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## The Deafening Silence Towards the Algerian War of Independence

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### Abstract:

The Algerian war of independence remains a pivotal point in French history even after 59 years. Despite the fact that it was fought from 1954 to 1962, France denied it for more than 35 years. It was a bloody conflict, with two million French soldiers fighting in Algeria and millions of people in modern-day France living through it. However, the French government refused to consider it a war and instead saw it as a series of minor events carried out to maintain order. This bloody disaster triggered a political crisis that led to the overthrow of the Fourth Republic, and it was a sensitive subject for the French state, as well as a stigma in its historical records that had to be hidden. This paper, then, aims to break the silence around the Algerian war of independence and investigate the reasons behind the erasure of the war from the French historiography.

**Keywords:** The Algerian war of independence; silence; the French historiography

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## **1 .Introduction :**

Colonialism and Imperialism are commonly perceived as a European construct and with the final wave of decolonization in the 1950's and 1960's they were esteemed as worldwide historical legacies. In spite of this classification, these institutions did not achieve a prominent status as that of the two world wars because of their inability to find a place of remembrance in the different national or shared European cultures. This is, also, because the events of colonial history ended in the recent past and mainly because they didn't occur within Europe. French Colonialism in Algeria is one sample of a muted colonial experience that was previously (during the war) transmitted via the media, but the political zeal that allowed its transmission was extinguished after decolonization, for it no longer contributed to the French national glory. The complete disregard to commemorative tendencies was indispensable, since the colonial past was that of defeat and loss; challenging the overall egocentric beliefs of the French grandeur.

## **2. From the Beginning:**

Algeria was invaded by France in 1830 and as early as the beginning of colonization, a large population of French and European settlers established themselves in Algeria constituting a community called '*les pieds noirs*'. Since 1848, Algeria was designated as an integral part of metropolitan France, divided into 3 administrative departments (Algiers, Constantine and Oran) administered by the Minister of Domestic Affairs. This was supported by a pronouncement that Algerians must be honored with a French education in order to be worthy of the title of French citizen. Until that occurs, they must accept their position as subjects of the French empire, with no political rights unless they want to give up their Muslim identity. In reality, the French strove to elevate their standards by creating a criterion of a French citizen that an Algerian could never achieve and against which they were judged. Algerians, on the other hand, correctly utilized it as a weapon to challenge French dominance and to build their demands for independence. (Calvet, 2017, pp. 3-4)

The French actions in Algeria were out of the ordinary; the massive land settlement and the intensity of occupation were unprecedented. From this moment forth, Algeria "was not only part of France, Algeria was France" (Calvet, 2017, p. 4) and was to remain French for one hundred and thirty-two

years. Indeed, the great attention towards Algeria was no surprise, taking into consideration Algeria's position in the Mediterranean: It is the gateway to the Third World and the largest country among them. It is also the closest country to metropolitan France and communication was easily attainable, and the idea of the Mediterranean as a French basin was highly irresistible. These factors constituted an incentive for the French to grip firmly on the notion of 'l'Algérie Française' and it allegedly granted it a departmental status because all in all: "les départements d'Algérie ... sont Français... et d'une manière irrévocable... ici, c'est la France". (Harrisson, 1983, p. 76)

Following World War II, Algerians were inspired by this liberating tendency to demand complete independence. Articulating under the *FLN* (le Front de la Libération National); military uprisings commenced by targeting urban areas. In return, France launched campaigns against urban guerrillas and was able to cope with the attacks. In spite of that, France was witnessing a political crisis that imperiled the state's security. The sharp division of opinions between the proponents and opponents of French Algeria threatened with a civil war, leading the French state to recall General De Gaulle to power, trusting his leadership capacity to hunt down the specter of civil war.

De Gaulle was nominated prime minister by the national parliament and granted the authority to draft the Fifth Republic's constitution. On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1958, he was elected president. The major difficulty he faced in his first years of presidency was to find a settlement to the Algerian conflict. He was torn between left-wing intellectuals who backed Algerian independence and pressured him to find a rapid solution to the conflict and European residents in Algeria and mainland France who wanted to keep Algeria under their control. However, once the *FLN* established the *Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic* (GPRA) on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1958, it was evident that its leaders would not compromise on Algeria's ultimate independence.

After having deeply examined the situation in Algeria, De Gaulle discerned that the rebels are firmly committed to their cause and eventually acknowledged the Algerians right to self-determination. As a reaction to this decision, a group of former French generals created *l'organisation de l'armée secrète* (OAS) that carried out terrorist operations against the *FLN* and the French authorities. Though the adverse conditions, the Evian treaty was signed instituting the ceasefire and the complete withdrawal of the French forces. (Calvet, 2017, pp. 6-9)

### **3 .The War with no Name:**

The Algerian war (1954-62) was deemed to be a point of no return for the French and Algerian states. It was an almost eight yearlong conflict that involved around 2 million French troops fighting in Algeria, rendering it the 3rd violent war experienced by France in the 20th century. Yet, the war carried a more profound meaning. Algeria was the jewel in the republican crown but at the same time the site of its terrible demise. The end of the war catalyzed the fall of the Fourth Republic and ultimately 800 000 pieds noirs were repatriated to France. The colonizer was not able to fathom the wreckage of French Algeria, the reason why the war leading to this grim end was an inflamed wound soothed by sinking into oblivion. (Pakier & Str  th, 2012, p. 277)

The Algerian war of Independence was known as ‘the war with no name’; moving towards this step of denying the very existence of the war was an astute plan that allowed the French to take hold over Algeria. The term ‘war’ was embellished and modified to be considered as mere actions to maintain order. In addition to the falsification of facts that had a corrosive effect mostly in the Academic field. In setting the educational program, the minister of education made sure to scrutinize history textbooks to minimize any chance of transmitting biased information or spreading others that are at cross purposes with the French needs. In other words, students may learn about the French empire and its colonial expansion; they get to learn about decolonization and the Fourth republic, but the Algerian war gets little attention which stands in stark contrast to the instructions they get about the two world wars. In the same vein, students rarely hear about the Algerian war from their families, especially those descendants of veterans. Veterans, in particular, were extremely neutral when the issue is raised, owing to a variety of factors such as trauma that makes it difficult for them to encounter their experiences and mainly due to the lack of interest by the great majority of the French society. As a result, the truth about the conflict was concealed for over 30 years after independence; it existed only in the minds of those who actually witnessed the war: former French army personnel, les pieds noirs, the Harkis, and the Algerian diaspora.

In 1991 the historian Benjamin Stora took the initiative to confront France with its past. The reality of the war, in his report, was veiled through a series of silence that was “eating into the Flesh of the French society... confronting it would heal the nation’s wounds and put it on the road to recovery”. (Lotem, 2021, p. 61). In his seminal book *la gangrene et l’oubli* he explained that the Algerian war was more like a taboo subject that no one dared to speak its name. It was labeled as ‘events’ on the onset of military actions by the *FLN*, as

‘actions to maintain order’ after the vote of *special powers* (les pouvoirs spéciaux) in March 1956, as ‘operations to restore civil peace’ following the battle of Algiers in 1957 and as a ‘pacification enterprise’ in the years running up to Algeria's independence. (Stora, 2005, p. 13)

When the war broke out on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954 the French magazines spread the word out. Albin Martal, a journalist for *le Monde* newspaper suggested that “everything happens as if an invisible hand seeks to ruin the invisible solidarities France North Africa at the very moment when we seem to be able to strengthen them” while historian Claude Paillat continued to affirm that an information is spread whenever the ‘police’ had an engagement with the ‘rebels’ and it was perfectly normal because “we weren't at war” (Stora, 2005, p. 14). Thus, the enemy labeled as ‘rebel’, ‘outlaw’ and ‘suspect’ is invisible, and his presence is sensed but materially nonexistent and in like manner, the war is ‘nowhere’ and ‘everywhere .’

By way of contrast was the declaration of the Minister of Interior, Francois Mitterrand on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1954. He asserted before the Interior Committee of the National Assembly that “the action of the Fellaghas does not make it possible to conceive; in any form whatsoever, a negotiation ... it can only find a terminal form, the war” (Stora, 2005, p. 15). However, this declaration was blocked out from etching into people’s minds and was taken for a misapprehended expression propagated by the press as truthful.

Inspite of the former declaration, Miterrand, at the end of November 1954 while visiting the Aurés mountains; gave a speech in which he tried to avoid naming the war as one:

It does seem that throughout Algeria, and specifically in these areas, around Biskra, Khenchela and Batna, there are those who want the people to rise up against those known as foreigners, as occupiers, that is to say, the French. But the people cannot understand this appeal as they are French. Without the people's support, nothing is entirely possible. I am sure of this. But if they do not support us, they will be the first victims. And as it is our duty to warn them of this, we will take every opportunity to do so. We will not strike collectively. We will avoid anything which might appear to be a state of war; we do not want this. But our punishment shall be severe, our sole concern will be for justice, and, given the present circumstances, justice demands stringency and the arrest of those responsible. (Stora, 1993, pp. 3-4)

This endeavor was not unusual at all, given that from the beginning of the conflict, the French state was disinclined to acknowledge the war. Its claims were once again based on the notion of *l'Algérie Française*. Since the territory is merged in the so called French Republican fabric, then the conflict in Algeria is not a war with a foreign power. Admitting the war is much the same as confessing the dislocation of the Republic and the recognition of Algeria as an independent nation. Thus, the conflict in Algeria was a state of turmoil that required intervention of the French military. (Cohen, 2002, p. 03)

To lay things out straight, the insistence on silence indicates that the life of the French state was hanged in the balance. The French were totally conscious that their activities in Algeria would shatter the illusion of the French grandeur. Throughout the war, France violated fundamental civil rights and contravened its principles as a civilized and a democratic nation. The implementation of torture, rape and massacres puts into question the motto of the French Republic 'Liberté, égalité, fraternité' which makes it impossible for the war to fit inside the mold of remembrance. It was not a part of history of which the French are proud, and so they favored forgetfulness over discussing their shameful past. (Cohen, 2000, p. 488)

#### **4 .The Politics of Silence/ remembrance:**

In April 1962, a referendum resulted in the approval of 90% of French people to sign the Evian agreements, announcing their desire to sever France's ties with the Algerian State. From this moment forth, the French government set its politics of concealment to prevent the remembrance of the conflict. The first challenge in dealing with wartime memories stemmed from the use of 'official language'. Because Algeria is part of France, the conflict is portrayed as a fight within French soil rather than an actual war. It was instead labeled with euphemisms such as 'événement', 'opérations' and 'mesures pour le maintien de l'ordre'. This political procedure sought to question the legitimacy of the war by creating an environment of absolute amnesia. By doing so, the French government was able to diminish the relevance of the war which rendered it unfeasible to be claimed a national event in public arena. (Pakier & Stråth, 2012, p. 277)

Another protocol of the state's policies is the broad and general amnesties on crimes committed during the war. After the return of les pieds noirs to the metropole, the French government sought to 'move on' or to 'calm the people's spirits'. In consideration of that, it decided to grant amnesties for all kinds of crimes and offenses concomitant to Algerian rebellious actions and all the

subsequent policing operations against it. By granting amnesties, the French state aspired to avoid future animosity either in the shape of avengement or prosecution. It all started when the *FLN* sought to guarantee that its members who had assaulted and murdered French troops, police, and civilians, as well as committed other violent crimes throughout the battle, would not be punished by French authorities who would still govern Algeria until July 5<sup>th</sup>. As a result of the accord, Algerians implicated in prosecutable acts for Algerian independence were granted amnesty by De Gaulle. He did so on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and on the same day, as if inspired by a need for balance, he granted amnesty to all French police, administrative, and army personnel.

The very first regulation, which was extended to all French territory on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1962, amnestied Algerians in metropolitan France who had committed acts of violence, as well as French officials in the metropole who had beaten, tortured, or even killed Algerians in the belief that they were fighting for Algerian independence. This includes gathering up, assaulting, and executing protesters. Yet, the amnesty did not extend to Frenchmen who had assisted the *FLN*, known as ‘porteurs-de-valise.’

Parliament usually votes on amnesties. Those of 1962, on the other hand, were enforced by decree on the basis of parliamentary legislation approved in 1955 and reaffirmed in 1956, giving the government complete authority to cope with the Algerian conflict. As a result, there was no legislative discussion, which might have put restrictions on the amnesty, as occurred after World War II. For De Gaulle, state interests seemed to need amnesty; it offered a means to avoid more strife and split over the war's merits, as well as preventing the state's servants from being penalized for their duty, no matter how harsh it may have been.

Howbeit, the amnesties overstepped the bounds and set in motion some risky tendencies that endeavored to assimilate all the accomplices of the war into the French society; for instance, the reintegration of OAS members in the French community. More repressively, the amnesties pointed that the French state in not by all means ready to take the responsibility of its activities in Algeria. Since the Republic is ‘moving on’ then the crimes committed in pre-colonized Algeria has no relevance with the current decolonized France. Perhaps the most explicit testimony is the 1962 amnesty that denied the act of torture committed by the French authorities on Djamila Boupacha and Maurice Audin and the complete rejection of their trials. The *FLN* Activist Djamila Boupacha was beaten and raped with a bottle after being imprisoned in 1960. After being released; she filed a lawsuit in a French court, while for Maurice

Audin, a Communist mathematics lecturer at the University of Algiers, he was arrested by the army in June 1957. He was tortured and murdered and his corpse was never discovered. Audin's wife filed a murder complaint against X. On the same day that amnesty was announced, the Minister of War inquired whether the amnesty meant that the Boupacha and Audin cases might be dropped; he said yes, and they were. Because Audin was killed by the judiciary rather than the police or the army - a branch of government that some feared might not be covered by the 1962 amnesty - on June 18, 1966, a new amnesty law was passed that specifically covered all acts "committed as a result of police or judiciary administration" (Cohen, 2002, p. 244). This precedent prevented all war victims from seeking justice through the French legal System.

Intimidated enough by these two incidents that attempted to challenge the prevalence of torture among French forces, the French authorities, to avoid a worldwide scandal, grew highly obsessive about concealing them. Indeed, losing the war was already an unbearably painful scar in the face of France, opening a public debate about it is adding insult to injury. The sole solution was to pretend as if none of it has ever happened.

In 1991 Benjamin Stora hosted a TV show *Les Années Algériennes* to speak about the pervasive silence in post-colonial Algeria. He arranged an interview with Jean Pierre Farkas, a veteran of Algeria, who explained that since returning from the war "I have never met a man who told me I participated in the Algerian war...and this while our fathers... made us gag on their stories of 1914-1918 and even 1939-1945. I have never met veterans from Algeria who talk about the war... Why did it all vanish somehow? I don't know". (Lotem, 2021, p. 62)

It is no surprise that the French politics of concealment succeeded at first to silence the voice of revolution and shape the memory of the war. Collective memory is, indeed, "a French invention" (Calvet, 2017, p. 13) and for centuries France was able to have a monopoly over social norms and customs in order to create a general memory that tends to legitimize the narrative of French unity. Despite the efforts made, the war was extremely visible, the silence was all the more a doubt impulse and the play on words was not able to influence the public thought. Instead, the words 'war' and 'Algerian war' never seized to be employed in the mass media and public debate.

Memory activists embarked on a mission to break the deafening silence towards the war. They were determined to defy all the memorial policies that



might hamper their right to question official memory and simultaneously more, to urge the French state to reflect on the events of the Algerian war and incorporate it into their national narrative. At first, the lack of information did not assist their course, but this began to change in 1997-1998 when Maurice Papon was trialed before the French courts. Papon was a French official who operated for the Vichy government when cooperated with Nazi Germany from 1940-1944. During this period, he had committed crimes against humanity for which he was arrested and charged before the French court. By connecting the dots, this case compelled the French public to reconsider the Algerian war and exposed the long-hidden tragedy of massacres carried out by the French Police. Papon served as IGAME (Inspecteur-général de l'administration en mission extraordinaire) for the Constantine department in 1956–58, and as Prefect of Police for Paris after March 1958. In the last position, police records revealed that under his commands, police officers brutally assaulted the Algerian protestors in 1961 resulting in over 200 Algerian corpses dumped in the Seine River. (Alexander & Keiger, 2002, pp. 1-2) The situation in Algeria was extremely perilous. Despite all efforts made by politicians and statesmen to mislead the general public; citizens and military adjacent to danger exhibited a grimmer image of what was going on. Marshal Alphonse Pierre Juin, in his book *Le Maghreb en Feu* 1957, described how horrific the war was; contradicting the French authorities' euphemistic language that rendered the war a mere "judicial policing matter". (Alexander & Keiger, 2002, p. 04)

The Papon trial resulted in the first discussion in the French courts of the massacre that occurred in Paris on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1961 and the issue of torture during the war became a generally known fact. Yet, due to a series of amnesties granted by the French government from the 1960's through the 1980's that safeguarded people from prosecution for acts of violence during the war, the Papon trial stemmed in further media coverage and failed to connect memory with the Algerian war. Nevertheless, though amnesties obstructed the conventional way of seeking justice via the courts, cultural restrictions were considerably less effective and the silencing policies of the French state failed to suppress the public discussion.

## **5. The Cinema Propagates:**

A good number of cinematic productions raised the issue of the Algerian war, but the task was never easy. From the French perspective; any film that raises awareness, tells different stories or show other realities must be either distorted or completely censored. In a TV program broadcasted in April 1991, director Philippe de Broca recounted that whenever “I filmed French soldiers committing acts of violence, the officer immediately censored these sequences, little by little, I no longer filmed them”. (Stora, 2005, p. 38)

Starting from the aforestated information, Stora in his book *Imaginaires de guerres* (2004), made a comparison between the US memory of the Vietnam War and the French memory of the Algerian war, only to find out that the public recollection of both wars has been shaped by movies. Through the latter, the United States conveyed an authentic image of the war. However, France had a tendency to create images that fabricated peace or misrepresented facts. In worst cases, it dealt with it indirectly using a tactic of avoidance. In *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1963), the land where the soldiers established themselves is called ‘over there’ and not explicitly ‘Algeria’, also in *Louise L’insoumise* (1985) the war was not displayed as a lived experience but only as a background TV news. While in *le petit Soldat* (1963) the torture was evoked as not employed by the French, but rather as a tool of interrogation by the *FLN* against a member in the *OAS* organization. (Cohen, 2000, p. 409)

On the other hand, a number of French movies that opposed the war succeeded in presenting a sobering picture of the situation in Algeria. Among which are: *Avoir Vingt ans dans L’aurès* (1917), *R.A.S* (1973) and *Cher Frangin* (1988). These works had an impact on the French society, particularly on the young generation of students who didn’t engage in the war. They began to reflect on the country’s history of cooperation throughout the 2nd World War, while the Algerian conflict opened up new opportunities to challenge the old order and to express their total dissatisfaction with the state and its policies. (Lotem, 2021, p. 68)

## **6. The Repression of memory: why the silence?**

In any case of war, there is always a tendency of secrecy that builds up an ambiguous comprehension of the conflict. War always beds in substantial limits on press freedom, publishing as well as a widespread censorship that shapes the memory, remembrance or forgetfulness of the war. To explain the techniques employed by France in the making of collective memory, Paul Ricoeur examined in his seminal book *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2000), the relationship between the three expressions. He defines forgetting as the

“emblem of the vulnerability of the historical condition” (Calvet, 2017, p. 19), yet, is still a crucial part of memory. Given that memory is a method of representing the past, it requires the forgetting of certain components in order to preserve others. The process of forgetting, according to Ricoeur, is a drawback that affects the accuracy of memory and ultimately leads to manipulation and misuse of memory. This misuse can be in the shape of: commanded memory, manipulated memory or imposed memory on what should be forgotten and remembered, which indicates the use of ‘repression’ as a mechanism to shape the remembrance and forgetfulness of past events. (Calvet, 2017, p. 20)

Seven years earlier, Michel-Rolph Trouillot published his book *Silencing the Past* (1995) where he reformulated the issue of oblivion in collective memory. He demonstrated that any historical narrative is a “bundle of silences” in which the ‘unthinkable’ is concealed. He further explained the unthinkable as anything one cannot consider a possible option to remember, because it ruins all the answers and “defies all the terms under which the question was phrased” (Calvet, 2017, p. 20) so to challenge a world order or show resistance to a grand narrative is part of the creation of an unthinkable that must be suppressed. Trouillot (1995) suggested that silence can be incorporated in historical productions during the stage of fact creation, fact assembly, fact retrieval and most particularly the making of history which means the establishment of “a single narrative framework” that controls the remembrance of certain events. (Calvet, 2017, p. 21)

To explain the reasons behind the French silence, a hypothesis was put forward by Jean Pierre Rious (1990) in which he hinted that the silence was an inevitable result of the ‘repression’ of sentiments of guilt and pain towards the events of the Algerian war. As general De Gaulle puts it in April 1962, explaining that the French experience in Algeria is nothing but: “une boîte de chagrin qui ne supporte que des malheurs” (Smith, 1991, p. 88) and affirmed that the situation will remain the same unless “that guilt be acknowledged, that anger be heard, that grief be expressed and thereby that integrity and honor be recovered”. (Smith, 1991, p. 89)

For Benjamin Stora (1999), the repression of the memory of the war resulted in dysfunction for both Algeria and France after decolonization. In several discussions with the press, he revealed that the savage civil war in Algeria in the early 1990’s happened due to Algerians inability to embrace the severity of the post war and the underestimation of the role of Islam in the struggle for independence, leading the Islamic stream to seek revenge and

ultimately civil war. In his book *Le Transfert d'une Mémoire* (1999), he explained that the repression of memory has taken the form of racism and hatred towards Algerian immigrants in the aftermath of war. Immigrants or 'Maghrebins' (a code name attributed to Algerians) were prone to hostile and brutal treatment that has escalated to the point of murder. Memory in this case was the reason behind these conducts. The presence of Algerians in France serves as a reminder of the French defeat and the degradation of wealth and power leading to the loss of the North African Colony. Memory, therefore, might elicit rage, resentment and violence and at the same time, a counteraction represented in complete denial and forgetfulness.

Stora (1999) believes that France suppressed the memory of its horrific deeds in Algeria because it was unable to come to terms with its past. It, thus, continued to suffer from a 'neurosis' induced by the repression of memory. Following the Freudian paradigm, Stora personified France to conclude that evading the recognition of war was because it was an inconceivable tragic incident. It therefore, repressed and erased it from its memory which in turn contributed in a national neurosis. The government refusal to commemorate the war has led to an emotional and mental disorder that spread a sense of forgetting the war. (Cohen, 2000, pp. 491-492)

To sum up, Algeria's acceptance into French history brings light onto the 'mystery' surrounding the conclusion of the Algerian war. Stora believes that the puzzle derives from the rejection of an independent Algeria, but the real issue is the inability to imagine one. The war and, by extension, independence were unimaginable because they violated the historiographical myths that included Algeria into French national creation. According to historian Marc Ferro:

Historically, there are no similar cases [to the history of French Algeria]. Elsewhere, there had been invasions, occupations of countries that have lasted ten, twenty maybe thirty years. Yet, this level of occupancy, with massive land dispossession and settlements is unique Algeria was an integral part of France and thus French nationalism has always considered Algeria as part of itself. How can one turn against oneself? (Calvet, 2017, p. 29)

Following the Algerian independence in 1962, French historians experienced a failure in confronting the colonial period with clarity. They indulged in the past as actors and narrators. Yet, their historical narratives were highly at odds with the Algerian war. To unravel the mystery hovering around

this point of debate, and reveal the reason why the French opted for silence; it is yet, of a paramount importance to highlight that for 132 years, Algeria was not a colony like any other, it was the physical extension of mainland France and was not a mere colony among others but, in proper words, half of itself. Losing Algeria was already an intolerable fact and the shameful defeat was a stake into France's heart; to come clean about the war was adding insult to injury. Thus, French officials decided to act as if nothing of it has ever happened and to apply the most destructive practice of colonialism; that is the suppression of the colonized or 'the other'. Since the colonized is inferior, it has to be suppressed from being commemorated in history. From another perspective, the Algerian Revolutionary war "summoned France and the world to see the paradoxes, limits and incoherencies of Western universalism, as well as the violence it required and thus produced" (Shepard, 2008, p. 10) For these specific reasons, to protect the grandeur of the nation and to save the honor of the Republic that had been stained by its horrific deeds during the war; France had to forget.

The Algerian war was an event beyond justification. To the French, giving a justification to the war is the same as giving evidence to the failure of its democracy, and to explain why the war occurred entails recounting a turbulent history of the French and Algerians who lived together for so long and were then separated because one of the partners was too violent to respect his forever celebrated universal principles and put the words of: "liberty, equality, Fraternity" into action. The silence was the only choice left to protect what was left of a country that had lost most of its colonial provinces during the great war, and ended the process by losing the jewel of its crown; the one on which they had pinned so many hopes to compensate for previous losses and to establish itself as the world power it had always desired. The loss of Algeria shattered the illusion of l'Algerie Française and independence that was highly unexpected, forced les pieds noirs to take leave of a land that contained them for 132 years. These new realities that were unlikely to happen shocked the colons and stood as a thorn in their throat that hindered them from speaking the truth. The French favored to completely deny the war and espoused a policy of censorship towards anything that has a relationship with the conflict. The silence, on the one hand, served as a soothing agent that calmed the inflamed wound of independence, but on the other, was like cancer eating into the flesh of the republic. This agonizing dilemma of being caught between two situations, each of whom is bitter than the other; torn the body of the nation. The only way to mend the scars and set things straight was via confrontation.

## **7. Conclusion:**

For many years, historical recollections of the Franco-Algerian war were deeply repressed and obscured, expressing the enormous grief and humiliation upon the defeat. Individuals who witnessed or participated in the war made every effort to recount their experiences, the great majority refused to consider the events and the French government urged silence on the subject to protect the narrative of French unity. However, the secret memories after years of complete denial and repression entered the mainstream due to the relentless activities of memory activists ranging from authors and scholars to politicians and filmmakers who, since the 1960's, have assisted the establishment of a visible range of social memories. Furthermore, the 1990's witnessed a massive change in the attitudes of the French government towards the memories of the war and showed great leniency in calling things by their proper names and putting things back to right.

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