Judeo-Berber, Judeo-Arab, Portuguese and Sephardic roots, in which each locality had its own customs and thereby challenged the definitions of homeland and heritage in comparison to actual place of birth and nationality.

Les Juifs d'Algérie during la Guerre d'Algérie

When the *guerre sans nom*, *La Guerre d'Algérie*, began in 1954, the Westernized generations of *Juifs d'Algérie* guided their older “Oriental,” rather devastated, relatives away from the homeland and on the way to the construction of yet another. Unlike the *Pieds Noirs*, several were advocates of an independent Algeria on which their ancestors planted their family tree. However, like the *Pieds Noirs*, they felt they had the right to claim Algeria as their own, their home, whether it be French or independent. From 1954 to 1962, the *Juifs d'Algérie* faced some of the most difficult choices and challenges the Jewish people had endured throughout their varied history. Called to stand with two opposing sides, the verdict of the *Juifs d'Algérie* on Algerian soil was that of unrequited potential and inevitable displacement. Numbering 130,000, as opposed to nine million Arab-Berber Algerians and about one million European settlers, the Jewish Algerian minority was faced with three choices: accept and strive for independence, join the battle in defense of colonial Algeria, or leave.

The quest for Algeria's independence gained momentum after French promises for Algerian self-rule went unfulfilled following the conclusion of World War II. Both Algerian and French organizations revealed the extreme measures (and violence) they were capable of when it came to maintaining what they thought was ‘rightfully’ theirs to claim. The FLN, *Front de Libération Nationale*, began its guerilla activities in the countryside, particularly along Algeria's borders. Targeting France as an oppressive colonial force, this nationalist Algerian organization sought diplomatic recognition from the United Nations so that it could establish a sovereign Algerian state. Their most violent activities took place in and around Algiers from 1956 to 1957, during which its members launched a series of violent urban attacks, bombed bars and cafés in

Algeria's European quarters (such as the Milk Bar) and participated in what came to be known as *la Bataille d'Alger*. The battle was concluded with an increased presence of French forces (500,000 to be exact)⁴⁶ ready to do whatever it took to regain control, even if it meant systematic torture and rape. Despite the terror, the vehement opposition, and an attempted coup by the French army, the Evian Accords, signed in 1962, declared Algeria independent from foreign rule for the first time in its existence.

The several difficult choices Algeria's War of Independence forced the *Juifs d'Algérie* to make serve as the basis for our analysis of identity and homeland in the remaining chapters to come. Torn by the choice to either advocate for their forefathers' homeland and *berbère* heritage, or preserve a French Algeria that embedded them in culture and ideals they could identify with, the *Juifs d'Algérie* were inevitably caught in the middle of this conflict's spectrum. Since the French conquest of Algeria, the *Juifs d'Algérie* had kept their official affiliation with either "camp" to a certain minimum. The War put an end to the *Juifs d'Algérie*'s almost normalized and internalized task of mediating between their two opposing collective identities, French and Algerian, and required them to indefinitely choose one over the other. As negotiations for a resolution became evidently impossible, each choice would cause a particular controversy. That is to say, although the Jewish Algerian collective identity had sought refuge in silence and, as it were, remained apolitical, individuals within it associated themselves with either the French or with the Algerians, each of which camp envisioned a very different conclusion to the war and thus a future fate for Algeria as a homeland. The choice to be either displaced or remain in a

⁴⁶ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Algerian War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 4 Jan. 2016, www.britannica.com/event/Algerian-War.

home that gradually turned hostile would, in the years and decennia to come, both mutate and reaffirm Algeria's several collective identities.

Despite the Jewish Algerian tendency to restrain associations to a personal level, Élie Gozlan, a prominent Algerian Jew born in 1876, a former instructor of Arabic and director of the *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d'Algérie* (the main Jewish Algerian communal journal), divided the *Juifs d'Algérie* during the Algerian Civil War into four detailed categories:

1. "Ceux qui n'ont rien appris mais tout oublié et entendent demeurer français 'avant tout'; ils n'ont paru nulle part pendant la tempête et comprennent des étrangers au judaïsme algérien" ;
2. "Ceux qui ont souffert dans leur chair, dans leur âme et dans leur sang de l'antisémitisme et de sa farouche hypocrisie et ne veulent plus aucune attache avec les représentants de cet antisémitisme qui exercent encore toute l'autorité, mais demeurent des Français" ;
3. "Ceux qui veulent profiter de la situation historique qu'offre l'appui de l'Amérique et de l'Angleterre et veulent cesser d'être des parias et refaire leur patrie : la patrie juive" ;
4. "Ceux qui se déclarent être ici des autochtones et qui considèrent que l'Algérie est leur terre comme elle est celle des Arabes, qu'ils ont vécu avec ces derniers sans qu'une hypocrite civilisation [française] à laquelle ils ont tout donné, les ait abrités."⁴⁷

Although it is hard to categorize the complex mosaic of Algeria's internally divided Jewish community, Gozlan's distinctions are nonetheless informative. For instance, the majority of notable *Juifs d'Algérie*, who essentially became 'notable' due to their economic and national attachment to the *Patrie*, were the ones who, even after Vichy, viewed France as an entity of essential 'goodness'. Among the six interviews independently conducted for this project, two interviewees, Henri Atlan and Denis Guénoun, the first based in Israel and the second in Paris, appear to partly belong to Gozlan's first category. Although defining themselves as post-zionist and post-communist, respectively, the two inhabit a deep sense of belonging to France, to the French language and identity, and think of nationality and homeland as essentially synonymous.

⁴⁷ Pierre-Jean Le Foll Luciani, «Les juifs d'Algérie face aux nationalités française et algérienne (1940-1963)», *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* (26 juin 2015), accessed March 12, 2018, <http://journals.openedition.org/remmm/9057>.

In the interviews' early stages, both almost immediately referred to their fathers, creating a Father-Son theme that would interestingly persist throughout the other interviews. While Guénoun's father was a *Semite* ('a Jewish Arab', after whom he titled his memoir of Algeria, entitled *Un sémite*), and a communist in favor of Algeria's independence, both he and Atlan's father appreciated the French culture and felt 'more' French than Jewish or Algerian, thus inevitably influencing their sons' definitions and later appreciations of identity and homeland:

“Moi j'ai pas demandé la citoyenneté française, et mon père non plus, mais mon père était très content d'avoir la citoyenne française, et d'élever ses enfants dans la France... Pour lui y avait que de la France, en plus il a fait la guerre de 14, c'était un ancien combattant en France, il y avait que de la France ... ils habitaient en Algérie avant que les arabes l'ont conquise” “Moi je n'ai connu que l'Algérie comme département français.”⁴⁸

“Mon père se sentait beaucoup plus français qu'algérien, il se sentait radicalement français. Il était très conscient de ses origines algériennes. Mes grands parents parlaient arabe très très bien et bien le français, mon père parlait le français beaucoup plus que l'arabe, et moi je parle seulement le français ... Mais il pensait que l'Algérie devait être le pays des Algériens. Il était contre la colonisation. Donc, il était au parti communiste.”⁴⁹

In an attempt to understand in what way living on Algerian soil did or did not influence their perception of France, these interviewees made it extremely clear that from 1870 until 1962, regardless of geographical boundaries, for them Algeria *was* France: “Nous n'avions pas le sentiment de faire partie des colonies, d'appartenir à l'empire colonial français, nous étions la France.”⁵⁰

This absoluteness, that could potentially translate into a disregard and ignorance, could also be explained by France's implantation of facilities and organizations that brought about the distinct separation between the French citizens and indigenous Algerians, sustained by little to no interaction, rendering one invisible, or rather non-existent to the other (as often happens in an

⁴⁸ Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018.

⁴⁹ Denis Guénoun, personal interview, January 19, 2018.

⁵⁰ Stora, *Les clés retrouvées*, 62.

“imagined community”); Mohammed Dib provides his account of his relationship as an indigenous Algerian with French Algerians: “Ma mémoire de cette époque reste vierge de tout souvenir d’étrangers ... mes yeux n’étaient nullement faits pour les voir. Ils n’existaient pas,”⁵¹ Atlan and Guénoun, who feel more French than Jewish or Algerian, provide us with that of the ‘Europeans’:

“Pour moi quand j’étais enfant les Arabes ça faisait partie du paysage. C’était comme des animaux, comme des chèvres, la question se pose même pas, on avait aucun rapport avec eux, au lycée on n’avait que des étudiants français, on avait des écoles moins prestigieuses où on avait des Arabes, qui sont devenus le cadre de la révolution ... la plupart des cadres du FLN faisait des études supérieures.”⁵²

“J’avais pas d’amis arabe. Pas du tout. La rupture était terrible entre nous. Je crois que le personnage arabe que j’ai connu le mieux c’était la femme qui venait faire le ménage chez nous.”⁵³

Extremely dedicated to an adoptive France that had given them their language, culture, identity, and horizons, both interviewees foreshadow the crucial role of nationality to which we will return later. Both believe that nationality dictates one’s identity and homeland, crediting their French passport for the often complex and conflicted definitions this thesis seeks to analyze.

One should nevertheless keep in mind the possibility that this seemingly nationalistic approach, so clearly assumed by several *Juifs d’Algérie*, was not necessarily one of blind faith. Having been both indigenous and French, the *Juifs d’Algérie* were painfully aware of the superiority the French collective identity held over the Algerian. They relied on the two collective identities to propotionalize and use French sovereignty to alleviate the Algerian identity’s collective marginalization. Accordingly, Henri Aboulker, like many other *Juifs d’Algérie*, thought of the reestablishment of the French nationality (after its abrogation by the

⁵¹ Mohammed Dib, *Une enfance algérienne*, textes recueillis par Leïla Sebbar, (Paris: Gallimard 1997), 109.

⁵² Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018.

⁵³ Denis Guénoun, personal interview, January 19, 2018.

Vichy Regime) as an unconditional prerequisite that would force one to side with one or the other pole of one's dual identity. He believed the Jewish Algerian community would be most competent in helping its Muslim cohabitants when belonging to the French nationality rather than by associating with the indigenous Algerian identity. Even after witnessing an anti-semitic France, the French nationality was seen by some as more resourceful than the never officially established *Judéo-Musulman* consortium of almost friends and never quite accomplices.

The *Judéo-Musulman* relations that did 'officially' develop date back to 1936 and were established by Arabic speaking Jewish Algerian notables born between 1870 and 1910. Members of *Judéo-Musulman* projects and movements, such as *l'Association des Oulémas*, *la Fédération des Élus*, and the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* (PPA), blatantly attacked the idea of colonialism and strove for equality between the two communities. Prominent members of the Jewish Algerian community such as Henri Aboulker, Elie Gozlan, Marcel Loufrani, Andre Narboni, and Marcel Belaiche demanded that the two communities would get equal salary, have the same nationality, and insisted on the abolition of a judiciary system designed for the indigenous. Together, inspired by the French ideals on Algerian soil, they defended a *fraternité Judéo-Musulmane* and used the very *décret* that had forever changed their standing in Algeria to prove that it was possible, and profitable, to assimilate the remaining indigenous into the French nationality. These Jewish Algerian individuals, assumed the pre-1870 role of their metropolitan French coreligionists and took the responsibility for the assimilation of their cohabitants' (rather than coreligionists), while the indigenous Algerians reminded the first of what the *Juifs d'Algérie* were before the French intervention in Algeria. Balanced between Gozlan's fourth and second

categories, the *Judéo-Musulman* relations allude to the uncanny repetition of alliances, battles, and categorizations particular to French Algeria throughout its long history.

To unite an evolving fraternity against another that had been embedded for 70 years, Muslim Algerian notables, such as the lawyer Ahmed Boumendjel, addressed the persisting absence of the *Juifs d'Algérie*'s French nationality on behalf of the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* (PPA): "les musulmans ... ont pu simplement se rendre compte qu'une citoyenneté qu'on retirait après 70 ans d'existence était 'discutable' par la faute de ceux-là même qui l'avaient octroyée."⁵⁴ The alliance with the *Juifs d'Algérie*, respected by the French for their military service and their strong Jewish electorate, became a source of subversion for Algeria's colonized society. When the *Manifeste du Peuple Algérien* was published in February of 1943, a nationalistic Algeria transformed into an anti-colonialist nation that demanded *auto-détermination*. Supported by many "assimilationists" born during the *entre deux guerres* time period, collective negotiations for an independent Algeria could last up to seven hours and often called for the reciprocation of each other's privileges (whether they be economic, social, or national).

Yet despite this evolving symbiosis, the *Juifs d'Algérie*'s 'by birth' held and expressed a certain grudge among several Muslim Algerians, driven by a remaining sense of inferiority. Another member of the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* and author of the Algerian national anthem, Moufdi Zakaria, reminded the Muslim Algerians of the "countless Jewish betrayals" carried out both in Algeria and in the rest of the world. To prove that their collective identity was as Algerian as it was Jewish, Marcel Loufrani and Gozlan declared themselves *Indigènes Algériens* and affirmed that "nous n'accepterons jamais quoi que ce soit sans que le musulman n'y soit

⁵⁴ Luciani, "Les juifs d'Algérie," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 137 (mai 2015).

associé.”⁵⁵ Emmanuel Sivan, a professor of Islamic History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, asserts that the Europeans and Jews who adhered to the *Parti Communiste Algérienne*, PCA (the most prominent anti-colonialist movement in Algeria following its dissociation with the French Communist Party in 1936) did so for the sake of anti-fascism, rather than for the Muslim Algerians, and were still “plein de préjugés en ce qui [concerne] les musulmans et méfiants devant le danger du ‘nationalisme indigène.’”⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the PCA was joined by 12,000 individuals, of whom half were non-Muslim *patriotes algériens* who envisioned an Algeria composed of *Algériens musulmans*, *Algériens d’origine européenne*, and French (if they so wished) who for the first time in Algeria’s history would be legally considered as *étrangers* and, more pertinently, as independent from colonizers.

Given their unfamiliarity with what an Algerian nationalist government might be capable of, the participation of the *Juifs d’Algérie*’s in the party, especially that of the younger generation, needs some explanation. Sivan credits this engagement to this group’s visceral reaction to the racisms practiced in World War II. In other words, they joined the anti-colonial struggle due to an individual motivation rather than an overarching idealistic cause they adopted, reacting against the racists and fascists, rather than against racism or fascism, as prejudicial and ideological worldviews in the abstract.

Although they were often addressed in communist propaganda as *Algériens d’origine Israélite* or *Juive*, the PCA did not specifically allow the *Juifs d’Algérie* a place in any public discourse concerning an Independent Algerian Nation until 1954, when they had no choice but to absolutely side with one of their collective identities. When the *Guerre d’Algérie* began,

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

propaganda carried out by both the the FLN, and by anti-colonialist, liberal, or communist Jews, called for the *Juifs d'Algérie*'s final collective association in the conflict. The FLN's propaganda deemed the *Décret Crémieux* an operation of division and denationalisation, and like Boumendjel, reminded Algerian Jews of how the laws inaugurated by Vichy's France and European anti-semitism demonstrated that the "citoyenneté française est artificielle."

The *appel du FLN aux Juifs d'Algérie*, initiated by Jewish militants driven by the motto: "La France peut vite reprendre d'une main ce qu'elle donne de l'autre,"⁵⁷ pressed the Jewish Algerian collective to proclaim its decision on the Algerian nationality. The 'call' was concluded with the idea of homeland: "C'est parce que le FLN considère les israélites algériens comme les fils de notre patrie qu'il espère que les dirigeants de la communauté juive auront la sagesse de contribuer à l'édification d'une Algérie libre et véritablement fraternelle."⁵⁸ Still on the topic of homeland, the response however, of several *Juifs d'Algérie* was: "vous nous demandez de trahir une patrie dont nous sommes citoyens, la France, pour une patrie qui n'existe pas encore,"⁵⁹ emphasizing that Algeria, as its own independent governing body, did not exist just yet. They began to fear that, as the *Organization Armée Secrète* (OAS) speculated, the independent Algerian nationality would, ironically, be like the French citizenship dictated by the Crémieux Decree, that is, imposed rather than offered and merited. Fearful of an independent Algeria as a whole, the CJAES used the case of Morocco as a cautionary tale, reminding that "souvent, lorsqu'un État arabe accède à l'indépendance... les Juifs de ce pays en subissent les

⁵⁷ Stora, *Les clés retrouvées*, 76.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

conséquences.”⁶⁰ This apocalyptic vision of an independent Algeria played a major role in the massive departures of the *Juifs d’Algérie* from Algeria to notably France.

Further fueling such fears and subsequent mindset, the *Organisation Armée Secrète* or OAS, the French political and military clandestine organization created on February 11th, 1961, made it its mission to resolutely reject an independent Algeria to preserve French Algeria, regardless the consequences and even if this entailed extreme violence. Such violence was deliberately directed at both nationalist Algerians, Communist *Pieds Noirs*, *Juifs d’Algérie* and anyone who stood in the way for a French Algeria. Along the FLN, the OAS terrorized both Algeria and France to a substantial extent. From March 16th, it marked Algeria’s buildings with slogans such as these: “l’Algérie est française et le restera,” “OAS vaincra,” “l’OAS frappe où elle veut et quand elle veut.”⁶¹

By the same token, starting in January of 1962, the FLN targeted Jewish neighborhoods such as Mostaganem, in northwest Algeria. For instance, an attack against the Jews of Nédromah resulted in the death of seven *Juifs d’Algérie*, three of whom were children. In March, the great Rabbi of Médéa was killed in front of his synagogue. In May, an attack in La Chronique d’Alger, a casino where many European and Jewish youngsters convened, killed several dozens. While both individual *Juifs Pieds Noirs* and other collectives in Algiers and Oran fully engaged with the OAS. These groups supported what came to be known as the *France Résurrection*, managed by Elie Azoulai and Ben Attar. To secure this resurrection they resorted to extreme measures, assassinated elected Muslims, and attempted to set a prison, where several members of the FLN were detained, on fire.

⁶⁰ Luciani, “Les juifs d’Algérie” *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 137 (mai 2015).

⁶¹ “Organisation De l’ Armée Secrète (OAS).” *La Guerre D’Algérie*, 26 Jan. 2015, accessed April 29, 2018, laguerredalgerie.canalblog.com/archives/2015/01/26/31406267.html.

Recognizing the need for mediating positions in a conflict of extremes, the *Comité des Juifs Libéraux* (CJL) established itself in Algiers in 1956 and gathered a few dozen *Juifs d'Algérie* of nuanced opinions united by the common goal of attaining a double citizenship in a potentially independent Algeria that would guarantee their secured presence in their place of birth, regardless of its political fate. The double nationality should have provided the different generations of the *Juifs d'Algérie* with a sense of confidence. These efforts reached out to the younger generations, who identified as French, and to the elderly arabophones, who lived amongst the Algerian Muslims and gave their “adhésion au principe de la personnalité algérienne.” The latter, envisioned to “composer avec les musulmans dans un état indépendant... dans la limite où les juifs conserveront une vie de citoyen libre.”⁶²

Although the double citizenship would have saved them the various displacements and consequently might have preserved their identity as a proper function of the homeland, it also became clear that their eventual displacement was almost inevitable. When the time came, the *Juifs d'Algérie* who embarked on their itineraries to either France or Israel were left solely with the French collective identity, while they were forced to mourn the from here on forbidden Algerian land of origin. And so it was that despite the attempts at dialogues offered by both the FLN and the Muslim community, for a majority of the *Juifs d'Algérie* the fear of a potentially independent Algeria overruled the fear from an unpredictable *Patrie*.

In March of 1960, President Charles de Gaulle (inaugurated on January 8th, 1959) embarked on what came to be known by the media as *la tournée des popotes*, which roughly translates as the round of mess that was about to be served. During this *tournée*, de Gaulle visited

⁶² Ibid.

fifteen posts of the French Army in Constantine, Algiers, and Oran, to receive detailed accounts of their operations. Searching for a possible alternative to the situation, he inquired with fellow officers stationed in these bases and arrived at the conclusion that there were three possible actions the Algerians could take to achieve a solution:

- Secession, whose consequences would be “*une misère épouvantable, un affreux chaos politique, un égorgement généralisé et bientôt la dictature belliqueuse des communautés;*”
- Complete Francisation “*de Dunkerque à Tamanrasset;*”
- The drafting of a constitution that would be unique to an Algeria governed by Algerians, but nonetheless “*en union étroite avec la France.*”⁶³

Taking all three into consideration yet openly advocating for the first, de Gaulle sought to prove that French rule would protect Algerians from the conflict’s accumulating perils. As certain young *Juifs d’Algérie*, specifically in Oran, sided with the OAS and others with the FLN, the conflict’s final stages with its mounting violence proved that the process of assimilation into the French culture succeeded in making the *Juifs d’Algérie* an inseparable part of an unforgettable, even if terrorizing, French Algeria. Despite the conflicting demands for their clear social and political stances, the only constant, as so often, remained to be found in their shared Judaism.

In the course of the twenty years that followed Algeria’s independence, out of the 25,000 *Juifs d’Algérie* who were initially determined to stay in their homeland, only 200 were left. By 2005, no Jews were to be found on Algerian soil. While some would choose to immigrate to Canada or the United States, the majority, notably Gozlan’s first and second categories of the War’s *Juifs d’Algérie*, left for France. And while the majority among the Jewish Algerians was

⁶³ “Allocution Du Général De Gaulle Du 16 Septembre 1959 En Faveur De L'autodétermination - Ina.fr.” *INA - Jalons*, 8 Nov. 2016, accessed April 28, 2018, fresques.ina.fr/jalons/fiche-media/InaEdu00088/allocution-du-general-de-gaulle-du-16-septembre-1959-en-faveur-de-l-autodetermination.html.

thus displaced to France, members of the third category started immigrating to Israel for both religious and political reasons, beginning in the early stages of the war and then, increasingly, after the Six Days War in 1967. The fourth category included the minority that was originally determined to stay in their homeland and place of birth. Hence, by categorizing the *Juifs d'Algérie* of *la Guerre d'Algérie*, Gozlan unknowingly foreshadowed the different displacements they would face on between 1954 and 1962, and afterwards. Each displacement revealed the choices of which identity to assume as a function of the homeland, whether the latter be understood in terms of place of birth or as construct formed and fostered abroad.

Les Juifs d'Algérie after la Guerre

After the signing of the *Accords d'Évian* on the 18th of March, 1962, the streets of Algeria were filled with 'cadres' (designated containers made out of wood) for the families of the *rapatriés* to place their belongings and souvenirs in. Assigned the *Pieds Noirs's* status of *rapatriés*, the *Juifs d'Algérie* were from here on often confused with the former. Uprooted, 95% of them, some of them having never crossed the sea by a boat or the sky with a plane, headed towards France. Merging with all the different social and political categories of groups that were likewise exiled from the now independent Algeria, they were dropped off on the Mediterranean's European shore and took a step, for some the very first, on the *Patrie* that adopted them 92 years before and that had colonized their place of birth 132 years prior to its independence on July 5th, 1962.

After 1962, the urgency was to integrate into the metropolitan French society, rather than to remain in *l'Orient* that many of them left indefinitely. The departures of the *Juifs d'Algérie* from Algeria accelerated even further due to the murder of Raymond Leyris, prominently known as *Cheikh Raymond*. A renowned *maitre* of Arab-Andalusian music, Raymond was well known and liked by all groups and *armées* involved in the conflict, including both the FLN and the OAS (in the unique image below, retrieved from Jacques Leyris' home in Paris, we find him surrounded by (as indicated, in low definition) standing OAS and seated FLN members):



In the few weeks that followed *Chef's* assassination, various manifestations carried out by the FLN in Jewish Algerian neighborhoods brought about last minute departures of both Jewish and Christian communities. Raymond's son, Jacques Leyris, who, when asked of his identity, claimed to be "solely French rather than French Algerian," recounts in our interview the painful experience of having lost his father to this extreme violence and the departure that soon followed:

"Mon père a été assassiné le 22 juin, 1962 et moi j'ai pris l'avion le 15 août 1962, avec ma petite soeur, et avec ma tante, j'avais exactement quatorze ans et neuf mois. Ça a été une période difficile ... [alors un jeune orphelin..] j'avais perdu la chose qui m'a été le plus cher avec ma mère et mes soeurs ... Le deuil c'était quelque chose de très strict ... Et là [à Paris] j'ai passé des moments très durs."⁶⁴

Although the *Juifs d'Algérie* were met, upon their arrival at the port of Marseille, with signs that read Welcome in Hebrew (ברוכים הבאים), with the word Zion centered on the Star of David placed in between the two words, for many the separation from Algeria as a home was experienced as an unjustified traumatic rupture. The displacement exposed them to an unforeseen reality of abhorrence and isolation. Due to their sudden massive arrival, a housing crisis drove them to the periphery of Paris, notably Sarcelles, Épinay-sur-Seine, Créteil, Orly, Gennevilliers, and Orsay.⁶⁵ Stora tells that his displaced Jewish Algerian mother would come back from shopping shocked at the fact that there was (or rather was not) "pas une seule tête connue dans la rue."⁶⁶ Whether it was for financial reasons or residential restrictions, the gallicized *Juifs d'Algérie* were immediately reminded of what it was like to be othered in the presence of the Europeans. The souvenirs of the Jewish presence in Algeria were preserved

⁶⁴ Jacques Leyris, personal interview, January 20, 2018.

⁶⁵ Jean Laloum, "Les Bouleversements Communautaires Consécutifs à l'Arrivée des Juifs Nord-Africains en France dans les Années 1950" in *Juifs d'Algérie; Exposition du 28 septembre 2012 au 27 janvier 2013*, (Paris; Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme et Skira-Flammarion, 2012 - 2013), 239.

⁶⁶ Stora, *C'était hier en Algérie*, 178.

through the culture's preservation, through the chanting of melodies like "*j'ai quitté mon pays, j'ai quitté ma maison*" or "*la France de mon enfance, perdue au soleil du côté d'Alger, c'est elle la France où je suis né.*" And these expressions of loss contribute to our understanding of how a lost way of life is perpetuated even when the possibility to return to it is gone. We will return to this insight in the conclusion of this investigation. Although some *Juifs d'Algérie* missed a world composed of open doors and familial and neighborly relations, a world of sounds, odors, savories and feelings, the majority of the exiled nonetheless insisted on fully integrating into French society and to firmly establishing themselves at the center of what, in many cases, the very construction of their *Patrie*.

While in Algeria, the French had europeanized the *Juifs d'Algérie*, in France the *Juifs d'Algérie*, as it were, reoriented the French metropolitan Jews toward other origins, resacralizing their way of life in turn. The suffered displacement inspired a growing solidarity between *Le Fonds Social Juif Unifié* (FSJU), *la Campagne des Chantiers du Consistoire* established in 1960, and the *Comité juif d'action sociale et de reconstruction* (COJASOR). Together, they founded communal institutions where the *Juifs d'Algérie* could find one another and connect with their, up until that moment, distant French metropolitan coreligionists. In 1954 Belleville, 60% of the students who were being taught the Talmud and Torah were of North African origin.⁶⁷ Starting in 1961, the art of kosher wine, previously imported from Morocco and Tunisia, was implanted and taught in France, and *boucheries* began catering to an increasingly kosher population. Due to the lack of competent French *shohatim* (butchers in Hebrew) and the increased consumption of kosher products, the *Juifs d'Algérie*'s successfully entered the metropolitan workforce. When the

⁶⁷ Laloum, "Les Bouleversements Communautaires Consécutifs," 240.

holiday season came about and an increased sacralized French Judaism called for more religious space, the *Association consistoriale israélite de Paris* (ACIP) dedicated a synagogue on rue des Tournelles to Jews of North African origin. Satisfied to have established themselves in a homeland the majority only knew as French Algeria, the 110,000 *Juifs d'Algérie* displaced to France thoroughly transformed the French Jewish community and social space, thus strengthening the indispensable connection of Judaism to a homeland regardless of place of birth.

The outcome of the cultural and political assimilation of the *Juifs d'Algérie* in French Algeria only came to light when there were displaced to the *Patrie*. French citizens for more than four generations, the *Juifs d'Algérie* ascended in social status and could not imagine falling into the status of *dhimmis* once again, and seemed to prefer to be “othered” as part of a community seen as free and egalitarian rather than being simply tolerated. This social dimension, perhaps, explains why the displacements to France outnumbered those to Israel.

The concept of “othering” is thoroughly explored by two Algerian born French intellectuals of Jewish descent, Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida. These influential writers and thinkers shared not only a convergence of intellectual curiosity and scholarly projects, inspired by French feminism and so-called deconstructionism, respectively, but also a degree of communal experience. Both were born in pre-Second World War Algeria and remained in Paris after the 1962 expulsion. They made intertextual sense of their shared identification to a monolingual identity, a characteristic that inspired Derrida’s 1996 autobiographical text *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*, and Cixous’s literary invocation of the Algerian-born French “Stranjew Body.” The experiences of having been born into a colonial hierarchy of ethnicities and religions are the sediment that inspires their historical understanding of and public empathy

for the fate of Algerians conditioned by a colonial system's categories. Belonging to combinations of Gozlan's first and second categories, Cixous and Derrida in their respective writings arrived at interesting conclusions about the ideals of French Republican universalism, colonialism, faith, and the othered identity complex.

Born to a German Jewish mother and a *Bèrbere* father, Cixous is painfully aware that it is through the experience of anti-semitism that she was able to give form to her Algerianness. Having experienced both an institutional expulsion from French public school under Vichy law, and a social one when referred to as *sale juive* (dirty Jew) outside of school, her identity, displacement, and homelands have left an indelible trace on her vision of the world. The latter is characterized by a position too nuanced for the politics of the post-colonial and is sustained by a progressive disconnect from both the Marxist left and Zionist liberalism. The ambiguity of Cixous's thinking springs from the unique structural historical and cultural tensions of Algerian Jewish existence defined by its pull and push toward and against 'Arab' indigenosity.⁶⁸

Although 1962 marked the end of her immediate contact with Algerian nationalism, Cixous reflects on her displacement as she compares the homeland's metropolitan capital to the 'Islamic world' she was born into: "tout le solide, le brillant, le sanglant, l'éclatant, le respirant, le charnel était à Alger, à Paris je flottais dans l'état gazeux, je trainais dans la poussière, je ne respirais pas."⁶⁹ Due to the ambiguity of Cixous's nascent political consciousness, she was stuck between the legal system that claimed her and the language which defined her, on the one hand, and her sense of belonging to Algeria, on the other: "I was behind the bars of a demented destiny, parked with the French who dis-resemble me, my adversaries, their hands reaching for

⁶⁸ Judith Butler "Preface" in Denis Guénoun, *Semite: a Memoir of Algeria* (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 2015), x.

⁶⁹ Hélène Cixous and Pierre Alechinsky, *Si Près* (Paris: Galilée, 2007), 12.

mine and, on the other side, invisible hands reaching for my own tribe who had not eyes for me. For them assuredly I was what I was not: a French girl.”⁷⁰ Being imprisoned outside the future Algerian national community to which Cixous ached to belong, her outstretched hand could not be received.

Although Cixous often describes her struggle of not finding her place in Algeria, she perceives terms such as *judaitiés* or *Algérieance* not as operating in separate spheres but rather as functioning together to form a reconstructed whole. She formulated *The Algerian-Thing*, made up of many hitherto suppressed memories of an Algeria resurfaced contemporaneously due to a period of intense Algerian civil unrest in the 1990s, during which opposition to the regime and Islamist violence and brutality by members of the Algerian civil society reverberated throughout France. Her article, *Mon Algérieance*, published in 1997, engaged more directly than usual with her fears about the reification of identity and her consternation at the ongoing process of French community-making. In Cixous’s words “I fear the way in which people through anxiety and inspired by unhappiness take on, belong, attach themselves,” which “includes writers who plot their land, become lord or a manor, search for houses, patrons and identity.”⁷¹ In 1998, she wrote from the point of view of an Algerian, discussing feelings of ‘not being French’ and showed a degree of unity between the historical positioning of Algerians and their progenies in France. Cixous’s politics of the self are thus distinct from the overwhelming majority that often gives credence to the innate fundamentals of Jewish (Algerian or French) identity, origin, faith, politics or community. For Cixous, Algeria is not an adherence to tribalism, but an association, both in its religious and indigenous forms. Due to their identification with Jewish French Algerians in

⁷⁰ Hélène Cixous and Eric Prenowitz, "Letter to Zohra Drif," The Johns Hopkins University Press, (winter 2003), 87.

⁷¹ Hélène Cixous, *Mon Algérieance*, (1997b) 70–74.

their displacement from a home composed of rituals and sentiments, and their association with a homeland of ideals and culture, both Cixous and Derrida separate themselves as individuals from the political mainstream and its approach to France's or Algeria's national identity and sense of belonging.

A Sephardic Jew whose ancestors have lived in Algeria long before the French colonial expansion in 1830, Jacques Derrida's ethnic and sociohistorical background makes his self-presentation as a French Algerian 'liberal' understandable: "To be liberal was to hold the French government up to the standards of its republican tradition... the tension between belonging to France and the critique of French colonialism was constitutive of the liberal political stance."⁷² The liberals were united by their resistance to a colonial system that placed severe restrictions on the individual rights of French colonial subjects. Neither a colonial subject nor a fervent anti-colonial campaigner, Derrida defined himself as a respectful liberal adherent of Algerian politics, despite his avowedly identification with the French.

Derrida's history explains why, on reading the book *Les Français d'Algérie* by Pierre Nora, a friend from his days at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, he felt a close affinity with those accused in Nora's 'political intervention' rather than purely 'academic study.' In Nora's estimation, the liberals were incapable of supporting Algerian independence because they believed Algeria owed everything to France, especially liberalism. By contrast, Nora refused to see French Algerian liberalism as properly French and rather regarded its Algerian born citizens as complicit in the upholding of colonial authority. In Nora's eyes, the *Français d'Algérie's* prolonged stay in Algeria eroded their European characteristics, making their claims to

⁷² Edward Baring, *Liberalism and the Algerian War: the Case of Jacques Derrida*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 250.

Frenchness ring hollow. Thus, he dedicated the first chapter of his book to this refutation of an identity. In so doing, he mocked the very accent Derrida was evidently embarrassed by, by imitating it through sentences such as these “je suis francé, moi, Monsieur, je suis aussi francé que vous!”⁷³ Nora’s generalizations and refusal to differentiate among the *Français d’Algérie* must have felt to Derrida like a personal attack.

Driven by a concerted and meticulous effort to distinguish the French Algerian liberals from the die-hard supporters of colonialism, Derrida addressed Nora in a private letter composed on April 27th, 1961.⁷⁴ Outlining a position that was as distrustful of the French army as it was of the Algerian nationalist forces, the letter suggested that these dichotomies were neither rigid nor in simple opposition to each other. That is, even though French Algerian liberals worried that independence would cause their miserable mass exodus, they were pessimistic about the future of a government directed by the FLN that would not allow a plurality of political and religious beliefs. In defending the French Algerian liberals, Derrida de facto defended himself, concluding on a pacifist note, speaking of their mutual “désaccord ... qui n’est jamais pour nous qu’une façon d’être d’accord ensemble. Ou de ne pas être d’accord avec soi. Et comment penser sérieusement à l’Algérie - ou à autre chose - sans en venir là?”⁷⁵ In other words, Derrida accentuates that in order to accurately criticize the French Algerians, one must have been identified with French Algeria’s homeland.

Torn between a colonial power towards which he felt grave misgivings and a French republican tradition to which he expressed a strong allegiance, Derrida was confronted with

⁷³ Ibid., 250.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 240.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 261.

questions as to the univocity of identity and the structural limitations of critique, both of them themes that would preoccupy him in his more theoretical writings:

“La folie comme exclusion de l’autre hors de l’opération de rationalisation, la structuration en intérieur-extérieur, le même et l’autre, la relation éthique à l’Autre, l’altérité, la différence, les différences identitaires, l’identité qui se distingue d’elle-même, la translation, le déplacement, l’emprise déstabilisante sur le marginal, le subalterne subversif, la dépendance constitutive du centre à l’égard du marginal ou de l’exclu, la dissémination, la diaspora conçue sans le point final du retour et enfin, avant tout, l’histoire comme violence, comme violence ontologique, éthique et conceptuelle.”⁷⁶

Derrida first developed his deconstructive ideas from the tortured political stance of a Jewish French Algerian liberal, indeed, his practice of textual deconstruction became itself a procedure of intellectual and cultural decolonisation, revealing and mobilizing the foundations of the text to be those of contradicting polarity. Neither dedicated to the French sovereignty, nor to the cause of Algerian nationalism per se, Derrida, among the majority of the *Juifs d’Algérie*, remained silent on the question of Algeria for most of his life. The silence, was not due to his lack of interest, but rather a response to the complexities of the situation that brought him to hold passionate and nuanced political beliefs. Refusing to fall into binary oppositions, for or against, Derrida has always been hard to place on a political spectrum. Although he refused both political positions and the entire system of political logic, he was, however, not apolitical. In the first draft of his seminal text defining deconstruction, the possibility of a ‘revolution’ from within or ‘in the language of a department of internal affairs’ ‘disturbance’ was framed in terms directly and indirectly related to the idioms surrounding the Algerian war.

As had been the case with Cixous, it was only in the 1990s that Derrida’s opinion on Algeria was explicit enough to share with the public. Instead of defining himself as a French

⁷⁶ Robert J.C. Young, “Subjectivité et Histoire: Derrida en Algérie,” *Cairn. Info* (2009), accessed March 3rd, 2018 doi:10.3917/litt.154.0135.

Algerian, “a black and very Arab Jew,”⁷⁷ he described himself as Franco-Maghrebian, meaning “a French citizen who by birth was North African, and an Algerian in France.”⁷⁸ The term aptly alluded to the relationship between place of birth and homeland. By drawing on the ambiguities of his Sephardic Jewish heritage, Derrida argued that he was “une sorte d’enfant de la marge de l’Europe, un enfant de la Méditerranée, qui n’était ni simplement français ni simplement africain,”⁷⁹ thus implicitly separating himself from the colonists, some of whom he had vociferously defended forty years earlier.

With traces of older theoretical stances, in *Le monolinguisme de l’autre*, Derrida used his identification as a Franco-Maghrebian to explain his relationship to the French language. He was born in a French context and knew no other language apart from French, which was what he called an ‘absolute habitat,’ defining his very relationship to the world. With French as the language of the colonizer, disciplined by its usage in Paris and not fully mastered by the Sephardic Jew, he accentuated that his own idiom exemplified a more common relationship to language as a whole: “Language is for all of us, the ground of our autonomy, the material of our thought and our analyses, but it is one that we can never fully control.”⁸⁰ Having only one language to associate with his three collective identities, he defined the way he was deprived from the rest throughout his life as an Algerian born French Jew:

“La communauté à laquelle j’appartenais aura été trois fois dissociée: elle fut coupée, d’abord, et de la langue et de la culture arabe et berbère, plus proprement maghrébines, elle fut coupée aussi et de la langue et de la culture française, voire européennes, qui étaient pour elle un pôle éloigné, hétérogène à son histoire: elle fut coupée enfin, ou pour

⁷⁷ Baring, *Liberalism and the Algerian War*, (The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 259.

⁷⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l’autre*, (Stanford, Calif., 1998), 29–30.

⁷⁹ Jacques Derrida, Mustapha Chérif, *Islam and the West: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 56.

⁸⁰ Baring, *Liberalism and the Algerian War*, 259.

commencer, de la mémoire juive et de cette histoire et de cette langue qu'on doit supposer être les siennes, mais qui a un moment donné ne le furent plus."⁸¹

Derrida further emphasized that for the French Algerian liberals, Frenchness was not only the 'law' guiding their actions and criticisms of the French administration in Algeria, but also that which characterized their more intimate relationship to a colonizing power. He suggested that "though supporters of colonialism felt that they could force a language, culture, and institutions on others, their error was to think that it was theirs to impose"⁸² or, rather, to take away.

Derrida's experience as a Jewish French Algerian also led him to view religion as an imposition. To voice his influential Jewish identity, he contradicted Benjamin Stora's point on the influence of the Vichy Regime: "le régime de Vichy et l'abrogation du décret Crémieux ont poussé les juifs d'Algérie à considérer l'assimilation promise par ce fameux décret comme leur bien le plus précieux."⁸³ Contrarily, for Derrida, the Vichy regime created a desire for integration in the non-Jewish community and secularisation as a whole. He believed that "the secular today must be more rigorous with itself, more tolerant of religious culture and toward the possibility of religion being practised freely, unequivocally, and without confusion"⁸⁴ as it did in pre-colonial Algeria. He expanded such realizations in the context of any conflict fought in the name of religion:

"Cette foi est la condition du lien social lui-même. Il n'y a pas de lien social sans une foi ... cette foi partagée, cette foi sans laquelle il n'y a pas de lien social, on peut et on doit respecter les appartenances religieuses proprement dites... et je suis persuadé que les croyants authentiques ... qui ne sont pas seulement des dogmatiques de ces religions, sont plus prêts à comprendre la religion de l'autre et à accéder à cette fois ... je suis persuadé que les croyants authentiques, ceux qui ne sont pas ce que l'on appelle des

⁸¹ Derrida, "L'anti-Macías," *Le Matin d'Algérie*, (21 Nov 2007), accessed April 29th, 2018, <http://www.lematindz.net/news/373-lanti-macias-moi-lalgerien-de-jacques-derrida.html>.

⁸² Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, (Stanford University Press, 1998), 39-40.

⁸³ Benjamin Stora, *Les trois exils: Juifs d'Algérie*, (Stock Paris, 2006), 106.

⁸⁴ Derrida, Mustapha Chérif, *Islam and the West*, 51.

fondamentalistes, intégristes, dogmatiques, prêts à transformer leur croyance en arme de guerre sont plus prêts à comprendre la religion de l'autre et la foi universelle.”⁸⁵

There was a need, then, to differentiate between faith in religion and a universal faith in humanity and its members.

The identifications as Jewish or Other stem from the interpellation of a racialising system and the dichotomous emotion of fear, necessary to produce racial animosities to this very day. Therefore, both Cixous and Derrida consistently oppose the reduction of Jewish ‘religious’ to Algerian ‘national’ identities that, for them, did not translate the diverse facets of far more complex and evolving identifications to multiple North African and other localities and heritages. They disapproved of the systemized sense of belonging that works through religious affiliation and that makes the Jewish identification a racial interpellation mechanism. Their theoretical interventions have undone the ideological heritage of French colonialism and help us to rethink the premises, hypotheses, and protocols of its imperial orientation dominated and preserved by the metropole’s culture. Their establishment of deconstruction bore fruit to the Franco Maghrebin identity, dissociating yet also including all that they have been identified as throughout their lives as French born Algerian Jews. They understood that it was only by deploying their French identity against itself that they could live up to its ideals, contradicted by Algeria’s colonization and the war for independence. Through their vast literary and scholarly production, they both rejected and valued their natural association with the French colonizers and their language. They described how they had been Othered and excluded by the different titles

⁸⁵ “L’anti-Macias” *Le Matin d’Algérie* (21 Nov 2007), accessed April 25, 2018.

assigned to them in the vain efforts to strengthen either the French, Algerian, or Jewish among their identities in relation to a homeland both lost and found.

Études de Cas des Entretiens; Interviews

The six interviews conducted for this research and the analyses of Derrida's and Cixous's autobiographically inspired insights, have led me to expand on Gozlan's initial four relatively constricted categories of *Juifs d'Algérie during* the War by including the following include four categories of *Juifs d'Algérie after* the war, following the declaration of Algeria's independence on July 5th, 1962:

1. Those who left for France, and were content to rejoin a *Patrie* greater than a *département français*;
2. Those who were displaced to France and found themselves in an identity conflict, having lost a home in which they were deemed colonizers and needing to construct another in which they were Othered;
3. Those who either immediately immigrated to Israel, or made a stop in France before reaching the so-called national home of the Jewish people;
4. Those who stayed in Algeria and adhered to the Algerian identity and homeland, insisting that despite the conflicting definitions, they were first and foremost Algerian.

As indicated above , the applicability of these and other categories depend on their relevance at certain times and for certain time frames, that is, on the year of the displacement in question, the individual's age, social status, location, and so on and so forth. Each category, however, contributes to a better definition and understanding of identity as a function of a homeland one is either naturally born into or that is constructed outside the proper birthplace.

The return of the *Juifs d'Algérie's* to their past is best portrayed by the belated itinerary of some to the "Holy" Land of Israel. Even though Zionism had succeeded to establish its long before the end of the Algerian War and its aftermath, its historical movement and founding of a

State proved less influential than the process of Europeanization that led France to be a preferred location for the construction of a homeland for the Jewish communities we have analyzed. However, sometime after the displacement to France, especially after the shock provoked by the Six Days War, the interest in the Hebrew State showed itself in a modest, yet consistent flow of Jewish Algerian immigrants. The latter did not only succumb to a nostalgia sustained by aesthetics sensibilities, but also strangely perpetuated an ‘Oriental’ culture that been ripped from its origins in 1962.

The Six Days War, carried out from June 5th 1967 until June 11th, changed the map of the Middle East. The war’s outcome was considered a miracle by Israel’s supporters, and was seen as an unbelievable defeat in the Arab world. The tensions that brought about the war could be traced back to Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein’s, the second president of Egypt, nationalization of the Suez Canal, which resulted in France, Britain, and the State of Israel (the belated incarnation of the independent Jewish Nation Napoleon envisioned and that the British prepared and militarily trained) resuming their international diplomatic and military relations. Christian Pineau, the French Foreign Minister, representing both the outraged French and British owners of the International Canal Company, suggested that Israel start a war as the pretext for the intervention. Hence on 29th of October, 1956, Israeli forces crossed the border into Egypt. At a very short distance from the Canal, French and British forces ordered them to withdraw and arrived themselves in Port Said on November 5th, 1956. The consequent presence of the UN forces on the borders initiated a ten year period of unsigned peace, from 1957 until 1967.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ "The War in 1967," video file, posted by Al Jazeera English, June 2, 2017, accessed April 26, 2018, <http://aje.io/h9sr>.

By the end of those six days in June of 1967, Israel had doubled in size by conquering the Golan Heights from Syria, the Gaza Strip and Eastern Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. After this victory, Algeria's new Islamic governing body, sure of its Arab Muslim collective identity, proclaimed that any war with an Arab nation should be considered as its own. Since the early 1970s, Algeria's adherence to the *Nation Arabe* shaped its attitude towards Israel's existence, claiming, like many other Arab states, that peace with Israel would only be possible with the return of the territories captured in 1967. Nevertheless, for several *Juifs d'Algérie* the victory secured Israel as a viable option for diasporic Jews, Henri Atlan among them. He recalled how a substantial majority of California's Jewish residents rushed to the Israeli embassy to offer their medical, technical, and social services when the war started and concluded: "Pour moi, pour la première fois, j'avais une solidarité avec Israël."⁸⁷

This influence of the Jewish faith in relation to the concept, land, and state of Israel is further explored by Jacques Leyris and Yossef Charvit, who both allude to the French Algerian Jewish devotion and their appreciation for the State of Israel:

"Israël pour moi c'est un pays sacré, la première fois que j'étais en Eretz Israël c'était en 71, quand je suis descendu de l'avion, j'ai embrassé la terre. Parce que ça cest mon éducation c'est mon enfance, [et tant je lisais la Torah [...]] [le] paysage [d'Algérie] là j'ai vu en Israël."⁸⁸

"Ma patrie? J'ai bien du mal à la définir ... Je pense que ma patrie est, dans mon coeur, c'est Israël. Dans mon coeur. C'est Israël. On a une affinité, la même sentiment, même si on pense différemment sur certains problèmes, religieux, etc. Un juif vit pas hors de sa communauté, c'est impossible. Je pense que là est la vraie définition du juif ..."⁸⁹

"I had a very strong urge to live in the Eretz⁹⁰ from what I heard and learned at home. From that perspective the Jewish and Zionist identity is very profound. And together with that the French identity is a culture that I appreciate immensely, which also helps me

⁸⁷ Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018.

⁸⁸ Jacques Leyris, personal interview, January 20, 2018.

⁸⁹ Jacques Leyris, personal interview, January 20, 2018.

⁹⁰ Eretz: *country* in Hebrew; Israel is often referred to by Jews all around the world as 'the Country': 'ha Eretz'.

understand the hebraique identity. Because the Hebraique identity is very different from the jewish identity, the first is much more universal, while the other is reserved for exode.”⁹¹

The two confirm both the virtue of Judaism in the Algerian Jewish home, strengthened by Jewish institutions such as the *écoles Talmudiques*, and the relationship of the Jewish identity to the homeland. Similar to Denis Guénoun’s reflection that “L’Algérie ne m’a pas manqué du tout, parce que Algérie c’était la peur, c’était les bombes, c’était la maison détruite, c’était la menace,”

⁹² Leyris reflects on how Algeria had displaced his sense of homeland and identity, regardless of similarities between the Algerian and Israeli landscapes:

“Le problème est que l’Algérie est un pays fermé. L’Algérie particulièrement, contrairement à la Tunisie ou le Maroc qui étaient de protectorats, ou les juifs sont restés sur place, en Algérie aucun juif n’est resté sur place. L’Algérie aujourd’hui c’est à dire est un pays *Judenrein*. On va faire un pays *Judenrein*, sans aucun Juifs. Pourquoi les Juifs? Parce qu’ils étaient des autochtones qui étaient là bien avant des Arabes, les Arabes sont arrivés après le 7ème siècle puis après ils ont bougé, les Ottomans, succession, bon ... et comme la France a fait la guerre, elle n’était pas contre l’Algérie.”

For Raymond Leyris however, a *Judéo-Arab* French Algerian, Algeria was “son territoire, ça veut dire sa terre... son élément,” concluding that his identity was that of “un vrai Algérien.”⁹³

Once again the difference between generations of fathers and sons is prevalent in the interviews. Leyris, who claimed to be solely French rather than French Algerian, could be compared to his father’s composed Algerian identity. In response, Charvit reflects on his conception of Algeria as a homeland, and explains how the difference in generations has contributed to the dissonance of the perception of Algeria as a place of birth rather than a homeland:

“Algeria is not a homeland, it’s a very interesting diaspora, because of the proliferation of identities. There was a time when I was a little ashamed of this identity, it seemed to me so clumsy and confused. It’s not really jewish and not really french, it’s not really anything, something like that. And these days i know that it’s in fact, everything. Algeria

⁹¹ Yossef Charvit, personal interview, January 24, 2018.

⁹² Denis Guénoun, personal interview, January 19, 2018.

⁹³ Jacques Leyris, personal interview, January 20, 2018.

is the place of my birth, not my home. Especially since I left at such a young age and thus don't have these longings. When I was there I was happy to leave after three days. I felt this weight, and fear. I experienced my parents' nostalgia, and finally I met the city that was this fantasized charming world that my parents spoke of."⁹⁴

It should be noted that these two interviewees, Jacques Leiris and Yossef Charvit, constitute the oldest and the youngest interlocutors, substantially contributing to this investigation's concentration on time and timing. While Leiris, old enough to have experienced the beauty of French Algeria and the perceived horrors of an independent Algeria, is conflicted and nostalgic, Charvit, who left Algeria at a young age, seems to be more composed. He explains: "I believe because I was very young it was easier to ask questions and solve them in an harmonious and balanced way, blessed be God, and not in a radical one."⁹⁵ And yet, despite their departures at different times and ages and, hence, their differently constructed homelands, both refer to Derrida's approach to the Jewish French Algerian identity as ineffective. Leiris criticized his deprecation of Judaism's essence:

"Derrida, ça c'est la génération qui a fait un boom aux États-Unis. Il a commencé à m'énerver pour une chose, la première chose il a dit que ce qui l'a embêté le plus dans sa vie c'est quand il s'est fait renvoyé de l'école en Algérie parce qu'il était Juif. Et la deuxième chose, c'est là où il m'a vraiment énervé, quand son père l'oblige à apprendre un petit passage de la torah pour faire sa bar mitzvah, et comment il a pu oser écrire des conneries pareilles? Autrement, Derrida n'avait pas de problème à apprendre le grec mais l'hébreu si, il l'avait. Or l'hébreu c'est fondamental,"⁹⁶

Differentiating between his own and Derrida's recognition of the Jewish faith, Charvit also discusses the latter's choice to deconstruct without the essential subsequent reconstruction:

"I believe the Algerian Judaism is the most balanced. It has tradition and modern, East and West, holy and sand, there is a universal, individual, and national identity, and all are balanced. There's place for everything, you can be religious, but modern. You can have an appreciation of the European culture, and with that of Judaism as well [...]"

⁹⁴ Yossef Charvit, personal interview, January 24, 2018, translated from Hebrew to English by Britt Shacham.

⁹⁵ Ibid., translated from Hebrew to English by Britt Shacham.

⁹⁶ Jacques Leiris, personal interview, January 20, 2018.

Derrida got very confused. He said he had too many identities and thus got lost. So he researched deconstruction ... I, on the other hand, didn't only deal with deconstruction but also reconstruction of a full identity, the hebraique identity.”⁹⁷

The two educated, welcoming, and *chaleureux* interviewees that so kindly agreed to contribute to this research's purpose, inspire various conclusions on the *Juifs d'Algérie's* perception of identity, homeland, displacement, and the way these three interconnect. For both, the Jewish identity directed the French and Algerian, making Israel the constructed homeland distinct from their place of birth. While Leyris holds the experience of losing his father on Algerian soil as the ground for his displacement, Charvit, who ended up in the Jewish Nation shortly after his displacement from Algeria, reflected on the *mélange* of the three collective identities: “I am very happy to belong to this trilogy of Algeria, France, and Israel. It's a wonderful story in my opinion, wonderful journey if you take the right paths, which is deconstruction, and reconstruction. The conjoining of opposites. A great contribution to the Jewish Nation.”⁹⁸

The previously mentioned hope for a double nationality contributed to the initially lessened and then almost extinguished Jewish presence in Algeria. In July of 1962, a law was adopted that legalized the automatic maintenance of the French nationality for all former French residents of Algeria. The binationality allowed the *Juifs d'Algérie* to reexamine the possibility of staying in an independent Algeria without losing their option to leave, which was after all granted by their *Patrie*. Between 1963 and 1965, out of the 296 naturalized citizens thanks to the “participation à la lutte de libération” (among whom twenty-one were considered Jewish under the Vichy regime), only 94 non-Muslim *indigènes* were to be found in Algeria. One of these

⁹⁷ Yossef Charvit, personal interview, January 24, 2018, translated from Hebrew to English by Britt Shacham.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, translated from Hebrew to English by Britt Shacham.

individuals, Jean Pierre Lledo, breaks down his itinerary and at times forced choices as we reflect on his experiences over sweetened mint tea and nuts in his home in Jaffa (an originally Arab Israeli city). Consistent with the theme of fathers and sons, he depicts his father's and his 'communist' reasoning for staying in a considerably deformed independent Algeria:

“Dans la conception communiste de l'indépendance, c'était une Algérie multi-ethnique, les Musulmans, les Juifs, les Chrétiens ... Il est resté bien que la majorité de Juifs sont tous partis pour une raison simple, qu'après l'indépendance l'Algérie avait une constitution et un code de la nationalité, et dans ce code, on disait que seul les Musulmans avait la nationalité automatiquement ... Alors les communistes qui s'étaient battus par une Algérie indépendante, en prison, tortures, etc. se sont dit 'mais comment on nous a fait ça? [...]

Quelques uns comme mon père, même si c'était très rare, sont restés en Algérie, donc je suis resté ... pour qu'en 62, plus d'un million de personnes ont dû quitter l'Algérie, donc l'Algérie a changé son visage, d'un jour à l'autre, il manque 1 million de personnes dans les rues.”⁹⁹

Lledo recalls his temporary displacement to France and attributes it to two specific, interconnected reasons. To address the first, he tells of Algeria's first day of independence:

“Le 5 juillet 1962, le jour même de l'indépendance il y a eu un massacre terrible à Oran, ma ville quand j'étais petit ... Organisé par le FLN et par l'armée aussi parce qu'il y avait une lutte aussi entre l'armée et le FLN ... les arabes sont sortis dans les rues, ils attrapent le peuple, ils les égorgent les attrapent, et ils les jettent dans un lac qui se trouve dans la périphérie d'Oran. Il y a eu 67 personnes, presque tous intellectuels, qui ont été assassinés [...]

Il y avait des gens qui étaient restés comme ça à Oran, mais quand il y avait le massacre du 5 juillet, c'est un message, ça veut dire PARTEZ, vite!”¹⁰⁰

Having witnessed these atrocities, immediately following the independence, he justifies his timely departure by addressing the central question this investigation implicitly seeks to address and analyse regarding the relationship between identity relation and the homeland:

“J'ai décidé d'aller à Paris, et j'ai décidé d'y aller, pour une seule chose, pas tellement pour les études mais pour savoir si j'étais français ou pas, parce qu'en 62, mon père était pour l'indépendance et moi je l'étais aussi, même si j'étais petit, mais j'étais très politisé à l'époque, même à dix ans je pouvais expliquer qu'est ce que l'indépendance...

⁹⁹ Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

Le problème est que quand je suis arrivé en France .. Les six mois, il pleuvait toujours, il faisait gris, les gens n'étaient pas sympathiques, enfin, c'est comme ça que je l'ai ressenti, et moi je me suis dit bon non moi je suis pas français...Je me sentais algérien, et d'une part je voulais pas utiliser le passeport français, pour moi, c'était juste pour rentrer en Algérie.”¹⁰¹

Moreover, Lledo comes to the following conclusion about his French identity:

“La France, je l’ai jamais considéré comme ma *Patrie*, même quand j’ai eu le passeport Français, mais je considère pas la France comme ma *Patrie*, la France m’apporte beaucoup de choses, ma culture, ma langue, la possibilité de réfugié, 1993, je suis pas anti-français mais je me sens pas français.”¹⁰²

After the 1990s, Algeria’s Armed Islamic Group declared war on all non-Muslims, driving most of the remaining *Juifs d’Algérie* to emigration. Having returned to document his forbidden homeland, Lledo makes the following observations on its state driven by a brutal agenda:

“En 93 les Islamistes vont développer la lutte armée. Ils commencent à tuer directement. La première catégorie est les policiers, pour avoir les armes. Ensuite les intellectuels. Et pour les policiers c’était le lundi, pour les intellectuels c’était le mardi, tous les mardis, on tue un intellectuel.”¹⁰³

Despite his eventual return to Algeria and the fact that in 1968 one could still find about 7,000 *Juifs d’Algérie* in an *Algérie algérienne*, the marginalizing constitution that only nationalized Algerian Muslims and did not tolerate any exceptions withered the hope of staying.

As we sit on his terrace, the muezzin’s melodies set a melancholic tone for Lledo’s memories of a continuously violent independent Algeria, including his subsequent hypothesis for why:

“J’ai compris que le FLN avait un but terroriste de faire partir les gens non musulmans. Avant même l’indépendance parce que le FLN, comme dans tous les pays arabes, le nationalisme, ne sait pas gérer le problème multi ethnique. [...] Ils ont fait un congrès, très agressif. Comme les nazis, bien organisé, avec des gens qui s’habillent en militaire, c’est effrayant, impressionnant. Ils ont commencé à agresser les

¹⁰¹ Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

¹⁰² Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

¹⁰³ Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

gens, des femmes, des femmes célibataires, ils ont mis le feu dans les maisons de femmes seules en disant qu'elles étaient prostituées.”¹⁰⁴

The choice on which land to construct a home is the culmination point of Lledo’s reflections as the sun sets on the Mediterranean coast:

“Jusqu’à une certaine époque j’ai voulu être algérien, j’ai voulu que l’Algérie c’est mon pays. Mais c’était un acte personnel. Volontariste. Parce que j’étais né en Algérie je croyais que cela suffisait, pour dire que c’est ma *Patrie*. Je me suis rendu compte que j’ai pu vivre en Algérie autant de temps parce que je n’avais pas posé de questions, la question de 62, et la questions des Juifs. Or ces deux questions, c’est fondamental pour sa propre identité. [...]

À partir du moment que j’ai rencontré Israël, instinctivement, quelque chose que j’avais pas analysé, j’ai tout de suite compris que là, c’était ma *Patrie*. Voilà. Ma maison. Et d’ailleurs, quand je suis venu au début il y avait une amie que je connaissais pas, il y avait un amie qui venait me chercher à l’aéroport et il ma dit: Il faut revenir à la maison. [...]

Et c’est très fort. En plus, je me sentais pas français, mais j’étais plus algérien, alors évidemment, Israël c’est devenu comme un aimant¹⁰⁵ très très fort. À partir de là, il fallait prendre la décision de faire Alliyah de venir ‘à la maison.’”¹⁰⁶

The categorization of identities, the Vichy Regime, *la Guerre d’Algérie*, and an independent Algeria have inspired many questions, theories, and explanations on what one’s religion and nationality could entail. The various statuses the *Juifs d’Algérie* were given in pre- and post-1870 Algeria reveal the fundamental political and legal tensions within the Algerian society. They thus serve as a prime example of both successful and unsuccessful ‘assimilation’ took place between colonizers and colonized, superior and inferior, French and Algerian, secular and religious. Defined as this or that by individuals and collectives, during and after the war, the *Juifs d’Algérie* never constituted a homogenous historical actor whose collective destiny was clear in this context. They were rather a flexible social category whose political and legal

¹⁰⁴ Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Magnet.

¹⁰⁶ Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

transitions became the subject of both colonial and national contradictions present in France, Algeria, and from the outset also in Israel, which will need to be further analyzed so as to fully appreciate its historical fates and predicaments as well as its lasting significance.

Conclusion

A. Nostalgie

Since Algeria's colonization by the French in 1830, it has become the prime example of how the conception and perception of the homeland are historically conditioned and socially constructed. The generations that followed the initial diasporas that sought refuge in Algeria demonstrated how a homeland could de facto be construed or imagined around an identity, regardless of place of birth.

In his PhD dissertation *Homesick Epoch: Dying of Nostalgia in Post-Revolutionary France*, Thomas W. Dodman speaks of this direct correlation between the homeland and one's place of birth. He refers to the case of Jérôme Lassere, a military surgeon displaced from Lot-et-Garonne and stationed in lower Rhine as part of the First Battalion. He desired to be repositioned and claimed he'd be a more useful military surgeon if he were to serve in his *Patrie*. When the French armies of the Rhine and the Moselle struggled to contain Austrian and Prussian forces invading from the East in November 1793, the medical condition of nostalgia became the only way to return to the homeland rather than the suffered wounds of combat. The essential part of this story is that Lassere blamed his sickly symptoms on his permanence in Alsace, a "region very different to that in which [he] was born."¹⁰⁷ Justifying the relationship between spatial displacement and his body's physical deterioration, the condition of nostalgia was diagnosed as an obscure identity rather than a distinguished body. Lassere's ultimate fate has less to do with our research than his phenomenon of affliction when he felt displaced not just from any land but

¹⁰⁷ Thomas W. Dodman, "Homesick Epoch: Dying of Nostalgia in Post-Revolutionary France," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2011), UMI (3472835), 100.

from his place of birth more specifically. Dodman summarizes Lassere's case of nostalgia as "the repressed symptom of a displacement from 'home.'"¹⁰⁸

To address this same symptom that also manifested itself in Algeria, another French military surgeon, Jean-Pierre Bonnafont, proposed to create a network of *dépôts de convalescence* that would be set up near French Mediterranean ports, such as Marseille and the regions along the shores of Algeria. Based on the phenomenon diagnosed among the French soldiers stationed in Mount Boudjaréah, at the outskirts of Algiers, Bonnafont believed that redirecting convalescents would not only have a positive impact on their health but would also serve as the first step towards their 'acclimatization.' Organized by French military physicians and government authorities in Algeria, the network he thus set up aimed to cure "homesickness outbursts" by "removing the soldiers from the theatre of operations and exposing them to a more familiar French environment."¹⁰⁹ Considering France as the land for which they longed, and Algeria as the land in which they were treated and healed, an internalized complex was formed that captured the sense of where it was that one felt at ease, secure, and, most importantly, at home. Similarities between Algeria and France were further analyzed in order to create or simulate previously nonexistent ties such as the "exposed pure and fresh air, similar to the one they breathed au *pays natal* ...,"¹¹⁰ which served as the first connection between the two distinct lands separated by the Mediterranean. Dodman's research shows that the problem of nostalgic longing, and its remedies, form crucial ingredients of our study of the *Juifs d'Algérie* and, indeed, hold great relevance for any other displaced people forced to distinguish between place of birth and home.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 103.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 372.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 373.

The diagnosis of nostalgia is an attempt to grasp the emotional turmoil wrought by displacement and, in this sense, reflects more than merely the effects of so-called “processes of modernization.” Could the remedy for nostalgia indeed be nostalgia itself as it sustains the image of the homeland, as Dodman asserts? A disease prominent among the Swiss compatriots in the 1680s and referred to colloquially as *maladie du pays* in French, nostalgia has remained abundantly present in modern times. As migrations became means for diasporas, and displacements from homelands became natural phenomena, in June 1873 nostalgia was deemed benign. Ever since, the term nostalgia has been reserved for a wider variety of battles and fields. Indeed, it may well serve as the *Juifs d’Algérie*’s primary mental and cultural source of preserving their ancestry and place of birth in their constructed homelands.

After encountering and analyzing a diverse group of displaced *Juifs d’Algérie*, I believe it is safe to assume that another prime source of preserving an entity’s collective identity, especially when the return to its geographical borders is no longer possible, is the conservation of culture. Culture, referring to a historical and social feature of both peoples people and communities, is a “prime instrument through which groups mobilize themselves, construct their collective identity, and effect their solidarity by excluding those whom they identify as outsiders.”¹¹¹ Culture, family, customs, and traditions one is born into, adopts as normal, and passes on to the next generation, like the very idea of home and homeland, is usually associated with the place of birth. Atlan, who, for his part, rejects the term of homeland, concludes that culture must rather be seen as a function of nationality or, to put it in terms this investigation has used throughout: identity can be understood as a function of the homeland:

¹¹¹ Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, 52.

“A land is not a homeland. The *Juifs d’Algérie* didn’t come to Israel to find their homeland, their homeland is France. Especially in Judaism, a homeland is just something that doesn’t fit. You could say that the French Jews’ homeland is France, because their culture comes from there. The homeland of the Russian Jews is Russia, hence they speak Russian among themselves even though they live in Israel. [...] The majority of Jews, even today, live happily, comfortably, and in peace around the world by building their own communities within the diverse destinations.”¹¹²

This research thus questions the very idea that culture can be contained by national boundaries and alludes to a greater, supernatural solidifier that cannot be doubted and hence acts as an absolute unifying instance: religion. With its unique capacity to stabilize and buttress all aspirations, religion gives human preferences a divine right and transcendent status. This component of culture, as we can conclude from this research, can exacerbate a conflict, as esthetic and ethical preferences can transform discriminations into sacred duties. As a result of this tendency, a culture’s nation becomes “an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign... imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion,”¹¹³ separated into different ‘sects.’ One is thus not only born into different variations of faith, defined by familial ties, conducts, morals, monotheism, polytheism, esthetic, and ethical preferences, indeed, sustained by an imagined community, but is also educated to make meta-judgments about a host of things in the name of one’s culture, acting as an individual representative of a collected whole.

The secularizing character of the modern state and the potentially religious character of the nation result in an unresolved tension between two separate genealogies and divergent characters. When Europe exported the nation-state formation to the rest of the world via

¹¹² Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018.

¹¹³ Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso 2016), 37.

colonialism, the divergence between the state as an instrument designed to contain (or monopolize) violence, on the one hand, and the nation as one with the capacity to effectively mobilize and unleash identifications, on the other, imposed itself as a global model whose fundamental traits prevail to this day. There is ample historical and empirical evidence for how much of an influence religion can exert, both in terms of its unifying and divisive effects. The case Algeria, as of France and Israel, comes to mind.

Depending on the circumstances of both nations and states, religion can either become a prime source of national identity and connect insurgent groups with coreligionary supporters across social boundaries, as happened in the formation of the State of Israel and then also in the struggle for an independent Algeria. But, instead, it can also mark an internal cleavage that needs to be overcome by stressing other sources of unity within the borders of a pluralistic state. Again, examples of this can be found in the colonial rule of the French in Algeria and that of the State of Israel over its Israeli-Arab conflict within its borders as well as Palestinian populations in the occupied territories. The nation or political community is therefore at best *imagined* precisely because of the fact that, “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal, comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”¹¹⁴

When nationality becomes a byproduct of religion, postcolonialism becomes an ethos and not simply a politics of opposition. In both French Algeria and Palestine under the British Mandate, for instance, members of the majority religion, namely Islam, felt that the state

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 41.

operated to their systematic disadvantage, while benefiting members of minority religions, notably the Jews, from whom they may have also felt estranged on other grounds. In such circumstances, the disaffected can find powerful instruments of agitation and mobilization in narratives that recall the grandeur of ‘their’ past as a critique of an objectionable present. Nostalgic, the suffering communities mobilize around their religious identity to challenge those of other faiths and the State that prefers them.

In Algeria, religion became a privileged instrument for the rallying of nationalist sentiment. For the colonized, the real trauma was colonialism, “which threatened not just profanation of what is holy, but profound destabilization of cultural patterns in which religion is inextricably interwoven.”¹¹⁵ Yet restoring religion to its dominant position within a culture hardly puts an end to a conflict; instead, it simply ensures that a culture’s most bruising conflicts will assume religious, rather than ethical, political or aesthetic or even nationalist character. Thus, whatever success the suffering community might have, including independence, comes wrapped in cruel irony. Examples of insurgents that met with ‘success’ and gained hope of winning the internal conflict are the Muslim Brotherhood in Algeria, Ultra-Orthodox activists in Israel, and Hamas in Palestine. They all expanded their goals to reform and expand policies that would reconstruct the state along explicitly drawn religious lines and thus secure their absolute power.

Thus, wars between nation-states were replaced by what now appear as wars between religious communities. “Communities and institutions that define themselves in terms of religion still wage their conflicts primarily around rival claims to scarce resources: people, territory,

¹¹⁵ Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, 64.

wealth, positions of power, and economic advantage, but also nonmaterial resources as dignity, prestige, and all manner of symbolic capital.”¹¹⁶ Despite the variations of theism that were practiced in Algeria, the colonized within it saw no need to minimize their religious initiatives or their culture’s integrity, as had happened in an early modern Europe traumatized by Religious Wars. It was rather the colonizers’ intrusion and degradation of the colonized from rightful citizens to indigenous subjects that brought about a trauma which, at its core, intended to free one from another: the religious from the secular, the dependent from the independent, the revolutionary from the silent.

B. Wholly or Holy?

“Vous connaissez la blague de Ben Gurion? Quand on lui dit: 'alors, après la mort qu'est-ce que vous voudriez, aller au paradis ou en enfer?' Et il dit 'ah bon je sais pas, il faudrait d'abord que je les vois.' Alors on lui montre, on lui montre le paradis, il voit bien des gens sérieux tout ça qui ont l'air de s'ennuyer, et on lui montre l'enfer, et il voit des gens qui s'amuse... Alors il dit, 'bon moi je choisis ça.' Une fois qu'il est mort il est là en enfer et tout d'un coup, il pense 'c'est pas exactement ce que je voyais avant,' et on lui dit 'oui parce avant tu étais touriste maintenant tu es Oleh Chadash [Newcomer].”¹¹⁷

I first learned about *La Guerre d'Algérie* during my year abroad when I took a course on Francophone literature. To provide for my sustained interest in the field, I took a further class on Francophone cinema the following semester. The thought of people losing their homeland to colonialism and, simultaneously, of others constructing their own home within it, made a deep impression and kept me wondering: “when is exile from a land justified? Is it ever? What gives one the authority to claim a land as one’s own? Does one’s place of birth and, consequently, one’s nationality define one’s homeland?” As I was already taken with the Europeans of Algeria,

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 74.

¹¹⁷ Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018.

and familiarized myself with their voices and faces through literary and theoretical *oeuvres* and visual materials, I came up with a working hypothesis that I thought might guide my senior thesis. Could it be, so I asked, that Israel had become the new Algeria for the French Jews? This initial speculation was based on the following observation: while the French metropole offers a culture, education, and ideals, Algeria and Israel offer an ambiance, scenery, and sense of community particular to the Mediterranean coast. As Lledo recalled his first arrival in Israel:

“Alors je me suis taillé à Jérusalem, j’ai passé sur le marché Machne Yehuda, et je me suis dit mais c’est comme un marché Juif d’Oran, quand j’étais petit. Quand j’étais petit, c’était 1955, en ce moment là, je suis en 2008, il y avait à peu près cinquante ans qui sont passés.”¹¹⁸

My subsequent investigations confirmed such similarities between the two territories that I envisioned served almost the same purpose as an ongoing reference for the members of the French Jewish community with whom I conducted extensive interviews to test my hypothesis. And yet, the hypothesis as I formulated it, also proved also somewhat painful as it directly addressed a traumatic subject and, in my conversations, a group too traumatized to impose yet another displacement, identity and homeland on.

I realized that, in fact, the association between the three entities all by itself forced me to include a fourth or a fifth, namely occupying Israel and Palestine. Suddenly, Israel was not the new Algeria for the French Jews but rather assumed the role of France as a colonial power, with the Palestinians in the position of the colonized Algerians. Such bold assertions base themselves on the in-depth study of all relevant territories in question, and involve, once again, the themes of colonialism, post-colonialism, nationalism, nationality, and religion. It is necessary, without expanding too much on such complex matters, to dedicate at least part of this conclusion to

¹¹⁸ Jean Pierre Lledo, personal interview, January 11, 2018.

Israel's recent history so as to explain how is it that a country with a relatively short history could come to resemble France's colonial power in some relevant aspects.

In 1948, Israel was declared an independent state in Palestine, an event that inaugurated great celebration for the Jewish people turned nation, just as it meant a catastrophe, Al Nakba, for the Palestinians. The Nakba, however, had started long before 1948 and lasted for more than 70 years. The original story starts in 1799, outside the city of Acre in Ottoman controlled Palestine. An army led by Napoleon Bonaparte besieged the city, as part of an attempt to defeat the Ottomans and establish a French presence in the region. In search of allies, Napoleon issued a letter, offering Palestine as a Jewish homeland, that would be under French protection, for its diaspora Jews. To secure such an establishment, he called on no more than 3,000 Jews in Palestine to rise up against what he called their 'oppressors.' Although substantially publicized and worthy of a statue on a hill (named after him), overlooking Acre, Napoleon was ultimately defeated. Although the project for a Jewish homeland remained unfulfilled, it was revived 40 years later by another prominent colonial power, namely Great Britain.

The pursuit of a Jewish homeland was simultaneously sustained by what the Austrian writer Nathan Birnbaum termed in 1885 as Zionism.¹¹⁹ Derived from the word Zion, one of the biblical names for Jerusalem, zionism came to mean the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. While Jews outside of the homeland, especially European and American Jews, took great pride in the initiated project, Jews in Palestine were not enthusiastic. They were locals, not Zionists, just like the *Juifs d'Algérie* had initially refused the French citizenship when it was offered, as they considered themselves not French patriots, but Algerian citizens. In 1896,

¹¹⁹ "Al-Nakba - Episode 1," video file, YouTube, posted by Al Jazeera English, May 8, 2013, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7FML0wzJ6A>.

Theodor Herzl, an Austro-Hungarian Jewish journalist, wrote the most important text of early Zionism, *Der Judenstaat*, *The Jewish State*, in which he laid out a future for an independent Jewish State. People in favor of this proposal visited the land and concluded: “the bride is beautiful, but she’s married to another man.”¹²⁰ And, remarkably, Jewish French born Algerians living in Israel today use similar imagery to express their relationship to the country:

“The connection between the Jewish people and to the land of Israel is not between a mother or a father with their offspring [and hence not a *Patrie*]. I would say Israel is the wife of the Jewish Nation.”¹²¹

In the 19th century however, the spouse was an existing and thriving Palestinian society indigenous to the soil which today defines the borders of the Jewish Nation. In 1897, the first Zionist congress was convened in the Swiss city of Basel. Herzl convened the major European powers and exploited the competition between them by promising that whoever swore to protect such a possible entity, would be provided for its needs. The model of Israel’s socialist Zionist founders was based on the movement’s success in building a state in as much of the Jewish people’s imagined ancient homeland as was possible. This state-building project was in principle understood as dialectically related to rebuilding the Jewish nation, a relationship expressed in the popular Zionist slogan “to build and to built by,” while at the same time it expressed willingness to accept partition in order to consolidate Jewish sovereignty in just part of the Land of Israel. But David Ben-Gurion, and other mainstream labor Zionist leaders, by contrast always maintained the superiority of Jewish rights to the whole land. In their eyes, those were rights that could be exercised in the name of the Jewish faith whenever circumstances, dictated by the ever

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018. Translated from Hebrew to English by Britt Shacham.

present Israeli-Palestinian conflict, made it possible and prudent to do so. Atlan provided us with his personal perception of Zionism and its dangers:

“Il y a un passage au Talmud qui dit que Dieu a dispersé les juifs à peu près partout dans le monde entier pour pas être tous détruits ensemble, ça veut dire, en français on dit il faut pas mettre toutes les pommes dans le même panier, parce que si vous perdiez le panier il n'y a plus de pommes. Alors à l'époque je pense absolument pas que le Sionisme était la solution pour les juifs.”¹²²

And yet, despite the skepticisms and dire warnings, the UN Resolution 181, consisting of 33 votes for, 13 against, and 10 abstentions, divided Palestine into an Arab and Jewish State (with Jerusalem being an internationalized State)¹²³ and the State of Israel was signed into existence with the stroke of a pen.

Combined with the ‘pioneer’ ethos of state- and nation-building, Israel’s ideological position made it difficult for most of the new state’s political class to resist the attraction of assuming state-building tasks also in those portions of the Land of Israel *occupied by* the Jewish state in 1967. The aura of invincibility that accompanied the victory of the Six Days War, in June of 1967, was not only the start of an increased Jewish Algerian migration towards Israel, but also that of greater complications that plague the Middle East until this very day:

“After the Six Days War, Ishai Albowitz said and published that we must immediately give back all the captured territories to the Arabs, because if not we will be in a state of occupation. No one in the Jewish Nation agreed because they thought and hoped the Arabs will just recognize the State of Israel and everything will be fine. However, as a result the Arab league in Sudan decided three things: ‘no to recognition, no to peace, and no to negotiation.’ [...]

And so, *we* were left in the state of occupation, and that’s the Arabs’ biggest victory on *us*, they forced the State of Israel to continue with the occupation. It was a trap! And now we have settlements since people took advantage of the situation.”¹²⁴

¹²² Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018.

¹²³ "Al-Nakba - Episode 2," video file, YouTube, posted by Al Jazeera English, May 15, 2013, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI2D5Fsd9lg>.

¹²⁴ Henri Atlan, personal interview, January 8, 2018, translated from Hebrew to English by Britt Shacham.

Israel found itself responsible for governing a million Palestinians in their newly captured territories. In 1969, Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir stated: "It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist,"¹²⁵ thereby blatantly denying the fact that, in 1949, Israel violated the international agreement in seizing more land than the UN initially allowed. More than 400 Palestinian villages and 11 cities were destroyed, 111,000 Palestinians became refugees, while 13,000 were killed, and 30,000 injured.¹²⁶ This sheer denial of confiscating Palestinian land has remained prevalent in subsequent ruling governments of the State of Israel until this very day.

The similarities between French Algeria and the State of Israel, on the one hand, and the Muslim Algerians and the Palestinians, on the other, are uncanny and practically justify my initial hypothesis for this research project. It seems as though the Palestinians have assumed the unfortunate role of the Jews as persecuted, expelled, refuged, and diasporic. While before there was the "Jewish Question," now there is the "Palestinian Question." Moreover, while throughout history, especially from 1939 until 1945, Jews were subject to ethnic cleansing, to put it mildly, an almost similar fate of the Palestinians was initiated simultaneously. For a while the Holocaust propelled Zionism into a State but also took about 6 million Jewish lives, there are currently 6 million Palestinian refugees dispersed around the world.¹²⁷ And while Jews were known for having the most prominent diaspora, now the Palestinians have become the only society solely composed of refugees; while the land "without people" for people without a land was

¹²⁵ "Al-Nakba - Episode 3," video file, YouTube, posted by Al Jazeera English, May 21, 2013, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SKECszemmA>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ "Al-Nakba - Episode 4," video file, YouTube, posted by Al Jazeera English, May 28, 2013, accessed April 26, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m__A7MIDrk.

meticulously designed to create the Jewish Nation, now the Palestinians, a people without a land, search for a land without people. And, while Kahina, mentioned in the first chapter, led the *Judéo-Berbère* troops against the Arab invasion of Algeria, Mouhiba Khorshid commanded revolutionary Palestinian troops to conserve Jaffa under Israeli rule. Finally, while Yitzhak Shamir, Israel's former Prime Minister and head of the Zionist nationalist Stern gang, published a biography of all the terrorist operations he carried out to secure Israel's conquered territories (including the murder of Folke Bernadotte, the United Nations Security Council at the time, dedicated to the Palestinian cause), so did Général Aussaresses, in *Mon Témoignage sur la torture*, when he described the horrific actions he was ordered to perform, confirming these acts were done voluntarily as he refused to claim 'Je regrette' (when he had the chance to in front of the Parisian court in November of 2001). In sum, while there is the Jewish Nation, there is also the Arab Nation, consistently placed against one another by outside forces.

Juifs d'Algérie, Algerian Muslims, and Palestinians were all deemed indigenous in their own land. Both the French and the British colonial powers chose to assimilate the Jews rather than the Muslims, disrupting the symbiosis present prior to their arrival. In French Algeria and during the transformation of Palestine into the State of Israel, patriotism was not only confiscated by a colonial power but also forbidden. Both Algerians and Palestinians, unlike the French or Israelis, not only lost the battle, but the whole war itself. The story continues and we don't know how it is going to end. People live as dead, without a homeland, and with no possible return to a home. "Feeling at home is a condition of being free in the most fundamental way of being free – a condition of being creative in a particular way – naturally"¹²⁸ and thus, expelling people from

¹²⁸ Margalit, "Isaiah Berlin, Home and Homeland," lecture chair: Ian Buruma, Fonds DOTS (June 1-6 2009).

their home and preventing their return is a war crime as such. People are trapped in their consciousness or, on the contrary, unconscious of the injustice surrounding them. The Jewish Nation has produced Jewish citizens who fail to recognize what troubled their homeless and rootless ancient ancestors, and who are, hence, capable of oppressing others. In light of recent events, and given the persistence of anti-semitism in France attributed to North Africans, I think it is of the utmost importance to reexamine historical claims, traumas, and the racisms of today's world in light of each other.

The recent murder of Holocaust survivor Mireille Knoll, on March 23rd in Paris, has exposed two toxic racisms, often attributed to anti-semitism and Islamophobia, notably prevalent in France. In both of these racisms, essentially driven by feelings of exclusion, the sentiment of being a “victim” predominates. France offers a unique environment for these hateful associations to foster, as it is the sole country to have a collective guilty conscience toward *both* its Jews and its Arabs: toward its Jews, for the active collaboration of the Vichy regime with the Nazi occupiers, and toward its Arabs for the colonial history in North Africa and the inhumane crimes committed by the French army during the Algerian War of Independence.¹²⁹ Each prejudice perversely feeds on the other, sustaining exclusion and groups closing in on themselves. Against this background, Frantz Fanon, Algeria's *filis adoptif*, appropriately used the line that he had been taught by his philosophy professor: “When you hear someone insulting the Jews, pay attention; he is talking about you.” The line remains topical, and both French Arabs and French Jews

¹²⁹ Sylvain Cypel, “The Murder of The Murder of Holocaust Survivor Mireille Knoll Has Exposed 2 Toxic Racisms in France,” trans. Arun Kapil, *The Nation*, (April 6, 2018), accessed April 27, 2018, <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-murder-of-holocaust-survivor-mireille-knoll-has-exposed-two-toxic-racisms-in-france/>.

would do well to adopt it and understand that “when you hear someone insulting Muslims, he is also talking about you.”¹³⁰

Whichever ‘you’ one embodied or represented in the Algerian War, be it the *Juifs d’Algérie*, second generation French Algerians, indigenous groups, Pieds Noirs or the Harkis (i.e., the Algerians who claimed an usually unfortunate fate when choosing to fight alongside rather than against the French), they all were implicated either directly or indirectly in the search for a nostalgic identity displaced from its homeland. Hence the theme of nostalgia in the case of Algeria, *nostalgérie*, is a crucial component in the construction of the displaced and exiled identity of the communities in question. The idealization of a forbidden homeland creates a nostalgia relying on previous imagined communities, preserved by a nation’s overall culture. Therefore, when the homeland is eventually reached it doesn’t always serve as the cure for nostalgia’s symptom of homesickness. Within the next several decades, the generation of *Juifs d’Algérie* would eventually move on from their homeland to the construction of an intangible other. I am honored to have paid tribute to and to have documented several of these experiences, against the foil of different contemporary opinions and theoretical approaches to this part of the modern history of Algeria, France, and Israel. Having moved from *the* homeland and constructed several others, the collective identities, perceptions of homeland, and displacements I have discussed have both enlightened and inspired many more questions à propos nationalism, religion, colonialism, and decolonization that, alas, fall beyond the scope of the present project. But I hope, and trust, I will have the occasion to investigate at least some of them more fully and properly in the not too distant future.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

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