

“MAYBE I CAN MARRY THEM BOTH”: CONFLICTED AMERICAN VIEWS ON THE
ALGERIAN WAR

By

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On July 2, 1957, Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts delivered the most notorious speech of his senatorial career. On that day, he offered a scathing assessment of the Eisenhower Administration’s “head-in-the-sands” policy regarding the Algerian War, and he called for direct U.S. involvement in order to secure Algerian independence.¹ Kennedy declared, “[T]he single most important test of American foreign policy today is how we meet the challenge of imperialism.”² Because the United States had an “obvious dedication . . . to the principles of self-determination,” he counseled, traditional American anti-imperialism demanded that the U.S. intervene in Algeria.³ Kennedy expressed anxiety about Islamic peoples when he worried that the lack of U.S. involvement would abandon Algeria to “the pull toward Arab feudalism and fanaticism.”⁴ He also believed that violent revolutions were dangerous, for Kennedy stated, “The situation deteriorates so fast that moderate people become extremists, extremists become revolutionaries, and revolutionaries become Communists.”⁵ Such a conclusion called to mind the specter of the Bolshevik Revolution, which struck fear into the heart of any Cold Warrior in the late 1950’s.

Kennedy’s speech was a political bombshell, for the Eisenhower administration had followed a scrupulously middle-of-the road policy toward the French and Algerians ever since the

¹ Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, speaking for the resolution on Algerian Independence, “Imperialism – the Enemy of Freedom,” on 2 July 1957, to the Committee on Foreign Relations, S. Res. 153, 85th Congress, 1st session, *Congressional Record* 103, pt. 8: 10781.

² Kennedy, “Imperialism,” 10780.

³ Kennedy, “Imperialism,” 10781.

⁴ Kennedy, “Imperialism,” 10786.

⁵ Kennedy, “Imperialism,” 10788.

Algerian War began in 1954.⁶ While the administration sympathized with the Algerian rebels and worried about losing the crucial support of the newly decolonized nations of the Third World in the Cold War, it also could not afford to lose French support for the NATO alliance against the Soviets in Europe. According to historian Frank Costigliola, “Backing France would allow the Communists to exploit frustrated nationalism. The other choice [backing the Algerians] endangered America’s interests in Europe.”⁷ Faced with this dilemma, the Eisenhower administration attempted to please both sides by doing nothing.

Predictably, then, Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, responded negatively to Kennedy’s suggested change in policy.⁸ French leaders were outraged, and the press in the United States lambasted Kennedy. Even journalists at the liberal *New York Times* and generally anti-French *Time* magazine criticized Kennedy’s speech.⁹ However, despite the severe criticism of Kennedy’s call to action, one cannot conclude that Americans supported the French efforts to crush the colonial revolution in Algeria. Informed Americans were, in fact, quite critical of French conduct in Algeria, but they were also critical of the Algerian nationalists.

The scholars Melvin Small, Gabriel Almond, and Ralph Levering have all argued that public opinion in the United States plays a significant role in influencing American foreign policy, and their arguments echo observations made by key scholars in the Cold War Era, including George Kennan,

⁶ For an extended description and analysis of U.S. policy regarding France and the Algerian War, see: Irwin Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁷ Frank Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance Since World War II* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 111.

⁸ “Burned Hands Across the Sea,” *Time* LXX, no. 3, 15 July 1957, 18.

⁹ For the French reaction see: “M. Lacoste Answers U.S. Critic,” *The Times* (London), 7 July 1957, 6; “Coty Pledges Reactions,” *The Times* (London), 11 July 1957, 8; “No Settlement by Magic in Algeria,” *The Times* (London), 24 July 1957, 6. For the U.S. press reaction, see: Russell Baker, “Kennedy Urges U.S. Back Independence for Algeria,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1957, 1, 5; “Mr. Kennedy on Algeria,” *New York Times*, 3 July 1957, 22; Robert C. Doty, “Paris Is Bitter,” *New York Times*, 4 July, 1957, 10; C.L. Sulzberger, “Foreign Affairs: The United States, France, and Algeria,” *New York Times*, 6 July 1957, 14; Arthur Krock, “Five Political Figures Without a Single Thought,” *New York Times*, 7 July 1957, 115; “Burned Hands Across the Sea,” *Time* LXX, no. 3, 15 July 1957, 18.

Hans Morgenthau, and Walter Lippmann.¹⁰ Non-Americans, too, have realized the importance of American public opinion in foreign affairs, and they have often appealed to the American people for support. While Cold War scholars worried that American foreign policy leaders pandered too much to the public, Almond, Small, and Levering all stress that the American public has been quite prudent in its approach to foreign affairs and that policymakers must not only mind but also mobilize public opinion. Nevertheless, not all Americans are interested in, or exercise influence over, foreign policy. Those Americans whom Melvin Small labels the “opinion makers,” such as government officials, national leaders, celebrities, editors, and journalists, and the “attentive public,” the “well-educated and well-read people [who] tend to pay attention to international politics and influence others around them,” are the Americans whose opinion carries weight in the foreign arena.¹¹ Levering and Almond likewise use the term “attentive public” to refer to both opinion leaders and generally well-informed Americans who take an interest in foreign affairs.¹² While these scholars estimate that the “attentive public” makes up at most 20-25% of the U.S. population, with only 5% or less having direct access to the media or membership in foreign policy organizations, these Americans influence the opinion of the “mass public” and policymakers in vast disproportion to their numbers.¹³

“Opinion leaders” are capable of influencing mass opinion by propagating their own views in print and electronic media, while members of the “attentive public” who belong to foreign policy organizations, such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Foreign Policy Association, lobby the executive branch for certain foreign policies. Most Americans receive almost all of their

¹⁰ See: Melvin Small, “Public Opinion,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, eds. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 165-176; Ralph B. Levering, *The Public and American Foreign Policy, 1918-1978* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1978); Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965). For a discussion of Lippmann, Kennan, and Morgenthau, see: Levering, 11.

¹¹ Small, 166-167.

¹² Levering, 20-21; Almond, xxii.

¹³ Levering, 20; Small, 167.

information about foreign affairs from the media, and the “attentive public” in particular prefers to get its information from newspapers and magazines.¹⁴ In particular, American presidents and State Department officials since World War II have paid particular attention to print sources like the *New York Times* and *Time* magazine in order to determine the climate of public opinion. Melvin Small argues, “These sources have been influential in setting the news agenda and shaping editorial slants and news budgets for many other newscasts, magazines, and newspapers.”¹⁵ In fact, they may be the best representatives of informed opinion. The *New York Times* was *the* newspaper of record in the 1950’s, and *Time* magazine was and is the first and most widely-read weekly news magazine in the U.S.¹⁶ In addition, local newspapers across the country reprinted articles from the *Times*, especially regarding foreign affairs, so the paper’s influence extended far beyond New York City. Thus, articles from the *New York Times* and *Time* magazine are indicative of how American opinion leaders and the attentive public viewed the conflict in Algeria during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s.

While Kennedy’s speech and the media reaction to it had no immediate effect on U.S. policy toward the war, the anti-imperialism and anxiety about Islam and violent revolutions that Kennedy expressed incrementally became part of the American diplomatic lexicon and informed U.S. interactions with the Muslim world for decades to come. Many informed Americans shared Kennedy’s views on imperialism and revolution, but they disagreed with Kennedy’s conclusions. Kennedy’s speech and the reactions to it are symbolic of the general ambivalence that American observers felt about the Algerian War. The war brought to the fore a crucial paradox in American ideology. Americans in general thought of themselves as the standard-bearers of freedom, and they looked to their own war for independence against Great Britain in the eighteenth century to frame

¹⁴ Levering, 23.

¹⁵ Small, 172.

¹⁶ See: “The State of the News Media 2007: An Annual Report on American Journalism,” <http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2007/index.asp>. Project for Excellence in Journalism, Journalism.org, 7 April 2007

their generally anti-colonial worldview. Thus, the American attentive public refrained from offering whole-hearted support for the French during the war. Further, it often criticized the French government and saw European settlers in Algeria, known as the *pieds noirs*, as right-wing extremists. Despite U.S. criticism of the French, however, American opinion leaders also refused to offer strong support for the Algerian nationalists, led by the National Liberation Front (FLN). This paradox can be explained by the suspicion and fear with which American leaders and the informed public traditionally viewed violent revolutions. According to the eminent historians Frank Ninkovich and Walter LaFeber, Americans in general preferred stable regimes and “modernization” in Third World countries, modeled after “modern” American society.¹⁷

In addition to worries about violent revolution, which were compounded by Cold War concerns in Europe, the Algerian War also confronted Americans with another factor unique to independence movements in North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Southeast Asia: Islam. As people who prided themselves on being “modern,” American observers felt significant anxiety about Islam and its supposed antipathy toward modernity. Such anxiety often manifested itself in American opinion leaders’ depictions of the Muslims of Algeria as a backward people and of the FLN as a group of fanatical terrorists. American anxiety about Islam especially manifested itself in journalists’ focus on the veil, or *hijab*, worn by Algerian Muslim women. Thus, informed Americans’ view of Islamic society played a significant role in their hesitancy to support Algerians’ revolutionary nationalism, despite general American anti-imperial ideals and desire for decolonization.

Attentive Americans had to manage their conflicting attitudes toward the Algerian War, which resulted in the lack of decision as to which side to support. The informed American public’s moral dilemma was only relieved when the French Fourth Republic collapsed and Charles de Gaulle

¹⁷ For an extended discussion on American views of imperialism and revolution, see: Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001); Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993).

returned to power in the summer of 1958. To the American observers' relief, de Gaulle offered an alternative to the stark choice between hard-line French imperialists and Muslim nationalists. De Gaulle's return raised Americans' hopes that the Algerian War could come to a peaceful conclusion, for he promised from the outset to put an end to the conflict. Thus, they supported him wholeheartedly, especially in the U.S. press.¹⁸

The Algerian War was perhaps the bloodiest episode in the process of decolonization that swept the globe in the twentieth century. At least half a million people died during the eight-year conflict, and a majority of the one million European-descended *pieds noirs* of Algeria took part in a mass exodus when the country gained its independence in 1962.¹⁹ According to historian Matthew Connelly, the Algerian War was “extreme in almost every way.”²⁰ Algerian nationalists, represented by the Algerian National Liberation Front, or FLN, waged a brutal guerrilla war against the French colonial apparatus and the *pieds noirs* who called Algeria home. They engaged in terrorist bombings of European targets and violence against fellow Muslims, both in Algeria and in the metropole, who either were loyal to the French or seemed insufficiently supportive of the revolution. The French, for their part, responded to the outbreak of revolution in Algeria with both conventional military violence and the use of internationally condemned practices, such as torture, illegal arrest, indefinite internment, and massacres of Algerian civilians. The *pieds noirs* contributed to the bloodshed by engaging in terrorist activities of their own.

The violence in Algeria had repercussions far beyond the colony's borders. The conflict was strong enough to topple the French Fourth Republic in May 1958 and return General Charles de Gaulle to power in France. It also shocked foreign observers around the globe and influenced other

¹⁸ This support was only whole-hearted when De Gaulle first came to power, and it only holds true for his Algerian policies. Relations between De Gaulle and American leaders soured quickly when he attempted to craft an independent French policy regarding NATO, nuclear power, and other Cold War issues; see: Costigliola, 118-159.

¹⁹ Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), xiii.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

anti-colonial movements in Africa and Asia. As the French tried desperately to portray the Algerian War as a domestic conflict, it became increasingly clear as the war dragged on that it was an issue of international concern. Indeed, Connelly argues persuasively that the true revolution in Algeria took place in the international arena.²¹

Kennedy was not wrong, then, when he argued, “Algeria [is] a matter of international, and consequently American, concern.”²² Informed Americans and U.S. policymakers indeed were very concerned with the war, and they took part in the international debate it generated. The robust support of the United States in particular for either side may have made a great difference in the conflict’s outcome. As the sole superpower in the West, American military support could have helped the French to crush the Algerian nationalists, or it could have given the Algerians a much-needed boost in their fight against the militarily superior French. Strong declarations of American moral support would have been nearly as effective as military aid. Moral support for the French could have weakened the FLN’s will to resist, while declarations of support for the FLN could have signaled to the French that they were fighting a losing battle against the tide of decolonization. Both sides knew that American support could mean the difference between victory and defeat, so both the French and the FLN waged a war for American sympathy and public opinion that neither side won.²³ Americans’ hesitancy to support either side in the Algerian War perhaps contributed to the prolongation of the conflict, because neither combatant could count on U.S. help in winning a decisive victory.

²¹ Ibid., 4.

²² Kennedy, “Imperialism,” 10781.

²³ For an extended discussion of French and Algerian efforts to secure U.S. support, see: Connelly, 119-141. Connelly describes French propaganda efforts aimed at Americans. Such propaganda included films and articles aimed at American audiences, as well as efforts to lobby both the *New York Times* and *Time-Life’s* Henry Luce in an attempt to gain their support for French war efforts. Connelly also describes FLN efforts to secure American support through their propaganda office in New York City. Connelly calls this war for U.S. public opinion “The Battle of New York.” Connelly, however, concludes that the FLN won the war for world sympathy, especially in the United States. I disagree, as this article will demonstrate.

Informed Americans not only hesitated to support French efforts in Algeria, but also offered outright criticism of the Fourth Republic's war to hold on to its colony. Such criticism usually stemmed from Americans' anti-imperialist ideology and from traditional American antipathy toward the French. Historian Frank Costigliola describes American leaders' perceptions of their difficult French allies as "needlessly stubborn or vacillating, proud, independent, and other-minded."²⁴ In fact, Costigliola continues, Americans tended to interpret French disputes with the U.S. or conflicting French and U.S. values and lifestyles as "evidence of French inferiority."²⁵ Thus, "Particularly from 1940 to 1958, Americans often stereotyped France as pathological or as negatively feminine."²⁶ The French, therefore, were "emotional, hypersensitive, frivolous, impractical, [and] unrestrained . . . Meanwhile Americans usually cast themselves in a 'masculine' mode – rational, calm, pragmatic, and efficient."²⁷

Indeed, the attentive American public often expressed criticism of the French Republic's war in Algeria in these terms. A common theme of criticism in the American media was that the French government was weak and indecisive. For example, *Time* magazine had nothing but harsh words when assessing the Fourth Republic's decision to oust Premier Felix Gaillard from office over the controversy surrounding the French Army's bombing of the supposedly FLN-friendly town of Sakiet in neighboring Tunisia. Calling the fall of Gaillard's government "another one of those periodic paroxysms of French politics," *Time* condemned France's "national reluctance for hard decisions" regarding "the increasingly absurd legal fiction that revolt-torn Algeria is just another French province."²⁸ Implying that the French were unlike the decisive Americans, *Time* continued, "Once again the French Assembly voted to evade truths and postpone consequences," so it "was

²⁴ Costigliola, 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁸ "France: The Guillotine Falls," *Time* LXXI, no. 17, 28 April 1958, 23.

left with an administration but no government, a condition which seems to suit” the French, “so long as the trains run [and] the grapes ripen.”²⁹ *Time*’s contempt for the French government is clear here, as it depicts the French governmental system as chaotic and indecisive. As a consequence, the weak French were refusing to take responsibility and act decisively to end “their frustrating and interminable war in Algeria.”³⁰ Indeed, contempt for the French was a common theme in *Time*. It called the Fourth Republic “twelve years of muddle,” marked by “political impotence.”³¹ *Time* also pathologized France by calling it a “sick nation.”³² Even the more sympathetic *New York Times* depicted the Fourth Republic in derogatory terms. One correspondent claimed that the French National Assembly liked to “indulge in its favorite game of overthrowing successive Cabinets,” and that French politicians were “unable to agree on anything except their opposition to the existing Government.”³³

In assessing France’s efforts to keep Algeria within its empire, influential U.S. publications agreed that the Fourth Republic was delusional and unrealistic in persisting to believe that it could “pacify” Algeria.³⁴ Even the *New York Times* concluded, “France has sought to solve the problem [of colonial nationalism] by legalistic constructions which did not withstand reality . . . Algeria is a case in point.”³⁵ French emotions regarding Algeria commonly came under attack, as well. *Time* deemed the French “testy,” and the *New York Times* claimed, “If you feel bitterness and resentment over the attitude of the world toward Algeria you are a Frenchman.” The paper criticized the French for dealing with Algeria “in an atmosphere of passions, not political realities or that logic of

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “France: The Insider,” *Time* LXXI, no. 17, 28 April 1958, 24.

³¹ “France: The Fifth Republic,” *Time* LXXII, no. 15, 13 October 1958, 24. “France: ‘I Am Ready,’” *Time* LXXI, no. 21, 26 May 1958, 28.

³² “France: De Gaulle to Power,” *Time* LXXI, no. 23, 9 June 1958, 23.

³³ “Paris and Algiers,” *New York Times*, 23 May 1958, 22.

³⁴ “France: ‘Would You Be So Cowardly,’” *Time* LXX, no. 4, 22 July 1957, 23. “France: ‘I Am Ready,’” *Time* LXXI, no. 21, 26 May 1958, 28. “North Africa: Algeria: Death,” *Time* LXX, no. 11, 9 September 1957, 37.

³⁵ “The Issue in France,” *New York Times*, 25 May 1958, E10.

which the French are supposed to be such exponents.”³⁶ Therefore, it is clear that American media criticism of the French during the Algerian War stemmed in part from stereotypes of the French as weak, indecisive, emotional, and pathological. However, such criticisms of the French also stemmed from American anti-imperialism.

Historian Frank Ninkovich has argued that anti-imperialism has been a major component of American ideology throughout U.S. history.³⁷ He argues that American anti-imperialism tended to focus on the harmful effects of the European “diplomacy of imperialism” on international relations prior to the 1940’s, but that moral condemnation of colonialism became the prominent form of U.S. anti-imperialism following World War II. At that time, “American policymakers finally began to acknowledge openly that colonial rule was deeply inconsistent with their desire to create a harmonious world based on liberal principles.”³⁸ After 1945, Ninkovich maintains, Americans combined their progressive and Wilsonian opposition to European imperialism and their own revolutionary tradition with moral outrage over European treatment of Third World peoples, so they “openly called for the end of colonialism as a matter of global social justice.”³⁹ French conduct in Algeria clearly demonstrated to Americans that imperialism was politically undesirable and morally wrong. In the case of the Algerian War, American observers most often focused their anti-imperial critique on the atrocities committed by the French against the Algerian populace.⁴⁰ American journalists lamented, “To keep Algeria French, the Paris government . . . winked at atrocities worthy

³⁶ “France: The Duellists,” *Time* LXXI, no. 22, 2 June 1958, 18. “France and Africa,” *The New York Times*, 1 March 1958, 16.

³⁷ Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 3.

³⁸ Ninkovich, 200-201. Robert David Johnson has located this moral condemnation of imperialism at an even earlier period, when the “peace progressives” in Congress gained ascendancy in the 1920’s and put anti-imperialism at the core of U.S. ideology. See: Robert David Johnson, *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

³⁹ Ninkovich, 234.

⁴⁰ See: *New York Times* and *Time* magazine for 1957 and 1958, i.e., “Ordeal by Torture: The Question,” *Time* LXXI, no. 23, 9 June 1958, 98; “Four Algerians Executed,” *New York Times*, 9 January 1958, 3.

of Hitler's SS."⁴¹ Even worse were the *pièdes noirs* in Algeria, whom informed Americans viewed as right-wing extremists.⁴² Kennedy's pronouncements in his 1957 speech that decolonization was the way of the future echoed the sentiments of many Americans interested in foreign affairs, who believed that decolonization was necessary, for colonialism clearly turned their allies into barbarians and threatened to turn the Third World against the West.⁴³

Despite a strong anti-imperial ideology in the United States, however, the vast majority of informed Americans did not offer their overwhelming support to Algeria's FLN. This was due to a fundamental dilemma. According to Ninkovich, imperialism and anti-imperialism went hand-in-hand in the U.S. Thus, despite their opposition to formal empire, "Americans retained their belief in the economic and cultural development of the non-industrial world *and* in the eventual cooperation of like-minded developed societies."⁴⁴ While many Americans believed that colonialism was unjust, they still believed that the West, led by the U.S., had a mission to "modernize" supposedly backward peoples. Racism in the United States was rampant in the 1950's. This sense of superiority and belief in modernization was combined with traditional American antipathy toward violent revolution, despite the revolutionary origins of the United States. From the time of the French Revolution, Americans tended to prefer stability to chaos, and they intervened numerous times in foreign insurrections against the revolutionaries in order to restore order, from the Bolshevik Revolution to various upheavals in Central America.⁴⁵

⁴¹ "Algeria: The Reluctant Rebel," *Time* LXXII, no. 15, 13 October 1958, 25.

⁴² For depictions of the *pièdes noirs*, see: *Time* and the *New York Times* from 1957 and 1958, i.e., Henry Tanner, "Army in Full Control in Algeria," *New York Times*, 29 June 1958, E4, and "Algeria: Vanishing Idols," *Time* LXXI, no. 25, 23 June 1958, 21.

⁴³ "Reluctant Rebel," *Time*, 25.

⁴⁴ Ninkovich, 249.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of Woodrow Wilson's fear of violent revolution and his interventions in Mexico and Russia, see: Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918-1919* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967). For a discussion of American anti-revolutionary intervention in Central America, see: Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993); David F. Schmitz, *Thank God They're On Our Side: The United States & Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1921-1965* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

To further complicate matters, the United States was engaged in a Cold War with the Soviet Union. Satisfying their Western European allies was crucial to U.S. policy in Europe, so American policymakers often found themselves propping up the decaying British and French empires in order to maintain the NATO alliance. Keeping the Third World allied with the West was also crucial in the Cold War, however, so American leaders had to tread a fine line in attempting to please both the Europeans and the peoples of Africa and Asia. Ninkovich concludes, “The American attitude, then, was quite conflicted. It was comprised in equal measures of an understanding of the need for decolonization, a distrust of the political capacity of those same dependent peoples, and a willingness to subordinate anti-imperialist concerns to the exigencies of Cold War globalism.”⁴⁶

This dissonance in American thought revealed itself when members of the attentive American public were unable to offer strong support for the Algerians. Despite their anti-imperial sentiments and lack of support for the French, these Americans’ concerns about violent revolution and modernization were more decisive in the formation of their views of Algerian Muslims and the FLN. Their concern about modernization caused these Americans to dwell on the inferiority of the Muslim masses, especially as represented by the practice of veiling Muslim women, and their fears of violent revolution oftentimes led them to depict the FLN as a fanatical group of terrorists.

Western anxiety about the nature of Islamic societies and Pan-Arabism often manifested itself as a fascination with and condemnation of the Muslim woman’s veil, known as the *hijab* or *haik*. Veiling practices varied by region in Muslim societies, but the most prevalent type of veil worn in Algeria was a long, diaphanous white robe, which covered the entire body, topped with a veil that covered both the hair and the face from the nose down. The intent of veiling was to separate the sexes. It supposedly protected men from female sexuality (manifest in women’s hair) and protected

⁴⁶ Ninkovich, 236-237.

women from the sexual attention of men.⁴⁷ All that was visible of an Algerian woman to a Western observer was her eyes, which made her an object of curiosity, fetish, and pity. Confronted with a creature deprived of her individuality or freedom, the Western world responded by attempting to persuade the Muslim communities in Algeria to unveil their women. Westernized Muslims, too, focused on unveiling their women as part of the key to transforming their society in order to compete with the West.⁴⁸

Franz Fanon, the Martinique-born theorist of African independence movements and an ardent supporter of the Algerian nationalists, wrote an extensive tirade about the Western focus on the veil in his 1959 polemic, *A Dying Colonialism*. Fanon deplored the fact that the veil “generally suffices to characterize Arab society.”⁴⁹ The French, he argued, were so obsessed with the veil, which they interpreted as a “medieval and barbaric” symbol of women’s oppression, that they undertook to uplift Algerian women by waging war on it.⁵⁰ Of course, since the colonizers were trying to eradicate the veil, Fanon argued that the colonized chose to cling to veiling practices as a form of resistance against colonialism. Fanon asserted, “The veil was worn because tradition demanded a rigid separation of the sexes, but also because the occupier *was bent on unveiling Algeria.*”⁵¹ Left to its own devices, Fanon suggested, Muslim society’s treatment of women, symbolized by the veil, might have improved and evolved over time. Ironically, then, he argued that French efforts to liberate Algeria’s women actually had the opposite effect. Fanon claimed that only the outbreak of the revolution allowed Muslim society to relax its strict dress code for women. As the revolution increasingly required more innovative methods in combating the enemy, the rebels began to use

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the purpose of the *hijab*, see: the chapter entitled, “Women and Religion,” in Shawn Meghan Burn, *Women Across Cultures: A Global Perspective*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2005). See also: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (New York: Pantheon, 2003).

⁴⁸ Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 144-168.

⁴⁹ Franz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, English Translation, 1965), 35.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

women as informants, messengers, lookouts, and, later, as agents to plant bombs in the European sections of Algiers and other cities. This involvement of women necessarily led to fluid veiling practices, for female insurgents often unveiled in order to appear European so that they could infiltrate the European areas of Algeria. Conversely, many women also used the billowy *haik* to hide bombs and weapons on their persons from French army checkpoints. Fanon's main point was that Western observers were unfairly obsessed with the veiling of Algerian women in their assessment of Algerian Muslim society.⁵²

American views on the subject were directly influenced by the French, who did indeed attempt to eradicate Muslim veiling practices in Algeria, as Fanon described. According to historian Todd Shepard, "[T]he minds and bodies of Algeria's 'Muslim' women quickly became central to French efforts to win the larger war of international opinion."⁵³ French colonialists pushed for Algerian unveiling in order to help "modernize" Algeria, for French arguments about the necessity of maintaining control of the colony often centered on the benefits of French "development" of Algeria's society and economy. French feminists, too, criticized the veil as a means of oppression utilized by misogynist Muslim men.⁵⁴ Sophisticated U.S. journalists seized upon these French critiques and brought the "Battle of the Veil" to a wider audience.

For example, on July 13, 1958, the *New York Times* Sunday Magazine ran a feature article by Hal Lehrman, a well-known foreign correspondent and member of the Council on Foreign Relations, entitled, "Battle of the Veil in Algeria."⁵⁵ The key to this battle was the "unveiling" of

⁵² See: Fanon's discussion of veiling in his chapter, "Algeria Unveiled," in *A Dying Colonialism*, 23-68. Ironically, Fanon often proves Western observer's points about the fundamental misogyny of Algerian society (although Fanon was not Algerian) because, despite his discussion of Algerian women's brave contributions to the revolution, he often depicts Algerian women as superstitious, stupid, and less comprehending of events than Algerian men. He also does not advocate female leadership in the revolution. To him, the women are mere tools born of necessity.

⁵³ Todd Shepard, *Inventing Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 186-187.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁵⁵ This was the only Sunday Magazine article in the *New York Times* that focused on Algeria during the entire period under examination in this paper.

Muslim women on May 16, 1958, staged by the European-directed “Feminine Solidarity” movement. During the military and *pieds noir* uprising in Algeria that began earlier that week, a small group of Muslim women removed their veils in what Shepard calls “a well-choreographed ceremony to reveal smiling faces” in front of eager news cameras.⁵⁶ While the women removed their *haïks*, they shouted, “*Kif-keif la française!*” which Lehrman characterized as “strife-torn Algeria’s latest war cry.” The phrase means, “Let us be just like the French lady!” – a sentiment,” according to Lehrman, “that is menacing only to the immemorial superiority of the Moslem male.”⁵⁷ Lehrman also described a “flurry of veil-burning” after the *colons* and French military seized power in Algiers on May 13.⁵⁸

With neither a discussion of *which* Algerian women were taking up this “battle cry” nor any mention of how widespread the phenomenon was, Lehrman gave his audience the impression that the revolt of the women was a major phenomenon in Algeria. Implicit in Lehrman’s account of the “abysmal inferiority, ignorance and exclusion” of the Algerian Muslim women was a view of the non-European, Muslim men of Algeria as tyrannical and distinctly not “modern.”⁵⁹ This view of the Muslim world was not unusual. While the typical Muslim woman of Algeria, according to Lehrman, is secluded in her home or is forced to perform manual labor, the man “rides the donkey, dozes or puffs his hubble-bubble pipe at the coffeehouse.”⁶⁰ It was these men who were seeking their independence from France. Lehrman’s assessment, then, implies that Algerian men would not make good democrats – not yet – for they ascribed to a legal system that gave men vastly more rights than

⁵⁶ Shepard, 187.

⁵⁷ Hal Lehrman, “Battle of the Veil in Algeria,” *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 13 July 1957, SM14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, SM14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, SM14.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, SM14.

women, condoned polygamy, and allowed a father to choose his daughter's husband, "to the extent, if he wishes, of selling her like an animal."⁶¹

Lehrman contrasted the backwards and oppressive Algerian men with the seemingly benevolent French. The French, at least, ascribed to Western gender roles, which Lehrman assumed were superior. To him, the West offered general gender equality, while Muslims offered only oppression for women. French (especially *pieds noirs*) women, on their own initiative, reached out to uplift their Muslim sisters. The French colonial administration, too, undertook efforts to bring about a "simple, steady advance toward freedom by instruction in it," which included efforts to bring more Algerian girls into formal schools and to expose Muslim women to the benefits of modernity.⁶² Avoiding mention of French atrocities in Algeria and omitting the fact that France granted its own women the right to vote only in 1947, Lehrman portrays the French as the "good guys," the bearers of modernity and civilization to a clearly backward part of the world. Lehrman essentially encourages his American readers to support French modernizing efforts in Algeria. While he agreed that the bloodshed needed to end, he favored continued French presence in Algeria through a federation, for the Algerians he described were not yet ready for full independence. Algerian men's oppressive treatment of their women indicated political immaturity; they had to be taught how to behave and how to institute "modern," rational legal codes. Lehrman's article offered perhaps the most positive assessment of French conduct in Algeria, while at the same time painting a clearly negative picture of Algeria's Muslims for his American audience.

According to Todd Shepard, then, "The Algerian Revolution brought into focus and onto the world stage the long history of French fixation on the veil; once again, the veil worked as a sign both of all that was alien, pre-modern, and regressive in Muslim and Arab cultures . . . In the late 1950's, the symbol of the 'falling veil' anchored official French efforts to present their fight against

⁶¹ Ibid., SM15.

⁶² Ibid., SM15-SM16.

the F.L.N. as a crusade for modernity.”⁶³ Obviously, it was a crusade that was roundly applauded by journalists in the United States, and Americans in general could sympathize with French efforts to modernize the supposedly backward Muslims.

In addition to serving as a symbol of oppression (and its removal a symbol of emancipation), the Algerian woman’s *haik* could symbolize inscrutability. Showing only her eyes, the *haik* concealed rather than revealed the nature of the woman. Similarly, in a political cartoon published in *The New York Times*, the white *haik* symbolized the inscrutability of an entire people. In the cartoon, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles stands between two veiled women, one labeled “Nationalist Argument” and the other “French Argument.” The caption reads, “Perhaps by turning Moslem I could marry them both,” poking fun at the Muslim practice of polygamy.⁶⁴ Here the veil symbolizes the equally incomprehensible, perhaps irrational, demands of both the French and the FLN. Secretary Dulles, like the American informed public, is pulled between two foreign women and cannot choose which side to support.

Beyond symbolism, Algeria’s Muslim women took on a new importance once de Gaulle returned to power in May 1958. A flurry of American news articles stressed women’s inclusion in the new Fifth Republic’s political system and touted de Gaulle’s attention to them. American observers of the referendum on de Gaulle’s constitution for the Fifth Republic in the autumn of 1958 focused on de Gaulle’s extension of the franchise to veiled Algerian women. For example, one *New York Times* article about the campaign for a “yes” vote on de Gaulle’s constitution described French military men campaigning in front of “groups of veiled women.” For the French, the support of Algerian women was crucial, so they had to make sure that the women both wanted to vote and that they would be permitted to vote by their fathers and husbands. The article stressed that de Gaulle’s supporters portrayed women’s voting as complimentary to Muslim tradition: “They

⁶³ Shepard, 189.

⁶⁴ Editorial Cartoon, *New York Times*, 7 July 1957, 116.

make sure, above all, that it is understood that Moslem women will have separate polling stations where they can lift their veils and permit a woman registrar to check their identity without their being seen by any man.”⁶⁵ Similarly, the photographs accompanying the September 27, 1958 article “De Gaulle Urges Big Charter Vote” made sure to depict a veiled Muslim woman casting her “yes” vote in front of a European official.⁶⁶ Another front-page *New York Times* article the same day described a “white-robed, smiling Moslem woman with lowered veil present[ing] herself with a registration card” to vote, despite FLN threats of reprisals against Muslims who took part in the referendum.⁶⁷ *Time* magazine similarly took delight in the seemingly overwhelming support for de Gaulle among Algerian women in the September elections. One article stated triumphantly, “Moslem women swathed in traditional robes waited patiently to cast the first vote of their lives. At Mostaganem, one pregnant Moslem woman defied doctor’s orders to take her place in line and produced her baby right in the polling station. In impressive numbers, they voted for De Gaulle.”⁶⁸

A December 4, 1958, *New York Times* article also included a photograph of de Gaulle with Muslim women, some veiled completely and others with only their hair covered, in order to stress de Gaulle’s direct appeal to Muslim women in 1958 to support his government.⁶⁹ De Gaulle, the “Liberator” of France during World War II, here becomes the liberator of Algerian Muslim women. The mere act of voting was a step toward emancipation and modernization for these women, as one journalist argued:

Often the French appeal to Moslem women takes the form of a simple human effort to bring some light and pleasure into their dark and joyless lives. Some women who attended a meeting in Marengo, southwest of Algiers, a few days ago saw and spoke to each other for the first time since they went to school together years ago. Since

⁶⁵ Henry Tanner, “Army Drive Spurs the Algeria Vote,” *New York Times*, 13 September, 1958, 6.

⁶⁶ Robert C. Doty, “De Gaulle Urges Big Charter Vote,” *New York Times*, 27 September 1958, 3.

⁶⁷ Thomas F. Brady, “Moslems Go to Polls,” *New York Times*, 27 September 1958, 1, 2.

⁶⁸ “Oui to De Gaulle,” *Time* LXXII, no. 14, 6 October 1958, 25.

⁶⁹ Henry Tanner, “De Gaulle Paying 5th Algeria Visit,” *New York Times*, 4 December 1958, 3.

then, they had lived as near neighbors, each behind the windowless walls of her dwelling.⁷⁰

Another group of women, driven to a coastal town on the Mediterranean eight miles from their homes by French campaigners, “were overwhelmed. They had never seen the sea.”⁷¹ Nearly every journalist who mentioned Algerian women stressed that they “never had the right to vote before.”⁷² Following de Gaulle’s referendum victory in late September, some Muslim women even came forth as candidates for local office in Algeria during the November 1958 elections.⁷³ These press depictions reinforced the fact that Muslim women had been oppressed by their men, the very men who hypocritically sought independence for themselves. The implication was that such women would continue to be oppressed were it not for de Gaulle and his civilizing mission.

Criticisms of the Muslim population of Algeria went far beyond the condemnation of their treatment of women. The Muslim masses were most commonly portrayed as poor, pitiful, terrorized by both the FLN and the *pièdes noirs*, and too childlike to understand clearly what was occurring in their country. Like rabbits, their explosive birth rate caused both French and other Western observers to fret over the “teeming millions” of Muslims in Algeria.⁷⁴ Lehrman asserted that Algeria’s “galloping demography” was its curse, which stemmed mainly from the fact that, in Algeria, “women are little more than child-bearing machines.”⁷⁵ Such uncontrolled overpopulation threatened to overwhelm the European minority of Algeria while at the same time causing conditions like overcrowding, unemployment, and food shortages, which could lead to crime, violence, and more open insurrection. The people at *Time* magazine, for example, argued, “No matter how glamorous Charles Boyer made it seem, the Casbah in Algiers is a squalid slum

⁷⁰ Henry Tanner, “Algerian Women Get Gaullist Bid,” *New York Times*, 17 September 1958, 4.

⁷¹ Tanner, “Algerian Women,” 4.

⁷² Henry Tanner, “Wins in Algeria by Bigger Margin,” *New York Times*, 29 September 1958, 1. See: “France: The Fifth Republic,” *Time* LXXII, no. 15, 13 October 1958, 28.

⁷³ Henry Tanner, “Election Failure in Algeria is Seen,” *New York Times*, 10 November 1958, 11.

⁷⁴ “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” *New York Times*, 6 September 1958, 16.

⁷⁵ Lehrman, “Battle of the Veil,” SM16.

overpopulated by 80,000 natives, where pimps and petty thieves dart about labyrinthian alleyways, secret passages and connecting rooftops.” Nothing could be more exotic, or appear more chaotic and inferior, to the average American.

The Muslims were also depicted as the passive victims of the violence of both the French Army and the FLN. During the Battle of Algiers, “terrified Moslems in the area shrieked and scattered.”⁷⁶ Following the attempted *coup d’Etat* by the *colons* and Army in Algeria on May 13, 1958, thousands of Muslims came to Algiers to celebrate the return of de Gaulle hand-in-hand with the Europeans. *Time* recognized, “Terrorized for almost four years by the F.L.N. on one hand and the Europeans on the other, the Moslems of Algeria – particularly in the cities – have greeted the promise of integration [offered by the *colons*] with immense relief.” However, like children, “Without entirely understanding what is happening or why they are suddenly embraced as brothers, they have been carried away” by “the chance to go to town and celebrate, with all expenses paid [any Muslim who demonstrated in support of de Gaulle was not to lose a day’s pay].”⁷⁷ The Muslims are portrayed like teenagers besotted with a pop star. They are depicted as supporting de Gaulle without having a true understanding of him. “By the mere fact of talking recently with Algerian nationalist leaders, he has in Moslem eyes recognized Algerian nationalism. And to the average Algerian, who has little use for institutions and great respect for individual leaders, De Gaulle stands for power and authority in the old-fashioned tribal sense.”⁷⁸ Like savage children, this implies, these people require a strong authority figure to keep them in line. To American observers, the Muslims obviously were not intelligent enough to grasp the meaning of the events of May 1958. The implication is that such a pitiful and childlike people would be unable to handle complete independence from France.

⁷⁶ “Algeria: Death,” *Time* LXX, no. 11, 9 September 1957, 37.

⁷⁷ “Algeria: Cheaper Than War,” *Time* LXXI, no. 22, 2 June 1958, 19.

⁷⁸ “Cheaper Than War,” *Time*: 19.

A more damning *New York Times* editorial, which mistakenly defined all of the Muslims in Algeria as Arab (when most were of Berber descent), stated simply, “[T]he only state to which all Arabs owe allegiance is a state of mind.”⁷⁹ The Muslim “state of mind,” of course, appeared irrational and dangerous to American observers.⁸⁰ Pan-Arabism posed a real threat to the Western alliance against Communism. The *New York Times* echoed this Cold War fear when it commented that “Nasserization” of not only Algeria but also of its neighbors, Morocco and Tunisia, was as scary a prospect as Communist infiltration into North Africa.⁸¹ Even pro-independence Senator Kennedy feared that the freedom-seeking Algerians could be lured into the Communist camp.⁸² American concern about foreign influence in Algeria betrayed a mindset that assumed the Muslims of Algeria were incapable of forming their own ideology about the world; therefore, like children, they were extremely susceptible to foreign suggestion. Because they could be dazzled by the promises of Pan-Arabism or of Communism (often conflated in American opinion), continued French influence, even if it was merely the influence of France’s political culture, was clearly desirable to the alternative.

Despite American opinion leaders’ clearly derogatory perceptions of the Muslim masses, they reserved their harshest criticisms for the FLN. In describing the initial Algerian revolt on V-E Day in 1945, *Time* magazine in 1958 described the rebel precursors to the FLN in terms reminiscent of how Native Americans were depicted in Wild West novels. Following a scuffle with the police, who tried to take away the rebels’ banners that said, “Down with Colonialism,” someone fired a shot: “In a sudden fury, bands of Moslems took off through Setif, savagely attacking every European they saw with clubs, knives, and hatchets. And as word of the Setif ‘uprising’ spread

⁷⁹ “Arab Turmoil: Atlantic to Mideast,” *New York Times*, 16 February 1958, E1.

⁸⁰ For the most influential and extensive discussion of Western (including American) perceptions of Muslim societies, see: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

⁸¹ Thomas F. Brady, “Tunisia Sees Algerian ‘Poison’ Spreading,” *New York Times*, 16 February 1958, E5. See also: “Algiers, Cairo, and Baghdad,” *New York Times*, 16 February 1958, E8. Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956 was fresh in the attentive public’s mind.

⁸² Kennedy, “Imperialism,” 10786.

through the rugged mountains of Kabylia, bloodthirsty Berber bands, killing, pillaging and looting, set off on the warpath against the area's 200,000 Europeans."⁸³ Such imagery is evocative of Indian raids against American settlers on the western frontier, and American readers in the 1950's could be counted upon to make that connection and to sympathize with the white settlers in 1945 Algeria, as they had been taught to sympathize with white settlers in American history, Wild West novels, and movie Westerns.

The FLN of the Algerian War was the direct descendant of this wild horde of savage Muslims from the Setif uprising. It is not surprising that the most common portrayal of the FLN and its sympathizers was that of single-minded "fanatics" who terrorized both the "civilized" Europeans and the pitiful mass of their fellow Muslims.⁸⁴ To the *New York Times*, the FLN leadership, which established a provisional government in exile in Cairo in September 1958, was both "extreme" and "intransigent" in its demands for nothing short of immediate and complete independence from de Gaulle.⁸⁵ The *New York Times* also described the FLN as illegitimate, calling it "ultra-militant" and stating that it "has no mandate from the Algerian people and is in fact fighting not only the French but also the more moderate Algerian elements which might constitute a majority."⁸⁶ *Time* magazine described the FLN as "an organization which in the name of Algerian nationalism wages merciless war on France," whose leaders have "little in common with the hopeless, half-starved Moslem peasants who make up the mass of Algeria's population."⁸⁷ *Time* lamented, "Dirty and cruel, the Algerian rebellion is a war of torture and treachery, of ambush and sabotage."⁸⁸ In addition to terrorizing Europeans and Muslims, American writers suggested that the

⁸³ "Algeria: The Reluctant Rebel," *Time* LXXII, no. 15, 13 October 1958, 27.

⁸⁴ For such descriptions, see: "Algeria: Death," *Time*, 37; "Algeria: Death of a Diehard," *Time* LXXI, no. 23, 9 June 1958, 29.

⁸⁵ "The Algerian 'Government,'" *New York Times*, 20 September 1958, 18.

⁸⁶ "The Voice of Africa," *The New York Times*, 23 April 1958, 32.

⁸⁷ "Reluctant Rebel," *Time*, 25.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

FLN also had no compunction about terrorizing its own members with “the time-honored method of liquidating an unsuccessful and ‘fractional’ leader.”⁸⁹

Despite the fact that many informed Americans sympathized with the FLN’s desire for independence, they found its violence unacceptable. *Time* magazine reported an incident in September 1957 that occurred during the infamous “Battle of the Casbah” that American audiences probably found shocking. Allegedly, French paratroopers cornered two of the FLN’s “top terrorists” in the Casbah section of Algiers. After resisting for an hour, the rebels indicated that they would surrender if the French commanding officer promised that they would not be tortured. Once the French agreed and called a cease-fire, the rebels lowered a “token of surrender” from a window, which turned out to be a bomb. The bomb exploded, wounding three of the French officers who had walked over to retrieve it. The incident ended after another two hours’ siege with the combat death of one of the rebels and a suicide bombing by the other rebel, which killed his mistress and destroyed the house.⁹⁰ The rebels’ detonation of a bomb after their pretense of surrender could only be interpreted as dishonorable, and the impulse to become a suicide bomber was alien to American society. Americans saw the targeting of civilians as criminal “terrorist” activity, not legitimate warfare. The FLN often set off bombs in French cafes and other areas of heavy civilian traffic in Algeria. Therefore, U.S. audiences could only see these men as terrorists. Then, as now, Americans could not condone terrorist activity.

Despite the FLN’s brutality, its leaders, unlike the Muslim masses, were not perceived as childlike or stupid. These men were educated, elite, and often spoke French better than Arabic. They utilized “the classic tactics of civil strife, sabotage and guerrilla warfare . . . with terrible effectiveness and a remarkable display of coordination.”⁹¹ Although American journalists saw most

⁸⁹ “Death of a Diehard,” *Time*, 29.

⁹⁰ “Algeria: Death,” *Time*, 37.

⁹¹ “Algerian Terror in France,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1958, 28.

as ruthless and fanatical, they also recognized that the FLN leadership successfully “aimed at combining the fighting in Algeria with diplomatic maneuvers and appeals to world opinion.”⁹² They were even slick enough to “wheedle” their way into Kwame Nkrumah’s Accra Conference in the spring of 1958, where M’Hammed Yazid, FLN observer at the UN, was able to “steal the show” and garner support from the previously hesitant governments of Ghana, Liberia, and Ethiopia for the FLN cause.⁹³ FLN leaders also proved persuasive enough to convince the leaders of Morocco and Tunisia to offer them unqualified support, which ran the risk of France breaking off relations with both countries.⁹⁴ Support for the FLN by members of the United Nations also plagued France throughout the war, especially during 1957, when the UN proposed a resolution on the Algerian War. More pernicious, Egypt’s Nasser lent his support to the Algerian nationalists, and the specter of Communist bloc support was never far from the minds of Western observers.⁹⁵ The American opinion leaders saw the FLN as cunning and capable, but never worthy of support.

In the final analysis, the conflict between informed Americans’ anti-imperialist, anti-French ideology, which pre-disposed them to criticize French warfare in Algeria, and their anxiety about the backward Algerian Muslim society and the fanatics of the FLN prevented the attentive American public from throwing its weight behind either of the combatants. President Eisenhower too was unable to choose which side to support. Since they could not bring themselves to support either side, despite Senator Kennedy’s exhortations that they support the FLN, informed Americans stood and watched as the French and Algerians engaged in a bloody conflict that seemed like it would never end. When Charles de Gaulle unexpectedly regained power in France in May 1958, he offered an alternative to both the hard-line imperialism of the French Fourth Republic and *pieds noirs* and the

⁹² “Death of a Diehard,” *Time*, 29.

⁹³ “Ghana: The African Personality,” *Time* LXXI, no. 17, 28 April 1958, 30.

⁹⁴ “North Africa: The Threat of Worse,” *Time* LXXI, no. 19, 12 May 1958, 27. See also: “North African Unity,” *New York Times*, 2 May 1958, 26.

⁹⁵ “The Mediterranean: Flames of Violence,” *Time* LXXI, no. 25, 23 June 1958, 18.

fanatical nationalism of the Muslim FLN. The fact that American observers were nearly unanimous in their support for de Gaulle once he returned to power, notwithstanding the tension that characterized his World War II relationship with Washington, demonstrated their relief at being offered a way out of their ideological dilemma.⁹⁶ The leader of the “Free French” during WWII was not known as an imperialist, and he came to power with the promise that he would devise a peaceful solution to the crisis in Algeria. This appealed to the anti-imperial consciences of de Gaulle’s American enthusiasts. De Gaulle also seemed the perfect antidote to the “weak” and “effeminate” French leadership, for he was decisive, strong, and decidedly masculine. Costigliola has noted that de Gaulle’s rise to power positively affected U.S. perceptions of the French, for “coding of the French as feminine diminished sharply after 1958, when patriarchal de Gaulle came to power and replaced the weak, diffused parliamentary government of the Fourth Republic.”⁹⁷ Indeed, de Gaulle’s creation of “the strong, executive-dominated regime of the Fifth Republic” and his immediate inclusion of the Algerian Muslims, especially women, in French politics seemed promising.⁹⁸ Thereafter, Americans concerned about foreign affairs resolved their internal conflict about whom to support in the Algerian War by offering moral support for de Gaulle’s efforts to broker a peace in Algeria, although peace would not come for another four years.

While the Algerian War ended decades ago, it should not be forgotten. The war exposed a critical paradox in American views toward the Third World. It demonstrated that Americans’

⁹⁶ See: “France: ‘I Am Ready,’” *Time* LXXI, no. 21, 26 May 1958, 24-29; “France: The Duellists” and “Algeria: Cheaper Than War,” *Time* LXXI, no. 22, 2 June 1958, 18-20; “France: De Gaulle to Power” and “Algeria: The Organizer,” *Time* LXXI, no. 23, 9 June 1958, 23-29; “France: The Providential Man” and “Algeria: Successful Mission,” *Time* LXXI, no. 24, 16 June 1958, 19-21; “France: The Beautiful Road,” *Time* LXXI, no. 25, 23 June 1958, 20-21; “France: *Oui* to De Gaulle,” *Time* LXXII, no. 14, 6 October 1958, 25; “France: The Fifth Republic,” *Time* LXXII, no. 15, 13 October 1958, 24-25; “France: Winner and Champion,” *Time* LXXII, no. 17, 27 October 1958, 22-23; “France: ‘The Peace of the Brave,’” *Time* LXXII, no. 18, 3 November 1958, 24-25; “France: The Page of Progress,” *Time* LXXII, no. 24, 15 December 1958, 22-23. See also: *New York Times* coverage of de Gaulle’s return to power from May 1958 through January 1958, i.e., “Acclaim for de Gaulle,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1958, 22; “Assurances from France,” *New York Times*, 2 July 1958, 28; “De Gaulle’s Rain Check,” *New York Times*, 11 July 1958, 22; and Henry Giniger, “De Gaulle Opens Drive to Sell Constitution,” *New York Times*, 24 August 1958, E4.

⁹⁷ Costigliola, 4-5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

professions of anti-imperialism were tempered by beliefs in the West's civilizing mission and by an anti-revolutionary disposition. Since most of the world gained its freedom by the end of the twentieth century, and since the Cold War has ended, it might seem that such concerns about the Third World are no longer relevant. However, informed American attitudes toward the Algerian War revealed a deeper anxiety about the Muslim world that American society has been unable to resolve. To many Americans, Algeria's Muslims were inscrutable, backward, irrational, childlike, and potentially fanatical. De Gaulle, to their relief, kept these potentially dangerous Muslims in check when he took power and negotiated peace with the nationalists. The American attentive public escaped the need to deal directly with an Islamic society in that instance. However, the American government and people faced Muslim movements directly again and again in the four decades following the war in Algeria and, now, indefinitely into the twenty-first century. Educated Americans' inability to view the Muslims in Algeria as rational equals would inform these later encounters with other Muslim societies, and anxiety about Muslim "fanatics" and "terrorists" still pervades American society today.