



IMMIGRATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

NORTH AFRICAN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS
IN COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL FRANCE

RABAH AISSAOUI

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TO FATMA AND SAID AISSAOUI, WITH MY GRATITUDE

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADAF	<i>Amicale des Algériens en France</i>
ADAE	<i>Amicale des Algériens en Europe</i>
AEMNA	<i>Association des étudiants musulmans nord-africains</i> (Association of North African Muslim Students)
AGTA	<i>Amicale générale des travailleurs algériens</i>
ALN	<i>Armée de libération nationale</i> (National Liberation Army)
AMF	<i>Association des Marocains en France</i>
AML	<i>Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté</i>
AN	Archives nationales
ANC	African National Congress
ANM	<i>Au nom de la mémoire</i> (In the name of memory)
APL	Agence presse-libération
APP	Archives de la Préfecture de police de Paris
BDIC	Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine
CAC	Centre des archives contemporaines
CAOM	Centre des archives d'Outre-Mer
CARNA	<i>Comité d'action révolutionnaire nord-africain</i>
CCE	<i>Comité central exécutif</i> (central executive committee)
CDVDTI	<i>Comité de défense de la vie et des droits des travailleurs immigrés</i>
CEC	<i>Comité d'études coloniales</i>
CFDT	<i>Confédération française démocratique du travail</i>
CFLN	<i>Comité français de libération nationale</i>
CGT	<i>Confédération générale du travail</i>
CGTU	<i>Confédération générale du travail unitaire</i>
CIDIM	<i>Centre d'information et de documentation sur l'immigration et le Maghreb</i>
CIMADE	<i>Comité intermouvements auprès des évacués, service œcuménique d'entraide</i>
CLMA	<i>Comité pour la libération du Maghreb arabe</i>
CNHI	<i>Cité nationale de l'Histoire de l'immigration</i>
CNRA	<i>Conseil national de la révolution algérienne</i>
CPMA	<i>Comité politico-militaire</i>
CRUA	<i>Comité révolutionnaire d'unité et d'action</i>

CSRP	<i>Comités de soutien à la Révolution palestinienne</i> (Palestinian revolution support committees)
CVIA	<i>Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes</i>
EEC	European Economic Community
ENA	<i>Etoile nord-africaine</i>
FAAD	<i>Front algérien d'action démocratique</i>
FADRL	<i>Front algérien pour la défense et le respect des libertés</i>
FEN	<i>Fédération de l'éducation nationale</i>
FFS	<i>Front des forces socialistes</i>
FLN	<i>Front de libération nationale</i>
GPRA	<i>Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne</i>
HLM	<i>Habitation à loyer modéré</i>
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
JALB	<i>Jeunes Arabes de Lyon et sa banlieue</i>
JC	<i>Jeunesses communistes</i>
LC	<i>Ligue communiste</i>
LCI	<i>Ligue contre l'impérialisme</i> (League Against Imperialism)
MIB	<i>Mouvement de l'immigration et de la banlieue</i>
MNA	<i>Mouvement national algérien</i>
MPB	<i>Mouvement populaire berbère</i>
MRAP	<i>Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et pour la paix</i>
MTA	<i>Mouvement des travailleurs arabes</i>
MTLD	<i>Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques</i>
OAS	<i>Organisation de l'armée secrète</i>
OS	<i>Organisation secrète</i>
PC	<i>Parti communiste</i>
PCA	<i>Parti communiste algérien</i> (Algerian Communist Party)
PCF	<i>Parti communiste français</i> (French Communist Party)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
POI	<i>Parti ouvrier internationaliste</i> (International Workers' Party)
PPA	<i>Parti du peuple algérien</i> (Algerian People's Party)
PPF	<i>Parti populaire français</i>
PPK	<i>Parti populaire kabyle</i>
PRS	<i>Parti de la révolution socialiste</i>
PSU	<i>Parti socialiste unifié</i>
PSOP	<i>Parti socialiste ouvrier et paysan</i>
SAINA	<i>Service de surveillance, protection et assistance des indigènes nord-africains</i>
SCINA	<i>Service de coordination des informations nord-africaines</i>
SFIO	<i>Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière</i>
SHAT	<i>Service historique de l'armée de terre</i>

SONACOTRA	<i>Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs</i>
SRI	<i>Secours rouge international</i>
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i> (Nazi paramilitary organization)
UDMA	<i>Union démocratique du Manifeste algérien</i>
UGEMA	<i>Union générale des étudiants musulmans algériens</i>
UGTA	<i>Union générale des travailleurs algériens</i>
UIC	<i>Union intercoloniale</i>
UNFP	<i>Union nationale des forces populaires</i>
USTA	<i>Union syndicale des travailleurs algériens</i>

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Introduction

Immigration reveals the profound crisis affecting the very idea of the Nation-State.¹

It is often argued that postcolonial immigration in France has posed new challenges to the so-called French republican model of integration. Recurrent unrest in the housing estates and suburbs of French towns and cities (*banlieues*) and the persistence of xenophobia in France² fuel public, political and media debates about the integration of immigrants and their children and about the future of France as a multicultural society. The term immigrant is often diverted from its original meaning to refer mainly to non-Europeans, particularly North Africans, irrespective of whether or not they were born in France and are French nationals.³

In this process, which posits immigration as a problem,⁴ the question of religion is frequently evoked and inexorably tied to the immigrant's persona.⁵ Images of Islamic fundamentalism are conjured up. The headscarf affairs in 1989 and 1994,⁶ and the suspicion and surveillance to which the French authorities subjected Maghrebis, whom they feared might constitute a fifth column in France during the two Gulf wars and the Algerian civil war in the 1990s illustrate how North Africans have come to embody difference in France.

In the face of the racism and sociopolitical, economic and cultural segregation Maghrebis and other postcolonial ethnic minorities experienced in the 1980s, a number of antiracist organizations were created. These were associations close to the French socialist party such as the media-friendly *SOS-Racisme*⁷ and the assimilationist France Plus, or the more ethnically and regionally based *Jeunes Arabes de Lyon et sa banlieue* (JALB). Maghrebis developed their own political action, such as the march against racism and for equality of 1983, and played a leading part in the multiethnic, and somewhat less successful convergences march of 1984, as well as the so-called 'third march against racism' of 1985.⁸ In the 1990s, the emergence of new social movements such as the *Mouvement de l'immigration et de la banlieue* (MIB) reflected a desire

among migrants and their children to be more autonomous and proactive in fighting discrimination and racism.

Despite their so far limited success in bringing improvements to the rights and lives of ethnic minorities in France, politicians and the media have seen these movements as marking a new era of affirmative action among immigrants and their children in France and as signs that so-called 'second generation youths' are entering the realm of the French polity.⁹

What is more problematic, however, is that their action is often depicted as inherently new among ethnic minority populations in France, particularly Maghrebis. Indeed, even though their political mobilization was and is still innovative, it is not the first sign of structured affirmative sociopolitical action among the North African migrant population. The general view, which seems to persist in France, is that North African immigration started to become 'visible' with the coming of age of the 'second generation' from the late 1970s/early 1980s onwards.¹⁰ The so-called first generation, marginalized in shantytowns (*bidonvilles*), workers' hostels and later housing estates (*habitation à loyer modéré*, HLM), was essentially seen as composed of 'invisible' passive workers living quiet and lonely lives well away from the gaze of most of the French population.

Through their lack of an historical perspective, the media and politicians construct Maghrebi and other postcolonial immigrations as a relatively recent phenomenon and radically different from those of previous migrant groups. It also conveys implicitly the idea that previous immigrants from European countries successfully 'integrated' into French society without much difficulty thanks to their cultural and religious affinities with the French. Whereas, in fact, it has been shown that they clearly suffered from racism and segregation in their own time and experienced similar choices and difficulties in the face of France's assimilationist message.¹¹ Even though this is gradually changing, it has, for several decades, allowed French politicians and media pundits to present France's 'model of integration' as unproblematic and to put the onus on the most recent arrivals to assimilate. Their failure to do so is explained not by their sociopolitical, economic and cultural exclusion in France, whose assimilationist machine is said to have worked so well for previous migrants, but because they are culturally and religiously too different or reluctant to integrate. As Sayad points out, 'This kind of social and political edenism attached to the term "integration" ... magnifies past history (and the history of

past and accomplished “integrations”) and, correlatively, “paints a black picture” of present history that is the history of current conflicts.¹²

Equally, the French can present the absence of Maghrebis from the political sphere and from decision-making processes as the immaturity of a community lacking in political tradition and more prone to instinctive than to coherent action, rather than as another illustration of their marginal status in French society.

The aim of this study is twofold. First, I challenge these two widely held beliefs by exploring the processes by which Maghrebi immigrants have, since the period between the two world wars, developed a consistent and original political tradition and voices.¹³ I assess how French universalist values and shifting constructions of ethnicity marked by references to class, culture, religion and history shaped the ethno-national identity of North African migrants in France in the colonial and postcolonial periods.

Second, I emphasize the central role emigration played in the interwar period in developing a nationalist voice and action, which laid the foundations for the independence movement that won Algerian independence and for the nationalist stance in the 1970s that attempted to challenge the totalitarian rule of regimes in North Africa and beyond. Many of the historical studies of North Africa that have focused on the emergence of nationalism and politics in that region have indeed paid little attention to the *continuity* of a political tradition in the Maghrebi immigrant community in France, and underestimated the often influential role the diaspora has played in the politics of change in their home country.

Admittedly, many historians acknowledge the contribution of Messali Hadj’s movement, which was born in emigration, to Algerian independence and politics. However, the emergence of political activism in the diaspora in the interwar period is generally bound to the colonial history of Algeria (or more broadly North Africa) and it somehow faded from the Maghrebi migrants’ political map after Algerian independence was achieved.¹⁴

By contrast, political organizations that developed among North Africans in the postcolonial period before the late 1970s are rarely or too briefly studied, and mostly only from a French sociopolitical perspective.¹⁵ In this book I challenge the colonial/postcolonial dichotomy and show that the hybrid political voices of political movements born in the Maghrebi migrant population are rooted in the politics of

both France and North Africa. I hope to contribute to a better understanding of the underlying political themes that political activists developed in the North African diaspora in the twentieth century, particularly in the 1970s, which is an area on which relatively little academic work has been carried out.

As I shall show, nationalist politics among Maghrebi migrants did not end with the independence of North African states in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Both movements claimed to be nationalist and developed in decades (1930s and 1970s) marked by economic recession and the rise of racism against migrants and other ethnic minorities. By examining the history of political activism among North Africans in France from the interwar period to the late 1970s, I shall analyse the main characteristics of Maghrebi political discourse and mobilization in France across the colonial/postcolonial divide. More specifically, I focus on the central question of identity and on how Maghrebis construct a sense of nationality rooted in ethnicity in a diasporic context. I also look at how the ideological substrata underpinning a Maghrebi sense of identity has been consistent or otherwise over the years. Of course, one has to acknowledge the different historical contexts in which these nationalist movements emerged and developed, and how their respective sociopolitical environments affected and shaped their outlook. However, the strong correlation that exists in some of the key aspects and themes of their discourses and actions illustrates the extent to which the experience of Maghrebis in France remained a shared one, and was marked by racism, socio-economic marginalization and political alienation.

In this book I focus on the two most prominent autonomous North African political organizations to develop within the North African migrant population in the colonial and postcolonial periods.¹⁶ The first is the *Etoile nord-africaine* (ENA). Formed in June 1926, the *Front populaire* government dissolved it on 27 January 1937, but it continued its political activity as the *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA) in the interwar period. This movement grew at the height of French imperialism and, led by the charismatic Messali Hadj, it became an organization mostly concerned with Algerian politics in the colonial era. I focus the analysis of the political voice of the ENA–PPA on the 1930s, but I frame it historically to cover its development until Algerian independence.

The second case-study is the *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes* (MTA),¹⁷ a Maoist-inspired anti-Zionist North African organization

and the strongest independent political voice among first-generation Maghrebi migrants in the postcolonial (1972–77) period.¹⁸

I focus each case study on how ethnic and national identity is constructed in the discourse of each movement. I then look not only at their discourses on the external parameters that marked the Maghrebi diasporic experience, such as racism and international political events, but also at their relationship with the French, with other immigrants and with political organizations.¹⁹

The first case study, Part I, consists of an exploration of some of the key processes that shaped the Algerian nationalist discourse of the ENA (June 1926–January 1937) and *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA) (March 1937–November 1939) in the interwar period. These two political organizations are referred to as the ENA–PPA and/or the Messalist movement in Part I. Despite some variations that can be explained by changing political constraints and developments, the characteristics of the Messalist nationalist discourse and ideology remained more or less the same during the interwar period. Understanding the processes through which Algerian national identity emerged during that period can enable us to trace how Algerian national identity and Algerian nationalism were constructed in the aftermath of the Second World War, during the Algerian war – both within the *Mouvement national algérien* (MNA) and the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN) – and in post-independence Algeria.

I provide a brief historical account in Chapter 1 of the development of the ENA–PPA in the interwar period in an attempt to understand the sociopolitical context within which the Messalist movement developed. The focus of Chapters 2, 3 and 4 is on the ‘inner’ constitutive elements of a Maghrebi ethnic identity and sense of nationality. Chapter 2 is an exploration of how Algerian nationality was constructed in the context of a diaspora. Chapter 3 is an examination of how class, religious, cultural and historical references interweave with the bond of kinship underpinning the Algerian sense of national identity. In Chapter 4, which is an assessment of how Algerian perceptions of ethnicity as difference from ‘French-ness’/Other-ness influenced national identity in the Messalist movement, I look at the movement’s discourses on racism, colonialism and France, and discuss the role that universalist values played in its nationalist ideology. In Chapter 5 I examine the Messalist voice in relation to the ‘outer’ constitutive elements of identity: its action and discourse in the French political arena and on the international scene.

In Part II, Chapters 6 and 7, in an attempt to make a link between the two case studies (the ENA–PPA in the interwar period and the MTA in the 1970s) I outline the historical development of the Messalist movement between the Second World War and Algerian independence. I chart Algerian nationalism from the Second World War to the eve of the Algerian war in Chapter 6 and look at what processes transformed the Messalist organization into an Algerian national movement for independence – the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN), which ultimately led to Algerian independence. In Chapter 7, I summarize Messalist reaction to the Algerian insurrection, Messali Hadj's reaction to the *Mouvement national algérien* (MNA) and its trade union, the *Union syndicale des travailleurs algériens* (USTA), as well as the mounting tensions between the Messalists and the FLN that led to open conflict.

In Part III, the second case study, I explore the emergence of new forms of political activism in postcolonial France. I focus on an analysis of the voice and actions of the most important autonomous political organization to have developed among first-generation North African immigrants in the postcolonial period, namely the *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes* (MTA) in the 1970s. I compare and contrast this organization with the Messalist movement. The latter evolved from being a political organization representing all North Africans to becoming a movement largely centred on the Algerian anti-colonial struggle, while the MTA largely transcended national differences to represent all North Africans fighting what they saw as neo-imperialist oppression. In Chapter 8 I examine the extent to which a construction of ethnicity rooted in Arabness, class, culture and memory informed national identity for the MTA. In Chapter 9 I look at the MTA's discourse on racism, at the antiracist strategies its militants developed, and at how universalism as an ambivalent concept both inspired these people at an ideological level and underpinned the oppressive forces that alienated them as immigrants. Finally, in Chapter 10, I analyse the MTA's voice and action in relation to social processes and pressures and to organizations and movements in France and beyond. Some of these, such as racism and colonialism, had negative effects while other progressive political and social forces were positive influences. I assess the MTA's discourse on and relationship with French political parties of the left, trade unions and intellectuals, as well as other immigrants. I also look at how Maghrebis regarded the sociopolitical situation in their North African home countries and how international events,

such as the Palestinian question, influenced their ideology, political discourse and mobilization.

The discourses and activities of the political organizations examined here are analysed through a large corpus of archival documents and secondary sources pertaining to anti-colonial political organizations led by Messali Hadj in the colonial era, and to the MTA in the postcolonial period.²⁰ Primary documents examined in detail include newspapers, tracts, reports produced by militants, personal correspondence, minutes of meetings, posters, as well as police, military and government reports. Primary sources used in the study of Algerian political activism and nationalism in the colonial period include newspapers and bulletins published in France and Algeria by Algerian political activists.²¹ They also include tracts and other publications produced by (or for) the North African population in France and by the French Communist Party and the *Confédération générale du travail unitaire* (CGTU), the trade union close to the PCF (*Parti communiste français*).²² Pertinent references from the French national press in France (and some from the French press in Algeria) are also analysed. These documents and publications were consulted at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, at the *Archives nationales*, and the *Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine* in Paris. Other key primary sources pertaining to the Messalist movement and FLN are reports on Algerian political activism produced by the French police, military sources and government bodies,²³ as well as internal documents and memoirs. The MTA archives include some of the publications of the organization such as *Akbbar el Haraka* and *La Voix des travailleurs arabes*, reports from leading militants, personal correspondence, minutes of meetings, tracts and posters.²⁴ Other sources, such as publications from the French national and regional press, North African newspapers and magazines, as well as antiracist newspapers were also analysed.²⁵

Defining discourse

This book is multidisciplinary in approach. It is an historical, ethnographic and political analysis of aspects of immigration in France. It focuses principally on ethnicity, nation-ness and political mobilization in North African political organizations in France within their specific historical contexts. More important, it is a comparative study not only of the discourse and actions of these organizations and their militants, but also of other social, political and institutional actors

and/or factors affecting them. In a study of the weekly *Sans frontière* (1979–85), created by ex-militants of the MTA, Polac draws attention to the ‘unconventional’ character of the political practices of immigrants (before the 1980s), as well as the importance of discourse in their political activism, which, drawing on Memmi, she refers to as ‘discursive participation’.²⁶ As she also points out pertinently, ‘deprived of the right to vote, immigrants are present in the political sphere far more as the object of a discourse and the focus of struggles than as actors in the political arena. Thus, for many amongst them, the shift to the political implies speaking out.’²⁷ In this study, discourse is viewed as a ‘context-sensitive’ process of action and interaction in society. As van Dijk points out:

If we want to *explain* what discourse is all about, it would be insufficient to merely analyse its internal structures, the actions being accomplished, or the cognitive operations being involved in language use. We need to account for the fact that discourse as social action is being engaged in within a framework of understanding, communication and interaction which is in turn part of broader sociocultural structures and processes.²⁸

Within this wider framework, discourse structures our sense of reality and how we perceive our own and other people’s identities.²⁹ It can provide power, hegemony and a means of establishing consensus around the dominant ideology. In addition, access to public discourse is, in a number of ways, limited and controlled by the powerful.³⁰ Since ideological struggle is the essence of discourse structure,³¹ one could also argue that discourse is the main terrain on which ideologies and identities are constructed, shaped and negotiated, and where they can clash. Control and domination often imply some form of resistance and counter discourse. In this book I examine and illustrate some of the complex processes and strategies underlying the discourses of the dominated – in this case North African migrants in France. These discourses can also provide an empowering political tool that can be appropriated to challenge the dominant discourse and ideology.³²

Hybrid discourses

The analysis developed in this book focuses more specifically on the concepts of ethnicity and nation-ness,³³ which are particularly salient and inextricably linked to each other in their discourse. The concepts

also highlight the hybrid character of their ideology and the way in which it was enunciated. In broad terms, the analysis of ethnicity in both organizations is from a situationalist perspective.³⁴ The situationalist perspective on ethnicity, as Barth defines it, challenges the premise that ethnic groups should be defined solely according to common cultural characteristics, and calls for a better understanding of the processes by which ethnic groups are constituted and of the nature of the boundaries between them. Barth points out that it is 'the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses',³⁵ so therefore shifts the emphasis from cultural traits to boundary maintenance in the formation of ethnic identity. It is important to note, however, that ethnicity cannot be fully understood if it is viewed exclusively as shaped at the boundary between 'us' and 'them', for that does not fully account for the complexity of this concept. This perspective also needs to incorporate another dimension of ethnicity and needs to be 'context-sensitive', since ethnicity is also marked by the social, cultural, political, economic and religious context within which it is developed and posited. The second concept to shape the discourses of the ENA–PPA and the MTA is that of nation. It is understood here as a modern concept and phenomenon rooted in politics,³⁶ but also in ethnicity, and is viewed as an imagined community³⁷ shaped by nationalism.

In this book I assess the processes through which Maghrebi immigrants in France develop complex and shifting discourses on ethno-national identity rooted in their diasporic experience from the colonial to the postcolonial period. In doing so, I aim to reconcile these social, political and historical phenomena that have too often been broached in a dichotomous way (one grounded mainly in a colonial context and the narrative of Algeria's struggle for independence, the other in postcolonial immigration rooted in a French context). I also highlight the way in which Maghrebi immigrants were able to build a consistent political tradition in France.

PART I

North African Nationalist Discourse and Actions in the Interwar Years

1

The Emergence of the Messalist Movement

As Memmi argued, the gravest shortcoming the colonized endured was to be placed ‘out of history, out of the city’. Colonization took away from the colonized ‘any part that they might [have played] in wartime as in peace time, any decision that contributes to the world’s – and to their own – destiny, any historical and social responsibility’.¹ The French military, which euphemistically called its operations pacification, violently suppressed the successive insurrections and revolts that occurred against French colonization in Algeria in the nineteenth century. Colonization was reinforced, the traditional local economy was dismantled, the local artisans ruined and the influence of the Algerian middle-classes eroded.² Under French colonial authority European settlers, aided by a number of pliable Muslim notables, *caïds* and *bachagas*, whom the Europeans often derided as ‘*beni oui-oui*’ (yes-men), ruled colonial Algeria and its indigenous population. However, most Algerians remained staunchly attached to their culture and traditions. That few Muslims requested French citizenship by renouncing their Muslim status and the increased levels of emigration to Tunisia, Morocco and the Middle East,³ which prefigured the later migration to France from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, should all be interpreted as expressions of resistance to colonization.

The beginning of the twentieth century marked a new phase of political engagement: the first quarter of the twentieth century saw the emergence of the *Jeunes Algériens* (Young Algerians’ party), with Cheikh Khaled, Emir Abdelkader’s grandson, as its most outstanding figure, and from the 1930s onwards the *Fédération des élus* (Federation of elected representatives) and the ulemas Muslim scholars came into being. The involvement in Algerian political affairs of a small group of educated Muslims and more vocal demands for reforms characterized

political participation. However, the political discourse and action of these Muslims was broadly expressed from a reformist perspective that aimed – but largely failed – to acquire equal rights within the French nation. The most important characteristic of modern Algerian nationalist politics was that it emerged within the Algerian working-class immigrant population in France. In this chapter I chart the history of Algerian nationalist activism in France during the interwar period. I give a brief historical assessment of the creation, among emigrants in 1926, of the first modern Algerian nationalist movement, soon to be led by Messali Hadj, an Algerian immigrant worker who shaped Algerian nationalist politics during the interwar and postwar periods. I then discuss the development of the Messalist movement in Algeria from the second half of the 1930s to the eve of the Second World War.

The creation of the ENA

While it is established that the *Etoile nord-africaine* (ENA) was founded in the spring of 1926, the role Emir Khaled played in its creation is still the subject of academic debate. As Mahfoud Kaddache has shown,⁴ some ex-militants of the Etoile, including leading member Si Djilani, declared that Khaled had intended to create a political organization in France. He was in contact with the *Association de la fraternité islamique* (Islamic Fraternity Association) a religious association based in Paris that some, including Mohamed Guénanèche, an early nationalist militant, argued was the organization from which the ENA had emerged. However, Messali Hadj, who had attended some of its meetings, dismissed it as a ‘talking shop’ for notables who had no real political agenda.⁵ In July 1924, Khaled met North African members of the *Union intercoloniale* (UIC) who were to become leaders of the ENA. However, there is no conclusive documentary evidence on hand that he might have had a part to play in the creation of the ENA.⁶

The role the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) played in the emergence of the ENA is, on the other hand, more clearly established. During its second congress of August 1920, the Communist International instructed European communist parties to support the oppressed colonized people and to direct their propaganda towards colonial soldiers. In July 1921, the PCF created the *Comité d'études coloniales* (CEC) (Colonial Studies Committee) whose function was to develop the party's documentation and reflection on the colonial question. It

also founded the UIC – an organization set up in 1922 to recruit colonial workers and publish the anti-colonialist newspaper *Le Paria*. The UIC, along with other communist satellite structures such as the *Jeunes communistes* (JC) (communist youth organization), *Secours rouge international* (SRI) (International Red Aid), *Ligue contre l'impérialisme* (LCI) (League Against Imperialism), *Ecole des cadres* (communist college) of Bobigny and the communist trade union the *Confédération générale du travail unitaire* (CGTU) enabled a number of colonial workers to acquire and develop their political experience as militants.⁷

By 1924, the PCF had managed to attract approximately 8000 North African members or supporters. In the same year, several thousand North Africans carrying red flags were reported to have taken part in the Paris street rallies that preceded the ceremonies marking the transfer of the ashes of Jean Jaurès, the leading socialist politician, to the Panthéon and the funeral of writer Anatole France. On 7 December 1924, a North African workers' congress of around 150 delegates took place in Paris and adopted a programme of economic, social and political demands reflecting those promoted by Emir Khaled. It also called for the 'introduction of universal suffrage for all the natives who should have the same voting rights as the French' and expressed their 'solidarity with the Moroccan people and Abd el-Krim' and with the Egyptian and Tunisian peoples.⁸ By 1924–25, however, the police noted that the PCF's influence among North African *coloniaux* was declining.⁹

PCF archives indicate that the Comintern's sixth committee decided to create a nationalist revolutionary party in Algeria and France.¹⁰ By the mid-1920s, it had become clear that attempts to build this organization around Emir Khaled had largely failed. Under the aegis of the PCF, Hadj Ali Abdelkader, an Algerian *Parti communiste* militant, played a key role in founding the ENA. In its first few months, the ENA's political programme was relatively moderate and largely reflected what the *Jeunes Algériens* championed. It called for political and social equality and for the abolition of the *Code de l'indigénat* (Native Code), which consisted of a series of punitive regulations, penalties and discriminatory measures imposed on North African Muslims in Algeria.¹¹

Hadj Ali Abdelkader became the first president of the ENA when it was created in June 1926 and he enrolled Messali Hadj in the executive of an organization that Messali would shape and mark profoundly.¹² Messali Hadj was appointed general secretary and

Chabila Djilani treasurer. The PCF and the CGTU provided crucial financial and material support to the ENA during its early years.¹³

Following the launch of the ENA on 26 June 1926 at the Maison des Syndicats on Boulevard de Belleville in Paris, frequent meetings were organized to rally North African migrant workers from all social backgrounds to the ENA. Hadj Ali and other speakers addressed audiences of several hundred North Africans on 14 July and 14 August 1926 in the Salle de la Grange aux Belles in Paris and called on all North Africans to unite in support of the Rif uprising led by Abd el-Krim in Morocco. In July 1926, during a banquet organized for Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian students in Paris, the Algerian Abdelkader Hadj Ali and the Tunisian Mustapha Chadly¹⁴ invited North African students to join the ENA and to show solidarity with manual workers. Guest speaker Habib Bourguiba¹⁵ called for Tunisian independence and for the emancipation of all North Africans. On 1 October 1926, a meeting of around 50 North African restaurant owners, traders and notables took place in Salle des sociétés savantes in Paris during which Hadj Ali tried to rally the North African *petite bourgeoisie* in Paris to their cause and called for Emir Khaled to be allowed to return from exile.¹⁶ Meanwhile, ENA militants presented petitions, took part in demonstrations and debated with North African workers. They distributed tracts and sold the nationalist newspaper *L'Édram* (and from 1930 *El Ouma*) in cafés owned by North Africans known as '*cafés maures*' (Moorish cafés), in and outside factories, in workers hostels and markets. Party propaganda also targeted North African soldiers in cafés, particularly near the military college in the 15th *arrondissement* of Paris.

Messali Hadj rose rapidly to prominence within the ENA and shaped the organization's radical programme a few months after its creation. Messali's speech to the International Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism (*Congrès international contre l'oppression coloniale et l'impérialisme*), held in the Palais Egmond in Brussels from 10 to 15 February 1927, marked his clear commitment to North African independence.¹⁷ Members of the ENA and of the Tunisian nationalist party, the Destour, had joined the French communist delegation to Brussels. The congress had 175 delegates, including 107 from colonial territories. Representatives included Chekib Arslan of the *Congrès syro-palestinien* (Syro-Palestinian Congress), Jawaharlal Nehru (India), Mohamed Hatta (Indonesia), Nasib al-Bakri (Syria), J. T. Gumede (South African leader of the African National

Congress), Lamine Senghor (Senegal), as well as a delegation of Chinese generals of the Kuo Min Tang.¹⁸ The programme reflected the LCI's anti-imperialist agenda and its strategy to develop the anti-colonial struggle and solidarity between the colonized and workers in 'imperialist countries'.¹⁹ In his address to the congress on the morning of 12 January 1927, Messali Hadj denounced France's violent colonial oppression in Algeria, the Native Code and the dispossession and humiliation endured by Algerian Muslims since 1830. He presented a programme that included general demands focusing on Algerian independence and the end of French 'military occupation' and calling for immediate social and political reforms in Algeria.

For the first time, the radical agenda Messali Hadj presented contrasted with the PCF's reformist one and put forward Algerian independence as a key ENA demand. Messali's desire to develop an autonomous, pro-independence organization with strong religious undertones, together with the communist leadership's distrust of the ENA's general secretary, led to growing tensions between the two organizations. Leading members of the organization soon reasserted the pro-independence stance Messali had developed.²⁰ In the September 1927 issue of *L'Éclaireur*, Mustapha Chadly, in an article entitled 'Our single objective: national independence, our supreme hope and supreme salvation', declared that North African independence could only be achieved by rallying to 'revolutionary nationalism'.²¹

Messali Hadj's rise to prominence in the ENA marked the beginning of a political life that was to shape Algerian nationalism for decades to come.²² Political allies and enemies alike acknowledged his leadership skills and personal charisma. A 1934 police report described Messali as 'the main attraction' at ENA political meetings in the eyes of North Africans, and stated that:

His fellow-Muslims rarely come out of discussions with Messali without feeling his influence in some way. He has thus managed to rally to his cause men whose loyalty to France had, until then, never been questioned, and whose material interests depended upon their non-involvement in any political organization. Such is his influence on his interlocutors that even those whom he has not managed to convince are always affected. ... In fact, the *Etoile nord-africaine* is inextricably linked with Messali Hadj's personality. He, alone, has reorgan-

ized it. He, alone, has given it ... the renewed popularity that it has experienced. Finally, he, alone, has shaped its political direction ... he has given a doctrine to the Etoile nord-africaine.²³

During this period, the organization's influence on the Algerian-dominated North African population in France grew markedly and raised further concerns for the French authorities and the police unit in charge of the surveillance of North Africans, the *Service des affaires indigènes nord-africaines* (SAINA).²⁴ By November 1927, the ENA had 3500 members and was composed of 13 sections in France, including eight in Paris. New sections were set up in provincial France and in North Africa where the ENA had correspondents, and contacts had been established with the *Association de défense des Nord-Africains* (North African Defence Association) based in Marseilles. They were also considering setting up a North African students association to be led by the Tunisian Ahmed Ben Milad, who was a member of the PCF. *L'Ékdam*, the ENA newspaper, had by then reached a circulation of 3000 copies and was still financed by the PCF and produced on CGTU presses.²⁵ It was sold through local sections of the ENA and by correspondents in provincial France. To avoid seizure in North Africa, copies of *L'Ékdam* were hidden in French national newspapers and sent from the offices of the colonial workers' branch (*Main d'oeuvre coloniale*) of the CGTU.²⁶

In 1928, the ENA refocused its mobilization campaign. Police control and harassment and the recent banning of *L'Ékdam* had, by then, undermined the action of the organization. Alarmed by the ENA's growing autonomy, relations with the PCF worsened and the French communists significantly reduced their material and financial support. Messali lost the income he had previously received from the PCF and was forced to work as a market trader. Meetings in large halls (Salle des ingénieurs civils and Salle des sociétés savantes) were temporarily abandoned in favour of local gatherings involving smaller audiences in North African owned cafés and restaurants. The ENA also focused on issues that affected the life of migrants in France and condemned the surveillance and repression to which the SAINA subjected North Africans in France. It called for better social rights and working conditions for North African workers in France, and opposed the construction of the Paris mosque, which it denounced as an imperial symbol of France's colonial domination of Muslim North

Africa.²⁷ This strategy proved largely successful. It enabled the ENA to develop its influence locally, particularly in the 13th and 15th *arrondissements* of Paris, in Levallois-Perret, Clichy, Puteaux and Boulogne and it facilitated the recruitment of more militants. In 1929, the organization had 4000 registered members.²⁸

Faced with the emergence of the ENA as an increasingly popular nationalist organization, and aware that the Communist International's sixth congress had instructed the PCF to prevent the ENA becoming a political party, the government acted against the organization. The Seine tribunal banned the ENA on 10 November 1929.²⁹ This ruling, which the PCF failed to condemn, marked the start of a crisis within the ENA and the loss of many militants.

However, Messali pursued his action by sending the League of Nations a memorandum in January 1930 denouncing the French celebration of a century of oppression and exploitation in Algeria and by demanding independence.³⁰ He also organized a meeting in September 1930 to prepare the launch of *El Ouma* (Community/Nation), which was to become the most important Algerian nationalist newspaper in the 1930s.³¹ The PCF's attempts to take over and reorganize the North African organization on its own terms and, with the CGTU, to publish *El Amel* (Action), a newspaper aimed at the Maghrebi *coloniaux*, proved largely unsuccessful.

While the organization's relationship with the PCF remained tense, links were maintained and the Communist Party appears to have provided some material assistance. It was not until 1933, however, that the ENA was able to re-emerge as a strong political organization at a time of political and social tensions in North Africa.³² In Algeria, popular protests followed the colonial authorities' decision to prevent moderate ulemas preaching in mosques, to put a curb on independent Arabic schools, which were mostly run by ulemas, and to reinforce press censorship in Algeria. In July 1933, Interior Minister Camille Chautemps refused to receive a delegation of moderate Algerians who requested the adoption of modest reforms – the abolition of orders passed by *préfets* against the Arabic language in Algeria and better Muslim representation in the administration. These developments led to significant discontent among North Africans on both sides of the Mediterranean and contributed to the re-emergence of the ENA in France. In Paris, two active militants, Belkacem Radje³³ and Amar Imache,³⁴ worked with Messali to launch the new organization. The first general assembly, which took place on 28 May 1933, presented its

new statutes and its nationalist programme reflecting the political demands Messali had already made at the Brussels congress of January 1927. Its statutes stated that the ENA's 'fundamental aim' was 'the struggle for total independence for each of the three countries: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, and the unity of North Africa'.

The detailed political programme was divided into two parts. The first consisted of 11 points and included demands for the abolition of the discriminatory Native Code and for immediate reforms to ensure complete social, political, economic, religious and educational equality in North Africa. The second part detailed the wider ambitions of the organization for an independent Algeria. This radical political programme laid the formal foundation of Algerian nationalism. To a large extent, this would remain the core set of demands made by Algerian nationalists from the interwar period until the end of the Algerian war in 1962.

In 1934, the ENA increased its presence in most industrial parts of metropolitan France, including Lyons. Messali travelled to the north of France and Belgium to set up new local groups and a few clandestine cells were created in Algeria. These later developed into important groups attracting increasing numbers of militants.³⁵ In France, local meetings were held in North African cafés and restaurants. Larger rallies with audiences of 150 to 200 North African workers also took place with increasing frequency and were subjected to close police surveillance.³⁶ The organization relied on the many North African taxi drivers in Paris to distribute tracts and newspapers in various parts of the capital and to drive North Africans to the halls where the ENA organized political rallies. Other meetings were presented as cultural or musical events at which singers, musicians and actors would perform songs, music and plays evocative of the homeland and often highlighting the injustice of colonial oppression. During a meeting of its executive committee on 6 December 1933, at its office at 19, rue Daguerre, the ENA built on these initial successes by setting up four commissions (entertainment, newspaper edition, control, propaganda, and newspaper sales). During this meeting, it was also decided that Arabic classes and religious teaching would take place every Sunday afternoon at the ENA's office.³⁷

The role the nationalist newspaper played in the ENA action was also central. Its ultimate objective, independence, was systematically promoted. The November 1933 issue of *El Oumma*, for example, declared that the motto of all 'good nationalists' should be: 'I love my

country and for it I want to die. I love my country and I want to see it free.³⁸ The nationalist newspaper was published more regularly and its circulation increased steadily in France and in Algeria from 1933 onwards.³⁹ Despite the colonial authorities' consistent attempts to seize it, several hundred copies of each issue were sent to many Algerian towns and cities (like Algiers, Tlemcen, Constantine, Oran, Philippeville, Sétif and Tizi-Ouzou) and villages where new militants and sympathizers were recruited. Dozens of copies were also sent abroad (to Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and the United States).⁴⁰ On 5 August 1934, during the ENA general assembly in Paris, the ENA-designed Algerian flag – green and white struck with a red crescent, which later became the national flag of independent Algeria, was presented to an audience of 800 North Africans.⁴¹

Repression and lack of reforms

The progress of nationalist militancy among North African *coloniaux* raised deep concern among European settlers in Algeria and in political and official circles in France. Articles in the French press on both sides of the Mediterranean attacked the nationalist organization, which, they argued, wanted to end French domination in North Africa and 'expel the French' from the colonies.⁴² In July 1933, the Paris police chief wrote to the interior minister to ask for sanctions to be imposed against the ENA as the 'propaganda they have undertaken may cause unrest among the mass of 60,000 natives [North African immigrants] that revolutionary contagions have so far spared'.⁴³ Soon after, the authorities took repressive measures. Messali Hadj was arrested on 1 November 1934 and charged with 'reconstitution of a banned league'. He was fined and given a six-month prison sentence, which he served at the Santé prison with Amar Imache and Belkacem Radjef. *El Ouma* denounced his sentence as a 'racial verdict' and declared: 'Such is the pleasure of imperialism; such is the pleasure of the colonizers: instead of granting rights to the martyred Muslim people, instead of acknowledging the fairness of our demands, they prefer to punish those who speak out.'⁴⁴

The defendants appealed against the sentence, arguing that they had never been officially notified that the ENA had been banned on 20 November 1929. Early in 1935, other leading members of the organization were arrested in France (Si Djilani, director of *El Ouma*; and Mohamed Beddek, regional president of the newly-created ENA section in Lyons) and in Algeria. These arrests marked the start of a

long series of incarcerations that affected the nationalist organization's leadership until the end of the Algerian war.

While in prison, Messali ensured the continuation of the ENA's work by ordering the dissolution of the *glorieuse* ENA and re-creating it temporarily under a new name (*Union nationale des Musulmans nord-africains*/National Union of North African Muslims) on 28 February 1935. A successful campaign of mobilization against the imprisonment of its leaders raised the profile of the organization among North Africans on both sides of the Mediterranean. On their release on 1 May 1935, Messali, Imache and Radjef faced further court charges. On 14 May 1935, the Paris appeals court confirmed the ruling based on the accusation that Messali, Imache and Radjef were guilty of 'incitement of military personnel to disobey orders, incitement to murder through anarchist propaganda'.⁴⁵ Messali, Imache and Radjef appealed to the Court of Cassation. However, they were still able to lead the organization. On 3 July 1935, the Seine tribunal ruled in favour of the ENA and confirmed that the November 1929 banning order had lapsed as the leaders of the organization had not been notified within six months of the judgment being passed.

Following a temporary *rapprochement* with left-wing political organizations (the PCF, CGTU, *Ligue anti-impérialiste* and socialist SFIO) the ENA joined the committee that was to become the *Front populaire*, together with the Tunisian (Neo-Destour) and Moroccan (*Comité d'action marocaine*/Moroccan Action Committee) nationalist organizations.⁴⁶ It called for a union between North African and French workers and organized large political meetings that often attracted more than a thousand North Africans. On 14 July 1935, the ENA led several thousand North Africans carrying the Algerian flag and calling for Algerian and North African independence, in a demonstration the assembly had organized in Paris. During that period, the ENA held joint meetings with the Neo-Destour and Moroccan Action Committee to protest against the arrest and deportation of Neo-Destour leaders to the south of the colony and with the *Ligue de défense de la race nègre* to protest against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. However, in July 1935, the sixth congress of the Communist International in Moscow stated that its priority was the fight against fascism rather than anti-colonialism – a shift in the PCF's position.

In September, Messali, Imache and Radjef joined the *Front populaire* delegation to the League of Nations in Geneva where Messali spoke in support of the Ethiopian people, and from 12 to 15 September

attended the *Congrès islamo-européen* (Islamo-European Congress) presided over by Emir Chekib Arslan, head of the Syro-Palestinian Committee in Geneva.⁴⁷ When they returned to France, legal action against them had gathered pace. In October 1935, the Court of Cassation confirmed the May 1935 ruling against the leadership of the ENA. Imache and Radjef were imprisoned and Messali went into hiding to avoid arrest, before taking refuge in Geneva from where he pursued his political activities. There, he was in regular contact with Chekib Arslan and was able to meet nationalist leaders and activists from North Africa and the Middle East.⁴⁸ From Geneva, Chekib Arslan called on all Muslims from countries under European colonial domination to take advantage of the tense international situation and unite to gain independence. At the end of December 1936, Chekib Arslan sent his general secretary – and nephew – Chekib Djabri Bey, to Paris to reinforce links with North African and Syrian nationalist organizations and student groups (*Comité d'action marocaine*, *Comité de défense des libertés en Tunisie*, *Comité de défense des libertés en Syrie*). He attended several meetings organized by the ENA, the *Ligue de défense des droits de l'homme en Syrie* and the *Association des étudiants musulmans nord-africains*.⁴⁹

During the first half of 1935, the ENA launched a campaign to denounce the reinforcement of colonial order following Interior Minister Régnier's recent visit to Algeria. Contrary to Muslim reformists' hopes that he would start introducing long-awaited reforms in Algeria, Régnier soon signed a decree (the Régnier decree) to increase the colonial authorities' repressive powers against Muslims. Nationalists expressed their disappointment with what they saw as a lack of courage by politicians of all tendencies: 'How many left-wing and right-wing governors, including those who are members of the Central Committee of the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* have we had? Did the situation change when those men on the left governed us? Have they abolished the infamous Native Code? No, no and no.'⁵⁰

In France, the ENA experienced serious financial difficulties, which police repression compounded, but political meetings continued to be held to denounce colonialism and the repression to which militants were being subjected, and more collections were organized. The *Secours rouge international* provided significant financial support during that period and held joint meetings with the ENA. In a meeting the *Ligue contre l'impérialisme* and the ENA organized on 14 January 1936, Octave Rabaté, from the left-wing *Comité contre la guerre et le*

fascisme (also known as *Comité Amsterdam Pleyel*), the socialist Marcel Bloch and the communist Jean Chaintron, known as Barthel, expressed their support for the ENA and urged the audience to trust the *Front populaire*.⁵¹ The ENA and the National Union of Muslims (*Union nationale des Musulmans*) founded a prisoners' defence committee (*Comité de défense des prisonniers*) in support of militants who had been arrested or deported and their families, and the ENA organized the purchase of cafés – which acted as important centres of mobilization – by ENA militants.⁵²

Despite some members' doubts, the ENA placed much hope in the *Front populaire's* ability to introduce important reforms. In February 1936, the ENA, the *Comité de défense des libertés en Tunisie* (the Committee for the Defence of Freedoms in Tunisia) and the *Comité de défense des intérêts marocains* (Committee for the Defense of Moroccan Interests) presented the *Front populaire* with a programme of political, social, economic and financial demands. The proposed reforms were designed to implement full democracy and ensure complete equality between colonizer and colonized in North Africa.⁵³ On 24 May 1936, 2000 North Africans led by the ENA took part in the annual procession to the Mur des Fédérés in Paris with other organizations of the *Front populaire* to commemorate the French commune of 1871. Larbi Ouamar, an ENA central committee member, carried a green flag and several marchers held placards demanding the end of the 'Native Code' and the release of imprisoned militants.⁵⁴

The *Front populaire's* electoral victory on 3 May 1936 took place at a time of social tensions and strikes in France and North Africa. The newly formed government announced an amnesty for the ENA leaders. Messali left Geneva and returned to Paris on 10 June 1936 to take direct control of the nationalist organization. On 20 June, he led a delegation that presented two lists of reforms – one for Algerian immigrants in France and the other for the Algerian people – to Raoul Aubaud, the under-secretary of the interior, who assured him that their demands would be carefully examined.⁵⁵ Messali Hadj also met Ahmed Boumendjel, an Algerian student and ENA militant, who then left for Algeria on 16 July with instructions to organize local sections of the ENA and mobilize support for the organization in Algeria.⁵⁶

Algerian reformists also hoped for a major shift in France's policy in Algeria. The *Fédération des élus* – led by elite French-educated Algerian notables favourable to assimilation – and the *Association des Oulémas*, with the support of the communists in Algeria, held a joint

Muslim congress in Algiers on 7 June 1936 from which members of the ENA were excluded. They produced a loyalist charter that included progressive reforms in favour of the Algerian population. On 20 July 1936, a delegation was sent to Paris to present the *Front populaire* government with a list of moderate demands. The delegation included, among others, Dr Bendjelloul (general councillor of Constantine and president of the Muslim Congress), Ferhat Abbas (general councillor of Sétif), Ben Badis (member of the Ulemas' Association and professor of Muslim law in Constantine), Okbi Taïeb (or Cheikh El Okbi, president of the Ulemas' Association) and Lamine Lamoudi Ben Youssef (director of the Algiers newspaper *La Défense*).⁵⁷ The reforms the ex-governor general of Algeria and prominent *Front populaire* government minister Maurice Viollette recommended had raised hopes among Algerian notables. They believed that political emancipation and the end of colonial subjugation could be achieved through legal equality within the French Republic. However, Prime Minister Léon Blum, who described himself as the 'loyal guardian' of empire, judged the programme of reforms the congress proposed unacceptable and was denounced in violent terms by the colonial press in Algeria.⁵⁸

On 21 July 1936, the delegation of Algerian reformists also met the leadership of the ENA (Messali Hadj, Amar Imache, Belkacem Radjef, Ahmed Yahiaoui and Si Djilani) at their hotel in Paris. On 22 July, Messali met Cheikh Ben Badis and Lamine Lamoudi (director of the Algiers newspaper *La Défense d'Alger* and close to the ulema), criticized the reformist demands of the congress and argued that the only viable solution for Algeria was independence.⁵⁹ When Cheikh Ben Badis declared that it was easier for Messali to hold revolutionary views in Paris than in Algeria, the latter promised to go to Algiers and present his programme.

Following his declaration to Ben Badis, Messali Hadj left France to promote the ENA's programme in Algeria. He arrived in Algiers on 2 August 1936 and went immediately to the large political meeting organized by the Muslim Congress at the municipal stadium and attended by thousands of Algerians, where he was allowed to give a short speech. In his address, given mostly in French, he expressed support for the immediate demands of the congress but added that the ENA wanted the abolition of the *délégations financières* and of the *gouvernement général* of Algeria and was in favour of an 'Algerian parliament elected by universal suffrage without any racial or religious distinction'. He concluded by calling for the Algerian people to rally

around the ENA, which 'will defend and guide you on the path to emancipation' and by declaring: 'Down with the Native Code, down with laws of emergency and racial hatred; long live the Algerian people, long live fraternity between peoples and long live the ENA.'⁶⁰ The large audience applauded his speech loudly, but it embarrassed the congress leaders and deeply concerned the *colons* and French authorities. On the same day, Imam Bendali, the mufti of Algiers, was murdered and Cheikh El Okbi, the pro-French president of the ulemas was soon arrested. News of El Okbi's arrest caused turmoil in Algeria and the Algerian Muslim population perceived it as a provocation. Dr Bendjelloul, the congress president, and other reformists started to attack the ENA openly.⁶¹ However, Messali's speech marked publicly the ENA's entry on the Algerian political scene. Messali then spent the following weeks creating the Algiers branch of the ENA, before travelling around Algeria to take part in political meetings and establish cells and sections of the ENA in other parts of the colonial territory.⁶²

In the same period, relations with the PCF, whose Algerian federation supported the Muslim Congress, deteriorated rapidly. The French communists were increasingly hostile to the ENA's pro-independence programme and growing assertiveness as an autonomous organization and were concerned about Emir Chekib Arslan's influence on Messali Hadj. In Algiers, the PCF, which by this time saw the ENA more as an opponent than an 'unruly ally', officially turned its Algerian federation into the *Parti communiste algérien* (PCA, Algerian Communist Party) on 16 and 17 October 1936. On 23 December 1936, Maurice Viollette presented a bill to parliament that included some modest reforms to the status of Muslims in Algeria. It proposed granting personal but 'non-transmittable' French citizenship to 21,000 'deserving' Muslims without renouncing their Muslim status – namely Algerian 'natives' who had obtained certain diplomas or military distinctions, were in specific professions or held certain military ranks.⁶³ The Blum–Viollette Bill, as it became known, caused an outcry among the *colons* in Algeria, but the Muslim Congress welcomed it as a positive step forward. At its annual general assembly on 27 December, the ENA decided to reject what Messali called a '*réformette*', which left the vast majority of the population without rights, allowed the colonial system to remain unchanged and deepened divisions among Algerian Muslims. Messali Hadj's decision to maintain his support for the coalition behind the *Front populaire*, while openly criticizing the *Front populaire* government, split the ENA leadership: Messali clashed with

Amar Imache, the ENA general secretary, who wanted to end the ENA's relationship with *Front populaire* political organizations.⁶⁴

In France and Algeria, the PCF and PCA openly attacked Messali and his party at meetings and in their newspapers (*L'Humanité* in France and *La Lutte sociale* in Algeria). The communists declared that the ENA's opposition to the *Front populaire*, the Muslim Congress and the Blum–Viollette Bill strengthened fascist and colonialist reactionary forces, and that to demand an Algerian parliament, which the nationalists did, was nothing short of 'utopia'. The PCA's analysis of Algerian politics was increasingly at odds with political realities and with the growing aspirations of the Muslim population. It accused André Ferrat, who had by then joined the Trotskyists but had once led the PCF's colonial section, of having promoted the ENA and *El Ouma* at the expense of the PCF and *El Amel*. In fact, *El Amel*, the newspaper the PCF launched for North African workers, struggled to find a readership in the early 1930s. According to the PCA, 'North African comrades' had been duped into joining ENA in the belief that they were joining a communist organization, and were now 'imprisoned' in an organization 'confined in the narrowness of nationalism'. It argued that 'a communist cannot and must not consider himself a nationalist' and that the ENA's action, which was the 'adversary of international solidarity, [was] doomed to fail'.⁶⁵

Algerian nationalists, on the other hand, denounced the Communist Party's attacks and criticized it for aligning its colonial policy with that of the SFIO. In *El Ouma*, nationalists argued that 'the fact that the PPA [the ENA's successor] proclaims its political independence and directs itself resolutely towards the defence of the Algerian working masses' interests is enough for the PC (*Partie communiste*) to hate it.' This hostility, they argued, could be explained by the fact that 'the PPA has turned out to be a dangerous rival, which tends to develop its influence on increasingly large groups of Algerian workers to the detriment of the influence of the PC'.⁶⁶

The *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA)

At the beginning of 1937, aware of the ENA's increasing isolation on the French political scene and the Muslim coalition's open opposition to it in the congress, the *Front populaire* government decided to act. Cabinet Minister Raoul Aubaud told the Senate that the government had delayed its banning order until the ENA's conflict with the congress was brought into the open, and acted when ENA militants

were expelled from a meeting of the Muslim Congress in Algeria after they had sung a hymn to independence.⁶⁷ The cabinet banned the ENA on 26 January 1937.⁶⁸ A special issue of *El Ouma* in February 1937, in which Amar Imache accused the *Front populaire* of betraying the ENA with the connivance of the communists, was widely circulated in cafés by militants who declared that the ENA would be relaunched under another name. Messali Hadj called for the creation of groups called ‘*Les Amis d’El Ouma*’ (‘Friends of *El Ouma*’) which included mostly ex-militants of the banned organization to continue the work of the ex-ENA.

A meeting in Nanterre of the Friends of *El Ouma* on 11 March 1937 marked the foundation of the new nationalist organization. Messali Hadj announced to the audience that a new party, the *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA) had been created. This party aimed to focus more on Algerian politics while maintaining a close interest in Moroccan and Tunisian affairs. Messali Hadj was appointed president and the new executive committee was made up almost exclusively of leading members of the ex-ENA and included most members of its central committee – Belkacem Radjef, Arezki Kehal (ex-treasurer of the ENA) and Si Djilani (director of *El Ouma*). The new nationalist organization emphasized its independence from French political parties. While a number of new activists from the lower middle-class joined the organization, the PPA often deplored the fact that few intellectuals had rallied to their cause championed by the Muslim working class. The party was organized into sections in the districts of towns and cities where the nationalist organization was established. Led by a secretary and small committee of five or six elected members, these sections held local meetings, distributed tracts and newspapers and recruited new activists and supporters in their local area.⁶⁹

The PPA adopted a programme of demands that partly reflected the ENA’s, but left out some of its more important elements – replacing the *délégations financières* with an Algerian parliament elected by universal suffrage; abolishing *communes mixtes* in Algeria, granting union rights; equal wages with the French; education in Arabic; access to all ranks and equal pay with the French for Algerian Muslims in the army; creating schools, health centres and hospitals; and building roads to serve the whole population in Algeria.⁷⁰ No mention was made of a call to return the large domains and property owned by wealthy *colons* and the land controlled by the French state to Algerians. The programme did not include the key demand of independence but called

instead for 'the total emancipation of Algeria without any separation from France', on a model inspired by Syria or by the British dominion created in Egypt.⁷¹ Amar Imache, the ex-secretary general of the ENA was, once again, in disagreement with Messali Hadj and refused to support a programme of demands he judged too moderate.⁷² Yet, the new organization's declared objectives had to differ from those of the ENA to avoid further prosecution for 'reconstitution of a banned league'. Furthermore, its demand for an Algerian parliament elected by universal suffrage also clearly established the right of Algerians to control their destiny. The newly created organization disseminated its political activities to North African colonial workers in cafés, in the workplace, in hostels and in large meetings.

The PCF immediately accused the PPA of being an Algerian equivalent of the PPF (*Parti populaire français*), the fascist party created by ex-communist deputy Jacques Doriot. The Algerian nationalists responded to those attacks by regretting that 'in newspapers of the right, the PPA is no more and no less than a cell controlled by Moscow. ... In newspapers of the left, on the other hand, they like to depict us as an extension of international fascism.'⁷³ Even before the fascist *coup de force* of 6 February 1934 in Paris that had threatened the republic, the Algerian nationalists reminded their opponents that they had worked consistently with the left to counter the extreme right, which was developing its influence in France and trying to recruit North African migrant workers as members.

Faced with political isolation and *Front populaire* hostility from the French right and Muslim Congress, ex-ENA leaders reinforced their links with the extreme left. The Fourth International (Trotskyist) also declared itself in favour of independence in the colonies. Trotskyist newspapers such as *La Lutte Ouvrière*, *La Commune*, *Drapeau rouge* and *Révolution* published articles protesting against the dissolution of the ENA and criticizing the Blum-Viollette Bill. The POI (*Parti ouvrier internationaliste*/Internationalist Workers' Party) accused the PCF and the SFIO of continuing the imperialist policy of previous governments. The POI planned meetings in France with members of the ex-ENA.⁷⁴ The support provided by the revolutionary left proved crucial at that stage of political development for the organization.

The political campaign in Algeria

In the summer of 1937, the PPA strengthened its presence in North Africa and Messali, despite strong opposition from the executive

committee, decided to transfer the headquarters of the PPA to Algiers. The transfer became effective in November 1938.⁷⁵ This decision marked a gradual shift in the dynamics of Algerian nationalist politics. Even though immigrants still played an important role in the PPA, the location of the organization in Algeria paved the way for the postwar political struggle that would inexorably lead to the Algerian war. On 18 June 1937, Messali travelled to Algeria to attend a series of political meetings and set up the Algiers, Constantine and Oran federations of the PPA.⁷⁶ In the same period, the authorities were compiling a case against the PPA but considered they 'should wait for the organization to take a more precise form in order to justify those proceedings'.⁷⁷

The second Muslim Congress took place in Algiers between 3 and 11 July 1937 without Messali Hadj because the PPA was excluded from the meeting.⁷⁸ Growing disillusionment with the *Front populaire* government, which had failed to implement the Blum–Viollette Bill, marked the congress. In addition, there were tensions between critics and partisans of the then policy of unconditional support for the government.⁷⁹ Among the *élus*, divisions between Dr Bendjelloul, who was increasingly isolated because of his denunciation of the communists, and Ferhat Abbas who was frustrated by the lack of improvement in the life and political status of Muslims, were becoming apparent. In the Association of Ulemas, the political position of Cheikh Ben Badis and his partisans was evolving and they became more sensitive to Messali's calls for a *rapprochement*, while Cheikh El Okbi remained hostile to the PPA.

On 14 July 1937, PPA militants, led by Messali, took part in the large *Rassemblement populaire* procession in Algiers; they carried the Algerian national flag and sang nationalist songs. They did this despite the PCA's expressed reservations, for its general secretary, Amar Ouzegane, was an Algiers city councillor, the secretary of the executive committee of the Muslim Congress and a vocal opponent of nationalism. Less than two decades later, however, he became a leading member of the FLN during the Algerian war. Interestingly, the PPA decided to boycott the *Rassemblement populaire* procession that took place in Paris on the same day.⁸⁰ The colonial press reacted immediately by calling for harsh sanctions against the PPA. Newspapers controlled by the organizations behind the Muslim Congress (namely the PCA, the *élus* and Association of Ulemas) – including *La Lutte sociale* and *La Défense* – joined in and attacked the nationalist organization. In the 30 July 1937 issue of *La Défense*, Lamine Lamoudi

denounced Messali as an *agent provocateur* and a ‘miserable opportunist’ who was stirring ‘hatred and division’.⁸¹

During Messali’s tour of the country in the summer of 1937, the party’s growing influence on Muslims caused alarm among the colonial authorities. The public prosecutor of the Algiers tribunal wrote to the minister of justice to inform him that ‘the unrest provoked by the *Parti du peuple algérien* had increased markedly over the last month.’ He stated that ‘graffiti such as “down with France” with the symbols of the ENA [the green crescent and the star] were painted on walls in several towns and cities, including Algiers’.⁸²

On 26 August, acting on the public prosecutor’s reports warning that the recent ‘unrest’ ‘could seriously affect public order’ and ‘the extent of the danger that such an association represents for our colonizing action in Algeria’, the minister of justice instructed him to act against the PPA leader.⁸³ Messali Hadj was arrested in Algiers on the morning of 27 August 1937 as he was about to start a political tour in the south of Algeria. Other leading members of the PPA arrested were Zakaria Moufidi, Khalifa Ben Amar, Hocine Lahouel and Brahim who were soon imprisoned and also charged, under the Régnier decree, with ‘reconstitution of a banned league’.⁸⁴ The PPA leaders were put in solitary confinement at Barberousse prison in Algiers. The police also intervened to prevent the PPA from printing its newspaper *Ech Chaab* and its tracts in Algiers.⁸⁵

Activists reacted swiftly to mobilize the party in France and Algeria. Messages were sent to militants and supporters in Algeria and Tunisia, and meetings of support were organized. Si Djilani, Arezki Kehal and Si Amrouche created a committee to collect funds for the defence of the accused and militants travelled by taxi in the Paris area to speed up the collection of funds.⁸⁶ In tracts, the PPA castigated a French colonialism ‘in dire straits and now allied with a communism that has become an imperialist doctrine’ for arresting ‘patriots who ... had committed the crime of loving their country dearly’. The organization warned that ‘putting a dyke on a stream turns it into a torrent. This torrent will, one day, sweep away everything on its way’.⁸⁷

On the following days, large-scale police operations were launched to arrest leading militants of the organization. *El Ouma* denounced the increased repression that was targeting the PPA and, seven years before the violent quelling of the May 1945 rebellion, predicted a show of military force on the part of the authorities:

All the group leaders of Sidi-bel-Abbes, Mascara, Aïn Temouchent, Mostaganem, Dellys, Maison Carrée, etc. have been charged and left on provisional release. Algiers is almost in a state of siege. Pickets of policemen are mounting guard everywhere. A regime of terror has been imposed by the police. Anyone mentioning Messali's name is charged. As for Tlemcen, one expects that martial law will be declared any day now. The authorities are deploying considerable force. We may soon see not only armoured cars, tanks and bombers, but also some battleships pointing their cannons towards our ports.⁸⁸

News of the arrests and of police repression triggered demonstrations in Algeria (Algiers, Tlemcen, Blida, Oran) and in France (Paris, Lyons and other major industrial centres). The *Jeunes du Congrès musulman algérien*, an association grouping young congress militants expressed their support for the PPA leadership. In Bizerte (Tunisia), there were violent clashes between demonstrators and the police on 9 September 1937. The Tunisian nationalist leader Habib Bourguiba published an article in the Neo-Destour newspaper *L'Action tunisienne* to protest against the arrest of Algerian militants.⁸⁹ Several PPA meetings took place in Algeria and France. On 3 September, the PPA held a large meeting presided over by Hadj Ali Abdelkader at the Salle Wagram, in Paris. The other speakers, who addressed an audience of approximately 600 North Africans, included Rabah Messaoui, Belkacem Radjef and Amar Kedder of the PPA, Emile Faure of the *Ligue de défense de la race nègre* and Rousset of the Trotskyist party, the *Parti ouvrier internationaliste* as well as Indochinese and Senegalese participants whom the police did not identify.⁹⁰ All the speakers denounced the oppressive measures the *Front populaire* government had ordered against the PPA and agreed to send a delegation to the prime minister's office to demand Messali Hadj's release and the abolition of the 'Native Code'.⁹¹ Activists and supporters organized collections in North African cafés in Paris. They criticized the PCF and CGT for refusing to lend rooms for their meetings and for the CGT's lack of support for North African workers in the workplace.⁹²

Rising unemployment among North African workers in France, the drought along with worsening misery and hunger in North Africa, and violent clashes between nationalists and the police in Meknes (Morocco) had already created tensions, which encouraged the PPA to recruit new militants. News of Messali's arrest led to renewed

mobilization among North Africans in France. The leaders of the Association of North African Muslim Students (*Association des étudiants musulmans nord-africains*, AEMNA) and leading militants of Indochinese and black anti-colonial organizations all expressed their support for the PPA in their newspapers and in meetings in Paris. Events forced the leaders of the Nadi Ettadib – also known as the *Cercle de l'éducation* – to tone down some of their attacks on the PPA so as not to undermine their influence over North African *coloniaux*.⁹³ In July 1937, a *rapprochement* had already taken place between Cheikh Ben Badis and representatives of the PPA (Arezki Kehal and Mohamed Guénanèche) and the ulema leader had distanced himself from the violent attacks of the PCA on the nationalist party.⁹⁴

Faced with increased repression, the PPA decided to develop clandestine operations to ensure that its political action could continue. Militants who had not been arrested took over running the party. Messali Hadj's French wife, Emilie Busquant, who had been actively involved in the PPA, played a key role in the organization during those years, leading demonstrations, organizing meetings and addressing audiences at rallies. It is revealing, by the way, that despite the important role she played in the Algerian nationalist movement, little detailed information about her activities, thoughts and writing appear in the French police and military archives examined for this study. The PPA also pursued its policy by successfully presenting Messali Hadj as a candidate at the Algiers cantonal election of October 1937. Even if the French authorities immediately annulled his election, this result, followed by subsequent electoral successes, showed that the PPA's popularity was growing among Muslims.⁹⁵

On 4 November 1937, Messali Hadj, Zakaria Moufdi, Hocine Lahouel and Khalifa Ben Amar were sentenced to two years in prison and Brahim Gherafa to one year. Rabah Messaoui and Ali Belamine, who were still on the run, were given a two year and a one year prison sentence respectively. Messaoui was arrested in April 1938. Contrary to the minister of justice's recommendation, the public prosecutor appealed against the ruling that granted political status to the prisoners. A general strike was organized in Algiers on 20 November to protest against what the PPA described as a 'racial verdict'. During their trial on 7 January 1938, the Algiers deputy public prosecutor argued that the accused, as 'subjects', had no right to engage in politics and the appeals court confirmed the sentence.⁹⁶

While in prison, Messali Hadj received messages of support from

Daniel Guérin, Félicien Challaye and other left-wing politicians.⁹⁷ He continued to lead the PPA and ran the nationalist newspaper *Le Parlement Algérien*, which was published in Algiers. (*El Ouma* was still printed in Paris.)⁹⁸ In the first issue, Messali Hadj published a piece entitled 'To our French friends of good and hard times' in which the organization castigated the communists and some in the SFIO, and paid tribute to their long-standing allies of the extreme-left in the *Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes* (CVIA), the *Rassemblement colonial*, the Anarchist Union and the International Workers' Party (*Parti ouvrier internationaliste*, POI).⁹⁹ He condemned the 'Stalinists and certain dubious socialists' who 'have put on the colonial tunic and hat to be at the service of a Fatherland they have rediscovered as if by magic'.¹⁰⁰

In the months following Messali's arrest, repression against North African Muslims intensified. Several nationalist leaders mobilizing Tunisian and Moroccan nationalists in support of the PPA were arrested, including Habib Bourguiba, who was imprisoned after denouncing the repression of Messali and the PPA. In Algeria, demonstrations were quelled violently; PPA political meetings were banned, police searched the offices and homes of PPA militants, and leading activists were arrested. Yet, this repression failed to stem the rise of the nationalist organization. On 9 May 1938, the public prosecutor in Algiers noted that:

In various parts of the Algerian territory other militants are appearing; new groups are being created; numerous acts of propaganda are brought almost daily to the attention of the police; tracts with similar aims are being published and seized in spite of the sanctions that have already been taken and the arrests that have been made, and all this action is continuing and manifests itself under the self-avowed aegis of the PPA. They are protesting about the charges brought against PPA militants, about the arrests, about police searches that were carried out, against the convictions that were pronounced, about the detention regime to which the prisoners are subjected; in brief, they are seizing any pretext to fuel and stir up unrest.¹⁰¹

Faced with the development of Algerian nationalism, which by his own admission repression had fuelled, the Algiers public prosecutor

recommended taking further repressive measures against the PPA using the powers conferred by the law of 10 January 1938 against 'associations whose aim is to undermine the integrity of the national territory'.

In the summer of 1938, with the lack of political reforms increasingly disillusioning the reformists and police repression starting to target moderates such as Lamine Lamoudi, the PPA reacted by calling for the unity of Muslim political forces. In September 1938, the French senate's rejection of the Blum–Viollette Bill led to the demise of the Algerian Muslim Congress and severely undermined the Algerian reformists' position.¹⁰² Even Dr Bendjelloul, who had been a staunch supporter of assimilation and had been excluded from the congress for his attacks on the PCA, concluded that 'Algerian Muslims will now reserve the right to demand something else.'¹⁰³ The *Fédération des élus* and the ulemas were weakened and the Algerian Communist Party was isolated, while the PPA's political influence was growing in both Algeria and France.¹⁰⁴ In *El Ouma*, the nationalists announced the end of the congress with irony:

Well, gentlemen. Now what do think of your Congrès, its death, its failure? ... Today, public opinion sees things more clearly and is demanding explanations from you. ... The Congrès is well and truly dead; it cost the Algerian people dearly. A huge amount of money was collected by subscription made in its name. All those delegations that stayed at the Grand Hôtel, travelled first class and had a lavish lifestyle have disappeared as if by magic. ... The Stalinists and the ulemas have remained dead silent about their fiasco.¹⁰⁵

From 1938 to 1939, the PPA repeatedly called for the ulemas to distance themselves from their communist partners at the congress, form an alliance with the PPA and create a Muslim assembly (*rassemblement musulman*) to work together for the emancipation of Algeria. Instead, the ulemas joined the Franco–Muslim Assembly founded by the reformist Dr Bendjelloul. In the same period, Ferhat Abbas created a political party, the *Union populaire algérienne* (Algerian Popular Union).¹⁰⁶ At the end of 1938, Cheikh el Okbi, who was openly hostile to Cheikh Ben Badis, resigned from the Association of Ulemas. He reasserted his loyalty to France and created *Al Islah al Islami* (Muslim Reform).¹⁰⁷ The PPA's call for unity fell on deaf ears,

and it was not before the last years of the Second World War that a *rapprochement* between the nationalists and some reformists took place.

During this period marked by police repression, the PPA's political bureau still called on the French government to 'look seriously into the terrible fate of Algerian Muslim populations deprived of the most basic rights and freedom'.¹⁰⁸ It added that:

France must review its colonial policy practices which no longer correspond to the realities and which are the cause of the current malaise. [The political bureau] insists on the necessity to grant democratic freedoms to the Algerian people as the only way to end the discontent that prevails in the whole country. ... With the sincere hope that a frank and fruitful cooperation will develop between the French and the Algerian peoples whose general interests informing their common security are linked, the political bureau of the PPA asks the French government to take the necessary measures which will turn Algeria into a land of equality, happiness and fraternity, without any distinction of race or religion.¹⁰⁹

However, this call for the introduction of much needed reform went unheard. On 29 August 1939, the French authorities banned the PPA's two French language newspapers – *El Ouma* and *Le Parlement algérien*.

When Messali Hadj and the other PPA leaders were briefly released from prison on 27 August 1939 after having served their full sentences, they continued their political action in the context of the looming war that was precipitating political events in France and the colonies. From the mid-1930s onwards, the French authorities were also concerned about the way the German and Italian fascist governments were actively pursuing their propaganda and attempting to undermine France's colonial dominance in the Middle East and North Africa. In Germany, Abdelatif Abdelouhab, the head of the Islamic community in Berlin, was in regular contact with Moroccan nationalists.¹¹⁰ In the summer of 1939, Moussa el Husseinî, a cousin of the ex-mufti of Jerusalem and in contact with the German authorities, travelled to Paris to produce a report on North African political organizations in France, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and to Switzerland to meet representatives of the Syro-Palestinian Committee.¹¹¹ In Geneva, according to police reports, the committee was sending funds

obtained from Germany and Italy to the PPA and other North African nationalist organizations, and was trying to establish an Arab confederation uniting all Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa.¹¹²

Throughout the 1930s, the ENA and PPA sought to make use of the tense international situation to mobilize and fight for the emancipation of North Africa. Yet, under Messali Hadj's leadership, the nationalist organization maintained its hostility to Hitler and fascism and stated that 'the Muslim population hates war because it does not like carnage and massacres [and] because it has nothing to defend and nothing to gain.' The PPA also consistently denounced the Italian military expansion in Ethiopia and in the Muslim countries of Tripolitania and Albania. On 17 December 1938, the PPA's political bureau made a declaration denouncing Italy's claims on Tunisia as 'a danger for the democratic aspirations of the peoples of a united and indivisible North Africa' and as 'a threat to the security of the North African and French peoples'.¹¹³

On 2 September 1939, the French parliament and senate declared war on Germany and ordered general mobilization. Leading reformists, including Ferhat Abbas and Dr Bendjelloul, immediately joined the French army. On the following day, the PPA was dissolved. The French authorities were aware of the prestige the Germans and their Emperor Wilhelm II, nicknamed 'Hadj Guillaume', had enjoyed among many North Africans during the First World War and were concerned that some North African subjects might refuse to fight. However, despite some reticence on the part of the Algerian population, the mobilization campaign took place with relatively few incidents. In France, the police reported that the mobilization of North Africans in France by SAINA (the *Service des affaires indigènes nord-africaines*) was taking place 'in excellent conditions'. By 5 September, 5000 Algerians had been directed to the mobilization centres to which they had been posted and the PPA leadership was said to have advised its militants not to protest in order to limit the police repression against them.¹¹⁴ On 4 October, Messali Hadj and dozens of other PPA militants were arrested, and in France, many Algerian nationalist activists were sent to detention camps. As Algerian men were mobilized for a second time to 'save' France and to fight against its German foe, the French authorities remained intent on maintaining absolute colonial order in North Africa. Confronted as it was by the limitations of its political action during the 1920s and 1930s, the

Algerian nationalist movement was moving inexorably towards a confrontation with the French colonial system.

Conclusion

To conclude, it could be argued that the nationalist politics that developed in the Algerian diaspora in the interwar period heralded a new era of political mobilization and shaped anti-colonial activism among North Africans both in France and Algeria. Nationalist political activism first appeared among Algerian immigrants in the mid-1920s and spread to Algeria from 1936 onwards. In the light of France's refusal to reform the discriminatory colonial order in Algeria and to ban the Native Code, the limits of the *Jennes Algériens'* reformist political action in Algeria soon became apparent and led Emir Kahled to declare that Algerians had been duped by France's assimilationist rhetoric, which was nothing more than a smokescreen.

While the ulemas and Algerian *évolués* (elite) of the *Fédération des élus* pursued a reformist political agenda in Algeria in the interwar period, Algerian migrant workers in France (and to a lesser extent their Tunisian and Moroccan counterparts) established, with the assistance of the PCF, the first North African nationalist organization, the *Etoile nord-africaine* (ENA) in the spring of 1926. The organization's nationalist programme, which Messali Hadj soon led, gradually evolved to focus particularly on Algerian affairs and to demand more rights for the colonized, the abolition of the Native Code and independence for North Africa. Tensions grew rapidly between the French communists, shifting towards a more reformist position on colonialism, and the ENA whose nationalism, rooted in Islam, conflicted with the PCF's internationalist and secularist agenda. When the French government first dissolved the ENA on 29 November 1929, the PCF did not react.

Messali and other leading nationalists recreated the ENA as an autonomous organization in May 1933 and, despite being subjected to harassment, arrests and oppression by the police and authorities, from the mid-1930s onwards it developed into the principal Algerian anti-colonial movement on both sides of the Mediterranean. The ENA's support for the *Front populaire* government in 1936 was short-lived, for the latter failed to introduce any significant reforms to the colonial system that persisted in Algeria and the rest of North Africa. On 27 January 1937, the government led by Léon Blum banned the ENA again, but less than two months later Messali created its successor, the PPA, and later transferred its headquarters to Algiers. While immigrant

workers in France still played an important role in nationalist politics, a gradual shift in emphasis from France to Algeria marked this new phase of activism and the strategy and actions the organization pursued. During that period, Algerian nationalism established its ideological and discursive foundations, as the following chapters show.

2

Ethnicity and Nation-ness in the ENA–PPA Discourse

During the interwar period in France, the North African nationalist movement focused on Maghrebis as an ethnic group and on ethnicity as the underlying mobilizing force behind their sense of nationality (or nation-ness).¹ But what ideological function did this fulfil? How did ethnicity and race relate to nationality? How did Algerian Muslims view their ethnic identity? Did the North African migrant community constitute then – and now – a diaspora and did this affect their behaviour. These are the questions I try to answer in this chapter.

The Maghrebi diaspora

In its modern form, Algerian nationalism was born and evolved from the North African migrant community's experiences in France in the 1920s and 1930s. Can one, however, define Maghrebi migrants in France as part of a diaspora, and consider their experience and discourse as influenced by it? Safran states that even though the Maghrebi community does not 'fully conform to the "ideal" type of the Jewish diaspora',² it can be considered a diaspora despite Maghrebis having neither been expelled from their country by force nor faced the political obligation or moral burden of 'reconstituting a lost homeland or maintaining an endangered culture'.³ It could be argued that the case Safran made to describe the Maghrebi community as a diaspora is, on the whole, convincing, but his interpretation fails to assess this community's experience within a wider historical context. Indeed, the North African diaspora started in the early twentieth century and was marked by colonialism and its corollaries, the politics of dispossession and sociocultural dislocation. The migrants' aims, as seen in the main North African political movement of the interwar

period in France, the *Etoile nord-africaine*, replaced in 1937 by the *Parti du peuple algérien* (broadly referred to here as the ENA–PPA) were clearly to reconstitute a lost homeland and maintain an endangered culture. This remained their objective in the postcolonial era too, even though their understanding of the ‘lost homeland’ and culture had by then shifted, as will be shown in the second case study, examined in Part III (the *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes*).

A number of the characteristics of the North African, and more specifically the Algerian, migrant population in the 1920s and 1930s conform to those of a diaspora. During the colonial period, many left the Maghreb to go to France and the Middle East and viewed their experience in France as an abnormal period in their life, comparable with ‘warfare in an “infidel” land’.⁴ *El Ouma* referred to them in December 1937 as ‘North African workers of France, economic exiles that exploitative colonialism threw out of their home and fatherland’. As a political movement, the ENA, despite its focus on North Africa, was very much anchored in the North African community in France; and the realization that the Maghrebis’ exile in France was a direct result of colonial oppression influenced its political philosophy. At a meeting on the ‘Algerian malaise’ that the Club du Faubourg organized on 18 March 1936, which most of the parties involved in the Algerian question attended, Dr Ben Sliman, representing the ENA, defined his movement as follows:

What is the *Etoile nord-africaine*? An organization that brings together Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan migrant workers in France and whose aim is to give them a political education to enable them to work towards the national and social emancipation of North Africa. It also defends North Africans tracked down by the [police service of] rue Lecomte, unemployed and deprived of any assistance and all those who are bullied by the authorities.⁵

The ENA was therefore seen as a movement born in exile, the main aim of which was to educate and mobilize North African migrants to achieve independence and restore their homeland.

North African migrants could have been regarded as constituting a diaspora even before they came to France, for colonialism had culturally alienated the indigenous population by destroying the communal system and behavioural codes that maintained its social

cohesion.⁶ The introduction of the Native Code, the segregationist and punitive code applied to Muslims, as well as the imposition of the European taxation system and of individual ownership, devalitized and dislocated the pre-colonial economy.⁷ Dispossession of the more fertile land by the French colonial authorities resulted in a large-scale rural exodus.⁸ Also, increasing pauperization and debt, lack of land and demographic growth led to more farmers becoming day labourers on French farms or in towns and cities.

In that context, emigration was a Muslim's best chance of escaping colonial oppression. It offered some reprieve from the forces of dispossession and many worked in France to help their families and communities in North Africa financially. Sayad describes the migration of North Africans in the interwar period as the first 'age' of emigration: 'The primary function of emigration to France – which was at the same time the consequence and the sign of the ruin of the old system within which the traditional peasant society and economy survived – was to give peasant communities ... the means to be perpetuated as such.'⁹ Their act constituted what Stora calls 'the escape from the colonial ghetto'.¹⁰ Contrary to a frequently-held belief, migrants were not the least able among the North African population; in fact, the best were chosen to carry out such an important task.¹¹ The colonial context within which migration took place showed that emigration was, to a large extent, a political act. In 1933, in an article denouncing racist comments about Kabyle immigrants in the French press and the dispossession and oppression endured by Muslims in North Africa, Amar Imache, then general secretary of the ENA, compared emigration with an 'exodus of martyrs ... who fled hell' and described the process of migration as follows:

I wanted to dedicate this article to all my brothers. To all those who, back home in North Africa, are suffering from imperialist oppression, forced as they are to bow down under the feudal authority, under the democratic Republic that makes 'peace and justice' flow, and also to my expatriate brothers, to those who fled from the odious Native Code and who paid dearly for the right to go into exile. ... I was thinking of the heartache they have felt on the eve of departure and of their heartbreak when parting, for the only solution for us is to leave: next to the settler, happy and rich from the land that he stole from us, there is no room for us.¹²

The nationalist movement's view of emigration conjures up notions of exile, separation and oppression, as well as an awareness of the racism and hostility to which North Africans were subjected, not only in the colonies but also in metropolitan France. It is imbued with feelings of loss, memory and hopes that emancipation and freedom will mark their eventual return to their homeland. The economic imperatives that motivated their migration were linked to their social, political and economic marginalization in North Africa.

Nation-ness and difference

As Barth has shown, ethnicity can be defined as a process that takes place at the boundary between 'us' and 'them'.¹³ It should also be understood, within the framework of this book, as part of a wider process. It was indeed at the point of contact, at the boundary between the ethnic and the political, that Algerian national identity was constructed. A twofold process shaped Algerian nation-ness: on the one hand, ethnic membership facilitates group formation in the political sphere, and on the other hand, it is the political community that inspires the belief in common ethnicity.¹⁴

The interplay between ethnicity and nation-ness helps to explain the evolution of the community's identity through nationalism.¹⁵ Here, it is necessary to define briefly the concept of nationalism, as well as those of nation and nation-state, which tend to be used widely and interchangeably, and to assess the relationship that exists between them. Giddens interprets 'nationalism' as 'a phenomenon that is primarily psychological – the affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasizing communality among the people of a political order' and the 'nation-state' as a 'bordered power container'.¹⁶

Connor, who favours an ethnic rather than political interpretation of nation, argues that the terms 'nation' and 'state' have too often been used synonymously when there is, often, no direct correlation between the two. He also criticizes the broadly used designation of nation-state to describe all established state structures, even when the majority of them contain several nations. He defines the state as the major political subdivision of the globe, which is readily defined and easily understood in quantitative terms.¹⁷ On the other hand, Connor sees the essence of a nation as intangible and argues that 'this essence is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way. The nature of that bond and its well-spring remain

shadowy and elusive.¹⁸ Anderson, however, challenges this somewhat purist reading by clarifying the nature of that bond, and takes the concept of nation further when he defines it as an imagined community.¹⁹ This interpretation can shed some useful light on the processes of ethno-national formation within the North African migrant community during the interwar years. Indeed, if one accepts his contention, then it is worth exploring how the Algerian nation was imagined. In a tract announcing a political rally on 16 June 1933, the nationalist movement referred to itself as ‘The Etoile nord-africaine, your national organization’.²⁰ But to what nation did nationalists refer, and how did they define it? Was it built on a sense of ethnic belonging or on other foundations?

First, it could be argued that the movement’s sense of nation-ness was very much informed by what it was not, or rather by what it was against. Indeed, it frequently focused on rejecting the idea that Algeria was French and, by extension, that Muslims in Algeria could one day become French. The nationalist newspaper often reminded militants that ‘Algeria was never French, is not French and will never be French as it goes against the will of its children.’²¹ It also condemned the concept of a French Algeria in an article hostile to a pro-colonialist association the French authorities had created called *Algérie française* (French Algeria), which recruited among North African immigrants in France: “‘French Algeria’”, how ridiculous! In what way is Algeria French, what makes Algeria French? No, really, there is no French Algeria; yes, there is an Algeria dominated by the French! But Algeria will always remain Algerian ... we prefer, and fight to remain “Algerian ... Algerians”.”²² Becoming French (*naturalisé*), which implied a renunciation of one’s Muslim status, was perceived as a betrayal of one’s religion. In a meeting the ENA organized on 9 September 1934, Amar Imache called for ‘the blacklisting of all the naturalized who have betrayed Islam’.²³ The naturalized, who usually belonged to the Algerian elite, were also relentlessly condemned in the nationalist newspaper. In an article published in *El Ouma*, the movement expressed its indignation that the French *Commission inter-ministérielle des Affaires musulmanes* exercised control over the Muslim faith and law in North Africa with the assistance of leading North African reformist politicians such as Khalifat El Djerad and Dr Mohamed Bendjelloul:

How on earth can Dr Ben Jelloul [*sic*] who, more than once, has solemnly declared that he thinks in French, dreams in French

and talks in French, deal with Islamic judicial questions? ... It is certainly easy for Kalifat [El Djerad] and his young partner [Bendjelloul] to declare their love for Marianne, even if she rejects them with disgust, to spout incessant declarations of loyalty and attachment to the 'Motherland'. ... Just go to your Motherland, hug her, give your life for her, but we forbid you from talking about us and Islam. You are unworthy of Islam and Arab society, go away! ... Let them become French citizens, they should let us work towards the construction of our Motherland, that will love her children as a true mother, and not as a cruel, unnatural mother [*marâtre*].²⁴

The gendered sexual metaphors used in this extract to differentiate between French and Algerian nation-ness are worth noting. Here, Marianne personifies French nationality, and the declaration of love made to Marianne by those *notables naturalisés*, symbolizing their love for France and their desire to become French citizens, is presented as belonging to the sphere of the unnatural and of perversion (through the ambiguities of the term '*marâtre*'). It is a one-way relationship the loved one (Marianne) only meets with disgust. By contrast, the nation-ness, and Islam they, as nationalists, long for is also personified, but presented as the natural, generous and 'disinterested' love of a mother for her children.

In the February 1934 issue of *El Ouma*, Amar Imache also described what he saw as a fundamental opposition between an 'oppressive' Marianne and a 'generous' Islam:

Your prodigal sons are only human in their appearance; they are wolves, Marianne, wolves with long fangs and with an insatiable appetite. ... For the last hundred years, those who have been enthralled by your apparent beauty have asked you to come to their rescue but you have turned a deaf ear ... you have abandoned millions of innocent beings to these bloodthirsty ogres, and encouraged and protected their gluttony. ... All this comes at a price, Marianne, this is the law of nature! One always perishes the way one sinned! This is immanent, infallible justice! Oh Marianne! Even if you claim that you have come to civilize us, the victims' complaints and the howling of the hyenas and jackals have covered your poor voice. The laurels of Islam prevented you from behaving yourself, you wanted to imitate its

conquests without following its example. ... Islam did not behave like you, Marianne; its flag was inseparable from the Koran that brought the holy word of God. 'Justice and fraternity'.²⁵

Within this representation of irreconcilable difference between Marianne and the Muslim faith, naturalization not only meant betraying Islam, but was also equated with Christianization. For Algerian nationalists, the relationship between nationality and religion had two aspects; naturalization implied Christianization, while Algerian nationalism was equivalent to the preservation of Islam and the Muslim identity of North Africans. This point is illustrated by the speech made by a militant, Amar, during a political meeting of the Levallois-Perret section of the ENA on 12 September 1933:

The people only have one aspiration: to be free and independent; as for hypocrites allied with the missionaries ... who are trying to force Algerian Muslims to become Christians by declaring 'we want our place in the great French family, and we want to be French Muslims', these people are faced with the solidly built pillar of the Etoile that only seeks the tradition of Arabs and the divine doctrine. ... We are Muslim Algerians. ... We are proud of it. And we will never accept to become French.²⁶

The movement frequently reiterated the assertion that to adhere to their nationalist programme was the best way for Algerian, and more broadly North African, Muslims to preserve their religious identity. In 1935 the ENA asked all Muslims to open their eyes to the 'danger of Christianization and naturalization',²⁷ and a further article published in *El Ouma* entitled 'Muslims ... Beware!!!' written under the pseudonym 'El Ançari' by the Moroccan student leader El Kholti – who was a Berber – denounced the White Fathers' attempts to spread the Christian faith among the Kabyles:

We want to warn our fellow Muslims against charlatans and hypocrites, those who take advantage of the Muslim people's misery to Christianize them and who, on domains composed of thousands of hectares of land stolen from Muslims, force Muslim workers to pray in front of them or face dismissal. ...

Now the Père blanc Jean Lemoine is asking us to sing the ‘Marseillaise’, instead of the ‘International’. ... We might have sung the ‘Marseillaise’, if it were still the song of those who proclaimed the principles of 1789 and those who, in 1792, sang this hymn to bring freedom, and not slavery, to other peoples. And as far as we, Muslims, are concerned, we much prefer to sing ‘Beni El Ouatani’.²⁸

Under colonial rule, which dispossessed Maghrebis of their land and undermined much of the traditional sociocultural fabric of North African life, nationalists viewed their Muslim heritage as the last and most important marker of identity; Christianity, on the other hand, they equated with the colonial oppression to which North Africans were subjected.²⁹ They brushed aside Jean Lemoine’s accusations that their nationalist agenda was part of a communist plot; and they rejected French nation-ness because the France that oppressed them bore no resemblance to that of the French Revolution, the values and principles of which they, as nationalists, adhered to but that had ceased to exist. Their salvation lay in their nationalist struggle for an independent Algeria (as implied by their reference to ‘Beni El Ouatani’, the Algerian nationalist anthem).³⁰

Nationalists also rejected the belief some North Africans held that they would gain materially if they obtained French citizenship. The political vision the movement developed illustrates the extent to which many North African immigrants became class conscious while living in metropolitan France. Their contact with the French working class and their involvement in union activity and protest actions in the workplace had influenced them profoundly. They also realized that, as long as the colonial order was in place and until Algeria was independent, they would remain part of the *sous-prolétariat*, whatever their legal status:

We know full well that citizenship will not lift us out of our misery, since we can see the desperate situation of our French working-class comrades. ... We will painfully continue to love our beloved Algeria from the Gehenna – our hovels in the *Métropole*, and our huts and tents back home.³¹

Even though, as I shall show later, references to class were neither frequent nor explicit, they nonetheless provided a reason not to seek

assimilation into the French nation, for French citizenship did not imply better living conditions.

The importance North African nationalists attached to the family and to their affiliation and faithfulness to their religion characterized their sense of belonging to a nation – a nation in which ties of fraternity were seen as crucially important. Dr Ben Sliman insisted in his speech at the Club du Faubourg on 18 March 1936 that national emancipation could only be achieved by ending the colonization of the Algerian people by a minority of foreigners who had ‘no feeling of fraternity with Muslims’.³² Thus, France’s colonial domination of Algeria resulted in the ENA–PPA defining identity in terms of irreconcilable difference.

However, defining nationhood so simply does not get to the heart of what nationhood is: it is not one dimensional but the multifaceted and shifting result of negotiation, exchange and conflict. If Algerian nationalists rejected unequivocally the idea that North African Muslims could become French, they argued nonetheless that their newly born nationalist feelings should not turn into hatred for the French people and, more ambiguously, for French nationalism – nationalism in the sense of love, loyalty and, as Connor points out, identification with one’s nation.³³ An article in *El Ouma* written in 1938 and entitled ‘Algeria will live’ illustrates this point clearly:

But do not believe, my brothers, that love for our country must lead us to hate that of others. No, on the contrary, we can only have admiration for the peoples who were able to keep their independence or got it through their courage and devotion. This must not lead us to attack or blame the French fatherland and the heroic and just French people.³⁴

This passage raises a number of questions about how nationalists perceived their own identity. The Algerian nationalist movement had developed largely as a result of French colonial domination. This domination, as expressed through a colonial project that declared Algeria to be part of France, was clearly a manifestation of French nationalism. However, the PPA, as it was then called, still described the French people, and more importantly French nationalism, with admiration. How can this apparent contradiction be explained?

First, it could be argued that Algerian nationalism bore many of the characteristics of its French equivalent, with references to French

revolutionary principles, the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’, pride in national independence and to the concept of the ‘one and indivisible Republic’, and so on. It was essentially a modern political concept of nation that was adopted.³⁵

Second, the ENA–PPA still made a distinction between the people of France, on the one hand, whose claim to national sovereignty they considered legitimate and wanted to emulate, and French imperialism on the other. It is interesting to note that this distinction was made at the height of the French colonial empire, which coincided with the development of Algerian nationalism in its modern form.³⁶

Let us now assess the characteristics of the movement’s nationalism. How was it structured? Did it aim to create a North African state that would destroy the colonial border the French had established? Maghrebis would embrace such a state all the more willingly and naturally because it corresponded to their national aspiration to base their state on the homogeneous ethnic make-up of North Africans. This was certainly an option on the ENA agenda when it was created with the assistance of the French Communist Party (PCF) on 20 June 1926. Its mission then was to unite all North Africans against colonialism and, during the movement’s early years (until the late 1920s), it often called for the mobilization of all Maghrebis to gain the independence of North Africa. However, as a police report noted, the ENA never really managed to establish a common front between Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians.³⁷

Even though the different ‘national’ groups constantly showed solidarity with one another, the ENA rapidly shifted towards focusing mainly on Algerian issues. There were many reasons for this partial break in North African unity. One had to do with the nature of North African immigration to France: with numerically many more Algerians coming to France and Algerian issues given more importance, many other North Africans felt marginalized.³⁸ Also, unlike Morocco and Tunisia, where part of the elite was developing quite a radical agenda (the *Jeunes Marocains* in Morocco and the *Destour* in Tunisia), the Algerian nationalist movement was, at least during the interwar years, largely anchored in the working-class Algerian diaspora in France and not in the educated middle classes in Algeria, which had adopted a more reformist stance. However, it is worth noting that the ENA leadership usually belonged to the more educated section of the working-class migrant population, and that the profile of ENA–PPA militants in Algeria was different, as nationalists had developed a

significant audience among sections of the more educated Algerian youth.³⁹

At a meeting on 30 July 1933, Belkacem Radjef, then member of the central committee and ENA treasurer, whom the police described as Messali Hadj's most devoted and active lieutenant, made a speech in which he called on North Africans to rally around one programme: 'Algeria to the Algerians, Morocco to the Moroccans, Tunisia to the Tunisians'.⁴⁰ How is one to interpret this slogan? Let us first concentrate on the countries mentioned here and note, as a further legacy of the divisive French imperialist project, that the borders the French colonial authorities had established were not challenged. On the contrary, they seemed to have been adopted as valid frameworks for the creation of independent North African states. The imagined ethnic make-up of a nation was therefore not necessarily considered to be the indispensable foundation and justification for shaping a similarly imagined nation-state. Inasmuch as ethnic boundaries could shift and encompass the whole of North Africa, the struggle to establish an independent state seemed to dictate that the nation's frontiers had to be defined and shaped to fit into the rigid borders of the ex-colony. This decision was fraught with problems and, as history has shown, would create further unrest and instability. In the post-independence period, the low-level wars between Algeria and Morocco triggered by a dispute over borders are an illustration of the contested nature of boundaries, particularly in postcolonial states.

As Bauman argues, 'to explain the phenomenon of the nations, one needs to explain the phenomenon of nationalism.'⁴¹ The ENA and the PPA regarded the Algerian nation and the state in different ways. When they demanded 'the abolition of the *gouvernement général*, of the *délégation financière*, and their replacement by an Algerian parliament elected by universal suffrage by the Algerian people without any distinction of race and religion',⁴² they conjured up the vision of an independent Algerian state and people based on democracy. And this open and tolerant conception of Algeria was not deemed to be in contradiction with the nationalist feelings of the ENA, as the following passage shows:

We, nationalists who love our country, who want education, freedom, peace, justice, and welfare for all its children without any distinction of race or religion, declare that the only solution lies with the Algerian people itself, its union, its organization

and the daily struggle that it must undertake to have its immediate demands satisfied.⁴³

In this extract, the ENA's vision of the ideal Algerian nation was rooted in the political sphere rather than in ethnicity, and its representation of Algerian people included Maghrebis, Europeans and Jews. It was a nationalism based on generous values of tolerance and not on racism, the ENA claimed, and it gave the same rights to the majority as to the minorities. It was a reversal of the colonial order in the sense that in a free and independent Algeria the ethnic make-up of the country would be kept as it was, but it would be a free democratic state where what Messali Hadj's movement perceived of as the true values of 1789 would find a home. Several examples can be mentioned to illustrate this point. At the Club du Faubourg debate on the Algerian question on 18 March 1936, Dr Ben Sliman's exposé of the nationalist view sparked off a hostile reaction from the French settlers present in the audience who, according to *El Ouma*, shouted 'Long live France'. Ben Sliman, who was the ENA's delegate, then reacted by declaring:

Yes! Long live the France of the 1789 Revolution! Long live France, land of the Rights of Man! ... The Algerian people, once they are masters of their own destiny, will end political oppression, and in a free and independent Algeria, there will be neither Jew, nor French, nor *indigènes*, but Algerians reconciled in freedom. On that day, as our valiant president said, there will also be bread for everyone and freedom for all.⁴⁴

In an article published in *El Ouma* in January 1938, the Algerian nationalist movement emphasized the inclusive and conciliatory nature of its political programme and rejected accusations made by the French press and some political parties (including the French Communist Party) that the PPA, the ENA's successor, was a fascist and racist party close to Doriot's fascist movement, the PPF:

One must concede in all fairness that nothing in this programme is directed against France or against the French of Algeria. On the contrary, everything is conceived here to foster a closer and more real cooperation between the different ethnic elements of the country. ... What we want is to cooperate, but

in a way that is real and consistent with the principles that have inspired the current regime of France. This is clearly visible in the fundamental chapter of our programme in which we ask for the replacement of the *Délégations financières* by an Algerian assembly, but one elected by universal suffrage, without any distinction of race or religion between voters. ... The aim of our nationalism is to give every Muslim, French or foreigner who has acquired the *droit de cité* in Algeria, the right to have their say in the running of the country. It can be seen that this is a nationalism that is neither chauvinistic nor xenophobic because it is not based on racial prejudice.⁴⁵

It was a nationalism based on equality between citizens belonging to all ethnic groups within a democratic state, rather than on a sense of ethnicity. The Algeria imagined here was not a nation-state giving prominence to the ancient rights of the majority 'ethnic' group, but rather a free, democratic and multiethnic state. It could be argued that this ideal nation was perceived as a pluralist or diverse one, where all Algerian citizens, regardless of their ethno-national background – religion, 'race', geographical origin, language, and/or culture – would be part of the same independent state and have the same rights. This vision of an independent state not only reflected the complex ethnic make-up of Algeria at the time but was also marked by a desire to transcend the political and socioeconomic divisions and the racial boundaries that colonialism had made insurmountable.

Establishing the foundations of the nation-state on such a precept was undoubtedly consistent with Algerian nationalists' understanding of universalism; it also had the advantage of offering a realistic alternative to the colonial order as it would enable Algeria to replace the latter with a fairer social system:

This is not at all about ... amending, mitigating, softening the colonial system but about replacing it with a different, more sane relationship that, while establishing rights, safeguards some of the respective interests of the peoples living here ... this is the only fair path because it will seal the fraternal union of peoples based on equality between peoples and respect for nationality.⁴⁶

This call for a smoother transition from a colonial to a pluralist,

democratic order was, to nationalists, the best way of helping independent Algeria emerge as an economically and politically viable and stable state. Expertise from former colonials, who would then become Algerian citizens, would benefit the country while the Muslim population, which had previously been marginalized educationally, socially, politically and economically, would play a full role in these previously forbidden areas. Also, as a police report shows, Messali Hadj considered in private conversations that an independent Algeria would still need France's technical and economic assistance.⁴⁷ This depiction of a free and pluralist Algeria focused on the construction of an inclusive and egalitarian society in which the ethnic divisions on which the colonial system was based would be removed to establish the foundations of a modern country, the diversity of which was represented as being of potential benefit to all new Algerian citizens. In an independent Algerian state, ethnic difference was seen as compatible with equality and equality as the only way forward to respect difference. This political perspective implied that a constructive dialogue between nationalists and progressive French authorities should be established.

The way in which the term 'nationality' was used is worth exploring. When the ENA–PPA referred to 'the fraternal union of peoples based on equality between peoples and based on respect for *nationality*' (my emphasis), the word was understood as meaning a feeling of loyalty to the Algerian nation-state within the framework of a diverse society where all peoples, in the sense of ethnic groups, would be equal. This feeling of loyalty to one's nation-state, which they called '*nationalité*', was a form of patriotism.⁴⁸ The Algeria that the ENA–PPA imagined was rooted in a universalist/political concept of nation, one where all the citizens living in the state, of whatever origin, would be bound by this social contract.

Given the particular nature of the movement's nationalism, however, the ENA–PPA's universalist vision of a multiethnic Algeria infused with a sense of patriotism was problematic. On the one hand, by establishing a clear social contract and shared patriotic feelings, that 'ideal' representation of social relations between the citizens of an independent Algeria normalized and ironed out any difference. On the other hand, however, a process of identity construction marked by an emphasis on ethno-national differences sustained the North Africans' anti-colonial nationalism.

Nationalists wanted to be independent because they saw them-

selves as ethnically different, because to demand the emancipation of North Africans they could draw on what they considered tangible historical, cultural, linguistic and religious differences. In other words, there was a divergence between the underlying beliefs that shaped the ENA–PPA’s nationalist feelings of ethnic ‘uniqueness’, and its aspiration to see, one day, a state based on inclusiveness and equality emerge from the rubble of colonialism.

Nonetheless, at that particular stage of their anti-colonial struggle, reconciling the two was extremely difficult, but not impossible, provided the transition from a colonial order to the creation of an independent Algeria was carried out relatively peacefully and without alienating the two sides. Muslim nationalism could serve as a tool to destroy the colonial order, and the newly independent state could forge a new patriotic bond among ethnically varied Algerian citizens on the basis of the already existing feelings of Algerian-ness shared by North African Muslims, European settlers and Jews.⁴⁹

The nationalist organization’s statements showed that, as leaders and militants declared their hope that one day the French would be expelled from Algeria, this vision of an independent Algeria was sometimes questioned and contradicted. In a meeting of the ENA on 15 September 1934, Amar Imache and Belkacem Radjef called for the French to be ‘thrown out to sea’.⁵⁰ But these demands, which were occasionally made in the course of heated political speeches and debates, probably referred to the French as a symbol of colonialism, and as such did not necessarily contradict their other universalist and inclusive claims. Furthermore, those calls for the French to be ‘expelled’ did not appear in the issues of *El Ouma* analysed here. Rarely was the future Algeria described in the movement’s newspaper as composed only of indigenous North Africans. On the contrary, the overriding ENA–PPA position seems to have been that a new leaf should be turned once independence had been achieved and that constructive relations should be established between France and Algeria: ‘One hundred years of French domination have definitely created spiritual affinity and a community of interests between the French and the Algerian peoples. Algeria needs a sincere and loyal France. ... And France needs Algeria with its many resources.’⁵¹ Mutual understanding based on shared history, as well as political and economic interest, marked this conciliatory representation of postcolonial relations between the two countries.

Ethno-national identity: the tension between inclusive nationality and exclusive nationalism

Even though the future Algerian nation-state the ENA and PPA imagined was multicultural, Algerian nationalist feelings, rooted in the urgency of the anti-colonial struggle, were radically different. Examining the growth of a sense of shared North African Muslim identity (Muslims were meant to be numerically dominant in that independent state) helps us to understand the development of nationalism.

I established in the previous section that a key characteristic of the militants' identity is that they define themselves *vis-à-vis* the other, and I argued that they refused to become that different figure that the French assimilationist policy promoted. This marked the 'outer boundary' of their identity. One cannot, however, simply consider oneself as belonging to a specific nation only because one feels different from another national group. The nature of that difference has to be defined, or rather imagined, in such a way that it can mobilize people around a number of clear, if shifting, reference values, which is why the processes through which they construct their own national identity also need to be assessed. To put it differently, if Algerian Muslims were not 'French', then who were they?

First, it is important to note here that two reference frameworks were inextricably linked: the complex and constantly evolving tension between what constituted 'us' and what differentiated 'us' from 'them' was what formed national identity. As Connor puts it, 'the essence of the nation is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all non-members in a most vital way.'⁵² The aim of this section is to examine how this bond was constructed.

At the core of the process of nation-building is the relationship between nation, ethnicity and 'race'. Today, a distinction between race and ethnicity tends to be made. Wallerstein, for instance, defines race as '[supposed to be] a genetic category corresponding to an apparent physical form' and an ethnic group as 'a cultural category defined by certain persistent behaviours transmitted from generation to generation'.⁵³ Since the notion of 'race', which has no scientific foundation, lost much of its credibility after the Second World War, the concept of ethnicity has become more widely used. In the interwar years, the term 'race' was widely used and loosely defined: it could describe biological, as well as cultural, religious, historical, geographical and/or linguistic differences. Banton and Harwood's historical inter-

pretation of how the notion of 'race' was invented and then spread to the rest of the world highlights the meaning that it conveyed in colonial times:

Race was a kind of classification invented by Europeans, first to press the political claims of groups within European countries; then to represent the relations between these countries; only later when the potentialities of this way of labelling people had been extended and biological theories integrated with social ones, was it imposed upon the rest of the world.⁵⁴

However, to follow up on that argument and relate it to our case study, that this kind of classification was imposed on the rest of the world does not necessarily mean that the colonized adopted, structured and used it in the same way as the colonizer.

The ENA–PPA seemed to be ambivalent about the meaning of the word 'race'. In an article denouncing colonialism, *El Oumma* referred to nationalism as the bond that unites all North Africans of the same 'race' belonging to the same country: 'We say to our North African Muslim people and before the whole world that it can only acquire its rights, honour and prosperity if the feeling of freedom and for the fatherland inspires men, women and children, and becomes the powerful link between the children of the same race and the same country.'⁵⁵ In this passage, the term 'race' is used in the singular and all North African Muslims are described as being members of that 'race'. But to which 'race' do they refer? The article later implies that all North African Muslims belong to the Arab 'race' when it states that 'the people ... will make the right choice between courage and cowardice ... between those who say "we are proud of being Arabs, and we want to remain as such" and those who go back on everything they stood for and say: "we only want to be French".'⁵⁶ However, it also acknowledges that North African Muslim people are composed of different racial or ethnic groups when it calls for the 'fraternal union' of our 'Arab [and] Kabyle brothers'.⁵⁷ One of the conclusions that can be drawn from the apparent contradiction between the two above-mentioned passages is that between the two main existing ethnic groups in the Muslim population – the 'Arabs' and the 'Berbers' – Arabness was the dominant racial reference.

Analysing the varied ethnic make-up of the North African indigenous population implied not only determining which 'race' was

dominant, but also reconciling both ethnic groups by explaining that they were one and the same ‘race’. The ENA–PPA’s view echoed that of Algerian reformist politicians in the Association of Ulemas. *El Ouma* reproduced and welcomed the content of a conference held in Algiers on 12 March 1936, in which reformist politician Lamine Lamoudi gave the following historical account of Arab domination in North Africa:

One should remember ... the Arab conquest. Arabs are not considered as conquerors, [there were] neither victors nor vanquished people. Berbers benefited from the broadest democracy, and this is why, after fewer than twenty years, the Berbers had been conquered body and soul by the Arabs. ... Let us say that in Algeria, there no longer are Arabs, Kabyles or Mozabites, but Muslim Arabo-Berbers, and if we are all united, we are sure that our just Cause will prevail.⁵⁸

This depiction of the Arab invasion of North Africa was clearly inaccurate, for it glossed over the wars between the two ethnic groups from the seventh and eighth centuries onwards and dismissed the differences that continued to mark both communities.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the point of this account was not about whether or not it was historically accurate, but rather about what political purpose such a portrayal could serve. Indeed, it could be argued that it played the more important role of creating a unified identity shared by all North African Muslims, an identity that could mobilize North Africans and constitute a rallying point against colonialism. The above passage shows another perspective on the nation: it illustrates Connor’s argument that a nation is a self-aware ethnic group.⁶⁰ Indeed, however problematic the nationalist movement’s reinterpretation of history was (as time would show) it was part of a process of nation-building that implied (re)defining Maghrebis’ identity in order to create or enhance an awareness among all North African Muslims that they belonged to a common ethnic group, and therefore to the same nation.

Identity played a crucial role in their fight against colonialism, the ‘divide and rule’ strategy of which was felt across Algeria.⁶¹ Indeed, the nationalist movement consistently condemned the French colonial authorities, who had introduced policies that differentiated between Arabs and Berbers, as ‘those who want to divide the Muslim people’.⁶² This point is illustrated in several articles in which

nationalists denounced the continuing exploitation of Muslims by a minority of Europeans and called for the *Délégations financières*, an assembly dominated by Europeans, to be replaced by an Algerian parliament whose members should be elected by universal suffrage:

Let us go back to our *Délégation financière* and clarify its workings. As in all Algerian assemblies, five million Muslims are represented by a third of the seats and the neo-French who are 900,000 are represented by two-thirds. Thus, out of 60 *députés financiers*, there are 40 settler and non-settler delegates and 20 Muslim delegates who are divided into two sections, one Arab and the other Kabyle. This division between Kabyles and Arabs was created and maintained by the *délégation* to create a struggle between factions that will allow the settlers to award themselves the lion's share of the Algerian budget.⁶³

Faced with these divisive policies, the nationalist movement saw it as crucial to claim and reassert that Arabs and Berbers were part of the same ethnic group. This was all the more necessary since Kabyles had been the subject of a certain fascination among French intellectuals and politicians in the nineteenth century. The 'Kabyle myth', according to which Berbers were the 'descendants of Europeans', developed from 1830 onwards, and had its heyday in the decades between 1870 and 1890. At the time, it led some colonial authorities to consider the gradual assimilation of Kabyles and the marginalization of Arabs.⁶⁴ Even though the myth lost influence at the turn of the century, it survived in colonial and metropolitan circles; from the early twentieth century onwards, France's '*politique berbère*' no longer aimed to assimilate the Kabyles, but to differentiate between what they saw as the two main ethnic groups in Algeria.⁶⁵

This romantic and contentious interpretation of the Kabyles as a 'lost European people' had its supporters in France up until 1960.⁶⁶ It also served the purpose of furthering the colonial agenda and reinforced racism: it established a link of distant kinship between Kabyles and European settlers, and divided the two indigenous communities. It portrayed the Kabyles as distant European cousins who were the precursors of the French, and it supported the claim that colonization was a rightful enterprise that had come full circle, as the French, in the name of their Gallo-Roman heritage, were only claiming back what was truly 'theirs'. This interpretation also delegitimized any

claim the indigenous population made on North Africa: in their view, Kabyles were descendants of Europeans, and Arabs were just another conquering people. Of course, the French did not go as far as accepting the Kabyles into the ‘French family’. They were not even, as Carlier suggests, ‘first-rate colonized people but second-rate citizens’,⁶⁷ as they, like all other Algerian Muslims, did not benefit from French citizenship until the last years of the French colonial presence in Algeria. Like the Arabs, they were also considered North African subjects and, as such, had to endure the discriminatory Native Code and racism on both sides of the Mediterranean. But, one of the direct consequences of this representation was that the Kabyles were singled out as the North African ethnic group on which the proselytizing efforts of the Catholic Church should concentrate.

The Algerian nationalist movement saw it as a priority to counter this historical interpretation of the ethnic make-up of North Africa. In an article vehemently denouncing this interpretation of the Berbers’ origins and the White Fathers’ attempts to Christianize the Kabyles, Moroccan student leader and nationalist Mohammed El Kholti, writing under the pen name of El Ançari, presented the ENA’s view of Algeria’s ‘racial’ make-up:

Over the last few years, a ‘Père blanc’ called Jean Lemoine – a spy-missionary bribed by the Quai d’Orsay [foreign ministry] and the Department of Native Affairs, pardon me, also naturally by the Pope – settled in Fort-National, with the manifest intention of separating the Kabyles from their brothers and fellow Muslims the Arabs and trying to Christianize them.

We can see ... that this policy of division to split the Arabo-Berber Muslim block implemented on a wider scale by French imperialism in North Africa has manifested itself especially in Greater Kabylie. Thus we can see what low level articles Mr Jean Lemoine has published in his rag scandalously called *The Berber*, never missing an opportunity to discredit the Muslim civilization. ... Father Lemoine wants us, Berbers, to believe that we are of Roman origin and that, as a consequence, we have nothing in common with the Arabs. But thank God, our ancestors never were Romans, and were the only ones able to counter their domination. ... We Berbers know that we too are Arabs, only that we came a few thousand years before our

brothers who arrived after the revelation and the mission of our glorious Prophet (homage to him), which explains the rapid spread of Islam in North Africa with the arrival of the caliph's envoys.

Today, for us in Algeria, Tunisia or Morocco, there are neither Arabs, nor Kabyles, nor Mozabites, there is only one race, the Arabo-Berber race, product of one crossing and above all, we are all Muslims, and we are proud of it, and all Muslims are brothers.⁶⁸

In dismissing the argument that Berbers are of Roman origin, this article sheds some useful light on the processes of ethnic identity formation in the nationalist movement. The discourse in this exposé is structured around similar criteria to the ones Lemoine and his peers developed. First, the ENA concentrated on the links of kinship between the numerically dominant ethnic group (the Arabs) and the Berbers, while the French emphasized the distant connection between the latter and the colonially dominant Europeans. Second, both Lemoine and El Ançari ignored the possibility that Berbers could be the original indigenous peoples of North Africa, and asserted that they came from a specific 'homeland' outside North Africa. Third, the question of religion is seen as central in determining kinship, and by extension 'race' for both Algerian nationalists (whom they viewed as 'Arabo-Berber Muslims') and the French (who wanted to see the Kabyles as 'Romans' who should 'return' to Christianity). In this 'struggle' for identity, both interpretations of the past aimed to justify both parties' claims on North Africa. For the ENA, all North Africans were Arabs, for the two components of the Arabo-Berber ethnic group were described as originating from Arabia. This was how the psychological bond that joined the North African people was justified. To paraphrase Connor,⁶⁹ it was a bond that differentiated them from the French in a most fundamental way and that constituted the essence of North African nationalists' claim on the Algerian nation.

Furthermore, it could be argued that this interpretation of Algerian nation-ness as being inherently Arab, as nationalists perceived it, was all the more justified because the religious brotherhood that united all North Africans merged Islam with Arabness and, by extension, with the Arabic language. The ENA's occasional reference to Muslims as a race implied a relationship between race and religious belonging.⁷⁰

Another parallel needs to be noted. The process by which Algeria was being imagined as a nation clearly echoed the way in which France developed and portrayed itself. Indeed, France saw itself as the ‘one and indivisible republic’, which was the incarnation of the French nation, in other words of the French people and by extension a French *ethnie* rooted in the political. This meant that the very existence of ethnic minorities like the Basques or Bretons was ignored, and languages and cultures other than French forbidden or marginalized because they were seen as a threat to the republic. Similarly, the ENA depicted Algeria as a republic with, at its core, an Arab nation rooted in the Arab *ethnie*, composed of Arabo-Berber people who were described as Arabs. This representation of North African identity also meant that differences and diversity were denied in the name of unity, and it led to a number of crises within the nationalist movement (and in postcolonial Algeria) as Berbers felt alienated.⁷¹ The calls some Berbers made to be recognized as a distinct ethnic group were seen as a threat to the anti-colonial struggle of the ENA, which saw itself as a ‘movement of the Arab nation’,⁷² and to the future viability and stability of an independent Algerian Republic.

Conclusion

The North African migrant community in France should be considered a diaspora, even if it fails to correspond to the archetypal Jewish diaspora. As the nationalists portrayed it, feelings of dis-possession, oppression and exile permeated their experience of migration, and their hope was to fight colonialism and re-establish their lost homeland. It was within this diaspora that Algerian nationalism, in its modern form, developed.

In its early years, the aim of the movement was to mobilize all North Africans to obtain the independence of the whole of North Africa, implying that a single national state covering the whole Maghreb should be created. However, its position evolved to present a nationalist programme for the Maghreb based on three distinct states adopting the existing colonial borders of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. As a movement numerically dominated by Algerians, the ENA, and from 1937 the PPA, focused mainly on Algerian issues.

Algerian nationalists saw the future of Algeria as inclusive and marked by universalist principles. They wanted to see the creation of an independent, multiethnic and democratic state keeping strong ties

with France, in which all citizens, whatever their 'race' or religion, would be equal and share the same patriotic feelings for Algeria.

By contrast, their own ethnic identity as North Africans was seen in exclusivist terms, and dominated by a sense of 'us' and 'them'. They argued strongly that North Africans were not and would never become French, and that France's colonial domination aimed to dispossess North Africans not only of their land but also of their religious identity. 'Naturalization' was seen as a betrayal of their identity as Muslims and was correlated with a conversion to Christianity, and the *évolués* were stigmatized for what was seen as their sterile pursuit of assimilation into the French nation.

Their ethno-national identity developed in a way that countered colonial attempts to divide North Africans on the basis of 'race'. They denounced French imperialism for using what they saw as the fallacious argument that Berbers were a distinct 'race' of European origin as the basis for the policies aimed at dividing North Africans.

Their own interpretation of Maghrebi ethnicity also emphasized the varied ethnic make-up of North Africans. For them, Arabs and Berbers belonged to the same 'Arab race' and both originated from the Middle East. This representation, which reflected the process by which France had come to recognize its own national identity, shows the extent to which Algerian nationalism had been influenced by that of France.

3

The Markers of Ethnicity

The discourse of the Algerian nationalist movement during the interwar period in France highlights the extent to which North African ethnic identity was defined to coincide with the contours of the envisaged Algerian nation. This process implied not only defining ‘us’ (North Africans) as inherently different from ‘them’ (the French), but also merging ethnically varied North Africans into a single ethnic entity (alternatively called ‘Arab’ and ‘Arabo-Berber’) united by a sense of religious belonging.

This ethnic identity was imagined in such a way that it could build on a number of sociocultural, religious and historical factors to create a sense of ‘us’, of awareness that they, North Africans, belonged to a specific nation. However, as Barth argues,¹ cultural features can either be used to highlight differences or can be ignored, and differences can be played down or denied. Far from being characterized by their consistency, the ENA–PPA selected supposed traits strategically and according to circumstance to justify the image of the Algerian nation it wished to conjure up. It adopted some traits wholeheartedly, but discarded or modified others to support its nationalist agenda.

The mechanisms that allowed the formation of Algerian nationness worked in a twofold process of legitimization: on the one hand, the markers of national identity the movement chose legitimized its own discourse on the nation and therefore allowed it to present itself as the incarnation of the nation; and on the other, the way or ways in which it envisaged the nation legitimized the traits it had used as the true source of its identity and, by extension, de-legitimized those it had dismissed.

It could be argued that Barth’s emphasis on the negotiable nature of ethnicity, which subordinates the cultural content and profile of ethnicity to the process of boundary maintenance, neglects the extent to which the ethnic boundary has what could be called limited

flexibility. The nature of the ethnic identity the nationalists constructed meant that calls for a fairer representation of the nation's varied ethnic make-up consistently triggered a somewhat Pavlovian reaction. Such calls were deemed anti-patriotic because they appeared divisive and therefore reinforced colonial rule. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the discarded cultural traits disappeared from the cultural landscape of its militants' imagery, however de-legitimized they had been. Those supporting a vision of Algeria based on its cultural diversity and the persistence of a distinct Berber identity recurrently challenged the nationalist movement's official interpretation of ethnicity. This has continued to be the case in the independent states in North Africa.

The bond of kinship in Algerian nationalism

Kinship, influenced by class, religion, culture and history, was crucial to the formation of Algerian nationhood² and a number of studies on ethnicity and nationalism have acknowledged the prominent role it has played in the process of ethnic and ethno-national formation.³ In the previous chapter, reference was made to Anderson⁴ who illustrated this convincingly, arguing that the nation is an imagined community. According to him, it 'is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible ... for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willing to die for such limited imaginings.' The ties of kinship, he states, denote something that is natural, not chosen; and because these ties are not chosen, they have about them what he calls 'a halo of disinterestedness'. In other words, the nation can ask for sacrifices because it is 'interestless'.

This argument can help us analyse how the nationalists made use of this bond of kinship. Its evocation of the mother-nation illustrates how the Algerian nation was envisaged. After the First World War, the North African diaspora in France still made a distinction between French colonial oppression in the Maghreb and in metropolitan France, which summoned up images of democracy and fairness. At that time, Maghrebis had not fully developed their nationalist project and their demands focused mainly on sociopolitical and economic equality. An article in *L'Éclaireur de Paris* illustrates the extent to which many Maghrebis, at that stage of pre-nationalist thought, still perceived France as their mother-nation and were willing to contribute to France's reconstruction after the First World War:

Our first duty following this indescribable cataclysm that has affected France so ferociously is to do our best to cooperate and help rebuild the Motherland, with this generous and heroic *élan* that is so characteristic of our race, and that earned the hundreds of thousands of brothers who died on the battlefields of Charleroi, the Marne and Verdun, to name but a few, the imperishable Glory of having deserved a historic page in the final victory.⁵

This passage highlights the fact that, in the years following the war, the Maghrebi migrant sense of kinship was very much anchored in the French nation. By making the supreme sacrifice of their life to the nation (*le don du sang*), Muslims argued they had fulfilled one of the most sacred requirements on which French nationhood is based. They perceived their identity within an assimilationist perspective and described themselves as a 'generous and heroic race' who had earned themselves a place in the French nation.⁶

From the second half of the 1920s onwards, which coincided with the creation of the ENA, France's failure to keep its word on the question of rights for Muslims contributed to its losing much of its credibility among them. By then the terminology used to refer to France and to the war had become far more irreverent. France was described as a country that had failed to keep its promise to grant rights to North African Muslims as a reward for their sacrifice for France during the First World War and as one of those "civilized" countries [where] lies and hypocrisy ... are practised at the highest echelon of the social scale'.⁷ The ENA, and later the PPA, often recalled with bitterness the contribution of North Africans to the war effort, referring to getting 'killed in the great world slaughter of 1914'.⁸ They resented the way France, with empty promises, had duped Muslims into joining its ranks to fight the Germans: 'We demand that all the promises made to us during the war to dupe us and send us to the slaughter in order to defend a cause that was not ours be kept.'⁹

Not only did North Africans realize they had fought France's war for nothing, but they, as colonials and unlike the French, had been consistently sent to the front line with the Senegalese and other *coloniaux* by a 'racist French army'.¹⁰ They also became aware that the wider implications of that unjust war had been for European imperialist powers to reinforce their colonial domination in Asia and Africa: 'Whilst men of all races and colours were killing each other for

“Freedom, Justice and people’s right to self-determination”, British, French and Italian imperialisms met in London to share Asia and Africa between themselves.¹¹

These extracts highlight the extent to which the Algerian political view of kinship had drastically changed from the mid-1920s onwards. A shift had therefore taken place. The Algerian nation had become the centre of their national feelings, and the bond that united Algerian nationalists to their nation was marked by ‘disinterestedness’.¹² Certainly, the concept of disinterestedness is highly ambivalent and should not be equated with gratuitousness. ‘Social agents’ act as they do for a particular reason and do not engage in gratuitous actions.¹³ In the case of the Algerian nationalist movement, the disinterested relationship with what it referred to as the Algerian nation also had a number of corollaries that were arguably of an interested nature – like the desire to end colonial domination and restore the Muslims’ dignity and freedom, or improve their socioeconomic position and political rights in society. *El Ouma*’s tribute to the Muslims who died or were injured during the Constantine uprising in August 1934 illustrates that point: ‘We bow very low before all the dead and injured who fell fighting for our freedom, for our *interest* [my emphasis] and for the respect of our race.’¹⁴

For nationalists, building the Algerian nation implied first rejecting the French nation, symbolized by the mother-nation (*mère-patrie*) paradigm, as the ‘home’ of their nationhood. It meant coming to terms with the fact that the hybrid relationship that had, for some time, tied North African Muslims to the French nation was sterile, and that the North Africans had been deceived:

Force prevails over right! As people are groaning, France has closed her ears to our complaints, and closed her eyes to our suffering! The only right that we are left with is force. Muslims must now more than ever unite to be stronger. For there is nothing to expect from France. Our salvation lies in our hands.¹⁵

The concluding part of a letter Algerian nationalists from the Algerian town of Relizane addressed to the *Président du Conseil* on 16 January 1925 also shows the extent to which France’s rejection of the Muslims’ appeals to be accepted into the French nation and treated as equals influenced the birth of their nationalism: ‘France’s indifference

towards us, her injustice, her ingratitude make us sick and gives birth within us, we are telling you frankly, to nationalist feelings. ... Let us tell you before we part, Sir, that we want our own Algeria since you are preventing us from reaching your France.¹⁶ This passage reflects how nationalism developed out of a feeling of rejection and an awareness that, in colonial Algeria, Muslims would always remain outside, and never be accepted into the French nation.

The Muslims' attempt to base their nation-ness on that of the French had failed. Now it had to be built on different foundations: Algerian national identity would exclude France. At an ENA political meeting on 15 September 1934 Belkacem Radjef, then a key member of the ENA central committee, declared that France should no longer count on indigenous troops for protection and that, if there were a war, it would be impossible to prevent Muslims from rebelling. During that same meeting, Messali Hadj invited the North African soldiers present in the audience to turn their weapons against imperialist France.¹⁷ In the same year, an article written by the young militant Ali Rouified explicitly invited Muslim nationalists to fight against France:

Don't you understand the urgent necessity to be a nationalist? It is now time to take advantage of an international situation that is very tense. Wouldn't there be a hundred thousand brave people in North Africa ready to sacrifice their lives, not in Verdun against a nation that did not attack us, but against imperialism, against the adventurers who are oppressing and subjugating us?¹⁸

This extract shows that the idea of 'sacrifice for one's nation' (*don du sang*) had changed. The 'nation' was no longer France but Algeria. Now Algerian people were waiting for an order to die for the Algerian nation and have 'the road to freedom strewn with its dead'.¹⁹

Markers of ethnic solidarity

Even though the political involvement of North Africans in an anti-colonial struggle reinforced their identification with the Algerian nation, the nationalist movement could not mobilize Maghrebis against colonialism until more positive feelings of solidarity were established through a shared awareness of who they were. Nation-ness had to be envisaged in such a way that Algerian Muslims in both the diaspora and the colony could identify and relate to it.

Nationalists often contrasted their sense of ethno-national belonging with French identity, showing that identity was not simply shaped by a number of common traits, but that it also had to highlight distance and difference. An article in *El Ouma* that was highly critical of Ferhat Abbas reflects that point. It denounced Abbas for going back on the radical political views he had held when young (at a time when he used Abencérage, Chateaubriand's heroic character, as a pen name) to adopt a more reformist position (particularly in the Algerian newspaper *L'Entente*) and reiterated the nationalists' conception of Algerian identity:

Like the young Abencérage, we think that it is impossible to change nationality as easily as one changes ties [*cravate*]. Our nationality is, first and foremost, our past, our history, our customs, our traditions, our childhood memories, our way of thinking, everything that makes up our self [*moi*] and one cannot empty one's personality of its substance through an act of will. In other terms, one cannot cease to be an Arab or a Kabyle to become French from one day to the next. Besides, we are convinced that once transplanted into the French family, Abbas himself, the flamboyant admirer of the French flag in *L'Entente* would feel embarrassed to say 'we conquered Algeria'.²⁰

This suggests that identity is seen in two ways – it states what being Algerian means, and it argues that those traits make it impossible for North Africans to become French. Several attributes of identity ('our past, our history, our customs, our traditions, our childhood memories, our way of thinking') are mentioned, which fall into two broad and overlapping categories – history and memory on the one hand and culture and tradition on the other. To these, one could add religion, which is another frequently mentioned key marker of national identity, and class.

The ethnic dimension of class awareness

During the interwar years Algerian nationalists used the concepts of class, ethnicity and nation-ness interchangeably. The North African migrants' experience as colonial workers in France undoubtedly fostered the development of their class consciousness.²¹ It would, however, be too simplistic to view this simply as the result of their sociopolitical and economic interaction with others during the years

they had spent in metropolitan France. Indeed, such a limited interpretation ignores the complex role of the diaspora. Furthermore, their experience in the colony prior to emigration had already raised their political consciousness and lay behind their decision to migrate.

In North Africa, ethnicity largely influenced class affiliation. In the complex social order of colonial North Africa Europeans occupied the top of the hierarchy, then came the Jews, who gained French citizenship through the Crémieux decree (*Décret Crémieux*) in 1870, followed by the Muslim elite and notables, many of whom had become French citizens by abandoning their personal status as Muslims. The majority of the indigenous population belonged to the underclass (mostly *fellahs*). Even though there was a European proletariat, the *petit blancs*, the colonial order made ethnic and racial distinctions between them and the Muslims to set them apart from one another. The *petit blancs* thus offset their often difficult existence and lower class status through recourse to racial divisions that still placed them above the Muslims socially. The racist foundations upon which the colonial system had been built shaped the Maghrebis' experience in North Africa, for they suffered discrimination at the hands of both the European bourgeoisie and the European working class. An article published in *La Patrie Humaine* on 8 March 1935 described how North Africans 'have remained the eternal serf-workers ... the plaything not only of their masters, but also often of their work comrades, who are skilled workers, but also unconsciously full of racial prejudice'.²²

The conflict between the Algerian nationalist movement and the reformist North African elite (*évolués*) shows that class could be an important criterion in influencing its sense of nation-ness. The Algerian nationalist movement frequently condemned the latter for ignoring the plight of their people:

There is a clan that includes all the civil servants, the lawyers, the doctors ... who boastfully call themselves men of the *élite* and intellectuals. ... Their action derives from their education and social *milieu*. This clan is detached from the people, it ignores it; even though it lives with it, it underestimates it and considers it to be unimportant, an inert mass in which it has no interest. This is a big mistake; the people are Algeria's force, the force that can be counted on; the people are ahead of our intellectuals: they are more combative because they are always ready to fight and struggle for their demands and their freedom.²³

This argument illustrates how class shaped the nationalist movement's representation of ethno-national belonging. The ENA made a distinction between the elite and the people based not on 'race', but on class. The North African elite (intellectuals, politicians and notables) were stigmatized and described as divided from the rest of the Algerians and indifferent to their fate. The Algerian people, namely the vast majority of 'poor and oppressed' Algerians, were praised and depicted as the true standard bearers of Algerian nation-ness and nationalism. The movement's assertion implied that because the elite had failed to develop a sense of kinship with the rest of the Algerian people, did not share true feelings of ethnic belonging with them and still expressed their attachment to the French nation, they had betrayed their people. They were described as 'traitors who are assassinating the Algerian nation in the dark'.²⁴ Even though the elite were of the same ethnic origin as the rest of the Algerian people, they were nonetheless bracketed with the French because of their reluctance to develop a sense of nationality based on shared ethnicity.

Migrating to France was compared with exile and was in itself a conscious political decision; many North African Muslims saw it as the only way of escaping colonial oppression. Their years in France, where they were also subjected to racism and colonial rule, were another important stage in a long process of politicization that had started in North Africa in the development of a class, a sense of community and a national consciousness. In *El Ouma*, Amar Imache's vivid recollections of the colonial experience that led many North Africans into exile highlighted the political dimension of their migration:²⁵

There I was, in my meditations, trying hard to remain calm when thinking about those tragic scenes of our shattered life in which I saw, in succession, the dissembling and cynical figure of the usurer, the impassive face of the merciless *caïd* and the haughty attitude of the authoritarian and despotic *administrateur* amid his retinue of soldiers, *gendarmes* and *mokbzanis*. ... And as all the monopolizers are revelling in our wealth, as all the adventurers are making fortunes and are growing fat on our forebears' possessions whilst next to them, another population suffers from hunger, whilst children wait for their father's return and the mother mourns her absent husband, during all this, those who managed to escape from their home – O! irony

of fate! O! strange destiny! – those who fled hell are described as aggressors and assailants!²⁶

This clearly reflected an awareness that the political dynamics that led to North Africans' emigration was rooted in a class system that enabled the colonizing European minority and Muslim notables to deprive the vast majority of the Muslim population, who constituted the underclass, of their land and their rights.

In the 1930s, the ENA's objective was to unite and mobilize all Algerian Muslims, whatever their social status, around its nationalist agenda.²⁷ However, it also celebrated the fact that, as a movement, it was born within the Maghrebi working-class in France. To mention a few examples, *El Ouma* saw the ENA delegation's successful contribution to the Muslim Congress, which took place in Geneva in September 1934, as 'an encouragement for all those workers, all those sons of *fellahs* and all the unemployed who, out of nothing, created this movement which has won the admiration of all the great political parties and all our fellow-Muslims in all countries'.²⁸ The nationalist newspaper, which condemned Messali Hadj's imprisonment in 1937, recalled the role he had played in the formation of the movement in these terms: 'patiently, tirelessly, he organized the North African proletarians of France, those economic exiles that the exploitative colonialism expelled from their home and from their fatherland.'²⁹ Class is emphasized here as a characteristic of the nationalist organization: it had been created by exiles, those workers and the unemployed who constituted the North African proletariat of France.

The nationalist movement was aware that class and racial bias shaped the racist stigma attached to North Africans in colonial times. Racism was the crucible in which class and racial prejudice reinforced each other: ethnic origin (North African or Arab) justified class positioning (the underclass). To break that vicious circle, the nationalist movement challenged the colonial ethno-class system to empower the marginalized Muslim majority. To mobilize the Algerians they exploited the fact that class differences broadly reflected ethnic divisions. Even though class and ethnicity are two distinct concepts, the particular colonial context within which the Algerian nationalists evolved had created a significant overlap between the two, and the movement turned that overlap into a political tool.

However marginalized North African migrants were, and despite the racism they endured both in and out of the workplace, the years

they spent living and working in metropolitan France affected their political interpretation of their own experience. Their contact with other workers and the actions in which they were involved in the workplace enabled them to develop a sense of solidarity with other workers and identify with the French working class.

Algerian nationalists regarded North African workers in France as an inherent part of the French working class, as 'always on the side of their exploited brothers, having sincerely tied and merged their destiny with that of the working class of France'. Recalling North African workers' involvement in trade union action, they called for the French working class to support 'the just aspirations' of their 'exploited brothers'.³⁰ A reference to the sacrifice of the whole of the working class for social progress marked their evocation of the bond of kinship among workers in France.

El Ouma appealed to a sense of kinship based on class (as the use of terms such as 'sacrifice' and '*frères d'exploitation*' shows) that transcended ethnic belonging. In meetings, militants consistently called for class solidarity, and the ENA–PPA often took part in demonstrations organized by French trade unions. When, on 24 March 1936, 150 North African workers went on strike at the Sueur factory in Bagneux and demanded a wage increase and safer working conditions, ENA militants successfully managed to gain the support of part of the French workforce and produced tracts calling for solidarity between French and North African workers and for a continuation of the strike.³¹ On 28 March 1936 at the Salle des Syndicats, Paris, Si Djilani referred to the strike at the Sueur factory in Bagneux and announced that subscription cards would be sold to support the strikers.³² The ENA–PPA was also engaged in a number of other strikes that took place in the Paris region and other parts of France during the interwar period, and called on all Muslims to join the French workers' struggle.³³ However, the ENA–PPA also hinted that the failure of the union representing the French working class to express the same level of solidarity towards them as colonial workers and to support their legitimate demands had weakened this bond between North African and French workers. This was also compounded by the unremitting prejudice of many French workers towards them.

To conclude, it could be said that class played a role in Algerian nationalism and that class consciousness was shaped not only by Maghrebis' experience as migrant workers in France, but also by colonial oppression in North Africa, which was at the core of their

decision to migrate. In North Africa, class coincided with ethnicity and nation-ness: the Algerian people represented the under-privileged and embodied national aspirations. The movement accused the Algerian elite, which had generally adopted an assimilationist position, of betraying its own people.

Nationalists also celebrated the fact that their movement was born within the North African working class in France. They viewed the experience of Maghrebi immigrant workers as inextricably linked to that of the working class of France, and called on the whole of the French working class to support their political and social demands. This shows that class solidarity could transcend ethnicity in the name of social progress, but only if the sense of kinship between North African and French workers was *shared* and was of mutual benefit.

Cultural practices

The role of culture and its interplay with ethnicity in the Algerian nationalist movement needs to be examined.³⁴ In this section I shall try to answer the following question: how did the movement define culture and what cultural features were emphasized or made relevant to the construction of Algerians' ethno-national identity?

As *El Ouma* pointed out in January 1938, 'it is impossible to change nationality as easily as one changes neckties.' Nationality, in its view, is not about choice or political calculation, it is about substance and destiny; it is not chosen and it is unchangeable. For North African nationalists in France, national identity was very much grounded in culture: all Maghrebis shared a sense of cultural belonging, an awareness that some determinist logic and their history made them what they were. They saw their 'true' self shaped by their past, their history, customs, traditions and childhood memories that summoned up images of nature and purity, and therefore of an identity that was intrinsically different, unique and not affected by the 'other'. In reality, it was a hybrid construct born and developed out of conflict and resistance to colonial domination. Just as Algerian history and traditions could not be conjured up outside the colonial context, childhood memories were mixed with recollections of incidents of injustice that Muslims witnessed or experienced at the hands of Europeans.

The nationalists' sense of (Algerian) nationality was defined by culture and inextricably linked with ethnicity (Arab and Kabyle); their ethno-national identity was not simply defined in terms of the

perceived nature of its cultural substance (or cultural stuff, as Barth³⁵ calls it) but also by an emphasis on difference – by the creation and maintenance of the boundary between ‘us’ (Algerians) and ‘them’ (the French) that assumed national differences between North Africans and the French to be irreconcilable.

Hence, it is clear that beyond the nationalists’ visionary representation of culture as unique, timeless and transcending place and experiences, cultural practices and perceptions among the North African population were, like most aspects of Muslim society, fundamentally affected by colonialism. The upheaval colonization brought about profoundly altered the Muslims’ social, economic, political and cultural position. Expropriation and dispossession, rural exodus, proletarianization, the introduction of paid labour and of a new conception of time and space, the prominence given to the individual over the group, and to private ownership over common use of land and resources, all led to profound changes in intra- and intergenerational relationships, and in the much undermined cultural fabric of Muslim society.

The cultural baggage that migrants brought with them – their customs and *habitus*³⁶ and their religion, which was at the heart of their identity – was already deeply marked by French colonial domination. This complex process of *déculturnation*³⁷ became even stronger for Maghrebi immigrants evolving in an environment where French culture was dominant.³⁸ Indeed, culture went through a process of further hybridization in emigration, which was consistent with its politicization within the nationalist movement.

In the ENA–PPA, culture was considered central to the development of a sense of common identity and solidarity among Maghrebis. This appeared in the way its political events were organized. The meetings and rallies it held were not limited to political speeches; they often included other cultural and artistic events such as plays and concerts. The police saw these *fêtes arabes* as the nationalist organization’s attempt to attract more North African migrants to its political rallies.³⁹ The aim of meetings such as the ones organized on 18 November 1934 at the Maison commune in rue Cadet, Paris, with an audience of 250, on 25 November in Puteaux, with 400 people, and on 31 December 1934 in rue Duhesne was to collect funds for the nationalist movement and its newspaper.⁴⁰ Other *fêtes artistiques*, as the organization called them, on 7 March in Levallois-Perret, on 4 April 1936 at La Grange-aux-Belles⁴¹ and on 25 December 1937 at La

Mutualité⁴² were organized in support of North African political prisoners, including, at the time, leaders of the Messalist organization. Artistic events regularly featured satirical plays that denounced colonial rule in North Africa and contained a political message that was consistent with and reinforced the speeches made by the nationalist organization's leaders and militants. That political expression was not limited to traditional rallies and included songs, dances and plays, showed that North African migrants had adopted an all-round approach to political activism. Expressing political views through artistic means was used as a tool of propaganda.

These *fêtes artistiques* also played a socially cohesive role, since North African migrant workers were culturally and socially marginalized in France. Political mobilization was therefore not simply about the evocation of the ethnic bonds that were meant to unite Maghrebis in their struggle for independence. It was also about celebrating that bond through the creation of a sense of common culture with other Algerian Muslims.

The nationalist organization's efforts to establish specific cultural practices in emigration that were presented as traditional could not hide the fact that they were hybrid creations shaped by the movement's political agenda. The development of such cultural practices, which were (re)created, in emigration was inspired by the ENA-PPA's modern concept of the nation influenced by '*l'idéal républicain*'.⁴³ It aimed to foster a national culture marked by Algerianness, within specific territorial borders shaped by French colonial expansion.⁴⁴ However, as the following section shows, that national culture could only be constructed and sustained if it were bound to the wider cultural framework of 'civilization'.

History and memory: nostalgia for a great past and the anti-colonial struggle

Evocation of the past was one of the dominant themes on which the nationalist claims of the ENA-PPA were based: reference to the past can be a way of shaping and strengthening a sense of identity.⁴⁵ In this section I examine how the movement reconstructed the past, which encompasses both history and memory, and shaped its political and cultural vision and ideology. History marked a sense of 'us', which often transcended time and space and tended to be considered positively, while memory was rooted in experience, the 'here' and 'now' of the colonial era, and was filled with feelings of otherness.⁴⁶ As

Carlier points out,⁴⁷ memory belonged to the sphere of the '*vécue*' (lived experience), and history to that of the '*relue*' (reread). Both shaped the Maghrebi diaspora's identity in specific ways and influenced the shifting boundary of their ethno-national identity.

At the core of the movement's evocation of history lies the concept of civilization. Elias⁴⁸ considers civilization to be a concept that can refer to political, economic, religious, technical, moral or social facts, and that expresses the self-consciousness, or the national consciousness, of the West. He also argues that by this term 'Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of its technology, the nature of its manners, the development of its scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more.'⁴⁹ More importantly, Elias points out that the concept of civilization is shaped by situation and history, and was established as a Western concept that led to the expansionist tendency of colonizing groups.⁵⁰ French and British colonial empires were built on and justified by their claim that by colonizing 'uncivilized' and therefore 'inferior people', they fulfilled their 'civilizing mission'.

That concept also became central to the ideology of the colonized people fighting for Algerian independence in the interwar period. For nationalists, civilization crystallized history and the present. While, at the beginning of the twentieth century, civilization expressed the national consciousness of Western countries such as France, whose national integrity was well established, it appears that, for North Africans at the time, the concept reflected and influenced a national consciousness in the making. It gave structure, meaning and a sense of purpose to their social experience at a time when colonial rule was dismantling the sociocultural fabric of Muslim society. Civilization was also the wider framework within which nationalist aspirations for an Algerian national culture could be expressed. The ENA's nationalist agenda was metaphorically described as 'searching along each path, along each lane, for the traces and steps of our ancestors and maybe we will hear their language and their advice'.⁵¹

Far from being rigidly defined, the past was conjured up in fluctuating ways so that it could both shape and be shaped by the present. The function of the concept of civilization was to provide nationalists with an empowering cultural framework of reference for their message on identity:

When the Arabs lived in their brilliant civilization, when they

built castles, villas and gardens, when they translated Greek works and perfected them, when Popes went to Cordoba to be educated, when for several centuries Christians learnt medicine from Arab books translated into Latin, much of Europe was dressed in animal skin and lived in a state of ignorance, because Europeans at that time were not organized and lived in a state of anarchy. But since then, what have they done? They have imitated Arabs; they have started to work without wasting any time. They have become organized and have never become discouraged. They have gone a long way and today they are our rulers.⁵²

The civilization to which they referred was itself problematic. Indeed, by acknowledging only the Arab civilization, they dismissed the history of North Africa prior to the Arab conquest and thereby ignored the Berber cultural legacy. However, that interpretation of civilization and cultural heritage influenced the attitude of both the nationalist movement and North African independent states.⁵³ In a way, it echoed the process through which France came to construct its own sense of civilization: the expression of the French nation and culture was the foundation for the exclusivist construction of a French *ethnie* in which the mores of minority ethnic groups in France were both dismissed and suppressed.

This extract from *El Ouma* shows the nationalists adopting the same notion of civilization the French did to justify their colonial domination, but placing it in a different historical context. By referring to the past, they reversed the dominant/dominated, superior/inferior relationship to the advantage of North African Muslims. The prestigious Arab civilization recalled here represents Arabs as culturally, scientifically and architecturally 'superior' to the French and Europeans, described as backward, uncultivated and dependent on Arab science and culture. Implied also is that Europeans were only able to abandon the anarchy that characterized their society and develop their civilization by imitating Arabs. Thus, the movement could claim not only that Arab civilization preceded and was superior to European civilization, but also that the former was a source of inspiration for the latter. Arab civilization is therefore seen as original, authentic, pure and rooted in the past, while European civilization is described as imitative, artificial, unoriginal, corrupt and by extension corrupting: 'If, nowadays, there is less truth in Kabylie, it is because

since [French colonization], we have let ourselves go through contact with this rotten western civilization. In those “civilized” countries, lies, hypocrisy and deceit are practised from the highest echelons of the social scale.⁵⁴

The nationalists developed the movement’s agenda on civilization by appropriating the concept to create their own sense of ethno-national identity; it was done in such a way that the sense of ‘us’ that was conveyed influenced their present and future relationship with the ‘other’ (the colonizer). Indeed, images of a great Arab civilization were summoned up to differentiate North Africans from the French, and show them to be culturally superior to the colonial power that dominated them. This was what, in an article denouncing Father Lemoine and the Jesuits’ attempts to convert the Kabyles to Christianity, *El Ouma* implied by saying that ‘the doctrine and the Gospel that [Lemoine] stands up for and glorifies are on all counts inferior to Arab civilization.’⁵⁵ Therefore, France’s colonial domination of North Africa was not a sign that France’s civilization was superior, but that the West was now better organized and more motivated than the Arab world:

Those who are not organized are doomed to become enslaved, to become servants and work for those who are organized. ... Europeans, particularly the British, the French, the Italian or the Dutch who, in some way, rule the activity of the world were not born superior to the Tunisian, Moroccan or Algerian Muslims; they were born like all the children of other countries; they are in no way superior to us. They have not got a monopoly either of intelligence or of knowledge, but the difference is that they were born in an organized environment.⁵⁶

Interestingly, this passage shows the nationalists going beyond the French-inspired rhetoric of posturing on the superiority of one civilization over another to adopt a more egalitarian stance in the debate. It also demonstrates that organization, as a theme, was central to the movement’s interpretation of colonialism and essential for North Africans if they were one day to recover their freedom. Poor organization was both the reason for their misfortune and the key to their problem. The ENA argued that the organizational experience it had accumulated, and the fact that it was the only North African political movement to demand rights and independence, made it the

Maghrebi nationalists' natural choice for mobilization. The movement's position on civilization is illustrated by *El Ouma* equating the ENA with 'the movement of the Arab nation that aims to give back to a once brilliant civilization the place that it deserves'.⁵⁷ The ENA was therefore not simply depicted as a political association struggling for North Africans' rights to emancipation, but as the incarnation of the Arab nation fighting to bring Arab civilization back to its former glory.

That the nationalists' argument was based on the representation of a North African *ethnie*, nation and civilization rooted in Arabness shows the extent to which the past could be imagined to suit the ideology and political needs of the nationalist movement, as well as the situation and context within which it evolved. It also reveals how those ideas could contribute to legitimizing the ENA as the 'true voice' of the Algerian nation.

Their use of the past and of the concept of civilization, their insistence on the primacy of the state and on the integrity of the nation, and their definition of a nation-ness based on one *ethnie*, one culture and one language show the nationalist movement as both modern and influenced by French nationalism. Indeed the ENA-PPA imagined the Algerian nation in relation to French nationalism and in conflict with France's colonial rule. In the independent Algeria they conjured up, all things French would be replaced by all things Arab, but the internal dynamics and structure of cultural and ethnic oppression and division would not be questioned. Berber and popular Algerian Arab cultures and languages would remain marginalized and an Arab culture (based on classical Arabic), which was probably just as if not more alien to Algerian Muslims as the French language and culture at the time, would be imported.

The nationalists defined their own identity only against others (the French) and through others (the Arabs). They saw Arab culture from the Middle East as sufficiently prestigious, authentic and untouched by the corrupting influence of French civilization to supplant French culture in North Africa. It was to be presented as the true cultural self of North African civilization. This implied that Algeria's varied ethnicities and cultures would remain as stigmatized under the new cultural order as they were under French rule. But the long-term implications of the Algerian nationalist leadership's decision to favour the '*Algérie arabo-islamique*' alternative over that of an '*Algérie algérienne*' were serious.⁵⁸ The economic, social and political price to pay for the imposition of an imported Arab culture and language on Algeria would

be heavy, particularly if one considers that it took the French several centuries (probably up to the early twentieth century) to establish a culturally and linguistically homogeneous state.⁵⁹

To return to the question of civilization, it is worth noting that the nationalist movement used this concept to present Algerian national identity as timeless. The ENA–PPA limited French domination to a temporary period of colonial control, which like other such periods in the history of North Africa, would one day fade and leave North African civilization unadulterated. *El Ouma* depicted the French as the “worthy descendants” of their ancestors the Romans from the time of Nero,⁶⁰ and when it held that under French colonial domination ‘our freeing is out of the question; Rome needs slaves,’⁶¹ it was comparing France metaphorically with ancient Rome. The nationalists argued that France’s colonial adventure, like the Roman domination of North Africa, was destined to fail:

The use of force is a terrible mistake on this African land ... the brutal Roman is long gone. His great ruins rest under the shroud of sands. And his bronze weapons melted under the sun. But our people are still here, as solid as a rock. Only Islam conquered it for ever, because it knew how to speak to their heart and speak the only language that they understand: that of honour and faith.⁶²

The nationalists believed that history was on their side and they used the Roman example, namely that domination by force could not succeed, to predict the fate that awaited the French colonial empire. They defined colonialism as ruthless and ephemeral, but the Algerian people (and therefore in the political context of the time the Algerian nation) as timeless and powerful, as a part of nature (‘solid as a rock’) and civilized (‘the only language they understand: that of honour and faith’). Therefore, history enabled the ENA–PPA to reverse the power relations of their time. The nationalists’ evocation of the past glories of the ‘Saracen’ recalled ‘the time, not so long ago when Arabs knew how to be respected’.⁶³

It can therefore be seen that the nationalist movement’s concept of civilization fulfilled two functions – to emphasize difference and mark the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’; and to strengthen the nationalists’ sense of ethno-national identity through identification with a great civilization. This does not imply that their concept of civil-

ization was inherently different from that of the French. In fact, distinguishing one's own civilization from another's and presenting it as intrinsically superior is one of the characteristics of civilization as a concept. Even if the content of that civilization was and needed to be different, the basic processes that shaped it were the same.

In evoking the greatness of their respective civilizations, the nationalists and French held similar views on the subjects of colonialism and domination. While the ENA denounced French domination of North Africa as brutal, uncivilized and ultimately futile, it also summoned up images of supremacy and subjection in its account of Arab civilization. In a political rally that took place on 26 May 1934 at the Salle des Sociétés savantes in Paris, Fodil Arab, a prominent ENA militant, contrasted North Africans' subjugation by France with their past glories and recalled that 'In the past, Muslims were united and were able to conquer part of Europe and Asia, whereas their division has led to their present enslavement.'⁶⁴ The linking of the past greatness of Arab civilization with the concept of empire was also mentioned in *El Ouma*:

We once had our illustrious learned men, our philosophers, our men of letters, our historians, our geographers, our mathematicians, our architects. Today, we can still see everywhere the remains of Arab art which have defied the force of time and kept their beauty intact ... it is because we were a united and prosperous nation that we were able to create a colonial domain.⁶⁵

This passage shows striking similarities between North African nationalist and French depictions of their own civilizations.⁶⁶ Condemning the domination that Europe had imposed on the rest of the world in the name of civilization, while praising the fact that they, too, as 'Arabs', had once organized a colonial empire was not so much a contradiction as an illustration of the ideological power struggle in which North African Muslims and French colonialism were engaged. It was, to a large extent, a confrontation about each civilization's greatness and its ability rightfully to claim ownership of North Africa.

North African nationalists, like the French, vaunted the timelessness and greatness of their civilization at a cultural, scientific and political level. The reference to aesthetics and past architectural achievements was meant to convey a sense of superiority: while

Roman constructions were seen as ephemeral, an emphasis was put on the timeless beauty of Arab art and architecture.

Nationalists also dismissed French accusations that North Africans were barbarians who considered their own civilization superior to that of the Europeans because it spread not through oppression and exploitation, but through fraternity. An article in the October 1935 issue of *El Ouma* quoted an unnamed English historian who observed, in *The History of Charles Quint*, that Muslim civilization was unique in that it combined armed conquest and proselytism with tolerance. Remel el Hok, the author of this article, also argued that:

If Muslims were Barbarians, they would not have conquered [an empire] from Gibraltar to the glaciers of the Himalayas, from the Mediterranean to the outer edges of China. Muslims created an empire that united the entire Arab population, that had been divided for centuries in a racial fraternity, a fraternity of peace in which any distinction between rich and poor, between Bedouins and sedentary peoples is ruled out.

They not only govern politically half the world, but our scholars from Cordoba, Salamanca, Baghdad and Damascus influence profoundly the sciences and the intellectual life of the entire world.⁶⁷

In this passage, the switch from the past to the present tense reflects the contiguity of history and situation for Algerian nationalists. What is also implied here is that, for the ENA, the greatness of Muslim civilization was inextricably linked to the possession of an empire. This article dismissed French claims that North Africans were barbarians, arguing that, had they been Muslims, they would not have made the conquests they did. What this extract also shows is that, for nationalists, Arab civilization was also imagined as unique because it was marked by tolerance, generosity, fraternity and egalitarianism, ignoring the reality of imperial domination when it came to remembering their own. This further emphasizes the parallel made earlier: the more North Africans strove to make their imagined Arab civilization different and unique, the more similar it appeared to that of the French.

The above extract also reveals the problematic way in which territory was equated with ethnicity and religion. The fact that nationalists amalgamated Islam and Arabness and argued that the empire

they had built unified the previously divided Arab population, brushed aside the existence of other peoples, ethnic groups (Iberians, Berbers, Persians, Kurds, Indians, Chinese and so on) and religions (such as Christianity and Buddhism) that may have been numerically dominant in parts of the empire.

The movement's argument conveyed the idea that the concept of civilization, and the empire built in its name, were not about domination but about fulfilling a destiny. It conveyed the idea of a return, of a reunification of one's people. It was, in a way, about claiming what was rightfully one's own. In that sense, the ENA and the PPA's interpretation of civilization was no different from that of the French. The French presented France's imperial ambitions in North Africa not only as its destiny and duty to spread civilization and the Christian faith to inferior 'barbaric' people, but also as a return to their 'Roman/European' roots.⁶⁸ The Arab empire the nationalists described would accommodate their nationalist project: to establish an egalitarian and classless society based on one religion and one *ethnie*.

The past was clearly an important theme in the discussion of national identity. To see how the North African diaspora in France shaped the past to convey an Algerian nation, it is interesting to compare the ENA-PPA's views in France with those of a prominent North African politician in Algeria such as Ferhat Abbas. Their nationalist programme was based on claims that the Algerian nation pre-existed the arrival of the French:

The colonists wanted us to believe that before they arrived on the African land, we did not constitute a real nation, that we are steeped in crude barbarism. This is entirely unfounded. We were a real nation before the arrival of the French in Algeria. We were driven by a shared sentiment of solidarity and national unity. We had our own way of life.⁶⁹

The nationalists' assertion that their nation existed before the French arrived may appear questionable. After all, the very name and borders of Algeria were creations of the French colonial authorities. But their argument, however problematic it is, should be interpreted as more than mere posturing. First, the nation is referred to in vague terms, and the article does not explicitly mention Algeria. Second, nation as a concept is understood in this extract as rooted in ethnicity.⁷⁰

The ENA–PPA refers here not so much to a nation-state it wants to restore as to the broadly-defined nation that forms the foundation upon which that nation-state would, one day, be built. The nation is presented as well established on the basis that a sense of nation existed before the invasion of the French. When the nationalists emphasized their ‘shared sentiment of solidarity and national unity’, they were implying that they formed a nation in the sense of a self-conscious *ethnie* characterized by shared sociocultural traditions and practices – ‘our own way of life’.

That this argument may not have reflected the ethno-national composition of the North African territory before 1830 is not really important; the accuracy of France’s representation of Algeria’s ethnic, historical and social characteristics prior to, as well as after, colonization was no less questionable. Indeed, as Anderson pointed out, what characterizes all nations is not their falsity/genuineness but the way in which they are envisaged. The nationalist’s argument merely reflected how they envisaged the Algerian nation. It was an interpretation influenced by the colonial context, by the ‘other’. That the nationalist’s concept of their nation was based purely on Arabness (when Algeria’s ethnic make-up was actually varied and complex) echoed how the French nation had been constructed. Also, it served a clear political purpose – to counter the colonialists’ argument that the Algerian nation did not exist prior to 1830.

By contrast with this nationalist stance in France, reformism marked the attitude of the Muslim politicians in North Africa grouped together in the *Fédération des élus musulmans*. Ferhat Abbas, the federation’s vice-president – and future president of the GPRA (*Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne*) during the Algerian war – expressed very clearly the *élus*’ assimilationist views in *L’Entente* (28 February 1936) when he argued not only that he was in favour of assimilation, but that he identified with France:

I am in favour of assimilation. I am France, because I am the many, the worker, the artisan. ... I cannot conceive Algeria without France. ...

My opinion is well known. Nationalism is this sentiment that drives a people to live within territorial borders, a sentiment that created this network of nations. If I had discovered the ‘Algerian nation’, I would be a nationalist and would not be ashamed of it. Men who died for a patriotic ideal

are honoured and respected daily. My life is not worth more than theirs. And yet, I will not die for the 'Algerian fatherland' because this fatherland does not exist. I have not discovered it. I asked history. I visited cemeteries: nobody has told me anything about it. Clearly, I found the 'Arab empire' and the 'Muslim empire' which honour Islam and our race. But these empires died out. They would correspond to the Roman Empire or the Holy Roman Empire of the medieval period. They were born for a time and a humanity which are no longer ours.

Would an Algerian Muslim seriously consider building the future with this dust from the past? Don Quixote has no place in our century. ... One does not build on thin air. We have dispelled those clouds and chimeras once and for all to tie our future to France's *oeuvre* in this country.

While the largely uneducated migrant workers who belonged to the nationalist movement were more able to imagine the Algerian nation in its own right, Abbas's position echoed that of many French-educated Muslims in North Africa who failed to do so.⁷¹ Indeed, he was convinced that a nation had to be built on some tangible foundations and failed to realize that, as Anderson points out, all nations – including France – are imagined communities. Abbas's views on the French nation were strongly influenced by the French education system, which he, like many North African *évolués*, went through: its function was not only to reinforce a sense of French nationhood but also to present Algeria as an uncivilized territory where no nation existed.

Abbas's contention that no Algerian nation could be found in the past was based on problematic premises; first, that the sense of nationhood was rooted in and legitimized by history, when it is clear that the opposite is true: this sense could actually shape and legitimize history; second, that a nation could only exist *per se*, and not emerge through the relationship between 'us' (the colonized) and 'them' (the colonizer); third, that memory, in other words recollections of past experiences, including colonial ones, did not play a part in the building of Algerian nationhood; fourth, that nation and state had to coincide in the past and present to be legitimately considered as a basis for a sense of nationhood; and finally, that giving one's life to the motherland was justified only if that nation 'existed', when in fact that longing for sacrifice could foster the birth of a nation.

Soon after their publication, Ferhat Abbas's arguments were denounced in the March–April 1936 issue of *El Ouma*, which accused him of betraying Arabs and Muslims. The way in which each of the points he had made were countered not only exposed the chasm that existed between the two political groups at the time, but more importantly, revealed the modern character of the ENA's nationalism. On the question of the link between the past and the sense of nationhood, while the ENA recognized that the 'Arab empire' had been in decline, it asserted that 'The Arab Empire is not dust from the past; it exists for those who want to see it.' Its statement conveyed the idea that the past is not fixed and dead, but can be subject to choice and interpretation or, to use Carlier's argument, that history can be 'reread'. The Arab empire, and by extension the Algerian nation, exist for those who *want to see* them. What is implied here is that the Arab empire, epitomizing Arab civilization, is not rigidly rooted in the past, but is shaped by and interpreted through present circumstances and situations. The ENA's evocation of the Arab empire was one in which ethnicity incorporated religion and the past was linked to the present. It embraced both Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries: the examples the nationalist movement gave included countries such as Yemen, Iraq and Egypt, but also, more problematically, Afghanistan and Turkey.⁷²

To counter Abbas's argument that he would not die for the 'Algerian motherland, because it does not exist', the ENA, in the same article, cited examples of Algerians, Syrians and Egyptians who had sacrificed their life for the emancipation of their nation:

As for the Algerian fatherland, there is nothing extraordinary about the fact that M. Abbas cannot personally see it, but for him to condemn six million Algerians to think like him, is beyond reason. ... In the heart of each Muslim Algerian, the idea of the fatherland is well established.

Without going back in history to the Arab and Berber dynasties, let us only take the great historical figure of Abdelkader who, during 16 years, resisted foreign armies, and who forced France to recognize his sovereignty through the Tafna treaty. Isn't this recognition, the recognition of the Algerian fatherland?

From 1830 to today, has Algeria ever submitted body and soul to French imperialism? Never! It has always fought tooth and nail to recover its independence. Mr Abbas talks about

cemeteries; well! He should go to the cemeteries of Kabylie where thousands of fighters died during the insurrection of 1871, and many other uprisings for the liberation of Algeria.⁷³

For Algerian nationalists, the fatherland was rooted in history and memory. What differentiated them from Algerian reformist and assimilationist politicians like Ferhat Abbas was that it was their national feelings that fostered the idea of the nation. Abbas, by contrast, saw the existence of the nation as an indispensable condition for the emergence of nationalism. The ENA argued that it could indeed build 'the future on this dust from the past'. In the age of nationalism, the fact that nationalists could summon up shreds of the past and construe them to further their agenda undermined Abbas's argument that 'Don Quixote has no place in our century'.

Revealingly, the historical references selected for the *El Oumma* article were all illustrations of past resistance to France's domination and placed Algerian nationalism in the French colonial context. The mythical figure of Abd el-Kader, who fought the French until his surrender on 23 December 1847, and the Kabyle rebellion led by Mokrani in 1871, supported the nationalist's argument that the Algerian fatherland did exist; but the existence of such a nation was perceived not so much in the form of an established nation-state, as through the nationalist feelings and struggle of historical figures. The fact that these examples were all from the colonial era was no coincidence. Nationalism was, after all, a 'gift of the West' to the rest of the world⁷⁴ and it triggered the construction of nations in many colonial countries, including Algeria. However, as Hobsbawm points out, 'nations without a past are a contradiction in terms. ... What makes a nation is the past.'⁷⁵ Nationalists wrapped the nation in a mantle of timelessness, rooting Algeria in an immemorial past.

The same article showed that it was not enough to base a nation on a past resistance to oppression. A powerful rallying force, Islam, had to be invoked to create strong enough feelings of solidarity and identification with the nation to mobilize Muslims around the movement's nationalist project:

Even if one admits the inadmissible, that the Algerian fatherland has never existed, can't six million men work towards the creation of this fatherland? It is easier and more logical to stimulate the idea of the fatherland among the Muslim popu-

lation who are already sensible to this concept through their unswerving love for Islam, through their fierce struggle and resistance to the invasion of imperialism, than to undertake a task of Frenchification, of *francequillonnerie*, and thus to betray God and the people, as Abbas, Bendjelloul and dozens of their peers have done.⁷⁶

This was the closest the ENA ever came to considering explicitly that nationalism could imagine and shape the nation. It argued that even if, as Abbas pointed out, such a nation did not exist, it could be created by stimulating the idea of an Algerian fatherland among Muslims based not only on resistance to imperialism, but also, and more importantly, on Islam. It conveyed the idea that the colonial context from which it had emerged very much influenced the construction of their national identity. The choice was between assimilation and nationalism, both, to some extent, defined *vis-à-vis* the other. The former implied a Frenchification equated with the betrayal of one's religion and people, and presented as contrived, artificial and somewhat ridiculous (*francequillonnerie*); while the latter was described as an easier and more logical choice, consistent with the true nature and religious beliefs of North African Muslims. Abbas's argument about the impossibility of Algerian nationalism was therefore challenged by the movement, which, conversely, depicted the Muslim elite's assimilationist agenda as an empty pursuit, as nothing more than an impossible attempt to build a French Muslim identity on the 'chimera' of a French future for Algerians.

Historians like Droz and Lever, who emphasize the nationalist character of Abd el-Kader's reign, seem to support the nationalist argument that past nationalist struggles demonstrated that the Algerian nation did 'exist' when they point out that during his war against the French, 'He initiated the constitution of an Arab, if not Algerian, state endowed with surprisingly modern means.'⁷⁷

Religion: a nationalist project shaped by Islam

As Gellner argues, during the emergence of nationalism, 'the religion defined fairly closely all the under-privileged as against the privileged, even if the under-privileged had no other positive shared characteristic (such as language and common history).'⁷⁸ In colonial Algeria, there was a strong correlation between religion, which he describes as a high culture, and class. This is where religion became salient to the

development of Algerian nationalism. Indeed, if Islam characterized a dominated, oppressed and, to a significant extent, divided North African population, it could play a significant role not only in shaping a new Algerian identity, but also in mobilizing North Africans against colonialism.

How then did Islam, and religion as a concept, come to play a central role in nationalist policy and ideology? In other words, how did nationalists appropriate the experience of the sacred to give it territorial shape⁷⁹ and modernity?

The close relationship between religion and politics that characterized the nationalist agenda was also a feature of colonialism. Indeed, for Muslim nationalists, France's colonial policy in North Africa went further than socioeconomic dispossession and political oppression. It set out to marginalize Islam and Christianize the indigenous population. Imperialism and Christianity went hand in hand. In an article by the PPA that conjured up painful images rooted in history, colonialism was described as 'the relentless crusade of French imperialism against North Africans'.⁸⁰ The PPA considered that, in North Africa, politics and religion were inextricably linked to further the interest of imperialism:

Politics and religion go hand in hand. [Imperialism] uses, for the same purpose, the officer and the bishop, as the soldier and the informer, and the harmless *Pères blancs* collaborate with the same grace and ease as the Muslim notables. ... It is time to realize the danger of Christianization and naturalization. ... You must protect your rights and your life.⁸¹

To the French argument that the 'Cross [had broken] the Crescent', the ENA responded by claiming that 'the Cross is too fragile to break the Crescent' and that it was time to demand the 'national liberation of our country'.⁸²

In the nationalists' eyes, the political and religious dimensions of colonialism overlapped and Christianity was 'compromised' by its association with colonialism. In 1938, France's imprisonment of nationalists such as Messali Hadj and six other leading activists was compared with the 'dark times of the Inquisition'.⁸³ The nationalist movement referred to the Eucharistic congress, which was held in Algiers in May 1939, as 'this colonial-Catholic event' and saw it as a provocation to Islam. It recalled how, throughout the history of

colonization, 'In the vanguard of expeditionary troops, one has found the missionary to prepare [the ground] for the army of soldiers bringing with them what is called, using a hypocritical euphemism, civilization.'⁸⁴ When nationalists denounced the dispossession and exploitation of Muslims by colonialism, and stated that 'what counts for it is the God of money, that is its cult and its adoration'⁸⁵ the Christian faith was, in their eyes, further (albeit indirectly) discredited by its association with imperialism.

Thus, it seems that the nationalists interpreted colonialism as shaped by the politicization of religion. In fact, its accusation that France had inextricably linked religion with politics was well founded. France's decision not to apply the law on the separation of state and religion to Islam was clearly politically motivated. The government directly controlled and administered the Muslim faith, and the colonial authorities had established a social order that excluded the majority indigenous population socially, economically and politically on the basis of its religious faith. That North Africans had to give up their personal status as Muslims to become French citizens implied they had to renounce a central part of their identity. This indicated that France saw Islam as the last bastion of resistance to colonial domination, which had to be conquered. The ENA was aware of this when it declared that 'France, which proclaimed the separation of Church and State, has turned Islam in Algeria into a clergy subjected and devoted to colonization.'⁸⁶ As part of their political programme, nationalists demanded 'religious freedom and the separation of the Mosque and the State, complete autonomy for religious organizations and the election by universal suffrage of members of Muslim bodies' and the extension of the 1905 law on the separation of the church and the state to Islam.⁸⁷ The construction of the Paris mosque in the 1920s, which the ENA opposed as a further act of propaganda,⁸⁸ was an earlier illustration of France's intention to use religion as a political means to assert its imperial power. In such circumstances, the struggle for independence was equated with a war of religions, as its frequent use of the 'Cross against the Crescent' metaphor shows.⁸⁹

As Kedourie points out, transforming religion into nationalist ideology enables nationalists to use the 'powerful and tenacious loyalties which a faith held in common for centuries creates'.⁹⁰ One should not, however, see the role Islam played in the development of Algerian nationalism simply in utilitarian terms and thereby conclude that it was given prominence only because it had the capacity to

mobilize. Certainly, the movement was conscious of the potential for effective mobilization contained in religious loyalties. Because of the nature of the colonial context in which its ideology developed, and given the particular social background of most North African migrants in France, Islam also constituted the main sociocultural frame of reference through which they could interpret their own experience.

The kind of Islam that was to play such a central role in defining an Algerian national identity and in the movement's struggle for independence was, however, of a particular nature. It was different from the traditional faith of most North Africans in that it was a high and universal culture being used politically to challenge colonial rule. This was made possible through a three-way process.

First, Islam was shaped as a high-culture *per se*, at the core of a prestigious Arabo-Islamic civilization rooted both in history and in the present.⁹¹

Second, for the Muslim faith to be the foundation of national identity and to mobilize North Africans, it had to be defined as inherently incompatible with French culture and rule. France's control of Islam was perceived as heresy, and North Africans who sought to obtain French citizenship were condemned as traitors. For instance, at an ENA meeting on 9 September 1934 in rue des Pyrénées in Paris, Amar Imache called for 'the blacklisting of all the naturalized who have betrayed Islam' and Muslim leaders and scholars seen to collaborate with the French were denounced.⁹² The ENA's sustained attacks on Si Kaddour Ben Gabrit, the French-appointed imam of the Paris mosque, is a case in point. In May 1934 the ENA central committee addressed an open letter to him that ended with 'Today more than ever, North African Muslim youth ... works relentlessly to build its future, in spite of and against you and your colonial masters.'⁹³ During a political meeting at rue Daguerre on 13 January 1934, Imache stigmatized the imam and invited the members of the association to seize the opportunity of the Aid Seghir religious festival on 17 January to go to the Paris mosque 'to protest against this renegade'; at a banquet the ENA organized on that day, Messali Hadj condemned Si Kaddour and Belkacem Radjef described how he and several other militants had been arrested by the police before they could reach the mosque where they wanted to protest.⁹⁴

Third, if Islam were to embody national identity and aspirations for freedom and modernity, then it had to be distinguished from the vernacular forms of religious practices that were well established

among North Africans. Interestingly, this type of Islam to which nationalists referred, seen as high culture and a universal religion, was also the one commonly practised by the urban bourgeoisie of North Africa, and it was in many respects opposed to the traditional ritualistic practices and the cults of the saints and marabouts among rural Maghrebis.⁹⁵ Nationalists viewed the traditional religious practices of marabouts⁹⁶ as 'backward', as a lower form of religious practice, and denounced marabouts as 'microbes ... using [Islam] to deceive and mislead the people'.⁹⁷

This definition of religion reflected, and was intricately linked to, the process of creating ethnic identity. The movement evoked Islam as a high culture with which all North African Muslims should identify. Islam could not escape the logic of being historically defined in comparison with and contrasted against the 'other': it was the core of a great civilization represented as intrinsically superior to that of France or Europe. The ENA-PPA's condemnation of reformist Muslim leaders and people willing to abandon their 'personal status' as Muslims to become French showed that religion was what distinguished North Africans from Europeans: one could not be both Muslim and French. When nationalists denounced North African Muslims' traditional religious practices as backward and almost barbaric, they perpetuated the stigmas that the French had attached to vernacular forms of cultural and religious expression. For nationalists, religious identity, which was at the core of national identity, was very much influenced by interaction and conflict with, as well as emulation of, the spirit of Western modernity.

The politicization of religion legitimized not only Algerian Muslims' claim for independence on the basis of their distinct national identity rooted in Islam as a high culture, but also the movement itself by draping it with the mantle of Islam. The ENA-PPA presented itself as the true voice of religion and depicted it as every Muslim's duty to join the nationalist organization. A tract announcing a political meeting on 16 June 1933 ended with 'Subscribe ... to the newspaper *El Ouma* that fights for you. By making it known, you will have done your duty as a good Muslim'.⁹⁸

Religious metaphors were also used to describe the particular atmosphere of political rallies. Reporting on a political rally that was held in Lyons on 26 August 1934, *El Ouma* wrote how the speeches made by Bedek, president of the Lyons section of the ENA, and by Messali Hadj both imposed 'a religious silence' in the audience.⁹⁹ Also,

Imache described his tour of the Lyons region in January 1935 as 'a pilgrimage, since this trip allowed me to witness ... our union and our fraternity. And yet my mission was to announce this miracle to my brothers, and I had the joy of finding it already realized everywhere.'¹⁰⁰

The nationalists' interpretation of the ethnic and ethno-national identity of Algerians implied that differences, distinctions and variations in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia had to be reconciled into a unified interpretation of the ethnic make-up of North Africans. This was intended to create a sense of common ethnicity and solidarity among Maghrebis, which could, in turn, form the basis for efficient political mobilization. The movement's assertion (which countered French colonial attempts to divide and rule the two ethnic groups) that Arabs and Berbers belonged to the same Arabo-Berber people, that Berbers were somehow of the same ethnic origin as Arabs, emphasized Algerian identity as being marked by Arabness. Because a common religion cancelled out ethnic differences, blending Islam with national identity strengthened this picture of Algerian-ness.

In the colonial context, history did not justify the prominence given to Arabness: it was, more importantly, consistent with the nationalists' argument that all North Africans were, first and foremost, Muslims. Islam, Arabness and the Arab language were inextricably linked, and were the high culture and powerful identity on which the nation could be shaped, imagined and fought for. When, in January 1934, the movement decided to organize Arabic classes and Messali Hadj took the initiative to read and comment on Arab texts to militants every Wednesday, the ENA's aim was to 'teach to the audience the force of Islam'.¹⁰¹ Islam was therefore not limited to the religious sphere; it symbolized 'race' and language as well as culture. On 26 May 1934, in front of 600 mainly Algerian Muslims in Paris, Messali Hadj condemned France's attempt to regulate Koranic teaching as a threat to Algeria's Muslim traditions and culture.¹⁰² That the movement emphasized Islam's compatibility with modernity¹⁰³ implied that, for its militants, religion could play a central part in developing nationalism. Religion gave meaning to Muslims' experience as a colonized people and substance to their struggle for independence. At the ENA meeting of 6 June 1933, the nationalists' fight for independence was referred to as 'working towards the complete liberation of Islam'.¹⁰⁴ Imache's lyrical evocation of Algeria's emancipation also underlined the correlation made between the renaissance of Islam and the birth of the nation:

This is a new dawn, light, sunshine will appear. And over there, on the pink mountain, a large flag [has] been put up by a firm hand; its colour is as green as hope, with a Star and the Crescent. On its pole, there is a message printed in gold letters that everyone can read: Union, fraternity! Independence, freedom!¹⁰⁵

For Algerian nationalists, the sacred dimension of the nation, defined by Balakrishnan¹⁰⁶ as ‘the longing for immortality becoming a desire for membership of an imperishable collective’ was therefore incarnated by Islam. It conferred on this collective, that is to say on the community of North African Muslims, that ‘halo of disinterestedness’, as Anderson put it, that could ask for sacrifices: ‘Has our Prophet not ordered us to fight for our freedom, to die on the battlefield and defend Islam? Are we not Muslims[?] Wake up, North Africans. Let us join the ranks.’¹⁰⁷

However, it has been seen that Algerian nationalism and French republican nationalism had much in common. Loyalty to the nation was marked by the bond of kinship and its corollary, sacrifice (*don du sang*). But unlike France, whose long-standing republicanism focused essentially on the nation decoupled from Christianity, Algerian nationalism was based on the concept of a nation rooted in religious belonging. The timeless, boundless and modern nature of Islam as a high and universal culture enabled nationalists to challenge France’s claim that there had been no nation in Algeria before 1830 because French imperialism had suppressed its great Islamic religion and civilization. It also allowed them to represent the ethnically diverse North African population as all sharing the same Arab identity, which was seen as indissociable from religion.

Conclusion

Modernity and a twofold process of ‘opening’ (the dream of a future independent state) and ‘closure’ (attitude to the anti-colonial struggle) characterized the nationalist interpretation of the nation. Indeed, while nationalists thought that Algeria would one day be an independent multiethnic state where Muslims, Europeans and Jews would live side by side and maintain some relationship with France, the colonial context in which they developed their ideology led them to create an exclusive sense of national identity based on ethnicity and defined as inherently incompatible with Frenchness. A sense of kinship deemed

strong enough to command feelings of disinterestedness and sacrifice for Algeria marked the nation with which North Africans were to identify. It was also based on an interpretation of ethnicity in which all Arab and Berber North Africans belonged to the 'Arab race', on class (with the North African people seen as the underclass in Algeria), and on specific markers of culture, history and memory.

Most importantly, Islam transcended differences and divisions and embodied the nation and its corollary, nationalism. Furthermore, religious loyalties could command feelings of sacrifice and absence of self interest. The inextricable link between Islam, Arabness and the Arab language provided nationalists with a blueprint for an empowering national identity that could effectively challenge colonial rule. For them, Algerians were Muslims and therefore Arabs. Conversely, Arabness was seen as incompatible with Frenchness because such a bond betrayed Islam. Also, the language of the nation was Arabic, the language of religion.

These markers of ethno-national identity were, however, problematic; they included as much as they excluded. The nationalists' desire to mobilize Muslims around a unified and modern vision of the nation, one that placed Islam in its modern form at the core of Algerian-ness, implied imposing a new identity, language (classical Arabic) and religious practices on North Africans, and alienating people on account of their vernacular religious beliefs, cultural practices and language (Berber and colloquial Arabic), in other words on account of their 'ethnic habitus'.

In so doing, the ENA-PPA discourse showed that, in nationalism, difference was very much rooted in sameness. The more it tried to make Algerian national identity different, the more it appeared similar to that of the French. Indeed, it could be argued that its nationalism shared many characteristics with French nationalism – the bond of kinship based on the absence of self-interest, sacrifice, a unified high culture based on ethnicity, the rejection of difference seen as a threat to the one and indivisible republic and so on. Furthermore, nationalists implicitly adopted the legacy of French colonialism when they simply replaced one imported high culture (that of the French) with another (Islam-Arab culture from the Middle East) and dismissed North Africa's varied cultural, linguistic, ethnic and vernacular Islamic heritage as backward and unfit to be the foundation of a modern nation.

4

Racism, Colonialism and Universalism

During the interwar period in France, Algerian nationalists defined and negotiated their sense of national and ethnic identity at the boundary, at the point of contact between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Through interaction and conflict with ‘them’, ethnicity was constructed to fit into the strait-jacket of modern nationalist necessities. Their ethno-national identity had to appear unique, although the processes by which it was shaped were, in many respects, similar to those of Western nationalism.

The ENA and later the PPA saw some French or Western institutions, symbols, values, political processes and groupings as alien and racist, while viewing others positively. All those factors helped shape Algerian nationalist ideology and ethno-national identity. In this chapter I focus on the nationalist movement’s discourse on racism, colonialism and France.¹ I look at the complex role the concept of universalism played in the ENA–PPA’s ideology.

Racism in North Africa and in France

As a concept, racism was central to colonialism and, more importantly, constituted a fundamental theme in a North African nationalism inspired by universalist values. In this chapter I examine the interplay between racism, colonialism and universalism rather than carry out a detailed study of these three concepts.

A significant corpus of work on racism exists² as the meanings and connotations of terms such as ‘race’ and ‘racism’ have evolved and changed historically;³ however, for the purpose of this book, in which I make a comparative analysis of two movements set in different historical, socioeconomic and political contexts, I shall use the current meaning of racism.

Banton defines racism in the following terms: ‘By racism is meant

the doctrine that a man's behaviour is determined by stable inherited characters deriving from separate racial stocks having distinctive attributes and usually considered to stand to one another in relations of superiority and inferiority.⁴ What he implies here is that racism is a determinist doctrine in which group difference and inequality are ascribed to 'racial' traits. However, given the elusive nature of 'race' as a concept, his reference to the 'racial stocks' to which people are supposed to belong requires further clarification.

Perceived genealogical, genetic and/or cultural characteristics, and 'cross-fertilization' between them, make it difficult to define 'race'. For instance, cultural traits are seen as inherently linked to and explained by the genetic and genealogical make-up of a group to explain its place in the social/world order.⁵ Racism, which is both belief and the practice of categorization and differentiation, places and fixes the 'other' in an inferior position. The question of the forms that racism can take in society is discussed by Wieviorka,⁶ who notes that there are four levels of 'intensity' of racism, from 'infraracism', a rather minor social phenomenon, to racism in the inner workings of the state and its policies. This perspective is of particular relevance as it explores the role of racism in social practices and the polity.

Memmi's work on racism and antiracism⁷ in a colonial context broke new ground in this field. It emphasized the experience of the colonized and offered an interpretation of the relationship between them and the colonizer that went against the grain of 'traditional' theories of antiracism that were embedded in universalism.⁸ Gallissot adopts this approach⁹ and also explains the complex social processes that led to the inherent antagonism between colonized and colonizer. He describes how, in Algeria, racism affected the relationship not only between the colonizer and the colonized, but also between Jews and Europeans, and between the various European populations. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, virulent anti-Semitism riddled the Algerian colony, as it did metropolitan France.¹⁰ Anti-Jewish racism developed within a tense racial context, which, in the colony, was referred to as '*la guerre des races*' ('the war of the races'). Many Italian, Spanish, Maltese and other settlers expressed hatred of the Jews who had acquired French citizenship with the Crémieux decree in 1870. It was only with the law of 1889, which made second-generation European migrants into French citizens, that the '*Français d'Algérie*' idea emerged, and with it the myth that two communities existed in North Africa, the French of Algeria and the Muslims.¹¹

The ENA–PPA castigated the racism that pervaded all levels of colonial society from the individual to the higher echelons.¹² The nationalist organization’s denunciation of the colonialist press, which referred to North Africans as “wogs”, good-for-nothing ... with the obvious aim of deceiving and stirring up public opinion ... to stop the national movement of demands,¹³ shows that it saw racism as creating a chasm between Muslims and the French people and as an obstacle to emancipation.

Nationalists described the legacy of the century-old colonization of Algeria as one of suffering, humiliation, oppression and exploitation of Muslims, and they accused imperialism of using force to ‘reduce us to the rank of inferior people, to the rank of slaves’.¹⁴ Following the arrest of 80 militants by the rue Lecomte SAINA after a meeting of the ENA on 16 December 1933 in Paris, Amar Imache stated:

Why bother with legality towards Arabs? The law is for citizens and we are only ‘subjects’, and what counts with subjects is the law of the master for the slave, the law of the wolf for the lamb. ... Where are you, lawyers and judges supporting people’s rights??? Nowhere! They only exist for the citizens of each country, for those who have a fatherland, for the superior race and we are only inferior beings, humble subjects of the French Republic. We are just lowly ‘Sidis’!¹⁵

In an article reporting on a court case where a young French settler had been sentenced to pay a 16 franc fine for murdering a Muslim woman in Algeria, *El Ouma*¹⁶ depicted the relationship between the dominant and the dominated as one of extreme psychological and physical violence:

In North Africa, a settler can kill, steal, hit, abuse, humiliate, fine of his own accord ... he is the master and the Arab is, purely and simply his thing, he is at his disposal at all times and in all circumstances. ... We are the flesh, you are the knife; you can cut us up as you wish, imprison us as you want, kill our wives according to your wishes, deport us to god-forsaken places, seize our land, exploit our children, but we know full well that everything has an end. He who laughs last laughs longest.

For North African nationalists, the violence that marked the relationship between colonizers and colonized was racist, and it dehumanized Algerian Muslims. In response to an article written by Jules Rouanet in the pro-colonialist newspaper *La Dépêche Algérienne* on 21 February 1939 claiming that France treated colonials as equals and brothers, *El Oumma*¹⁷ put colonialism in the dock and explicitly linked it with racism:

Racism? Reading *La Dépêche*, one would believe that there is none in Algeria and in the French colonies. Would you deny the fact that the native code is a code of racism? That the Régnier Decree and the whole list of special decrees for natives are racist? That the fact [that] native civil servants and ... workers earn lower wages than the Europeans is racism? That the expropriation and displacement of natives onto infertile land are racist actions? That the massacres carried out in Morocco and Tunisia are racist acts?

This passage shows that racism was not perceived as a corollary of colonialism, but as its very nature – colonialism was racism. The movement's interpretation of colonialism, which contrasted sharply with France's claim that it was its duty to fulfil its generous '*mission civilisatrice*' in the colonies, had direct implications for the development of Algerian nationalism, for racism was also posited as a justification for emancipation. For nationalists, colonialism was akin to feudalism, a system in which North Africans were compared with serfs who were at 'the colonizer's beck and call'.¹⁸ Thus their fight against colonialism was presented as a struggle against racism; and the racism to which they were subjected both justified their struggle for freedom and reinforced their resolve: 'We will come out stronger and tougher from every act of repression and every injustice.'¹⁹ The very process of alienation, exploitation and violence that it engendered also precipitated the formation of movements of national liberation.

Colonialism, universalism and the state

Although denouncing colonialism as inherently racist, the nationalists' relationship with metropolitan France was more complex. At an ideological level, they were strongly influenced by universalism and presented themselves as a movement ruled by democratic principles.²⁰ Thus, their political programme demanded equality between French

and Muslims; equal political and union rights for Muslims and the French; equal pay; access to jobs and social legislation; the separation of the mosque and state; freedom of expression for Muslims and their press; the abolition of the Native Code and of the *communes mixtes*; compulsory education in French and Arabic; military service of the same duration for Muslims and French; the same freedom to travel as European settlers; and an Algerian parliament elected by universal suffrage 'without any distinction of race or religion'.²¹

At a more abstract level, they argued that their nationalism reflected Muslims' aspirations to freedom, and rights to become full citizens:

[Muslims] want freedom, absolute respect for their person, their conscience and their rights, a fair share of the advantages and assets of the collectivity ... the right to enjoy the benefits of education and of everything that can improve one's life and make it more pleasant, that of participating on an equal footing in the management of public affairs and fields of general interest; in a word, everything that can give them the right to aspire to the character of a reasonable and free people. ... What is necessary is an awareness of a high form of solidarity that, through the involvement of Muslims in the pursuit of a common ideal, will replace violence and brutal tyranny based on force and foolhardiness with order, peace, and authority respectful of the law.²²

The movement called for the Declaration of the Rights of Man to be enforced and for tyranny to be brought to an end when, after the arrest and imprisonment of ENA leaders in 1934, they declared: 'When will this indecent and brutal imprisonment cease? When? The day when, united and disciplined, we will demand that our human rights and our rights as citizens be respected.'²³

Up until the early 1920s, politically active North African migrants in France were still ideologically close to the *Jeunes Algériens*, and viewed metropolitan France as the true home of revolutionary principles. They considered that there was a dichotomy between France and the values it stood for, and the colonial system that oppressed North Africans: Muslims were fortunate to depend on a central government and parliament with enough concern for justice to guarantee a fairer system in North Africa if only the terrible conditions in which Muslims lived were better known in Paris.²⁴

The creation of the *Etoile nord-africaine* (ENA) in 1926 coincided with a North African condemnation of France as an imperialist power that suppressed the legitimate rights of the colonized. In December 1934, an article in *El Ouma* denouncing the arrest and imprisonment of nationalist leaders and militants on both sides of the Mediterranean declared:

Republican laws have given way to feudal laws. Democracy has bowed and stepped aside in front of the native code that is settling in as the sovereign master in the capital of 'liberal' France. How pathetic! How regressive. ... This is a return to Barbarism! Besides, aren't the laws that are imposed on us 'back home' anything but barbaric laws? And now, it is in the capital of revolution, in the city of human rights, O irony, that these abject laws are imposed on us! It is in the capital of the great lawyers and thinkers that we are being prevented from holding meetings, from founding an association to demand our rights to life and freedom. It is in the city of Victor Hugo and Jean Jaurès that Muslims are being hunted down, searched, jostled, arrested and sentenced.

However, the persecution to which North African migrants were subjected in the home country revealed that France was no longer the land of rights and freedom. With the imposition of the Native Code in Paris, liberal France had turned into a parody of itself, with colonialism corrupting and contaminating the revolutionary principles that had inspired it for so long. In a way, colonialism and racism had turned the clock back to feudalism, and the ENA's fight for rights and freedom seemed not only consistent with France's true values but also crucial for its survival.

The nationalists no longer regarded the French authorities as the protectors of the colonized who were unaware of what was really going on in North Africa. They argued that if the government had really wanted to help North African Muslims, then they would long ago have abolished the Native Code on both sides of the Mediterranean.²⁵ Furthermore, the universalist policy was also interpreted as hypocrisy: it had been clear for some time that 'in this France which claims to be a democracy, the famous slogans "*Liberté*", "*Egalité*", "*Fraternité*" are only empty words, at least as far as we are concerned.'²⁶ The government was also criticized for being at the core of the

imperialist project. Paris and Algiers were described as ‘two poles where hands red with blood strike relentlessly’.²⁷ The authorities were denounced for betraying France’s Declaration of Human Rights and the legacy of 1789, and for letting their representatives in the colonies behave like ‘potentates’.²⁸ Colonialism was depicted as an anachronistic system rooted in feudalism that the Third Republic encouraged.²⁹

Thus, nationalists regarded themselves as the true bearers of revolutionary principles fighting against a feudal government. In a tract announcing a meeting in Lyons on 9 September 1934 in support of the victims of colonial repression in Tunisia and in Constantine, where Muslims had protested against the desecration of a mosque, the movement called for mobilization ‘against armed occupation, against the plan of serfdom followed by the government’.³⁰ Another tract along the same lines explained how the government had banned an ENA meeting planned for 13 October 1934, and invited North Africans to attend a political meeting on 28 October 1934 in rue Grange-aux-Belles in Paris. Nationalists asserted that the fundamental values of rights and justice, which France claimed to champion, were being denied to Muslims, and that the oppression they were condemned to endure under the tyrannical rule of colonialism would only reinforce their resolve to be free: ‘Does [the government] hope ... to continue to maintain us in a state of perpetual slavery? ... The people has [*sic*] decided to break free of its chains and snatch its rights at all costs.’³¹ A further parallel was made between the struggle of the Messalist organization against colonialism and France’s revolutionary past when the PPA denounced the incarceration of some of its militants in the Barberousse prison in Algiers in 1938:

Thirty-three Algerian Muslims are presently detained in the modern Bastille that is Barberousse prison. Two of them, who were arrested more than six months ago, have not even been questioned yet. As in the times of the king’s arrest orders and the oubliette, so-called ‘republican’ justice is anything but scrupulous.³²

France’s definition of colonization as a ‘civilizing mission’ was also denounced as nothing more than a ploy to ‘[stuff] its safes with the varied resources drawn from the exploitation of our soil, our subsoil and from us’.³³ Its only purpose, *El Ouma* argued, was to further France’s imperialist project of oppression and dispossession: ‘The so-

called civilization of which France is so proud in Algeria is not very different from the barbarism that it derives from, since it is based on the right of the strongest.³⁴

The French republic and imperialism were therefore seen as one and the same thing. Because the government's policies and actions were at odds with the values it claimed to stand for, it was accused of hypocrisy. The 'feudal system' it had introduced in the colonies denied Muslims access to education and showed that colonialism was not about the 'enlightenment' of the colonized but about oppression and racism. In 1938, the nationalists argued that millions of Muslims were maintained in a state of complete ignorance by a France 'motivated by racial bias ... for exploitative ends that are shameful and unworthy of a nation that pretends to be civilized and claiming to be inspired by the glorious principles of 1793'.³⁵ The emphasis was on the inherent contradictions between French colonialism and its revolutionary legacy:

Neither the inferiority of certain race[s] nor the protection given to slaves in exchange for their services ... can justify or even mitigate such glaring iniquity. The complete state of dependence to the master to which the serf is reduced is manifestly contrary to his dignity, to the development of his personality and to the right to enjoy life freely. Slavery and serfdom have disappeared from our customs. ... However, the government should not deny and violate the great political and moral principles such as those of the 'Rights of Man' for which a great revolution took place and rivers of blood were shed.³⁶

If the government did not represent France's universalist values then who did? For the nationalists, the true bearer of those principles was the nation and by extension, the people of France.

The French people and the legacy of 1789

The nationalists compared the Algerians' struggle against 'feudalism' and for rights and freedom with that of the French people in 1789. They conjured up their own longing for independence in a way that was reminiscent of their attitude to the French Revolution: 'We want to tear our gag and throw off our shackles. We want our share of life, light and freedom.'³⁷ Algerian Muslims and the French people were presented as sharing the same values, and both were depicted as

inherently hostile to the French authorities' colonial project. In a speech at La Mutualité after the arrest of her husband Messali Hadj and other ENA militants, Emilie Busquant asserted that the French people would never tolerate the injustice of colonialism: 'the role of the native code and the emergency measures have bound the Algerian people hand and foot. The French people, who made the revolution of 1789 to throw off the monarchic shackles that suppressed it and to give freedom to all peoples, will not allow this to happen.'³⁸

The French people represented revolutionary legitimacy and the interests of the Algerian people were presented as identical to those of the French. A tract announcing an ENA meeting on 26 May 1934 ended with a call for the 'freedom-loving French people' to support North Africans' struggle for emancipation.³⁹

Algerian nationalists felt they could speak to the French people on equal terms. The oppression to which both were subjected created a sense of mutual understanding and shared interests. Their common enemy was the imperialist state, which not only subjugated colonized people but also trampled on the revolutionary legacy of 1789 and, by extension, on the integrity and fundamental rights of the French people:

We call on the real people of France so that its glory for having achieved '89 does not end here. By defending us ... the people of France will defend itself and defend the cause of democracy. Real *French people of France*, whose heart is so generous and welcoming, do not remain indifferent to our enslavement. ... Let us all fight for ... the implementation of the first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen: '*All men were born free and equal in rights*'.⁴⁰

The emphasis on the authenticity of the French people ('Real *French people of France*') aimed not only to differentiate the latter from the oppressive state structure that claimed to represent them, but also, more importantly, to distinguish them from the European settlers in North Africa whose French-ness they questioned. Indeed, the racism of the *pièds-noirs*, their disdain for human rights and their unflinching support for colonialism, discredited them in the eyes of Algerian nationalists. The ENA–PPA denounced the bias and inconsistency of a system that marginalized Muslims on the basis of their religion, ethnicity and language, while ignoring the cultural and linguistic

differences of European settlers. Many of these had come from countries like Spain, Italy and Malta and their knowledge of the French language and culture was often limited, but they were granted 'feudal' privileges and French citizenship.⁴¹ Independence from France was put forward not as a rupture but as a *rapprochement* of two equal peoples who shared the same values, as the logical outcome of the spread of those universalist values given by the French to the rest of the world. Algerian emancipation was therefore presented as crucial to the survival of those ideals and as reinforcing the rights of the French themselves: one had to challenge imperialism because it threatened the very foundations of universalism.

This implied that there was a conflict between the French people on the one hand, and the state and its colonial policies on the other: 'We must protest by holding frequent meetings in the Paris region and in the neighbouring *départements* to draw the attention of the French people deceived by its rulers and expose the miserable situation and the abuse of which the North African people are the victim.'⁴² This argument was, to some extent, influenced by the concept of class: a distinction was made between the French working-class, oppressed and misled by the French government, like the Algerians, and the ruthless imperialist state controlled by the privileged.

The assumption was that there was a chasm between 'real' French people and their state. Nationalists idealized the French people as the true heirs of the revolution, but failed to acknowledge that a significant proportion of French public opinion was far from hostile to colonialism, as the success of the *Exposition coloniale* of 1931 showed.⁴³ They also failed to acknowledge that in a democratic system government policy and actions were not necessarily at odds with popular will. Even French workers and workers' movements, whom the Algerian nationalist movement viewed as natural allies, often favoured colonialism and frequently referred to the colonized as inferiors, as Bédarida shows: 'Another widespread sentiment of the working-class that should not be underestimated further contributes to their support for, or acceptance of colonization: a superiority complex towards native populations considered as primitive and inferior.'⁴⁴

The nationalists' second assumption was that universalism and colonialism (and by extension racism) were irreconcilable opposites. I have already mentioned that Western states justified colonization on the basis of universalist principles – civilizing the colonized was their duty, the 'white man's burden'. To become truly universal, those values

had to be spread to the rest of the world because European civilization was considered intrinsically superior to others and the uncivilized had to be put under its protection. Algerian nationalists also wrongly assumed that the French Revolution was carried out by the French to grant freedom to other people.⁴⁵ Indeed, it is worth noting that none of the colonized people who lived in territories under French control during and after the revolution of 1789 was granted additional rights or freedoms.

At a conceptual level, there is also a link between universalism and racism. Balibar points out convincingly that universalism developed during the Enlightenment, at a time when race acquired its modern meaning and when the 'natural bases' of slavery were spelt out, and the idea of Man so central to universalism implied a latent hierarchy. He goes on to suggest that:

You cannot find a clear-cut line of demarcation between universalism and racism or, if you prefer, you cannot designate two sets of ideas with no intersection, one in which you would put all the (potentially) universalistic ideas, and the other in which you would put all the (potentially) racist ideas ... universalism and racism are indeed (determinate) contraries, and this is why each of them has the other one inside itself – or is bound to affect the other from the inside.⁴⁶

Balibar and Wallerstein⁴⁷ consider that gender ('the Rights of *Man*') and racial biases distort the 'egalitarian message' of universalism, and that, as a concept, universalism fails to include non-whites and women. He views the relationship between universalism and racism/sexism as one of tension constructed and sustained by the capitalist system, in which racism 'ethnicizes' the workforce in order to maintain low costs of production (in other words low wages for the 'ethnicized') and sexism ensures that women's non-paid work remains so.

One advantage of including universalist references in the Third Republic's political discourse was to justify the colonial order as a generous mission that had to be carried out for the greater good of humanity.⁴⁸ Universalism as an ideology was closely tied to French civilization and was used to rally the French-educated North African elite to its national project and make the assimilation myth appear credible to them.⁴⁹ 'Uncivilized', indigenous North Africans were clearly not meant to take it literally to claim independence and threaten

France's colonial empire. When they did, the French interpreted their aspirations as fuelled by religious, tribal fanaticism and as political extremism inconsistent with universalism, or as a 'medieval, even prehistoric fanaticism'⁵⁰ fuelled by Islam.

Algerian nationalists argued that the French authorities had betrayed their own people by paying lip-service to revolutionary values while oppressing Muslims. The complex nature of universalism and its relationship with colonialism, racism and nationalism could explain why the ENA–PPA could develop a nationalist agenda marked by anti-colonialism and inspired by the values of 1789, and at the same time justify its claim for independence on the basis of the past greatness of an 'Arab nation' that had had, in its time, its own colonial empire.⁵¹

Antiracism and racism within Algerian nationalism

I argued earlier that the racism to which North African Muslims were subjected was cited as a justification for emancipation. As I have shown, a number of articles and political speeches called for the installation of 'an Algerian parliament elected by universal suffrage ... without any distinction of race or religion', and invited Muslims to join the movement 'against injustices and racial hatred'. They asserted that they were 'neither anti-French, nor anti-other races, nor fanatics, nor anarchists but ... we are anti-imperialist',⁵² and that there was 'nothing xenophobic' about their nationalism 'because it is not based on any racial prejudice or racial complex'.⁵³ Dr Ben Sliman, representing the ENA at a debate on Algeria organized by the Club du Faubourg on 18 March 1936, stated the nationalists' antiracist agenda as follows – 'it has been said that the ENA is an organization that is anti-French and anti-Jewish; it is neither one nor the other; it is anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist ... and in a free and independent Algeria, there will be no Jews, French people or natives, but Algerians reconciled in freedom.'⁵⁴ Nationalists argued that their antiracism was based on what they saw as the inherently tolerant nature of Islam when they referred to the treatment of the Jews in Muslim countries: 'The Jews have never had their property or religion mistreated in Muslim land because what distinguishes Islam is its tolerance.'⁵⁵

Those antiracist claims could not hide the fact that the nationalism of the ENA, just like other nationalisms, was also marked internally by racism. While Algerian Muslims were markedly more tolerant than the European settlers towards the Jews, and in many cases offered them

protection at times of anti-Jewish persecution by the French settlers or French authorities, for example under the Vichy regime, or in the 1930s when anti-Semitism was rife, the nationalist movement also played the race card for political purposes. The events of Constantine in the summer of 1934 were a case in point. The riots that took place there between 4 and 6 August 1934 were triggered by the desecration of a mosque by a drunken French Jewish soldier. The ENA organized a number of political rallies to debate the issue. *El Ouma* denounced the fact that the soldier had been condemned to spend only two days in prison when Muslims who had taken part in the demonstrations had received sentences of two to five years' imprisonment, and accused the French justice system of racism.⁵⁶ For taking advantage of the Crémieux decree of 1870 to become French and siding with French imperialism, Jews in North Africa were accused of betraying the Arabs who had welcomed them:

The Jews, who are the friends and obedient servants of French imperialism betrayed the Arab people when they were naturalized *en masse* in 1870, thereby playing into the hands of colonialism by siding with the strongest. ... Almost all Jews are obedient servants to colonialism to the detriment of the Arab people.⁵⁷

In the same issue, Amar Imache's article was riddled with more virulent racist rhetoric and repeated many of the common stigmas that racism has historically attached to Jewish-ness: 'The ungrateful, perfidious Jews who have betrayed those who opened their arms to them when they were persecuted in Christian countries, obeying their sordid and cunning instincts have defected to the stronger camp, that of imperialism.'⁵⁸

How could North Africans, who denounced and fought against all forms of colonial racism and developed a vision of an independent Algeria where Muslims, Europeans and Jews could live together as equals, also use anti-Jewish rhetoric? Part of the answer may possibly lie in the very nature of nationalism as a political ideology and its relationship with racism. As Anthias and Yuval-Davies argue, race and racism act as a structuring principle for national processes,⁵⁹ and 'wherever a delineation of boundaries takes place, as is the case with every ethnic and national collectivity, processes of exclusion and inclusion are in operation.'⁶⁰

Furthermore, correlations can be noted between European anti-Semitic sentiments and the racist terminology Algerian nationalists directed against Jews during the Constantine riots of 1934. As Balibar points out, even if the nationalism of the dominant (*'nationalisme de conquête'*) should not be equated with that of the dominated (*'nationalisme de libération'*), they both share some common ground.⁶¹ However contradictory it may seem, universalism and racism are two aspects of nationalism and form a kind of tension. This tension could justify domination and exclusion in the case of a dominant and expansionist nationalism such as France's. It could, for different reasons, also affect a nationalism of liberation such as Algeria's, for universalist values were embraced and presented as vindicating their agenda for independence. However, the events of Constantine show that European anti-Semitism, which stigmatized the 'other' (incarnated by the Jew) as privileged, treacherous and exploiting the people (and so on), could be taken on and reinterpreted by Algerian nationalists within the colonial context.

The upsurge of anti-Jewish feelings during those incidents was a sharp contrast to the movement's main nationalist policy, which essentially emphasized tolerance and equality. It is indeed worth noting that once the agitation accompanying the events had abated, the ENA became far more moderate in its attitude to conflicts between Muslims and Jews, as in Constantine and Orléansville, and put the blame for the violence that had occurred mostly on imperialism. In an article published a few months later, the ENA expressed regret for those clashes during which there had been so many victims in both communities, and called for a general amnesty. The movement referred to all those who had been condemned as 'the victims of a provocation that did a disservice to both the Jews and the Muslims'. It argued that it was colonialism that had made Jews 'arrogant', that Muslims had been manipulated by French anti-Jewish groups, and that the violence of the North Africans' reaction had been exacerbated by 105 years of misery and colonial domination.⁶²

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Algerian nationalist movement was acutely aware that racism was at the core of colonialism. It affected the North Africans' whole experience as subjects of the French colonial empire. As a consequence, racism was a key motive for their desire to gain freedom and independence. The only possible way to bring to an

end the racism to which they were subjected was not to reform but to end the colonial rule of Algeria.

Universalism was a key inspiration for the nationalists' own struggle for emancipation, for they still saw France as upholding the values inherited from the Enlightenment and French Revolution. Until the early 1920s, a distinction was still made between a 'tolerant and generous' mother country and French government, the guardian of those values, and the feudal rule of imperialism in the colony. From the mid-1920s onwards, however, a period that coincided with the development of police oppression against North African migrants within France, the French state was denounced as being the real instigator of imperialist domination in North Africa.

The true heirs of the French Revolution were then no longer seen to be the government and parliament in Paris, but the people of France. The movement often invoked the universalist values they believed they shared to call on the latter to support the Algerian people's struggle and demands. It failed, however, to recognize that the government that implemented the colonial policies reflected the will of the French people, that colonization was very popular and that universalism and colonialism did not necessarily clash in French nationalist ideology. Furthermore, although the events of Constantine in the summer of 1934 showed that their nationalism of liberation could also be informed by racism, the ENA-PPA nationalists declared themselves to be antiracist and tolerant.

5

Algerian Nationalists in the French Political Arena

In the interwar period, North Africans in France began to structure their anti-colonial political struggle and nationalism around a common denominator, namely their identity as Arabs and Muslims fighting French colonial oppression. The ENA initially encompassed all North Africans, but soon shifted its focus to Algerian issues, the construction of a 'modern' Algerian identity and the struggle for independence. At least until 1938, when the PPA moved its headquarters from Paris to Algiers, the ideology and actions of the Algerian nationalist movement were shaped by the experiences of its members in both North Africa and France. The organization was created and developed within the North African diaspora and, when addressing fellow Algerian Muslims in North Africa, it acknowledged that 'we have started our struggle far away from our country, far away from you!'¹ Beyond metropolitan France, international issues such as Palestine, the Middle East and Ethiopia, were also considered important and were discussed extensively both in political meetings and in the North African nationalist newspapers, *L'Ikdam* and later, *El Ouma*, founded in 1930. The aim of this chapter is to assess the ENA–PPA's relationship with political groups of the left and other immigrants in France, and to examine their attitude to international events in the Middle East and in Africa.

Links and conflicts with the French Left in the interwar period

Until 1914, the French Socialist Party paid little attention to the colonial question and to the fate of Muslims in North Africa. However, on 5 March 1919, the first International manifesto pressed French socialists to side with the colonized and bring 'colonial slavery' to an end.² The Eurocentric strategy that had been adopted, which viewed any changes in the colonies as the result of a proletarian

revolution in Europe, enabled many socialists, both in France and North Africa, to sit on the fence and support the status quo on French colonialism. Then, in June 1920, Lenin's writings and the Communist International's third congress challenged that strategy. The colonies now became a key focus of the revolution. This forced French communists to adopt a clearer position *vis-à-vis* the colonies and led to rifts and tensions within the party.³

However, as I have shown in Chapter 1, tensions marked the close relationship that existed between North African nationalists and the French Communist Party (PCF).⁴ The North Africans' attempts to develop a more independent organization with an agenda that did not necessarily conform to that of the PCF, led to a number of crises and clashes between the two political organizations. Though contacts with the communists were maintained, hostility between the two parties grew and turned into open conflict during the second half of the 1930s, by which time the PCF and the newly-created Algerian Communist Party (PCA) had abandoned their commitment to an independent Algeria and adopted a more assimilationist stance.⁵

The movement's relationship with the French Socialist Party (SFIO or *Section française de l'internationale ouvrière*) was more problematic. The socialists' policy on the colonies was far more conservative than that of the communists. In the 1920s, some socialist MPs, such as Georges Nouvelle and Léon Blum, expressed their support in parliament for a progressive and cautious move towards autonomy in some of the French colonies,⁶ but in the 1930s the party moved away from that position and favoured policies that would gradually improve the socioeconomic and political rights of North Africans within the French empire.

In 1934, during the trial of Messali Hadj, the nationalist organization acknowledged the support that left-wing parties and intellectuals like Daniel Guérin had given to it and stated that it was 'delighted ... with the active sympathy of working-class parties, which, at a time when the government has been hounding/persecuting us, have all come to our rescue'.⁷ This support was expressed by key figures such as Francis Jourdain, president of the *Ligue anti-impérialiste*, Paul Hirtz, of the *Jeunesses laïques et républicaines*, André Ferrat of the PCF, Gabriel Cudenet of the *Parti radical-socialiste*, as well as Jean Longuet – Karl Marx's grandson – and André Berthon, both lawyers supporting the ENA, who spoke at a meeting the ENA organized in Paris to protest against the sentencing of Messali Hadj and the

leadership of the organization. Representatives of the PCF, the CGTU (*Confédération générale du travail unitaire*), the SFIO and the *Secours rouge international* (SRI) also took part in a meeting in Lyons on 8 September 1934.⁸

However, there were always tensions between the communist and socialist left. The controversy over a meeting the ENA had organized at La Grange-aux-Belles in September 1934 following the Constantine events illustrated the growing tension between the nationalist movement and the PCF. It ended with *El Ouma* publishing a 'clarification' in September–October 1934 to denounce the report on the meeting in the communist daily newspaper *L'Humanité*, which had failed to mention either the role played by the ENA or the speeches made by Algerian nationalists, and had presented the event as a communist initiative.

Socialist politicians, members of parliament and left-wing governments and ministers (particularly those in charge of the colonies) were frequently criticized for their reluctance to challenge the colonial status quo established by the right:

How many left and right-wing Governors have we had, including those who were members of the Central Committee of the Human Rights League? Did the situation change when those men from the left governed us? Have they abolished the odious Native Code? No, no, no.⁹

Despite the conflicts and arguments, the movement often acknowledged that its political affinities lay with the French left. However, the colonial policy led by the *Front populaire*, after it had won the general election on 3 May 1936, was a great disappointment for the ENA, which felt betrayed by the left. Nationalists opposed the timid reforms of the *Projet Blum–Viollette* (Blum–Viollette Bill), which planned to extend the right to vote to a mere 20,000 Muslims in Algeria and failed to address the fundamental question of democracy and rights in North Africa.¹⁰ The conflicts and recriminations that developed between the two sides after 1936 led the government to dissolve the ENA on 27 January 1937 and to arrest the leadership of the nationalist movement.

While some French politicians of the mainstream left maintained contact with Algerian nationalists, the *Front populaire's* accession to power marked the end of an era of difficult coexistence between the

movement and the French left. The PPA, which the ex-leadership of the ENA created on 11 March 1937 to continue the nationalist struggle, was consistently attacked by both the left and the right. The nationalist party, which still hoped to win the left over to its cause, regretted that 'in right-wing newspapers, the PPA is nothing less than a Moscow cell ... on the other hand, left-wing newspapers like to represent us as an offshoot of international fascism.'¹¹ The movement also condemned the Communist Party's hostility towards it, and criticized it for aligning its colonial policy with that of the SFIO:

The fact that the PPA demands political independence and places this resolutely on the path of the defence of the interests of the labouring Algerian masses is enough for the Communist Party to find reasons for hating it. Because the PPA has turned out to be a dangerous rival which, more and more, seems to be spreading its influence on increasingly larger groups of Algerian workers to the detriment of the Communist Party.¹²

The Algerian nationalists' cooperation with left-wing French parties during the 1930s was considered crucial to the success of their struggle. This, however, was becoming more difficult because the economic recession, which was felt throughout the French working class, exacerbated xenophobia. Foreigners within the ranks of the French left were blamed for the crisis and unemployment affecting France in that decade. Radicals such as Edouard Herriot and Pierre Mendès France, socialists such as Roger Salengro and George Monnet (who was also a leading member of the *Ligue des droits de l'homme*) called for a reduction in the number of immigrants, while the CGT declared that it was in favour of giving preference to the French on the job market. The PCF and the communist trade union the CGTU also denounced the xenophobia, which was rife among their members and militants.¹³

Although relations between the nationalist movement, the communists and the socialists were often problematic and confrontational, Algerian nationalists found consistent support for their cause in the parties of the French extreme left such as the International Workers' Party (POI): 'Each time we have been the victims of repression, the only ones to denounce it were the parties and organizations from the extreme left, and some left-wing groups. The reactionary press and people have always heaped insults on us.'¹⁴ While the ENA-PPA's

political strategy was to work with all democratic, particularly proletarian, organizations in France, they maintained their independence from other parties.¹⁵ They also believed that the unity of North Africans in nationalist organizations was paramount if their fight for independence was to succeed:

North Africans have no interest whatsoever in joining French political parties, whether from the right or the left. Their place should be in anti-imperialist, nationalist groups. They must first secure equality with other men through the liberation of their country that is currently subjected to colonial oppression. When this liberation has occurred, they can, each according to their ideology, follow different political and social leanings. Until then, they have not got the right to disperse when faced with the immense forces of colonial imperialism.¹⁶

For the ENA, the anti-colonial cause was above ideology and the national unity it espoused transcended sociopolitical differences. The nationalists' call to mobilize against imperialism along ethnic lines showed that, for them, ethnicity took precedence over political allegiance and beliefs. They saw this as the only way to counter the imperialist agenda, which, in the 1930s, had managed to gain support on all sides of the political spectrum. Only in an independent state could North Africans express their democratic right to belong to different political groupings.

Solidarity with other *coloniaux* in France

In an attempt to create a united front against colonialism, the ENA and PPA consistently tried to establish links with other North African groups, with Arab organizations based in Europe and the Middle East, and with other colonial migrant organizations. Some attempts were more successful than others, but they all showed that the Algerian nationalist movement wanted to develop beyond the limited boundaries of the social class from which it had emerged. It wanted to develop into a truly national organization of manual workers, intellectuals and traders belonging to the oppressed colonial population, and to promote Arab nationalism from the Maghreb to the Middle East.

Although Algerian nationalists maintained close relations with North African-based nationalist parties such as the Destour in Tunisia

and the *Jeunes Marocains* (Young Moroccans) during the interwar period, they failed to create any real alliance with Muslim intellectuals, politicians and religious groups in Algeria.¹⁷ Algerian organizations that failed to respond to the movement's call for unity were consistently criticized at political meetings.

The movement's efforts to win over North African organizations in France focused mainly on the associations of students and traders, and they were far more successful with the former than the latter. Students from Moroccan and Tunisian student associations were politically more radical than their Algerian counterparts, whom the Algerian nationalists often criticized for their reformist stance. Tunisian and Moroccan students, including the leaders of the Paris-based *Association des Etudiants musulmans nord-africains* (Association of North African Muslim Students or AEMNA) Ahmed Ben Milad and Ahmed Belafredj, who were Tunisian and Moroccan respectively, often participated in and addressed meetings organized by the ENA and PPA. They also played an active part in running the organization and provided assistance with writing and editing the nationalist newspaper. For instance, Mohammed El Kholti, who was president of the Association of Moroccan Students in the early 1930s, was a regular contributor to *El Ouma*, while Messali Hadj was invited to make a speech at the Muslim Students' Congress, which took place in December 1933.¹⁸

The nationalists interpreted the presence of North African intellectuals and traders at ENA meetings organized after specific events, such as the Constantine clashes or the arrest of nationalist activists, as the start of a process of mobilization of all Maghrebis against colonialism:

Bullying and humiliation by the police has led those of our compatriots – intellectuals and traders – who are less unfortunate than the masses and who, until recently, still retained some illusions – to rally to our cause. ... That is why we were pleased to see at our meeting not only the mass of our compatriots but also Muslim intellectuals, including those who in the past were indifferent to our movement. ... Intellectuals will all come to help us undo the crimes and misdeeds of French imperialism.¹⁹

However, as far as North African traders' associations were concerned, this judgement was more a pious hope than any reality on the

ground. The traders' association (*Amicale des commerçants*), created in the early 1930s, remained staunchly faithful to France. In June 1934, a number of meetings were organized between Messali Hadj, the leader of the ENA, and Mansouri Ahmed, president of the Muslims' Defence League (*Ligue de défense des Musulmans*), the main North African traders' association in Paris, to establish closer ties between the two organizations. But those attempts failed and constituted a serious setback in the ENA's aim to unite and mobilize all North Africans against imperialism.²⁰

Algerian nationalists also made connections with movements from the Arab world in Europe. During the Islamo–European Congress held in Geneva between 12 and 15 September 1935, for example, ENA leaders established contacts with the organizer of the event, Chekib Arslan of the Arab Academy in Lausanne and the editor of *La Nation arabe* (the *Arab Nation*), and with representatives of Muslim groups based in Europe who were attending the Congress.²¹ The presence of Arabs belonging to the *Association syrienne de Paris* (Syrian Association of Paris) at some of the movement's political meetings would also suggest that links with Middle-Eastern organizations also existed within France.

The organization was also keen to create a front uniting all colonized people whom the French colonial empire subjugated. The involvement of many North African nationalists in the Communist Party's Intercolonial Union (*Union intercoloniale*) in the 1920s had enabled them to build strong relationships with the Annamese and black organizations.²² Chabila Djilani, for instance, whom the French police described as 'one of the best propagandists' in the ENA, had worked very closely with the Martiniquan community. Leaders of the Annamese movement and *Ligue de défense de la race nègre* were also invited to speak at meetings of the ENA.²³

In the 1930s, those links were maintained and reinforced as the *coloniaux* became more radical. Emile Faure, president of the league, made a speech during a PPA meeting at the Salle Wagram in Paris in December 1937 denouncing the sentencing by the French government of the Algerian nationalist movement's leadership as a 'denial of justice'.²⁴ Nguyen The Truyen, the Indochinese delegate and president of the *Rassemblement colonial* (Colonial Unity), made a key address at the PPA's meeting of 18 February 1938 commemorating the death of Emir Khaled, Abd el-Kader's grandson and leading figure of the *Jeunes Algériens* movement.²⁵

Through those links, the Algerian nationalist movement aimed to establish a united front. In an article that condemned the *Conférence impérialiste* that had taken place in Paris on 3 December 1934, the ENA called for the unity of all colonized people:

It is essential that all the oppressed from the colonies, Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians, Annamese, Malagasy, Senegalese, etc., get together, find common ground, form their committee of action to snatch their immediate demands, and work together closely, shoulder to shoulder with French intellectuals and the manual proletariat for economic, political and social independence. Oppressed people from the colonies, unite to protect your interests.²⁶

Solidarity between all colonized and French people was therefore considered necessary to challenge French colonial rule. However, the vision of the 'anti-colonial nationalists' was, to a certain extent, structured around the idea of class (the oppressed colonial and French proletariat united against an oppressive imperialist system) and universalist principles, and did not take into consideration that racism created divisions between the French population (it even affected the French left) and the colonized.²⁷

The Middle East and the Palestinian question

The origins of Arab nationalism can be traced to Nahda, a movement that developed in the late nineteenth century and that had a long-term influence on nationalist organizations in that region.²⁸ The consistent support of Algerian nationalists for Arab liberation movements illustrates the extent to which the dominant faction in the ENA and PPA considered North Africa to be ethnically, culturally, politically, religiously, historically and linguistically anchored in the Arab world. During a political meeting on 13 January 1934 at the Maison du Peuple in Boulogne, Messali Hadj called on North Africans to unite with Syrians and Egyptians to form one Muslim people. This highlights the ideological tension between the nationalist's long-term vision of an 'Arab nation' in the Middle East and North Africa and their fight to establish independent 'Arab states' as separate national entities.²⁹

North African militants followed the Arab nationalists' struggle in Iraq and Syria with great interest and considered it an inspiration for all Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa.³⁰ During the nego-

tiations that took place in Paris between Syrian nationalists and the French high commissioner in Syria in March 1936, the ENA organized at La Mutualité in Paris a political rally with the Anti-Imperialist League and the Syrian Human Rights League (*Ligue syrienne des Droits de l'Homme*) in support of Syrian independence, and published an article stating that ‘Muslim North Africa follows with great interest and joy the march towards independence of our Syrian brothers, and with God’s help and our daily struggle, it will follow the same path to reach its independence too.’³¹

Even though those events were of great significance to North African nationalists, it was the Palestinian question that came to occupy centre stage in their discourse on imperialism beyond North Africa. The conflict that opposed Palestinians to British imperialism and Zionism was regularly discussed during political meetings and reported in *El Ouma* as affecting the whole Muslim world: ‘From the edge of the Ganges to the shore of the Atlantic, no Arab or Muslim is impervious to the sacrifices and suffering of their brothers from Jerusalem or Jaffa.’³²

The Algerian nationalist movement considered Zionism to be the stalking horse of British – and by extension European – imperialism, also referred to as ‘Anglo-Zionist imperialism’. It denounced the Jewish colonization of Palestine as a further act of dispossession and oppression of Muslims aimed at ensuring the future presence of imperialist powers in the region and to prevent the unity and independence of the Arab nation.³³ North African nationalists argued that the Arabs’ claim to Palestine was all the more justified because it was a land that had been theirs for 14 centuries and for which they had made many sacrifices. ‘The Arabs will never accept that the Jews become the masters in that country ... that they defended with their blood and which is, moreover, only a province of the Arab nation, just as the Auvergne region belongs to France, or Scotland to Britain.’³⁴ The PPA rejected the Zionist claim on Palestine, which was also very much based on history, stating that Arab hostility to the creation of a Jewish homeland was not motivated by anti-Jewish xenophobia, but by anti-Zionism, anti-imperialism and the Arab people’s will not to be dispossessed. They argued that ‘if the Zionists are claiming Palestine as their “irredent land”, couldn’t the same be said about the Greeks if they were soon going to claim Marseilles? Why not, since it was created by their ancestors four thousand years ago?’³⁵

Conclusion

Clearly, the relationship between the Algerian nationalist movement and the French left was a difficult one. Tensions with the Communist Party grew from the end of the 1920s onwards as the ENA asserted its independence and its nationalist agenda, and as the Communist Party's position on the colonial question shifted to become closer to that of the SFIO. Those tensions became more pronounced with the economic recession of the 1930s and with the difficulty left-wing politicians had in countering the spread of anti-immigrant racism within the French working class.

The great hopes the ENA had when supporting the *Front populaire* were dashed when Léon Blum's coalition government failed to introduce bold reforms in the colonies. The ENA condemned the Blum–Viollette Bill as betraying the commitments it had made. In 1937 the left-wing French government banned the Algerian nationalist movement and arrested its leaders. Despite those rifts, close links with a number of left-wing intellectuals remained. But it was mainly within the Trotskyite left, in organizations such as the International Workers' Party, that Algerian nationalists found consistent support.

The movement also attempted to spread its support base, which consisted mainly of North African workers in France, by establishing a close relationship with North African groups on both sides of the Mediterranean. In North Africa, they had regular contacts with Tunisian and Moroccan parties with a clearly nationalist agenda, such as the Destour and the *Jeunes Marocains*, but failed to rally the traditionally reformist Algerian-based political movements. In France, while they managed to work closely with Moroccan and Tunisian student leaders of the *Association des étudiants musulmans nord-africains de Paris*, they failed to mobilize the assimilationist Algerian students' organization, and their attempts to build links with North African traders in France were unsuccessful.

They also had contacts with other Arab organizations such as the *Association syrienne de Paris* and Chekib Arslan's Lausanne-based *Académie arabe*. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, it also reinforced its links with the Indochinese and the *Ligue de défense de la race nègre* in France.

International events in the Muslim world and in the colonies were followed with great interest. In the Middle East, colonial struggles in Syria and Egypt were also seen as a source of inspiration. However, the Palestinian problem was the international issue that Algerian

nationalists raised most frequently. The Palestinian Arabs' fight against Jewish expansion was described as a cause that epitomized the fight of all Arabs against domination, and Zionism was depicted as an ideology aimed to further the imperialist project of dispossession and oppression of Muslims in the Arab world.

PART II

The Messalist Movement from the Second World War to Algerian Independence: An Historical Overview

In the interwar years, the Messalist movement had given a strong political voice to colonial workers in France while exporting its political message and establishing the foundations of a nationalist organization in Algeria from 1936 onwards. In the following two chapters I do not aim to provide a comprehensive discussion of Algerian nationalism in the postwar era but rather a brief overview of the historical development of the Messalist movement and the tensions within nationalism from the Second World War to Algerian independence.

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Algerian Nationalism from the Second World War to the Eve of the Algerian War

In this chapter I examine the emergence of the PPA and the *Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques* (MTLD) as the dominant political force in postwar Algeria during a period marked by repression and vote rigging to maintain the colonial status quo.¹ I discuss some key aspects of the strains, crises and tensions in the movement in the 1940s and 1950s – the dismantling of the clandestine paramilitary *Organisation secrète* (OS), the ‘Berberist crisis’ and the conflict between the Messalists and Centralists within the MTLD. The latter ultimately led to the emergence of a third nationalist force, the FLN, which launched the insurrection of 1 November 1954 marking the beginning of the Algerian war.

Clandestine operations during the Second World War

In the late 1930s, some PPA members, ready to take up arms against the French in Algeria, saw collaboration with the Germans as a way of obtaining weapons and furthering the cause of Algerian independence. As early as 1937, a prominent group, led by Rachid Ouamara and in contact with Belkacem Radjef, had already established links with German officials and by spring 1939 some leading PPA militants, many of them Kabyles, had formed the *Comité d'action révolutionnaire nord-africain* (CARNA). In June 1939, a group including Rachid Ouamara, Mohamed Taleb, Omar Hamza, Ahmed Flittat, Lakhdar Mekkidèche and Abderrahmane Yassine, as well as student militants like Mohand Cherif Sahli and Moussa Boulkeroua, received training in Berlin in clandestine organization and how to handle explosives. Following the rapid collapse of the French army and France’s

occupation by the Wehrmacht, however, the German authorities stopped helping the nationalists because France was now considered an ally.² From prison, Messali Hadj, convinced that the nationalist cause could only be weakened by collaboration with the Germans and hostile to a regime shaped by racism, denounced the CARNA and excluded all its members from the PPA.

With the PPA cadres in prison, a new generation led by Dr Lamine Debaghine emerged in Algeria to oppose the mobilization. Activists were, however, divided in their response to the new political situation: while militants like Abderrahman Yassine actively collaborated with the Nazis, many CARNA members were not attracted by fascism. Those who did work for the Germans argued that their aim was to ensure the survival of the organization under occupation, and they ended their collaboration in 1942 when the German authorities no longer supported the nationalists after France was defeated. For many militants, collaboration had compromised the nationalist struggle and conflicted with the ideological and organizational stance they had adopted since the creation of the ENA in 1926 – autonomy from non-Algerian political parties, close relationships with left-wing groups, support for democratic institutions and opposition to racism and fascism.³

The lack of reforms in Algeria

In Algeria, many Europeans were sympathetic to the anti-Semitic authoritarian nature of the Vichy government and admired Marshal Pétain. When, in October 1940, the Crémieux decree that had granted French citizenship to Algerian Jews was abolished, Jews were expelled from the administration and professions and marginalized in schools and at the university. Messali reacted from prison, writing that ‘the equality between Muslims and Jews that you have created is of the lowest kind.’⁴ Aware of his influence in Algeria, the Vichy authorities asked him to abandon his demands for universal suffrage and an Algerian parliament in exchange for his release. He refused and in March 1941 he and other leading nationalist militants were sentenced to 16 years’ hard labour with loss of civil rights. Ferhat Abbas then took the political initiative but the PPA’s influence on Algerian Muslims grew steadily during the Second World War.

Meanwhile, the Americans landed in North Africa in November 1942 at a time when the French authorities of the *Comité français de libération nationale* (CFLN) were weakened and the French army under-

equipped.⁵ Contacts between Algerian politicians and the American authorities took place in Morocco and Algiers. In February 1943, with the support of the *élus*, many notables, the ulemas and members of the ex-PPA then led by Dr Lamine Debaghine, Abbas produced the *Algerian People's Manifesto*, a critique of 113 years of French colonial presence in Algeria, and demanded urgent and sweeping reforms, including the abolition of colonization, described as slavery; the adoption of an Algerian constitution; the immediate and real participation of Muslim Algerians in the affairs of their country; and the release of all political prisoners.⁶

Muslim politicians intended to obtain serious reforms from France at a time when North African troops were being asked to play a key role in the military offensive against the Germans. However, the arrival of General de Gaulle in Algiers brought an end to the negotiations.⁷ The new governor-general, General Georges Catroux, immediately rejected the proposed reforms, the manifesto and the compromise reached between his predecessor, Charles Peyrouton, and Abbas. In the tradition of the Third Republic, Catroux presented six *ordonnances* (orders) that introduced some minor reforms but maintained the colonial status quo. Algerian Muslims met this about-turn with frustration and disappointment. In protest, the *élus* boycotted the extraordinary meeting of the *Délégations financières* of 22 September 1943 and Catroux immediately ordered the arrests of Sayah Abdelkader, president of the *section indigène* of the *Délégations financières*, and Ferhat Abbas. They were soon released following a large demonstration organized by the clandestine PPA,⁸ but this act of intimidation led a number of *élus* to backtrack and declare their loyalty to France, while the American authorities, following repeated demands made by the French authorities, adopted a more neutral position on the Algerian question.⁹ On 11 October 1943 Messali, who was then under house arrest in Boghari, addressed a letter to the new French authorities demanding the emancipation of the Algerian people, the introduction of full democracy and of universal suffrage in an independent Algeria.¹⁰

In this period the communists played a central role in the resistance, with the PCF and PCA supporting the assimilation of Muslims into the French republic and the gradual extension of citizenship to the 'natives'. The PCA declared in December 1943 that, like the PCF, it believed that Algeria was a 'nation in formation' whose people will be 'an original mixture of elements of European, Arab or

Berber origin who will merge to such a point that they will form a new race: the Algerian race', but added that 'this nation has not reached its maturity yet'.

In his Constantine speech in December 1943, Charles de Gaulle announced reforms that offered more concessions than the prewar Blum–Viollette Bill, but maintained the colonial *status quo*. The ordonnance of 7 March 1944 and the circulars that followed abolished the emergency laws imposed on Muslims and granted French citizenship within their religious status to a small minority of Muslims selected from the educated, the veterans and the notables.¹¹ Messali denounced de Gaulle's plan as 'anti-democratic' on the grounds that it 'creates a category of privileged people and still keeps the large mass subjected to colonial policy'.¹²

In March 1944, Ferhat Abbas founded *Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté* (AML) to 'create among all the inhabitants of Algeria, whether they are Jewish, Christian or Muslim', Algerian solidarity, a feeling of equality and a 'desire to live together, a desire which according to Renan, is the constitutive element of the nation'.¹³ Within a year, the AML had recruited half a million members from all social backgrounds, launched a newspaper, *Egalité*, and created AML groups throughout Algeria.¹⁴ The clandestine PPA's participation in the AML enabled the Messalists to exert their influence and, during the first AML congress in March 1945, PPA militants imposed a radical agenda and Messali was recognized as the 'undisputed leader of the Algerian people'.

The PPA's re-emergence after the Second World War

In 1945, deep social, political and economic tensions marked Algerian society. Most Algerian Muslims lived in extreme poverty, and famine had flared in many parts of the territory. AML meetings were either banned or subject to close police surveillance.¹⁵ There were widespread rumours of an imminent insurrection, and strikes and social unrest broke out in the Constantine, Kabyle and other regions when Messali Hadj was deported to Brazzaville in April 1945.¹⁶

The rise of nationalism also affected other parts of the French colonial empire – Indochina, Madagascar, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria and Lebanon. The creation of the Arab League in March 1945 reinforced the West's belief that the Arab nations were emerging from an era of domination and asserting their political unity. At the San Francisco Conference (26 April–26 June 1946) the United Nations Charter was established and the right to self determination affirmed.

The violence of the Constantine rebellion in May 1945, and the swift and brutal repression General de Gaulle ordered, evoked the memory of the bloody invasion of 1830. This failed insurrection, which took the PPA by surprise, marked a turning point in Algerian politics as many Muslims rallied to the nationalist cause following these events. Some 102 Europeans died but the final toll among Muslims is unknown. The French authorities' official figure of 1500 Muslim deaths contrasts markedly with the Algerian claim of 45,000. Recent estimates also vary greatly: Gilbert Meynier finds the estimate of 5000–6000 made in private by two high-ranking civil servants of the *Gouvernement général* at the time more plausible,¹⁷ while Jean-Louis Planche argues for a number between 20,000 and 30,000.¹⁸ The military commander of the Constantine territorial division during the uprising accurately predicted that 'if France does nothing within the next ten years, everything will reoccur but it will be worse and irremediable.'¹⁹ In fact, the uprising of the people of Constantine marked the first battle of the Algerian war.²⁰

As the scale of the repression became known, some left-wing French politicians called for an amnesty and, realizing their hostile stance had damaged their standing, the communist PCF and PCA declared they were now in favour of autonomy in Algeria within a federal framework informed by close association with France.²¹

The PPA regroupes

Believing it could mobilize the Muslim population only through effective organization, in June 1945 the PPA regrouped in Paris, where it had 4000 members. A new executive committee was appointed, headed by Messali (president), who at the time was still imprisoned in Brazzaville, Sétif lawyer Brahim Haïza (general secretary) and Dr Lachrof Mohamed Salande (treasurer).²² The clandestine PPA worked to recreate party structures. Four federations were created in France (Paris, Valenciennes, Lyons/Saint-Etienne and Marseilles), with each divided into smaller sections. The party had become more influential in both France and Algeria. It also involved North African soldiers who – the French authorities feared – were developing '*un mauvais esprit*' and becoming more sensitive to 'nationalist propaganda'.

Relations with Moroccan and Tunisian nationalists were reinforced and contacts with Middle Eastern states established. Chadli el-Mekki was sent to Egypt in 1945 to represent the PPA and, through the Arab League, win the support of Arab countries. In December 1947, the

Comité de libération du Maghreb arabe was set up in Cairo under the aegis of Rif military leader Abd el-Krim, who had escaped French custody during his transfer to France and taken refuge in the Egyptian capital.

Tensions and political conflicts

It was a symbolic milestone when moderate Muslim Algerians led by Dr Bendjelloul were elected to the parliament for the first time in 1945. However, their moderate demands for citizenship within the Muslim status, abolition of the *Gouvernement général*, and the introduction in Algeria of local administrative structures similar to those of metropolitan France were rejected.

New hopes were raised in June 1946: Messali was released and 11 *Union démocratique du Manifeste algérien* (UDMA) deputies, led by Ferhat Abbas, were elected to the second *Assemblée nationale constituante* and presented a moderate programme of gradual reforms intended to lead eventually to an autonomous Algeria closely associated with France.²³ Abbas declared: 'this is your last chance, we are the last barrier.'²⁴ However, parliament rejected the UDMA's moderate proposals to increase the representation of the second college (Muslims) and to grant voting rights to Muslim women.²⁵

Following this setback, the Messalists took part in the legislative elections of November 1946 under a new name, the *Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques* (MTLD) and, against all odds, five Messalist candidates were elected at a time when legislation to establish a new *Statut de l'Algérie* was to be debated. Despite their inexperience they managed to present their programme for independence at the Palais du Luxembourg and 'contest, in the name of the Algerian people, the right of the French parliament to legislate for [Algeria]²⁶ and Messali launched the MTLD as a new legal party.²⁷

However, rigged elections in April 1947 (and subsequently) marked the end of the Algerian Muslims' last hope for a peaceful political solution in Algeria. While some in the administration acknowledged privately that the nationalists had won 57 of the 60 seats in the second college reserved for Muslim elected representatives, the authorities declared that only nine Messalist candidates had been elected.²⁸ Messali, still under house arrest, reacted immediately:

All these projects are anti-democratic since they ignore ten million Arabs only to cater for the privileges of one million Europeans who, over the last one hundred years, have imposed

their will on the Algerian People dominated and kept in servitude by armed force. ... Isn't this well calculated dosage ... based on the policy of superior races and inferior races?²⁹

In the light of the French authorities' systematic reliance on electoral fraud to block Muslims' right to elect their representatives, some political activists now declared: 'Don't call us to the polling station any more! Give us weapons!'³⁰

The *Statut organique de l'Algérie* of September 1947 conceded little to the nationalists' demands and, ironically, was opposed both by Europeans, who rejected any reform of the colonial order imposed on them by Paris,³¹ and moderate Muslims, disappointed by a text that was merely an extension of the ordonnance of 7 March 1944.³² Against a background of conflict between the UDMA and MTLD, and obstacles put up by the administration – rejection of several MTLD candidates and ballot boxes stuffed with fake votes – the Messalist movement made significant gains in the municipal elections of October 1947, reinforcing its position as the dominant nationalist party in Algeria. However, it also faced mounting internal tensions, which undermined its political action.

Ethnic tensions and the Berberist crisis

The ethnic issue had always dominated the nationalist movement, with a rift between the Berber-speaking Kabyles and Arabs already evident in 1936.³³ Messali favoured an imposition of an Arab identity on the whole nation, while Amar Imache, his general secretary, valued his Kabyle identity. On the eve of the Second World War, Messali saw the creation of the CARNA by militants, many of them Kabyles ready to collaborate with the Germans to further the cause of independence and the later attempt by the Germans to create a separate Kabyle party, the *Parti populaire kabyle* (PPK), as attempts to undermine the party. The unresolved rift over the role and recognition of the Berber language and culture in Algeria fuelled tensions further. The pro-Arab stance of the ulemas, with whom Messali had consistently tried to achieve an alliance, concerned the Berberists. The ulemas' motto, 'Arabic is my language, Algeria is my country, and Islam is my religion' obviously denied legitimacy to the Berber language, culture and identity. The rise of Arab nationalism in the Middle East, the growing influence of the Arab League and the prestige acquired by Middle Eastern countries following their independence also worried the

Berbers. For Berberists, all this reinforced the position of Algerian nationalists who supported pan-Arabism.

In the postwar years, nationalism increased in Kabylie and among Algerian (mostly Kabyle) immigrants in France, and there was frustration at the tactical errors of the PPA leadership during the failed insurrection of May 1945 in the Constantinois.³⁴ Many radical Kabyles favoured military action and were also increasingly concerned by signs that many in the PPA leadership were shifting towards reformism.³⁵ This explains why Rachid Ali Yahia who headed the French federation in 1948, argued in its newspaper *L'Etoile algérienne* created in March 1947,³⁶ that 'Algeria is not Arab but Algerian. It is necessary to form a union of all Algerian Muslims who want to fight for national liberation, without distinction between the Arab and Berber races.'³⁷

Rachid Ali Yahia, elected to lead the federal committee in November 1948, also reasserted the Berberists' position and, in direct conflict with the PPA–MTLD leadership, called for the creation of a *Mouvement populaire berbère* (MPB). In March 1949, the Berber movement started to develop in Algeria and in April Messali and his allies reacted by dissolving the *Fédération de France*. Violent attacks were launched in Paris and provincial France against those whom Messali accused of being 'Berbero-materialists' and a purge started against those accused of '*berbérisme*'. Messali used the purge to settle old accounts and remove the radical wing of the party, even though many MTLD leaders had not expressed support for the Berberists. The OS group in Kabylia was dissolved and several key members of the central committee replaced by reformists.³⁸

The violent suppression of political dissent within the party put a provisional lid on the Berber movement but did not end Kabyle demands for more cultural and linguistic recognition within a pluralist and democratic Algeria.³⁹ It also undermined the radical current within the party and weakened the *Fédération de France*, which lost much autonomy and influence.

Clandestine operations: the OS

Inspired by the French resistance movement and Irish nationalist struggle, Algerian nationalists had already considered creating combat groups in the early 1940s. While Messali, who was in prison, still favoured legal political action, Dr Lamine Debaghine, leader of PPA undercover operations, strongly supported armed struggle. The thwarted uprising of May 1945 reinforced many PPA militants' belief

that a well-structured secret military organization was necessary to mobilize the Muslim population effectively.

Despite Messali's reservations, in February 1947 the MTLD leadership set up the OS, led by Aït Ahmed and later by Ahmed Ben Bella, to prepare for armed struggle. Its 1000 to 1500 members were 'fervent patriots' who 'could no longer bear humiliation and discrimination'. They tended to be better educated than other nationalists, and leading members were influenced by reading about the Irish and Mexican rebellions.⁴⁰ While many had been soldiers in the French army, the OS lacked experience in large-scale military organization; nevertheless, it nurtured many militants who launched the insurrection of November 1954 at the start of the Algerian war.

When the French authorities dismantled the OS in spring 1950 many activists were arrested and tortured; 363 of them were tried in 1951 and 1952 and given heavy prison sentences, with many suffering ill-treatment and several dying in custody. Some militants became police informers and were released.⁴¹ Aït Ahmed, who was sentenced *in absentia*, fled to Cairo where Mohamed Khider joined him in 1951 and Ahmed Ben Bella, who had escaped from prison in March, joined him in June 1952.⁴² With Chadli el-Mekki, they formed the MTLD's foreign delegation and represented the party in the *Comité pour la libération du Maghreb arabe* (CLMA) in Cairo. Mohamed Boudiaf went to France and led the French federation of the PPA-MTLD with the assistance of Mourad Didouche, while many others went into hiding or joined the *maquis*.

Radical and moderate nationalists fail to unite

Increasing Algerian migration to France had made the MTLD's *Fédération de France* a key part of the nationalist organization and raised its profile. Despite police repression and arrests, the MTLD organized demonstrations and there were violent clashes with police on 1 May 1951. Three North Africans died in May 1953 and in July 2000 North Africans took part in a demonstration in Paris during which seven protestors were killed and 126 injured.⁴³ The MTLD again appealed to the UDMA and ulemas,⁴⁴ a moderate programme of reforms was agreed with the PCA and an agreement was signed by a *Comité d'initiative* to create a *Front algérien pour la défense et le respect de la liberté* (FADRL).⁴⁵

Messali declared that the FADRL, created in his absence, was based on a 'minimum programme of action' and called on it to

demand 'independence and national sovereignty in Algeria', in cooperation with Moroccans and Tunisians within a Maghrebi liberation front. Moderates, however, were unwilling to follow the radicals within the PPA–MTLD and, as violent repression against nationalists in Tunisia and Morocco spread and the war in Indochina intensified, radicals called for the re-creation of the OS. Unable to agree on united action, the coalition behind the FADRL slowly disintegrated.⁴⁶ Strike action was limited in the three Algerian departments because the party had so far failed to establish a strong trade union,⁴⁷ but Algerian support for the MTLD remained strong in France.⁴⁸ A strike PPA–MTLD and PCA called on 23 May 1952, declaring a 'day of mourning for the Algerian people', was widely supported with violent confrontations between protesters and police; many Algerians were arrested and three protesters were killed.

Centralists versus Messalists

For many years, Messali, influenced by France's revolutionary legacy, believed that his political approach would force France to grant Algerian independence. Repeated imprisonment had left him out of touch with the mood of the party but he was intent on maintaining his position as the party's *ẓaim* (venerated and undisputed leader and guide). In the postwar period, during the second phase of Algerian nationalism, there were increasing calls for armed insurrection, but Messali opposed '*la rupture*', seeing the OS only as an additional political force.

The *ẓaim* tended to favour militants who shared his political views even when radicals were his most loyal supporters. His policy of revolution, firmly anchored in legal and political action, led to the emergence of a moderate wing that shifted, to Messali's disadvantage, towards the reformist camp. In the early 1950s, a split developed between the central committee and militants loyal to Messali. The *ẓaim* increasingly vehemently denounced the moderates in the central committee, including the general secretary Hocine Lahouel and his successor Benyoucef Benkhedda, attacking their management of the party and their collaboration with the colonial authorities in councils and at the assembly.

Messali's opponents in the central committee denounced the personality cult they felt had developed round him and accused him of imposing his personal and dictatorial power on the party. Increasingly corrosive and acrimonious in-fighting on these and many other matters between the central committee or Centralists and the opposing

wing, the Messalists, finally triggered a crisis, which ended with the party splitting in the summer of 1954.

Most militants had been unaware of the internal conflicts between the president and central committee until the crisis actually broke. Messali's allies then created a public salvation committee (*Comité de salut public*) and entered into contact with heads of local sections in France and Algeria to call on members to rally round him, but most cadres in the party joined the Centralist camp. In France and Kabylie most militants supported Messali while in other parts of Algeria many militants waited to see how the increasingly bitter conflict would evolve. After the failure of a conciliatory meeting in Switzerland, Messali organized an extraordinary congress in Belgium in a bid to regain control of the movement. He accused the Centralists of 'reformist deviation' and of betraying the party and the nationalist cause. The congress voted to prepare for armed insurrection but granted Messali full powers and, ill-advisedly, made him president for life. With the Centralists reacting by holding a separate extraordinary conference in Algiers a month later, the split between the two camps was final. Violent clashes soon erupted between Centralist and Messalist militants and a struggle for control of the party's financial assets, offices, archives and cars in France and Algeria ensued.

In September 1954 the Centralists, who had lost much ground in their conflict with the Messalists, and had so far failed to create a united front with the PCA, the UDMA and the ulemas, launched a newspaper, *La Nation algérienne*, and considered founding a new party 'free from religious fanaticism, from the Messalist cult and from narrow nationalism'.⁴⁹ With the MTLD weakened by such bitter infighting, radical activists became increasingly frustrated and now looked for an alternative force able to take the nationalist movement forward and launch an armed insurrection.

The emergence of the third force: the CRUA

The emergence of a third political force within the MTLD was thus the result of the crisis in the nationalist party. As Messali increasingly challenged the central committee, Lahouel and his allies introduced the third force to safeguard party unity and strengthen their position. In March 1954, Mohamed Boudiaf and members of the central committee set up the *Comité révolutionnaire d'unité et d'action* (CRUA) to promote armed insurrection. They knew that Messali, having always denounced the Centralists' 'reformist drift', could hardly disown an

organization led by activists eager to take up arms for independence, even if Centralists controlled it. Boudiaf incorporated radical activists and ex-OS members into the new organization and they became the first militants in the FLN, which was formed later that year. Soon other ex-OS members, led by Ahmed Ben Bella who acted as the MTLD's foreign delegation in Cairo, rallied to the CRUA. Messalist attacks on the CRUA created deep hostility and there were violent clashes between CRUA and Messalist supporters in Algeria and in France.⁵⁰

By spring 1954, however, CRUA's radical militants had distanced themselves from the Centralists who were motivated mainly by internal struggles for control of the party. Then, in June 1954, without informing the Centralists, a group called the *Comité des 22* met to prepare the insurrection and many militants, realizing that reconciliation between the MTLD factions was impossible, decided to train activists in Algeria in preparation for the uprising.⁵¹ This, in effect, marked the end of CRUA.⁵² The 22 members of the *Comité des 22* elected a 'Council of the Revolution' with five members (Boudiaf, Ben Boulaid, Larbi Ben M'hidi, Mourad Didouche and Rabah Bitat) whom key members of the Cairo-based foreign delegation and Krim Belkacem, leader of the first nationalist *maquis* in Kabylie, then joined.⁵³ Intense efforts were made to prepare for armed action: light firearms were stockpiled in the Algérois and the Constantinois, and militants were recruited and trained. Several secret meetings were held before a final decision was taken to 'light the fuse', as nationalists often referred to it, on 1 November 1954.⁵⁴ The Algerian war about to begin.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the Messalist nationalist organization re-emerged after the war as the dominant Algerian political force, regrouping and reorganizing during a period of deep political tension in France and its colonial empire.

After France's liberation the French authorities ignored the pressing political demands of moderate Algerian Muslims, relying on force to maintain their colonial rule, as the bloody repression of the Constantinois revolt of May 1945 illustrates. Muslim participation in a legal political process characterized by systematic electoral fraud, which the French authorities organized or condoned, led to a dead end. At the same time, the OS failed to become a force able to

challenge France's interests and was soon dismantled, although some OS activists later played a central part in the Algerian rebellion.

The internal crises of the late 1940s and early 1950s had a lasting impact on both the anti-colonial struggle and post-independence Algeria. During the 'Berberist crisis', the MTLD's Kabyle-dominated *Fédération de France* was weakened and marginalized and its leadership replaced. In the early 1950s, Centralist–Messalist tensions led to a conflict that ultimately weakened the *zaim* and his allies. The CRUA, which the Centralists initially set up to undermine the Messalists, soon evolved to form the *Comité des 22*, an autonomous radical organization that launched the insurrection on All Saints day 1954.

The Messalist–FLN Conflict in France during the Algerian War

In this chapter I chart Messalist reaction to the Algerian insurrection and the creation by Messali Hadj of the *Mouvement national algérien* (MNA) and its trade union, the *Union syndicale des travailleurs algériens* (USTA). I also examine mounting tensions between the Messalists and the FLN, which led to open conflict.

The insurrection and the creation of the MNA

In the early hours of 1 November 1954, Algerian activists carried out about 30 attacks across the three Algerian departments and the Constantinois. Ali Zamoum, a young Kabyle militant, described his experience as a local group leader on the first day of the insurrection in the village of Ighil Imoula, in Upper Kabylie: ‘Everyone was there at the agreed time. There were some men from neighbouring villages but the majority was from Ighil Imoula. There were about 15 of us. Then I said to them: “this is not military practice, this time. We will attack the *mairie* at midnight”.¹ Even if the operations achieved little militarily – some French civilians and military personnel were killed, homemade bombs planted, cars destroyed, telephone lines sabotaged – they were to have profound effects. The *Front de libération nationale* (FLN) and the *Armée de libération nationale* (ALN) were established to coincide with the start of the insurrection.² The attacks anticipated the date the Messalists fixed so Centralists and Messalists were caught by surprise.

The French authorities had underestimated the depth of anti-colonial feeling in Algeria and, failing to understand the complexity of an organization that had evolved rapidly since the summer of 1954, attributed the attacks to the CRUA.³ They also believed that militants from Cairo, influenced by the Arab League and encouraged by the communists, had masterminded the insurrection.⁴

Président du Conseil Pierre Mendès-France, who negotiated the independence of Indochina and granted autonomy to Tunisia in 1954, declared that, in the case of Algeria, ‘No secession is possible. ... This is France!’ while Minister of the Interior François Mitterrand, stated, ‘I will not tolerate any negotiation with enemies of the fatherland, the only negotiation is war.’⁵ The French authorities reacted immediately, banning the MTLD and its newspapers, *L’Algérie libre* and *Sawt el Chaab*, and arresting and torturing MTLD militants during a police operation code-named ‘Bitter Orange’. General Chérière’s violent and often indiscriminate military repression failed to suppress the insurrection in Algeria; it merely helped rally many Muslims and moderate Algerian politicians to the nationalist cause.

Given Messali’s dominant role in the nationalist party, people thought that the *Toussaint rouge* events were carried out with his assent. Crucially, Messali decided not to denounce the start of the insurrection and praised the nationalist fighters or *djounouds*, as they were called, and many Algerians joined the *maquis* believing it was under his supreme command. He declared that ‘those explosions in Algeria are precisely the disastrous result of the colonial policy that obstinately continues to ignore Algerian realities.’⁶ In December 1954 the Messalists created a new party, the *Mouvement national algérien* (MNA), which raised funds for terrorist attacks in Algiers, set up its own armed groups and *maquis*,⁷ and launched *La Voix du peuple algérien*.⁸ On 10 December, several hundred Algerians demonstrated outside the French parliament and chanted, ‘Long live Algerian independence! Let the Algerian people speak! Down with repression!’⁹

FLN versus MNA: failure to reach an agreement

From the start of the insurrection to the end of 1955, the MNA attempted to assert its control over the uprising. Its ambiguous message led to an increasing number of its members joining the *maquis*, supporting the National Liberation Army and making donations for a ‘revolution’ they believed Messali had launched. Meanwhile, he rejected FLN calls to rally his party round the *Front*, and behind the scene negotiations with the *Délégation extérieure* in Cairo revealed the growing split between Messalists and frontists. At the end of 1954, the Egyptian authorities urged all Algerians to unite to fight French colonialism more effectively and they arranged meetings, but once again negotiations broke down and Messali severed relations with the FLN. From then on, with the support of the Egyptian leader Gamal

Abdel Nasser, the FLN established an international presence. It made a significant diplomatic breakthrough at the Bandung conference in April 1955 where the Algerian question was included in the declaration calling on France to recognize the right of Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians to self-determination and independence.

Despite these setbacks Messali Hadj, the *zaim*, convinced that he personified the Algerian national movement, rejected invitations from the FLN's foreign delegation and representatives of North African and Middle Eastern countries to join the *Front*. Taking advantage of many Algerians' confusion about Messali's role in the armed insurrection,¹⁰ MNA tracts, presenting the FLN's National Liberation Army as a Messalist organization, were distributed to increase the prestige of the party in Algeria.¹¹

By 1955, however, under Ramdane Abbane's strong leadership, most of the FLN had moved beyond internal dissensions about Messali's role and wanted to unify all nationalists who supported the revolution. Abbane, a strong critic of Messali, engineered the rallying of the Centralists in 1955, the leadership of the UDMA and of the ulemas in the spring of 1956, and the attachment of the PCA to the FLN in the summer, insisting that all militants join the FLN as individuals and not as members of a specific organization. He was the main architect of the key FLN congress in the Soummam valley in August 1956, which brought together the FLN's disparate elements, gave ideological and structural coherence to the *Front*, and created the central executive committee (CCE) and the National Council for the Algerian Revolution.¹²

Realization of the strategic importance of Algerian immigrants in France, who were dominated by Messali's MNA, led to the foundation of the *Fédération de France du FLN*,¹³ whose leaders warned the MNA that it must be incorporated into the FLN and dissolve itself as a separate group. Further fruitless MNA–FLN negotiations took place in Paris in July 1955, with both sides insisting that their organization should lead a united nationalist movement.¹⁴

Then, on 20 August 1955, Youssef Zighout, who headed the ALN's Wilaya 2, and his lieutenant Lakhdar Ben Tobhal, launched the violent insurrection of the Constantinois, also known as the Philippeville massacres. This marked a turning point in the Algerian war and a radicalization of both sides of the political divide because it followed a decision in June 1955 to order 'total war' on all French civilians and military personnel in Wilaya 2 to counter France's

campaign of collective punishment against Algerian Muslims.¹⁵ Muslim civilians organized by ALN *djounouds*, including women and children armed with axes, knives and other rudimentary weapons, attacked 30 targets in the Constantinois, killing 71 Europeans, 21 Muslims and 31 police officers. In the massive military repression that followed, entire populations of some Muslim villages were wiped out; European militias murdered several hundred Muslim civilians and many others were rounded up for mass execution. The FLN leadership disapproved of the violent attacks on European civilians, which exposed the Muslim population to repression, but used them as propaganda to mark the beginning of a popular revolution uniting the *djounouds* and the Muslim people, and the end of the myth of ‘the integration’ of Muslims and Europeans in the French Republic.¹⁶

Meanwhile, in France, rivalry between the MNA and FLN reached a new high, and Boudiaf and some other leading *Front* militants considered assassinating Messali whom they considered a traitor. As the January 1956 legislative elections approached,¹⁷ the MNA called for a boycott, and the FLN followed suit.¹⁸ Then the MNA decided to intensify its action, develop a clandestine structure and obtain weapons for militants in Algeria and France.¹⁹ In a meeting of heads of MNA sections (*kasmas*) in the western area of Paris in January 1956, it was announced that cells of volunteers would be created and weapons distributed. Internal discipline was tightened and control groups were set up to enforce orders and ensure that Algerians observed the code established by the party.²⁰ Both the MNA and FLN ordered many Algerian immigrants who had completed their national service and were physically fit to return to Algeria to join the *djounouds*.²¹

In 1956 Algerian students distanced themselves from the PCF and the *Union générale des étudiants musulmans algériens* (UGEMA), which was created in 1955 but which the authorities dissolved in 1958, rallied to the FLN. Rumours spread that Algerians needed to return to protect their families from French military violence and that the French authorities were planning to create internment camps in France and to end freedom of travel and the transfer of funds to Algeria. At one point the increasing number of immigrants who left their jobs and returned to Algeria affected key sectors of French industry: the workforce in building and metalworking was mainly Algerian and it was difficult to replace these people with ‘French metropolitan workers who were not willing to carry out such difficult jobs’.²²

To reinforce its authority in France, the MNA organized demon-

strations and strikes throughout 1956, which in some cases up to 80 per cent of North African workers supported. For example, there were several in March, including one against the full powers the French parliament had granted to the government to 'restore order' in Algeria, one in May calling for two days of mourning to commemorate the repression in the Constantinois in 1945 and another in July to mark the anniversary of the fall of Algiers in 1830.²³

The creation of the USTA

Following these protest actions, many employers dismissed their Algerian employees – although this was less frequent in small firms that could not afford to lose their workforce – and French trade unions failed to intervene. In some factories Algerian workers set up independent commissions of North African workers and growing numbers of workers joined the *Union syndicale des travailleurs algériens* (USTA), the new trade union the MNA set up in Algiers in February 1956. It was 'open to all Algerian workers, regardless of their origin or their political, religious or philosophical conceptions'. In March 1956, the French federation of the USTA was established, and its first congress was held in Paris in 1957.²⁴

For the MNA, the USTA soon became an important part of what it saw as its campaign on the second front, affecting metropolitan France and its economy. USTA groups were set up where there were enough Algerian workers, but French trade unions, particularly the PCF and CGT, which traditionally incorporated large numbers of Algerian workers, consistently opposed its expansion. The USTA also failed to gain affiliation to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which decided to restrict its support to the UGTA (created in February 1956) as its Algerian branch. The FLN worked to infiltrate USTA sections and turn them into groups controlled by the *Amicale générale des travailleurs algériens* (AGTA), the FLN trade union in France. The USTA, which condemned what it saw as CGT, FLN and AGTA collusion against it, was, however, unable to stop the slow erosion of its support base as the Algerian war turned into open conflict between Messalists and Frontists.²⁵

The dominance of the Fédération de France du FLN

By 1957, the FLN was well-established in various parts of France. FLN armed groups (*groupements de choc*) were created and orders given to identify MNA supporters and use violence if necessary to put them

out of action.²⁶ The French police, aware that the internal war could only weaken the nationalist movement, found the increasing MNA–FLN rivalry advantageous.²⁷ As the number of police operations increased mutual suspicion grew, with the two groups accusing each other of denouncing their respective militants to the French police.

Events in Algeria also influenced their rivalry. When on 28 May 1957 the FLN massacred all 301 male inhabitants of Melouza, a village in Kabylie that supported the Messalists, MNA hostility to the FLN reached a new high in France.²⁸ To counter the political fallout, the *Fédération de France du FLN* adopted the same line as the FLN in Algeria and abroad, denying that the *Front* was involved and accusing the French army of being responsible. For the MNA, the ‘monstrous crime’ committed by FLN troops in Melouza, which it compared with the Oradour massacre by the SS in occupied France, ‘undermined the Algerian revolution’.²⁹

In France, the MNA managed to hold its position in some parts of the country, but by the beginning of 1957 more than half its members had defected to the FLN.³⁰ Violence still continued between the two groups: in August 1957, during operations by FLN and MNA commandos, 114 Algerians were killed and ‘pro-French’ Algerians were also targeted.³¹ Messali’s call to end the violence had little impact, even though both sides were victims of French police operations. In November 1957, 879 Algerians were arrested, 1626 night searches of Algerian homes were carried out leading to a further 63 arrests, and 263 weapons and approximately nine and a half million francs were seized.

Nevertheless, in June 1958 the police reported that the FLN had 9000 and the MNA 4000 militants in France, and that one-third of the 329,000 Algerians immigrants had made financial contributions to the nationalists. With the FLN receiving international support and financial help, mainly from the Middle East but also from socialist countries and Asia, it had larger resources than the MNA with which to tighten its organization and control the immigrant population.³² ‘Police’ and intelligence units, as well as tribunals responsible for enforcing strict political and moral codes of conduct and imposing penalties were set up where Algerians accused of collaborating with the French, smoking or consuming alcohol were punished. Attendance at meetings was compulsory for militants, and Algerians were instructed not to change residence or return to Algeria without authorization from the local FLN coordinator.³³

At the same time, the FLN denounced the MNA as a counter-revolutionary organization that the French left had manipulated to prevent the Algerian political struggle from taking place peacefully in France and forcing the FLN to use violence.

The shock waves of the war in Algeria

By the spring of 1958, France was engaged in a bloody colonial war and there seemed to be no end to the cycle of violence. Successive governments of the Fourth Republic had been unable and unwilling to challenge the colonial status quo the *pieds-noirs* supported and to deal with the Algerian nationalist uprising, other than through military repression. During the 'battle of Algiers' of 1957, the FLN military infrastructure had been destroyed for a while but the army had failed to quell the insurrection in the country at large. French public opinion was turning against the war and there was increased international pressure to reach a settlement, particularly from France's ally, the United States.³⁴ The swift call to order by the United States and the USSR during the Suez Canal crisis of November 1956 and the international outcry following France's aerial bombing of the Tunisian village of Sakhiet Sidi Youcef on 8 February 1958 also contributed to French embarrassment abroad.³⁵

Despite internal strains, the FLN/ALN was the undisputed Algerian nationalist force. The last major Messalist *maquis* in Algeria was finally lost in November 1956 when its leader, Mohamed Bellounis, made an agreement with the French army to accept French logistical and financial assistance to fight the FLN. However, his relationship with both his followers and the French deteriorated and, by the summer of 1958, the French army had liquidated the Bellounis *maquis* and, on 14 July 1958, killed its 'unpredictable' and 'insufficiently compliant' leader.³⁶ The FLN exploited this development and at the end of 1958 a number of MNA cadres critical of Messali's leadership defected to the FLN.

Meanwhile, the ultra-conservative settlers (the ultras), pro-*Algérie française* politicians and the French army dominated in Algeria and, following a large-scale demonstration by ultra-conservative *piéd-noirs* in Algiers in April 1958, a coup enabled the army and the ultras to take power. They set up a public salvation committee and called for General de Gaulle's return to power in France. On 1 June 1958, President René Coty appointed him *Président du Conseil* and, on 28 September 1958, the constitutional referendum enabled him to

establish the foundations of a strong presidential regime under a new constitution.

Messali saw de Gaulle's return to power as a positive development that could create a new environment for negotiations to take place, and declared that his proposals of October 1958 in Constantine could lead to a 'peaceful, just and democratic solution to the Algerian problem'.³⁷ The *Fédération de France du FLN*, on the other hand, claimed that de Gaulle had not talked about independence and remained a politician serving the ultras.³⁸ However, there is no doubt that de Gaulle's more realistic political stance raised hopes in the FLN. They responded positively not only to his speech of 29 January 1960 reasserting the Algerians' right to self-determination, at a time when the ultras in Algeria were building barricades and denouncing him, but also to his firm action against the military putsch of April 1961.

On the other hand, increased violence on the part of the French police and their *Harki* units³⁹ marked the late 1950s and early 1960s in France. Many suspected of sympathizing with the FLN were intimidated, imprisoned, interned⁴⁰ or deported to Algeria. And, much to the satisfaction of the French police, the conflict between the Frontists and Messalists, the latter now in a defensive position, also worsened.

By the end of 1959, the FLN was well-established and had structured France into six *wilayas* (military regions), 11 super-zones and 25 zones. It had 120,000 paying members and had collected three and a half billion francs in donations and subscriptions, of which the police seized only 3 per cent. However, between January 1956 and December 1959, the French police arrested 26,644 suspected FLN sympathizers;⁴¹ a number of high-ranking Algerian civil servants and elected representatives were also targeted.⁴² In November 1961, the FLN leadership in France was largely dismantled⁴³ but these police operations still failed to destroy the *Front*. Although the MNA tried desperately to maintain its position by launching attacks on Frontists, in February 1959 the deputy general secretary and deputy treasurer of USTA joined the FLN and they were followed by an important group of leading MNA cadres.⁴⁴

However, as many workers had lost their jobs and were finding it difficult to make the significant financial contribution asked of them, the *Front* became concerned that immigrant commitment to the war effort was flagging. The FLN decided, at this point, to counter the potential impact of de Gaulle's return to power: in July 1958, the federal committee and the heads of *wilayas* decided to open a second

front in France, setting up the OS (*Organisation secrète*) in France and gathering weapons and explosives for terrorist operations. From August 1958 onwards, attacks were carried out against France's infrastructure. These increased in 1960 and 1961 and consisted mostly of fires in oil depots in the Paris region and other targets in the south. However, they failed to divert French police and troops from Algeria and France's infrastructure remained largely unaffected.

Increased repression, the killing of policemen by Algerian nationalists and the deepening cycle of police violence culminated in the killing of many peaceful Algerian demonstrators in Paris on the night of 17 October 1961. This peaceful demonstration, which the *Fédération de France du FLN* had ordered to protest against the imposition of a discriminatory curfew against Algerians, led to the deaths of up to 200 Algerians as a result of police repression.⁴⁵

Final stages of the war and end of the MNA–FLN conflict in France

By the early 1960s, the FLN was the dominant nationalist force in Algeria, France and abroad, focusing its diplomatic efforts on the UN to ensure that it put the Algerian question on its agenda. In France, the French left, *intellectuels de gauche*, and the left-leaning press broadly supported the *Front*. As reports and testimonies emerged about the violent colonial repression and torture of Algerians and their French supporters,⁴⁶ French public opinion increasingly turned against a war that had been dragging on for almost six years. The discovery of French networks of support for the FLN, known as the '*porteurs de valise*', through the trial of the members of *Jeune Résistance*, contributed to the growing influence of dissenting voices in France.⁴⁷ The *Appel des 121* was made in September 1960 by French intellectuals, including writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Vercors, Nathalie Sarraute, Françoise Sagan and André Breton, as well as journalists, academics and artists. This condemnation of the war, calling on soldiers to desert, marked a turning point and mobilized the left against the war. The oppression and terrorist attacks the OAS (*Organisation de l'armée secrète*), the French terrorist organization the ultras created in February 1961, carried out in both Algeria and France further undermined the cause of the *Algérie française* supporters, as the anti-OAS day organized in December 1961 in France showed.

Many French and Algerians supported the policy of *ouverture* that de Gaulle favoured. The Messalists hoped their support for his vision of an

‘Algerian Algeria closely associated with France’ would enable them both to play a prominent role in forthcoming discussions between the French authorities and the nationalists and reinforce their position.⁴⁸ However, they were soon disappointed: General de Gaulle’s speech on 14 June 1960 about opening negotiations made no reference to the MNA; the FLN refused to talk to the French until it was recognized as the sole representative of the Algerian people and the Messalists were excluded.⁴⁹

Messali’s decision to support de Gaulle only weakened the MNA and deepened the internal crisis. Late attempts by leading Messalist militants and foreign envoys to unite the MNA with the FLN failed and the MNA’s desperate decision to reorganize the party in France and Algeria and launch a media and diplomatic campaign abroad also failed to stop the party’s decline.⁵⁰

Despite de Gaulle’s declaration at a press conference in September 1960 that Algeria’s future could not be decided exclusively with the FLN, Messali was excluded from the Evian negotiations between the French government and FLN on 20 May 1961. When the talks stalled, Messali refused to accept a French offer to enter into negotiation with them – a proposal he saw, with good reason, as a French manoeuvre to put pressure on the FLN.⁵¹ By early 1961, the MNA only had between 100 and 200 militants left in Algeria, mostly from the Bou Saada region in southern Algeria where Ahmed Bellouni’s *maquis* had been located⁵² and Messali now faced mounting opposition from his once close circle of leading militants and USTA leaders. These internal divisions soon led to a final split in the weakened Messalist party: leading cadres attacked Messali’s decision to turn down the French invitation to take part in the negotiations, and accused him of having established secret contacts with the FLN’s provisional government.⁵³ Some left the MNA to join the short-lived *Front algérien d’action démocratique* (FAAD), an organization the French authorities controlled largely to undermine the FLN’s influence and to establish a third political force that would promote a settlement favourable to French interests.⁵⁴

In the summer of 1961, the FLN tried to take advantage of the MNA’s collapse and called on Messalist militants to rally to the *Front*. It renewed its attacks on the organization, particularly on USTA cadres in the north, east and Lyons region where they still had a strong position. The important role the Messalist trade union could play in independent Algeria and the weakness of its own union worried the FLN, which launched operations to destroy USTA and liquidate its leaders. In September 1961, two USTA coordinators were seriously injured in Metz

and Valenciennes, the Lyons union leader was murdered and the trade union archivist in Longwy was seriously injured. By the end of 1961, the USTA leadership had been almost completely destroyed. The last militants to resist took refuge in fortified hostels and launched desperate attacks against FLN groups, which suffered heavy losses.⁵⁵

In the same period, as the battle for influence in the party gained momentum, the French federation of the FLN based in Germany took steps to reinforce its position. It adopted a more radical stance than that of the GPRA and was hostile to its negotiated settlement with the French authorities. Despite GPRA opposition, the FLN decided to organize demonstrations in the autumn of 1961 and, in October, Paris police violently repressed a demonstration of 25,000 Algerian men, women and children protesting peacefully against the curfew imposed on Algerians. In November 1961, a hunger strike to try to achieve the status of prisoners of war by thousands of nationalist detainees, including Ahmed Ben Bella – who would become Algeria's first president – and other *chefs historiques*/ministers in French prisons and camps, raised the profile of the organization in the French press. Lawyers close to the FLN managed to obtain a change in the detention regime, which, even if it fell short of granting them the status of prisoners of war, led to a considerable improvement in prison conditions.

By the beginning of 1962 the MNA was a spent force, despite Messali having declared that no solution to the Algerian question could be reached without it. He desperately placed his hopes in the post-independence period in Algeria, believing that his party could regain its influence through the electoral process, which would give Algeria its independence and political and administrative structures. He decided to send some of his closest allies to Algeria to prepare what he called the third landing.⁵⁶ However, his hopes were dashed by the ever-increasing dominance of the FLN and the proclamation of a cease-fire between the French government and the FLN on 19 March 1962, which the president of the Algerian provisional government presented as a victory for the ALN. Algerians welcomed the news with relief, for it marked the final stage in the battle that led to the undisputed dominance of the FLN over the MNA in France, with the discipline its militants showed after the cease-fire reinforcing its influence. On the insistence of the FLN, the MNA was forbidden to take part in the campaign for the referendum of self-determination of 2 July 1962.⁵⁷

The FLN used the terms of the Evian agreement to establish

control over immigrants protesting about Algerian arrests, the imposition of compulsory collections, and committees being set up to act as administrative and judicial services that Algerian immigrants had to use, or to which they were referred to be judged and sentenced. These committees also carried out purges of nationalists who had not joined the FLN. In spring 1962, they systematically interviewed Algerian political prisoners released from French prisons, camps and house arrest to identify who had denounced *Frontists* to the police. The FLN's French federation also reinforced its control over the Algerian immigrant vote in preparation for the referendum on Algerian self-determination on 2 July 1962.⁵⁸

After General de Gaulle officially recognized Algerian independence following the referendum of 2 July 1962, the MNA–PPA's criticism of the Evian agreement, its support for the cease-fire of 19 March 1962 and its calls for Algerians to vote in favour of the referendum on self-determination had little impact on the political scene. The publication of numerous articles in *La Voix du peuple* on Messali Hadj's historical legacy served only to remind readers that the party's agenda was out of date and no longer relevant, while features glorifying the ALN's Messalist *djounoud* could not hide the fact that almost all Messalist *maquis* in Algeria had been destroyed. The USTA, the once powerful Messalist trade union was soon to disappear, for it faced an impossible dilemma that could only lead to its demise – either merge with a French trade union and lose its independence or turn into a clandestine organization and lose its remaining influence.

The irony of Algerian history is that, as Messali Hadj was marginalized from the final stages of Algeria's march towards independence, the Evian agreement largely embodied the political values for which he had fought since the creation of the ENA in 1926. The agreement stated that 'the Algerian state will subscribe without reservation to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and will found its institutions on democratic principles and on the equality of political rights between all citizens without any discrimination based on race, origin or religion.'⁵⁹ Independent Algeria, however, was deprived of many of these democratic and egalitarian values because the FLN and the Algerian military were soon to be ruling it under a one-party system.

Messali Hadj was released from house arrest in January 1960 and settled in Gouvieux, where he died of cancer on 3 June 1974. He never returned to post-independence Algeria in his lifetime, but was buried in his home town of Tlemcen.

Conclusion

It has been seen that, during the early years of the Algerian war, when Messali refused to negotiate with or support the FLN, Messalist–FLN tensions turned rapidly to open conflict in France and Algeria, much to the French authorities' satisfaction. By 1957, with the FLN becoming ever more influential and also attracting support abroad, the now violent conflict between the two nationalist organizations had turned to the advantage of the FLN and marginalized Messali and the MNA.⁶⁰ The *zaim* and his party were therefore excluded from the negotiations that determined the terms of Algerian independence in the final months of the war.

In the summer of 1962, the Tlemcen group led by Ahmed Ben Bella and Houari Boumédiène emerged as the dominant force in an FLN dominated by the military and rife with internal conflict and crises. It established an authoritarian regime that excluded many key figures of the FLN.

After independence, the role of the FLN's French federation and its successor, the *Amicale des Algériens en France*, was not so much to assist Algerian immigrants in France as to control and keep them in line, and to implement in France the directives of the Algerian one-party regime. In the same period, Messali's relaunch of the PPA in France, to continue its political struggle in favour of democracy in Algeria, largely failed to have any impact on Algeria, ruled as it was by a one-party system under military constraint. The MNA, as a political force, was spent.

PART III

North African Migrants in the Postcolonial Period: The MTA in 1970s' France

Ethnicity and Nation-ness in the MTA Discourse

By the postcolonial era, North Africans in France had established a tradition of anti-colonial political struggle structured around a common denominator, namely their identity as ‘Arabs’ and Muslims fighting colonial oppression. The Algerian movement, formed within the PCF in the mid-1920s was to distance itself slowly from the direct influence of this party. The ENA developed a policy that initially encapsulated all North Africans, but soon evolved to focus primarily on Algerian issues – the construction of a ‘modern’ Algerian identity and the struggle for independence.

In the aftermath of the fight for independence, which socio-economic and political factors, both within French society and abroad, affected North African migrant discourse, identity and struggles for rights and recognition? I shall try to answer these questions with a detailed analysis of a second case study, namely of the *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes* (the MTA). Maghrebi students created this movement in the early 1970s and, between 1972 and 1977, it grew to become the most prominent autonomous Maghrebi political organization in France.

In the postcolonial period, the political action of North African opposition parties, structured as it was within national boundaries and along national lines, had a limited impact on politics and power relations within newly independent North African states. The main parties opposed to the FLN after 1962 – Hocine Aït Ahmed’s *Front des forces socialistes* (FFS); Mohamed Boudiaf’s *Parti de la révolution socialiste* (PRS); and Messali Hadj’s short-lived PPA, recreated at the end of the war – failed to leave any significant mark on the Algerian political scene and paid little attention to the life and experience of migrants in France. The same could be said of *Perspectives tunisiennes*, the main opposition party to Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba. As for Moroccans, the

opposition party, the *Union nationale des forces populaires* (UNFP), linked with *Association des Marocains en France* (AMF) created by Mehdi Ben Barka in 1961, rallied in support of the Moroccan monarch Hassan II during the 'green march' on the Western Sahara in November 1975.¹ These organizations dealt mainly with the politics of their respective home country and paid little attention to the rights and experiences of immigrants in France on a social, professional, political or economic level. Maghrebi militants in France were largely seen as a means to an end, as instrument in political processes aiming to bring political change in the home country and their influence declined rapidly.

From the late 1960s onwards, following the events of May 1968, new forms of political mobilization emerged among Maghrebi immigrants. These challenged the narrow constraints of national boundaries and focused not only on issues of political change in the home country and beyond, but also on the immediate concerns and experience of Maghrebis in France.

Unlike the colonial period, when Algerians dominated the leadership of the anti-colonial movement among Maghrebi immigrants, the MTA leadership in the 1970s was composed largely of Moroccans and Tunisians, and Algerians only to a lesser extent. Their political action focused on mobilizing all Maghrebi immigrants in France and on challenging the authoritarian regimes in North Africa, particularly Morocco and Tunisia, which were seen as serving the interests of neo-imperialism. Two factors explain the MTA leadership profile. First, while Algerians remained by far the largest Maghrebi group in France at the time and remained actively involved in militant action, once Algerian independence had been won, the powerful FLN-dominated association, the *Amicale des Algériens en France* (ADAF), largely controlled their political action.² Second, a significant increase in Moroccan and Tunisian immigration, including left-wing political activists, many of whom were students, marked this period. The latter took the lead in initiating political action that was independent of French and North African official structures and established political parties in France and North Africa, particularly after the events of May 1968.

In Part 3 I chart the growth of the new forms of political activism that developed among Maghrebi immigrants at the beginning of the 1970s. A study of the discourse of the *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes* (MTA) – the most influential autonomous political organization among first-generation Maghrebi immigrants in the postcolonial period – reveals that this movement developed new political frames of

reference that transcended national boundaries. In this chapter I shall look at how they presented ethnicity and nation-ness in their discourse.

The creation of the MTA

The MTA was created and developed during the 1970s in a particularly difficult sociopolitical context. The nature of immigration was changing and analysts no longer saw it as being temporary.³ That decade also marked the end of the, often idealized, prosperous three decades that followed the Second World War, which Jean Fourastié later popularized as the *Trente Glorieuses*.⁴ The Maghrebi community in France developed new strategies to deal with the tensions the changing profile and economic role of immigration was creating in the light of changes in French society and of international events affecting North Africa and the Middle East. These strategies were aimed to address issues seen as affecting them in both France and in a wider international context.

In 1970 solidarity with the Palestinians acted as a catalyst for North African political mobilization. In the aftermath of King Hussein of Jordan's actions against the Palestinians and his expulsion of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to Lebanon in September 1970 ('Black September'), Palestinian revolution support committees (*Comités de soutien à la Révolution palestinienne*, CSRP) were created at the Cité internationale universitaire in Paris. Contacts were established with Palestinian political organizations in the Middle East and in France, with Mahmoud Hamchari and Azzedine Kalak the first unofficial representatives of the PLO.⁵

These pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist committees consisted mainly of Maghrebis (Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerians), some Arabs from the Middle East (Syrians, Lebanese and Egyptians) and some French militants. The latter were of the revolutionary left, Maoists (*Gauche prolétarienne*, *Vive la révolution*) and to a lesser extent Trotskyites. Activists were soon able to initiate their political action in the Maghrebi migrant community and, in April 1971, Palestine committees (*Comités Palestine*) were created in France.⁶ These committees were mostly composed of Maghrebi students and workers, and their main purpose was to explain the 'Palestinian revolution' through debates, discussions and films. They collected money and sent medicines to help the Palestinian Red Crescent. Maghrebis who took part in these committees later compared their involvement in the Palestinian cause with their earlier support for the Algerian revolution.⁷

Given the discrimination and racism Maghrebis experienced in France, MTA militants realized that their movement might run out of steam unless they also addressed the concerns of Maghrebis in France.⁸ Following two large preparatory meetings gathering militants from several regions of France, these committees merged into one political organization: the *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes* (MTA) in June 1972.⁹ Militants from the Palestine committees and other left-wing organizations (*Comités antiracistes*, *Comités de soutien aux mals-logés*, *Comités de lutte*) attended the meetings and took part in creating the MTA. *Fedai*, the Palestine committees' publication, was adopted as the MTA's organ. The militants who created the MTA represented the following regions: Nord (Dunkirk and Douai); Bouches-du-Rhône (Marseille); Var (Toulon); Isère (Grenoble); Haute-Garonne (Grenoble); Rhône (Lyons); Doubs (Sochaux and Besançon); Nièvre (Nevers); Paris (14th, 18th, 19th and 20th *arrondissements*); and the Paris region (Gennevilliers, Clichy, Puteaux, Nanterre, Choisy and Mantes).¹⁰ Unlike the ENA-PPA in the interwar years, the MTA was not led by a single charismatic leader but by many North African activists. In France, the movement had several hundred members fighting for improved working and living conditions for Maghrebis, for undocumented or illegal immigrants (the *sans-papiers*) and opposing deportations and racism. In addition to the Maghreb, the movement was concerned with international issues related to Palestine and Lebanon, and saw support for the Palestinian revolution as a catalyst and example for the immigrants' struggle for freedom.

Ethno-national identity and the Arab nation

During the *Conseil national du Mouvement des travailleurs en lutte* on 8 October 1972, militants from Paris, Grenoble, Marseille, Aix, Lyons, Amiens, Toulouse, Dunkirk and Paris discussed, among other things, the need to unite all 'Arabs' in France. Some delegates supported this call but others expressed reservations about organizing workers along ethnic lines. Unity with French and other immigrant workers within multiethnic *Comités de lutte* was needed to get results.¹¹

This debate about strategy and action reflected the MTA's overall discourse in that it posited Arabness as a given and unchallenged marker of identity for all Maghrebi workers in France. The movement's discourse systematically referred to Maghrebis in France as 'Arabs', 'Arab brothers', 'Arab workers', or as 'the Arab masses'.¹² Its perception of ethnicity was, to some extent, consistent with that of

the North African nationalist movement in the interwar period. However, whereas the Messalists acknowledged the existence of Berber people, if only to describe them as Arabs, nowhere in the MTA's discourse did this happen. This may partly be explained by two factors. First, even though many of its members were Berbers, the leading militants in the MTA, unlike those of the ENA-PPA, were often from Morocco and Tunisia, countries where the Berber movement was, perhaps, less politically active than in Algeria. Second, the 1960s and 1970s were decades when the Arab nationalist movement was very popular, not only among Maghrebi governments but also within the North African population and the diaspora.¹³

In the MTA's discourse, ethnic identity was envisaged through a process of interaction, conflict and negotiation. At the above-mentioned national council, the Gennevilliers delegate commented on his identity in a way that illustrated the extent to which confrontation with 'them' defined the militants' Arabness when he stated: 'We are Arabs, we belong to the Arab nation that struggles against the Zionists and the reactionaries.'¹⁴ The MTA's aim was to create a mass movement that could confront and address the problems Maghrebis experienced:

It is a movement of struggle for dignity, against racism, to support the Palestinian revolution and the Arab people struggling against Zionism and the Arab reactionaries ... for decent living conditions and for the defence of our rights, against material and moral misery. Through these struggles, an Arab national consciousness (which is also a working-class consciousness) developed.¹⁵

As with the ENA-PPA, the MTA perception of North African national identity was largely informed by the 'other', by what it was against. A struggle to acquire rights and dignity and defeat oppression in all its forms therefore shaped the Maghrebi immigrants' Arab identity. The movement focused its discourse and action on the sociopolitical problems affecting Maghrebi workers in France as well as on matters affecting Arabs in other European countries, in the Maghreb and in the Middle East.¹⁶

In structuring its sense of identity and actions, the MTA drew ideologically on any local, national or international conflict it thought relevant to the Arab people. In MTA discourse any associated matter was significant. For instance, racism in France, events in North Africa

and the situation in Palestine were all discussed during strikes in factories or in the workers' hostels (*foyers*). Solidarity and mobilization against all forms of 'imperialist oppression' of Arab workers gave form to their sense of ethnic identity. To some extent, the MTA's discourse echoed that of the ENA-PPA, which attached its ethnic identity to anti-imperialist struggles that affected Arabs not only in North Africa but also in France, the Middle East and various colonies in Africa.

In the context of the 1970s, the MTA's view of nation-ness, unlike that of the ENA-PPA, was not tied to the limited borders of a specific state.¹⁷ During the interwar period, the nationalist movement had endeavoured to create a nation within the narrow constraints of the colonial territory and prove that an Algerian nation rooted in Arabness existed before French colonization. The MTA's evocation of nation, however, transcended the boundaries of established nation-states. It was a nation that encapsulated all 'Arabs' in the Arab world and in the diaspora and events taking place in the Arab world were viewed as affecting them as Arabs, whatever nation-state they belonged to.¹⁸ The Palestinian struggle and the repression of Palestinians in Jordan in September 1970, which led to the creation of the Palestine Committee and later to the MTA, as well as the Algerian revolution were seen as inspiring the MTA's Arab national feelings and giving a nationalist character to its antiracist action in France.

The Arab nation evoked here was the expression of a self-aware ethnic group, a group aware of its uniqueness.¹⁹ That the movement's reference to Maghrebis as Arabs did not necessarily reflect their ethnic make-up is not crucial to our understanding of the movement's discourse on nation-ness. What is more revealing is the movement's belief in its ethnicity and the way that ethnicity was imagined.²⁰ The MTA's construction of the 'uniqueness' of Arabs as an ethnic and national group was shaped by the sociopolitical context of its time, and was rooted in the experience of Maghrebi immigrant workers in the diaspora.

Like nationalists in the interwar period, most first-generation Maghrebi immigrants did not see France as a potential home for their nation-ness. Their experience as immigrants and their socially marginalized status had turned them into almost 'invisible' workers who were seen as instrumental in meeting the needs of French industry and agriculture in the eyes of many French people. Furthermore, the legacy of colonial conflicts had equipped Maghrebis with a strong sense of national pride in their home country. Ties with France as a nation

would have been all the more difficult and problematic as they would have been perceived as a kind of betrayal in favour of their host country, which they were used to seeing as their colonial oppressor.

In its discourse, which was reminiscent of that of interwar nationalists, the MTA put the emphasis on the temporary nature of Maghrebis' presence in France and return to their home country was described as their main objective. This was highlighted in a letter an MTA activist wrote in 1974:

We cannot forget that France is not our country ... our horizon should not stop with racism in France but extend to the question of the return to the home country and to a better understanding of our country. ... Western ideology tries to catch us in a vice-like grip; to separate us completely from our people. European ideology is an ideology of intoxication that aims to reduce our youth to a Western way of life, at a time when our people is [*sizi*] so far away.²¹

This discourse echoed that of the North African nationalist movement in the interwar period. French culture was seen as close, all pervading and oppressive. In that context, strengthening their ties with their country of origin enabled them to break the stranglehold of Western/French ideology and escape cultural entrapment.

On the other hand, despite evoking an eventual return to the home country and the importance of keeping North African traditions alive in emigration, and despite consistently invoking faithfulness to the Arab nation, the movement acknowledged that France was also the social space in which the life and sociopolitical experience of Maghrebis were being shaped.²² This country was not only viewed as a place of social, political and economic alienation for immigrants, but also as the framework within which the socialization, political action and self-definition of Arabs as an ethno-national group were formed and expressed. In that sense, the movement differed from the ENA-PPA in that it acknowledged the embedding of the social experience of Maghrebi immigrants in a French context. It recognized the realities of Maghrebis' experience in the diaspora and aimed to improve their socioeconomic situation in France. Maghrebis were fighting for the right to stay, live and work in the *hexagone* and argued that they were 'Arab workers of France who aspire to unite, and to unite their struggle in a national context in France'.²³

Beyond the MTA's ideological discourse, which presented Arabness as the main locus of national sentiment among Maghrebis, the political actions of MTA militants in France were often structured around solidarity between Maghrebis from the same country and region.²⁴ During hunger strikes by illegal immigrants following the adoption of the Marcellin–Fontanet circular (*circulaire Marcellin–Fontanet*) in 1972, a decree that ended the regularization of immigrants after their arrival in France, the movement's actions gained impetus through mobilization based on shared neighbourhood in France, and on their country and region of origin in the Maghreb. The case of the hunger strike of rue St Maur in Belleville in 1973 illustrates this:

The work of *popularizing* hunger strikes and the ideological impact of the hunger strikes were such that hundreds of *sans-papiers* who had gathered around the rue St Maur were the driving force behind the struggle over a period of several months and, one month after the St Maur strike, 7000 took to the streets in Belleville and joined a demonstration. How did this happen? The natural networks of the masses played a part: on the basis of nationality and of the region of origin, hundreds of people visited the hunger strikers.²⁵

The bonds of solidarity that united Maghrebis in France in the 1970s and that the MTA used as the basis for political mobilization, mirrored those of Maghrebi workers in the 1920s and 1930s whose country and region of origin also tended to inform their work and living patterns.²⁶

Kinship and class: beyond ethnicity

As we have seen, the MTA saw Arabness not only as a marker of Maghrebi ethnic identity but also as constituting the basis of their national belonging (*'la nation arabe'*). The movement, however, viewed Maghrebis' national consciousness as Arabs very much from a class perspective. This sense of belonging to the working-class, which formed national awareness, was more marked in the MTA's discourse than it had been in that of the ENA–PPA. The latter regarded Muslims as the main victims of colonial domination, but that did not mean that its discourse was devoid of references to class. As Muslims constituted the vast majority of the underclass in the North African colonies,²⁷ class was identified with religious affiliation in the ENA–PPA's discourse.

For the MTA, there was a direct correlation between identity and class. The Maghrebis' socioeconomic position in France, anchored as it was at the lower end of the working-class hierarchy, reflected that of the colonial workers before them. Furthermore, in the 1960s and 1970s, as Pinot argues,²⁸ immigration remained the reserve of the state and police, and the government adopted immigration policies through decrees. This enabled it to avoid parliamentary and public scrutiny in that area of policy-making, and to apply these *circulaires* in an arbitrary way. Pinot points out that the administration and government:

through the system of the *circulaires*, officially circumvented the laws in their actions, without any parliamentary scrutiny. By doing so, the authorities gave in to the demands of business ... *arbitrariness is the rule*. The texts of the *circulaires* are not published or are unnecessarily complex; they are interpreted in different ways by civil servants within the same department, frequently modified and vary from one department to another. ... Decisions to reject [a residence application] are often communicated without any explanation.²⁹

The arbitrariness that marked Maghrebi immigrants' experience at the hands of the authorities in 1970s France was reminiscent of that of their colonial forebears. The Marcellin-Fontanet circular in particular, which was adopted in 1972, aimed to weaken immigrants' position in France further and contributed to their alienation from the rest of society. It did so by favouring the national workforce; by putting the police in charge of all immigrant administration; by making it impossible for illegal migrants to regularize their situation;³⁰ by making the renewal date of residence and work permits coincide; and by forcing foreign workers to remain in a specific region and job with one employer for one year. A year was not long enough to become a staff representative (*délégué du personnel*) but sufficient for employers to dismiss employees who were deemed undesirable. Those who became unemployed at the end of a contract or were unable to work because of a disability resulting from an industrial accident could see their residence and work documents 'not renewed'.³¹ This in turn enabled the authorities to deport immigrants without resorting to the lengthy and complex legal process the standard deportation procedure entailed.³²

In French society, where they suffered social, economic, political and cultural alienation, immigrants' sense of ethnic and national iden-

tity had to give them the feeling of belonging to a particular group. Like interwar nationalists in France, Maghrebis' ethnic and cultural ties, in short, their Arab-ness, allowed them to question and challenge the economic and social marginalization to which they were subjected in 1970s France.

We have seen how ENA–PPA and MTA views of ethnicity differed, with the former linking it to a modern nation rooted in religion and the latter linking it to class. A desire among Maghrebis to have their rights recognized and be accepted as equals in France marked the MTA's attitude. The declaration of the candidacy in the 1974 French presidential elections of a Maghrebi *sans-papiers* and key militant of the MTA using a pseudonym Djellali Kamal illustrated this well.³³ He was a hunger striker fighting against the Marcellin–Fontanet circular whom other immigrants had chosen to represent them.³⁴ His candidacy highlights the extent to which Maghrebi militants' experience in France was far more rooted in a French sociopolitical context than that of the *coloniaux*. Indeed, the ENA–PPA's political action focused on emancipation from France and on political representation in elected bodies in North Africa to defeat colonialism.

Although Djellali acknowledged that, unlike other candidates, he did not want to become president, he nonetheless wanted to show French people that 'even if we cannot vote, we exist like all the other workers of France'.³⁵ His agenda was to condemn the way France and Europe exploited immigrants, treated them as slaves and subjected them to racism and racist attacks. Djellali argued that France rejected and despised the immigrants' culture and identity and that the only right they had was the 'right to silence'. His plea echoed that of Maghrebis in the interwar period who objected to their lack of political rights and freedom of expression. He saw this election as an opportunity to speak in the name of immigrants and express their hopes and demands: 'against the oppression and the ghetto within which we are maintained, we seize this opportunity to speak out and address all the workers of France'.³⁶

According to Djellali, immigrants in France objected to the way French politicians and candidates tried to introduce restrictive measures such as the Marcellin–Fontanet circular and spoke about immigration as 'a problem' – in fact they questioned a political rhetoric that tried to present immigration in that way. Djellali addressed his discourse to the French population with a view to building solidarity between immigrants and French workers, in much the same way as the interwar

nationalists aimed to bypass oppressive political structures in France and call for solidarity with the French people. It was an attempt to create a different type of kinship, one that put more emphasis on class.

Drawing on Anderson's concepts of kinship and sacrifice as markers of community,³⁷ it could be argued that Djellali's discourse illustrated the extent to which MTA militants' ethnic identity as Arabs was anchored in a French class context and imbued with universalist values. Critical of the 'statute governing immigration' the left had proposed, Djellali argued that: 'What we want is not a statute governing immigration that would divide us from the French working class but to be able to benefit from the rights won through years of struggle for which the French working class shed its blood.'³⁸ Djellali clearly wanted to establish a relationship of solidarity between immigrant and French workers. That feeling of kinship was based on shared experience and struggle and it is revealing to notice that he referred to the broader 'working class of France' that could unite all workers of different origins and from all national groups. The rights of workers had been won through a sacrifice that did not relate to sacrifice for a nation, as it did in the ENA-PPA discourse,³⁹ but rather to workers' rights within France. Indeed, the divide was no longer between national groups but between classes, for MTA militants like Djellali set their own sense of sacrifice (through the hunger strike) within the tradition of the working class in France. He justified his sacrifice and that of his fellow immigrant hunger strikers as a price worth paying to gain rights and recognition in France. Inclusiveness characterized this declaration and it was infused with a particular sense of belonging in which sacrifice for a greater cause could be seen as a marker of class identity.

Djellali's declaration was also universalist in its approach to rights. Differences were not described as national, but as part of each human being and they did not openly imply an allegiance to a particular nation-state. His discourse saw the immigrants' fight in France as a class struggle and he warned that 'we are aware that the situation of terror and over-exploitation that is ours ... might spread to all the workers of France; those who abuse us and try to break our struggle are the enemies of the working class.'⁴⁰ The rhetorical process used here echoes that of the ENA-PPA, which ultimately presented the repression of the colonized as a threat to the hard-won rights of the French. It aimed to win the support of the French people by warning them that any oppression against immigrants could one day also undermine the rights of the French.

Characteristic of the French universalist tradition and echoing the nationalist movement's discourse in the interwar period, a dialectical interpretation of the immigrant experience informed Djellali's declaration. It set the fight for immigrants' rights within the wider context of class struggle in France and Europe, and dismissed the way the French authorities (re)constructed cultural and ethnic differences to segregate them. Immigrant struggles to acquire rights and conquer racism and exploitation were also seen as fights between French revolutionary and universalist principles on the one hand, and prerevolutionary feudal oppression on the other. Similarly, the ENA–PPA presented its fight against colonialism as consistent with the French revolutionary fight against feudalism. Djellali argued that the central contribution that immigrant workers made to the wealth of France and Europe was not recognized, and that immigrants were dehumanized. He referred to the then Common Market as a place not of opportunity but of slavery, serfdom and continuing exploitation in the postcolonial era:

There are more than three million immigrant workers in France. Throughout Europe, we are a people of fourteen million workers. We are exploited from our first drop of sweat to our last drop of blood. We contribute to the production of wealth and are at the origin of the development of the economy of European countries: for centuries, European countries have plundered our natural resources, they continue to do so and treat us like goods. Today, millions of men are chained in the common market of slavery. ... My candidature is not a joke, it is not a publicity campaign, it is the cry of millions of men reduced to serfdom in the twentieth century.⁴¹

This extract, like the others mentioned above, highlights the similarity between the discourses of Maghrebi militants in the interwar period and in the 1970s. Oppression and exploitation by neo-imperialism (here capital, France and by extension Europe) are viewed as echoing both feudal times when people were subjected to serfdom, and colonial times with their legacy of exploitation, slavery and denial of human rights. Here, the terminology places neo-imperialism within a framework transcending history – feudalism, colonialism and modern European capitalism – to represent it as an oppressive force. This discursive representation was not only relevant to immigrants, a large proportion of whom came from France's ex-colonies, but also to

French workers who were the heirs of the revolutionaries who freed themselves from serfdom.

This discourse defined exclusion in such a way that it allowed immigrants to present their own demands and concerns as well as those of other workers in France as inalienable and intrinsically just. Thus, they could position their requests and struggles in a progressive and universalist framework consistent with the values that France and Europe had always considered their own since the Enlightenment, but visibly failed to implement as far as immigrants' rights were concerned. This reflected the interwar nationalist discourse that presented the Maghrebi anti-colonial struggle as consistent with the values of the French people who maintained the revolutionary legacy.

Other examples within the MTA discourse show forces of oppression against Maghrebi and other immigrants always interpreted from a class perspective. To name but a few, an internal report assessing the Palestine committees' mobilization campaign after the murder of Djellali Ben Ali, a young Algerian killed in the Goutte d'Or district of Paris in 1971, celebrated the 'popular unity between French and immigrant workers and viewed its action as part of the wider class struggle against repression of all workers'.⁴² In the October 1973 issue of *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, published after a wave of racist murders in Marseilles and other parts of France in the summer of that year, the MTA denounced racism as an attempt to divide the working-class and declared that 'we are workers and not slaves ... our struggle goes on with all the immigrants and French workers.' In a tract, the MTA and *Comité de défense de la vie et des droits des travailleurs immigrés* (CDVDTI) criticized the government's immigration and deportation policy for forcing migrants into 'a new form of slavery' and argued that 'we are part of the working class without, however, having any of their rights'.⁴³

More generally, the dominant–dominated relationship Maghrebi immigrants experienced (which, in Djellali Kamal's declaration and in other MTA documents, had a colonial resonance to it) influenced the way in which they defined their own identity. This was formed by a process of inclusion whereby being part of the 'Arab nation' was compatible with belonging to the French working class. In that sense, it differed from the interwar nationalist view that Maghrebis' belonging to the 'Arab nation' would lead them to emancipation from the French, and that only when North Africans were independent could equality with the French be reached.

Islam as a cultural marker and the role of the Catholic Church

What role did religion play in the formation of a sense of nationhood among Maghrebi members of the MTA? Hastings views every ethnicity as being ‘shaped significantly by religion just as it is by language’.⁴⁴ However, his statement that ‘Christianity has of its nature been a shaper of nations, even of nationalisms; Islam has not, being on the contrary quite profoundly anti-national’⁴⁵ is more controversial. It may be well founded in the broader context of Islam and the community of Muslims, the *Umma*, but it is less applicable to the North African, and more specifically Algerian, case. As discussed earlier, the ENA–PPA drew on Islam as a unifying, modern political force underpinning Algerian ethnic and national identity. But was this also the case with the MTA?

The first striking observation to come out of an analysis of the MTA’s documentation is that Islam and religion were rarely part of its discourse. Clearly, this did not mean that Maghrebi immigrants in France were not seen as or did not consider themselves Muslims. Islam played an important role in Maghrebi life in 1970s’ France. In 1976, there were two million Muslims there, including 400,000 French nationals. It was the most important religion among immigrants, yet was ‘a religion that is not accepted in this country’.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, despite the difficulties Muslims encountered in France, the number of places of worship – most of which were no more than a room in *foyers* or sometimes flats – grew from 33 in 1970 to 274 in 1980, while the number of Islamic associations increased over that decade from seven to 192.⁴⁷ Much of the credit for this must be given to the *Jama’at el tabligh* (the Society for the Propagation of Islam), a Pakistani religious organization founded in British-ruled India in 1927.⁴⁸ Together with some Algerians and Mahmoud Medjahed, an Egyptian imam who had graduated from the prestigious Al-Hazar University, members of *Jama’at el tabligh* founded the *Association culturelle islamique* in 1968 and, after a split, created the *Association musulmane Foi et Pratique* in 1972. Both were to become highly successful, since Muslim organizations and places of worship were scarce in the early 1970s.

Supporters and activists in the MTA were representative of the Maghrebi population in terms of religion. Indeed, like the ENA–PPA, the MTA recognized that Maghrebi immigrants valued religious festivals and sometimes organized social events to celebrate them. For instance, a tract produced in 1974 called for a preparatory meeting to organize a national conference, and immigration night on the eve of

the *Eid ul-fitr* – the feast marking the end of Ramadan – on 12 October that year.⁴⁹ Like interwar nationalists, the MTA described the celebration of Muslim festivals as a form of political struggle against oppression. It was also seen as a way of maintaining traditional cultural values among Maghrebi immigrants and their children:

The workers and families from Barbès who, under police occupation, celebrated [the Muslim holy day of] *Aid ul-Kebir*, the workers in Mantes-la-Jolie who, through a general assembly in their hostel, imposed their right to be educated ... show us that every day our people fight to maintain their traditions and culture in France and to teach their language and history to their children in emigration.⁵⁰

The January 1977 issue of *El Assifa*, an MTA publication in Marseilles, celebrated the fact that Maghrebi immigrants on strike a month earlier in a SONACOTRA hostel in Aix-en-Provence had won the right to hold meetings, to watch films on Palestine and use some of the hostel's cultural budget to buy some sheep for the celebration of *Aid ul-Kebir* on 2 December 1976.⁵¹

However, although the examples given above show that religious festivals and references to Islam were acknowledged, they nonetheless appeared very rarely in MTA and Palestine committee documentation. When they did, they were mentioned only to support a particular political point. Islam as such was almost completely absent from their discourse and was viewed neither as a main rallying force nor as an end in itself. Religion, or rather the visible signs of religious celebration, was seen as a marker of cultural identity and tradition. Its symbolic value was also acknowledged in as much as it could be (re)interpreted and used to reinforce the justification for sociopolitical struggle and demands. This differed markedly from the interwar nationalist discourse that placed religion at the heart of its political ideology.

The mosque did, however, provide a political symbol and rallying point for the MTA, just as it had done for the militants of the ENA-PPA in the 1930s. After the murder of Djellali Ben Ali on 27 October 1971, the Palestine committees, with *Secours Rouge*, organized a march towards the Paris mosque under the slogan '*Halte au terrorisme anti-arabe*' ('Stop anti-Arab terrorism').⁵² Similarly, when the MTA launched its day of protest against racism on 14 September 1973, it asked all Arab workers in the Paris region to stop work and held a public meeting of

about 1000 workers outside the same symbolic place – the Paris mosque.⁵³ The ENA–PPA had already used the mosque as a rallying point and political symbol, yet also denounced its construction by France as a further sign of colonial oppression. The MTA mostly viewed the mosque as a religious symbol.

In the 1920s and 1930s Islam was at the core of the ENA–PPA ethno-national identity and shaped its nationalist demands. How then does one account for the relative absence of religious references in the MTA's political discourse? It would be wrong to see it as a sign of secularization of forms of political expression among Maghrebis in 1970s' France. After all, the MTA had fought to introduce prayer rooms in *foyers* (workers' hostels) and factories. However, the emphasis of the movement's political discourse was not really based on a modern reconstruction of Islam as a core political weapon, as it had been for nationalists in the interwar period, but on other shifting and flexible markers of identity (like Arabness, class and solidarity with Palestine) as 'points of identification'.⁵⁴ Religion, or rather religious belonging was certainly a marker but by no means the most important one. Islam was integrated as one feature of cultural identity, but the sense of belonging to and solidarity with the working-class of France was overriding. This may reflect a greater anchoring of Maghrebi immigrants' experience in the French class structure of the 1970s than in the 1920s and 1930s.

It is also interesting to see the MTA's relationship with the Catholic Church. In Algerian nationalist discourse in France in the 1920s and 1930s, the Church was consistently criticized for being an intrinsic part of France's project of colonial domination and for attempting to convert Muslims to Christianity. By contrast, in the 1970s, even though most of France's institutions were seen as prejudiced against immigrants, the key role the Catholic Church played with regard to the *sans-papiers* meant that it was perceived differently within the MTA. Indeed, many Catholic leaders actively supported illegal immigrants who fought the Marcellin–Fontanet circular and demanded a work and residence permit. In February 1972, three Tunisians and two Moroccans began a hunger strike in the St-Hippolite church, Paris, as did 13 Tunisians at 154, rue St Maur, in the annex of a church.⁵⁵ Similar action took place at the Notre Dame de Ménilmontant church in Paris where 56 immigrants managed to get a work permit after a six-month struggle.⁵⁶

By 1973 the hunger strikes had spread to about twenty French towns and cities and this led to 50,000 immigrants being granted official status. The most revealing case, however, took place in

December 1972: 19 Tunisians threatened with expulsion under the Marcellin–Fontanet circular went on hunger strike in Valence and, to show their solidarity with the *sans-papiers*' action, four Catholic priests in the city refrained from celebrating midnight mass.⁵⁷ MTA members fully acknowledged the Catholic priests' help and support. This shift between the colonial and postcolonial era in the way the Maghrebis saw the Catholic Church reflected a major change in the Church's approach to Muslim migrants. In a hand-written document, a leading MTA activist reported the events in Valence in a rather lyrical way:

The great benefit of the Valence experience was that the hunger strike brought together immigrants and the French. Christians, priests and young people supported the Tunisians' fight for their rights. In the whole of Valence, Christmas was a Christmas of mourning – a large demonstration in which young people and immigrants took part, went through Valence at midnight. The marchers carried flaming torches and were accompanied by the beat of drums. All the churches rang their bells, and the priests celebrated their mass on the theme of the great material and moral misery of immigrants in France. They refused to celebrate joyfully when the lives and freedom of immigrants were threatened in their city.⁵⁸

*La voix des travailleurs arabes*⁵⁹ described the resultant demonstrations as 'our brothers gaining their rights, residence and work permits'. In this context, the MTA interpreted the role of the Church as central to the welfare of immigrants and as embodying the generosity of the French people.

Actions like the hunger strike in Valence were not presented solely as a way of securing immigrant rights; they were seen as sociopolitical frameworks within which solidarity between immigrants and the French could be developed by appealing to France's Christian values of compassion and tolerance. This contrasted with the view of interwar nationalists who presented their struggle as a fight between the cross and the crescent.

What characterized the MTA's discourse was the representation of the Catholic Church as close to the values of the French people and therefore as anti-imperialist. Echoing a theme the ENA–PPA had also developed, the MTA's discourse showed the extent to which the status and treatment of immigrants at the hands of the French authorities

were at odds with France's religious and political values, as well as with public opinion: immigrants' material and moral misery had become the concern of Catholics. By contrast with the colonial era, militants no longer saw the French state as having had the support of the country's moral guardian (the Catholic Church) to further its imperialist agenda. French legislation and immigration policies, and the officials and politicians behind them, were seen as discriminatory and exclusive while immigrants, the French people and the Church were described as sharing the same values and concern.

Those signs of solidarity were used to define the boundaries of inclusiveness and shared values within French society. Indeed, a shift in representation took place: those who were officially marginalized became included and accepted by France's population and by the Church. The authorities, on the other hand, who introduced alienating and discriminatory measures towards them, were shown as inherently isolated and removed from the concerns of the people they were meant to represent. The political class and the legal system were thus marginalized. To conclude, it is interesting to note that the MTA, through the relative decoupling of Islam from the political sphere, only acknowledged Muslim religious expression as markers of tradition and culture sustaining social cohesion within a Maghrebi community fighting for recognition and rights. This lack of emphasis on religious adherence in the MTA's discourse may have encouraged the establishment of links of solidarity with the Catholic Church. Islam was mostly described as a facet of cultural identity and ethnic belonging that could sometimes be used as a rallying point of reference, which the antiracist demonstrations of November 1971 and September 1973 showed, but it never played as central a role for the MTA as for the ENA-PPA.

Culture as politics

The relationship between ethnicity and culture is as central to understanding the MTA's discourse on nation-ness as it was to that of the ENA-PPA. Maghrebi immigrant experience perhaps influenced MTA references to cultural identity more than it did those of the ENA-PPA. The MTA's aim was twofold: first, culture was about maintaining Maghrebi traditions; and second, it was about developing and negotiating strategies to address Maghrebi concerns, experience and sociopolitical action, primarily in France rather than North Africa, as had been the case with the ENA-PPA.

The MTA saw developing a cultural response to social marginalization and oppression in France as a viable way of constructing Maghrebi identity in the diaspora and strengthening communal solidarity. This strategy reflected that of the ENA–PPA. It was an empowering and humanizing process aimed at countering their sense of alienation and challenging the economic role to which they had been confined within French society. Talha described this as the ‘eternal *homo economicus*’,⁶⁰ and the MTA often referred to it as slavery.⁶¹ As Marié points out, the workplace was the only sphere in which the existence of immigrants was acknowledged: ‘it is not in the urban sphere but in the sphere of production that immigrant workers can find their legitimacy.’⁶²

Within such a context, the MTA saw cultural activity as an efficient way of countering Maghrebi immigrants’ alienation and exploitation in French society. Culture was a concept with several meanings and it formed an inherent part of the MTA’s political struggle. Indeed, as in the ENA–PPA’s discourse, the MTA saw the celebration of a religious festival, an immigrant’s will to learn a language, and the cultural activities Maghrebis organized in *foyers* and factories all as markers of cultural expression.

El Assifa (the Tempest), a theatre company some members of the MTA founded, played a key role in the movement’s cultural strategy and went beyond artists and theatre companies performing for the ENA–PPA. For the latter, cultural action and political mobilization essentially took place within an intra-ethnic framework. By contrast, El Assifa, which its founders described as ‘a collective composed of immigrant and French workers participating directly in the movement and struggles of immigrant workers in France’, engaged in theatre, cinema, songs, dance, and street events. Its objectives were quite different from those the interwar nationalists developed. First, it aimed to ‘destroy the sacred aura surrounding culture’ and make it accessible to all.⁶³ Second, it fought what it saw as ‘cultural racism’.⁶⁴ Third, it tried to ensure that immigrants’ experience and struggles were better known in France and to develop and foster cultural expression among migrants in order to fight against the wrongs of their situation. El Assifa’s founders argued that ‘against the modification of our culture that has been imposed on us and to counter cultural racism, our aim is to have our culture of origin recognized in a context of respect for difference.’⁶⁵

Therefore, culture was more open and rooted in practice and action in the MTA than it had been in the ENA–PPA. It was about both cultural preservation and opening a solid front with the French.

Factories and *foyers*, demonstrations, parties, celebrations and theatre were all considered privileged outlets for cultural expression. El Assifa also produced 'Radio Assifa', a monthly series of programmes on tape (made by the El Assifa theatre company, music groups and other MTA militants) about the life and struggles of immigrants, who had similar social and political aims to those of the theatre company:

'The Tempest' – symbol of the will of Arab immigrants to speak out, to fight, beyond daily difficulties and racism, the cultural oppression to which it is subjected. ... For years Arab immigrants have shown that they are not simply workers on building sites who work, work and work [*siz*]; 'they can also speak out' ... to impose their rights and the existence of their culture. ... 'Radio Assifa' ... will report on the lives and struggles that little by little contribute to writing the history of Arab immigration in France; it will reflect all the efforts made to establish a new culture.⁶⁶

How can this relationship between culture and politics be interpreted? It could be argued that they were mutually shaped within the MTA by a dual process: by bringing politics into culture and culture into politics. To a greater extent than the nationalist movement in the interwar period, the MTA endeavoured to construct and use culture and cultural practice as political tools, a strategy that could be defined as the introduction of politics into culture.

An editorial in the MTA's publication *Akhbar El Haraka*⁶⁷ highlighted the problem the movement faced when defining the strategic role El Assifa could play in the cultural life and political struggle of Maghrebi immigrants. The author asked if cultural activity could be reduced to theatrical performance. Could it transform the cultural life of a district or factory and make an enduring and real contribution to its struggle? The same editorial answered these questions by recalling how, since 1975, strikes in various locations had led immigrants involved in those actions to develop their own political and cultural life.⁶⁸ In an interview in April 1976, an El Assifa spokesperson stated that the company had performed in a number of state-run SONACOTRA hostels like Romain Rolland, Pierrefitte and St Denis where strikes were taking place and that in each *foyer*, they also organized political and cultural debates.

The MTA differed from the ENA-PPA in that it questioned and

assessed far more explicitly the role cultural practice could play within its wider political aims. The political and cultural were seen as inseparable. The fundamental relationship between the two and their complementary nature were spelt out even more clearly when the editorial referred to the action of El Assifa in St Bruno and that of the MTA in Barbès – ‘The cultural intervention of El Assifa in St Bruno, the militant intervention of the MTA in Barbès (Palestine–Morocco–SONACOTRA campaign) and especially the linking up of these two movements’, constituted poles of resistance against forces hostile to the MTA.⁶⁹ The El Assifa representative also emphasized the political importance of the company’s action by declaring that, apart from the shows organized in Barbès, members of the company also focused on their work as MTA militants:

In theory, we are supposed to work as militants in Barbès, since it forms part of the work of the MTA as a whole. We have to be present on the ground to mobilize the *quartier*, know people and the problems of the *quartier*. ... And the members of the theatre company should also theoretically be part of a militant group. ... As we know that Barbès is occupied by the police, acting in the street with musical instruments attracts the sympathy of the population and prevents repressive operations from taking place; it highlights the authoritarian nature of the police and at the same time undermines its authority. Our aim is that the good work done with people’s effective involvement will continue after we have gone ... as our cultural activity is not simply limited to theatre.⁷⁰

As these extracts illustrate, culture was presented as an inherent part of the organization’s political and antiracist struggle, and as an effective way of mobilizing and maintaining cohesion among Maghrebi migrants, reinforcing solidarity between immigrants and the French, and countering oppression in all its forms.

In the 1970s El Assifa emphasized the MTA’s ambitious multi-ethnic framework for cultural action, which it defined as more than a theatre company: ‘Assifa has never been a “theatre company” but a collective of cultural action composed of French people and immigrants whose vocation remains that of fostering a movement of expression and action among immigrants and the French against slavery and against racism.’⁷¹

It can therefore be seen that the cultural dimension of Maghrebi immigrant workers' identity in France was central to the MTA's political struggle. In the interwar period, the ENA–PPA's discourse emphasized that culture was a marker of ethno-national difference and never really acknowledged the specificity of Maghrebi migrant workers' cultural experience in France. However, the Arab nationalist stance the MTA developed placed culture in the context of a diaspora, as rooted both in emigration (the 'Arab' culture and traditions that immigrants had brought with them), and immigration (a shared experience anchored in France and underpinned by class kinship). The MTA saw Maghrebis as Arab workers of France who shared common values with French workers, but who were distinct as far as culture and traditions were concerned.

Memory and history: anti-colonialism and the Algerian war

Study of the MTA's discourse has highlighted the importance of cultural practice in the movement's sociopolitical action. However, it should not hide the fact that many characteristics of Maghrebis' identity, including their perception of tradition, were redefined through memory. In the interwar period, this had enabled the ENA–PPA to give a sense of timelessness to a culture and traditions it had reconstructed to form the basis of a national culture it considered indispensable to a modern nation-state. In the 1970s, Maghrebi traditions and culture were presented as markers of Arab-ness transcending nation-states. This celebration of certain traditions, as well as cultural and religious practices, gave them continuity and, as a corollary, legitimized the MTA's own political role, discourse and action, as it had with the ENA–PPA during the interwar period.

In his case study on multiethnic alliances, Baumann⁷² pertinently stresses the distinction that exists between two complementary discourses among ethnic minorities: the 'dominant discourse', where differences of culture are seen as consistent with differences of ethnic identity, and the 'demotic discourse', which is an alternative discourse opening up possibilities of alliances between ethnic groups.

This distinction reflects the ideological tension that existed within the MTA's discourse even more so than in that of the ENA–PPA. The negotiation of identity is characterized by its shifting nature and informed by a twofold process. References to cultural, ethnic and religious differences are sometimes put to the fore in an exclusive and affirmative strategy of empowerment and sociopolitical counteraction

– the dominant discourse. Alternatively, calls for multiethnic support and solidarity become prominent, and differences are either played down or acknowledged selectively when they are seen as a unifying factor with multiethnic forces in order to create or participate in ‘communities of action’ – the demotic discourse.

Though these two forms of discourse on the past could also be noted in ENA–PPA documents, they were rooted in frameworks that were different from those of the MTA. For the former movement, the dominant discourse on the past referred mainly to what it saw as a great Arabo-Islamic civilization, which influenced the movement’s nationalist agenda of building intra-ethnic solidarity and mobilization in an exclusive manner. The demotic discourse performances, on the other hand characterized its evocation of a multiethnic independent Algeria.

The interplay between dominant and demotic discourses was structured differently within the MTA and transcended the constraints the ENA–PPA’s struggle for a national state had imposed on its discourse. It was rooted in the movement’s struggle to gain rights and oppose racism in France. To reinforce ethnic solidarity and to justify strategic political choices and actions, the dominant dimension of the MTA’s discourse was focused on more recent history, on colonial oppression and postcolonial racism. The events related to the Diab case clearly illustrate this.

On 29 November 1972, Mohamed Diab, a mentally-ill Algerian immigrant was killed at Versailles police station. *Le Monde* of 1 December 1972 reported the tragic incident as resulting from a violent attack by Diab, during the course of which he injured several policemen. The article, which reflected the conclusions reached by the police inquiry, stated that after he was arrested for indecent behaviour in a hospital where he was a patient, he was taken to the Versailles police station where he hit several policemen with a chair and tried to escape. The judge in charge of the case heard the testimonies of key witnesses such as Diab’s wife and his neighbour, both present at the station at the time of his death. Their version of the incident painted an entirely different picture of the circumstances of his death from the one given in the police report. Their account suggested that the policeman killed him while he was standing unarmed.⁷³ This notwithstanding, the case seemed likely to be closed with the policeman involved avoiding prosecution. However, the MTA’s immediate reaction played a central role in the Diab family’s fight for justice.⁷⁴

The MTA placed the case in a clear historical context. That the

murder had taken place in a police station was of symbolic importance for the movement, which described it as ‘a cold-blooded murder with a submachine gun under the French flag by a policeman’.⁷⁵ The policeman was seen as a representative of the state and the location of the incident came metaphorically to embody France and its flag. This description of the killing places the MTA’s assessment of the case in an historical framework in which Maghrebi immigrants were the victims of oppression by the French state: ‘Our reaction must be swift and strong. It is a reaction from the heart. Workers immediately discovered the truth behind this murder because it reflects their historical and social experience.’⁷⁶ This account highlights MTA attempts to build solidarity and consensus against racism and oppression on the basis of class. It illustrates MTA militants’ self-definition as workers caught in a class struggle. The MTA’s reaction was two-pronged. First, it was based on solidarity between ‘Arabs’ (dominant discourse). For this, it drew on Maghrebi immigrants’ experience of French colonial and postcolonial repression to mobilize them on this issue in workers’ hostels, local markets and the workplace. Second, the MTA developed a strategy of multiethnic alliance and mobilization (demotic discourse).⁷⁷ In this context, the MTA interpreted the case from a class perspective that presented the murder as affecting all workers and as a further illustration of oppression against workers.

The nature of the MTA’s dominant discourse was closely tied to history and memory. History gave it an interpretative frame of reference on issues affecting Maghrebis in France, and inversely, current events reinforced the salience of those historical events. Memory encapsulated past struggles and experience and its content could be recalled by the present, as the MTA’s discourse and reaction to the death of Mohamed Diab showed:

The response demanded by the Arabs must be *as strong as [sic]* the cry of despair and hatred that comes out of their chests: this murder by the police has affected the Arabs ... and revived their memory: all the resentment from the past, the resentment that has been accumulated re-emerges.⁷⁸

Here, a correlation is made between the present and the past in a tension in which memory informs action.

Indeed, the Algerian war was very much present in the way they

structured their action and discourse. In *La voix des travailleurs arabes* of 1 January 1973, Fatna Diab made a direct link between her brother's death and the killing of Algerian pro-independence protesters by the French police on 17 October 1961 when she declared: 'I saw my brother being murdered by the fascist police. Dozens of other Arabs were murdered. They are thrown into the Seine and the racists then say that Arabs are killing each other.'

The MTA often cited examples of colonial oppression and of figures who had fought colonialism on both sides of the Mediterranean to mobilize militants on a specific issue. There are several examples to illustrate this connection between past and present in the MTA's documentation. An internal report shows that the movement sent an activist, who had just taken part in a demonstration against Mohamed Diab's death, to Valence where Maghrebi *sans-papiers* were on hunger strike. As a representative of the Paris committee, his mission was to draw attention to Saïd Bouziri's similar hunger strike in Paris, and thus create unity of action. The MTA activist's nickname (Ali la pointe) evoked the battle of Algiers and a leading figure in that episode of the war of independence. An internal report assessing the impact of the Palestine Committee's action after the murder of Djellali Ben Ali on 27 October 1971 stated that tracts were distributed outside a cinema showing the film *La Bataille d'Alger*.⁷⁹ This report also argued that by mobilizing and protesting against this racist murder, 'Arab workers have revived ... their national revolutionary traditions. They sing the anthem of the FLN.'⁸⁰

At the end of 1973, after the wave of racist murders that took place in Marseilles following the killing of Désiré Guerlache, a bus driver, by a mentally-ill Algerian, the MTA declared that:

Our countries were colonized and everything was put in place to ensure that they remain under-developed. ... Good old colonialism may be dead, but in France and in Europe, there are colonized people: immigrant workers. ... Ever since Hitler's time, fascists have been using the same methods: yesterday, it was the Jew, the wog, today it is the Arab. But Arab workers reacted. They reacted correctly by using the common weapon of workers: the strike.⁸¹

These references illustrate the extent to which concepts, events and people of the past could be seen to have values in common with the

present and provide new interpretative frameworks for identity and action. Evocations of the past undoubtedly affected, if not influenced, the movement's perspective, discourse and action. In the eyes of MTA militants, colonialism had left deep wounds in North Africa and still oppressed immigrants.

Through the strategy adopted after Mohamed Diab's death, the MTA formed alliances and sought consensus. After all, it had learnt the lesson from past actions and saw the limits of such an exclusive strategy. Indeed, after Djellali Ben Ali's death on 27 October 1971, the Palestine committees organized a large protest in Paris in which about 4000 people took part. However, despite a real effort on the committees' part to involve more French people in their antiracist activities, most of the protesters were Maghrebi.⁸² The scale of their protest action did not lead to a reduction in the number of racist murders and proved to have little impact on racism.

MTA strategy also needed to be demotic and inclusive, so links were established between immigrants and French public opinion. After Diab's death, MTA supporters were aware that solidarity based on Algerian nationality could be taken for granted, and that it would constitute the starting point for a broadening of support. The MTA considered that its efforts should focus on initiatives aimed at educating and encouraging the creation of alliances with the French population and decided to organize a protest march to the ministry of justice: 'We needed to influence public opinion as a whole, challenge their clear conscience, let people know and affect the state. ... This is how the idea was born: a march to the Justice Ministry – a protest march.'

The MTA drew on past examples of solidarity between French and Maghrebis against colonialism and racism. On 16 December 1972, the Diab march involved key French intellectuals like Jean Genet, Michel Foucault, Alain Geismar and Claude Mauriac. This strategy was directly inspired by the 'Appel des 121' that intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre made during the Algerian war.⁸⁴ In addition, the route chosen for the demonstration was very much inspired by the march of 17 October 1961 in Paris, when a peaceful pro-FLN demonstration by Algerian immigrants met a violent response from the police who killed an estimated 200 marchers and carried out mass arrests:

The idea of the 121 derives from this. Those who during the Algerian war had denounced the crimes and torture committed

against the colonized, launched an appeal in support of the Arabs against racist crimes and the new colonization. They appealed to the historical memory of the French and chose as a starting point the march to the ministry: Bonne-Nouvelle – the Rex cinema where Algerians reddened the paving stones with their blood in October 1961. [This constituted the] second appeal to the memory and conscience of Westerners. This appeal to memory enabled us to highlight fully the horrors experienced by immigrants today.⁸⁵

Both past events aimed to draw on the French people's memory of the racism inflicted on Maghrebis and highlight the fact that in the 1970s their experience was still marked by racism and required a wide consensus encompassing immigrants and the French against what was referred to as 'the new colonization'.

To foster multiethnic solidarity and mobilization, the MTA recalled a positive past that could influence the building of a universalist discourse and a front of multiethnic solidarity in the present. Bouziri's declaration against his expulsion in 1972 illustrates this universalist stance within the MTA: 'Today, as in the time of the OAS, the fascists, the police and the racists are trying to spread terror among the Arabs. ... For the first time since the Algerian war, hundreds of workers took to the streets alongside the French.'⁸⁶

The MTA's hybrid discourse decoupled universalism from the rigid monocultural characteristics the French had given to it, to give it a more universal nature, where equality could be compatible with difference. By contrast to the nationalist movement in the interwar period, MTA militants did not present the universalist ideas they defended with reference to France and its revolutionary legacy.

We can therefore see that, as with the ENA-PPA in the interwar period, memory played a central, if different, role in forming the MTA discourse. It did so at different levels. It adopted dominant strategies based on history and memory to reinforce ethnic cohesion and action through a direct link with anti-colonial and antiracist struggles. However, while interwar nationalists often referred to the past and to French revolutionary principles to construct a national culture, the MTA essentially focused on North Africa's opposition to colonialism and, in a demotic sense, also on the struggle of the whole of the working-class as a tool for mobilizing Maghrebi immigrants and the French against racism.

Conclusion

The MTA was a movement with a discourse and strategy structured around a number of internal markers of identity. Reflecting the predominant discourse within the ENA–PPA, MTA militants saw themselves first and foremost as Arab nationalists. Their sense of belonging to the Arab nation, however, transcended narrower affiliation to a particular nation-state and never acknowledged the Maghrebis' ethnic diversity. In contrast to the ENA–PPA discourse, class and culture were probably the most important frames of reference allowing MTA militants both to interpret their experience as members of a diaspora and to negotiate their identity, action and strategy at a social and political level. The MTA used culture as a tool, allowing Maghrebis to reinforce social communal cohesion but also to use it to serve its political purposes and establish a multiethnic front of solidarity with the French.

This process extended to religion, which was mostly referred to as a cultural aspect of identity. By contrast with the interwar nationalist movement, Islam did not play a central role in the MTA's political discourse. Furthermore, the support provided by Catholics to the cause of the *sans-papiers* meant that the Church was no longer seen as an arm of imperialist domination but as an ally against racism and oppression.

The MTA placed more emphasis than the ENA–PPA had on class and immigrant action. The MTA described Maghrebi workers' identity as based on class kinship and solidarity and perceived their experience as Arab workers as anchored in France's working class. References to memory and history, rooted in the North Africans' struggle for independence and in the fight of the French against colonialism, formed a two-pronged discourse that could mobilize Maghrebis and establish a multiethnic front of solidarity against racism.

All these inner markers of identity were constantly shifting. They allowed militants in the MTA to develop a flexible discourse that could maximize political opportunities, unite around dominant identity points of reference and widen support through a demotic discourse and strategies. This gave Maghrebis a strong independent voice that was at odds with the general French perception of immigrants – that of a silent, invisible and passive workforce.

9

Antiracism, Universalism and Difference

In the colonial period, the discourse of North African migrants engaged in nationalist politics reflected not only their desire to establish a modern nation-state of their own, and therefore be accepted as citizens of a nation equal to others, but also their desire to defeat a system of domination imposed by a French colonial order steeped in nationalism and rooted in racism. For Algerian nationalists in the colonial era, vanquishing colonialism also meant defeating racism. Therefore, as we saw in Parts I and II, fighting for independence was very much a humanizing process equated with antiracism. This implied, for many, the end of all forms of economic, social and political oppression on the basis of 'race'.

But what form did racism take in the 1970s? The independence of Algeria and of other ex-colonies marked the end of an era of overt colonial domination. It failed, however, to address the other dimensions of imperialism, racism and domination. These persisted and evolved in the postcolonial era and continued to affect a North African diaspora that was still part of an 'internal colony' in France during the 1970s.¹ By that decade the nature of racism had changed. Indeed, the 1950s and 1960s marked the challenge to, and loss of, influence of racism as a 'biological doctrine of racial inequality',² which had characterized the interwar years. These two decades also saw the emergence of a neo-racism in which cultural differences were claimed to be irreconcilable ones, a form of racism that Taguieff refers to as 'differentialist racism'.³

This shift in racist ideology and discourse was partly the result of the loss of credibility of biological racism in the aftermath of the Second World War and of the collapse of colonial empires. Even though the United Nations rejected the term 'race' as a scientific

concept after the Second World War,⁴ it was only in the 1960s and 1970s that it was more broadly challenged. This was as a consequence of the growing consensus among scientists on the absence of scientific foundations for ‘race’ as a biological marker and the emergence of an anthropological discourse based on cultural characteristics.⁵ Not without tensions, this latter interpretation influenced the discourse of many antiracists who argued that equality and the universalist principles that informed their ideology and discourse must be consistent with the respect for difference.⁶ This leads Taguieff to argue that racist and antiracist discourses are rooted in the same pluralist logic.⁷ Gallissot goes further when he points out that:

Antiracism lags behind because it has remained stuck in anti-fascism and anti-Semitism; it is caught in the logic of difference and identity ... as if it were still about Jewish specificity ... when the focus of racism is coloured people. The present challenge is that of immigration, and conflicts are therefore now social, in the workplace and on the street.⁸

In this chapter I examine how the MTA, in a discourse echoing that of the ENA–PPA, interpreted racism as systemic in French society and as a characteristic of neo-imperialism. I assess how a focus on difference or universalist values and class could mark its antiracist discourse.

The MTA’s systemic interpretation of racism

The 1970s was a decade marked by racism, particularly racist violence.⁹ As Gallissot points out, ‘Today, racism targets immigration, and more directly coloured immigrants and even preferably those of North African appearance.’¹⁰ Racist violence, which affected Maghrebis in the colonial period, had not abated after independence. Between September 1973 and January 1974, the *Mouvement contre le racismisme, l’antisémitisme et pour la paix* (MRAP) stated that 22 racist attacks, mainly against Maghrebi immigrants, took place, many of them fatal.¹¹ In 1973 alone, 40 crimes were committed against North Africans by people whom the police never detained.¹²

On a different level, the life of Maghrebi migrants during the 1970s was not necessarily better than that of their colonial forebears. *Politique Aujourd’hui*¹³ described the experience of immigrants at work and in hostels as ‘over-exploitation’ and affected by racism. It also stated that

French legislation regarding migrants was particularly repressive: they were denied basic rights, such as freedom of expression and association, and were left to the mercy of their employers and of frequent police checks.

The MTA consistently denounced the fact that Maghrebi immigrants were a prime target of racism and, as illustrated in the MTA's discourse on anti-Arab racism in France in 1973, it affected all aspects of their life.¹⁴ This was a period of heightened racist violence against Maghrebis echoing previous incidents that had affected North African migrants.¹⁵ In October 1973, *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, the MTA's mouthpiece, stated: 'Racism? We, Arab workers, experience it every day in our soul and in our flesh! On the job market, on the street, in the underground, we are systematically humiliated and offended. Today, we are being killed.'

The MTA reported the murder of an Algerian teacher, Mohamed Laïd Moussa, on 18 March 1975, by 'a killer [who] belongs to an organization in charge of hunting down Arabs'.¹⁶ It saw this crime as part of a series of racist attacks and murders carried out by 'organizations' committed to the systematic murder of Arab workers. This violence was seen as being made possible by the tolerant attitude adopted towards it by the authorities and the judiciary. A letter by Larbi Boudjenana, an MTA and CDVDTI militant, to the minister of the interior, of 10 May 1973 illustrates this. In it he protests about the minister's decision to expel him after political books were found in his home. He also censures the authorities and the judiciary for failing to arrest and condemn Daniel Pigot, who killed 15 year-old Djellali Ben Ali on 25 October 1971, and Robert Marquet, the policeman who murdered Mohamed Diab in November 1972. The ENA-PPA had made a similar accusation in the past.

The MTA criticized the authorities for failing to investigate and arrest any of the perpetrators of such attacks, and denounced 'a fascist order that is starting to take hold in this country'.¹⁷ Referring to Laïd Moussa's death (which they attributed to an extreme right-wing organization called *France Libre*), to the wave of racist murders of North Africans that took place in the south of France after the death of Désiré Guerlache in August 1973 and to the bombing of the Algerian consulate in Marseilles in December 1973 (which the far-right group *Le club Charles Martel* claimed to have carried out), the MTA stated that:

If racist organizations (such as the Charles Martel group) have been able over several years to perpetrate their crimes and to murder Laïd Moussa (through the fascist organization *La France libre*), it is because they have enjoyed total immunity from the judiciary and government. ... So many crimes have taken place because they form part of a general climate of incitement to murder and racist oppression for which the authorities bear responsibility: police occupation of our *quartiers*, raids in the underground, racist attacks against North Africans [*ratonnades*] and deportation of immigrant workers.¹⁸

The MTA's attitude recalled to some extent that of the interwar nationalist movement: racism was clearly seen as traversing all aspects of French society from individual acts to the highest echelons of the state. The authorities were directly incriminated for protecting and failing to arrest those responsible, who could therefore act with impunity.¹⁹ In the MTA's discourse, the authorities were also portrayed as the accomplices of such violence. More importantly, the state was criticized for fostering an environment within which the murder of North Africans was not only tolerated, but even encouraged. According to the MTA, 'the responsibility of the police (and therefore of the state) was all the more marked as policemen themselves take part in the operations of organized racist groups. ... And every day policemen organize racial attacks against Arabs ... thereby confirming the responsibility of the Police-State in anti-Arab racism.'²⁰

One can trace the MTA's interpretation of racism in French society to a Palestine committee report after Djellali Ben Ali's murder in La Goutte d'Or (Paris) on 25 October 1971. This report, which assessed the impact of the organization's antiracist campaign in the aftermath of his death, denounced the 'fascist leaning developing within the state' and viewed all forms of racism and violence against North Africans as the 'systematic expression of racism'.²¹

However, like the interwar nationalist movement's, the MTA's analysis of racism went further. Racism was perceived not simply as something that pervaded all aspects of French society, but as serving a purpose, namely of furthering the economic exploitation of the dominated through neo-imperialism. The MTA interpreted the wave of racist murders in Marseilles following the death of Désiré Guerlache as capitalism's reaction to the immigrants' campaign to mobilize against the Marcellin-Fontanet circular in the workplace and *foyers*.

The MTA's discourse presented racism as a way of punishing Maghrebi workers and dividing the working-class in France. In October 1973 *La voix des travailleurs arabes* emphasized the movement's interpretation of racism based on ethnicity and class when it stated that 'it is because we appeared as an autonomous and combative workforce that employers saw the danger. This wave of racism has been orchestrated to intimidate and suppress the struggle of Arab workers.'

Antiracist discourse and actions of the MTA

During the colonial period, the ENA–PPA frequently cited racism as one of the most important aspects of colonial oppression to which North Africans were subjected on both sides of the Mediterranean. Racism was also presented as a key motive behind their demands for emancipation, independence and an end to colonialism. It greatly contributed to the creation and development of the nationalist movement structured around a sense of ethnic and religious belonging. Similarly, in the 1970s the fight against racism to a large extent influenced the political mobilization of North African migrants in the Palestine committees and MTA. However, what distinguished its discourse was its focus on ethnicity and class. An article in *Akbbar el Haraka* in 1976 emphasized the antiracist nature and universalist aims of a strike against racism and working conditions at the Peugeot-Cycles factory in Beaulieu-Mandeur and highlighted the use of antiracism as a force for mobilization. It stated that 'through our struggle, we can erase racism and replace it with a lasting fraternity; it is through our struggle that we can recover our dignity and our freedom as human beings.'

I stated earlier that the MTA's discourse against racism and exploitation was, like the ENA–PPA's, marked by universalist references and grounded in class. In this section I show how the nationalist movement developed a binary antiracist discourse characterized by its focus on ethnic difference and universalism.

The MTA consistently focused on ethnicity and referred to the Palestinian cause as a catalyst for mobilization against racism and oppression in France. The cause was therefore more central to the MTA discourse than it had been to that of the ENA–PPA. The latter referred to it in broader nationalist terms and as an inspiration for its fight against imperialism in North Africa and for Algeria's search for independence. The MTA also saw the Palestinian revolution as inextricably linked to the Maghrebis' fight against racism within a French metropolitan context:

When united and organized to support Palestine, the Arab workers constitute a force that racists cannot break. In the *Comités de soutien à la révolution palestinienne*, we have regained our dignity and the right to speak out that had been taken away from us. We stopped being ‘wogs’, slaves, we became fighters, *fedayeen*.²²

The second antiracist approach the movement adopted was rooted in universalist values and class. Through its antiracist discourse and strategy, the MTA sought to establish multiethnic solidarity around common values. This approach led to the creation of the CDVDTI,²³ a multiethnic antiracist organization founded after Saïd and Faouzia Bouziri’s hunger strike in Paris in October 1972, and led by a leading MTA militant, Mohamed Selim Najeh.²⁴ Here, the MTA discourse goes further than that of the ENA–PPA, for Maghrebis are not only described as Arabs, but are viewed as a community that transcends national boundaries.

These two antiracist approaches were not necessarily seen as separate frames of reference for the movement, which sometimes combined, in different ways and with different emphases, both forms of antiracist discourse. For example, the MTA’s reaction to the wave of racist murders that took place in the south of France in the summer of 1973 was not exclusively based on a differentialist, intra-ethnic approach. Echoing the ENA–PPA discourse, which denounced France’s representation of the colonized, it sought to address wider antiracist considerations by challenging the way in which immigration was referred to in public, in media and in political discourse. This strategy was consistent with the movement’s perspective on racism as being systemic in society.

In the 1970s, numerous posters featuring the slogan ‘*Halte à l’immigration sauvage*’ (Stop illegal immigration)²⁵ appeared in Paris.²⁶ However, contrary to what Guillaumin²⁷ argues, the use of the expression *immigration sauvage* was not limited to racist groups and to popular discourse, it was also integrated into mainstream media and political discourses. For example, an article in *Le Monde* on 7–8 January 1973 about a hunger strike by four Tunisians and one Algerian *sans-papiers* in churches in La Ciotat and Marseilles was entitled ‘The authorities are unable to stop *immigration sauvage*’. It talked of a ‘phenomenon of saturation of the foreign workforce’ and of a ‘population that is difficult to control’ before ending with the assertion that ‘the application of the *circulaire Fontanet* has experienced many

difficulties and sanctions a chronic impotence in controlling the illegal immigration that it aimed to fight'.²⁸

This term was also frequently used in mainstream political discourse. Désiré Guerlache's murder by Salah Bougrine, a mentally-ill Algerian, on 25 August 1973, mentioned in the previous chapter, was a case in point. A wave of violence and murders directed against North Africans followed, despite calls for calm by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Archbishop of Marseilles, and the MRAP.²⁹ In a *Le Monde* article of 9–10 September, ex-minister Eugène Claudius-Petit described the violence as 'anger whose excesses are excusable'. He saw the French workers' protest against *l'immigration sauvage* as justified and blamed the immigrants rather than the state for their bad housing conditions. He claimed that *immigration sauvage* had caused the proliferation and swelling of shantytowns and unhealthy buildings.

The following day, Gabriel Domenach, editor of the main Marseilles regional newspaper, wrote an openly racist article, full of nostalgia for *l'Algérie française*, which exacerbated the tension:

We have had enough! Enough of Algerian thieves, enough of Algerian rioters, enough of Algerian trouble-makers, enough of syphilitic Algerians, enough of Algerian rapists, enough of Algerian pimps, enough of Algerian madmen, enough of Algerian murderers. We have had enough of this *immigration sauvage* that attracts all the scum from the other side of the Mediterranean into our country ... because, contrary to what they had been led to believe, independence only brought them misery.³⁰

At the same time, several Christian organizations in Marseilles such as *Vie nouvelle*, *Rencontre et recherche*, *Témoignage chrétien* and *Petits Frères des pauvres* produced a joint statement accusing the press of hypocrisy for using this tragedy as an excuse to target North Africans, when other murderers were never referred to as Parisians, Corsicans or *Provençaux*.³¹ Paul Guimard developed the same kind of argument in *L'Express*:

A mentally-ill person slit the throat of a bus driver in Marseilles. Public opinion is outraged and demands the implementation of protective measures. Against mentally-ill people? No, against North Africans. The murderer is indeed insane and North African. Clearly, he killed someone because he is mad, but this

remains first and foremost a crime committed by a North African. One would never say that a person originally from Auvergne killed a taxi driver. This would be a murder committed by a madman without any reference to his origin. On the other hand, whatever an Arab does, he does it as an Arab. His racial origin precedes his individual existence. The shape of his face prevails over the conformation of his brain. His actions have the colour of his skin. ... Such is the logic of racism.³²

As the country faced heightened racial tension, President Pompidou warned that 'France must not let itself be caught up in a spiral of racism.'³³ However, it was only on 15 September, under pressure from left-wing organizations and trade unions that the government sued *Le Méridional-La France* and the extreme right-wing weekly *Minute* (which had reproduced Gabriel Domenach's article) for racial abuse.³⁴

The impact of that incident was soon felt in the North African community, which had been the target of racist attacks long before Guerlache's death. Altogether, 12 Maghrebis were murdered in the aftermath of this incident. In all but one case,³⁵ the police arrested nobody, despite some people reportedly having bragged openly about carrying out racist attacks.³⁶ This led some observers to talk about 'complicity by omission on the part of the police'.³⁷

On 2 September, during 16 year-old Ladj Lounes's funeral, a victim of a racist attack, an MTA militant suggested there should be a general strike to protest against the rising number of racist attacks on North Africans.³⁸ This spontaneous strike, called by the MTA, took place the next day and was supported by the entire Maghrebi working population of the region.³⁹ It severely disrupted work at a large number of companies in the south; areas affected included Aix, Marseilles, Toulon and Fos. Most construction sites in Fos were brought to a standstill.⁴⁰ Building on this success, the MTA called a strike in the Paris region on 14 September, which was widely supported and disrupted many industries, including car manufacturing and construction sites.⁴¹

The rising popularity among immigrants of an autonomous movement such as the MTA was a source of concern for both the French and North African authorities. The decision by the then Algerian president, Boumédiène, to announce the suspension of emigration on 19 December was as much motivated by the desire to react against anti-Maghrebi racism as an attempt to respond to the

anger of immigrants and the wider Algerian population, which might otherwise have backfired against his regime.⁴² As for the French government, it decided to clamp down on the activities of the MTA by expelling a number of its militants and supporters. Among them were leading members of the movement such as Mohamed Selim Najeh, general secretary of the CDVD'TI, and Maurice Courbage, a Syrian scientist and supporter of the Palestinian cause close to the MTA. More surprising was the arrest and expulsion, on 4 September, of Berthier Perregaux, a Swiss Protestant minister who headed the *Comité inter-mouvement auprès des évacués* (CIMADE) in Marseilles. CIMADE was a religious, non-political organization providing assistance to immigrants, and the expulsion of its leader was carried out despite protests by religious and left-wing political organizations, and intellectuals such as Jacques Fauvet, the then director of *Le Monde*.⁴³

In a declaration about the media, political outrage and the appearance of posters calling for an end to *l'immigration sauvage* following Guerlache's murder, Mohamed Selim Najeh, also a leading member of the MTA, declared:

Why was this murder perceived as more horrible because it was committed by an Algerian than by a Frenchman? ... In Marseilles, an immigrant worker killed a French worker; that is what is tragic about this; a worker killed another worker. ... Terror exists in France. ... There is no *immigration sauvage*. There are workers whose main concern is to work and it is the exploitation of men that is *savage*. ... What is the purpose of devoting front pages to this crime committed by an Algerian? To allow racist aggressions against immigration to take place and have them accepted by the French; the Marseilles murder makes racist crimes possible and racist crimes allow clashes with the communities.⁴⁴

This passage shows that the MTA's antiracist discourse on these events was also inherently universalist and based on class. The MTA's use of the adjective *savage*⁴⁵ aimed not only to counter French popular, political and media discourses, but also to denounce the French state. Its action, which sustained systemic racism in society, was inconsistent with the progressive and universalist values it claimed to uphold.

The racist attacks, which continued throughout the country, cul-

minated in an extreme right-wing organization, *Le club Charles Martel*, bombing the Algerian consulate in Marseilles on 14 December 1973; four people died and 20 were injured. *Le club Charles Martel* was composed of ex-members of the OAS whose self-declared aim was to 'foment a number of racist incidents to prove to the French population that it is as xenophobic as we are'.⁴⁶ Two months earlier, the Marseilles *préfet* had withdrawn police protection from the building, despite the consul having received a number of threats and, three years earlier, three people having been arrested for firing shots at the consulate.⁴⁷ Two weeks after the bombing, Algerian ambassador Mohamed Bedjaoui complained that nobody had been arrested, despite the French police's intelligence on extreme-right wing activities, and accused some of the police in Marseilles of being 'nostalgic for *Algérie française* and the OAS'.⁴⁸

Finally, another aspect of the MTA's discourse on racism is worth noting. As early as 1971, the Palestine committees had suggested the use of self-defence and violence as useful weapons against racists. This aspect of immigrants' discourse in the 1970s differed markedly from that of interwar nationalists who did not call for immigrants to establish self-defence groups against racists. The report produced to assess the impact of the movement's campaign following the death of Djellali called for the committees to adopt 'broad and multinational forms of politico-military organization' and create autonomous groups called '*des groupes de vigilance*', whose aim was to oppose police repression, carry out surveillance operations on racists, and counter any racist aggression committed by individuals and organizations.⁴⁹ Another MTA document shows that violence, a less frequently acknowledged response to racist attacks, had sometimes been adopted by the movement. It argued that:

Our task is to deal with the problem of this new stage of repression against Arab masses by transforming the relationship that the MTA has with the question of violence. ... Indeed, if we want to break the encirclement and the repression that has descended upon us in France, it is fundamental that we examine how to use violent action against those who are oppressing us.⁵⁰

Given that references to violence appeared only rarely in the MTA's discourse, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the movement relied on such an approach to fight racist violence. But

what appears from the MTA's discourse is that ethnically-based forms of violent action might also be relied on to counter racist attacks against North African immigrants.

Conclusion

What emerges from this study is that the MTA viewed racism not only as one of the key markers of Maghrebi immigrants' experience in France but also as one of the most important mobilizing forces for its militants. In that context, the organization's antiracist action and discourse mirrored, to some extent, that of Algerian nationalists in the interwar period. The movement interpreted racism as a systemic force that pervaded all aspects of French society from the individual to the state, and that served the interests of capitalism and neo-imperialism.

The MTA's antiracist discourse and strategy were threefold: first it developed a differentialist approach that positioned Arabness as a key reference and a mobilizing force against racism and oppression. The Palestinian revolution constituted a central reference and a catalyst for its ethnically-based antiracist mobilization. Zionism was viewed as a racist ideology serving the interests of neo-imperialism and oppressing Arabs, and the Palestinians' struggle epitomized Maghrebi/'Arab' immigrants' own fight against racism and exploitation.

Second, the MTA's approach was also marked by universalist values which, to some extent, reflected the discourse of the ENA-PPA, although in this case through class loyalty, as highlighted by the movement's response to Mohamed Diab's death. By developing a counter discourse challenging French politicians' and the media's representation of migrants, the movement sought to establish a multiethnic front of solidarity against racism capable of attracting the sympathy of French public opinion.

Third, this movement's discourse differed from that of the ENA-PPA in the interim period in that it acknowledged its reliance on violence to counter racist aggression.

The differentialist and universalist antiracist perspectives it adopted were not necessarily discrete and dichotomous forms of antiracism, but could sometimes be combined, in different ways, to increase support for the MTA's cause.

10

The MTA in the French Sociopolitical Arena

In this chapter I examine the MTA's relationship with, and discourse on, groups, organizations and political parties both within France and abroad, as well as with states and governments.¹ I first look at the MTA's approach to the workplace, to the *foyers* and to illegal immigrants' rights. Then, in subsequent sections, I explore the MTA's cross-ethnic links with other immigrants, its relationship with French trade unions, its conflict with the *amicales* and the effect upon it of the Palestinian revolution.

MTA activity in the workplace, in the *foyers* and for the *sans-papiers*

The MTA used the Maghrebis' experience of being illegal immigrants, workers and residents of hostels as frameworks for action. Then, to broaden, nationalize and politicize its activities, it went on to try to mobilize militants beyond these narrow spheres. Overall, the MTA aimed to oppose the state's segregationist policy, to force it to recognize that the Maghrebis' presence and role in society was legitimate, and to show that the immigrants' demands for rights were inherently universalist.

In the 1970s, the MTA faced accusations from opponents like the CGT that it was a sectarian group exploiting the cultural and religious backgrounds of Maghrebi immigrants for its own political ends.² The MTA strongly rejected these allegations arguing that 'our calls are addressed most of all to Arabs because, more so than other ethnic groups, it is they who are the victims of racism.'³ This racism influenced the policy of the MTA, as it had that of the ENA-PPA during the interwar period. The MTA viewed 'Arabness' as an empowering reference and mobilizing force against the racism Maghrebi experi-

enced. It put its definition of ethnicity at the core of its antiracist ideology and strategy and presented it as consistent with its wider universalist aims.

The role assigned to immigrants in 1970s France was that of migrant workers.⁴ The state viewed their presence as purely functional and necessary for sustaining and furthering French economic interests.⁵ Their experience in France, which Georges Mauco described as one of 'total exploitation',⁶ was therefore not very different from that of colonial workers in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the workplace, migrants were systematically paid less than their French counterparts and did the most difficult and dangerous jobs. One in six suffered from tuberculosis caused by poor living and working conditions and, in the metal industry where immigrants accounted for less than 11 per cent of the workforce, they suffered 20 per cent of the accidents.⁷ To a certain extent, these working conditions mirrored those endured by Maghrebis during the colonial period.⁸ The circumstances within which immigrants worked led the MTA to organize and/or support a number of strike actions for improved pay and working conditions, and for the granting of work and residence permits to illegal immigrants working in industry. Factories such as those belonging to Perranoya, Cables de Lyons, Peugeot-Cycles, Renault and Margoline were affected.⁹

Immigrants were also subjected to spatial/residential segregation, which was highly reminiscent of what their interwar forebears experienced. A large proportion of them lived cut off from French society in hostels and shantytowns where health problems and accidents were rife.¹⁰ Conditions in SONACOTRA *foyers* (state-run hostels for immigrant workers) were not necessarily any better. Residents were subjected to stringent rules and could be expelled at any time by hostel managers who were often ex-soldiers who had served in Indochina and Algeria. Visitors were banned, as were meetings and any expression of their views. Their poor living conditions, together with the almost doubling of rents between 1971 and 1976, with no concomitant improvement in their environment, led to large scale rent strikes in the *foyers*.¹¹

The absence of legal rights for migrants, who were too often the victims of administrative and police arbitrariness, further contributed to their marginalization, as the adoption of the Marcellin-Fontanet circular on 18 September 1972 illustrated.¹² The circular named after the two ministers who had conceived it, aimed to prevent illegal

immigrant workers from obtaining a work permit or housing certificate and to facilitate their deportation. It gave priority to French workers on the job market and transferred certain aspects of the administration of immigrants to the police.¹³

The MTA's action was formulated within these three spheres of economic, spatial/residential and administrative segregation of immigrants by the state. The anchoring of its political discourse and protest action within them illustrates the extent to which its approach differed from the more discourse-based one of the ENA–PPA. The latter movements only occasionally discussed immigrant strike action, and did not see the North African immigrants' poor living conditions and expulsions as central frameworks for political action. They interpreted them as further expressions of colonial domination that independence would bring to an end, and their political project focused almost exclusively on a discourse of national liberation.

The MTA's political discourse, however, was rooted in action supporting North African workers in France. The wave of hunger strikes by illegal immigrants following the introduction of the circular marked the start of a two-way process. This aimed to develop solidarity between immigrants and the French, and to broaden the movement nationally by linking similar actions taking place in France.¹⁴ In October 1972, the hunger strikes in Paris by MTA activists Saïd and Faouzia Bouziri – who were eventually allowed to live in France – led to other hunger strikes, and to the creation of the CDVDTI, mentioned in previous chapters.¹⁵

The MTA's documentation provides significant details of how the hunger strikes spread to other parts of the country and how they were planned. It also highlights the greater importance the MTA attached to the spread of protest action in France, compared with that of the ENA–PPA. Rabah Saïdani, a Tunisian worker from Valence, played an important role in this process. In 1972, he had met Saïd Bouziri at the MTA's first *Congrès des comités de lutte d'atelier* and had started a one-week hunger strike in solidarity with him. On 8 December 1972, 18 Tunisian *sans-papiers*, including Saïdani, were arrested in Valence and faced with expulsion. The MTA saw Saïdani's role as central to the hunger strike started by some of them on 15 December in Valence: 'The link between the Valence strike and that of Saïd Bouziri is this Tunisian man from Valence ... confronted with the deportation of 19 [*sic*] Tunisians, he followed the method adopted in Paris: the defensive hunger strike.'¹⁶ It attracted a broad swathe of support ranging from

the Church¹⁷ to the socialist and communist parties, and *Al Assifa* described the popular demonstration that took place on 23 December as the most extraordinary event since 1968.¹⁸

Another MTA strategy, which distinguished it from the ENA–PPA, was to establish bridges between the various spheres of action in which it was involved. The arrival of two militants from the Mohamed Diab committee (formed after Diab's death) during the Tunisians' hunger strike in Valence, is an illustration of how the MTA tried to relate the hunger strike of the Tunisian *sans-papiers* to its action against racist violence.¹⁹

Although the MTA often denounced the narrow role the French had assigned to immigrants in their society (that of a labour force), it was within this role that Maghrebis tried to reconstruct an empowering identity. The particular political context of the 1970s helped the MTA's mobilization process. The events of May 1968 had weakened the credibility of established organizations and authority and reinforced the Marxist ideological premise that political legitimacy rested primarily within the working class. In such a context, the workplace constituted the framework *par excellence* within which to develop immigrant action. As Bonnechère argues, 'the immigrant is in France because work is expected from him ... it is first and foremost in his condition as a worker that his rights can be defended or denied.'²⁰ In a society where immigrants were marginalized, their action in factories constituted a potentially powerful weapon that could affect sensitive areas of the economy.²¹

The MTA acknowledged the importance of the workplace as a terrain for political action when it stated that it had to work towards 'the necessary spreading of the fight for a work permit to the main front: the factory'.²² It was in this sensitive area that the MTA considered it could challenge the state effectively. Indeed, as Verbunt argues, 'the French authorities easily confuse protests against (economic) power with protests against the nation.'²³ In that context, protest action in the workplace was consistent with the MTA's aim to challenge the state.

This approach can be seen in the way the May 1973 strike at the Margoline factory, a paper recycling plant in Nanterre employing mostly illegal immigrants, was structured.²⁴ The strike started with 50 mostly North African workers demanding work permits, better working conditions and an end to illegal practices in the factory. Following their action, the strikers went to the Hauts-de-Seine *préfecture*

and were able to obtain residence permits. The Margoline strike marked a shift in emphasis of the MTA's strategy, and was to influence other strike actions in the workplace. The movement successfully mobilized illegal immigrants working in this plant and linked their strike to other actions, such as the *sans-papiers*' hunger strikes, by organizing meetings involving both Margoline workers and hunger strikers from Ménilmontant in Paris. MTA militants did not, however, want to limit their demands to better working and living conditions, and work and residence permits; they aimed to place their action within a universalist framework that was consistent with the MTA's wider aims and ideology and with its attempt to win over French public opinion.

It is also important to note that the Margoline strike took place in the same year (1973) that the MTA adopted a far more proactive approach to protest action, which distinguished it from that of the ENA-PPA. Whereas in the early 1970s, illegal immigrants went on hunger strike once they had been arrested and were faced with expulsion (for example in actions such as the Valence hunger strike, which the movement called a 'defensive hunger strike'), the movement now supported a more assertive stance whereby illegal immigrants came out and started hunger strikes voluntarily ('offensive hunger strike'). A typical case was that of 13 Tunisians who stopped feeding themselves and demanded basic human rights and legal documents.²⁵

This action was accompanied by a bolder approach to dealing with the authorities, thus highlighting the greater importance the MTA gave to challenging the authorities directly compared with the ENA-PPA. The creation of delegations of *sans-papiers*, or workers on strike, whose representatives then met officials to present their demands (as on 28 February 1973 when a delegation of hunger strikers went to the ministry of the interior) proved largely ineffective. A more offensive strategy (described as a 'Maoist policy') then replaced the reformist approach, referred to as a 'trade union policy'. The Maoist policy aimed to attract publicity by holding demonstrations, occupying official buildings and ensuring that the immigrants' case was heard in the media. It was put into practice on 16 March 1973 when a group of 200 *sans-papiers* occupied the employment office in Paris and presented its regional director, Mr Bois, with 1500 applications for work and residence permits, which had been collected at rue St Maur.²⁶

A similar strategy was adopted in the workplace. Margoline strikers went to the *Préfecture* and employment office to tell officials, as well as the media,²⁷ about their experience at the factory and to force the

authorities, whom they claimed were aware of the employment of illegal immigrants there, to act. In so doing, the MTA hoped to discredit racist authorities and the state:

The political advantage of such an approach is clear, not only from the point of view of the strikers but also from that of the whole population: we support the former by informing the latter, by implicating all the administrative and police authorities, and by highlighting all the contradictions that exist within the State apparatus.²⁸

Thus, by developing a national base for its actions, by adopting a bolder strategy and linking all forms of protest actions with each other, and by placing immigrants' experience and demands within a universalist framework, the MTA aimed to renegotiate the boundary of political action in immigrants' favour. It also tried to challenge the French state's discriminatory rule against immigrants, a strategy the MTA also referred to as 'repeated but measured confrontation with the enemy'.²⁹

Solidarity between the MTA and other immigrants

Echoing the ENA–PPA's call for solidarity with all the colonized in the interwar period, the MTA discourse considered France's inherently 'repressive' and 'racist' state to be part of a larger order aimed at exploiting all immigrants throughout Europe and beyond. The MTA felt the need to create a newspaper (*La Voix des travailleurs arabes*) that would allow it to unite Maghrebi and other immigrants and French workers 'from Toulouse to Paris ... everywhere in France, and even in Europe'.³⁰

At meetings, demonstrations and other protest actions, the MTA's focus on issues affecting immigrants, particularly North Africans in Germany, and the contacts it established with other Maghrebi militants on the left in Brussels, suggest it tried to develop a European strategy based on solidarity among Maghrebis within the European Community. Because racism, marginalization and exploitation affected all immigrant workers, MTA militants considered it essential that these ethnically-based links should not be an end in themselves but should constitute the foundation for wider inter-ethnic mobilization among all immigrants in France and beyond. The fight would be against what Djellali Kamal coined 'The Common Market of Slavery'.³¹

The future success of this embryonic supranational strategy and network depended very much on the effective mobilization of all immigrants in France. The ENA–PPA in its time had established close links with black and Annamese colonial workers and political activists. The MTA, in its turn, now tried to establish a solid front with other immigrant workers and organizations by presenting the experience and fight of Maghrebis as inextricably tied to those of other immigrants. This was illustrated by its complex hybrid discourse rooted in ethnicity and class loyalty. By combining ethnically-based actions with alliances between Maghrebi and non-Maghrebi immigrants, the movement would be able to break the mould, and fight more effectively against what it saw as segregation and economic exploitation.

In *La voix des travailleurs arabes* in October 1973, the MTA emphasized this tactic by stating that ‘our struggle continues together with all immigrants and French workers’. Various actions in the workplace, in the *foyers* and on the streets were considered to be ideal loci for such alliances to be formed. This further demonstrates that though both the ENA–PPA and the MTA sought to establish solidarity with other immigrants, the latter built a solidarity that went beyond political rallies and was involved in common protest action within French society. The struggle of Mauritian and other immigrants to have their situation legalized, for their rights and for better living and working conditions, was often evoked in the MTA’s internal documents and in its newspaper.³² For instance, links were established with Pakistanis in France who went on hunger strike in Paris in March 1974 with the support of Père Louis Gallimardet. Led by Abdul Razak, they demanded residence permits for the 400 or so Pakistanis living in Paris, an agency to be set up by the French government in Pakistan to recruit workers and better accommodation provided for those already living in France.³³

The MTA’s consistent support for the *Mouvement des travailleurs mauriciens* and opposition to the proposed repatriation of 2000 illegal immigrants to Mauritius suggests it was more involved than the ENA–PPA in other migrants’ daily struggles. It was particularly active during the Silvério case in which illegal Mauritian immigrants successfully sued their employer (Silvério) in February 1974. They had been recruited in Mauritius, brought to France illegally through Belgium and had had to work as builders without pay for months (supposedly to pay back their air fare) or face expulsion.³⁴ The MTA welcomed the verdict as the first case in which an employer had been punished and accused the authorities of hypocrisy:

There was significant mobilization within organizations as well as in workshops and colleges in Troyes. ... The public authorities will attempt to drop one employer to try and clear themselves and take the initiative, but the determination of the plaintiffs themselves to turn this court case into one in which the government and employers are in the dock dissuaded Dijoud from coming to the witness box, even though he had declared in *France-Soir* that he would.³⁵

Here again, the MTA blamed the state and the authorities for the exploitation of the Mauritian immigrants. Immigration minister Paul Dijoud was effectively put in the dock when the plaintiffs blamed not only the employers but also the government for their exploitation. To some extent, this discourse reflected that of the ENA–PPA, which had accused imperialism and the state of oppressing the *coloniaux*. Indeed, the Mauritian immigrants' experience at the hands of their employer and the government was presented as yet another illustration of the exploitation of all immigrants. The prosecution of Silvério was also seen as that of the government and employers for their treatment of migrants.

Other inter-ethnic protests further highlight the importance the MTA attached to them – for example, the hunger strikes supported by North African, Pakistani and Mauritian immigrants together with French militants,³⁶ and the occupation of a building under construction by 50 North African, Pakistani and Mauritian immigrants on 22 May. This drew the public's and the authorities' attention to their difficult living and working conditions.³⁷

The Pakistani and Mauritian movements shared much of the MTA's political outlook: they were autonomous groups that had opted for militant action (strikes, hunger strikes, court cases, demonstrations) against what they saw as employers' and the French authorities' discriminatory policies. They established links with other immigrants and the wider French population and were highly critical of their governments' perceived complicity with European countries in supplying cheap labour to the West. Solidarity between the MTA and other immigrants in France was based on class and an awareness that immigrants represented 'the oppressed in France'.³⁸

Tensions between the MTA and French trade unions

In this section I examine the relationship between French and immi-

grant workers, often seen as one of conflict, and the way it has influenced union strategies in relation to immigration. I then look at the MTA's attitude to and difficult relationship with French trade unions, a discourse that in many respects reflected that of the nationalist movement during the interwar period.

Beyond the political references to socialism underlying the ideology of unions such as the CGT, the CFDT or the more reformist stance of *Force ouvrière*, the subtext in trade union discourse could also be rooted in nationalism.³⁹ The CGT's pro-assimilationist agenda in the colonies during the late 1930s (particularly during the years of the *Front populaire*), and *Force ouvrière*'s ambiguous position during the Algerian war are good illustrations of this.⁴⁰ As Lemarquis points out:

The Algerian war highlights the stumbling block that a trade union carrying the demands of a working-class increasingly conditioned at a national or state level is faced with. Its struggle is influenced by a political life that is also national and it can only tolerate the actions of immigrants within its own field of gravity.⁴¹

The Algerian war highlighted the contrast between French trade unions' nationalism and their stance on immigration. To assess the MTA's difficult relationship with the unions, the ambivalent nature of nationalism and its relationship to racism needs briefly to be discussed. As Balibar and Wallerstein argue, 'this interlocking [of nationalism and racism] is linked to the circumstances within which nation-states ... tried to control population movements, and to the very production of the "people" as a political community superior to class divisions.'⁴² The tensions arising from the sense of belonging, above all to a 'people' rather than to a class, was one of the key obstacles to the MTA's attempt to create a broad solidarity based on class that would encompass both French and immigrant workers. Large unions and left-wing parties were the locus of such tensions in the 1970s, just as they had been during the interwar period.⁴³ Trade unions argued they found it difficult to reconcile the often contradictory interests of French and immigrant workers.⁴⁴

There had been no significant improvement in immigrants' rights at the workplace since the interwar period. Until the mid-1970s, at least, non-EEC workers were not allowed to manage or administer a union and the position of union delegate was open only to those who

could read and write French. This condition, which the law of 11 July 1975 partly abolished, excluded almost 70 per cent of immigrants from positions in trade unions.⁴⁵ In effect, legislation deprived most immigrants of union representation and, as in other areas such as employment, housing, social rights and professional training, 'legally or *de facto*, the whole French institutional framework accepts the discrimination, segregation and isolation of immigrants.'⁴⁶

In that context, unions like the CGT and CFDT tried to incorporate immigrant workers as members, which echoed the CGTU's policy of recruiting colonial and other immigrants to its ranks. The third national conference on immigration, which the CGT organized in November 1972, set out the main lines of its policy on immigrants. The trade union adopted a number of measures and fundamental principles that emphasized its desire to recognize immigrants as an integral part of the working class whose rights and demands should be incorporated into the CGT's programme.⁴⁷

The resolutions the CFDT adopted at its 36th congress in June 1973 emphasized that the fight for equality and battle against discrimination, racism and colonialism were priorities for the union. Unlike the CGT, the CFDT acknowledged the immigrants' involvement in the conflicts at Perranoya and Renault as further proof of their maturity in social conflicts.⁴⁸ The CFDT called for a review of the structures put in place within the union to deal with immigrants because its *Secrétariat des travailleurs immigrés* was deemed inefficient.

In a sociopolitical context that excluded many immigrants from union involvement and where trade unions did not always cater to their needs, the emergence of the MTA marked a significant shift in the way Maghrebis expressed their discontent and demands in the workplace. In the 1970s, French unions saw the development of such an ethnically based, autonomous organization as a threat. Trade union accusations about the Maghrebis' lack of political motivation and experience in union activities were not always founded. Obviously, North African labour relations and political practices did not necessarily equip Maghrebi migrants with the appropriate political techniques and traditions to fight for their rights in a Western industrial environment, but North African migrants did have some historical experience of protest at the workplace. The Algerian nationalist movement had been closely linked with the CGTU from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, and North African migrant workers had taken part in strikes and other actions in the workplace and in

demonstrations from the interwar period to the 1970s.⁴⁹ Furthermore, through their struggle for independence on both sides of the Mediterranean, many Maghrebis had developed a political consciousness and immigration to France played a key role in this process as early as the interwar period. In fact, the MTA argued that the politicization of the Maghrebi community was anchored in its role in the movement for Algerian independence: ‘The suffering and struggles of Arab workers within colonialist metropolitan France, through strikes in factories, armed action and especially through the large-scale demonstrations of Arab workers (Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans) in 1961 constitute an important contribution to the Algerian people’s liberation movement.’⁵⁰

The political awareness developed during the interwar period was further reinforced by what the MTA saw as a crucial sociopolitical phenomenon – May 1968.⁵¹ The events of that year saw the establishment of links between French students and workers, left-wing and anarchist organizations, foreign workers and students, and a significant number of immigrants became involved in strike action.⁵² As Gastaut argues, ‘It was as a consequence of the May crisis that, at the beginning of the 1970s, campaigns initiated by immigrants – who were more confident because they were better supported and more politicized after the Revolution – were organized.’⁵³ Indeed, the involvement of Maghrebi immigrant workers in the events of May 1968 was one of the inspirations behind the creation of a sociopolitical movement whose ideology was grounded in its belief in autonomy of action and which gave primacy to militants over structures:

As early as May 1968, Arab workers had taken part in the protest movement and were at the forefront of action in occupied factories; the wind of May had spread to the Arab community and, during the years 1968 to 1970, struggles developed throughout France, especially in workers’ hostels in an attempt to have decent living conditions and basic freedoms in their home.⁵⁴

The MTA’s determination to build on these past struggles and develop as an autonomous force led to strains and conflicts with French trade unions reminiscent of those that marked the ENA–PPA relationship in the interwar period. However, the movement did make a clear

distinction between the CGT and CFDT in the 1970s. The CGT was openly hostile to the MTA, which it accused of dividing the working class. The Maghrebi movement, on the other hand, accused the trade union of refusing to support the hunger strike movement and of opposing immigrants' initiatives in the workplace. The strike at the Peugeot-Cycles factory epitomized the strains that existed between the two organizations in the 1970s. The workers, who demanded better pay and working conditions, decided to go on strike despite the unions' objections. The MTA argued that the CGT, which had close links with the PCF, was anxious to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible. This was so as not to jeopardize the chances of the communist candidate (Paganelli) at the local elections. As a result, the strike action was a relative failure.⁵⁵

While the MTA's relationship with the CGT was always tense, it believed its disputes with the CFDT were not fundamental and that 'in the CFDT, we can always find people who agree with us'.⁵⁶ The relationship between the MTA and CFDT in the first half of the 1970s was, in that sense, comparable with that between the ENA and CGTU until the early 1930s. Indeed, the CFDT offered the MTA tactical help and support on a number of occasions. For example, the MTA sometimes used its premises in the Place des Martyrs de la Résistance in Aix for meetings.⁵⁷ Moreover, a number of hunger strikes, such as those by three Tunisians on 30 December 1972 in rue Montholon, Paris, took place in the union's building.⁵⁸ MTA militants also participated in some CFDT political meetings, such as the one organized in November 1972 in Château-Rouge to discuss the implications of the Marcellin-Fontanet circular.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, the MTA was often critical of the CFDT. It regarded its stand against the Marcellin-Fontanet circular as inefficient because, in its view, it had failed to take into account the real needs of workers: 'their [the CFDT] starting point was not the needs of the masses as they were expressed in life but in texts: the *Journal Officiel* [official government publication] received ideas, and bureaucratic decisions.'⁶⁰ In a document produced on 5 May 1975, the MTA also accused the CFDT of organizing smear campaigns against the movement and some illegal immigrants in Montpellier who wanted to legalize their situation. It marked a clear shift from their previously close relationship, and the MTA interpreted the campaigns as a sign that the CFDT was, in a way, supporting the repressive policy of the government:

The Executive Commission [EC] of the CFDT, as well as its Languedoc-Roussillon branch, have just taken responsibility for distributing a false and insulting report on the struggle of seasonal and illegal workers in France. ... What the EC has feared most during the last two years' struggle against the *Circulaire Marcellin-Fontanet* is that immigrant workers organize themselves in an autonomous way on the basis of their own needs and, from this foundation, build unity with French workers.⁶¹

From the mid-1970s on, the MTA expressed a desire to become more independent of the CFDT, for history and recent confrontations had justified its mistrust of unions. It rejected French trade union policy on immigration as a 'pseudo-unity of workers which leads to paternalistic unity with the wog'.⁶² This type of discourse echoed that of the ENA-PPA during the second half of the 1930s after their split with the PCF/CGTU became more evident.

Clashes between Maghrebi immigrants and unions at Renault plants in 1970, and in the Chausson factory in 1971, where CGT activists tore down the Palestinian flags Maghrebi militants had brought, were seen as further proof that unions were hostile to the movement's pro-Palestinian policy.⁶³ Subsequent events showed the unions attempting to take over militant immigrant-initiated actions. Even though the CGT initially opposed, then decided rather belatedly to join, the antiracist protest movement in September 1973, it tried nonetheless to dominate it and marginalize the MTA.⁶⁴ The movement's representatives were also prevented from speaking during the political meeting that took place at the trade union centre after the national day of action against racism organized by the CGT, CFDT and FEN on 25 September 1973.⁶⁵ In a letter addressed to Georges Séguéy and Edmond Maire, respective leaders of the CGT and CFDT, the MTA claimed that it was working towards developing a workers' movement and rejected accusations that creating an ethnically-based organization was playing into the hands of racism and dividing workers. The movement's aim was to unite Maghrebi and French workers and 'explain the meaning of our struggle to French workers misled by trade unions and make them understand that the CGT only acted because we did first'.⁶⁶

MTA documents also show the extent to which the movement was itself divided over its attitude to unions. In a meeting of 24 January

1974, MTA delegates from all over France emphasized the importance of developing as an autonomous force and accused unions of having systematically opposed immigrants' autonomous action.⁶⁷ The movement faced a dilemma: should Maghrebi immigrants develop their autonomous movement within or outside union structures? Because the MTA had not developed nationwide structures capable of founding a completely independent movement in the workplace, the participation of MTA militants in the CFDT presented a number of material benefits, just as the ENA had benefited from material and financial help from the CGTU until the early 1930s. For the movement, Maghrebis' involvement in the CFDT could also facilitate the establishment of a grass-roots front of solidarity between 'Arab' and French workers and bypass the trade union's leadership. As one delegate acknowledged:

The MTA must fight on all fronts ... we can use the CFDT acronym and their money to spread our ideas. ... We would [need] to turn the CFDT into a trade union that reflects our aspirations; we don't care about Maire and the CFDT; we want the grass-roots to take charge of it.⁶⁸

However, the position the MTA adopted failed to resolve the contradiction between its desire to develop as an autonomous force on the one hand and to obtain the benefits that involvement in an established union could bring on the other. The movement decided nevertheless to 'come to a compromise with the trade unions' even though it was aware that its own aims often differed from theirs and that every important initiative it had taken had been initially opposed by them, only to be appropriated later.⁶⁹

To conclude, it appears that although the MTA recognized a distinction between the CFDT and CGT, it believed that they were just another conservative structure stopping the creation of a united front of French and immigrant workers against racism. To some extent, the MTA's complex and often difficult relationship with the CGT, and to a lesser degree with the CFDT, reflected that between the ENA-PPA and French trade unions during the interwar period.

In a society where immigrants felt marginalized, the MTA, even more than the ENA-PPA, saw the workplace as a key setting for immigrant socialization and protest action. The MTA did not want to see unions, which it viewed as paternalistic and motivated by an

agenda that often differed from its own, taking over its actions, demands and experience. As a political organization, it claimed that it should be inspired by the ‘masses’ or the rank and file. This put it at odds with traditionally hierarchical and *dirigiste* unions. Also important was the MTA’s realization that the trade unions could not address a number of issues relating to immigrants’ home countries and to the Arab world, which were particularly relevant to Maghrebis in France. The *amicales*, which presented themselves as the Maghrebis’ natural representatives in France (a claim the MTA was to challenge), shared the MTA’s belief that to represent North Africans legitimately political groupings had to be ethnically based.

The relationship between the MTA and the amicales

After 1962, the ADAF (*Amicale des Algériens en France*, later to become the *Amicale des Algériens en Europe*, ADAE) replaced the FLN structures in France that had more or less taken over from Messali Hadj’s MNA during the early years of the Algerian war. The Tunisian and Moroccan governments also set up official *amicales* to represent and ‘control’ their nationals in France and to promote the policies of their respective governments. Their hierarchical and rigid political structures reflected the one-party systems of their home countries.

The *amicales* interpreted the emergence of the MTA – an organization that wanted to see immigrants return to their home country with what it called ‘a small revolutionary capital’ – as a direct threat to the political order in the Maghreb. Although the MTA openly declared that its position was to ignore rather than fight the *amicales*, their relationship was tense and difficult.⁷⁰ To some extent, this reflected the relationship that existed between the ENA–PPA and North African reformist organizations during the interwar period.

The wave of racist murders in Marseilles in August–September 1973 highlighted the ambiguousness of this official organization’s position. The ADAE both condemned racist aggression and called on Maghrebi immigrants to ignore provocation.⁷¹ During the national day of action against racism on 14 September, the *amicales* tried to restrain the strike while officially supporting it. ADAE militants in Barbès, for instance, could be seen distributing leaflets backing the workers while at the same time advising immigrants not to go on strike and ripping up MTA posters.⁷² In the workplace, in workers’ hostels and in the street, this strategy was also applied to most conflicts and actions involving Maghrebi immigrants during the 1970s. The fact that the

amicales' main concern was to act as official mouthpieces for their home governments while keeping an eye on their nationals in France, coupled with their failure to represent the Maghrebis' real concerns and interests and fight for their rights, may explain the emergence of autonomous movements such as the MTA. As a social movement, it was able to shape a political discourse and strategy independent of established sociopolitical structures. The movement's emphasis on developing a democratic organization based on the needs of the 'masses' and its rejection of all forms of paternalism appealed to many immigrants who felt segregated and marginalized by the state, as well as abandoned by the unions and *amicales* that were supposed to defend their rights.

The MTA encapsulated the dual nature of Maghrebi migrant experience, anchored as it was in both France and North Africa. Like the ENA-PPA before it, the MTA was where immigrants could express their longing for rights in France and question the undemocratic political situation in their homeland. In the social context of the 1970s, this was a role the *amicales* could not play, marked as they were by a rigid organizational structure, close links with North African authoritarian regimes and a political programme that failed to reflect the complex democratic aspirations of North African workers.

The MTA, by contrast, claimed to be a mass 'revolutionary movement' of the Arab left with the ambitious and ultimately self-defeating aim of mobilizing Maghrebis against reformist and reactionary forces. During a training course for militants it organized in Paris on 6 and 7 July 1974, the movement emphasized the need to prepare for 'confrontation to break the encirclement (reformism, Arab *amicales*, traditional parties)'.⁷³ Like the ENA-PPA, the 'reactionary forces' the MTA saw as threatening North African workers were not structured along ethnic lines. Indeed, it perceived the *amicales* as part of the oppressive forces the Maghrebis should fight, and as 'repressive structures in France ... that connive with the reactionary authorities'.⁷⁴ During the 1975 'rent strikes' that took place in some SONACOTRA hostels, the MTA condemned the attempt by the *Amicale des algériens* and the Algerian consul to stop the residents' protest action and criticized them for siding with the management and the Communist Party.⁷⁵ The MTA saw the role of the *amicales* as central to France's repressive policy against immigrants: 'One of the aspects of the new policy of repression of immigration is the greater intervention of repressive national apparatuses (*amicales* and Neo-Destour) that openly attacked the Arab workers' initiatives against racism.'⁷⁶

The MTA saw the *amicales* not only as serving the interests of France's exploitative order by actively opposing the immigrants' antiracist protest, but also as part of the North African governments' repressive apparatus: 'the arrest by the police of immigrant workers returning to their home country, and the creation of an "Amicale des Marocains" to control them in France, form part of a movement of anti-popular repression led by the Moroccan regime.'⁷⁷

In its documentation, the MTA blamed the *amicales* rather than the individuals who belonged to them for their obstructionist role in the conflicts in which the movement engaged. This, so the MTA argued, was because these official organizations were composed of Maghrebi workers who were somehow duped by propaganda, but would one day rally to their cause.

In 1970s France, where the MTA often compared immigrants' experience to that of Maghrebis under colonial rule, the *amicales*' 'collaboration' with France's 'racist and imperialist' project was evocative of the divisions and betrayals among Maghrebis that had marked their past struggles. The MTA questioned the legitimacy of the revolutionary and anti-colonial credentials of the *amicales* and, by extension, of North African governments. Reflecting the ENA-PPA denunciation of pro-assimilationist North African organizations, the MTA accused the *amicales* of being mere servants of a racist neo-colonial and neo-imperialist order. They argued that 'with the end of the Algerian war, there was no longer anything to unite the isolated struggles of Arab workers in France.' This enabled them to portray themselves as the true holders of revolutionary and anti-colonial values and principles.⁷⁸

The MTA's Arab revolution in the home country

Much of the MTA's discourse and action focused on the sociopolitical situation in the Maghreb and reveals the extent to which its contentious relationship with North African governments and the fact that its revolutionary project included North African immigrants' home countries shaped its sense of nation. To some extent, this resembled the ENA-PPA's political project that aimed to defeat imperialism in North Africa.

The MTA constantly condemned the Maghreb regimes (particularly Morocco and Tunisia) for being reactionary and in the pay of Western countries, and called on its militants to fight 'attempts to crush Arab revolution in our countries'.⁷⁹ 'Reactionary regimes' in

North Africa were criticized for furthering the interests of Western neo-imperialism and for betraying North Africans who had suffered during the colonial era, and made so many sacrifices during the fight for independence.⁸⁰

The MTA's desire to mobilize Maghrebi immigrants and export its revolutionary message to the home countries was a source of concern for the authoritarian regimes in North Africa. Indeed, like the interwar colonial authorities, they feared that the politicization of their emigration might backfire on them. This was probably one reason why Algerian President Houari Boumédiène decided to stop emigration to France in 1973.⁸¹ However, the MTA seemed to be more critical of Hassan II and Bourguiba than of Boumédiène, who claimed to be the president of a 'socialist' Algeria.⁸²

To achieve its aim, the MTA tried to reinforce the link between Maghrebi workers in France and revolutionary groups of the Arab left in North Africa. In 1975, this is what Arfaoui Béchir, a Tunisian migrant worker and MTA activist, emphasized in his declaration protesting against his expulsion from France. He stated that 'we, immigrants, need autonomous organizations for immigrant workers to organize our struggles ... and maintain links with the struggles of workers in our home country.'⁸³ The development of communication channels and the collection of information on the situation in their home countries were therefore perceived as crucial, given the unreliability, as in colonial times, of the state-controlled media. The minutes of the *Conseil National des Travailleurs en Lutte*, which took place on 8 October 1972, show that participants were aware of the difficulty of getting information. Collaborative work between *Fedai* (one of the MTA's publications) and *Massira*, written in Morocco by the Arab left, was seen as a way of addressing this problem.⁸⁴

Contacts in Morocco had also been strengthened since the expulsion of some of that country's militants from France.⁸⁵ The MTA emphasized 'the need to establish closer links ... with friends in Algeria and with those who were deported recently'. The movement's national meeting of 24 January 1974 welcomed and discussed a detailed report from a militant called Driss about his imprisonment, the contacts he had established in Morocco and the political situation there.⁸⁶ These contacts established between repatriated militants⁸⁷ and other revolutionaries were reminiscent of those that developed when interwar Messalist militants were deported to North Africa.

The regular trips Maghrebi immigrants made to North Africa were seen as the most efficient way for supporters to develop links with the Arab left there. Like the ENA–PPA, therefore, one of the MTA’s aims was to exploit some of the characteristics of its militants’ experience in France to further its revolutionary aims in the home country.⁸⁸

The MTA also focused on some key sociopolitical issues in the Maghreb, such as the crisis in the Western Sahara. In the 1970s, the future of this territory, colonized by the Spanish and rich in natural resources, was uncertain. The Moroccan population widely supported Hassan II’s claim to the Western Sahara and his hostility to a referendum on self-determination that could lead to independence. Tunisia and the United States, which feared the creation of another non-aligned country, backed him.⁸⁹ Algeria and Libya, on the other hand, opposed Morocco’s ambitions and supported the Polisario Front, the pro-independence political and military formation in the Western Sahara.⁹⁰ The MTA denounced Morocco’s imperialist campaign, which aimed, through conflicts like that of the Western Sahara, to prevent the creation of a ‘Maghreb of the people’. It argued that neo-imperialism sharpened rivalries between North African states and divided the people of the Maghreb by fostering ‘regional chauvinism’, which aimed to counter the desire of the ‘Arabs’ to establish an Arab nation.⁹¹ In that respect, the movement’s discourse was at odds with that of the ENA–PPA during the interwar period, for the latter saw the establishment of independent nation-states in North Africa as the best way of ensuring the liberation of the ‘Arab people’.

Delegates at the MTA’s national meeting on 24 January 1974 reiterated their support for the Polisario Front⁹² and criticized the Mauritanian and Moroccan regimes for their previous ‘connivance with Spanish fascism’. This, to some extent, mirrored the ENA–PPA’s criticism of North African reformist organizations for serving the interest of French imperialism in the interwar period. MTA delegates denounced King Hassan II for obeying orders from American imperialism to persecute Saharan and Moroccan revolutionaries.⁹³ They also accused him of exploiting the Moroccan people’s ‘natural’ longing for reunification with the people of the Western Sahara to further the regime’s reactionary aims:

The Polisario Front leads an armed struggle to free the Sahara from the colonial yoke and tries to foil the manoeuvres and the reactionary and colonialist liquidation attempts [*sic*]. It remains

to be seen whether the card played by Hassan II the torturer and his partner Ould Dadda can ... indeed save two puppet and wavering regimes and maintain the people in a state of confusion. Which revolutionary position will, on the one hand, defeat colonialist manoeuvres, and, on the other, further and amplify the class struggle and the armed movement in Mauritania, in Morocco and in the Sahara[?].⁹⁴

The MTA's efforts to fight 'neo-imperialism' on both sides of the Mediterranean contributed to the development of a twofold strategy. On one hand, it wanted to support the class struggle in North Africa as well as the military opposition to regimes it deemed illegitimate. On the other, it insisted that the Arab revolution in North Africa was intrinsically linked to the involvement of North African immigrants in the French class struggle.

An awareness of their experience being *within* the framework of the working-class and class struggle in France, but at the same time being *outside* that framework, belonging to the 'Arab people' working for the 'Arab revolution', influenced the MTA militants' sense of identity. These two positions were seen not as contradictory but as complementary. Belonging to the working-class in France as immigrants did not mean they were assimilated as French workers. They thought that working-class solidarity could be expressed in a way that involved all workers on equal terms and that it could be consistent with respect for national and cultural differences. The MTA's discourse did not, however, imply that both sides of Maghrebi identity were given equal importance; as with the ENA-PPA in the interwar period, emphasis in the MTA could shift from one to the other depending on the circumstances and challenges it faced. When its discourse focused on the need to intensify its efforts to 'spread the Arab revolution', it could keep its distance from the French national context, and from the broad-based universalist principles that informed its vision of class-struggle, to develop more 'ethnically-marked' responses:

We do not consider ourselves as being integrated with the French workers. We belong to the Arab world and our action is defined in relation to the revolution that is developing in the Arab world. One day, the Arabs who are here, in France, will return home with a small revolutionary capital.⁹⁵

The MTA, the Arab left and the Palestinian cause

To assess how the MTA interpreted and fought Zionism, I shall now look at the role the Palestinian revolution played in mobilizing North African immigrants in France. In 1970, the repression of Palestinians in Jordan during what came to be called Black September, led to the creation of the Palestine committees in France, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, merged to become the MTA in June 1972. The movement saw the Palestinian revolution as an example and catalyst for its own liberation struggle.⁹⁶ In that sense, the Palestinian struggle played an even more crucial role in the MTA's than in the ENA-PPA's discourse. Clearly, the latter interpreted the oppression of Palestinians at the hands of Zionism as an important illustration of colonial oppression against Arabs outside North Africa, and interwar nationalists certainly called for solidarity with Palestinians, but this cause was not central to the movement's discourse and ideology.

The idea of Arab unity first surfaced in what is now Syria at the beginning of the twentieth century, before spreading to the Middle East, and the Palestinian question soon came to play a fundamental role in this ideology.⁹⁷ Even though the governments of independent North African states and nationalist movements fighting for independence in the 1970s defined their countries as Arab, culturally and linguistically, a nation-state-focused nationalism seemed to inform their political outlook. By contrast, organizations of the Arab left, like the MTA, which opposed the regimes in North Africa, considered that even though national movements had defeated traditional colonialism, they had not as yet been able to find solutions to underdevelopment, Zionism and neo-imperialism. For them, only Arab unity could enable them to challenge these forces and Palestinian resistance constituted a rallying point for the Arab world.⁹⁸ On the whole, therefore, the Arab left shared the views of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).⁹⁹

For most of the MTA's North African activists, the Palestinian revolution was a fundamental source of inspiration. The MTA saw its support for the Palestinian struggle as an inherent part of the 'struggle for national liberation of Arab peoples' and as a humanizing process that enabled North African immigrants to regain their 'right to speak out'.¹⁰⁰ This cause provided MTA militants, unlike the ENA-PPA ones before them, with a means of regaining their dignity and countering racism, exploitation and the stigmas attached to their condition in France. Hamza Bouziri highlighted this on denouncing his expulsion from France in 1971:

Thousands of Arab workers in France are the victims of threats, intimidation, deportation and murder. If the enemy strikes today, it is because it has realized that we are starting to organize ourselves to reject slavery, to regain our dignity that has been trampled over by the French bourgeoisie. We refuse to be treated like ‘wogs’; the Palestinian people who took up arms to recover their dignity are showing us the way. ... We Arabs have been holding our heads high again since, (when) last September, thousands of fedayeen died fighting against Hussein the butcher. We organized ourselves in *Comités de soutien à la révolution palestinienne* because for us, fedayeen are the incarnation of the struggle of the Arab people.¹⁰¹

The Palestinian revolution reflected Maghrebi immigrants’ own struggle. It created a favourable terrain for mobilizing Maghrebis through the Palestinian revolution’s support committees (renamed Palestine committees in 1971). In these committees, Maghrebis could express their support for Palestine, discuss issues that affected their own experience in France and develop antiracist strategies. The Palestine example was often brought up in speeches, discussions and films at the time of the *sans-papiers*’ hunger strikes and at various other strikes and demonstrations. For example, Maghrebi picketers outside the Chausson factory in 1971 carried a Palestinian flag, and Renault workers gathered outside their plant to express their support for Palestine following the repression of Palestinians in Israel in July 1972.¹⁰²

However, unlike the ENA–PPA, the MTA’s discourse went further than merely expressing support for the Palestinian cause. It compared the Maghrebi experience in France with that of the Palestinians. During immigrant strikes in the SONACOTRA *foyers* in the mid-1970s, a number of films were shown on immigration and on Palestine, and discussions focused on the notion that ‘[our] immigrants’ struggle is identical to that of the Palestinian people.’¹⁰³ In 1973, the MTA interpreted the *sans-papiers*’ hunger strike in Ménilmontant as consistent with the aims of the Palestinian struggle.¹⁰⁴ The significance of the Palestinian revolution for the MTA, the fact that it influenced much of its discourse and action, thus differentiated it from the ENA–PPA. The Palestinian struggle was also seen as symbolizing the fight of the dominated against the dominant, and it was interpreted as the rallying cry of all oppressed people, whatever their national or ethnic origins. As Hamza Bouziri’s call for unity illustrates: ‘all of us, French, Arabs,

West Indians, Spanish, Portuguese, have the same enemies and lead the same struggle: for justice and dignity. If one of us dies, ten of us will rise as in Palestine.¹⁰⁵

The MTA castigated Zionism as a racist ideology that had to be fought on all fronts. This interpretation was reminiscent of the one North African nationalists developed in the 1920s and 1930s, but it differed in that it saw Zionism as closely linked to the racism affecting immigrants' lives in France. In an article denouncing Israel's repression of Palestinians, *La Voix des travailleurs arabes* of 1 January 1973 referred to the Israeli prime minister as 'the terrorist leader Golda Meir', and called on French and Maghrebi workers to demonstrate during her visit to Paris. The article also drew on universalist terminology when it asserted: 'We, justice and freedom-loving Arab and French workers, will not tolerate this criminal.'¹⁰⁶ In announcing his decision to start a hunger strike, Saïd Bouziri argued that his support for the Palestinian cause was the main reason for the French authorities' decision to expel him, and added that 'this measure is part of a campaign led by racists and Zionists'.¹⁰⁷

Another distinction between the MTA and ENA–PPA was the former's argument that the Israeli government's Zionist policies were at odds with the anti-Zionist views of many Jews.¹⁰⁸ That in Israel, Jews who supported the Palestinians were also the victims of Zionist repression proved to the MTA that 'Zionism, which is based on anti-Arab racism ... also oppresses Jews.'¹⁰⁹ In France, it also welcomed the support of Patrick Farbiaz, a French worker of Jewish origin who started a hunger strike in sympathy with that of Saïd Bouziri and who, in his declaration, compared the Zionist oppression against Palestinians with the suffering of his family in Nazi concentration camps.¹¹⁰ Universalist and antiracist principles therefore consistently marked the movement's discourse on Palestine and on Jews, which never referred to Jews in derogatory or racist terms. In that sense, this discourse differed from the ENA–PPA's, which did not make an explicit distinction between Zionism and Jewishness. Their discourse on Palestine and Jews could sometimes shift from a predominantly universalist perspective to adopt, in certain circumstances, a racist stance, as the ENA's reference to the events in Constantine in the summer of 1934 shows.¹¹¹

For the MTA, Zionist violence was not limited to Palestine and the Middle East; it also affected 'Arabs' in France and in the rest of Europe, as the following quotation shows.

Once again, the Zionist services have cravenly murdered our Algerian brother Mohamed Boudia on 28 June at 11.00 a.m. in Paris, by planting a bomb in his car. ... After the assassination of Mohamed Hamchari and Bassil Koubeissi, he is the third brother to have died on French territory, for a just cause. And the French government continues to protect the Zionist and fascist murderers. ... We call on all our Arab brothers, all our French friends, all those who want to counter fascism to join us.¹¹²

It could be argued that the MTA's discourse on Zionism and Palestine was more complex and developed than had been the case with the ENA-PPA. Unlike the latter, the 1970s' movement viewed the situation in Palestine in two ways. On the one hand there was the conflict in Palestine itself between progressive revolutionary forces and reactionary oppression,¹¹³ which the MTA held up as an example to inspire Maghrebi immigrants in their own struggle. On the other hand there was the fight against neo-imperialism with Zionism regarded as its agent.

In Europe, the MTA argued that Zionism used colonial racism as a tool to further its aims and prevent Arab unity:

Zionism has found in France, and in Europe, ideological, political and military bases for its development. It draws part of its strength from the anti-Arab racism that has grown in France, in lost colonial wars to set the population against the national movements of the Arab peoples and the Palestinian people.¹¹⁴

This dual interpretation of the political map, with its marked universalist and anti-colonial tone, shaped the movement's political discourse. Its call to unite all workers against 'the real plot hatched by American imperialism, the Arab states and Israel' was presented as a revolutionary struggle against slavery and for freedom.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

To conclude, it could be argued that for MTA militants, Arab-ness had more to do with their condition as Maghrebi immigrant workers and with anchoring their sociopolitical experience in the world order of the 1970s than with a sense of ethnic belonging. Being tied to or aspiring to be tied to nation-states was viewed as obsolete. The political

activities of nation-specific political groups opposing authoritarian regimes in North Africa had limited influence, from the 1960s onwards, on either Maghrebi immigrants or the political situation in the home country. As this analysis of the MTA has shown, new forms of political engagement, challenging national boundaries and reconciling some of the main concerns of North African immigrants, emerged in the 1970s. For the MTA, labelling North Africans as 'Arabs' in France and being aware that the Palestinians' experience epitomized their own, probably explains why the 'Palestinian revolution' played a far more important role in mobilizing Maghrebi immigrants in the 1970s than it had done in the interwar period.

For the MTA, neo-imperialism permeated not only Western nation-states and the Zionist state of Israel but also the reactionary postcolonial governments in North Africa. These had betrayed the legacy of the Algerian war of independence and the anti-colonial struggles of Tunisia and Morocco. In this context, the MTA portrayed itself as the heir to the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist tradition and tried to establish links with the Arab left in the Maghreb to further its revolutionary aims. Within France, it also affected workers' organizations that systematically opposed the MTA's fight against racism, such as the CGT. Even though MTA militants were closer to the CFDT, most trade unions attempted to stop North Africans developing their own autonomous movement. This complex relationship with unions echoes that of the ENA-PPA in the interwar years.

In its discourse, which was reminiscent of the ENA-PPA's vilification of reformist North African organizations in colonial times, the MTA portrayed the *amicales* as reactionary organizations. The *amicales'* role, it argued, was not so much about championing the rights of migrants as about controlling them, promoting the political view of illegitimate regimes in North Africa and serving the interests of Western states.

To fight what it regarded as neo-imperialism, the MTA developed a universalist discourse rooted in class loyalty, in contrast to the ENA-PPA's anti-imperialist discourse inspired by universalism and religion rather than class. Furthermore, unlike the ENA-PPA, with a view to opening a solid front with other immigrants, French workers, intellectuals and the Catholic Church, the MTA adopted more proactive strategies in the workplace, in the *foyers* and on behalf of the *sans-papiers*. However, despite some successes in its fight against racist

violence and in helping the *sans-papiers*, the movement failed to mobilize French public opinion consistently against what it saw as imperialist oppression. After years of pressure from hostile forces the MTA gradually disbanded as a political organization in 1977. Sustained French police and government repression of its militants, the CGT's opposition to its autonomous position, and attacks from *amicales* controlled by North African regimes hostile to MTA activities (autonomous mobilization of Maghrebi workers in France and denunciation of authoritarian rule in North Africa) largely contributed to the end of the movement. The MTA also failed to make any significant impact on the politics of North Africa. However, its political action proved central to the protection of the rights of Maghrebi immigrants in the 1970s. It also acted as a '*porteur de mémoire*', as a crucial link between the autonomous political struggle of North African migrants in the colonial period and the mobilization of so-called second-generation Maghrebi militants from the 1980s onwards in France.

Conclusion

We are still treated as people of immigrant origin. I belong to the third generation. Will my son be told that he belongs to the fourth? When will this end? ... Whatever we do, we always feel that we remain second-class citizens.¹

In this book I have set out to analyse the complex processes by which the North African immigrant population was able, from the interwar period to the 1970s, to construct a powerful and consistent political tradition in France. I have given an account of the historical and ideological development of the Messalist movement (ENA–PPA) during the colonial period and the political mobilization of North Africans in the MTA during the 1970s, and have examined their concepts of ethnicity, national identity and nationalism, seeking to understand the complex interaction and strains that existed between them. I have placed the actions and discourse of the ENA–PPA, which has too often been assessed as part of North African politics and history,² within the broader context of Maghrebi immigration in twentieth-century France. By analysing some of the ways in which Maghrebis' sense of identity in a diaspora, was constructed within the two organizations, I highlighted some consistencies and differences within their discourse. Finally, I placed Maghrebis' experience in France in its historical context, countering the received political, media and popular view that it is a recent phenomenon and 'problem'. I show that the 'diasporization' (to use Hall's term)³ of North African immigrants has been accompanied by an empowering process of politicization. This has led to the formation of an original political tradition among Maghrebis in France that gives the lie to the view that Maghrebis' absence from the political sphere and decision-making processes is due to the immaturity of a community lacking in political tradition, and more prone to instinctive than to coherent action, rather than to its marginal status in society.

For both nationalist movements in the colonial and postcolonial periods, racism epitomized the various forms of oppression to which

North Africans were subjected. They believed there was a contrast between the French state, which they considered imperialist and racist, and the French people who were the holders of revolutionary legitimacy. This meant that the boundary between ‘us’ (Maghrebis) and ‘them’ (the French people) was negotiated positively. The problem with their universalist discourses was their argument that racism somehow conflicted with the universalist values that inspired them and the French people, when in fact racism and universalism are linked and affect each other from the inside.⁴ Furthermore, the ENA–PPA thought that racism had created a chasm between the French people and Muslims and, as such, constituted an obstacle to their emancipation. It viewed the violence marking the relationship between colonizer and colonized as rooted in racism. For its militants, racism dehumanized the ‘*indigène*’ and was posited as a justification for emancipation from French rule. However, the ENA’s anti-Jewish rhetoric during the events of Constantine in 1934 shows that it too could play the racist card.

The MTA saw postcolonial racism as inextricably linked to colonial racism, arguing that it affected and pervaded all aspects of Maghrebis’ experience in France, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and was at the core of neo-imperialism. It highlighted the coherent, organized and systemic nature of racism, from the individual through racist organizations to the higher echelons of the state. Antiracism, therefore, became the main focus of its discourse and action. Support for, and identification with the Palestinian struggle became an inspiration for its actions, each of which was seen as contributing to the fight against racism and the establishment of multiethnic fraternity. The movement developed and sometimes combined several strategies to combat racism such as ethnically-based violence against racists, the promotion of actions for ethnically-based reform and multiethnic protest. The latter strategy led to the creation of the CDVDTI, a cross-ethnic antiracist organization supporting the immigrants’ struggle.

While both movements had complex and tense relationships with French mainstream left-wing organizations and unions, extreme-left organizations (the POI for the ENA–PPA and Maoist groups for the MTA) provided more consistent support because of their often common ideological stance. The French Communist Party created the ENA in 1926 and the CGTU supported it. Tensions soon appeared, however, between the two organizations until the French government banned the ENA in 1929. It was re-established in 1933, but its

relationship with the communists remained strained throughout that decade, particularly during the *Front populaire* era when the PCF embraced the French Socialist Party, the SFIO's reformist colonial policy. As for the MTA, it faced constant opposition and hostility from the CGT, which feared the creation of an ethnically-based union. Its relationship with the CFDT was more constructive as it occasionally provided the MTA with tactical support. There were two main reasons why the unions were unable to cater effectively for the specific needs of immigrants. One was their fear of jeopardizing their negotiating position with the government if they supported immigrants' protest actions overtly. The other was the difficulty they had in reconciling the interests of French workers (who could be hostile to immigration) with those of migrant workers. Beyond party politics, however, the ENA-PPA and the MTA managed to attract support from prominent intellectuals and activists on the left.

Both organizations considered the establishment of links with other Maghrebi organizations and immigrant groups to be crucial. Between the wars, the ENA had successfully developed contacts with the Tunisian Neo-Destour and the *Jeunes Marocains* in North Africa, with Tunisian and Moroccan student leaders in France and with Chekib Arslan in Lausanne. It failed, however, to attract more reformist, mainly Algerian, organizations on either side of the Mediterranean. Those moderate political and union leaders whose organizations remained aloof from or hostile to the ENA's nationalist project were criticized for supporting colonialism and betraying the Muslims' cause and religion. Links that had been established with Annamese and black anti-colonial organizations from the ENA's first years were maintained, and common political rallies were organized to build a united front of the colonized. This was demonstrated by their common denunciation of the Ethiopian war in the mid-1930s.

Similarly, the MTA worked with political organizations of the Arab left in North Africa (especially Morocco) and condemned the *amicales* in France for failing properly to defend North Africans' rights, and for serving the interests of imperialism and the illegitimate governments they represented. Furthermore, the movement felt the need for wider multiethnic mobilization among immigrants. Various strikes and protest actions, such as those involving Pakistani and Mauritian immigrants, both inside and outside the workplace, were seen as ideal frameworks within which such solidarity could be built. This was all the more important since many could not express their demands and

concerns effectively through trade unions – until the mid-1970s, foreigners, illegal immigrants and those unable to read or write French were prevented from holding positions in such organizations.

The MTA's ideology was also shaped by its relationship with North African regimes that naturally had no desire to be included in its revolutionary project. The MTA was far more critical of the pro-Western governments in Morocco and Tunisia than it was of the 'socialist' Algerian regime, focusing primarily on King Hassan II's systematic persecution of left-wing Arab organizations and the ill-treatment of political prisoners (including MTA militants expelled from France). It also denounced the King's decision to take control of the Western Sahara and to integrate it into Moroccan territory when Spanish rule ended, and it actively supported the Polisario Front.

What emerges clearly from both movements' discourses is the importance of Palestine as an ideological reference and inspiration for their own political struggles. Between the wars, the ENA–PPA saw it as the most important example of imperialist domination of Arabs outside North Africa. It castigated Zionism as the stalking-horse of British and, by extension, Western imperialism, and denounced Zionist history-based territorial claims that echoed France's own justification for colonial expansion. In the 1970s, the Palestinian struggle played a crucial role in the MTA's birth and political development, which saw Arab resistance in Palestine as an inspiration for the Arab world and a catalyst for their people's liberation.

Ethnicity, identity and nationalism

As this analysis of the ENA–PPA and the MTA shows, the discourses and actions of their militants were rooted in their experience in France and marked by a sense of dispossession, alienation and exile (*'le lieu de l'épreuve'*, as Hirt defines it).⁵ For both organizations, the interplay between ethnicity and the sense of nationhood was at the core of their ideology.

In the case of the ENA–PPA this was defined by what it was not and what it was against. It rejected France as a possible repository of national identity for Muslim Algerians and other North Africans and denounced naturalization as a betrayal of Islam. It aimed, however, to establish an independent nation-state within the French defined borders of the colonial territory. Its sense of nationhood was marked by a discourse relating to the family and kinship (regarded as irreconcilable with French-ness) and by a sense of faithfulness to their

religion. It also developed a dichotomous and somewhat contradictory view of France in which the French people were seen as the legitimate heirs of the revolution and as being at odds with French imperialism and the state. Another contradiction lay in the fact that its concept of an independent Algeria was based on inclusive ideas of democracy, multiculturalism and tolerance (a nation rooted in the political) while their nationalism posited that the Algerian nation should be 'restored' in exclusive terms of ethnicity and difference.

Like the ENA-PPA, the MTA did not see France as a repository of nationality for North Africans. It was, however, disillusioned with the newly independent nation states in North Africa and the revolutionary aim of its militants was to establish an Arab nation encompassing all 'Arab' people, from the Middle East to North Africa.

At the heart of both organizations' views on nation was the concept of ethnicity, and the assertion that all North Africans were Arabs. The ENA-PPA acknowledged the existence of Berbers but still referred to them as 'Arabs'. The nationalists' aim was to create a sense of identity shared by all North African Muslims and to counter the French colonial policy of division between Arabs and Berbers. The MTA, however, did not even recognize the varied ethnic make-up of the Maghrebi people and considered them all to be Arabs.

The markers of kinship that underpinned the sense of ethno-national identity within these two movements could overlap, but could also vary in their emphasis and significance. For the ENA-PPA, Islam constituted the key reference and rallying force shaping the movement's discourse and embodying its national aspirations.⁶ This process of politicization of Islam could be seen as a way of countering the Catholic Church, which, through its proselytizing campaigns among Muslims, was viewed as closely linked to the politics of colonial dispossession and French imperialism. Its aim, the movement argued, was to conquer the sphere of the spiritual, of religious belief, the last dimension of Maghrebis' life that colonialism had not yet controlled.

The MTA saw Christian Churches very differently in the 1970s. Their consistent support for the *sans-papiers* and stand against racism made them natural allies of the movement. However, religion came to play a minor role in its discourse and ideology, with Islam, or rather its visible signs, mainly seen as markers of cultural identity, and traditions sustained in emigration. In contrast to the ENA-PPA, one of the MTA's key frames of reference for kinship and identity was class loyalty. Its militants' sense of belonging to the working-class pervaded

much of their ideology, and establishing solidarity and mobilizing along class lines was seen as the best way of fighting imperialism and racism.

Culture played a central, if differing, role in both movements' construction of ethno-national identity. Their depiction of their culture as authentic and rooted in the distant past hid the fact that it was the result of complex hybrid processes. Visible forms of cultural celebration were encouraged to 'keep traditions alive' in France and challenge the cultural alienation that Maghrebis were experiencing. This approach allowed the nationalists to develop cultural strategies through which to address their concerns and experience, and to sustain their political activity by linking various forms of cultural expression to political events and actions. For the MTA, this translated into a dual process of politicizing culture and culturalizing politics. The ENA–PPA discourse linked its evocations of culture to history and memory, which were important characteristics of its ideology but historically problematic as it focused on the greatness of Arabo–Islamic civilisation and ignored the history of North Africa prior to the Arab conquest. Nonetheless, identifying with a great civilisation provided nationalists with an empowering sense of ethno-national identity and emphasized difference by reinforcing the boundary between 'us' and 'them'. On the other hand, the historical perspective the MTA developed centred mainly on past anti-colonial struggles in North Africa and more particularly in Algeria. Indeed, the Algerian revolution constituted an important point of reference for the organization.

Both movements' discourses on the past were inherently hybrid. They were shaped by contemporary circumstances and aimed to legitimize their political stance and ends. Beyond the ENA–PPA's insistence on the authenticity and uniqueness of its Arabo-Islamic civilization, it appears that the hegemonic terms in which it was couched mirrored France's own sense of civilization – in order to surpass it. In the case of the MTA, the Algerian revolution and the interplay between racism and exploitation in France in the 1970s enabled its militants to make sense of the state of alienation in which they found themselves (and by extension to 'reinterpret' the past). It also enabled them to develop political strategies marked by a conflict between an intra-ethnic dominant discourse and a demotic discourse rooted in inter-ethnic, class-based solidarity.

Maghrebi's political activism in France: the '*porteurs de mémoire*'

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a shift in Maghrebi immigrants' autonomous political activism. Their participation in the events of May

1968, their deeper involvement in trade union activism, the development of pan-Arabism in the international arena and growing opposition to the undemocratic regimes in North Africa contributed to the emergence of alternative political voices. Spurred by the repression of the Palestinians during 'Black September' in 1970, the Palestine committees (which became the MTA in 1972) were formed to support the Palestinian cause. This developed into an important political organization fighting for immigrants' rights and opposing racism and the authoritarian regimes ruling North Africa. The MTA's discourse made explicit references to the political action of Maghrebi immigrants who had fought for Algerian independence in France.

By the late 1970s, a number of activists from the ex-MTA acted as '*porteurs de mémoire*' ('keepers of memory') of the long tradition of political activism among Maghrebi immigrants. The *Sans frontière* militant initiative (1979–85) launched by former MTA militants acted as an important forum for the expression of their past experience. It sought to foster solidarity between immigrant Maghrebi parents and their children and, to some extent, charted the emergence of political and antiracist activism among the so-called 'second generation' in the 1980s, as was shown by the involvement of *Sans frontière* in the marches for equality. The activities of these '*porteurs de mémoire*' have continued to the present day. Associations like *Génériques* in Paris have played an important role in promoting immigrants' rights and preserving their memories and complex history.⁷

This memory work is all the more important as the past remains at the heart of French social and political management of the internal colony of the *banlieues*, often referred to in the media as '*quartiers sensibles*' (sensitive districts) and '*quartiers difficiles*' (difficult districts). As Philippe Bernard argued, the French authorities' discourse on, and actions in the *banlieues* 'can only comfort their residents in their confused but resolute conviction that they are still looked upon as "*indigènes*", that they are citizens only on paper who can be relegated, controlled, provoked and patronized openly.'⁸

Over the last decade, however, new Maghrebi-led political and anti-racist movements in France have sought to relate their experience with that of their forebears to counter discrimination and racism. The *Mouvement de l'immigration et de la banlieue* (MIB), an activist group that developed in the 1990s to fight for immigrants' rights and prevent deportations, declared that the MTA's work in the 1970s had inspired its struggle and linked racism today to colonial oppression and police

violence against immigrants, as in October 1961. Since 1990, militants belonging to *Au nom de la mémoire* (ANM) have sought to mobilize around the history of these events.⁹ Another organization, the *Mouvement des indigènes de la République* interpret discrimination against postcolonial minorities in France within a broad historical framework of colonial oppression.

These emerging memories of the past among Maghrebis have, over the last few years, influenced their perception of themselves as French citizens, and challenged the principle of '*intégration*', which is largely based on the process of forgetting the past. It follows, therefore, that it is only by remembering both France's unresolved relationship with its colonial history and their own past that Maghrebis can find their rightful place in French society.

Notes

Introduction

1. S. Bouamama, 'Nationalité et citoyenneté: le divorce inévitable', in S. Bouamama, A. Cordeiro and M. Roux (eds) *La citoyenneté dans tous ses états: de l'immigration à la nouvelle citoyenneté* (Paris: CIEMI-L'Harmattan, 1992) p. 153.
2. See the Rapport de la Commission consultative des droits de l'homme (2006).
3. Sayad calls those French people of immigrant origin 'the "immigrants" of French nationality'. See A. Sayad, 'L'immigration algérienne en France, une immigration exemplaire', in J. Costa-Lascoux and E. Témine (eds) *Les Algériens en France (génèse et devenir d'une migration)* (Paris: Publisud, 1985) p. 19.
4. M. Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation: immigration, racism and citizenship in modern France*, (London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 70–8.
5. See S. E. Bariki, 'Identité religieuse, identité culturelle en situation immigrée', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 23, 1984, p. 427.
6. For an analysis of the headscarf affairs, see for example F. Gaspard and F. Khosrokhavar, *Le foulard et la république* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1995); and P. Siblot, 'Quand la France se voile la face', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 29, 1990, pp. 361–8.
7. S. Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990) provides an insightful analysis of the close relationship between the PS and SOS-Racisme.
8. For a detailed account of the *marches*, see for example, S. Bouamama, *Dix ans de marche des Beurs, chronique d'un mouvement avorté* (Paris: Epi/Desclée de Brouwer, 1994); and A. Jazouli, *Les années banlieue* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).
9. R. Leveau and C. Wihtol de Wenden, 'La deuxième génération' (*Pouvoirs*, no. 47, 1988) pp. 61–73.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
11. R. Gallissot, 'Un regard sur l'histoire: les générations de l'entre-deux-guerres', *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, vol. 1, no. 2, December 1985, pp. 61–2; E. Mestiri, *L'immigration* (Paris: La Découverte, 1990); and R. Schor, *Histoire de l'immigration en France de la fin du XIXe siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1996) pp. 24–7. See J. Ponty, 'Une intégration difficile: les Polonais en France dans le premier vingtième siècle', *Vingtième Siècle, revue d'histoire*, no. 7, July–September 1987, pp. 51–8 for a study of the difficult 'integration' of Polish immigrants in France.
12. A. Sayad 'Qu'est-ce que l'intégration?' *Hommes et Migrations*, no. 1182, December 1994, p. 9.
13. R. Girardet, 'Autour de la notion de tradition politique', *Pouvoirs*, vol. 42,

- September 1987, p. 6 broadly defines political tradition as ‘any phenomenon of permanence through time of a relatively coherent system of images and representations, memories and behaviours, allegiances and refusals’.
14. See for example Ch.-R. Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France, 1871–1919* (vol. 2, Paris: PUF, 1968); Ch.-R. Ageron (ed.) *L’Algérie des Français* (Paris: Seuil, 1993); R. Aron, *Les origines de la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 1962); B. Droz and E. Lever, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 1954–1962* (Paris: Seuil, 1982); Ch.-A. Julien, *L’Afrique du Nord en marche, nationalisme musulman et souveraineté française* (Paris: Julliard, 1972); M. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I: 1919–1939* (Paris: Editions Paris-Méditerranée, 2003); M. Kaddache and M. Guénanèche, *L’Etoile Nord-Africaine 1926–1937: documents et témoignages pour servir à l’étude du nationalisme algérien* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 1984); M. Kaddache and M. Guénanèche, *Le parti du peuple Algérien 1937–1939, documents et témoignages pour servir à l’étude du nationalisme algérien* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 1985); P. Laffont, *Histoire de la France en Algérie* (Paris: Plon, 1980); R. Letourneau, *Evolution politique de l’Afrique du Nord musulmane, 1920–1961* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962); A. Noushi, *La naissance du nationalisme algérien, 1914–1954* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1962); X. Yacono, *Histoire de la colonisation française* (Paris: PUF, Coll. Que sais-je?, 1969); and X. Yacono, *Histoire de l’Algérie* (Versailles: Editions de l’Atlantique, 1993).
 15. See, for example, A. Cordeiro, *Pourquoi l’immigration en France?* (Paris: OMMC, 1981); A. G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, ‘race’ and ethnicity in contemporary France* (London: Routledge, 1995); A. Jazouli, *L’action collective des jeunes maghrébins de France* (Paris: CIEMI/L’Harmattan, 1986); Jazouli, *Les années banlieue*; and C. Wihlto de Wenden, *Les immigrés et la politique* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques, 1988).
 16. Each movement was rooted in what A. Sayad, in ‘Les trois “âges” de l’émigration algérienne en France’, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 15, June 1977, pp. 59–81 defines as a distinct ‘age’ of emigration. Sayad has analysed the complex processes of emigration in a number of studies (see, for example, his ‘El Ghorba: le mécanisme de reproduction de l’émigration’, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, no. 2, March 1975, pp. 50–66, ‘Le phénomène migratoire: une relation de domination’, *Annuaire de l’Afrique du Nord*, vol. 29, 1981, pp. 365–99, ‘Naturels et naturalisés’, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, no. 99, September 1993, pp. 26–35, ‘Aux origines de l’émigration kabyle’, *Hommes et Migrations*, no. 1179, September 1994, pp. 6–11, and *La double absence: des illusions de l’émigré aux souffrances de l’immigré* (Paris, Seuil, 1999). In ‘Les trois âges de l’émigration’, he describes Maghrebi migration to France in the interwar period as the first ‘age’ of emigration, a migration of older and more able men forced by the collapse of traditional socioeconomic structures brought about by colonization and whose aim was to enable rural communities to survive. From the 1950s onwards, the second ‘age’ of emigration marked a shift from the previous generation and from traditional norms and practices. It was characterized by the desire among an

- increasingly larger number of younger Maghrebis (not only from rural communities, but more often from urban environments) to emigrate for more individualistic reasons.
17. The MTA was composed of Moroccans, Tunisians and Algerians.
 18. While French police and government archives on the MTA remain closed, militant archives provide a rich source of information for this case-study.
 19. This structural framework is inspired theoretically largely by Hughes's definition of ethnicity: 'An ethnic group is not one because of the degree of measurable or observable difference from other groups: it is an ethnic group, on the contrary, because the people in it and the people out of it know that it is one; because both the *ins* and the *outs* talk, feel, and act as if it were a separate group'. See E. C. Hughes, *On work, race and the sociological imagination* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994) p. 91.
 20. Messali Hadj played a leading role in several successive Algerian nationalist organizations that are discussed in this study: the Etoile nord-africaine (ENA) from June 1926 to January 1937, the Parti du peuple algérien (PPA) from March 1937 to September 1939, the Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques (MTLD) from October 1946 to November 1954 and the MNA from December 1954 to 1962. It is worth noting that most of the documents, tracts and publications of the ENA-PPA and of the MTA were written in French.
 21. These newspapers include, among others, *L'Islam* 1912-14; *L'ikdam* 1919-23 and 1931-35, *El Ouma* 1933-39 (1933-39 incomplete series), *Al-Maghrib al-Arabi* 1947-49 and March-May 1956, *L'Algérie libre* (1949-54), *La Voix du peuple* (1954-962) and *El Mojtahid* 1956-62.
 22. The CGTU was created following a split with the CGT at the end of 1921 and merged with the CGT in March 1936.
 23. These primary sources were consulted at Archives et Musée, Préfecture de police de Paris; the Archives nationales, Paris; the Centre des archives contemporaines (CAC), Fontainebleau; and the Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer (CAOM), Aix-en-Provence.
 24. These were accessed at the Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (BDIC) at the University of Nanterre and at Génériques, Paris.
 25. These documents were accessed at the Bibliothèque Cujas, Bibliothèque Sainte-Genève, the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Bibliothèque de Sciences politiques in Paris.
 26. C. Polac, 'Quand les immigrés prennent la parole', in P. Perrineau (ed.) *L'engagement politique: déclin ou mutation?* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques, 1994) pp. 359-86. Memmi argues that 'apart from the political decisions emanating from a very small number of professionals in politics who have some power of initiative, what does political activity consist of? Of discourse production and reproduction' (D. Memmi, 'L'engagement politique', in M. Grawitz and J. Lecas (eds) *Traité de science politique*, vol. 3, *L'action politique*, Paris, PUF, 1985, quoted in Polac, 'Quand les immigrés prennent la parole', p. 360).

27. Polac, 'Quand les immigrés prennent la parole', p. 360.
28. T. A. van Dijk, 'The study of discourse', in T. A. van Dijk (ed.) *Discourse as structure and process* (vol. 1, London: Sage Publications, 1997) p. 21.
29. S. Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1997); M. Pêcheux, *Language, Semantics and Ideology* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982).
30. T. A. van Dijk, 'Discourse as interaction in society', in T. A. van Dijk (ed.) *Discourse as social interaction* (vol. 2, London: Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 1–37).
31. Mills, *Discourse*; Pêcheux, *Semantics and Ideology*.
32. Masculine concerns shaped by male protagonists largely inform the nationalist discourses and modes of mobilization examined here. Drawing on C. Enloe, *Bananas, beaches, and bases: making feminist sense of international politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Nagel states that in nationalism, 'women are relegated to minor, often symbolic, roles in nationalist movements and conflicts, either as icons of nationhood, to be elevated and defended, or as the booty or spoils of war, to be denigrated and disgraced. In either case, the real actors are men who are defending their freedom, their homeland and their women' (J. Nagel, 'Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, March 1998, p. 244). The nationalist modes of mobilization, from which women are largely excluded – even when they play a key role in resistance as in the Algerian war – and the nationalist discursive modes in which they are rarely evoked and to which they seldom contribute, do inflect the way in which ethno-national identity is constructed and, to a significant extent, marginalize North African women's voices, concerns and rights in the polity. On Algerian nationalism and women, see M. Gadant, *Le nationalisme algérien et les femmes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995).
33. B. Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
34. The situationalist perspective on ethnicity as defined by Barth challenges the premise that ethnic groups should be defined solely according to common cultural characteristics, and calls for a better understanding of the processes by which ethnic groups are constituted and of the nature of the boundaries between them. Barth points out that it is 'the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses' (F. Barth, 'Introduction', in F. Barth (ed.) *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organisation of culture difference*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969, p. 15), and therefore shifts the emphasis from cultural traits to boundary maintenance in the formation of ethnic identity. See also S. Wallman, *Ethnicity at work* (London: Macmillan, 1979).
35. Barth, 'Introduction', p. 15.
36. J. Breuilly, 'Approaches to nationalism', in G. Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the nation* (London: Verso, 1996) pp. 146–74.
37. Anderson, *Imagined communities*.

1. The Emergence of the Messalist Movement

1. Memmi, 'L'engagement politique', p. 111.

2. Ch.-R. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine (1830–1964)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964, reprinted 1983) pp. 55–60.
3. J. Berque, in *Le Maghreb entre deux guerres* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970) identified an 'exodus' of Algerians to the Orient in 1830, 1832, 1854, 1860, 1875, 1888, 1898, 1910 and 1911 (cited in M. Lacheraf, *L'Algérie: nation et société*, Paris: François Maspéro, 1965, p. 179).
4. M. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I: 1919–1939* (Paris: Editions Paris-Méditerranée, 2003) p. 168.
5. B. Stora, *Messali Hadj, 1898–1974* (Paris: Hachette, 2004) p. 59.
6. See A. Koulakssis and G. Meynier, *L'Emir Khaled, premier *zâcm*? Identité algérienne et colonialisme français* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1987), pp. 301–20.
7. J. Simon, *Messali Hadj (1898–1974): la passion de l'Algérie libre* (Paris: Editions Tirésias, 1998) pp. 45–8. These included leading militants of the ENA such as Hadj Ali Abdelkader, a *cadre* of the PCF and a militant of the CGTU – Mahmoud Ben Lakhal, Mohamed Si Djilani, Chabila Djilali, Mohamed Marouf and Messali Hadj.
8. Abd el-Krim (or 'Abd al Karim) was born in Ajdir in Morocco in 1882. In 1921, he led a successful revolt in the Rif region of Morocco against the Spaniards who were defeated in Anoual. He then launched an attack on French colonial troops but was defeated in 1926. He was imprisoned in La Réunion but fled to Cairo during his transfer to France in 1947. He acted as a symbol of resistance against French colonialism for North African nationalists. He died in 1963, one year after Algeria – the last Maghrebi country under French rule – had gained independence. See C. Collot and J.-R. Henry, *Le mouvement national algérien: textes 1912–1954* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1978) pp. 34–5.
9. 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, APP-BA 56, pp. 3–4.
10. M. Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj: texte établi par Renaud de Rochebrune* (Paris: Lattès) p. 60.
11. The Code de l'indigénat started with the order issued by Thomas Bugeaud on 12 February 1844. It evolved through the adoption of a series of orders, decrees and laws, and lasted in various forms until the end of the Second World War. It aimed to reinforce French colonial domination of Muslims in Algeria and provided land for colonial expansion. Its stringent rules, which were inconsistent with the French legal system, ensured that Muslims were subjected to heavy prison sentences and taxes, often arbitrary individual and collective punishments, and that travel was limited.
12. Abdelkader Hadj Ali (1883–1957) was born in Sidi-Saada (province of Oran). He became a French citizen in 1911 and came to France to work as a market trader just before the First World War. He was mobilized in 1914, injured at the front a year later and hospitalized in Bordeaux. He spent the last years of the war in Bordeaux acting as an interpreter. After the war, he moved to Paris and opened a hardware shop. He became a member of the Socialist party (SFIO) and joined the French Communist Party on its creation in 1920. He went to the *Ecole des cadres* of Bobigny and contributed articles to

communist anti-colonial newspapers such as *Le Paria*. Hadj Ali became a leading member of the PCF and replaced Ngyuen Ai Quoc (later known as Ho Chi Min) as the head of the Union intercoloniale in 1924. During the legislative elections that took place in the same year, he stood as a communist candidate and lost by a short margin. Following a brief visit to Moscow at the end of 1925 to attend the Communist International's fifth congress, he took part, with Messali Hadj, in the creation of the ENA. He later became a member of the PCF's executive committee and Messali replaced him as president of the ENA in 1928. He became the first director of *El Ouma*, the nationalist newspaper of the ENA launched in 1930. In 1930, he was excluded from the PCF for standing as a candidate at the local elections without having consulted the party. He progressively distanced himself from the ENA and joined the executive committee of the moderate Ligue de défense des intérêts musulmans (Muslim Interests Defence League) and later left the political arena ('Note sur l'activité de l'Etoile'; Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*).

13. In the first few years that followed the creation of the ENA, several of the organization's leading militants were on the PCF/CGTU payroll. They were able to organize meetings in premises the party and trade union owned, and their tracts and newspaper (*L'ikdam*) were printed on their presses.
14. Mustapha Chadly, also known as Chadly Khairallah, was a militant of the Destour Party. He was born on 10 March 1898 in Tunis. He received his baccalaureate in Algiers and studied law in Paris. He lived in Paris between 2 November 1926 and 19 January 1928 when he was expelled from France. He was sentenced to two months in prison and fined by the Tunis magistrate's court – the Algiers appeal court later increased the prison sentence to six months – for having denounced France's action in Syria in a Tunisian newspaper article. He contributed to the creation of the Etoile's first newspaper *L'ikdam*, which the French authorities banned on 1 February 1927. In February 1927, as a militant 'intellectual', he took over the leadership of the Etoile and was briefly promoted to the post of president following the annual general assembly held on 9 March 1927. The interior minister signed Chadly's expulsion order on 18 November 1927 ('Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, APP-BA 56, pp. 14, 19; letter from the Interior Minister to the Paris *Préfet de Police*, 27 December 1927, APP-BA 56). When he was expelled on 19 January 1928, he was arrested and the French colonial authorities imprisoned him in Tunisia (B. Stora, *Messali Hadj, 1898–1974*, Paris: Le Sycomore, 1982, p. 158). From then on, Messali Hadj became the most prominent figure of the Etoile.
15. Habib Bourguiba was then a leading Tunisian nationalist and a member of the Destour party. After a split with the party's pan-Arabic and Muslim traditionalist reformists, he took part in the creation of the pro-independence and secular Neo-Destour Party, becoming general secretary in 1934, leading the country to independence in 1957 and becoming its first president.
16. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA, 1934, pp. 10–12.

17. A police report indicates that the Congress was organized by the Liga Gegen Kolonialgreuel und Unterdrückung, an organization created in Berlin at the end of 1925 or the beginning of 1926 by the Comintern through the Secours rouge international. The congress invited representatives of organizations from seven American and six African countries, from China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Indochina, the Philippines, Persia, Syria and Palestine, as well as from European countries (Britain, Germany, France, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Italy). (AN F713412, Police report, 'Note sur la propagande révolutionnaire intéressant les pays d'outre-mer', 14 March 1927).
18. J. D. Hargreaves, 'The Comintern and anti-colonialism: new research opportunities' (*African Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 367, April 1993); J. Simon, *L'immigration algérienne en France des origines à l'indépendance* (Paris: Editions Paris-Méditerranée, 2000) pp. 100–2; Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, pp. 67–9.
19. The programme included the following: (1) imperialist activities (colonial wars, crimes committed by the military) and oppression in colonial and semi-colonial countries; (2) movement of emancipation in the colonies and 'support' for this movement by the working-class in imperialist countries; (3) coordination of national movements of liberation and of the workers' movement in colonial and imperialist countries; and (4) creation of a permanent organization to 'support' movements of emancipation in the colonies and to protect native populations against crimes committed by the 'militarist regime' (AN F7 13412, Police report, 'Note sur la propagande révolutionnaire intéressant les pays d'outre-mer', 14 March 1927).
20. During that period, the French national press published xenophobic articles targeting immigrants and colonial workers in France. The PCF also adopted a new orientation less favourable to immigrants and its central committee even called for an end to 'collective immigration of foreign workers'. (Simon, *Messali Hadj*, p. 53).
21. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 17.
22. Messali Hadj (1898–1974) is widely acknowledged as the founder of modern Algerian nationalism. He was born in Tlemcen (Algeria) to a modest family and acquired a basic primary education that was interrupted by his family's lack of money. After the First World War, he did his national service in France and enjoyed the relative freedom experienced by the *coloniaux* in metropolitan France. Messali was an avid reader of the press and of books and a gifted autodidact. He was marked by the poor standard of living of Muslims in Algeria, and also by the dramatic developments of the 1910s and 1920s – political tensions in the Middle East, the Soviet Revolution in Russia, the rise of the 'Young Turk' movement and the formation of the Kemalist republic in Turkey, and the Rif uprising in Morocco. He was demobilized and went back to Tlemcen in 1921. He returned to France in 1922 where he worked as a shop employee, a salesman and later as a market trader before rising to political prominence. Messali Hadj joined the PCF in May 1925.
23. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 43.

24. The SAINA police surveillance unit police unit ('Service de surveillance, protection et assistance des indigènes nord-africains'), also known as the 'Services de la rue Lecomte' or 'Services nord-africains' was set up in December 1924 by the municipal council of Paris and promoted by Pierre Godin, an ex-colonial civil servant in Algeria who became president of the Paris municipal council in 1926–27. It was based in rue Lecomte in Paris, and its aim was to police, 'assist' and control North African immigrants in France. It was extended to the rest of France in 1928. For a study of the SAINA and the policing of North Africans, see N. MacMaster, *Colonial migrants and racism: Algerian migrants in France 1900–1962* (London: Macmillan, 1997) pp. 153–71. For a detailed analysis of the policing of colonial workers and immigrants in Paris in the interwar period, see C. Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: the origins of immigration control between the wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
25. The first newspaper of the Etoile, *L'Ikdam de Paris*, was the voice of North African nationalists in France until the French government banned it on 1 February 1927. *L'Ikdam Nord-Africain* replaced it until 1930 and *El Ouma* thereafter ('Note sur l'activité de l'ENA, 1934', p. 135). Even if the circulation of *L'Ikdam* was quite modest in the late 1920s – for example, 500 copies of the May 1928 issues were printed – it rapidly increased as the organization developed its influence (Police report, 24 June 1928, APP, BA 56). It is also important to note that the 'readership' of the nationalist newspaper was significantly larger than circulation numbers would suggest: because of the high level of illiteracy among North African *coloniaux*, copies of the newspaper were shared and tended to be read to groups by those who were literate.
26. APP, BA 56, Police report, 16 November 1927.
27. The Etoile nord-africaine organized a protest against the Paris mosque, which was inaugurated on 15 July 1926. In the 1930s, it denounced the building and opening of the Hôpital franco-musulman (Franco-Muslim hospital) in Bobigny. The Hôpital franco-musulman of Bobigny, which opened on 22 March 1935 to treat North African colonial migrants separately from the French, led to a further reinforcement of the police and administrative apparatus put in place in the previous decade to isolate and 'control' North Africans in France.
28. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, pp. 14–15.
29. APP, BA 56, Police report, 21 January 1929; Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, p. 80.
30. Interestingly, the police had translated an early version of the national anthem. Report from the Ministère des colonies, 19 March 1930.
31. *El Ouma* was first published in October 1930. In the first issue, Hadj Ali, who was then its director, wrote an article calling for Muslims to be 'united to improve our life and for our complete emancipation' (APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 140).
32. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, pp. 31–2.

33. Both Radjef and Imache were Kabyles. Belkacem Radjef was born on 19 September 1909 in Fort-National and arrived in France in 1928. He worked as a carpenter for a few years in Levallois-Perret before going back to Algeria. He returned to France in 1932 and worked briefly in a wash house in Levallois. In April 1933, he was unemployed but became a member of the executive committee of the *Etoile nord-africaine* on 28 May 1933 (APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, pp. 150–1).
34. Amar Imache was born on 7 July 1895 in Beni Aissi (Fort-National, Kabylie) to a modest family of Kabyle farmers. In the mid-1920s he settled in the Paris area and secured a job at the Roger Gallet cosmetics firm from 1926 to 1934 and was promoted to foreman. He soon engaged in nationalist politics and became a prominent member of the *Etoile* in the early 1930s. In 1933, he was appointed general secretary of the ENA and editor-in-chief of *El Ouma* during the first general assembly of the new *Etoile nord-africaine* on 28 May 1933 (APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, pp. 150–89; O. Carlier, *Le cri du révolté: Imache Amar, un itinéraire militant* (Algiers: ENAL, 1986). His oratorical skills were widely acknowledged, but his incisive and lyrical written style, which was probably superior to Messali Hadj's, and his sense of satire contributed to the success of the ENA and *El Ouma* in the first half of the 1930s.
35. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I: 1919–1939*, pp. 242–4.
36. Between the end of February and the beginning of July 1933, ten meetings were organized; these took place more and more frequently – by the early summer, meetings were held on a weekly basis (APP, BA 56, 'Letter from the Paris Préfet de Police to the Interior Minister', July 1933).
37. APP, BA 57, Police report, 7 December 1933.
38. Cited in APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 143.
39. From 3000 in 1930, the circulation of *El Ouma* increased to 9000 in 1933 and 15,000 in 1934 (Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I: 1919–1939*, pp. 242–4). B. Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie: l'immigration algérienne en France (1912–1992)* (Paris: Fayard, 1992) p. 43, on the other hand, gives significantly higher circulation figures for this newspaper (12,000 in 1933 and 44,000 in 1934).
40. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I: 1919–1939*, p. 136. The police report indicates that the *El Ouma* readership in Algeria also included a number of traders, as well as the middle-class, educated Algerians, teachers, notables and elected politicians. For example, Ferhat Abbas (Sétif) who was, at the time, a reformist politician, and the pro-assimilation politician Dr Bendjelloul (Constantine) are mentioned as *El Ouma* readers ('Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, pp. 129–34).
41. Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, pp. 176–7.
42. *Le Temps*, 5 February 1935.
43. APP, BA 56, 'Letter from the Préfet de Police to the Interior Minister', July 1933.
44. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
45. APP, BA 56, Paris Appeals Court ruling, 14 May 1935.
46. Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, pp. 193–4.

47. Chekib Arslan was the head of the Syro-Palestinian Committee in Geneva and one of the most prominent political figures of the Arab world at the time. He launched *La Nation Arabe*, a French language publication in 1930. During the congress, Messali's meeting with Arslan marked the beginning of a close political relationship that broadened Messali's understanding of Middle Eastern politics in the mid-1930s.
48. Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, pp. 199–213.
49. Police report, 13 March 1936, CAC 1940500/297.
50. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
51. Police report, 26 January 1936, CAC 19940500/297.
52. Police reports, 12 February 1936, CAC 19940500/297; and 30 March 1936, CAOM 9H35.
53. *L'Entente franco-musulmane*, 11 June 1936, cited in Collot and Henry, *Le mouvement national algérien*, pp. 73–7.
54. Police report, 29 May 1936, CAOM 9H35.
55. Police report, 3 July 1936, CAC 19940500/297.
56. Police report, 21 July 1936, CAOM 9H35.
57. Police report, 24 July 1936, CAOM 9H35.
58. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*, pp. 87–8.
59. Police report, 31 July 1936, CAC 19940500/297.
60. *El Ouma*, September–October 1936.
61. Dr Bendjelloul suddenly changed his political stance and re-emphasized his loyalty to France. His denunciation of the communists who were officially members of the congress led to his replacement as its president.
62. Police report, 23 September 1936, CAOM 9H35.
63. Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie*, p. 42.
64. B. Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne* (Paris: CIEMI-L'Harmattan, 1992) p. 48.
65. 'ENA', PCA pamphlet, CAC 19940500/216.
66. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
67. Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, p. 241.
68. Cabinet meeting ruling, 26 January 1937, CAC 19940500/297.
69. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I: 1919–1939*, pp. 470–1.
70. Police report, 16 March 1937, CAC 19940500/297.
71. 'Declaration of the political bureau of the PPA', *El Ouma*, 10 April 1937, reproduced in J. Simon, *Messali Hadj par les textes* (Saint-Denis: Editions Bouchène) p. 37.
72. Police report, 16 March 1937, CAC 19940500/297.
73. *El Ouma*, 22 April 1938.
74. Police reports, 23 February and 9 April 1937, CAOM 9H35.
75. Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne*, pp. 50, 54.
76. Militants who joined the Algiers committee included members of the ex-ENA (Hocine Lahouel, Mohamed Mestoul, Moufidi Zakaria, and Brahim Gherafa, among others). Following their arrest in the summer of 1937, new activists replaced them, including Mohamed Khider, who was to play an

- important role in the FLN during the Algerian war (1954–62). In August 1937, the PPA also launched *Ech Chaab*, an Arabic language newspaper based in Algiers and run by Moufidi Zakaria.
77. Letter from the Algiers public prosecutor to the justice minister, 8 July 1937, CAOM 9H47.
 78. Police report, 27 July 1937, CAC 19940500/177.
 79. A delegation from the Paris-based *Ligue de défense des Musulmans nord-africains* that included lawyer Boumendjel, took part in the congress. In a PPA meeting held at the Salle du Cinéma Excelsior in Paris on 24 July 1937, Embarek Filali (known as ‘Abdallah’) and Boumendjel denounced, before an audience of 300 North Africans, the hostility of the congress towards the Paris delegation. Boumendjel declared that Cheikh Ben Badis, of the Association of Ulemas, had told him in a private conversation that he did not trust the *Front populaire* government that had failed to keep the promises it had made to Algerian Muslims, but that he was in favour of maintaining links with *Front populaire* organizations since the *Rassemblement* was the only group able to grant certain freedoms and rights to Muslims (Police report, 27 July 1937, CAOM 9H35).
 80. Police report, 15 July 1937, CAC 19940500/177.
 81. Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, p. 252; G. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN, 1954–1962* (Paris: Fayard, 2002) pp. 58–9.
 82. Report from the public prosecutor of Algiers to the minister of justice, 9 September 1937, CAOM, 9H47.
 83. Algiers public prosecutor’s report to the interior minister, 9 September 1937, CAOM 9H47.
 84. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
 85. Letter from Arezki Rehal, 17 September 1937, CAOM 9H47. On 1 October, all the PPA prisoners except Khelifa Ben Amar started a hunger strike to be granted political prisoner status (Report from the Algiers public prosecutor to the Justice Minister, 6 October 1937, CAOM 9H47). During the Algerian war, Khelifa was an MNA activist and was appointed as contrôleur général of MNA armed groups in the Algiers *département* (Police report, July 1956, CAOM 7G1288). Khelifa re-emerged briefly on the political scene in 1961 when he joined the *Front algérien d’action démocratique* (FAAD), an organization controlled by the French authorities to undermine the action of the FLN.
 86. Police report, 31 August 1937, CAOM 9H35.
 87. PPA tract, 1937, CAOM 9H47.
 88. *El Ouma*, 20 September 1937.
 89. *El Ouma*, September 1937; Stora, *Messali Hadj*, p. 180.
 90. Police report, September 1937, CAOM 9H35.
 91. Police report, September 1937, CAOM, 9H35.
 92. Police report, 31 August 1937, CAOM 9H35.
 93. Nadi Ettadib (*Cercle de l’éducation*) was created in France in August 1936 and led by Cheikh el Foudil. It produced a newspaper (*La Justice*) and at the end of 1937 had between 5000 and 6000 members. The aims of this association

- founded by Cheikh Ben Badis were to 'provide Arabic education, study the Koran and improve the material and moral situation of Muslims'.
94. Simon, *Messali Hadj (1898–1974)*, p. 89.
 95. *El Ouma*, 21 January 1938. In November 1938, the PPA supported two candidates (Mohamed Abbas and Boumendjel – Messali's lawyer) who were elected during the partial municipal elections in Algiers. At the cantonal elections of April 1939 in Algiers, the PPA candidate, an unknown worker called Mohamed Douar, was elected in spite of the campaign of hostility from the colons and the congress. His election was immediately annulled and the pro-colonial candidate was selected (Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I*, p. 499; Simon, *Messali Hadj (1898–1974)*, p. 91). Douar was sent to the Lambèse prison in July 1942 with a group of PPA militants and, following several months of harsh treatment and hard labour, died there on 23 January 1943 (*L'Algérie libre*, 11 March 1950).
 96. Reports from the Algiers public prosecutor to the justice minister, 6 October and 17 November 1937, CAOM 9H47; *El Ouma*, December 1937.
 97. Daniel Guérin was born in 1904 into a Parisian middle-class family. He studied political science and became an anti-colonial activist after two visits to Syria and Indochina. He became a member of the Colonial Commission (*Commission coloniale*) of the SFIO. With Marceau Pivert, he joined the *Parti socialiste ouvrier et paysan* (PSOP) when both were excluded from the SFIO in 1938. He remained an ally of the ENA-PPA and a close friend of Messali Hadj. Guérin contributed articles to *La Révolution prolétarienne* and later completed several books on anti-colonialism, including *Au service des colonisés* (1954) and *Ci-Gît le colonialisme* (1973). Historian Félicien Challaye was an anti-colonial militant and peace activist at the *Comité central de la Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*, *The Ligue contre l'impérialisme et l'oppression coloniale* and the *Ligue pour la défense des indigènes* (Simon, *Messali Hadj par les textes*, pp. 43–4).
 98. Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne*, p. 54.
 99. The newspapers published by organizations of the extreme-left provided consistent support to the nationalists: *SLA* (CVIA); *Que Faire?* (from 1934 to 1937, then *Revue marxiste* from 1937 to 1939); *La Lutte ouvrière* (POI); *Les Cahiers rouges* and *Jun 36* (PSOP); *Le Libertaire* (Union anarchiste) (Ibid.).
 100. *Le Parlement algérien*, 18 May 1939.
 101. Report from the public prosecutor to the justice minister, 9 May 1938, CAOM 9H47.
 102. The French government's failure to adopt the Blum–Violetta Bill also severely undermined the action of Nadi Ettadib (or *Cercle de l'éducation*) in France. In the summer of 1938, Ben Badis had already authorized a *rapprochement* between Nadi Ettadib and the PPA in France. Both organizations agreed to end mutual criticism and attacks. Nadi Ettadib allowed its members to attend PPA meetings and nationalist militants could attend Arabic classes at the *Cercle de l'éducation* (Police report, 20 July 1938, CAOM 9H35).

103. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*, p. 89.
104. In the summer of 1938, the PPA's influence was much greater than the number of its members (approximately 2500) would indicate. It had 52 local organizations: 21 in the Paris region; 12 in provincial France (in the Nord, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Ardennes, Bouches-du-Rhône, Puy-de-Dôme and Loire *départements*) and 19 in the three federations set up in Algeria to cover the three Algerian *départements* (the largest one, Algiers, as well as Constantine and Oran). The majority of identified militants (55 per cent) were immigrants in France (39 per cent in Paris and 16 per cent in provincial France) and 45 per cent were in Algeria (Police report, 25 July 1938, CAOM 9H35).
105. *El Ouma*, 25 October 1938.
106. B. Stora, *La guerre d'Algérie vue par les Algériens* (Paris: Hachette, 2004) p. 183.
107. *El Ouma*, December 1938; Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien, Tome I*, p. 542.
108. Déclaration du Parti du peuple algérien, 17 December 1938, CAC 20010216/109.
109. *Ibid.*
110. Police report, 22 March 1938, CAOM 9H35.
111. Police report, 12 July 1939; tract from the Association des Arabes d'Allemagne, 26 June 1939, CAC 19940500/216.
112. Police report, 13 April 1938, CAOM 9H35.
113. 'Déclaration du Parti du peuple algérien', 17 December 1938, CAC 20010216/109.
114. Police reports, 2 and 5 September 1939, CAC 19940500/297.

2. Ethnicity and Nation-ness in the Discourse of the ENA-PPA

1. Nation-ness is a term borrowed from Anderson (*Imagined communities*, p. 13) and means nationality or the sense of belonging to a 'nation'. Even though 'nation-ness', 'nationhood' and 'nationality' are, for stylistic reasons, used interchangeably in this book, there is a case for selecting/privileging a distinct word such as 'nation-ness' to highlight the characteristics of the diaspora within which North African nationalist militants in France formed Algerian national identity during the 1920s and 1930s.
2. W. Safran, 'Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return', *Diaspora*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1991, p. 84. See also J. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) pp. 247–8.
3. Safran, 'Diasporas in modern societies', pp. 85–6. A. Brah, *Cartographies of diasporas: contesting identities* (London: Routledge, 1996) also argues in favour of a wider understanding of the concept of diaspora.
4. *Le Populaire*, 10 avril 1938.
5. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
6. M. Khellil, *L'exil kabyle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1979) p. 63.
7. A. Cordeiro, 'Eléments sur la condition des travailleurs immigrés algériens', *Economie et Humanisme*, no. 200, July–August 1971, p. 18.

8. P. Bourdieu and A. Sayad, *Le déracinement: la crise de l'agriculture algérienne* (Paris: Minuit, 1964).
9. Sayad, 'Les trois "âges" de l'émigration algérienne en France', p. 61.
10. Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne*, p. 14.
11. Sayad, 'Les trois "âges" de l'émigration algérienne en France', p. 61.
12. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
13. F. Barth, *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organisation of culture difference* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969).
14. M. Weber, 'What is an ethnic group?', in M. Guibernau and J. Rex, *The ethnicity reader: nationalism, multiculturalism and migration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997) p. 19.
15. An earlier version of this section appeared as 'Combattons pour rester "Algériens ... algériens": national identity and difference in the nationalist discourse of the Etoile nord-africaine (ENA) and the Parti du peuple algérien in interwar France', *Modern & Contemporary France*, vol. 13, No. 2, May 2005, pp. 209–24.
16. A. Giddens, *The nation-state and violence: vol. two of a contemporary critique of historical materialism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, first published 1985) pp. 116, 120.
17. W. Connor, 'A nation as a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group is a ...', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 1, no. 4, October 1978, p. 379.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p. 15.
20. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 61.
21. *El Ouma*, September–October 1934.
22. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
24. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
25. *El Ouma*, February 1934.
26. *El Ouma*, October 1933.
27. *El Ouma*, October 1935.
28. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
29. There are many illustrations of this in Messalist literature. For example, Amar Imache wrote (*El Ouma*, February 1934): 'They did not come to our country in the name of the prophet but in the name of profit, and it could not have been otherwise since weapons that bring death are blessed, the aspergillum stands next to the sword and the Bible is tied to the breechblock of the cannon.'
30. See APP, BA56, 'Hymne national algérien', 20 May 1937, 'ENA–PPA, 1929–1937'.
31. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
32. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
33. Connor, 'A nation as a nation', p. 384.
34. *El Ouma*, 1 April 1938.
35. Further on in this section, the discussion of the movement's attempt to construct the Algerian nation along 'ethnic' lines is shown not to be

- contradictory with this point. The 'ethnic profile' that nationalists attributed to the ideal Algerian nation could not hide the fact that the process and substance of nation-building as it appeared in their discourse was inherently modern and political.
36. Clearly, there had been previous expressions of nationalism in colonial Algeria, such as Abd el-Kader's war against the French between 1840 and 1847 and the 1871 Kabyle uprising, but unlike Messali Hadj's movement, they were not articulated along modern lines.
 37. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 172.
 38. In the wider context of interwar immigration in France, O. Carlier, 'Pour une histoire quantitative de l'émigration en France dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres', in J. Costa-Lascoux and E. Témime, *Les Algériens en France: genèse et devenir d'une migration* (Paris: Publisud, 1985) p. 156, points out that 'Algero-Maghrebi immigrants, who represented a minority within the immigrant population but a majority within colonial immigration, were the group that was most differentiated and most subject to fantasy.'
 39. O. Carlier, *Entre nation et Jihad: histoire sociale des radicalismes algériens* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques, 1995).
 40. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, pp. 149–51, 64.
 41. Z. Bauman, 'Soil, blood and identity', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 40, no. 4, November 1992, p. 676.
 42. *El Ouma*, October 1935.
 43. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
 44. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
 45. *El Ouma*, January 1938.
 46. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
 47. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 48.
 48. W. Connor, 'Beyond reason: the nature of the ethnonational bond', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 16, no. 3, July 1993, p. 374. Connor, a proponent of an ethnic interpretation of nation, argues that a distinction should be made between loyalty to one's national group (which he defines as nationalism) and loyalty to one's state (which he refers to as patriotism). On the other hand, Breuille, who sees nations and nationalism as inherently modern and political, sees 'little analytical value in distinguishing "patriotism" and "nationalism". The first tends to become a term of praise, the second a term of abuse' (Breuille, 'Approaches to nationalism', p. 148). It is important to note that in the interwar period, the ENA and PPA, like other political groupings, used the term 'nationalism' as an empowering and positive concept.
 49. North African Jews, who became French with the Decret Crémieux in 1870, were culturally and historically rooted in the Maghreb, and many Europeans had been in Algeria for generations and had developed a specific *pied-noir* identity. However, history would show that the chasm between the different parties was to widen as the French authorities showed no sign of reforming their colonial agenda and anti-Semitism spread.
 50. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, pp. 103–4.

51. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
52. Connor, 'Beyond reason', p. 377.
53. E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein, *Race, nation, classe: les identités ambiguës* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1988) pp. 104–5.
54. M. Banton and J. Harwood, *The race concept* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1975) p. 8.
55. *El Ouma*, October 1935.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
59. See, for example, the emblematic figure of the Kahina – the Amazigh (Berber) woman who led the Berber resistance against the Arab invasion in North Africa at the end of the seventh century – in Amazigh consciousness.
60. Connor, 'A nation as a nation', pp. 388–9.
61. D. Spurr, *The rhetoric of empire: colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing and imperial administration*, (Durham: Duke University Press) p. 68, points out that 'the classification of indigenous people according to their relative complexity of social organization becomes more systematic and articulated as it directly serves the interests of colonial administration.'
62. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
63. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
64. For a study of assimilation in the interwar period, see, for example, M. Hily, 'Qu'est-ce que l'assimilation entre les deux guerres? Les enseignements de quelques ouvrages consacrés à l'immigration', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 20, 1981, pp. 71–80; and P. Siblot, 'De l'anticolonialisme à l'antiracisme: de silences en contradictions', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, no. 18, March 1989, pp. 57–71.
65. Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France*, vol. 2, p. 873, see also L. Dornel, 'Les usages du racialisme: le cas de la main-d'œuvre coloniale en France pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale', *Génèses*, vol. 20, September 1995, p. 51; and S. Zeghidour, 'Le bon Kabyle', *Télérama hors-série*, 'Algérie: la culture face à la terreur', March 1995, pp. 30–1.
66. Ch.-R. Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France, 1871–1919*, vol. 1 (Paris: PUF, 1968) pp. 267–91.
67. O. Carlier, 'La production sociale de l'image de soi', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 23, 1984, p. 361.
68. *El Ouma*, January 1935.
69. Connor, 'Beyond reason', p. 377.
70. See, for example, *El Ouma*, October 1933.
71. It is interesting to note, in the ENA–PPA's discourse, the example of diversity as a concept. It was considered to be positive within the context of a multi-ethnic and independent Algeria enriched by its multi-ethnic population, and negative during the process of ethnic self-definition.
72. *El Ouma*, January 1935.

3. The Markers of Ethnicity

1. Barth, *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, p. 14.
2. S. Helmreich, 'Kinship, nation, and Paul Gilroy's concept of diaspora', *Diaspora*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1992, p. 244.
3. For example, Connor, 'Beyond reason'; S. Cornell, 'The variable ties that bind: content and circumstance in ethnic processes', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, April 1996, pp. 265–89; C. Geertz, 'The integrative revolution: primordial sentiments and civil politics in the new states', in C. Geertz (ed.) *Old societies and new states: the quest for modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York: The Free Press, 1963) pp. 105–57; R. Jenkins, *Rethinking ethnicity: arguments and explorations* (London: Sage Publications, 1997).
4. Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p. 131.
5. *L'Éclat de Paris*, 7 March 1919. *L'Éclat de Paris* was the voice of the North African community in France until the French government banned it on 1 February 1927; *L'Éclat Nord-Africain* replaced it until 1930 and *El Ouma* thereafter (APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ÉNA', 1934, p. 135).
6. The limits of this hybrid sense of kinship soon became obvious as the French had no intention of introducing reforms – such as granting equal political rights to Muslims – that might undermine their colonial rule of Algeria.
7. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
8. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
9. *El Ouma*, September–October 1934.
10. *El Ouma*, January 1938.
11. *El Ouma*, January 1935.
12. Anderson, *Imagined communities*.
13. P. Bourdieu, *Practical reason: on the theory of action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) p. 76.
14. *El Ouma*, August–September 1934, cited in APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ÉNA', 1934, p. 149.
15. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
16. AN, F7 13170, Letter to the Président du Conseil, 'Propagande communiste aux colonies (1925–1936)'.
17. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ÉNA', pp. 104–6.
18. *El Ouma*, January 1934.
19. *El Ouma*, June 1934.
20. *El Ouma*, January 1938.
21. Wihtol de Wenden, *Les immigrés et la politique*, p. 33.
22. Reproduced in *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
23. *El Ouma*, October 1933.
24. Ibid.
25. In the same article, Imache denounced the press in France, which led a racist campaign and which described North African migrants as invaders.
26. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
27. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ÉNA', 1934, pp. 139–40.
28. *El Ouma*, October 1935.

29. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
30. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
31. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
32. Police report, 9 April 1936, CAC 19940500/297.
33. Police reports, 20 June 1936 and 19 November 1937, CAC 19940500/297.
34. Culture is broadly defined by Fanon as ‘All the motor and mental behaviours born out of the encounter between man [*l’homme*, translated today as ‘the human being’] and nature, and man and his kind’ (F. Fanon, ‘Racisme et culture’, *Présence africaine, revue culturelle du Monde noir*, nos 8–10, June–November 1956, p. 122).
35. Barth, *Ethnic groups and boundaries*.
36. Bourdieu defines habitus as ‘the structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions. ... The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures ... to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms (which one can ... call individuals) lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence’ (Bourdieu, *Practical reason*, pp. 72, 85).
37. Fanon, ‘Racisme et culture’, p. 122.
38. Fanon has produced a large corpus of work on the impact of colonization. See, for example, F. Fanon, ‘L’expérience vécue du Noir’, *Esprit*, no. 179, May 1951, pp. 657–79; F. Fanon, ‘Le “syndrome nord-africain”’, *Esprit*, no. 2, February 1952, pp. 237–51; F. Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1975); F. Fanon, *Sociologie d’une révolution: l’an V de la révolution algérienne* (Paris: François Maspéro, 1975); and F. Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991).
39. APP, BA 56, ‘Note sur l’activité de l’ENA’, 1934, p. 56.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 66–78.
41. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
42. *El Ouma*, January 1938.
43. This was not incompatible with the movement’s claim that its nationalist aspirations were rooted in Islam.
44. R. Gallissot, ‘Les limites de la culture nationale: enjeux culturels et avènement étatique au Maghreb’, *Annuaire de l’Afrique du Nord*, vol. 23, 1984, p. 49.
45. See K. Ganguly, ‘Migrant identities: personal memory and the construction of selfhood’, *Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1992, p. 27.
46. The movement’s reference to history through its evocation of a great Arabo-Muslim civilization, which is discussed later in this section, is a case in point.
47. Carlier, ‘La production sociale de l’image de soi’, p. 348.
48. N. Elias, *The civilizing process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) pp. 3–7.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–7.
51. *El Ouma*, October 1933.

52. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
53. For a historical overview of the Berber question in Algerian politics and in emigration, see S. Chaker, 'Langue et identité berbère (Algérie/émigration): un enjeu de société', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 23, 1984, pp. 173–80.
54. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
55. *El Ouma*, January 1935.
56. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
57. *El Ouma*, January 1935.
58. The 'Berberist' trend that existed within the nationalist movement and that favoured an 'Algerian Algeria' – a multicultural Algeria composed of Muslims recognizing the specificity of Berber culture – failed to impose its views on the organization's broader ideological framework.
59. See M. Benrabah, *Langue et pouvoir en Algérie: histoire d'un traumatisme linguistique* (Paris: Séguier, 1999) for an account of the disastrous social, cultural and political consequences of Algeria's arabization policy after independence.
60. *El Ouma*, January 1934.
61. *El Ouma*, 11 March 1938.
62. *El Ouma*, January 1938.
63. *El Ouma*, January 1938.
64. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 83.
65. *El Ouma*, 27 May 1938.
66. With terms like 'Arab' and 'Islam' replaced respectively with 'European' and 'Christianity', this extract could have easily been taken for a celebration of 'European civilization'.
67. *El Ouma*, October 1935.
68. This was the context in which the Kabyle myth and '*politique berbère*' were particularly pertinent.
69. *El Ouma*, 27 May 1938.
70. This problematic interpretation of nation as *ethnie* is supported by Anthony D. Smith, 'The origins of nations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, July 1989, p. 340, who argues that the origins of nation 'can be traced back to pre-modern ethnic communities'. In the same tradition, Connor, in 'A nation as a nation', also asserts that a distinction should be made here between 'nation' on the one hand and 'state' on the other.
71. It is important to note, however, that a number of leading members of the nationalist movement (including Messali Hadj and Amar Imache) were more educated than the large majority of the migrant workers who supported it.
72. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
73. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
74. P. Chatterjee, 'Whose imagined communities?', in G. Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the nation* (London: Verso, 1996) p. 215.
75. E. J. Hobsbawm, 'Ethnicity and nationalism in Europe today', in G. Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the nation* (London: Verso, 1996) p. 255.
76. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
77. Droz and Lever, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, p. 14.

78. E. Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988) p. 73.
79. Chatterjee, 'Whose imagined communities?'
80. *El Ouma*, March 1939.
81. *El Ouma*, October 1935.
82. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
83. *El Ouma*, 11 March 1938.
84. *El Ouma*, April 1939.
85. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
86. Ibid.
87. *El Ouma*, January 1935 and 11 December 1938.
88. MacMaster, *Colonial migrants and racism*; B. Stora, 'Faiblesse paysanne du mouvement nationaliste algérien avant 1954', *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'Histoire*, no. 12, October–December 1986, pp. 59–72.
89. See, for example, the September–October 1934 and the February–March 1935 issues of *El Ouma*.
90. E. Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1985) pp. 76–7.
91. Algerian nationalists often evoked examples of independent Muslim countries like Turkey, or those fighting for their independence like Egypt, to sustain their argument that their Muslim civilization was not 'dead'.
92. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 101.
93. Ibid., p. 142.
94. Ibid., pp. 71–3.
95. P. Bourdieu, 'Génèse et structure du champ religieux', *Revue française de Sociologie*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1971, p. 326.
96. Marabouts are Muslim holy men or hermits venerated in vernacular forms of Islam in North Africa.
97. *El Ouma*, October 1933.
98. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 61.
99. *El Ouma*, September–October 1934.
100. *El Ouma*, January 1935.
101. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 75.
102. Ibid: 81–2.
103. *El Ouma*, 27 May 1938.
104. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', 1934, p. 57.
105. *El Ouma*, October 1933.
106. G. Balakrishnan, 'The national imagination', in G. Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the nation* (London: Verso, 1996) p. 205.
107. *El Ouma*, January 1934.

4. Racism, Colonialism and Universalism

1. Part of this chapter was previously published as "Nous voulons déchirer le baillon and briser nos chaînes": racism, colonialism and universalism in the discourse of Algerian nationalists in France between the wars', *French History*, vol. 17, no. 2, June 2003, pp. 186–209.
2. See, for example, M. Banton, *Race Relations* (London: Tavistock, 1967); M.

- Banton, *Racial Consciousness* (Harlow: Longman, 1988); M. Banton, *Discrimination* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994); Banton and Harwood, *The race concept*; R. Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989); J. Rex, *Race and ethnicity* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986); Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*; P.-A. Taguieff, 'Réflexions sur la question antiraciste', *Mots*, no. 18, March 1989, pp. 75–93; P.-A. Taguieff, 'Politisation de l'immigration et racisme: lectures', *Mots*, no. 18, March 1989a; P.-A. Taguieff, *Face au racisme*, vol. 1, *Les moyens d'agir* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991); P.-A. Taguieff (ed.) *Face au racisme*, vol. 2, *Analyses, hypothèses, perspectives* (Paris: La Découverte 1991); M. Wiewiorka, *L'Espace du racisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1991); M. Wiewiorka, *La France raciste* (Paris: Seuil, 1992); and M. Wiewiorka, 'Les paradoxes de l'antiracisme', *Esprit*, no. 205, October 1994, pp. 16–28.
3. See Banton and Harwood, *The race concept*.
 4. Banton, *Race Relations*, p. 8.
 5. Jenkins, in *Rethinking ethnicity*, pp. 82–3, synthesizing some of the various interpretations of the concept, offers a broader defining framework whose options may apply to specific or general contexts where racism is noted: first, either as a set of organized beliefs or as existing in institutional arrangements and practices, and second either as categorization on the basis of purported biological differences or as categorization of any set of criteria allowing difference to be asserted.
 6. Wiewiorka, *L'Espace du racisme*, pp. 83–6.
 7. A. Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé* (Paris: Payot, 1973, first published 1957).
 8. C. Lloyd, *Discourses of antiracism in France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).
 9. R. Gallissot, *Misère de l'antiracisme: racisme et identité nationale: le défi de l'immigration* (Paris: Editions de l'Arcantère, 1985).
 10. From 1894 onwards, the Dreyfus affair, which divided French politicians and intellectuals into two distinct camps (the anti-clerical and anti-militarist *Dreyfusards*, and the anti-Semite, militarist and clerical *anti-Dreyfusards*), was an illustration of the depth of anti-Semitic prejudice in French society. See, for example, E. Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus: histoire, politique, société* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1994); and M. Winock, *L'Affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Seuil, 1994).
 11. Gallissot, *Misère de l'antiracisme*, pp. 44–6.
 12. See E. Sivan, 'Colonialism and popular culture in Algeria', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 14, no. 1, January 1979, pp. 21–54, for a detailed analysis of *piet-noir* racism against Muslims.
 13. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
 14. *El Ouma*, September–October 1934.
 15. *El Ouma*, January 1934.
 16. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
 17. *El Ouma*, March 1939.
 18. *El Ouma*, February–March 1935.
 19. *El Ouma*, 22 April 1938.
 20. *El Ouma*, January 1939.
 21. *El Ouma*, September 1934 and January 1935.

22. *El Ouma*, 11 March 1938.
23. *El Ouma*, December 1934.
24. *El Ikdam*, 11 March 1921.
25. *El Ouma*, October 1933.
26. *El Ouma*, January 1938.
27. *El Ouma*, December 1934.
28. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
29. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
30. APP, BA 56, ‘Note sur l’activité de l’ENA’, 1934, p. 99.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.
32. *El Ouma*, 24 July 1938.
33. *El Ouma*, September–October 1934.
34. *El Ouma*, December 1933.
35. *El Ouma*, 11 March 1938.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *El Ouma*, December 1934.
38. *El Ouma*, December 1934.
39. APP, BA56, ‘Note sur l’activité de l’ENA’, 1934, p. 80.
40. *El Ouma*, 22 April 1938.
41. At the turn of the twentieth century, settlers from southern Europe accounted for the majority of the European population in Algeria. Second generation Italians, Spaniards and Maltese became French citizens thanks to the law of 26 June 1889. See L. Talha, ‘De l’immigration coloniale à l’émigration des colons: colonisation, migrations internationales et mobilisation primitive des forces de travail’, *Annuaire de l’Afrique du Nord*, vol. 20, 1981, pp. 19–21.
42. *El Ouma*, October 1933.
43. The *Exposition coloniale* that took place in Marseilles in 1906 was also very popular (F. Bédarida, ‘Perspectives sur le mouvement ouvrier et l’impérialisme en France au temps de la conquête coloniale’, *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 86, January–March 1974, p. 38). The *Exposition coloniale* of 1931 was castigated in an ENA tract as France’s celebration of the oppression and exploitation of the Algerian people (APP, BA56, ‘Frères musulmans, alerte!’, January 1929).
44. Bédarida, ‘Perspectives sur le mouvement ouvrier’, p. 38.
45. See *El Ouma*, December 1934.
46. E. Balibar, *Masses, classes, ideas, studies on politics before and after Marx* (London: Routledge, 1994) pp. 191–204.
47. Balibar and Wallerstein, *Race, nation, classe*, pp. 42–54.
48. From Doriot’s extreme right-wing *La Liberté* (20 January 1938), which praised the progress brought about by imperial France in the colonies, to the ‘laxist’ attitude adopted by many workers’ movements that favoured moderate and peaceful colonialism (Bédarida, ‘Perspectives sur le mouvement ouvrier’, p. 29), a large consensus existed across the political spectrum on the benefits that colonialization could bring to the colonized.
49. On 15 April 1930, the congress of the *Association des instituteurs indigènes* ended with a declaration by S. Faci which stated that ‘France’s policy towards

- natives can only be a policy of assimilation'. During the nineteenth congress of the *Union des associations générales des étudiants de France*, Ferhat Abbas who, at the time, was president of the *Amicale des étudiants musulmans*, asserted that Algerian Muslim students' ideals were to 'incorporate the great French family'. See A. Ayache, 'Essai sur la vie syndicale en Algérie, l'année du centenaire (1930)', *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 72, January–March 1972, p. 97.
50. Fanon, 'Racisme et culture', p. 126.
 51. See for instance the organization's evocation of the past Arab nation: 'It is because we formed a united and prosperous nation that we were able to organize a colonial domain' (*El Ouma*, 27 May 1938).
 52. *El Ouma*, December 1934.
 53. *El Ouma*, January 1938. ENA–PPA leading militants regularly attended antiracist meetings during the interwar period. For example, the meeting organized by the *Rassemblement mondial contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme* on 5 February 1937 at the Palais de la Mutualité attracted an audience of 450 people (including 200 North Africans). While Messali Hadj was not allowed to speak, he nonetheless called on North Africans to fight fascism and racism (Police report, 8 February 1937, CAC 19940500/297).
 54. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
 55. *El Ouma*, February 1935.
 56. *El Ouma*, September–October 1934.
 57. *Ibid.*
 58. *Ibid.*
 59. F. Anthias and N. Yuval-Davies, *Racialized boundaries: race, nation, gender, colour and class and the anti-racist struggle* (London: Routledge, 1992) p. ix.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
 61. E. Balibar, *Les frontières de la démocratie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1992) pp. 65–6.
 62. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.

5. Algerian Nationalists in the French Political Arena

1. *El Ouma*, January 1935.
2. Ch.-R. Ageron, 'Les communistes français devant la question algérienne de 1921 à 1924', *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 78, January–March 1972, p. 8.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
4. See Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*.
5. The *Parti communiste algérien* (PCA) was created on 17 October 1937. During the first congress marking its foundation, the party voted for a manifest 'for a free and happy Algeria fraternally united with the French people and with all the other peoples' (Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne*, p. 48).
6. AN F7 13170, 'Note du Ministère des Colonies No. 17', 15 January 1929.
7. *El Ouma*, December 1934.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
10. *El Ouma*, January 1938; *El Ouma*, 1 April 1938.
11. *El Ouma*, 22 April 1938.

12. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
13. O. Milza, 'La gauche, la crise et l'immigration (années 1930–années 1980)', *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'Histoire*, no. 7, July–September 1985, pp. 128–9; Schor, *Histoire de l'immigration en France*, pp. 120–7.
14. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
15. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
16. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
17. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', p. 119.
18. *Ibid.*, pp 70–1.
19. *El Ouma*, December 1934.
20. APP, BA 56, 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', pp. 86–104.
21. *El Ouma*, October 1935. From Geneva, Chekib Arslan, headed the Syro-Palestinian Committee. He called on all Muslims from countries under European colonial domination to take advantage of the tense international situation and unite to gain independence. At the end of December 1936, Chekib Arslan sent his general secretary – and nephew – Chekib Djabri Bey, to Paris to reinforce links with North African and Syrian nationalist organizations and student groups (the *Comité d'action marocaine*, the *Comité de défense des libertés en Tunisie*, *Comité de défense des libertés en Syrie*). He attended several meetings organized by the ENA, the *Ligue de défense des droits de l'homme en Syrie* and the AEMNA (Police report, 13 March 1936, CAC 1940500/297).
22. For an account of Vietnamese immigration and political activism in France in the interwar period, see D. Hémerly, 'Du patriotisme au marxisme: l'immigration vietnamienne en France de 1926 à 1930', *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 90, January–March 1975, pp. 3–54.
23. 'Note du Ministre des Colonies', 31 December 1928 and 31 March 1929.
24. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
25. *El Ouma*, 11 March 1938. Nguyen The Truyen was a leading Vietnamese nationalist. He arrived in France in 1919 and was a science student in Toulouse between 1919 and 1921, and in Paris between 1922 and 1923. He became an engineer in chemistry and succeeded Nguyen Ai Quoc – later to be known as Ho Chi Minh – at the Section coloniale of the PCF (Hémerly, 'Du patriotisme au marxisme', p. 6).
26. *El Ouma*, January 1935.
27. Ch.-R. Ageron, *Politiques coloniales au Maghreb* (Paris: PUF, 1972) and Bédarida, 'Perspectives sur le mouvement ouvrier', highlight the racism that existed on the French left and in the workers' movements in the interwar period.
28. A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).
29. 'Note sur l'activité de l'ENA', pp. 71–2.
30. *El Ouma*, October 1935.
31. *El Ouma*, March–April 1936.
32. *El Ouma*, December 1937.
33. *El Ouma*, September 1933.
34. *El Ouma*, 27 August 1938.

35. *El Ouma*, December 1937.

Part II: The Messalist Movement from the Second World War

1. A number of detailed studies have focused on the history of Algerian nationalism in the postwar period and on the Algerian war. See, for example, H. Alleg, *La Guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Temps actuels, 1981); Aron, *Les origines de la guerre d'Algérie*; Y. Courrière, *La guerre d'Algérie, 1954–1962* (vol. 1, Paris: Fayard, 2001); Y. Courrière, *La guerre d'Algérie, 1957–1962* (vol. 2, Paris: Fayard, 2001); Droz and Lever, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie*; P. Eveno and J. Planchais, *La Guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1989); M. Harbi, *Aux origines du FLN: le populisme révolutionnaire en Algérie* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1975); M. Harbi, *Le FLN, mirage et réalité: des origines à la prise du pouvoir (1945–1962)* (Paris: Les éditions Jeunes Afrique, 1985); M. Harbi and B. Stora (eds) *La Guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Hachette, 2004); A. Horne, *A Savage war of peace, Algeria 1954–1962* (London: Papermac, 1996); M. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, vol. 2, *1939–1951* (Paris: Editions Paris-Méditerranée, 2003); Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*; P. Miquel, *La guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 1993); C. Paillat, *Le guépier* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1969); C. Paillat, *Dossiers secrets de l'Algérie*, vol. 1, *1958–1961* (Paris: Presse de la Cité, 1971); Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne*.

6. Algerian Nationalism from the Second World War to the Eve of the Algerian War

1. See R. Girardet, *L'idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962* (Paris: Hachette, 1972).
2. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, p. 60; Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie*, pp. 84–5.
3. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, vol. 1, *1919–1939*, defended the action of CARNA and the ATNA as necessary to ensure the maintenance of Algerian nationalist structures in France. Their consistent commitment to the nationalist cause led Messali Hadj to reintegrate the members of the ex-CARNA in 1944. These nationalists differed from Mohamed el Maadi, an ex-militant of the ENA–PPA who had sympathized with French fascist organizations before the war and collaborated actively with the German occupiers. In January 1943, El Maadi launched *Er Rachid* (the Guide), the bulletin of the North Africa Muslim Committee, a virulent anti-Semitic publication. However, El Maadi's call for the mobilization of North Africans around the committee recruited fewer than 200 militants.
4. *Combat*, 26 July 1946.
5. For a study of the relationship between the United States and France in the post-Second World War period, and during the Algerian war, see I. M. Wall, *The United States and the making of postwar France, 1945–1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and I. M. Wall, *France, the United States and the Algerian war* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
6. The text of the Manifesto is reproduced in J.-C. Jauffret (ed.) *La guerre d'Algérie par les documents*, vol. 1, *L'avertissement, 1943–1946* (Vincennes: Service historique de l'Armée de Terre, 1990) pp. 31–8.

7. On 14 August 1944, de Gaulle instructed General Henry Martin to 'prevent North Africa from slipping through our fingers whilst we are liberating France' (Report from General Henry Martin, 1944, SHAT 1H1726, cited in Jauffret, *La guerre d'Algérie par les documents*, vol. 1, *L'avertissement, 1943–1946*, p. 151).
8. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, p. 63.
9. Concerned about the unrest caused by the manifesto, the French authorities deported Messali Hadj to Aïn Salah on 10 December 1943 and put him under house arrest in Chellala (known as Reibell in the colonial period) in the Sahara on 4 January 1944 (Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, p. 317).
10. 'Lettre de Messali Hadj aux présidents et membres du Comité de libération', 11 October 1943, SHAT 1H2811.
11. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, vol. 2, 1939–1951, p. 607, states that 65,285 Muslims were affected by this reform. Other limited measures increasing access to education, housing, health and migration to France were also adopted. These changes were consistent with the orientation adopted by France at the Brazzaville conference (30 January–8 February 1944): France aimed to strengthen control of its empire by introducing some reforms but also by reasserting colonial domination and rejecting any form of autonomy.
12. Commission des réformes musulmanes, 1944, reproduced in Collot and Henry, *Le mouvement national algérien*, pp. 183–5.
13. Du Manifeste à la République algérienne, UDMA, February 1948, pp. 61–2, reproduced in Collot and Henry, *Le mouvement national algérien*, p. 187.
14. Report from General Duval, 30 May 1945, SHAT 1H2812.
15. In the region of Kabylie, young Algerian scouts were even arrested for chanting the French Resistance hymn. See M. Kaddache, *Et l'Algérie se libéra, 1954–1962* (Paris: Editions Paris-Méditerranée, 2003) p. 652.
16. Report from General Henry Martin, 14 November 1946, SHAT 1H1726; Report from the *Gouvernement général*, 26 April 1946, SHAT 11P61; Report from General Duval, 30 May 1945, SHAT 1H2812.
17. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, p. 67.
18. J.-L. Planche, *Sétif 1945: histoire d'un massacre annoncé* (Paris: Perrin, 2006). For detailed accounts of the events in Constantine in May 1945, see B. Mekhaled, *Chroniques d'un massacre, 8 mai 1945, Sétif, Guelma, Kherrata* (Paris: Syros, 1995); and A. Rey-Goldzeiguer, *Aux origines de la guerre d'Algérie 1940–1945: de Mers el-Kébir aux massacres du Nord-Constantinois* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002).
19. Cited by Paillat, *Le guépier*, p. 78.
20. Harbi and Stora, *La Guerre d'Algérie*, Planche, *Sétif 1945*.
21. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, vol. 2, 1939–1951, pp. 703–4. The parliament adopted an amnesty law on 9 March 1946, which benefited many Muslims who had been imprisoned following the uprising of May 1945.
22. The other members of the executive committee were Dr Bensaali (Tunisian), Dr Bousmaine (from Mostaganem), Si Djilani, Belkacem Radjef, Amar Imache, Ali Chabane, Yahiaoui Ahmed, Reboun and Aït M'Bouche.
23. There was a total of 13 parliamentary seats in the second college, the electoral college that 'represented' the majority Muslim population. This

- system ensured that the minority European population in Algeria – represented in the premier college – remained dominant in parliament.
24. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine (1830–1964)*, p. 93.
 25. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, vol. 2, 1939–1951, p. 706.
 26. *El Maghrib el Arabi*, 12 September 1947. The PPA–MTLD also launched an ‘Appeal for national union’ that aimed to unite the PPA–MTLD, the UDMA and the ulemas in a national alliance. However, the UDMA and the ulemas failed to commit themselves to such a union (‘Appel du Bureau politique du PPA pour l’union nationale’, December 1946, reproduced in Collot and Henry, *Le mouvement national algérien*, pp. 232–4).
 27. In fact, the MTLD acted as the public face and legal structure of a PPA which, in the same period, also developed clandestine structures. The nationalist party was therefore often referred to as the PPA–MTLD during that period.
 28. Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, vol. 2, 1939–1951, pp. 742–5; Report from General Olleris, 17 April 1948, SHAT 1H1430. The MTLD deputies used their position to denounce police torture, oppression and discrimination towards Muslim Algerians and to denounce France’s colonization of Algeria, even though French members of parliament were hostile they saw themselves as Algerian nationalists able to present their views in parliament, and not as French deputies. For example, Dr Lamine Debaghine declared that ‘Algeria is a nation. It was a nation and was sovereign. Only the aggression of 1830 took its sovereignty away from it’ (*El Maghrib el Arabi*, 12 September 1947).
 29. ‘Message au peuple algérien’, 17 July 1947, SHAT 1H1430.
 30. Report by Ait Ahmed, December 1948, cited in M. Harbi (ed.) *Les Archives de la révolution algérienne* (Paris: Editions Jeune Afrique, 1981) p. 26.
 31. Relying on tactics used during previous attempts made by the French authorities to introduce reforms in Algeria, many European *élus* threatened to resign if a liberal status were adopted.
 32. The statute included some positive reforms – greater financial and judicial autonomy, equality of all French citizens in the *Union française*, independence of the Muslim religion from the state and legalization of Muslim festivals, recognition of Arabic as one of the languages of the union and voting rights for women with a Muslim background. However, it kept most Muslims out of the polity and in a state of subjection. In the new Algerian assembly, Europeans and Muslims would be represented by 60 delegates each, ensuring European domination of Algerian affairs as many Muslim delegates were traditionally ‘chaperoned’ by the administration. (Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, vol. 2, 1939–1951, p. 718). The French authorities failed to implement many of the statute’s reforms.
 33. Making a ‘racial’ distinction between Kabyle/Berber Algerians and ‘Arab’ Algerians, as both French colonists and Algerian nationalists often did, was highly questionable since the North African population was mostly composed of Berbers, the original population of the Maghreb. Many who were often described as Arabs were in fact Arabized North African Berbers,

- and the minority Arab population whose ancestors had moved to North Africa had merged with the original population.
34. Harbi, *Le FLN, mirage et réalité*, p. 61.
 35. A. Ouerdane, *La question berbère dans le mouvement national, 1926–1980* (Sillery: Éditions du Septentrion, 1990) p. 56.
 36. The titles chosen for the two PPA newspapers illustrate this ideological clash between the two main trends in the party. During the period when the Fédération de France published *L'Etoile algérienne* – the title and content of which promoted Algerian-ness, the name chosen by the PPA for its organ in Algeria – *Maghrib al Arabi* (the Arab Maghreb) – reflected the ideological anchoring of many within the Algiers leadership in pan-Arabism.
 37. Cited in Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie*, p. 8.
 38. Harbi, *Le FLN, mirage et réalité*, pp. 64–5. These same reformists would soon turn against Messali during the 1953–54 crisis between the Messalists and the Centralists.
 39. These had marked the anti-colonial movement since its creation and were to re-emerge as political demands for democratic change in independent Algeria.
 40. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, p. 83.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 87. One, Djellali Belhadj remained as an agent of the French. During the Algerian war, under the pseudonym of Kobus, he led, with the assistance of the French army, a counter-maquis in the Ouarsenis region to oppose the FLN.
 42. While the moderate members of the central committee advised Mohamed Khider to contact the French and denounce the 'plot' to safeguard his position, Messali Hadj and Filali apparently disagreed with this strategy and helped Khider to escape to Cairo. On 21 June 1961, Ben Bella was given a life sentence (hard labour) *in absentia* for his role in the hold up of the Oran post office. See J.-C. Jauffret (ed.) *La guerre d'Algérie par les documents*, vol. 2, *Les portes de la guerre, 1946–1954* (Vincennes: Service historique de l'Armée de Terre, 1998) pp. 933–4.
 43. Jauffret, *La guerre d'Algérie par les documents*, vol. 2, *Les portes de la guerre*, pp. 14–17.
 44. *L'Algérie libre*, 6 July 1951.
 45. *L'Algérie libre*, 27 July 1951.
 46. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, p. 90. Whereas the central committee of the MTLD tried to re-establish a united front to develop the action of the FADRL, Messali opposed the idea of a front in which the party would have to make concessions and become an ally of the communists.
 47. It was only followed by traders in central Algiers; dockers in the ports of Algiers and Oran; and workers in Bône, Philippeville, Nemours, Maion-Carrée, Souma, Félix Faure and Chellala (*La Nation algérienne*, 3 September 1954).
 48. The demonstrators' social and economic demands focused on work, pay and housing conditions, social rights and benefits, the denunciation of racism and racist attacks and solidarity between North Africans and the French. Political demands included a call for Messali Hadj's release, Algerian independence,

- support for North African, Egyptian and Vietnamese nationalists and the separation of state and religion in Algeria (*L'Algérie libre*, 10 May 1952).
49. Report from the Gouvernement général d'Algérie, August 1954, SHAT 1H1202.
 50. Ibid., April 1954.
 51. Police report, Blida, 1 September 1954, CAOM 7G1288.
 52. As Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, pp. 124–5, points out, and contrary to the argument made in many historical studies and in French official documents, it was not the CRUA that launched the insurrection but a group whose many leading members had been connected to varying degrees to the ex-CRUA.
 53. They later became known as the nine '*chefs historiques*' of the Algerian Revolution.
 54. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, p. 125. Intelligence reports from the *Gouvernement général d'Algérie* and the French military show that the French authorities were already aware of the creation of the CRUA in March 1954 and had identified several members of the '*Comité des cinq*' in the summer of 1954. The police were aware of several explosive and arms caches controlled by nationalists but opted to wait in order to dismantle the whole paramilitary structure. However, the insurrection started earlier than expected – several reports referred to terrorist attacks being planned for December 1954 – which allowed the nationalists to take the initiative.

7. The Messalists–FLN Conflict in France during the Algerian War

1. A. Zamoum, *Le Pays des hommes libres: Tamurt Imazighen* (Paris: La Pensée sauvage, 1998) reproduced in M. Harbi and G. Meynier, *Le FLN: documents et histoire 1954–1962* (Paris: Fayard, 2004) pp. 33–7.
2. The leaders of the insurrection were the members of the *Comité des six* (Mohamed Boudiaf, Mostefa Ben Boulaïd, Larbi Ben M'hidi, Mourad Didouche, Rabah Bitat and Krim Belkacem) and the three leaders of the MTLD's *délégation extérieure*. They were later referred to as the '*neuf chefs historiques de la Révolution*' (the nine historical leaders of the Revolution). Dr Lamine Debaghine turned down an offer to lead the FLN at the beginning of the war. Arrested by the French police in 1954 he only joined the FLN after his release in 1955. He became the first foreign minister of the *Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne* (GPRA) but did not play a role in the leadership of the FLN after 1959 (Alleg, *La Guerre d'Algérie*, p. 347).
3. Report from the Gouvernement général de l'Algérie, 18 November 1954, SHAT 1H1202. The French intelligence service was aware of plans by Algerian radical militants of the ex-OS and Messalists to launch an insurrection on Christmas day 1954 (known as the 'Christmas plot') and on 15 January 1955 (Report from General Chérière, 28 December 1954, SHAT, EMA, 2e Bureau, carton non coté No. 506). It also believed that the CRUA was led by a '*Comité des quatre*' and assisted by the three leading members of the ex-OS in Cairo. It had identified four other names but they were all

- pseudonyms used by one man. Algerian fighters were praised and referred to as ‘mujahedins’ by nationalists.
4. Report from the Gouvernement général de l’Algérie, 18 November 1954, SHAT 1H1202. In the archival documents that were examined, this appeared to be the main interpretation of the events by the French authorities in the weeks that followed the ‘Toussaint rouge’ (Red All Saints Day).
 5. Cited in Kaddache, *Et l’Algérie se libéra*, p. 17.
 6. ‘Déclaration de Messali à l’AFP’, 8 November 1954, *La Voix du peuple algérien*, 1 December 1954.
 7. The Messalists set up *maquis* in several parts of Algeria, including one led by Mohamed Bellounis in Kabylie, and in the south of Algeria.
 8. The MNA also published newspapers and bulletins during the war, including *Algeria Libera* (Italy) and *Algerian News* (Great Britain).
 9. *La Voix du peuple algérien*, 16 December 1954.
 10. According to a police report, Algerians were unaware of the conflict between Messali and FLN leaders in many parts of the colony, particularly in the Constantinois, and it only became known in Kabylie in the spring of 1955 (Police report, 9 and 11 July 1955, CAOM 7G1288).
 11. Police report, 1 September 1955, CAOM 7G1288.
 12. The CNRA meeting of 28 August 1957 reversed the Soummam valley principles. These principles, which Abbane set out, aimed to reinforce the democratic character of the Front by giving prominence to the political structure over the military and of the ‘FLN de l’intérieur’ over the party structures based outside Algeria. The CNRA meeting in Cairo in August 1957 marked the beginning of the militarization of the FLN leadership and the dominance of the FLN de l’extérieur. It was followed by the marginalization of Abbane Ramdane whose murder on 22 December 1957 was ordered and planned by Colonel Abdelhafid Boussouf with the complicity of Belkacem Krim and Lakhdar Ben Tobbal – Krim and Ben Tobbal later claimed they did not want Abbane to be killed.
 13. The leadership of the *Fédération de France du FLN* transferred to Germany in April 1958 and formed a *Comité d’organisation militaire*. Its influence extended to the Algerian immigrant population in metropolitan France, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland.
 14. Police report, 30 September 1955, CAOM 7G1288.
 15. Horne, *A Savage war of peace*, pp. 120–1.
 16. Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, pp. 280–2.
 17. The elections planned for 2 January 1956 in Algeria were cancelled but the right to vote of Algerian residents in France (to whom the French referred at the time as ‘Français musulmans’) was maintained.
 18. The MNA declared that ‘Algerians will not take part in French elections’ (*La Voix du peuple*, 16 December 1955). The FLN soon issued a similar order and no violent confrontation took place on this issue.
 19. Both the FLN and the MNA were reported to be in negotiation with arms traders to purchase weapons (SCINA report, 1 July 1956, CAOM 84F38).

20. SCINA reports, January, February, April, and 20 October 1956, CAOM 84F38.
21. The police estimated that twice as many Algerians had left France in January 1956 as in January 1955 and that in 1956, almost all North Africans in France were young men under the age of 35, making them potential fighters for the nationalist cause (SCINA reports, January and February 1956, CAOM 84F38).
22. SCINA reports, January and February 1956, CAOM 84F38.
23. *Ibid.*, March and 1 July 1956.
24. *La Voix du peuple*, July 1957.
25. The French police also reported on the close links between the 'Frontist' AGTA and the CGT (SCINA report, 29 March 1957, CAOM 84F38).
26. SCINA reports, 28 January and 27 May 1957, CAOM 84F38.
27. In July 1956, four people were reported to have been killed and 86 injured. In August, eight people were murdered and 92 were injured. In September, the toll was higher (12 deaths and 160 injured) (SCINA reports, 20 September and 20 October 1956, CAOM 84F38).
28. The massacre of Melouza was the continuation of a violent FLN campaign against Messalist villages. This had intensified in 1956 with the killing of the entire population of the Messalist village of Ifraten in Kabylie in April 1956 (Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, pp. 446–7).
29. *L'Aurore*, 10 July 1957; *Le Monde*, 5 June 1957.
30. SCINA report, 28 January 1957, CAOM 84F38.
31. *Ibid.*, 13 July, September, and 4 November 1957.
32. In 1959, the French army stated that foreign aid to the FLN amounted to 6.3 billion francs and that most of it came from Arab countries (95.9 per cent – with Iraq and the United Arab Emirates accounting for more than 75 per cent of Arab aid), socialist countries (2.3 per cent), Asia (1 per cent), Western countries (0.8 per cent) (SHAT 1H1687–2, cited in Meynier, *Histoire intérieure du FLN*, pp. 731–2).
33. SCINA reports, 16 December 1957, CAOM 84F38; 23 July 1958, CAOM 84F39.
34. For a detailed study of Franco-American relations during the Algerian war, see Wall, *France, the United States and the Algerian war*.
35. French involvement in the Suez Canal operation was partly motivated by the determination of the Guy Mollet government to undermine Nasser, whom it saw as a key ally of the FLN, even though relations between the FLN and the Egyptian authorities had by then become less cordial.
36. Police report, 21 June 1961, CAOM 7G1288. Other Algerian military units controlled and manipulated by the French also gradually disappeared. The troops led by Djellali Belhadj, the early OS member who had become a French agent known as Kobus, and controlled by the French to fight the FLN, was now destroyed. Kobus was killed by the FLN and his troops joined the FLN on 29 April 1958.
37. *France Observateur*, 24 October 1959; *Le Figaro*, 13 November 1959.
38. SCINA reports, 16 June 1958, CAOM 84F38; 23 July 1958, CAOM 84F39.

39. Units of Algerian Muslim auxiliaries who collaborated closely with the French police and army in repressing Algerian nationalists were referred to as *Harkis*.
40. *Centres d'assignation à résidence* were opened in France, included in Thol and in the Larzac. The Larzac camp was designed for 4000 detainees (Note from the Renseignements généraux, 26 November 1959, CAC 20010345/1).
41. SCINA report, December 1959, CAOM 84F39. In the same period, the police reported that 2,603,742 Muslims – many were arrested on several occasions – had been taken in for questioning, 9740 vehicles whose drivers and/or passengers were Algerians had been stopped and thousands of weapons seized (Ibid.).
42. Letter from Roger Frey to Charles de Gaulle, CAC 19770101/7.
43. SCINA report, November 1961, CAOM 84F40. French police arrested the '*responsable fédéral*', four of his deputies, two '*contrôleurs de wilaya*' and one head of *wilaya*, and the DST seized important FLN archives in metropolitan France during the DST 'Opération Flore' against the FLN on 9 and 10 November 1961 (SCINA report, November 1961, CAOM 84F40). These archives are now located at the Archives de la Préfecture de police de Paris (APP-H1B35).
44. Stora, *Messali Hadj, 1898–1974*, p. 278.
45. The police prefect of Paris at the time was Maurice Papon. He was an ex-collaborationist who had organized the deportation of hundreds of Jews under the Vichy regime and was a staunch supporter of the colonial order. He had signalled to police officers that he would cover up their violent actions and the killing of any Algerians. For a detailed analysis of police repression and violence against Algerians in the autumn of 1961 and during the demonstration of 17 October 1961, see L. Amiri, *Les fantômes d'octobre 1961* (Paris: Editions Mémoires-Génériques, 2001); J. L. Einaudi, *La Bataille de Paris* (Paris: Seuil, 1991); and J. L. Einaudi, 'Octobre 1961, un massacre au cœur de Paris', *Hommes et Migrations*, no. 1175, April 1994; J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, state terror, and memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); P. Péju, *Ratonnades à Paris: précédé de les Harkis à Paris* (Paris: La Découverte, 2000). For an analysis largely based on, and reflecting, the police version of the events, see J. P. Brunet, *Police contre FLN: le drame d'octobre 1961* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).
46. See, for example, H. Alleg, *La Question* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1958); P.-H. Simon, *Contre la torture* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1957); and P. Vidal-Naquet, *L'Affaire Audin* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1958).
47. See M. Evans, *The memory of resistance: French opposition to the Algerian war (1954–1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997).
48. Police report, 28 September 1960, CAOM 7G1288.
49. Messali refused to withdraw in favour of the FLN, as President Bourguiba of Tunisia had personally requested in 1959, and further attempts to mediate by representatives of the King of Morocco in Switzerland were unsuccessful (SCINA reports, May and August 1960, CAOM 84F40).

50. Following the marginalization of the MNA during the negotiations between the FLN and the French government, the Messalists reorganized the party in Algeria. The activities of *Comité politico-militaire* (CPMA) set up in Algiers under the control of the *Comité directeur* of the MNA in Paris were reinforced (Police report, 29 June 1960, CAOM 7G1288). Messali ordered the cadres to end their contacts with the administration in the *métropole* to counter FLN accusations that the MNA was manipulated by the French. In Britain, Professor Saadoun, the MNA representative, ensured that Bensid, the general secretary of the USTA, was invited to the Trades Union Congress. In Belgium, Ferhat, the MNA representative, facilitated the publication of articles on the MNA in the national press (including *La Cité*). In Germany, Moulay Merba's efforts to promote the programme of the MNA in governmental and political circles were hampered by the FLN's dominant relationship with German politicians. The meeting between Messalist delegates and high ranking Moroccan officials that took place near Geneva produced few results. The Moroccan authorities refused to allow the MNA to open an office in Morocco and reasserted their close relationship with the GPRA (Police report, 28 September 1960, CAOM 7G1288).
51. Bulletin d'information du Mouvement national algérien, June 1961, CAOM 7G1304.
52. *Le Monde*, 30 March 1961.
53. Police report, undated [summer 1961], CAOM 7G1304.
54. The FAAD, set up in March 1961 as an anti-communist, anti-FLN body, published *L'Algérien*. It called for a status for Algeria based on integration and close association with France, and guaranteeing the interests of Europeans. It favoured a legislative assembly elected by universal suffrage, a senate with 50 per cent of the seats reserved for Europeans and 'the joint exploitation of the wealth of a Franco-Algerian Sahara' (DST report, December 1961, CAOM 7G1304). The FAAD, whose influence on Algerian Muslims remained negligible, later developed close links with the OAS. Messali's opponents used this link to accuse him of collaborating with the OAS, an accusation he vehemently denied. An article in the newspaper *Minute* stated that the MNA had held talks in Frankfurt with Colonel Gardes of the OAS and concluded a pact known as the 'Salan pact' – named after the leading French general who had rebelled against the French government (*La Voix du peuple*, May 1962).
55. SCINA reports, June, July, September and December 1961, CAOM 84F40.
56. SCINA report, January 1962, CAOM 84F41.
57. *La Voix du peuple*, 1 July 1962.
58. SCINA report, April, May and June 1962, CAOM 84F41. Over 99 per cent of Algerians voted in favour of Algerian independence in the referendum of 2 July 1962.
59. Cited in B. Ben Khedda, *Les Accords d'Evian* (Algiers: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 90.
60. Messali's political allies were reduced to the Trotskyite Lambertist movement. His close relationship with the Lambertists and his declarations

of support for General de Gaulle's project of reforms during the last years of the war were exploited by the FLN to further marginalize the *zaim* and the MNA in France, in Algeria and internationally.

8. Ethnicity and Nation-ness in the MTA Discourse

1. A. Dumont, 'Polarisation et fragmentation identitaires au sein du mouvement associatif des migrants marocains en France (1956–2006)', Colloquium, 'Classe, ethnicité, genre ...: les mobilisations au piège de la fragmentation identitaire?' 8–9 March 2007, Institut d'Études politiques, Rennes.
2. In contrast to the ADAF, the *Amicale des Tunisiens en France* (ATF) remained largely ineffective (A. Hajjat, 'Les comités Palestine (1970–1972): aux origines du soutien de la cause palestinienne en France', *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, no. 98, 2006, pp. 74–92). The *Amicale des travailleurs et commerçants marocains* (ATCM), established by the Moroccan authorities to control Moroccans in France and limit the influence of autonomous organizations and French trade unions on Moroccan migrants, was only created in 1973 (Dumont, 'Polarisation et fragmentation').
3. See, for example, G. Abou Sada, B. Courault and Z. Zeroulou (eds) *L'Immigration au tournant* (Paris: L'Harmattan-CIEMI, 1990); Ch.-R. Ageron, 'L'immigration maghrébine en France: un survol historique', *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'Histoire*, no. 7, July–September 1985, pp. 59–70; Y. Allouane, *L'émigration maghrébine en France* (Tunis: Cérès Productions, 1979); Khellil, *L'exil kabyle*; M. Khellil, *L'intégration des Maghrébins en France* (Paris: PUF, Coll. Sociologie d'aujourd'hui, 1991); M. Khellil, 'Kabyles en France, un aperçu historique', *Hommes et Migrations*, no. 1179, September 1994, pp. 12–18; Schor, *Histoire de l'immigration en France*; and P. Weil, *La France et ses étrangers* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1991).
4. J. Fourastié, *Les Trente Glorieuses ou la révolution invisible* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).
5. Hajjat, 'Les comités Palestine'.
6. S. Bouziri (with M. Belbah), 'Itinéraire d'un militant dans l'immigration', *Migrance*, no. 25, 'Immigration et luttes sociales: filiations et ruptures (1968–2003)', 2005, pp. 36–49.
7. *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, No. 1, January 1973; Microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre; *Frontière*, October 1973.
8. *Akhhbar El Haraka*, 1976; Microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
9. Police report, 26 August 1972, CAC 19850087/29.
10. *Ibid.*, CAC 19850087/28.
11. 'Procès verbal du Conseil national des travailleurs en lutte', 8 October 1972. Microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
12. This terminology appeared consistently in MTA documents. The report produced on the campaign of mobilization after the death of Djellali Ben Ali is a good illustration of this: see p. 6 of the report 'Bilan de la campagne Djellali',

- Microfiche 218/7, Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 197–1974-Affaire Djellali (octobre–novembre 1971), BDIC, Nanterre.
13. The re-emergence of Berber identity and movements on the political scene can be traced to the 1980s when the Berber demonstration (known as the ‘Berber Spring’) in 1980 challenged the government’s repression of Kabyle culture and language and the imposition of an Arab identity in Algeria.
 14. ‘Procès verbal du Conseil national des travailleurs en lutte’, 8 October 1972.
 15. MTA document, untitled, undated. Microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
 16. On 25 September 1973, the main French unions (CGT, CFDT and FEN) and the ADA called for a general strike against racism inspired by the success of the general strikes organized by the MTA on 3 September 1973 in the south of France and on 14 September 1973 in the Paris region. They also organized a meeting at the Bourse du Travail on that day during which MTA militants were prevented from addressing the audience. In their publication, the MTA denounced these organizations for attempting to marginalize its militants during that meeting and declared that ‘Arabs are not against the French but against the racists’ (*La Voix des travailleurs arabes*, October 1973).
 17. Even though the Muslims’ struggle in the Arab world was often evoked in the ENA–PPA’s discourse, the interwar nationalist movement never really considered the establishment of an Arab nation embracing the whole Arab world. Its nationalist ideology was very much rooted in the colonial borders established by imperialist powers.
 18. It is worth noting that in the MTA’s discourse, North Africans were sometimes described as Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians in specific contexts where their nationality was pertinent (for instance, the deportation of Moroccans and Tunisians to their home country, or the oppression of North African political activists by the oppressive regimes in the Maghreb).
 19. Connor, ‘A nation as a nation’, pp. 388–9.
 20. Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p. 15; Connor, ‘A nation as a nation’, p. 380.
 21. ‘Chers camarades’. Microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
 22. See D. El Yazami, ‘France’s ethnic minority press’, in A. G. Hargreaves and M. McKinney (eds) *Post-Colonial Cultures in France* (London: Routledge, 1997) pp. 119–20.
 23. MTA document, untitled, undated; Microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
 24. This phenomenon was consistent with the interwar nationalists’ political action.
 25. Microfiche 214/4: Fonds Saïd Bouziri/Lettre à un camarade en prison (1972), Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine, Nanterre.
 26. MacMaster, *Colonial migrants and racism*, pp. 94–102.
 27. Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*.
 28. F. Pinot, *Les travailleurs immigrés dans la lutte de classes* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1973).

29. Ibid., pp. 32–3.
30. J.-C. Labracherie, 'Le ministre et les immigrés', *Esprit*, no. 5, May 1973, p. 1169.
31. Most immigrants who were recruited to work in France had been rigorously 'selected' and their health had to be excellent. Disabilities among migrants often resulted from poor and dangerous working conditions in France.
32. F. Jordan, 'Travailleurs immigrés, service social et lutte syndicale', *Esprit*, no. 413, April–May 1972, p. 733; Pinot, *Les travailleurs immigrés*, pp. 46–7, 57.
33. Interview with Driss el Yazami, 22 January 2001.
34. 'Déclaration du candidat immigré aux élections présidentielles', 1974; microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
35. Interview with Driss el Yazami, 22 January 2001.
36. Ibid.
37. Anderson, *Imagined communities*.
38. 'Déclaration du candidat immigré aux élections présidentielles', 1974.
39. The MTA's inclusive evocation of sacrifice contrasts with the ENA–PPA's exclusive discourse which did not aim to gain recognition within France but rather to mark difference and distinctiveness.
40. 'Déclaration du candidat immigré aux élections présidentielles', 1974.
41. Ibid.
42. 'Bilan de la campagne Djellali', microfiche 218/7: Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–1974-Affaire Djellali (octobre–novembre 1971).
43. 'Halte aux expulsions des immigrés! Halte à la politique d'esclavage et de refoulement du gouvernement!', microfiche 218/3: Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–1974, BDIC, Nanterre.
44. A. Hastings, *The construction of nationhood: ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 185.
45. Ibid., pp. 185–7.
46. F. Bissekri, 'Vivre le ramadan en France', *La croissance des jeunes nations*, no. 177, November 1976, p. 19.
47. G. Kepel, *Les banlieues de l'Islam: naissance d'une religion en France* (Paris: Seuil, 1987) pp. 229–31. A number of other studies of Islam in France have been carried out. See, for example, S. Andezian, 'Appartenance religieuse et appartenance communautaire: l'exemple d'un groupe d'immigrés algériens en France', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 20, 1981, pp. 259–66; Bariki, 'Identité religieuse'; B. Etienne, 'Le cas de Marseille', *Pouvoirs*, no. 47, 1988, pp. 115–22; B. Etienne, *La France et L'Islam* (Paris: Hachette, 1989); B. Etienne (ed.) *L'Islam en France: Islam, état et société* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1991); G. Kepel, *A l'Ouest d'Allah* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1994); R. Leveau, 'Eléments de réflexion sur l'enquête "culture islamique et attitudes politiques dans l'immigration maghrébine en France"', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 27, 1988, pp. 85–8; and R. Schor, 'Le facteur religieux et l'intégration des étrangers en France', *Vingtème Siècle, Revue d'Histoire*, no. 7, July–September 1985, pp. 103–15).

48. Kepel, *A l'ouest d'Allah*, pp. 178–9.
49. MTA tract, untitled, 1974, microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
50. MTA document, untitled, undated, microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
51. *Al Assifa*, no. 12, January 1977. Microfiche 216/1–9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
52. Tract signed by the Comité Palestine, Secours Rouge 18ème and 'antiraciste residents', Microfiche 218/7, BDIC, Nanterre.
53. *Frontière*, October 1973; *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, October 1973. Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
54. S. Hall, 'Introduction: who needs identity?' in S. Hall and P. du Gay (eds) *Questions of cultural identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1996).
55. Microfiche 214/4: Fonds Saïd Bouziri/Lettre à un camarade en prison (1972).
56. 'Victoire. La carte de travail pour les 56 grévistes de la faim', Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
57. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 8 August 1996.
58. Microfiche 214/4: Fonds Saïd Bouziri/Lettre à un camarade en prison.
59. *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, no. 1, 1 January 1973.
60. L. Talha, 'Le travailleur immigré, éternel homo oeconomicus?', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 20, 1981, pp. 349–64.
61. The MTA frequently referred to Maghrebi experience in France as 'slavery'. See, for example, MTA documents such as the 'lettre à un camarade en prison', as well as their newspaper *La voix des travailleurs arabes*.
62. M. Marié, 'De l'immigré colonial à l'immigré-marchandise: ou l'espace d'une amnésie?', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 20, 1981, p. 339.
63. El Assifa started to perform in August 1973 during the strike action at the Lip factory, after a meeting between immigrant and French workers. Its first play was entitled 'Work, work and shut your mouth' ('*Ça travaille, ça travaille et ça ferme sa gueule*').
64. 'Qu'est-ce que Assifa?', Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
65. Ibid.
66. 'Ça Radio Assifa', Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
67. *Akhbar El Haraka*, 1 May 1976. Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
68. Ibid.
69. *Akhbar el Haraka*, 1 May 1976.
70. 'Qu'est-ce que Assifa?', Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
71. 'Collectif Al Assifa'.
72. G. Baumann, 'Dominant and demotic discourses of culture: their relevance to multi-ethnic alliances', in P. Werbner and T. Modood (eds) *Debating cultural hybridity: multi-cultural identities and the politics of anti-racism* (London: Zed Books, 1997) p. 209.
73. *Le Monde*, 7 December 1972. The lawyer acting for the Diab family later showed the inconsistencies in Robert Marquet's account of the incident and

- proved that the policeman was drunk when he killed Mohamed Diab (*L'Unité*, 26 September 1975).
74. Following a lengthy campaign by supporters of the Diab family, a trial took place in September 1975. However, the case against Robert Marquet was dismissed on 16 October 1975 due to lack of evidence (*L'Unité*, 20–26 June 1980).
 75. 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', Microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
 76. *Ibid.*
 77. December 1972 marked the creation of the CDVDTH, which the MTA saw as 'the start of a mass organization in which unity between the French and immigrants would be achieved'. This committee played a key role in the Diab campaign ('Lettre à un camarade en prison').
 78. 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', Microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
 79. 'Bilan de la campagne Djellali, microfiche 218/7, BDIC, Nanterre. Daniel Pigot was judged in 1977, some six years after he had killed Djellali. The court declared that his act was not motivated by racism, and he received a prison sentence of five years, three of them suspended (see, for example, *Le Matin*, 22 June 1977, *Libération* and *Le Monde*, 23 June 1977).
 80. 'Bilan de la campagne Djellali', microfiche 218/7, BDIC, Nanterre.
 81. *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, October 1973.
 82. 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', Microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
 83. *Ibid.*
 84. Following a trial that took place in September 1975, the case against Robert Marquet was dismissed on 16 October 1975 due to lack of evidence (*L'Unité*, 20–26 June 1980).
 85. 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', Microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
 86. 'Déclaration de Hamza Bouziri', Microfiche 218/3, Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–74, BDIC, Nanterre.

9. Antiracism, Universalism and Difference

1. For a discussion of the concept of the 'internal colony', see Lloyd, *Discourses of antiracism in France*, pp.131–48.
2. P.-A. Taguieff, 'Du racisme au mot "race": comment les éliminer?', *Mots*, no. 33, December 1992, p. 21.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–35; and Taguieff, 'Réflexions sur la question antiraciste', p. 77.
4. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Race et histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).
5. C. Guillaumin, *L'idéologie raciste: genèse et langage actuel* (Paris: Mouton, 1972); and C. Guillaumin, 'Usages théoriques et usages banals du terme *race*', *Mots*, vol. 33, December 1992, pp. 59–65. See also J.-L. Bonniol, 'La "race", inanité biologique mais réalité symbolique efficace', *Mots*, no. 33, December 1992, pp. 187–95; P. Darlu, 'De quelques fonctions génétiques du concept de *race*', *Mots*, no. 33, December 1992, pp. 143–9; and A. Piazza, 'L'histoire génétique des populations: est-ce que les races existent?', *Mots*, no. 33, December 1992, p. 159.
6. Lloyd, *Discourses of antiracism in France*, Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé*; Taguieff,

- 'Du racisme au mot "race"'. Of course, this did not mean that biological references had disappeared from racist discourse and accusation, as racism could rely on the shifting interplay of biological, cultural and character differences as justification for discrimination. A. Memmi, 'Essai de définition', *La Nef*, nos 19–20, September–December 1964, p. 42, cited in Taguieff, *Face au racisme*, vol. 2, *Analyses, hypothèses, perspectives*, p. 40.
7. P.-A. Taguieff, *La force du préjugé: essai sur le racisme et ses doubles* (Paris: La Découverte, 1988).
 8. Gallissot, *Misère de l'antiracisme*, p. 8.
 9. Racist violence during the 1970s was frequently discussed in periodicals like *Africasia*, *Contact*, *Droit et Liberté*, *France-Pays Arabes*, *Jeune Afrique*, *L'Algérien en Europe*, *Le Droit de vivre*, *Réforme*, *Révolution africaine*, and *Vivre en France*, as well as in French daily newspapers and weekly news magazines. See, for example, M. S. Badday, 'Travailleurs africains: la monnaie de la pièce', *L'Afrique littéraire et artistique*, no. 23, June 1972, pp. 46–59; A. Meury, 'À Marseille, la situation des immigrés nécessite des mesures urgentes', *Croissance des jeunes nations*, no. 159, May 1975, pp. 16–18; and A. Meury, 'Les travailleurs immigrés victimes de la crise', *Croissance des jeunes nations*, no. 159, August 1975, pp. 19–26.
 10. Gallissot, *Misère de l'antiracisme*, p. 7.
 11. *Frontière*, October 1973, pp. 30–3. See also L. Bitterlin, 'La guerre en France ... contre les Algériens', *France-Pays Arabes*, no. 40, January–February 1973, pp. 26–8; and M. Toumi, 'Un Klu Klux Klan pour la France?', *L'Afrique littéraire et artistique*, no. 30, November 1973, pp. 23–6.
 12. *Croissance des jeunes nations*, March 1973, p. 14.
 13. *Politique Aujourd'hui*, March–April 1974, p. 42.
 14. *Sans Frontière*, October 1973, p. 31.
 15. See, for example, N. MacMaster, 'The Rue Fondary murders of 1923 and the origins of anti-Arab racism', in J. Windebank and R. Gunther (eds) *Violence and conflict in the politics and society of modern France* (London: Edwin Mellen Press) pp. 149–60.
 16. 'Mohamed Laïd Moussa, jeune travailleur algérien, a été lâchement assassiné à Marseille', Microfiche 216/1–9: Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.
 17. Ibid.
 18. Ibid.
 19. This discourse reflected that of the ENA–PPA, which consistently criticized the judiciary for failing to prosecute French murderers of North Africans, and which it referred to as *'justice de race'* (racial justice).
 20. 'Déclaration du Mouvement des travailleurs arabes (MTA) à la conférence de presse du vendredi 21 mars 1975', microfiche 218/9: Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–74, BDIC, Nanterre.
 21. 'Bilan de la lutte Djellali', microfiche 218/4: Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–1974, BDIC, Nanterre.
 22. Déclaration de Hamza Bouziri, Microfiche 218/3: Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–1974, BDIC, Nanterre.

23. On the CDVDTI, see Chapter 8.
24. *Sans Frontière*, 11 January 1980. The French government deported Mohamed Selim Najeh after the antiracist strikes successfully organized by Maghrebi workers in September 1973 to protest against the wave of racist murders targeting North African immigrants (see *Le Monde*, 5 September 1973).
25. Given the multilayered meaning of the word 'sauvage', the English translation does not fully reflect the complexity of negative connotations contained in the slogan 'Halte à l'immigration sauvage'.
26. C. Guillaumin, 'Immigration sauvage', *Mots*, no. 8, March 1984, p. 43.
27. *Ibid.*
28. The reference to *immigration sauvage* without quotation marks in the latter assertion is quite revealing of the way in which it was adopted as a valid notion by the mainstream media.
29. *Le Monde*, 28 August 1973.
30. *Le Méridional-La France*, 26 August 1973.
31. *Le Monde*, 30 August 1973.
32. *L'Express*, 3–9 September 1973.
33. *Le Monde*, 1 September 1973.
34. *Le Monde*, 16–17 September 1973; *Jeune Afrique*, 6 October 1973.
35. The exception was when sous-brigadier François Canto, a policeman, and his accomplice Raymond Michel (who was later released) were arrested for randomly looking for North Africans in the streets of Marseilles and killing 16 year-old Ladj Lounes. Canto's arrest was the result of the long campaign carried out by Lounes's family which, in spite of police intimidation, managed to discover the identity of the murderer. They contacted the *Gendarmerie* in order to leave no alternative to the *Police Nationale* but to arrest him. See F.-N. Bernardi, J. Dissler, A. Dugrand and A. Panzani, *Les dossiers noirs du racisme dans le Midi de la France* (Paris: Seuil, 1976).
36. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 4 December.
37. Meury, 'A Marseille, la situation des immigrés nécessite des mesures urgentes', p. 16.
38. *Le Nouvel Observateur* (24 December 1973) said that during 1973, no fewer than 47 North Africans had been the victims of racially-motivated murders. This figure is significantly higher than the one provided by the MRAP (see p. 4).
39. Bernardi et al., *Les dossiers noirs*, p. 53.
40. *Frontière*, October 1973.
41. *L'Express*, 8–14 October 1973.
42. *Frontière*, October 1973, pp. 30–3; *Le Monde*, 22 September 1973.
43. *Le Monde*, 5 September; Bernardi et al., *Les dossiers noirs*, p. 57.
44. 'Déclaration de Mohamed Selim Najeh, Secrétaire général du CDVDTI, Paris, 29 August 1973', Microfiche 218/4: Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–1974, BDIC, Nanterre.
45. In 1971 the Palestine committees also applied the adjective 'sauvage' to police repression, referred to as 'sauvage police intervention'. See 'Bilan de la campagne

- Djellali', Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–1974-Affaire Djellali (October–November 1971), Microfiche 218/7, BDIC.
46. Bernardi et al., *Les dossiers noirs du racisme*.
 47. The three people who were arrested admitted carrying out that attack because, in their own words, they could not bear to see the Algerian flag raised in Marseilles. Two of the accused were later released without charge and one received only a suspended sentence (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 24 December 1973).
 48. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 31 December 1973.
 49. 'Bilan de la campagne Djellali', microfiche 218/7: Dossier France-racisme-lutte contre les crimes racistes, 1971–1974-Affaire Djellali (octobre-novembre 1971), BDIC, Nanterre.
 50. MTA document, untitled, June 1972, microfiche 216/1–9: Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrébins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre.

10. The MTA in the French Sociopolitical Arena

1. The comparative aspect of this analysis is influenced by the central role played by both the ENA–PPA and the MTA in the processes of mobilization of Maghrebi immigrants, and by the MTA's claim that through its action in the postcolonial period, it aimed to continue the anti-colonial struggle on behalf of Maghrebi immigrants. Part of this chapter was previously published as 'Political mobilization of North African migrants in 1970s France: the case of the Mouvement des travailleurs arabes (MTA)', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 2, August 2006, pp. 171–86.
2. To some extent this echoed the way in which, in the late 1930s, the PCF and CGTU accused the PPA of being a fascist, fanatic religious organization close to the PPF.
3. *Frontière*, October 1973, p. 33.
4. See, for example, Talha, 'De l'immigration coloniale'; and Talha, 'Le travailleur immigré'. El Assifa, the theatre group close to the MTA, challenged and derided this functional and dehumanized view of immigrants in its play entitled *Ça travaille, ça travaille et ça ferme sa gueule* ('Work, work, and shut your mouth').
5. In 1973, there were 3,775,000 immigrants in France (7 per cent of the population). The proportion of workers among them (48 per cent) was higher than that of the French (41 per cent). In 1971, 72 per cent of immigrants were unskilled workers, and by 1981, Maghrebis represented 42 per cent of immigrants in France. (See C. Granges, 'Les travailleurs marocains employés par la Régie Renault en France: conditions de travail et de vie', *Annales de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 20, 1981, p. 143; *Politique aujourd'hui*, March–April 1974, pp. 41–2.)
6. G. Mauco, 'Les travailleurs étrangers en France: exploitation tous azimuts', *Le Monde*, 23 March 1973, pp. 1, 34; G. Mauco, 'Les travailleurs étrangers en France: du bidonville à l'école', *Le Monde*, 24 March 1973, p. 38; G. Mauco,

- 'Les travailleurs étrangers en France: une absence de politique', *Le Monde*, 25–26 March 1973, p. 7.
7. *Politique aujourd'hui*, March–April 1974, pp. 41–2. For analyses of Maghrebi immigrants' experience in the workplace see, A. Bouhouche, 'Conditions et attitudes des travailleurs algériens émigrés en France: exposé analytique', *Revue algérienne des Sciences juridiques, économiques et politiques*, no. 10, June 1973, pp. 511–25; R. Cornu, 'Quand les travailleurs maghrébins devinrent des travailleurs immigrés', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 21, 1982, pp. 69–83; A. Gharbaoui, 'Le prolétariat maghrébin immigré dans la banlieue nord-ouest de Paris', *Bulletin économique et social du Maroc*, no., 115, October–December 1969, pp. 25–50; D. Lahalle, 'Les travailleurs immigrés d'une grande entreprise de construction 7 mécanique', *Sociologie du Travail*, vol. 3, no. 72, July–September 1972, pp. 316–30; H. Le Bras, 'Lieux et métiers des étrangers en France depuis 1851', *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'Histoire*, no. 7, July–September 1985, pp. 19–35; R. Manangy, 'En 1976, les travailleurs immigrés défendent leurs droits', *Croissance des jeunes nations*, no. 177, May 1976, pp. 33–4; Migrinter, 'Les Maghrébins de la Régie Renault: solidarités communautaires et implications au Maghreb', *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, vol. 2, no. 1, September 1986, pp. 137–61; and O. Ouahdj and M. Trébous, 'L'immigration de travailleurs algériens: les responsabilités politiques et sociales de la France', *Projet*, no. 70, December 1972, pp. 1233–41.
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 9. 'Le bilan de la grève de Peugeot-Cycles à Beaulieu-Mandeur', undated, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
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- Ginesy-Galano, *Les immigrés hors la cité: le système d'encadrement dans les foyers (1973–1982)* (Paris: CIEMI-L'Harmattan, 1984).
11. D. Williams, '15 mois de grève des loyers', *Croissance des jeunes nations*, no. 171, May 1976, p. 34.
 12. M. Castells, 'Travailleurs immigrés et luttes de classe', *Politique aujourd'hui*, March–April 1975, pp. 22–3.
 13. Labracherie, 'Le ministre et les immigrés', pp. 1168–71.
 14. For an account of immigrants' action against the circular see, G. Verbunt, 'Les immigrés contre les circulaires', *Projet*, no. 76, 1973, pp. 707–16.
 15. M. H. Abdallah, *J'y suis, J'y reste! Les luttes de l'immigration en France depuis les années soixante* (Paris: Editions Reflex, 2000) p. 22; 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre; *Sans Frontière*, 1 January 1980. The CDVDTI included militants from left-wing organizations such as the PSU, *Front Rouge, Révolution*, the *Ligue communiste* (LC), the CFDT, as well as members of the *Mouvement contre le Racisme, l'antisémitisme et pour la paix* (MRAP). Pierre Halbwachs and Mohamed Bachiri fought actively within the committee to prevent any settlement by the administration of the demands of hunger strikers on a case-by-case basis (Police report, 13 March 1973, CAC 19850087/28).
 16. 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
 17. Together with Catholic '*progressistes*' organizations, the Bishop of Valence expressed his support for the cause of the Tunisian *sans-papiers*. A number of radio stations publicized the hunger strike and Maurice Clavel, of Agence presse-libération (APL) wrote an article in *Le Monde* (27 December 1972) celebrating the intervention of the Catholic Church in favour of the Tunisians (Police report, 30 December 1972, CAC 19850087/28).
 18. *Al Assifa*, no. 7, January 1973; Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre. As a police report noted, 'the success of the Tunisian hunger strikers, helped by left-wing support committees, has encouraged a number of undocumented North African immigrants to repeat this blackmail operation and force the Administration to give in' (Police report, 6 January 1973, CAC 19850087/28).
 19. *Le Monde*, 19 December 1972.
 20. M. Bonnechère, 'Travailleurs immigrés: la lutte pour l'égalité de traitement avec les travailleurs français', *Le Droit ouvrier*, March 1976, p. 127.
 21. For example, the general strikes against racism organized by the MTA on 3 and 14 September 1973 crippled large sections of industry in the south of France and the Paris region.
 22. 'La grève chez Margoline (Nanterre-Gennevilliers du 21 au 23/5/73), douze règles tirées de l'expérience', microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 23. G. Verbunt, 'Inégaux en droits', *Projet*, no. 70, December 1972, p. 1220.
 24. *Le Monde*, 25 May 1973.
 25. Ibid.
 26. Ibid.
 27. Ibid.

28. 'La grève chez Margoline (Nanterre-Gennevilliers du 21 au 23/5/73), douze règles tirées de l'expérience', microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
29. 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
30. 'Les travailleurs arabes luttent, les travailleurs arabes veulent s'exprimer. Un journal est indispensable', Microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre. Part of this chapter was published in R. Aissaoui, 'Political mobilization of North African migrants in 1970s France: the case of the Mouvement des travailleurs arabes (MTA)', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 2, August 2006, pp. 171-86.
31. 'Déclaration du candidat immigré aux élections présidentielles', Microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
32. See, for example, *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, 1975.
33. 'Situation des travailleurs pakistanais sous contrat' and tract written in English by Pakistani activists entitled 'We demand', microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
34. *Akbbār el Haraka*, bulletin no. 4, 15 December 1975, microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
35. Ibid.
36. *Libération*, 9 May 1974. This action led the French authorities to accept the demands of the 37 strikers for a work permit, housing and training.
37. *Le Monde*, 24 June 1974. The protesters were arrested and taken to the Opera police station where they accused the police of trying to gas them while they were in cells (*Libération*, 24 May 1974). A commission of inquiry was set up by the *Mouvement d'action judiciaire* and 35 plaintiffs, with the participation of the CDVDTI, the Syndicat de la Magistrature and CFDT-Police to examine this case (*Le Monde*, 26 June 1974). This incident also led to an attack against the commissariat by an antifascist group on 9 June 1974 (*France Soir*, 11 June 1974). Microfiche 218/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
38. MTA document, untitled, undated. Microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre. Similarly, the black and Annamese workers and organizations with which the ENA-PPA had established close links had comparable political objectives: to end imperialist oppression and fight for independence.
39. G. Lemarquis, 'Mouvement ouvrier français et immigration', *Politique aujourd'hui*, March-April 1975, pp. 50-74.
40. L. Gani. *Syndicats et travailleurs immigrés* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1972) pp. 175-7.
41. Lemarquis, 'Mouvement ouvrier français et immigration', p. 69.
42. Balibar and Wallerstein, *Race, nation, classe*, p. 69.
43. For an analysis of the conflicting relationship between the PCF and the ENA-PPA in the 1930s, see T.-A. Schweitzer, 'Le Parti communiste français, le Comintern et l'Algérie dans les années 1930', *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 78, January-March 1972, pp. 115-36.
44. *Frontières*, October 1973, pp. 32-3.
45. Bonnechère, 'Travailleurs immigrés', p. 128.
46. M. Tripier, 'Concurrence et différence: les problèmes posés au syndicalisme

- ouvrier par les travailleurs immigrés', *Sociologie du travail*, vol. 3, no. 72, July–September 1972, p. 334.
47. *Politique aujourd'hui*, March–April 1975, pp. 88–95.
 48. *Ibid.*, pp. 96–8.
 49. The CGTU admitted North African and Indochinese colonial workers as members and organized the first 'Congress of North African workers in the Paris region' in 1924 (Lemarquis, 'Mouvement ouvrier français', p. 56).
 50. 'Histoire des luttes des travailleurs arabes face au nouveau développement du racisme et le rôle du MTA', 1973, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 51. See Tripier, 'Concurrence et différence', p. 338.
 52. Y. Gastaut, 'Le rôle des immigrés pendant les journées de mai–juin 1968', *Migrations-Société*, vol. 6, no. 32, 1993, pp. 9–29.
 53. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
 54. 'Histoire des luttes des travailleurs arabes face au nouveau développement du racisme et le rôle du MTA', 1973, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 55. 'Le bilan de la grève de Peugeot-Cycles à Beaulieu-Mandeur', manuscript document, 1976, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 56. *Frontière*, October 1973, p. 32.
 57. MTA document, untitled, undated, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 58. 'Lettre à un camarade en prison', microfiche 214/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
 59. *Ibid.*
 60. *Ibid.*
 61. 'Déclaration du *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes*', 5 février 1975, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 62. *Frontière*, October 1973, p. 32.
 63. 'Notre politique par rapport aux syndicats', microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 64. The protest action the MTA instigated followed the wave of racist murders of North Africans in the South of France in the summer of 1973.
 65. For a study of the events that followed the racist murders of the summer of 1973, see Chapter 9.
 66. *Frontière*, October 1973, pp. 32–3.
 67. 'Deuxième partie du mouvement dans les usines: débat', microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 68. *Ibid.* Edmond Maire was general secretary of the CFDT between 1971 and 1988.
 69. 'Notre politique par rapport aux syndicats', microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 70. *Frontière*, October 1973, p. 33.
 71. *Le Monde*, 30 August 1973.
 72. *Frontière*, October 1973, p. 33.
 73. MTA tract, untitled, July 1974, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 74. *Akbbbar el Haraka*, no. 2, 2 July 1975, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 75. *Akbbbar el Haraka*, 1 May 1976, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 76. Amicale des Algériens in Marseilles and Grenoble, in factories (Amicale des

- Marocains) in Paris and Saint-Etienne', MTA document, untitled, undated, microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
77. *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, No. 1, 1 January 1973, microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 78. 'Histoire des luttes des travailleurs arabes face au nouveau développement du racisme et le rôle du MTA', 1973, microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 79. MTA document, untitled, undated, microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 80. This denunciation of the authoritarian nature of North African governments also highlights the limits of the ENA-PPA's political project, which presented independence and the establishment of North African nation-states as the precondition for the true emancipation of Maghrebis.
 81. The main reason Boumédiène gave for stopping Algerian emigration was the rising number of racist attacks against Algerians in France.
 82. *Frontière*, October 1973, pp. 31-3; *L'Express*, 24-30 September 1973. Patrick Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, p. 115, inaccurately defines the MTA as a 'mouvement d'opposition au gouvernement algérien'. It was an organization that was far more critical of the Moroccan regime, and to a lesser degree, of the Tunisian government. To a certain extent, this reflected the fact that many, in the leadership, were Moroccan.
 83. 'Déclaration', 1975, microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 84. 'Procès verbal du Conseil National des Travailleurs en lutte', 8 October 1972, microfiche 216/1-9, BDIC, Nanterre.
 85. Many MTA activists who returned voluntarily or were expelled from France were imprisoned as they arrived in North Africa. *La voix des travailleurs arabes* (no. 1, 1 January 1973) describes how 49 political prisoners (including Anis Belafredj, who had been a pro-Palestinian activist in France until 1972) started an unlimited hunger strike to protest against their conditions of imprisonment. The same issue published a statement by Mokhtar Mohamed Bachiri, an MTA militant and a member of the El Assifa theatre company, describing his arrest and torture in Morocco (Microfiche 216/1-9, Dossier France-étrangers-Maghrebins-Mouvement des travailleurs arabes, BDIC, Nanterre).
 86. *Akhbar el Haraka*, no. 2, 1975.
 87. The MTA militants who were deported were often arrested and imprisoned in their home country.
 88. The MTA organized meetings to protest against the execution, on 1 November 1973, of 15 militants of the *Union nationale des forces populaires*, the Moroccan political organization led by Mehdi Ben Barka that opposed Hassan II and accused the Moroccan monarch of being a 'butcher' who 'murdered fifteen workers and peasants' (Police report, 8 December 1973, CAC 19850087/28).
 89. This territory was also claimed by Mauritania. For a study of the non-aligned movement, see A. Gupta, 'The song of the non-aligned world: transnational identities and the reinscription of space in late capitalism', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1992, pp. 67-79.

90. D. Junka, 'Les enjeux du Sahara Occidental', *Croissance des jeunes nations*, no. 166, December 1975, pp. 8–13; and D. Junka, 'La politique maghrébine de la France', *Croissance des jeunes nations*, no. 175, September 1975, pp. 19–26.
91. 'Liban: qu'y a-t-il derrière la guerre civile?' Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
92. *Akhbar el Haraka*, no. 2, 2 July 1975.
93. 'Liban: qu'y a-t-il derrière la guerre civile?' Microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
94. *Akhbar el Haraka*, no. 2, 2 July 1975.
95. *Frontière*, October 1973, p. 33.
96. *Frontière*, October 1973, p. 30.
97. M. Harbi, 'Dépasser le nationalisme arabe', *Politique Aujourd'hui*, May–June–July 1974, pp. 27–34.
98. Ibid.
99. M. Boukhara, 'Proche-Orient: la guerre contre la révolution', *Frontière, les cahiers du CERES, Socialisme aujourd'hui*, no. 11, November 1973, pp. 4–8.
100. 'Bilan de la campagne Djellali', p. 143, microfiche 218/7, BDIC, Nanterre.
101. 'Déclaration de Hamza Bouziri', 1971, microfiche 218/3, BDIC, Nanterre.
102. *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, 1 January 1973.
103. *Akhbar el Haraka*, May 1976. See also *Al Assifa*, no. 12, January 1977.
104. 'Bilan de la lutte pour la carte de travail, sur la base de Ménilmontant par rapport à St Maur', microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
105. 'Déclaration de Hamza Bouziri, 1971, microfiche 218/3, BDIC, Nanterre, p. 91.
106. Golda Meir was invited by François Mitterrand, the French socialist leader, and was due to address the Socialist International at the Palais du Luxembourg. The MTA and Maoist groups organized a 2000-strong demonstration in Paris during her visit on 15 January 1973 ('Lettre à un camarade en prison').
107. 'Aujourd'hui dimanche 5 novembre [1972], Saïd Bouziri commence une grève de la faim illimitée', microfiche 218/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
108. 'Pour la libération de Monseigneur H. Capucci', microfiche 218/3, BDIC, Nanterre.
109. *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, 1 January 1973.
110. 'Patrick Farbiaz. Travailleur intermédiaire', microfiche 218/4, BDIC, Nanterre.
111. See Chapter 4.
112. 'Appel des travailleurs arabes en lutte contre les crimes sionistes', MTA tract, undated, microfiche 218/3, BDIC, Nanterre.
113. *Assifa Palestine*, 1974, microfiche 216/1–9, BDIC, Nanterre.
114. Ibid.
115. *La voix des travailleurs arabes*, 1976.

Conclusion

1. Morad Agoun, cited in *Le Monde*, 16 January 2008.

2. See, for example, Ageron, *Politiques coloniales au Maghreb*, Droz and Lever, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, and Julien, *L'Afrique du Nord en marche*.
3. S. Hall, 'New ethnicities', in K. Mercer (ed.) *Black Film, British Cinema*, London: Institute for Contemporary Arts, 1988, pp. 27–31.
4. Balibar, *Masses, classes, ideas*, p. 198. See also E. Balibar, 'Le racisme: encore un universalisme', *Mots*, no. 18, March 1989, pp. 7–20; and E. Balibar, 'Le mot *race* n'est pas de trop dans la Constitution française', *Mots*, no. 33, December 1992, pp. 241–56.
5. J.-M. Hirt, 'La maladie de l'exil', *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord*, vol. 27, 1988, pp. 121–5.
6. Gellner, *Thought and Change*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969, p. 73.
7. For example, Driss el-Yazami co-wrote a key report for the ex-socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin that shaped the creation of the *Cité nationale de l'Histoire de l'immigration* (CNHI), a '*projet présidentiel*' steered by Jacques Toubon that opened in 2007. In Marseilles, the *Centre d'information et de documentation sur l'immigration et le Maghreb* (CIDIM) was also created by ex-MTA militants.
8. *Le Monde*, 14 October 2006.
9. See House and MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, pp. 319–20.

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<i>Contact</i>	<i>L'Express</i>	<i>La Voix du peuple</i>
<i>Droit et Liberté</i>	<i>L'Humanité</i>	<i>algérien</i>
<i>El Assifa</i>	<i>L'Humanité Dimanche</i>	<i>Le Cri d'Alger</i>
<i>El Maghrib el Arabi</i>	<i>L'Ikdam</i>	<i>Le Droit de Vivre</i>
<i>El Ouma</i>	<i>L'Islam</i>	<i>Le Figaro</i>
<i>Er Rachid</i>	<i>La Dépêche Algérienne</i>	<i>Le Journal La Croix</i>
<i>France Soir</i>	<i>La France de Bordeaux</i>	<i>Le Libertaire</i>
<i>France-Pays Arabes</i>	<i>et du Sud-Ouest</i>	<i>Le Matin</i>
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<i>L'Akhbar</i>	<i>La nation algérienne</i>	<i>France</i>
<i>L'Algérie libre</i>	<i>La Patrie Humaine</i>	<i>Le Monde</i>
<i>L'Algérien en Europe</i>	<i>La République</i>	<i>Le Monde Diplomatique</i>

Le Nouvel Observateur

Le Paria

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