The uses of displacement:
refugees, resettlement, and partition in wartime Algeria

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The twentieth century's most brutal war of decolonization, the three-way French-settler-Algerian struggle of 1954 – 1962, has been preserved in the public memory as a war of terror: marked by attacks on civilians, brutal levels of internal and external punishment on all sides, and the widespread use of torture. It is less commonly noted that the war featured the forcible relocation of somewhere between a third and a half of Algeria's population, a French policy that created a massive refugee crisis extending across the country and into the Moroccan and Tunisian borderlands. In the first instance, such dislocation was arguably the primary tool of the French colonial effort to preserve Algeria for France after 1955; but it rapidly became the tool of any number of other interests as well.

Beginning in 1957, Tunisia and Morocco both appealed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for assistance with the huge numbers of displaced people streaming into their territories – an act designed both to stabilize their own borders and to locate their own positions within the new international sphere under construction. The FLN, intent on breaking the French position that the conflict was an internal and domestic one that allowed for no form of international intervention, supported their request for international refugee aid as a mode of recasting the conflict as a national war. The UNHCR itself, struggling with the diminution of its role following the trailing and unsatisfactory but more or less final closure of the postwar European refugee crisis, saw its own kind of opportunity for reformulation in the moment; in providing supplies, constructing regimes of documentation, and building camps for displaced Algerians in the Tunisian and Moroccan border zones, it was recasting itself as a key external partner for newly independent North African governments and for American Cold War interests in what was becoming known as the Third World. American administrations too saw in this uprooting of people an opportunity to extend their power across a fragile postcolonial landscape, leveraging mass displacement into a forum for a long-term, anti-Soviet, potentially developmentalist presence. Even France, which had initially objected to internationalist

involvement in the question of mass Algerian displacement, eventually came to see such endeavors as stabilizing influences on an emerging postwar North African order that would necessarily involve French interests – and remained interested in further forced migration, in the form of an Algerian partition, as a possible avenue out of the war.

Refugeehood in wartime Algeria, then, was not a mere byproduct of the conflict but a constitutive aspect of both the state and the international – hence the emergence of a situation, by the war's end, of a colonial power simultaneously displacing populations and supporting their relief; or a provisional nationalist government insisting on the active and sometimes forcible "repatriation" of refugees by an internationalist body funded and supported by its bitter enemies; or an American government using an internationalist agency whose power they had always opposed to enforce and make visible the national borders and citizenries of brand-new states. It should come as no surprise that yet another form of forced migration – the mass flight of settlers and *harkis* from Algeria to France – would mark the real end of the conflict and demonstrate the shape of the erstwhile French empire for a new era.

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The first use of displacement: anticolonial legitimacy

Mass displacement appeared in Algeria, early in the war, as a crucial tool of the bloody French effort to hold onto its most important colonial holding. The postwar French government in Algeria, facing down discontent from all sides in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, declared a comprehensive liberal reform of its imperial project characterized by a redoubled commitment to "development" as both a discursive rationale and a practical means for continued French domination. It established a "ten-year plan" promising economic development on a mass scale; set up a new "Investment Fund for Social and Economic Development"; extended citizenship beyond the settler community; and promised a general agenda of economic renewal, revival, and expansion.[1] But the "events" at Sétif in May of 1945, in which French military action killed some eight thousand Algerian civilians over the course of a few days, ushered in a new era of mass and violent political repression that belied this retooled justification for French rule. Describing the post-1945 moment as one of increasing distance between a *pays légal* and a *pays reél*, historian James McDougall writes, "What seems to have happened in Algeria is that as the formal regime of the reformist empire became more overtly inclusive in the postwar context, so the real regime of reasserted colonialism became more unaccountably repressive."[2] By 1954, when the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN, the major Algerian nationalist party

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[1] Such an approach combined the dramatic expansion of the European state's purview since the 1930s with an older practice of legitimizing empire as a project of civilizational and economic improvement. See James McDougall, "The Impossible Republic: The Reconquest of Algeria and the Decolonization of France, 1945-1962," *Journal of Modern History* 89 (2017): 772-811.

[2] See James McDougall, "The Impossible Republic: The Reconquest of Algeria and the Decolonization of France, 1945-1962," *Journal of Modern History* 89, no. 4 (2017): 775.

opposing French colonial rule) launched its first major bombing campaign and the French military mobilized a massive military response using conscripted soldiers, the situation in Algeria was clearly describable as a war.[3]

It was in this new military context, marked by the French army's inability to dislodge the FLN from the Algerian countryside despite overwhelming military superiority, that a new form of displacement came into use in French Algeria. Beginning in 1955 in the Aurès region, east of Algiers, French troops began to remove Algerian village and nomadic populations by force – demolishing homes, destroying arable land, sometimes machine-gunning livestock from the air.[4] Removed populations were placed in so-called *centres de regroupement:* in official propaganda, model villages for agricultural and commercial development; in actuality, internment spaces surrounded by barbed wire and designed to prevent the movement of goods, information, and people to the FLN. In this context of all-out war against the FLN amid theoretical claims of a new, modern, humanitarian and developmentalist form of rule, this project of mass encampment of Algeria's rural poor took on a central role in French colonial practice. 40,000 people were interned in these "centres" in 1955; by the summer of 1957 the figure had grown to a million; by 1961 the figure was two and a half million – three and a half million if those resettled in towns and urban areas are included. In all, the *regroupement* campaigns forcibly resettled fully half of Algeria's population over the course of a mere seven years – often repurposing spaces used as labor, prison, and refugee camps during the Vichy years and drawing unwelcome comparisons to Nazi practice.[5]

As the French assault gathered strength and the FLN doubled down, tens of thousands of Algerians began to flee the *regroupement* campaigns for Tunisia. This exodus apparently began as early as 1954, but in 1956 it became a serious issue with a new French attack on the Tunisian border areas that included the torching of whole villages. From early 1958, the French army began to enforce a no-man's-land along the border and "evacuated"

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[3] Jean-Charles Jauffret, *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2001), 278; Mohamed Tegia*, L'Algérie en guerre* (Paris: Office des publications universitaires, 1971), 310

[4] Andrei Miroiu, "Deportations and Counterinsurgency: A Comparison of Malaya, Algeria and Romania," *Romanian Political Science Review* 15, no. 2 (2015): 187

[5] On the French use of *regroupement* during the Algerian war, see especially Benjamin Brower, "Regroupement Camps and Shantytowns in Late Colonial Algeria," *L'Année du Maghreb* 20 (2019): 93-106; Muriam Haleh Davis, " 'The Transformation of Man' in French Algeria': Economic Planning and the Postwar Social Sciences, 1958-62," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 1 (2017): 73-94; Mahfoud Bennoune, "La doctrine contro-révolutionnaire de la France et la paysannerie algérienne: les camps de regroupement (1954-1962)," *Sud/Nord* 1, no. 14 (2001): 51-66; Moritz Feichtinger. " 'A Great Reformatory': Social Planning and Strategic Resettlement in Late Colonial Kenya and Algeria, 1952–63," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 1 (2017): 45-72; Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence: The Wars of Independence in Kenya and Algeria,* trans. Geyer Dona (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); and Michel Conaton's crucial work *Les camps de regroupement de la guerre d'Algerie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998). On the Nazi comparisons, see especially Emma Kuby, "In the Shadow of the Concentration Camp: David Rousset and the Limits of Apoliticism in Postwar French Thought," *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 1 (2014): 147-173.

some 180,000 people from the northern reaches of Constantine. Many of the refugees, desperate to avoid incarceration in the resettlement camps, crossed over the border into Tunisia. A British official reported from a camp in Sbeitla that the inhabitants had fled a French clearing-out operation in the newly designated no-man's-land, during which the soldiers arrested all the men and ordered everyone else out before burning down the villages.[6] The Tunisian government, pushing back against French claims that Algerians in Tunisia were mostly not refugees but permanent residents, issued a pamphlet in 1958 decrying French army policies of expulsion: Algerians, they wrote, were being "menaced and traced like wild beasts by General Massu's and Colonel Bigeard's paratroopers [and forced out by]... torture, humiliation, shame, fires and death spread by the French occupation army."[7] The UNHCR estimated that there were already more than a hundred thousand refugees in Tunisia at the end of 1958, with more arriving every day. Morocco, too, was seeing an influx of displaced people into its eastern regions: Ahfir, Boubeker, and Oujda. In 1957, faced with this new refugee crisis, the newly independent but impoverished Tunisian state called for assistance from the UNHCR, the only standing UN agency still dealing with mass displacement.

The question of UN involvement with Algerian refugees had implications well beyond the straightforward provision of assistance. From the beginning of the war, many Algerian nationalists had hoped that the UN would represent a new kind of international space for the airing and resolution of their grievances. In 1954, the proclamation that defined the goals of the new Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) placed the UN front and center, declaring one of their three central objective to be "in the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, affirmation of our sympathy for all nations that support our action of liberation."[8] The United Nations had now emerged as the primary – indeed, in many ways the only – site for the formal acknowledgement of claims to nation-statehood.[9] Acknowledgement of the displaced as refugees eligible for international aid would do two things: it would cast the war as an inter-state conflict rather than a civil one, and it would assign France the status of persecutor of the fleeing refugees. FLN activism at the UN vis-à-vis the question of refugee aid therefore

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[6] Report by S. H. Dearden, Mar 4 1958, TNA FO 371/131668, cited in Cecilia Ruthstrom-Ruin, *Beyond Europe: The Globalization of Refugee Aid* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1993), 90

[7] Cited in Ruthstrom-Ruin, *Beyond Europe*, 88-89

[8] Mohammed Harbi, *Les archives de la revolution algerienne* (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1981), 55

[9] As Mark Mazower puts it, "American recognition was one vital step to international acceptance, but membership of the United Nations was a crucial mark of legitimacy as well." He is here speaking of Israel, whose admission into the international order came to represent a path forward for other nations emerging out of the processes of decolonization – a path of which Algerian leaders were well aware. See his *No Enchanted Palace,* 145. On the issue of formal international recognition for new states, see particularly Thomas Grant, *The Recognition of States: Law and Practice in Debate and Evolution* (New York: Praeger, 1999).

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had the explicit goal of agitating against the French position that Algeria represented a domestic question in which the UN had no right to intervene.

In the fall of 1955, the UN General Committee voted not to include the question of Algeria on the General Assembly agenda on the grounds that "nothing... shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state."[10] In other words, for the moment, Algeria technically remained a space of internal French conflict rather than interstate war, and those displaced within or even outside it were not refugees but victims of a domestic dispute in which the UN had no jurisdiction to intervene. Over the next two years the French ministry of foreign affairs engaged in an extensive propaganda campaign to promote this French position vis-à-vis Algeria among representatives with swing votes in the General Assembly. These efforts did not succeed in keeping the question of Algeria off the General Assembly's docket altogether, but they managed to limit the damage somewhat. When the first UN resolution on Algeria passed in February of 1957, it called only for "a spirit of cooperation" in solving the "situation" along "peaceful, democratic and just" lines – language that neither recognized the political claims of the FLN and the Algerian nationalist movement more generally nor posited a role for international institutions like the UN in coming to some sort of conclusion. Nothing had changed later that year, when the UN once again deployed the language of a suitable "solution" to the situation, rejecting an Afro-Asian draft resolution that called for recognizing the principle of Algerian self-determination.

Still, by 1959 De Gaulle was anticipating trouble: "If we take part in the UN debate on the Algerian affair, be it only in the corridors, nothing will then be able to prevent the UN for intervening directly later on the referendum in Algeria. Knowing what the UN is and knowing what Algeria was, that would ensure a disastrous referendum."[11] And indeed, as more and more decolonizing countries joined the UN and began to vote with the Afro-Asiatic bloc, UN resolutions on Algeria became less and less sympathetic to the French position; and in 1960 the General Assembly passed a resolution that for the first time affirmed a UN "responsibility to contribute towards the successful and just implementation" of Algerian self-determination.[12] It was in this context of an emerging international consensus around the long-term impossibility of the French position that the UNHCR, backed especially by the United States, began quietly to formulate a plan for refugee intervention in North Africa. By now – despite its initial active opposition to the organization – the United States was the UNHCR's largest and most important donor, and Americans constituted a substantial

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[10] Matthew Connelly, "Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization: The Grand Strategy of the Algerian War for Independence," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 33, no. 2 (2001): 225
[11] Charles De Gaulle, *Lettres, notes et carnets*, vol 8: 1958-1965 (Paris, 1986), 287
[12] GA Resolution 1573, Dec 19 1960

percentage of its staff.[13] This accession of the UNHCR's services by Algerians displaced by France, however quietly rolled out, clearly demonstrated American acquiescence in the cause (or at least the inevitability) of an independent Algeria and asserted an American role in, and venue for, the production and maintenance of independent postcolonial states – something the FLN was not slow to point out. Forced migration was turning out to be useful in all sorts of unexpected ways.

A second use: securing (American) internationalism and its clients

The Truman and then the Eisenhower administrations had already begun to consider certain smaller and more focused refugee organizations as useful to the production of an American-dominated economic and political order in certain specific postcolonial zones: in the Middle East and East Asia, in particular. The birth of the new United Nations Relief and Works Administration, which provided basic forms of assistance for a million expelled Palestinians following the 1948 war, owed its existence and its shape to the American decision that Palestinian refugees could neither be permitted to return to their homes in what was now Israel, nor allowed to disrupt the fragile postcolonial order of their new host states by making economic and political claims across the region, nor be allowed to apply for asylum and resettlement elsewhere.[14] In East Asia the similarly delimited United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, which ran from 1950 until 1958 and which relied heavily on the financial backing of the United States, sought to resettle refugees from North Korea in South Korea and assist with the rebuilding of the now American-backed South Korean state.[15] In both cases, these were American-financed operations reflecting specific regional policy priorities rather than any more generalized concern for broader issues of global displacement in these early Cold War years; and in both cases the United States was careful to maintain tight controls over these localized organizations and to delimit their reach from that of the IRO's successor body, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose more general capacity it had historically sought to contain and limit.

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[13] On the parallel story of American financial, political, and practical support for UNRWA, see Ilana Feldman, "The Challenge of Categories: UNRWA and the Definition of a 'Palestine Refugee,'" *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, 3 (2012): 387–406; Laura Robson, "Refugees and the Case for International Authority in the Middle East: The League of Nations and UNRWA Compared," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, 4 (2017): 625-644; and the relevant essays in Karim Makdisi and Vijay Prashad, eds., *Land of Blue Helmets: The United Nations and the Arab World* (Oakland, Cal.: University of California Press, 2017).

[14] On the history of UNRWA, see especially Susan Akram, "UNRWA and Palestinian refugees," in *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,* ed. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), and Benjamin Schiff, *Refugees Unto the Third Generation: UN Aid to Palestinians* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

[15] The history of UNKRA is under-researched in the literature on refugee agencies, and has not been considered recently. For an old examination of its institutional history, see Gene M. Lyons, *Military Policy and Economic Aid: The Korean Case* (Columbus, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 1961).

The UNHCR emerged in 1951 under the leadership of a Dutch former refugee and resistance fighter named Gerrit van Heuven, who later recounted that when he arrived at his office to begin work he found "three empty rooms and a secretary."[16] The organization had a budget of about $300,000 (this versus the IRO's previous annual budget of some $150 million) and from the beginning faced down active American hostility. In its early years, the United States actively sought to render the UNHCR irrelevant via its own refugee assistance programs – not only UNRWA and UNKRA, both of which technically operated under the purview of the UN, but also more strictly domestic schemes. In 1951 the US passed the Mutual Security Appropriations Act, which provided ten million dollars towards some kind of international migration office – eventually the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, which competed successfully with the UNHCR for successor status to the IRO (even acquiring the latter's fleet of ships) and spent the next decade organizing both refugee and labor migration from Europe to American satisfaction. The sidelined UNHCR struggled in the meantime to find some solution for the hundreds of thousands of unwanted "displaced persons" against the will of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it gradually emerged as an organization to be reckoned with. Its receipt of nearly $3 million from the Ford Foundation in 1952, and its subsequent high-profile contribution to refugee assistance and emergency housing in the Berlin crisis the following year, both helped to soften the American attitude. The new Eisenhower administration, taking the reins in 1953, supported the UNHCR's bid for a refugee "emergency fund" the following year, and began gradually to think of the organization as one with possible political relevance for American goals in these clarifying years of the early Cold War.

Tunisia made its official request for aid from UNHCR in early 1957. Lindt rapidly engaged the most important stakeholders – France, Britain, and the United States – in conversation about the possibility of a relief scheme. The American response was unreservedly positive; Britain was anxious to balance its competing commitments to France and to the Arab world; and France, albeit reluctantly, agreed to not to object, though it also looked for ways to displace responsibility for the refugees somewhere other than on UNHCR.[17] Still, this represented less than full-blown international support, and Lindt proceeded cautiously. He appointed a Norwegian former resistance fighter named Arnold Rørholt to travel to Tunisia and conduct an inquiry into the possibilities for UNHCR assistance, in consultation with the Tunisian authorities and with reference to his own witnessing on the ground.

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[16] Cited in Loescher, *The UNHCR and World Politics,* 50

[17] Ruthstrom-Ruin, *Beyond Europe*, 163-165, points out that France agreed to contribute fifteen million francs to the International Red Cross and to accept responsibility for fifteen hundred refugees itself, as a way of forestalling and limiting UNHCR involvement.

Rørholt returned to Geneva in July. His reports to UNHCR featured graphic details of French atrocities in Algeria and advocated for organizational aid to Algerian refugees, a position Lindt successfully sold to the French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau with a promise not to "make too much of a fuss."[18] In May, UNHCR began to collaborate with the League of Red Cross Societies to provide material assistance to some 200,000 refugees, who were in the main dispersed in *bidonvilles* (shantytowns) in the desert areas on the border. As in the Hungarian case, the office worked on the principle of providing aid without a specific articulation of individual refugee eligibility and without an official expansion of its mandate. But by December of 1958, with some 200,000 Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco and more coming all the time, the UN made refugee assistance in North Africa a formal part of the UNHCR's directive: "The General Assembly ... recommends the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue his action on behalf of the refugees in Tunisia on a substantial scale and to undertake similar action in Morocco."[19] The following year another resolution allowed the UNHCR new latitude to determine who qualified for its services, without reference to the prior legal architecture: "[the General Assembly] authorizes the High Commissioner, in respect of refugees who do not come within the competence of the United Nations, to use his good offices in the transmission of contributions designed to provide assistance to these refugees."[20] Through this so-called "good offices" clause, refugee assistance in the decolonizing world was cleared to emerge as a formal element of postwar internationalism.

The next stage was one of clarifying the situation and fundraising for relief efforts. Initially, the UNHCR (itself a "non-operational body") tapped the International Committee of the Red Cross to assist with distribution efforts; in the spring of 1958 it was replaced by the League of Red Cross Societies, in cooperation with the Tunisian Red Crescent. ("The participation of the League of Red Cross Societies," the UNHCR reported to the General Assembly, "is a guarantee of the essentially humanitarian and non political character of the operation."[21] In December of 1958 the General Assembly passed its first resolution dealing with the question of Algerian refugees, giving the green light to a new and expanded joint UNHCR-League operation in both Tunisia and Morocco. Over the next four years the United States donated some two and a half million dollars – forty-three percent of the operation's

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[18] Cited in Loescher, *The UNHCR and World Politics,* 100
[19] UN Resolution 1286, "Refugees in Morocco and Tunisia," Dec 5 1958, https://www.unhcr.org/3ae69ef910.html
[20] UN Resolution 1388 (XIV), "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees," Nov 20 1959, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/206378?ln=en
[21] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Supplement No. 11, Jan 1 1960, UNGA A/4104/Rev.1

total funds – while also contributing seven million more directly to the Tunisian government for refugee relief and assistance.[22]

The precise form of this aid campaign revealed a great deal about its purposes and intent. Initially, Rørholt had suggested something very limited – perhaps a supply of food directly to the Tunisian government, rather than any more intensive involvement by externally appointed officials or aid workers. In its first incarnations, then, the UNHCR issued money and goods ("contributions in kind") to the International Committee of the Red Cross for direct distribution to the refugees, a modest effort amounting to some $116,000 in relief.[23] In 1958, as the League of Red Cross Societies entered the picture and brought the Tunisian Red Crescent into the relief effort, the UNHCR stepped up its correspondence and collaboration with the Tunisian government and sent a representative to Morocco to investigate refugee needs there. At this point, the emphasis of the intervention was still almost entirely on supplies, and the UNHCR's annual report for 1958-59 detailed the work in exclusively material terms: "The outstanding needs of the refugees were for olive or other edible oil, sugar, milk, soap, blankets and clothing….. Supplies on the required scale, however, were not forthcoming and in March it was necessary to cut down on expensive items such as olive oil and sugar and substitute cheaper ones such as wheat, while keeping the same calorie content."[24] In 1959 there were sixty food distribution points across the refugee-hosting areas (thirty-seven in Tunisia and twenty-three in Morocco), with an additional program to provide milk to children and some mobile medical clinics and dispensaries. The Tunisian government, describing the refugees' entrance in terms as neutral as possible ("resulting from a feeling of insecurity in their own country") pressed chiefly for material assistance: food, medical supplies, and clothing, as well as barracks "to replace the tents which were proving inadequate to house the refugees."[25] Such a presentation mainly prompted encomiums – even from France, whose representative noted that he supported the humanitarian intent of the operation even as France maintained reservations about the refugees' legal status and wished to remind the General Assembly that "any person returning to Algeria was entitled to all advantages granted to other French citizens who had remained in Algeria and had suffered as a result of present events."[26]

But as substantial amounts of money came in to the UNHCR for the refugees, the scope of the work and the number of institutional participants both expanded. First of all,

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[22] Ruthstrom-Ruin, 181
[23] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jan 1 1959, UNGA A/3828/Rev.1
[24] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Supplement No. 11, Jan 1 1960, UNGA A/4104/Rev.1
[25] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Supplement No. 11, Jan 1 1960, UNGA A/4104/Rev.1
[26] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Supplement No. 11, Jan 1 1960, UNGA A/4104/Rev.1

the UNHCR – following on much longer established practices of guaranteeing refugee productivity as well as survival – began to introduce work and educational programs in the camps. "In order to counteract the effects of idleness," the UNHCR reported, "a number of small pilot projects, such as sewing rooms, mat-weaving and other schemes calculated to provide refugees with work opportunities have been started."[27] This sort of presentation of refugeehood as a venue for productive economic activity and a training ground for self-sufficiency represented a particularly American, and anti-Soviet, form of political claims-making: one intended to produce a kind of façade of capitalist productivity while in fact segregating displaced populations from local labor markets and thereby shielding vulnerable postcolonial client governments from migration-related economic disruption.

A third use: drawing borders, making citizens

More controversially, beginning in 1959 the League (in its new position as the UNHCR's main operational partner on the ground) pressed to extend eligibility and issue ration cards to larger numbers of refugees than the UNHCR was willing to acknowledge. The process of registering refugees and determining their "eligibility" for assistance therefore now became a major task for workers on the ground, requiring close collaboration not only with Moroccan and Tunisian government workers but also with representatives of the FLN. The UNHCR, the French, the Americans, and the Algerians might have disparate positions on the war; but they all had an interest in clarifying, and controlling, refugee movements that might dangerously blur the national boundaries deemed essential for a postcolonial political order.

A memorandum produced by the British Embassy in Paris in the summer of 1957 detailed the multiplicity of ways in which Algerian refugees were increasingly constituting a serious challenge to the emergence of clear borders and unambiguous nationality in this uncertain and violent moment of postcolonial political formulation. Refugee historian Cecila Ruthstrom-Ruin notes the complicated provenance of the refugee question, and the way in which it interfered with the process of postcolonial state formation and the assignment of unambiguous forms of national belonging:

> ... The FLN, to begin with, had various headquarters near the border where several hundred Algerians were believed to live. Secondly, there were probably little less than 5,000 ALN soldiers – troops at rest, in transit, waiting for arms or undergoing training, and wounded. Thirdly, there was an unknown number of nomads, probably several thousand, primarily in the southern part of the Algerian-Tunisian border. These nomads normally lived on both sides of the border, but now stayed on the Tunisian side since any living targets could be bombed on the previous grazing grounds in the

[27] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jan 1 1961, UNGA A/4378/Rev.1

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> forbidden zones on the Algerian side. The fourth and largest category were people working in one country and living much of the year in another.... The last category was "a number of genuine refugees" from the Constantine area who had fled villages which had been destroyed or forcibly evacuated by the French.[28]

The refugees thus offered a challenged to the concept of both colonial and postcolonial nationalism and identification, one that by extension challenged the basis of the postwar order on which the UN's existence depended. Any refugee response therefore had to deal not only with the humanitarian issues of refugee poverty, illness, and dispossession but also with the "security" issues that came from the movement of populations of undefined national commitment in and out of newly formulated and fragile states. Tactics of documentation, encampment, and physical restraint – ensuring that refugees could be collected, tracked, and prevented from absorption into the host country – therefore quickly became crucial practical tools of the kind of American-backed refugee assistance offered by the UNHCR, and indeed primary venues for the provision of international aid more generally.

In Morocco, an intense debate arose over the question of excluding refugees who were also mobilized soldiers for the FLN – something the UNHCR considered essential, but which was very difficult to ensure given both the opposition of League aid workers and their dependence on local authorities to carry out the registration process. UNHCR officials were unimpressed with local capacities to estimate numbers of "genuine" refugees; as one observer wrote upon receipt of an overview of the refugee situation in El Kef in 1959, "The standard of the statistics is low, to put it mildly."[29] Further, the High Commissioner complained in 1961 that "The total registration of 132,000 refugees in Morocco included some 58,000 persons registered as Moroccan nationals" – a phenomenon that reflected the blurry boundaries of nationality across late colonial North Africa, but that the UNHCR in its capacity as an arm of the United Nations was bound to view as a problem requiring the solution of clear national boundaries among people claiming refugee status.[30] Quite quickly, then, the UNHCR campaign expanded beyond the mere provision of food and essentials to the monitoring of refugees, collection of information, and enforcement of national boundaries in the form of documenting refugee aid "eligibility" – something on which UNHCR workers would find themselves spending more and more time as the months passed.

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[28] Ruthstrom-Ruin, *Beyond Europe* , 91
[29] Walton to Jamieson, Aug 11 1959, UNHCR 13/1/31 TUN, available at https://www.unhcr.org/4417e7c82.html
[30] Addendum to the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jan 1 1962, UNGA A/4771/Rev.1/Add.1

Such documentary campaigns of refugee categorization and surveillance soon morphed into physical campaigns of border control. As Ruthstrom-Ruin notes, the UNHCR faced considerable practical difficulties in withholding supplies to soldiers, since "it was an aggravating circumstance that the refugees were not living in camps but were scattered over vast areas – this made control even more difficult."[31] Although Bourguiba and the Tunisian regime, anxious to demonstrate their support for the FLN and the Algerian war effort, did not want to be seen closing the borders, they were nonetheless anxious to preserve a clear sovereignty for themselves in this fragile postwar era and to forestall "security" threats from Algerians who might disrupt the political status quo in Tunisia. By 1959 UNHCR officials were debating the merits of constructing refugee camps in Tunisia and moving refugees away from border areas, for the explicit purpose not just of streamlining the provision of material assistance but effectively controlling a potentially disruptive population which might include refugee fighters for the ALN. Rørholt recorded a 1959 exchange on this question:

> In my report of 1957, I stated that the Tunisian authorities were against the setting up of camps and that I had agreed with them. The authorities now maintain that the much greater number of refugees and their present location presents certain risks and considerable difficulties. In the first place there is insufficient control to prevent the Algerians from transgressing the frontier from time to time. In the second place the present location of the people makes the distribution of relief supplies very difficult and expensive.... [The local authorities] are now much more in favour of the establishment of camps away from the frontier. In so far as this would reduce political and administrative difficulties, I am inclined to support the idea ... [though] it must be recognized that once camps are set up, the authorities have to assume the responsibility for care and maintenance.[32]

By the following year this policy of further removal of refugees was being implemented to a degree, with some (though not all) refugees moved away from the borders to tent cities in the interior of the country. The refugee regime had become, to some degree, a security regime intent on the documentary enforcement of national belonging and the physical enforcement of national borders.

Drawing on its experience in Algeria, the UNHCR now began actively to identify refugees of decolonization as distinct from earlier European refugees: entitled to material assistance in place, but not eligible for asylum or resettlement. This too reflected American Cold War priorities: refugee asylum, in this new era, was to be limited to political refugees fleeing Communism, whose small numbers and public witness to the failures of Eastern

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[31] Ruthstrom-Ruin, *Beyond Europe*, 120

[32] A. Rorholt, "Report on Mission to Morocco and Tunisia," Jan 26 1959, UNHCR, available at https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/archives/4a3272846/unhcr-archive-gallery-algeria-1954-1962.html

Bloc rule served to bolster American claims of humanitarian concern and action without (as administration officials saw it) placing undue strain on the domestic capacity to absorb immigrants.[33] High Commissioner Felix Schnyder articulated this emerging differentiation in his 1961 address to the General Assembly:

> I made a distinction between "new refugee" and "old refugee" problems. The reasons for this distinction are not merely chronological: they go to the very heart of the problem and so to the type of action required of UNHCR. Now that the big assistance programmes for European refugees are nearing completion, legal protection, as defined and elaborated in the Statute of the High Commissioner's Office, is on the way to becoming once more our main concern so far as these refugees are concerned. On the other hand, the problem raised by the new groups of refugees to which my attention was drawn some time ago, is essentially, at the moment, a problem of material assistance and not of legal protection. ... What is important is that the work of this Office should be constantly adapted to the needs it has to meet.[34]

For this emerging category of "new" refugees, the delineation, documentation, and enforcement of an originary nationality – rather than the exploration of alternative venues for resettlement and legal changes to nationality or citizenship status, and over the UN's putative commitment to the principle of *non-refoulement* – would be a central aspect of internationalist refugee aid in the Global South.

In accordance with this vision, the UNHCR now began to work towards "repatriation" for Algerian refugees, with the support of both the United States and France. Following the signing of the Evian Accords, which in March of 1962 set the terms of the French withdrawal from Algeria, the UNHCR became one of three partners (joining the French Republic in Algeria and the Algerian Provisional Executive) in a commission devoted to facilitating the "repatriation of Algerian refugees living in Morocco and Tunisia." Here, again, the enforcement of nationality was something to which all the relevant parties – however opposed politically on other questions – were deeply committed. From the American perspective, it was crucial to restrict the problem of refugees fleeing decolonial violence to the physical spaces of the Global South, while also strengthening the fledgling nation-states into which the Cold War-era United States was pouring resources in hopes of recreating them as political and economic clients. From the French perspective, limiting the inflow of migrants from Algeria to so-called *pieds noirs* who were already being carefully (albeit sometimes reluctantly) categorized as metropolitan French citizens *avant la lettre* – and constructing postcolonial North Africa as a series of distinct nation-states permanently

[33] Refs on this

[34] Addendum to the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jan 1 1962, UNGA A/4771/Rev.1/Add.1

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linked economically, if not politically, to France – were emerging as core assumptions of an often-incoherent Fifth Republic seeking to establish itself on the ashes of French Algeria and lingering memories of Vichy.[35] From the FLN's perspective, a clearly defined national citizen body and borders were essential – not only as a mode of state-building in the aftermath of a phenomenally destructive war, but also as a path to international recognition and acknowledgement. For Algeria as well as Morocco and Tunisia, it was clear that in this post-1945 political landscape the nation-state – with its defined, documented, settled citizen body – would be the only recognized and legitimate form of postcolonial statehood.

Driven by all these stakeholder interests, the UNHCR now actively took on the task of mass "repatriation" of Algerian refugees as a way of mopping up the dislocations of the war and dismantling the refugees' challenge to national borders. The High Commissioner's office reported on the results with satisfaction:

> The commission established a detailed plan of operations for the repatriation including the organization of the departure centres in Morocco and Tunisia, the establishment of the crossing points on the Algerian borders, the timing of the actual crossings and the organization of reception centres in Algeria itself.
>
> The Office of the High Commissioner, in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies and its member societies in Morocco and Tunisia, undertook the transportation of the refugees to the departure centres in Morocco and Tunisia. The transportation of the refugees across the Algerian border was the responsibility of the French authorities and the Provisional Algerian Executive. The competent authorities in Algeria also assumed the responsibility for the reception and resettlement of the refugees on Algerian territory. To carry out these tasks they had at their disposal financial means made available by the French Government within the over-all budgetary arrangements for Algeria. UNHCR and the League of Red Cross Societies also provided certain facilities, particularly medical, personnel and food, towards the reception of refugees inside Algeria.
>
> The repatriation of the refugees from Morocco began on 10 May 1962 and was concluded on 25 July 1962, with the return of some 61,400 persons. In Tunisia the first movements began on 30 May 1962. The operations on the Tunisian side were concluded on 20 July 1962 with the repatriation of some 120,000 persons to their former homes in Algeria.[36]

The purpose of this particular form of refugee relief had now become clear: not just to offer succor, or to expand the purview and reach of the UNHCR as an organization, or to offer an entry point for American clientelism vis-à-vis the Soviets in North Africa – though all these

[35] Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006)
[36] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jan 1 1964, UNGA A/5511/Rev.1

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were also goals – but to assist the more general cause of drawing clear and unambiguous postcolonial borders, supporting specifically delineated national states, and creating an exportable model for the identification, containment, and eventual return (forced if necessary) of any refugee fleeing a decolonial war.

A fourth use: settling (down) the metropole

There were others whose displacement might serve instrumentalist purposes. In 1959 De Gaulle had for the first time subtly raised the possibility of partitioning Algeria and moving its settler population into some kind of permanent French-controlled enclave. In a speech promoting the idea of Algerian self-determination (*autodétermination*) and proposing the possibility of what he called "secession," De Gaulle declared, "In this unfortunate hypothesis, it goes without saying that Algerians of all origins who would wish to remain French would do so and that France would, if necessary, organize their relocation."[37]

A number of contradictory and uncertain plans for the partition of Algeria emerged in the brief period between De Gaulle's 1959 speech and the final dissolution of French colonial rule in 1962. These proposals, as historian Arthur Assaraf has pointed out, coincided with a new French effort to create a separate administration for the Sahara and make the *ex post facto* argument that it had never been part of Algeria proper – a precautionary move to protect French access to the Sahara's oil fields and maintain control over the French nuclear testing grounds there.[38] After a series of unsuccessful attempts throughout the mid-1950s to create some kind of French-run "national territory" in the Sahara, 1957 saw the establishment of a new Common Organisation of Saharan Regions (OCRS) for the stated purpose of the "development, economic expansion and social promotion of the Saharan regions of the French Republic" – involving the creation of a new Ministry of the Sahara and the handover of authority over the region to Paris from Algiers.[39] In 1960, Israeli prime minister David Ben Gurion met with De Gaulle and suggested the creation of a French zone connecting the Mediterranean with the Sahara, thus preserving both the European-heavy urban centers of the coastal north and French control over

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[37] "Allocution du general de Gaulle du 16 septembre 1959 en faveur de l'autodetermination," Sept 16, 1959, https://fresques.ina.fr/independances/fiche-media/Indepe00232/allocution-du-general-de-gaulle-du-16-septembre-1959-en-faveur-de-l-autodetermination.html. This speech is cited and discussed further in Arthur Asseraf, " 'A New Israel': Colonial Comparisons and the Algerian Partition That Never Happened," *French Historical Studies* 41, 1 (2018): 100, and in Benjamin Stora, *Le mystere de Gaulle: Son choix pour l'Algerie* (Paris: Laffonte, 2010).

[38] Assaraf, " 'A New Israel,' " 100. The first French atomic bomb was tested in the Saharan desert in 1960.

[39] Berny Sebe, "In the Shadow of the Algerian War: The United States and the Common Organisation of Saharan Regions (OCRS), 1957-62," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 38, no. 2 (2010): 307-308.

Saharan oil resources centered around the recently constructed terminal at Arzew.[40] Though it appears that De Gaulle himself regarded partition mostly as a strategic threat to intimidate the FLN, his prime minister Michel Debré and especially his future minister of information Alain Peyrefitte developed a substantial enthusiasm for the idea, articulated particularly in Peyrefitte's articles for *Le Monde* on the topic and his book *Faut-il partager l'Algerie?,* published in early 1962.

By 1960 the new prominence of the partition idea was causing alarm within the FLN, which pressed the UN to state its commitment to the "territorial integrity of Algeria" in 1960 and held a series of anti-partition demonstrations (put down brutally by the French military) in the summer of 1961. Objections to partition represented a new rallying cry for Algerian nationalists both within and beyond their own movement; as Asseraf notes, "Partition was widely seen among anticolonial movements as an attempt by former colonial powers to hold onto power, and threats of partition proved especially effective at mobilizing international support for the FLN in the Third World."[41] Nevertheless, proposals for partition continued to gain adherents, including from abroad; when the French ambassador raised the question of the fate of the settler "minority" to Eamon de Valera in 1960 he was met with a suggestion of partition.[42] In January of 1962 – just two months before the French government's final recognition of the FLN – Jean Morin, the highest-ranking French official in Algeria, constructed a report on the various possible iterations of a partitioned settler state, including costs and military outlook. Peyrefitte's own book on partition appeared in the same month, and made reference to the British approaches to partition in India and Cyprus while also protesting that this iteration would represent a specifically French form of non-racial partition: "It is not about separating two races, but two varieties of Algerians: those who wish to live with France, and those who wish to live without and against her."[43] Despite such declarations, working out the details of a partition plan – as in Palestine – repeatedly ran up against the demographic reality that there were vanishingly few spaces where settlers constituted a majority, and no one truly imagined that partition in Algeria would not fall along racial lines and involve substantial expulsions and relocations.

In the event, though, this particular proposed forced migration could not be successfully defended either as a path to military victory or as a necessary precondition for some kind of ethnic self-determination. The forces of the French "New Left" began, in late 1961, to promote their interpretation of the Algerian conflict as primarily a "Franco-French civil war" – that is, not a war of Algerian independence against a brutal and determined

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[40] Assaraf, " 'A New Israel,' " 95-96
[41] Ibid., 102
[42] Though, the source notes, "he obviously did not believe that it was a viable solution." Quoted in Christophe Gillissen, "Ireland, France and the Question of Algeria at the United Nations, 1955-62," *Irish Studies in International* Affairs, 19 (2008): 152.
[43] Alain Peyrefitte, *Faut-il partager l'Algerie?* (Paris: Plon, 1961), 45

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French colonialism but a conflict between the French metropole and neo-fascist "European Algerians."[44] Pierre Nora emerged as the primary voice of this position in his 1961 book *Les Francais d'Algerie*, in which he argued that the *pieds-noirs* had "suffered the influence of their Arab milieu" and now embodied a profound – and, he claimed, profoundly un-French – racism through which they hoped to "recover that precious Western essence that they largely have lost."[45] For much of the French left, such an argument explained the descent of the French colonial state into torture and brutality, exonerating the metropolitan population by placing blame on the settlers and declaring them to be in some fundamental way outside the French political tradition. The French journalist Eugene Mannoni, writing in 1962, went so far as to claim that Algeria had physically altered the *colons*: "A new man has appeared, who is neither metropolitan, nor Italian, nor Spanish, but 'French of Algeria'.... [even] acquiring a particular physiognomy."[46] This argument also underlay the widely held assumption that in the event of a total French withdrawal the *pieds-noirs* would largely choose to remain in Algeria, where they clearly belonged, and not emigrate to a France whose "liberal tendencies" they had resoundingly rejected.[47] Partition to ensure the continued rights of such a population was clearly insupportable – especially in the face of an increasing metropolitan sympathy for the Algerian victims of settler violence. In February of 1962, further bloodshed by the Organisation Armée Secrète – the settlers' military wing – led even De Gaulle to declare, "They must be cut off and punished."[48]

Then, of course, there was the attitude of the *colons* themselves: unlike in Palestine fifteen years earlier, the settlers here were generally opposed to partition and committed to keeping the whole of Algeria French at any cost. The erosion of metropolitan support for the *colons* in part reflected the domestic unsustainability of their essentially colonial claims as a primary frame for the project of French control over Algeria – precisely because they did not make the claim of ethnic nationhood but insisted on the necessity of maintaining Algeria, in its entirety, as a permanently colonized space. The FLN, on the other hand, made ever greater use of the rhetoric and discourse of ethno-national self-determination to argue passionately against partition and for refugee return. Although they were simultaneously

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[44] Pierre Nora, *Les Francais d'Algerie* (Paris: Gul, 1961); see also the discussion in Todd Shepard, "Pieds-Noirs, Betes Noires: Anti 'European of Algeria' Racism and the Close of the French Empire," in *Algeria and France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia,* ed. Patricia Lorcin (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 152

[45] Cited in Shepard, "Pieds-Noirs, Betes Noires," 153-4

[46] *Le Monde,* April 25 1962. For a useful commentary on the metropolitan attitude towards the *colons*, see especially Fiona Barclay, "Reporting on 1962: The Evolution of *pied-noir* Identity across 50 Years of Print Media," *Modern and Contemporary France* 23, no. 2 (2015): 197-211.

[47] Words used in the preface to Nora's book, written by Charles-Andre Julien, who explained that the settlers derived their strength from "their refusal of the liberal tendencies of the metropole." See discussion in Shepard, "Pieds-Noirs, Betes Noires," 154.

[48] Cited in Benjamin Stora, *Algeria: A Short History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004), 96

participating in new visions of a supra-national "Third Worldism" and increasingly looking to international Marxist movements for support, the FLN's leaders – following on other movements of decolonization elsewhere – retained a simultaneous commitment to nationalism and internationalism, with a strong understanding of the power of nationalist language not only as a mode of rallying domestic support but making irrefutable claims at the new United Nations. Nationalist outlets declared that partition would represent a dismemberment of the national body and represent an unforgivable betrayal of Algerian national rights. 'Abd al-Qadir Chanderli, the FLN representative at the UN, castigated Israel and Ben Gurion for their support for partition: "Why did Ben-Gurion go so far as to advise de Gaulle to implement partition of Algeria – a proposal loathed by every Algerian? It is impossible to remove this trauma... [If Israel changes its policy] we will tell her: 'For seven years, when the blood of tens of thousands of Algeria's sons was shed, you stuck a knife in our back. You supported the colonizer."[49] The international community in the form of the United Nations acceded to this vision of decolonization, deciding that the best way to affirm the primacy of ethnonationalism in the international political system – and thus protect its own role as arbiter and mediator of ethnonational statehood – was to acknowledge the claims of Algerian nationalism along ethnic and communal lines. As Fiona Barclay, Charlotte Chopin, and Martin Evans note trenchantly, "The newly established UN ... enshrined a clear decolonisation narrative–one where the demand for national self-determination would led to a nation-state and a seat at the UN Assembly."[50]

Abandoning the partition idea, then, metropolitan authorities negotiating at Evian traded a promise of substantial post-independence aid to secure ongoing rights for the *colons* – a guarantee of dual nationality for three years, followed by a choice between Algerian citizenship or permanent residency – as well as a foothold for French economic and strategic interests in the form of commercial rights to the Sahara's oil and the maintenance of a naval base at Mers el-Kebir. "The French citizens of Algeria will participate in public affairs in a fair and genuine manner," the final accords declared, adding" No measure of dispossession will be taken against them without their being granted equitable compensation that has been fixed in advance."[51] The OAS had other ideas. Immediately following the signing of the accords, it declared French troops in Algeria to be "occupation troops" and redoubled its campaign of violence against both the French military presence

[49] Cited in Michael Laskier, "Israel and Algeria amid French colonialism and the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1954-1978," *Israel Studies* 6, no. 2 (2001): 8
[50] Fiona Barclay, Charlotte Chopin, and Martin Evans, "Introduction: Settler Colonialism and French Algeria," *Settler Colonial Studies* 8, vol. 2 (2018): 115-130
[51] The text of the accord was published as "Texts of declarations drawn up in common agreement at Evian, March 18, 1962, by the delegations of the government of the French Republic and the Algerian National Liberation Front," (New York: Service de presse et d'information, 1962). For a detailed analysis of the content of the Evian accords, see Charles-Robert Ageron, "Les accords d'Évian (1962)," *Revue d'histoire* 35 (1992): 3-15.

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and Algerian Muslims. By May, OAS forces were murdering somewhere between ten and fifty Algerians every day; in June, they torched the library at Algiers and bombed four schools, the municipal library, and the city hall in Oran. In this confused moment, the specter of partition once again raised it head: at the end of June, the OAS branch in Oran ("Zone III") refused to accede to the terms of the Susini-Mostefai Agreements the OAS leadership had just signed with the FLN and declared itself to be exploring the possibility of a sovereign "territorial platform" linked neither to Algeria nor to France – a pronouncement accompanied by further attacks and the robbing of six banks.

An ever less sympathetic French government was anxious to pin blame for the war on the racism and violence of the *colons*. In the face of increasing evidence to the contrary, its officials continued to maintain that "European Algerians" would stay in Algeria, even as they began to monitor travel agencies and country entries. In the meantime, crowds mobbed the airports and ports, and *pied-noir* admission into France spiked. As late as May of 1962, the government continued to assert that these were merely vacationers who would return to Algeria after their holidays. As it became clearer that this was a fantasy and that virtually the entirety of the settler community in Algeria was migrating to France, the official rhetoric had to shift: now, these new arrivals were redefined as French, victims of the OAS and the war coming "home" for succor. As the *Journal official* wrote in 1962, "Do not forget that these French, our compatriots, our brothers, are the children of those who went before pushed more by the need to give [to France] than greed."[52] Re-installing the *pieds-noirs* as French "repatriates" represented the only clear path to their integration within the metropole and the resolution of the bitter internal battles over the nature and outcome of the war. In the era of decolonization, ethnic origin was being enshrined as a requirement for metropolitan belonging just as surely, and at the same time, as it was emerging as the primary basis for the political claims of decolonizing states. As the idea of partitioning Algeria faded from memory, the international commitment to ethno-nationalism that had given life to the concept of partition in other arenas was now deployed to reimagine not just an "Algeria for the Algerians" but also to define the multiplicity of participants in the postcolonial metropole as fundamentally, essentially "French."

In this iteration, then, forced migration – this time, of the *colons* whom much of the French political establishment had spent considerable energy disavowing – served to reintegrate the French national ideal along theoretical ethnic lines, smoothing over a period of intense domestic conflict and presenting the outcome of Algerian independence as a necessary manifestation of a new liberal order that served, in the language of an earlier era,

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[52] Cited in Shepard, "Pieds-Noirs, Betes Noires," 162. Shepard further notes the re-conceptualization of the migrating *colons* as organized around the familial unit, arguing that because of the earlier demonization of the settlers as fascist threats to France, it was critical "in responding to the unexpected 'exodus' of Europeans, to present them as grouped in heterosexual families" (161).

to "unmix" Europe from North Africa. (This distinction was also made within the metropole, where Muslim *harkis* were designated not as repatriates but as "refugees" ineligible for the kind of resettlement assistance offered to the settlers.)[53] Not incidentally, it also freed France to think in different terms about the tactical possibilities for maintaining a presence in its former colonies, unconstrained by the messy claims of the settlers. "Now that nearly all of the *pieds-noirs* are gone," De Gaulle commented in the fall of 1962, "only the petrol and the [atomic] tests count."[54]

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Algeria's special place in the decolonial imagination, and the length and brutality of the decolonial war there, has tended to obscure some of the fundamentals of the conflict: in particular, the central roles of mass displacement, partition, repatriation, and control of refugees in creating the specific contours of a postcolonial French North Africa. The legacies of the interwar commitment to the principle of "unmixing of populations" were clearly evident in midcentury Algeria. So was the idea that mass displacement could constitute a basis for reimagining statehood, borders, and the role of the "international" in global affairs – not primarily as a matter of theory, but as a practical venue for the exertion of visible and tangible forms of political authority.

To think about forced migration in Algeria, then, is to consider how mass movement was conceived not just as a tactic of wartime brutality or colonial population control but as a mode of statebuilding, of international legitimization, and of on-the-ground declarations of alliance in the emerging political lineup of the Cold War. It is also to consider the ways in which forced migration applied, as a phenomenon, to Algerian villagers and European *colons* alike – who met with radically disparate treatments and arrived at wholly different outcomes, but who both found themselves imagined (including by their own political representatives) as people for whom collective displacement and re-placement was an imaginable and even potentially desirable strategy for the remaking of postcolonial North Africa and postcolonial France. In other words, though forcible transfers had by now moved from internationally legitimized and supported tactics of state construction to being "prohibited, regardless of their motive" (as the Geneva Convention put it in 1949), expulsion and resettlement clearly remained not just a political possibility but a primary strategy of

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[53] Upon arrival in France some 42,000 *harkis* (out of a population of somewhere between 65,000 and 100,000) found themselves imprisoned, often in old camps that had interned refugees and prisoners during the Second World War: Rivesaltes, Saint-Maurice-l'Ardoise, La Rye Vigéant. In 1974, more than a decade after the *harkis'* arrival in France, sixteen thousand of them were still there. See Jeanette E. Miller, "A Camp for Foreigners and 'Aliens': The Harkis' Exile at the Rivesaltes Camp (1962-1964), *French Politics, Culture and Society* 31, no. 2 (2013): 37

[54] Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 439

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making both war and peace, even for institutions like the UNHCR ostensibly dedicated to helping the victims of such practices. Indeed, the presentation of mass displacement as a kind of accident of war requiring on-the-ground responses was one of the ways in which the continuation of the interwar era's most brutal tactics of global ordering could extend, without attracting notice, into this new postcolonial age.

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