

Inside the FLN



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Inside the FLN: the Paris massacre and the French Intelligence Service

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The moral right of the author has been asserted.

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Cover photograph: Mohamed Zouaoui.

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INTRODUCTION

By 2006, when I and Jim House published *Paris 1961. Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*, a number of books, by Jean-Luc Einaudi, Jean-Paul Brunet, Alain Dewerpe, Linda Amiri, Rémy Valat, and others, meant that the main features of the Paris massacre and the demonstration of 17 October were quite well understood.¹ Political controversy has continued to rage, mainly in relation to the contested issue of the numbers of Algerians that were killed, but in general the bulk of the publications that have appeared since *Paris 1961* have had to do with the cultural, artistic and memorial aspects of the events, rather than with further research into primary archival sources.² This shift from the further excavation of archives, to differing interpretations of cultural and political meanings, was exemplified by the debates surrounding Michael Haneke's film *Caché*,³ and the commemoration of the 50th anniversary in October 2011. The commemoration was marked by an enormous range of memorial, artistic and political activity: the organisation of demonstrations in Paris and its suburbs, as well as in numerous provincial towns from Caen to Bordeaux; conferences in Lyons, Nanterre and elsewhere, including one in the Paris National Assembly; documentary and film productions, most notably Yasmina Adi's *Ici on noie les Algériens*; photographic exhibitions; four new theatre productions; several books, including a *bande dessiné* by Daeninckx and Mako, *Octobre Noir*; musical-café shows; the ceremonial renaming of streets and squares, the unveiling of plaques (Pont de Bezons, Pont de Neuilly).....⁴ At the heart of this mobilisation was a campaign to bring pressure on the French state to officially recognise the massacre through a '*proposition de loi*' tabled in the Senate on 12 October 2006.

Jim House closely analysed in *Paris 1961* the extraordinary complexity and emotional intensity of the political, trade union, nationalist, inter-generational and sectarian memory battles that raged openly, or seethed under the surface, throughout the period from 1961 to 2006 over the very existence and significance of the Paris massacre. Since 2006 the debates and political skirmishing has intensified, both in France and Algeria, and the campaign for official recognition of the massacre by the French state has been challenged by an array of right-wing and reactionary forces, from UMP conservatives and retired generals, to neo-fascists and die-hard ex-colonialists that defend the enlightened 'civilizing mission' of France in its oversea empire and its undemocratic and violent domination over 'subject races'. On 17 October 2012 President François Hollande provided the first official recognition of the fact of the massacre in a brief statement: 'The Republic recognises lucidly these facts. Fifty-one years after the tragedy, I pay tribute to the memories of the victims'. This declaration was met with a cacophony of protest from Marine Le Pen and others on the far-right.

¹ For a full bibliography see Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961. Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 341-359, French edition, *Paris 1961. Les Algériens, la terreur d'Etat et la mémoire* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008), 483-509. I have updated this in a short bibliography of works that have appeared since 2006, see below page 145.

² The major exception here is Emmanuel Blanchard's book, based on his 2008 thesis, *La Police Parisienne et les Algériens (1944-1962)* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2011). Linda Amiri's doctoral thesis on the FLN in France, based on many years of archival research, also promises to bring new elements to our understanding of October 17 and its context.

³ There is a considerable, and growing, literature on Haneke and the 17 October: see, for example, Nancy E. Virtue, 'Memory, Trauma, and the French-Algerian War: Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005)', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 19:3 (2011), 281-96; Jonathan Thomas, 'Michael Haneke's New(s) Images', *Art Journal*, 67:3 (Fall 2008), 80-85; Susannah Radstone, 'Caché: Or what the past hides', *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 24:1 (2010), 17-29.

⁴ On some of this cultural activism see the homepage of the 'Collectif "17 Octobre 61"', www.17octobre61.org; also the bibliography and references in Marcel and Paulette Péju, *Le 17 Octobre des Algériens. Suivi de La Triple Occulation d'Un Massacre par Gilles Manceron*, (Paris: La Découverte, 2011), 187-195.

Had a point been reached by 2007 in which debate was no longer about gleaning further evidence on the 17 October, but offering different cultural and political readings of the established ‘facts’? Was little more to be discovered from the archives in which research was no longer worth the effort because it promised diminishing returns? Such a claim would be absurd, since no historical investigation can ever claim to be definitive and each generation of historians will bring to the body of evidence quite new and different interpretations. In 2006, however, after several years research on the massacre, I decided to move on, not because the topic was exhausted, but because I had a number of others projects that were waiting. However, the peculiar interpretations that Jean-Luc Einaudi continued to develop in his book, *Scènes de la guerre d’Algérie en France* (2009), and elsewhere, led me in early 2012 to re-examination the DST archives.⁵

To mark the 50th anniversary commemoration in October 2011, which drew enormous media attention in France and Algeria, Jean-Luc Einaudi, the doyen of memory activists, and Mohammed Ghafir, who was FLN leader of Amala or Superzone 12, located on the Left Bank of the Seine, joined forces in the autumn of 1961 to publicise the claim that Mohammedi Saddek was the head of the entire FLN network on French soil and had organised the demonstration of 17 October. The rather strange campaign, assisted by members of the Saddek family, to construct a mythical status for Mohammedi Saddek was intended to counter the research of myself and Jim House that had shown that the top-level co-ordinator in France was Mohamed Zouaoui.⁶ This inspired me to re-examine much of the archival materials that I had collected a decade earlier and the issues surrounding the Paris massacre. My initial, but subsidiary interest was in an anthropological examination of how and why Einaudi and Ghafir went about the construction or defense of such a myth through the sacralisation of Saddek, especially by religious commemorative rituals in his village of origin in Kabylie. This case-study serves to throw light on wider processes of memory activism and the ‘ideologisation’ of history and why it is that the charged emotional investments that result from the confusion or mixing of commemoration ritual and historical interpretation and fact can make for poor history. I have placed this case-study at the end, since it can be read on its own standing apart from the main drive of the study, as a separate essay under the title, *Jean-Luc Einaudi and the Sacralisation of Mohammedi Saddek*. I have also examined the question of the biography and role of Saddek in the FLN, who appears nowhere in the DST and police archives, in a separate Appendix 1 (page 132).

The more substantial reason for writing this study arose from a re-examination of my research notes from the Archives of the Paris Prefecture of Police (APP) which reminded me how extraordinarily rich and important these documents were for an understanding of the Paris massacre. This was especially true of the extensive reports of the counter-intelligence agency, the *Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* (DST), its arrest of numerous top FLN cadres in early November 1961, and the seizure of hundreds of key FLN documents. In our previous publications we had referred to the DST files, but editorial restrictions on word-length meant that full justice could not be done to this important and extensive body of source material. Since the publication of our 2004 article it would appear that no historians have followed our lead by further investigating what constitutes the richest and most significant, but still largely unused, archival source on the Paris massacre and its context. My aim in this study is to fill this gap.⁷

The DST archive is important to an understanding of the Paris massacre for a number of reasons. On 22 September 1961 DST agents, who were tailing an FLN cadre Medjoub Benzerfa, were led to

⁵ Jean-Luc Einaudi, *Scènes de la guerre d’Algérie en France. Automne 1961* (Paris: Le Cherche Midi, 2009).

⁶ Neil MacMaster, Jim House, ‘La Fédération de France du FLN et l’Organisation du 17 Octobre 1961’, *Vingtième Siècle* 83 (July-Sept. 2004), 145-160; reprinted in Raphaëlle Branche (ed.), *La guerre d’indépendance des Algériens 1954-1962* (Paris: Tempus, 2009), 127-149.

⁷ In doing so I have tried to avoid as far as possible repeating the ground already covered in J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961* and I do not set out to provide a more general overview of the massacre. This present, largely complementary, study does not pretend to a complete examination of all aspects of the October events, but focuses mainly on the decision-making process of the leadership of the FLN French Federation.

the Café Luxembourg on the Boulevard Saint Michel where they located a group of top leaders, including a heavy-set individual who was later to be identified as Mohammed Zouaoui. According to a standard DST procedure the cadres were not arrested, but subjected to a long and painstaking surveillance that enabled agents to locate further contacts and to build up a detailed network chart or ‘organigramme’ of the Paris FLN network, before executing co-ordinated mass arrests during an operation code-named ‘Flore’ on the night of 9-10 November 1961. By an extraordinary stroke of good luck for the historian the seven week tracking ('filatures') of the Zouaoui network between 22 September and 10 November 1961, along with the subsequent interrogations, and police analysis of hundreds of internal FLN documents, cut precisely across the crucial timescale of the planning, execution and brutal repression of the 17 October demonstration.

Secret underground networks are, by definition, difficult to investigate or reconstruct. The clandestine FLN organisation in Paris during the long war of 1954 to 1962 is no exception, especially as the French Federation sought to block police surveillance by constantly changing the structure as well as personnel by moving them from one region (*Wilaya*) to another. Ali Haroun remarks that the average period of time between the appointment and arrest of Wilaya heads was six to eight months, hence a constant replacement or circulation of top cadres.⁸ However, the police and DST files from Operation Flore provide, like a camera image, a detailed picture of the FLN network and its transient members at the precise moment that the demonstration of 17 October was organised.

Ali Haroun, a member of the five-man Federal Committee, notes that the counter-intelligence service was the most skilled of the many police and security agencies in France and presented the greatest single threat to the FLN: ‘les deux personnes les mieux informées de l'état de la structure du FLN en France étaient Ladlani, responsable de l'organisation, et Roger Wybot, directeur de la DST’.⁹ The archives of the secretive DST, like those of Britain’s equivalent MI5, are not open to historians, and the unusual survival of the DST papers relating to Operation Flore in the Prefecture of Police archive, where they are open to inspection by *dérogation*, is in itself of considerable interest in providing a rare window into the policing methods of the intelligence service.

The use of police records is, of course, subject to caution. Some ex-FLN militants and former European *porteurs de valise* have strongly objected to the historical use of such an ‘enemy’ archive, as if to do so was to be in some way complicit with, or to give credence to, the deceptions and lies of a violent and oppressive state. Firstly, in reply to this position, it can be noted that the historian will, hopefully, subject police records to the same critical examination as any other body of evidence. Secondly, the great bulk of the Prefecture archive consists of internal and often classified or secret reports and internal correspondence in which agents, far from warping intelligence, had a self-interest in the accurate analysis of FLN organisations, the better to locate and neutralise them. For example, the transcripts of reports received from Algerian informers were subjected to very close scrutiny by intelligence officers and classified according to their degree of reliability. Finally, and most conclusive, is the fact that the Prefecture deposits consist of literally thousands of pages of original internal FLN documents that were captured in November 1961 and placed under seal by the Police judiciaire (PJ). The FLN in France was a supremely bureaucratic organisation, and the extraordinary detailed monthly financial and ‘organic’ reports that full-time ‘responsables’ were required to produce enabled police analysts at the time, and the historian today, to engage in a close reconstruction of Federation structures, decision-making and morale.

Reframing the massacre

Most studies of 17 October have, apart from those concerned with the post-colonial cultural, literary and media representations of the massacre, tended to focus on two interrelated issues. Firstly, there is the highly contested and often political issue, of the nature and extent of the

⁸ Ali Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya. La Guerre du FLN en France 1954-1962* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), 57.

⁹ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya.*, 52. Kaddour Ladlani, like Haroun a member of the Federal Committee, was responsible for the FLN clandestine organisation in France.

brutality and killings to which Algerians were subjected in Paris, a process of verification or measurement of state violence that has involved identifying and counting the victims. Closely related to this has been the investigation of the police services, how they were organised, and the role of Maurice Papon and the Gaullist government in unleashing the unprecedented repression of October 1961.

Where the present study marks a new departure is in the attempt to piece together the structure and decision-making processes of the FLN French Federation that took the momentous decision to organise the demonstration of 17 October and how the crisis was lived from 'inside' by those who carried responsibility for steering the Algerian nationalist community through the subsequent repression. Until now historians and other commentators have paid considerable attention, often through oral history sources, to the experience and testimony of the ordinary men and women who participated in the Paris demonstrations of 17-20 October and provided witness to the savage violence of the police. In general, less attention has been given to the higher-level decision-making processes of the FLN leadership, in part because it has been singularly difficult to reconstitute the inner workings of a clandestine organisation that has left only fragmentary evidence. As Ali Haroun has remarked, the clandestine structures designed to prevent penetration by French police and intelligence services, by which members of one cell, or echelon, had a restricted knowledge of the identity of individuals in other groups, meant that even higher level cadres might have little understanding of the wider or global network: 'Le cloisonnement, indispensable à la survie de toute l'organisation clandestine, ne permettait à aucun cadre du FLN en France, aussi haut-placé dans la hiérarchie fût-il, de connaître dans ses détails le fonctionnement d'un service ou d'un échelon parallèle'.¹⁰ This explains why, for example, even a high-placed cadre like Mohammed Ghafir might have a quite limited or partial knowledge of what was going on during October 1961 in other parts of the FLN hierarchy in Paris and Germany.

The purpose of the DST and police intelligence operations was precisely to penetrate the clandestine structures of the FLN and to reconstruct the totality of the networks, the better to combat it. The DST was significantly successful in achieving this goal by late November 1961 and this enables the historian today to have a clearer picture of the overall organisation than was available to many, if not most, of the Algerians present in Paris at the time.

The main interest in this study, apart from Chapter 6, is not with the rank-and-file, but with the higher level leaders from the position of Régional upwards that constituted the decision-making apparatus. This leadership can be defined as those senior cadres (usually referred to as 'responsables') who spent so much time in day-to-day organisation and administration that they were waged by the FLN on a full-time basis. In Paris this leadership, apart from the armed groups of the Organisation spéciale (OS), constituted about fifty individuals.¹¹ This was the élite group that the Federal Committee banned from attending the demonstration of 17 October so that they would not be arrested or identified. This book is essentially about this strata that did *not* demonstrate, rather than the rank-and-file that fell under the police truncheons and gunfire.

What does this monograph have to say that is new? Firstly (Chapters 1 to 3) it is concerned primarily with the close reconstruction of the FLN organisation that was in place during October 1961, from the 'Federal', Mohamed Zouaoui, and the 'central commission', down through the head of propaganda Medjoub Benzerfa, to the leaders of the Wilayas, Amalas and Regions, and the European liaison agents like Rolande Mingasson. Piecing together the networks has not been an easy task, in part because the sources are fragmentary, and the archival documents have been scattered through numerous cartons, often in disorder and without sequence. In places the reader might find that there is an overload of detail, but I have deliberately sought to reconstruct the organisations

¹⁰ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 8.

¹¹ This Paris leadership was made up of the Federal (Zouaoui), three Regional controllers, two heads of Wilaya, four Amalas, eight Zones, twenty-four Regions, one head of propaganda (Benzerfa), and about four advisers. These figures do not include others on the FLN payroll, including lawyers of the collective, and European support agents.

and personnel as closely as possible, in part because these issues have been contested, but also because the finer points of detail often hold an important key to an understanding of the events. For example, the fact that the Federal Committee in Germany took the decision to call, and to plan, the demonstration in the small window of time between the 7th and 10th of October raises interesting questions about how, during three days, it was able to consult with militants in Paris as well as with the provisional government (GPRA) in Tunis.

Secondly, the study develops the thesis that the Federal Committee faced a serious crisis or challenge during 1961 from Paris-based activists and armed groups. The history of the French Federation from 1954 to 1962 shows that it faced, unlike the FLN in Algeria, an underlying contradiction between whether to adopt violent, armed actions in metropolitan France or whether such a strategy of a 'second front' might prove counter-productive in exposing the community of migrant workers to unbearable levels of state repression, while also alienating the French public, political left and trade union movement. As we show (Chapters 4 and 5), the opening of negotiations between the FLN and French government from May 1961 onwards, led the GPRA to compel the Federal Committee to enforce a secret truce on the armed groups in Paris. However, the Paris militants, unwilling to stand aside while the police and harki forces seized the opportunity to rack-up the repression, unilaterally unleashed a wave of assassinations of the security forces from mid-August 1961 onwards, a counter-violence that the Federal Committee had great difficulty in containing. Chapter 6, a case-study of the 13th arrondissement, shows how at the grass roots, between August and October 1961, enormous tensions were building up within the Algerian migrant community that threatened to explode in an uncontrollable mass action, unless the Federal Committee acted quickly to resolve the problem. The highly unusual decision, in the context of the war, to organise a mass demonstration, provided a neat solution to the contradiction between maintaining a pacific truce, so as to satisfy the FLN leadership in Tunisia, while simultaneously easing the demand from the militant base that something had to be done to counter Papon's remorseless campaign of psychological terror. However, in planning the 17 October (Chapter 7), which served as a kind of safety-valve and point of focus for a demoralised Algerian community, the Federation fatally underestimated the degree to which the Paris police might be prepared to unleash violence, even when women and children were present, while also rejecting the possibility of securing protection through association with the French anti-colonial left, and in particular the French Communist Party (PCF), in a joint demonstration.

A third theme relates to the implications of the DST and police operations that virtually destroyed between 3rd and 10th November, first the financial networks controlled by Abderrahmane Farès that centralised the monthly collection and moved it out of France through the banking system and shadow companies (Chapter 8), and then the top level of the Federation leadership in Paris. Farès, ex-President of the Algerian Assembly, and close to Gaullist circles, was a political figure of considerable stature, and the DST archives reveal how he played a crucial role during 1961 in mediating between the Algerian negotiators at Evian and the Federal Committee in Germany, acting as a powerful moderating influence against FLN violence. Farès, present in Paris with Zouaoui on the night of 17 October, played an important role both in planning the demonstration, but also in channeling huge sums of money directly from the Algerian factory workers and businessmen of Paris to the commanders of the ALN maquis. While historians and many ex-Federation militants tend to focus on the armed struggle as the prime contribution of the FLN in France to the overall struggle for independence, it is argued that this emphasis has tended to obscure or relegate to a secondary level the importance of the financial system. In opposition to this I argue that the FLN structures, cohesion and working climate, can be better understood as a bureaucratic apparatus for the maximum collection and centralisation of funds, than as a quasi-military organisation.

Finally (Chapter 9) examines the short-to-medium term impacts of the October-November crisis. Up to now most studies, including *Paris 1961*, have limited themselves to a study of the impacts of the repression of the demonstrations of 17-20 October on the FLN and the Algerian community. However, the FLN in Paris had barely recovered from this shock, when it was hit two weeks later by

two further heavy blows, the arrest of the Farès network (3-4 November) and the decapitation of the Zouaoui structure (9-10 November). There is a strong argument for treating the three events as component parts of a single crisis, especially as the November arrests led to the capture of the key personnel that had planned and implemented the 17 October, along with numerous documents and militants' reports on the events. Although police violence on 17 October inflicted enormous physical and psychological trauma on the mass of ordinary workers, it is argued that the repression was far less damaging to the smooth running of the FLN organisation than the dislocation of the financial network and top leadership by the DST.

Overall the study sets out to provide the most detailed picture yet provided of the FLN organisation during the traumatic events of mid-1961 in Paris.¹² One of the most extraordinary achievements of the French Federation was, despite the setbacks which it faced, its success in organising such an extensive and complex urban network under conditions of ferocious state repression that were not dissimilar to those faced by the French Resistance movement in occupied Paris.

¹² However, I do not claim that the research is complete, far from it, since to date I have not had the means to consult the important FLN Federation archives that have been deposited in the Algerian National Archives in Algiers by Mohamed Harbi and Ali Haroun. So this monograph can be regarded as work in progress, and if and when I can make my way to Algeria I would hope to revise this study. What I can claim, is to have attempted to piece together, as thoroughly as I can, the documents deposited in the Archives of the Paris Prefecture of Police.

1

“Operation Flore” and the arrest of Mohamed Zouaoui.

The headquarters of the *Direction de la surveillance* (DST) in the Rue des Saussaies, a few paces north of the Elysée Palace, was a hive of activity on the night of 9 November 1961. The director Daniel Doustin, who had only been in his post since August 1961, was co-ordinating from his third floor bureaux, a joint DST-Police operation code-named “Flore” to arrest over thirty top-level FLN cadres and their European agents (*porteurs de valises*).¹³ Normally the Algerian section of the DST, country coded ‘CAYA’, operated from first floor offices, but now five levels of the entire building had been taken over to prepare twenty-eight separate interrogation rooms, equipped with thirty typewriters, lamps and telephones.¹⁴ Down in the courtyard intervention teams waited by their cars, twenty-four of them DST and fifteen Prefecture, while the commissioners in charge of each group received their instructions: ‘Chaque chef de groupe, Commissaire, Officier de Police Judiciaire recevra une enveloppe contenant la liste des individus à arrêter – la perquisition à effectuer – les fiches individuelles avec ou sans photo des personnes en cause – un plan d’interrogatoire – le numéro de la pièce où il fera cet interrogatoire et son poste téléphoniques. Tous les fonctionnaires seront armés...’.¹⁵ The teams headed out to twenty-nine addresses scattered widely over central Paris and its suburbs, and simultaneously raided the target flats and houses at 3 am.

The meticulous undercover work, planning and execution of Operation Flore was typical of standard DST procedures and very different from the anti-FLN methods then being deployed under the Prefect of Police, Maurice Papon. This was to have significant implications for the extraordinary rich body of detailed documentation that has survived in the archives and which is so valuable to the historian today. The basic operating mode of the specialised police bodies developed by the Prefecture of Police (PP) from late 1958 onwards was to act as fast as possible to arrest suspects. As soon as the Prefecture had a lead on an FLN suspect, from intelligence gathered from seized documents, informers and interrogations, rapid intervention teams would immediately seize the individual and, on the basis of quick extraction of further intelligence, work their way into a network, before his or her contacts could take cover.

By 1961 the recognised expert in such rapid-reaction techniques was Captain Montaner who commanded the brutal *Force de Police Auxiliaire* (FPA) or *harkis* brigades based at Fort Noisy. Montaner, with the support of the Prefecture, quite deliberately avoided the legal requirements of due process in effecting such arrests, on the grounds that the need for urgent intervention to capture dangerous armed ‘terrorists’ simply did not give time to notify the Police judiciaire (PJ) so that they could be present to verify correct procedures and to place seals on documents, weapons and other material evidence that would be used in any future trial. Faced with a choice between legality and a brutal efficacy, Montaner opted for the latter.

In early 1961, when de Gaulle’s government was facing strong media and political pressure in regard to the harki torture of FLN suspects, a Prefecture internal report defended Montaner’s methods. ‘Il sait que l’exploitation d’un renseignement doit être immédiate...La règle d’or de l’action menée par la FPA réside en conséquence dans l’intervention foudroyante portée où besoin est et par conséquent il faut bien le dire en marge du Code de Procédure Pénale’. The report went on to

¹³ Daniel Doustin was regarded as an effective moderniser of the DST: Roger Faligot and Pascal Kop, *DST. Police secrète* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999), 193, 213. On his key role in counter-insurgency operations in Cameroun in 1957-1958 see Augusta Conchiglia, ‘Ghosts of Kamerun’, *New Left Review* no.77 (Sept.-Oct. 2012), 140; and below, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴ On the design and layout of the HQ at 13 Rue des Saussaies see the illustration in R. Faligot and P. Kop, *DST*, 218.

¹⁵ H1B28, Plan of Preparation for Operation “Flore”, 4.pp.

illustrate the need for such methods by reference to a specific operation on the night of 17-18 January when Montaner had to move fast to arrest two men and seize weapons, so that it was not possible to inform the procureur or to assign an officer of the PJ, nor to properly record the procès-verbal of arrest. The seizure of weapons, noted the report, was ‘parfaitement illégales’ and as a consequence, there could be no later trial of those arrested. More crucially the *Service de coordination des affaires algériennes* (SCAA), the Prefect intelligence unit, was perfectly happy, as was Papon, to avoid due process since the system of justice was viewed as radically incapable of dealing with the dangers of terrorism suffering, as it did, from ‘un formalisme ridiculement inadapté à la lutte contre l’Organisation’.¹⁶ The dark downside of this was that captured FLN suspects could be ‘disappeared’ and, without any legal protection, subjected to every form of abuse and violence.

One very significant consequence of such police methods is that the absence of detailed written procedures and judicial documentation is very evident in the Prefecture archives: the amount of information available to the historian to reconstruct FLN networks, biographical data, the conditions of arrest, the description of evidence, and the documents that were seized, is often very thin or simply missing. The DST procedures, and consequent archival traces, could not be more different. A secret DST internal mission statement of 1950 emphasised the great importance of carefully building up intelligence on a particular clandestine network, without disturbing its agents, so as to ‘identifier le plus grand nombre de complices, de rassembler les éléments constitutifs des délits, de connaître l’organisation du réseau de renseignements, au besoin en le “pénétrant”, c'est-a-dire en y introduisant des agents en vue de le contrôler. La phase répressive ne doit être entreprise que lorsque, par l’exploitation complète des informations de sources les plus diverses, les recoupements d’archives, les surveillances et les filatures, le plus grand nombre de complices ont pu être localisés et le maximum d’éléments de preuves recueilli’.¹⁷ Such counterintelligence methods, that had been long honed against the Communist Party, Soviet agents, and other networks seen as a threat to the French state, was readily applied to the FLN and consequently have left a massive paper trail in the archives.

In addition the DST-led Operation Flore was surprising in the extent to which, unlike Montaner’s harkis, it conformed to correct legal procedure, with the extraordinary exception of the “disappearance” of Baba Hamed, which is examined later (Chapter 2). The DST was, by its very nature, quite prepared to operate in secrecy and to engage in assassinations and torture. In December 1958 FLN militants initiated a court action against Roger Wybot, the most famous of all DST directors, and published *La Gangrène* (1959), a harrowing account of their torture in the Rue de Saussaies, revelations which brought about Wybot’s downfall.¹⁸ It was probably this scandal that led the DST to be much more careful not to expose itself to charges of ‘extra-legal’ activities and, as will be seen later, by 1960-61 the counterintelligence service seems to have been happy to ‘outsource’ more brutal interrogations to Montaner. More to the point, Operation Flore involved the arrest of some fifteen European support agents, and it was politically impossible to treat such a large number by anything other than due process and trial, unlike Algerians who could be incarcerated by administrative orders in camps and prisons, or flown to Algeria, under emergency powers, without any political or judicial repercussions. After 17 October Papon and the Minister of the Interior, Roger Frey, were keen to score a major success against the FLN, one that inevitably involved open legal procedures and possibly even a grand show trial, so as to counter the very real threat to their personal position following the revelations of the Paris massacre. It also helped that the DST, unlike Britain’s equivalent service MI5, had a juridical existence and its agents were officers of the police

¹⁶ H1B13 SCAA report, ‘Au Sujet des opérations effectuées par la FPA en Janvier 1961’, 5.pp. See also J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 51, 101-106.

¹⁷ ‘La Surveillance du Territoire. Etude sur son organisation, ses attributions et son fonctionnement’, Ministry of Defense, 15 March 1950, quoted in R. Faligot and P. Kop, *DST*, 577.

¹⁸ Bachir Boumazar, et.al., *La Gangrène* (Paris: Minuit, 1959); on this affair see Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Les Porteurs de Valises. La Résistance Française à la Guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979), 127-138; A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 146, 404-5.

judiciaire, which in turn facilitated the legal procedures and drawing up of procès verbaux during the arrest of suspects, and the careful recording and sealing of captured FLN documents which have consequently survived in the Prefecture archives.¹⁹

Traditionally the DST, like many other French security services (Renseignements généraux, Surêté, Gendarmerie....) tended to remain jealous of its authority and autonomy and disliked sharing information, materials and logistics with other police organisations. Why did Doustin decide to bring in the Prefecture to share in the glory of Operation Flore, what was likely to be a major and prestigious coup? During the first four years of the war, under the Fourth Republic, the DST seems to have taken centre stage in combatting the FLN in Paris by, for example, 'decapitating' the first and second Federations under Terbouche and Lebjaoui in 1956 and 1957.²⁰ However, from the summer of 1958 onwards, as Maurice Papon created his own, specialised and aggressive intelligence and policing apparatus to combat the FLN, notably the SCAA, SAT and FPA, the DST was forced to recognise the existence of this dynamic competitor.²¹ The DST was a relatively small organisation of about one thousand agents, given that it operated throughout metropolitan France and the colonies, and although it dedicated a third of its total manpower to anti-FLN surveillance, the service must have been severely stretched.²²

Papon, ambitious to expand his anti-FLN operations in Paris, suggested to the Minister of the Interior a division of labour between the DST and the Prefecture. The role of the DST, claimed Papon, was to focus on the tracking down and arrest of top-level FLN cadres, but this was to overlook the fact that the FLN was always able to rapidly replace those arrested, by recruitment or promotion from the massed ranks of the 'cadres intermédiaires'. The DST might grab attention through its 'spectacular' operations, but no less crucial was the role of the Prefecture, 'opérant à la base', and especially through the harkis, by taking on, 'ces cadres subalternes, audacieux et agissants', who were 'trop souvent impunis ou mal punis'.²³ This dual strategy was put in place through late 1960 and 1961 by which the DST would play the 'long game', penetrating the top-echelon FLN networks by careful surveillance, while the Prefecture, especially through Montaner's FPA, engaged in a much more brutal and rapid deployment action against tough mid-rank militants, and especially the armed groups (GA) and collectors that imposed discipline at the level of the street, café and lodging houses. This dualism has left a distinctive mark on the structure of the archive record: it is the DST sources that provide the most detailed evidence of the structure, strategy and overall organisation of the FLN leadership in Paris.²⁴

The year 1961 saw a growing convergence and co-operation between the DST and Prefecture of Police in the battle against the FLN, a joining of forces that offered a particularly formidable challenge to the French Federation. This co-operation derived in part from the close relationship that developed between Maurice Papon and Daniel Doustin, men who shared quite striking similarities in their careers and expertise in counter-insurgency. Doustin, born in Bayonne on 25 February 1920, the son of a railway worker, studied law and then at the Ecole nationale de la France d'outre-mer, before being posted to Indochina as an administrator in 1945. As head of the province of Kontum he had considerable experience of counter-insurgency, which he later applied in

¹⁹ R. Faligot and P. Kop, *DST*, 214; the care with which PJ officers during Operation Flore carefully sealed documents and referred to their evidence and file location in the analytic reports (e.g "voir scellé no.86 côté 53") explains in part why so many important FLN documents have survived intact in the archive.

²⁰ Mohamed Lebjaoui, *Vérités Sur la Révolution Algérienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 82-7; A. Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya*, 28, on 'les arrestations en cascade'.

²¹ On the origins and function of the *Service de coordination des affaires algériennes* (SCAA) and the *Service d'assistance technique* (SAT), see J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 67-77.

²² R. Faligot and P. Kop, *DST*, 159, 171.

²³ HA65, Papon to Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior, 19 April 1960, and Papon report to *Service de coordination des informations nord-africaines* (SCINA, Ministry of Interior), 17 June 1960.

²⁴ The documentation section of the DST, controlled by the *Deputy adjoint* Auguste Sauzon, was particularly renowned: see R. Faligot and P. Kop *DST*, 205, 224.

Cameroun as head of the region of Nyong-et-Sanaga from January 1957 to October 1958.²⁵ Doustin masterminded, with Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Lamberton, an extremely violent operation called ZOPAC (Zone de pacification de la Sanaga-Maritime) between December 1957 and December 1958. This reproduced all the features of the revolutionary warfare theories and methods concurrently being used in Algeria, including mass displacement of populations (regroupement), burning of villages and crops, massacre and torture.²⁶ Doustin pushed hard for the elimination of Ruben Um Nyobé, the most gifted and charismatic of the nationalist leaders, who was assassinated by French forces on 13 September 1958. Doustin, who after leaving the DST in 1964, went on to various Prefecture posts (1964-1976), director of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister Raymond Barre (1976-78), and President of the Compagnie nationale du Rhône (1979), followed a career pattern that was remarkably similar to that of Papon, who after leaving the Prefecture of Police (1967), became PDG of Sud-Aviation and Budget Minister, also under Raymond Barre, in April 1978.

These two 'grand commis de l'état', both of whom were deeply involved in colonial warfare in Africa during 1957 and 1958, brought to the policing of the FLN in Paris a similar experience and outlook, and this assisted in the close co-operation and trust that developed between the DST and the Prefecture of Police in Operation Flore, intelligence sharing, and other joint actions. The Director of SCAA, in his annual report for 1961, noted, 'Des rapports confiants se sont institués aussi avec la DST. Ils devaient permettre aux deux services d'oeuvrer en parfaite concordance des vues, et en se complétant'. Through daily exchanges of intelligence and a, 'partage rationnel des tâches, SCAA et DST ont abouti à l'anéantissement des groupes armés et de l'OS, ainsi qu'à la destruction, en fin d'année, de la Fédération de France du FLN'.²⁷ Doustin not only sent to Papon copies of the final DST reports on the Zouaoui and Farès networks, but also a huge volume of photocopies of the documents seized during these operations, which helps to explain why, quite exceptionally, such a mass of secret DST documentation that would normally not be available to the historian, can be found today in the Prefecture archive.

The remaining part of this chapter examines how the DST surveillance system operated during the seven weeks that it tracked, identified and finally arrested the members of the FLN Paris network. On 19 July 1960 Medjoub Benzerfa, a young school teacher in Colombes, was seen by DST agents in West Germany in contact with two members of the French Federation, and a third unknown man who was later identified as Mohamed Zouaoui. Benzerfa was questioned by the DST at Dusseldorf station, and said he had come to Germany to visit his girlfriend, Elisa Brunk. From that moment Benzerfa was identified by the DST as head of propaganda for the Federation in France and was placed under constant surveillance on the grounds that he would eventually lead the police to the head of the FLN in Paris. In July 1961 Benzerfa again met Zouaoui, as yet unidentified, in Paris, and agents concluded, 'La déférence qu'il lui montre, les instructions qu'apparement il reçoit, permettent de penser que cet individu est le supérieur de Benzerfa et par conséquent, le responsable fédéral que nous recherchons. La surveillance de cette personne nous conduit dans les jardins du Luxembourg où elle perdue de vue'.²⁸ But on the 22 September 1961 Benzerfa inadvertently led the

²⁵ On Doustin's career see Thomas Deltombe, Manuel Domergue and Jacob Tatsitsa, *Kameron! Une Guerre Cachée aux Origines de la Françafrique 1948-1971* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011), 256-8; www.whoswho.fr/decede/biographie-daniel-doustin_15644.

²⁶ On ZOPAC see T. Deltombe et.al, *Kameron!*, 264-297.

²⁷ H1B4, SCAA annual report, 1961.

²⁸ This, and most of the overall detail of what I call the 'Zouaoui network', is based on two key sources: first, an important report by the DST Commissaire Principal E. Desbons based on his analysis of all the intelligence gathered during Operation Flore, including interrogations and seized FLN documents, *Rapport d'ensemble sur l'affaire des responsables de la Fédération de France du FLN, traitée le 9 novembre 1961*, 14 November 1961, 32.pp.located at H1B16. Second, the *Fiches de Renseignements*, which were the detailed cards issued to the arresting teams for each individual and included, where available, identifying photographs, background biographical and political history, precise tracking data of date, time, location and contacts ('Activités dans le cadre de l'affaire en cours'), and the questions or areas of interest to be investigated in the following interrogation in the Rue de Saussaies (*Fiches d'Interrogation Technique*).

DST to the Café de Luxembourg, at 58 Boulevard Saint-Michel, opposite the Jardin du Luxembourg, a contact that proved to be fatal to the Paris network.

It is not known who the DST agents were who staked out the Café Luxembourg, but the Algerian section of the Rue des Saussaies under Jean Baklouti, a specialist in Maghreb and Middle-East intelligence, directed a team of Arab speaking officers, many of them Europeans or indigenous North Africans who could eavesdrop on conversations or operate from vans, disguised as window-cleaners, postoffice (PTT) or other commercial workers.²⁹ Zouaoui made the fatal error of holding almost daily meetings with his key lieutenants and advisers in the Café Luxembourg, although a driver acted as lookout: on the 4 October, for example, an agent reported, ‘la réunion se déroule à voix basse et le chauffeur Haddour, qui s'est assis à une table voisine, surveille visiblement les entrées du café’. When Zouaoui had particularly important information to exchange with a contact he would frequently meet them in the grounds of the adjacent Luxembourg Gardens. From the gatherings in the café, which involved numerous top cadres, the DST had no difficulty in trailing each individual, and through the minutely recorded movements (*Compte-rendu de surveillance*), photographic surveillance, phone taps and archival or fichier research, built up a detailed picture of each person (address, car registration, employment, associates....) and a rapidly expanding diagramme (*organigramme*) of the network.³⁰ As the DST unravelled the FLN linkages they were not to know that this was the organisation that would, within two weeks, be coping with the crisis caused by Papon's night curfew of 5 October, and the subsequent planning and execution of the 17 October demonstration.

Who was Mohamed Zouaoui and what was his function within the French Federation? Zouaoui was born in Sidi-Bel-Abbès, the city of the French Foreign Legion, on 8 March 1920 and grew up in an imposing house in the Rue de la Mosquée in the popular district of Graba. His father was a well-to-do landowner and after his secondary schooling Mohamed left to study in France where he joined up with several nationalists from his home town.³¹ He is described by Ali Haroun as one of the older generation of militants who had cut his teeth in the post-war MTLD movement of Messali Hadj, and by 1957 was a mid-level militant who helped organise the early clandestine FLN networks in Paris. In late 1958, he moved up the hierarchy to replace an arrested leader, and in June 1959 he became head of the Marseille region, Wilaya 3B, before being recalled to Paris to head the information services.³²

In late 1960 the FLN in France, following two damaging police operations, decided to carry out a significant restructuring that put in place an entirely new organisational and financial network that has, until now, remained undetected by historians. It was this deep, clandestine team, that was established in January 1961, that oversaw the later planning of 17 October, before being virtually decapitated in early November 1961. Between the 18th and 21st November Ahcène Chibane, who held the position of RC1 (*responsable contrôleur*) or chief deputy in France to Kaddour Ladlani, was found brutally murdered in a ditch in Colombes. The death of Chibane, almost certainly killed by state agents, came as a shock to the Federal Committee which found it difficult to replace such a

²⁹ A top-secret FLN cell of Algerian police officers, operating inside the police judiciaire until June 1960, was able to identify the key French officers engaged in anti-FLN operations. One list they provided identified seventeen DST agents with North African origins, including Baklouti: A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 89, 455-6. On 28 October 1960 the DST commissaire Boyer was drawn into a trap by the FLN and assassinated in the Rue Pasquier: R. Faligot and P. Kop, *DST*, 191. Baklouti, who in later years applied his anti-FLN expertise to anti-Arab terrorism, was to gain some renown for his involvement with Carlos 'the Jackal' and other affairs.

³⁰ Unidentified individuals were usually given a temporary seven letter code-name (eg. "KILUFAC", "KITIPAN", "KUTIPAN"), probably a system designed for treatment by IBM punch-card machines.

³¹ H1B16, Desbons Report; on Zouaoui's early background, <http://lavoxdesidibelabbes.info/?p=1981> (accessed 26 November 2011).

³² A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 41, 117, 120. Haroun, in charge of the *Commission Centrale de Presse et Information*, in a letter to the author, 31 March 2003, notes that Zouaoui, 'se trouvait auparavant dépendre de moi-même comme responsable à l'information pour la wilaya de Paris et qui ensuite est passé à la structure organique sous la responsabilité de LADLANI'.

capable leader.³³ His assassination raised worrying questions about security at the highest level of the FLN in Paris, and in promoting Zouaoui in January 1961 the Federal Committee sought to put in place a new team that could operate in deep clandestinity. On 20 October 1960, the police arrested Henri Curiel, an Egyptian communist who had, until then, master-minded the system by which the FLN monthly collection was safely transferred abroad through the banking system.³⁴ The lawyer and senior politician Abderrahmane Farès, as we will see later (Chapters 4 and 8), was called to meet Omar Boudaoud and asked to construct a totally new banking network, which was achieved with remarkable skill. Finally, the arrest of many agents in the Jeanson network, followed by the capture of Curiel, who had largely taken over from Jeanson, provided Omar Boudaoud with the opportunity to quietly settle a long-standing issue that had caused him deep irritation. Jeanson and Curiel, and many French militants active in their networks, had long claimed the right for European support agents to engage in opposition to the colonial state according to their own revolutionary agendas, which were quite autonomous from those of the FLN. Boudaoud was angered by the diversion and security threat created, in his eyes, by rival militant organisations such as the *Mouvement anti-colonialiste français* (MAF) and *Jeunes Résistance* (JR), and felt that French agents should ideally abstain from political activism and dedicate themselves to purely technical assistance to the FLN, providers of safe-houses, printing presses, weapons, and chauffeurs.³⁵

After the arrest of Curiel in October 1960 Boudaoud relied increasingly on a support network provided by Vignes and Mattéi, survivors from the Curiel organisation, that was largely non-political and technical. But, as will be seen in Chapter 3, Boudaoud and Zouaoui from January 1961 onwards, with the assistance of Rolande Mingasson, created an additional clandestine network that seems to have operated parallel to the Mattéi group, abstained from any political adventurism, and dedicated itself to the unquestioning execution of FLN orders. Its members, deliberately selected because they had no previous police record, would, it was hoped, prove impenetrable by the French intelligence services. The clandestine cellular structure of the FLN in Paris explains in part why many French support agents have, in later years, had no recollection of Zouaoui. However, Claude Vinci, a deserter from the army in Algeria who achieved subsequent fame as a singer, served as the regular chauffeur to the Federal until his arrest in November 1961.³⁶ The student Gérard Chaliand, who was recruited into the Mattéi network in January 1961, provides rare evidence of a linkage across to the Federal group: ‘Le contact avec le Front passait par Mattéi et moi. Notre interlocuteur habituel était Zouaoui, alias “M.H” ou “Mustapha le noir”.³⁷

As the DST surveillance on the Café Luxembourg continued through late September and October 1961, agents pieced together a pattern of daily meetings in which Zouaoui conferred, often for hours, with a small group of advisers, a kind of brains trust or *Commission centrale*. ‘La commission centrale, véritables collège de conseillers politiques, assiste le fédéral dans ses tâches de haute direction de l’organisation. Le fédéral confère avec eux journellement et certaine de ces réunions

³³ A. Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya*, 416-17.

³⁴ Curiel, the son of a banker, retained close ties to the world of international finance that proved useful to this professional revolution: see H. Hervé and P. Rotman, *Les Porteurs de Valises*, 90.

³⁵ On Boudaoud’s hostility to the MAF and JF movements, that he tried to control during 1960, see H. Hamon and P. Rotman, *Les Porteurs de Valises*, 264-73,324.

³⁶ Jacques Charby, *Les Porteurs d’Espoir* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 59; Claude Vinci, *Les Portes de Fer* (Le Temps des Cerises, 2006), 68-71, drove Abderrahmane Farès, Saïd Amroune and Mohamed Zwaoui (sic), described as the “trio de tête” of the Federation, to the monthly meeting to co-ordinate centralisation of the money collection for the whole of France. He did the same on 17 October by taking the three to the house of a friend, Jacques Elsir, in Villejuif, to follow the events on the radio, see Jean-Luc Einaudi, *Scènes de la guerre d’Algérie en France. Automne 1961* (Paris: Le Cherche Midi, 2009), 219-20.

³⁷ H. Hamon and P. Rotman, *Porteurs*, 331-3, interview with Chaliand, October 1978; Chaliand went on to become an authority on global guerilla movements, terrorism and ‘asymmetric’ conflict, see Thierry Garcin (ed.), *Gérard Chaliand. L'aventureux, entretiens avec Thierry Garcin* (La Tour-D’Aigues: Editions de l’Aube, 2010).

ont duré plusieurs heures'.³⁸ The existence of this influential advisory group is unexpected since it figures nowhere in existing literature or in the standard diagrammes of the 'official' FLN structure. The Commission members, aged 41 to 51, constituted an older generation of militants, all of them like Zouaoui from Oranie, who had joined the nationalist struggle in the 1930s or 40s, and were able to camouflage their FLN activities in Paris as small business-men or *commerçants*. The three leading figures in this mysterious commission were:-

*Mohamed Benabderrahmane, born in Zemmora on 22 October 1913, was well known to the colonial police as an activist in the Messalist *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA) and *Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques* (MTLD) during 1940-1950. In 1953 he was active in a school (medersa) of the reformist Ulema, "Djemiat El Falah" in Oran, and President of the *Cercle du Progrès* that met in the brasserie "El Widad", which he managed. After he was identified by the police in late 1956-57 as an organiser of FLN finances in Oran, he fled with his wife and seven children to Paris, where in July 1957 he found a job as manager (Maitre d'Hôtel) of the restaurant 'Le Hoggar' at 54 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince in the 6th arrondissement.³⁹ 'Le Hoggar' was owned by Ahmed Belghoul who had arrived in Paris in 1916 and, as one of the founders of the *Etoile nord-africaine* (ENA) in 1926, turned his restaurant into a famous centre of nationalist activity.⁴⁰ In late 1957 Belghoul, to avoid imminent arrest by the DST, fled to Switzerland and Benabderrahmane took over this hub of FLN activism since in the restaurant-hotel, noted Desbons, 'il dispose d'une grande liberté pour recevoir de la correspondance et prendre des contacts utiles à l'organisation rebelle'.⁴¹

Benabderrahmane was arrested at 'Le Hoggar' during Operation Flore and then taken by the arresting team to Room 101 in the DST HQ where, during his interrogation, he denied any political role and only admitted to paying FLN dues since 1960. Although he had known Zouaoui since 1957, he claimed the group in the Café Luxembourg had only met to discuss the cloth trade and business affairs.⁴² The Desbons report noted this : 'insistance même sur le caractère purement amical et commercial de ces relations permet d'affirmer qu'il ne s'agit que d'une système de défense depuis longtemps mis au point et ayant pour prétention de camoufler d'importants responsables FLN en de paisibles commerçants'.

*Othmane Ben Kelfat, born in Tlemcen the 26 May 1920, moved to Paris in 1948 and set up business as an import-export carpet merchant at his shop at 17 Rue Bergères in the 9th arrondissement. His passport showed that he had travelled to many countries, including Switzerland (1954), Morocco (1955), Spain (twice in 1955), Yugoslavia (1957) and Germany, and this probably enabled him to carry out FLN missions under the cover of business. He was already known to the police since in March 1957 Malika Allag, the sister of the FLN representative in Guinea, had worked as his liaison agent.

Five days after the DST first located the Zouaoui group in the Luxembourg, Ben Kelfat made contact with Mohamed Zeghari and his son, the former a high placed figure in the government of the newly independent Moroccan state, former vice-president of the *Conseil des Ministres*, director of the Moroccan State Bank, and owner of the flour-mills, Minoterie de Fez. Ben Kelfat's links to such high-placed individuals suggests that he was playing a significant role in the FLN international networks, probably in the banking and transfer abroad of funds collected in France. Arrested during Operation Flore, and interrogated in Room 103, he recognised his membership of the FLN to which he contributed 30,000 francs a month.⁴³ When he was confronted with the liaison agent Rolande

³⁸ H1B16 Desbons report.

³⁹ H1B16 Desbons report; H1B28, Fiche des renseignements.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Stora, *Dictionnaire Biographique de Militants Nationalistes Algériens, 1926-1954* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), 46-7.

⁴¹ H1B16. Hotels and cafés played such a major role in clandestine networks in Paris, that the FLN would often control the replacement of arrested hoteliers by its own appointed managers (see Chapter 6).

⁴² H1B28, notes that the entire staff of 'Le Hoggar' and 'Le Centenaire' was arrested.

⁴³ On 1 January 1960 the New Franc (NF) replaced the anciens francs (AF) in the ratio 1:100. Throughout this study all money figures, unless otherwise indicated, are in old francs since in FLN and police documents this

Mingasson, whom he had met on 22 September, both claimed not to know the other and refused to give any further information. Desbons concluded that Ben Kelfat, ‘d’une mauvaise foi évidente’, was lying when he said his many trips abroad, ‘n’ont qu’un intérêt touristique ou familial’. During his later interrogation Baba-Hamed disclosed that regular Federation meetings had been held in the home of Ben Kelfat.⁴⁴

* Lakhdar Bouri, born in Nedroma 22 April 1910, was a market trader living at 18 Rue de Chartres in the famous Algerian ghetto of the Goutte d’Or in the 18th arrondissement. He was already known to the police since he had been interviewed on 7 February 1957 about his brother who had leant his car to the FLN to transport tracts. Interrogated in Room 7/9 by the DST on 10 November he claimed to be, ‘un commerçant n’ayant que des rapports amicaux et de commerce avec Zouaoui’. He pretended that Zouaoui, ‘doit apprendre un métier qu’il ignore complètement’, and to this end had signed a legal contract by which Zouaoui had paid 8,000 New francs into a bank account opened by Bouri in the Barbès branch of the Banque nationale pour le commerce et l’industrie (BNCI) on 26 September 1961, and Zouaoui had opened an account in the same bank. This looks very much like a cover for an FLN operation. Bouri had been identified crossing the Swiss border on 7 June 1961, and again on 17 July, and his claim that he had not paid any FLN dues for some time was an indication, thought Desbons, that he was sufficiently senior to be on the FLN payroll.

The Luxembourg circle, in addition to these three, included various minor figures like Mekki ben Kaddour Gaddi, born at Ouled el Abbes, near Mostaganem (Oranie) 25 July 1935, who was living at the Lux Hotel, 17 Rue Lacépède in the 5th arrondissement, and a former activist in the proscribed UGEMA (*Union générale des étudiants musulmans algériens*). Desbons thought that he was probably a link between the FLN and the university milieux. The market trader Abdelkader Laguer who, like Zouaoui was born in Sidi-bel-Abbès (29 September 1910) and his driver, Kouider Haddou, who both lived in the Hotel Home Latin at 17 Rue de Sommerard (5th arrondissement), appear to have played a minor support role. Although both were arrested and interrogated during Operation Flore, neither was on the list of those who were held in prison to be brought to trial.

Although, in principle, the FLN attempted to eliminate ‘regionalism’ within its organisation, the *Commission centrale* of Abderrahmane, Ben Kelfat and Bouri, appears to have been constituted through long-term contacts between militants from the Oran region, men that Zouaoui knew well and could trust. None of those arrested gave away much information on the subject matter of the intense, daily discussions that took place in the café, nor did they leave any record or minutes, but a few captured documents revealed, for example, that the group had decided the overall themes that were to be developed by the head of propaganda, Medjoub Benzerfa. ‘La commission centrale, qui tiennent conseil, mais évitent de transcrire eux-mêmes leurs décisions, laissant aux agents de liaison ou au responsables le soin de matérialiser par des communiqués, des tracts ou des décisions, l’orientation de l’action de la rébellion’.⁴⁵ Although the precise role and nature of the Commission remained unknown to the DST, it appears to have provided a kind of informal, but non-the-less highly influential, body of older and experienced nationalists that could advise Zouaoui in relation to the more difficult strategic choices that he had to make. It seems likely that the Commission would have been involved in discussing the response to Papon’s night curfew and the political logic of the demonstration of 17 October.

Each day DST agents followed Zouaoui from the Café Luxembourg as he walked through the Latin Quarter to his home at No.8 in the Impasse des Deux Anges just north of St. Germain des Prés. A creature of habit, he liked to stop off en route to play cards in the Café Le Tournon, just to the north of the Senate. During the 1950s this café was the favourite meeting place of many Afro-American

invariably continued to be used. Commerçants like Ben Kelfat paid a higher monthly levy to the FLN, in this case ten times the fixed rate for manual workers.

⁴⁴ H1B16, interrogation by Montaner at Fort Noisy, 11 November 1961; H1B34, Roger Cheix to Papon, 26 April 1963, remarked on his meeting with M.Benkelfat, *Consul général* in Paris of the newly independent Algeria, who may well have been the same individual.

⁴⁵ H1B16 Desbons report.

writers, artists, journalists and musicians, including James Baldwin, Chester Himes, Richard Wright, William Gardner Smith and Duke Ellington. The ex-pat US community became bitterly divided during the so-called “Gibson Affair” over the issue of supporting the Algerian nationalists, and William Gardner Smith, in his semi-autobiographical novel *The Stone Face*, recorded his dawning realisation that Paris was not, as compared to the deeply racist society of the USA, the liberated multicultural society that so many exiled black Americans believed. In the streets and cafés of Paris Gardner Smith became aware of the racial violence meted out to Algerian workers by the police. As a journalist and interpreter with Agence France-Presse he was well informed on the actions of the French army in Algeria, including bombing of villagers, and in *The Stone Face*, which he began to write in 1961, he provided the first and perhaps most famous literary account of the 17 October massacre.⁴⁶ That the Black novelist of the Paris demonstration of 17 October, and Zouaoui its key planner, should have habituated the same café is no doubt a coincidence, but Zouaoui’s choice of Le Tournon in which to relax at the end of the day is not, since in this bohemian and multi-ethnic setting the man who was also known as ‘Mustapha le Noir’, must have felt at ease with the clientèle, could merge in, and felt relatively secure from the police patrols that constantly intercepted those of North African appearance.

No.8 in the Impasse des Deux Anges (see Photo 1) is tucked away at the bottom of a small cul-de-sac where Zouaoui may have felt safer from police surveillance and inquisitive neighbours or informers. The *fiche de renseignement* provided to the team led by the DST officer Mousseigne who arrested and interrogated Zouaoui in Room 201 indicates that he had already been identified. The attached identity or police photograph shows a thick-set figure with a bullet-shape head and thick-framed, darkened glasses, which explains three of his many pseudonyms, “Mustapha le Noir”, “Bouledogue”, “Quatre Yeux”. Zouaoui refused to reply to any questions, beyond stating that he was ‘un militant du FLN’, but the DST was particularly keen to prove, for judicial reasons and any subsequent trial, that he was indeed the same person as used the principal cover name of “Maurice”. This detail is of considerable importance, as will be seen subsequently, since the key correspondence and orders sent by the Federal Committee to Paris relating to the planning of the demonstration of 17 October were addressed to “Maurice”, which also happened to be the pseudonym of Mohammedi Saddek. The police took great pains to prove that “Maurice” and Zouaoui were one and the same person. The fiche issued to Mousseigne, the arresting officer, emphasised in bold capitals that no mention was to be made to Zouaoui of the pseudonym “Maurice”, ‘NE PAS FAIRE ETAT DU PSEUDO “MAURICE”’. Mousseigne managed to get Zouaoui to identify a document as in his own hand, and writing experts were able to verify this was identical to another text that had been signed “Maurice”: ‘le texte incomplet, révèle cependant que les préoccupations de Zouaoui portent sur l’ensemble du territoire et dépassent même les circonscriptions des contrôleurs de wilayas’. Another letter signed “Maurice” found in the home of Mingasson, his liaison agent, showed Zouaoui, ‘est bien le responsable fédéral du FLN résident en France’.⁴⁷

When the DST raided Zouaoui’s home they did not find very much in the way of FLN archives, almost certainly because the highly sensitive documents that he exchanged with Germany were held for security reasons at other safe-houses or in the Tunisian embassy.⁴⁸ However, the DST did find an

⁴⁶ William Gardner Smith, *The Stone Face* (New Jersey: Chatham Bookseller, 1975 ed.(first published 1963), 197-209. On the background see LeRoy S. Hodges, Jr. *Portrait of an Expatriate: William Gardner Smith, Writer* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); C. Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1996), and ‘The Fire This Time: Black American Expatriates and the Algerian War’, 98, *Yale French Studies* (2000), 182-200; James Campbell, ‘The Island Affair’, *The Guardian*, 7 January 2006.

⁴⁷ Mustapha Baba-Hamed, the *Responsable Contrôleur* (RC) of Wilaya 1 and 1B, recognised during his secret interrogation that Zouaoui was his superior and head of operations in France.

⁴⁸ Mohamed Harbi published in *Sou’al: Revue quadrimestrielle*, 7 (Sept. 1987), 7-110, the important correspondance between the Federal Committee and Zouaoui regarding the planning and execution of the

address, at 31 Avenue de Versailles in the 16th arrondissement, that led them immediately to the home of Josette Berry in which they seized 108,390,000 old francs, accounts for Wilaya 3B (Marseille) and, in her workplace at the Touring-Club de France, typed stencils relating to the activity of the ALN in Algeria from 1 to 10 September 1961.

One of the bizarre incidents of Operation Flore concerned the arrest of a wealthy, eccentric American called Georges Hasslacher who shared the same house as Zouaoui at 8 Impasse des Deux Anges. DST investigation revealed that Hasslacher, a freelance journalist and financial speculator,



Photo.1. The home of the Federal, Mohamed Zouaoui, at No.8 Impasse des Deux Anges (6th arrondissement). The location in the heart of the Latin Quarter enabled FLN cadres to merge into the Left Bank world of students, artists and tourists.

October demonstration. These documents had originated in the Tunisian embassy: Mohammed Harbi communication to the author, Lyons, 19 June 2006.

had been under suspicion of money trafficking in 1953-54, and an anonymous letter to the DST in 1956 denounced him as a, ‘trafiquant d’armes ayant effectué un voyage en Algérie et au Maroc et devant se rendre en Israël’, but an investigation had been inconclusive. Hasslacher and an associate Francis Hoerler had travelled to Holland and Germany by car on 16 October 1961 with a young woman “Haidi”, and met up in Germany on 20 October with Gisela Seidler who had gone ahead by train from Paris on 13 October in a seat reserved by Hasslacher. The DST suspected a classic FLN support network, placed a phone tap, and arrested both Hasslacher and Hoerler during Operation Flore. Hasslacher, in his autobiography, recounts how he had decided to escape from his bourgeois life-style as a businessman in Versailles by training as an artist and, after renting a studio in the Impasse des Deux Anges, painted young nude models, among them ‘a young false blonde named Gisèle’. The trip to Holland and Germany appears to have been more an amorous pleasure excursion than an FLN operation. Hasslacher describes how a ‘dozen gorillas burst into my room’ and took Gisèle and himself for separate grilling at the Rue de Saussaies. But the DST quickly released Hasslacher after forcing him to sign, under threat of ninety days detention, a form stating that he had been well treated by them.⁴⁹ However, rather curiously, Francis Hoerler, whom Hasslacher knew as an artist friend, was identified by the DST as a lycée monitor at Vanves who had been arrested at a UNEF demonstration for peace in Algeria in October 1960. He was identified on 21 September 1961 driving Zouaoui away from 8 Impasse des Deux Anges, so there may have been more to Hasslacher than meets the eye.

After the DST location of the FLN group that met regularly in the Café Luxembourg, the agents had little difficulty in tracking their further contacts, so that a detailed picture of the overall network began to appear. The next two chapters investigate the remaining part of the network.

⁴⁹ Georges F. Hasslacher, *To Dare to be Free* (published by the author, Einsiedeln, Switzerland, 1977), 237.

2

The Zouaoui network: the role of the Contrôleurs

The geographical structure of the FLN in France was frequently modified throughout the war, in part to take account of changes in the numbers of Algerians on the ground, but also to counter the fact that the intelligence services, over a period of time, invariably built up a clear picture of the organisation. Marcel and Paulette Péju, who worked closely with the Federation during 1961, noted: ‘Certains policiers, devenus de véritables techniciens de la structure FLN, réussissaient à reconstituer, à recomposer le puzzle avec une précision remarquable. Simplement, comme cette structure changeait constamment, ils n’y parvenaient qu’avec un certain retard: quatre à six mois en général’.⁵⁰ The SCAA, in a study of FLN structures, remarked with a sense of pique, that the FLN was able to rapidly modify its organisation, ‘du jour au lendemain, réduisant ainsi à néant le travail des services spécialisés, chargés de la synthèse des efforts de tous’.⁵¹ On the 1 September 1961 the Federation carried out a major reorganisation of the Paris Wilaya boundaries in order to effect a, ‘mouvement de ses cadres supérieure menacés par les nombreuses arrestations’ and to prevent penetration by the ‘services spécialisées’. In particular the previous Wilayas for Paris-Centre (W1) and Paris-Périmétrie (W2), were replaced by a demarcation line marked by the River Seine, with Wilaya 2 on the right bank and Wilaya 1 on the left.⁵² The metropolitan territory was now divided into seven Wilayas, and these were in turn grouped into three blocks each of which was under the direction of a ‘*responsable contrôleur*’ (RC) based in Paris.

Contrôleur 1, Mustapha Baba-Hamed, was in charge of Wilaya 1 (Paris south of the Seine) and Wilaya 1B ('Atlantic') that covered all of western France as far as Bordeaux and the Pyrenees. Contrôleur 2, Younès Aberkane, directed Wilaya 2 (Paris north of the Seine), Wilaya 2A (Normandy, Pas-de-Calais, and the Nord), and Wilaya 2B (the North-east, Alsace-Lorraine, up to the Swiss border). Contrôleur 3, Saïd Amroun, covered Wilaya 3 (the Lyons region and Massif Central), and 3B (Marseille and Languedoc). The DST was able to build up a detailed picture of this organisation since during Operation Flore on 10 November it arrested all three RCs, and seized a major part of their archives, including a map of the new Wilaya boundaries (see Map 1). It is important to take account of this new structure and its personnel, which only lasted from 1 September to 10 November 1961, since without this it becomes impossible to decode correctly the source of each FLN internal document. For example, as will be seen later, an important account of the 17 October demonstration, seized during Operation Flore, and coded ‘A12’, can be traced to Mohammed Ghafir who was in charge of one of the two Amalas (or Superzones) south of the Seine ('12' being the code for Wilaya 1, Amala 2).

The *Responsables contrôleurs*, the existence of which is barely mentioned in histories of the Federation, played a crucial role in the overall running of the FLN networks across the entire geographical space of metropolitan France. Like the *Commission centrale* they conferred regularly with Zouaoui but, unlike these politically wise ‘elders’, they also performed an executive function, receiving orders that arrived from the Federal Committee and the Federal, and passing these down the chain of command to the seven Wilayas and the lower rungs of the hierarchy (Amala, Zone, Region, Secteur, Kasma, Section, Group, Cell).⁵³ In turn, the seven Wilaya heads were required to

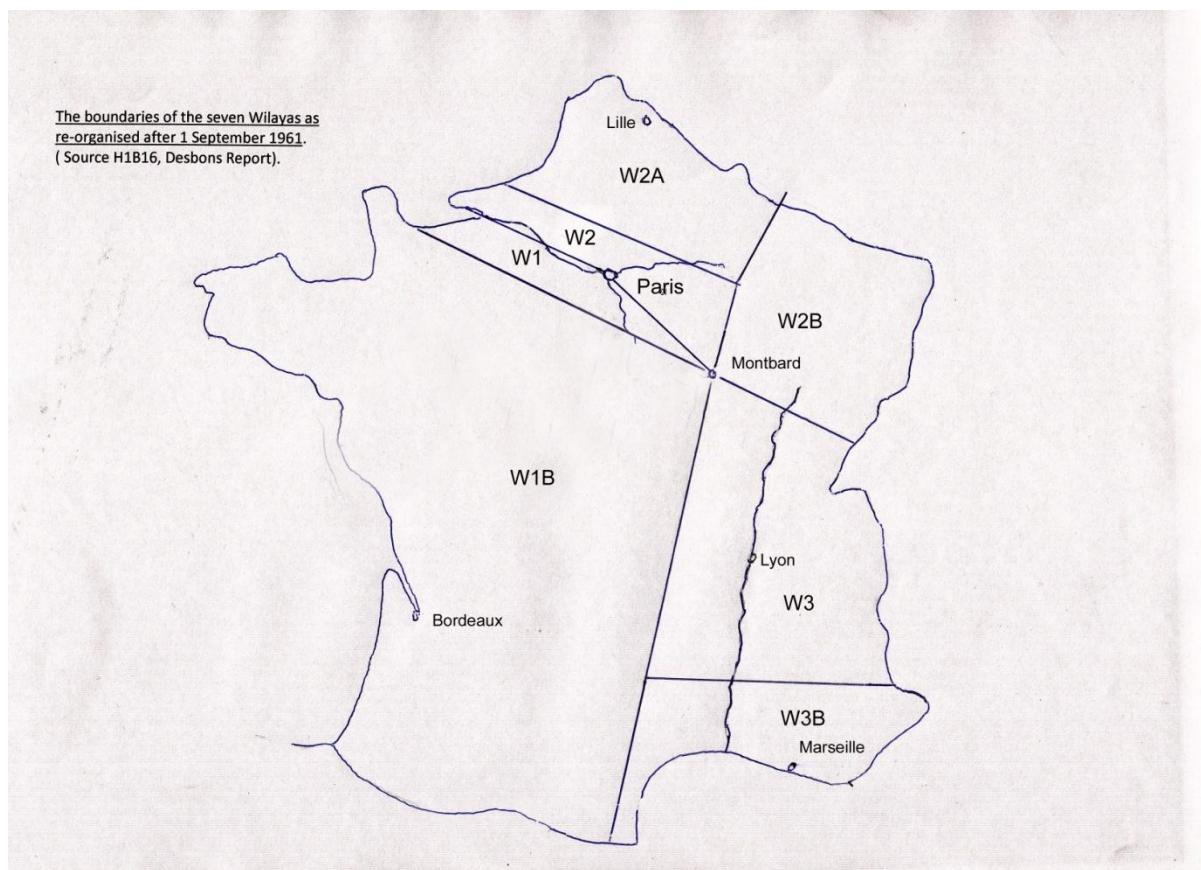
⁵⁰ Marcel and Paulette Péju, *Le 17 Octobre Des Algériens suivi de La Triple Occultation d’Un Massacre* par Gilles Manceron (ed.), (Paris: La Découverte, 2011), 28. This delay explains why the police/DST archives for November and December throw the best light on the FLN structures in Paris during the crucial crisis phase of August to October 1961.

⁵¹ HA27, SCAA, *Etude Relative à l’Organisation du FLN dans la Région Parisienne*, December 1959.

⁵² HB13, Report of director of SCAA to Papon, 30 November 1961.

⁵³ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 55. I have capitalised references to the different levels of the FLN pyramidal structure to avoid confusion between these specific organisational levels and more general terms, such as region, zone, and group. For the overall structure see figure 1 (page 23).

Map 1



to constantly liaise with their controller in Paris, especially during the complex monthly operations when they usually travelled with a European driver to the capital, bringing the collection to safe houses (*dépôts*) to be counted, centralised and finally banked (see Chapter 8). The Wilaya heads, through elaborate financial and ‘organic’ reports, were answerable to the RCs for a range of issues that included diffusion of propaganda, internal FLN discipline, the control of armed groups and weapons supply, and plans to execute attacks on the police or other targets. The DST Desbon report summed up the function of the RCs who, ‘au contrôle des wilayas dirigent et coordonnent l’ensemble de l’activité des wilayas qui leur sont rattachées. Chaque mois, ils centralisent le produit des collectes qui leur est remis à l’agent financier du Fédéral. Ils coordonnent l’action politique, assurent la diffusion de la propagande écrite et contrôlent étroitement la lutte armée. Ils reçoivent les comptes-rendus d’assassinats, corrections, amendes, sanctions diverses dont sont victimes les adversaires et les récalcitrants. Ils tiennent comptabilités de l’armement, des effectifs, des mouvements de la population musulmane’.⁵⁴ The arrest of all three RCs, along with a mass of documents, on the 9-10 November represented a huge coup for the DST, and explains why the archives contain such a wealth of records on the global administration of the organisation as well as documents relating specifically to the planning of the demonstrations of 17-20 October as well as a numerous eye-witness reports of militants who had been present.

⁵⁴ Desbons report, 3.

Figure 1. The structure of the FLN organisation in France, October 1961.⁵⁵

Federation Committee (Germany) – 5 members (Boudaoud, Ladlani, Bouaziz, Souici, Haroun)

Federal - Zouaoui

Wilaya Controlers (RCs) – RC1 (Baba-Hamed), RC2 (Aberkane), RC3 (Amroun)

Wilayas – W1 (Maama), W1B (Mellah), W2 (Attaba), W2A (Hamadene), W2B (Boudraâ), W3 (Benyounès) and W3B (Achab) - total FLN numbers in a Wilaya, 36,000

Amala 2 to 3 Amalas per Wilaya

Zone 2 to 3 Zones per Amala

Région 2 to 4 Regions per Zone - total FLN numbers in a Region 3,500

Below the level of Région, the FLN subdivided the structure, for security reasons, into three parallel hierarchies of militants, adhérentes, and sympathisantes.

Secteur

Kasma - total FLN numbers in a Kasma about 300

Section

Groupe – total FLN numbers in a Groupe about 30-35

Fraction

Cellule - between 3-5 members.

All three of the controllers, Aberkane, Amroun and Baba-Hamed, were arrested in the early hours of 10 November, and these figures are considered in turn, although Baba-Hamed is examined in greater detail since there is a lot more information on his background, activities and subsequent ‘disappearance’ and interrogations. Baba-Hamed’s biography provides a case-study of the typical career pattern of a militant who succeeded in climbing up through the ranks of the FLN.

The Younès Aberkane group (RC2)

Younès Aberkane was born on 28 October 1928 in Taourirt-Mimoun (Grande Kabylie), a village famed for its rich cultural and nationalist traditions. During Operation Flore he was arrested in the southern suburb of Antony (38, Rue des Pivoines), along with his partner Geneviève François and his cousin Brahim Aberkane. The DST seized a considerable number of documents relating to Wilayas 2, 2A and 2B, a pistol and ammunition, 172,388,000 francs and a forged identity card in the name of Roberto Santoni.⁵⁶ During interrogation Younès, after admitting that he was RC for Wilayas 2, 2A and 2B, refused to speak, but the captured documents showed clearly that he exercised under the ‘autorité exclusive’ of Zouaoui, ‘dans tous les domaines de cette organisation subversive’. His cousin Brahim Aberkane, born on 31 December 1932 in Fort National (Kabylie), was already known to the

⁵⁵ Adapted from A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 55.

⁵⁶ In 1961 (a rough-and-ready guidance) 100 AF would equal in value about 1.4 Euros in today’s terms (2013), or £1 sterling. In this specific instance, the police seized 172,388,000 AF, or about £17 millions in today’s money, about one third of the total monthly income collected by the FLN in France.

police as member of a *groupe de choc* who had been interned in the camps of St.Maurice and Larzac between 9 December 1959 and 27 September 1961. Desbons as a ‘garde de corps’ for his cousin, he had the misfortune of falling under arrest within weeks of being released from Larzac.

The French Federation frequently recruited European, or even American women, to undertake the role of liaison agents and drivers since they could more readily avoid detection by the police. Throughout the long history of Algerian labour migration to France, many exiles had entered into relationships and marriage or cohabitation with European women, and in the case of the Paris FLN leaders such a relationship, often with students, could provide access to a secure house, a car and driver, and secretarial and liaison support.⁵⁷ A cadre of the *Organisation spéciale* (OS), during interrogation, said that he had been asked in early 1961 to recruit European agents who could liaise between Paris and the Federal Committee in Germany, preferably those who had no previous police record, could travel abroad frequently on the pretext of academic study, and female, ‘since they are generally regarded as less suspect than men’. The OS militant, in addition to his French fiancée, was able to recruit a female sociology and a philosophy student, who carried out two or three trips to Düsseldorf between March and December 1961.⁵⁸

Younès partner, Geneviève François, falls into this pattern. The DST investigation showed that she frequently liaised with other support agents, including Mingasson, to whom she was introduced by Aberkane in August 1961; transported packages, including collected money; had visited Zouaoui’s house in the Impasse des Deux Anges; and acted as the RC’s secretary during meetings. During the DST surveillance of François they were led to the house of Ali Riche at 233 Boulevard Jean Jaurès in Boulogne-Billancourt, and when Riche was arrested on 10 November it was discovered that this had been used as an FLN safe-house since 1958 and Aberkane, who had a key to the door, met here with other cadres at the end of each month to receive and count money that was delivered in large scotch-bound bundles. Aberkane also drew up his reports here for Zouaoui and François served as his secretary and also took notes during meetings.⁵⁹ The DST agents seized a large number of documents relating to Wilayas 2, 2A and 2B which were particularly detailed on actions carried out by armed groups during September and October 1961 (43 assassinations, 4 attempted assassinations, and 9 ‘actions terroristes diverses’), and on the number of arms held by each Wilaya. Wilaya 2 (Paris north), for example, had a reserve of 67 automatic pistols, 10 machine-gun pistols, 3 rifles, a light machine gun, and 5,478 shells. The DST investigation led to the arrest of two other members of the Aberkane cell. Marcel Verger, a mechanic (born 5 April 1931 in Calvados), who lived at 113 Avenue Jean-Jaurès (19th), had transported weapons for the FLN on several occasions. Mohamed Sallat, born the 17 April 1918 in Sidi-Bel-Abbès, and therefore a contemporary of Zouaoui, had been visited at home by him at 13 Rue de Sentier (2nd), and had attended meetings of the RC2 group in Ali Riche’s home.

The Saïd Amroun group (RC3)

Saïd Amroun, born in Tigmout Azouz in Kabylia on the 15 December 1928, was probably the most politically experienced and important of the three Contrôleurs, and the most trusted of advisers to Zouaoui. He had arrived in France in 1948 and was a member of the MTLD federal bureau in 1953, but in 1954 rallied to the Centrists in the internal schism that led to the breakaway FLN.⁶⁰ In 1957 he

⁵⁷ Neil MacMaster, ‘The Role of European Women and the Question of Mixed Couples in the Algerian Nationalist Movement in France, circa 1918-1962’, *French Historical Studies*, 34:2 (Spring 2011), 357-386.

⁵⁸ H1B18, OS – Réseau de soutien logistique européen (1961-1962).

⁵⁹ Ali Riche, ouvrier spécialisé [at Renault?], born 26 February 1925 at Dra-el-Mizan, and his wife Catherine Cascaux, born 28 January 1929, were both arrested and interrogated on 10 November. Cascaux had tried to conceal documents with a neighbour during the DST raid, but later declared that, ‘François accompagnait Aberkane chez elle et lui servait de secrétaire’.

⁶⁰ Daho Djerbal, *L’Organisation Spéciale de la Fédération de France du FLN* (Algiers: Chihab Editions, 2012), 21-24.

was head of Wilaya 1 (Paris-Centre) but was arrested in October 1957 in possession of a typed, threatening letter and was condemned by the Seine court on 6 December 1958 to two years prison. On his release from Larzac on 6 February 1960 he was banned from the greater Paris region and several weeks later he went to Germany, shortly before the Orleans Cour d'Appel condemned him (*in absentia*) as a danger to state security (ASES). In Germany he received medical treatment and on his return to Paris in September 1960 he was identified as linked to the Curiel network. By January 1961 he had been located by the DST as RC3 for Wilaya 3 and 3B, but they were unable to find his whereabouts until he was sighted in the company of Zouaoui on 9th and 12th October, days before the 17 October demonstration, and then arrested during Operation Flore at 18 Rue Clauzel (9th). Amroun, who was known under several pseudonyms, "Mustapha", "Saïd", and "André", was found to be in possession of numerous documents, 'en particulier des rapports organiques et financiers des wilayas 3 et 3bis, des comptes relatifs à des mouvements importants de fonds, une carte de France avec le découpage des wilayas, des directives diverses de la Fédération de France du FLN', as well as 240,000 fr and a false identity card in the name of Youcef Touati. Also implicated with Amroun was Si Tahar Ben Yahia, a street trader, born in Azazga 21 February 1930, who had been sentenced to two years prison (suspended) on 28 September 1961. On 9 October he was seen with Zouaoui and Amroun, but was arrested by the DST on 30 October, shortly before Operation Flore, as a suspected high level cadre of the *Organisation spéciale*.

Amroun's liaison agent Nicole Grumbach, born in Paris 27 October 1934, a secretary who lived with her parents at 40 Avenue Duquesne, was frequently seen by DST agents making contact with Mingasson and Amroun during October. Also arrested at 26 Rue Spontini (16th) was Monique Antoine, a copywriter (*rédactrice*) at the Caisse Centrale de Crédit Immobilier et Commercial, who claimed that Grumbach had tried to recruit her to work with the FLN, but admitted that, 'pendant ses loisirs, elle s'occupe d'un comité d'aide aux enfants algériens'. But her attempt to create a cover story was blown when, during the search of her home, Yahia Achab, head of Wilaya 3B arrived by chance from Marseille, carrying 16,670,000 francs and numerous documents. The DST quickly moved to search his home in Marseille where they found further documents, including the address of Mosze Joseph Hamburger at 3 Impasse Lemiere, Paris (19th). Born in Warzaw (11 June 1925), an ex-PCF militant, Hamburger was found to have 4,625,000 francs and tried to explain away why he had crossed the border into Switzerland between 15 and 20 August 1961 with 20 millions.

The 'disappearance' of Mustapha Baba-Hamed (RC1).

One of the most sinister aspects of Operation Flore is the way that the DST and the Prefecture of police collaborated in the carefully planned enforced disappearance of Baba-Hamed, Controller of Wilayas 1 and 1B. According to Amnesty International, enforced disappearance, today one of the most widespread abuses of human rights, 'takes place when a person is arrested, detained or abducted by the state or agents acting for the state, who then deny that the person is being held or conceal their whereabouts, placing them outside the protection of the law'.⁶¹ This is precisely what happened in the case of Baba-Hamed. In the detailed DST plan for Operation Flore Baba-Hamed was identified as one of those to be arrested on the night of 9-10 November at 29 Rue des St.Pères by a three man team consisting of officers Guyral and Delham, and a driver Dubois, and then taken to the HQ Rue des Saussaies for interrogation in Room 2.⁶² However, it was claimed by the police that Baba-Hamed was absent and his flat was then placed under surveillance awaiting his eventual return. Press reports on Operation Flore, as well as a statement by Roger Frey during a speech in parliament, while listing the names of all those who had been arrested, made no mention of Baba-Hamed.⁶³

⁶¹ www.amnesty.org/en/enforced-disappearances

⁶² H1B28

⁶³ See *Le Monde*, 12-13 November 1961; *Journal Officiel, Débats parlementaires, Assemblée nationale*, 12 November 1961, 4496.

However, the FLN was aware that Baba-Hamed had probably been spirited away and lawyers from the FLN collectif, Oussedik and Benabdallah, wrote to Alain Simon, the Juge d'Instruction, on 24 November to investigate the matter. The two lawyers said they were acting for their clients, 'Zouaoui et de ses co-inciprés qui sont actuellement détenus à la maison d'arrêt de Fresnes'. Their clients had been interrogated by the DST in relation to Baba-Hamed, alias 'Slimane', and, 'La photo de ce dernier fut notamment présentée à Monsieur Zouaoui à qui l'on reproche de l'avoir rencontré le 25 octobre 1961'. Baba-Hamed had also been sighted in police custody and the accused demanded to be legally 'confrontés' with this man, 'dont il ne connaissent pas les déclarations'. Baba-Hamed had not been imprisoned at Fresnes, despite police claims that he had played an important role in the FLN, and Zoauoui, Amroune and other accused, 'ce demandent si la police n'a pas fait disparaître ce témoin', and asked that his place of detention be revealed.⁶⁴ On 27 November Simon, the Juge d'Instruction, wrote to the Procureur de la République, who in turn requested on 8 December the director of the DST, Doustin, and the Minister of the Interior, to send him, 'des éléments de réponse'. Doustin handed the investigation over to the Commissaire Principal Etienne Desbons, who had earlier written the key report on Operation Flore, and he duly reported that Baba-Hamed had not been located on 9-10 November and subsequent searches had proved negative. 'Une perquisition opérée le 25 novembre 1961, dans les formes légales, fut négative. Aucun élément à charge contre l'intéressé ne put être recueilli'.⁶⁵ However, Desbons admitted, he had come to learn that several hours before Operation Flore Baba-Hamed had been arrested by the police of the Prefecture and 'assigné à résidence'. 'Je n'ai pu obtenir de renseignements sur les résultats de cette intervention'.⁶⁶

The DST officers were, however, engaged in an elaborate cover-up as we know from other documents that recount how Baba-Hamed had indeed been arrested as planned by the DST early on the 10 November, and after interrogation at the Rue des Saussaies, was transferred to the harkis at Fort Noisy for eight days where he was again interrogated by the DST, and officers of the Prefecture of police and FPA.⁶⁷ After that he was moved to the holding cells (the 'dépôt') of the Préfecture de Police on the Cité for seven days before being flown from Orly on about 25 November to Algiers and the camp of Béni-Messous.⁶⁸ In Algeria Baba-Hamed was handed over, not to the camp authorities, but to the infamous *détachement opérationnel de protection* (DOP) torture teams who subjected him to further interrogation. The DOP, working in small, mobile teams, specialised in the interrogation of FLN suspects in secret detention centres throughout Algeria, acting in isolation and in an autonomous matter outside the control of military, police and legal organisations.⁶⁹ The DOP tried to camouflage its existence by frequent changes of name and, in the case of Baba-Hamed, he was held and interrogated by a special DOP 'Section de Liaison Paris' that was disguised as the 123rd Brigade or the 58th battalion d'infanterie (BI).⁷⁰

The DST, which had been considerably damaged in 1959 by the publication of *La Gangrène* that revealed in detail the systematic torture of Algerians at the Rue des Saussaies, appear to have 'outsourced' their interrogation practices, just as the American and British authorities were to do

⁶⁴ H1B16, Oussedik to Simon, 24 November 1961.

⁶⁵ H1B16, Desbons, in his earlier major investigation and report on the Zouaoui network, maintained the fiction that Baba-Hamed was, 'très certainement absent de son domicile au moment du déclenchement de l'opération le 9 novembre dernier'.

⁶⁶ H1B16, Desbons report forwarded by Desbons to the Procureur de la République (undated).

⁶⁷ H1B28, a DST report by Police Principal René Basse to the Commissaire Divisionnaire, Chef de Service, 10 November 1961 notes, 'Les O.P Lefevre et Bornet, ont en plus transféré, de la rue des Saussaies au Fort de Nogent, à la disposition du Capitaine Montaner, Un FMA réputé dangereux'.

⁶⁸ H1B28, *Fiche de Criblage* (undated), originating from the Algiers DOP.

⁶⁹ Raphaëlle Branche, *La Torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 195-211, 255-263.

⁷⁰ H1B28, *Fiche de Criblage* on Baba-Hamed, 9 January 1962 . On the camouflage of the DOP as Brigade 123 and 58th BI, see R. Branche, *La Torture*, 262, 371.

after 9/11 in the rendition of suspects to Egypt, Morocco and elsewhere.⁷¹ During late 1960 and through 1961 there is archival evidence of Montaner's increasing role as the expert of choice in Paris when it came to the urgent need to interrogate suspect senior FLN cadres.⁷² Montaner had also attracted unwanted attention for the torture of Algerians by the harkis in the cellars of the 13th and 18th arrondissements in early 1961, but after the transfer of the FPA back to the base at Fort Noisy in June, he and his team were able to act in greater security and more concealed from public attention.⁷³ When Viatte of the *Commission de sauvegarde* visited the Fort on 31 October to investigate claims that five 'disappeared' Algerians were being held there, Montaner reassured him that Papon had forbidden him to hold and interrogate any Algerians at Noisy. Viatte, in his report, praised Montaner since he, 'seems to have put a stop to certain previous excesses. Captain Montaner appears to keep a very strict discipline at the fort'.⁷⁴

The harki brigades shared Fort Noisy with the Service Action (SA), a commando wing of the counter-espionage agency the SDECE, which carried out special operations, including the assassination of targeted FLN agents in France and abroad. From 1960 until the end of the Algerian War the SA and FPA officers at Noisy, although officially under separate commands, in reality cooperated informally on a day-to-day basis and shared views on how to wage 'unconventional' warfare against the FLN in Paris. The SA, which was increasingly infiltrated by the OAS, even supplied plastic explosive from its base at Cercottes that was then used by the harki against Algerian café-hotels.⁷⁵

One of the SA officers, Raymond Muelle, a veteran of Indochina and North Africa, who had been a close friend of Montaner's since the Second World War, has left a detailed account of his daily relations with the harki officers at Noisy. Muelle provides an eye-witness account of Montaner's interrogation of Baba-Hamed after his arrest in the Rue des Saints-Pères, under the false identity of François Baldini, born 18 January 1933, and living in Grenoble.⁷⁶ Muelle, without admitting to torture, signals that Baba-Hamed was subjected to some gruelling treatment:-

'La journée a été rude pour lui. De large cernes de fatigue soulignent ses yeux inquiets; une barbe drue bleuit ses joues et son menton. Il n'a plus ni ceintures ni cravate, ses poignets sont liés dans le dos par des menottes trop serrées. Devant lui, se tiennent les inspecteurs et trois hommes, la tête recouverte de cagoules noires.

Il voit bien qu'il s'agit de musulmans malgré la lumière trop violentes qui lui dévore les yeux. L'un des policiers se penche vers l'homme masqué à sa droite qui hoche la tête, le deuxième cagoulard se contente de faire oui de la tête à une question de son voisin'.

We do not know exactly what 'treatment' Baba-Hamed underwent or what threats were made, but the Contrôleur RC1 followed the standard FLN instructions of resisting pressure as long as

⁷¹ *La Gangrène* (Paris: éditions de Minuit, 1959); on the resulting political scandal see H. Hamon and P. Rotman, *Les Porteurs*, 127-138.

⁷² Archive sources refer to Montaner, an army officer, as an 'Officier de renseignement' (OR), a trained intelligence interrogator. During 1957-1958 Montaner was head of the SAU of Clos-Salembier, a sector that included the notorious torture centre of the Villa Susini, and which he frequented. He was also fully conversant with the techniques deployed by the parachutists under Massu during the 'Battle of Algiers'.

⁷³ On the claims that the FPA was engaged in systematic torture see Paulette Péju, *Les harkis à Paris* (Paris: La Découverte, 2000 edition (first published 1961)).

⁷⁴ HA86.

⁷⁵ J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 176-7; on Montaner's use of plastic explosives against FLN targets, see Rémy Valat, *Les calots bleus et la bataille de Paris. Une force de police auxiliaire pendant la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Michalon, 2007), 112-13, 132.

⁷⁶ Muelle's novelistic style of writing is deceptive and we cannot be sure that he was present. However, the precise details of his book, including the text of other interrogations, are certainly drawn from original documents that may have been made available to him by Montaner or de Roujoux. A documentary film interview of Pierre de Buxueil de Roujoux by *Le Monde* in 2011, is intercut with various original FPA documents in his possession, including texts of interrogations and one typed page that is visible refers specifically to Baba-Hamed: see at www.lemonde.fr/societe/visuel/2011/10/17/la-nuit-oubliée_1587567_3224.html

possible, to give other militants time to seek safety or to remove documents and arms. Suddenly, says Muelle, ‘après un long soupir, sans doute épousé par les heures d’interrogatoire, sans doute aussi persuadé que son silence a déjà sauvé les autres...[il] se met à table’. So elaborate was the attempt to sustain the ‘disappearance’ of Baba-Hamed that the transcript of his interrogation by Montaner was disguised as that of “Abdelkader El Fasi”, born the 14 October 1935 in Oran, living at 41, Rue Claude Decaen in the 12th arrondissement.⁷⁷ This interrogation, along with a further *Fiche de Criblage* sent by the DOP from Algiers to Papon in Paris on 9 January 1962, provides a fascinating insight into the events surrounding the 17 October as well as biographical information on one of the three highest ranking FLN leaders in Paris after Zouaoui.

Mustapha Baba-Hamed [or Baba-Ahmed], who was born in Tlemcen 15 June 1935, had received an elementary education up to CEP level. He first arrived in Paris in October 1955, at the age of twenty, and lived initially in the 13th arrondissement (96 Avenue de Choisy) while working as a mechanic at a garage in Orly, and later with Panhard. During 1956 he attended a nine month apprenticeship course at the *Centre de formation professionnelle des adultes* (CFPA) at Foix, in the Pyrenees, and it was probably after his return that he was contacted by Abderamane to join the FLN and to act as a collector, while working as a lathe-turner at the company ACMA in the north-west suburb of Asnières. He followed a typical militant trajectory, working his way up the FLN echelons, until he had sufficiently proved his worth to become in 1958 a full-time activist on the meagre FLN wage of 550 NF a month. At first he operated as a *commissaire politique* in Wilaya 2, the Paris suburbs of Gennevilliers and Asnières, until promoted Régional of Colombes-Nanterre (2222) in December 1958.

Baba-Hamed, like so many migrant workers, moved frequently from one cheap lodging to another and during 1958-1959 he lived for a while in a workers’ hostel, a Foyer Nord-Africaine in Gennevilliers, the type of centre that was a target of FLN penetration and recruitment.⁷⁸ He then moved on to rooms at 82 Rue Vaillant-Couturier and then 2 Avenue de la Gare in Gennevilliers. Baba-Hamed was thus deeply immersed in the north-west industrial suburbs that had one of the biggest concentrations of Algerian migrants and FLN militants. In August 1959 he was again promoted to the level of Zonal head of Colombes (222) with three Regional leaders under his orders, Petit Mohamed (2222), Lakhdar (2221) and “El Chaouia” (2223). He was thus in charge of an area that stretched out to Argenteuil, Bezons, Houilles, Sartouville, Maison-Laffitte, Herblay, Cormeilles-en-Parisis, and Conflans-Ste.Honorine. In December 1959 he progressed to Amala or Superzonal (22), with three Zonal leaders under him, Si Mokrane (222), Si Mahmoud (221) and Si Djillali (223).

At some time in 1960, probably in May, Baba-Hamed was sent by the Federation to Germany on a special, six-month training course. While, as we will see (Chapter 5) the OS were initially trained at Larache in Morocco, by 1960 militants were sent in increasing numbers to courses that were developed by the Federal Committee in Germany, either to form a special commando to attack the FPA or to train as higher echelon leaders.⁷⁹ The numerous arrests of senior cadres in France had, by 1961, begun to take its toll, as many of the most experienced and politically aware men were confined to prisons and camps. Replacements drafted in from the mid-level hierarchy were, often within a few months, arrested in turn. The gradual decline in the quality and experience of leaders began to present a serious challenge to the Federation, a situation that was not helped by the fact that the GPRA and the military in Tunisia and Morocco were also attempting to increase their recruitment in France. It was in response to the growing dearth of able leaders that the Federal

⁷⁷ H1B16, *Fiche d’Interrogatoire Technique*, Abdelkader El Fasi, 16.pp. , undated. The internal details show this to be Baba-Hamed. This was not the first interrogation that Baba-Hamed had undergone since in it he rectifies certain incorrect information given previously. This might suggest that he had tried to hold out under duress during his first sessions with Montaner by falsifying dates and names.

⁷⁸ See M. A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 107-8.

⁷⁹ See, for example, the accounts by Mohamed Cherbi, Akli Djouder, and Abdelkader Moktar of their training in Germany during 1960, in Raymond Muelle, *7 Ans de Guerre en France* (Monaco: Editions du Patrimoine, 1994) 254-59; on the *écoles de cadre*, part financed by the German socialist youth, see A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 315.

Committee began to select promising militants for accelerated training in an *école des cadres* in West Germany. On his arrival at Bad Godesberg, the Bonn suburb in which many embassies were located, Baba-Hamed was instructed to go to the Hotel Diplomatique and to phone the Tunisian Embassy. From there he was transferred to a training centre near Cologne where he followed a course with eighteen other recruits.⁸⁰ Baba-Hamed said little about the content of the training programme, but interrogations of others arrested in 1961 provide some detail. For example, Mohand Bachiri, recounts how he received an ‘éducation politique....Pour commencer, il m'a longuement entretenu de l'histoire et de la géographie de l'Algérie’. He also learned how to write reports, and throughout the six months between January and July 1960, received an ‘entraînement au maniement des armes et au sabotage’.⁸¹ Djouder Akli recounted how, installed in an isolated house in the countryside, ‘Tous les matins un instructeur algérien nous donnait des cours sur les armes et les munitions. Nous avons effectué des tirs dans la cave. Il nous faisait aussi l'analyse politique des événements, nous apprenait les méthodes de reconnaissance, celles de la police, l'établissement de plans d'opération, comment répondre aux interrogatoires’.⁸² On completion of the programme Baba-Hamed was smuggled, via Switzerland, back across the French border in the usual system of car drop, foot crossing, and car pick-up. Soon after his arrival back in Paris he was introduced to “Le Rouquin”, the head of Wilaya 1 (Paris-Centre), whom he replaced in about December 1960 or January 1961.⁸³

One of the key concerns of Baba-Hamed’s interrogators was to establish the identity and function of his FLN contacts during 1960 and 1961, so as to construct a detailed picture of the changing networks. From the enormous volume of archival material it is difficult to build up a coherent overview of the network since many individuals were only known through a plethora of pseudonyms, and cadres constantly moved from one échelon to another, or between different regions of France. However, there is enough to go on to arrive at a fairly clear picture of the particular clandestine sub-network that Baba-Hamed operated during his period as contrôleur (RC1) between September and 9 November 1961, a phase that corresponded to the police crisis and 17 October demonstrations. He was appointed RC1 at the moment that the Wilaya structure in Paris was re-organised on 1 September 1961, and under his control was Wilaya 1, in the hands of Kaci Mâamar (“Kaddour”), and Wilaya 1B headed by a Kabyle, Belkacem Mellah, who was transferred there from Amala 11 on the right bank.⁸⁴

In Wilaya 1B, which covered a huge area of south-west France from Nantes and La Rochelle down to Bordeaux and Toulouse, the FLN had a very weak presence and, according to Baba-Hamed, ‘il n'y avait pratiquement pas d'organisation, pas de responsables’. Belkacem Mellah was actively trying to reorganise the Wilaya, particularly in the region of Nantes.⁸⁵ The monthly collection amounted to the relatively tiny amount of three to four millions, but even this was, ‘en baisse de plus de la moitié à cause des arrestations qui suivirent la manifestation du 17 octobre’.⁸⁶ Belkacem’s ‘pointe de chute’ in Paris, the location of occasional meetings with RC1, and where correspondence was received from the provinces was at the house of a taylor called ‘Oukaci’ at 43 Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Martin.⁸⁷ This turned out to be Rabah Sassi, born at Bordj-Ménaïel 15 January 1904, who was arrested during Flore

⁸⁰ H1B16.

⁸¹ H1B18, Interrogation of Mohand Bachiri by André Podborski, Commissaire-Adjoint SCAA, 11 February 1961.

⁸² R. Muelle, *7 Ans*, 258.

⁸³ H1B16. The dates at which Baba-Hamed returned from Germany and assumed control of Wilaya 1 are contradictory and confusing, probably because Baba-Hamed was feeding disinformation to Montaner, in part to avoid his connection to armed attacks on the FPA that may have exposed him to the death penalty.

⁸⁴ H1B19, the SAT intelligence officer Captain Parrent to Director of SCAA, 11 December 1961, identified “Belkacem” as Belgacem Mellah, who was passing under the identity of Mohamed Boubekeur, born at Michelet 20 June 1922.

⁸⁵ Belkacem had previously been head of Amala 11 (Paris banlieue).

⁸⁶ Wilaya 1B was in disarray in 1961, as shown by the inefficient collection due, reported DST analysts, to a ‘comptabilité désordonnée, détournements importants, pertes élévées’, H1B17.

⁸⁷ H1B16, Montaner interrogation of Baba-Hamed.

and interrogated the following day. He claimed, as might be expected, that he had only worked with the FLN under duress when about one and a half to two years earlier Baba-Hamed (alias "Alfred") and Belkacem had come to demand the use of his car and threatened him, 'parce que je refusais'.⁸⁸ In January or February 1961 Baba-Hamed, Mellah and a man who was identified from a photograph as probably Ahmed Belakbi, had held a meeting in his house: 'Je leur ai demandé que cela ne se reproduise plus'.⁸⁹ In time letters from Wilaya 1B arrived by post or were delivered by hand and then collected by agents.

Far more important was Baba-Hamed's role as *controleur* over Wilaya 1, Paris south, one of the most heavily populated and militant areas in the whole of France. Like the other two RCs, Saïd Amroun and Younès Aberkane, Baba-Hamed retained a safe-house that could be used for regular meetings with the head of Wilaya 1 and his two Amala lieutenants. This 'point de chute' was at 28/28b Rue Daubenton in the 5th arrondissement in the flat of a French artist, Savatier. At the last such meeting, on 5th November, Baba-Hamed had met there with "Kadour" [Kaci Mâamer], "Ahmed" of Amala 11 [Mohamed Tahar Labane], and "Rachid" of Amala 12 [Mohammed Ghafir].⁹⁰ Quite separate from this 'organic' structure was the extremely important system for the monthly movement of the funds for the whole of France, which was collected at the local Regional level by Algerians and then transported by European agents through a sequence of Paris counting houses and eventually centralised and banked by the Farès network. Baba-Hamed's remit within this accounting chain was to oversee the centralisation of the collection for Wilaya 1 at the home of Rovenstach, 6 Rue de Panama in the 18th, and for Wilaya 1B in the home of 'Mohammedi', 42 Rue Richet in the 13th, from where it was transferred by Jacques Girard to the RCI counting house in the home of Capon, at 78 Vaillant-Couturier in the south-east suburb of Alfortville.⁹¹

A third, and even more secretive, component of Baba-Hamed's network, that he was particularly loath to disclose to his interrogators, was that relating to his key role in the operation of the GA and OS armed groups. The police were particularly keen, in view of the FLN attacks on the FPA and individual police officers, to extract information on the structure and membership of the armed groups. Baba-Hamed had played a key role in planning the attacks on the harkis in late 1960: for example the major operation against the FPA base in the 13th arrondissement on 23 October 1960 had come about through orders transmitted from the Federation by 'Si-Said' [ie. Bouaziz] to him and 'Slimane' at a meeting in an HLM flat in the northern suburbs of Staines during which Baba-Hamed was ordered to prepare a commando of 30 men. After the massive arrests and dislocation of the Amirat commando in January 1961, Baba-Hamed was given the task of re-organising the GA, and documents found in his archives showed that it was he who received and monitored some of the plans relating to assassinations of police officers during and after September.

Montaner was particularly interested in documents that had been delivered to Baba-Hamed in a café on 25th October and had later been seized in his archive during Operation Flore. This consisted of a map of Fougères in Normandy, where the FLN had located a Brigadier de Police, Giner, who had been moved there in 1959 and was now living in the Gendarmerie in the Rue Laval. Giner had been condemned to death by the ALN in 1956 and had escaped an assassination attempt: 'Plus de cinq

⁸⁸ H1B16, Interrogation of Rabah Sassi, Fort Noisy-le-Sec, 11 November 1961.

⁸⁹ Ahmed Belakbi or Belakebi, known as 'Moustache' or 'Petit Mouloud', was for a brief period of about two months, until about January 1961, Zonal 121.

⁹⁰ Baba-Hamed claimed that 'Rachid' had replaced 'Jacques' [Mohamed Seghir, or "Messaoud"] as head of Amala 12 when the latter was moved to the east of France. After the Flore arrests Seghir was made head of Wilaya 3, until his arrest on 2 January 1962, see M.A. Benyounès, *7 Ans*, 111,113, 139. Mohamed Seghir may have been replaced first by Bachir Boudjema, since Ghafir in his memoirs says that he had succeeded Boudjema, who was murdered by the FPA on 15 August 1961 and thrown into the Seine, see M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 96-7, 173. Ghafir makes no mention in his book of Baba-Hamed or the meeting of 5 November.

⁹¹ H1B16. This was probably an old contact since Baba-Hamed had, while a Regional in 1958-59, lived for eight months at 82 Rue Vaillant-Couturier.

cents (500) victimes lui sont imputables'. There followed a description of this 'type espagnol', probably a pied-noir, who spoke Arabic.⁹²

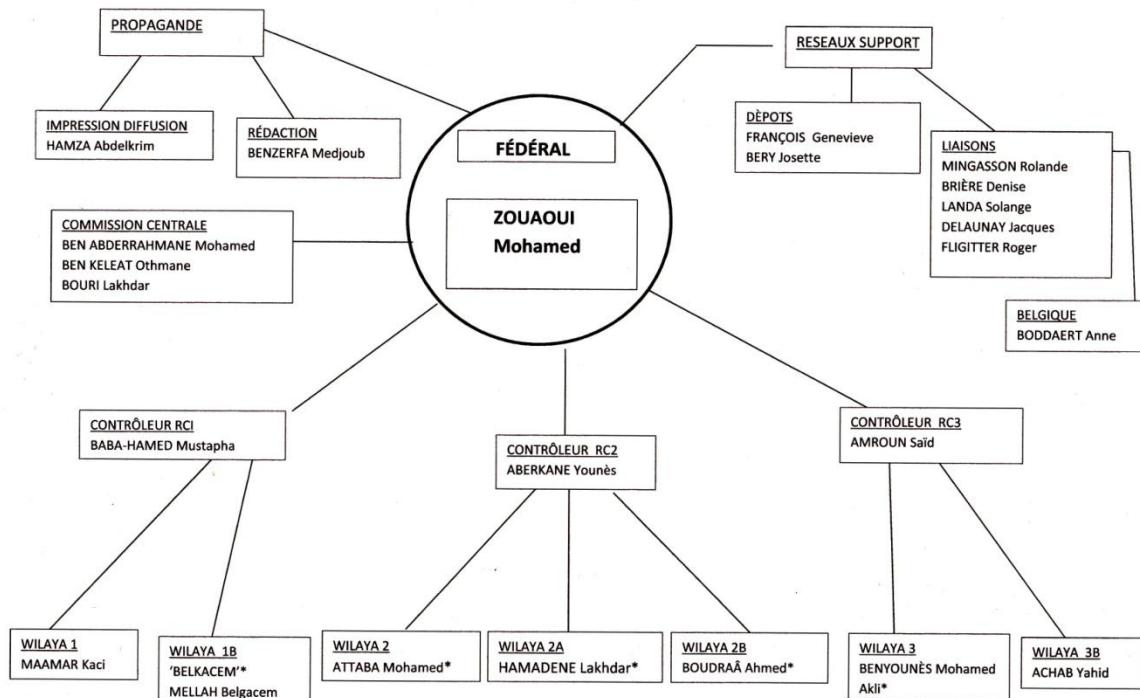


Figure 2. The Structure of the Zouaoui network, before Operation "Flore"

Sources: figure2 has been based mainly on sources and an 'organigramme' to be found in the DST Desbons Report, H1B16. The identification of the leaders of Wilayas 2, 2A, 2B, and 3 is from a table in Mohamed Akli Benyouñès, *Sept Ans*, 124. Benyouñès table incorrectly identifies Saddek as head of Wilaya 1 when, as Mohammed Ghafir's memoirs show beyond doubt, this position was held by Kaci Mâamar. The leader of Wilaya 1B "Belkacem", has been identified from H1B19, as Belgacem Mellah.

A key objective of the security forces was to locate FLN arms caches, so vital to operations of the armed groups, and a major coup for Montaner was his rapid location of two OS dépôts.⁹³ On the night of 10 November an FPA officer, Champsavin, assisted by the Police judiciaire and BAV police, raided the workshop of a tapestry-maker (or upholsterer?), 33 year-old Roland Morne, at 43 Rue de Montreuil (11th). Morne, who was known to the police from 1958 as a Communist militant, must have been tipped off via FLN contacts since he escaped before he could be arrested and phoned his workman on 11 November to say, rather wisely, that he was, 'en voyage pour une durée

⁹² H1B16, interrogation; the documents are in H1B21.

⁹³ H1B12, the Director of SCAA in a report to Papon, noted that Baba-Hamed had revealed, 'l'existence de 2 dépôts constitués à son échelon et, bien qu'il s'en défende, à l'usage de l'OS'.

indéterminée'.⁹⁴ At Morne's the police found a significant cache of twelve automatic pistols, dynamite, electric fuses and cartridges. A second arms dépôt was found in the home or practice of a dentist, Dr.Maurice Lambert, at Clichy-sous-Bois.⁹⁵

At the next level down from the *responsables contrôleur*s, the DST failed to identify the seven Wilaya heads, with the exception of Yahia Achab who had the bad luck to arrive from Marseille at his FLN contact address at the very moment that the secret service was searching it. The fact that RC documents and interrogations failed to identify the Wilaya heads is significant, since it suggests that the clandestine structure of the FLN, by which at any one level only one militant would have contact with the cell above, so as to prevent discovery by the police services, appears to have worked effectively. Omar Boudaoud remarks that each full-time responsable, at Wilaya, Zone and Region level, tended to construct his own local network and the Federal Committee members only found out the identity of these individuals when they were arrested and their organisations broken up.⁹⁶

A quite secure bulk-head seems to have operated between the Federal and the Wilaya/Supersonal level. As Desbons noted, Zouaoui's daily contacts remained circumscribed to a small circle: 'Pratiquement, Zouaoui n'avait de contacts directs et fréquents qu'avec ses contrôleurs de wilayas (Amroune Saïd, Baba-Hamed, Aberkane Younès), les membres de la commission centrale ou les individus ayant un rôle sur le plan national'. The hermetic nature of the upper-Zouaoui circle helps to explain why it was that quite high-placed militants in the Federation, such as Mohammed Ghafir who was head of Amala 12, could be both close to the action during the autumn of 1961 in Paris and yet remain, apparently, without any knowledge of the identity of the Federal and his activities.

⁹⁴ H1B18.

⁹⁵ H1B16.

⁹⁶ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 139-40.

3

The European Support Network, Renault, and FLN Propaganda

Europeans, mainly French, German, Belgian and Swiss, were vital to the operations and security of the French Federation and yet the so-called *porteurs de valises* who were arrested by the DST during Operation Flore have, until recently, remained largely unknown. Hamon and Rotman, in their standard history, *Les Porteurs de Valises*, do not identify or name a single agent in the Zouaoui network. This anonymity is itself of interest and can be explained in relation to the longer term evolution of the support networks in France. Omar Boudaoud, throughout his leadership of the French Federation, from July 1957 to the autumn of 1962, disliked the fact that the most prominent heads of the support networks, notably Francis Jeanson and Henri Curiel, strongly asserted the right of the European militants to pursue their own political agendas, that were not to be confused with those of the Algerian independence movement. Boudaoud, in his first meeting with Jeanson in 1957, bluntly asserted, ‘Vous faites un travail clandestin et vous continuez à avoir une activité publique, à donner des conférences. Tout ça, c'est fini’.⁹⁷ Boudaoud’s view was that the Europeans should confine themselves to a purely technical support function, and he was suspicious of any autonomous political agendas, especially if they should be linked in any way to international communism. Boudaoud was unable to impose his position, especially on Curiel’s *Mouvement anticolonialiste français* (MAF) founded in July 1960, but by late 1960 the Jeanson network, and Jeanson himself, had been marginalised through mass arrests, and the DST captured Curiel in October.

On 1 November 1960 Boudaoud seized the chance to call a top-level meeting of the French network in Germany and was able to put in place, through Jacques Vignes and Georges Mattéi, an organisation that recruited new people who prioritised technical support over sectarian politics and were happy to abandon the culture of intellectual ‘stardom’ for one of anonymity and the quiet acceptance of the FLN payroll and directives.⁹⁸ Gérard Chaliand, a student in Oriental studies (“Langues O”), described the climate in January 1961 among the post-Curiel network, one in which there was little political debate, and quite a number of “solitaires” who were not connected to any competing organisation or movement. The Zouaoui network that was arrested in November 1961 was formed from January 1961 onwards, in deep clandestinity and far away from any media attention. Chaliand, however, like Claude Vinci, was aware of the fact that the support networks were essentially under the control of the Federal: ‘Le contact avec le Front passait par Mattéi et moi. Notre interlocuteur habituel était Zouaoui, alias “M.H” ou “Mustapha le noir”’.⁹⁹

From this it can be seen why the European support network which was so heavily implicated in the events surrounding the demonstration of 17 October has remained, until now, largely unknown. The Zouaoui network was constructed from January 1961 onwards, as had the earlier Jeanson-Curiel organisations, through key activists recruiting trusted friends or associates in an ad hoc way, contacts who were judged to be discrete and who were able to offer quite specific skills or materials, as secretaries, owners of cars, print workers, or who could secure flats or homes that could accommodate FLN cadres, collect money, or conceal documents and arms.

By far the single most important organiser of the Zouaoui network was a twenty-six year old woman, Rolande Mingasson, who was variously described by the DST as Zouaoui’s ‘agent financier’, ‘secrétaire’, ‘agent de liaison’ and ‘agent d’exécution’. Mingasson, born at St. Cloud on 25 July 1934, had no previous police or security record, but the DST investigation showed that between 1955 and 1960 she had been very active on the Catholic left, notably in the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique* (JOC)

⁹⁷ H. Hamon and P. Rotman, *Les Porteurs de valises*, 81; Marie-Pierre Ulloa, *Francis Jeanson, un intellectuel en dissidence de la Résistance à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Berg International Editeurs, 2001), 146-7.

⁹⁸ H. Hamon and P. Rotman, *Les Porteurs de valises*, 201-2, 239-40, 263-273, 324-29; on Mattéi see Jean-Luc Einaudi, *Franc-tireur: Georges Mattéi, de la guerre d'Algérie à la guérilla* (n.p: Editions du Sextant, 2004).

⁹⁹ H. Hamon and P. Rotman, *Les Porteurs de valises*, 331-2.

and in CFTC trade union circles. In the municipal elections of 8 March 1959 she had stood as a candidate for the *Union des Forces Démocratiques* (UFD), a cartel of the non-Communist left that was in opposition to de Gaulle after he returned to power on the back of the Algerian army coup of 13 May 1958. Private correspondence, seized on 9 November, shows that in 1961 Mingasson, like many of the activists opposed to the Algerian War, was deeply anxious that France was threatened by a dangerous fascism, and thought that clandestine opposition to the military, the OAS and the Gaullists, was legitimated by values that were synonymous with those of the French Resistance. In July 1959 Mingasson joined the *Union de Gauche socialiste* (UGS) and eventually, on 1 November 1960, the *Parti socialiste unifié* (PSU), the party that was to mark the emergence of the "New Left" out of the cauldron of the Algerian War.¹⁰⁰

From February 1957 to January 1961 Mingasson worked as a librarian for the Renault *Comité d'Entreprise* at Boulogne-Billancourt. During these years Renault employed about 3,000 Algerian workers and, as a bastion of working-class militancy, represented a crucial support base for both FLN and French liaison cadres.¹⁰¹ An unusually high percentage of French support agents were current or ex-Renault workers, and the enormous factory, with its trade unions, and rich political and social networks that reached out into the surrounding urban quartiers, provided an ideal environment for close, personal contacts between individual Algerians and French anti-war activists. Mingasson was representative of this pattern and in 1960 Renault internal security had noted her association with the FLN militant Mohamed Aït Aissa. Mingasson left Renault in January 1961 and it seems highly likely that this was the moment that she became a full-time salaried worker for the FLN and Zouaoui, in itself an indicator of her importance to the nationalists.¹⁰²

As DST agents tracked her every move between 22 September and 9 November 1961 they built up an extremely precise picture of her contacts and her pivotal role in orchestrating the entire Zouaoui network. Since the FLN was well aware that the police intercepted telephone calls, the leaders in Paris communicated on a daily basis through a secure system of courriers that carried verbal and written messages. Mingasson was tracked as she constantly moved, sometimes on her scooter, between Zouaoui, all three of the RCs, and other top-level cadres. She carried out secretarial functions, for which she held a copy of the official FLN stamp, and assisted in the drafting of tracts and communiqués through liaison with the propaganda officer Medjoub Benzerfa, delivered copy to the clandestine printer Abdelkrim Hamza, and organised mail distributions to the press, politicians and embassies. Mingasson, who lived in a flat at 18 Avenue de Verdun in the suburb of Vanves, paid for by the FLN, also helped to locate and rent properties that served as safe-houses, as in the case of the RC1 Baba-Hamed in the Rue des Saints-Pères.¹⁰³ Particularly onerous was the end-of-month process of co-ordinating the arrival of the bulky money collection by courriers from the Wilayas, its counting in ten different reception dépôts, and eventual centralisation at Federal level before banking and transfer abroad.

Mingasson also helped to recruit or co-ordinate the activities of other European members of the Zouaoui network. She appears to have been particularly close to Denise Brière, a twenty-seven year old shorthand typist at Renault, with whom she shared an FLN-financed flat in the Avenue de Verdun. Brière moved in similar political circles to Mingasson and in 1959 headed the section Le Pré

¹⁰⁰ See Marc Heurgon, *Histoire du PSU, i. La Fondation et la guerre d'Algérie (1958-1962)* (Paris: La Découverte, 1994).

¹⁰¹ See Laure Pitti, 'Renault, la "fortresse ouvrière" à l'épreuve de la guerre d'Algérie', *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 83 (July-September 2004), 131-43; and 'Ouvriers algériens à Renault-Billancourt de la guerre d'Algérie aux grèves d'OS des années 1970: Contribution à l'histoire sociale et politique des ouvriers étrangers en France', doctoral thesis (University of Paris-VIII, 2002).

¹⁰² Only a small number of key underground organisers, among them Francis Jeanson, Jacques Vignes, and Hélène Cuénat, were paid full-time by the FLN at a rate of 75,000 francs per month: see M. Ulloa, *Histoire du PSU*, 150. When the DST arrested Mingasson they found the accounts for her personal budget between May and October 1961, as well as the costs of liaison agents when, for example, they travelled to Brussels, and rented safe-houses.

¹⁰³ H1B20, accounts seized from Mingasson include the rent paid for various flats.

St.-Gervais-Pantin-Lillas of the *Union de la Gauche Socialiste*. Brière was already known to the police in early 1961 for her contacts with a member of the FLN collective of lawyers, Mireille Glaymann, and an unidentified Renault worker "M.H" who controlled FLN funds. On her interrogation in the Rue des Saussaies, 'Elle déclare être membre d'un réseau de soutien du FLN, mais ne veut donner aucune précision sur son action'. However, in her bedroom at her parents home, 68 Rue Eduard Vaillant (Le Prés-St.Gervais), the DST found various FLN leaflets, including two draft AGTA tracts that were partly in her hand, and a manuscript, '*Liste des martyrs algériens guillotinés au fort de Montluc à Lyon*'. The clandestine trade union, the *Amicale générale des travailleurs algériens* (AGTA), which played a crucial logistic role in the FLN French Federation, had its main base at Renault under the leadership of Omar Ouhadj. Brière was, evidently, providing secretarial assistance to the underground union that, as we will see later, was to play a significant role in planning the demonstration of 17 October.

Among other arrested support agents working in the Mingasson circuit was Josette Bery [or Berry], Jacques Delaunay, Solange Landa, and Roger Fligitter. The DST found in the office of Bery, a secretary in the Touring-Club (65, Avenue de la Grande Armée), 108,390,000 francs, a significant deposit of the FLN monthly collection, documents relating to Wilaya 3B (Marseille), and various stencils typed out at the request of Mingasson, who had been seen visiting the Club on 7 October. Solange Landa, a psychology student, who lived with her husband Michel at 61 Rue de Rennes, also did typing, and had various documents in her possession, including FLN accounts, seals and envelopes left by "Geneviève" (Mingasson) on 8 November. Landa admitted that she had travelled to Brussels as a courier on 17 October, using a seat reservation that was booked and paid for her by Mingasson, and had delivered an envelope, almost certainly from Zouaoui to the Federal Committee, to a liaison agent, "Anna" [Boddaert].

Typical of the piece-meal growth of the network through personal contacts was the way in which Landa introduced her friend Jacques Delauney, an official in the Air Ministry (*Service de Documentation et d'Information*), to Mingasson who then recruited him as a driver. Mingasson asked him to act as a courier and on 27 October she had given him 30,000 francs and two envelopes, also to be taken to Boddaert in Brussels. On 9 November the DST arrested Delaunay and Mingasson as they left Landa's to post an FLN statement to the press and various embassies and politicians.¹⁰⁴ Finally, Roger Fligitter, a senior accountant at Renault, admitted that as a member of the PSU he had collected money in the factory for Algerian prisoners, and had acted as a courier to Brussels in late August and early September, and, using a train reservation booked by Mingasson, on 14 October 1961. The role of Landa, Delaunay, Fligitter and Mingasson as courriers between Paris and Brussels is, as will be seen in Chapter 7, particularly significant since these agents carried the vital exchange of orders and correspondence that passed between Zouaoui and the Federal Committee during the planning for the 17 October.

Needless to say there were other support agents whom the DST failed to locate, or who were identified later. For example, after the arrest of Yahia Achab, head of Wilaya 3B, during Operation Flore, the police searched his home in Marseille where they found, among other documents, the Paris address of Joseph Mosze Hamburger, an ex-PCF militant and businessman born in Warsaw in 1925. When the DST raided his home in the 19th arrondissement they found 4,625,000 francs which he explained, according to Desbons in a 'fantaisistes' way, as a tax-evasion fraud linked to his business. Hamburger went on to support this story by recounting how between 15th and 20th August 1961 he had driven to Switzerland with 20 millions, of which 5 millions belonged to his mother. The DST suspected, certainly with good reason, that Hamburger was an FLN support agent.¹⁰⁵ Later, on 12 December 1961 the police also arrested Naceur Bouchouchi, known as "Khemal" or "Philippe", a law student living at the Cité Universitaire at Antony. Bouchouchi was in charge of OS logistics, the safe storage of weapons, who admitted that he had deposited two suitcases of arms with Robert

¹⁰⁴ Jacques Delaunay's wife, Jeanne, secretary to Astier de la Vigerie, editor of *Libération*, denied all knowledge of her husband's activities and was released by the DST.

¹⁰⁵ H1B16.

Letrous, the father of his girlfriend. Letrous, PDG of the *Compagnie générale du Disque Populaire*, also happened to employ Hamburger as his 'secretary'.¹⁰⁶

The French support agents, apart from providing safe houses, dépôts, and chauffeurs, in part through their links to the intellectual world of higher education, journalism, publication and secretariats, played a particularly important role in the writing, printing and distribution of FLN press releases and tracts. This is examined in the remaining part of this chapter in relation to Mejdoub Benzerfa, the head of Federation propaganda in Paris, and also through the significant role of Renault as a centre of militant and trade union support.

Mejdoub Benzerfa and propaganda

On the 22 September 1961 DST agents, after patiently tracking Mejdoub Benzerfa for many months, were eventually led to Zouaoui and his network. Investigation of Benzerfa, a school teacher from Colombes, revealed one of the most politically experienced cadres of the Paris Federation who was head of press, information and propaganda. During the events of October 1961 he was involved in the writing, printing and distribution of at least seven tracts and communiqués that provide important information on the way in which the FLN attempted to use propaganda to influence both Algerian and French public opinion in relation to the 17 October massacre, and the 'official' interpretations that it wished to diffuse.

As the Algerian War progressed, the FLN became increasingly aware of the enormous importance of propaganda to the eventual outcome: indeed, historians have increasingly recognised that independence was won as much through the influence gained over international opinion, particularly through the UN and the global media, as through military means.¹⁰⁷ Ali Haroun, who was head of propaganda on the Federal Committee, remarks, 'En effet, dans la lutte que mènent les Algériens, un tract percutant, une déclaration convaincante, un communiqué opportun, un appel entendu, ou une mise au point qui arrive à son heure, font autant pour la cause qu'une embuscade dans les maquis ou l'attentat contre un policier tortionnaire'.¹⁰⁸ The key propaganda body that Haroun organised from June 1958 onwards was the *Commission centrale de presse et d'information*, which co-ordinated the activities of the *délégué à la presse et à l'information* (DPI) who worked with the head of each Wilaya. Benzerfa, as DPI attached to Zouaoui, was in effect the highest level information officer for France as a whole. Following Benzerfa's interrogation and the analysis of documents seized from his home on 9 November, the Desbons report summarised his role, 'A l'échelon national, le responsable à la propagande prépare la rédaction, l'impression et la diffusion des tracts, communiqués, instructions générales destinés aux militants ou parfois à l'ensemble de l'opinion publique. Les thèmes sont choisis par le Fédéral et la Commission Centrale avec lesquels le responsable à la propagande entretient des liaisons constantes. Ce responsable dispose d'une imprimerie clandestine'.¹⁰⁹ The DPI was, however, far more than a technician for the printing and distribution of materials, but an intelligence officer and intellectual whose task it was to gather and analyse information relating to the state of opinion and morale among both Algerian migrants as well as the French public, including trade union, church and political groups.¹¹⁰ On the 5th and 20th of each month the DPI sent a report to Haroun and the *Commission centrale de presse* in Germany

¹⁰⁶ H1B18, Report of 14 December 1961. Robert Letrous hid the suitcases with his aged parents, both PCF militants, who lived south-west of Paris at Garenne-Colombes.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: OUP, 2002).

¹⁰⁸ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 115.

¹⁰⁹ H1B16, Desbons Report.

¹¹⁰ In this respect the function of the DPI was similar to that of the French *Renseignements généraux* (RG), and can be placed within the broader context of the function of 'Humint', information on economic, social, and psychological matters that were developed by the modern state: see Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence. Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 19-28.

which included, 'l'opinion de l'émigration, exprimée par les militants, les cadres et les non-militants...la synthèse des rapports politiques et des informations diverses émanant de la base', as well as, 'l'opinion française vue à travers les partis politiques, les syndicats, les églises, l'homme de la rue'.¹¹¹ Benzerfa thus played a pivotal role in the Federation during the crisis of 1961 since he, more than anyone, was required to gather intelligence as to the state of Algerian and French opinion in relation to the unfolding violence in Paris, intelligence on which both the Federal Committee and Zouaoui depended for assessing the situation.

Benzerfa was born on 2 February 1930 in the small town of Perregaux (today Mohammadia) in Oran province, and was raised in a strong nationalist family that supported Messali's PPA. By 1957 he was already known to the French police as a communist militant, possibly the head of the PCA in France, who had attended the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow that opened on 28th July 1957, and was suspected to be the author of a text intended for the UN. However, Benzerfa, like other communist militants, was required to join the FLN on an individual basis, and by 1958 he was listed as a student in law and active in the *Union générale des étudiants musulmans algériens* (UGEMA).¹¹² The UGEMA was a hot-bed of nationalist militancy, and from its ranks the FLN recruited numerous cadres. In mid-August 1958 Ali Haroun organised his new team of DTI officers: Ali Kara-Mustapha ("Karl"), a law student, appointed to Wilaya 2; Mustapha Francis ("François"), a dental student, allocated to Wilaya 4; Abdelatif Rahal ("René"), a student in political science and law, Wilaya 3; and Medjoub Benzerfa ("Marcel"), a teacher at a boy's school in Colombes, to Wilaya 1 (Paris-Centre).¹¹³ Within a few months the network was decimated by arrests, only Benzerfa remaining in place at Wilaya level, and Ladlani, in March 1959, noting that, 'le service presse et information est pratiquement inexistant', ordered a reorganisation of the network. This was finally achieved by Haroun through a clandestine meeting on 6-7 September 1959 in Lausanne attended by Benzerfa and other newly appointed DTIs, among them Zouaoui for Wilaya 3B (Marseille).¹¹⁴ It was agreed in Lausanne that Haroun and the DTIs should meet to co-ordinate activities every three months and, mainly with the assistance of Catholic support networks, such clandestine gatherings were subsequently held in Switzerland (Geneva), Belgium (Liège, Lustin), and Germany (near Sarrebrucken).¹¹⁵

During one such liaison trip in July 1960 Benzerfa was located by DST agents in Germany in contact with two unidentified Federation cadres, one of whom was later identified as Zouaoui, and when intercepted catching a train for Dusseldorf he said that he was visiting his mistress Elisa Brunk. From that moment Benzerfa was identified as the head of propaganda in France and was tracked continuously by the DST with the hope that he would eventually lead them to the Federal, which he eventually did in June 1961.¹¹⁶ Ali Haroun recounts in detail a further incident at Brussels station on 7 January 1961 when he narrowly escaped arrest, but all four DTI agents, including Benzerfa, were arrested and interrogated by the Belgian police. Although quickly released, information was passed to the French police that then arrested two of the Wilaya DTI soon after, and eventually Benzerfa.¹¹⁷ By October 1961 Benzerfa was the longest surviving and most experienced FLN specialist in propaganda on French soil, although, unknown to him at the time, he owed his longevity to a deliberate DST tracking policy. Haroun notes that the highly able DTI cadres were often later promoted to act as Wilaya heads or RCs, and this was true of Zouaoui who was made Federal, in January 1961. Among his closest advisers in Paris was Benzerfa, whom he already knew well from the quarterly liaison meetings with Haroun and the other Wilaya DTIs during 1959 and 1960.

¹¹¹ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 120.

¹¹² H1B16, DST files.

¹¹³ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 92, 116-17; the first DTI reports for August 1958 are quoted by Haroun, 104-6.

¹¹⁴ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 120-1.

¹¹⁵ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 124. Unknown to the Belgian Minister Charles Moureaux, the Lustin meeting was held in his country home.

¹¹⁶ H1B16.

¹¹⁷ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 123-125.

When the DST officers arrested Benzerfa in the early hours of 10 November at his home, 208 Rue d'Estienne-d'Orves in Colombes, they found a number of tracts and communiqués, some in a handwritten form with his corrections.¹¹⁸ Although Benzerfa did not give much away during his interrogation in Room 110 of the DST HQ, the police had little difficulty in piecing together the network that he used for typing, printing and distribution. This is reconstructed next, before moving on to analyse more closely the content of the tracts and press releases, and the propaganda intentions of the Federal Committee and the Paris FLN. The publication and distribution network are here divided into two distinct, although interconnecting, parts: the Renault-AGTA organisation, that constituted a trade union branch of the FLN, and the autonomous Federation network that included the FLN clandestine print works.

The Renault-AGTA organisation

The huge Renault factory at Billancourt, the so-called "Fortresse Ouvrière", played an exceptional part in the post-war history of Algerian nationalism. As Laure Pitti has shown, the 3,000 Algerian workers in the plant, through their long contact with one of the great centres of French working class militancy, trade union activism, and left-wing politics, received an invaluable education in political organisation. Numerous top FLN cadres received their formation at Renault, such as Saïd Slyémi, Aboubeker Belkaïd, Slimane Ben Rahou, Omar Ouhadj, Arezki Ziani, Larbi Bendaoud, Mohand Aït Aissa and Laïfa Lattad, mainly through the CGT *commission nord africaine*, and the AGTA that was founded in 1957.¹¹⁹ Omar Ouhadj, the head of AGTA, remarks that Renault provided a recruitment ground for FLN cadres and that the Amicale had a specific function in educating and training militants: 'L'AGTA avait aussi pour rôle de former des militants, politiquement, et ces militants devaient être mis à la disposition du FLN sur simple demande. Et à partir de ce moment-là, ils quittaient la structure de l'AGTA, on ne les connaissait plus et ils rentraient directement dans la clandestinité'.¹²⁰ When the French Communist Party supported the repressive Special Powers act in March 1956, what Ouhadj referred to as 'la grande trahison', and campaigned for 'peace' in Algeria, but not independence, many Algerians left the PCF, and a deep rupture took place between Algerian militants and French workers. From mid-1956 onwards Algerian workers at Renault, under instructions from the FLN, participated in autonomous strikes or actions that received little support from the CGT and French workers who were either hostile or apathetic towards the struggle for independence.¹²¹ Increasingly from February 1957 Algerians organised themselves in the *Conseil d'Entreprise de l'AGTA* and, after this was banned by the government in August 1958, continued to operate as a clandestine arm of the FLN.¹²² Despite the rift between the AGTA militants and the main body of workers, the Renault plant still offered exceptional conditions of protection for nationalist activism. Firstly, although Renault had its own internal security service that spied on Algerians and a minority of French supporters, the high level militancy of the French work force meant that the police or other state agents dare not put foot into the factory since this would be met by immediate muscular opposition, if not violence. This meant that FLN militants had a relatively police-free and protected environment in which to operate and they could, for example, move freely around the factory under the cover of shop-stewards work.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Zouaoui, in a letter to the Federation Committee, Paris 17 October 1961, stated: 'Ci-joint une lettre de Marcel à son responsable dont il est coupé, paraît-il, depuis plusieurs mois. Son pointe de chute à l'extérieur est-il toujours valable?', *Sou'al*, 81. 'Marcel' was the pseudonym of Benzerfa, and the message suggests that he was left for a long period of time, without guidance from Ali Haroun, to run the propaganda network.

¹¹⁹ See L. Pitti, 'Ouvrier algériens'; René Gallissot (ed.), *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier: Maghreb* (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2006), 99-100, 128, 554-5.

¹²⁰ Interview with Omar Ouhadj, Gharchizy, 15 May 1993: transcript kindly made available by Laure Pitti.

¹²¹ L. Pitti, 'Renault, la "fortresse ouvrière"', 139-40.

¹²² L. Pitti 'Ouvriers algériens', 426-28.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 434.

Secondly, among the 27,000 French workforce, there existed a small, but extremely important and disparate body of militants who were deeply committed to the Algerian cause and fully prepared to risk imprisonment. Among them were communist militants like Clara and Henri Benoits, who were prepared to defy the PCF party line, Trotskyists, left-Catholic radicals, CFTC trade unionists like George Lepage, and socialists who were moving away from the Socialist Party towards a left current that eventually became the PSU.¹²⁴ This diverse group of militants, many of whom worked within the Renault social or trade union secretariats, possessed skills or had access to equipment and materials, that enabled them to type, duplicate, print and distribute FLN tracts. Yvette Magué, for example, a PCF militant at Renault who was disowned by her party on her arrest in February 1961, justified her ‘aide tant morale que matérielle’, as ‘une Française consciente de ses responsabilités et tout en restant dans les perspectives révolutionnaires qui sont celles qu’on lui a toujours enseignées’.¹²⁵ Likewise Francine Riquier, who was arrested along with the AGTA leader Aboubekr Belkaïd on 6 February 1961, was immediately excluded by the PCF.¹²⁶ Operation Flore revealed in great detail the central role of Renault personnel in the Zouaoui network, in particular of Rolande Mingasson who left Renault in January 1961 to take up the role of full-time paid agent in the FLN network. Mingasson worked closely, as we have seen, with Denise Brière, a shorthand typist in the Renault *Comité d’entreprise*, and among documents seized by the DST were two AGTA tracts, part of which had been written by her.¹²⁷ The arrest of Roger Fligitter, a senior accountant at Renault, who admitted his role as a courier, suggests how far the FLN support network had penetrated even into higher management levels of the company.

After the arrest of Aboubeker Belkaïd in February 1961, Omar Ouhadj remained as the head of the AGTA organisation both for Renault and the whole of France. Ouhadj, who worked at Renault from 1952 to 1963, worked in the *Comité d’Etablissement*, and was a CGT and PCF militant until he left the party in 1956.¹²⁸ It was Ouhadj who played the key role in organising the clandestine AGTA as an integral part of the FLN network from 1958 onwards, and during the crisis of October 1961 he was not only consulted directly by Omar Boudaoud in Belgium, but also assisted in the clandestine publication of various tracts, including two important AGTA leaflets dated the 10th and 12 October (see below). As Haroun, head of propaganda on the Federal Committee acknowledged the, ‘AGTA fournira à l’organisation du FLN en France un soutien inestimable en lui procurant des agents de liaison, des lieux d’hébergement, des moyens d’impression pour sa littérature, des transporteurs sûrs ou les caches indispensables pour ses fonds’.¹²⁹ Among the documents seized by the DST from Geneviève François, who acted as secretary and liaison agent to Younes Aberkane (RC2), were typed copies of the two AGTA tracts, with a hand written note signed “Maurice” [Zouaoui] in which he requested, ‘Veux-tu communiquer les 2 tracts inclus dans cette lettre à l’AGTA et leur demandent de faire le tirage et la distribution aux Français’.¹³⁰ This would indicate that AGTA-headed publications were, in some instances, actually written by FLN cadres, probably Mejdoub Benzerfa.

The Federation, in addition to the support of AGTA, thought it important to control its own clandestine printing operation. Among those arrested during Operation Flore was Abdelkrim Hamza, a forty-two year old carpenter from Algiers who lived with his wife and two children at 56 Boulevard Diderot in the 12th arrondissement. Hamza was already known to the police since he had been

¹²⁴ On the role of Clara and Henri Benoits during 17 October see Michel Levine, *Les Ratonnades d’Octobre. Un meutre collectif à Paris en 1961* (Paris: Editions Ramsay, 1985), 120-26; Jacques Charby, *Les Porteurs d’Espoir. Les réseaux de soutien au FLN pendant la guerre d’Algérie: les acteurs parlent* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 146-7; Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *Le 17 octobre 1961. Un crime d’état à Paris* (Paris: La Dispute, 2001), 32-5; on Georges Lepage, *delegué du personnel* CFTC at Renault, J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 60.

¹²⁵ L. Pitti, ‘Renault, la “fortresse ouvrière”’, 141.

¹²⁶ L. Pitti, ‘Ouvriers algériens’, 453-4; A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 299.

¹²⁷ H1B16; H1B20, contains the ‘Liste des martyrs’ and other documents, including the tract ‘Appel au peuple Français’, of 18 October 1961.

¹²⁸ L. Pitti ‘Ouvriers algériens’, 344.

¹²⁹ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 72.

¹³⁰ H1B20.

interviewed by them in late 1959 and was accused of providing a car to Mohammed Aït El Hocine, or Idir, head of Wilaya 2 for an FLN operation. DST agents were led to Hamza's house on 11 October by an unsuspecting Mingasson ("Michel"), who, as Zouaoui's liaison agent, sent his orders and also paid for printing paper and equipment and delivered a Beretta pistol. While the DST found nothing in Hamza's home, they quickly moved to his atelier at 11 Rue des Haies in the 20th arrondissement where they found concealed behind a false wall a clandestine press, including a ton of printing paper, two 'ultra-modern' roneos, a calculating machine, and three typewriters.¹³¹ During his interrogation, 'Hamza reconnaît que le stock de papeterie et le matériel d'imprimerie lui ont été confiés par le FLN depuis un an environ. Il tire avec ce matériel, tous les mois, des tracts ou communiqués en 5 ou 6,000 exemplaires. Le matériel lui a été fourni par un nommé "Michel"'. Mingasson would give him publication deadlines for particular tracts, and had also been present at the delivery of a new Girda duplicator.¹³²

FLN-AGTA tracts, 10th to 18th October.

The final part of this chapter sets out to look more closely at the content of several tracts and communiqués that were disseminated by the Zouaoui network during the planning stage of the October 17 demonstration.¹³³ These publications, beside illustrating the propaganda methods of the Federation, provide important clues as to official FLN thinking at this precise moment. In chronological sequence, the first three tracts were published as a *Lettre Ouverte de l'AGTA* (10 October 1961), *Après Bab El Oued*, and *Des Précisions* (both 12 October 1961), and indicate an intense flurry of propaganda activity during the lead-in to 17 October. These tracts, as we have seen above, although issued under the AGTA letterhead were almost certainly composed by Benzerfa, and provide a good example of the way in which the Federation attempted to influence French opinion through 'parallel hierarchies', organisations that would not necessarily be recognised as instruments of the FLN.

By early October the Federation was becoming increasingly concerned and bitter at the failure of the French media and public opinion to take any notice of the dramatic and deepening nature of police assaults and killings of Algerians in Paris. Among the documents seized during Operation Flore was a draft tract or communiqué by Medjoub Benzerfa in which he attacked the failure of the French press to address the issue of state violence and protested, 'contre le mur de silence élevé par certaines organes d'information', and what was a virtual "black out" [in English] in relation to the FLN Appeal and other press releases.¹³⁴

The *Lettre Ouverte de l'AGTA* of 10 October, addressed to the main trade unions (CGT, CFTC, FO, UNEF...), newspaper editors, the political parties, the President of the *Conseil Général de la Seine*, Cardinal Feltin, and various human rights organisations (the MRAP, the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*, and the *Commission des Sauvegarde des Libertés*), was a heart-felt cri de coeur. The *Lettre*, written immediately prior to decision of the Federal Committee to organise a mass demonstration, set out to expose and detail the deepening barbaric repression and killings that Algerians were undergoing at the hands of Papon's police. 'Au cœur même de Paris, de paisibles travailleurs algériens sont journalement abattus par des rafales de mitraillettes [...] à Nanterre, à Puteaux, à Suresnes, Coubevoie, Colombes, Boulogne-Billancourt, etc.... d'autres de nos compatriotes ont été torturés, assassinés, étranglés et jetés dans la Seine [...] A tout ceci, s'ajoutent les déportations en masse vers les camps de concentrations en Algérie [...] Nous savons que tous ces crimes sont le fait de la

¹³¹ H1B28.

¹³² H1B16.

¹³³ At least seven publications were distributed by the FLN in Paris just before and after the 17 October, of which one was drafted by the Federal Committee in Germany, and five probably by Benzerfa. Among the documents seized from Benzerfa, Mingasson and Brière were various other fragmentary drafts that appear not to have been printed or distributed.

¹³⁴ H1B21.

police française dans sa majeure partie et à la solde du facisme'.¹³⁵ The intention of the FLN was to shake public opinion out from its state of lethargy, indifference or hostility towards the Algerian situation in France, and to compel all representative bodies, from the political left to trade unions, to assume their responsibilities. 'L'AGTA accuse une nouvelle fois une partie de l'opinion publique française dont vous êtes les porte parole, d'encourager le génocide perpétré à l'égard des travailleurs Algériens par votre silence et votre désintérêt. Nous vous demandons une fois de plus de prendre conscience du rôle complice dont l'histoire vous accusera demain, si, à l'instar des populations de Puteaux, Saint-Denis, Nanterre, Aubervilliers, qui ont manifesté concrètement leur indignation, vous ne prenez pas vos responsabilités, si vos voix ne s'élevent pas pour mettre un terme à de tels crimes'.

Only two days later the Federation issued a further AGTA tract *Après Bab El Oued* that followed an identical line in denouncing the 'barbarie répressive' of the police, and 'une grande partie de l'Opinion publique français qui, par son silence devient complice et responsable de ces crimes'.¹³⁶ This second tract, published on 12th October only two days after the *Lettre Ouverte*, might appear superfluous, but it closed with a highly significant, if oblique and coded statement: 'Le temps des pétitions et des communiqués est dépassé. L'heure des actes courageux et concrète a sonné, et ce n'est que ainsi que seront sauve-gardées les chances d'une coopération fructueuse et fraternelle entre nos deux peuples'. The author was evidently aware of the decision of the Federal Committee on 10 October to go ahead with a mass demonstration, but crucially without the participation of the French left and trade unions. The Renseignements généraux, in an analysis of this key moment and the *Lettre Ouverte*, noted that the FLN had, in moving to unilateral action, simply lost patience: 'quant à l'opinion française, il apparaît que le FLN se soucie peu de lui déplaire. La Fédération dira qu'elle a plusieurs fois averti le peuple français de prendre position en faveur de l'indépendance de l'Algérie. Et depuis six ans, le peuple français n'a rien fait'.¹³⁷

Politically the most important tract, the *Appel au peuple français*,¹³⁸ was drafted by the Federal Committee itself and dispatched to Zouaoui with the order to distribute it, 'largement dans les milieux français de la presse et radio françaises'.¹³⁹ Archival sources indicate that this text, which was dated 18 October, was in reality drawn up on the 17 October or just before. The timing is significant since the *Appel* was not composed in reaction to the violent repression, but reveals the intentions of the Federal Committee before the event, and what it was hoping to achieve.¹⁴⁰ The *Appel* conformed to the overall strategy that the Federal Committee had finalised on 10 October, which was to

¹³⁵ *Lettre Ouverte de l'AGTA*, 10 October 1961: a photocopy was provided to me by Jim House from ACON, CFTC Archives, Fédération unifiée des Industries chimiques CFTC, 1F 1187; see also J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 217, for the context of this tract. Two of the AGTA tracts were also reprinted in its clandestine journal, *L'Ouvrier Algérien en France*, along with photographs by Elie Kagan of the 17 October demonstration, see HA30, tracts. *Le Monde*, 13 October 1961, also published the *Lettre Ouverte*.

¹³⁶ AGTA tract, H1B20.

¹³⁷ Laurent Chabrun, *La Guerre de l'Ombre. RG contre FLN* (Paris: Editions Jacob-Duvernet, 2011), 167-8. The third AGTA tract, *Des Précisions* (12 October), is similar in content, but takes a more positive stance towards the trade unions and Paris left-wing communes that had vigorously opposed the harkis, and had demonstrated how, 'il est possible de généraliser et d'intensifier cette action', H1B20.

¹³⁸ This text is reprinted in G. Manceron (ed.), *Le 17 Octobre des Algériens* (Paris: Découverte, 2011), 89-92, as well as in O. Le Cour Grandmaison (ed.), *Le 17 Octobre 1961*, 208-210, although mis-dated by the latter as 22 October.

¹³⁹ Federal Committee to Zouaoui, 17 October 1961, in *Sou'al*, 82. The text did reach some left publications like *Les Temps modernes*. No.186, November 1961.

¹⁴⁰ The *Appel* seems to have been a long overdue tract that had been promised by the Federal Committee in time for the demonstration itself. Zouaoui, in a letter to the Committee on 17 October, complained, 'de n'avoir reçu aucun texte pour diffuser des tracts au cours des manifestations prévues. Notre équipe de presse est mobilisée depuis trois jours à cet effet'. *Sou'al*, 81. HA110, a copy of the orders sent out by Zouaoui to the Wilaya organisations seized by the police on 17 October, notes that during the demonstration, 'Des tracts seront distribués au public français et étrangers par nos militants'.

exclude any forces of the French left from participating in the mass demonstration of 17 October since the FLN wished this to be reported as a unique and heroic action of Algerians. Any joint action with the PCF, CGT or other forces of the left would, it was feared, be reported in the press in such a way as to marginalise or obscure the primary role and objectives of the FLN (see Chapter 7). But, clearly the FLN hoped that the demonstration would have such a huge media impact as to galvanise the left that had, until then, shown such hostility or indifference to the Algerian cause, and compel it to take notice and provide support. The *Appel* was designed to call, after the demonstration was over, for solidarity from the French people: ‘Français, Françaises, travailleurs, étudiants, intellectuels, militants des partis politiques, des syndicats, des mouvements de jeunesse, hommes et femmes de toutes opinions et de toutes confessions!’ and to combat forms of racism that were as odious as those suffered by the Jews, and to defend the highest humanitarian values of France. The *Appel* asked them all to fraternise in factories, work places, universities and quartiers, in the street and metro, and by petitions, meetings, demonstrations and stoppages, to end the repression and to resume negotiations to find a rapid and peaceful resolution, ‘au cauchemar qui vivent nos deux peuples’. However, the decision to associate the French anti-colonial left with the FLN after, rather than before and during the demonstration, was to carry fatal consequences for the participants.

The Problem of Violence and the Federation U-Turn

Between 19th January 1961, when de Gaulle gave a green light for the resumption of secret talks with the FLN, and the final Evian Accords of 19 March 1962, French and Algerian representatives in Geneva were in almost constant daily contact, both during formal sessions (Evian 1 - 20 May to 13 June; Lugrin - 20 to 28 July 1961; Rousse - 11 to 18 February 1962; and Evian 2 - 7 to 18 March 1962), as well as during 'off-the-record' meetings to try and hammer out agreement and to prepare the ground for resumption of talks. This background is important to an understanding of the nature of the crisis in Paris, since the Federation was throughout the period from 20 May 1961 to 18 March 1962 subject to strong pressures from the FLN team in Geneva. At the centre of the Franco-Algerian negotiations lay a number of highly contentious issues, such as the rights of the European minority in a future independent state and claims to the Sahara, in which the French Federation had no particular or specific stake. However, there was one crucial question that had immediate bearing on the situation in metropolitan France, that of FLN armed struggle and violence.

Since 1956 the French government had insisted that a cease-fire agreement was a necessary precondition to any negotiations and eventual elections, while the FLN, as a guerrilla movement, refused to demobilise its fighters, thus handing the initiative to the French army, until the colonial power had formally recognised an independent Algeria. From the first day of secret talks on 20th February 1961 Georges Pompidou stated that a cease-fire, or at least some form of truce ('trêve'), be initiated, even if it was kept a secret.¹⁴¹ The FLN refused to accept any such deal, in spite of French attempts to upstage them by introducing a month-long unilateral cease-fire on 20 May, and a full-scale war continued in North Africa until 19 March 1962.¹⁴² However, there remained room for manoeuvre on this question in relation to the situation in metropolitan France, and this was to have major implications for the deepening cycle of violence in the metropolis during 1961.

For the French government the issue of terrorism in metropolitan France, and especially in the capital, assumed an importance out of all proportion to any military threat that it might offer. Continuing FLN violence in Paris carried symbolic and political weight. On 10 April the chief Swiss intermediary Olivier Long reported to the Algerian representatives that de Gaulle had commented, 'que la recrudescence des attentats en France et en Algérie crée une atmosphère défavorable à la négociation'.¹⁴³ Bernard Tricot, de Gaulle's chief Elysée adviser on Algeria, remarked how difficult it was for the French negotiators, 'génés d'avoir à discuter avec nos partenaires après avoir lu dans les dernières dépêches la liste des embuscades, des enlèvements, des égorgements'.¹⁴⁴ What Tricot found humiliating was not that the men sitting opposite were engaged in conventional military actions, the mutually shared field of the honourable soldier, but in acts of 'terrorism', which was precisely the modus operandi of the FLN in France. Moreover, complained the French, the FLN dramatically increased its terrorist attacks on both sides of the Mediterranean between 20 May and 8 June, just as Evian 1 got underway.¹⁴⁵

As the cycle of violence deepened in Paris during 1961, so the French negotiators showed increasing concern and attempted to find a resolution. While the French eventually came to concede that an official cease-fire was not going to be accepted by the GPRA, they still sought a resolution to the impasse by making a distinction between a formal 'cessez-le-feu' and an 'unofficial' and even secret truce that could be implemented immediately as an 'acte de bonne volonté'.¹⁴⁶ The GPRA would never accept such an agreement in relation to the main field of combat in North Africa, since

¹⁴¹ Redha Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 92-3.

¹⁴² Constitutionally the GPRA held powers to enter into negotiations, but a cease-fire would have required a four-fifths majority of the *Conseil national de la révolution algérienne* (CNRA), R. Malek, *Evian*, 110.

¹⁴³ R. Malek, *Evian*, 107.

¹⁴⁴ Bernard Tricot, *Les Sentiers de la Paix. Algérie 1958-1962* (Paris: Plon, 1972), 190.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 230-2, 247, 274.

¹⁴⁶ R. Malek, *Evian*, 97-8, 132, 142.

to do so would involve the ALN in virtually demobilising its forces, while the huge French army remained in situ, and from, ‘la crainte de ne pas pouvoir remettre en marche la machine si on l’arrêtait’.¹⁴⁷ However, the situation in France was rather different and, as I will show later, the GPRA was prepared to offer as a bargaining deal a form of secret ‘truce’ in France, a deal that would not endanger the global military strength of the FLN. To understand why this decision was to carry such major implications in precipitating an internal crisis within the French Federation requires taking a step back in time to look at the history of the debate among FLN leaders as to whether they should engage in armed struggle in mainland France and what form this should take.

The question of armed action presented quite different issues in metropolitan France from that of colonial Algeria. In Algeria, where the FLN was confronted with a full-scale war in which tens of thousands were the victims of military violence on a vast, mechanised scale, the nationalists were prepared to take actions that might include civilian European targets, as during the famous bombing campaign in Algiers during 1957.¹⁴⁸ But the Federation abstained from such a policy, because the political context in France was quite different and any such forms of ‘terrorism’ would have massively alienated French public opinion, the national and international media, as well as a large number of European supporters and agents. In 1956 some leaders, like Abbane Ramdane, were pushing for the French Federation to open a ‘second front’, co-ordinated attacks on economic and political targets that would tie down French security forces in metropolitan France, relieve military pressure on the ALN in Algeria, and increase the costs of the war so as to rapidly force the French to the negotiating table.

Many Federation leaders appear to have opposed such a hard-line position and in February 1957 the *Commission de la presse et de l’information* (CPI), of which Mohammed Harbi was a prominent member, offered an oblique critique of this position. Abbane, the driving force in the FLN, advocated a strategy based on the key premise that the Algerian War would be of short duration and that the French would be soon brought to negotiate by spectacular mass actions, like the insurrectional strike of January 1957 that was to become known as the “Battle of Algiers”.¹⁴⁹ But by late February the highest executive body of the FLN, the *Comité de coordination et d’exécution* (CCE), was forced to flee abroad and by October the French army in Algiers had dismantled the *Zone autonome d’Alger* (ZAA). The Federal *Commission de la Presse*, aware that the Battle of Algiers represented a crushing defeat, offered the alternative of ‘une lutte de longue durée’, and an implicit critique of Abbane’s agenda of a short, violent push that was seen as premature and damaging and which, if extended to France, would invite repression and paralysis of the FLN. The CPI favoured a strategy that would create a broad anti-imperialist alliance with the French left, including the PCF, so as to force the French government by political rather than military action to end the war. An immediate offensive shock strategy, argued the CPI, would have consequences that would be ‘très dures’ for workers in France: ‘n’avons-nous pas le droit de demander de lourds sacrifices pour des résultats politico-militaires aléatoires?’¹⁵⁰

In June 1957 the *Comité de coordination* (CCE) led by Abbane, ignored the Federation position and ordered that a new Federation head be appointed with instructions to intensify the armed struggle in France and to wipe out (‘abattre’) the leaders of the MNA.¹⁵¹ Omar Boudaoud, who had

¹⁴⁷ B. Tricot, *Sentiers*, 233.

¹⁴⁸ However, the FLN often took care to ensure that explosives were positioned to have a limited civilian impact, as in the case of the bomb placed by Fernand Iveton in the Algiers gas works: see Jean-Luc Einaudi, *Pour l’Exemple. L’Affaire Fernand Iveton* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1986).

¹⁴⁹ Daho Djerbal, *L’Organisation Spéciale de la Fédération de France du FLN* (Algiers: Editions Chihab, 2012), 59-61.

¹⁵⁰ See the text of the *Rapport de la commission Presse-Information du comité fédéral sur l’action armée en territoire français* (February 1957), in D. Djerbal, *L’Organisation*, Appendix 2, 416-418; Mohammed Harbi, *Une Vie debout*, 218.

¹⁵¹ The text of the CCE order is reproduced in M. Harbi, *Vie debout*, 389, ‘Procès verbal de la réunion du CCE en date du 10 Juin 1957’.

the status of an ALN commander, was appointed by Abbane on 15 June to carry out this mission, to form OS commandos in Moroccan training camps, and then to launch co-ordinated ‘second front’ attacks throughout France.¹⁵² In the autumn of 1957 the imprisoned leaders Ben Bella, Aït-Ahmed, Boudiaf and Khider wrote to the CCE to oppose its order of 10 June to, ‘déclencher le terrorisme’ in mainland France, despite the fact that the Federation had already discussed such a proposal and rejected it. The CCE appears, they remarked, to have taken no heed of, ‘des avis autorisés de certains frères, ni des conditions économiques, morales et humaines dans lesquelles vivent les émigrés algériens. Ces conditions déjà précaires sont rendues particulièrement graves par l’hostilité chauvine de toute une nation...’. They therefore supported the position of the Federal CPI that a massive offensive against strategic and personnel targets in France would invite unacceptable levels of state repression against the Algerian community that already faced desperately harsh living conditions and police violence.

Despite the opposition of the historic leaders imprisoned in the Santé prison, Omar Boudaoud, who constantly travelled to Tunis and Cairo to consult with the CCE, went ahead and closely implemented Abbane’s strategy. Harbi, supported on the Federal Committee by Messaoud Guerdroudj and Zine El Abidine Moundji, sustained a strong challenge to the authoritarian methods imposed by Boudaoud that transformed, they claimed, the Federation into a purely military apparatus of a Stalinist kind that ruled out any meaningful political debate of key policy issues. Subsequently Harbi offered a devastating critique of the FLN in which he identified the emergence of anti-democratic processes, including the use of internal violence to discipline or crush oppositional voices, and which was eventually to culminate in the post-independence dominance by a military, one-party state apparatus.¹⁵³

An important meeting of the Federal Committee, attended by the French Wilaya heads, near Cologne on 23 July 1958 was informed of the CCE order to launch the ‘second front’ on 25 August. Harbi led a last-ditch challenge by demanding that the thinking behind such a crucial strategic decision be subject to debate, rather than imposed as a fait accompli. He argued that initiating such an offensive in France would expose the Federation, ‘une des rares organisations en ascension’, to repression and dislocation. The Committee was accountable, he remarked, ‘du sang des innocents, algériens et français’.¹⁵⁴ Harbi, concerned, and with good reason, for his own safety, immediately resigned and departed for Switzerland. As Daho Djerbal notes, this moment marked the end of internal opposition to Boudaoud on the Committee and a crucial watershed in metropolitan France as OS and GA commandos accelerated an armed struggle that was matched by the counterinsurgency policing and repressive policies introduced by Maurice Papon in late 1958.¹⁵⁵

Between 1958 and 1960 Boudaoud succeeded in transforming the FLN in France by creating a remarkable parallel state in which the Federation aimed to exert an absolute control over the Algerian population through its own taxation, judicial, and social welfare system, a system that was policed and enforced by armed groups attached to each Region (see Chapter 6). This evolution, along with the creation of the OS, a highly sophisticated paramilitary organisation, and the extension of local armed groups (GA), soon moulded an ‘activist’ mentality among mid-rank militants and cadres who controlled the FLN organisation at the base.¹⁵⁶ Harbi and others, have argued that the ‘shockists’, recruited from young, physically tough men who were often quite illiterate and lacking in political formation, were encouraged to develop forms of brutal violence and torture that were directed as much against ‘deviant’ FLN militants as against the MNA and French security forces.

¹⁵² A. Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya*, 33-37, 85-111.

¹⁵³ See especially M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 177-223, Chapter 6, ‘La Fédération de France du FLN’.

¹⁵⁴ M. Harbi, *Vie Debout*, 238-39; on Haroun’s account of this meeting, from which Harbi has been erased, see *7e Wilaya*, 90-91.

¹⁵⁵ D. Djerbal, *L’Organisation spéciale*, 56-58. Messaoud Guerdroudj was removed by Boudaoud and sent to Morocco with a ‘lettre de cachet’ that contained orders for his arrest and imprisonment.

¹⁵⁶ These armed groups are examined in Chapter 5 and 6.

The activist culture became so embedded at the local or Regional level that the Federal Committee would find it almost impossible, following GPRA orders, to contain or reverse after July 1961.

The extent of the ‘militarisation’ of the Federation and its conversion to armed struggle was significantly revealed when in June 1960 the Provisional Government made a first attempt to impose an informal armed truce. The ensuing debate was to be repeated in precisely the same terms one year later, except that by mid-1961 the Federal Committee had undergone a complete U-turn, while its own 1960 position against the dangers of demobilising the armed struggle was now fiercely defended by the Paris FLN.

On 21 June 1960, shortly before negotiations with the French government first got under way at Melun between 25-29 June, the GPRA ordered, ‘la cessation de toute action armée contre tout individu français ou algérien, à l’intérieur ou à l’extérieur de l’organisation’. In 1957 the Federal Committee, as well as the imprisoned leaders, Ben Bella, Aït-Ahmed, Boudiaf and Khider, had firmly opposed armed struggle in mainland France. Now the Committee, led by Boudaoud, challenged the GPRA order for a truce on the grounds that it would have, ‘une très fâcheuse répercussions sur le moral de la base. L’organisation était comme une “chaudière sous pression prête à éclater” (se reporter aux différentes rapports sur les harkis). Nous avons réorganisé les groupes de choc, préparé la Spéciale [OS] ou une action impatiemment attendue depuis août 1958, action qui aurait seule pu redonner plus de vigueur à l’organisation. S’il faut aujourd’hui lui imposer de se croiser les bras, ce serait la démobiliser et lui faire toucher du doigt le rôle mineur qu’elle joue dans la révolution (rôle politique)...’.¹⁵⁷ Armed struggle, far from presenting a grave threat to the FLN in France, was now perceived as a vital cement in the revolutionary élan and unity of the people. The Committees discourse represented the demand for energetic ‘activism’, the heroic fighting capacity of the militants, as a vital force inherent in the base, but elided the fact that many Algerian migrants deeply resented the brutal ‘disciplinary’ powers of the GA that enforced tax collection and a puritanical moral code.

In its letter of 23 June to the GPRA Minister of the Interior the Committee went on to predict that the French state would seize on the opportunity of an FLN truce to redouble its repression and to seize control of the terrain. However, it would be impossible to refuse militants a right of ‘legitimate defense’ against police violence, and this would then be exploited by the media and enemies to show that the, ‘FLN est incapable de faire respecter ses décisions’. Finally, a truce would lead to a decline in vigilance among the militants, a relaxing of the nerves that were geared up for the liberation struggle, and ‘la naissance d’une sorte d’euphorie dangereuse qui immobiliserait nos masses’. If negotiations failed, it would be impossible to galvanise or reinstate the highly demanding level of commitment and sacrifice demanded of the rank-and-file: ‘Si nous laissons s’installer la dangereuse illusion que la lutte active, c’est-à-dire essentiellement l’action directe, n’a plus sa raison d’être, il est à craindre que notre organisation se “refroidisse” à un point tel qu’il serait pratiquement impossible de la replonger dans le bain de la lutte révolutionnaire’.

The GPRA, following the abortive negotiations at Melun (25-29 June 1960), appears to have abandoned its order of 21 June for a truce on armed action. During 1960 the Federation selected numerous militants who were sent on training courses in Germany and formed into a special armed commando group under Slimane Amirat with the express purpose of attacking the FPA. The Paris FLN, far from restraining its attacks, between October 1960 and June 1961, planned and executed a series of major actions against the harkis posts and patrols. However, with the resumption of more meaningful discussions at Evian (20 May – 13 June 1961), the issue of a truce in metropolitan France returned to the agenda. Now both the French and Algerian representatives at the talks were prepared to use continuing police and FLN violence in Paris as a bargaining counter. A well-informed journalist of *L’Express* learned from unnamed contacts that FLN delegates had protested that over 2,000 Algerians had been arrested in Paris even as talks were under way, while a French spokesman was ‘particulièrement amers’ that the Federation had chosen this particular moment to organise a

¹⁵⁷ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 428, and Appendix, 501-2, Report of Federal Committee to Minister of the Interior, 23 June 1960.

spectacular attack in Paris on the night of 4-5 June.¹⁵⁸ The FLN had successfully penetrated the ranks of Algerian conscripts based with the 93rd Infantry Regiment at Frileuse, just outside Paris, and persuaded thirty-one men to take part in a heavily armed attack on the harkis posts in the 13th arrondissement, during which nine deserters were killed and three wounded.¹⁵⁹ This seems to have confirmed, in some respect, that the ‘second front’ strategy had worked since the French were as sensitive to the political impacts of armed struggle in France, as in Algeria itself.

A strong media campaign by the French left against harkis torture in the cellars of central Paris forced the government, despite Papon’s angry opposition, to order the withdrawal of the FPA from its bases in the 13th and 18th arrondissements to Fort Noisy on 27 June 1961. The French delegates, who remained in place after the closure of Evian 1 on 13 June, attempted to turn this defeat to their advantage by offering the withdrawal as a gesture of goodwill that should be reciprocated by an FLN truce.¹⁶⁰ *L’Express* correctly surmised that the Evian delegates had struck a deal: ‘Tout se passe comme si une sorte de “trêve de fait” s’était instaurée en Métropole, chacun des adversaires décidant “unilatéralement” de mettre une soudaine à ses activités soit d’action terroriste, soit de répression.’¹⁶¹ The French intelligence service (RG) in a report of 6 July confirmed these press accounts. The Federation had been, it claimed, hostile to the opening of the Evian negotiations, and had continued to mount armed actions during the talks, including the dramatic Frileuse commando attack of 4-5 June.¹⁶² The report went on to note that the Federation had finally responded to the pressure that was brought to bear by the GPRA and the French left to contain such offensive actions: ‘la Fédération de France s’oriente donc vers un certain apaisement du terrorisme pour montrer tout à la fois sa bonne volonté et un contrôle parfait de l’immigration. Elle est prête au combat mais elle y renonce car elle entend enlever leurs arguments aux éléments français qui assurent qu’on ne peut discuter avec les chefs d’une organisation terroriste pratiquant une politique d’attentats et d’assassinats sur le territoire même de la métropole. En outre, elle ne veut pas choquer l’opinion publique qu’elle estime beaucoup plus sensible à ce qui se passe en France qu’aux événements d’Algérie...’¹⁶³

The Renseignements généraux, it appears, had intercepted a specific Federation order of 5 July which it summarised as follows, ‘il a été demandé de cesser tous attentats jusqu’à nouvel ordre. Cette décision a un caractère essentiellement politique et est destinée à créer un climat favorable au déroulement des négociations d’Evian’.¹⁶⁴ More recently Omar Boudaoud has denied that the

¹⁵⁸ *L’Express*, 13 July 1961, *Terrorisme Trêves de fait?*, signed ‘T.L.’

¹⁵⁹ The mutiny in Paris represented a new danger: in general, fearing insurrection by Algerian conscripts in Algeria, soldiers were based in mainland Europe. Now, they seemed to offer a key threat at the heart of empire. On the ‘Frileuse’ attack see A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 200; Roger Le Taillanter, “Le Grand”. *Ma vie de flic* (Paris: Plon, 1995), 110-117; M. Papon, *Les Chevaux*, 199-201 . HA 107, has a report of the trial on 28 November 1961 of 16 soldiers and 4 civilians.

¹⁶⁰ *France Observateur* reported that the ‘truce’ had been discussed in meetings between the French delegates de Leusse and Labouret, and Saad Dalheb and Boulharouf on 29 June and 3 July, and ‘plusieurs dirigeants de la fédération de France du FLN se trouvent depuis quelques jours à Tunis où ils étudient, avec les membres du GPRA, l’éventualité d’un ralentissement du terrorisme sur le territoire français’, see R. Valat, *Les calots bleus*, 199; and Jean-Paul Brunet, *Police Contre FLN*, 69, who suggests the French offer probably came from the highest level, probably de Gaulle.

¹⁶¹ *L’Express*, 13 July 1961.

¹⁶² Although this attack was orchestrated by the OS, who were under the leadership of Rabah Bouaziz, it seems quite possible that such a politically motivated action, given the timing during the last days of the Evian talks, already represented a Paris-based initiative in defiance of the Federal Committee. It was, perhaps no coincidence, that it was from this date that the Paris OS was virtually ordered to stand down (see Chapter 5).

¹⁶³ L. Chabrun, *La Guerre de l’Ombre*, 131-3; Chabrun had access to numerous important documents of the Renseignements généraux that were given to Benjamin Stora, by an undisclosed provider, in the early 1980s. The texts of orders sent later in September and October by the Federal Committee to Paris to halt attacks on the police, including concerns about French public opinion, are in accord with this RG report of 6 July.

¹⁶⁴ B. Stora, *Ils venaient*, 367-8.

Federation ever agreed to a ‘cease-fire’ in France since this could only be constitutionally decided by the CNRA, the GPRA and agreement between both Algerian and French negotiators, but he is being disingenuous since, beyond doubt, ‘informal’, if rather secretive, FLN instructions for a truce were sent to Paris.¹⁶⁵

The dramatic U-turn by the Federal Committee did not come about easily, indeed it only assented to an informal truce because of considerable pressure from above. Boudaoud, however, so respectful of the military hierarchy and obedient to orders, was not the man who was likely to oppose decisions from above, even when he strongly disagreed with them. But the decision, which went against everything that the Committee had argued one year earlier in June 1960, was to prove costly indeed and, by causing a temporary loss of control over the Paris militants, triggered off a chain of events that was to culminate in extreme state violence in October 1961.

During the summer of 1961 the GPRA, at a moment when it was engaged in crucial negotiations with the French, was faced with a deepening internal crisis as various political factions, most notably the army generals of the *Etat-major général* (EMG) in Tunisia and Morocco led by Boumedienne, entered into a protracted struggle for power. As the competing groups jockeyed for position, each power-block attempted to bring the Federation on side since it held, in addition to considerable political weight, control over major financial and manpower resources. The EMG and other self-proclaimed ‘radical’ currents opposed to the GPRA attempted to undermine it by attacking the Evian negotiations as a sell-out of Algerian interests by conservative, bourgeois delegates, ex-UDMA and centrists, who were in the pocket of de Gaulle.

Such oppositional currents began to appear inside the ranks of the FLN in France and the GPRA responded by asserting a strong and growing disciplinary control over the Federation. The French intelligence services began to pick up signs of a key shift in the Federation towards compliance during the Evian talks (20 May to 13 June). The SCINA reported on 5 July that the Federation before Evian, ‘était décidée à faire preuve d’intransigeance et de dureté’, but was now more prepared to go along with the negotiations and to accept, ‘certains formules de compromis jusqu’alors absolument exclues’. The causes of this shift were as yet unclear to the SCINA, but a further indication of significant change was the abandonment since 5 June (ie the Frileuse incident) of, ‘attentats spectaculaires contre les forces de l’ordre’.¹⁶⁶ A month later the SCINA remarked on rumours among FLN militants that the GPRA was exerting an ever stronger control over all armed actions to prevent unauthorised or ill-prepared attacks that might damage ongoing negotiations.¹⁶⁷ Until that moment the Federation had exercised considerable autonomy in selecting targets and planning operations, but now it was undergoing, ‘de plus en plus le contrôle du GPRA et qu’elle se verrait retirer certaines de ses prérogatives. Ainsi, on dit qu’elle ne serait plus souveraine pour décider de certaines sanctions graves à appliquer aux militants de la métropole en désaccord avec l’organisation’. All such internal sanctions must receive prior authorisation from Tayeb Boulahrouf, GPRA representative in Europe, and a key negotiator in Geneva.¹⁶⁸

Boulahrouf, it was thought, was also responsible for imposing a further control over the forms of violence through an order to halt the assassination of MNA militants and to encourage their integration into the FLN.¹⁶⁹ Up to July 1958 Harbi had fought within the Federation Committee, but

¹⁶⁵ O. Bouadoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 184-5.

¹⁶⁶ HA47, SCINA Procès-verbaux, 5 July 1961.

¹⁶⁷ The *Express*, 13 July 1961, reported that despite official denials by the FLN in Tunis, ‘que certains dirigeants de la Fédération de France aient pu être convoqués à Tunis et sanctionnés pour des initiatives qui dépassaient leurs consignes’.

¹⁶⁸ HA56, SCINA 10 August 1961; also HA88, SCAA intelligence report 23 August, 1961, which noted, ‘Il est certain qu’une sorte de trêve est intervenus et que les commandos frontistes ont cessé une grande partie de leur activité. Il semble que des chefs locaux n’ont plus l’entièvre liberté d’ordonner des attentats et qu’ils doivent en référer à la Fédération de France, voire même à un délégué du GPRA. On dit que le Gouvernement rebelle n’a pas été toujours d’accord avec la Fédération de France sur les attentats perpétrés ces trois derniers mois’.

¹⁶⁹ HA 56, SCINA 10 August 1961.

to no avail, to contain or halt the enormously costly fratricidal MNA-FLN war that was to lead to over 4,000 Algerian deaths in France. He argued that such brutal internecine killings served to alienate even their strongest supporters on the French left, who simply did not understand the logic of such killings.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, FLN armed groups in France (GA) that had first developed as a defense against Messalist aggression, had, under the direction of Ladlani, increasingly become an instrument that was turned inward against FLN militants to impose an authoritarian police state by deploying the worst forms of intimidation and violence, including torture.¹⁷¹ This now changed dramatically and the SCAA reported on 23 August, ‘la volte face la plus spectaculaire’. The Federation issued a tract in which it asked militants to help persuade MNA militants to join the FLN, to welcome ‘les frères égarés’ who had for several years been led astray by Messali Hadj and by the French government that had supported the MNA as part of a divide-and-rule strategy. Here also a kind of ‘truce’ was proclaimed and MNA cadres could now join FLN ranks without any prior investigation or suspicion hanging over them.¹⁷² The double truce, in relation to both the police and MNA, meant that the armed groups, both OS and GA, were virtually ordered to stand down and condemned to inactivity.

The Farès-Boulahrouf grouping

The role of Tayeb Boulahrouf as the GPRA representative in Europe, with powers of control over the French Federation, is highly significant. Boulahrouf, who had been active from 1938 at age fifteen in the PPA and had a long and distinguished career as a leading nationalist, returned to France in October 1954 and assumed temporary leadership of the French Federation after its top cadres were arrested in 1957. He thus had a close working knowledge of the clandestine operations of the Federation, before he moved to Rome in 1958 as representative of the GPRA and then to Geneva to prepare the grounds for the Evian negotiations.¹⁷³ While acting as transitional head of the Federation (September 1956 to May 1957) Boulahrouf, with the backing of Abbane, recognised the need for the FLN to build alliances with a class of liberal ‘politiques’, members of a bourgeois élite, Senators, deputies, lawyers, and doctors, many of whom had been close to the UDMA or centralists. This moderate and francophile élite, symbolised by Ferhat Abbas, represented an establishment that had been closely tied to the French state before the War of Independence and which had been slow to rally to the FLN.¹⁷⁴ Although many from this élite group moved into overt opposition or secretly sided with the FLN, they still retained close informal ties to the Gaullists and to the French administrative apparatus. As such, while retaining a highly ambiguous position, they were correctly seen by the FLN as a potential source of high grade intelligence, and as facilitating personal contacts that would assist in reaching an eventual negotiated end to the war.

Mustapha Ferroukhi was encouraged by Boulharouf to cultivate such a network, including Abderrahmane Farès, ex-President of the Algerian Assembly, for whom de Gaulle had a high regard and had invited in 1958, as part of a ‘Third force’ agenda, to become a minister in his government.¹⁷⁵ In 1959 French journalists reported rumours that Farès was attempting to create a ‘parti algérien centriste’ in order to head an eventual Algerian government.¹⁷⁶ *Le Monde* stated that Farès appeared, ‘aux yeux des “révolutionnaires” du FLN, comme un grand bourgeois aux allures prudentes.

¹⁷⁰ M. Harbi, *Vie debout*, 208-9.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 209-215.

¹⁷² HA 88, SCAA report, 23 August 1961.

¹⁷³ B. Stora, *Dictionnaire Biographique*, 277-8.

¹⁷⁴ An important watershed was marked by the resolution signed by 61 Algerian deputies on 26 September 1955 that demanded an immediate end to ‘la répression aveugle’, and eventually enough of them resigned to force the dissolution of the Algerian Assembly on 30 November. Many from this élite that hesitated too long in supporting the FLN were assassinated.

¹⁷⁵ B. Stora, *Dictionnaire Biographique*, 284; M. Harbi, *Vie debout*, 199; in his autobiography, *La cruelle vérité* (Paris: Plon, 1982), 75-86, Farès recounts his meetings with de Gaulle, but has very little to say about his FLN activities.

¹⁷⁶ *L'Humanité*, 6 November 1961.

Il est donc douteux qu'il ai jamais bénéficié d'un grand crédit parmi les membres du GPRA'.¹⁷⁷ But *Le Monde*, along with the media in general, failed to detect the extent to which Farès was by 1961 deeply embedded as a key figure in the FLN clandestine organisation, and the public was astounded at the disclosures made following his arrest on 4 November.¹⁷⁸ Far from attempting to constitute a 'Third force', a strategy aimed at marginalising the FLN by the formation of a moderate political movement with which the French could negotiate independence, Farès' mission during 1961 appears to have been the very opposite, to prevent such a force crystallising out among Algerian notables. Farès, by mid-1961, was thus closely associated with a liberal circle of FLN political heavy weights, among whom can be included Dr. Chawki Mostefai, Ahmed Boumendjel, Dr. Ahmed Francis, Ahmed Bentounès, Jean Amrouche, Saad Dahlab and Ferhat Abbas, a grouping that played an important role in the shaping of the Evian negotiations.¹⁷⁹

The internal politics of the French Federation in relation to the deepening FLN struggle for power remain largely unknown, in part because the central GPRA archives remain closed, or because the key actors are either deceased or cling to a facade of 'official' unity in which they refuse to accept the complex and, often contested, reality of the past.¹⁸⁰ The role of the Farès-Boulharouf group in the Federation has remained, until now, largely unknown, but the documents captured by the DST on 3-4 November throw some light on the unexpected role of the 'notables' during 1961. Farès, as will be seen in Chapter 8, carried considerable weight within the Federation both through his control of the 'Aboulker' network that gathered important intelligence from within the French police and administration, as well as by his management of the FLN system that centralised the monthly collection and transmitted funds abroad.¹⁸¹ The correspondence indicates the extent to which Farès, who was to be party to the planning of the demonstration of 17 October, was in liaison with high level French and Algerian politicians, including the negotiators at Evian.

After the closure of the Evian 1 negotiations on 13 June both sides maintained delegates near Geneva to prepare the ground for the later resumption of talks. During the summer of 1961 Farès visited Switzerland frequently where, through his close contacts with Jacques Legrand, he acted as a high level intermediary between Joxe and the GPRA delegates. For example, Farès tried to convince the GPRA of Joxe's good intentions but that, in order to facilitate proceedings, it should insist less on the crucial claim to the oil-rich Sahara.¹⁸² At the same time Farès acted as an intermediary or envoy between his contacts with the French government and GPRA officials in Geneva and Paris and Omar Boudaoud in Germany, conveying to the latter the latest secret developments and its implications for French Federation policy.¹⁸³ Farès pivotal role is also confirmed by the fact that he served as the

¹⁷⁷ *Le Monde*, 7 November 1961.

¹⁷⁸ *Parisien Libéré*, 6 November 1961, said that the Farès arrest, 'fit l'effet d'une bombe'.

¹⁷⁹ M. Harbi, *Le FLN Mirage et Réalité*, 283-4.

¹⁸⁰ It remains a source of regret that the surviving leaders of the Federation, as of the FLN in general, remain so long after the event compelled, with a few rare exceptions, to a defensive and transparently wooden and laundered version of the past. In doing so, they fail to see that this, far from justifying their versions, has the opposite effect. But, more crucially, they present a dreary version of the FLN that fails to do justice to the extraordinary richness of the experience of nationalist militants, and the human dilemmas which they faced.

¹⁸¹ D. Djebal, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 87-91: Farès worked closely with his nephew, Nacereddine Aït Mokhtar, head of the OS in France, and with Rabah Bouaziz; A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 214. An indication of Farès intelligence functions is indicated by one of the papers seized by the DST on 4 November, a letter dated Geneva 25 August 1961, that forwarded documents relating to a year-long penetration of Freemasonic circles that had succeeded in gaining access to fortnightly intelligence reports from an unidentified *Inspecteur des services spéciaux français*, who prepared these himself for the President personally and the Minister of the Interior.H1B17.

¹⁸² R. Malek, *Evian*, 146. Saâd Dahlab, head of the delegation, eventually ordered Farès to halt this initiative.

¹⁸³ Farès role as an intermediary and political broker is also shown by his role during the summer of 1960 in putting René Reygasse, a spokesman for colonial 'ultras' who wished to negotiate an end to hostilities, in touch with Boudaoud and the GPRA in Tunis. Farès also helped smuggle into Algeria 2,000 copies of Reygasse's

key channel for international courier passing between the ALN commanders in the maquis and the GPRA in Tunisia.

Farès was in Switzerland between the 5th and 10th September, at the crucial moment that de Gaulle made a speech in which he finally conceded the oil-rich Sahara to Algeria, thus clearing the last major hurdle to a settlement. Among the documents seized by the DST on 4 November was a letter from Farès in Geneva dated 10 September, addressed to ‘Mon Cher Président et Cher Frère’, in which he recounted his having ‘received’ the French delegate Jacques Legrand who confirmed that Louis Joxe, Minister for Algeria, ‘a convaincu le Général de Gaulle qu'il ne pourra y avoir de solution valable en dehors de la négociation avec le GPRA’, and that the speech of 5 September, ‘signifiait officiellement la reconnaissance de l'unité territoriale de l'Algérie’.¹⁸⁴ The identity of the ‘President’ with whom Farès was in communication is unclear, but this was almost certainly Belkacem Krim who headed the Algerian team at Evian 1.¹⁸⁵ Farès went on to confirm that the French were tempted by the idea of negotiating into power a provisional FLN government headed by moderate elder statesmen, rather than by FLN radicals who would be seen as a real danger to French interests. Farès continued, ‘En outre Joxe a compris que le fait que tu sois Ministre de l'Intérieur, cela entraînait la réunion de tous les rouages du GPRA entre tes mains, et la présence de Saâd Dahlab aux Affaires Etrangères est interprétée aussi comme étant entre tes mains’.¹⁸⁶ This letter may seem to confirm the fears of the EMG and of the militant rank-and-file that that the Evian process was in the hands of moderates who were prepared to make too many concessions to the French.

Farès concluded his letter, ‘Je dois me rendre ce soir à Bruxelles pour y rencontrer Omar [Boudaoud] avec lequel je dois régler les questions concernant la Fédération dont tu dois être au courant’. Farès was soon back in Geneva and on 9 October he wrote again to the ‘President’ [Krim Belkacem] providing a detailed analysis of the latest developments among the delegation teams. Because of the urgency of this report he dispatched it by Commandant Kaci, a diplomatic emissary, but excused himself for not sending this through the normal hierarchical channels: ‘Tu m'excuseras donc auprès du frère Omar pour n'avoir pas emprunter la voie organique c'est-à-dire le canal de la Fédération’.¹⁸⁷

In his autobiography Boudaoud recounts how Farès, probably during September 1961, had requested a meeting and came to Brussels, ‘Il m'informa de la volonté de l'entourage du général de Gaulle de faire aboutir ces négociations pour l'indépendance de l'Algérie si les Algériens le veulent. Afin de faciliter le contact, les responsables au sein du pouvoir français souhaitaient que la Fédération fasse une déclaration à la presse décrétant l'arrêt de toute action armée du FLN en France. Ma réponse fut un “non” catégorique’.¹⁸⁸ Technically Boudaoud was correct in his claim that he had rejected an official cease-fire, a decision that could only be made by the CNRA or GPRA, but he was being economic with the truth since the Federal Committee had by then passed orders to

book *Témoignage d'un "ultra" sur le drame algérien* (1960), first published by *Témoignage chrétien*: see A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 347-58.

¹⁸⁴ H1B18. This one-page letter from Geneva, dated 10 September 1961, is unsigned, but was attributed by the DST to Farès. Farès was a close friend of Jacques Legrand, director of the cabinet of Louis Joxe, the head of the French negotiating team: see R. Malek, *Evian*, 146.

¹⁸⁵ R. Malek, *Evian*, 125, remarks that Joxe addressed Krim formally, as head of the FLN delegation, as ‘Monsieur le président’; also after 27 August Belkacem Krim was appointed Minister of the Interior, a fact referred to in the letter.

¹⁸⁶ Saâd Dahlab, a senior FLN figure, became Minister of Foreign Affairs of the GPRA in 1961. B. Stora, *Dictionnaire Biographique*, 281, notes, ‘Associé de très près à tous les contacts secrets et à toutes les négociations avec la France, il est l'un des principaux animateurs de l'équipe des négociateurs d'Evian’.

¹⁸⁷ H1B18, Farès letter (unsigned) from Geneva, 9 October 1961. Commandant Hamai Kaci, following accusations of homosexual crimes in 1960, was saved by Krim Belkacem by removing him as head of the Tunis army base to join the GPRA diplomatic mission: see G. Meynier, *Histoire Intérieure*, 366. Farès apology to Boudaoud suggests that he was officially subordinate to the Federation head.

¹⁸⁸ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 184. Boudaoud gives no date for Farès visit, but in later press and TV interviews he remarked that the meeting was about one month before the demonstration.

Paris to cease attacks on the security forces. Boudaoud claims that it was his rejection of the French offer that had been conveyed via Farès, that was the main cause of the decision of Debré, Frey and Papon to unleash the brutal repression of the FLN in Paris and to introduce a night curfew on 5 October. In reality police attempts to destroy the FLN was in response to the wave of assassinations of police officers, attacks that were executed in defiance of the orders of the Federal Committee. What seems clear is that Boudaoud was, from June 1961, under increasing pressure from the GPRA and its delegates in Geneva, to bring a halt to any forms of armed action that might damage ongoing negotiations. Farès was the key senior figure acting as a direct link between the Geneva circles and the Federal Committee. Among the captured Farès archives is a note dated 10 October, inviting him to Belgium.¹⁸⁹ This, significantly, was the very day on which the Federation Committee took its decision to organise the Paris demonstration, and it seems likely that Farès was being summoned to discuss this major event. It appears that Farès decided to go immediately since another document, that the DST attributed to him, was dated Brussels the 11 October, and provides a detailed analysis of the crisis in Paris according to which the OAS was penetrating the police force while Papon was losing control of his own service. 'Je ne dois pas vous cacher que les attentats contre les policiers nous préoccupait beaucoup' and 'ils seraient souhaitable que les attentats contre les polices s'arrêtait'.¹⁹⁰ As we will see in the next chapter, Boudaoud certainly followed closely the GPRA orders that were further reinforced by Farès on the ground, but this volte face, that went completely against everything he had strived to achieve since his appointment by Abbane in 1957, soon ran into major difficulties in Paris.¹⁹¹

Within a few weeks of the Federation Committee order of 5 July to cease armed actions, the FLN was plunged into crisis by a wave of assassinations of harki soldiers and police officers in Paris. This apparently co-ordinated offensive presented a major challenge to Boudaoud's authority, and threatened to undermine his standing with the GPRA just as the factional struggle for power deepened. The FLN attacks in Paris came in three phases: the first involved the assassination of individual harkis and informers that began between 12-16 August, an obvious target since the FPA had for weeks been engaged in brutal repressive operations in the Algerian quartiers.¹⁹² A second, and politically more significant, series of attacks which began on 28 August targeted isolated police officers, many of whom were carefully tracked and killed on their way to or from work. The initial killing of the harkis evoked little response from the French media, the government or the Prefecture of Police: a latent racism placed little value on Algerian lives that were tacitly viewed as expendable. It may have been, in part, this absence of any strong public reaction that inspired the Paris FLN to up the stakes by launching a sequence of planned assassinations of French police officers. The police reaction was dramatic and immediately precipitated an acceleration of state repression that was to lead to the killing of over a hundred Algerians in the next two months, culminating with the 17 October.¹⁹³ Third, Zouaoui, following Committee orders, had just succeeded by about 3 October in imposing on Paris militants a halt to such assassinations, when Papon's own riposte, of counter-killings, began to accelerate, and the Federal came under further rank-and-file

¹⁸⁹ H1B17, 'Je t'invite donc ainsi que la Petite famille chez moi à Bruxelles, dimanche prochain, c'est-à-dire le 15. Ma femme t'attendra à 22 heures au Grand Café du Roi où elle t'avait attendu pendant les fêtes des paques...'.

¹⁹⁰ H1B17.

¹⁹¹ Boudaoud may have been ultra cautious not to get caught out backing the 'activists' against the GPRA after Ben Tobbal, intent on disrupting the emergence of a 'Third force', had persuaded him to send a commando to assassinate Senator Benhabylès in Vichy on 28 August 1959. But it turned out that Benhabylès, far from being a traitor, had been in secret discussion with the 'Aboulker' network: see D. Djebel, *Organisation spéciale*, 264-272.

¹⁹² See R. Valat, *Les calots bleus*, 202-4, two informers were killed, and four harkis, Lazhar Ensighaoui, Amar Aït Taleb, Amar Berani and Mohamed Belomari. Valat, 253-257, lists 24 harkis that were killed by the FLN throughout the war: by my calculation, a third of these were assassinated in the few weeks between 14 August and 3 October.

¹⁹³ See J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 88-106.

pressure to resume armed action. The Federation, as Paulette Péju noted, was caught in a paradoxical situation since while it had effectively brought an end to police assassinations this secret change of direction was unknown to the public, and the Prefect and media continued to attack the FLN as a violent terrorist organisation, so legitimating ongoing repression, including the night curfew.¹⁹⁴

The assassination of officers immediately triggered an internal crisis in the police force as the unions demanded better protection, and Maurice Papon, who felt that his own position and his authority with the government was at risk, responded in cold fury by further deepening brutal repression.¹⁹⁵ In his memoirs Papon held the FLN uniquely responsible for attempting to unleash a ‘Bataille de Paris’ and a deliberate cycle of violence, through its unprovoked assault during this “septembre noir” on isolated police officers. The FLN, claimed the Prefect, in deliberately provoking a violent defensive response from the state, set in motion a train of events that was to lead to what he called the ‘unfortunate’ deaths of two or three few fellow countrymen.¹⁹⁶ The historian Jean-Paul Brunet shares this position since the FLN, he claims, in undertaking, ‘cette offensive brutale – et unilatérale – allait être à l’origine d’un engrenage infernal qui allait déboucher sur la violente répression des 17 et 18 octobre’, and for this the FLN leaders in Paris, ‘porte une lourde part de responsabilité’.¹⁹⁷ If they had acted more responsibly, ‘il n’y aurait sans doute pas eu ces dérives meutrières’.¹⁹⁸

Brunet’s argument that the FLN carried ultimate responsibility for the massacre of their own people does not hold up to examination and obscures the fact that the Prefect of Police, far from respecting a truce by withdrawing the brutal FPA to Fort Noisy on 28 June, had in reality deepened violent police operations by sending harki units on what the commander Montaner referred to as punitive ‘surprise-operations’ into the key FLN enclaves (see Chapter 6). The resumption of FLN attacks from the 12 August onwards was significantly a local riposte by armed groups to the way that Papon had been taking advantage of the truce to push forward an aggressive agenda, while militants had to stand by powerless to intervene. The reasons that the Federal Committee had given in June 1960 for opposing the GPRA order for a truce was that, ‘l’ennemi, lui, ne désarme pas. La répression va redoubler de violence...’, while the MNA, supported by the police, ‘va, par une terreur qui ne connaîtra plus de bornes, essayer de reprendre les quartiers d’ou il fut chassé’.¹⁹⁹ After July 1961 the Paris militants could throw this argument back in the face of the Committee as its own informal truce had enabled Papon and the FPA to engage unchecked in an offensive that threatened the FLN in its own key bastions.

In the next chapter I move on to identify who were the armed groups that defied the orders of the Federal Committee and whether this resistance was supported by the Paris leadership.

¹⁹⁴ Paulette Péju, *Le 17 Octobre des Algériens*, in G. Manceron (ed.), 46: the paradox confronting the Federation was this, ‘Non seulement sa modération relative entraînait un malaise certain, mais cela ne lui était daucun profit dans l’opinion française’.

¹⁹⁵ Papon discharged his anger on the head of SCAA, accusing him of a failure in intelligence and to give forewarning of the FLN change in strategy: Poupaert strongly defended his position, but was soon after replaced by the more compliant Chaix.

¹⁹⁶ M Papon, *Les Chevaux du pouvoir*, 201-204.

¹⁹⁷ J.-P. Brunet, *Police contre FLN*, 82.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 338.

¹⁹⁹ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 501.

Assassination of police officers and the Federation crisis

The dramatic resumption of co-ordinated assassinations by armed groups in Paris, caught both the Federal committee and the Prefect of police off-guard and precipitated a crisis in the FLN that has, until now, been largely ignored by historians. Much of the correspondence and orders that passed between Germany and Zouaoui, the Federal in Paris, during this crisis has survived, and reveals an astonishing situation in which the Federation Committee seems to have temporarily lost control over the Paris FLN and floundered around in the dark, unable to gain information and leverage over a situation that threatened to spiral out of control.²⁰⁰ The Federal Committee first demanded on 27 August why the Paris FLN had engaged in these actions, but over six weeks later it was still trying to extract information from Paris.²⁰¹ This failure to elicit information, and the deepening irritation and anxiety of the Committee, placed within the context of how the Federation hierarchy normally operated, was highly unusual. The FLN in Paris, perhaps more than anywhere else in France or urban Algeria, constituted a model organisation, a highly disciplined and centralised bureaucratic apparatus that functioned on military lines. The Federation leaders would not tolerate any form of dissidence, resistance could be met by severe punishment including execution, and cadres, who had been selected and promoted for their loyalty, generally shared in a culture of deference to their superiors.

The *Sou'al* correspondence has been frequently studied for what it reveals about the planning of the mass demonstrations, but little note has been taken of its relevance to the assassination crisis. The sequence of events here can be usefully conveyed by extrapolating the comments made by both the Committee and Zouaoui on the FLN attacks in Paris:-

27 August 1961. The Federal Committee (CF) to Zouaoui demanded to know, 'sur quel principe ou directives se base-t-on pour abattre des simples gardiens de la paix?'.

16 September. CF to Zouaoui, 'la même question vous a été réposée'.

7 October. CF to Zouaoui, 'nous n'avons reçu aucune explication à ce sujet jusqu'à ce jour'. The Committee asked for four things: i) 'de cesser toute attaque contre les policiers', save in a situation of legitimate self-defense ii) to desist from the 'liquidation physique et individuelle' of harkis, as was being done by one 'Djafar' who was recruiting harkis in order to kill them. It would be better to organise a mutiny inside the FPA force and a 'coup spectaculaire' in the form of a mass desertion iii)

²⁰⁰ There has been much speculation about the origins of these documents and even their authenticity. Mohamed Harbi, in a special edition of *Sou'al. Revue quadrimestrielle*, no.7 (September, 1987), 71-88, published eleven documents, three of them Committee 'directives' to Paris, and eight letters from Zouaoui (signed "Maurice") to the Committee in Germany. Zouaoui kept the FLN central Paris archive in security at the Tunisian embassy, and Harbi was able to recuperate them from this source after the war (personal communication to author by Harbi, Lyons, 19 June 2006). Harbi, however, did not publish all the correspondance, as we know from some additional documents to which Daho Djerbal was able to gain access in the Harbi and Haroun archives in Algiers, see *L'Organisation spéciale*, 336-343. Among the FLN archives seized by the DST during Operation Flore on 9 November 1961, and now to be found in the APP, were almost identical copies of the three CF 'directives' to those found in *Sou'al*. Zouaoui's secretariat typed copies of the original orders from Germany that were then forwarded as instructions, sometimes in an amended form, to the three RC's. H1B20 includes a letter, probably from Mingasson, dated Paris 11 October 1961, which refers to enclosed documents, including '3 ex.[exemplaires] Directives Générales No.2', ie. the detailed instructions from Germany regarding the implementation of the phased demonstrations from 17 October onwards. Maurice Papon, who had privileged access to the secret police archives long before they were made public, also used these documents in his memoirs, see *Les Chevaux du pouvoir*, 214. In addition, some of the reports that were sent by Zouaoui to the Federation Committee are quoted or referred to in Ali Haroun, *7e Wilaya*.

²⁰¹ CF to Zouaoui, 7 Oct 61, *Sou'al*, 71; also a copy in HB113.

in regard to ‘policiers tortionnaires’ to make a detailed report of all the charges against them iv) to provide a list of compatriots murdered by the police, with details such as where the body was found.²⁰²

10 October. CF to Zouaoui, ‘nous insistons sur la nécessité de nous envoyer *d’extrême urgence* tous les renseignements concernant les exécutions sommaires’ and ‘les méfaits dont se sont faits responsables les policiers abattus’. Detailed reports must reach the Committee by 14 October. A new urgency arose in the light of a need to counter Papon’s curfew. ‘L’opinion publique française étant retournée contre nous, il nous faut absolument renverser la vapeur et ramener l’opinion publique à nous, ce n’est que dans cette mesure que les actions prévues contre le couvre-feu [ie. the demonstrations] auront des échos et feront reculer Papon et ses sbires’.

12 October Zouaoui to CF. Notes that the reports requested would be sent on 14 October, but if incomplete they would arrive by a second courier on 17 October. This is the first sign that Zouaoui was facing difficulty in getting reports delivered to him from lower echelons.

14 October. Zouaoui to CF. He included a report on the activities of the armed groups (GA), and everything he had received to date on the crimes committed by the police. However, while he now had a thick dossier for Wilaya 1, with quite complete reports, Wilaya 2 was proving slow to respond and its returns would be delivered, in principle, on 17 October by ‘Anne’ [Boddaert].

17 October Zouaoui to CF. Nothing had been received yet from Wilaya 2, and he hoped to send a dossier on 21 October. He was able to enclose more information from Wilaya 1 on actions by the armed groups.

17 October RO [Ladlani] to Zouaoui, written after radio reports had announced several dead and wounded during the Paris demonstration, showed a high level of concern and the most strongly worded order yet, that police assassinations were damaging the intended impact of the mass action. ‘Il faut éviter la “politique de réaction” qui ressort dans vos rapports...[.....]....Sachez aussi que l’opinion publique est contre nous, elle ne comprend pas les attentats contre de simples gardiens de la paix. Votre silence sur ce sujet et surtout votre manque de précision quant aux causes réelles de ces attentats ont été pour une grande partie la cause de la réprobation unanime de l’opinion française de nos actions’. Significantly, Ladlani went on to suggest that perhaps Zouaoui and his lieutenants were falling victim to resistance by the rank-and-file, ‘Surtout les cadres ne doivent pas se laisser dépasser par la base. La structure étant solide à Paris, aucun dépassement ne doit se produire’. Clearly the Committee felt that the Paris leaders needed to show their authority and had no excuse for being dictated to by lower rank militants.

20 October Zouaoui to CF, enclosed the reports concerning, ‘les assassinats et tortures auxquels s’est livrée la police depuis septembre’.

24 October Zouaoui to CF, was only now able to identify the ‘Djafar’, mentioned by the Committee on 7 October as luring harkis to their death.

The *Sou’al* correspondence indicates that Zouaoui faced problems in imposing his authority on the networks under his command. As early as May 1961 he had complained to the Federation Committee that he was being kept in the dark about, ‘activités entreprises en dehors de [sa] connaissance’.²⁰³ Zouaoui was facing difficulty between late August and mid-October 1961 in extracting the information demanded by the Committee, from the RCs, Wilaya heads, or further down the chain of command, and especially from Wilaya 2 (Paris north). Was the Federal himself facing lower level resistance that he was unable to master, or was he complicit in the dissidence? Who exactly were the armed groups that were assassinating harkis and police on such a scale, and did they represent part of a wider resistance by FLN cadres in Paris?

²⁰² CF to Z, 7 October 61, *Sou’al*, 72. When Zouaoui received a directive from Germany, he would have those parts relating to orders to be relayed to lower echelons retyped. This is why truncated or variant versions of CF directives can be found in the APP archives.

²⁰³ Quoted in R. Valat, *Les calots bleus*, 197, from H1B20. I have been unable to locate this letter.

The *Sou'al* correspondence provides no answers to these questions and it has proved extremely difficult to find information on the Groupes armés (GA) and Organisation spéciale (OS) in Paris since they operated in the deepest clandestinity. The cellular structure of the FLN hierarchy, designed precisely to prevent police penetration so that any arrested cadres would have a very restricted knowledge of any contacts in the echelon above, meant that even leaders had little idea of the overall structure and its dynamic.²⁰⁴ The accounts that have been written by high placed leaders of the Federation who were involved in the events of 1961, Haroun, Boudaoud, Ghafir and Benyounès, tend to provide an 'official' FLN version of the past that denies the existence of any significant discord in the ranks of the heroic and disciplined revolutionary movement that they headed. This is where the Prefecture of Police and DST archives prove to be so useful to the historian.

On the resumption of FLN attacks on the Paris police on 28 August, Maurice Papon, caught off-guard and sensing a threat to his own authority and position, angrily responded by lashing out at Jean Poupaert, Director of the SCAA, for failing to predict this development.²⁰⁵ On 5 September Papon issued instructions for a drive against the FLN and to track down the armed groups responsible and on 11 September Poupaert submitted a detailed action plan to the Prefect. The super-clandestine OS, as well as the GA, had always been a prime target of intelligence operations, but now the wave of unprecedented assassinations offered a sense of urgency to the task since it had precipitated a dangerous crisis in the police force and also threatened to politically discredit Papon for losing control of the capital at the crucial moment that talks were underway with the FLN. A key problem that the intelligence services faced was that the FLN, particularly after a phase of police arrests, repeatedly restructured its networks so that investigators were constantly faced with the problem of having to slowly piece together an organigramme of the new system and its modus operandi. Each time the police built up a detailed picture the FLN would secretly change its organisation, so that they were forced to go back to the drawing board. As the Director of the SCAA remarked, with a hint of admiration, 'Le FLN, organisation particulièrement souple, on ne le soulignera jamais assez, s'adapte sans cesse au combat qui lui est fait'.²⁰⁶

During the policing crisis in Paris during 1961, the Federation initiated two such reorganisations. The first, in response to the massive arrest of the OS network led by Slimane Amirat in January 1961, consisted of a restructuring and decentralisation of the armed groups, so that the GA began to take precedence over the OS, a change that was to carry significant consequences for the later assassination of police officers. Secondly, on 1 September 1961, the Wilaya structure was changed so that Wilaya 1 (Paris centre) and Wilaya 2 (Paris suburbs), was replaced by Wilaya 1, south of the River Seine and with adjoining suburbs, and Wilaya 2, north of the Seine. Such technical changes may appear to be of minor interest, but after 1 September the police, were unable to work out how the FLN networks operated without being able to crack the new number codes by which any given echelon was identified, and the geographical area to which it corresponded (see map 1 and figure 1, pp.22-23 above).²⁰⁷

The voluminous daily security reports that were produced by the SCAA and SCINA provide a fascinating insight into the way in which the police gradually passed from an early stage of inadequate intelligence, deep perplexity and speculation about FLN assassinations, to one of growing certainty as the DST and police arrested and interrogated a rapidly expanding chain of suspects. Papon dedicated extra resources to the urgent task of hunting down the armed groups and the commander of the FPA, Montaner, reinforced by other special police units, the BAV and the 8th

²⁰⁴ Papon in a report of 17 June 1960 to the Minister of the Interior, HA65, noted how difficult it was to gain intelligence on the OS since it was, 'fortement structurée et cloisonnée', and even when cadres were arrested they never gave, 'le moindre renseignement utilisable', and the cell structure meant that they had a very restricted knowledge of the organisation anyway.

²⁰⁵ HA88, Poupaert in a spirited reply to Papon, 31 August 1961, made a detailed rebuttal.

²⁰⁶ H1B4, Director of SCAA to Papon, report dated 30 November 1961.

²⁰⁷ During the interrogations of Baba-Hamed much attention was given by the police to verifying the new boundaries and codes of each level of the Paris pyramidal structure.

Territorial Brigade, was highly successful, through arrests, interrogations and analysis of captured documents, in locating an ever-widening circle of militants. Between early September and mid-November the police was able to arrest 91 GA and 19 OS cadres, and the mass of intelligence deposited in the archives relating to their activities makes it possible to build a detailed picture of the groups involved in the campaign of assassination.²⁰⁸ The SCAA claimed by December 1961 to have achieved, ‘une connaissance parfaite des structures du FLN et des modifications que celui-ci y a apportées au cours de l’année’.²⁰⁹

The first problem the police faced was in identifying the structure of the clandestine commando units, and whether they belonged to the OS or the GA, since their function and chain of command was quite different. The *Organisation spéciale* (OS), which was headed by Rabah Bouaziz of the Federation Committee, constituted a commando élite that had been carefully selected and intensely trained in urban guerilla warfare, including the use of explosives, in camps in Morocco.²¹⁰ The OS manual noted its aim was to make, ‘un véritable Science de l’Action destinée à combattre l’ennemi sur son propre territoire’, and to force him to, ‘fixer ses forces en dehors de l’Algérie’.²¹¹ A military (ALN) rather than civilian organisation, the OS was recruited from young, physically strong and courageous men and women who, preferably without any family ties, were prepared to live a spartan, isolated and often lonely existence without social contact, embedded like sleeper cells in the main urban centres of France. They were expected to live outside the main Algerian quartiers, and to avoid police attention by ‘passing’ as Europeans with false identity cards, often wearing suites, and even drinking alcohol and smoking in public, since this was banned by the FLN.²¹² The OS only emerged from this deep clandestinity to carry out carefully planned operations to destroy strategic targets, place bombs, or to assassinate key political figures. The OS état-major in Paris also had a national remit and dispatched units to carry out missions in the provinces where they could avoid recognition, including by local Algerians, and quickly depart before any police reaction.²¹³ Because of the importance of these operations, the OS was directly controlled by Rabah Bouaziz who frequently crossed the border into France to plan and supervise attacks, along with his chief lieutenant in Paris, Nacereddine Aït Mokhtar.

The *Groupes armés* however, constituted a quite different force, that was recruited from volunteer militants at the Regional level and, by the nature of the tasks facing them, tended to be tough men, such as former soldiers who had fought in Indochina, who knew how to handle themselves in physical combat. The key echelon of GA formation was that of the Region, three rungs down from the Wilaya, and corresponding to an urban area that included about 3,500 FLN members.²¹⁴ Each head of a Region had at his disposal a commando of fifteen men, and he usually designated any mission that was to be carried out by the GA, an action that was then planned and executed by the head of the armed unit. Their activities, among them punitive actions against the MNA, as well as the disciplining of Algerians who resisted the monthly collection, consumed alcohol, or were subject to the fines of the *Comités de justice*, meant that the GA were closely involved in the daily policing of social and political life within the core immigrant quartiers. Because of this intimate knowledge of the quartier and its social life based on the Algerian cafés or lodging houses, the GA shared much more closely the general attitudes of the rank-and-file militants, including the growing

²⁰⁸ The process of police reconstruction of the FLN networks, and identifying which groups and individuals were responsible for specific operations, took about three months. The syntheses produced by the intelligence services late in 1961 thus provide the best insight into armed actions that took place during the crisis from August to October, see especially H1B4, the detailed SCAA annual report for 1961, 34.pp.

²⁰⁹ H1B4, SCAA report for 1961.

²¹⁰ D. Djebal, *L’Organisation Spéciale*, 128-137, 419-421; A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 87-111, 453-4; R. Valat, *Calots bleus*, 21-5.

²¹¹ H1B18, FLN Fédération de France booklet, *OS Guide du Fidai*.

²¹² D. Djebal, *L’Organisation Spéciale*, 73, 97, 123-5, 175- 189-202.

²¹³ L. Chabrun, *Guerre de l’Ombre*, 122-3.

²¹⁴ See A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 56, on the key role of the Region, ‘situé à une articulation sensible de l’ensemble organisationnel’. On the structure of the FLN ‘contre-société’, see B. Stora, *Ils Venaient*, 335-55.

sense through mid-1961 of the unbearable repressive actions of the FPA forces inside their neighbourhoods (see Chapter 6).

Despite the claim by Ali Haroun that the GA were well regulated²¹⁵, the Federation leaders faced a constant battle to prevent armed groups engaging in maveric or uncontrolled actions, including towards fellow Algerians. The FLN put in place two major safeguards, the first that weapons should only be temporarily issued and returned to dépôts after each mission, to prevent individuals using the guns to pursue their own private agendas, from clan vendettas to extortion.²¹⁶ Secondly, assassinations, whether of MNA, police or other targets, were not to be carried out without prior investigation and preparation of a dossier that was then reviewed and clearance given at Wilaya or Federal level. However, during 1960 and 1961 in Paris there are numerous signs that while the OS operated in a professional way in following such procedures, the GA units, poorly trained and inexperienced, retained their own arms dépôts and constituted a volatile and often autonomous force, that engaged in poorly planned and frequently botched operations. For example, when the FPA first created a base in the 18th arrondissement on 20 November 1960, it was met immediately by an unplanned Regional armed response. This local initiative, during which the FLN lost heavily in men and arms, was condemned by the Amala leader as too ‘hâties’ and a significant failure.²¹⁷ The police received intelligence that an unidentified FLN ‘très haute responsables’ had gone on a tour of inspection of the Paris region in June 1960, including one ‘Tahar’ who was classified as a ‘non violentes’. Tahar, ‘s’élèvant contre les attentats ou les réprésailles des groupes d’action locaux’, by trying to place men whom he could trust, so as to counter or marginalise certain cadres who were ignoring orders.²¹⁸

From early September 1961 onwards, as the police and DST arrested and identified growing numbers of gunmen, an unexpected pattern began to emerge which showed that the assassination of harkis and police officers, which was normally the responsibility of the OS, was almost solely the work of GA units. For example, on 27 September the BAV arrested Lahlah Bentifaouine who, during interrogation by Montaner on 10 October, revealed that he was the head of the new Zone 212 in Wilaya 2 (Paris north) and had three Regional GA commandos under his control, one under Abdelhamid Azzouz in the 11th arrondissement, a second led by Aissa Derbal and Arezki Sadaoui in the 3rd arrondissement, and a third under Idir Tachet in the 19th. Bentifaoune had in his possession a gun that had belonged to the harki Amar Berani when he was strangled and thrown into the Canal Saint Martin on the Quai de Valmy (10th arrondissement) on the night of 15 August. Bentifaoune was also involved, on the same night, in the assassination of the FPA informer Moumène.²¹⁹ The synchronised attacks on the night of 15 August, that first breached the truce imposed by the GPRA and Federal Committee, thus took place in the north-east area of central Paris under the GA groups controlled by Bentifaoune, and the crescendo of mounting attacks on isolated police officers after 28 August followed the same pattern. Likewise, Ameur Akli, head of the Regional GA at Boulogne-Issy-les-Moulineux in Wilaya 1, during his interrogation by Montaner, ‘reconnu sa participation au meutre d’un gardien de la paix à Boulogne-Billancourt au printemps dernier’ and disclosed the location of his arms dépôt.²²⁰

²¹⁵ A. Haroun, *7eme Wilaya*, 59-60.

²¹⁶ H1B18, Abdelkader Ould Saïd, head of the OS in Paris, during interrogations on 18 and 22 July 1961, stated that arms were only supplied twenty-four hours before an operation by ‘le responsable de l’armement’, then recuperated after an attack by the OPA network, and returned immediately to a secret cache.

²¹⁷ HA88. Unsigned report, probably by Montaner, 25 November 1961.

²¹⁸ H1B29. Intelligence report 7 October 1961. D. Djebal, *L’Organisation Spéciale*, 334-5, shows that Naceredine Aït Mokhtar (“Majid”), head of OS operations in France, after departing to Germany to escape arrest, was replaced by Tahar Benyahya (“Ali”), until his arrest in August-September. It seems likely that the ‘Tahar’ mentioned in the report was Benyahya.

²¹⁹ H1B12, FPA ‘Lutte contre le terrorisme’.

²²⁰ H1B12.

The modus operandi of GA attacks on individual police officers is illustrated by a document seized by the DST during Operation Flore, a report by the head of Region 1121 at Boulogne-Billancourt (Wilaya 1, Superzone 1, Zone 2, Region 1) headed ‘Policiers abattus’. This was almost certainly a copy of one of the reports that was sent to Germany at the demand of the Federation Committee: ‘Un inspecteur qui habite la même avenue [de Verdun at Issy-les-Molineux] est signalé plusieurs fois par nos éléments comme étant très zélé malgré qu'il n'est pas en service: ils rentre dans les cafés même européen s'il trouve des Algériens il leurs demandent les papiers et certains sont sortis par des coups de pieds sans aucune raison’. On about the 15 September a fifty-year old Algerian from Clamart, during a visit to members of his family at 109 Avenue de Verdun, was shot by the inspector as he left the hotel. The officer covered his actions by a routine story of self-defense, that the unarmed victim had been shot as he rapidly pulled, what was believed to be a gun, from his pocket. Because of these ‘crimes’ a riposte was planned by two GA men on 22 September who staked out the café-restaurant at 105 Avenue de Verdun that was frequented by the police officer but, because of a mistake in their surveillance, they were caught off-guard by a police patrol that chanced to make a check of the clients. In an ensuing gun-battle the two officers and one GA were killed, and three Algerians were wounded, while the target, it would appear, was able to escape and later moved to a different quartier.²²¹ This particular case confirms that standard FLN practice was followed by which, after local identification of police malpractice, a report was produced for the Regional head who would then give a green light to a particular GA cell to carry out an operation.

The demobilisation of the OS

In late November 1961 the director of the SCAA, in a detailed report on operations to dismantle the armed groups, was able to show that after the 5 June 1961 the OS had mounted only one operation, an attack on 22 September on a patrol in the Rue de Temple. All the rest, including the assassination of isolated police officers and harkis, was the work of the GA.²²² By early August the security services were beginning to speculate that the OS had ceased to exist as a separate organisation, and had been replaced by the regional GAs.²²³ The SCINA reported on 31 August 1961, ‘Les groupes armés remplacent depuis quelques mois l'organisation spéciale (OS), organisation autonome, dissoute à la suite d'action jugées inopportunnes (attentat de Montfermeil).’²²⁴

The Prefecture and DST archives confirm the conclusion reached by Daho Djerbal that during 1961 the OS, although not ‘officially’ dissolved, underwent an ill-defined crisis and lost terrain to the GA.²²⁵ Djerbal attributes this, in part, to the fact that since its able organiser Aït Mokhtar was forced to flee France in May 1960, the OS was increasingly run by inexperienced men, recruited from intermediate cadre levels, who were unable to retain the same, high levels of efficiency and cohesion.²²⁶ But far worse was to follow during 1961 as the OS was repeatedly dismantled by the security forces. In January 1961 the Prefecture of police and DST, in a combined operation, arrested

²²¹ H1B21, Report of 1121, 25 October 1961. For a similar report by the regional head 2211A in August 1961 see A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 414.

²²² HB13, Director of SCAA to Papon, 30 November 1961. A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 412, confirms this by a list of GA missions during September 1961 in Wilaya 1.

²²³ HA47 SCINA report 2 August 1961.

²²⁴ HA56. The FLN raid on a hospital at Montfermeil on 6 April to kill a wounded MNA gunman was particularly disastrous and damaging to the Federation: as an RG report noted, ‘Le 6 avril, un commando frontiste pénétra dans l'hôpital, tua le gardien de service, balaya tout sur son passage, blessa des infirmiers, des malades, des visiteurs et finalement n'aperçut pas S. qui était caché sous le lit et mit à mort à côté, par erreur un frontiste également hospitalisé...’. L. Chabrun, *Guerre de l'Ombre*, 55; according to a SCAA report, 30 November 1961, the FLN blamed this fiasco on ‘une machination policière’, H1B13.

²²⁵ D. Djerbal, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 339, 343. Intelligence officers in the RG were convinced in September 1961, unlike the SCAA, that the OS had been entirely disbanded, see HB13, SCAA Director to Papon, 30 November 1961.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 334-5.

36 men from the special operational commando headed by Slimane Amirat.²²⁷ The OS had barely begun to recover and to reorganise when its key operatives were again arrested, among them Ali Benyahia, Ahmed Benhadi and Mohamed Salah (le "Khal") in May, followed by the head of the Paris network, Abdelkader Ould Saïd, and the controller of weapons, Amouzouarene, arrested respectively on 29 June and 5 July.²²⁸ At this moment the OS, in significant disarray, appears to have been stood down while it regrouped, and the GA were given the task of carrying out attacks on isolated police officers.²²⁹ However, the GA did not constitute free-booting commandos as they were still accountable to the Wilaya heads and Controleurs: as the DST analyst of intelligence gathered during Operation Flore reported, 'Ces groupes armés paraissent dépendre des chefs de wilayas, sous le contrôle étroite des responsables au contrôle des wilayas [ie RCs] qui reçoivent les comptes-rendus des assassinats ou des corrections et dont parfois l'accord préalable est sollicité avant l'action'.²³⁰ In general it would appear that the Federal Committee had significantly lost its means of control over both OS and GA actions in Paris and that the GA in particular, that still controlled their own crucial arms depots, had a considerable degree of autonomy. Plans for attacks on police officers may still have received prior assent at RC or Wilaya level, but the circuit of decision-making had effectively come to exclude the Committee in Germany.

Daho Djerbal has raised the interesting question as to whether the weakening, and demobilisation of the OS in France during 1961, was linked to a rift between Rabah Bouaziz, in charge of the OS networks, and Ladlani, responsible for the organic hierarchy, including the GA. He notes that Rabah and Salima Bouaziz were spending a lot of time in Switzerland engaged in the minor task of assistance to Algerian militants who had sought refuge there. Had Rabah been politically marginalised, he asks, since one would not expect the head of the OS to be absent in Switzerland at such a crucial time, 'aussi loin du centre de décision....Y a-t-il eu éloignement ou transfert des responsabilités?'.²³¹ The intelligence services detected signs of tension, as have Harbi and Djerbal.²³² Whatever the truth of this matter, the fact remains that the demobilisation of the OS, just as the FLN in Paris confronted a phase of deepening police repression, had drastic effects on the ability of the Federal Committee to control the armed groups in Paris. Normally, since the Committee had ordered a virtual truce on 5 July, it would have been able to depend on the highly trained OS to contain any potential or growing unrest among the Paris militants and the GA. But

²²⁷ R. Valat, *Les Calots bleus*, 174-8; P. Péju, *Ratonnades à Paris*.

²²⁸ H1B18, DST interrogations 18th and 22 July; H1B13, report by Papon to Minister of Interior, 13 July 1961; R. Muelle, *7 Ans de Guerre*, 261.

²²⁹ H1B4. SCAA report for 1961.

²³⁰ H1B16, Desbons report. H1B4, the SCAA annual report for 1961, notes that after the arrest of Amirat in January 1961, the OS that had, until then, been under the direct command of the GPRA [ie the Federal Committee] passed under the control of the Wilaya heads, and the GA groups (about 250 men in Paris) were in principle assisted by the OS in planning operations. It was 'ces nouvelles formations' that, between February and July 1961, carried out attacks on the police. However from 15 August, after the brief 'trêves', the 'groupes armés et fidaïnes de l'OS ont收回 leur autonomie. Les premiers ont été chargés des attentats contre les fonctionnaires de police', while the latter began to prepare spectacular operations against economic targets, especially oil refineries.

²³¹ D. Djerbal, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 373. However, the location of Bouaziz in Switzerland is not entirely anomalous. When the CF first moved to Germany in 1958 it operated, on a day-to-day basis, as a central body located in Cologne. But later, because of the extreme danger of assassination by French secret service agents operating in Germany, the five members decentralised into different towns, making collective decision-making more irregular. In addition members of the CF were often absent from Germany, Bouaziz and Ladlani rotated 'en mission' in Paris, while Boudaoud travelled frequently by air via Switzerland and Rome to Cairo, Tunis and Madrid. Thus it seems likely that the Committee often took decisions in the absence of one or more members, and this may explain why Ali Haroun was responsible for penning the 'directives' sent to Zouaoui in early October 1961 and signed "Kr" on behalf of Ladlani.

²³² M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 221; D. Djerbal, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 341. HA56, SCINA report 10 August 1961, comments on, 'les rapports – toujours difficile – de l'organisation spéciale avec l'organisation politico-administrative'.

suddenly the GA was dominant in Paris, an often unruly body of tough gunmen, that Ladlani had some difficulty in controlling. Harbi had already noticed in 1958 that, ‘Contrirement à ce qu'il affirmait, Ladlani ne maîtrisait totalement ni les groupes de choc ni les militants qui conduisaient les interrogatoires dans les caves des restaurants ou des hôtels’.²³³ As early as May 1961 Zouaoui admitted in a report to the Committee that, for lack of information from below, he was losing his grip over actions being carried out by militants. He was not informed of, ‘activités entreprises en dehors de [sa] connaissance’.²³⁴ This is perhaps why Zouaoui, even under intense pressure from the Committee after 27 August to explain the assassinations, took so long to extract information from the base.

On September 1st the Federal Committee sent an order to Zouaoui noting that, ‘il n'est pas dit que les harkis vous sont confiés, ces traîtres restent toujours “confiés” à la Spéciale [OS]’, although the GA could defend themselves if endangered by a patrol.²³⁵ The same message was emphasised again by the Committee in further orders that were sent on 10th and 15th of September.²³⁶ However, the leaders in Paris were frustrated by their inability to follow normal procedure by calling on the OS to counter police violence, since it was in such a state of disarray. ‘Nous vous demandons de nous permettre de nous “occuper” des harkis, sans attendre la collaboration avec nos frères de la Spéciale. En effet, le responsable de l'OS est toujours à l'extérieur ou ailleurs, son remplaçant provisoire, visiblement dépassé, se terre et demeure intouchables. Les contacts avec le Spéciale se limitent actuellement à des rencontres fortuites avec quelques éléments ex-GA’.²³⁷ The situation was much the same three weeks later, when Zouaoui wrote again, ‘Prière nous communiqué “officiellement” les coordonnées du responsable de l'OS. Car nous ne savons plus qui est effectivement le responsable à Paris’.²³⁸ The OS had been so severely effected by frequent arrests between January and July 1961 as to be virtually neutralised and without leadership.

At the same time the FLN was having to confront an unprecedented violent onslaught from the police. The five week cycle of assassinations of police and harkis came to an end on 3 October. This suggests that Zouaoui had finally succeeded in following Federal Committee orders to halt the GA attacks. But the Prefecture, as yet unaware of this changing pattern, unleashed even more lethal forms of counter-violence following Papon's notorious speech at the funeral of Demoën on 2 October: ‘For every blow received, we will render ten’.²³⁹ During September and early October the OAS was at work in Paris attacking FLN café-hotels with plastic explosive and rogue death-squads within the police force were taking Algerians at night to isolated locations where they were brutally murdered or thrown unconscious into rivers and canals. Zouaoui, in his letter to Germany on 6 October, spelled out this desperate situation: ‘D'autre part, la police agit actuellement sous la

²³³ M. Harbi, *Une Vie debout*, 213. A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 313-14, mentions the case of a Regional in Grenoble executing a young cadre for using the collection to buy a motorbike. The Federal Committee received the report of the theft and execution after the event, ‘et ne put que regretter la mort de ce jeune homme’.

²³⁴ H1B20, Zouaoui to CF, May 1961, quoted in R. Valat, *Les Calots Bleus*, 197.

²³⁵ D. Djebel, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 340, letter from CF to Zouaoui, 10 September, private archive. Daho Djebel, in an e-mail exchange with the author, notes that this source (along with the other correspondence quoted below) is in the Harbi or Haroun papers deposited in the National Archives in Algiers.

²³⁶ D. Djebel, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 340. On 10 September the Federal Committee re-iterated the demand as to why ‘simples gardiens de la paix’ were being attacked: ‘Normalement, ce travail revient à la Spéciale [OS] et elle aussi ne doit pas agir n'importe comment et contre n'importe qui’. On 15 September the Committee repeated, ‘Ce qu'il faut éviter, c'est de viser intentionnellement les simples gardiens de la paix pendant qu'il y a des tortionnaires qui courrent les rues de Paris’. This suggests that the Committee believed that the GA were attacking innocent or innocuous police, rather than the officers most culpable of criminal killings or torture of Algerians.

²³⁷ D. Djebel, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 340. This letter from Zouaoui to the Federal Committee is incorrectly dated by Djebel as 6 September 1961, when from references to the curfew and other events it is undoubtedly the 6 October.

²³⁸ *Sou'al*, 87, Zouaoui to CF, 28 October 1961.

²³⁹ *Le Monde*, 3 October 1961.

couverture de "l'OAS" pour plastiquer les hôtels nord-africains. En outre, ils arrêtent au hasard des Algériens qu'ils exécutent froidement dans la forêt ou qu'ils jettent dans la Seine. Des rapports très documentés vous parviendront incessamment. Actuellement, il nous est signalé une trentaine d'Algériens trouvés noyés dans la Seine. En conséquence, nous avons décidé que ces mesures arbitraires ne devaient en rien diminuer le "volume" de nos actions".²⁴⁰

Zouaoui could not have been more blunt. The Committee had insisted for weeks that assassinations of the police should stop immediately, and this moratorium had in reality been achieved by 3 October, but the Algerian community was facing an unprecedented wave of further murders by the police. The OS, who should normally have taken on the task of organising a riposte to the police, was virtually defunct. In this situation Zouaoui, who still showed a prudent obedience to Committee orders by requesting permission to deploy GA cells, was prepared to break rank by maintaining high levels of counter-violence. Zouaoui was prepared to re-launch the GA attacks, that he had just succeeded in bringing under control at the behest of the Committee, in the light of an even more deadly and deepening cycle of police violence.²⁴¹ The FLN leaders in Paris were placed in an increasingly difficult situation as enormous pressures for armed action began to build up among rank-and-file militants that were suffering the most direct effects of police brutality in the working-class quartiers, an issue that is explored in more detail in the following chapter.

Before moving on to examine in Chapter 7 Algerian militant life in the 13th arrondissement, I will consider three aspects of the position of the Federal Committee: the impact, at this precise moment, of divisions at the highest levels of the FLN; the way in which the Committee revealed its primary concern with the negotiating position of the GPRA through propaganda that aimed to counter the damaging effect of 'terrorist' assassinations of the police; and whether the Committee, because of its location in Germany, was out of touch with the situation developing in Paris

The crisis in the French Federation coincided with, and was affected by, a much wider dissension within the FLN leadership, a power struggle that was already developing and eventually erupted in 1962 in violent division and a situation close to civil war. The growing tensions between the two main blocks, the GPRA and the *Etat-major général* (EMG) burst to the surface at a meeting in Tripoli of the highest constitutional body, the *Conseil national de la Révolution algérienne* (CNRA) between the 9th and 27th August 1961.²⁴² The EMG group, led by Boumediene and his two lieutenants Mendjli and Kaïd, used opposition to the Evian talks as a means of attacking the GPRA. Presenting themselves as true revolutionaries, they attacked Abbas and the GPRA as 'bourgeois' sell-outs who, in the words of Gilbert Meynier, 'avait pour dessein de noyer la révolution dans le marais néocolonialiste de la coopération avec la France'.²⁴³ On the final day of the Council, 27 August, Abbas was replaced as President by Benyoucef Ben Khedda who was viewed by many, including French intelligence, as a hard-line radical who was expected to take a tough stance. Although the EMG was not opposed to Ben Khedda, overall the colonels felt they had lost the initiative on the CNRA and left Tripoli early. Boumediene, fearing that he might be arrested and executed by the GPRA, fled to Germany where he found temporary refuge with the leaders of the French Federation. What was discussed between Boumediene and Boudaoud remains a mystery, but it seems likely that the EMG leaders believed that the Federation, which was widely perceived as a radical vanguard of the

²⁴⁰ Zouaoui to CF, 6 October 1961, quoted in D. Djebal, *L'Organisation Spéciale*, 336.

²⁴¹ Although I have not located any document in which the FLN leadership in Paris directly ordered the attacks on the police after 28 August, the sheer scale of these operations and their synchronicity indicates either a high level of planning inside the Paris FLN or a strong element of collusion. The Director of SCAA informed Papon on 4 Oct 61, the 28 armed groups in the Paris region, 'seem to be activated one after the other according to a prearranged plan', HA68.

²⁴² On the background to this see G. Meynier, *Histoire Intérieure*, 372-75; R. Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 109-10, 120-121, 155-7, 170-3.

²⁴³ G. Meynier, *Histoire Intérieure*, 373.

revolution, was sympathetic to the army and could provide political, material and manpower support.²⁴⁴

Boudaoud, an astute politician, was faced with the difficulty of how to position himself and the Federation, caught between the power blocks of the EMG and the GPRA, at the very moment that the police crisis was precipitated in Paris. The global tensions that were fracturing the higher levels of the FLN were inevitably reflected inside the Federation. The SCINA intelligence agency reported on the 8th August 1961 that some elements in the Federation, among them students, were unhappy with the Evian negotiations: ‘Ils pensent que les délégués du GPRA n’étaient pas armés politiquement pour répondre à certains questions précises du Gouvernement français’. The students looked forward with expectancy to the CNRA in Tripoli, due to open the following day, to clarify the issues.²⁴⁵ For the radicals or ‘activists’ in Paris, the removal of Abbas as President of the GPRA on 27 August came as good news since, in line with the EMG position, he was viewed as a bourgeois conservative who had entered into negotiations that were viewed as a sell-out. Abbas was widely disliked by the Federal armed groups since in an interview with the German journalist Arthur Rosenberg of *Tag* on 25 September 1958, he had publically spoken out against the opening of the ‘Second front’. Asked about ‘l’offensive terroriste en France’, Abbas said the newly installed GPRA had only recently agreed to this, on condition that action be restricted to economic and military targets. But the Fédération had exceeded its authority, ‘Que voulez-vous! Dans l’acharnement du combat, les ordres sont partout transgressés’.²⁴⁶

The fall of Abbas on 27 August was regarded by Paris activists as a turning point and the end of the man who carried prime responsibility for initiating the hated ‘truce’ imposed after Evian 1. It was no mere coincidence that the GA launched the first assassinations of Paris police officers the very next day. In this the ‘activists’ in Paris may, wittingly or not, have imitated the EMG that, according to Ben Tobbal, increased offensive military actions during Evian in order to compromise the negotiations.²⁴⁷ Nothing has been divulged by Boudaoud or other Federation leaders about such ‘internal’ matters that might shatter the carefully sustained myth of revolutionary unity. But, while Boudaoud seems to have preferred a prudent ‘attentisme’, he and the Federation Committee, confronted with a dramatic explosion of police assassinations after 28th August decided to uphold the GPRA position on the primacy of negotiations and a de facto truce on armed actions.²⁴⁸ The removal of Abbas, and the ongoing radical or EMG attacks on the ex-UDMA and ‘centristes’ moderates like Boumendjel, must also have threatened the position of Farès. However, Farès continued to play a central role within the Paris FLN throughout September and October, and it seems likely that he, as an intermediary between the FLN delegates in Geneva and Germany, was influential in persuading the Federal Committee to contain the violence in France.

The Committee was having to react quickly, and make important judgements, in a rapidly evolving situation in which it faced great technical difficulties in ensuring that secure and accurate political intelligence was constantly reaching it from Tunisia, Geneva, France and elsewhere. The initial priority of the Committee appears to have been how to satisfy the demands of the GPRA, rather than taking much heed of the problems that were brewing at the base in Paris. In this sense, the Committee took its eye off the ball until, confronted by a growing revolt in the capital, it realised that a mass demonstration could be used as an instrument to reassert its authority.

The preoccupation of the Federal Committee with the negative political impacts of police assassinations can be seen in the propaganda that it prepared in the week before the 17 October

²⁴⁴ G. Meynier, *ibid.*, 372, remarks that the EMG, ‘avait des soutiens à la fédération de France’.

²⁴⁵ HA 56, SCINA report, 10 August 1961.

²⁴⁶ M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 109; B.Stora, *Ils Venaient*, 367, notes that Abbas secretly informed de Gaulle via Rosenberg that the GPRA had decided to stop these ‘agressions’.

²⁴⁷ R. Malek, *L’Algérie à Evian*, quoting an interview with Ben Tobbal, 6 June 1990.

²⁴⁸ Eventually the Federation was forced to declare its hand in mid-1962 when it decided to back the GPRA and ‘interior’ forces against the Ben Bella/EMG block. This backing of the losing side led to the political marginalisation of the Federation leaders in post-Independence Algeria.

demonstration. The GPRA Minister of Information, M'Hamed Yazid, had led the way through a press statement on 14 October in which he justified executions by the FLN in Paris as a response to the depredations of police killers and torturers and for the, 'exactions qu'ils auraient commises contre le peuple algérien', and that had now been reinforced by the curfew and other, 'mesures de discrimination raciale'.²⁴⁹

Ali Haroun, as head of the central *commission de presse*, also sent the text of a tract to Paris that had been prepared before the 17 October, a further damage limitation exercise to counter the media and public image of militants in France as dregs of the criminal class, 'racketteurs', 'hommes de main' and 'tueurs'. It was politically important, in the context of negotiations, to counter perceptions of FLN militants as criminals, as the French government had tactically done throughout the war in order to deny legitimacy to the struggle for independence, and to bring activists before the court as common law criminals without political rights. French recognition of the FLN as the sole voice of the Algerian people was doubly important at this juncture. The tract emphasised such legitimacy by pointing to the fact that the GPRA, 'est reconnu par vingt-cinq pays représentants les deux tiers de l'humanité'. The communiqué concluded by announcing an immediate and unlimited hunger strike throughout prisons in France in order to gain recognition of, 'leur qualité de détenus politiques et obtenir l'application du régime politique à tous les détenus FLN de France et d'Algérie'.²⁵⁰ The fact that this communiqué was drafted in Germany before the 17 October again indicates the considerable political weight that the Federation placed on quickly halting the assassinations of police officers since, as we have seen above, this not only alienated French public opinion, but could be manipulated by the French government during negotiations as a bartering piece. If armed groups acted like criminals to indiscriminately murder innocent police officers, and worse if the Federal leaders were unable to control such killings, how could the French treat the FLN as a legitimate and trustworthy 'interlocuteur valable', that could implement and keep to its side of any future agreement?

A second tract dated 17 October, the *Déclaration du FLN sur la répression et les mesures policières dans la région parisienne*, was probably written by Benzerfa.²⁵¹ This represented the first public attempt by the Paris FLN to justify its assassinations of harkis and police officers, and also to mollify the Federal Committee. Fry and Papon, the tract claimed, were engaged in a campaign, like that of Massu's 'Bataille d'Alger', to dismantle the FLN in Paris by striking at the immigrant community and, 'en frappant spécialement les centres nerveux de sa structure organique'. The French government, to this end, was engaged in a propaganda campaign that represented FLN militants as 'terroristes aveugles et inconscients, abattant à tous les carrefours les inoffensifs agents de la circulation parisienne', lies that were being reproduced by the press and which might persuade Parisians that 'toutes les mesures de repression racistes et criminelles' were legitimate. The *Déclaration* then gave details of how named Algerians, Amrane Chemoul, Dahmane Lamri, Ahmed Smail, Chérif Mehdaze and others, had been criminally killed by the police. In such cases the FLN, the tract claimed, would carefully investigate and establish a dossier before proceeding: 'Aucune exécution n'est ordonné sans que le coupable ait été jugé criminel'.²⁵² The FLN was not, 'une organisation anarchique qui exécute un policier uniquement parce qu'il est policier'. The assassination of the SAT officer, Georges Perrache, on 2 October, was, for example, justified on the grounds that he was actively collecting intelligence on the FLN: 'qu'il s'occupait davantage de renseigner la police sur les activités du FLN que de trouver du travail à nos compatriotes' and had continued in such practices despite several 'mise en garde'.

²⁴⁹ H1B4, quoted in SCAA annual report for 1961.

²⁵⁰ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 385; Haroun discusses this important prison strike, see pp. 381-396.

²⁵¹ H1B21, tract seized during Operation Flore.

²⁵² The tract used data on the killings of Algerian to be found in other documents forwarded by Zoauoui to the Federal Committee, see H1B21, 'Liste des Frères Assassinés par la police', dated 14 October 1961, and A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 411.

Finally, although the Federal Committee was clearly aware of the dangers involved in imposing a truce on the armed groups, there is no indication that it responded in any decisive way to the demands being made by Paris. One reason for this is that the Committee, located in deep clandestinity in Germany, and despite a steady flow of intelligence reports from France, found it difficult to keep its finger on the pulse of the daily lived experience of the Algerian rank-and-file. One of the reasons why Mohammed Harbi had opposed the relocation of the Federal Committee to Germany in early 1958 was that this ran the danger of isolating it from the 'interior', and meant that leaders could make poor decisions that carried huge, repressive consequences for the population, but which they themselves did not experience.²⁵³ To a certain extent the tensions in the French Federation over this issue, mirrored the much more serious political battles at the higher levels of the FLN between the role of the 'exterior', the bureaucratic and military apparatus outside Algeria, supposedly living in luxury, and the ALN maquisards of the 'interior' who alone faced the French army, starved of arms and supplies. Mohand Akli Benyounès, who was to replace Zouaoui as Federal leader in November 1961, has criticised the Committee in his recent memoirs since FLN leaders were too often, 'éloigné du terrain des opérations'. 'Les insuffisances qui peuvent résulter de l'éloignement du responsable par rapport au champ d'action qu'il doit superviser', appeared both at the level of relations between the capital and the provinces, as well as between Paris and the Federal Committee. While Benyounès understood the security reasons for locating the Committee in Germany, he argues that from the steady flow of reports and intelligence which it received it could have done better, 'en matière d'analyse et d'observation....Il pouvait, par recoupements et réflexions, détecter les causes de certaines défaillances ou dysfonctionnements'.²⁵⁴

In the next chapter I go on to examine how and why pressures were building up in the Paris base for the resumption of armed action, and why the Federal Committee needed to respond quickly to this situation before things ran further out of control.

²⁵³ M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 222.

²⁵⁴ M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 163-5.

6

At the grass-roots: Mohammed Ghafir and Amala 12 (13th Arrondissement)

This study is primarily concerned with the upper echelons of the FLN organisation in France, the decision makers who can be identified by the fact that they received a salary from the Federation as full-time cadres. However, how these leaders formulated policy during the 1961 crisis needs to be understood in relation to the state of opinion among the rank-and-file, the mass of ordinary workers, upon whom they depended for support. The FLN, like their counterparts in the French security services, was constantly pre-occupied with the gathering of human intelligence, an assessment of the state of mind among the Algerian population and the degree to which its support among them fluctuated through time and geographic space.²⁵⁵ As we have seen, the Federal Committee, was faced in mid-1961 with a deepening crisis of control over Paris militants that endangered the negotiating position of the GPRA. French intelligence analysts began to note from early in 1961 that the growing likelihood of a negotiated settlement to the war was creating hope among the Algerian masses that an imminent cease-fire would not only bring an end to police repression, but also to the burden of FLN tax collection and the severe regulation of their everyday lives. The prospect of approaching peace, far from producing a climate of calm, precipitated an atmosphere of deepening uncertainty and anxiety. For example, would final negotiations lead to a situation in which migrant workers, many long settled in France and dependent on the relatively higher wages and welfare rights of the metropole, be forced to return en masse to Algeria? According to French police reports the Federation, ‘a parfaitement conscience du danger que présente pour l’organisation l’effet dissolvant des espoirs de la masse’, and countered demobilisation by an even more pronounced control.²⁵⁶ At Argenteuil, for example, the FLN was in January 1961 seen to be hardening its disciplinary line against, ‘déserteurs’, and ‘voleurs’ and tracking down other miscreants.²⁵⁷

As 1961 progressed so the situation faced by the Algerian community in Paris, caught between deepening state violence and the disciplinary demands of the FLN, became increasingly unstable. Very little is known about the mind-set, the *mentalités*, of ordinary Algerian workers and their families during the war and, in particular, what opinions they shared in the intimate social circles based on kin and village relations. The Algerian cafés, hotels and lodging houses of Paris provided the essential framework of FLN cellular formations since nationalist organisation had historically taken root and expanded within the pre-existing social networks that had evolved in the migrant community since the First World War. The memoirs of Federation leaders like Ali Haroun, Omar Boudaoud and Mohammed Ghafir largely fail to address the issue of the complex social and political universe of the migrant workers, in part because they lived segregated from that existence, but also because they sustain a mythical image of the ‘people’, on a par with the communist idealisation of the ‘proletariat’, as an essentially pure and united force.²⁵⁸ In the social world of the Algerian café,

²⁵⁵ On the universality of such intelligence gathering in modern colonial systems see Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence. Security Services and Colonial Disorder After 1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

²⁵⁶ HA47. SCINA minutes, 7 March 1961.

²⁵⁷ HA57, SCINA report No.1590, 4 January 1961.

²⁵⁸ An analysis of the ‘official’ FLN discourse would require a separate work. But, to quote just one example, Omar Boudaoud, in decrying the leadership power struggle of 1962, notes, ‘Heureusement, le peuple, forgé par les souffrances endurées, avait cimentée son unité, ce qui sauva le pays d’une possible “congolisation”’, *Du PPA au FLN*, 228. Many hundreds of hand-written reports by rank-and-file militants, including women, on the demonstrations of 17-20 October have survived in the archives. While of great historical interest, these reports, written to conform to what hierarchical superiors wanted to hear, share in a standard discourse of triumphant optimism, unity and sacrifice that reflects the propaganda diffused at weekly meetings and in FLN tracts, newspapers and books.

unguarded or loose talk was highly dangerous, since there were considerable numbers of police informers at work,²⁵⁹ while any criticism of the FLN ‘line’, swearing, insults and other verbal indiscretions might invite immediate physical assault or disciplinary action by the local *commissions de justices*.²⁶⁰ Public spaces became so dangerous, and the constant watching one’s words and actions so stressful, that many Algerians preferred to pull back into the security of the close kin or village networks of the café-hotel where individuals could trust one another, speak more freely and afford minor indiscretions, such as alcohol consumption, without risking retribution.²⁶¹ In January 1958, when a Kabyle, Mohamed Amami, was interrogated at the central police station in the 13th arrondissement, he remarked that it was difficult to provide any information on the politics of the quartier since there existed, ‘un climat de méfiance réciproque et tous, même dans les cafés musulmans, évitent de parler “politique” et notamment du FLN et du MNA....[....]...même entre personnes de la même famille le silence serait de règle’. But, he added, the FLN did not exert a hegemonic control over all Algerians.²⁶²

In spite of the difficulty of penetrating into the political world of the mass of Algerian workers in Paris, to scrape away the patina of ‘official’ FLN discourse to get at the reality of the complex tensions and contradictions that lay beneath, we can go some way to reconstructing the social life of the base and its reactions to the crisis that it faced in mid-1961. This is far too large a project to carry out for the entirety of Paris so my approach in this chapter is to provide a case-study of one quite delimited area, the FLN Région 1221 that corresponded to the 13th arrondissement. Previous histories of the FLN in Paris have used a city-wide approach, a large canvas, and this has tended to work against a finer-grained understanding of the spatial elements of the 1961 crisis and how Algerian mass mobilisation was rooted in quite particular quartiers.²⁶³ The choice of Region 1221, and Amala 12 within which it was located, was determined by a number of factors. The arrest of Baba-Hamed, who as RC1 controlled Paris south of the river, led to the capture of numerous documents relating to the area, including reports by militants of their experiences during the demonstrations of 17-20 October. Secondly, Montaner selected this area as the first local base of the harkis units in March 1960, and consequently the archives are particularly rich in reports, photographs and other documents relating to the 13th arrondissement. The particularly intense forms of surveillance and pressure placed on the Algerian population in this quartier by the FPA also throw further light on the nature of rank-and-file tensions in mid-1961 and the growing discontent with the informal Federal armed truce. Lastly, the only account to date by a senior FLN cadre who was present in Paris during 1961 is that of Mohammed Ghafir, head of Amala 12, which included 1221 among the six Regions which he controlled.

²⁵⁹ The APP archive contains numerous reports by informers: see, for example, H1B28, Note de Renseignements, a dossier that contains reports by the SAT officer Captain Parrent from his informers coded as ‘Cinema’, ‘Cigale’, ‘Camembert’, ‘Chasseur’, ‘Coca’, ‘Corbeau’, ‘Cane’, ‘Chitane’, ‘Catherine’, ‘Crapule’, ‘Corse’, etc. Reports often refer to conversations overheard in cafés.

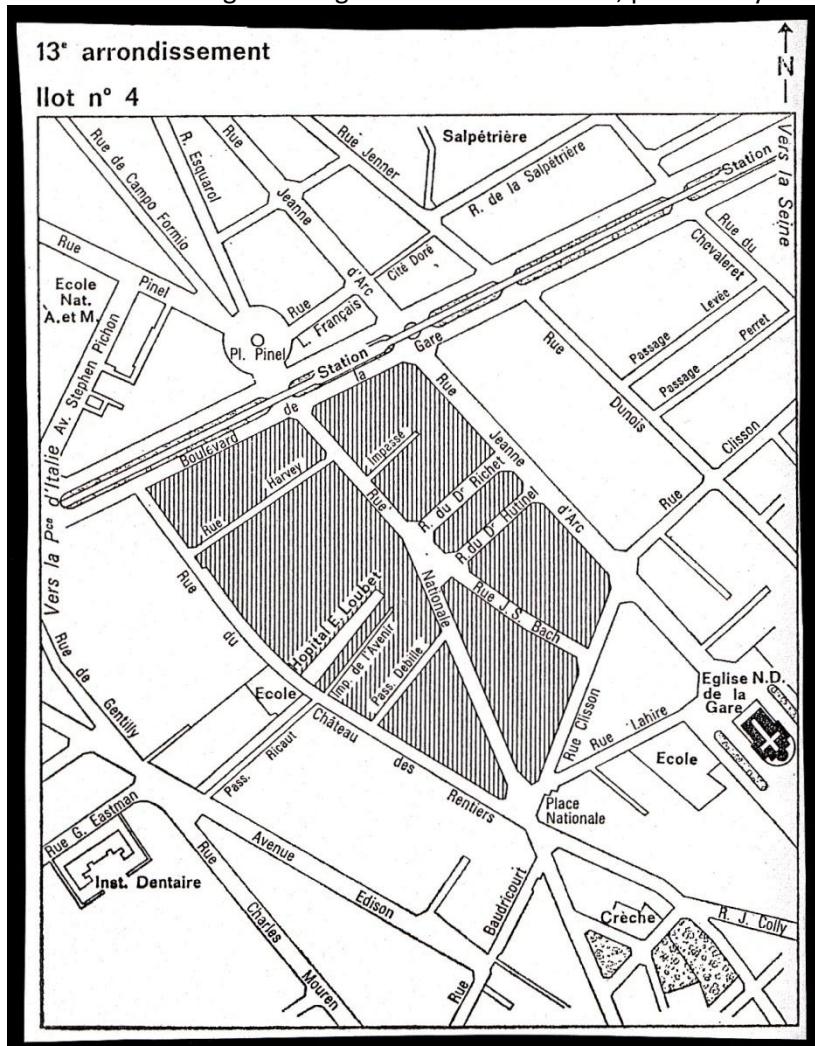
²⁶⁰ H1B21, *FLN Fédération de France, Règlement interieur*, provides three levels of sanctions. The middle level for ‘Fautes graves’, included fines of up to 5,000 francs for ‘les indiscretions’, ‘faux rapports’, and behaviour ‘portante atteinte au prestige de l’organisation’.

²⁶¹ For a similar situation in rural Algeria see N. MacMaster, ‘The “Silent Native”’, 295-6.

²⁶² H1B33, SCAA Section de Renseignements, 12 January 1958. Amami was, perhaps, likely to plead such ignorance, but his statement rings true.

²⁶³ There are some exceptions, in particular Monique Hervo’s important study, *Chronique du bidonville: Nanterre en guerre d’Algérie, 1959-1962* (Paris: Seuil, 2001); Emmanuel Blanchard, *Encadrer des “citoyens diminués”. La police des Algériens en région parisienne (1944-1962)*, doctoral thesis, Université de Dijon, 2008, 523-593, has a case-study for Argenteuil. A social history of the Algerian community in Paris during the war of independence awaits its historian. Some components of such an approach were provided by the exhibition, *Vies d’exil, 1954-1962. Des Algériens en France pendant la guerre d’Algérie*, Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration, Paris, 9 October 2012 to 19 May 2013, and the accompanying book, Benjamin Stora and Linda Amiri (eds.), *Algériens en France, 1954-1961: la guerre, l’exil, la vie* (Paris: éditions Autrement, 2012).

The 13th arrondissement, during and after the First World War, came to constitute one of the most significant enclaves of Algerian migrant workers in France, particularly in a quartier of



Map.2

The shaded area indicates the insalubrious îlot 4, a slum zone that had been identified by 1918 as suitable for demolition and re-development. The Rue Nationale, Rue du Château des Rentiers, and the Rue Harvey, were lined with cheap lodging houses and cafés, places of intense FLN activity.

notorious slum housing demarcated by the Rue Nationale, Rue du Château du Rentiers and the Rue Harvey. During the First World War the Paris municipal council used statistics of TB infection to identify the seventeen most derelict *îlots insalubres* in the central city, including Ilôt 4 on the Rue Nationale, as due for demolition and redevelopment.²⁶⁴ By 1954 Ilôts 4 was still standing, a zone of squalid *garnis* in which 46% of housing units had only one room, 50% were without water, 86% without a toilet and 98% had no shower or bath.²⁶⁵ Algerian workers were even more deprived than

²⁶⁴ Henri Coing, *Rénovation Urbaine et Changement Social. L'Îlot no.4 (Paris 13e)* (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1966), 32. Between 1914 and 1918 îlot 4 had an average mortality rate of 7.9 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants. On the quartier see also Nora Evenson, *Paris: A Century of Change, 1878-1978* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 255-64.

²⁶⁵ HA62, *Opérations meublés* reports of hygiene and intelligence gathering visits by SAT teams that describe conditions in the lodging houses, like one on 12 September 1958 to 179 Rue du Château-des-Rentiers

the French working class inhabitants , and were subject to chronic overcrowding in miserable, dank and disease-ridden hotels.²⁶⁶ The *hôtels meublés*, of which there were 30 in the arrondissement, had by far the worst living conditions in 1954, and 740 of the total 1,200 people living in them, were Algerians.²⁶⁷ One of the few saving aspects was the intense shared social life and cohesion of this classic *quartier populaire*, one that centred on the street and the café, and this was especially true for Algerian migrants who found a crucial refuge and support network in the Algerian cafés: ‘Les Algériens disposent de 14 cafés où ils se retrouvent entre eux, jouent aux dames et aux dominos, et où les juke-boxes déversent une musique exclusivement arabe’.²⁶⁸ Most Algerians were employed in unskilled, heavy manual labour and, to economise on travel costs, a particularly high percentage (56%) worked in local factories, including Panhard, the sugar works of Say, and the Grands Moulins de Paris, that were within a short walking distance.²⁶⁹ The Say sugar refinery increased the number of Algerian workers between 1914 and 1923 from 250 to 500, and in 1931 a journalist described the scene as workers left the factory:

‘....as night falls – the moment the sugar refineries spew their shifts onto the street – the Rue Henry fills with a swarm of swarthy men who in an instant are sucked into the small bars which are lined up in double file; there under the feable lights, the North Africans crowd between the smoke-stained walls and, while a gramaphone begins to squeak a native song, the dominos line up on the wooden tables, the cards fly between the fingers: the *ronda*, the *baza* begin their devilish dance.....²⁷⁰

The café-hotels of the 13th arrondissement, in which migrants grouped themselves by kin and village of origin, provided an ideal location for the social networks through which the nationalist movement of Messali Haj was diffused and found root between 1926 and 1954. After 1954 the FLN, from tiny and fragile beginnings, gradually displaced the Messalist networks of the MNA, and from 1957-58 onwards accelerated the “quadrillage” of the émigré community. Omar Boudaoud has described how the FLN practised a tactic of penetration and colonisation of selected hotels: ‘Notre tactique consistait à loger nos militants, dont l’appartenance politique n’était pas connue des autres résidents, dans les hôtels occupés par les Algériens qui n’étaient pas encore encadrés....Arrivés à l’hôtel, nos militants réunissaient les locataires, leur expliquaient la situation en Algérie, puis leur faisaient comprendre que le moment était venu de participer effectivement à la révolution, de s’organiser et de collecter l’argent destiné au soutien de la lutte de libération’. A four or five man cell would then be created.²⁷¹ The hotel owners or managers played a pivotal role in the FLN system: for decades they had served as the key point of contact for new arrivals from their home village, a source of short-term loans, advice on the job market, how to send remittance money, and a mass of other practical information so vital to the survival of the migrant worker. The ‘patron’, from his position behind the bar, overhearing the quotidien conversations and concerns of his clients, with

described as a ‘véritable taudis’, with rat-infested wooden shacks back-built into a yard. HA86 has a large-scale police map of the 13th arrondissement with the location of all Algerians hotels and lodgings.

²⁶⁶ H. Coing, *Rénovation*, gives data on the exceptional overcrowding of Algerians.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 34, 36.

²⁶⁸ H. Coing, *Rénovation*, 65; N. Evenson, *Paris*, 255-64, includes photographs of the grey, delapidated Rue Nationale, and the interior of a café in the Rue Harvey. Evenson, who notes the location of political associations and trade unions in the cafés, ‘centres of sedition’. It is possible that the demolition programme that began in 1956-8 was, like the clearance of the bidonvilles, in part motivated by government plans to root out the Algerian population and FLN networks.

²⁶⁹ H. Coing, *Rénovation*, 49.

²⁷⁰ Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism*, 79, 98

²⁷¹ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 109; M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 45-6, remarks that the system of ‘quadrillage’ was initiated in July 1957. During a typical evening operation militants would take over a target hotel, place guards on each entrance, systematically check the identities of each occupant, enroll all those who were not already on the FLN registers, and establish Cells, Groups or Sections, according to the numbers involved. This campaign was a complete success, greatly increased the collection revenues, and, ‘réussi à déjouer les tentatives d’infiltration de la police qui manipulait les indicateurs’.

registers to hand of all lodgers, was in an ideal position to police the micro-community, to collect the monthly dues, and to provide security for group meetings or militants on the run. The café and lodging-house keeper was, as Mohand Benyounès remarks, ‘un élément fondamental de l’organisation. Etant toujours à son poste, il voyait tout et entendait tout. Il représentait, à son poste d’observation, une mine d’informations, et un agent du FLN irremplaçables que la police avait le plus grand mal à débusquer.’²⁷² In the event of a police raid the owner would often warn lodgers or meetings taking place by a switch that briefly cut the lights. The café-hotel also owned what was a scarce item in France of the early 1960s, a telephone, an important means of FLN communication that the police often tapped or closed down by administrative order.

In the 13th arrondissement a typical FLN manager was Belkacem Amrar, an elderly 71 year old militant who had once been active in the MTLD and who ran a nineteen-room hotel at 210 Rue du Château-des-Rentiers. FLN documents that were seized by the police on 29 July 1959 revealed he was head of a Kasma, in charge of 63 militants, that were living there and in three adjacent hotels. In 1957 Amrar had been identified by the police as supplying guns and using his café as a ‘centre de ralliement’ for militants from the Nord region and Paris who needed false papers to get back into Algeria.²⁷³

Hotels and cafés like this served such an important function in the FLN organisation that the Federation did everything it could to maintain control and continuity in their management. For example, if an owner was arrested and imprisoned, the FLN would try and ensure that he was rapidly replaced by another militant who could pick up the reins to keep existing networks in operation. The early nationalist movement in Paris, recognizing the great importance of restaurants and hotels, had attempted to organise *commerçants* during 1926 and 1934, and was prepared to use threats, including boycotts, to force owners to co-operate.²⁷⁴ After 1954 the FLN used similar methods,²⁷⁵ and it seems likely that the Federation invested directly in commercial property or holding companies both to secure meeting places and to provide a business facade for collecting and banking money.²⁷⁶ Omar Boudaoud remarks that if an arrested militant, ‘exploitait un fonds de commerce, le FLN en était garant’.²⁷⁷

A good example of continuity of control over a typical FLN bastion-hotel is provided by another establishment, No.139 in the Rue-du-Château Rentiers, where the arrest of a succession of managers led to their replacement by militant patrons. The hotel, which had a uniquely Algerian clientèle of 90 lodgers in 45 bedrooms and a small café, was well-known to the police who reported: ‘Les différentes gérants qui s’y sont succédés étaient des responsables frontistes. Des documents y ont été saisis à plusieurs reprises établissant l’activité intense du FLN dans cet hôtel (14 militants, 46 sympathisants)’.²⁷⁸ The first of four managers during 1958 to 1959 was Arezki Sersou, a Kabyle born in the douar Yaskren at Mizrana on 26 February 1926, who had first settled in the Nord region where he married a French woman in April 1951 and had experience of running a bar. In June 1957 he moved to Paris, almost certainly to escape MNA gunmen since within days of arrival he was attacked by a commando, and again in November 1957. Sersou was made manager of the hotel, which was owned by French interests, on 1 February 1958, and moved in with his wife and four children. But

²⁷² M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 19.

²⁷³ H1B45. Next door to this hotel, at 208 Rue du Château-des-Rentiers, was another FLN base that was used by the armed groups (GA) for collecting intelligence: R. Valat, *Les calots bleus*, 155.

²⁷⁴ B. Stora, *Messali Hadj*, 105-7.

²⁷⁵ H1B45, on 10 October 1956 the Algerian administration notified the Paris RG of complaints received from two Moroccan owners of a hotel, 96 Avenue de Choisy, 13th arrondissement, who had a predominantly Algerian clientèle and were seeking protection from some who were damaging their business and subjecting them to physical assault.

²⁷⁶ E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Finnacement du FLN*, 123. HA27, shows that the commissions de justice regulated civil contracts and enforced back-payment of rent, but took a percentage cut of 20% for its services.

²⁷⁷ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 123.

²⁷⁸ H1B45, report of March 1960.

within weeks he was arrested on a magistrate's warrant, issued in Constantine, for terrorist activities (*atteinte à la sécurité exterieur de l'état*).

His replacement, Mohamed Aoun, a thirty year old Kabyle from Michelet, was in turn soon arrested and imprisoned in Bône. On 22 July 1958 the hotel passed into the hands of a third manager, a 32 year old welder called Boulanouar Katim, who originated from Saïda (Constantine), where his wife and four children still lived. He was in turn arrested and held in the detention camp at Larzac. On 1 August 1959 thirty-four year old Messaoud ben Amar Allache, like Aoun a Kabyle from Michelet, was appointed manager. Allache had been known to the police since 1954 as an MTLD militant who had gone over to the FLN and acted as assistant to a head of Secteur.

The police frequently raided the hotel at number 139 during 1958 and 1959 and identified it as a centre of terrorist activity. For example, when the municipal police were called there on 24 June 1959 because of reports of a fight between women, they seized the opportunity to search the building and located various FLN documents at Group level, including a tract and a *Bulletin Interieur d'Information*.²⁷⁹ Although there is no information on the relationship between the small French company, the *Société Hôtel Pyrénées*, that owned the hotel and the FLN, the evidence points to a situation in which the Federation was in effect able to recommend or impose its choice of manager.

Police maps of the various FLN cafés, hotels, lodgings and businesses in the 13th arrondissement give a graphic sense of the dense spatial occupation of the quartier and the ability of militants, with a thousand alert eyes in every metre of public and private space, to engage in a total surveillance and policing of everyday life.

The counterstate.

Between 1957 and 1961 the FLN continuously refined an elaborate system of control in order to assert its hegemony over the entire Algerian population of Paris. The internal Federation regulations began with the claim, 'Le front de libération nationale est l'expression suprême de toute autorité et est le seul dépositaire de la souveraineté populaire pendant la durée de la guerre'. This fundamental claim to sovereignty, that was reinforced by the declaration of a provisional government on 19 September 1958, meant that the FLN laid claim to all the legitimate functions of a nation-state, including taxation, justice, police, welfare, and diplomatic functions. Western liberal democracies during periods of national emergency and war may, when the very survival of the body politic is in jeopardy, constitutionally suspend normal liberties, for example suspending democratic elections, and imposing press controls and national conscription. Likewise the FLN, involved in a life-and-death struggle for survival, was prepared to assume totalitarian methods, a logic that extended down to the most banal features of everyday life in the quartier. From 1958 onwards, and in part in response to the psychological warfare strategy of the SAT bureaux that began to offer Algerian workers assistance with welfare, unemployment and pension concerns, the FLN constructed a local counter-state. The lynch-pin of this operated at the level of the Région, an echelon of about 3,500 militants and sympathisers, through *Comités de justice*, *Comités d'hygiène*, and *Comités de soutien aux détenus* (CSD).²⁸⁰ The Comités de justice, in effect local Islamic courts, regulated everything from marriage and divorce, to commercial contracts, alcohol consumption and brawling, and fines constituted a significant amount to FLN coffers. The Comités d'hygiène carried out inspections of lodging houses and compelled landlords to carry out improvements, such as regular laundering of bed linen and charging fair rents. The Comités de soutien aux détenus, that paid fixed-rate allowances to the families of 'martyrs' and prisoners, whether in France or in Algeria, were of enormous importance to the hold of the FLN since they reassured all militants of a minimum of material security for their families, in the eventuality of their own death or arrest. A key objective of this welfare state was to create a firewall between the Algerian community and the French authorities that were intent on building bridges so as to 'integrate' migrants, win them away from the 'terrorist' FLN, and to collect intelligence.

²⁷⁹ H1B45, contains these FLN documents. A Group usually consisted of 14 men and one leader.

²⁸⁰ See B. Stora, *Ils Venaient*, 343-53.

During 1961 the Paris police mobilised its resources to try and penetrate and dislocate this clandestine counter-state, and the crisis that ensued, including the organisation of 17 October and its repression, was directly linked to the tensions that arose as the FLN fought back to protect its structures. Historians, as well as ex-FLN leaders and the police, have seen this conflict as primarily an armed struggle, a ‘Bataille de Paris’, but, I would argue, this has tended to obscure the extent to which the struggle was primarily about money and the financial organisations of the Federation. In order to understand why the Paris militants reacted in the way they did to the repression unleashed by the Prefecture of Police and resisted the orders of the Federal Committee to maintain an informal truce, we need to examine the way in which tax collection shaped the basic structure and culture of the FLN underground.

The enormous importance of money, the sinews of war, to the global functioning of the FLN will be examined more closely in Chapter 8, but here it is sufficient to note that the GPRA, like any government, was dependent on considerable and regular flows of cash to cover a budget that included weapons, clothing and material for the ALN maquis, the wages of fighters, doctors, nurses, lawyers and diplomats, propaganda and publications, various social welfare costs, including benefits to the families of deceased militants and prisoners, ministerial bureaucracies, and so on.²⁸¹ Apart from money and materials provided to the FLN by foreign governments and international agencies, the French Federation contributed a huge and disproportionate amount to the global budget, compared to the taxation potential of the population in Algeria itself. The volume of money raised by the Federation was, in part, a reflection of the higher earning capacity of industrial workers in France, but was also linked to the fact that the FLN exercised a far higher degree of control and surveillance over the population than in Algeria.

What is astonishing is not that such a taxation system existed, but the extraordinary complexity of the bureaucracy that ensured its smooth running. The monthly ‘organic’ and financial reports that every full-time responsable from Région upwards had to submit to his superior, constituted remarkably lengthy and detailed documents, often twenty or thirty pages long, and followed a standardised format.²⁸² Upper level leaders in Paris were essentially bureaucrats and every month they retreated for days on end into a quiet safe-house, often in the spare bedroom of an Algerian family living in an HLM, to write their meticulous and detailed reports.²⁸³ Like any efficient state taxation apparatus the FLN set out to locate and identify every potential tax-payer via a census or fichier, to assess their resources, and to guarantee that dues were paid, the whole backed up by an effective policing system. As soon as a previously unknown Algerian moved into a locale like the 13th arrondissement, from Algeria or elsewhere, they were approached to check their ID papers and whether they had received FLN permission to move, or if they had tried to escape as a ‘déserteur’ from another region to avoid dues and FLN discipline. A young migrant recounted a typical experience on arriving in the Nord: ‘Ici en France, il faut payer le FLN, on payait 3,500 F obligatoires. Si tu ne payes pas ils te descendent. En Algérie, je n’avais pas vu ça et quand je suis arrivé au foyer, ils m’ont chopé. Tu paies 3,500 F par mois sinon ils te tabassent, ils t’avertissent deux ou trois fois et ils te tuent’.²⁸⁴

The financial organisation of the Federation was, however, far more than an apparatus concerned to maximize revenue. An individual’s monthly payment to the local collector was

²⁸¹ These issues are closely examined by Emmanuelle Colin-Jeanvoine and Stéphanie Derozier, *Le financement du FLN pendant la guerre d’Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Editions Bouchene, 2008); see also A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya, 305-327, ‘Le nerf de la guerre’*.

²⁸² A flavour of these reports can be found in Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 280-88, that reproduces a few internal financial documents; see also Harbi (ed.), *Sou’al*, 22-55; E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Le financement*, 151-63.

²⁸³ In one instance a lengthy report-writing session in an HLM apartment was revealed because the responsable, who later moved in permanently, was reported by the husband for having an affair with his wife.

²⁸⁴ E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Le financement*, 94.

ultimately a symbol of allegiance to the national cause, an instrument of compliance terrorism. As the DST noted in a detailed study of the *Appareil Financier du FLN en 1961*, the system of collection in France related not only to money, but also, ‘à la notion d’engagement de la masse dans la lutte pour l’indépendance, conception classique de toute guerre subversive depuis 1945’ and was thus an instrument by which the FLN aimed to, ‘faire participer tous les Algériens à son combat’ and also to ‘compromise’ them.²⁸⁵ The FLN agent may not have been able to read and control the inner thoughts of each Algerian, whether he was truly a patriot or not, but cash payment presented an inescapable material and observable marker that could be quickly put to the test and measured. The archives contain numerous instances of individuals resisting the collection, either because they politically opposed the FLN, as in the case of MNA supporters, or because they resented a tax that diminished their meagre earnings that were desperately needed to sustain family members in France and Algeria.²⁸⁶ A considerable amount of lower-level FLN activity was devoted to tracking down such miscreants and extracting accumulated dues or back-payments (*retards*).

A deep concern, even anxiety, about the collection was not restricted to rank-and-file workers, but permeated the leadership at Régional, Amala and Wilaya level. Members of the Federal Committee, Zouaoui, the three RCs, Wilaya and Amala heads, could not easily exercise a routine control over the activities of lower level cadres through direct contact and regular tours of inspection. The bulk-heads of clandestine structures also intervened. Control and discipline thus became very much a bureaucratic, paper exercise, and the essential metrics or performance indicators were the monthly figures that indicated changes in the number of enrolled militants and the amounts of money collected by each geographical area. Monthly reports went to great lengths to explain and justify even short-term falls in militant numbers and revenues or even the smallest of accounting anomalies, while increases were enthusiastically flagged and added to the reputation and promotional chances of the cadre as efficient, energetic and vigilant.²⁸⁷ Even today former leaders refer to high levels of collection as an index of their personal achievement.²⁸⁸ Omar Boudaoud, seeking to confirm the revolutionary unity of the nationalists, remarks: ‘Sinon, comment comprendre que les cotisations collectées auprès de chaque militant de base parvenaient au sommet par centaines de millions, à un franc près, sans que rien ne disparaîsse au cours des diverses manipulations réalisées à une dizaine d’échelons? Les fonds de la révolution étaient sacrés. Distraire l’argent du FLN, c’était voler l’argent de la nation’.²⁸⁹ A prime concern of cadres during 1961 was how far deepening police repression might disrupt or damage the monthly collection.

To imagine the situation of the mass of ordinary workers in Paris during mid-1961, the enormous pressures and tensions to which they were subjected, we have to understand the extent to which they were caught between two relentless forces, that of the police and the

²⁸⁵ H1B17, DST, *L’Appareil Financier du FLN en 1961*, January 1962. 16.pp.

²⁸⁶ H1B20, has a typical report found during Operation Flore for Wilaya 2 (211221) regarding execution of a ‘traitor’. In 1957 he had denounced two FLN collectors to the police, and then fled to Valenciennes. He later returned and was captured in a bar on 26 September 1961 playing cards and drinking cognac. During his interrogation he refused to recognise the existence of the FLN, claimed he was French, and intended to remain so. ‘Il a été condamné par la suppression physique par la comité siégeant à l’échelle secteur’.

²⁸⁷ Contrary to the opinion of Ali Haroun that fraud was quite rare among militants, the captured DST archives contain a voluminous correspondence on the matter. Lower cadres, in particular, felt highly anxious to explain any delays in the collection or why even small sums had gone astray.

²⁸⁸ M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 113, indicates his success in leading Wilaya 2B (Est) so that by mid-1961 it was ‘classé troisième dans la collecte des fonds’, after the two rich Paris Wilayas 1 and 2.

²⁸⁹ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 201.

FLN. At the local level these forces came to bear in particular on the cafe-hotel which served as a key organisational base for the FLN.

The Harki challenge

The Prefecture of Police was well aware of the fact that the 13th arrondissement, with its dense warren of FLN networks, constituted one of the most powerful bastions of insurrectionary nationalism in Paris. In March 1960 it became the first target in a particularly bold experiment in urban counter-insurgency when Raymond Montaner recruited and trained the harkis brigades that were then deliberately located in six café-hotels in the heart of the zone, a frontal challenge to the FLN on their own turf.²⁹⁰ Montaner, who as a former SAS and SAU officer in Algeria had a wide experience of counter-insurgency theories and practices developed by the army, adapted this to the Paris context. In Algeria in order to 'reconquer' mountain areas under the control of the ALN, French intelligence officers carefully studied the socio-political characteristics of local populations, and selected for preliminary action not those that were most "pourrie" or invested by the FLN, but the areas of weaker guerrilla penetration in which inhabitants would prove most amenable to psychological warfare. After an initial military action or 'surge' into the area had cleared out ALN cadres and protected the local population from terrorism, the inhabitants, it was thought, would be prepared to provide intelligence, to join auto-defense forces, and to rebuild schools, roads, and other infrastructures. Once an area had been secured and stabilised, the same process was gradually extended from a safe core area into adjoining communes in an oil-slick effect.

Montaner, modeling his tactics on such 'pacification' procedures, carried out a similar project in the 13th arrondissement, carefully selected as what he described as, 'un champ expérimental de premier ordre'.²⁹¹ The FPA chose not to initiate its assault on the redoubtable FLN ghetto of the Goutte d'Or (18th arrondissement), but selected the 13th arrondissement as a suitable target on the basis of a sociological study. This indicated a high level of stable employment within the quartier, so that it would be possible, 'de grouper une population faite beaucoup plus de travailleurs que de membres de la pègre'. The inhabitants seemed, 'plus saine et davantage digne d'intérêt que dans des arrondissements, comme le 18e arrondissement par exemple', an underworld zone of prostitution, drug dealing and small time gangsters. 'D'autre part il [13th] apparait que des signes certains de lassitude existent et que la tendance politique y serait assez aisément reversible'.²⁹² Once the FPA had established a firm base in Région 1221, the plan was to extent the actions of the harkis into the neighbouring 5th, 14th and 15th arrondissements.

The Prefecture estimated, on the eve of its intervention, that the FLN exerted a hegemonic control over Region 1221 since, of a total Algerian population of 3,700, including women and children, some 3,200, mainly single men, were organised into the three parallel groupings of militants, adherents and sympathisants. There were 170 commerçants, who constituted the spine of FLN networks, mainly running café-hotels (60), hotels (13), cafés or restaurants (21), grocery stores (17), or working as hairdressers (6), street traders, and taxi drivers. For the month of November 1959 the collectors had raised about 20 million francs., a tenth of which (2,230,000) came from small businesses.²⁹³ Figure 3 below provides, for comparative purposes, a diagramme of a similar Région in the 18th arrondissement for which there is more precise data in the archive.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ On the installation of the FPA in Region 1221 see R. Valat, *Les calots bleus*, 151-60.

²⁹¹ H1B6, SCAA note, 1 April 1960.

²⁹² H1B6 *Physionomie du X111e arrondissement*, undated, 2.pp. The curious use of the term 'grouper' carries a resonance of the policy of peasant regroupement into camps: see Michel Cornaton, *Les Regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1967).

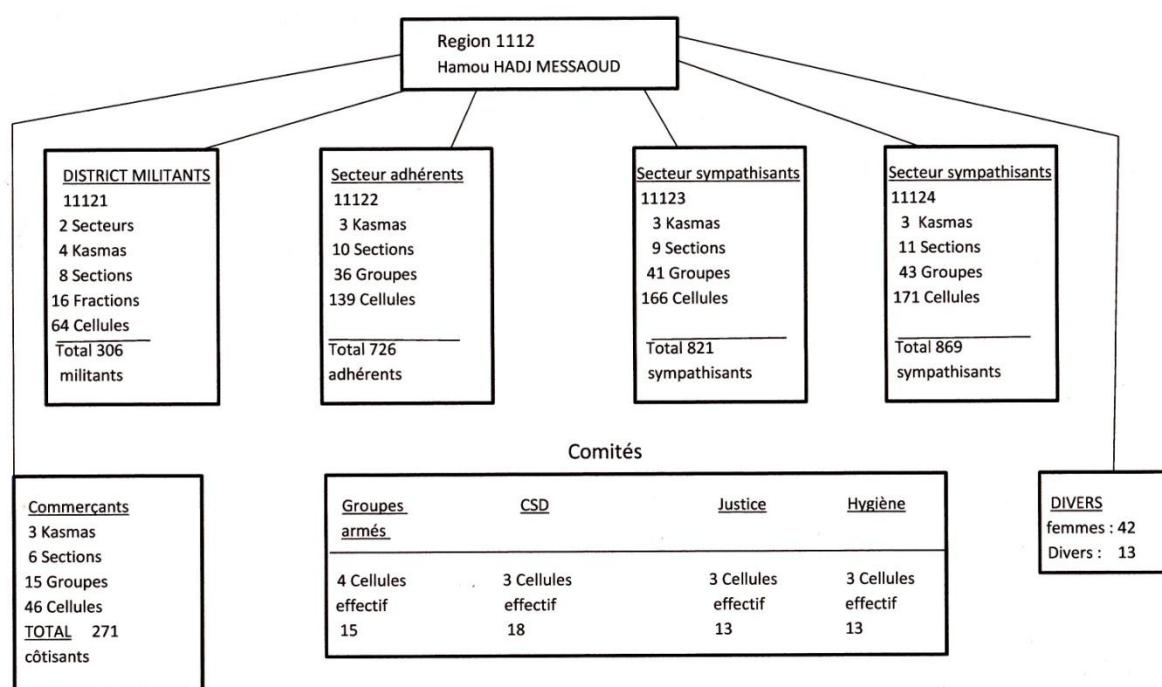
²⁹³ H1B6, SCAA report, 1 April 1960.

²⁹⁴ This figure is based on a diagramme in H1B29: for the month of November 1960, the collection was 16,834,560 francs.

In our previous study, 'Paris 1961', we argued that the French government deployed state terror as a policy of psychological destabilisation of the Algerian community, through the creation of endemic insecurity that would serve to weaken and demobilize popular support for the FLN.²⁹⁵ Montaner's plan, in creating the FPA, was to create among Algerians 'une psychose' by 'semant la confusion', 'un climat de méfiance' and a generalised state of instability and panic.²⁹⁶ It is not my intention to repeat here the analysis of all the diverse and complex methods that were used to achieve this goal, from constant street stop-and-searches, to night-time invasion of lodgings and, most feared, mass refoulement to Algeria. However, I will illustrate the process through a brief examination of what was dubbed by the Prefecture as 'Operation Osmose', since this illustrates most clearly how and why the harkis presented such a major threat to the fabric of FLN organisation, and its financial system. It was the constant pressure of 'Osmose' and other techniques of daily harassment, first tested in Région 1221, that were to play a key role in the crisis of mid-1961, and which pushed militants towards a resumption of armed actions in late August.

Figure 3.

Region 1112 (18th arrondissement) in November 1960. Source H1B29.



A café under the sign 'Bouillon Restaurant' at 162 Boulevard de la Gare was typical of the FLN centres in Region 1221 that were closed down by administrative order. The tenant of this small, 30

²⁹⁵ J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 29-30, 69-70.

²⁹⁶ HA 84, Montaner, *Destruction de l'Organisation Rebelle*, 5 July 1959, and Montaner to Papon, 30 November 1959.

seat café, Méhanna Seridj, a Kabyle from Aït Khelili near Tizi-Ouzou, was well known to the police since he had installed himself there, with his family, in February 1957. Seridj was under FLN orders to, 'centraliser le produit des collectes effectués sur cet arrondissement', and was also head of a GA commando that had undertaken interrogations in the cellar of his café. His older brother Azouaou had lived with him there in early 1957, before returning to join the ALN maquis where he was later killed. Although Méhanne was detained at Mourmelon (Marne) in mid-1959, the café continued under Méziane Seridj, to act as a centre of FLN activism. On 9 October the police officer for the quartier, in making an official request for closure, disclosed the financial implications of the procedure, 'fermeture qui doit avoir pour résultats d'inciter les commerçants FMA du quartier et des quartiers voisins, à modérer leur soutien au FLN'.²⁹⁷ On 5 November the Prefect signed an application for a six month closure to the Ministry of the Interior, and on 24 November Méziane Seridj, who could neither read nor write, was summoned, along with his accountant, to the District police commissariat, where he was formally notified of closure of both the café and the telephone line, for 'atteinte à l'ordre public'.²⁹⁸ The impact of such closures was considerable: the tenant's family would suddenly find themselves without income, while the Federation lost not only the commercial dues, but found itself deprived of a safe meeting place and the lower-echelon cell networks led by the Seridj family dislocated.

The 'Osmose' operations added a new twist to the closure procedure: the lodgers, most of them FLN militants, instead of being simply expelled, with the likelihood that they would find accommodation with other activists in the same neighbourhood, were dramatically evicted by night-time police operations and scattered through various lodging houses in distant parts of Paris. The intention was to radically disrupt the kin, village and factory-based networks of the neighbourhood, to dump militants into potentially hostile Algerian environments in which suspicion reigned, and to add the punitive costs and disadvantages of having to make a long daily return trip to work.²⁹⁹ It was this method that Montaner applied as a shock tactic when at 4.am on Sunday 20 March he expelled the inhabitants of six FLN-controlled hotels in Région 1221 and installed his harkis sections and HQ.³⁰⁰ Among the hotels was the militant centre at 139 Rue du Château-des-Rentiers, with its 90 lodgers, that we looked at above. By 8.am of the 20 March the harkis were already going out on their first patrols of the neighbourhood.

The FPA investment of the 13th arrondissement was immediately recognised by the FLN to present a dangerous threat to the organisation, an experiment that needed to be blocked before such a model could be tested and applied to the Paris region as a whole. The OS and GA riposted to the FPA presence in Region 1221 by carrying out frequent armed attacks on the harki posts in the Rue Harvey and Rue Château-des-Rentiers, but without being able to dislodge them. Montaner had considerable success in severely damaging the FLN organisation, to the extent that many cadres were forced to find safety by moving out from the 13th into neighbouring arrondissements, or the suburbs. The FPA replied to this by extending its operations in a classic 'tache d'huile' effect into the adjoining 14th, 5th and 6th arrondissements. Informers claimed that Algerians were resisting the collectors and in the FLN bastion at 139 Rue des Chateau des Rentiers only three lodgers had paid their dues.³⁰¹ The SCAA reported that the collection in Region 1221 had been badly damaged by harkis activities, with the number of contributors falling from 3,200 in February 1960 to 2,268 in

²⁹⁷ H1B45.

²⁹⁸ H1B45, procès-verbal, 'signed' by Méziane Seridj with a finger print. The relationship of Mézian, who lived at 42 Rue Jean-Pierre Timbaud, to Mehanna is unclear.

²⁹⁹ On 'Operation Osmose', HA68; see also Linda Amiri, *La Bataille de France. La guerre d'Algérie en métropole* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004), 94-97; J. House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 72-3.

³⁰⁰ R. Valat, *Les calots bleus*, 154-5. The hotels, soon increased to eight, were in the Rue du Château-des-Rentiers, Rue Harvey, and Boulevard de la Gare.

³⁰¹ H1B16, Montaner report 1 July [1960].

January 1961.³⁰² By November 1960 Montaner felt sufficiently confident in the methods deployed in Region 1221 to extend the same procedure to the notorious FLN bastion of the 18th arrondissement. In early 1961 the FLN, and the anti-war French left, was successful in an energetic political and press campaign to expose the extreme brutality of the FPA and the widespread use of torture in the cellars of the 13th and 18th arrondissements.³⁰³ It was this, more than anything, that forced the French government in June to withdraw the harkis from their city-centre bases back to their barracks at Fort Noisy.

Papon was deeply angered by the order to withdraw the FPA forces and on 27 June, since he shared a profound contempt for what he saw as weak liberal laws and restraints, was quite prepared to engage in covert and illegal initiatives. Far from abiding by an informal truce, Montaner proposed that he be granted, ‘une grande latitude quant aux conditions d’engagement des compagnies de jour’, so that harkis could be sent by day or night and without prior warning, ‘indistinctement en de nombreux points de Paris’. Arrested Algerians could be interrogated in the immediate vicinity, such as in, ‘l’arrière-salle d’un débit de boissons où il aurait décidé de s’installer pour plusieurs heures’, a sure-fire recipé for continuing torture.³⁰⁴ Montaner saw positive gains in the new arrangement since the previous fixed bases of the FPA in the 13th and 18th arrondissements had made them the static target of FLN attacks, ‘des pôles d’attraction pour les actions spectaculaires du FLN’. The FPA would recapture the initiative through offensive mobile ‘opérations-surprise’.³⁰⁵ Montaner was given a green light for particularly aggressive FPA patrols immediately to go onto the offensive, striking daily into the main areas of FLN activity.³⁰⁶ Contrary to statements made by the French government and its negotiators at Evian, the FPA, far from reducing its activities in response to a Federal truce, accelerated its depredations into the FLN terrain.

The final repressive measure that drove the Federation to the wall and compelled it to consider some form of radical action to escape the relentless pressure was the night curfew imposed by the Prefect of Police on the 5 October 1961. ‘Dans le cadre’, said Papon, ‘des mesures prises pour neutraliser le terrorisme algérien et accroître la protection des personnels de police, j’ai décidé de prononcer le couvre-feu, pour les Français musulmans d’Algérie, de 20 h 30 à 5 h 30 du matin’.³⁰⁷ The Federal Committee, in organising the demonstrations of 17th to 20th October (see Chapter 7), placed a primary emphasis in its propaganda on opposition to a ‘couvre-feu raciste’, that discriminated against all Algerians, constitutionally French citizens who should not be subject to any exceptional laws. While this principled stand, which was to find strong support among French politicians and the left, was pushed to the fore, the FLN recognised all too well that such a curfew threatened to cripple the rank-and-file activities, and in particular the monthly collection. The sting in the tail of Papon’s order lay in the second sentence, ‘D’autre part, les débits de boissons tenus et fréquentés par les Français musulmans doivent être fermés à partir de 19 heures’.³⁰⁸ The FLN in Paris had already experienced the imposition of such a curfew in August 1958, following the ‘second front’ offensive, and were well aware of its potential to disrupt after-work meetings and collections. Ali Haroun remarks that the 1961 curfew, ‘c’est pratiquement arrêter toutes les activités organiques, les éléments du FLN étant pratiquement tous des travailleurs qui ne peuvent militer qu’après les heures

³⁰² HA27, SCAA report, 2 February 1961. L. Chabrun, *Guerre de l’Ombre*, 158, notes from RG reports that the collection had become so difficult in the 13th arrondissement that orders were given for ‘cotisants isolés’ not to hand money to lodging house collectors but outside the area to neighbouring Regions.

³⁰³ See Paulette Péju, *Les harkis*.

³⁰⁴ HA86, Chaix to Director of SCAA, 26 June 1961.

³⁰⁵ HA86, Note of Montaner, 23 June 1961 [file 344].

³⁰⁶ H1B12 *Ordres d’opération* (1960-1961).

³⁰⁷ Papon, Ordre du jour, text in J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 299. For a detailed discussion, see Sylvie Thenault, ‘Des couvre-feux à Paris en 1958 et 1961: Une mesure importée d’Algérie pour mieux lutter contre le FLN?’, *Politix*, 4:84 (2008), 167-85.

³⁰⁸ J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 299.

d'usine', while the closure of cafés would disrupt 'la plupart des contacts des échelons de base'.³⁰⁹ Reports from the Wilayas informed the Federal Committee, 'l'application de ce couvre-feu deviendra un handicap insurmontable et paralysera toute activité. Essayez donc d'organiser quelque chose pour riposter'.³¹⁰

If we return now to how the FLN crisis of mid-1961 was experienced at the grass roots in the 13th arrondissement, as in other Algerian quartiers, there exists no information about the kinds of political debates that took place weekly within the local cell and Group meetings or, even more intriguing, in the everyday exchanges of news, rumour and opinion that took place in the cafés and lodging houses. We can deduce from the propaganda, newspapers and orders passed down from the centre to the base, that the FLN very carefully sought to control the political formation of the militants, even to the extent of concealing the fratricidal power-struggles that were tearing the central leadership apart. Mohammed Harbi has insisted that the Federation did not accept or facilitate a process of open political discussion, and that all key decisions were formulated at the top and imposed by an authoritarian organisation, thus creating an ambience that stifled the emergence of a more mature and informed political culture, with tragic long-term consequences for the future post-independence state. However, what scraps of evidence we have, suggest that there was a very lively and intense exchange of information and opinion at the grass-roots, within the small circles of migrant workers who, bound together by strong kin and village ties, sufficiently trusted each other to express even dissident ideas or questions without running the risk of disciplinary action from above. In a typical Paris Région of 3,000 to 3,500 members, the key opinion-makers would be the heads of each echelon, from cells of 5 upwards through Groups, Sections, Kasmas and Secteurs to Région, Zone and Amala. The monthly oral or written reports that were sent up the hierarchy were synthesised at each successive level of the pyramid, and in the case of Région 1221 (13th arrondissement) eventually reached Mohammed Ghafir who, as head of Amala 12 (south-east Paris), amalgamated the intelligence for the six regions under his control. Each leader in the chain would, to varying degrees, select out or filter incoming information, according to his own bias, level of conformism, or ambition to please his superiors as to his own diligence and control over the rank-and-file. However, the higher echelon cadres from Régional upwards could not afford to remain totally deaf to any murmuring and discontent that might appear at the base: indeed, if he failed to respond to the kinds of intense pressures that were building up during 1961, he could face the catastrophic consequences of losing control altogether. Such a process can be deduced in the valuable reports of Mohammed Ghafir, reports that provide the clearest insight into what was happening at the local level in Paris.

Mohammed Ghafir and Amala 12

Mohammed Ghafir represents a typical example of the FLN leadership in Paris during the closing stages of the war, a militant who had worked his way up the hierarchy. Men from the mountainous Kabyle region had been dominant in the early labour migration to the Paris region during and after the First World War and by the 1950s many had succeeded in establishing small businesses, mainly cafés-hotels, restaurants and import-export companies, that were to play a key strategic role in the Messalist MTLD and subsequent clandestine FLN organisations. When Ghafir, born on 19 January 1934 at Iklidjene, first arrived in Paris in September 1955, it was to join his father and uncle, who had emigrated during the 1920s, in Clichy-la-Garenne.³¹¹ Although we lack any systematic study of the role of familial networks in the development of nationalism in Paris, mid-rank and higher level FLN cadres were often recruited from among the Kabyle commercial clans since they had a higher level

³⁰⁹ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 365.

³¹⁰ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 185.

³¹¹ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 27-8, 232. His father, Chérif Ghafir arrived in France in 1926 and worked in various low paid jobs, including as a car washer, until he set himself up as a taxi driver. His uncle M'Hand was a school caretaker.

of education and a point of entry into the social and political networks that had developed after 1918.³¹² In 1951 Ghafir was among the small minority of Algerians to receive a lycée education, through the fact that his father was able to send money from France to pay for his schooling in Constantine. But unable to complete his schooling, he qualified as a lathe-turner, and avoided military service in August 1955 by escaping to Paris where he joined the FLN and was quickly appointed in 1956 head of a Secteur in Clichy, and then promoted in 1957 head of a Region in northern Paris. As a responsable at Regional level Ghafir received a salary from the FLN, which enabled him to leave his employment in an engineering works to become a full-time activist.³¹³ On 8 January 1958 Ghafir was arrested by the DST at 1 Rue des Blancs Manteaux in the 4th arrondissement, tortured, and finally condemned on appeal on 8 October 1958 to three years prison, one of which was added to the sentence for making a political statement during his trial.³¹⁴

Freed from the detention camp of Larzac on 6 February 1961, Ghafir quickly returned to Paris, from which he was still banned, and through contact with Mohammedi Saddek, was reintegrated into the FLN network, supplied with a forged ID as a Tunisian student, and appointed by Maâmar Kaci, head of Wilaya 1 (Paris centre), to replace Tayeb El Bachir as head of Zone 121, corresponding to the 5th, 6th, 14th and 15th arrondissements on the Left bank, and 8,159 FLN members.³¹⁵ Ghafir was thus plunged in June 1961 into the heart of an FLN fiefdom that was undergoing unprecedented levels of police operations, especially by the brutal harkis units that patrolled the sector and spread a climate of terror. This was brought home with force on 15 August when Ghafir's immediate superior, Bachir Boudjemaa, head of Amala 12, was picked up by the harki in the 15th arrondissement, tortured, executed and thrown into the Seine.³¹⁶ Immediately Ghafir was chosen by Kaci to replace Boudjemaa, and found his responsibilities extended to cover both his existing Zone 121, as well as Zone 122 which corresponded to the 12th and 13th arrondissements. Ghafir, as one of four Amala

³¹² The Kabyle Mohand Akli Benyounès, when he first arrived in France aged 18 years in 1955, joined his father and other villagers from Aïn El Hammam at St.Denis, before moving to a café-hôtel-restaurant at 31 Rue des Poisonniers in the heart of the FLN 'ghetto' of the 18th arrondissement, that his father and cousin acquired in February 1957: *Sept Ans dans le feu*, 15-16; Tahar Bouaziz, a cousin of Rabah Bouaziz, owned a restaurant (52 Rue Letelier) and hotel (4 Rue de Lourmel) in the 15th, and used his commercial links to export Federation funds to the ALN in Kabylie: M.A. Benyoune, *op.cit*, 76; Malika and Louisette Ighilahriz, who both operated in the OS network led by Slimane Amirat, lived in the hotel of their uncle in the 20th arrondissement: Louise Ighilahriz, *Algérienne* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2001), 157. Omar Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 81-2, when he first went to Paris in 1952, with money sent by his family that ran a bakery, general store and café roasting business in Algiers, bought a café with two associates at Issy-les-Moulineaux. Such family commercial linkages are quite typical of the Kabyle community that composed about 75% of the emigrant population in Paris.

³¹³ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 29.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 31. In his statement Ghafir refused to recognise the French court: 'Quel que soit votre verdict, nous demeurons convaincus que notre cause triomphera, parq qu'elle est juste et parce qu'elle répond aux impératifs de l'histoire'. He then demanded a minutes silence, 'à la mémoire des Martyrs Algériens'.

³¹⁵ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 32, 284; Ghafir interview with J.L. Einaudi, *Scènes*, 210. The geographical boundaries of the Wilaya, Amala and Zones during this period is difficult to plot, mainly due to the restructuring of the area codes and boundaries on 1 September 1961 which, since it was designed to impede French intelligence and to halt the avalanche of arrest of cadres, was surrounded with great secrecy: HB1B, SCAA report to Papon, 30 November 1961. Montaner, during his interrogation of Baba-Hamed on 11 November was keen to gain information on this change, but the latters listing of each Amala and Region, and corresponding arrondissements, is highly confusing, perhaps deliberately so, and seems to relate more to the old, pre-1 September divisions, see H1B16. As a rule of thumb, after 1 September, all codes for Wilaya 2 (north Paris), begin with a 2, as can be found for example with the arrest on 27 September of Lahlou Bentifaoune, who told Montaner that he was head of the new Zone 212 [ie.Wilaya 2, Amala 1, Zone 2]: HB13 , Director SCAA to Papon, 30 November 1961. All codes for Wilaya 1, with which we are concerned, likewise start with a 1. For Ghafir's own identification of Amala, Zonal and Region areas in Wilaya 1, see *Cinquantenaire*, 21, 83, 85, 279.

³¹⁶ J.-L. Einaudi, *Scènes*, 213.

heads in Paris, was in charge of 15,260 militants, about a quarter of the total Algerian population in the capital, during the critical events of July to October 1961.³¹⁷

Two reports of major importance, written by Ghafir during this period, have survived. The first, his monthly report for July for Zone 121, recounts in details the impact of the FPA squads that, while in principle relegated to barracks at Fort Noisy, were involved in violent daily incursions into the 5th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 18th arrondissements, the smashing down of hotel doors and the brutal assaults on Algerians, many of whom needed hospital treatment for wounds. This report shows the position before the resumption of armed group attacks on the police:-

'La répression a été intense sur l'ensemble de la Zone ces dernières semaines. Le XVe et le Ve en particulier ont été les plus touchés par les fouilles et les perquisitions multipliées jour et nuit. Cette répression est dirigée souvent par les traîtres harkis qui sont constamment dans les quartiers des deux régions citées. En effet, depuis la fameuse mise en scène du transfer des harkis à Noisy-le-Sec, l'activité de ces derniers est redoublée. Papon et son gouvernement, en déplaçant les harkis du XVe et du XVIIe, ont laissé croire à l'opinion française que c'est un geste d'apaisement à la suite de la fameuse trêve unilatérale décidée le 20 mai dernier. Mais, pour nous, le déplacement des harkis n'a changé en rien leur activité qui a été au contraire intensifiée et étendue sur l'ensemble de Paris et la banlieue.....Dans tous les cafés et hôtels du XVe, Ve et XIVe des frères ont été frappés, des portes des chambres cassées, sans parler des vols d'argent et d'autres objets ayant de la valeur faisant ainsi le travail de gangstérisme. Le vendredi 21, le samedi 22 et le dimanche 23 juillet, la répression s'est abattue intensément sur toute la Zone par les harkis encadrés des policiers français, de 8 heures du matin à minuit, visant ainsi les jours de la perception'.³¹⁸

Ghafir's report confirms what is known from other sources about the wave of violence, but he adds two further points that are of particular interest. Firstly, massive police intervention in Paris was focused each month on the period, usually lasting several days, during which the collection was organised at the local level. The FLN, from 1958 onwards, altered the collection dates each month, and a prime goal of the French intelligence services was to identify, through informers, telephone taps and captured documents, the precise days on which money was to be collected from the migrant workers in cafés and lodgings. In July 1961 the police had, evidently, discovered the dates and had set out to disrupt the system of collection, the moment each month when the organisation was most vulnerable. Secondly, and most significant of all, is the fact that a high placed cadre like Ghafir could speak out so forcefully about the swelling discontent among the FLN rank-and-file and against the 'truce' policy enforced by the GPRA and Federal Committee:-

'Une réaction unanime est constatée chez tous les militants, c'est celle de reprendre les actions contre la police, principalement les harkis du moins en se défendant légitimement. Oui, nous savons que l'ordre donné par notre gouvernement d'arrêter les opérations offensives en France a une signification politique vis-à-vis de l'opinion française et internationale. Notre gouvernement en ordonnant l'arrêt de ces opérations a voulu déjouer les manœuvres du gouvernement français et démentir par les faits la propagande que ne cesse de faire la presse française, selon laquelle la Fédération de France est extrémiste et échappe au contrôle du gouvernement algérien [...]. Cependant, l'arrêt des opérations en France ordonné par notre gouvernement est interprété par le gouvernement français, en particulier Papon et ses harkis, comme faiblesse de notre organisation. C'est pourquoi la répression est redoublée ces dernières semaines afin de nous provoquer et voir notre réaction. Nous devons dire à l'organisation que l'arrêt des opérations offensives ordonné par notre gouvernement n'a pas satisfait nos militants et que leur réaction est unanime pour reprendre les actions afin de démontrer à Papon et ses valets que notre organisation n'est pas faible et ne s'affaiblira jamais quelle que soit la force de sa police'.

³¹⁷ Report A[mala] 12, 1 November 1961, in M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 280. M. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 64, notes that in March 1961 the total number of FLN elements in France was 135,202, so that Amala 12 included about 11% of all members.

³¹⁸ Ghafir Mohammed, 'Rapport sur la répression', quoted in Einaudi, *Octobre 1961*, 72-3.

Ghafir's analysis of the dangerous consequences of a truce that was undermining and demobilising the FLN organisation, to the profit of the French security forces, was completely at one with the argument developed by the Federal Committee one year earlier in opposition to the GPRA plan for a cease-fire in France. In June 1960 the Federal Committee had predicted that a "trêve" would work to the advantage of the French who would not disarm: 'La répression va redoubler de violence' and the police would, 'par une terreur qui ne connaîtra plus de bornes, essayer de reprendre les quartiers d'où il fut chassé'.³¹⁹ This scenario now appeared to be unrolling.

Other sources confirm Gafir's account of a growing sense of anger and frustration at the grass roots. One report from Kasma level conveyed a sense of desperation: 'La confiscation, le vol, n'en parlons pas. C'est rien à côté du reste. Ils [FPA] agissent n'importe comment. A déchirer même les vêtements. Quelle rage! Il faut que tout ceci s'arrête. Il faut trouver un moyen, une solution pour enrayer, au moins entraver ces répressions meutrières et destructives...[...]. S'indigner, protester seulement devant ces massacres, ne sera pas suffisant. Que pourrait-on faire? Il y a une solution! Elle doit être trouvée au plus tôt!'³²⁰ Paulette Péju, who worked closely with the Paris FLN in October 1961, was also aware of a deep malaise affecting the rank-and-file who, in face of a Federal policy of "des bras croisés", were demanding an armed riposte. She had access to numerous FLN reports that spelled out the same message: for example, the police and harkis had, 'créé une tension et une nervosité insupportable.....Je suggère que les frères des groupes armés procèdent à une contre-attaque, ce qui ne serait qu'une légitime défense', and another wanted to move to, 'des attaques massives et générales, à des protestations en masse...' .³²¹

Ghafir concluded his July report by demanding on behalf of all militants, who were unanimous, that armed actions be resumed or, at the very least, that the FLN issue a press communiqué denouncing the duplicit actions of the French government. 'Nous attendons avec courage et le maximum de sang-froid la réponse de l'organisation, soit pour la reprise, même provisoire, des actions contre les harkis ou nous expliquer d'une manière détaillé par voie de tracts la raison pour laquelle nous avons suspendu ces actions et que nous ne pouvons reprendre. C'est l'avis de tous les militants et responsables de la [Zone] 121'.

The Federal Committee seems to have responded too slowly or to have ignored the danger signals arriving from Paris. In part this was due to the problem of difficult and slow communication between Paris and Germany. Ghafir's report for July would probably have been written in the first days of August but, on completion, would have had to pass up the chain of command to Wilaya and Paris Federal levels, before dispatch to Germany by the weekly courrier. However, even making allowance for such slow communication, the Committee seems to have failed to recognise the serious nature of the crisis that was developing in Paris.

Ghafir was compelled to write a second report, titled '*Août 1961, le tournant?*', in which he detailed further violent incursions in the 2nd, 3rd, 10th, 18th and 20th arrondissements: 'Policiers et Harkis, parfois accompagnés de chiens, descendant dans les hôtels à toute heure du jour et de nuit'. Lodging rooms were sacked and many Algerians taken away or hospitalised with wounds. Algerians were daily being assaulted in the street and, 'les policiers ne demandent même plus leurs papiers à ceux qu'ils croient être Algériens. C'est la chasse aux faciès'. Ghafir felt compelled by the urgency of the situation to reiterate his July warning: 'Cette offensive policière se produit alors que

³¹⁹ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 501.

³²⁰ Saint Ouen, *Rapport de la répression policière*, 24 September 1961, matricole No.222241, quoted from the FLN Haroun archives by Linda Amiri, *La Bataille*, 127. It is interesting to note that Zouaoui's closest political adviser in 1961, Medjoub Benzerfa, had responded in a similar way to Ghafir when rank-and-file militants had been subjected to severe police repression and a curfew after the 'second front' was opened on 25 August 1958. He wrote to the Federal Committee on 16 September 1958, 'Nos frères formulent le voeu d'être mis en possession de moyens de défense contre la répression, voire de participer activement à l'action. Une certaine nervosité se manifeste chez les éléments maltraités dans la rue ou les commissariats de police': A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 109.

³²¹ Paulette Péju, *Le 17 Octobre des Algériens*, In G. Manceron (ed.), 43-4.

l'organisation du FLN sur directives du Comité Fédéral, a décidé de cesser les actions armées par nos FIDAINE (Groupe Armé) à PARIS et en banlieue depuis plusieurs semaines. Au sein des structures hiérarchiques de l'Organisation, militants et responsables à tous les niveaux, des voix s'élèvent en faveur d'une reprise des opérations armées'.³²²

By mid-August the GA groups in Paris had lost patience with the Federation Committee and decided from 15 August to take unilateral action against the harkis, and then on 27-8 August against individual police officers. For many of the young and highly combattant militants that formed the armed groups it was intolerable to be forced to stand aside while the harki, traitors to the nation, had carte blanche to brutalise and murder. For them the need to engage in a riposte derived not only from concern at the indiscriminate violence experienced by the Algerian community and the damage to FLN networks, but also from the values of male honour that were so deep a part of Maghrebin culture. Typical was the sentiment expressed by the head of Secteur 21133 at Nanterre , 'On ne doit pas rester dans les circonstances pareilles d'humiliation....Nous demandons un ordre pour la contre-répression et d'armer tous les éléments des GA'.³²³ Other reports confirm the accumulative impact of daily 'low intensity' operations that included not only brutal assault, but also verbal insults, tearing up of identity papers, smashing watches, and other acts of humiliation.³²⁴

As we have seen in Chapter 5, although it is difficult to find exactly which leaders were involved in co-ordinating the resumption of attacks on the security forces, the evidence points to significant collusion at the highest level. Mohammedi Saddek, for example, gave uncompromising support for counter-violence. Georges Lepage, who provided Saddek with a safe-house in Vitry, remonstrated with him: 'It's not normal that you bring down some lad standing outside a police station....It's badly received by the people and even by some of those who support you'.³²⁵ As we will see in Chapter 7 Saddek's support for the armed groups explains why he was called by the Federal Committee to Belgium, where he was disciplined and read the riot act by Boudaoud. Ghafir remembers the week between the imposition of a curfew on 5th October and the decision to organise a demonstration as one of mounting tension that placed huge pressure on the lower level responsables to find some kind of riposte. He clearly believes, even today, that the Federation should have followed the demands of the firebrand Mohammedi Saddek, but, 'Hélas, toutes ces opérations souhaitées par la

³²² M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 93-4.

³²³ J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 62.

³²⁴ See for a sense of this, A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 509-10, a report drawn up by Secteur 12131 in Amala 12, corresponding to the Latin Quarter in the 5th arrondissement, that detailed daily FPA and police actions during August. This lists daily actions of a far-from dramatic, but typical low-key nature:-

Le 13 [August] à 19h 30, vérifications dans les rues de Bièvre, Maître-Albert, Galande, Colbert. Les policiers ont arrêté tous les frères se trouvant sur leur passage. Le car était plein à leur départ.

Le 14 à 20 heures, des harkis et des policiers français ont vérifié les frères place Maubert, rues Lagrange, Maître-Albert et de la Bûcherie. Pas d'arrestation.

Le 15 à 20h 30 et 23h 30, des policiers ont vérifié des frères boulevard Saint-Michel. Aucune arrestation.

Le 17 à 23 30. Toute la matinée et la soirée, des harkis et policiers français ont vérifié tous les frères dans le quartier et leur ont demandé s'ils cotisaient. Certaines de nos frères, ayant répondu qu'ils ne comprenaient pas ce qu'on disait, ont été tabassés'.

The report concluded that August had seen only five FLN arrested, of which one was held in prison: 'Les harkis sont assez nombreux dans le quartier bien qu'ils ne soient pas aussi brutaux (sic) que d'habitude; ils exaspèrent les frères qui commencent à en avoir pardessus la tête de les voir tous les jours dans le quartier'.

³²⁵ J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 60-1, 66-7. Einaudi describes Saddek as, 'chaud partisan des actions armées, et les armes exercent une certaine fascination sur lui...Il est favorable au développement des actions armées en France, à des opérations de grands envergure...'.

base et les responsables sont refusées par le Comité Fédéral pour des raisons politiques afin de ne pas gêner les contacts entre le GPRA et le Gouvernement français'.³²⁶

By 27th August the Federal Committee was beginning to realise that it was facing a crisis among the Paris FLN and demanded to know, ‘sur quel principe ou directives se base-t-on pour abattre des simples gardiens de la Paix?’ But by the first week of October it was still without response to its urgent request and, faced with a dangerous loss of control over the Paris militants, hit upon the idea of mass demonstrations as a means to reassert its authority, as will be seen in the next chapter.

³²⁶ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 94-5.

7

Planning the demonstrations of 17-20 October

The Federal Committee responded quickly to the imposition of a curfew on 5th October, and by the 10th of October had already drawn up detailed plans for a sequence of mass demonstrations in Paris and the French provinces. A week later the FLN, a considerable feat in the circumstances, succeeded in organising in secrecy a mobilisation of some 30,000 men, women, and children in the boulevards of the capital. The aim of this chapter is to examine closely how this planning process took place, and to answer three questions: why the Committee decided to oppose the curfew through a mass demonstration rather than any alternative form of opposition, despite the evident dangers involved; why it decided to exclude the French left and trade unions that might have provided a degree of protection from police violence; and whether action was taken with or without the agreement of the GPRA in Tunisia.

On the 7th October the Federal Committee sent by weekly courrier a directive in which, concerned for the negative impacts of the curfew on the organisation, it asked for a detailed report on the likely impact, ‘sur nos activités en général. Nous donner la réaction des commerçants dont les établissements sont fermés à la suite de ces mesures policières. Nous donner votre avis sur les actions éventuelles (ripostes) qu'il y aura d'entreprendre contre ces mesures racistes de la police’.³²⁷ However, the Committee at this stage, only ten days prior to the 17th October, had not yet conceived the idea for a demonstration since it outlined proposals for the commemoration of 1 November, a standard date in the FLN calendar. Shortly after this directive was dispatched the Committee received a delayed ‘Express note’ dated Paris, 7 October, in which Zouaoui reported how he had responded to Papon’s announcement of the curfew on 5th October by calling an emergency meeting of the three RCs on the same day. Although they still lacked details, the Paris leaders urged the Federal Committee to agree to their proposals to disobey the ‘menaces du sieur Papon’ through mass civil disobedience in which small groups of three, four or more Algerians would walk through the streets of the city after 8.30 pm. in defiance of the ban. Significantly this was to be a peaceful demonstration and include women and children, a highly controversial recommendation in the light of the subsequent police violence.³²⁸ The protest would put the French public, who had up to now been indifferent to police brutality, on the spot (*‘au pied du mur’*) and compel them to take supportive action. Zouaoui undoubtedly hoped that a French presence would provide some protection from extreme police violence, as it had done on many demonstrations in the past. ‘Les partis politiques et syndicats démocratiques “conseilleraient” à leurs militants français de sortir aussi nombreux que possible, à partir de 20 h 30, pour s’intégrer s’il le faut aux paisibles promeneurs algériens et s’opposer s’il y a lieu aux provocations de la police’.³²⁹

The Federal Committee met several times in an apartment on the Theodor Heus Ring in Cologne to consider what action to take and by the 10th October had arrived at the definitive order for a three-stage mass action: phase one, a sequence of demonstrations in Paris; a phase two extension to the rest of France; and a phase three general strike by all Algerians.³³⁰ In effect the Committee discussed and arrived at its final decision for the demonstrations in the relatively brief period, at most some 72 hours, between late on 7th October and the dispatch by courrier of its order on 10th October. This narrow window of time is significant since the Committee had only three days within which to consult with Paris leaders and, in principle, to get a green light from Tunis. The difficulty

³²⁷ *Sou’al*, 72.

³²⁸ Paulette Péju, *Le 17 Octobre des Algériens*, in G. Manceron (ed.), 47, notes that local leaders had not suggested any form of demonstration, but preferred an armed response since any mass street action would involve big losses.

³²⁹ *Sou’al*, 74.

³³⁰ On the Cologne meeting see Ali Haroun in M. Levine, *Les Ratonnades*, 82-4; the detailed order for the demonstrations, dated 10 October, is in *Sou’al*, 75-77.

and slowness of clandestine communication between Germany and Paris also needs to be taken into account.

The Committee was meticulous in how it planned in advance the regular weekly dispatches to and from Paris, the particular dates on which documents would arrive, and the courier who was scheduled to deliver them. The usual pattern in October 1961 was for an agent to leave Paris for Brussels, often on the evening train at 17 h 36, and to deliver documents to Anne Boddaert, a 26 year old physiotherapist who, in turn, transmitted them to the members of the Federal Committee who lived under conditions of ultra-tight security in different urban locations in Germany. Such precautions were necessary, not only to ensure that crucial intelligence did not fall into the hands of the French, but also to prevent location by special forces that, if given the opportunity, had no hesitation in assassinating FLN cadres and arms dealers abroad. Courriers, after spending the night in Brussels, then made the return journey with Committee documents for Paris.

The planning of 17 October was so important that Mingasson was sent in person. The DST agents trailing Mingasson saw her going at 10.40 am on 7 October to Zouaoui's home in the Impasse des Deux Anges, before her departure to Mons in Belgium on 9 October. The next day Mingasson returned to Paris, almost certainly carrying the vital instructions dated 10 October.³³¹ By noon on the 10th October DST agents tailed Mingasson back in Paris as she made contact with members of the Zouaoui network, including Nicole Grumbach, liaison agent for Saïd Amroun (RC3) and Genève François, liaison agent for Younès Aberkane (RC2). Mingasson was particularly busy on 12 October as she met Anne Boddaert, who had arrived from Brussels as a courier, in the Café François Coppée and again in a café-tabac in the Rue Jacob. Two hours later, at 4.50 pm Mingasson and Zouaoui met to convey the latest news from Germany to Abderrahmane Farès. The three walked deep in conversation from Trocadéro towards Passy and Farès, who appeared to DST agents to be highly nervous, wrote down notes of what Mingasson had to say before returning to his car, 'en s'assurant que Mingasson n'est pas "filée"'.³³² A document found in Farès home on 4 November suggests that he too was summoned by Boudaoud to a meeting in Brussels on the evening of 15 October, presumably for the Federal Committee to receive a final account of preparations and to pass on any last instructions for Paris.³³³

Why a demonstration?

Few historians or commentators have asked the question as to why the Federal Committee took the decision to respond to the crisis through the organisation of a demonstration, rather than opting for alternative forms of action. It should be kept in mind that in the context of late 1961 a mass demonstration in the capital did not represent an obvious choice, especially as the special powers acts and brutal police repression had brought a virtual halt to street protest in Paris since 1957. However, the Committee realised that mass demonstrations could provide a neat solution to the dilemma which it faced, caught between the demand from the GPRA that armed action be contained so as not to endanger the ongoing negotiations, and the pressure from the Paris militants to make some form of strong response to police violence. A peaceful demonstration would satisfy the former, while a mass action could serve to channel and release the deep frustration building up among the militants.³³⁴

³³¹ Jean-Luc Einaudi claims that Mohammedi Saddek was called to Belgium on 9 October and returned to Paris on 12 October with the orders for the demonstrations: this is examined in Appendix 1.

³³² H1B28.

³³³ H1B17, A thinly disguised letter dated 10 October, the day the Committee met to plan 17 October, and addressed to Farès states, 'Je t'invite donc ainsi que la Petite famille chez moi à Bruxelles, dimanche prochaine, c'est-à-dire le 15. Ma femme t'attendra à 22 heures au Grand Café du Roi ou elle t'avait attendu pendant les fêtes de Paques', (signature obscured but probably 'Omar').

³³⁴ Paulette Péju, *Le 17 octobre des Algériens*, in G. Manceron (ed.), 47, adds a further consideration, that Papon had made a tactical error in imposing a night curfew that was blatantly discriminatory, one that was

In reality it is possible to detect two, contradictory currents within the Algerian community: that formed by a more pliant mass that simply wanted to see a rapid end to the war, and to the pressures being exerted by both the police and the FLN, and a more vocal group of activists or lesser cadres, who were prepared to make every sacrifice to continue an insurrectionary agenda to the bitter end. The Federal Committee was well aware of the treacherous difficulties and tensions that the FLN would face at the very moment that negotiations with France were under way and an imminent peace became a real prospect. The post-1945 nationalist movement had developed authoritarian mechanisms to retain control over the emigrant community and to retain constant pressure to maximise tax contributions, to attend meetings, and provide other forms of support that were exceedingly burdensome. The FLN leaders were aware of the need to retain a constant psychological pressure on the Algerian population to extract the maximum personal sacrifice from each militant and they feared that any relaxing of external discipline would lead to a rapid demobilisation, loss of momentum and even mass defection. The SCAA intelligence service, in a report of 23 August, commented on a marked ‘changement de l’état d’esprit’ of Algerians, ‘une très nette lassitude, doublée d’une certaine inquiétude. Les contrôles de police et la tutelle frontiste pèsent très lourdement sur la vie quotidienne des FMA. Ils pensent que la partie est gagnée pour le FLN, que la France ne conteste pas l’indépendance de l’Algérie, donc que leur participation active n’a plus de raison d’être...Leur lassitude vient d’un certain sentiment de victoires acquises..’³³⁵ Pulling in an opposite direction, but equally threatening to the Committee, were the activists, including the GA groups, who were itching to accelerate the attacks on the security forces.

The post-war nationalist movement, first under the MTLD-PPA and then the FLN, had built up a number of techniques for enforcing discipline and unity, among them a range of proscriptions, such as the ban on alcohol and smoking, that had the advantage of being eminently public and visible acts so that resistance could be quickly exposed and sanctioned.³³⁶ Mohammed Harbi has remarked that the FLN ban on alcohol had less to do with respect for Islam, than to ‘fidéliser les militants’. ³³⁷ But perhaps the most potent traditional instrument of psychological coercion for enforcing discipline and unity was the mass action, whether in the form of a general strike or street demonstration, since anybody refusing or trying to avoid the party call to action could be quickly identified and, if necessary, punished.³³⁸ However, the dramatic failure of the general strike in Algiers in January 1957 led to the collapse of the FLN organisations in the city and discredited urban mass action in general for four years, while mountain guerilla warfare moved to the forefront. This was to change dramatically as a result of spontaneous mass demonstrations in Algiers on 10-12 December 1960 during a tour by General de Gaulle. Thousands poured down from the Casbah and popular quarters waving green-and-white nationalist flags and chanting ‘Abbas au pouvoir’, ‘Libérez Ben Bella’ and ‘Algérie musulmane’. The violent clashes that ensued, in which over 120 Algerians died, marked a decisive turning-point in the war, since de Gaulle realised that the FLN constituted a legitimate expression of the popular will of the Algerian people, with whom he would now have to negotiate.³³⁹

A first reaction of some FLN leaders to the street insurrection was one of deep suspicion and hostility since, owing to the authoritarian culture that had become predominant, they disliked any

immediately seized upon by FLN propagandists to persuade public opinion of the similarities with, and danger from, a creeping fascism.

³³⁵ HA88, SCAA report, 23 August 1961.

³³⁶ I have discussed the function of such symbolic restraints during the Algerian War in, ‘The “Silent Native”: Attentisme, Being Compromised, and Banal Terror during the Algerian War of Independence, 1954-1962’, in Martin Thomas (ed.), *The French Colonial Mind. Vol.2. Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 283-303.

³³⁷ M. Harbi, *Un Vie*, 235.

³³⁸ H1B35, SCAA report 8 Dec. 1961, claimed that after the 17 October the FLN was more determined than ever to use demonstrations, ‘dont le caractère collectif émeut l’opinion et qui tend à démontrer sa réelle représentativité’.

³³⁹ Mahfoud Kaddache, ‘Les Tournants de la Guerre de libération au niveau des masses populaires’, in Charles-Robert Agheron (ed.), *La Guerre d’Algérie et les Algériens 1954-1962* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1997), 51-70;

popular initiative that arose outside the control of the party hierarchy. The EMG and Wilaya 4 issued instruction during 1961 which showed anxiety that further mass actions, like those of December, would become uncontrollable. In July 1961 the commander of Wilaya 4, that included Algiers, ordered, ‘Il faut que les masses ne manifestent que sur ordre du GPRA. Il y a certaines formes d’action qu’il faut interdire aux masses. Grèves: c’est une forme d’action à exclure pour le moment, l’encadrement des masses n’étant pas réalisé’.³⁴⁰ However, following the successful demonstrations of 5 July, the FLN was becoming more confident about its ability to harness popular action and, more important, was beginning to recognise the political importance of street protests in placing pressure on de Gaulle to accelerate the peace process. By 1961 the entire strategic thinking of the FLN was beginning to swing away from the ALN maquis and the peasantry, that was barely surviving after the crushing impact of the Challe offensive, back to the potential of urban protest. Zouaoui, in making his proposal on 7 October for a street demonstration, knew that this was in line with the new radical position taken by the CNRA of late August, ‘qui tiennent compte dans le combat actuel de la participation de la masse à la lutte révolutionnaire’.³⁴¹

It is clear that the Federal Committee was searching for means to retain discipline over the Paris rank-and-file: for example, when on 5 July it sent out the contentious order to stop further attacks on the police, it added, ‘D’autre part, de manière à tenir solidement en main les cadres, des réunions doivent rassembler ceux-ci tous les deux jours et ce jusqu’à nouvel ordre’.³⁴² In calling for a demonstration on the 17 October the Federation was playing for high stakes, since the level of mobilisation would provide incontrovertible proof of the strength or weakness of its support among the Algerians and its claim to represent the popular will. While the majority of Algerians spontaneously and enthusiastically supported the demonstration, there was also a significant minority that was reluctant to participate after a long days work or because of the evident dangers involved. The militants and leaders of cells and Groups scoured the lodging houses or sectors which they controlled to make sure that every man and woman, no matter how reluctant, would attend.

A mass action would, in addition to reasserting FLN discipline over immigrants weary of seven years of war, also serve to hold in check the activists who advocated armed action. As Ali Haroun notes the Committee was unanimous about the need to act: ‘la population algérienne était en train d’étouffer. Tous nos responsables, qu’ils soient chef de cellule ou de wilaya, nous disaient que ça ne pouvait pas continuer, qu’on ne pouvait pas accepter de se faire massacrer, qu’il fallait réagir contre le couvre-feu’.³⁴³ Omar Boudaoud agrees that ‘nous avions été contraints de réagir’ and that a failure to act might even have led to the explosion of, ‘des manifestations spontanées, inorganisées’.³⁴⁴ The Committee, confronted with the danger of losing control over the strategically important Paris region, saw the demonstration as the best way of providing a psychological pressure valve while simultaneously remaining compliant with GPRA demands to respect a truce while peace negotiations hung in the balance. As SCAA intelligence reported early on 17 October, from information received from informers, the action would, ‘revêtir la forme d’une démonstration pacifique tendant à extérioriser le mécontentement des FMA devant les mesures de rigueur prises à leur encontre ces jours derniers’.³⁴⁵ The panic that seized the Federal Committee, and its extreme urgency, can be gauged by the pressure that it placed on Zouaoui to organise a demonstration by 14 October, an almost impossible time scale in the circumstances. The Committee was not even prepared to wait, like Algerians across the Maghreb and Europe, to join the global commemoration of the seventh anniversary of the revolutionary war on 1 November.

³⁴⁰ Directive from Si Mohammed, Wilaya 4, 28 July 1961, 1H1643-1*, in G. Meynier, *Histoire intérieur*, 207.

³⁴¹ *Sou’al*, 74.

³⁴² B. Stora, *Ils Venaient*, 368.

³⁴³ M. Levine, *Ratonnades*, 83.

³⁴⁴ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 185, 188.

³⁴⁵ H1B34, SCAA report 17 October.

Why was the French left and trade union movement excluded?

The single most important and fateful decision that the Federal Committee made between 7 and 10 October in deciding on the form of the demonstrations, concerned the issue of whether to associate the French left, and in particular the French Communist Party and the trade union movement, with the mass action. After the massacre of 17 October there was some criticism in FLN ranks of the Federation for exposing ordinary workers and their families to the police onslaught. For the French right, including Maurice Papon, the Federation, while claiming to act peacefully, was fully prepared to place gunmen in the crowds who, by firing on the police, planned to precipitate a blood-bath that would politically damage the Prefect.³⁴⁶ While the evidence does not support this interpretation, others, including many Algerians, argued that the FLN made a serious mistake in failing to understand the highly dangerous and volatile situation among the police force which had been on the receiving end of FLN assassinations and was rearing to seize the opportunity to exact a violent revenge. Omar Boudaoud goes some way towards admitting an error of judgement: 'Nous nous attendions certes à une vague d'arrestations; mais nous étions tellement sûrs du caractère pacifique de la manifestation, que la sauvagerie et l'atrocité de la répression qui s'ensuivit nous prit au dépourvu'.³⁴⁷ The Paris leaders, who were closer to the ground and should have recognised the dangerous tensions, were the first to suggest a mass street action, but had also recommended that some protection be provided by associating the French left with the demonstration by mixing them with the, 'paisibles promeneurs algériens et s'opposer s'il y a lieu aux provocations de la police'.³⁴⁸

Boudaoud, as an older and experienced militant active in the MTLD since 1945, would have known that Algerians had in the past frequently received protection during mass demonstrations from police violence by marching alongside Europeans or flanked by French trade unionists. Whenever Algerian nationalists had decided to constitute quite separate columns or large groups, and presented a ready and visible target for the police, there had invariably been extreme brutality and killings, as during the 14 July demonstration in Paris in 1953 when six Algerians were shot dead.³⁴⁹ Such a tactic in October 1961 would not have guaranteed security, as the French fatalities at Charonne on 8 February 1962 were soon to demonstrate. But if Europeans had been involved in the 17 October events it seems inconceivable that the Prefecture of Police would have unleashed the levels of murderous violence that were used against Algerians. Such a blood bath would have precipitated a major political crisis, and almost certainly led to the downfall of both Papon and the Minister of the Interior, Frey.

There has been very little discussion by historians as to why the FLN decided to exclude the French left on 17 October. Behind this seemingly minor issue lies one of the most important and controversial matters of the Algerian War: in addition to the protective aspect of a combined street action, lay the question of what exactly the Federation hoped to achieve by the demonstration and how it would impact on the French working class and public opinion. Mohammed Harbi, perhaps the single most astute and fearless critic of the Federation, has provided throughout his oeuvre a detailed analysis of the Federal Committee, of which he was a member between June 1957 and

³⁴⁶ After the 17 October Maurice Papon successfully protected himself from parliamentary investigation and political challenge through a number of ploys, see J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 137-153. Among these defensive strategies was the careful fabrication of evidence to show that the FLN had deliberately planned to precipitate a violent crisis that specifically targeted Papon, with the intention of bringing about his downfall.

³⁴⁷ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 186; A. Haroun, in M. Levine, *Les Ratonnades*, 83, makes the same judgement, 'On avait prévu qu'il aurait une répression violente, mais pas un seul instant on imaginait que les choses allaient se passer comme elles se sont passées. Pas un seul instant'.

³⁴⁸ *Sou'al*, 74, Zouaoui to Federal Committee, 7 October 1961.

³⁴⁹ Danielle Tartakowsky, 'Un 14 juillet 1953 à Paris', in Anne-Marie Pathé, and Daniel Lefevre (eds.), *La Guerre d'Algérie au miroir des décolonisations françaises* (Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer, 2000), 473-88; Maurice Rajsfus, *1953: Un 14 juillet sanglant* (Paris: Agnès Viénot Editions, 2003).

September 1958, and of the authoritarian regime imposed by Omar Boudaoud and Ladlani.³⁵⁰ Harbi, as a socialist and self-proclaimed ‘Marxist militant’, believed strongly that a truly revolutionary party should be open to debate on the key decisions and the political objectives of the broader struggle, but in reality Boudaoud ran the Federation as a police or military apparatus in which cadres at all levels were required to obey orders from above in an unquestioning way. Harbi, a highly educated intellectual from a renowned and cultured family background, was perceived as a personal threat by Boudaoud who betrayed the unease of a relatively untutored Kabyle peasant when confronted by the sophisticated and urbane intellectual. When Harbi began to raise a number of crucial political issues, the ‘apparatchik’, as Harbi referred to Boudaoud, interpreted these as a disguised bid for personal power: ‘Toute contestation lui apparaissait comme une conspiration organisée contre lui’.³⁵¹ Boudaoud’s response was to use his influence with Krim Belkacem of the CCE to ruthlessly isolate and remove the three Committee members, Moundji, Guedroudj and Harbi, who had the courage to display some independence of mind on important matters of policy. Guedroudj was sent to Morocco with a ‘lettre de cachet’ that threw him into a prison camp, and, since ‘Boudaoud m’a menacé de me faire liquider’, Harbi left for Switzerland.³⁵²

Mohammed Harbi, in addition to raising the issue of democratic debate within the Federation and challenging ‘le vide politique ambiant’, introduced three questions onto the agenda of the Committee: the counter-productive and bloody civil war with the MNA, the decision whether to open a ‘second front’ into metropolitan France, and the relationship of the FLN to the French left and anticolonialist movement.³⁵³

It is the last of these that is of interest here, since it links directly to the issue of the demonstration. The long history of the relationship between the Algerian nationalist movement and the Communist Party was extremely complex and often deeply conflictual and, even after the Algerian Communist Party negotiated in June 1956 individual integration into the FLN, many nationalists remained deeply hostile to communism. Marxist intellectuals like Harbi remained exposed to ill-founded, but dangerous rumours of collusion with communism, a charge that Boudaoud used to remove him from the Committee. However, this failed to unnerve Harbi who opposed an embedded and unthinking anti-communism, and argued in the Committee, ‘que des convergences avec le PCF étaient possibles et souhaitables’.³⁵⁴ The French left was in general indifferent to the Algerian War, but the FLN, argued Harbi, instead of painting the PCF into a corner by depicting it as an inherently diabolic force, should seek allies in the French working class and, ‘disais-je à mes collègues du comité fédéral, instaurer des rapports de confiance avec nos partenaires français...’. The aim was to bring about ‘une régénérescence de la gauche française sur la base de la formation d’un mouvement consacré à la cause de l’anticolonialisme’.³⁵⁵ Already, in 1958, Harbi recognised that the European support networks were significantly isolated from the mainstream PCF-CGT movement: ‘ceux-ci [networks] ne sont pas enracinés dans la masse française’, and this isolationism was proving counterproductive since it threatened to leave the FLN isolated and unprotected by the powerful French working-class movement.³⁵⁶ By 1961, the Federation, far from building strong bridges to the French masses, was even more isolated and had pulled back into

³⁵⁰ See, for example, ‘Interview de Mohammed Harbi’, in *Sou’al*, 7-17; *Vie Debout*, Chapter 6, ‘La Fédération de France du FLN’, 177-223.

³⁵¹ M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 221.

³⁵² M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 223; *Sou’al*, p.17.

³⁵³ M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 196, 208.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 192.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 217 - 218.

³⁵⁶ Mohammed Harbi, ‘Les porteurs de valise, le FLN et la gauche française. Table ronde’, *Politique Aujourd’hui*, Nos.5-6 (1979), 16. In the same debate the historian Madeleine Rebérioux, during the war a PCF militant engaged in the Mouvement anti-colonialiste français (MAF), remarked that she could now see more clearly why it was, ‘pratiquement impossible de constituer un mouvement anticolonialiste de masse’, in liaison with the FLN.

a kind of bunker in which liaison agents were only to be tolerated on an individual basis as technical agents, courriers, and drivers.

In August 1961 French intelligence had picked up on this deepening trend: ‘La méfiance à l’égard des métropolitaines semble être devenue une règle nouvelle. Après avoir demandé aux militants de prendre contact avec les Français pour leur expliquer la position du Front, il apparaît que maintenant l’organisation opère un repli sur soi. Le FLN semble prendre ombrage des syndicats, du parti communiste et aussi des œuvres sociales officielles ou officieuses qui s’intéressent aux FMA. Cette méfiance n’est pas une nouveauté en soi mais elle semble s’accuser comme si le Front voulait plus que jamais maintenir les Algériens dans une unité totale, politique, syndicale et sociale. Evidement, les métropolitains seront toujours utilisées comme agents de liaison, transporteurs de fonds, fournisseurs d’armes, mais individuellement et non en groupes homogènes déjà organisés’.³⁵⁷

Returning to the way in which the Federal Committee, between the 7th and 10th of October, planned the Paris demonstration, it is clear that it wished, in the short time available, to assess the likely degree of support from the French left, and few were in a better position to provide such advice than Omar Ouhadj. Ouhadj had belonged to a PCF cell until March 1956 and was the key organiser of the AGTA at Renault, as well as nationally. He had his finger on the pulse of PCF, CGT and CFDT attitudes towards Algerian workers and the FLN. Ouhadj was called by Abdelkrim Souici to a meeting in Brussels on about the 9 October 1961 and, after crossing the border on foot, was asked by Souici, ‘si les organisations françaises réagiraient en cas d’initiative de grande envergure. Il lui a répondu qu’il ne le pensait pas’.³⁵⁸ Ouhadj, in a long interview with Laure Pitti, noted that relations between French and Algerian workers had been quite normal before the Algerian War, and had then deteriorated as the conflict progressed, and since the PCF had reneged on its avant-garde role to support the anti-colonial struggle, the majority of French workers felt a muted hostility and that what happened to Algerians outside the plant did not concern them. Ouhadj, in an anonymous interview with the journalist Jean Cau on 16 November 1961, expressed his bitter anger that the French public had remained indifferent on 17 October, or had actively assisted the police. He was not surprised, ‘Cette passivité, ce racisme latent, cette indifférence n’est que la concrétisation politique de ce que nous vivons et subissons depuis des années’.³⁵⁹

In the light of such consultation it is not perhaps surprising that the Federal Committee made the risky decision to reject Zouaoui’s initial report of 7 October which had suggested that, ‘Les partis politiques et syndicats démocratiques “conseilleraient” à leurs militants français de sortir aussi nombreux que possible, à partir de 20 h 30, pour s’intégrer s’il faut aux paisibles promeneurs algériens et s’opposer s’il y a lieu aux provocations de la police’.³⁶⁰ The point being made by Mohammed Harbi, however, is that the political failure of FLN/French relations cannot be uniquely blamed on the PCF or the latent racism of French workers, since the FLN Federation had also failed in its fundamental political analysis and had not developed a long-term strategy of rapprochement that would not have left the FLN standing isolated and vulnerable in 1961.

There is confused or contradictory evidence that the Federal Committee may have tried to negotiate with the PCF directly on the very eve of the demonstration. Omar Ouhadj, after his

³⁵⁷ HA88, SCAA report, 23 August 1961.

³⁵⁸ J.-L. Einaudi, *Octobre*, 159, interview with Ouhadj, 7 February 1992. In an interview with Laure Pitti, Garchizy, 15 May 1993, Ouhadj remarked that several people had been consulted by the Committee: ‘Chaque responsable de service était convoqué à l’extérieur, les uns à Cologne en Allemagne, les autres en Belgique. Moi j’ai été convoqué en Belgique à Bruxelles. Et oui, c’est là qu’on m’a demandé s’il était possible que je demande au PCF de déléguer des militants, des représentants, pour aller à la manifestation’. My thanks to Laure Pitti for providing access to this important material.

³⁵⁹ Jean Cau, ‘Un miroir pour les Français’, *L’Express*, 16 November 1961, quoted in J.-L. Einaudi, *Octobre*, 314-15.

³⁶⁰ *Sou’al*, 74. Zouaoui’s tactic had a further advantage: the curfew only applied in a discriminatory and racist way to Algerians, and the police would be faced with the difficult, if not impossible, task of trying to identify and separate out Algerians from ‘legitimate’ French groups or individuals who had an undisputed right to be in the street.

meeting with Souici on about the 9 October, received next day a message from Boudaoud asking him to make contact with the PCF and to arrange a meeting, which he did on his return to Paris by phoning André Merlot who was a member of the *Conseil fédéral* of the CGT and the PCF *Comité central*.³⁶¹ This contact, argues Einaudi, led to a meeting in the Hotel Métropole in Brussels on 15 or 16 October, between Boudaoud and Léon Feix, the PCF expert on Algerian affairs, and Etienne Fajon.

Boudaoud, in a 1992 interview, gave much detail on this meeting which does not tally with Ouhadj's account since it followed from contacts between Communists and representatives of the GPRA meeting in East Germany, not Paris. In Brussels the PCF request that communist women be allowed to participate in the demonstration of Algerian women on the '18 October' [sic], was tersely rejected by Boudaoud since the Communists had a long history of opposition to the FLN and it would take more than this to, 'effacer tout la rupture qu'il y a eu'. If Communist women participated, even in small numbers, this would be used by the PCF for its own propaganda purposes and the front-page of *L'Humanité*, predicted Boudaoud, would carry the heading "Jeannine et Malika". Finally, the PCF asked what other assistance it could provide, which was accepted by the FLN in the form of help in transmitting 200 millions to Switzerland, a sum that was not handed back to the FLN until after Independence, minus 20 millions for 'costs'. In sum, concluded Boudaoud in his memoirs, the PCF had brought no assistance whatsoever to the FLN throughout the entire war.³⁶²

In 2007 Boudaoud gave an entirely different version of this event: the meeting had not taken place just before the 17 October, but in early January 1962 when he and Ali Haroun met in Brussels with Léon Feix and, from memory, the editor of *L'Humanité*, who had requested a meeting to discuss PCF aid to the Federation. 'Nous ne pouvions pas le refuser', but it was regrettable that the Communist Party had only decided, noted Boudaoud with irony, to offer the solidarity of the international proletariat when the war was virtually over.³⁶³ Here the historian is confronted with the kind of contradictions that may arise from a combination of failing memory and *parti pris*, but it does seem implausible that high-level discussions should have been taking place for PCF participation in the women's demonstration of 20 October on the very eve of 17 October and after detailed planning instructions had already been dispatched to Paris on 10 October. But what can be detected in all this is Boudaoud's visceral antipathy for the PCF and communism in general, a dislike that reflected, according to Mohammed Harbi, a deeper failure of the FLN leadership, an anti-intellectualism allied to conservative and religious forms of nationalism that was to have long-term catastrophic consequences for post-Independence Algeria. The Federation decision to go-it-alone on 17 October was thus not only a tactical mistake that carried considerable, even fatal, consequences, but one which was symptomatic of a wider refusal to engage in a common front. The Federation released the important '*Appel Aux Français*' immediately after the 17 October with the intention that the dramatic demonstration would precipitate French support as a consequence of, rather than prior to, the event.

Did the GPRA agree to the demonstration?

Did the Federal Committee consult with the highest level of the FLN, the provisional government (GPRA) in Tunis? It seems highly unlikely that such an important decision would have been made

³⁶¹ J.-L. Einaudi, *Octobre*, interview with Ouhadj, 7 February 1992.

³⁶² J.-L. Einaudi, *Octobre*, 159-60, interview with Boudaoud, 7 February 1992.

³⁶³ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 188-9. Ali Haroun, in a letter to Jim House, 9 October 2011, confirms that the PCF/FLN meeting took place on about 6 January 1962. Haroun, in *7e Wilaya*, 303, makes reference to this Brussel meeting in January 1962. This, he notes, followed from a high-level meeting held in Prague on 19 November 1960 between Waldeck-Rochet and two GPRA ministers, Dr.Francis and Ahmed Boumendjel, at which co-ordination between the two movements was discussed. The Federation was invited to make contact with the PCF to agree on concrete methods of support, but such a meeting only occurred in 1962! Boudaoud's 1992 version of a Communist/GPRA top level meeting has probably mistakenly located it in 'East Germany' rather than Prague .

without receiving approval at the top level. In *Paris 1961* Jim House and I argued, especially in the light of later GPRA distancing from the 17 October demonstration, that the Committee had planned the event unilaterally.³⁶⁴ Since then, however, both Haroun and Boudaoud have insisted that Tunis was indeed consulted on the matter. ‘De plus’, notes Boudaoud, ‘le GPRA avait été informé de notre initiative. A Tunis, Bentobbal – le ministre de l’Intérieur dont dépendait alors la Fédération – m’avait dit en substance: “Cela est votre affaire. Si vous réussissez, c’est la révolution qui réussit. Si vous échouez, vous paierez votre décision.” Réponse: “J’ai bien compris. Alors nous allons agir”. En fin de compte, le GPPRA nous a félicités, car l’impact international des manifestations du 17 octobre 1961 a été positif, au-delà de nos espérances’.³⁶⁵ There is some confirmation of this in the DST files: Baba-Hamed (RC1) was interrogated as follows:

Q[question]. D'où venait l'ordre de la manifestation du 17 octobre?

- Moi je le tenais de Zouaoui qui le tenait lui-même de la Fédération.

Q. Venait-il d'ailleurs?

- Moi je suis convaincu qu'il venait du GPRA'.³⁶⁶

However, since the Federal Committee, meeting at Cologne, made its decision to organise a demonstration in the short period between late on 7 October and 10 October, it remains unclear how Boudaoud would have been able to make the return trip to Tunis in such a brief window of time. Perhaps Boudaoud, rather than meeting in person with Bentobbal [a mistake for Krim?], was able to talk with the Minister of the Interior by a secure telephone line via the Tunisian embassy in Bonn or some other means, although usually the FLN avoided such communication because of the well known ability of the French to intercept such telecommunications. Mohammed Harbi remains in doubt as to whether Belkacem Krim would have informed the President, Ben Khedda, about the demonstration, while Saâd Dahlab, the newly appointed Foreign Minister, reacted strongly to news of the plans for 17 October: ‘Ils nous emmerdent!’.³⁶⁷

Implementation of the plan in Paris, 10-20 October

This final section examines the process by which the Paris leaders, after the delivery by the courrier Rolande Mingasson on 10 October of the detailed orders, set about the concrete organisation of the demonstrations between then and the 20 October. Historians and other commentators have, given the preoccupation with the events of 17 October, often failed to remark that the detailed Federal plan dispatched to Paris on 10 October was for a complex sequence of mass actions that were to take place in three phases, first in the capital, and then across the main towns of Algerian settlement in France.

Phase 1 was to unfold over four days in Paris, starting on Saturday 14 October or, at the latest, by Tuesday 17 October, with a boycott of the curfew by workers, ‘en compagnie de leurs femmes et de leurs enfants, en masse’, who were to circulate in the evening, ‘dans les grandes artères de Paris’. The following day all Algerian shopkeepers, café owners and restaurateurs were to close down for 24 hours. On the third day Algerians were to continue to ignore the curfew.

Since it was expected that there would be numerous arrests and internment, a fourth day of action was to be led by women alone on 20 October. They were called to demonstrate in front of the Prefecture of Police using the following slogans:

A BAS LE COUVRE-FEU RACISTE

LIBERATION DE NOS EPOUX ET DE NOS ENFANTS

NEGOCIER AVEC LE GPRA

³⁶⁴ J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 154.

³⁶⁵ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 188., seems to have made a mistake here. In the third GPRA government, formed in August 1961, the post of Minister of the Interior, who had responsibility for the French Federation, passed from Ben Tobbal to Belkacem Krim.

³⁶⁶ H1B16.

³⁶⁷ G. Manceron (ed.), *Le 17 Octobre*, 153, 176.

INDEPENDANCE TOTALE DE L'ALGERIE, etc.

All demonstrations were to be stewarded by experienced militants, and any provocation of the police was to be avoided at all costs. It was proposed that a large number of tracts, which in reality never appeared, were to be handed out to the public to explain the action.

Phase 2. The start of the second phase would depend on how things worked out in Paris. The provincial FLN networks were instructed to wait for clearance from the central Federation before organiisng similar mass actions, especially women's demonstrations, 'devant les préfectures des grands centres de province'.

Phase 3. In a final phase all Algerians, whether workers or shopkeepers, commerçants and students, were to participate in a general, 24 hour-strike in the whole of France, while prisoners would go on hunger strike.

The final planning and execution of the demonstration of 17 October, carried out by Zouaoui and his lieutenants in less than one week, under conditions of secrecy that would not give prior warning to the police, represented a remarkable feat of mobilisation that was only made possible through the well-oiled machinery of the FLN network. The need to maintain frequent communication between Paris and Germany during final preparations saw the putting in place of special arrangements, including a doubling of the courrier's that traveled by train to and from Brussels, and the identification of secure telephone links in Paris 'chez Nicole' in the morning, and 'chez le barbu' in the evenings.³⁶⁸ Zouaoui planned an emergency meeting with the three contrôleur, Saïd Amroun, Younès Aberkane and Mustapha Baba-Hamed that was delayed, because of liaison problems, until 8 pm on the evening of Friday 13 November, a delay that meant the demonstration could not begin until 17 October.

Following this meeting Zouaoui was able to write the next day, Saturday 14 October, to the Committee in a letter that was taken by the courrier Roger Fligitter to Brussels on the evening train. In this Zouaoui was able to spell out the detailed planning that had been agreed on by him and his RC advisers. Instructions for a mass action, that was to start at 20 h 30 and finish by 21 h 30, were not to reach the lower levels of the local networks until the very last moment to prevent the police gaining prior warning. Algerians from particular suburbs or arrondissements would be ordered to travel to four starting points, at the Champs-Elysées (then to march towards Concorde), République (towards the Opéra), the Gare Saint-Lazare and Opéra (moving towards République), and from the Place d'Italie (in the direction of Saint-Michel). As ordered, noted Zouaoui, everything would be totally pacific: 'Nous ne pouvons pas prévoir la réaction des sbires de Papon, mais les directives sont formelles. Nous ne cherchons pas la bagarre'. But, rather interestingly, Zouaoui indicated that the armed groups were being held in reserve if necessary. The stewardship would be mainly in the hands of militants from the District level, while the sixty-three District leaders were to act as observers in order to draw up precise reports for the Committee, a task that was eventually delegated to Europeans.

How were the orders transmitted from the Paris Federal level to the two Wilaya heads in the capital as well as the five Wilayas that were to implement phases two and three by extending actions to the rest of France? Among the documents seized by the DST during Operation Flore is a five page, handwritten instruction, dated 14 October which was almost certainly a copy of the order sent to Wilaya heads on the basis of the decisions reached by Zouaoui and the contôleurs the previous evening.³⁶⁹ This stated that the aim of the actions was, 'pour démontrer à l'opinion française et internationale notre détermination de nous défendre contre ces mesures...racistes'. Avant "l'opération" les mitants doivent être instruite sur tous les plans et aurant comme mission à l'intérieur de la "manifestation" de faire respecter toutes les instructions...', including the orders of the service d'ordre. These were to make sure that, 'le port d'armes a feu ou d'armes blanches est rigoureusement interdit', that marchers should behave in a dignified and disciplined fashion, and not respond to police provocations. Zouaoui was particularly concerned to

³⁶⁸ Today it is impossible to know the content or significance of such telephone calls in shaping the events.

³⁶⁹ H1B21, this also included a further update on 16 October.

ensure that every participant was controlled within the framework of his or her cell: 'Observations. Ne jamais laisser le militant accomplir tout seul sa mission. Il doit être suivi de près par les membres de sa cellule – 2 – par mesures de sécurité et pour renforcer son autorité. Evites l'isolement individuel....'. It detailed how all hotels were to be cleared of their lodgers, and insisted on the presence of all women and children. Severe sanctions would be taken against anyone failing to carry out their duty ('devoir'), including, significantly men of the armed groups or toughs ("spéciaux et truands").

We have evidence from Mohammed Ghafir as to how these internal instructions were received by Wilaya 1 (Paris south) by a three man committee attended by himself for Amala 12, Mohamed Tahar Labane for Amala 11, and Kaci Maamar, otherwise known as "Kaddour" or 'Moustache', leader of Wilaya 1. The Wilaya meeting, as usual, took place in the Château of the Parc de Sceaux where a militant Mohamed Oussayef, who was a park-keeper, lived with his family.³⁷⁰ The meeting started at 10 am on the 12 October to undertake, 'une analyse approfondie de la directive [ie. probably the above order from Zouaoui] et tous les aspects disciplinaires et sécuritaires entourant cette action, l'engagement a été pris pour la transmission à la base et surtout dans une discréction totale toujours avec la même rigueur et une discipline exemplaire'. Ghafir makes no mention of Baba-Hamed in his memoirs, perhaps because the practices of clandestinity prevented identification of other cadres, but it is likely that he would have had contact with him. Baba-Hamed, during his interrogation stated, in reply to the question, 'Quand vous alliez contrôler la [Wilaya] 1, cela se passait où?', replied, 'Chez Savatier – la dernière fois le 5 novembre (dimanche) réunion à laquelle j'assistais avec "Kadour" [Maamar] et les deux super-zonaux Ahmed [Labane] et Rachid [Ghafir]'.³⁷¹

It seems likely that Wilaya and Amala leaders from the rest of France were also called to Paris just before the 17 October to receive and discuss the orders concerning the planning of stages 2 and 3 that were to begin, but only after orders received from Zouaoui, after the women's demonstration on 20 October. Rabah Athmaniou, Amala head in Reims, remarks that he came to Paris for a meeting at which his own leader, head of Wilaya 2B, and Mohammedi Saddek, described as 'coordinateur' or 'super-wilaya', were present. He returned to Reims on 16 October where, in breach of Zouaoui's instructions, preparations for phase 2 were begun immediately, 'Toute la nuit on a confectionné des drapeaux. Le lendemain, on les a distribués à tous les responsables'.³⁷² The calling of provincial Wilaya heads to Paris was also confirmed, although in a rather confused account, during a studio debate broadcast by *Vérités* on Algerian TV on 17 October 2001 when Mohand Akli Benyounès, who was at the time temporary head 'en mutation' of Wilaya 3 (Lyons), was called to a meeting in Paris, 'j'ai assisté à la réunion le 17 [sic] octobre à Paris', where a contrôleur [RC2, Saïd Amroun?] was present. The task of the meeting was purely 'technical', how to implement the plan drawn up by the Federal Committee, and the same evening he returned to Wilaya 3 where, also in breach of instructions, he organised a women's demonstration in Bourg-en-Bresse before returning next day to Lyons.³⁷³

From these accounts, despite possible confusions about precise dates, we begin to gain a sense of the extent to which the planning of the October demonstrations was a much more complex

³⁷⁰ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 102-105. Ghafir's date of 12 October appears anomalous since it pre-dates the meeting of the higher placed committee of Zouaoui and the three contrôleurs late on 13 October. During his interrogation Baba-Hamed (RC1) confirmed that he had first received orders regarding the demonstration on 13 October. The plans were then conveyed on 14 October to lower-level cadres with orders to diffuse them to the rank-and-file on the evening of 16th and, if possible, the 17th. 'Pour être plus précis', he told Montaner, 'la mise en état d'alerte a été donnée la veille et les directives précises ont été communiqué le 17, des secteurs à la base', H1B16.

³⁷¹ H1B16. Savatier was described as an 'artiste' and his flat, at 28 Rue Daubenton, 5th arrondissement, provided the regular meeting place for Baba-Hamed and Maamar Kaci.

³⁷² J.-L. Einaudi, *Scènes*, 141-2. The role of Saddek here, to which I return in Appendix 1, remains a mystery since the RC2 contrôleur in charge of Wilaya 2B was Younès Aberkane.

³⁷³ A video recording of the *Vérités* programme, 17 October 2001, was kindly made available to me by Dr. Jim House.

operation than usually recounted, and that the detailed execution or preparation involved all leaders at Amala level and above, perhaps as many as thirty individuals or more. However, at no stage was the top FLN echelon in metropolitan France ever asked to discuss the key ideas or objectives of the demonstrations: this was all in the hands of the Federal Committee, and their task was limited strictly to the implementation of the order sent to Paris on 10 October.

Further evidence of the planning process can be found in various documents discovered by the police and by the DST during Operation Flore, and which reveal that all did not go to plan. The higher level cadres in Paris did not pass on the instructions for the demonstration of 17th October to the rank-and-file until very late, either on the evening of 16 October or, in some instances, the next morning. For example, in the industrial suburb of Aubervilliers the local cadres only received orders to prepare the mass action on the evening of Monday 16 October.³⁷⁴ On the morning of 17 October a large number of workers, because of a rail strike at the Gare Saint-Lazare, were unable to catch trains to their workplaces in the industrial suburbs, and by noon they had started to demonstrate many hours before the planned time which, unfortunately, gave the Prefecture of Police prior warning. The police found on one of the demonstrators who was arrested, Ahmed Alla, in what was a major breach in security, a two page document which gave the instructions of Zouaoui's committee for lower level cadres.³⁷⁵

This order, which has never been published, is worth quoting at length:-

Recommendations:

- 1) Interdiction de prendre une arme avec soi, quelle qu'elle soit (arme, couteau, etc.....)
- 2) Ne répondre à aucune provocation d'où qu'elle vienne (conserver le calme en toutes circonstances).
- 3) Le boycottage du couvre feu raciste doit se dérouler pacifiquement, avec dignité et tout le calme absolu.
- 4) Tous militants et cadres sont chargés de respecter les consignes ci-dessous et de veiller à ce que le calme règne.
- 5) Etat d'alerte: contact permanent et compte rendu quotidien que doit fournir chaque responsable.
- 6) Des tracts seront distribués au public français et étranger par nos militants; préparation en pratique du boycottage contre le couvre feu:
 - 1) Mobilisation de tous les militants et responsables pendant les trois jours qui viennent
 - 2) Tous les Algériens doivent être présents aux quartiers qui leur sont désignés à partir de 20 h 30.
 - 3) Ceux des frères qui habitent en banlieue doivent partir à l'avance pour être présents dans les lieux indiqué à 20 h 30.
 - 4) Toutes les habitations algériennes, hôtels meublés, logements HLM et foyers doivent être désertés en direction des lieux prévus. Les quartiers à forte densité doivent être desservis.
 - 5) Le boycottage doit s'appliquer à l'ensemble de l'émigration Algérie H.F.E.V [hommes, femmes, enfants, vieillards].
 - 6) Les responsables et militants doivent mener un travail d'explications auprès de la base, pour leur démontrer l'importance de cette riposte, pour mettre en échec les mesures racistes, arbitraires, sauvages, aveugles et barbares.
 - 7) Les mêmes responsables et militants doivent s'assurer que tous les Algériens ont participé au boycott et doivent veiller à ce que notre riposte s'effectue dans le calme et l'ordre absolu.
 - 8) Les craintifs et les hésitants doivent être convaincus que leur participation est primordial (solidarité).

³⁷⁴ J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 95.

³⁷⁵ H1B34, SCAA report, 17 October 1961, on the arrest of Ahmed Alla.

9) En cas d'arrestation, répondre n'avoir été obligé par personne. Seulement que nous sommes sortis de notre propre gré, que nous sommes contre le couvre-feu raciste, contre l'arbitraire, contre la sauvagerie et la barbarie et que nous sommes Algériens.

10) De la discréction absolue de la diffusion de ces consignes contre le couvre-feu raciste dépendra le succès de notre riposte.

Nota – Abstentions:

Toute abstention à la participation au boycottage du couvre-feu raciste et le dépassement des consignes données ci-dessus seront considérés comme un manquement au devoir et seront par conséquent l'objet de très graves sanctions allant jusqu'à.....[sic. blank].³⁷⁶

During the events of 17 October the senior FLN cadres, from the level of Wilaya, Amala, Zone and Region, were under strict orders not to participate in the demonstration to avoid the arrest and elimination of key leaders.³⁷⁷ The leaders collected in various safe-houses where, in an atmosphere of increasing tension, they listened to the radio reports. Claude Vinci who, after deserting from the army in Algeria, had become an FLN driver and liaison agent in Paris, recounts: 'Début 1960, j'étais en relation avec un groupe composé d'Abderrahmane Farès, Saïd Amroune et Mohamed Zwaoui [sic] (je n'ai connu leurs noms qu'après leur arrestation). Tous les mois, pendant une nuit entière, nous étions réunis pour compter les billets et répartir les livraisons des 500 million'. Vinci saw this triumvirate as forming the key inner circle of the Paris FLN, and as their driver, 'Mes seules relations autorisées étaient le trio qui était responsable du nerf de la guerre et avec lequel il fallait prendre toutes les précautions'.³⁷⁸ 'Le 17 octobre 1961, en début d'après-midi, j'ai emmené, un par un, Abderrahmane Farès (Mustapha), Saïd Amroune (André), et Mohammed Zouaoui (Omar le Noir), chez un copain, à Villejuif, Jacques Elsair, un pied-noir.....Tout l'après-midi du 17, toute la nuit du 17 au 18 et le début de la matinée du 18, nous les avons passés à Villejuif à écouter la radio, Europe 1, Radio Luxembourg et Paris Inter'.³⁷⁹ Amroune became so agitated as he heard the radio reports that he wanted to join the demonstration, but the others dissuaded him: 'Il se demandait s'ils avaient bien fait d'organiser cette manifestation', that Vinci went on to describe as a 'catastrophe'.

From Villejuif Zouaoui wrote a letter, that was taken by the courrier Solange Lander on the usual 17 h 36 evening train to Brussels: 'J'ai le regret de vous annoncer que je viens d'apprendre sur Europe No.1 que les Algériens ont commencé à manifester ce mardi 17.10.61 et ce à partir de 12 heures dans les quartiers de la Madeleine et de l'Opéra....Au moment où j'écris ces mots, je n'ai pas d'autres renseignements...Nous espérons néanmoins que tout se déroulera normalement ce soir mardi à parti de 20 h 30'.³⁸⁰ Zouaoui must have felt mortified that an FLN cadre had been so careless as to be arrested with a copy of the order, thus in part losing the initiative to Maurice Papon's police. At this moment, in Germany, the Federal Committee was also glued to the radio, as it reported in an order to Paris dated 17 October: 'La radio annonce ce soir plusieurs morts et blessés ainsi que 7,500 arrestations'.

Phase Two.

³⁷⁶ HA110. The specific arrangements for 17 October were also revealed in other documents seized during Operation Flore: for example, DST agents found in the home of Geneviève François, liaison agent for Younes Aberkane (RC2), a handwritten instruction naming precise arrondissements and suburban communes and the respective collecting points in central Paris for the populations from these areas where they would form columns.

³⁷⁷ H1B21, instructions dated 14 October.

³⁷⁸ Interview in Jacques Charby, *Les Porteurs d'Espoir*, 59. See also Claude Vinci, *Les Portes de Fer* (2006), 68, where he recounts his recruitment by 'André' (Saïd Amroune, RC3): 'Tu vas travailler directement et seulement avec le trio de tête, responsable de la Fédération de France....Il faut que toi, n'aies absolument aucun contact avec les réseaux qui travaillent par ailleurs avec nous, c'est impératif'.

³⁷⁹ J.-L. Einaudi, *Scènes*, 219, interview with Vinci, 9 June 2005, 27 December 2005.

³⁸⁰ *Sou'al*, 81.

As we have seen above, the Federal Committee had ordered that Phase 2, the extension of mass actions to provincial France, was not to be commenced until it had digested the impact of the Paris events and sent a coded order by telephone to Zouaoui. ‘Avertir toutes les autres wilayas de tenir l’organisation en état d’alerte permanente et tenir compte de l’expérience de Paris pour ne pas refaire les mêmes erreurs, si erreurs il y a, dans les méthodes d’action’.³⁸¹ But before the Committee could give a green light, Zouaoui was further embarrassed by the fact that Wilaya 2 and Wilaya 2B had already jumped the gun. Among the documents found by the DST in the archives of Younès Aberkane (RC2), was a one page undated note, signed ‘Maurice’, in which Zouaoui reminded Aberkane that , ‘la 2e phase et la 3e phase ne sont à déclencher qu’après directives express correspondants de ma part. Il est évidemment entendu que la W2A et W2B ne doivent rien entreprendre sans que tu leur ais communiqué tes directives’.³⁸² But demonstrations, especially of women, had kicked off without any Federal authorisation in Nancy, Metz, Thionville, Mulhouse, Longwy, Forbach, Reims, Charleville and elsewhere.

Zouaoui wrote to the Federal Committee on 21 October in which he tried to explain this embarrassing ‘dépassemement’. Local cadres in the provinces, hearing of the police repression in Paris, thought that this must have prevented the transmission of the orders to start phase 2 and used their initiative, ‘de déclencher la 2e phase sans qu’ils aient reçu pour cela les instructions correspondantes’.³⁸³ Zouaoui added, in his defense, that this explanation was not an attempt at self-justification for what was clearly a gross breach of orders ('dépassemement'), ‘mais pratiquement nous sommes devant un fait accompli’. Zoauoui added, ‘Nous avons néanmoins renouvelé aux RC [Younès Aberkane] de ne rien entreprendre au-delà du vendredi 20.10.61, sans avoir reçu des directives expresses de la Fédération’.³⁸⁴ Three days later Zouaoui wrote to the Committee that it was Aberkane who had triggered the demonstrations in W2A and W2B, ‘par suite d’une mauvaise interprétation de la différenciation entre les trois phases bien distinctes prévues par le boycott du couvre-feu’, but Zouaoui said that he did not understand how this confusion by RC2 could have arisen since the orders were ‘prises en commun et prévues pour la période du 17 au 20.10.61’, ie. fully discussed in the meeting of the three contrôleurs on the evening of 13 October.

Such a breakdown in communication is not surprising given the extraordinarily difficult conditions of clandestinity under which such complex operations had to be planned. However, Younès Aberkane’s singular failure to convey these instructions correctly to the Wilaya leaders under his control may be indicative of a degree of incompetence or negligence. As we have seen in Chapter 5 Zouaoui faced the greatest difficulty in gaining information and reports from Wilaya 2 as to why police assassinations were taking place, and archive sources show that it was the armed groups in Wilaya 2 that led the way in unleashing the cycle of attacks on the security forces.

³⁸¹ *Sou’al*, 82-3.

³⁸² H1B20.

³⁸³ *Sou’al*, 85. Zouaoui to Federal Committee, 21 October 1961.

³⁸⁴ *Sou’al*, 85, *ibid.*

Abderrahmane Farès and the financial network

On the 10 October, the same day that the Federal Committee drew up plans for 17 October, the *Brigade des agressions et violences* (BAV) received intelligence that led to the identification and surveillance of three key members of the FLN financial organisation, Abderrahmane Farès, a senior Algerian politician close to the Gaullists, and two businessmen, Jean-Marie Leuti and François-Xavier Baudrillart.³⁸⁵ As we have seen in Chapter 4, Farès, ex-President of the Algerian Assembly, had come to play an important role through the ‘Aboulker’ network that he established, cultivating links to Senators and high level civil servants to gather intelligence from within the French administration and police. The DST agents who were tracking Rolande Mingasson saw her, on the afternoon of 12 October, deep in conversation with Zouaoui and Farès at Trocadero, while throughout the day and night of 17 October Farès had followed events on Radio 1, Radio Luxembourg and Paris Inter, along with Zouaoui and Saïd Amroune, at a flat in Villejuif. Farès was thus at the centre of the planning and implementation of 17 October, but his most crucial role within the FLN was as the organiser of the system for the collection, banking and transferral from France of the monthly collection. The arrest of Farès, just as the negotiations at Evian was entering the final phase, was potentially explosive since rumours were already rife in the press that he was being supported by the French government for the possible role of provisional head of government in the transition to full independence. However, nobody, including the police and intelligence services, had any inkling of the extraordinary role that Farès was playing, not only in the banking and transfer abroad of Federation revenues, but also through the direct links that he had developed with the Wilaya commanders in Algeria and the large funds that he was passing to them.

At 11.30 am on 3 November the police agents that had been tracking Leuti and Baudrillart saw them leaving the home of Abderrahmane Farès at 269 Avenue Daumesnil, the latter carrying a suitcase. Baudrillart was arrested at 3.45 pm. at a branch of the Crédit Lyonnais Bank just as he was depositing 13 millions in cash and, during a sequence of three interrogations on the 3rd and 4th of November, he provided a comprehensive account of his involvement in the FLN network. Both Leuti and Farès were subsequently arrested and a search of their homes located considerable sums of money, accounts, and a mass of correspondence and important FLN documents. During his interrogation on 4 November Farès claimed that the money and documents related to his professional activities as a notary, and that his involvement with Leuti was only through shared business interests, as shown in various company documents and accounts, in property and construction projects. He admitted that many documents did relate to the FLN, but refused to say more: ‘Je suis en effet lié par le secret d’Etat, et ne pourrais m’expliquer ou en discuter qu’en présence de personnalité politiques’. Despite his silence, the police became quickly aware of Farès role through the location, ‘de très importants documents à l’échelon le plus élevé de l’Organisation rebelle, notamment des comptes et des rapports relatifs à des mouvements de fonds destinés aux Wilaya opérationnelles en Algérie’. A specialist police officer, Marcel Wagner, was quickly brought in to analyse the extraordinarily complex and bulky accounts, and soon a detailed picture began to emerge. A few days later on 9-10 November Operation Flore led to the capture of a further mass of financial reports and documents, and eventually DST analysts were able to use this, in conjunction with the Farès papers, to write a detailed synthesis and report on the global Federation financial apparatus.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ H1B17, Papon to Minister of the Interior, 6 November 1961. H1B17 contains most of the documentation relating to the arrests, interrogations and subsequent analysis of the financial structures and, unless otherwise indicated, is the source for this chapter.

³⁸⁶ H1B17, *L’Appareil Financier du FLN en 1961*, January 1962. This previously unknown document provides one of the most important primary sources on FLN finances, and complements the book by E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Le financement du FLN*.

In October 1960 the police arrested Henri Curiel, the son of an Egyptian banker, who had masterminded the system for the centralisation of the monthly collection in Paris and its safe transfer abroad through the international banking system. The DST report (*L'Appareil Financier*) noted that Farès had taken over the control of the entire FLN financial apparatus in France after the mass arrests of the Jeanson network in the Spring of 1960, but the archive documents suggest that he put his network in place from about January 1961, coinciding with the moment that Zouaoui arrived to head the Paris organisation.³⁸⁷ Farès chief aid was Jean-Marie Leuti, an Algiers property developer, born at Roanne in January 1928, whom he had known for fifteen years in relation to HLM construction and other developments, but had moved to the Rue Des Colonels Renard (17th) Paris in late 1960, while keeping his home and business address in Algiers at 7 Rue Colonna-D'Oranano. Leuti and Farès, in effect engaged in what today would be known as international money laundering operations, set this up by establishing a number of front companies and accounts in different names and banks, so that FLN funds could be disguised as legitimate property and business transactions. The main front company was the *Société Civile Immobilière Franco-Afrique* (SCIFA) that was legally registered in Algiers on 1 March 1961 by Leuti and Farès nephew, Mohammed Imendassen (or Abdallah Imabacene), who continued to run his uncle's notarial practice in the suburb of Koléa.³⁸⁸ An urgent circular was issued by the Renseignement Généraux in Algiers on 17 November for the arrest of Imendassen, also known as "Abdallah", who was born at Seddouk near Sétif on 10 December 1931, and was living in Algiers at 54 Rue d'Isly. Abdallah also had his own room in the Farès household in Paris at 269 Avenue Dausmesnil.³⁸⁹

At the Paris end of the SCIFA operation, François-Xavier Baudrillard, who travelled frequently to Algiers on business, was approached by Leuti and introduced by him to Farès in January 1961, and was eventually employed to run the new company from an office at 72 Rue de Richelieu. Baudrillard was asked to deposit large sums of money into the bank accounts of Farès or SCIFA but, he claimed, was only told later that the sums, 'ainsi manipulées provenaient de collecte faites en France, au profit du FLN et ces sommes étaient destinées à aider les familles de musulmans arrêtés....Je me trouvais donc pris dans une engrenage, et je ne pouvais pas faire marche arrière, d'une part sur le plan matériel, d'autre part sur le plan sécurité physique'.³⁹⁰ When the collection arrived in suitcases in central Paris each month the hundreds of thousands of small denomination notes collected from immigrant workers were extremely bulky and could not be easily banked without arousing suspicion. Baudrillard's took on the task of depositing bundles of small notes in his personal account held at the Evreux branch of Crédit Lyonnais where he was friends with the manager and the bank, he said, seemed happy to 'voir leur chiffre d'affaires augmenter'! This was what he was doing when arrested by BAV officers in a Paris branch of the bank on 3 November, and the money being deposited was to be returned a week later in larger, New Franc notes, to Farès.³⁹¹ Baudrillard also served as a courrier

³⁸⁷ Abderrahmane Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 82, recounts his journey to Germany, but without giving any clear dates, where he met Omar Boudaoud in Dusseldorf: 'Tu es chargé de l'organisation des filières financières en Europe et en Algérie; les points de chute pour ces dernières te seront fournis par Saïd [Rabah Bouaziz], afin de venir en aide aux populations regroupées et à celles vivant dans les maquis'. A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 319, notes that Farès was again in Dusseldorf on 18 March 1961 and gave a report on money sent to the Algerian Wilayas.

³⁸⁸ The Algiers registered office of SCIFA was at Leuti's home and business address at 7 Rue Colonna-D'Oranano. Among other companies used to launder funds were the *Société de Clairoix*, and the *Société Chemin de Halage*.

³⁸⁹ H1B17. On 20 June 1961 Farès wrote to Abdallah in Algeria: 'Prends tes dispositions pour venir la semaine prochaine. J'ai besoin de te voir pour te donner des instructions de vive voix. Prends avec toi toutes tes justifications pour les comptes et règlements afin de procéder aux vérifications d'usage'. This would have been to audit the money sent to the Wilaya commanders, who provided receipts, before notification from Paris to Souici on the Federal Committee.

³⁹⁰ H1B17, Interrogation of Baudrillart, 4 November 1961.

³⁹¹ Other banks in which Paris accounts were held were the BNCI, the Comptoir-National d'Escompte, la Société Générale, Banque Industrielle de l'Afrique du Nord; and in Algiers and Oran, the Crédit Foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie, and the BNCI. All the accounts were blocked by the *Juge d'instruction*, Escande.

to transport money to Algiers, which he could do easily, ‘comme je possédais un laissez passer en règle m’autorisant à me rendre en Algérie pour mes affaires’. He had made six such trips to Algiers on 9-10, 20-21, 30-31 July, 11-12 September, and 3 and 13-14 October, each time with about 25-30 millions, which he took on arrival either to Leuti’s office or to Imendassen. Baudrillard also travelled to Geneva in August to make contact with another company, Tetalco, in which Farès had interests.

Police investigation revealed further elements of the Farès network, including the likely involvement of his wife, Yamina, who held an account with the BNCI, and his son, Chérif Farès, a student who had recently moved to Switzerland. Farès frequently visited Geneva, Brussels and the Maghreb, and had close ties with a journalist, Philippe Bernier, of the *Union Africaine de Presse*, who had also travelled to Geneva on 4-5 November.³⁹² Abdelkrim Souici was in overall charge of finances on the Federal Committee and, since he exercised the audit of the central accounts, all money transferred to Switzerland was eventually transmitted to him. It would seem that the French were able to locate on 15 October what must have been a central FLN bank account held in Brussels that held 456 millions.

In the remaining part of this chapter I consider the enormous importance of the Federation collection of money, both in terms of the relatively huge amounts that were raised, its global significance in sustaining both the essential activities of the FLN government, as well as the hard-pressed guerillas that continued to pin down the French army, and the political implications of this cash-flow for the status and position of the Federation in the internal struggle for power. It is only through an understanding of the importance of the revenues raised in the factories and lodging houses of France, that we can begin to appreciate why the dislocation of the Farès network represented a catastrophe for the FLN.

In Chapter 6 we have already seen the importance of the monthly collection at the local level, through a case-study of the 13th arrondissement: here I want to look more closely at how the money was transmitted from the Région upwards, the amounts involved and what it was spent on. Ali Haroun has noted that the very long-drawn out process of undertaking the collection, since the money had to be laboriously transmitted by hand up thirteen echelons and counted and verified at various stages, meant that the police were able to readily intercept the chain.³⁹³ The FLN accelerated the collection by ensuring that it was completed at the local level within three days, but it still took a fortnight or more for the money to reach Farès at the top. For example, in the case of Wilaya 2 the ‘October’ collection took place at the base between 20-23 September 1961; the suitcases of cash reached the deposit of the Wilaya on 2 October, and from there was transmitted to the counting-house under the contrôleur RC2 in Courbevoie on 6 October.³⁹⁴ After the collection had been counted in each of the seven Wilayas, it was transported, usually by European agents, by car and train to the central dépôts of the three regions in Paris. There were five ‘dépôts des contrôleurs’ in the Paris suburbs at Alfortville, Sartrouville (RC1), Courbevoie (RC2), Neuilly, and Vanves (RC3).³⁹⁵ Each month the Wilaya heads would travel to Paris and meet with their respective contrôleur (RC) to verify the accounts and to report on and debate the various issues affecting their areas. For example, the Farès accounts show that a meeting had taken place in the Courbevoie depository for RC2 on 5 August 1961 and verified the following:

Wilaya 2 (Paris north)	236,333,000
Wilaya 2B (Nord)	32,460,000

³⁹² A telephone tap revealed that on his return Bernier had removed ‘des documents compromettant’ for Farès.

³⁹³ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 310.

³⁹⁴ H1B17, *Appareil Financier*. The memoirs of European porteurs de valise refer frequently to their transport of funds from the provinces or Paris suburbs by car, rail and metro.

³⁹⁵ H1B17, *Appareil Financier*. Other dépôts existed and E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Financement du FLN*, 101, note that in the Paris region alone there were ‘dix dépôts de réception, trois pour la comptabilité et un pour l’évacuation en cas de problème’.

Wilaya 2B (Est)	22,505,000
Total RC2	291,298,000 ³⁹⁶

Finally, on about the 14th of each month, the money from each of the French regions would be centralised in one location, and verified by the 3 RCs and the 'Fédéral', Zouaoui

Statistics relating to the global finances of the French Federation are fragmentary and scattered, which is hardly surprising given the clandestine nature of the organisation. However, the accounts and correspondence captured by the police from the Farès network, as well as during Operation Flore, provide a detailed picture, especially for 1961, that significantly adds to what has been known to date about FLN finances.³⁹⁷ The DST analysts were able to establish the following monthly collection figures for metropolitan France in 1961:-

June	506,537,500
July	544,570,000
August	534,902,500
September	465,509,000
October	550,947,000*
November	480,000,000*

[* estimate based on partial material].³⁹⁸

The 1961 monthly average for France was close to 500 millions, and this was made up of receipts from the different Wilayas as follows:-

Figure 4.³⁹⁹

Wilaya	Number of contributors	Revenue in millions	Contribution per capita
W1 (Paris Sud)	33,000	120	3,636
W1B (Atlantique)	3,000	6	2,000
W2 (Paris Nord)	57,500	203	3,530
W2A (Nord)	8,900	27	3,033
W2B (Est)	17,200	52	3,023
W3 (Lyon)	21,400)		
W3B (Marseille)	13,500) [combined]	91	2,607
	
Total	154,500 ⁴⁰⁰	499 millions	

The figures confirm the overwhelming importance of Paris to FLN finances, with 90,500 contributors, 58.6% of the total in France, who provided 64.7% of the income. The Parisian contribution did not only reflect the big population of the city, but also the fact that per capita earnings were higher than

³⁹⁶ H1B17. Although the document does not give the participants, the known heads likely to have been present were Younès Aberkane (RC1), Mohamed Attaba (W2), Lakhdar Hamadene (W2A) and Ahmed Boudraâ (W2B).

³⁹⁷ The most detailed study by Emmanuelle Colin-Jeanvoine and Stéphanie Derozier (2008), using sources available in 2000, was based primarily on the military archives (Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre), Ali Haroun's, *7e Wilaya*, and archives of the French Federation for February 1962, made available by Mohammed Harbi. The voluminous materials for 1961 in the Prefecture of Police archives, and especially the DST *Appareil Financier* adds significantly to the field and merits more detailed investigation .

³⁹⁸ H1B17, *Appareil Financier*.

³⁹⁹ Adapted from H1B17, *Appareil Financier*: the per capita figures are my own calculations.

⁴⁰⁰ This figure is significantly higher than that given by A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 64, of 135,202 in March 1961.

in provincial France and included many commerçants and professionals. Secondly, the extent to which the FLN exercised efficient control over the population ('quadrillage') varied from one area to another in France, and Paris undoubtedly represented a super-organised territory unlike, for example, Wilaya 1B, which during 1961 was suffering from major problems of disorganisation as was, to a certain extent, W3B (Marseille).⁴⁰¹

From such data it can be seen why the Federation leadership was so concerned during 1961 about the financial impacts of police repression on the capital, the golden goose of FLN income. Moreover, the collection data provided FLN leaders with a ready tool or index to constantly police lower rung cadres and how effectively they were managing local populations under their control. One such index was provided by the number of contributors as a percentage of the total Algerian population in a geographical area: for example, since in 1961 there were 154,500 contributors in a total Algerian population of about 330,000, or 47%, areas like Wilaya 1B (Atlantique) immediately stood out for a dismal failure of Amala, Kasma and Group leaders to make contact with the, admittedly, widely dispersed Algerian population of South-West France. Higher level cadres would study closely the monthly reports which they received from below, and demand to know, often in very fine detail, why revenues may have declined, changes in the number of registered members, and any anomalies in accounting.⁴⁰² Given that at Amala and Wilaya level at least two weeks in every month was devoted to the mechanisms of collecting and auditing cash, while the monthly Financial reports were far more detailed and lengthy than those of the 'Organic' or political reports, the FLN structure in France was shaped over time more as a revenue producing bureaucracy than as a military or political organisation.

Of the gross federal income during 1961, about 13% was spent in Europe, to pay for rent of buildings, full-time cadre wages, transport, materials (paper, typewriters...), lawyers fees, and, most important of all, the social and welfare costs that were processed via the *Comité de soutien aux détenus* (CSD) to support the families, orphans and widows of imprisoned or dead militants.⁴⁰³ From the Spring of 1958 the Federation created a standardised system of payments to support all militants held in detention and their families. In 1961 widows and wives of prisoners living in France received 25,000 per month and 2,000 per child, while wives in Algeria received 5,000 in towns, 3,000 in rural areas, and 2,000 per child.⁴⁰⁴ Detainees received, regardless of status, 3,000 per month. In Wilaya 2B, for example, in September 1961, the CSD supported 60 families in France, 94 in Algeria, with a total of 356 children, and 829 prisoners.⁴⁰⁵ Such a welfare system was of critical importance to the FLN to reassure the many thousands of militants that were risking all in joining the struggle that their family and close relatives would be properly cared for in the eventuality of their being seriously wounded, killed or executed or placed in detention. Protection of the collection in Paris during 1961

⁴⁰¹ H1B17, *Appareil Financier*, 'La Wilaya 3 bis pour des raisons qui lui sont propres (comptabilité désordonnée, détournements, pertes élevées)', diverged from other Wilayas by sending only 73% of its collection to Paris, as opposed to an average of 87%; see also L. Charbrun, *Guerre de l'Ombre*, 101-2, on the problems faced by the FLN of making collections in the region of Saint-Etienne.

⁴⁰² For a sense of the extraordinary, micro-level policing of numbers of elements and of payments received, see the Wilaya 2, organic report for February 1962, in *Sou'al*, 22-33.

⁴⁰³ See A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 312, the statistics for January 1961: the CSD were allocated 70.9 of the 92.4 millions spend internally by the Federation, or 76.7%. Even in Algeria in 1959, a major war zone, welfare costs (47.1 %) were almost equal to those of the military spend (47.8%); see E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Financement*, 110. On the CSD see also B. Stora, *Ils Venaient*, 351-3.

⁴⁰⁴ H1B20, *Fédération de France. Réglement Général du soutien*; also copy of a standard form of application, 'Contrôle de Secours', which asked information on the head of family, where detained, sentence, name and address of spouse, names and age of children, alternative forms of income (family allowances, unemployment pay, etc) and the amount of support agreed by the FLN. The FLN differentiation of levels in family support between France and Algeria, ironically went against demands that the nationalist movement had made since the 1930s for equality of treatment and welfare rights.

⁴⁰⁵ H1B20. CSD W2A, *Etat de secours*. The total spend was 7,245,695 francs; for similar data on Wilaya 2 in February 1962, see *Sou'al*, 28-9.

was thus also a crucial element in the ability of the Federal Committee to retain the morale and support of the rank-and-file.

As the crisis of repression deepened through 1961, and as huge numbers of men in Paris were subjected to ‘rafles’, mass incarceration, serious injury, and deportation to Algeria, so it became of increasing importance to the Federation to buttress the morale of the rank-and-file by ensuring that an efficient safety-net was in operation. The sudden and dramatic expulsion of 1,781 Algerian men from Paris after 19 October was deliberately designed to create deep insecurity and panic in the émigré community by damaging the long-term economic future of migrants. A large number of women and children were suddenly stranded in Paris without any income or protection, and French intelligence reported that the Federation was seeking to locate and support such families, a psychological agenda intended to reassure the base that the FLN had not abandoned them.⁴⁰⁶ The considerable political importance to the FLN of the welfare system is indicated by the fact that the CSD by 1961 was taking up between 70% and 80% of the total budget spend in France.⁴⁰⁷ As we will see in the next Chapter, the disruption of the Farès financial system on 3-4 November, followed a few days later, on the 9-10 November, by the mass arrests of Operation Flore and the seizure of most of the collection, posed a major threat not only to the flow of money to support the armed struggle in North Africa, but also to the welfare net that helped ensure Federal control over the militant base.

The sinews of war : the political importance of Federation revenues.

The FLN globally depended, like any significant insurrectionary movement and government –in-information, on access to money and materials.⁴⁰⁸ Apart from the cash and materials provided to the FLN by foreign governments and international agencies, the French Federation contributed a huge and disproportionate amount to the global budget, compared to the taxation potential of the population in Algeria itself. About 63% of the total Algerian population of just under nine million consisted of a desperately poor, rural peasantry that was facing the dual crisis of underdevelopment and radical dislocation by the war in the mountains and mass displacement into camps. The peasantry still made a costly sacrifice to the ALN in the form of their contribution in manpower and provision in kind (grain, livestock, fuel...), but this was largely a population without money and virtually untaxable, so that the maquis, often itself facing desperate hardship, was forced to seek money from both Algerian and European contributors in the towns. However, the FLN taxation capacity in the main towns, because of a huge French military presence, was also fragile. In Algiers, for example, the brutal crushing and eradication of the FLN networks during the 1957 “Bataille d’Algiers”, destroyed the capacity to sustain the grass-roots system of collection, so that by 1958 the whole city contributed a derisory 17 millions, or 0.8% of the global budget.⁴⁰⁹

By contrast, the 330,000 Algerian migrants in France, although mainly in low-skilled industrial occupations, had a high level of employment and *relatively* high wages compared to the endemic underemployment and poverty of the masses in Algeria, a level of regular income that enabled the FLN to impose an almost universal system of taxation. Colin-Jeanvoine and Derozier argue that the FLN in Algeria was facing a deepening financial crisis after 1958 as revenue declined while costs were mounting. In contrast, the French Federation from late 1957 onwards showed a remarkable ability to impose a taxation system on a growing percentage of the total migrant population, and to efficiently enforce and collect monthly dues. The total number of ‘côtisants’ in France increased, for

⁴⁰⁶ H1B56, SCINA daily report, No.1583, 9 December 1961. On the policy of expulsion and its economic logic, see J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 96, 138, 165-6.

⁴⁰⁷ H1B17, *L’Appareil Financier*: for example, the CSD in W2 (north Paris) paid out in June 1961, 33,350,000 (77% of total expenditure), rising in August to 37,388, 882 (80%).

⁴⁰⁸ See A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 63, on the ‘Etat potentiel que représentait le FLN’.

⁴⁰⁹ E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Le Financement*, 78.

example, from 135,202 in March 1961 to 163,069 in February 1962.⁴¹⁰ The extension of the system of ‘quadrillage’ from 1958 onwards ensured that the extraction of wealth was ever more efficient, and was reflected in the increase in monthly revenue from about 350 millions in mid-1958 to 664 millions in February 1962.⁴¹¹ In addition, the Federation exercised an extremely tight control over its own ‘internal’ expenditure which it pegged at about 13% in 1961, so that its net contribution to the GPRA was both considerable and growing in real terms.⁴¹² The FLN Minister of Finance Ahmed Francis stated in 1961 that the Federation supplied 80% of the global financial requirements of the GPRA.⁴¹³ The significance of the cash-flows from the Federation cannot be measured, however, simply in monetary terms. Politically, the FLN was forced to accept aid, both in terms of material such as weapons as well as money, from states, especially in the Communist bloc, that it would have preferred to hold at arms length. The Federation funding was important in providing a major source of cash that allowed the GPRA to make the strategic decisions as to how it was to be spent, and to retain a modicum of autonomy and freedom of manoeuvre from external powers like Egypt that often had their own agendas.⁴¹⁴

In brief, the overall political importance of the French Federation within the global nationalist movement rested primarily on its financial, rather than military capacity. This fact has been concealed or downplayed by ex-militants and leaders of the Federation itself, since the dominant discourse of struggle and sacrifice has deployed a language of heroic combat, rather than the mundane and less spiritual processes of money collection and banking. FLN memoirs invariably play considerable attention to armed struggle, in particular the dramatic opening of the synchronised ‘second front’ offensive of 27-28 August 1958, but despite the destruction of the Mourepiane oil refinery, the Federation commandos failed to inflict serious damage on the French economy or security forces. On the contrary, armed conflict, by enormously increasing the counter-weight of French repression, served to disrupt the valuable collection system and led to the incarceration of a high percentage of the most able and experienced cadres.

The symbolic prioritisation of armed struggle, however, carried an undoubted mobilising power that should not be underestimated. Throughout the war there were many migrant workers in France who felt vaguely guilty that they had escaped the horrors of the ‘real’ war in Algeria, the daily round of bombing and torture suffered by kin and villagers, and also aspired to join, as many did, the ranks of the freedom fighters in the free air of the djebel. Boudaoud, emphasising the dangers faced by militants in France, shows disdain for those who talked of the, ‘militants en cravate des Champs Elysées’.⁴¹⁵ This criticism of the near-cowardly émigré, enjoying the delights of Paris, was one that was often voiced sotto voce in Algeria, but was also internalised by Federation militants.⁴¹⁶ Paulette Péju remarked, ‘Pendant longtemps, l’émigration algérienne avait souffert d’une sorte de complexe: loin des combattants, des maquis, elle avait le sentiment de ne pas participer au combat de ses frères, d’être composée d’Algériens de seconde zone’.⁴¹⁷ An obvious counter to this, among a predominantly young male population, was to take up arms in France through enrolment in the GA

⁴¹⁰ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 64; E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Le Financement*, 50.

⁴¹¹ E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Le Financement*, 80-81.

⁴¹² H1B17, *L’Appareil Financier*.

⁴¹³ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 307; the 80% figure may be misleading since it refers only to the expenditure of the central government: see the more sober figures in E. Colin-Jeanvoine and S. Derozier, *Le Financement*, 84, which show that of a total FLN income in 1959 of 23,050 millions, 3,250 millions came from the Federation.

⁴¹⁴ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 192, notes that the GPRA was not forced ‘d’accepter des subventions conditionnelles...il peut mener sa propre politique sans ingérence de donateurs intéressés et maintenir entre les blocs de l’Est et de l’Ouest le cap du non alignement’.

⁴¹⁵ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 197.

⁴¹⁶ Among the documents seized during Operation Flore, H1B21, is a report from Region 2224B (Nord), 18 May 1961, on a case where two Algerians were playing table football in a café, when a third on-looker commented, ‘si j’étais jeune comme vous deux, je serais dans le maquis. Vous perdre votre argent au lieu de faire commes dons volontaire’. The critic was lured away, stunned with an axe and had his throat cut.

⁴¹⁷ P. Péju, *Le 17 Octobre*, in G. Manceron (ed.), 27.

and OS, and the Federal Committee's own use of the term 'Bataille de Paris' in 1961 encouraged a comparison with Yacef Saadi's heroic *fidayine* in Algiers.

One of the most surprising, and little-understood aspects of the Farès network, is the extent to which the police arrests and seizure of documents revealed a close and direct link between Paris and the guerilla forces inside Algeria. In the early stages of the War of Independence migrant workers in France often sent money directly to their relatives and friends to finance the maquis, but gradually the Federation brought this anarchic situation under control, in part to bring an end to regional or clan factions that worked against national unity.⁴¹⁸ The centralisation of the collection meant that Federal revenues were channeled to external bank accounts through which the GPRA controlled and audited how money was spent. However, the construction of the high-tension electric barrier and mine-fields along the Moroccan and Tunisian borders proved so effective in blocking the movement of arms, men and materials, that the internal Wilayas became practically isolated from the GPRA and external supplies. This, in turn, played a large part in precipitating deep and lasting political tensions between the 'interior' and the 'exterior', the former claiming that the corrupt and easy-living colonels and leaders were deliberately starving them, the true revolutionary fighters, of resources. Ali Haroun remarks that the GPRA, in about November 1960, eventually asked the French Federation to renew direct contact with the Wilaya, a process that was controlled after January 1961 by Farès.⁴¹⁹

When the police searched Farès home on 4 November they located a cache of 36 letters between France or Germany and the ALN commanders of Wilayas 1,2,3, 4 and 5 in relation to the transmission of money and materials. On 15th January Rabah Bouaziz of the Federal Committee wrote a letter to the heads of Wilaya 2 (Oranie), Wilaya 3 (Kabylie), and Wilaya 4 (Algerois) in which, following GPRA orders, he was trying to establish a network for the monthly transmission of 50 millions per Wilaya, about 50% of the gross Federal collection. Bouaziz also requested assistance in making contact with Wilaya 1 (Aurès) and Wilaya 2 (Constantine).⁴²⁰ Colonel Si Mohammed-Oulhadj of Wilaya 3 and Colonel Si Mohammed of Wilaya 4 both replied enthusiastically on 4-5 February, and the latter asked if the Federation could also supply, 'quelques munitions, détonateurs ou pistolets, et plastic'.⁴²¹ In the complex network that was put in place during 1961, Souici of the Federal Committee exercised overall control over the accounts, but it was the Farès team that directly transmitted the funds from the centralised monthly collection through SCIFA, the front company set up by Leuti, Baudrillard and Imendassen in Paris and Algiers.

All three travelled frequently between the two capitals, and with the assistance of Farès, began to build up an extensive network of agents and contacts, including deputies, to transfer funds from the urban centres into the distant maquis zones. The network linked most smoothly with Wilaya 4, but after the French army located, surrounded and killed Colonel "Si Mohammed" (Djilali Bounaama) at Blida on 8 August 1961, Farès wrote on 15 September to his replacement to re-establish contact by sending "Paul" (his nephew) so that new agents could be set up. The replacement commander "Si Hassan" wrote back on 17 September, 'à titre d'essai', keen for the

⁴¹⁸ M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 74-5, on the early system of direct transfers of cash; L. Chabrun, *Guerre de l'Ombre*, 99-100, on local FLN tensions in 1958-9 over the centralisation of the collection. A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, notes that as late as May 1961 a militant called Makkour was prepared to raise money in the 13th and 17th arrondissements after receiving a letter from Si Tahar of Wilaya 3 (Kabylie), asking him to contact workers from the villages of El Flaye, El Maadi, Izghad, and elsewhere: 'il appartient à vous, riches, commerçantes, artisans, travailleurs de toutes catégories de contribuer à la bonne marche de la révolution'. The initiative, 'absolument contraire aux règles de l'organisation', was rapidly blocked.

⁴¹⁹ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 317, states that the CNRA meeting in Tripoli (16 December to 18 January 1960) made the decision, and O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 192-3 confirms that he made this proposal at Tripoli. But Haroun, *ibid.*, 318, 320, reproduces letters from the commanders of Wilayas 3 and 4, which indicate that the network was only put in place in mid-January 1961.

⁴²⁰ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 317, quotes Bouaziz letter at length. A trial test of the new transfer system after November 1960 onwards had succeeded in passing 40 millions to Blida and Médéa.

⁴²¹ The text of both letters is reproduced in A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 318, 320.

transfer of funds, and giving the ultimate accolade from the heroic djebel to his brothers in Paris: ‘nous vous adressons toutes nos vives félicitations pour vos belles actions de fida et nous vous souhaitons d’autres succès sur les colonialistes’. Abdallah Imendessen also received instructions dated 14 September to make contact with Salhi, a friend of Farès and a big commerçant of Tizi-Ouzou living in Algiers, using the pass-word “Robespierre”. Imendessen was to transfer 100 millions every month, via Salhi, to Oudhadj, the Commander of Wilaya 3 (Kabylie), and to make sure that he retained a receipt of payments. The Farès network found it much more difficult to make links to Wilayas 1, 2 and 3, but Leuti travelled on 15-16 October to Sétif and Constantine with funds for Wilaya 2, while links were being extended to Batna (Wilaya 1) in the south.⁴²² When Leuti was arrested on 4 November he was preparing to depart on a further trip, under the code-name “Jugurtha No.5”, with 100 millions to be transferred via Imendessen to Sétif and Constantine.

Farès was able to use his extensive personal links to high placed Algerian deputies, prefects and businessmen to extend his financial and political network. Farès recounts in his memoirs how in early 1961 he had suggested to Omar Boudaoud that he should invite selected Algerian senators and deputies to Brussels. At a meeting in the cellar of a brasserie, Boudaoud made a speech, ‘Le moment est venu pour vous de prendre position publiquement en faveur de la négociation avec le FLN. L’Algérie a besoin de tous ses enfants’.⁴²³ On their return they formed the parliamentary group, the *Rassemblement Démocratique Algérien* (RDA) and on 8 March issued a declaration demanding ‘officielles et directes [négociations], sans préalable ni conditions, entre le gouvernement français et le GPRA’, while attacking any interests attempting to put a ‘third force’ in place.⁴²⁴ The captured Farès documents showed that a number of these deputies, and other notables, among them Slimane Belabed (deputy for Tlemcen), Makhlouf Gahlam (Médéa), Ali Guettaf (Blida), and Mohamed Belhaddad, Prefect of Batna, were helping with the financial network. The external intelligence service (SDECE) reported to Papon that a further meeting of Algerian parliamentarians had been organised by Farès in the Hotel Metropole in Brussels on 25-26 October, shortly after the Paris massacre.⁴²⁵ A number of Senators were also organised by the Farès network for the transport of arms, especially Keirat who owned a bus company in the Mostaganem region. The FLN acquired three buses in Germany for Keirat that carried secret compartments containing machine guns, pistols and ammunition, and were shipped out via Rouen.⁴²⁶

The financial assistance provided by the Federation directly to the isolated Wilayas of the “interior” was considerable and increasing during later 1961 and early 1962. Police accountants worked out from the Farès documents that by 15 October 1961 some 1,634 millions had gone to Algeria, while the FLN Brussels bank account had a reserve of 457 millions.⁴²⁷ The 1961 reconfiguration of the FLN financial network carried significant political implications. Before 1961 the communication axis of the FLN in the Maghreb, the flow of manpower, materials and intelligence, had been in an east-west direction across the Moroccan and Tunisian borders. This horizontal movement had played into the hands of Boumediene and the EMG commanders, who were able to control and police the links between the interior and the outside world, and even to divert funds intended for the Wilayas into their own coffers.⁴²⁸ Although the politics of the internal power

⁴²² O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, confirms that funds for Wilayas 1 and 2 were transmitted via the notary of Sétif, Serfati, a close friend of Farès.

⁴²³ A. Farès, *La cruelle vérité*, 85.

⁴²⁴ On-line: [lutte-ouvriere.org.documents/archives/la-revue-lutte-de-classe/serie-1960-1963/.../la-troisieme-force](http://lutte-ouvriere.org/documents/archives/la-revue-lutte-de-classe/serie-1960-1963/.../la-troisieme-force). In 1961 the Debré government secretly established the *Front Algérien d'action démocratique* (FAAD) to serve as a stooge party which could be brought into the negotiations for independence.

⁴²⁵ HA27, Directeur général SDECE to Papon, 14 November 1961. Among those present were Ai Guettaf (Blida), Ali Mered (Oasis), Makhlouf Gahlam (Médéa), Slimane Belabed, Slimane Belhabich Ibrahim, Youssef Achour (senator), and Mostefa Bengarif, president of the Conseil général of Algiers.

⁴²⁶ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 194, other senators that assisted Farès were Maâloum (Kabylie), Hakiki (Oran), and Benchicou (Constantine).

⁴²⁷ H1B17, Etude de documents.

⁴²⁸ G. Meynier, *Histoire Intérieure*, 363.

struggle within the FLN remain obscure, it seems likely that the GPRA order to the Federation in late 1961 to supply the Wilayas directly with cash, was an attempt to build up the power base of the ‘interior’ to counter the formidable weight of the EMG armed forces. By 1961 it had become so difficult and slow for the Wilaya commanders to remain in overland contact with the external government, that they seized on the opportunity provided by the Farès network to communicate with the GPRA via Paris and Germany.⁴²⁹ As Farès wrote on 15 September of Si Mohammed, ‘avec lequel nous étions en contact permanent pour la transmission du courrier venant du GPRA et du Ministère de l’Intérieur’, while Mintaka 5 of Wilaya 2 wrote on 3 October to the Federation: ‘Ci-joint une lettre pour le frère Président du GPRA, ainsi que les reçus’.⁴³⁰

The development and consolidation of a close North-South alliance between the Federation, based on the considerable financial resources centralised in Paris, was to carry major political implications and eventually provided a key factor in the Federation-GPRA-Wilaya grouping that confronted Ben-Bella, Boumediene and the EMG in the struggle for power in the summer of 1962. French intelligence analysts, including in the Préfecture de Police, had long predicted that the revolutionary agenda of the FLN was to accelerate an armed offensive (the ‘coup de boutoir’ theory) as the prospect of an end to the war approached in order to strengthen its position at the negotiating table. The Farès documents showed that the Federation, under instructions from the GPRA, did indeed push hard in late 1961 to maximise the delivery of money and materials to the maquis. In September 1961 the Federation was trying to increase the monthly flow of 500 millions to Algeria by an ‘effort supplémentaire’ that would raise it to 750 millions. Ben Khedda, on assuming the Presidency of the GPRA on 27 August, had made clear his intention to prioritise the ‘interior’ over the ‘exterior’, a policy that Boumediene would have interpreted as a threat to the EMG. On 24 June 1962 Omar Boudaoud and Kaddour Ladlani, representing the Federation, joined a council of the ‘internal’ heads of the ALN Wilayas at Zemmorah, where they formed an opposition to the ‘external’ Etat-major général led by Ahmed Ben Bella and Houari Boumediene. The latter quickly responded to the Federation challenge by sending emissaries into France and creating a *Comité de vigilance* that ordered Algerians to stop paying the monthly collection.⁴³¹

In this context, the centralisation of the collection in Paris by the Zouaoui-Farès networks assumed a particular political importance in the course of 1961, at the very moment that the cranking up of police repression offered a grave danger to both the organisation and the flow of money. Never had the connection between the Algerian factory worker, his pay packet, and the ALN guerrilla forces appeared so direct and stark as in late 1961. The question that I address in the final chapter is the extent to which the crisis of 1961, the combined impacts of the 17 October repression, the arrest of members of the Farès network, and Operation Flore, all coming within a period of just over two weeks, combined to damage the Federation on the eve of Evian. Did the offensive of the armed groups in Paris, starting in late August, by provoking deeper police repression prove counter-productive in destabilising the collection system that was so vital to the overall FLN struggle?

⁴²⁹ In 1960, for example, it took the commander Ben Cherif and his men four months (29 April to 28 August) to travel from the Tunisian border to Wilaya 4: see Guy Pervillé, *Atlas de la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Autrement, 2003), 38.

⁴³⁰ The political implications of the funding alliance are illustrated by the fact that Leuti, during his journey of 15-16 October 1961 reported that high level civilian and ALN personnel had warmly supported the idea that Farès should, during the period of transition to independence, be ‘à la tête d’un executif provisoire ou d’un “GPRA-bis”’. The idea became a reality in March 1962.

⁴³¹ Ali Haroun, *L’Eté de la Discorde. Algérie 1962* (Algiers: Casbah Editions, 2000), 64-5; B. Stora, *Ille Venaient*, 392-98.

After the massacre: the impact of the crisis on the FLN

To date historians and other commentators have debated the events in Paris in late 1961 by focusing on the genesis and impacts of a single event, the '17 October'. However, as we can now see, the French Federation of the FLN was, within a very short period of time, hit by a rapid sequence of blows that had a dramatic, accumulative impact and threatened to paralyse the organisation at a crucial moment in the transition towards final peace negotiations. This final chapter examines the impacts of the police dislocation, during the five month period between 17 October and the Evian Accords of 18 March 1962, caused by the combined brutal repression of 17-20 October, the dismantling of the Farès financial network, and the virtual decapitation of the Federal leadership for metropolitan France. It makes sense to treat these three events together, since they were closely interconnected and the leaders at the heart of the planning of the demonstration (Zououi, Farès, Benzerfa, Amroun....) were the same decision-makers that were identified and arrested two weeks later, along with a mass of documents relating to the 17 October and the context in which it was planned and implemented.

In *Paris 1961* the immediate impacts of the brutal repression of 17-20th October on the FLN in Paris has already been discussed, and I will not go over this ground again in any detail, but emphasise a few points that are important to the theme of this chapter.⁴³² Although the violent repression had an enduring physical and psychic effect on the thousands of men who were savagely beaten and herded into sports arena and police cells, the overall disruptive impact on the FLN networks was relatively brief and did not have the enduring crushing impacts that Papon and his associates liked to claim. One reason for this is that the Federal Committee had given firm instructions that leaders, defined mainly as those receiving FLN wages as full-time cadres, from the level of Secteur and Région upwards, were not to be present on the march. The order was precisely aimed to prevent the arrest of experienced and skilled leaders who held the organisation together and who could not be readily replaced.

The SCAA reported that of the 14,000 Algerians arrested during the three days 17-19 October and then sent to the *Centre d'identification de Vincennes* (CIV) to be individually checked against the intelligence files (fichiers), 2,338 were identified as 'meneurs', and of these, 1,515 'cadres moyens' were sent back to Algeria.⁴³³ Such data needs to be treated with great caution. Papon and his commanders, carefully gathered and produced a constant stream of statistics aimed at demonstrating to the media, politicians and public opinion the great success of the Prefecture in fighting 'terrorism'. The detailed Prefecture figures of the number of FLN militants arrested, their seniority within the organisation, the number and type of weapons, ammunition and explosives seized, sums of money captured, and weight of documents, appear convincing because of their apparent factual precision . However, most of the 2,338 'meneurs' which the police claimed to identify were minor rank-and-file militants, local collectors and heads of Cells or Groups, men who could be almost immediately replaced without any major interruption to the smooth working of the organisation. Within a week of 17 October, 11,294 Algerians of the 14,000 arrested, had been released, and the remaining screened out suspects peaked at 2,277 on 26 October, before declining to 217 'dangerous' men who were still in the CIV on 20 November.⁴³⁴ The great majority of Algerian men were back at work within days of the 17-20th October, with the exception of those who were seriously wounded and could not return for some while because of broken bones, contusions and shock, about 100 who were killed during the three days, and 1,515 who were expelled to Algeria. Despite the huge trauma inflicted by the police on the Algerian community, the impact of the brutal

⁴³² J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 137-60, 216-241.

⁴³³ H1B4, SCAA Rapport d'activité pour l'année 1961.

⁴³⁴ J.-P. Brunet, *Police Contre FLN*, 283-8.

repression on the normal functioning of the organisation, and its ability to carry on with business as usual, was relatively minor. The human costs were enormous, but the main functional impacts of the loss to the FLN of about three thousand workers, most of them adhérents and sympathisants, or about 1.6% of the Algerian population in Paris, was economic. One of the extraordinary aspects of the hundreds of militant reports on the 17 October demonstration is the high level of optimism, and the enthusiastic demands for further mass action, including support for a further demonstration on 1 November which was eventually called off by the leadership.

A major difficulty in trying to isolate or separate out the global impacts of 17th October on the FLN stems from the fact that police at the time, as well as historians subsequently, have often confused the effects of the demonstration with the concurrent drive against the armed groups, and the outcome of the Farès arrests (3-4 November) and Operation Flore (9-10 November).⁴³⁵ I contributed to this confusion in *Paris 1961* by misreading the reports of an OS leader who wrote, ‘A notre retour [à Paris], nous avons trouvé la situation vraiment détériorée à cause de la répression, qui a vraiment été terrible – avec cela plusieurs de nos éléments responsables ont été arrêtés, et c'est pourquoi il n'y avait aucun contact [entre] groupes et même entre éléments’. In a further note of 3 November to the Federal Committee he said that he had been unable to make contact: ‘malheureusement ils se sont fait arrêter, actuellement nous ne connaissons plus personne’, and only 90 militants remained.⁴³⁶ On reflection, the desperate situation described by the OS had less to do with the dislocation of the overall FLN organisation as a consequence of 17 October than with the quite specific crisis affecting the OS armed groups, which, as we saw in Chapter 5, had been stood down by the FLN and largely destroyed by Montaner, especially through what he called a ‘vaste opération’ between 29 October and 1 November during which 29 GA leaders were arrested and eleven arms dépôts located.⁴³⁷

The October report from the head of Amala 21 (north Paris) gives a more sanguine view: in general, ‘dans nos activités interne, malgré la dense activité policière, malgré de nombreux arrestations de cadres et éléments nos réunions se sont tenue aussi bien chez les éléments que chez les commerçants, elle se déroulent normalement dans l’ensemble mais elles sont perturbées parfois par la présence de la police, ce qui provoque l’interruption par moments’. But the impacts of repression on the normal activities of the base varied considerably within the Amala, as in Zones 212 and 213 where activity had been more severely affected by the curfew and ‘urement touché par la répression’ and the arrest of leaders, including a Regional. He expected the coming collection for November to be affected and, ‘en plus de tortures et de tabassage, nous avons des exécutions, des noyades et des déplacements et des transferts en Algérie’.⁴³⁸ As was quite standard in such reports, the prime concern of the Amala head was to gauge the degree to which disruption might affect future revenue collection, and to reassure his superiors that he was doing everything possible to redress the situation, including reinforcing the Regions that had been most severely affected. The overall sense given by Amala 21 was that some disruption had taken place, but this was temporary. Most crucially, as another report from Wilaya 2 noted, repression had only effected lower level cadres, such as Kasmas, and most of those arrested on 17 October were not militants, but ‘only’ sympathisants, the category of those who did little more in the FLN than pay the monthly dues.⁴³⁹

The negative impacts of the November arrests was somewhat different, however, since this involved a large number of the top level personnel in Paris who had largely escaped the repressive

⁴³⁵ See, for example, the statistics of police arrests of FLN cadres and OS/GA personnel in J.-P.Brunet, *Police Contre FLN*, 315-16, that bundle together the impacts of the different police operations.

⁴³⁶ H1B21.

⁴³⁷ H1B4. Report SCAA Director to Papon, 30 November 1961. During October, the report noted, the OS in Paris was reduced, ‘du fait des arrestations à 94 militants privés de la majorité de leurs cadres et laissés pratiquement sans commandement et sans ordres’.

⁴³⁸ H1B20, W21 Rapport organique, for October 1961.

⁴³⁹ H1B20. As the diagramme for Region 1112 (18th arrondissement) shows (see Figure 3, page 75 above), there were 306 militants to 726 adherents, and 1690 sympathisants.

effects of 17 October. The arrest of Farès and his associates on 3-4 November crippled the FLN finances, since in one blow this dislocated the system for the centralisation, banking and transfer of the monthly collection for the whole of France. The monthly collection for November at the local level, despite the intense activity of the police, went ahead as usual, but as the funds began to move up the chain towards Paris those responsible for transmitting the cash suddenly found that they could no longer make contact. French intelligence (SCINA) reported that the monthly collection had started at the base on 17 November without any problems, but ‘dans de nombreux secteurs du département de la Seine, la collecte a été différée’. In many Regions the leaders had received no instructions for the transfer of funds to the centre and, not knowing what to do with the money collected and, unable to guarantee its security from the police, had sent it back.⁴⁴⁰ Later the police discovered, after the arrest of a Regional head at Nancy on 19 February 1962, that the centralisation of the collection in Paris had been abandoned several months earlier after the arrest of Farès. Money from Wilaya 2B (Est) was now audited locally at the Wilaya level and then sent directly to Germany.⁴⁴¹ After Operation Flore Mohamid Akli Benyounes, then head of Wilaya 3 (Lyon), was ordered by the Federal Committee to go to Paris to investigate the chaotic situation and paralysis and to restore the networks. The most urgent matter facing him was to ensure the safety of accumulated funds that had built up in various dépôts after the Farès, ‘filière avait été brisée’: ‘Je me suis donc retrouvé dans les dépôts de l’organisation, avec plusieurs valises qui contenaient les cotisations de nos compatriotes en France pour les mois d’octobre, novembre et décembre 1961. Il y en avait pour plus de trois milliards d’anciens francs...’.⁴⁴²

The interruption of the direct flow of money from Paris must have made life difficult for the maquis. Benyounès remarks that, under his guidance, ‘Cette filière “finances” a été totalement rétablie au cours du premier trimestre 1962’.⁴⁴³ However, what Benyounès did not know, or fails to say, is that the replacement network was also quickly located and tracked by the French intelligence services. On 21 November 1961 the Algiers DOP and DST reported that a major company called El Amal, owned by a rich and powerful businessman, Tiar Hadj-Mohamed-Ben Larbi, was suspected to be, ‘un organisme financier du FLN, semblable à la société “France-Afrique” [SCIFA] de l’affaire Farès. Il n’est pas exclu que l’une et l’autre soient liées’.⁴⁴⁴

Ben-Larbi, born at Oued Amizour near Bougie in 1888, had been a municipal councillor in Bougie (1919-1925) and Algiers (1929-1937), and by the Second World War was an active nationalist. He built up a huge and expanding business empire, including the importation and distribution of Arab films in French North Africa. The El Amal company, which he founded on 25 February 1954, with Paris headquarters at 20 Avenue de l’Opera, had subsidiaries in the main Algerian urban centres (Algiers, Constantine, Oran, Bône, Bougie, Biskra, Tlemcen, Sidi-Bel-Abbès, Relizane, Tizi-Ouzou), important trading links to West Germany, the UK, USA, Tunisia, and Egypt, and had a controlling interest in major Algerian companies, including Lesieur Afrique, Chimique Agricole and Fruits Sahariens. ‘Elle [El Amal] se serait assigné pour objectifs de contrôler le marché algérien au profit de négociants et commerçants musulmans, réalisant ainsi le boycott du commerce européen et sous ce couvert alimentant la rébellion en matériel diverse’. The Paris director of El Amal, Boularès Harizi was sentenced to prison (Fresnes) in March 1957 for importing canvas army boots (pataugas) into Algeria, while Ben-Larbi also had links to Ben Abderrhamane, an important Constantine businessman who travelled frequently to France and had imported arms and munitions through the port of Philippeville.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁰ H1B56. SCINA daily bulletin No.1574, 25-27 November 1961. The anxiety of lower level cadres about holding collected money was undoubtedly related to the draconian investigations made by their superiors, because of high levels of peculation, in relation to any ‘missing’ money.

⁴⁴¹ HA57, SCINA daily bulletin, No. 1643, 7 March 1962.

⁴⁴² M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 138

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴⁴⁴ H1B18, secret report of 58th Bataillon d’Infanterie [DOP], 21 November 1961, with attached DST appendix.

⁴⁴⁵ H1B18, Dossier Société El Amal.

It was a standard feature of FLN networks to establish stand-by cadres, so that in the event of an arrest the deputy could stand in, without a hiatus in the running of operations. It is possible that El Amal served as a backup for the SCIFA/Farès network. However, the new central collection network established in Paris by Benyounès was tracked by the DST and SCAA and located in late January 1962 and some 20 to 25 European agents were identified. On 14 March a student, Danielle Barret, was arrested while delivering 100 millions to the home of a lawyer, Anne-Marie Blanchet-Parodi at 129 Boulevard Masséna, and that night the DST raided twenty-one addresses in Paris.⁴⁴⁶ The police were perfectly aware of the identity and role of Benyounès, since he had walked twice into a contact address while it was under surveillance, and even his address at the Cité HLM Pierre Semard in Saint-Denis was known. But by 14 March the signing of the Evian Accords and a cease-fire was only four days away, and it may have seemed pointless to the authorities to cause political reverberations by arresting him at this delicate moment. Overall, it can be said that the arrest of Farès and his associates did seriously disrupt the crucial financial system for over two months, and that even when it was reconstructed in late January, the police services were always in a position to destroy it at will. That the police did not always push home this advantage during February and March 1962 was probably due to the fact that the French government had no wish to antagonise the Algerian negotiators.

Finally, the damage to the financial system can be estimated in relation to the very large sums that were seized during the various raids in early November. The police seized 103 millions from Farès, Leuti and Baudrillard in Paris, and 77 millions from bank accounts in Algeria, and during Operation Flore another 302,611,000. These were considerable sums, the largest recovered in France during the Algerian War, and added up to about one months collection for the whole of France.⁴⁴⁷ There is also a report of a seizure of 294,800,000 on 9 January 1962 from the home of André Coquet.⁴⁴⁸ One of the major anxieties of the Federation about such losses was that, if known to the rank-and-file militants, this could cause demoralisation and discontent, especially given the huge sacrifices made by poor workers in handing over part of their small monthly income. The Federal leaders responded by simply not revealing the losses, along with other uncomfortable truths, in the weekly meetings, but local cadres inevitably picked up snippets of information that served to fuel a climate of rumour and suspicion that undermined the authority of the Federation .

The damage to the FLN caused by the arrest of Farès (4 November) was compounded five days later by Operation Flore that, quite literally, decapitated the top tier of the Federal organisation in France, along with its European support networks and safe-houses. The nationalist movement knew, from long experience, that the police arrest of cadres could seriously disable clandestine networks, especially as the militant might be the only person to know the codes, rendez-vous and contacts that linked one echelon to another. To counter this the Federation deployed what Boudaoud called a standard, 'système de permutation. Chaque responsable était secondé par un adjoint qui prenait tout de suite la relève en cas d'arrestation....Ainsi l'organisation put-elle poursuivre sa mission sans interruption'.⁴⁴⁹ Benyounès also remarks how an arrest and interrogation could lead rapidly to the, 'démantèlement d'une structure de l'organisation que nous avions minutieusement constituée. Il fallait, dès lors, agir rapidement pour combler ce vide et mettre en place une nouvelle filière'.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ H1B16. Director of SCAA to Papon, 15 March 1962.

⁴⁴⁷ H1B4. SCAA annual report for 1961.

⁴⁴⁸ H1B17.

⁴⁴⁹ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 175.

⁴⁵⁰ M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 103. L. Chabrun, *La guerre de l'ombre*, 107-8, quotes a report of the Renseignements généraux according to which 'les arrestations de hauts responsables se sont presque toujours accompagnées de la mise hors d'état de nuire des adjoints, ce qui a été capital pour la désorganisation'. The adjoints, 'doivent connaître parfaitement la structure géographique et le système de boîtes aux lettres permettant de toucher les responsables de l'échelon immédiatement inférieur. Dès l'arrestation de leur patron, ils doivent renouer les contacts. Leur élimination crée un hiatus qu'il est difficile de boucher'.

The evidence points to the fact that no such system could function after Operation Flore, perhaps because replacements could not be found for so many high-placed and experienced leaders, and that the highly centralised organisation in Paris was, for a while, so incapacitated as to paralyse the whole network. The Director of SCAA, in his annual report for the year 1961, claimed that the police had, ‘briser l’élan des formations d’assaut de l’Organisation, puis à les détruire’, uprooted, ‘le mécanisme de la transmission des fonds’, and arrived at, ‘une connaissance parfaite des structures du FLN’, so that after Flore the police could relax its offensive and, ‘ces succès remarquables devaient pratiquement mettre fin aux grandes opérations menées en métropole contre le FLN’.⁴⁵¹ The intelligence services claimed that the Federal Committee had sent an agent to Paris, ‘à l’effet d’enquêter sur les imprudences, pour ne pas dire les fautes, qui avaient abouti, pour le Front, aux désastreuses opérations de Novembre’.⁴⁵² That the police were not simply exaggerating their own achievements is confirmed by the important evidence of Mohand Akli Benyounès who was sent from Lyon to Paris after 10 of November to pick up the pieces and restore a functioning network. Benyounès describes the situation that he found in Paris as a ‘hécatombe’, ‘le haut commandement du FLN en France s’est trouvé très largement dégarni....Une telle situation était inédite. Elle ne pouvait perdurer sans conséquences désastreuses pour l’organisation’.⁴⁵³

On his arrival in Paris Benyounès was able to make contact with Mohamed Attaba, head of Wilaya 2, in the café *Le Palmier* in the 9th arrondissement, and at a second meeting Attaba was able to pass on a written order from Ladlani that stated: ‘Le comité fédéral désigne Daniel [Benyounès] coordinateur pour la France. Demandons à tous les responsables de se tenir à sa disposition; signe Kr/Kaddour’. Attaba, anxious that his cover was blown, was given permission to depart for Germany, and this left Benyounès with the need to find at least three new Wilaya heads, somebody to replace himself at Lyon (W3), Yahia Achab (W3B) who was arrested during Operation Flore, and Mohamed Attaba (W2).

Figure 5. Changes in the Wilaya leaders after Operation Flore.

	Wilaya 1	1B	2	2A	2B	3	3B
Before 9 th							
November 1961	Kaci MAAMAR	Belgacem MELLAH	Mohamed ATTABA	Lakhdar HAMADENE	Ahmed BOUDRAA	Mohand BENYOUNES	Yahia ACHAB
After 9 th							
November 1961	Kaci MAAMAR	Ahmed ASKRI	Ahmed BOUDRAA	Boussad OUYED	Amar MAZARI	Mohamed SEGHIR	Abdallah YOUNSI

Only one Wilaya head, Kaci Maamar (W1), remained in the same post, while Boudraa (2B) was transferred to Wilaya 2.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵¹ H1B4. SCAA *Rapport d’activité pour l’année 1961*. A large part of Maurice Papon’s, *Les Chevaux du Pouvoir*, proclaims the Prefect’s success in destroying the FLN in Paris.

⁴⁵² H1B16, Director of SCAA to Papon, 15 March 1962.

⁴⁵³ M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 137, 139.

⁴⁵⁴ Figure 5 is based on the APP archives, and on M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, figures on pages 124, and 139 that, rather oddly, provide the Wilaya structures before and after 17 October, rather than Operation Flore (9-10 November) that marked the point of change. On page 24 he mistakenly confuses Kaci Mâama with “Belkacem”, and places him as head of Wilaya 1B, whereas as Ghafir and other sources indicate, Mâama was beyond doubt head of the far more important Wilaya 1 (Paris south). He situates Mohammedi Saddek as head of Wilaya 1, whereas there is no archival or other evidence to back this up. The mysterious Saddek occupied none of the official or recognised posts in the pre-Flore structure (see Appendix 1). Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 139, 147-8, lists Lakhdar Hamadene as head of Wilaya 3B, whereas Abdallah Younsi, the notorious “Mourad”, stood in for Yahia Achab after his arrest on 10 November.

Benyounès claims that after several weeks, with the assistance of Danielle Barret as liaison agent, ‘la machinerie était reconstituée et tout le dispositif mis en place’, but the financial network took longer, until the first part of 1962, to reconstruct.⁴⁵⁵ However, Benyounès confidence was ill-founded, since the security forces remained absolutely certain of their sound intelligence and ability to intervene at will to destroy any re-emerging FLN organisation. For example, by late December the Director of SCAA noted how the Federation had, after Flore, energetically set out to rebuild its networks and control of the population (*quadrillage*), and judged on 20 December the moment right to put the clock back: ‘Il m'est donc apparu nécessaire de perturber une nouvelle fois l'appareil que le FLN s'efforce de mettre en place et de paralyser ainsi les moyens d'action dont il espérait disposer dans un avenir très prochain’. Instead of the older type of crude ‘rafles’, like that of 17 October, that involved random mass trawls of Algerians with the hope that activists could be identified among them, the police resorted more often to huge night-time operations like that of Operation Flore that targeted named suspects. Thus the operation ‘Confiseur’ of 20-22 December involved raids on the addresses of 281 individuals, with the aim, ‘de neutraliser en quelques heures des éléments dangereux afin de casser une nouvelle fois l'effort de reconstitution’.⁴⁵⁶ Unknown to Benyounès at the time was the fact that Aballah Younsi or ‘Mourad’, who he had placed at the head of Wilaya 3B, was a police informer, and probably provided the information that led to the arrest of his liaison agent Danielle Barret on 14 March, and to the location of Benyounès himself.⁴⁵⁷

The general weakening of the FLN in France, and its inability to fully recover from the crisis of October-November 1961, was demonstrated in a number of ways. First, the FLN showed an extraordinary capacity, throughout the War of Independence, to recover rapidly from wave after wave of mass arrests. In part this resilience can be attributed to the large reserve of young men who were eager to step into the shoes of ‘martyrs’ and detainees. But, in the long term, the repeated loss of middle and higher level cadres, who embodied many years of hard-won clandestine skills, reached a point at which the organisation became diluted by inexperienced, illiterate and unsuitable men.⁴⁵⁸ The Federal Committee tried to counter this by creating an *école de cadres* at Hagen in Germany, but the Federation was also under strong pressure during 1961 to send trained and skilled men to assist in the rebuilding of post-Evian Algeria.

Secondly, the French police remarked on a singular absence of offensive actions by FLN armed groups between late October and early 1962. In late November the SCAA intercepted documents sent by the Federal Committee to the head of OS in Paris which showed detailed plans, including maps and sketches, for the sabotage of oil installations in the Seine valley, Shell and Purfina at Nanterre, the Compagnie d’exploitation des Pétrolles at Chailly-en-Bière, the Société Pétroret at Melun, and Shell-Saint-Gobin in a complex at Bonneul. The FLN was also planning the assassination of various political figures, including the deputy Ahmed Djebbour and the junior minister Nafissa Sid Cara.⁴⁵⁹ The Federal Committee had succeeded in stopping the uncontrolled assassination of police officers and harkis, but was now seeking to reproduce the success of the 1958 attack on the Mourepiane refinery, and to maximise media impacts through spectacular blows against strategic economic targets and various personalities. However, the intelligence services reported that the OS had been unable to recover from the earlier phase of dislocation. ‘Durement éprouvé au cours des

⁴⁵⁵ M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 138.

⁴⁵⁶ H1B28, file ‘Opération confiseur’, 20-22 December 1961.

⁴⁵⁷ On the ‘Affaire Mourad’, which culminated in his arrest, secret trial and execution by the FLN in France, see M. A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 143-161,201-3; Mohammed Harbi, ‘Histoire d'une infiltration de la DST dans le FLN: l'affaire Mourad’, conference *Pour une histoire critique et citoyenne. Le cas de l'histoire franco-algérienne*, 20-22 June 2006, Lyon; http://ens-web3.ens-lsh.fr/colloques/france-algerie/communication.php3?id_article=230.

⁴⁵⁸ *Sou'al*, 31-2, Organic report for Wilaya 2, February 1962, notes problems of ‘négligences’ in Amala and Régional committees, and ‘le manque aussi d'éducation a été constaté surtout en matière organique. Beaucoup de détails pourtant très facile échappent aux responsables’.

⁴⁵⁹ H1B19, dossier ‘OS. Projets d'attentats’, and undated letter from Papon to Minister of the Interior.

derniers mois', the OS was trying to recruit replacements from among 'sympathisants'. Teams of men trained in the use of explosives were being formed, but were unable to implement the attack on refineries because of a lack of plastic explosive and because police operations had broken, 'de multiples liaisons, en détruisant des boîtes à lettres, en raréfiant les lieux de refuge, ont enfermé l'OS dans sa clandestinité'.⁴⁶⁰

The impact of the crisis on the FLN rank-and-file

To date historians, myself included in *Paris 1961*, have examined the impact of the repression of 17-20 October on the Algerian community in isolation from the concurrent crises affecting the FLN in early November. But, as we can now see, militants who began to draw up reports on their individual experience during the demonstrations did so during a period of ongoing and deepening chaos. Many of these local reports were still filtering up the organisational ladder to Wilaya and RC level when the leadership was captured, along with these documents. Before Zouaoui and his lieutenants could properly synthesise these accounts and reflect on the lessons of 17 October they were whisked away to the prison of Fresnes where they were instantly plunged into an ongoing FLN hunger strike. How did the mass of Algerian migrant workers respond, not only to 17th October, but to the overall crisis that, within two weeks, had so seriously damaged the leadership? If the defiant demonstrations had been planned by the Federal Committee as a morale-boosting response to police repression and the night curfew, were such goals achieved or were they quickly negated by the arrest of the Paris leadership?

The reports of participating militants provide one important source of information as to how the FLN rank-and-file reacted to, or made sense of, the traumatic events. My aim here is not to examine all these reports, which run into the hundreds, and require more extended examination, but in line with the case-study approach of Chapter 6, to illustrate these events by focusing again on Amala 12, Ghafir and the 13th Arrondissement. One of the most detailed reports in the archive can be identified as the work of Mohamed Ghafir, the only high level FLN leader in Paris during this period to have written his memoirs, and this is of considerable interest since it illustrates how, as the eye-witness statements were passed up the hierarchy, they were synthesised by higher level cadres who provided their own gloss or interpretation on the events. As we have seen, all the leaders from the level of Régional upwards were barred from the demonstration, to avoid exposing them to police arrest, so Ghafir had no direct experience of police brutality, and analysed events from reading the reports of others or from their oral testimony. Already, within days of 17 October, the FLN hierarchy was involved in the production of a certain kind of truth, a quasi-official rendering of events.

In the preparation for 17 October, Zouaoui had given precise instructions as to how militants from particular arrondissements or suburbs were to travel into the city to join one of three separate columns. In the case of Ghafir's Amala 12, all the Left Bank arrondissements and adjacent suburban communes (Montrouge, Sceaux, L'Hay-les-Roses, Ivry and Vitry) were to travel in small groups, to avoid police interception, to the Place d'Italie and Boulevard Montparnasse. From there they were to march along the axis of the Boulevard Saint-Michel, past the Café Luxembourg where, unknown to the militants, Zouaoui held his daily meetings, and on to Saint-Germain.⁴⁶¹ The Federation had decided in advance that it wished to place its own observers in various locations so as to gather evidence for a subsequent propaganda offensive, and this task was eventually allocated to various French journalists and trusted *porteurs de valise*. In the case of the Saint-Michel column, composed of militants from Amala 12, the FLN recruited Marie-Lucie Lanfranchi to act as a witness, although others present, such as the editor François Maspero and the journalist René Dazy of *Libération*, were

⁴⁶⁰ H1B56, SCINA daily report No.1587, 15 December 1961; HA47, SCINA minutes, meeting 20 December 1961.

⁴⁶¹ H1B20, FLN plan of mobilisation, 17 October 1961.

subsequently able to provide detailed accounts of police violence.⁴⁶² The Federal Committee, shocked by the level of violence unleashed by the police, also dispatched an order to Zouaoui to collect as many reports as possible from militants at every level of the hierarchy and a large number of these accounts, from semi-literate notes written in biro on paper from school exercise books, to elaborate and detailed narratives, were seized during Operation Flore.⁴⁶³ Since Baba-Hamed (RC1) was among those arrested, the archives contain a large number of such eye-witness accounts from Wilaya 1 and Amalas 11 and 12.⁴⁶⁴ For the purposes of analysis I have selected reports at two levels: that of the militants below Régional level, who participated directly in the demonstration, and next the more synthesised report prepared by Ghafir as head of Amala 12.

Most of the rank-and-file reports in Amala 12 provide a direct eye-witness account, often with quite precise and concrete detail of police brutality. Bouzid Abouab, who lived at 11 Quai d'Ivry, a poor industrial area between the River Seine and the train yards in the 13th Arrondissement, recounts briefly how he was arrested on 17th October near the Metro Quai de la Gare (close to the present Bibliothèque nationale), and was then taken by car to the police station in the Place d'Italie: 'je fus malmené, insulté de race de cochon, de bicaut, de tous les noms, ils m'ont cassé mes lunettes de vue'.⁴⁶⁵ Mohammed Luala, who lived close to Abouab, at 17 Quai d'Ivry, recounts how, after his arrest he was taken to the Palais des Sports, 'les Algériens les frères, la cervelle sur la peau mourraient constamment, il y en avait des morts toutes les 30 minuits, d'autres sont abbatus dans les W.C par balles, ils s'en vent à quatre, un seul revient, une jambe cassée ou un bras'. Mohammed Saïd Salat (?), also from the 13th arrondissement, recounts how he was in the Saint-Michel area on the 17 October when police in a Peugeot 403 drew alongside him and five or six other Algerians and ordered them to raise their hands, 'Et nous on a vu l'un des inspecteurs à rabattres le chargeur de son P.M [pistolet- mitrailleur] et les autres ont leurs pistolet à la main. Et ils ont commencé à tiré sur nous'. Wounded in the shoulder, he took a taxi home and that night saw a doctor who gave him an injection and then took him to the Bicêtre hospital, where he was, 'surveillé par la police'. An unidentified militant from Amala 12 (Kasma 122142), after demonstrating on the 18th October, was arrested at the metro Mairie d'Ivry and held with nineteen others in the toilets of the police station until three in the morning when they were made to run a gauntlet into a bus, 'à coup de matraque et à coup de crosse'. The same reception waited them on arriving at the Palais des Sports and, 'La nous firent de macabre découverte. Des frères se trouvaient par terre la tête fendues et les membres disloqués. Toutes ces horreurs étaient comparables a celle qu'enduraient les juifs dans les camps de concentration des nazis'.⁴⁶⁶

There are many dozens of factual reports of this nature. When they do offer an opinion, it is generally in a formulaic heroic style, like that of a militant from Amala 12 (Section 1213333) who notes that while, 'le sacrifice de cette journée à était énorme', all those who had been killed 'au champ d'honneur' would not have died in vain. 'A cette occasion le succès de ce jour et loin d'être oubliée dans l'histoire de la révolution algérienne' and had, 'porter un coup très dur à la politique gaulliste sur tous les plans...'.

From the archives we can follow the trajectory of the numerous reports from lower Section, Kasma or Group level as they were transmitted up through the higher échelons to reach Ghafir who

⁴⁶² J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 139, 144-147. None of these original observer accounts appear to have survived, although several of them, often years later, provided written or oral testimony.

⁴⁶³ H1B35, an order was received in Paris on 22 October to collect evidence of dead, wounded and disappeared. H1B16, Baba-Hamed (RC1), during an interrogation by Montaner, was shown a report on the 17 October demonstration by the head of Kasma 121221, and that was forwarded to him by Amala 12 (Ghafir), and replied, 'nous voulons nous en servir pour faire un bilan d'après les témoignages et les précisions sur les éléments blessés ou frappés'.

⁴⁶⁴ Other reports, which consist of those that eventually reached the Federal Committee in Germany, are to be found in the Harbi FLN archives.

⁴⁶⁵ H1B35, Abouab gives his organisational code 12214 (ie. Wilaya 1, Amala 2, Zone 2, Région 1, Secteur 4).

⁴⁶⁶ H1B35.

then synthesised them into a long and detailed, '*Rapport sur la riposte du 17 au 20 Octobre au couvre-feu rasciste*'.⁴⁶⁷ Ghafir had been among those who had given the direst warnings to the Federal Committee of the dangerous pressures building up among Paris activists as a consequence of enforced demobilisation in the face of police repression. He reiterated this position in his memoirs when he agreed with Mohammedi Saddek who was demanding a spectacular resumption of armed actions, declaring, 'L'Algérie est incendiée, pourquoi ne brûlerais-je pas la France?'. But, lamented Ghafir, 'Hélas, toutes ces opérations souhaitées par la base et les responsables sont refusées par le Comité Fédéral pour des raisons politiques afin de ne pas gêner les contacts entre le GPRA et le Gouvernement français'.⁴⁶⁸

Since, as I have argued, the Federal Committee planned the demonstrations to channel this explosive tension, was Ghafir happy with the outcome of 17 October? 'La décision de l'organisation', he stated in his report, 'concernait la riposte au couvre feu raciste décreté par Papon et son gouvernement, a répondu au voeux de tous les militants'. Given the wave of police atrocities, 'l'organisation a choisi le moment opportun pour déclencher une riposte vigoureuse et efficace....Des que nos militants ont appris la décision de l'organisation de riposte au couvre feu raciste, leur joie était indescriptible, car les voeux qu'ils ont formulé depuis toujours ont reçu une suite favorable'.⁴⁶⁹ What Ghafir failed to mention was that there existed a minority of men and women who remained refractory to the orders to take to the streets, or who only took part because of fear of FLN retribution in the form of fines or beatings.

Ghafir, fully aware from the earlier orders of the Federal Committee that the march must be totally pacific, went to some lengths to emphasise the highly disciplined nature of the column as it proceeded from the Place d'Italie and Montparnasse along the Boulevard Saint-Michel. Orders were respected, 'à la lettre, à savoir: le sang froid de nos éléments devant les provocations de la police et la circulation dans l'ordre, le calme et la dignité – Quelques éléments cependant qui n'ont pas tenir leur sang froid devant les agissements de la police ont été cahués et raisonnablement par les frères qui les entourent'. One Algerian who had seized a big stone to attack a policeman was disarmed, and a brigadier de police was impressed, stating, 'Je m'incline devant votre discipline'.⁴⁷⁰ Ghafir's account is corroborated by the journalist René Dazy who witnessed the crowd, including many women, children, and elderly, dressed in their Sunday best, as they approached the Pont Saint-Michel: 'They marched in good order, the leaders at the front, with an inexpressible dignity'.⁴⁷¹ The pacific and self-controlled nature of the demonstration throws into even more dramatic relief the terrible shock produced by the police charges into the crowd, brutal clubbing with the bidules, heavy gunfire and the throwing of Algerians into the Seine.

A second goal of the demonstration was to make an impact on French and international public opinion which, until then, had been singularly uninterested in the extreme levels of police repression in Paris. The Federal Committee, although excluding the French left and trade unions from the march, was hoping to make a big impact immediately afterwards, as was disclosed in the widely

⁴⁶⁷ H1B35, 'Rapports de responsables', liasse 5, 'extraite du dossier Flore'. This unsigned and undated report, written on 5 pages of paper of the type to be found in a school exercise book, was written some time after the 20 October.

⁴⁶⁸ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 94-5.

⁴⁶⁹ H1B35. Rapport A12. In his memoirs, M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 102-3, remarks that the arrival of orders for a demonstration, 'était une délivrance générale pour les cadres et les militants' and in the hotels, hostels and quartiers, 'régnait une ambiance de fête....une grande joie d'apprendre, enfin, que le mardi 17 octobre, ils seront libres de se pavanner dans les grands artères de Paris'.

⁴⁷⁰ Ghafir's account of self-control and discipline receives confirmation from other sources. In a report dated 17 October Gaveau, police Commissaire Divisionnaire of the 3rd District, who was present at the Boulevard Saint-Michel/Odéon area, noted, 'J'ai été frappé par l'impression de discipline qui dominaient les cortèges précédés par des éclaireurs à environ quarante mètres, guidés par des responsables, flanqués par des "commissaires" chargé de maintenir l'ordre et de convaincre les hésitants. A plusieurs reprises j'ai été témoin d'actes d'insubordination, énergiquement et rapidement réprimés'. H1B34.

⁴⁷¹ *Vérité-Liberté*, 13 (November 1961), 5.

diffused *Appel aux Français* of 18th October. This tract emphasised the extent to which the racist attack on Algerians, like that against the Jews, also threatened French workers and democrats by posing a danger to the fundamental principles of human rights, justice and liberty. The FLN called on workers, students, intellectuals and trade unionists to fraternise with Algerians ‘dans les usines, les chantiers, les quartiers, les universités’, to defend them against discriminatory measures in the street and public spaces, to organise demonstrations, meetings and stoppages, and to demand negotiations to find ‘une solution pacifique et urgente à ce conflit, pour mettre fin au cauchemar que vivent nos deux peuples’.⁴⁷² Ghafir, in his report, claimed that the demonstrations had been a remarkable success:-

Dans l'ensemble de cette riposte, nous pouvons nous rejoindre du résultat obtenu, car le succès est total. C'est une victoire et un prestige en plus pour le gouvernement algérien et la révolution – Cette démonstration des algériens et algériennes dans la capitale française à démontré à l'opinion française et internationale les vrais visage des colonialistes avec le racisme et la haine que nourrissent les forces de répression française sous les ordres de PAPON en complicité avec les criminels DEBRE et DE GAULLE.

L'opinion française reste amorphe jusqu'à ce jour, elle commence à prendre conscience de la juste revendications du peuple algérien, étant complice indirecte et même directe des crimes de la police et de son armée.....L'audience du gouvernement algérien s'accroît de plus en plus dans tous les pays du monde y compris les alliés de la France....Cette démonstration héroïque du 17 au 20 octobre sera peut-être le prélude de la fin de la guerre'.⁴⁷³

The public responses to the 17th October were extremely complex, but in overall terms Ghafir was correct in detecting a marked impact, but one which, on closer inspection, proves to have been fragmented and quite rapidly marginalised.⁴⁷⁴ Omar Boudaoud, like other ex-Federation cadres, has likewise emphasised the importance of 17 October as marking a watershed in the War of Independence. The GPRA, which had been so sceptical about the plan, ‘nous a félicités, car l'impact international des manifestations du 17 octobre 1961 a été positif, au-delà de nos espérances. On peut même soutenir qu'il s'est révélé plus important que celui des actions armées d'août 1958 en France’.⁴⁷⁵ However, what Boudaoud, Haroun and Ghafir fail to acknowledge is that the GPRA, shortly after the demonstrations, was actively working to terminate a Federation propaganda drive to capitalise on the political gains to be made from the massacre.

On 22 October the FLN Minister of Information, M'Hammed Yazid, issued a press communiqué in Tunis in which he excoriated the transfer of a ‘Battle of Algiers’ to Paris, the mass arrests and the death of over fifty demonstrators. At the moment that the GPRA was, ‘en train d'oeuvrer sincèrement et patiemment pour que soient créées les conditions d'une solution pacifique et négociée du problème algérien, nous assistons à une aggravation de la répression colonialiste’.⁴⁷⁶ On the 24 October Ben Khedda, the President of the GPRA, made a similar statement: ‘La répression militaire et policière qui s'abat sur le peuple algérien constitue un génocide caractérisé et s'aggrave chaque jour....Cette répression se déchaîne, avec une ampleur sans précédent, en territoire français...’. But, he claimed, all sides now accepted that independence was at hand. Are we going to allow the war now in its eighth year to drag on indefinitely, when, ‘les conditions d'une paix rapide sont à portée de la main?’.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷² Text of *Appel* in O. Le Cour Grandmaison (ed.), *Le 17 Octobre*, 208-10.

⁴⁷³ H1B35.

⁴⁷⁴ See in particular, J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, Chapters 8 and 9. H1B4, SCAA annual report, 1961, admitted the FLN had been successful in its aim to convince French public and international opinion, ‘qu'il incarnait en fait la population algérienne elle-même en lutte pour sa libération’.

⁴⁷⁵ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 184, 188.

⁴⁷⁶ *L'Humanité*, 23 October 1961.

⁴⁷⁷ H1B35. Text of declaration by Benyoussef Benkhedda, Tunis 24 October 1961; see also *Le Monde*, 26 October 1961.

The key instrumental use that the GPRA made of the 17 October was to bring further pressure on the French government to move rapidly to the negotiating table, but once that goal had been achieved the subject was marginalised.⁴⁷⁸ Behind the scenes, and at the very moment that the demonstrations of 17-20 October were ending, de Gaulle was secretly opening the door to a further round of negotiations at Bâle on 28 October. One sign of this was that de Gaulle on 20 October ordered termination of a clandestine ‘Third Force’ operation to establish the *Front algérien d'action démocratique* (FAAD) as a potential party to negotiations.⁴⁷⁹ At about the same time de Gaulle agreed to the reopening of preparatory talks, and on 26-27 October the Algerian representatives Redha Malek and Mohammed Benyahia were en route via Geneva to Bâle for what turned out to be the opening stages of the definitive round of negotiations that began on 28 October. Malek notes that the French delegation, ‘avait exprimé l'inquiétude de son gouvernement face aux “mouvements de foule” déclenchés par le FLN – allusion aux journées du 5 juillet et du 17 octobre’.⁴⁸⁰

It would seem that the French were, at this final stage, less concerned about ongoing pressure from the ALN, which they could readily contain, than by the potential threat offered by mass urban street protest. Such an anxiety was undoubtedly shared by de Gaulle, since it was the more spontaneous and insurrectionary demonstrations in Algiers on 10-12 December 1960 that had first shattered his illusions about holding on to Algeria. In addition, although de Gaulle was never going to admit it openly, the mass demonstrations of 17-20 October in the imperial capital must have dented his self-estime and image as a global leader. However, once the French had agreed to re-open discussions, Ben Khedda reciprocated by rapidly dropping further reference to the Paris massacre, a subject that was now seen as counter-productive in producing a more positive and conciliatory climate for negotiations. From 1 November onwards FLN propaganda centred almost exclusively on a mass hunger strike by Algerian prisoners throughout France and Algeria, and this served to overlay and bury the events of 17 October. In his memoirs Omar Boudaoud criticised the five ministers, and in particular Ben Bella, for distorting media coverage of this political strike so as to promote their personnal agendas in the struggle for influence and power.⁴⁸¹ Paulette Péju was commissioned to prepare a glossy brochure, with photographs by Elie Kagan and others, *Les Manifestations algériennes d'octobre 1961 et la répression colonialiste en France*, that was published in December 1961 by the ‘République algérienne, ministère de l'information’. However, this was ordered to be withdrawn, as was a further booklet by Marcel and Paulette Péju, *Le 17 octobre des Algériens* that was to be published by François Maspero in the summer of 1962.⁴⁸² At the same time, as will be seen below, the Federation appears to have abandoned attempts to collate all the information being centralised so as to provide an estimate of Algerian fatalities. Boudaoud has insisted that he and the Federal Committee, throughout 1961 and early 1962 retained a careful distance and neutrality so as not to be drawn into any of the emerging cliques engaged in the

⁴⁷⁸ One of the previously unknown aspects of the Federation propaganda campaign after 17 October, is the extent to which it probably mobilised Algerian parliamentarians to attack police violence in the National Assembly and Senate. Farès invited a number of politicians to a meeting in the Hotel Metropole in Brussels on 25-26 October 1961, perhaps to discuss, among other things, reactions to the massacre. A few days later on 31 October one of them, the Senator Youssef Achour, joined Gaston Defferre in launching an attack on Papon and Frey: ‘il s'insurge vigoureusement contre les discriminations et les exactions dont sont victimes les Algériens musulmans vivant en France et met en cause les autorités publiques’. www.senat-fr/senateur/achour-youssef000346.html.

⁴⁷⁹ Maurive Faivre, ‘Services secrets et “Troisième Force”: Le Front algérien d'action démocratique, de 1960 à 1962’, in Maurice Vaïsse (ed.), ‘Il n'est point de secrets que le temps ne révèle’: *Etude sur l'histoire du renseignement* (Paris: Editions Lavaudelle, 1998).

⁴⁸⁰ R. Malek, *L'Algérie à Evian*, 180-1, 188.

⁴⁸¹ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 190-1.

⁴⁸² J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 156; Gilles Manceron (ed.) *Le 17 octobre*, has published the full text of the Maspero manuscript, as well as excerpts from *Les Manifestations algériennes*.

struggle for power, but clearly a lot more needs to be known about the position of the Federation during this murky period to explain how or why the memory of 17 October was occluded.⁴⁸³

Finally, to what extent was it the case that, despite the widespread violence and trauma experienced by the October demonstrators, morale remained as strong as the FLN leaders claimed? After 17 October the position of both Papon and Frey, the Minister of the Interior, was seriously threatened by the growing volume of evidence of a massacre, but a standard element in the propaganda diffused to the media was the claim that the great mass of innocent Algerians had been forced by a tiny minority of violent terrorists to attend the march. Consequently, police reports emphasised the evidence of men and women being threatened or beaten for resisting the mobilisation, while after 17 October informers picked up rumours of Algerian workers criticising the FLN for exposing them to deadly force, or attacking collectors and other low level cadres. There were, beyond doubt, instances of Algerians who disliked or resisted being compelled to attend, but this involved a relatively small minority. The intelligence services reported that few fines had been imposed later for non-attendance, ‘for the simple reason that the reluctant were few in number....The Muslims are proud to have demonstrated. They are proud to have given proof of their cohesion and strength and to have protested against measures that they judge to be discriminatory and humiliating’.⁴⁸⁴

The Federation was, however, still concerned at the possibility that such massive violence might fracture or demoralise the migrant community in Paris. On 23 October the FLN issued a tract *Algériennes et Algériens Emigrés en France* to rally the militants, one that was penned in the standard discourse of heroic struggle and sacrifice: ‘En plein cœur de Paris, nous venons d’infliger au gouvernement français une défaite spectaculaire. Nous n’avons jamais reculé et nous ne reculerons jamais devant aucun sacrifice pour arracher l’indépendance.’ It made a significant connection to the recent ground-breaking mass demonstrations in Algeria: ‘A l’exemple de notre peuple héroïque, descendu dans la rue lors des mémorables journées de décembre 1960, l’émigration algérienne vient, une fois de plus, de démontrer avec éclat’, a similar level of power and unity. The tract concluded by emphasising the sacrificial nature of the ongoing struggle: ‘La lutte pour la liberté est une lutte âpre. Il n’y a ni répit, ni compromis entre l’opresseur et l’opprimé’, but ‘nous sommes une force invincible’. In conclusion, ‘Nos pensées vont vers nos martyrs des 17 et 18 octobre...Gloire à NOS MORTS!. Leur sacrifice ne sera pas vain’. At the same time, the Federation was fully aware of the fact that it needed to provide material support for those women and children that had suddenly lost the sole breadwinner who may have been killed, hospitalised, imprisoned, ‘disappeared’ or expelled to Algeria. French intelligence reported that orders had gone out to the Comités de soutien (CSD) to locate and support all the families so affected to show they had not been abandoned by the FLN, part of a campaign to ‘rassurer les troupes’.⁴⁸⁵

I would emphasise, however, that the police repression, while leaving deep psychological scars on many Algerians, had a quite minimal impact on the smooth operation of the FLN organisation in Paris, an impact which, as usual, was measured by the statistics of collection. In addition to the monthly collection, the FLN also imposed an additional ‘gift’ on symbolic dates, in particular the 5 July and 1 November, and these had by 1961 become obligatory. Returning to the situation in Amala 12, Ghafir has published a copy of his financial report on the special collection for the ‘journée nationale’, of 1 November. Situated shortly after the Paris demonstrations, but before the arrests of the Farès and Zouaoui networks, this provides an excellent summary of the impacts of 17 October on the local organisation, but before the disruption of early November. Out of the 15,260 elements

⁴⁸³ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 216-232. To date I have not been able to consult Amar Mohand-Amer, *La Crise du Front de libération nationale de l’été 1962. Indépendance et enjeux de pouvoirs*, doctoral thesis, University of Paris 7 – Diderot, 2010.

⁴⁸⁴ HA49, SCINA minutes, 26 October 1961.

⁴⁸⁵ H1B56, SCINA report No.1583, 9 December 1961. On the FLN failure in such support, see the interview of a woman in Yasmina Adi’s film *Ici on noie des Algériens, 17 octobre 1961*, whose husband never returned from the demonstration, and had to raise her children alone, see G. Manceron (ed.) *Le 17 Octobre*, 177.

that were registered in Amala 12, 14,366 (94.14%) had made a payment; while among the 744 registered commerçants, 696 (93.54%) had participated.⁴⁸⁶ While the number of ‘retards’ (non-payers who would be compelled to pay later) was high among the elements, Ghafir said this was justified since, ‘la moitié presque de notre effectif se trouvait dans les camps et les soi-disant centres de triages après le manifestation du 17 octobre – Plusieurs frères ont été hospitalisés....Des centaines de frères licenciés de leur travail, n’ayant même pas droit aux assurances sociale’. Also contact had been lost with dozens of militants after the arrest of several cadres. Perhaps about 1-2 millions francs had been lost through the reduced collection, ‘mais la coup d’éclat de la victoire politique emportée pendant le manifestation du 17 octobre a ses valeurs incalculable’. Overall the usual system had operated almost as normal: local weekly meetings had commemorated 1 November ‘dans une dignité absolue’, and the collection, centralisation and audit of money had been impeccable, with the exception of only one Section head arrested with 15,000 francs. Again it can be seen from Ghafir’s report how the crucial organising principle of the Federation was financial, and cadres were driven above all else to assure their superiors that they were efficiently performing their duty as measured by the counting of money and attendance.

The arrests of 3-4 and 9-10 November inflicted, however, far greater damage to the upper levels of the political and financial networks, virtually paralysing the organisation. In particular, the halt in the flow of money, especially towards the ALN in North Africa, presented a serious threat to the entire FLN apparatus. The Paris police and the DST were quite confident in their analysis that the FLN in Paris had, to all intents and purposes, been so severely damaged that it was still unable to recover by early 1962. The SCINA reported in December that a ‘calme relatif’ reigned in Paris because the armed groups had been neutralised by, ‘deux opérations d’envergure qui ont démantelé l’Etat Major Fédéral’, and broken, ‘de multiples liaisons, en détruisant des boites à lettres, en raréfiant les lieux de refuge’. The arrest of Benzerfa and his clandestine printer, had damaged the propaganda network, so that the Paris FLN had had to fall back on the assistance of the AGTA and Ouhadj.⁴⁸⁷ In short, ‘La Fédération doit remonter son appareil de propagande, rétablir ses filières d’acheminement de fonds, remplacer ses Etats majors de Wilaya et les cadres arrêtés et envoyés en Algérie...’⁴⁸⁸ The police remarked that the joint impacts of 17 October and the arrests of early November had created a certain ‘malaise’ among the rank-and-file, and disorganisation that had rendered them, ‘méfiants, timorée et indociles. Certaines mettaient en doute l’utilité des “mouvements de masse”, d’autres affirmaient carrément que la lutte était devenue inutile, puisque le droit à l’autodétermination était acquis et que le principe de la souveraineté algérienne sur le Sahara était admis’.⁴⁸⁹

While the police saw clear evidence of the Federation still struggling hard to enforce discipline and unity on the migrant community of Paris, especially during the dangerous and demobilising phase of transition to independence, they also remarked on the fact that the arrests of the Farès and Zouaoui networks had made little overall impact on the Algerian masses. A number of factors worked in this direction. Firstly, the centralised and authoritarian structure of the French Federation, meant that the Committee only transmitted the forms of information and propaganda to the base that it viewed as suitable for debate, a process that included filtering out any reference to the top-level battles for power, divisions over policy, or any other ‘negative’ events that might ‘demoralise’ the rank-and-file. Mohammed Harbi is correct in his assessment of the Federation as a single-party apparatus that dictated to the rank-and-file, but did not engage in a democratic exchange with local militants, who were thus kept in the dark about many developments.⁴⁹⁰ After the 10 November the Federation certainly did not inform local cells of the arrests, and seizure of documents and money,

⁴⁸⁶ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 280-3, 285. The percentage rate is slightly below the average figure of 95% given by A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 58, for the collection.

⁴⁸⁷ HA57, SCINA minutes, No.1601, 6-8 January 1962, notes that it was only now, after two months interruption, that the Commission de Propagande et de Diffusion, was beginning to operate again.

⁴⁸⁸ HA47, SCINA minutes, 6 December 1961.

⁴⁸⁹ H1B56, SCINA report No. 1583, 9 December 1961.

⁴⁹⁰ M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 208.

and its implications. At the same time, since peace talks had reopened, the French government had little interest in making political capital, as it would have done previously, from such major blows against the FLN in France.⁴⁹¹ The press did report on the arrest of Farès and of the Zouaoui network, but overall editors, well aware of the dynamics of the negotiation, remained relatively silent or discrete about the events. After 10 November we hear very little indeed about Farès, Zouaoui, Saïd Amroun and others who were held in the Fresnes prison, apart from their involvement in an attempted mass escape through a tunnel in January 1962.⁴⁹² The French security forces continued to pursue the FLN right down to the cease-fire of 19 March, but there is a sense in which both sides knew that they were now simply going through the motions, since a settlement was to hand, and this explains why the police did not bother to arrest Benyounès, although they were fully aware of his role and location. At the same time the FLN and French government were now preoccupied by the danger presented to both of them by the OAS bombing campaign in Paris.

Finally, in the historiography of the French Federation it can be noted that the crisis surrounding the November arrests has been even more marginalised than the memory of 17 October. Maurice Papon, in his memoirs that were published in 1988, provided what to date was one of the most detailed accounts of the 17 October. Through a carefully constructed narrative that distorted the evidence, Papon developed the thesis that the demonstration was organised by the FLN with the intention of provoking police violence, the killings of innocent Algerian men and women, so as to trigger an insurrectionary situation in which the security of the capital would be endangered and Papon himself toppled.⁴⁹³ Papon was engaged in a dramatic 'Bataille de Paris' that he claimed to have conclusively won by firmly containing the demonstrations, and virtually crushing the FLN at this point in time. Through this disciplined defense of the capital he had, 'assuré la liberté d'action et décision au gouvernement en pleins pourparlers', and, ultimate accolade, in pages of saccarine obsequiousness, recounts how he received the personal thanks of his hero, de Gaulle.

However, in order to inflate the importance of his achievement, Papon is compelled to distort the evidence in order to show that his defeat of 17 October marked the key watershed, the point of rupture, in FLN power, and not the November operations.⁴⁹⁴ This moment, he claims, was achieved by the location of leaders among the thousands arrested, by the consequential suspension of armed actions, the rupture of contacts between the base and the leadership, and the dramatic collapse of the collection by 50%, all of which were untrue.⁴⁹⁵ Papon, in his self-serving glorification, makes absolutely no mention of the Farès and Zouaoui arrests, apart from a vague allusion to the DST seizure of documents in the home of, 'un haut responsable [Farès?] de l'Organisation en France'.⁴⁹⁶ Despite his co-operation with the DST during 1961, Papon was not prepared to give any significant credit to the role of the other 'maison' in bringing about the most severe blow to the Federation.

In a strange way Papon's convenient silence on the events of November, and the preoccupation with 17 October, has been mirrored in the memoirs of the veterans of the French Federation. In reading these memoirs, the historian is confronted with the difficult task of attempting to assess how far memory reflects accurately past events in Paris and Germany, and how far it may have been

⁴⁹¹ HA47, SCINA minutes 6 December 1961, notes: 'Si les récentes arrestations ont décontenancé les cadres supérieures de l'organisation frontiste, elles ne paraissent pas avoir inquiété, outre mesure, la base, dont la confiance a été préservée à la fois par le silence des chefs ayant échappé à l'arrestation et par la discréetion de la presse....pour le mitant moyen tout se passe, pour le moment, comme si les deux opérations [3 and 9 November] dont il a été question n'avaient pas eu lieu'.

⁴⁹² A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 246-8, Zouaoui, the two RCs Younès Aberkane and Saïd Amroun, Yahia Achab (W3B), and Medjoub Benzerfa (propaganda), volunteered to stand down from the escape, to give a better chance to six other prisoners.

⁴⁹³ M. Papon, *Les Chevaux*, 223, 'On avait l'ambition d'immerger Paris sous des vagues algériennes et de transformer cette démonstration pacifique en émeute meurtrière'.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 215, 'Il apparaît clairement que, dans tous les domaines, les liaisons sont rompus, le potentiel du FLN est brisé.'

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 214-15.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

influenced and distorted by more recent debates and reading the work of other militants or historians. If we try and imagine the day-to-day experience of the Federation leaders in 1961, having to react quickly and decisively to the challenge of rapidly changing events and crises, it seems quite likely that the 17 October did not have quite the weight, the kinds of meaning , that have been attached to it more recently by memorial activists. The Federal Committee probably did not spend much time after 20 October contemplating the wider significance of the moment, in part because the GPRA signalled a rapid closure, but also because it had to contend with a hurricane of events, from the organisation of the 1 November, the start of the prison hunger strike, and a surge in OAS violence, to reorganising political and financial networks after 10 November.

Ex-Federation cadres turned to the recovery of the memory of 17 October, first with the publication of Ali Haroun's *La 7e Wilaya* in 1986, and more widely from 1990 onwards. After Independence in 1962 the Federation was politically marginalised by Ben Bella and remained so until the crisis of 1988 opened the way to a more open, democratic system that allowed new parties and associations to be established. Boudaoud and other ex-Federation leaders established the *Association des anciens moudjahidine de la Fédération de France du FLN*, (AAM) and gained for the first time the right to send delegates to the 8th Congress of the *Organisation nationale des moudjahidine* (ONM) in 1990.⁴⁹⁷

It is within AAM circles, reactivated in 2004, that a kind of quasi-official consensus on the past has been reached. In particular the AAM and other ex-Federation militants have watched with interest the appearance of a growing debate in France and elsewhere on the 17 October, marked by the appearance of Jean-Luc Einaudi's *La Bataille de Paris* (1991), the trial of Maurice Papon (October 1997 - April 1998), and the publication of Jean-Paul Brunet's *Police contre FLN* (1999). It is hardly surprising that the memoirs of ex-Federation leaders, Omar Boudaoud (2007), Mohammed Ghafir (2011), and Mohand Akli Benyounès (2012) have, in the light of the huge public interest, paid particular attention to the 17 October. But, in doing so, it is possible to detect signs of the extent to which memory has become inextricably confused with, or tainted by, the individuals reading of contemporary sources, and in particular of Jean-Luc Einaudi. The most extreme example of this is Mohammed Ghafir's *Cinquanteenaire du 17 Octobre* that consists of a compendium of extracts and fragments from Einaudi and elsewhere in which it becomes difficult to separate out which passages or interpretations derive from Ghafir and which from other sources.⁴⁹⁸

Boudaoud and Ghafir, in a mirror inversion of Papon, place the heroic achievements of 17 October at the centre of their picture but, perhaps not surprisingly, have little to say about the meanings of the defeat suffered two weeks later. Mohand Akli Benyounès provides a refreshing counter to this silence since he recounts how he was sent to Paris after 10 November with the specific task of rebuilding the networks that had been destroyed. However, in a curious way, he too reflects the idea that 17 October represented the point at which the FLN Wilaya network was fractured.⁴⁹⁹ But as we have seen, the watershed that he refers to resulted from the mass arrests of Operation Flore.

⁴⁹⁷ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 246-7. M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 191, notes that the Associations broke away from the ONM in September 2004, after it was excluded from higher-level posts. A study of the obscure politics of the ex-Federation and memory has yet to be written. Benyounès, 192-199, provides a list of 225 'cadres permanent du FLN en France', that is telling as much for those who were thus officially excluded in 2004 (all women, Mohammed Harbi, Mohammedi Saddek....),as for those included.

⁴⁹⁸ Mohammed Ghafir's book is disappointing, and the history of the FLN in Paris could have been greatly enriched if he had given more space to his own wealth of experience, rather than a disjointed pot pourri of fragments from other secondary sources.

⁴⁹⁹ A.M. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 124, 139.

Conclusion

The FLN French Federation during the War of Independence was confronted by two key dilemmas that came to a head during the October crisis of 1961. One tension arose from the contradiction between the need to create a form of clandestine organisation that would effectively prevent the penetration of the intelligence services and which, at the same time, could retain an 'open' democratic consultation between the base and the leadership. The second problem arose from disagreement as to whether the best strategy was to engage in armed actions in metropolitan France, a line that inevitably deepened the cycle of police repression, or whether to contain violence towards both MNA and police and to create stronger links to the French left for a broad united political movement. Broadly speaking these are the two opposed positions that can be associated with Omar Boudaoud and Mohammed Harbi.

Omar Boudaoud denies that the 'Bataille d'Alger' and the 'Second front' attacks of August 1958 in Paris can be compared, as some have done: 'Le peuple, dans son ensemble, a participé à la grève des "huit jours" et en a subi les conséquences que nous connaissons. Rien de semblable à Paris. Dans la Casbah d'Alger, le FLN évoluait en milieu acquis, alors qu'en France la faible communauté algérienne ne pouvait constituer le bouclier protecteur indispensable dans le domaine de la guérilla urbaine.'⁵⁰⁰ This important admission can be equally applied to October 1961 when both the FLN and Maurice Papon referred to a 'Bataille de Paris', by analogy with the events in Algiers in 1957. Contrary to the usual historical perception, a case can be made for the argument that the FLN migrant population in Paris faced a more difficult situation than that in Algiers, since in the latter case the clandestine networks found a base in a population that was 'at home' and in which the guerrillas could find support like the proverbial Maoist fish in water.

After the 'decapitation' of the leadership of the first and second Federations in 1956-57, Omar Boudaoud was brought in to increase the security of the organisation, a goal that he achieved by moving the Federal Committee to Germany and by a more radical compartmentalisation (*cloisonnement*) of the clandestine structure and total control (*quadrillage*) of the population. From late 1958, as Papon created new and aggressive neo-colonial forms of penetrating the Algerian community, including through social welfare programmes, the FLN responded by retreating into an institutional ghettoisation that would isolate it from the surrounding French society, including the political left and trade unions. This change did enable the Federation, under extremely adverse conditions, to survive through to independence.

However, there was a downside to this. Firstly, on the face of things it seems to be bizarre that a clandestine network like that of the Federation should have produced such an enormous volume of internal documents, information that was regularly intercepted by the police, as during Operation Flore, and enabled the intelligence services to build up a detailed picture of networks. But there was a logic to this. As security bulkheads were improved and the chain of command from the Federal Committee in Germany down to the local cells lengthened, so order was increasingly sustained by anonymous and bureaucratic means. A report of the Renseignements généraux noted, 'le contrôle et l'apport d'argent et celui de l'activité de la base se font pour chaque responsable par l'étude des rapports organiques et financiers. Les paragraphes de ces rapports deviennent de plus en plus nombreux (activité intérieure, moral des militants, discipline, propagande suggestion....) au fur et à mesure que le cloisonnement supprime les contacts directs. La connaissance personnelle est remplacé par une connaissance administrative très détaillé. Certes l'augmentation de la paperasse donne des armes à la police'.⁵⁰¹ The Federation was, especially in the later stages of the war, a supremely bureaucratic as well as authoritarian organisation as the Committee in Germany sought to impose control on a turbulent base of young male workers through central diktat, rather than by direct contact and debate. Mohammed Harbi summarises the position: 'A mesure que la Fédération

⁵⁰⁰ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 179.

⁵⁰¹ L. Chabrun, *La Guerre*, 113.

de France progressait dans le “quadrillage”, elle devenait de moins en moins une organisation politique pour s’assimiler à la ramification d’un parti-Etat qui, comme toute institution de ce type, combine des moyens bureaucratiques, policiers et militaires et se constitue à la fois avec le peuple et contre lui'.⁵⁰² In other words, the defenses worked, but at a cost. To a certain extent the Federal Committee attempted to correct what, borrowing from communist practice, might be termed Stalinist forms of ‘democratic centralism’, by going on mission into France, which defeated the object in locating to Germany. Mohand Akli Benyounès, on taking up the position of Federal after November 1961, insisted, late in the day, that controllers and Wilaya heads should relocate to the provinces or go out on tours of inspection, rather than seeking to hide up in Paris.

In general, the FLN authoritarian structure ran the risk of the centre losing touch with the base, as was to happen in mid-1961. Those local leaders who did have a close, day-to-day knowledge of Algerians in the Paris quartiers, were the heads of the Regions and below (Secteur, Kasma, Section, Groupe), and it is at this level that we can see evidence of FLN militants resisting central orders over the question of a truce and armed action. However, the relationship between local cadres and the FLN population in their area remains largely unknown or difficult, from lack of evidence, to interpret. It would be a mistake to assume that the monthly reports sent by Region and Secteur leaders accurately reflected the opinion of the rank-and-file under their control. The local leaders were in an ambiguous position: on the one hand they had been selected as cadres precisely because they were effective in carrying out the disciplined orders of the organisation. These were militants who belonged heart and soul to the apparatus, and to an extent they reported to their superiors what they wanted to hear. Within each Region it can be estimated that the ratio between local leaders and the rest, was about one to fourteen, or 7%. It would be of great interest to take a ‘subaltern studies’ approach to the history of the 93% of Algerian immigrants in Paris during 1961 who were, and continue to remain, largely voiceless.

The impression that I have, from what little evidence is available, is that the FLN control over its own history, has deeply obscured or hidden the enormously rich and complex life of Algerians in Paris, an official anodyne history that leaves everybody the poorer. Most FLN internal documents provide little insight into the mentalité of the majority, while most post-independence accounts by ex-Federation leaders present a monochrome interpretation of heroic unity. The Renseignements généraux noted that the Federation, in order to block police informers, decided to separate out militants, the trusted activists, from *adhérents* and *sympathisants* who only progressed up the hierarchy after careful testing. This new structure, ‘doive entraîner un certain abandon de la masse des adhérents et des sympathisants, privée de l’exemple et du stimulant des fanatiques’.⁵⁰³

Sometimes FLN internal documents, especially those of the commissions de justice, give a hint of an alternative, hidden world in which workers were caught up in the daily problems of the migrant and could prove quite rebellious to the petty regulations of the *frères*. For example, in February 1962 the contrôleur RC2, in reporting on fines imposed during the month, listed 186 cases of lateness or absence from meetings, 616 fines for drunken behaviour, 212 for fighting, and 68 for gambling. In 1959-60 cases were reported of, ‘Un élément ayant refusé sa chambre a un comité qui voulait faire une réunion a été amendé de 5000 F.’, ‘Diffamation envers un responsable: L'auteur est condamné a 7,000 F d'amende’, ‘Un membre conteste les Barèmes des cotisations. Simple incompréhension. Tout est remis dans l'ordre’, ‘Nous avons vu un frère qui à provoqué son supérieure. Nous lui avons fait une amende de deux mille francs’, and ‘sommés de payer leur cotis, certains éléments ont voulu faire preuve d'insubordination et que leur refus était de nature à entraver la marche de l'organisation en abaissant l'autorité des responsables’.⁵⁰⁴ In March 1962 Mohammed Attaba (“Gilbert”), newly appointed contrôleur RC3 in Marseille, reported a situation of absolute chaos in which even leaders at Zone, Region, and Secteur level were described as armed hooligans who were terrorising other militants, broke the elementary regulations of the FLN, and

⁵⁰² M. Harbi, *Une Vie Debout*, 208.

⁵⁰³ L. Chabrun, *La guerre*, 114-15.

⁵⁰⁴ *Sou'al*, 36, 40-45, 52.

refused to obey any orders.⁵⁰⁵ The gap between the official memory of the Federation and the lived reality at the grass roots is fascinating, but raises more questions than can be answered. The impression that I am left with is that the call to break the truce on armed actions in Paris from August 1961 was coming mainly from the level of the activist local leaders and the GA, rather than from the rank-and-file. The workers knew from bitter experience that any increase in GA or OS activity inevitably resulted in massive police counter-violence and actions that were aimed to humiliate and to disrupt their normal economic and social life. However, the Federal decision to organise demonstrations as a means to satisfy the minority of activists, while also appealing to the 'silent majority', was undoubtedly successful. Ordinary Algerians, men and women, were – with a few exceptions – pleased to be able to express themselves by marching through the streets of the capital, many dressed up in their 'Sunday' best for the occasion, and photographs taken just prior to the police attacks show happy and smiling crowds.

But was the Federation decision to engage in a 'truce' and to organise mass peaceful demonstrations a wise one, given the circumstances? Until 1958 the FLN had, in general, opposed the idea of opening an armed 'second front' in mainland France, since it was thought that this would invite state repression against a weak and vulnerable émigré community: as the imprisoned leaders, including Ben Bella, stated in opposing the CCE decision of 10 June 1957 to 'déclencher le terrorisme', this took no heed of 'des conditions économiques, morales et humaines dans lesquelles vivent les émigrés algériens. Ces conditions déjà précaires sont rendues particulièrement graves par l'hostilité chauvine de toute une nation'.⁵⁰⁶ Although a counter-factual history is to be avoided, it can be argued that undertaking armed action was, globally, not in the interests of the FLN. Most historians and commentators on the Federation have focused on the primacy of the armed struggle, but in many ways the taxation capacity of the migrant community contributed more to the final victory than the armed struggle, especially when the latter proved counterproductive in inviting further repression that disrupted the financial and bureaucratic networks, as it did in November 1961. Moreover police repression, that accelerated further during 1961, led to the arrest and incarceration in camps and prisons of growing numbers of valuable cadres and, as these were replaced in wave after wave of operations, so the FLN began to find it more and more difficult to recruit from the ranks men with the kinds of skills required to manage the bureaucratic apparatus. By 1961 this exhaustion of a pool of trained cadres meant a real decline in the quality of the FLN organisation which, as Harbi has argued, became more and more vulnerable to the emergence of incapable, illiterate and even criminal elements like 'Mourad'.

The problem that the Federation, under the leadership of Boudaoud faced, was that as it was converted between late 1958 and early 1961, into a more offensive fighting machine, with OS and GA commandos, so a militant culture of heroic activism was cultivated at Regional level. When the Federation, following orders from the GPRA, tried to reverse this in July 1961, it proved extremely difficult to do, and for a short while even threatened the authority of the Committee itself. By the 3 October, marked by the last in a sequence of police assassinations, the Committee had reimposed control on the armed groups, but by then Papon had set in motion his own style of counterviolence. Nor was the Prefect inclined to take any notice of a change towards pacifism, even when he had the clearest evidence in the orders sent out for 17 October that this was the case. Zouaoui notified Germany that all was being done to comply with the Committee orders, but suddenly by 3-5 October things were worse since there was growing evidence of Algerians being murdered and thrown in the Seine, while the night curfew promised to make the work of the organisation impossible.

In the Autumn of 1956 the FLN had decided that street demonstrations in the capital were, at least for the moment, to be avoided since they threatened to seriously damage the organisation. 'Nous considérons pour l'instant que les moyens d'action constitués par les manifestations de rues seraient inopérants et préjudiciables. D'une part parce qu'ils pourraient permettre à l'ennemi de nous paralyser car il est impossible d'organiser une manifestation sans se dévoir et d'autre part parce

⁵⁰⁵ *Sou'al*, 54.

⁵⁰⁶ See p.45 above.

que l'opinion y est hostile.....l'engagement de la masse algérienne dans la rue en Métropole ne devait être tenté qu'au moment où le gouvernement français serait au bord de la capitulation. La Fédération estimait, et estime toujours, qu'une poussée achèverait de l'ébranler'.⁵⁰⁷ Had the Federation by October 1961 reached this final stage, what the police analysts referred to as the theory of the 'coup de boutoir', by which the FLN would increase pressure as peace negotiations drew closer?

The Federation was inspired by the great success of street demonstrations in Algeria during 1960-61 to undertake a mass action, but in doing so it was taking a considerable risk. Firstly, as the Federation had warned in 1956, it could suffer from police repression and exposure to mass arrests. On the other hand, if the Federation failed to achieve a high level of mobilisation, it could damage its claim to be the legitimate voice of the Algerian people in France. But if the FLN exerted too strong a pressure, or even threatened the rank-and-file to turn out, it could be exposed as a 'terrorist' organisation that could only achieve apparent support through coercion. As we have seen, the Federation did strive to make an informed decision under difficult conditions, and especially with the time restraints that it faced. The trade union leader Ouhadj, and a number of others, were called across the border to consultations in Brussels and Germany, but the Committee was still unable to gauge accurately the conditions on the ground. The fatal mistake was the failure to appreciate the dangerous and violent mood that had, encouraged by Papon, rapidly built up in a police force that was extremely nervous, deeply penetrated by OAS sympathies, and geared up for taking revenge on the Algerian community, if an opportunity should arise. In addition to this, the Federation policy of isolationism from the main-stream French left, especially the powerful PCF and the CGT union, led it to reject the possibility of a joint demonstration that would have significantly protected the Algerians. As it was, the leaders in Germany decided to lock the French left out from the 17 October, and then to appeal to the same forces, rather contradictorily, after the event.

The Federation leaders claimed, and continue to do so today, that the 17 October represented a great victory, in breaking the mould of silence in relation to the situation of Algerians in France, and in galvanising French public and international opinion. However, if victory it was, it was bought at huge costs in human suffering and the propaganda gains proved to be very short-lived indeed. By November the GPRA was seeking to bury the events of Paris, either in the interests of negotiations with the French, or because the leaders of the GPRA and EMG were intent on grabbing headlines that would promote their own profile as the struggle for power deepened. The blood that was spilt in Paris before and during 17 October was mainly that of the small people, and did not impinge on the Federal organisation to any significant extent. The arrests of the Farès financial network on 3-4 November, and of the Paris leaders during Operation Flore did, however, inflict very serious damage on the organisation. Fortunately for the Federation this damage was sustained just as the final round of negotiations got under way, and both sides were increasingly reduced, between November 1961 and March 18 to shadow boxing, a kind of phony war. The deterioration in the position of the FLN in France, and its increasing vulnerability to actions by the police and DST, would have represented a catastrophe if they had occurred earlier in the war, but as things wound down such weakness carried few serious repercussions.

How and why the 17 October was to take on the symbolic and political meanings that it has today is an almost entirely different story.

⁵⁰⁷ L. Chabrun, *La guerre*, 166.

Jean-Luc Einaudi and the Sacralisation of Mohammedi Saddek:an Essay

The rituals surrounding a society's treatment of the dead, as in the village gravestones, monuments and annual commemoration ceremonies of the two World Wars, serve important purposes in how a local or national community may make sense of its past. Invariably the symbolism of dead bodies, who is buried, in which locations, and the scale and expense of monuments, carry political meaning through the reinforcement of nationalist narratives, those versions of the past which receive official sanction, and legitimate a particular social and political order.⁵⁰⁸ From the early days of Algerian labour migration to France, the return of the body of workers, frequent victims of industrial accidents and disease, to be buried in the Islamic soil of the homeland, was of particular concern to family, friends and village communities. Desperately poor Algerians would go to great expense to pay for the transport of a body and a French administrator in Kabylie during the 1930s described how coffins from France arrived in mountain villages tied to the roof of a bus.⁵⁰⁹ During the War for Independence, when, in addition to the 'normal' mortality, over four thousand Algerians died a violent death on French soil, repatriation of the corpse took on a particular symbolic weight. Nationalists wished to remove the bodies of loved ones from the soil of the enemy but, under conditions of extreme dislocation of rural society by the French military, this was often not possible.

At independence the militants of the FLN French Federation were politically marginalised since they had backed the GPRA, the losing side in the struggle for power with the victorious military faction led by Ben Bella and Boumedienne. However, by 1968 the Algerian state began to move towards recognition of the role of emigrants in the national cause, through the first celebration of the National Emigration Day on 17 October 1968 and the repatriation of 537 bodies in three cohorts of 'martyrs' (*chuhada*) during 1968 to 1970.⁵¹⁰ The repatriation of bodies and the elaborate official ceremonials surrounding their arrival and reburial constituted a powerful symbol of the physical repositioning of the remains of emigrants, who had sacrificed themselves abroad as militants or *chuhada*, within the sacred soil of the nation. As Ahmed Kaïd, a senior FLN party official, proclaimed as the bodies arrived at the Algiers quayside in 1970, 'Mort pour la Patrie, hors du territoire national, ils viennent aujourd'hui reposer sur la terre pour laquelle ils ont versé leur sang généreux'.⁵¹¹

Apart from the special prominence given to the bodies of nineteen *chuhada* (*supplicés*) who had been executed in France, the repatriation ceremonials did not involve a process of individuation or a return to the village or community of origin, but rather a mass reburial in the national cemetery at El-Alia, a symbol of centralised state power and national unity. The relative anonymity of the martyrs may also have reflected in part the pre-independence funerary rituals in Kabyle villages by which graves were never named or individually marked, apart from the white cupola tombs (*qubba*) of local saints.⁵¹² The anthropologist Judith Scheele, in a fine study of Kabyle cemeteries, has shown how in recent decades *chuhada* graves have become more durable, blocks of concrete, individualised, and invested with claims to specific heroic acts and biographical narratives, that emphasise the forms of self-sacrifice that increased the cultural capital and social and political prestige of the family, local clan and village. Such *chuhada* tombs have been transformed into veritable political pilgrimage sites, through which the village asserts both its Kabyle identity, as well as its regional, national and even transnational status.

⁵⁰⁸ See in particular the thought-provoking Harriman Lectures by Katherine Verdery, *Political lives of dead bodies. Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

⁵⁰⁹ M.Rémond, *Djurdjura. Terre de Constance* (Algiers: Baconnier, 1940), 75; on such practices see C. Yassine, 'Pour une thanatologie maghrébine: les rapatriements de corps', in Bruno Etienne (ed.), *L'Islam en France* (Paris: CNRS, 1990(, 337-48; Yassine Chaib, *L'émigré et la mort* (Aix-en-Provence, Edisud, 2000); Gilles Manceron and Remaoun, Hassan, *D'une rive à l'autre. La Guerre d'Algérie de la mémoire à l'histoire* (Paris: Syros, 1993), 58.

⁵¹⁰ J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 275-77.

⁵¹¹ *L'Algérien en Europe*, 27 March-9 April 1970, 'Transfert des corps de chouhada tombés en France', 23.

⁵¹² Judith Scheele, 'Algerian graveyard stories', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 12 (2006), 862-3.

Such an evolution from relative anonymity to individuation occurred in relation to the bodies of those who played a prominent role in the FLN French Federation or who were marked out as victims of the Paris massacre. During the repatriation of 375 bodies in March 1970, those exhumed came from all over France and, although I have been able to identify from the list of total names at least fourteen victims of police violence in October 1961, no official Algerian or media attempt was made to identify them as a category separate from the largely anonymous mass into which they were merged. However, in time the process by which the 'lost' memory of the 17 October massacre resurfaced and assumed an increasing political and media dynamic in both France and Algeria after the 1980s, became linked to the commemoration of individual militants or chuhada. This is illustrated, for example, by the case of Fatima Bedar, a fifteen year old Algerian girl from the industrial suburb of Stains, who, against her mother's advice, may have tried to join the demonstration on 17 October. She failed to return home after school, and a police investigation and autopsy, following the discovery of her body at a lock-gate in the Canal Saint-Denis on 31 October, suggested a probable suicide. Jean-Luc Einaudi turned Fatima Bedar into a cause célèbre by dedicating *La Bataille de Paris* (1991) to her, and providing further documentation in *Octobre 1961* (2001) to suggest, admittedly on rather circumstantial evidence, that she had been killed by the police.⁵¹³

Mohammed Gafir, in a book timed to coincide with the 50th commemoration of the Paris massacre, includes a detailed documentation in a chapter titled, 'Le martyre de Fatima BEDAR, symbole de sacrifice de la Femme Algérienne', on the long and complex negotiations with both French and Algerian authorities for her disinterment, repatriation and ceremonial reburial on 17 October 2006 in the 'carré des Martyrs' of Tichy, Béjaïa, the home village of her father.⁵¹⁴ The Organisation Nationale des Moudjahiddines, in seeking in 2006 authorisation from the Ministre des Moujahiddines for reburial in Bejaia, included in the supporting dossier a copy of the autopsy by Professor Hadongui [sic] on 4 November 1961, 'qui établit que la mort est due à une torture sauvage'.⁵¹⁵ Einaudi, however, quotes from the conclusion of Professor Hadengue's report as follows: "1) L'examen du cadavre et l'autopsie de la jeune Bedar Fatima n'ont pas montré de traces de violences. 2) La mort est vraisemblablement la conséquence d'une submersion. 3) Il s'agit vraisemblablement d'un suicide".⁵¹⁶ Can the urge to construct a martyrology sometimes lead to a cavalier attitude to the historic evidence? However, whatever the truth in the Bedar case, the most interesting example of the symbolism attached to location and sanctification of the body of the chuhada or moudjahidines, and central to the theme of this book, took place in the Kabyle village of Ait Sidi Amar on 16 October 2011 during an elaborate commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Paris massacre.

Cultural historians, sociologists and historians have developed an entire sub-discipline in the study of the symbolism and rituals of dead bodies. There is fascinating visual evidence for the way in which contemporary Algerian society has developed a complex memorial activism through the events at Ait Sidi Armar which were not only reported in the press but also extensively filmed and posted on Youtube. The 50th anniversary of the 17 October commemoration honoured Mohammedi Saddek and Yamina Idjeri, the latter a member of the OS terrorist network in Marseille who planted

⁵¹³ J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 171, 290-1, and *Octobre 1961*, 297-300. The conservative historian Jean-Paul Brunet, who betrays an all-consuming dislike of Einaudi, has put the boot in by a section in *Charonne. Lumières sur une tragédie* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 36-40, titled, 'Le myth de l'Enfant Héroïque', in which he charges his adversary with a classic propaganda construct, 'l'archétype de la jeune fille immaculée et héroïque'.

⁵¹⁴ Mohammed Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire du 17 Octobre 1961 à Paris. Droit d'évocation et de Souvenance (Essai)* (Algiers: Editions Encyclopedia, 2011), 175-206. The documentation and photographs provide an insight into the groups and interests involved in organising and funding the repatriation, from the Fondation 8 Mai 1945, the veterans of the FLN French Federation, and private funeral directors, to the Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidines, and the Wilaya of Bejaia.

⁵¹⁵ Letter from Said Abadou, Sécrétariat Général, ONM, to Si Mohammed Cherif Abbas, 25 September 2006, reproduced in M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 204.

⁵¹⁶ J.-L. Einaudi, *Octobre 1961*, 299.

a bomb at the Prefecture.⁵¹⁷ A video film follows the sequence of events with the procession of several hundred people beginning at the large, centrally located grave of the village's most prestigious hero, Colonel Mohand Ouldaj (real name Akli Belhadj Mokrane), commander of Wilaya 3, who died on 2 December 1972. The village has now been renamed Ait Sidi Amar Oulhadj after him in a modern, secular version of the tradition by which hamlets were often named after patron saints. After the laying of flowers by Yamina Idjeri and various dignitaries, then a prayer (*fatiha*), the presentation of the national flag while the national hymn was played, followed by a minutes silence, the assembly walked to the village cemetery where a similar ceremony took place at the much less prominent tomb of Mohammedi Saddek. The column then moved on by foot, to the accompaniment of the shrill ululations of women dressed in traditional Kabyle costumes, to a conference hall in the large mosque-communal complex of Ait Sidi Amar.⁵¹⁸ The walk by the pilgrims through the narrow lanes of the village, from one holy location to another, provides a powerful assertion and benediction of the physical space and cohesion of the community, one that can be relayed electronically to, among others, the sons and daughters now living in France and elsewhere.

In the tightly packed conference, decorated with national flags and a huge portrait of Saddek, Mohammed Ghafir, popularly known as 'Moh Clichy', who had come from Paris for the occasion, provided a testament to the heroic clandestine activities of Saddek, his 'ancien compagnon d'armes' during the war in Paris. Saddek, he assured the audience, was 'bel et bien l'initiateur du 17 Octobre 1961'.⁵¹⁹ A two page letter, addressed to the village of Ait Sidi Amar by Jean-Luc Einaudi on 9 October, was then read out: 'ne pouvant être parmi vous en cette occasion de commémoration du 50e anniversaire des manifestations du 17 Octobre 1961 à Paris, je vous adresse ces quelques lignes à la mémoire de celui qui en fut le principal organisateur sur le sol français, et ce, afin qu'il ait droit à sa just place dans l'histoire de la Fédération de France du FLN'.⁵²⁰

A marked feature of Einaudi's letter was the extent to which he persisted in underscoring the fact that Saddek was beyond doubt, 'le coordinateur principal sur le territoire français de la Fédération de France', and it was Saddek that had directly received orders from the Federal Committee during a meeting in Belgium to organise the demonstration of 17 October. The message was further pushed home by an interview with Jean-Luc Einaudi, filmed in Paris and posted on Youtube on 17 October 2011 by Mohammedi Saddek's son under the pseudonym 'Lunettes 1961', one of the noms-de-guerre of his father.⁵²¹ In this interview Einaudi once again engaged in an elliptic and repetitive emphasis of the certainty that Saddek was, 'le coordinateur principal de la Fédération de France du FLN' on metropolitan French soil. A few days earlier, on 13 October, Mohamed Ghafir during a speech at Bagneux, announced 'en exclusivité une bonne nouvelle qui constitue donc un scoop', that

⁵¹⁷ Yamina Idjeri was born in Marseille. Her mother was Italian, and her father originated from Ait Sidi Amar. Part of the 2011 commemoration involved an official visit to the family home of her father. Interview with Yamina Idjeri, in Algiers, 25 January 2012.

⁵¹⁸ See the video posted by Kabylienews on 16 October 2011, 'Ait Sidi Amar rend hommage à Mohammed Si Mohand Sadek et Idjeri Yamina', www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYvHxdy918c (accessed 29 May 2012).

⁵¹⁹ Le Soir d'Algérie, 17 October 2011: on-line at www.lesoirdalgerie.com/articles/2011/10/17/article.php?sid=124524&cid=2 (accessed 29 May 2012).

⁵²⁰ Le Soir d'Algérie, 17 October 2011; for a sense of the dramatic context in which this statement was read out see the film on Youtube, 'Jean Luc Einaudi écrit au village ait sidi amar oulhadj', www.youtube.com/watch?v=tz6n1FZjiaY. (accessed 29 May 2012). Einaudi could not be in Algeria for the ceremony, since on 15 October he was in Paris sitting alongside me as a speaker in two conferences held in Nanterre and in the National Assembly. In the foyer at Nanterre Einaudi told me rather mysteriously that there would soon be important revelations, but before I could gain enlightenment on his cryptic comments he turned on his heel and quickly headed away through a door.

⁵²¹ The video is on Youtube in two parts at www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJH5jonREVK, and www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUCM6JykXL4 (accessed 29 May 2012). Further interviews were carried out with two porteurs de valises, Mme and Robert Bonnaud, who knew Saddek when he was a leading cadre in the Marseille region, but neither was able to throw any light on his status within the Federal hierarchy.

his book on the events of 17 October was about to appear in the bookshops.⁵²² This book, which also campaigns on behalf of the primary role of Saddek, likewise omits any reference as to why the reputation of Saddek was thought to be threatened. What is remarkable about the co-ordinated Einaudi-Ghafir campaign of October 2011 is not that it sought to defend and honour Saddek's memory, but that nowhere do they dare to mention the dread name 'Zouaoui' or the evidence from our 2004 article and *Paris 1961*, that can have been the only source of their disquiet. What was it about this monster that so terrified Einaudi that he dare not even name it and remained frozen in a paralysis of the intellect? The sustained invisibility of Zouaoui, whose existence is perfectly well known to Einaudi, is strategically important since if he was ever to mention the counter-evidence, rather than sustaining the illusion that it does not exist, then he would be confronted with the threatening task of having to contemplate the DST archival sources on which the claim is based, and that might subvert his own version of history and the sacralisation of Mohammedi Saddek.

Meanwhile, far from Kabylie, in the western city of Sidi-bel-Abbès, a rather different kind of commemoration was taking place on 17 October 2011. Here local patriotism was able to lay claim to Mohamed Zouaoui, a native of Sidi-bel-Abbès who died and was buried there on 3 October 2000, as the 'grand militant de la cause nationale' who was beyond doubt head of the FLN in Paris. To honour this important son of the city was a duty: 'Un devoir de mémoire s'impose ce jour'. This claim to ownership of the FLN leader in Paris (no mention here in Oranie of the Kabyle, Saddek!) was instrumentally based on 'un précieux ouvrage' in which 'deux chercheurs britanniques...nous apporte le meilleur éclairage qui soit en ce qui concerne le rôle de ce meneur d'hommes'.⁵²³ Although I am flattered by such an accolade, it reinforces a feeling of being drawn into some kind of minor civil war, in which complex issues of family honour, local patriotism, and claims to regional or national status, play a more significant role than historical objectivity.

It is not perhaps surprising that the citizens of Sidi-bel-Abbès feel bound to honour their own son of the soil, just as the son and daughter of Mohammedi Saddek feel duty-bound to defend the prestigious status of their father. Anissa Mohammedi, a poet and academic, based almost entirely on evidence from Einaudi, has published an essay to 'rendre hommage' to her father, and 'd'abord revendiquer pour lui un passé historique glorieux, indéniable', especially after the long years during which he had received no recognition. This neglect was the subject of her poem *La voix du silence: Repose en paix, papa....*

Il y a des histoires qui ne se racontent pas
Et des mémoires qui n'oublient pas.⁵²⁴

Dead bodies, as the anthropologist Katherine Verdery has shown, can bestow prestige, or in the language of the Maghreb *baraka*, so the more prestigious the corpse the better, and the more potent its quasi-magical potency to reinforce claims of kin and villagers to power and status. In post-colonial Algerian society, claims made by individuals (or interest groups) in relation to their role during the War of Independence, as FLN cadres, ALN maquisards, liaison agents or victims of torture, and their degree of sacrifice, often measured in terms of suffering or numbers of dead in the family circle, carry very real material and economic consequences in terms of official registration as *moudjahidines* and access to jobs, land, political power, and pensions. Anything that might challenge such symbolic claims may be experienced as an assault on the core values and identity of the community, as well as its material interests. However, while the popular influence and legitimacy of

⁵²² M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 238.

⁵²³ 'Zouaoui Mohamed "Mustapha le Noir": Le Belabbésien qui a tourné en dérision toutes les polices de France', <http://lavoixdesidibelabbes.info/?p=1981> (accessed 29 May 2012). This article, apart from the DST archive that cannot be reproduced under dérogation rules, includes the only published photograph of Zouaoui known to me (see the book cover).

⁵²⁴ Anissa Mohammedi, 'Mohammedi Saddek, un combattant du FLN' in Olivier Le Court Grandmaison (ed), *Le 17 octobre 1961. Un crime d'Etat à Paris* (Paris: La Dispute, 2001), 141-156. In a similar vein, Amina Zouaoui, the niece of Mohammed Zouaoui, added an on-line comment to the above article (note 523), 'Je suis fière de mon Oncle. Allahy arahmou. VIVE l'ALGERIE'.

the tomb (*qubba*) of traditional village saints depended, rather like those of Catholic relics in Medieval Europe, on the test of whether its magical powers could perform miracles or not, the more secular *baraka* of the FLN hero and martyr receives its authentication from oral witnesses (*témoignages*) and historical investigation.⁵²⁵ This is one reason why Algerian political culture is notoriously prone to often bitter disputes between ex-FLN militants and others as to who did what in the past, backed up by reference to the most authoritative historians or documents. Reference to the claimed superiority and status of the historian, his reputation and ‘truth-speaking’ power, replaces faith in the demonstrative magical power of the saints’ bones to achieve miracles.

Such processes can be seen at work in the mutually reinforcing relationship between Ghafir as witness (*témoin*) and Einaudi as historian, as they intervened to sacrilise Saddek in the Ait Sidi Amar ceremonials. Ghafir, as head of Amala or Superzone 12 on the Paris Left-bank during the autumn of 1961, is potentially one of the most important and well-positioned FLN militants to provide detailed first-hand evidence of the massacre of 17 October and its context. Ghafir accepts that he has no skills as a historian and, in writing his new book, has no aim, ‘de substitution à un véritable travail d’historien lequel exige une capacité scientifique académique qui fait franchement défaut à l’humble Auteur que je suis’.⁵²⁶ But, he notes in his introduction, that he has overcome his reluctance to put pen to paper, primarily because of a ‘devoir de mémoire’, for which he evokes religious confirmation, as prescribed by Koranic verse 283 of the second surate ‘El Baquara’, ‘ne refusez point de témoigner’.⁵²⁷ His status as witness was evident to Einaudi who sought him out for further interview in 2009 to confirm that Saddek was the key Paris co-ordinator, which Einaudi again underlined in the Preface to Ghafir’s book, praising, ‘Ce souci de vérité le conduisait également à vouloir que soit restitué à sa juste place Mohammedi Mohand Saddek’.⁵²⁸ In turn Ghafir through his claim to the status of a direct observer in 1961, ‘un des acteurs de cet évènement historique en ma qualité d’ex-responsable de super-zone’, was able reciprocate by in turn placing a mark of authenticity on the ‘Professor’: ‘je considère que les témoignages réunis par l’historien Jean Luc EINAUDI dans ses livres sont authentiques et reflètent la réalité...’⁵²⁹

I would argue that the battle between partisans of Saddek and Zouaoui is ultimately of little importance since both individuals played an important role in the French Federation and it barely subtracts from their honour and status to place them as number two or three in the FLN hierarchy, as opposed to number one. Where I disagree with Einaudi is that his systematic denial and blocking out of Zouaoui’s role involves a silence in relation to the rich DST archive which not only provides incontrovertible evidence of his primary function, but is also the single most important untapped source on the 17 October and its context.

⁵²⁵ On the traditional cult of saints see esp. E. Dermenghem, *Le culte des saints dans l’Islam maghrébin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954).

⁵²⁶ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 11.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.* 9.

⁵²⁸ J.L. Einaudi, *Scènes de la guerre*, 209-18; M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 22.

⁵²⁹ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 215.

Appendix 1

Who was Mohammedi Saddek?

Information on Mohammedi Saddek's life is sparse and scattered and not once, in the extensive police and DST archives does his name appear. The main source on his background consists of interviews carried out by Jean-Luc Einaudi in Tizi Ouzou, Algeria, in September 1987. What follows is an attempt to reconstruct Saddek's position and function within the FLN, especially during 1961, from the available fragmentary evidence.

Mohammedi Mohand Saddek was born on 15 June 1930 in the Kabyle village of Bouzeuène where he received a primary education in the French school until aged 12, and then continued, until the age of 16, to study in a Koranic school.⁵³⁰ He arrived in France some time before the start of the Algerian war (1 November 1954), and settled in the north-west industrial suburbs of Paris, where he worked in various unskilled jobs, including as a sweeper and foundry worker. Like many workers in France, he left his wife and small son in the care of relatives in Kabylie. Saddek became active in the FLN during 1955 and Mohammed Ghafir, while responsable at Saint-Denis in 1956, knew him when he was employed at the Ferodo company and an organiser of the FLN *commerçants*.⁵³¹ I have no information on Saddek's activities between 1956 and 1960, but he must have worked his way up the FLN echelons since in 1960 he was given the high level post of head of Wilaya 3B, where he remained until June 1961.

In Wilaya 3B, which covered mainly Marseille, Nice, and Languedoc, he worked closely with a support network that was organised by Robert Bonnaud, a university lecturer and Secretary of the Fédération UGS, and Lucien Jubelin.⁵³² Also in the network was Madeleine Baudoin, who knew Saddek and introduced him to an ex-Resistance member, Jacques Meker, who later provided a safe-house at Villeneuve-la-Garenne.⁵³³ Zouaoui had also operated in Wilaya 3B from June 1959 as head of propaganda (DPIW) until his transfer to Paris to organise the information services under Haroun.⁵³⁴ The date of Zouaoui's transfer to Paris is not known, but he may well have had some contact with Saddek in Marseille and both men were to use the same pseudonym, "Maurice" and, because of their thick-framed glasses, "Quatre-yeux".⁵³⁵ It seems likely that Saddek was, for a while, Zouaoui's immediate superior in Marseille, and it is quite possible that the former felt a degree of resentment that Zouaoui was promoted over his head as Federal in January 1961, so reversing their positions in the hierarchy. Perhaps the Federal Committee preferred Zouaoui for such an important position since he was more dependable than the turbulent firebrand Saddek, a keen advocate of an armed offensive.

Marseille was for FLN cadres and supporters a dangerous place to be at this time, since unknown to them, one of the militants, Abdellah Younsi, was a police informer who seriously damaged the

⁵³⁰ J.-L. Einaudi, *La Bataille*, 57-8. An essay by Saddek's daughter, Anissa Mohammedi, 'Mohammed Saddek, un combattant du FLN', in Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison (ed.), *Le 17 Octobre 1961. Un crime d'état à Paris* (Paris: La Dispute, 2001), 141-156, is based almost entirely on Einaudi and adds little further information. I have used the spelling name 'Saddek' throughout, although various sources also use a single 'd'.

⁵³¹ J.-L. Einaudi, *Scènes*, 211, interview with Ghafir; Robert Bonnaud in *Vacarme* no.13 'Un franc-tireur minuscule, entretien avec Robert Bonnaud', notes that Saddek had worked at Renault and, 'en avait gardé un rudiment de culture ouvrière et communiste dû à la CGT'.<http://vacarme.eu.org/article79.html>.

⁵³² For the location of Wilaya 3B in 1961 see Map 1, p. 22. On the Jubelin-Bonnaud network in Marseille see H. Hamon and P. Rotman, *Les Porteurs de Valises*, 163-4, 357-59.

⁵³³ J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 59-60.; on Baudoin and the Marseille network also see Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance. French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 64-66, 208.

⁵³⁴ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 120. Zouaoui attended a central meeting in Switzerland on 4 September 1959 to reorganise the propaganda networks.

⁵³⁵ Bonnaud knew Saddek as 'Lunettes', 'André' and especially 'Maurice'.

Fédération.⁵³⁶ Younsi informed on numerous FLN cadres and French supporters over several years, including Bonnaud who was arrested in June 1961. Saddek, who has been described as exceptionally cautious and ‘cat-like’ in his clandestine routines, managed to escape overland. It was on this journey in about June 1961 that he stayed with Dr Gabriel Granier, deputy-mayor of the isolated town of Saint-Affrique in the Aveyron but, pursued there by the DST, he managed to escape disguised as a priest.⁵³⁷ Both Granier and Saddek were to be involved later with “Mourad” after the Evian Accords in 1962 when Saddek, because he had known him in Marseille, played a central role in his arrest, trial and execution. Mohamid Benyounès, who was then living in Granier’s house at Bagneux, called the doctor, with considerable embarrassment, to tend to Abdella Younsi after he had tried to cut his wrists while in captivity.⁵³⁸

Up to this point in time, June 1961, there is nothing unusual about the history of Mohammedi’s life as a nationalist militant, but from then until early 1962, the key phase of the October crisis, his trajectory becomes obscure and the evidence contradictory. After his escape from Marseille in June 1961 Saddek crossed over into Germany. ‘Je devais sortir parce que brûlé, grillé, ma tête mise à prix. Je devais donc transiter par l’Allemagne pour rejoindre soit la Tunisie, soit le Maroc, ou là où le FLN voudrait bien m’envoyer. J’arrive sur l’Allemagne, c’était en juin 1961. J’étais à l’époque responsable de willaya dans le midi de la France (...) j’arrive donc en Allemagne en juin 61. Un grand coup de filet avait été réalisé par la police sur le territoire français. Une vingtaine de responsables haut placés sont tombés. Le frère Boudaoud était là, avec le frère Bouaziz, avec Haroun, Souici. Je devais partir sur Tunis. Le frère Boudaoud me dit: “tu n’as pas de pot, tu vas y retourner!” (...) On m’a demandé de rentrer. Je suis rentré’.⁵³⁹ Saddek’s reference to the capture of some twenty ‘responsables haut placés’ does not correspond to any known event in Paris between June and early October, and seems to be a confusion with Operation Flore of 9th November.

By June of 1961 Zouaoui had been acting as Federal since January. Saddek then makes a surprising claim: he referred to Haroun’s *La 7e Wilaya*, which had been published in May of 1986, which contained ‘tout une structure aussi plausible que possible, mais il y a des omissions. Moi, j’étais le coordinateur principal, à partir du mois de juin 61’. After his return to France, ‘C’est à partir de là que je suis devenu coordinateur principal de la Fédération de France en France avec comme frères responsables, qui avaient le même titre que moi, si ce n’est que je supervisais aussi leur travail, “Daniel” Ben Younès, Mohamed Akli et Mohamed Attaba dit “Gilbert”. Leur nom est dans le livre [Haroun], il y a l’organigramme, il y a la structure. Il y a simplement une omission, c’est de ne pas avoir souligné que j’étais responsables principal de ces frères quoi que ce soit un travail collégial. J’ai été le premier à être informé, à autoriser cette manifestation du 17 octobre à Paris’.⁵⁴⁰

The organigramme that Saddek was referring to is on page 54 of Haroun’s *7e Wilaya*, but this diagramme, which includes Saddek, Benyounès and Mohamed Attaba as the three controlleurs, is of the FLN structure at the moment of the cease-fire (March 1962), one that was put in place months after the 17 October and also after Operation Flore.⁵⁴¹ As has been shown in this book, Zouaoui and all three controllers (RCs) were arrested on the night of 9-10 November, and it was this heavy blow that led to a major reorganisation. Mohand Akli Benyounès provides the only published account by a leader who had direct experience of this moment of extreme crisis. On the basis of his excellent work in organising Wilaya 2B (East France), he was ordered, first to Lyon (Wilaya 3) in October to sort out the problems generated by the informer “Mourad”, and then to Paris in November

⁵³⁶ Mohammed Harbi, ‘Histoire d’une infiltration de la DST dans le FLN: l’affaire Mourad’, Conference, *Pour une histoire critique et citoyenne*, Lyons 20-22 June 2006.

⁵³⁷ J.-L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 58.

⁵³⁸ M.A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 152-54.

⁵³⁹ Transcript from Einaudi’s interview with Saddek, 16 September 1987, kindly sent to me by Einaudi in a letter, 1 June 2003.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ On the controlleurs (RCs) and Wilaya leaders that were in place during 17 October and until 9 November 1961, see above page 31.

following ‘une vaste opération d’arrestations’ that had decapitated the Paris FLN. Here he found a desperate situation in which the higher levels of the organisation had broken down, and the collection, presumably because the Farès network had also been detained, remained blocked in a house at Montreuil. Benyounès managed to liaise with Mohamed Attaba, head of Wilaya 2 (Paris north) to start the process of rebuilding the network and Attaba handed over a letter from Ladlani, appointing Benyounès (“Daniel”) to replace Zouaoui: ‘Le comité fédéral désigne Daniel coordinateur pour la France. Demandons à tous les responsables de se tenir à sa disposition; signé Kr/Kaddour’.⁵⁴²

However, at this point Benyounès introduces a number of errors that further confuse the picture as to Saddek’s position in France between his return from Germany and Operation Flore. Benyounès indicates Saddek as head of Wilaya 1 (Paris South) during the events of October 1961, and Kaci Mâamar as head of Wilaya 1B (South-West/Atlantic).⁵⁴³ But Mohammed Ghafir, as head of Amala 12 from June 1961, provides a mass of evidence of his meetings with his immediate superior in Wilaya 1, who was undoubtedly Mâamar.⁵⁴⁴ Benyounès claims that Saddek escaped immediately to Germany after Operation Flore and remained there until he returned to France shortly before the cease-fire of 19 March 1962.⁵⁴⁵

Saddek’s position within the Federation during the October crisis remains a mystery, but certain parts of the puzzle can be put in place. Firstly, from the accounts of several leading members of the European support network, notably Georges Mattéi and Georges Lepage, we know that Saddek was active at a high level in Paris and co-ordinating some aspects of the 17 October demonstration. Mattéi, after the arrest of Henri Curiel on 20 October 1960, continued to recruit new members into the porteurs network, among them Francine Serfaty, who acted as a liaison agent for Saddek, Gérard Chaliand, Juliette Mince, Josette Brançon, Marie-Lucie Lanfranchi and others.⁵⁴⁶ What may be called loosely the “Mattéi network”, a grouping that was built up by him in an ad hoc way through personal contacts, appears to have been separate from the support organisation created around Zouaoui by Mingasson. It appears that Saddek in October 1961, via the Mattéi linkages, may have been moving within clandestine circles that were largely different from those of Zouaoui.⁵⁴⁷ Members of the Mattéi circle appear to have been ignorant of the Zouaoui-Mingasson grouping, apart from one telling statement by Gérard Chaliand, ‘Le contact avec le Front passait par Mattéi et moi. Notre interlocuteur habituel était Zouaoui, alias “M.H” ou “Mustapha le noir”’.⁵⁴⁸

Shortly before the 17 October Mattéi met Saddek in the Rue des Rennes and, as they walked in the direction of the Montparnasse Station, Saddek told him of the Fédération plan, ‘ “Nous allons descendre dans la rue le 17 octobre, contre le couvre-feu qui oblige nos frères à se terrer chez eux. C’est une question de dignité” [.....] Mohammed m’exposa le plan de la Fédération de France du FLN et me demanda de trouver une dizaine de camarades pour les placer en observateurs et en témoins aux différents points prévus pour la manif”.⁵⁴⁹ Unfortunately none of the reports drawn up by these witnesses appear to have survived, but several of them have been interviewed as to their experience of the 17 October, including Marie-Lucie Lanfranchi, and Clara and Henri Benoits.⁵⁵⁰ Mattéi continued to meet Saddek, for example a few days after the 17 October, and again on 13 February 1962 during the funeral of the victims of Charonne, which suggests that he may have

⁵⁴² M. A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 136.

⁵⁴³ Ibid, 124.

⁵⁴⁴ The DST archives indicate that the head of Wilaya 1B was “Belkacem” or Belkacem Mellah, and not, as Benyounès claims, p.124, Kaci Mâamar.

⁵⁴⁵ M. A. Benyounès, *Sept Ans*, 140. This is why Saddek appears in Haroun’s organigramme, 7 Wilaya, 54, which gives the organisational structure at the moment of the cease-fire.

⁵⁴⁶ J.L. Einaudi, *Franc-tireur. Georges Mattéi, de la guerre d’Algérie à la guérilla* (No place: Editions du Sextant/Danger Public, 2004), 83-100.

⁵⁴⁷ This may explain why in the extensive DST/Prefecture archives there is not a single reference to Saddek, Mattéi and others in the ex-Curiel circle.

⁵⁴⁸ Hamon, 332, interview October 1978.

⁵⁴⁹ O. Le Cour Grandmaison, *Le 17 octobre*, 27, reprinted from *Libération*, 17 October 1980.

⁵⁵⁰ J.L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 138-9, 152-55; O. Le Cour Grandmaison, *Le 17 octobre*, 32-35.

remained in Paris throughout this period, rather than escaping to Germany as Benyounès suggests.⁵⁵¹ Perhaps the person who knew Saddek best during 1961 was Georges Lepage, who worked at Renault in the wages department, and provided a safe-house in his home at Vitry. It was also here that FLN cadres held meetings and, once a month money from the collection was centralised and counted by Saddek before Lepage delivered it to the Farès banking network.⁵⁵² It was Lepage who, presumably at Saddek's bequest, recruited Clara and Henri Benoits, as well as Eugène Tribout, all three workers at Renault, to act as witnesses on 17 October.⁵⁵³

It is safe to say that Saddek was present in Paris before and after the 17 October in an organisational capacity, but none of the French agents or supporters have been able to identify the position of Saddek within the Federation organisation. This is to be expected, since the strict application of the basic ground-rules of clandestinity should have prevented any such identification being made, except at the very highest levels of the hierarchy where a few Europeans acting as chauffeurs or liaison agents had direct personal contact.

In recent years, Einaudi, looking to confirm the pre-eminent role of Saddek as the Federal in Paris, has interviewed two higher level FLN cadres, Mohammed Ghafir and Rabah Athmaniou, who seem to support this position.⁵⁵⁴ Their evidence needs to be examined closely. Ghafir, as we have seen in the Essay above (pages 127-131), attended the commemoration for Saddek in his native village of Ait Sidi Amar on 16 October 2011, and provided a testament to his 'ancien compagnon d'armes', who was 'bel et bien l'initiateur du 17 Octobre 1961'. Einaudi, in his Preface to Ghafir's memoirs, remarks that he was moved by a 'souci de vérité' that Saddek 'soit restitué à sa juste place...[....]..dont le rôle au sein de la Fédération de France avait été quasiment passé sous silence jusqu'à la parution de La bataille de Paris'.⁵⁵⁵ Ghafir, after his release from Larzac in June 1961 returned to Paris to re-establish contact with the FLN via the lawyer Mourad Oussedik. Saddek, whom he had known at St.Denis in 1956, made contact: 'Il m'a dit qu'il était coordinateur de quatre ou cinq wilayas, qu'il allait informer le comité fédéral, qu'on avait besoin de moi ici parce que la plupart avaient été arrêtés, qu'on avait besoin que je reprenne mes activités mais cette fois-ci sur la rive gauche'. Several days later Saddek arranged to have a false identity card made for him, under the name of a student, and introduced him to Mâamar Kaci, head of Wilaya 1, under whom he became a Régional.⁵⁵⁶ Although Ghafir mentions Saddek in several passages of his Memoirs as 'coordinateur de la Fédération de France du FLN', he provides no further evidence for this claim, beyond extended passages quoted from Einaudi's books. In a curious form of circularity, Ghafir as a witness to the historic events of October 1961 confers authenticity on Einaudi's work, while Einaudi in turn deploys Ghafir as confirmation of his thesis on Saddek.⁵⁵⁷

Ghafir's evidence on Saddek, it might be argued, coming as it does from a relatively high level cadre in charge of Amala 12 should be given credence: as a senior militant at the heart of the events

⁵⁵¹ J.L Einaudi, *Mattéi*, 114-15.

⁵⁵² J.L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 60.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 117, 153.

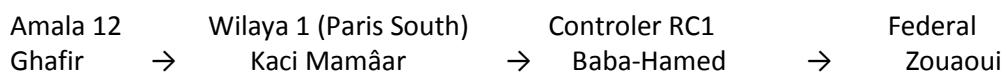
⁵⁵⁴ Rabah Athmaniou, interviewed by J.-L. Einaudi, *Scènes*, 120-142, 6 May 2005, was an Amala head in Wilaya 2B based In Reims in October 1961. 'Quand j'étais responsable d'amala, mon responsable, c'était le wilaya [ie head of Wilaya 2B,ie. Bahmed Boudraâ] et le responsable de mon responsable, c'est Mohammedi Saddek. Il était superwilya, coordinateur'. This, logically, would position Saddek as contrôleur RC2 for Wilaya 2B, a position actually held by Younès Aberkane. However, see A. Haroun, *7 Wilaya*, 54, was it a co-incidence that Saddek was to become RC2 in early 1962? Athmaniou attended a meeting in Paris on about the 15th or 16th October to plan the Phase 2 demonstrations that were to follow on from the Paris actions after 20 October.

⁵⁵⁵ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 22.

⁵⁵⁶ J.L. Einaudi, *Scènes*, 211-12. The figure 4 or 5 is peculiar since the Fédéral was in charge of seven wilayas, while RCs might have 3 at most.

⁵⁵⁷ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 215, states that as a key actor in,'cet évènement historique et en ma qualité d'ex-responsable de superzone [...] je considère que les témoignages réunis par l'historien Jean Luc Einaudi dans ses livres sont authentiques et reflètent la réalité, la sincérité, la crédibilité des déclarations enregistrées....'.

surrounding 17 October, he should know what he is talking about. However, the conclusion does not necessarily follow. We have no reason to doubt that Saddek did indeed liaise with Ghafir in this way, but it is very doubtful indeed if this would have been the task of the Federal to do this. It should be born in mind that the structure of the FLN cellular hierarchy was designed to prevent any militant or responsable at one level having any contact with or knowledge of any individuals beyond one linkage upwards or downwards in the chain. In the case of Zouaoui, for example, the archives show that he normally had contact upwards to the Federal Committee and downwards to the three contôleurs (RCs). The three RCs in turn, only operated downwards to the two or three Wilaya heads under their control. The seven Wilaya leaders linked as far as their Amala heads. Thus in the case of Ghafir and his superiors, the linkage was as follows:



This meant, if the normal rules of clandestinity were applied, that there was a fire-wall between Ghafir and his RC Controleur and the Federal. The evidence points to the maintenance of a successful barrier between the Federal/Contôleurs grouping, that met and conferred frequently in person, and the Wilaya/Amala group. The DST intelligence specialist Desbons, in his report on the Zouaoui network, remarked on the closed nature of the Federal's circle: 'Pratiquement, Zouaoui n'avait de contacts directs et fréquents qu'avec ses contrôleurs de wilayas (Amroune Saïd, Baba-Hamed, Aberkane Younès), les membres de la commission centrale ou les individus ayant un rôle sur le plan national'. During his interrogation by Montaner, Baba-Hamed (RC1) was questioned about the head of Wilaya 1 "Kadour"[Mâamar] and, 'comment vous touchait-il? – il ne pouvait pas'.⁵⁵⁸ The watertight nature of the bulkhead was put to the test during Operation Flore when, remarkably, despite the huge volume of documentation seized, the long *filatures*, and numerous interrogations, six of the seven Wilaya heads remained undetected and avoided arrest.⁵⁵⁹ Ghafir's memoirs, as might be expected, give precise and detailed information about his upward contacts with the three-man Wilaya Committee in which he met regularly with Kaci Mâamar and the second Amala head, Mohamed Tahar Labane, usually in the home of the Oussayef family in the Château of the Parc de Sceaux.⁵⁶⁰ That Ghafir never mentions either Baba-Hamed or Zouaoui is not surprising, since he would not have had any physical contact with them or known their identity.⁵⁶¹ On the other hand, the role of Saddek in contacting Ghafir in June 1961, while indicating a high level cadre, does not match the tasks of the Fédéral who, as far as possible, avoided carrying out field operations that might expose him to detection and arrest.

What do we know of Saddek's personality and how he positioned himself in relation to the profound crisis that was confronting the FLN in Paris between August and November 1961? Here the evidence of those few individuals who knew him, Mattéi, Lepage, Granier, Baudoin, and Ghafir, is in complete agreement: Saddek gave outspoken support for an activist position, a resumption of

⁵⁵⁸ H1B16

⁵⁵⁹ The exception was Yahia Achab, head of Wilaya 3B (Marseille) who just happened to arrive in Paris with funds collected on 1 November when Saïd Amroun's house was invested by the DST. It seems quite likely that Achab was, quite independently of this, revealed to the police by the informer "Mourad".

⁵⁶⁰ M. Ghafir, *Cinquantenaire*, 105, 118-19; on the narrow escape from arrest during a Wilaya meeting in Bagneux on 31 October 1961, see also pp.211-213.

⁵⁶¹ Ghafir, in an interview with Jim House, 24 October 2002, remarked that the strict 'cloisonnement' of the FLN meant that even high-ranking cadres remained ignorant of what was going on in other parts of the organisation. Ghafir also praised Einaudi's work since it has allowed former Federation leaders to gain an overview of the period that they were often unable to see at the time. A pitfall of Ghafir's memoirs, that are highly dependent on Einaudi, is that they have been profoundly coloured and shaped by his later reading so that it becomes impossible to separate his personal experience and memory from later narratives and interpretations by others.

armed struggle, that went against the policy of the Federal Committee. Early in 1961, in response to Saddek's justification of the assassination of a police officer in Valence, Gabriel Granier objected: 'L'opinion française est en train d'évoluer, cela risque de la raidir. C'est une erreur. Vous risquez de vous mettre encore plus l'opinion à dos'.⁵⁶² Likewise, Georges Lepage, his closest aid, criticized the attacks on the police, 'C'est pas normal que vous foutez en l'air un gars qui est devant un poste de police [...] C'est mal perçu par la population et même par certaines personnes qui vous soutiennent'. In such exchanges Saddek always presented himself as a hard man, 'C'est la loi du talion: oeil pour œil, dent pour dent! [...] S'il faut payer la facture, on paiera la facture!'.⁵⁶³ George Mattéi also witnessed Saddek's combative, if not aggressive attitude towards the French security forces and a supine public, remarking of the huge crowds that turned out for the victims of Charonne on 13 February 1962, 'Tu vois, ce qu'il faudrait maintenant, c'est jeter une grenade!'.⁵⁶⁴ Einaudi concludes that Saddek was an 'activist', 'Il est chaud partisan des actions armées, et les armes exercent une certaine fascination sur lui. Il n'a pas de pitié pour ceux qu'il considère comme des "traîtres" [...] Il est favorable au développement des actions armées en France, à des opérations de grande envergure, dans le style de celles du mois d'août 1958. 'Nous sommes en mesure d'incendier le territoire français si l'autorisation nous en est donnée...''.⁵⁶⁵

We are now in a position to see why it was that the firebrand Saddek, placed in an unidentified but senior position within the Paris organisation, represented such a major threat to the Federal Committee that was desperately trying to close down the attacks on the police. As we have seen in Chapter 7, the Committee made the crucial decision to organise a Paris demonstration, and the form that this would take, in a small window of time between the 7th and 10th October.⁵⁶⁶ It was during this brief period that the Committee met several times to consider the issue and to consult with those on the ground in Paris.⁵⁶⁷ Among those who were called across the border to confer with the Committee members was Mingasson, Ouhadj and several other trade unionists, and Saddek. Ouhadj, head of AGTA at Renault, was called to Brussels to consult with Souici on how the French left would react to a major action by the FLN in France.⁵⁶⁸ Mingasson, acting almost certainly as a liaison agent, travelled to Belgium on the 9th and returned the next day, probably carrying the highly important and secret instructions dated the 10th October. Saddek, after crossing the border disguised as a miner, met Omar Boudaoud in Belgium. In Einaudi's first book of 1991, he gives only one reason as to why Saddek was summoned by Boudaoud, to read him the riot act. The demonstration was to be pacific and, "Quiconque aura ne serait-ce qu'une épingle sur lui sera passible de la peine de mort!". Clearly the Federal Committee was well aware of Saddek's incendiary language in Paris. Einaudi concludes that Saddek disagreed, but was not prepared to break discipline, since 'on ne discute pas les ordres'.⁵⁶⁹ Ghafir, in his memoirs, fundamentally agrees with Saddek's position: that the truce was a big mistake, although the situation was rescued by the decision to organise a demonstration since this acted as a safety valve for the mounting pressure among the activist militants.

⁵⁶² J.L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 61, interview with Granier, 23 November 1987.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 66-67, interview with Lepage, 14 December 1988.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 276, interview with Mattéi, 4 March 1987.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

⁵⁶⁶ The *Sou'al* correspondence, pp. 71-77, shows that the Federal Committee, in a letter to Paris dated 7 October, was at this late stage still planning for the traditional demonstration of 1 November. This was sent before the Committee received a 'Note Express' from Paris, also dated 7 October, in which a mass street action against the curfew was suggested. In reply to this, the Committee, in the crucial planning order dated 10 October gave detailed instructions for three phases of action in Paris and France.

⁵⁶⁷ Ali Haroun, in an interview with Michel Levine, *Les ratonnades*, 82-3, notes that the Committee met in a safe-house in Cologne, probably on the 9 October. 'Nous étions tous d'accord qu'il fallait agir, mais nous devions étudier auparavant tous les rapports venus du terrain'.

⁵⁶⁸ J.L. Einaudi, *Octobre*, 159.; Laure Pitti, interview with Omar Ouhadj, 15 May 1993, 'Chaque responsable de service [at Renault] était convoqué à l'extérieur, les uns à Cologne en Allemagne, les autres en Belgique. Moi j'ai été convoqué en Belgique à Bruxelles'.

⁵⁶⁹ J.L. Einaudi, *Bataille*, 94-95.

In October 2011 Einaudi, in his letter sent to the commemorative meeting in Aït-Sidi Amar, rather modified his earlier account of Saddek's voyage to Belgium. Saddek was now, he claimed, called to Germany on 9 October in order to receive the order and plans for the demonstrations of 17 October and after, 'Il est revenu le 12 octobre avec les directives fixant les modalités des manifestations'.⁵⁷⁰ However, this version is in contradiction with the *Sou'al* correspondence that Einaudi insists was exchanged with Saddek, rather than with Zouaoui. Why would the Federal Committee write to Paris on 10 October giving its detailed instructions if Saddek was in Germany with the Committee and had received the orders in person? Ali Haroun, who wrote by hand the directives of the Committee to Paris on behalf of Ladlani, claims that Einaudi has made a mistake, 'en identifiant "Maurice" comme Sadek Mohammedi. Maurice était effectivement le pseudonyme de Mohamed Zouaoui qui se trouvait auparavant dépendre de moi-même comme responsable à l'information pour la wilaya de Paris....C'est donc Zouaoui qui était responsable organique en septembre-octobre 1961. Quant à Mohammedi dont les pseudonymes étaient "Lunettes" ou "Raymond" il n'a accédé à cette responsabilité qu'après l'opération de police du 10 novembre 1961'.⁵⁷¹ More recently Haroun has denied that Saddek was called at all to Belgium by Omar Boudaoud.⁵⁷²

At some time after November 1961 Saddek was briefly appointed RC2, contrôleur of Wilaya 2 (Paris North), and W2 and W2B. We know that he was in Paris on 13 February 1962 since he met with Mattéi, and on 17 May Saddek drew the informer Abdellah Younsi ("Mourad") into a meeting that led to his trial and execution. On his return to Algeria Saddek, like many in the French Federation, appears to have been marginalised and excluded from high ranking employment or other 'rewards' that went to the victors in the power struggle. He moved back to his native Kabylie, and said little about his war-time experiences until interviewed by Einaudi in 1987. In June 1989 he was arrested for fraud, and eventually condemned to seven years prison in December 1991, but was soon to be freed on the intervention of President Boudiaf, victim soon after of an assassination plot. His family and Einaudi suggest that Saddek was the victim of some kind of political machination, although the nature of this plot against him remains obscure or has not been clarified.⁵⁷³ Saddek died of a heart attack in August 1994.

To conclude, the evidence relating to Saddek and his position and role during 1961 remains fragmentary and opaque and several questions remain unanswered. However, we can state with certainty, given the considerable volume of evidence contained in the DST and police files, that Zouaoui was the 'Fédéral' who headed the overall organisation in France from January to November 1961. But Saddek was not a mere ghost: the testimony of Mattéi and others confirms that he fulfilled some quite high-level role in the overall organisation in Paris during the October crisis.⁵⁷⁴ What remains elusive is the identification of the precise niche that he occupied in the structure.

Saddek appears to during 1961 to have occupied none of the 'official' or normal posts to be found within the FLN organisational pyramid. Perhaps the most likely solution to the puzzle is that Saddek functioned as an 'adjoint' to Zouaoui. As we have seen, the FLN appointed deputies to the leaders at all levels of the hierarchy so that the latter could be rapidly replaced in the event of their arrest. This might explain why Saddek and Zouaoui shared the same pseudonyms, "Maurice", and "Quatre-yeux" or "Lunettes", since this could serve to confuse the security services. More interesting is the fact that the DST, after Operation Flore, drew up a very detailed plan or organigramme of the entire network. On this Zouaoui and Mingasson, as the key hubs, are indicated by larger circles, from which

⁵⁷⁰ *Le Soir d'Alger*, 10 October 2011, on-line at www.lesoiralgerie.com: I have had to rely on this newspaper account since I have, to date, not had access to the original two page letter.

⁵⁷¹ Ali Haroun letter to author, 31 March 2003.

⁵⁷² Letter to Jim House, 9 October 2011.

⁵⁷³ J.L. Einaudi, *Octobre*, 13-14.

⁵⁷⁴ Ladlani, CF head of the organisation in France, wrote to Einaudi on 17 February 1990, presumably in reply to a question about Saddek, 'Les directives se transmettent aux responsables, du moins pour mes subordonnés dont faisaient partie Mohand Saddek....', without specifying his position: see Einaudi, *Scènes*, 240.

connecting lines radiate out to other members of the organisation. Located in between them is an equally large circle, size here representing the level of importance, and this remains empty, suggesting that a key member of the network remained unidentified by the DST.⁵⁷⁵ Such a deputy function might best explain why Saddek was taking on some senior responsibilities just before and during 17 October, and also why he felt able to claim that he was 'head' of FLN operations in Paris. But if this was the case, Saddek was, during his interview with Einaudi in 1987, being rather economic with the truth.

⁵⁷⁵ H1B28.

Appendix 2

La Guerre des chiffres: how many Algerians died at the hands of the police?

Can the DST archives, and access to the internal FLN reports which they contain, tell us anything new about the highly controversial issue of the number of Algerians who were killed by the police during the October crisis?

I do not propose to re-examine the arguments surrounding this debate, which I have already addressed in *Paris 1961*, except to emphasise again that no definitive or conclusive figure as to the fatalities will ever be arrived at.⁵⁷⁶ Michel Levine, as early as his 1985 book *Les Ratonnades d'Octobre*, stated: 'Quel est le nombre réel des morts? Sans doute ne le saura-t-on jamais'.⁵⁷⁷ This does not prevent the historian from arriving, with some confidence, at an idea of the general scale of the killings in which over 120 Algerians lost their lives during the months of September and October. However, what did the Federation in particular have to say about this issue? In principle the Federation, which maintained an impeccable record of the monthly movements of Algerians in Paris, was in a good position to find out what had happened to the militants who attended the demonstration of 17 October. But such an accounting process could not be achieved, for a number of reasons.

The Federation made plans for European observers to be present on 17 October, but it was only after the event, from 22 October onwards, that it made a systematic effort to collect eye-witness reports from Algerian participants and data on wounded, killed and 'disappeared'. The eye-witness reports, which provide a still largely unexplored and rich historical source, were never centralised in one place in 1961 so that the FLN could subject the entire corpus to a systematic analysis. Some did reach the Federal Committee and can be found today in the FLN archives deposited by Ali Haroun in the Algerian National Archives, but others had only reached Wilaya or RC level when they were seized by the DST on 9-10 November. Other reports can be found in the FLN archives deposited by Mohammed Haroun, also in the Algerian National Archives, while an untold number are in private hands. Even if all such reports could be located and studied, they would still not be able to provide global statistics. The eye-witness accounts I have studied provide a vivid picture of events, but given the confusion of the demonstration, the violence and chaos, they can in most instances give only vague, locally restricted or uncertain impressions in which, for example, men who were seen by witnesses to have fallen from bullets remained anonymous or unknown.

The most accurate statistics would have been made possible if the lower echelon leaders at Regional level and below had, over a period of several weeks, checked – as they did every month – the number of men who had gone missing, and they had made enquiries to find which of these were in hospital, detailed in the CIV, had been returned to Algeria, sent to camps in France, or were dead. However, the mass arrest of 14,000 demonstrators from the lower ranks of the FLN hierarchy meant that local organisations were in disarray. On 20 October Zouaoui wrote to the Federal Committee, 'le nombre de morts et blessés est certainement plus élevé que celui annoncé par diverses voies. Sur cette affaire, nous ne serons définitivement fixés que d'ici une semaine et même...plus, car il va nous falloir rétablir la liaison entre divers comités et au sein de nombreuses régions, procéder à leur reconstitution. Cela ne va pas être sans peine, mais réalisable dans de brefs délais'.⁵⁷⁸ Soon after, on 9 November, the RC leaders that served to centralise information from the Wilayas were all arrested. In addition, from about early November onwards, the FLN leadership decided that it no longer wished to use the information of violent repression and deaths in Paris for propaganda

⁵⁷⁶ J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 161-8.

⁵⁷⁷ M. Levine, *Les Ratonnades*, 154.

⁵⁷⁸ *Sou'al*, 84

purposes, a shift that meant any information that had been collected was never collated.⁵⁷⁹ An additional complication arises from the fact that as many, if not more, Algerians were killed by the Paris police between 1 September and 17 October than on the demonstration itself. The information that militants were asked to supply related only to the 17-18 October, or shortly afterwards.

If we look at the later statements made by leading members of the French Federation, one can detect signs of uncertainty as to the figures, betrayed by the give-away sign of rounded up numbers. Ali Haroun remarks: 'La fédération a été dans l'incapacité d'en fixer le nombre de manière précise...', especially as the numbers detained or transferred elsewhere was unknown. 'Cependant la synthèse des rapports sur les cas précis des tués, les 17 octobre et jours suivantes, par balles, matraquages, noyades et autres moyens, permet de les chiffrer approximativement à 200, et les blessés à 2,300'.⁵⁸⁰ The figure of 200 has since 1986 become the 'official' figure of the ex-Federation leaders. Omar Boudaoud notes: 'Nous avions comptabilisé 200 morts à l'époque. Mais nous savons aujourd'hui que ce nombre était plus élevé. Nous n'avions en effet pris en considération que les chiffres mentionnés dans les rapports de l'organisation. Mais il y en eut beaucoup plus, sans compter les disparus. Nous ne savions pas exactement qui, parmi les disparus, avait été jeté dans la Seine et qui avait été arrêté et transféré dans les camps d'Algérie par le pont aérien établi dès le 20 octobre'.⁵⁸¹ The two Federal Committee members are right to remain cautious or approximative.

Mohammed Ghafir, in his undated report for Amala 12, described the situation for his own area, corresponding to about a quarter of Paris, in the following terms:-

'Jusqu'à présent nous n'avons pas pu avoir le bilan exact des blessés et des disparus – quant aux morts, nous avons eu 3 jetés à la Seine: TLEMSANTI, GUENDOUZ jeté au pont Montbello le 18-10-61 à 21 h 30, LOUCIF Lakhdar, 15 rue d'Ouessant 15e, et AREHAB-BELAÏD 20 rue Maitre Albert 5e, repêché de la Seine. Pour les blessés et les disparus, nous avons un élément blessé par une balle dans le dos et se trouve actuellement à l'hôpital NECKER – le nommé GUERFI MOHAMED 11 rue Général Boeurré 15e; un élément réscapé, le frère Bourouar 8 rue Maitre Albert 5e; un 2e réscapé, CHAMOUN [chaouzoun?] Ahmed, 245 rue d'Alésia 14e; un autre élément blessé par une balle à la jambe demeurant au 64 rue Mouffetard 5e.'⁵⁸²

Four of these seven men can be further identified from the books of Jean-Luc Einaudi. Three of the victims lived in the Rue Maitre Albert in the 5th arrondissement, a small road between the Place Maubert and quayside opposite Notre-Dame. Guendouz Telemansi and Ahcène Boulanouar lived in the same hotel (number 8) and worked on the same building site, and joined a demonstration on 18 October near the Seine. Telemansi was later found in the Seine, his hands tied behind his back, while Boulanouar, because he could swim, survived.⁵⁸³ Belaïd Arehab who lived at No.20 Rue Maitre Albert, also died from drowning in the Seine on 18 October.⁵⁸⁴ However, typical of the confusions that can arise with such data, is Ghafir's inclusion of Lakhdar Loucif who, far from dying on 17-18 October, had disappeared on 15 September and his badly decomposed body was recovered from the Seine on the 1st or 9th of October.⁵⁸⁵ Ghafir, in trying to establish the situation in Amala 12, a

⁵⁷⁹ Gilles Manceron (ed.), *Le 17 octobre*, 177, comments: 'Plus grave, la liste des blessés, des morts et des disparus du 17 octobre 1961 que la Fédération de France a établie après avoir demandé à tous ses militants de la région parisienne de lui transmettre l'ensemble des informations qu'ils détiendrait à ce sujet, n'a jamais été rendue publique ni utilisée ensuite par le FLN'.

⁵⁸⁰ A. Haroun, *7e Wilaya*, 374.

⁵⁸¹ O. Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN*, 186.

⁵⁸² H1B35, Rapport sur la riposte du 17 au 20 octobre au Couvre-feu raciste.

⁵⁸³ J.L. Einaudi, *La Bataille*, 13, 192; *Octobre 1961*, 210-212, based on a report of Boulanouar dated 22 October 1961, and an interview 9 November 1997. Telemansi was buried at the cemetery of Thiais on 4 November 1961. See also a long interview with Boulanouar by Camille Marchaut, <http://pourinfo.ouvaton.org/histoire/guerre%27algerie/17octobre/ahcene.htm> (accessed 23/05/02).

⁵⁸⁴ J.-L. Einaudi, *La Bataille*, 230.

⁵⁸⁵ J.-L. Einaudi, *La Bataille*, 88, quotes from *Le Monde*, 2 October, 'Le cadavre d'un Algérien, M. Lakhdar Loucif, habitant à Paris, a été retiré de la Seine, quai Carnot, à Saint-Cloud. La victime, dont le corps paraît avoir

considerable part of the city, was only able to establish the identities of three dead men. A similar report for Wilaya 1 (Paris south of the Seine) stated: ‘Pour le moment, sept de nos frères morts dans les manifestations nous ont été confirmés par des rapports’, but it was hoped that an exact number would be known, after further enquiry, in a few days.⁵⁸⁶ The difficulty of arriving at accurate statistics can be appreciated.

In his memoirs Mohammed Ghafir recognises the problem of finding sources that can be used to verify the numbers killed on 17 October: ‘les chiffres donnés sur les martyrs de cet évènement n’ont jamais été cernés d’une façon officielle, pour deux raisons: la destruction des archives de la wilaya 1 [et] la déstabilisation des structures de l’Organisation durant les mois suivants’, a cryptic reference to Operation Flore.⁵⁸⁷ However, this has not prevented him elsewhere in his book from advancing, without any evidence, the most fantastic figures, ranging from 327 ‘drowned’ in the Seine, to ‘un chiffre approximatif de 1000 martyrs’, and 50 militants in the courtyard of the Prefecture of Police, ‘fusillés [sic] et jetés à la Seine’.⁵⁸⁸ But in particular, Ghafir extols and quotes at great length from Einaudi, referred to him as the final authority in these matters, and reproduces from *October 1961* a list of victims.⁵⁸⁹ Einaudi’s victim lists, that he has frequently expanded and revised over the last twenty years, are worth examining, especially since they or their figures have been endlessly reproduced by the media and set the tone for many memory activists.

In 1991 Einaudi had the good sense to recognise the impossibility of a precise count: ‘Combien y eut-il de morts? On ne le saura jamais avec exactitude’, but immediately flew in the face of his own critical reason by producing ever longer and more detailed lists of victims.⁵⁹⁰ The 1991 list included 142 victims, 74 of whom had died and 68 ‘disappeared’, and in 2001 this was increased to 393 dead and disappeared, and then after various minor revisions, was reduced to 389 in 2009 and 2011. Throughout this process, although laying claim to the most careful investigation of individual cases, his work has been marred by numerous, careless mistakes. For example, he included in his early list of FLN victims a number of harkis who had been killed by the GA, including the case of Mohamed Larbi Boulahia who, in *Octobre 1961* (page 363) he designated as a ‘membre de la FAP’, but thirteen pages previously (p.350), included him on the list of FLN victims.

Unfortunately such carelessness is endemic. Here I examine just one aspect of this, relating to a serious issue of counting the same individuals twice or even three times. The question of the orthography of Algerian names had presented a major problem for French authorities and police in Algeria since the nineteenth century, since multiple variants in spelling on identity cards, official documents, and fichiers, could pose a serious administrative and security issue. The historian needs to be aware of this problem in compiling identification data. The Algerian and French colonial convention was also to usually invert first and surname, as in the case of the writer always known as ‘Yacine Ketab’, and this could also lead to obvious confusion, as in the case of Einaudi’s listing of ‘Hammiche Mohand’ and ‘Mohand Hammiche’ as separate individuals. In *October 1961*, Einaudi admitted that in 1991 he had confused Ahmed Khlifi with Ahmed Khalfi as two disappeared, when in fact this was the same person, but clearly this did not alert him to a wider problem. In 2003 Jean-Paul Brunet, in commenting on the question of ‘les doublons’, remarked that, ‘certains noms ont une similitude troublante’, and referred specifically to the cases of Bennehar, Djahmoum, Meziane,

séjourné plusieurs jours dans l’eau, avait reçu une balle de revolver dans la tête’. In *Octobre 1961*, 142, Einaudi reports that he was found in the Seine on 9 October, a date that contradicts his earlier book.

⁵⁸⁶ H1B35, W1, *Rapport concernant la riposte contre le couvre feu raciste*, 4.pp. undated.

⁵⁸⁷ M. Gahfir, *Cinquantenaire*, 217.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 168, 215. Gahfir derives his figure of 327 from a statement made by Mourad Oussédik, head of the FLN collective of lawyers, on 17 October 1983: ‘327 Algériens ont été noyés dans la Seine’ according to the records of the Institut Médico-légal. Einaudi, *La Bataille*, 268, was given precisely the same figure by Saddek during his interview on 16 September 1987, but of dead and disappeared. The source of this figure remains unknown

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 163-66.

⁵⁹⁰ J.-L. Einaudi, *La Bataille*, 266.

and Yahiaoui.⁵⁹¹ In *Paris 1961* we also indicated an issue here, and that 'at least' eight victims had been counted twice, as in the case of 'Seddik Kenniche', also listed as 'Sedik Kheniche' who had 'both' died on the same day.⁵⁹²

Einaudi, although claiming to subject Brunet's work to close critical scrutiny, has ignored the issue of double counting and the five examples named by Brunet and in *Paris 1961*, continue to be included in the victim lists he published in 2009 and 2011.⁵⁹³ Einaudi's most recent, revised list of 2011, contains the following dubious cases:-

Abbas Ahmed (17/10/61) and Habbas Ahmed (Autumn 61)
 Bellal Mohammed (Autumn 1961) and Bellil Mohammed
 Benakli Ahmed (5/9/61) and Benakli Ahmed (22/9/61)
 Benjahoub Ammar (7/10/61) and Benyahoub, Ammar (Oct. 61)
 Bennehar Abdelkader (18/10/61) and Bennehr Abdelkader (Oct. 61)
 Chemloul Abdelkader (3/10/61) and Chemloul Amrane (3/10/61)
 Hammiche Mohand (Autumn 61) and Mohand Hammiche (Autumn 1961)
 Kenniche Seddik (29/9/61) and Kheniche Sedik (29/9/61)
 Khelifa Ali (30/10/61) and Khelisi Ali (30/10/61)
 Makhnane Mohammed (23/10/61) and Makhnache Mohammed (26/10/61)
 Medjahdi Abdelkader (17/10/61) and Medjahi Abdelkader (17/10/61)
 Melouche Amar (Autumn 61) and Meklouche Amar (18/10/61)
 Tarchounet Layachi (10/10/61) and Tarchouni Abdelkader (9/10/61)
 Yahiaoui Larbi (17/10/61) and Yalaoui Larbi (16/9/61)
 Counted three times:-
 Meziane Mohammed (17/10/61), Meziane Mohand (Autumn 61) and Mohand Meziane (Autumn 61).

Most of these can be shown, through an inspection of the evidence in Einaudi's own books, to be the same individual. In some instances individuals and dates get in a complete mess as in the case of Yahlaoui Larbi, identified in *La Bataille* (p.114) as shot by the police on 17 October, but who is then listed (p.316) as Yahiaoui Larbi. The latter misspelling is then repeated in the *Octobre 1961* list, alongside another Yalaoui Larbi who was shot in or near the Rude de Chaligny on 16 September 1961 (p.90). So here we have a case of one individual, with three variants of name spelling, killed on two dates one month apart. Einaudi's most up-to-date 2011 list thus counts 15 individuals as 29.⁵⁹⁴

Does this really matter? I think that it does for several reasons. By a rather careless attitude to the analysis of this historical evidence Einaudi runs the danger of undermining confidence in his overall treatment of other sources. Secondly, he does no favours to the important cause of memory activism by providing it with inflated figures that sooner or later are going to backfire and possibly damage the legitimacy of the cause. Thirdly, Einaudi is playing to a tempting, but counter-productive, aspect of anti-colonial militancy that makes a naive equation between the quantifiable level of French repression and the self-righteous wrath of its opponents.⁵⁹⁵ In this mind-set the

⁵⁹¹ Jean-Paul Brunet, *Charonne. Lumières sur une tragédie* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003).

⁵⁹² J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 161.

⁵⁹³ With one exception. Brunet argued that Saïd Djamouni was not a victim, since he had died of natural causes on 19 October 1961. Einaudi in a Postface, 'Réponse à Jean-Paul Brunet', in a new edition of *Octobre 1961* (Paris: Fayard/Pluriel, 2011), 573, showed how open-minded he was to such counter-evidence by accepting this, 'Dans ce cas, la critique de J.-P. Brunet était pertinente'. However, Einaudi had nothing to say about Brunet's detection of the doubling of 'Djadnoun Saïd' and 'Djamouni Saïd', but discretely expunged both names from his victim list.

⁵⁹⁴ M. Ghafir, *Cinquante*, 163-66, reproduces Einaudi's list, as do also many militant organisations, so further disseminating this as a 'quasi-official' reference.

⁵⁹⁵ The militant impetus to inflation and exaggeration is illustrated clearly in Mohammed Ghafir's martyrology which, like official FLN commemoration ritual, dwells on the details of horrific killings and its scale.

worse the horrors of torture and killings the better, since the higher the figures, the more grim the butchery, the more legitimate the cause. Has Einaudi's incessant drive to a maximalist position been influenced by a secret ambition to corroborate the mythical figure of 327 given to him by Mohammedi Saddek in 1987? The reality of French colonial repression was sufficiently grim and nasty not to require any fictional elaboration or inflation, and it could be asked whether the moral and inhumane weight of a massacre of, for example, 140 Algerians is somehow 'less' a crime than that of 387? The data is simply incommensurable.

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