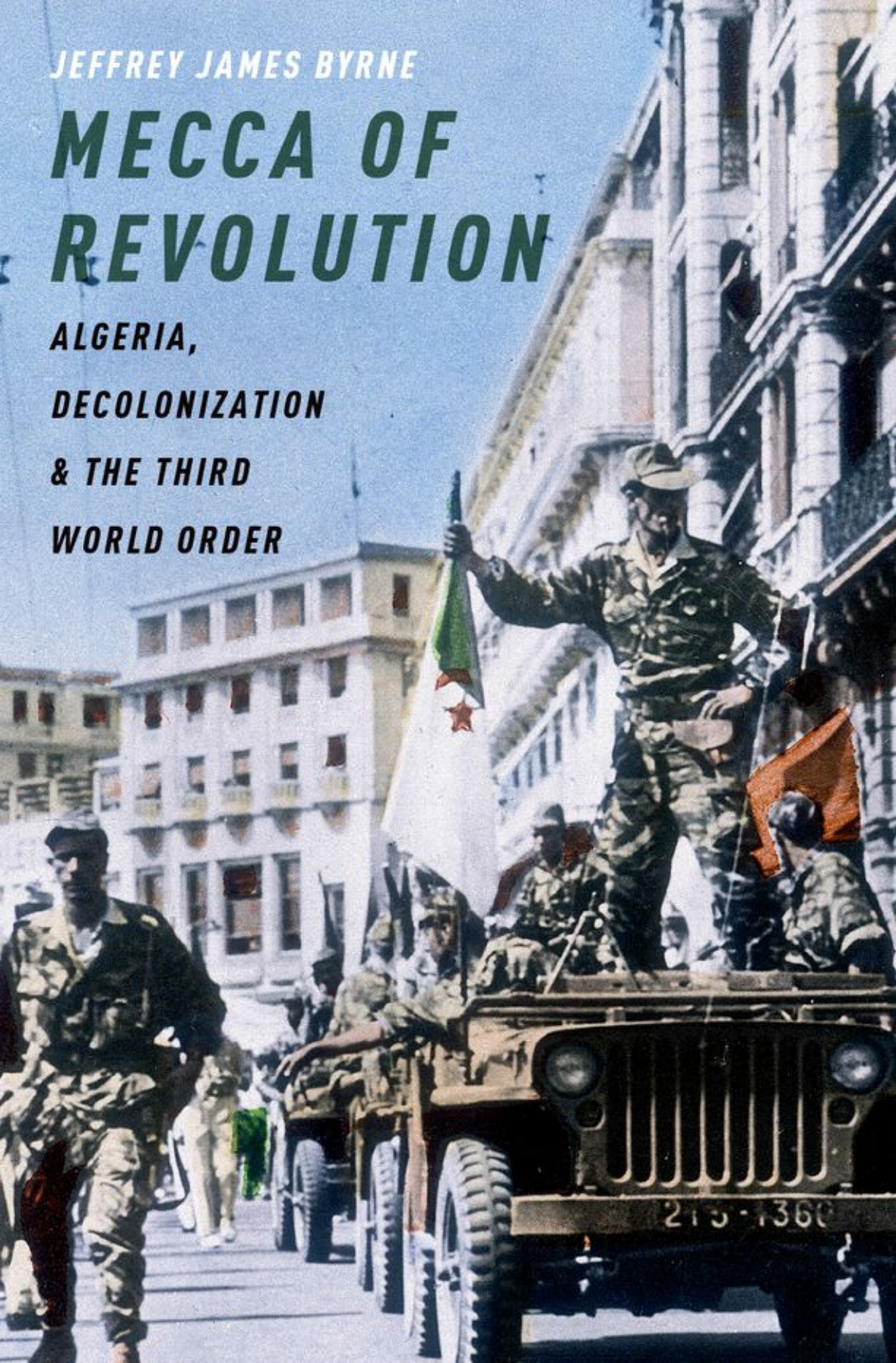


JEFFREY JAMES BYRNE

MECCA OF REVOLUTION

ALGERIA,
DECOLONIZATION
& THE THIRD
WORLD ORDER



Mecca of Revolution

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*For my parents
and a dream in the void*

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAPC	All-African Peoples' Conference
AAPSO	Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization
ALN	Armée de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Army, Algeria)
ANC	African National Congress
ANP	Armée Nationale Populaire (People's National Army, Algeria)
CIAS	Conference of Independent African States
CNL	Conseil National de Libération (National Liberation Council, Congo)
CNRA	Conseil National de la Révolution Algérienne (National Council of the Algerian Revolution)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
EMG	Etat Majeur-Général (General Staff of ALN)
ENA	Etoile Nord Africain (North African Star)
FFS	Front des Forces Socialistes (Socialist Forces Front, Algeria)
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front, Algeria)
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (National Front for the Liberation of Angola)
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
GPRA	Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic)
GPRA-MAE	Ministère aux Affaires Extérieures, GPRA (Ministry of External Affairs, Algerian GPRA)
MAE	Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France and Algeria)

MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation, South Africa)
MNA	Mouvement National Algérien (Algerian National Movement)
MNC	Mouvement National Congolais (Congolesse National Movement)
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
MTLD	Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties, Algeria)
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLF	National Liberation Front (South Vietnam)
OAS	Organisation Armée Secrète (Secret Armed Organization, Algeria)
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCAM	Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache (African and Malagasy Common Organization)
ONRA	Office National de la Reforme Agraire (National Office for Agrarian Reform, Algeria)
OS	Organisation Spéciale (Special Organization, Algeria)
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)
PCA	Parti Communiste Algérien (Algerian Communist Party)
PCF	Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Party)
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PPA	Parti du Peuple Algérien (Algerian People's Party)
RDA	Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (Democratic African Rally)
RADP	République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire (People's Democratic Republic of Algeria)
SAS	Sections Administratives Spécialisées (Special Administrative Sections)
SWAPO	South West African People's Organization
UAR	United Arab Republic
UDMA	Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien (Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto)
UGEMA	Union Générale des Etudiants Musulmans Algériens (General Union of Muslim Algerian Students)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNFP	Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (National Union of Popular Forces, Morocco)
UPC	Union des Populations du Cameroun (Union of Cameroonian Peoples)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

Mecca of Revolution

Introduction

It was an exemplary coup d'état. Trusted military units, prepositioned near the capital, moved into the city in the dead of night. Confused locals awoke to find tanks and soldiers of their own nation's army occupying major intersections and vital locations, such as the government buildings, the state radio and television broadcaster, and the airport. By then, the president had already been spirited away to an unknown fate. The plotters had captured him in his bed, the depth of his defeat demonstrated by the fact that the group that came for him included the very man he had been counting on to prevent this turn of events. Presented with a fait accompli, perhaps not so attached to their president as he had hoped, few members of the public offered overt criticism or protest. Indeed, the foreign minister, who was one of the coup's primary orchestrators, bragged that they would have killed their former leader if they had known how little resistance they would face. It was false bravado. As he well knew, in June 1965 Algeria was subject to intense international scrutiny.

In fact, the coup initially provoked greater consternation abroad. Charismatic and dynamic, President Ahmed Ben Bella managed in his brief tenure, beginning at Algeria's independence three years earlier, to establish himself as one of the most prominent statesmen in the Southern Hemisphere. His erstwhile colleagues and usurpers, chief among them the minister of defense, Houari Boumedienne, therefore now faced a crisis of legitimacy in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, the most powerful man in the Arab world, demanded that his friend be released into his care. Several African heads of state, including Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, declared that Ben Bella's fate was a matter of concern for the whole continent and insisted on an investigation. From the far side of the Atlantic Ocean, Cuba's Fidel Castro thundered blistering denunciations with characteristic vigor. More contemplative was the response of Castro's counterpart from British Guiana, Cheddi Jagan, who penned a mournful ode to the man he had so admired: "Where is he now / Ben Bella / What dark prison holds him / away from his people?"¹ While neither poetry nor petitions sprang Ben Bella,

such demonstrations of international concern may well have spared his life: hidden from the world for a decade and a half, he was eventually released, in the wake of Boumedienne's premature death, in December 1978. By that time, an era had passed for Algeria and the postcolonial world as a whole.

Of course, Ben Bella's considerable individual charm notwithstanding, this outpouring of concern reflected the considerable prestige that Algeria as a whole enjoyed throughout the "Third World." The North African country had accumulated many sympathizers in the course of its long and brutal war of independence from France, 1954–1962, which claimed as many as one million lives and hastened the dismantling of Europe's great empires. This costly struggle granted its people a heroic image elsewhere in the postcolonial world, where liberation through force of arms was the exception rather than the rule. For its part, the embattled Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front, FLN) reciprocated Asia and Africa's admiration. Its leaders greatly prized the support of those countries that were already independent. They credited their participation in the two meetings that laid the foundations for postcolonial international affairs—the April 1955 Summit of Asian-African Heads of State in Bandung, Indonesia and the September 1961 founding conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Belgrade, Yugoslavia—with changing the fortunes of their campaign.² The symbiosis of Third World internationalism and Algerian nationalism was personified in Frantz Fanon, the psychiatrist from French Martinique who happened to be working in an Algerian hospital when the nationalist rebellion began, embraced the FLN's cause as his own, and became arguably the single most influential ideological voice of both the Algerian Revolution specifically and revolutionary anticolonialism in the more general, global sense.

Moreover, with independence achieved in July 1962, the new République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire (People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, RADP) continued to express its identity and pursue its ambitions through those relationships and international initiatives that its diplomats referred to as "this Third World project." Forged in the crucible of the FLN's pioneering international campaign, that unusually capable diplomatic team allowed Algeria to assume disproportionate responsibility, in relation to its size, for the maintenance of globe-spanning coalitions like NAM and the Group of 77 (G77) that maximized the developing countries' influence in world affairs. In the same spirit, the Algerians played a central role in the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in April 1963, which they considered the prototype for a postcolonial order free of systemic Western interference. At the same time, portraying their country as a "pilot state," Ben Bella and his colleagues presented Algeria's socialist experiment as an example for others to follow. They accepted an influx of foreign anarchists, Trotskyists, and other assorted fellow travelers

who were eager to build a new utopia amid the wreckage of colonialism. In the words of a French diplomat posted to the embassy in Algiers in the early 1960s, the atmosphere there was “simultaneously convivial, revolutionary, disorganized, and generous.” Moreover,

Trotskyites, anarchists, internationalists from France and elsewhere lavished the young president with often confusing advice. . . . Dissidents from every authoritarian regime in the Southern Hemisphere flocked to Algiers to devise the ideology that came to be known as “Third Worldism.” It . . . rejected the inertia of Western civilization and counted on the new youth of the world, who sought to liberate themselves once and for all.³

For those disillusioned with both the Western and Eastern examples, Algeria seemed set to fulfill the Third World’s promise of a third way, a better way.

In addition to these bold diplomatic and economic endeavors, this poor and war-ravaged country received even greater recognition for its wholehearted commitment to the principle of anticolonial solidarity. Algeria offered support and hospitality to a panoply of national liberation movements, guerrilla armies, and insurrectionary exiles from every corner of the globe. As a result, Algiers quickly became an *entrepôt* of subversion, where rebels from such places as Palestine, Angola, Argentina, and Vietnam, among many others (including, in time, the Western countries Britain, the United States, and Canada) lived together, conspired together, and vowed to die together. It was this policy that inspired the nationalist rebel from “Portuguese” Guinea-Bissau, Amílcar Cabral, to approvingly dub the Algerian capital the “Mecca of Revolution.”⁴

However, it was no coincidence that Boumedienne and his allies chose to overthrow Ben Bella on 19 June 1965, mere days before Algiers was scheduled to host the long-awaited Second Summit of Afro-Asian Heads of State, or “Bandung 2.” Hosting Bandung 2, the sequel to the 1955 conference that had by this time achieved mythical status in the Southern Hemisphere, should have been the culmination of Algeria’s efforts to become a guiding force in Third World affairs. It was only fitting, enthused one senior diplomat, that the meeting should take place in a country “whose exploits and sacrifices . . . epitomize . . . the anticolonial struggle.”⁵ With Egyptian, Chinese, and (somewhat ironically) French assistance, Ben Bella’s government had overseen the construction at breakneck pace of a grand new conference venue and luxury hotel complex being built expressly for this occasion. That decision was typical of Third Worldist diplomacy in that era. The Ethiopian government had built gleaming new headquarters for the OAU two years before, while Nkrumah had ordered the construction of yet another grand complex from scratch in the Ghanaian

capita, Accra, in order to hold an African summit in the autumn of 1965. Critics might charge that such schemes were hubristic excesses for poor countries, that even allowing for foreign benefactors covering much of the expense, these show-piece projects amounted to a sort of postcolonial Potemkinism intended to conceal grim socioeconomic realities that might otherwise make a mockery of new elites' grandiose rhetoric. Yet, they also reflected the genuine spirit of optimism and possibility that characterized the early years of independence, a period all too easily obscured by subsequent disappointments and the contemporary era's dominant narratives of postcolonial disillusionment.⁶

Indeed, if the Algerian coup blemished this optimistic era and possibly augured its closure, it was also oddly indicative of it. For Ben Bella's rivals feared that, if he were permitted to preside over Bandung 2, he would so thoroughly attach himself to the universal yearnings of the age that his political position, at home and abroad, would become unassailable. Better than most, they understood the reciprocity of international and domestic legitimacy in the postcolonial context. Hence their decision to act, even as the first of thousands of expected dignitaries were already descending on Algiers. But if it was true, as the country's leaders insisted, that Algeria's individual fate was inseparable from that of the global anti-imperialist struggle, what, then, did tanks in the streets of the Mecca of Revolution portend for the Third World project?

Mecca of Revolution uses its Maghribi vantage to examine decolonization and the phenomenon of Third World internationalism on a larger scale. Algeria is ideally suited to the task. In addition to being an exemplary and prominent participant in the Third World movement, it is also an unusually interconnected place. Positioned at the interstices of North and South, Europe and the "Orient," Africa and the Arab world, this expansive land (the largest country on the African continent following the secession of South Sudan) has long been a crossroads between cultures and civilizations. In the first half of the twentieth century, its inhabitants defied the French authorities' increasingly determined efforts to isolate them from forces of change afoot in the world, so that Muslim Algerian society and politics reflected the dynamism and diversity of thought that characterized the late colonial era as a whole. Arab nationalism, Islamic modernism, liberalism, communism—these influences and others left their mark. Defying Western categories and the prevailing "area studies" mentality that deemed Algeria peripheral to various regional units, the country's new leaders saw their interstitial status as a source of strength.⁷ They believed that they could maximize their influence by acting as an interface between political spheres and regions.⁸

Non-Algerians also hoped to harness the country's interstitial position and international prestige. Fanon dreamt of "carrying Algeria to the four corners of

Africa”; Palestinian nationalist Yaser Arafat described it as “the window through which we appear to the West,” while a French policymaker deemed it “the ‘narrow doorway’ through which we enter the Third World.”⁹ The Cuban and Yugoslavian governments saw Algeria as their bridge to Africa, while African revolutionaries traveled between continents on Algerian passports.¹⁰ Dubbed the *pieds rouges* (red feet) in sarcastic reference to the enigmatic nickname for colonial Algeria’s European inhabitants, *pieds noirs* (black feet), the European leftists who flocked to Ben Bella’s government, saw the postcolonial world as a blank slate or conceptual space on which to build the new societies rejected in their own lands. Such notions validated the Algerians’ ambitions and reveal that the desire to escape one’s geographical fate was widespread. To that effect, the unconventional internal organization of the new Algerian foreign ministry—which segmented the world into “Latin America and Asia,” “the West,” “socialist countries,” “Arab countries,” and so on—is a reminder that geography is a social and ideological construction, susceptible to alteration during primordial periods such as the era of decolonization.¹¹

If Algeria could be many things to many people, the “Third World” continues to be a slippery concept and a challenging subject of inquiry, for reasons beyond that of sheer geographical scale.¹² Was it a place, an economic category, or a political movement? Does it still exist? On the one hand, an identifiable body of widely read literature and common ideological references gives the impression of a fairly cohesive and coherent “Third Worldist” perspective. Early cornerstones of the canon included the writings of Lenin, Mao Zedong, Mohandas Gandhi, and Michael Collins, while the likes of Ernesto “Che” Guevara, India’s Jawaharlal Nehru, Fanon, and Nkrumah also became popular inspirations by the 1960s. Yet Third Worldism was still far from being a codified or formalized ideology, and scholars have often used words like “trend,” “vogue,” or “mentalité” to convey its fuzziness as a mobilizing idea.¹³ Perhaps, though, that fuzziness was key to its undeniable popularity and power. While the French economist Alfred Sauvey first coined the term *tiers monde* in 1952 to describe poor countries with tremendous population growth and revolutionary potential, the new leaders of the Southern Hemisphere then quickly appropriated it to convey their intent to rapidly transform their own societies and international society, too. The Third World signified an alternative to the discredited philosophies of Western and communist civilization, accused of inveterate militarism and despotism. Anticolonialism, world peace, and global economic equality were the dominant themes of this transformative impulse. President Sukarno of Indonesia declared at the 1955 Bandung conference, generally considered the beginning of the Third World as a diplomatic and rhetorical phenomenon, that “we can inject the voice of reason into world affairs[, w]e can mobilize all the spiritual, all the moral, all the political strength of Asia and Africa on the side of peace.”¹⁴

The Third Worldist trend should be understood in this spirit: an application of the optimism of decolonization to the international sphere.¹⁵

Taking its cue from its central Algerian protagonists, as well as from historians such as Vijay Prasad and Odd Arne Westad, *Mecca of Revolution* examines the Third World as a political project—active cooperation between political elites in the developing world to achieve an extremely ambitious, yet not wholly unrealistic, agenda of political and economic reordering on a global scale.¹⁶ This cooperation began well before decolonization, its internationalist spirit evolving symbiotically with localized anticolonial trends as a result of the inherently cosmopolitan character of Europe's empires in the post–World War I era.¹⁷ Growing numbers of students, low-level administrators, workers, and soldiers from the colonies mingled in metropolitan universities and factories or, alternatively, served in one another's homelands. For example, Gandhi worked as a lawyer in South Africa, numerous influential Caribbean activists and future African national leaders mingled in London in the 1930s and 1940s, and Arab Maghribi conscripts fought for France on battlefields from Italy to Indochina. These experiences inspired political awakenings, instilled a sense of shared suffering, and encouraged colonials to look at imperialism as a massive integrated system that could only be defeated through collective resistance. This spirit of solidarity and globalist perspective often implanted itself at an early stage in the evolution of local nationalist movements, so that the Third Worldist instinct was inextricable from many postcolonial identities. Following Bandung, Third Worldist diplomacy placed great emphasis on a constant stream of international meetings that popularized diverse expressions of internationalist solidarity like “positive neutralism,” “nonalignment,” “Afro-Asianism,” “tricontinentalism,” pan-Africanism, Arab unity, and in reference to North Africa specifically, Maghribi unity. Such terms riddled the discourse of international affairs the Southern Hemisphere. By the early 1960s, organizations such as the G77 and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) gave concrete form to the desire to restructure the world economy, to the benefit of poor countries, in parallel to the political transformations already taking place.

Nevertheless, the luster of these initiatives has faded to such a degree that “Third World” is often thought to be a pejorative expression, at least in wealthy English-speaking countries. If the prolonged economic and political difficulties of so many former colonies were the most proximate cause of the Third World's sullied reputation, that reputation is also the product of a rich vein of skepticism on the part of many Western observers and policymakers, dating back to the original Bandung conference.¹⁸ American, British, and French diplomats had obvious reasons to dislike strident, open criticism of their imperial policies, military activities in the Southern Hemisphere, and, indeed, the simple suggestion that the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union was not

the most important issue in world affairs for all people. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles famously, or notoriously, stated in 1956 that nonalignment was “immoral and short-sighted.”¹⁹ Subsequently, in light of the obvious disconnect between the grandiosity of Third Worldist rhetoric and the meager resources of the participating countries, as well as the increasingly despotic character of their regimes, it became easier to dismiss the movement as either deluded or cynical, or both. Nor have its proponents and defenders always been effective, since they tend to share the critics’ preoccupation with a public discourse that was noble but, in itself, insubstantial.²⁰ A related problem is the corruption of history: major inaccuracies, such as the claim that Nkrumah attended the Bandung conference, have been repeated in print so many times over the years that it is difficult for diligent scholars to be certain of the facts, because retracing citations so often leads to dead ends. Similarly, there is a tendency toward ahistoricity in the literature on the subject. A mythologized Bandung casts too heavy a shadow, speeches from 1955 often dubiously quoted to explain events occurring two decades later, while terms like Afro-Asian and nonalignment are often mistakenly treated as synonyms.²¹ On the whole, admirable exceptions to the rule notwithstanding, the Third World phenomenon does not boast a literature commensurate with its import to modern history.²²

In this light, Algeria is a particularly useful locus of investigation because its leaders and cadres were themselves gravely concerned by the Third World’s supposed ideological deficiencies and recognized the need to translate rhetoric into practicable policies. Happily, the country is also rich in a rare commodity in postcolonial history: evidence from state archives.²³ In addition to interviews with key figures, such as Ben Bella himself, this book makes extensive use of the Algerian archives, including those of both the FLN liberation movement and the independent Algerian state. The archives of another prominent participant in Third World affairs, Yugoslavia, as well as a variety of powerful states, such as France, Britain, and the United States, complement the Algerian perspective and reveal the bigger picture. This evidence makes it possible to look behind the thick layers of rhetoric and bombast that shield the Third World movement from insightful inquiry. It reveals, for example, that terms like “Afro-Asianism” and “nonalignment” were not mere expressions of sentiment or interchangeable slogans, but distinct geopolitical trends that shaped international affairs in the Southern Hemisphere and were even, at times, in direct conflict with one another. Likewise, this new evidence shows how, owing to the widespread popular sentiment in the postcolonial world that diplomacy should be a reflection of a nation’s cultural and religious identities, the leaders of countries like Algeria tended to obscure the very real practical foreign policy ramifications of solidarity themes, such as Arab unity and pan-Africanism, which they deliberated and prioritized in a manner not so different from, say, a British Foreign Office official

contemplating European integration and the Commonwealth. In short, with the demystification of Third Worldism, the affairs of Africa, the Middle East, and the Southern Hemisphere as a whole are revealed from a new, insider's perspective.

This alternative perspective's first notable contribution to our understanding of modern international and global history is to further situate the Cold War in the larger context of decolonization.²⁴ *Mecca of Revolution* is not so much a book about the Cold War in the Third World as one about the Third World's Cold War. National liberation movements like the FLN and poor countries like Algeria were active and willing participants in the geopolitical turbulence of their time. In the same manner that historians have argued that the Western European countries "invited" American empire in the 1940s and 1950s, the comparatively weak state and nonstate actors of the developing world frequently pulled the United States and the Soviet Union into their affairs to their own (presumed) advantage.²⁵ To be sure, it can be trite to observe that such-and-such weak actor had more influence in international affairs than hitherto recognized, and the fact is that the yawning disparity of power between Third World forces and the superpowers ensured that the former's miscalculation often ended in disaster. Nevertheless, aware of the risks, the Algerians and their likeminded peers across the Southern Hemisphere practiced a doctrine of nonalignment that, contrary to their harmonious public rhetoric, actively sought to incite international tensions to their own advantage. The FLN and the state it created were insurgents that traveled the globe but also insurgents with respect to global order. Moreover, their maneuvers reveal a world far more complex than that allowed for in traditional Cold War narratives. In the dimming light of empire, secondary powers, such as France and communist China, emerged as credible competitors against the United States and the Soviet Union for the friendship of Africans and Asians. Third World actors tried to pit the superpowers against these second tier powers as much as against one another, exposing a multipolar Cold War well before the period of detente and Richard Nixon's visit to China, in the early 1970s.²⁶

More profoundly perhaps, the emergent elites of the Third World chose to replicate the multiple dimensions of the Cold War at the local regional level and within their own societies, geopolitics being only one of those dimensions. Rival states and national liberation movements, such as those in Morocco and Algeria, say, or the competing Angolan nationalist groups, also frequently hurled themselves into the global battle between "ways of life" and theories of socioeconomic organization. Only rarely did Third World forces fully embrace Western or communist ideologies, but they accepted the premise that they were living in an age of ideology that necessitated having one of one's own—typically, a hybrid of various outside ideological influences with supposedly authentic indigenous identifiers. As nationalist identities merged with socioeconomic identities, local contests over territory and cultural legitimacy, such as that between independent

Morocco and Algeria, expressed themselves as economic contests akin to that between the two Germanies (a comparison sometimes made by the antagonists themselves). In other words, the convergence of the Cold War and the processes of decolonization had the effect of imbuing national identities with a functional rationale: the purpose of the nation was development.

No less significantly, the Third World replicated the Cold War's vertical hierarchies of power, from the international level to the subnational level, as a means of replicating the European sovereign state model.²⁷ A vital mechanism for doing so was the adoption of the Cold War's competing practices of political organization.²⁸ Liberal internationalist diplomacy in the tradition of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, on the one hand, and the communist world's proven methods of subversive organization and revolutionary war, on the other, put the opponents of the imperial order on the path toward building sovereign states. Indeed, for all of the attention paid to the colonial world's reception of Wilson's and Vladimir Lenin's ideas, modes of action were more appealing than ideologies to many anticolonial militants, because they were impatient to begin their assault on the status quo.²⁹ It is because of this underrecognized dynamic that the superpowers managed to fuel so much internal disorder in supposedly fragile Third World states lacking innate territorial logic, yet only very rarely altered postcolonial borders or threatened the integrity of state sovereignty.

Many readers will know Algeria best from Matthew Connelly's history of the war of independence, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, which showed how the FLN was a herald of globalization, a transnational movement that defied the prerogatives of state sovereignty by leveraging the new normative and institutionalized framework of international affairs.³⁰ Happily, Algeria has more wisdom to share. This book pillages Connelly's insights even as its differing analytical focus leads in almost the opposite interpretive direction. Above all, by extending its analysis beyond independence into the postcolonial era, and by placing greater emphasis on "South-South" international relations, it argues that the net result of decolonization was a dramatically more state-centric world order than had been true of even the very late colonial post–World War II years. That is to say, the onset of globalization and the proliferation of transnational phenomena—meaning human interactions of all kinds outside of state channels—indisputably happened, but neither the relative nor the absolute power of sovereign states declined as a result. Indeed, it seems likely that transnational phenomena have become more visible to historians precisely because states have been multiplying and monitoring ever more aspects of life. It is perhaps against trend to thrust the state back into the center of historical analysis, as it is to focus on political elites and diplomacy, but intellectual trends that primarily reflect the preoccupations of Western societies have kept essential aspects of Third World history underexamined.

The chapters ahead chart the evolution of the Third World project from its interwar beginnings to the crucial inflection point of 1965. A crucial aspect of this story is the manner in which Third Worldism transformed from a transnational mode of cooperation that evaded and subverted the authority of the colonial state into an international collaboration that legitimized and zealously defended the authority of the postcolonial state. In other words, Third Worldism imposed order and structural uniformity on the process of decolonization. After all, the nationalist endpoint to the evolution of anticolonialist thought and mobilization should not be taken for granted. Decolonization's state-based outcome was neither self-evident nor inevitable, arguably even as late as the mid-1950s in Africa, when both the imperial powers and anticolonial groups were still experimenting with different notions of limited autonomy, transnational "interdependence" between the metropole and the colony or regional confederations that combined multiple territories. After Bandung, the great Algerian Islamic intellectual Malek Bennabi, reflecting this period of hopeful experimentation, predicted the onset of nothing less than "a wholly new era in the evolution of international society and civilization . . . a veritable transfiguration of international relations through the slow but steady progression from a 'closed' society of states to an 'open' international society."³¹

But this transfiguration did not come to pass. Instead, entities such as NAM and the OAU came to serve as mutual recognition societies for the participating governments, which also pledged to respect the inviolability of one another's borders and internal affairs. Recognizing that their successful mediation between the international and imperial spheres had been vital to their political ascendance, the Third World's new leaders made sure to control and monitor interactions between their national domains and the outside world. For better or for worse, the postcolonial order quickly became an emphatically "closed" one.

Chapter 1, "Method Men," follows the evolution of the Algerian nationalist project from the end of World War I to 1959/1960, just after the midpoint of the Algerian War. During the 1920s and 1930s especially, Algerian nationalism evolved in the context of mounting politicization throughout the colonial world, and Algerian activists were fully integrated in the global exchange of ideas among their African, Arab, and Asian peers. Within this rich and complex late-colonial political environment, the chapter argues, the dueling dogmas of Wilsonianism and Leninism played a decisive role in the creation of the FLN. Vitally, however, the import of these two influences was much less ideological than practical. The young militants who founded the FLN were impatient for action, and for them the liberal internationalism of Woodrow Wilson suggested one means to achieve their goals—diplomacy—while Lenin's genius at revolutionary organization demonstrated another. The resultant combination of diplomacy and revolutionary nation-building then drove the FLN in an increasingly state-oriented

conception of “liberation,” a trend that reached its logical conclusion in the movement’s effort to completely control Algerian political life and its founding of the *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne* (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, GPRA) in 1958.

Chapter 2, “Our Friends Today,” examines the FLN’s embrace of the Third World concept during the latter years of the War of Independence. Its diplomatic cadres and the officers of the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Army, ALN) were especially attracted to the charismatic Cuban Revolution, and they responded to the accelerating decolonization of sub-Saharan Africa by seeking to play the same “vanguard” role on that continent as Fidel Castro claimed for Cuba in Latin America. The FLN expanded into West Africa, with Fanon as one of its most important representatives in the region, and even began supporting smaller independence movements from such places as Angola and Cameroon. The Algerians epitomized the confused condition of the African international system during decolonization: while insisting on their own quest for sovereignty, they undermined the sovereignty of their neighbors Morocco and Tunisia. The FLN’s leaders and cadres also began to subscribe to the transformative dreams of Third Worldism, advocating increasingly bold visions of a new society to be constructed after independence. Yet, with the leadership now mostly based outside Algeria, the movement ran the risk of becoming too transnational, of existing more as an idea beamed from radio stations throughout North Africa than a tangible force among the populace.

Chapter 3, “Real Existing Third Worldism,” traverses the precolonial and postcolonial threshold in order to highlight the ambiguous and variable nature of “independence.” The driving narrative of this chapter recounts the negotiations between the FLN and the French government: initially, the negotiations that began in early 1961 and culminated in the Evian Accords of March 1962, which ended the war and granted Algeria its independence, and then the next round of negotiations between Algiers and Paris from late 1962 through 1963. Believing their independence to be incomplete on account of the concessions granted to France in the Evian settlement, which notably helped perpetuate France’s preponderant economic position in their country, independent Algeria’s new leaders initiated the “second stage” of their national revolution, in the form of socialism. They also had to brave the Cold War’s heated ideological contentions as they sought out alternative sources of commerce and development assistance, Ben Bella notably embroiling himself in the Cuban Missile Crisis while seeking American aid. The Algerians’ experiences epitomized the challenges of underdevelopment and state-building in an era when differing political and economic philosophies could be the cause of nuclear war.

How Algiers earned the nickname “Mecca of Revolution” is the subject of chapter 4, “The Allure of Globalism.” Many important aspects of independent

Algeria's foreign policy were simply continuations of the wartime FLN's numerous international relationships. Notably, Algeria greatly expanded the FLN's policy of supporting nationalists and rebels from around the world, giving succor not only to African and Middle Eastern groups but also to ones from Asia, Latin America, Europe, and North America. Simultaneously, Algeria sought to maximize its international influence by positioning itself as the interface between regions—introducing Palestine to Africa and African nationalists to potential Cuban, Yugoslav, and Chinese supporters. The founding of the OAU in early 1963 also served as the prototypical Third Worldist project for Algeria, exemplifying the creation of international institutions that were independent of Western participation. Yet just as Algeria's globe-spanning ambitions seemed on the point of fruition, the constraints of territoriality reasserted themselves in late 1963, when Morocco launched a military offensive to claim a resource-rich region of the Sahara. The so-called Sands War highlighted the contradiction between the FLN's transnational habits and the prerogatives of statehood.

The final chapter, "Mecca of Impatience and Anxiety," continues to explore the fundamental tension between internationalism and the nation-state project. To a certain degree, the divergence between these two agendas was manifest in the rivalry between Ben Bella, who practiced the wartime GPRA's method of using diplomacy to win domestic legitimacy, and his minister of defense, Boumedienne, who had always been very much focused on national interests and the construction of the state apparatus. In 1964, Boumedienne used the conflict with Morocco to stir nationalist passions and justify a military buildup that strengthened his position. His political "clan" also capitalized on growing popular resentment, channeled by conservative religious elements, of the substantial foreign presence in Algiers and in Ben Bella's government. This local resistance to globalism converged with the increasingly polarized dynamics within the Third World coalition. Algeria hoped to harmonize the disparate trends of Afro-Asianism, nonalignment, African unity, and so on. Instead, regional rivalries and communist infighting—the Sino-Soviet split in particular—rent the Southern Hemisphere. Such divisions paralyzed the Third World project and Algerian diplomacy with it, so that mere days before the Bandung 2 conference was scheduled to begin in June 1965, nobody knew whether Ben Bella would defy China by inviting the Soviets. Ultimately, the pressure of managing these disputes contributed to Boumedienne's coup d'état on 19 June, which toppled Ben Bella and resulted in the cancellation of the Afro-Asian summit altogether.

Despite the tumultuous nature of many of these events, this book is not a eulogy for the Third World. On the contrary, its writing has been motivated by the conviction that the tenets of Third Worldism and the normative framework of South-South international relations at the height of the Cold War are more influential in the early twenty-first century than ever before. On the one hand,

certain countries steeped in that diplomatic heritage have acquired greater sway in international affairs. On the other, the US-centric unipolarity of the post-Cold War world provides the motivation to rekindle the provocative nonalignment (though not necessarily under the aegis of the still-extant NAM) that is described in the following chapters. Meanwhile, subversive forces in the Middle East and elsewhere recall some of the traits of the left-wing, Third Worldist revolutionary trend of the 1960s and 1970s, even when they renounce these antecedents. The evidence mounts: the postcolonial world is our world.

Method Men

The Praxis of Anticolonial Resistance

How useful it would be for the Annamese to know how their Hindu brothers are organizing against English imperialism, or how the Japanese workers united to fight capitalist exploitation, or how the Egyptians have made sublime sacrifices to demand their liberty.

—Ho Chi Minh, May 1920

Oh Algerians, my brothers,
It is time to wake up
Look around you
At what your neighbors are doing

—Song lyrics by Mahieddine Bachtarzi, 1919

When the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) declared war on the French colonial order on 1 November 1954, it seemed a dubious endeavor. Though some had been active in politics, most of its young founders were totally unknown to the Algerian public. Most Muslims were baffled when Cairo's Voice of the Arabs radio station broadcast the first proclamation of this mysterious organization, which claimed to have instigated a revolution in their name and insisted on their loyalty. Nevertheless, within two years this upstart revolution had engulfed Algeria. By the beginning of 1957, the FLN's armed wing, the Armée de Libération Nationale (ALN), had grown into a potent guerrilla force of 40,000 mujahideen (freedom fighters), *djounoud* (soldiers), and active supporters. That January, it carried out 4,000 attacks and acts of sabotage, flaunting its ability to operate in every region and town. Determined to restore control, by that time France had mobilized a massive counterinsurgency army of more than half a million men, including professional and conscript soldiers, troops from the sub-Saharan African colonies, and pro-French Algerian Muslim militias known as the *harkis*. Elite commandos pursued the mujahideen across sizable expanses of the *bled* (countryside) that had been designated "free fire" zones following the

forced resettlement of the local inhabitants into guarded camps—a policy that eventually encompassed nearly a third of the rural population, or about 2 million people. French soldiers torched their abandoned homes, fields, and livestock in order to deny the rebels shelter and sustenance. Terror had polarized Algeria's society and flattened its politics; communities across the land lived in daily fear of one side or the other inflicting a brutal collective punishment for suspected disloyalty. In short, the FLN's founders could hardly have expected to destroy the status quo any more quickly or thoroughly.¹

Of course, theirs was not a purely destructive purpose. An illuminating episode from that same month, January 1957, shows how their movement also endeavored to build a new Algeria amid the ashes of the old. On the night of 25 January, an informant confided to French intelligence, eight rebel fighters stole into the village of Attatla in the mountainous Kabylia region, to the east of Algiers. After posting lookouts in all directions, they called the settlement's adult males to a meeting. There, a particularly impressive young man, fluent in French and Arabic, took charge of the proceedings by instructing his audience on the FLN's efforts on their behalf as well as its expectations of them, as Algerian patriots. Evidently his unit's political commissar, the young mujahid showed little deference to age or to Attatla's *djemâa*, the traditional council of elders and local authorities that had been a cornerstone of rural life in the Maghrib for centuries. If accurate in the main, the informant's account of the political commissar's comments provides a useful view of the methods used by the FLN's cadres to overthrow the old order—as well as some of the far-reaching, unintended consequences of those methods.

The rebel started with practical matters, reflecting his vital role in the front's efforts to create its own subversive administrative and governance structure among Algeria's Muslim Arab population. Inspired largely by communist precedents and the writings of Lenin, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh—though the Irish War of Independence was also an important reference point for the Algerian nationalists—the movement hoped to supplant the colonial system in the provision of medical services, education, justice, and civil ceremonies. According to one set of instructions to the ALN's political commissars, issued six months earlier, their role was “judge, tax collector, supply manager, head of propaganda, . . . health services, [and] the press.”² Accordingly, the FLN's man in Attatla chastised its residents for not paying the “taxes” that they owed to the revolution. He peremptorily levied duties on each in accordance with his occupation. In this fashion, he and his brothers (*frère* or *yakhuya*, “my brother” in Algerian dialectal Arabic, was the standard form of address among FLN members) attempted to construct a new national reality under the feet of France's settlers and soldiers.

Meeting no objections, he moved on to international affairs. By this time, the front's "external delegation" had already managed to gain some foreign allies and stoke contentious discussion of the Algerian question at the United Nations in New York, where the movement had even set up a public relations office. The political commissar explained that the primary objective was the passage of a resolution in the General Assembly that supported Algeria's independence, which was an accurate portrayal of the FLN's strategy at that time. Its leaders believed that only international pressure—above all American pressure—could actually compel Paris to let go of Algeria. Intriguingly, however, the political commissar then departed from the official script by suggesting that France's Western allies might block that route to victory. In that event, he declared, "The USSR is our great hope: it helps Egypt and all the Arab countries. It is more powerful than America." Furthermore, he continued, "We can't achieve our independence straightaway and all alone . . . [so] the Russians will help us little by little, until we are capable of living by ourselves." At this point, perhaps resenting the late hour, one of his listeners raised a surly protest that if the young mujahid's predictions were true, they would simply exchange one set of foreign masters for another. But the rebels had not risked the journey for a debate, and they brusquely told this brave dissenter to hold his peace.³

The political commissar's comments in Attatla that cold January night in 1957 are one small piece of evidence pointing toward a highly consequential yet underappreciated trait of the FLN's liberation struggle: namely, the movement's highly effective methods of revolutionary organization and diplomatic agitation induced a certain ideological progression in the cadres that implemented them. On the ground, the ALN's commanders and commissars imitated the Leninist-Maoist doctrine of underground organization and guerrilla warfare by trying to create a sort of shadow state under the noses of the French, binding the Muslim population to its subversive authority. In the international arena, the external delegation's intrepid young guerrilla diplomats (some plucked directly from their studies) worked the angles of the liberal internationalist order established in 1945, with the United Nations at its heart. The FLN's internal records show how, in the course of the long struggle, these two groups in particular underwent an inconsistent but discernible evolution in their political orientation. Collectively, they identified increasingly with the communist countries in geopolitical terms, while also becoming more consciously left-wing in their socioeconomic views. So while his comments on the Soviet Union certainly contradicted the front's public propaganda at that time, this particular political commissar was not alone among his brothers in seeing the communist superpower as more than just a potential ally of convenience, but rather as a sort of mentor to Algeria. This chapter aims to show that this generalized reorientation was only partly a consequence of pragmatic calculus. More fundamentally, strategic calculus was subtly

channeled by the internal logic of the revolutionary methods that the Algerian nationalists already practiced.

In a century defined by the clash of ideologies, the Algerian revolutionaries were notable for putting praxis before theory and valuing actions more than ideas. Their two methods of struggle—guerrilla-revolutionary and diplomatic—were actually the FLN's *raison d'être*, since its leaders explicitly defined their "revolution" in terms of means rather than ends. Fed up with the late-colonial era's vibrant debates between differing critiques of the imperial status quo, they began their assault on the colonial order on 1 November 1954 with practically no preliminary discussion of goals or political orientation. As one later explained, "The only possible option presented to the Algerian people [at that time] was to instigate the armed revolution without waiting to engage in minute and precise study, without waiting for the full elaboration of a program of action and coordination at every level."⁴ Subsequently, the leadership tried to avoid ideological contagion, diligently excising overtly Marxist-Leninist terminology from the communist manuals they copied, for example, in order to maintain a unified coalition at home and a policy of neutrality in the international arena.⁵ Nevertheless, somewhere along the way the means began to shape the ends. In time, the hidden ideological underpinnings of their chosen methods did begin to influence the deferred discussion of the revolution's basic principles and objectives. The result was a gradual recasting of the Algerian nationalist project in terms of socioeconomic outcomes familiar to any Cold Warrior—a marked re-evaluation of the Algerian revolution's position on the global ideological spectrum.

Thus, while highlighting the influence of communist and liberal internationalist methods of political mobilization, this chapter is not an effort to crudely impose the Cold War framework on the intellectual and cultural vibrancy of late-colonial Algeria (much less an effort to rehabilitate French efforts to brand the FLN as communist during the war). Instead, it argues that the front was, in effect, a brilliantly effective nation-building mechanism whose revolutionary internal strategy created a new Algeria from the ground up at the same time that its external diplomatic campaign asserted Algerian sovereignty from the outside in. Because its methods were its *raison d'être*, the FLN was able to incorporate such a diversity of constituencies in the revolution's early years, including such hitherto antagonistic groups as bourgeois Francophiles and stridently arabophone Islamic ulema (religious scholars). As a consequence, however, the deferred task of defining Algeria in cultural, linguistic, and religious terms would be inflected by the exigencies of the guerrilla and diplomatic campaigns. For this reason, significant symbolic advances in the Algerian national project, such as the founding the FLN's *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne* (GPRA) in September 1958, also precipitated significant leftward shifts in the movement's ideological and geopolitical orientation.

Tools of History: The Methodological Origins of the FLN

While it was the combination of guerrilla and diplomatic warfare that assured the FLN's eventual success, it won its first major battle on the field of history. After all, at the time of its founding, in 1954, its leaders were mostly unknown figures in a vibrant political milieu that featured numerous well-established parties and popular personalities. As was the case elsewhere in the late-colonial world, during the first half of the twentieth century Algeria experienced systemic change in the form of rapid population growth, industrialization, and integration into an unstable global economy—all of which encouraged questioning of the status quo. At the same time, multiplying opportunities for travel and long-distance communication (notably radio technology) granted Algerian Muslims access to a great number of complementary discourses of change, such as France's imperial *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission), Salafi Islamic reformism (or Islamic modernism), pan-Arabism, Bolshevism, fascism, Irish nationalism, Atatürkism, and liberal internationalism. Participants in a global anticolonial conversation, Algerians contemplated hybrid, oscillating, perhaps sometimes even contradictory identities and goals. Thus faced with the challenge of competing against the battle-hardened organizations and influential figures that had emerged from these oft-contentious debates, the FLN's founders condemned the entire scene as petty and ineffectual. In their initial proclamation, broadcast on Egyptian radio on 1 November 1954, they described themselves as "a group of responsible young people and dedicated militants" who had decided to "take the National Movement out of the impasse into which it has been led by the conflicts of individuals and influence, and to launch itself into the truly revolutionary struggle." Declaring 1954 to be "Year Zero," the front's propaganda tried to draw a line under what it considered to be the old elites' history of pointless, endless debate and misguided "reformist" politicking.

Consequently, any analysis of the FLN's origins must take account of the many disfavored concerns and individuals that would continue to shape the country's future during and after the revolution, in spite of the revolutionaries' concerted efforts to obscure or omit them from the narrative. The following discussion highlights some of the more important trends in this regard, situating Algerian dynamics within the stream of global history in the post-World War I era. However, for all the variety of anticolonial thought in this era—or perhaps because of it—the FLN's revolutionary lineage is clearest in the domain of political methodologies rather than ideologies. Indeed, especially in the first half of the Algeria's War of Independence, the movement's own leaders distinguished "revolutionary" from "reformist" in terms of means, not ends. Declared

one pamphlet on the front's origins, probably produced in 1955 or 1956, "None of the Algerian political parties measured up to their responsibility to give the Algerian people the tool [*outil*] of their liberation. The FLN arose from their rubble, just in time to nip their vague notions of reform in the bud."⁶ In fact, the action-oriented revolutionaries did not even take the time to develop a clear program or political apparatus before starting their struggle in 1954, such was their aversion to discussing theory. Therefore, in the place of an ideological evolution, two praxes of anticolonial action—the diplomatic and the revolutionary—began in Algeria in response to the pronouncements of Woodrow Wilson and Vladimir Lenin in 1918, were then practiced in parallel for three decades by a succession of movements, and finally converged in 1954 in the founding of the FLN.

Of course, just as Algeria would begin anew neither in 1954 nor in 1962, the transformations of the post-World War I era did themselves occur in the wake of nearly a century of traumatic colonization. Attributed variously to a dispute over debt repayments to Algerian merchants, the Hussein Dey's (the Ottoman governor) alleged lashing of the French consul with his fly swatter, or the unpopular King Charles X's need for an impressive foreign adventure, France's conquest began in 1830 with the swift defeat of the Ottoman regency in Algiers. Initially lacking any long-term purpose, by the time the subjugation of the full territory of present-day Algeria was completed in 1870, France's colonial project had taken on a totalizing scope. French armies met significant resistance, most famously that of the charismatic young religious leader, the emir 'Abd el-Qadir, who spearheaded a successful guerrilla-style campaign until 1847. The remnants of Ottoman power also held out in the high Kabylia region, in the northeast, for another ten years, with the ravine-straddling town of Constantine posing a particularly difficult challenge to the invaders. Likewise, the perennially unyielding communities of the Atlas and pre-Sahara regions, where the fertile north meets the desert, generated several sizable rebellions until the 1860s. Algeria's last mass rebellion before 1954 occurred in Kabylia in 1871. Epitomized by the ruthless Marshall Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, whose tactics inspired the expression "scorched earth campaign," the imposition of French rule was therefore a bloody business. All told, about 1 million Algerian inhabitants died between 1830 and 1870 as a result of war, sickness, and famine—one-third of the total precolonial population. Consequently, despite Algeria's seeming quiescence, memories of defiance and subjugation were still raw in the twentieth century. For example, one scholar has recently shown how village *djemâa* councils, such as the one at Attatla, helped sustain an oral-institutional culture of rebellion among the peasantry into which the FLN could later tap.⁷

In terms of its basic political and economic characteristics, *l'Algérie française* proper began in 1870, when the growing number of white settlers, or *colons*,

insisted that civilian governance take over from the military. Immigration accelerated as the *colons* set about buying up most of Algeria's prime farmland and building a society whose raison d'être was the exploitation of the original Muslim population and their descendents. In 1881, the government in Paris declared Algeria an integral part of sovereign French territory, in accordance with the constitution of the Third Republic. From that point, the *colons* in Algeria were "normal" French citizens who just happened to live in three *départements* (France's basic administrative regions) that were located across the Mediterranean but legally identical to, say, Normandy or Provence. Like their compatriots on the mainland, the Algerian French elected their local deputies to the National Assembly in Paris, where they formed an uncompromising, united bloc on settler-colonial issues. At the same time, however, the 1881 Code de l'indigénat (Native Code) relegated Algeria's Muslims to an entirely separate and repressive legal framework that sharply curtailed personal freedoms, neglected due process for criminal matters, and placed domestic matters under the auspices of Islamic courts. Subjects not citizens, most Muslim Algerians lived in the *communes mixtes* (mixed communities), areas whose administrators and judges (*cadis*) were appointed by the colonial authorities. Therefore, the defining division of colonial Algerian society was that between Muslim and non-Muslim—a truth made explicit in the 1870 Crémieux Decrees that extended French citizenship to Algeria's 25,000 Jews (a community that boasted many centuries of history in that land) and stipulated that those very few Muslim *évolués* (literally, "evolved") who were deemed worthy of French citizenship had to renounce Islam first. In social terms, some of the old elites did integrate into the colonial system, while a thin strata of middle- and working-class Arabs gradually emerged in the larger towns and cities in the twentieth century, but the vast majority of Algeria's Muslims belonged to either the near-destitute peasantry or the pool of cheap labor that served *colon* farms and *colon* homes.

Given that all the evidence indicates that Khaled was a convinced assimilationist to that point, his response to the so-called Wilsonian Moment in 1919 is all the more noteworthy. In the closing stages of World War I, the American president, Woodrow Wilson, publicized a sweeping vision for a new international order based on "liberal internationalist" principles. In his famous "Fourteen Points" speech to the US Congress in January 1918, Wilson called for the creation of an international organization, a "league of nations," that would maintain the peace by regulating disputes between countries, great or small. He stressed the principle of "national self-determination," arguing that every people had the right to choose their own government, citing specifically his desire to see an independent Poland and independent Turkey emerge from the debris of the Russian and Ottoman Empires, respectively. Wilson deliberately disseminated his ideas through the international press and by means of increasingly powerful

radio technology, in order to raise widespread support for his agenda before he arrived at the momentous peace conference convened at the Palace of Versailles, in January 1919. In the magnificent mirrored hall at Versailles, the leaders of Britain, France, Italy, and the United States would decide the fate of their defeated foes—as well as huge swaths of the globe and its inhabitants.⁸ Yet, exhibiting the prejudices common to southern American gentlemen in that era, Wilson was thinking principally of east-central Europe, not “the Orient”, in his advocacy of self-determination and equality between nations. Unintentionally, his ideas also energized politics in many parts of the colonial world, where activists in places as far apart and diverse as Syria, Korea, Ireland, China, and India championed the Fourteen Points. Rather awkwardly from a diplomatic perspective, crowds of “colonials” shouted the American president’s name in mass protests against their British and French overlords. One of the largest such commotions occurred in Egypt, where massive unrest broke out across the country in early 1919 in response to Britain’s tightening control. The initial spark for the uprising came when the British rejected the demand of an otherwise moderate establishment politician, Sa’d Zaghlul, to send a *wafd* (delegation) to Versailles to make the case for Egyptian independence. When repression alone failed to quell the unrest, the colonial authorities did finally try to placate the protesters by allowing the *wafd* to proceed to the conference in April—but only after ensuring that neither Wilson nor anyone else of consequence would receive them.⁹

The American president’s rebuff would live in infamy in Cairo. “Here was the man of the Fourteen Points . . . denying the Egyptian people its right to self-determination and recognizing the British protectorate over Egypt,” wrote the famous journalist Mohammed Haykal. “Is this not the ugliest of treacheries?! Is it not the most profound repudiation of principles?!”¹⁰ Nevertheless, Wilson still played a vital symbolic role in Egypt’s 1919 Revolution, which proved to be a momentous event in the progression of the country’s nationalist consciousness. Zaghlul’s Wafd Party, named after the failed mission to Versailles, would play a central role in Egyptian politics until the 1950s. Crucially, though, given Egypt’s own rich intellectual culture and decades of intensive exposure to European thought, Wilson made less of an ideological impression than a geopolitical one. He did not suggest new possibilities of what independence might be. Rather, he opened up new practical avenues of achieving it by positioning the Anglo-Egyptian power relationship in a wider international context.

Engaged Muslim Algerians, who held Cairo to be the capital of the Arab world, certainly followed Egyptian developments (an early Young Algerian newspaper, *El Hack*, or “truth,” was subtitled “The Young Egyptian”).¹¹ The war’s end brought increased instability in Algeria, too. By 1918, a full third of working-age Muslim Algerian men were employed in France as either soldiers or laborers, and they returned home with a new perspective on the world as well

as expectations of reward for their service. German and Turkish propaganda had also tried to stir up anticolonial sentiment in French North Africa during the war, and the Algerian Arab public enthusiastically cheered on Kemal Atatürk's forces in their war with Greece, which broke out in May 1919, because they viewed it as a national struggle against Franco-British imperialism. In this light, the modest political reforms that Georges Clemenceau's government implemented in February 1919—increasing to 500,000 the number of Muslims allowed to vote in a dual-college system that gave Arabs very limited say over their own affairs without challenging the *pièdes noirs*' supremacy—were an inadequate response to rising discontent and a surge in directionless, uncoordinated violence.

Yet even in these circumstances it was very surprising that the emir Khaled, the committed Francophile assimilationist, demanded in January 1919 that an Algerian delegation be allowed to attend the Versailles conference in a capacity similar to the representatives of Britain's dominions. Like Zaghlul, he set out for Paris with four companions in May, though he too managed only to deliver a letter to Woodrow Wilson's staff. Addressed to "the honorable President of American Liberty," it asked that an investigatory delegation be dispatched to Algeria in order to "decide our future fate, under the aegis of the Society of Nations."¹² Naturally, the letter made no impact on the Versailles proceedings, and there is no evidence that the American president actually read it. Nevertheless, the endeavor incensed the *pièd noir* community, who branded Khaled a dangerous subversive in thrall to foreign designs and succeeded in having him exiled to Damascus in 1924.¹³

The substance of Khaled's appeal to Wilson, undeniably at least proto-nationalist in its implications, was so discordant with his otherwise impeccable record as a Francophile assimilationist that scholars believed for many years that the *pièd noir* lobby had simply made the story up. In vain, Khaled insisted on his loyalty to France, declaring in 1922 that "the people of Algeria are all, without distinction as to religion or race, equally children of France and have an equal right in her home." Similarly, a Young Algerian newspaper swore after his exile that "we will always remain apart from any movement impregnated by nationalist or religious ideology. We are definitively French." Yet eminent French historian Charles-Robert Ageron was eventually stunned to find a copy of the letter to Wilson in the American archives, prompting him to completely re-evaluate Khaled as the budding nationalist.¹⁴ Revealingly, the FLN's "official" history also came to treat him as such, reflecting the legitimacy conferred posthumously by this fleeting diplomatic initiative in spite of the rest of Khaled's recorded positions being so anathema to the nationalist narrative. Even if he did sincerely renounce the letter's implications, his having written it demonstrates how new methods of political action could radicalize the goals those methods were meant to serve.¹⁵