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French vs France: Vichy Government Attempts to Save the Empire

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Vichy Government Attempts to Save the Empire

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England and France are just a few of the world powers deeply involved in maintaining and continuing colonization in the twentieth century. Even after World War I, which scholars point to as a breakdown in colonization, imperialism remained relatively strong in these European powers. As the world was thrust into a new war, colonialism would face more challenges in both the political and economic sphere. A complete transformation would be made from the efforts of self determination around the world by both indigenous people and those who sympathize with their plight. The different changes sprouting in the colonies were created and understood based on the Imperial policies of the European power ruling them.

Political specialists see the affect that World War II had on decolonization for the French Empire as the occupation and surrender of three-fifths of the European France, also known as the metropole. National sentiment developed within the colonies by the French State policies is often overlooked as a major cause of decolonization. The analysis of Vichy programs within the colonies, the adaptation of these policies by indigenous population for nationalistic movements, and the shift of colonial views towards the French government illuminates the way that the Vichy government pushed decolonization into the forefront of the post-war world.

By analyzing the policies and response within French Indochina and French North Africa, the French State policies creates a breeding ground for national and anti-French sentiment. French Indochina refers to the French ruled areas in Southeast Asia and French North Africa is used to refer to Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. The French government ruled all of these often ignoring the differences within ethnic groups in the areas. By ignoring ethnic differences a national identity that transcended ethnic ideals is harvested. While some ethnic

differences were looked at, such as Berber or non-Berber others were ignored or taken for granted, making a hegemonic place for many to call for nationalism.

One of the linchpins to destroying the French Empire would be the French State, also known as the Vichy government due to its headquarters in the southern spa town of Vichy. This government was created after the Fall of France to the German blitzkrieg, where the National Assembly voted to have war veteran and Lion of Verdun Henri Philippe Pétain become the marshal of the French State. In July of 1940 he became the Chief of the French State gaining dictator like power.[1] This state was to be a 'neutral' government, not taking active part in the war, which collaborated with the German Third Reich to keep control of the French Empire. A second French 'government', Free France, attempted to counter the power and control of the Empire. Headed by Charles de Gaulle in London, Free France worked with the allied forces after the fall of France until the end of the war. Both of these groups goals were to maintain colonial authority and the resources that they provided. Vichy interaction in the colonies with Free France pressures helped to develop policies to maintain colonist support.

Vichy policies directed towards French colonist constantly pushed for French nationalism. The groundwork Vichy policies laid in freeing these colonies from subjugation is the antithesis of what government officials had planned. Indigenous people developed and maintained a local nationalism out of the Vichy policies created for the colonies. Though decolonization would not come in some areas for over a decade, local nationalism became the call to arms in the French colonies. The ability for Vichy policy to create and promote national

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[1] Walter Consuelo Langsam, *Historic Documents of World War II*, Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc. 1958, 45

identity and alienate the indigenous people in the colonies would be the lasting effect of the racially charged doctrine that Pétain would create.

Some of the earliest writings pertaining to the end of the French Empire focused solely on the influence of wars. The heavy reliance upon colonial soldiers in the trenches of World War I eroded the strength of colonization.The immense number of casualties from World War I decreased the prestige and strength of the imperial powers to properly protect and keep control of their colonial interests. Authors eventual start to look at World War II and how not only war affected ideas but people. Robert Aron's book *The Vichy Regime 1940-44* illuminates how Vichy policy strengthened nationalism in the metropole. Aron gives little to contribute to the idea of decolonization but his analysis of the mindset of Metropolitan France helps to support many authors narratives of colonial disillusionment.[2] Though much of this disillusionment will take years to be the sole focus for authors, this work is the foundation of understanding how important the metropole will be in decolonization.

Another way war seems to be a leader in the road for decolonization was the promotion of the racial divide between Europeans and non-Europeans. In *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945,* Langley enlightens readers on the presence of nationalism in West Africa, and how it adapted and changed due to the wars and fall of France. the 'destruction' of the French Republic by the Vichy Government created a disillusionment of European supremacy within African colonies. Martin Thomas also analyzes the issue of European supremacy. His book *The French Empire at War 1940-45* delves into the fight between the two French 'governments' over the colonial properties. This argument promotes the impact of failure to

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[2] Robert Aron, *The Vichy Regime 1940-44*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958.

protect on the French image, and expanded the weight of Vichy government as an actor in decolonization. By analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of these two French governments, colonized people evaluated the flaws of their European 'overlords'.

K.H. Adler wrote an article in 2000 that places Vichy policy in metropolitan history. Adler maps the importance of the Vichy government at home creating an image of the impact the Vichy government would have. This gives a unique identity to the French State, disputing claims that Vichy Government was just the lap dog of the Third Reich. Many authors have said that Vichy regime's colonial policies were a continuation upon previous leadership, taking away the impact this government would truly have. By creating a more solid image of Vichy rule Adler ends up promoting the evaluation of the Vichy government's lasting impact a turning point in the field of French decolonization.

As colonies gained their freedom, scholars looked at the way in which people called for their rights. Langley along with many other authors in the new millennium took similar stances within the category of writing about colonial realizations and coping mechanisms. Ruth Ginio focuses primarily on French West Africa and its hardships, struggles, and relationship with metropolitan France. Her comprehensive focus on this large French colony opened up the voices of West Africans in many ways. Her initial articles on the subject would pave the way for others to focus on individual colonies or people as a smaller bit of the big picture issue of decolonization and the destruction of the French empire. People such as William Hitchcock, who wrote an article on Pierre Bisson, the colonial general in AOF from 1940-1942, and his impact upon ruling West Africa and colonization during the Vichy regime's power illuminate the impact the Vichy governors had upon colonial rule.

Another author who opens the door on focus of specific colonies wrote a book on three. Eric Jennings' *Vichy in the Tropics* focuses on Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina in the French colonies and how Vichy colonialism broke the colonial mold. Jennings tackles the ideas of World War I and II as strong proponents for decolonization. He denotes that historians looked at it broadly, ignoring the changes in French colonial ideology, and promoting the weak European argument.[3] He also imparts the knowledge of how Vichy rule and Popular Front ideology transformed the culture in French Indochina. The impact of assimilation to French culture on the part of the Popular Front, while Vichy promoted traditional values transformed Frenchness. This cultural shift can be seen as a major factor in the rebellion within Indochina. The importance of colonial ideology and the shift during Vichy regime is also commented on by another author who focuses on West Africa. Genova's *Colonial Ambivalence, Cultural Authenticity, and the Limitations of Mimicry in French-Ruled West Africa, 1914-1956* gives insight into West African culture and the impact of French culture in the colony. This book along with Ginio's *French Colonialism Unmasked* help to give an informed and strong picture of the impact of French, including Vichy, governmental policies and social commentaries upon French West Africa.

This idea that cultural and economic factors before the war, mixed with Vichy ideology and policy could lead to a cocktail of rebellion and revolution is one that Thomas Martin will also write on. His article *European Crisis, Colonial Crisis? Signs of Fracture in the French Empire from Munich to the Outbreak of War* promotes the importance of pre-war factors that created fissures in the empire. Examining the strong relationship between metropole and colonial

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[3] Eric Thomas Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain's National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940-1944*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001, 2

France, illuminates the strength and weaknesses of the Empire. Martin's focus on the impact of economics upon decolonization in conjunction with political harshness creates a foundation of insight into the challenges the Vichy government would face at its inception. This basic understanding of political survival helps to illuminate the impact that this short term government would have long term on the French Empire.

The most recent author who has made a tangential comment on decolonization is an author who chose to analyze French World War II combat films. *"Revenant(s) de Guerre?" Spectres of Decolonization in the French Second World War Combat Films* by Rachel Langford is not written for the historical community but for the film community. Her focus on the images of decolonization that show up in World War II films allows for a critique of French silences about decolonization. The social stigmas around it create barriers within the artistic field that are still being left alone. She analyzes *la France resistante*, *Week-end a Zuydcoote, Un taxi pour Tobrouk, and Les Morfalous*, all films focusing on France during World War II.[4] Her analysis informs on how the field has been approached and steps that need to be taken to help promote the understanding and importance of decolonization and the fall of Imperial Europe. The silences in these films she focuses on helps to see the connections that the French people saw between World War II and the Algerian War for independence. These connections allow for a greater understanding of Vichy actions along with reactions by the French people.

All of these authors have added work to the field of French decolonization. At first the scholarship shows the fallibility of European powers as the initial reasonings for the fall of the empire. Slowly the field adapts to the ideas of governmental policy and the extremity and

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[4] Rachel Langford. "*"Revenant(s) De Guerre?*" Spectres of Decolonization in the French Second World War Combat Film." *French Studies* LXVII, no. 3 (2013): 362. Accessed March 10, 2015. http://fs.oxfordjournals.org/.

culmination of Vichy doctrine within the colonies as a call for independence. Jennings and Gunio exploration of nationalism as a catalyst allow this paper to jump from and elaborate on the overarching themes of Vichy leadership and diverge by looking French citizenship and Frenchness as part of that cry for nationalism.

The primary sources that will be analyzed to help the understanding of the development of nationalism through policy are mostly translated. Correspondence to and from De Gaulle, legal documents from the Vichy government, along with a few articles written during the war will be the main types of documents. Also documents written by anti-French politicians such as Ho Chi Minh will also make an appearance. Writings from indigenous people also find a home and help to show the understanding of where Vichy fit in the French identity. These primary sources create a clear picture of the impact that France and the idea of being French had on the mindset of all people in the French Empire. This issue of identity is not unique to the World War II setting in France, but it is one of the most vivid and extreme examples harking back to the French Revolution for inspiration and applicability.

A regional analysis illustrates how the indigenous population both interpreted and reacted to Vichy Policy. This shows how Vichy ideology unintentionally promoted and allowed for decolonization due to its focus on French nationalism, racial disparity, and 'return to a better time' sentiment. By starting with French Indochina and then moving to North Africa, the policies created and the relationship between the French colonists and indigenous people show a growth in local nationalism leading to decolonization. The interpretation of Vichy policies by indigenous people that created local nationalism and anti-French sentiment prompted and supplied the fuel for the decolonization wildfire in the French Empire.

French Indochina

Some of the strongest and most immediate backlashes to Vichy politics can be seen in French Indochina. This region was occupied by Japan when the Vichy government came to power. This occupation gave a similarity between people in Indochina and their French counterparts in the metropole. Some of the first programs that the Vichy government implemented in the metropole were youth groups that focus on youth participation, nationalism, and traditional roles of citizens. The organization *Chantiers de Jeunesse* was one of the most impactful of the youth groups in the metropole.[5] this group was created in Indochina just after the beginning of World War II. Lead by military authorities, this group helped to promote French pride and the importance of physical labor as a return to a strong France. The political strife within the metropole was being combated by youth groups that promoted nationalistic tendencies. Pétain, using other military leaders, pushed militaristic educational programs at home and abroad.[6] The first implementation of promoting ideas at home along with abroad was the exportation of these military lead youth groups. The ideas that held soldiers to their cause and promoted the ability to follow without question, were now being taught to the youth across the empire.

Militaristic ideas were being taught within the context of Pétain's new catch phrase. By taking the traditional phrase of the French Revolution '*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*' and transforming it into '*Travail, famille, patrie',* he pulls from the history of France to create an identity more focused on tradition than equality. People often translate the phrase '*Travail, famille, patrie'* as 'family, tradition, and fatherland', while some translate it as 'family, tradition,

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[5] Anne Raffin. *Youth Mobilization in Vichy Indochina and its Legacies 1940-1970*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005, 21
[6] Raffin, Youth 20

and homeland'. The importance of homeland promotes an idea of where one lives is meaningful. In the colonies, the idea of "homeland" recalls indigenous land not the metropole. This idea of fatherland would be adapted by Ho Chi Minh, leader of the Vietnamese communists and political activist that would declare independence for Vietnam at the end of the war. In the Declaration of Independence he even reminds the French that they have "violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow citizens."[7] He calls out French rule by using the terminology that perpetuated colonialism to destroy it. Both give headway to the idea of land and where one was born as being key to understanding the French way of life. Pétain used the notion of Frenchness at home to help inspire those under German role that persevering and believing in the French identity was key to imperial success.

An adverse reaction would be the effect in the colonies. As many military leaders became educational leaders in the colonies, the idea of nationalism became a keystone of education.[8] The idea of Europe being maintained by a strong Germany was on the minds of many Vichy leaders. To stop the germanization of the colonies, Vichy leaders often pushed for colonial identities to mirror that of the metropole. This constant look at a post-war world drove much of Vichy policy. The focus on maintaining a strong empire was pivotal in Vichy decisions, because the only way for them to stay relevant in the new world would be through imperial strength.

The importance of military life in maintaining a strong national identity would be the driving force of many policies. While in the Third Republic militarism had been frowned upon and weeded out, Vichy regime promoted and empowered all of the branches of the military.[9] The

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[7] Ho Chi Minh, "Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, " *Selected* Writings (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1977), pp. 5356 on Fordham Modern History Sourcebook
[8] Raffin, Youth, 21
[9] Ibid., 26

blatant importance of military leaders was seen in Pétain's choice of administrators for the colonies: "Admiral Jean Decoux was appointed governor-general in Indochina and Navy Captain Maurice Ducoroy was the general commissioner for Physical Education, Sports, and Youth" in Indochina.[10] The numerous occasions of military, specifically naval officials placed into authoritative positions within Indochina was a continuation of the importance of militarism, with the emphasis on the one branch that maintained the most prestige after the occupation of France. [11] The navy was not marred by the loss of Paris, because there a sea battle never took place. Their inability to contribute to the fight meant that it was not their fault that the capital was lost.

The navy had a large role in the creation of French Indochina. The fact that Indochina was pieced together as a colony, initially parts being obtained as early as 1859 and spent almost thirty years acquiring control over the whole area, gave a long history of having French military personnel within the borders.[12] The gradual addition of lands to French control also gave specific areas the constant presence and dominance of French military as a generational acceptance. This militarism lead to many strong pushes for youth involvement in many unique spheres. The ambition of many of the nationalistic groups to create youth support, along with French groups wanting to maintain their imperial authority, created an additional struggle for power between Vichy government and an opposing force. The importance of gaining youth support is something that all facets of political and economic arenas understood and tried to monopolize. Some of the first groups in Indochina were religious organizations looking to convert children.

The multitude of groups vying for the land within French control created a large division between types of nationalist groups. The Franco-Siamese pacts dealing with some of the Siamese

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[10] Raffin, Youth.,40
[11] Ibid., 41
[12] Ibid., 36

claims to annex parts of Indochina was put into the waste bucket with the Fall of France and the creation of the Vichy Regime.[13] The inability of the Vichy regime to maintain the treaties and respect of the French Empire would be a major rallying point for local ethnic groups, communist groups, and outside ethnic groups who had their eyes set on the lands of Indochina. These groups viewed the fall of France as an inability of France to protect itself or its people. This gave rise to many of the areas which were taken by force into the French Empire to rebel and call for freedom.[14]

Japanese groups promoting 'Asia for Asians', as well as Vietnamese religious and nationalist groups created and maintained youth programs along with creating propaganda to promote resistance of the European intercession.[15] The works of Japanese propaganda were distributed in Indochina promoted the imagery of many unique Asians working together against imperialists. This adaptation of Vichy and French youth groups both by creating their own versions and taking over the French groups promoted national pride as opposed to imperial pride and French acceptance was one of the downfalls of Vichy policy. These religious groups were also met by political groups. Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh would also use youth and idealism to promote communism and a freedom from French and Japanese oppression.

With '*patrie*' creating a distinction between Imperial authority and indigenous authority that was kept in place over the time of colonization by promoting father or homeland, the downfall of dual administrative network which operated within much of the French colonial environment within Indochina showed an idealization of local rule.[16] In many French colonies

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[13]Adrienne Doris Hytier. *Two Years of French Foreign Policy Vichy 1940-1942*. France, 1958. 209
[14]Hytier, Two Years, 211
[15] Raffin, Youth, 45-50
[16] Ibid., 38,41

the French colonial government was created and maintained in conjunction with existing governmental structures. By maintaining the existing bureaucracy within the colony and adding a European checkpoint would tear at the strength of European rule. The ability for indigenous people to maintain some sense of authority would exemplify a counterpoint to European dominance. This ability to maintain control over some aspect of life allowed indigenous sentiment of self government to lie dormant throughout its time as a colony.

The realization of ability to rule gave way to the ability to be French. Since many in the colonies were not allowed to be French citizens they lost out on rights of being French. At the same time, they were a part of the French Empire so they were not considered foreigners either. This duality of not being French, but not being foreign either would create a headache for many indigenous people. A great example was when two students from Indochina attempted to get into the Ecole Coloniale, but were denied because the Ecole Coloniale specifically told the ministry of colonies that "these youth are not foreigners, but nor are they French citizens."[17] This only furthers the distinction between French and not French. The people in Indochina were able to see indigenous people rule themselves within the government, a renewed interest into indigenous culture and heritage, and the adaptation of Vichy policies and procedures to maintain and promote nationalism would be pivotal in their response for and eventual adaptation of independence.

While people in the Vichy Government were cross with some of the initial happenings of Japan's intervention and occupation of Indochina, they did not seem to appreciate how similar the situation was to the metropole. At the time of the fall of Paris General Georges Catroux was

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[17] Genova, Colonial Ambivalence, 186

the governor general of Indochina. He was instantly put between a rock and a hard place when the Japanese decided to force him into submitting to the occupation of his area and the stoppage of supporting China in its efforts against them. In a letter back to the metropole to Pétain, Catroux attempted to defend his position in allowing the Japanese army to enter and maintain troops in Indochina in a similar way that Pétain justified his actions the allies."When one is beaten, when one has few planes and little anti-aircraft defense, no submarines, one tries to keep one's property without having to fight and one negotiates. That is what I have done."[18] When Catroux tried to justify his actions by giving blatant and harsh views of how beaten the French were, he made the decision without consulting the government.[19] because he did not consult the government, Catroux weakened the Vichy government and allowed another force to vie for French authority. By using Catroux as an example, the Vichy regime showed that those who acted without consulting the metropole would be dealt with harshly. This harshness shows that even if they did the same thing, committing to collaboration and choosing to give up the fight just like Pétain, if they did not consult the chain of command they would be removed. This harshness, along with the added stress of multiple groups vying for Asian independence, caused the secession of Indochina from the French Empire at the end of the war.

Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh declared themselves and their fatherland free from Japanese and French rule. He constantly reminded the French that "The truth is that we have wrested our independence from the Japanese not the French."[20] This reminder that France had lost all semblance of leadership and control over the country. He also harks back to remind the French that the Vichy regime had violated all orders of French ideals within the colonies. He

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[18] Hytier, Two Years, 215
[19] Ibid., 215
[20] Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese Declaration, 5356

proclaimed that Pétain's abuse of "the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" was another reason for the breakaway from French abuse.[21] This immediate breakaway from European rule was stronger because of distance, native unrest, and nationalistic ties that tore at the fabric of the region.

North Africa

The last set of colonies that will be examined is North Africa. First the analysis of economic importance of this group of colonies would be to the Empire promoted the importance of this set of colonies to the French Empire. North Africa's economic importance to the French metropole was undeniable. The number of exports from North Africa to the metropole were insurmountable. This could be part of the reason that Pétain was so adamant that the armistice was "no less concerned about our colonies than about metropolitan France."[22] Pétain worked with the Nazi government as a way to maintain control of France's greatest resources, their colonies. The amount of exports provided by three of the North African countries accounted for 'one month supply for the whole of unoccupied France' in 1940.[23] The fact that Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia supplied a month of food for the unoccupied metropole created a demand for production in the colonies. A few years later a 3 month supply of the food for the metropole shows an increase in reliance on North African goods. The importance of keeping trade between metropole and North Africa helped direct much of the policy and relations between Vichy France and Britain and Germany. The importance of these resources to the French government is one that is often overlooked by historians. Often the proximity to the metropole is the importance

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[21] Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese Declaration, 5356.

[22] Qtd. in *La Legion,* Aug. 1940 Cited in: Ruth Ginio, *French Colonialism Unmasked: The Vichy Years in French West Africa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), pg. 1.

[23] H. L., "French North Africa since June, 1940—II: Economic Problems of the Three Countries," *Bulletin of International News* 20, no. 1 (January 09, 1943): pg. 3-4

piece in the relationship between North Africa and the metropole, not the reliance on trade goods.

The reorientation of industry into these three colonies created a push for more self-sufficiency into the colonies. Colonies being independent of energy needs from the metropole meant they had the ability to continue to supply the country. The importance of independent economic stability is something that the Vichy wanted not for the betterment of the colonies, but for the ability to keep industry out of German hands. They also wanted to keep the exportation of foodstuffs high. Pétain uses the proximity of the North African colonies to France as a tool for keeping the infrastructure of France out of German hands. The creation of areas to produce finished goods, such as soap factories, sugar refining, textiles, and alcohol refinement, within the colonies is one that was not present until Pétain's government.[24] The ability for resources to be produced and developed on 'French' soil without being controlled by Germans was something that the Vichy government strived for. The policies that were put into place for North Africa were often for the idea of keeping French interests out of German hands and with its closeness to the metropole the colonies in North Africa were perfect. Even in the initial aftermath of the fall of France the only option for continuing the fight against Germany was to move to North Africa.[25] Yet when that seemed to be the only option, those who opposed the armistice did nothing in the lead up to Pétain's rise to power to prepare North Africa to even try to defend against German aggression in Europe.[26]

The fall of France caused the Vichy Government to fight for its territories with many groups. The group in North Africa would be the Spanish. With Spanish claims upon areas of

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[24] H.L., French North Africa, 7
[25] Hytier, Two Years, 17
[26] Ibid.,, 18

Morocco that were closely linked to Spanish Morocco, the Vichy government had to deal with Spanish requests to them and to German for the areas. While trying to keep Spain neutral and German from breaking the armistice Pétain and his government were becoming trapped in dealings. Yet the indigenous people were more against being under Spanish rule, which was evident in General Nogues response to his government.[27] He told many at home that "any cession of territory to Spain without fighting would be a dishonor to France"[28] The indigenous people saw the French government as preferable than Spanish even if it was Vichy.

Though youth programs see often used by Vichy regime to promote Imperial identity, it was a system that had been in place in North Africa since 1925.[29] Though these institutes were in place as part of Catholic attempts to convert the indigenous people, Pétain was able to adapt these institutes to promote his policies. The use of military leaders was used here as well particularly admirals to help this end. Admirals Abrial and Esteva were put into place in both Algeria and Tunisia respectively.[30] Though the military was not the first to promote the ideas of sports to North Africa, there would help promote them and push them during the area of Vichy government's tenure in North Africa.[31] youth sports groups had been in North Africa since the 1910's and the adaptation of these popular groups towards French nationalism happened seamlessly. Although many of the colonial officers had not seen the devastation of Hitler's army, the chose to follow the lead of Pétain and maintain the neutrality and armistice agreement with

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[27] Hytier, Two Years, 207
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.,, 40
[30] Ibid., 41
[31] Ibid.

Germany.[32] Though many in North Africa especially felt betrayed by the armistice and wished to

keep up fighting, they trusted their French rulers to do what was in their best interest.

Like Indochina, the fight for independence from France in North Africa would be bloody.

There would be wars for independence, the worst of which would be in Algeria. The Algerian

War which is often hidden in French history was one of the worst. Henri Alleg's *The Question*

gives the harshest reality of Vichy impact upon decolonization. The connections of the French

officers to Gestapo and the relation of that to the impact Vichy shaped how French viewed

occupiers would be one major theme of remembrance.[33] Though Alleg was a French journalist

from the metropole, he was held hostage and tortured during the Algerian War. Submitted to

waterboarding, electric shocks and other horrible acts of cruelty, Alleg opened French eyes to the

door that Pétain opened when dealing with the Nazis.[34] This cruelty towards another human

being was only an issue when it was to a French citizen. The countless indigenous lives that were

also tortured in this brutal way were of no concern. Though the graphic nature of this book

would cause it to be banned, it was the black mark that it put on French relations and identity

from the period of Vichy France that caused it to remain banned long after the war. This inability

to see worth in colonized people's lives highlights the negative impact of Pétain's policy towards

non-French. Another way in which the indigenous people saw the French as Nazis was in the

laws passed about Jewish citizenship.

Like in Indochina many were unable to obtain French citizenship but Jewish Algerians

had been awarded that in 1870. This was something that had been a fighting point over between

Muslims and the French, while Jews got caught in the middle of the two dominant groups

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[32] Hytier, Two Years, 42
[33] Henri Alleg. *The Question.* Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2006
[34] Alleg, *The Question*

waring. When Pétain repealed the Cremieux Decree he stripped away the citizenship of this group. Indigenous people in masses were now non-French. Many lost rights and privileges that became second nature to their forefathers. The removals of the French identity of Jews created a divide between Jews and colonists, but created a kinship between Jews and Muslims. This kinship was the loss of Frenchness while being a part of France. This loss of French identity fanned the flames of nationalism present in the colonies.

When the war ended people around the world rejoiced. The streets were filled from San Francisco to Tonkin, life would be returned to normal. In the small town of Sétif, rejoicing for victory of the allies and the renewal of France from German occupation were the forefront of people's minds. Yet even with this rejoicing for French victory, the non-French element of colonial life popped its head into the picture. An Algerian flag made its way into the street and cheering for the freedom from French rule and a national identity that indigenous people could rally to became a statement for the local nationalist movements that had found a home in the 'liberated' Africa. This was marred by immediate violence between French gendarmerie and the nationalists cheering in the streets. This went on for days with countless deaths, and finally when French military intervention came, it was against all Muslim communities and cities whether they were associated with the movement or not. The colonial Europeans who had been shooting people in the streets were not reprimanded, but the indigenous people being reprimanded were the focus of the attempts of quelling the violence. It was not the French fault for the violence but those non-French entities just causing trouble. These events would lead to a stronger distaste for Frenchness within the colonies as they became portrayed as militaristic and violent. This French violence would have a major effect in the Algerian war. The way in which the Algerian war is

viewed in the undertones of World War II films also gives insight into the impact of the harsh policies in the metropole upon the colonies.

Many of the films created depicting World War II were made after the fact, many depicted combat either rarely or not at all. Critics have said the reasoning for this is due to the fear of being related to the Algerian war which was being fought. These connections to decolonization through World War II films show a backlash of Vichy policy and Nazi policy being so similar, that years after both are gone, they have a strong effect on the war their contemporary world.[35] The way many were forced into labor camps in Tunisia, along with the tight hold that the Vichy government attempted to keep on Algeria and Morocco during Operation Torch would be shining examples in the impact of decolonization.[36] The laws that removed citizenship from Jews, created by Vichy Rule, would not be removed from the law codes when they went away. Business as usual was kept and some Vichy policy were maintained in North Africa long after the fall of that government.

This paper initially took the task of laying out many of the Vichy policies that were in place in the colonies of French Indochina and North Africa. The impact of specific leaders loyal to the Vichy cause also show a large effect upon the way these policies were enacted; this helped to create a push towards self determination. The impact that Pétain's "*travail, famille, patrie"* motto became a leading cause of nationalist sentiment in the colonies. Its implied and understood meanings created two types of nationalism, imperial and local respectively. The ability for indigenous people to reappropriate Vichy policies to push the call for nationalism was a large factor in Vichy involvement within decolonization as analyzed. The ability to turn semi racist

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[35] Langford, Specters of Decolonization
[36] Memmi, Albert. *The Pillar of Salt*. Boston: Beacon, 1992.

ideology into a call for racial equality is the greatest evidence for how many of the Vichy policies helped break apart what it was trying to hold together.

The turn towards self determination within Indochina helps to show the cultural shift from emulation to traditional values. This mirrors the sentiment that Pétain was focusing on recreating in the metropole showing the indigenous people's ability to spin words to their benefit. This coincides with the fight between two French governments for power over the arms and legs of their Empire. By exposing the indigenous people to the enormous pressure that came with choosing between de Gaulle and Pétain, Africans and Indonesians were given authority they had not had since their colonization. The constant barrage of propaganda from both sides in West Africa was almost an overload for many of the indigenous people, causing an almost apathetic view to the European crisis. Others felt a call to nationalism as an overwhelming response to the constant pull for their authority and power, a remembrance that they could have control over their own lives. In North Africa the constant worry about Allied occupation became a threat that also caused many to fear imperialist governments even more. The ability for these people to create a third option is both inspiring and witty. This struggle lead to a lack of faith within the colonies of the European community in their ability to not only protect them, but also lead them. Even for some of those whose liberation would come later after the war, would make ties to Vichy regime and occupation to get across to the French people the severity of their actions.

The backlash away from European supremacy, due to actions by the government along with actions by others upon the government, promoted and pushed decolonization to a world wide event. The French Empire began breaking apart almost immediately after the liberation for Paris from the Germans. While some colonies took much longer, such as French West Africa

which did not become independent from France until the 1960's, the effects of decolonization were created within a small spanning France State. This four year government would be the turning point in French history as the end of the empire of France. The fall of the French empire coincided with the fall of many other European empires and the move to a post-colonial world was fundamentally created out of World War II.

This World War II government that helped to push the French empire into this new world has often been overlooked, and now it will not be. This paper's goal, the illumination of the true impact of the Vichy Regime upon decolonization and the creation of the postcolonial world, shows that Pétain's government would be greater than many of the government's whose legitimacy was never in question. This look at history helps to show how even though the past is full of things people would rather forget, without them the world would not be where it is now. Is that for better or worse, that is not the point. The point is that all of the world's history is important, and if we lose that, we lose more than we would like to admit.

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