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Violence in Algeria: From Colony to Independent Nation

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Violence in Algeria: From French Colony to Independent Nation

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Senior Thesis

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Introduction

“Out of my Algeria they made the prisons taller than the schools...they applied the whip without understanding.”¹ The Algerian War was a conflict the French call “a series of events.” However, the Algerians consider the French-Algerian War to be their revolutionary war. Mass amounts of bloodshed that places were fought over such as the Algerian mountaintops to the inner-city squares of Algiers and Paris. The war started November 1st, 1954, and lasted eight years until Algeria was declared an independent nation on March 19, 1962. James D. Le Sueur, a historian who has focused on the French-Algerian war, said that “the French-Algerian war was probably the most violent anti-colonial war of the twentieth century.”² However, the cycle of violence in Algeria did not start with the French-Algerian war, but during the French conquest of the nation. After mass amounts of violence during the colonization process, the inevitable war between the colony and its terrorizer portrays a picture of two different viewpoints of colonization.

Containing five sections, this thesis will display the different ways the French were able to separate themselves from Algerian culture and violently colonize the country; in turn, political groups like the National Liberation Front violently decolonized the country. First the French separated themselves from Algerian society by using concepts like “Orientalism” to show how uncivilized the Algerians were under the Ottoman Empire. Then, the violent colonization techniques will display how the cycle of violence began with the French’s conquest of Algeria. The second section will also cover the French government limiting the rights to the native

¹ “Jean Senac, a poet of the Algerian Revolution,” Warscapes, October 15, 2015, accessed June 05, 2017, <http://warscapes.com/poetry/jean-senac-poet-algerian-revolution>.

² James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

Algerians, and how that caused the Algerian population to create resistance movements. Then the paper will transition into the interwar period and the rise of political groups. Specifically, how the Algerians saw their only option for independence for having a clean violent break from the French. The last section covered is based on the different ways the political groups, specifically the FLN violently decolonized themselves from the French and the torture between both French on Algerians.

The difference between this paper and others is the connection of violence. While some scholars such as Jennifer Sessions, Patricia Lorcin, and Benjamin Brower wrote about the violent colonization process, and others such as James D. Le Sueur and Henry F. Jackson wrote about the decolonization process, yet this paper specifically will involve both and show the cycle of violence as a whole from colonization to decolonization. The cycle of violence and how colonization inherently violent fails to be discussed in most readings. This thesis helps connect how the cycle of colonization imposed by the French can only be broken with more violence.³ The separations of society between France and Algeria written about in this thesis as well as the violent colonization techniques implemented resulted in the Algerians having to use a more violent decolonization process after failed resistance movements.

Conquest

Before one delves into the Algerian War one must know the backstory behind it. Who colonized Algeria? Why did they colonize? How did the French government view Algerians? What colonization techniques did the French military use, and how did that influence the

³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2011). 3.

colonized to become angered and set up revolutionary groups? By looking at key concepts and perceptions through the use of orientalism and events to the French conquest of Algeria, one can see how the French's assumptions of the Algerians would lead to a violent conquest of Algeria.

Algeria has a deep history of colonization. Algeria is a country located to the east of Morocco, north of the Sahara and west of the Egypt. Algeria's main religion at that time was Islam ever since conversions of the Algerians since the Arab Invasion of the 8th century, Algeria's main religion. The country was under the Ottoman Empires rule when they conquered the country in 1518 before the French began their conquest of Algeria.⁴ While the Ottomans were in rule, the French military was continuously conquering different parts of the world with their "civilizing mission" with colonies in the Caribbean and North America, and would continuously have this desire to colonize more. During the rise of this new nationalism found with Charles X new French Empire, Algeria was in constant trade with the French. This trade lasted until a group of French merchants refused their debts to the Algerians. Through political means, both sides attempted to settle their differences. The diplomats' disagreement then became what is known as the "Fly Swatter Affair." The Algerian diplomat hit the French diplomat with an object after the French merchants refused to pay the debts back. The actual object is still unknown, but whether it was a glove or an actual fly swatter the French were still appalled by this act and considered the Algerians to be barbaric and uncivilized. These assumptions were all due to both parties' failure to settle their financial differences non-violently. Charles X's desire to civilize these "barbaric pirates" grew after the Fly Swatter Affair, this was shown with his Blockade of Algiers in 1827-1829. French views of the Algerians and the perception of fertile

⁴ Brian Baggins, "History of Algerian Independence," History of the Algerian Workers, accessed February 27, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/history/algeria/>.

land in the area as well as political unrest in France led to Charles X's have a desire to conquer Algeria.

The French government used Orientalist perceptions to place themselves above the Algerian population. Like the British Empire, the French took over landmasses and countries that had different cultures and societies for economic purposes and to create the separation of French culture with Algerian values. Edward W. Said coined this separation "Orientalism" to describe this perception. Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* describes how western civilizations, like France, created the term the Orient to help further divide the world into two, the west and the east. Said states that the western world used these ideas to help distinguish them from "the Orient," or eastern civilizations. Orientalism as a perception is essentially the separation of cultures between western and eastern civilization. The French government evaluated Algerian institutions, culture, and social structure and deemed them to be less civilized than French society and culture. This perception the French government and military used on the Algerians made the French government feel as if it was necessary to conquer the land to properly "civilize" the native Algerian population in any means necessary.

The first example of the creation of the mindset that the Algerians were uncivilized is through Jennifer Sessions' book *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria*. In her book, Jennifer Sessions describes how "barbaric" the French viewed the citizens of their new colony. Sessions also states that "colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism."⁵ The French government's justification was by having this overall perception that the Algerians are uncivilized through the Fly Swatter Affair. Sessions also explains why the French would even

⁵ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). Kindle Edition, Loc 355.

colonize such a place. She essentially illustrates that the French did not conquer the land for any specific economic benefit. Instead, they used the conquest of Algeria to help build nationalism within the country, especially after the restoration period of Louis XVIII.⁶ Her argument here helps illustrate that the French had no reason to colonize the land other than their desire to be dominant over others. This comes from the notion of the civilizing mission through orientalist perceptions. The French government saw the Algerian people as barbaric and uncivilized, therefore they needed to conquer them and make the Algerians proper civilized human beings.

The social hierarchy set up by the French government put all Muslim Algerians at the bottom of the social ladder. In this social hierarchy, the French observed different groups within Algeria and declared some to be more civilized than the other. Sessions goes on to state that, “in Algeria ethnographic observation of local cultural differences led to the French military officers, administrators, anthropologists, and pseudo-intellectuals to develop racialized distinctions- between Arabs and Kabyle and also between natives and settlers-that structured colonial law and society.”⁷ The social hierarchy had the French-born citizens at the top of society. Below them were the colons, or the colonizers who either given citizenship by the French or French-born citizens. Under the colons in the hierarchy were the Jewish Algerians, who were the first Algerians to be given French citizenship through the Cremieux Decree on October 24th, 1870, which states that, “The Israelites native to the departments of Algeria are declared French citizens; consequently, their real status and their personal status shall be, dating from the promulgation of the present decree, regulated by French law, with all rights acquired until this day inviolable.”⁸ This made two groups left out of French citizenship, the Berbers who were

⁶ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. loc 288-296.

⁷ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. loc 329.

⁸ "The Crémieux Decree," Decree of October 24, 1870, Algeria, accessed May 19, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/history/algeria/1870/decree-jews.htm>.

above the Arabs in the social hierarchy. The Berbers were a once nomadic tribe of Algeria who the French deemed more civilized than the Arab population within the country.

This resentment towards the native Arab and Berber population grew when the French also blamed the Algerians for making the land “infertile.” When the French government colonized the country, the French considered the land to be “infertile.” *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome* by Diana K. Davis helps illustrate how the French came to the land of Algeria and was said to be spoiled; putting the natives to blame. Davis states that, “there emerged a colonial environmental narrative that blamed the indigenous peoples, especially herders, for deforesting and degrading what was once apparently the highly fertile ‘granary of Rome’ in North Africa.”⁹ Where would the French get this notion that North Africa was once a place of fertility? Davis goes on to state that Algeria was once, “‘most fertile region in the world’ long before the French conquest of Algeria.”¹⁰ The French placed blame on the native herders and farmers due to the beliefs promoted through their orientalist ideas. The French saw the traditional Algerian institutions especially agriculturally to not be as advanced as the French. However, Davis blamed the Romans for the land infertility. She claims that, “a significant amount of land degradation did, however, occur during the Roman period itself, as a result of their agricultural techniques and expansion.”¹¹ However, the French government's unfair bias was proven false due colonization began when the French government refused to pay their debts for buying grain before colonization even began.

⁹ Diana K. Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio Univ. Press, 2009). 2.

¹⁰ Diana K. Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome*. 2.

¹¹ Diana K. Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome*. 5.

By using Orientalist ideas as well as two key colonization techniques and policies, one can see how the French government violently took control of Algeria and its social structure. The two techniques were: the types of violence needed to take control of Algeria, the French tactic *razzier* as well as unfair land policies set out to give the *colons* the advantage.

The struggle for colonization began in 1830, and Algeria was not declared a colony of France until 1875. The violence of this colonization started with the blockade of Algiers after the “Fly Swatter Affair.” According to author Ben Kiernan of *Blood and Soil*, “By 1875, the French conquest was complete. The war had killed approximately 825,000 indigenous Algerians since 1830. A long shadow of genocidal hatred persisted.”¹² Almost a million Algerians died by the end of the colonization effort, which shows how violent colonization can be. The beginning of colonization started the cycle of violence within Algeria. Sessions discusses how much the French were willing to destroy the Algerians by any means necessary stating that, “Prelates later described Algiers as ‘a lair of pirates and anti-Christian barbarism,’ ... [whose] extermination, humanely speaking, would be a benefit to society.”¹³ This statement alone is crucial in looking at the cycle of violence within the colonization of Algeria. How does one “humanely” exterminate someone else? Prelates’ viewpoint on the Algerians and this overall thought that the Algerians were uncivilized pirates sets the tone for colonization. It illustrates that rather than a “peaceful” conquest the French military would rather just exterminate the weak, uncivilized native Algerians.

The first major technique of colonization was through mass amounts of terror and violence. One of the ways the French were able to take control of Algeria is through the French

¹² Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009). 374.

¹³ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. loc 874.

tactic *razzia*. According to Jennifer Sessions “the primary tactical weapon in Bugeaud’s ‘total war’ was *razzia*, a scorched-earth raid designed to simultaneously destroy the enemy’s economic resources and feed the French army.”¹⁴ The French military set fire to fields to shut the Algerians off from being able to buy goods and weapons to fight off the French military. *Razzia* was described in William Gallois’ book *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony*. Gallois states

that the French were obsessed with violence – in their thoughts, acts and records – in the first two decades of the life of the colony is quite apparent not only across the documentary archive but also in the mutations of the French language, where the term ‘*razzia*’ included a level of brutality.”¹⁵

This illustrates that the primary ways that the French were colonizing were through mass amounts of brutality and terror used to conquer Algeria. Jennifer Sessions also states “the first French *razzias* as inexcusable ‘wars of savages,’ but ‘cut,’ ‘burn,’ ‘devastate,’ ‘ravage,’ became the orders of the day after 1841.”¹⁶ This shows the evolving definition of the term. *Razzia* was originally a raiding technique carried out by the Moors in North Africa. The term itself was founded in the region of Algeria, yet the French took a familiar term belonging to the area and evolved it to even more violence on the Algerian population. The French military even gave rewards to their soldiers. “Regulations according to the troops a portion of the booty exacerbated the *razzia*’s violence by giving the soldiers further incentive to pillage.”¹⁷

The second colonization technique the French government followed was the destruction of Muslim culture in Algeria. This destruction of Muslim society by the French put even more tension between the French government and military against the Islamic Algerian population,

¹⁴ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. loc 3194.

¹⁵ William Gallois, *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony*, Academia.edu, accessed February 26, 2017, http://www.academia.edu/3656563/A_History_of_Violence_in_the_Early_Algerian_Colony. 4.

¹⁶ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. loc 3194.

¹⁷ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. loc 3194.

since the dominant religion of the area was Islam. Henry F. Jackson, an expert on United States foreign policy toward Africa, his book *The FLN in Algeria: Party Development in a Revolutionary Society*. Jackson states that, “The French conquest of Algeria in 1830 was qualified by a pledge from the Paris government to respect the property, religion, and customs of the indigenous Muslim population.”¹⁸ Later in the passage, he states his argument by saying that, “a policy of direct colonial rule had resulted in the uprooting of the native economy, the displacement of Arabic with French, and the settlement of thousands of Europeans on Algerian soil.”¹⁹ This argument shows that the French claim that they tried to preserve Algerian cultural standards, but in reality, they failed to put the necessary attention to these cultural standards. Instead, the French took their time in destroying the native culture in many different ways through the means of rejecting civil rights for most of the native population, violence, and by implementing land policies to take away the Algerian farms and agricultural techniques.

The third method the French government utilized against the Algerians after colonization was through the lack of civil rights to the native Algerians. Todd Shepard’s book, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* states, “until 1944 in Algeria as elsewhere in France, the law maintained that full citizenship was a possibility only for men.”²⁰ Although this passage shows that women explicitly didn’t have rights, in most instances, Muslim men did not have rights based off of the social hierarchy put in place by the French government. Later Shepard says, “in discussing Algerians, some politicians and polemicists did make routine sallies that such men could never become French citizens because they were too different, by

¹⁸ Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria: Party Development in a Revolutionary Society* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 3.

¹⁹ Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria*. 3.

²⁰ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: the Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). 21.

which they meant inherently inferior.”²¹ It helps show that the French government wanted to restrict rights to the Algerians as much as possible. Henry F. Jackson goes in turn to discuss policy put in place to not allow the Algerians rights. “Politically colon discrimination and French laws combined to impede the evolution of Muslim society...the code de l’indigenat of 1881...denied Muslims basic civil rights, such as trial by jury, and excluded them from almost all civil administrative posts.”²²

The discrimination and destruction of Islamic culture in Algeria continued throughout the century up until the turn of the 20th-century, and the *colons* helped aid the French government give Algerian population the lack of proper rights. For instance, Henry F. Jackson discusses how Leon Le Blum, a leader of the Popular Front in 1936, proposed a law to give over 25,000 Muslims French citizenship, yet the colons fought to shut down the proposed bill.²³ David S. Powers’ journal “Orientalism, Colonialism, and Legal History: The Attack on Muslim Family Endowments in Algeria and India,” agrees with Jackson that French government did not give the Algerians proper civil rights. Within the journal, he discusses that French penal law eventually took over from Qur’anic law, thus the “intention was to withhold civil rights from the natives.”²⁴ The lack of rights given to the natives helped initiate resistance movements and was the main motivator for revolutionary groups in the French-Algerian War.

The last example of the French resisting the Algerian’s rights comes from Frantz Fanon’s book, *Toward the African Revolution*. Fanon explains begins to talk about a prominent doctor of

²¹ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*. 21.

²² Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria*. 8.

²³ Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria*. 12.

²⁴ David S. Powers, "Orientalism, Colonialism, and Legal History: The Attack on Muslim Family Endowments in Algeria and India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 03 (1989): accessed January 26, 2017, doi:10.1017/s0010417500016030. 6.

the area that discussed the social evolution of the native Algerians. He quotes the doctor directly by stating that,

The granting of French citizenship, conferring equality of rights, seems to have been too hasty and based on sentimental and political reasons rather than on the fact of social and intellectual evolution of a race having a civilization that is at times refined but still primitive in its social, family and sanitary behavior.²⁵

This passage illustrates that the French government still considered the native Algerians to be “primitive” in some sense. The French government’s mindset and attacks gave the Algerian Muslims motivation to begin creating resistance movements. The lack of rights given to Algerians helped them band together against their colonizer. Frantz Fanon’s book *A Dying Colonialism* discusses how all Algerians, whether it be men, Muslim, Berber, or Kabyle “the women, the family, the children, the aged – everybody participates.”²⁶ This statement illustrates that the French government attempted to assert dominance over the Algerian population by restricting rights to the Algerian. These lack of rights specifically effected the Arab and Muslim population was able to form common bonds over the lack of civil rights and fight their oppressors, start political groups, and initiate the cycle of decolonization. “Algerian masses were united in a single action for a single end.”²⁷

These facts demonstrate the viciousness of colonialism, and how it is inherently violent and racist. The French military murdered and destroyed everything the native Algerians had to intimidate the people and suppress their resistances in the inevitable conquering of the land. Algerian political parties used the violence as fuel to their resistance. Revolutionary groups such

²⁵ Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967. 12.

²⁶ Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1967). 4.

²⁷ Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*. 8.

as the National Liberation Front were musing over these actions by the French empire; they fought fire with fire, in order to resist the French empires expansion into Algeria.

Another technique the French used was through the separation of Christian and Muslim values. In doing so, the French government was able to make the Algerians inferior to the colonizers and help terrorize the native people. They also were able to destroy culture in this way. Jennifer Sessions illustrates this battle between Christian and Muslim values. As previously discussed, the French believed the Muslims of Algeria were inherently barbaric and violent, and that they believed it was their duty to change the Algerians mindsets. Sessions also states that, “barbary piracy was not considered a solely earthly crime, however. It was also seen as a form of religious warfare driven by Muslims’ perpetual hatred for Christians.”²⁸ She later goes on to quote King Charles X in *By Sword and Plow* saying that, “in satisfying the honor of France, turn with the aid of the Almighty to the benefit of Christianity.”²⁹ This clarifies that a major theme of King Charles X expansion of the French Empire into Algeria was guided by strong Christian values. This method of colonization helped gain the support of the Frenchmen as well as help boost morale of the soldiers and help give them a reason to colonize the nation.

The colonization would cause some major problems within the empire and what Algeria was. In Henry F. Jackson’s book, *The FLN in Algeria: Party Development in a Revolutionary Society*, he states that, “Official French sources did not refer to the conquered territory as a colony at that time, nor at any point during the entire history of French rule.”³⁰ The French government’s point of view was still seen differently from how the Algerians were actually treated by the French government. However, while the French government was mostly portrayed

²⁸ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. loc 723.

²⁹ Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*. Loc 769.

³⁰ Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria*. 3.

as doing the Algerians a service, yet the native Algerian population disagreed. Jackson later goes onto state that, “the economic, political, and social relationships between the native inhabitants and the Europeans partitioned this new society into two sharply distinct categories: the colonized and colonizer.”³¹ By looking at the land policies laid out by the French government, the social standards allowed for groups such as the National Liberation Front to rise and begin their struggle for independence.

The policies laid out by the French government were established to help set up the colonizers superiority. The French government also set up three policies that weakened and restricted the colonized land rights. It especially was pivotal when it came to two main ethnic groups, the Berbers and the Arabs. By investigating these three policies, one can be able to look at how the colonization process of Algeria angered many Algerians.

The first major land policy is a sort of “free land” policy, like that of the colonization of the Americas and the Louisiana Purchase of America. The French government offered free land to anyone who wished to colonize the physical land. In doing so, the government not only brought French citizens to Algeria but also offered non-citizens of other European countries citizenship and land if they were to colonize the region in 1863. This causes issues because in Algeria’s eyes this is their land, the same land that they have been harvesting for generations in order to survive and be successful. This physical land was taken away, and given to people who do not know the land, what grows better, and the proper harvest techniques of the area. The techniques the Algerians had were necessary to farm in such a harsh living environment being just north of the Sahara.

³¹ Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria*. 3.

Another main land policy laid out by the French was the *Warnier Law of 1873*.

According to Henry F. Jackson the *Warnier Law of 1873*, “was sometimes labeled the ‘colons’ law’ because it permitted settlers to confiscate indigenous farms when the fellahin could not show ‘good title’ to them.”³² The colons, or French settlers of Algeria, were fundamentally given the right to rip fertile land away from the natives if they could not come up with the deed to their land. However, most of the Algerians did not own deeds to the land because they had been in families for generations before deeds were even necessary to own the land. Phillip C. Naylor’s book, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria*, shows the effects of the *Warnier Law of 1873*. Naylor states that, “From 1877 to 1920, the colonized lost 1,750,000 hectares of land. The impoverished indigenes resorted to self-subsistence farming, migrant labor, and emigration to France. This legislation epitomized the colonial exploitation and expropriation.”³³ This helped show the monopolization of the land. The colonizers were able to rip the fertile land away, benefit from this economic boost and leave the colonized out of being able to make a substantial amount of money.

These policies laid out put the Algerians in the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy. Not only did they fail to give the native Algerians proper civil rights, but they also took the most fertile land away from them because of their lack of “proper” agricultural techniques. With the lack of rights and the financial binds due to the ripping away of the land through the *Warnier Law of 1873*, the Algerians found yet another common bond with each other for the desire for their own independent nation.

³² Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria*. 6.

³³ Phillip Chiviges Naylor, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015). 521.

The colonization methods in which the French chose were an attempt to get Algerians to assimilate to French cultural standards, but in fact only did the opposite to most of the native population. By setting up different cultural standards with racism, and religious standards the French government was able to target certain sections of the native Algerian population, such as the Jewish population, in an attempt to get them to assimilate and join French society through the *Cremieux Decree*. Also, the French took away “Algerian land” and set up certain policies that helped determine if the native population was treating the land in a proper manner, standards set up by the colonizer. By having a negative mindset towards the Algerians population, as well as using violent techniques such as *Razzia*, and taking away Algerian land the French government was able to start the cycle of violent conquest. In doing so, the French government had the consequence of letting the Algerian population band together and resist the French law, and colonization. These tensions would not become solved, nor addressed properly. One can see the rise of political groups post-World War II. In turn, this failure to address whether Algeria was a part of France itself, or a colony made much of the Algerian population to become more provoked by the French government’s conquest and gradually create stronger political groups.

The Rise of Political Groups

Resistance movements were a major part of the constant violence within colonization. One of the most prominent resistance movements was led by Emir Abdelkader, who led Algerian forces to resist the French conquest. Benjamin Brower claims that this gave, “the beginnings of a self-governing Algerian state from the French and his Algerian rivals, making him the iconic

figure of Algerian nationalism.”³⁴ However, these failed attempts at fighting off the French conquest would come at a price. Emir Abdelkader failed at fighting off the French and according to Brower, “The treasury of the dey, the grand prize claimed by the French state, had been estimated to hold as much as 500 million francs, but only 48.7 million francs made it to the coffers of the French government.”³⁵ Most likely going the money going the French soldiers who looted the dey of Algeria’s treasury, like *razzia*, the French were once again rewarded for their violence upon the Algerians. However, by letting Abdelkader become a symbol of Algerian nationalism enabled political groups to rise and use his original motives of pushing the French out.

There are four major political groups to be discussed when talking about the French-Algerian War. Those are the French government, the Organization Armée Secrète (OAS), the Algerian National Movement (MNA), and the National Liberation Front (FLN). The main focus of the paper is to investigate the decolonization of Algeria with a focus on the National Liberation Front, all of the other political groups were considered to be rivals to each other. How did they come to be?

The French government and military play a critical role in the French-Algerian War because they are the oppressor. The French were ones who took rights, land, and culture away from the native Algerians and forced them to assimilate to French society. While the French considered Algeria to be a part of the French empire, almost the same, the Algerians did not feel as if they were welcome inside French society. Even after World War II the French still did not

³⁴ Benjamin Claude. Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: the Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). Kindle Edition, 13.

³⁵ Benjamin Claude. Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*. 15.

consider Algeria to be a colony, however they were not an immediate part of France, yet they were in their own category.

The OAS was a predominant colon military-based group within Algeria. This group was a section of the colonizers in Algeria who refused to let Algeria gain its independence. They were, “determined to use all means necessary, including the most violent, to prevent the government of President Charles de Gaulle from granting Algeria independence.”³⁶ They turned against the French government when political discussions regarding independence began to arise between the revolutionary groups and the French government. This caused issues because as the Algerians were beginning to gain their independence, the OAS was officially breaking out, and the European settlers of Algeria began fighting back against both the government they belonged to and the Algerian revolutionary groups. Le Sueur’s *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics during the Decolonization of Algeria* he states that the OAS, “tended to see themselves as protectors of the ideals of justice, truth, equality, and liberty.”³⁷ Their leader was Jacques Soustelle, the governor of Algeria who was against De Gaulle and fought to save French colonial interests in Algeria. This group rose to power solely to the fact that a majority of the Europeans living in Algeria felt betrayed and Soustelle helped them create this anti-governmental coup and have one last effort to stay a French colony.

The Algerian National Movement (MNA) were the originators of the resistance of colonization of the major political groups. Led by Messali Hadj, the leftist military group was founded based off of immigrants’ rights within France itself. They gained their popularity off of

³⁶ "Organisation Armée Secrète (Secret Army Organization)," Encyclopedia of Race and Racism, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/organisation-armee-secrete-secret-army-organization>.

³⁷ James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). 5.

the Algerians living in France, rather than the natives still living within the nation. Although their political power would be short lived in the 1920s the party would reorganize. This reorganization would cause the National Liberation Front and the Algerian National Movement to become bitter rivals during the war and face off in what is called the “café wars.” The café wars were one of the key highlights of the rivalries between revolutionary groups in Algeria.

The National Liberation Front were a group of freedom fighters. The FLN would most prominent revolutionary group of all within Algeria and would later be the prominent political party of the government after the war. The National Liberation Front consider themselves to be representatives of the native Algerians as they were willing to go through any means necessary to gain independence from France. Frantz Fanon said it best when he said, “The husbands of the women who were raped were in the local FLN group.”³⁸ The people enraged by the lack of rights, the people that were the percentage that lost their fertile land, the ones pushed out of the countryside and forced into cities or moved to France to gain money. All of the people with that anger encompassed into one majority group, the National Liberation Front. Thus, the FLN finished this vicious cycle found within colonization by breaking free from the French Empire by any form of violence necessary. The National Liberation Front believed very firmly that people were either with them and willing to fight for them or against FLN. If that person were against them, they would make sure that the person is no longer in their way with any form from murdering the person to torturing or threatening them. After all, “the last can be the first only after a murderous decisive confrontation between two protagonists.”³⁹

³⁸ Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution*. 59.

³⁹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. 3.

Although in the French point of view the National Liberation Front's, "actions were no different from other Islamic terrorists, suicide bombers, and terror cells as to their objectives and methods."⁴⁰ The FLN's objectives were, "The restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social Algerian state, within the framework of Islamic principles."⁴¹ The French saw this rise in the political movement set forth by the FLN and had to publish as much negativity as possible to suppress the movement. While the FLN wrote about a clean decolonization through any means necessary to the French that meant the slaughtering of innocent humans. The French military was fighting the National Liberation Front as rebels, yet the FLN considered themselves to be a group of freedom fighters.

The National Liberation Front is the most important group when investigating the breaking of the colonization process with violence. The FLN stood against everything the French imposed on the native Algerians. By looking at their letter *To the Algerian People*, the FLN laid out their plans for decolonization.

Our purpose in distributing this proclamation is to enlighten you concerning the profound reasons which have impelled us to act by revealing to you our program, the meaning of our action, and the cogency of our views the, goal of which remains National Independence within the North African framework. Our wish as well is to help you avoid the confusion maintained by imperialism and its corrupt political and administrative agents.⁴²

This is important because the French government had control of the press during the decolonization process. Therefore, within this proclamation, the National Liberation Front wanted to make their intentions clear to all of their readers. These intentions were to decolonize

⁴⁰ General Paul Aussaresses, *the Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria. 1955-1957*, (New York, Enigma Books, 2006) xvi.

⁴¹ Front de Liberation Nationale, "Proclamation," accessed November 25, 2015, <https://www.marxists.org/history/algeria/1954/proclamation.htm>

⁴² "Proclamation November 1, 1954: To the Algerian People," Marxist.org, accessed May 1, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/history/algeria/1954/proclamation.htm>.

thoroughly and with any means necessary. While the French attacked the traditional Islamic standards of the Algerians the FLN wanted to have a “restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social Algerian state, within the framework of Islamic principles.”⁴³ It shows that they stood against everything the French did during the colonization process. The anger amongst the terror imposed by the French can be seen in the FLN’s letter to the *Harkis*, a militant police force of Algerians fighting for the French. Within the letter, it states, "you are the victims of the very people who torture and murder your fathers and brothers, brutalize and rape your mothers and sisters, set fire to and bomb your villages — of the very people who carry out a barbaric war against people FOR THE LAST SIX YEARS!"⁴⁴ Even though written during the time of the war it shows how the National Liberation Front was trying to get every Algerian on their side for independence. The National Liberation Front showed the *Harkis* that the French have only tortured their families and how they must be punished for their actions. This represents how the FLN has consistently fueled their revolution with anger towards the French from what they have done physically and mentally to the Algerians. They must still restore Algerian society under their independent nation.

However, how was the National Liberation Front going to restore these values to the Algerian people? The same way the French colonized the country; they fought for independence with mass amounts of violence and terror. The FLN stated in their proclamation that, “In conformity with revolutionary principles, and taking into account the internal and external

⁴³ "Proclamation November 1, 1954: To the Algerian People," Marxist.org.

⁴⁴ "Letter of the FLN to the Harkis," Marxist.org, accessed May 1, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/history/algeria/1960/harkis.htm>.

situations, the continuation of the struggle by all possible means until the realization of our goal.”⁴⁵ This goal would take eight years.

All of these political parties played a pivotal role in the French-Algerian war. The multiple wars between the multiple parties paint the picture of how this heinous and violent cycle of colonialism comes to an end. Before the war could end, the struggle for independence had to be fought. The land would be fought over, the fighting of fire with fire will be done, and at the end of the violence only one political group, the FLN, will be standing in Algeria. The violence was horrible, and an immense amount of people died.

Violence and Terror in the French-Algerian War

The French-Algerian War was the Algerians last attempt to break the vicious cycle of colonization. Mouloud Feraoun, a school teacher from Algeria, prominent writer, and Kabyle stated in his Journals during the war,

The fight between two different peoples has begun – the master and the slave. That is all there is to it... The Algerians did not wait for the twentieth century to realize that they were Algerians... they gathered together because they thought that they were strong enough to fight or die a meaningful death.⁴⁶

The French-Algerian War was the proof of that the National Liberation Front was willing to go through any means necessary to decolonize the country. The violence brought upon all four political parties shows that colonization is inherently violent and the only way to break this brutality found within is with more bloodshed. By examining torture, and key battles in Algerian

⁴⁵ "Proclamation November 1, 1954: To the Algerian People," Marxist.org.

⁴⁶ Mouloud Feraoun and Le Sueur James D., *Journal, 1955-1962 Reflections on the French-Algerian War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). 43.

war for independence one can see how this break between colonizer and colonized allowed for the vicious cycle to come to an end.

World War II lasted until May 8th, 1945. The Vichy reign in France had come to a close, and Charles De Gaulle's new government was in full force. Yet, when people were waving flags in France, a group of Algerian nationalists banded together and waved what is now the Algerian flag.⁴⁷ Hamou Amirouche recalls in his *Memoirs of a Mujahed* a discussion with his father when his father says, "They [the French] panicked at the sight of few thousand Algerians waving flags. Flags, not guns! Not yet, but that's coming soon. But flags are perhaps more frightening than guns."⁴⁸ At this time, talks of independence would increase as the years go by and the National Liberation Front would begin to create their army. At this time, many independence movements like that of Vietnam and Morocco were occurring. The French Government was losing its handle on its empire after the fall of Vichy France. However, the Algerian Revolution would not start until November 1st, 1954 when the National Liberation Front published their proclamation to the Algerian people. Through the proclamation, the FLN was able to allow the Algerian people to hear their opinion of "the restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social Algerian state, within the framework of Islamic principles,"⁴⁹ By banding together and fighting their oppressors. From bonding together, the National Liberation Front was able to gain popularity within the already angered native population in how to fix the problem of land disputes and lack of rights. These goals included Algerian land for the Algerians, and the return of Islamic cultural and social standards. This came after the repeated deliberations in the French government and Charles de Gaulle to determine if Algeria is French or a just a French colony. These discussions

⁴⁷ Class notes taken November 2, 2015 in Dr. Patricia Goldsworthy-Bishops Mod 20th Century History: France.

⁴⁸ Hamou Amirouche, *Memoirs of a Mujahed: Algerias Struggle for Freedom, 1945-1962* (San Diego, CA: Amirouche Publishing, 2014). Kindle Edition, 38.

⁴⁹ "Proclamation November 1, 1954: To the Algerian People," Marxist.org.

and debates about what Algeria was to the French would never fully get answered. The French president, Charles de Gaulle, in his postwar speeches failed to properly claim Algeria as a direct part of France to the public. The FLN waving Algerian flags on May 8th, 1945 infuriated not only the French government but the soon to be OAS. The Algerian War had officially commenced.

One of the most prominent ways we see the decolonization of Algeria be extremely violent is by the French military's way of torture. The French military was known for using "clean" torture techniques. "clean" torture techniques are when a person uses starvation, or any form of hurting a person, however, it does not show up on the body. These techniques included electro torture and water-based torture such as water boarding. Essentially when the French troops would torture an Algerian, that Algerian would have a harder time claiming that he was tortured because there were no physical bruises or cuts on his body. This way of torture the French military used was not only violent but caused psychological warfare within the Algerian population who were tortured. This way of torture techniques by the French paratroopers would become the main fuel to the FLN's fire and anger towards the French soldiers.

The first widely published account to show the extent of torture by the French military is from Henri Alleg's *The Question*. Published four years into the war, Alleg recalls his imprisonment within the French paratrooper's prison. Alleg discusses the French troop's use of electrotherapy on him by stating that,

He attached one of them to the lobe of my right ear and the other to a finger on the same side. Suddenly, I leapt in my bonds and shouted with all my might. C- had just sent the first electric charge through my body. A flash of lightning exploded next to my ear and I felt my heart racing. I struggled, screaming, and stiffened myself until the straps cut into my flesh. All the while the shocks controlled by C-, magneto in hand, followed each other without interruption.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Henri Alleg, *The Question* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006). 44.

This helps paint a picture of how the French paratroopers used electro torture. By attaching different electric cables to different parts of the body, the French military was able to send an electrical current through a human body. This brought immense amounts of pain to the person being tortured.

The French military's torture did not always work. Henri Alleg later went on to state that, "Senseless violence: whether the victim talks or whether he dies under his agony, the secret that he cannot tell is always somewhere else and out of reach. It is the executioner who becomes Sisyphus. If he puts the question at all, he will have to continue forever."⁵¹ This shows that even though the French paratroopers were doing these horrid acts of violence, most the time people either died before they confessed the information they had, the information was never told, or the information was out of date due to the National Liberation Front constantly moving about the country. This made the torture a failure, but the Algerians were able to take this information and use it as fuel to their revolution. The FLN recruited those who were tortured or their family members. One can see this in *Memoirs of a Mujahed* when Hamou Amirouche recalls, "As for my father, he was repeatedly arrested and taken to Akbou [prison] for interrogation, each time causing us great concern."⁵² Amirouche would eventually join the National Liberation Front after figuring out the tortures of the people, and the death of his father. Revenge was a common theme for the National Liberation Front and their actions.

Another example of torture in Algeria is through Pierre Vidal-Naquet's *Torture: Cancer of Democracy, France and Algeria 1954-62*. Living through World War II and Jewish, Vidal-Naquet's parents were sent to Auschwitz where he originally found out about the torture of

⁵¹ Henri Alleg, *The Question*. Xxxix.

⁵² Hamou Amirouche, *Memoirs of a Mujahed*. 38.

humans. He was a soldier through the Algerian War, who thought that the torture of Algerians was wrong. It is also important because Naquet was one of the people who signed the manifesto of the 121. The manifesto of the 121 was a written and signed document by one hundred and twenty-one Frenchmen and women who took a stand for the torturing the French military continuously proceeded to do during the war. He states that, “it is now common knowledge in the West that, throughout most of the recent war in Algeria [French-Algerian War], France made general use of the practices of torture, summary execution, and large-scale deportation.”⁵³ This helps illustrate that the French’s use of torture was originally hidden from the outside world. He also states that the French police officers during that time believed, “the water and electricity methods, provided they are carefully used, produce a shock which is more psychological than physical and do not therefore constitute excessive cruelty.”⁵⁴

Another example of the torture of Algerians is the story of Djamila Boupacha. Boupacha was a young girl during the French-Algerian War who was captured by the French military and tortured. During the war, she was, “an FLN liaison agent, illegally imprisoned by French military forces.”⁵⁵ However, women and men were tortured completely differently. In Algerian culture, a woman having sexual relations out of wedlock was considered to be worthless and was a punishable crime. The French, by knowing this, “deflowered her with a bottle: it is a common enough story.”⁵⁶ Her deflowering, however, was not the only torture she received before the rape. Boupacha also had, “blows were showered on her. Her head hit the wall with some

⁵³ Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Torture: Cancer of Democracy: France and Algeria 1954-1962* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963). 15.

⁵⁴ Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Torture: Cancer of Democracy*. 35.

⁵⁵ Simone De. Beauvoir, *Djamila Boupacha: The Story of the Torture of a Young Algerian Girl* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962). 9.

⁵⁶ Simone De. Beauvoir, *Djamila Boupacha*. 9.

violence, and she fell to the ground, stunned. While she lay there the paratroop captain began to kick her in the ribs. This incident left her with a hemithroacic displacement.”⁵⁷ This helps show that the French did not just use clean torture techniques, but would beat people who openly admitted working with the FLN.

When it came to clean torture techniques, the French would chose the most sensitive parts of a woman's body to shock and torture. The narrator goes onto state that, “Djamila was lashed down in the chair, completely naked, while her captors exchanged obscene jokes and drank beer, which they spat over her in mouthfuls till her body was dripping wet.”⁵⁸ This would essentially work like water to help the electrical current be a stronger force on the body. The locations, however, “the other two men attached the terminals successively to her anus, her vagina, and various other points all over her body.”⁵⁹ This statement shows that the French were willing to use any means necessary, whether it be man or women, to try to find as much information about the FLN as possible. The National Liberation Front, however, were able to take acts like this and recruit more people to the cause, “the husbands of the women who were raped were in the local FLN group.”⁶⁰

Investigating the anger is essential when looking at violence within the decolonization process. Whether it be the French conquest or the French-Algerian war, the French were still finding ways to brutally attack and demean the Algerians. The National Liberation Front and other revolutionary groups were able to take the hatred still growing within the unfair treatment of the native population and turn that into torture and violence.

⁵⁷ Simone De. Beauvoir, *Djamila Boupacha*. 34-35.

⁵⁸ Simone De. Beauvoir, *Djamila Boupacha*. 39.

⁵⁹ Simone De. Beauvoir, *Djamila Boupacha*. 39.

⁶⁰ Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution*. 59.

The French were not the only ones torturing civilians. The National Liberation Front believed in revenge. Therefore, while the French army was on manhunts for the FLN, the National Liberation Front was on the same mission but was hunting people who were suspected to be allied with French colonialism. Vidal Naquet stated that "in every mechta (collection of peasant huts), in every village, should be convinced that the cause of the FLN was his own. Brutal methods were, if necessary, used to achieve this."⁶¹ Pierre Vidal-Naquet later goes onto state the fact that, "those who collaborated with the French Army were executed and those who did not obey orders were punished."⁶² This shows how while the French were using clean torture techniques the National Liberation Front were openly punishing French, *colons*, and anyone in their way of creating their own independent Islamic state.

The first operation that's an example of the FLN's violence was the Massacre at Melouza in May 1957. The National Liberation Front technically never claimed the attack as their own; every other political group put the blame on them. To understand why the FLN would behead Algerian men and place their genitalia in their mouth, one has to examine their proclamation of independence.⁶³ Within the document, the FLN makes claims that let the people know you either are a member of the National Liberation Front or an enemy of their state, and by doing so, they were followers of their word. The Massacre at Melouza was a statement showing that a man cannot talk negatively about the group nor create more enemies of the National Liberation Front if they don't have a head or their reproductive parts attached. Within Mouloud Feraoun's journals, he explains how the people reacted to this act of violence. He starts off by stating the

⁶¹ Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Torture: Cancer of Democracy*. 40.

⁶² Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Torture: Cancer of Democracy*. 40.

⁶³ *Massacre de Melouza*, Accessed on November, 17, 2015, http://tenes.info/galerie/albums/MELOUZA/1957_06_01.highlight.jpg

men who were murdered were, “302 men... who wanted to ask the [French] troops for protection.”⁶⁴ In turn when the FLN would proceed with these actions when they found out about their fellow Algerians asking the French military for help. The French and the *Colons*, in the FLN’s eyes, tainted the country and the only way to fix that was to purge the country of its evil.

Another key part to show how decolonization is violent is through key battles, and the sheer amount of violence to be had in the French-Algerian War. By looking at the Café Wars, the General’s Putsch, the Battle of Paris, and the Battle of Algiers one can see how the decolonization of Algeria was extremely destructive other than just torturous.

The Café Wars were the most notable series of events in the French-Algerian war. The Café Wars were a series of bombings in France and major cities in Algeria. Fought between the Algerian Nationalist Movement (MNA) and National Liberation Front (FLN) these battles pitted the bitter rival political groups against each other as well as maximized civilian casualties. It was a series of intimidation events between the two parties. The FLN would bomb one café or restaurant within the cities where known MNA members. In return, the MNA would do the same thing but at suspected FLN meeting locations. However, the major issue was a lot of innocent civilians died. It was a political play of intimidation with mass amounts of violence. Francis Fytton once wrote a letter describing the café wars within Paris titled *Paris Letter: War in the 18th Arrondissement*. It states, “Very often they were insufficiently briefed in an identification and would pick the wrong man; as in the case where they killed two innocent passers-by and let their intended victim escape”⁶⁵ This statement illustrates how these planned attacks would take place. It also helps show how quickly and inaccurate these bombings and attacks were. The

⁶⁴ Mouloud Feraoun and Le Sueur James D., *Journal, 1955-1962*. 211.

⁶⁵ Francis Fytton, “Paris Letter: War in the 18th Arrondissement,” Accessed on November 25, 2015, <http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=10378>.

political groups would shoot, or bomb the wrong place. This violence would result in mass casualties. The Café Wars are a prime example of the violence within the decolonization process. Rather than torture this urban guerilla warfare system of bombing certain sections of the city and then doing the same in another section illustrates the fact that both MNA and FLN had to resort to terrorism and mass violence to obtain their objective.

Another instance where there was extreme violence was the Battle of Algiers. Lasting from January to March 1957 this was one of the first battles fought in the French-Algerian War. The start of the battle was fought over two National Liberation Front Members being guillotined. Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* he describes that, "announcing that for every guillotined member of the FLN a hundred French would be killed indiscriminately, Randane Abane [one of the National Liberation Front leaders] ordered immediate reprisals."⁶⁶ Thus initiating the Battle of Algiers. In spite of the French military and their guillotines, the FLN ordered operatives to "kill any European between the ages of eighteen and fifty-four. But no women, no children, no old people..."⁶⁷ This shows that originally the FLN was attacking men of a certain age who would be most likely to join the French side. However, this would only cause the Battle of Algiers to be a strenuous three-month long battle between the National Liberation Front and French military.

These events were where terrorism began cultivating within the war. This terrorism is where to strike fear into the French military or *colons*, the National Liberation Front would bomb cities or murder civilians. The FLN was training people to go into the city of Algiers, pick specific locations where the most Europeans would be and then bomb the location. One of the

⁶⁶ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: Viking Press, 1978). 183.

⁶⁷ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*. 184.

heads of these operations was Saadi Yacef, where he trained specifically women. Women were more likely to make it into certain sections of the city of Algiers, where some men could not. During battles such as the Battle of Algiers and the Café Wars, the French Government put in place restrictions on men entering certain parts of the cities, specifically the French parts of the cities. However, women could still travel into those parts of the city, so the National Liberation Front took advantage of this and trained women to plant the bombs. The French government would find out about Yacef, and his bomb-making operation and eventually silence the movement. Before they could silence it, “Saadi Yacef, quickly followed suit and orchestrated a series of attacks on French civilians on September 30th, 1956.”⁶⁸ This conflict between the French military and the FLN would slowly come to an end, and the French military was victorious and maintained control of Algiers.

This political play of intimidation in the Café Wars and Battle of Algiers is essential for the struggle of decolonization and to look at how the fight between rival political groups was violent. The National Liberation Front needed to get their message out to the people that they were to be taken seriously. The message through these devastating attacks was that if you weren't with the FLN, you weren't "Algerian" and therefore an enemy.

Another series of battles to examine the violence is through the General's Putsch. These battles occurred towards the end of the war. De Gaulle had begun peace talks with the National Liberation Front, and in turn, the OAS began recruitment and started turning against the government they supported throughout the entirety of the war. Most of the members of the OAS being ex-military the General's Putsch was a series of assassination attempts and struggles to for

⁶⁸ Mouloud Feraoun and Le Sueur James D., *Journal, 1955-1962*. XX.

Colons to take immediate control of Algeria. The first wave attempted assassinations on French generals and even the French President Charles De Gaulle. The plan was to overthrow the French government by taking control of major Algerian cities such as Algiers and Oran.⁶⁹ However, the second step of their plan to take control of Paris would come to a halt and utter failure after fighting for the major cities in Algeria. This illustrates that as the war was coming to an end there was still anger between French settlers and the government, and the only way to fix that was to kill off the current heads of France. These failed assassinations would cause disagreements between the generals within the OAS. The second phase of their plan failed when the generals could not settle their differences. The second phase was to capture and control the city of Paris, thus controlling all of France.

The last series of battles discussed is the Battle of Paris. According to Martin Evans, in his book *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* he states that, "30,000 unarmed Algerians converged on the centre of Paris."⁷⁰ However, the French police would then beat and chase Algerians away. They even went as far as throwing the bodies of the dead protesters into the Seine River.⁷¹ The French lowered the number of dead Algerians while the FLN reported that over two-hundred Algerians were dead and thrown into the river.⁷² The OAS still angered about these peace talks began bombing the city of Paris and terrorizing it immensely in attempts to take control of the city. Evans states that, "between 15 January and 28 January there were forty-eight bombings."⁷³ The bombings would eventually go back to protests until on 18th November,

⁶⁹ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*. 450.

⁷⁰ Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War (Making of the Modern World)*, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2012). 308.

⁷¹ Martin Evans, *Algeria*. 308.

⁷² Martin Evans, *Algeria*. 308.

⁷³ Martin Evans, *Algeria*. 309.

“10,000 students marched for ‘Peace in Algeria.’”⁷⁴ However, the protests in the Battle for Paris would become bloody. The students began fighting the police until the student’s protest finally was pushed out of the city by Papon’s police once again. The peace talks between the French government and Algerians eventually stopped the protests and riots in Paris. The Evian Accords were signed on March 18th, 1962 and the French-Algerian war was over. Algeria officially was an independent nation. The violent cycle officially had come to an end. The National Liberation Front’s goal of fighting its colonizers with violence to have a clean break from the French government was successful.

The war was a consistent struggle for freedom. Lasting eight years the National Liberation Front stated in one of their pamphlets, “this is yet another proof that no modern army can defeat a people fighting for a just cause.”⁷⁵ The fight against French imperialism was over. While the French had an army out scaling the Algerians the passion, and pure desire for freedom is what kept the revolution going. The sheer torture and violence necessary to prove the seriousness of the war continued to grow and the intimidation play between the political parties would eventually come to peace talks after the FLN proved that they were truly willing to go through any means necessary to restore the state of Algeria back to its traditional Islamic values, without being oppressed by the French Empire.

Overall the war was extremely violent, and the numbers are there to prove it. In Todd Shepard’s *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* he states that, “FLN forces killed more ‘Muslim’ civilians (over 16,300 in Algeria through 19

⁷⁴ Martin Evans, *Algeria*. 309.

⁷⁵ "The Algerian Revolution is Six Years Old," Marxist.org, accessed May 2, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/history/france/trotskyism/1960/algerian-revolution.htm>.

March, 1962) than ‘European’ civilians (over 2,700 in Algeria through 19 March, 1962).”⁷⁶ This statistic is shocking in the sense that the FLN claimed to be the leaders for the Muslim people, and native population within Algeria. It completely contradicts the National Liberation Front and their ideals. However, the French military killed more Algerians. According to Shepard, the French military killed “at least 150,000 (and upwards of 350,000) Algerian ‘Muslims’”⁷⁷ The OAS, however in their small stint of attempted power, through the stretch of spring of 1961 to April of 1962 killed 1,660 people.⁷⁸ Mouloud Feraoun would be one of those killed in a mass killing by the OAS. Therefore, in total over 170,000 – 300,000+ Algerians were killed during the French-Algerian War. This number doesn't represent the total amount of people tortured, beaten, and imprisoned for resisting the French government and protesting.

Conclusion

The colonization of Algeria was a violent, and tortuous ordeal where people died in the resisting of French colonization. The French made sure to separate themselves from the native population through means of religion as well having a perception on the Algerians defined as “Orientalism.” They also made themselves look like the superior race by not giving the Algerians population civil rights, as well as taking their land from them. The French settlers thrived within the colony. However, the native Algerian population lacked the economic and social resources. The way the French colonized Algeria only made the indigenous Algerian population build up anger to the point where after World War II and the fall of Vichy France,

⁷⁶ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*. 44.

⁷⁷ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*. 45.

⁷⁸ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*. 183.

small political groups such that like the National Liberation Front were given the chance to take the common bonds of anger and fight for their freedom. Algerians fought for freedom with mass amounts of violence, political groups like the Algerian National Movement, and the National Liberation Front would fight the French Military and themselves in order to gain power and independence for Algeria. The only way to properly decolonize from a violent colonizer was to violently decolonize from the French. Ending this vicious cycle of colonization with the very same thing that it started with, violence and death.

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