

# BREAKING DOWN ALGÉRIE FRANÇAISE: IMPACTS ON BOUALAM AS AN ELITE COLLABORATOR

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*The breakdown of colonial rule and reinstatement of pre-colonial borders is often regarded as a positive change for the local population. However, individuals who collaborated with the imperial power were often exposed to the adverse side-effects of these developments. Examining the Bachaga Boualam's (a harki) reasons for collaboration, and his experiences during and after the breakdown of colonial Algeria expands Robinson's theory of economic imperialism. This is done by exploring the tension between collusion, the harki's belief in his 'Frenchness', France's need to maintain imperial power, and thus a distinction between themselves and local Algerians.*

Algeria's colonisation by France and the subsequent breakdown of colonial rule forced local populations to choose between attempting resistance, submitting to France's control or becoming collaborators with the colonising power. France had its own reasons for recruiting locals: primarily that 'modern imperialism' was structured around economic assimilation.<sup>1</sup> Such assimilation necessitated the collaboration of some, but not all, local Algerians. This collaboration had to be balanced by the imperial power to ensure the loyalty of the necessary 'elite' individuals, but maintain the distinction between the coloniser and the colonised.<sup>2</sup> This presents a tension between the expectations of locals and their relationship with the imperial power, compared to its reality. Locals' reasoning for their choice of collaboration is often nuanced and has far-reaching consequences for their own lives and that of their families. This is particularly true when an occupation breaks down and the invading power must withdraw, which can be just as damaging as the period of colonial rule itself, especially on local individuals who supported the invading power. France's colonisation of Algeria and the subsequent war (1954–1962) coupled with the French use of *harkis* (local Algerian soldiers serving as auxiliaries in the French army) provides an example of Robinson's 'modern imperialism' theory and can be

<sup>1</sup> Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972), 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

used to examine the impact of colonial breakdown on these collaborators. By examining an individual who chose to collaborate, the Bachaga Boualam, it will be apparent that for collaborators, colonial breakdown was more difficult than the period of colonial rule itself.

### FRENCH COLONISATION OF ALGERIA

France colonised Algeria from 1830 until 1962. During these 132 years, the country was transformed from a tribal-based society under the rule of the Ottoman Empire to an exploited colony used by the French, then to a 'modern' state that was regarded by some as a part of France, and finally to a war-torn, newly independent nation.<sup>3</sup>

When French troops invaded in 1830 under the command of General Bourmont, they faced resistance from the local population, including a coalition of tribes against French rule.<sup>4</sup> To mitigate this, Bourmont set up groups of local soldiers which were later expanded to a unit comprised solely of Algerian infantrymen.<sup>5</sup> The main logic behind this expansion was that France could not rely on its own people to engage in military ventures overseas, as the French populace would not back such a risk. Thus, continued public support of colonial expansion hinged upon whether soldiers from colonised nations, rather than French citizens were dying for it.<sup>6</sup> This demonstrates a tension between the attempted disintegration of Algeria as an independent country through high levels of French colonial settlement, and the pragmatic use of Algerian soldiers because they were not French.<sup>7</sup> As a result, the French were reliant on Algerian locals to aide their imperialist economic expansion, yet they also sought to maintain a distinction between these few elite collaborators and the Algerian population.

The French dressed their local troops in a uniform of blue and red with white trims the colours of the well-known French flag.<sup>8</sup> This uniform had a symbolic

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Roberts, *Berber Government: The Kabyle Polity in Pre-Colonial Algeria* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2014), 262; Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de l'Algérie Coloniale: 1830-1954* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1991), 103; Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: History from 1830 to the Present*, trans. Michael Brett (London: Hurst & Company, 1991); Todd Shepard, 'La République Face aux Harkis: Questions Aux Historiens', *Les Temps Modernes* 5, no. 666 (2011): 55–56, doi:10.3917/ltn.666.0053.

<sup>4</sup> Driss Maghraoui, 'Moroccan Colonial Troops: History, Memory and the Culture of French Colonialism' (PhD diss., University of California, 2000); 'Note Pour La Direction Des Affaires de l'algérie', 5 May 1847, F/80/1676, Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer.

<sup>5</sup> Maghraoui, 'Moroccan Colonial Troops', 35–36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 22–23.

<sup>7</sup> Stora, *Histoire de l'Algérie*, 48.

<sup>8</sup> Florian Pharaon, *Spahis, Turcos et Goumiers* (Paris: Challamel Ainé, 1864), 2, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b2803987>.

purpose for the French: it demonstrated the Frenchification of their conquest and thus their imperial prowess.<sup>9</sup> For the those Algerians who did not support France, it was a blunt reminder of not only the French occupation but also the fact that fellow Algerians had chosen to collaborate with their occupiers. This constant reminder helped to reaffirm Algerian hostility towards these *collabos* (collaborators) who were actively involved in the violent subjugation of Algeria on behalf of the French and who were reported to fight ‘without laughter, with fury, without mercy’.<sup>10</sup> ‘*Collabos*’ was first used in France, by the Resistance, to describe those who worked for Vichy France or the Nazis during World War II, indicating that anyone, including *harkis*, who were labelled as *collabos* were the worst kind of traitors.<sup>11</sup> These tricolour uniforms contrast to the more disorderly uniforms that were worn by the *harkis* during the Algerian War—a mixture of Western-style fatigues and Arab robes—indicating the low esteem in which the French held the *harkis*.<sup>12</sup>

This low regard was despite the manufactured growth of the *Algérie Française* ideology.<sup>13</sup> This concept, the idea that France and Algeria were one country, began during World War II, when many Algerian soldiers were stationed in France and France sought to develop their loyalty in a non-colonial context. It was especially poignant at this time as both parties (colonial soldiers and French civilians) were somewhat equalised by the ravages of war, breaking the colonial hierarchy of power.<sup>14</sup> The rise of the concept of *Algérie Française* provided the stepping-stone for those Algerian soldiers who wished to shed their own national identity and to embrace that of France. The book by the *harki* Bachaga Boualam, *Mon Pays, La France* (My Country France), is evidence that France had now become *harkis*’ home country and thus, the country to which they were loyal.<sup>15</sup> Propaganda material was developed to help build this sense of connection and the existence of a common enemy: Nazi Germany. For example, a newspaper ran a comic strip addressing the significant issues of the war, and the part African soldiers were playing.<sup>16</sup> This accessible source,

<sup>9</sup> Maghraoui, ‘Moroccan Colonial Troops’, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Pharaon, *Spahis*, 7, 77 Original: ‘sans riri...avec furie, sans merci’; Pierre Daum, *Le Dernier Tabou: Les Harkis Restés En Algérie Après l’Indépendance* (Solin: Actes Sud, 2015), 29 Original: ‘collabos’.

<sup>11</sup> Daum, *Le Dernier Tabou*, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Bachaga Boualam, *Mon Pays, La France* (Paris: France-Empire, 1962), 80; Bachaga Boualam, *Les Harkis Au Service De La France* (Paris: France-Empire, 1963), 113.

<sup>13</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 170; C.M. Andrew and A.S. Kanya-Forstner, ‘France, Africa, and the First World War’, *The Journal of African History* 19, no. 1 (1978): 22.

<sup>14</sup> Myron Echenberg, ‘“Morts Pour La France”: The African Soldier in France During the Second World War’, *The Journal of African History* 26, no. 4 (1985): 367.

<sup>15</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*.

<sup>16</sup> Echenberg, ‘Morts’, 366.

which sparked the creation of many similar publications, was published during World War II in many different languages and depicted scenarios that soldiers were familiar with but emphasised pro-French relations.<sup>17</sup> It played a significant role in swaying individual perceptions of France as well as developing a sense of group loyalty to France through discussion and print media circulation.

However, many African soldiers were forcibly repatriated before the end of the war as the narrative that colonial soldiers assisted in the liberation of France would have been too great an embarrassment for the French state.<sup>18</sup> Such a situation depicts the duplicity and ability of France to cultivate an image of comradeship for its soldiers but act as the imperial power and deny its subjects the right to make their own decisions or to be wholly integrated with the country to which they belonged and for which fought. This dualism also manifested after the war as any Africans who had enlisted were promised post-war voting rights.<sup>19</sup> Yet, for most, this did not come to fruition until 1948 after numerous complaints from veterans.<sup>20</sup> Afterwards, most received at least some voting privileges and all were entitled to equal benefits (regarding medical care and pensions) as enjoyed by their French counterparts, which further solidified the notion held by colonial soldiers that they were French.<sup>21</sup> This long history, beginning from the initial time of Algerian colonisation, is where the concept of *harkis* originated from and why *harki* groups were able to be formed so quickly after the outbreak of war in 1954.<sup>22</sup>

### THE BACHAGA BOUALAM: AN EMBODIMENT OF ALGÉRIE FRANÇAISE?

The development and maintenance of loyal Algerian troops was essential to French colonial rule in Algeria. This supports Robinson's paradigm that imperialism required the loyalty of individual locals.<sup>23</sup> However, the impact on these individual local soldiers and their sense of identity, at a time when multiple sides (the French, the FLN and others) were demanding allegiance or

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.; Olivier Blazy, 'La Presse Militaire Française à Destination Des Troupes Indigènes Issues Des Différents Territoires de l'Empire Puis de l'Union Française', *Revue Historique Des Armées* 271 (2013): 1, <http://rha.revues.org/7714>.

<sup>18</sup> Echenberg, 'Morts', 379.

<sup>19</sup> Rita Headrick, 'African Soldiers in World War II', *Armed Forces and Society*, 4, no. 3 (1978): 502.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 520.

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Jacques Jordi and Mohand Hamoumou, *Les Harkis, Une Mémoire Enfouie* (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 1999), 24.

<sup>23</sup> Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations', 118.

accusing them of collaboration and treachery, is yet to be explored in detail. The Bachaga Said Boualam is widely regarded as the most famous and celebrated leader of the *harkis*.<sup>24</sup> This notability is due to his prolific, self-styled role as a defender of *harkis* and their rights which became especially prominent after the Algerian War ended and he moved to France in 1962. There, he published three books: *Mon Pays, La France* (My Country France), *Les Harkis au Service de La France* (The Harkis at the Service of France) and *l'Algérie Sans La France* (Algeria without France). Consequently, it is possible to explore the impact of colonial collaboration on him through his own work, supported by other archival sources, and how he was affected during and after the Algerian War of 1954–1962. This will be done by first looking at how Boualam sought to be perceived by the French and then the reality of his relationship with the imperial power and therefore the human cost on an individual level of French colonialism and its breakdown.

Boualam's family had a long history of service for the French, dating back to at least 1862.<sup>25</sup> Being cognisant of his family's history of French service set a mandate for Boualam's life and remained a point he often returned to within his body of written work. He enlisted on his eighteenth birthday and served for over twenty years, leaving with the rank of Captain in 1946, meaning that he definitely served and probably saw action during World War II.<sup>26</sup> In 1947 he became the *caïd* (Local Governor or Chief) of Civil Services of Algeria to the Beni-Bouttab *douar* (tribe) and in the following year was transferred to the Beni-Boudouane *douar* (Lamartine) with whom he would remain until he left Algeria in 1962 for France.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, in 1958 he was elected to join the French National Assembly of de Gaulle's new Fifth Republic.<sup>28</sup> Boualam became an important figure in the *douar*; the remarkable base of trust and followers he built even extended to him dictating whom they should vote for and them following his advice. This placed him in a high position of power and influence in his community.<sup>29</sup> However, his status would have both

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<sup>24</sup> Phillip C. Naylor, *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000), 132; 'De l'Ouarsenis à la Camargue', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 3 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1982/02/09/de-l-ouarsenis-a-la-camargue\\_2884914\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1982/02/09/de-l-ouarsenis-a-la-camargue_2884914_1819218.html); Keith Moser, ed., *A Practical Guide to Harki Literature* (London: Lexington Books, 2014), 1; Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 116–17.

<sup>25</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 37.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 37–38.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Shennan, *De Gaulle* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 1993), 85–87, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/lib/unimelb/detail.action?docID=1596760>.

<sup>29</sup> Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*, 117.

positive and negative consequences for the Beni-Boudouane as the Algerian War commenced and progressed.

### ENTRY INTO THE ALGERIAN WAR

For the first two years of the Algerian War, 1954–1956, Boualam described his region as ‘absolutely calm’.<sup>30</sup> The catalyst that drove him and his *douar* to enter the war was the desertion of Frenchman and military member Henri Maillot on April 4, 1956, who quickly joined the band of the ‘Maquis Rouge’ (a group of Communist, pro-FLN supporters in Algeria).<sup>31</sup> Roaming in Beni-Boudouane territory, the the Maquis Rouge assassinated some of the pro-French chiefs, an act which was described by Boualam as an act of terrorism.<sup>32</sup> Under the direction of the Special Administration Section (SAS) Chief of the region, Boualam and his men were mobilised to try to catch and stop the men.<sup>33</sup> In the early hours of June 5, 1956, Boualam was woken and told informed that Maillot and five other armed men had been found.<sup>34</sup> Heading to the scene, Boualam and his men initiated a gunfight with the men and ended up killing all six, including Maillot.<sup>35</sup>

Maillot was a deserter from the French army, but he was also a traitor: a Communist as well as a supporter and aider of the The National Liberation Front (FLN). The FLN was France’s main enemy during the war, and they had strong Communist connections.<sup>36</sup> Through being involved in Maillot’s destruction, Boualam was not only killing a perceived enemy and threat but was also asserting his loyalty to the cause and France, in contrast to the treachery of Maillot. Such a fact was not overlooked by the French either. The Police Commissioner of Algiers commented that the ‘spirit and decision [of Boualam], courage and loyalism, have clearly asserted themselves’.<sup>37</sup> He had

<sup>30</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 114.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Le Parti Communiste Algerien 1954 - 1962’, accessed 4 August 2017, <http://destins.notrejournal.info/Le-Parti-Communiste-Algerien-1954>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*; Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 183.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Le Parti Communiste’; Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 183.

<sup>34</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 184, 188.

<sup>35</sup> L’Administrateur des Services Civils, ‘L’Administrateur des Services Civils, Chef de la Commune Mixte du Chélif to Monsieur le Préfet (Cabinet)’, 6 July 1956, FR ANOM 91/1K957, Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer; Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 184, 188.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Evans, *Algeria: France’s Undeclared War* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013), 134; ‘Les communistes, entièrement éliminés protestent et invoquent le règlement’, *Le Monde*.fr, Le Monde Archives, accessed 4 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/12/10/les-communistes-entierement-elimines-protestent-et-invoquent-le-reglement\\_2364659\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/12/10/les-communistes-entierement-elimines-protestent-et-invoquent-le-reglement_2364659_1819218.html).

<sup>37</sup> Le Préfet D’Alger, ‘Dignité de Bachaga Proposition à titre exceptionnel formulée en faveur de l’Agha Boualem Saïd’, 26 June 1956, FR ANOM 91/1K957, Archives Nationales d’Outre-

come to the attention of the French, thanks to his loyalty and patriotism that he had been developing since birth.

Many French officials recommended that Boualam receive a promotion from his current rank of *agha* (chief) to *bachaga* (head chief). This advancement was intended to thank Boualam for his tenacity but also to ensure his continued loyalty and cooperation with French forces.<sup>38</sup> As a result, for Boualam, his sense of identity and support for the French cause and his actions that reflected this had been rewarded by the French bestowing him with a title, *bachaga*, which originated from pre-colonial Algeria.<sup>39</sup> The use of this word thus linked Boualam more closely with his Algerian heritage, rather than the French identity he had constructed for himself.<sup>40</sup> From the perspective of the French, this promotion was opportunistic and pragmatic as it would allow for 'beneficial effects in regard to the population under his [Boualam's] authority', indicating disparity between that and Boualam's perception of himself as a Frenchman and resultant loyalty.<sup>41</sup> The French's exploitation of him as a local Algerian soldier often manifested itself during the war, culminating in Boualam's participation in the *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS) and France's abandonment of the *harkis*.

Boualam took his promotion seriously, incorporating it into his name and publishing under it (Bachaga Boualam), entirely omitting his given name (Said). He also incorporated it into his signature.<sup>42</sup> This wholehearted embodiment of his title suggests Boualam's pride in receiving it and a desire to make it a part of his identity. He also may have used the name for practical reasons as within the French press it was the name he was known by; however, this does not explain the complete exclusion of his given and more Arabic name (Said) from his publications. Therefore, his acceptance and use of his bestowed French identity went beyond pragmatism and displayed a willingness and eagerness to be perceived in terms derived from the French.

Boualam credits Maillot's insurrection with the French taking his efforts seriously.<sup>43</sup> This recognition resulted in French authorities gifting Boualam one

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2006), 582.

<sup>40</sup> Boualam, *Les Harkis*, 265.

<sup>41</sup> L'Administrateur des Services Civils, 'L'Administrateur des Services Civils to le Préfet'. Original: 'd'avoir des effets bienfaisants sur les populations soumises à son autorité'.

<sup>42</sup> Bachaga Boualam, *L'Algérie Sans La France* (Paris: France-Empire, 1964).

<sup>43</sup> Boualam, *Les Harkis*, 47.

hundred, albeit old, rifles to him, that he distributed to ‘decorated [Algerian] military veterans’ which quickly expanded to three hundred men.<sup>44</sup> Such a force was a luxury after attempting to patrol and protect the same area with eight men.<sup>45</sup> This increase parallels the expansion of the SAS, sanctioned by French authorities and under the direction of Captain Conill.<sup>46</sup> This was significant because the role of the SAS in Algeria was to create, maintain and strengthen links between local Algerians and the French, both the army and *pied noirs*.<sup>47</sup> In essence, the French were looking to create and ensure the loyalty of Algerians to them, and not the FLN. In Lamartine, the strengthening of Algerian and French connections would have seemed opportune given the large base of power and support for Boualam, coupled with his already demonstrated loyalty and willingness to fight for the French. As a result, Boualam’s loyalty could have produced an expanding cyclical effect: he and his men were rewarded, which strengthened their sense of French identity and commitment to the cause.

The Maillot insurgency provided Boualam with a platform by which to be recognised by France, as well as the chance to solidify a following of his own, beginning his ascendancy to be named one of the most famous *harkis* and supporters of *Algérie Française*.<sup>48</sup> However, his actions directly impinged on the aims of the FLN and their potential supporter base in Lamartine. Thus, while coming to the attention of the French army; he also came to the attention of the FLN. A development which had dire consequences for Boualam.

### THE HUMAN COST FOR BOUALAM

In late July 1956, FLN supporters assassinated Boualam’s brother, Boualam saw this as a direct reprisal against his role in apprehending Maillot.<sup>49</sup> This death marked the first of many people close to Boualam, in reaction to his growing role as a *harki* leader and proponent of *Algérie Française*. In 1958 his half-brother, son and three other *harkis* were killed in a surprise attack.<sup>50</sup> At another point

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 113.

<sup>46</sup> François Collaveri, ‘François Collaveri to Capitaine Conill’, 27 June 1956, FR ANOM 91/1K957, Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer.

<sup>47</sup> Boualam, *Les Harkis*, 116; Daum, *Le Dernier Tabou*, 33–34.

<sup>48</sup> Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 132.

<sup>49</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 120.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 38, 122; ‘Le fils et le beau-frère du bachaga Boualem sont tués’, *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 11 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1958/12/31/le-fils-et-le-beau-frere-du-bachaga-boualem-sont-tues-dans-une-embuscade-pres-d-orleansville\\_2307926\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1958/12/31/le-fils-et-le-beau-frere-du-bachaga-boualem-sont-tues-dans-une-embuscade-pres-d-orleansville_2307926_1819218.html).



between 1958 and 1959 another one of his half-brothers, El Hadj, was captured and burnt alive.<sup>51</sup> When Boualam recounted the final death-toll, he lamented that had lost his son, seventeen close relatives, fifteen distant relatives, and more than three hundred members of his tribe.<sup>52</sup> The FLN had decided that he was the enemy, for his collaboration with France, and possibly a traitor to the Algerian people who desired liberty and nationalism. Also, given the FLN's declaration of *jihad* to call Algerians to fight for them, Boualam could also have been portrayed as a traitor to Islam.<sup>53</sup>

Shortly after Maillot, Boualam described the arrival of a rebel presenting a note which asked him to allow free or safe passage for rebels across the land of the Beni-Boudouane in exchange for money.<sup>54</sup> According to Boualam, he added the short note 'the Bachaga does not want it' and sent the rebel away.<sup>55</sup> While it is doubtful that the encounter was that simple, Boualam's categorical rejection of the bribe and the opportunity remains important. It is known that this occurred shortly after Maillot, but it is unknown whether Beni-Boudouane and Boualam had received the compensation money or wheat from the French. Therefore, turning down money in a region wracked by poverty is remarkable.<sup>56</sup> At least according to his own account in *Mon Pays La France*, Boualam never considered taking the money and refusing the passage duplicitously.<sup>57</sup> This situation demonstrates a man who was honourable to his enemy, but also to his own identity and in his loyalty to the French. It appears that he could not be bought or bribed, indicating that his collaboration with the imperial power was not only pragmatic. Over time these letters escalated to death threats, to which Boualam either ignored or responded with challenges to come and kill him; 'death is in the hands of God'.<sup>58</sup> Although these responses may have become exaggerated in his memory over time, the death threats themselves and the fact that he did not succumb to the pressure illustrates the tenacity of Boualam's belief and loyalty to the French.

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<sup>51</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 124. Original: 'L'assemblée ne voulait pas nous entendre, nous allions nous adresser au pays'.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*, 51.

<sup>54</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 144–115.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 115. Original: 'Le bachaga n'en veut pas'.

<sup>56</sup> Giulia Fabbiano, "Pour moi, l'Algérie, c'est les Béi-Boudouane, le rest j'en sais rien". Construction, narrations et représentations coloniales en Algérie française', *Le Mouvement social*, no. 236 (2011): 53–54.

<sup>57</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 115.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 116. Original: 'La mort est entre les mains de Dieu'.

The threats to Boualam's life outside of battle were not only rhetorical. In 1959, he was ambushed by about twelve members of the FLN. He narrowly escaped, along with the two other men he was driving with. His car was punctured with twenty-one bullet holes.<sup>59</sup> Not long after, he was reported to have been again attacked, while driving alone, but escaped without harm and, according to *Le Monde*, did not recount the incident to anyone for several months.<sup>60</sup> In April 1960 the FLN made a third attempt on his life. This time, one of his travel companions was wounded with a bullet to the arm, his car had fifty-one bullet holes.<sup>61</sup> These three examples are probably only a small sample of what Boualam experienced and did not feel the need to record or relay to others. As with the letters, these attacks, Boualam's failure to report them and his continued actions that put himself in harm's ways demonstrate Boualam's unshakable belief that he was fighting for the right cause, as he was willing to risk death in carrying out his pro-French duties. He was not content to let others do the work for him as he probably could have, given his superior rank, this made him more valuable to the French. The French military recognised this, and he produced a comprehensive report on the military and the civilian situation in Larmantine in October 1958.<sup>62</sup> As a result, while the French may have still only regarded him and his men as useful soldiers to carry out French aims in Algeria, they realised that Boualam was a valuable talent. This was through his eagerness to help them in any way possible, the French would use him and his men until they no longer had any need of them. This became apparent during the grudging French repatriation of Boualam and his family after the war and the large-scale abandonment of most of the *harkis* in Algeria.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, different expectations about Boualam's relationship with France existed between the French and Boualam.

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>60</sup> 'Huit militaires tués près de Sétif', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 11 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1959/09/29/huit-militaires-tues-pres-de-setif-le-bachaga-boualem-echappe-a-un-attentat-alger-28-septembre-la-recrudescence-de-l-activite-rebelle-tant-militaire-que-terroriste-s-est-confirnee\\_3057214\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1959/09/29/huit-militaires-tues-pres-de-setif-le-bachaga-boualem-echappe-a-un-attentat-alger-28-septembre-la-recrudescence-de-l-activite-rebelle-tant-militaire-que-terroriste-s-est-confirnee_3057214_1819218.html).

<sup>61</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 124–25.

<sup>62</sup> Bachaga Boualam, 'Rapport du Bachaga Boualam sur La situation dans la région de Lamartine à la date du 10 Février 1958', 2 October 1958, FR ANOM 9140/220, Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer; Boualam, *Les Harkis*, 70–77.

<sup>63</sup> Abderahmen Moumen, 'De Beni Boudouanes À Mas Thibert: Entre Crau et Camargue Histoire et mémoire des familles d'Anciens supplétifs' (Museum Arlaten, 2006), 24.

## FRONT ALGÉRIE FRANÇAISE

By 1960, members of the French military became disillusioned with de Gaulle and his growing conviction, and resultant policy, in 'self-determination' for Algeria.<sup>64</sup> This discontent led to severe factionalism within the army, prompting transfers of influential dissenters (such as General Salan) as well as spreading uneasiness about the progression of the war other supporters of *Algérie Française*.<sup>65</sup> In January 1960 there were mass protests in Algiers for the reinstatement the pro-*Algérie Française*, General Massu.<sup>66</sup> They became violent, which led to a five day stand-off between the pro-Massu troops, who surrounded the barricade and refused to eject the protesters, even at the command of senior military officials.<sup>67</sup> After five days, Gaullist military forces moved closer to the barricades.<sup>68</sup> The mostly European protesters had failed to convince the 'Moslems' (Algerians) to support them, and following a speech from de Gaulle where he expressed his steadfastness in self-determination for Algeria, the pro-Massu Parachutists guarding the barricade allowed themselves to be replaced by Gaullist troops.<sup>69</sup> The protesters then dispersed or surrendered.<sup>70</sup> Even though the 'Barricades Week' ended in defeat for supporters of *Algérie Française*, what is important is the inspiration it gave other followers who were watching from afar, such as Boualam.

When de Gaulle came to power in 1958, a plethora of pro-*Algérie Française* group and organisations had appeared, the most prominent was *Front National Français* (FNF).<sup>71</sup> In direct response to the 'National Assembly not listening to' Boualam and the Barricades Week, Boualam created the *Front Algérie Française* (FAF) as a means of 'speaking to the country'.<sup>72</sup> Compared to other pro-*Algérie Française* organisations which were mainly filled with Europeans, or  *pied-noirs*, the FAF was Algerian 'Muslim' led.<sup>73</sup> This was crucial for men such as Boualam, to have an organisation that they could control and use

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<sup>64</sup> Edward Behr, *The Algerian Problem* (London: Hudder & Stoughton, 1961), 165.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 165–66.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 167–68.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 172, 175.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>72</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 149; Guy Pervillé, 'La révolution algérienne et la « guerre froide » (1954-1962)', *Études internationales* 16, no. 1 (1985): 58, doi:10.7202/701794ar.

<sup>73</sup> 'Le nouveau Front de l'Algérie française se place sous l'égide d'élus musulmans', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/18/le-nouveau-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-se-place-sous-l-egide-d-elus-musulmans\\_2093133\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/18/le-nouveau-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-se-place-sous-l-egide-d-elus-musulmans_2093133_1819218.html).

to express their identity as French Muslims, but also their fear of losing this identity due to circumstances beyond their control.<sup>74</sup> In the first month of its existence, it gained 100,000 members, after two months it had 420,000 which grew to 600,000 supporters, in its sixth-month existence.<sup>75</sup> It also boasted the support of several military officers, including General Salan who would go on to lead the terrorist organisation OAS.<sup>76</sup> Such a movement, with half a million supporters at its peak, failed to sway de Gaulle from his conviction in holding a referendum to begin the independence process for Algeria.<sup>77</sup> However, for Boualam it emphasised that 'he was not alone', which in turn made the French betrayal of their Algerian supporters feel even more acute for him, as he knew how many were affected by it.<sup>78</sup>

By December 1960, *Times Magazine* had labelled the FAF as 'extremist'.<sup>79</sup> Between June and December of that year, apart from press releases claiming the rapid growth of their supporters, the FAF had not undertaken a great deal of action.<sup>80</sup> They attempted to engage in community lobbying, setting up offices in Lyon and the pro-FLN *Casbah* (suburb) in Algiers. Nevertheless, the support base for the FAF remained mostly *pied-noir* and *harkis* with very few other Algerians joining it or expressing approval.<sup>81</sup> In September 1960, a planned

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<sup>74</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 149.

<sup>75</sup> 'Le Front de l'Algérie française affirme avoir recueilli plus de cent mille adhésions', *Le Monde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/24/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-affirme-avoir-recueilli-plus-de-cent-mille-adhesions\\_2092563\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/24/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-affirme-avoir-recueilli-plus-de-cent-mille-adhesions_2092563_1819218.html); 'Le Front de l'Algérie française revendique 420 000 adhésions', *Le Monde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/07/14/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-revendique-420-000-adhesions\\_2101958\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/07/14/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-revendique-420-000-adhesions_2101958_1819218.html); 'Le front de l'Algérie française: Revendique six cent mill adhérents', *Le Monde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/10/22/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-revendique-six-cent-mille-adherents\\_2110020\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/10/22/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-revendique-six-cent-mille-adherents_2110020_1819218.html).

<sup>76</sup> 'Attendant les mots d'ordre de Paris', *Le Monde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/22/attendant-les-mots-d-ordre-de-paris-les-algerois-demeurent-reserves\\_2092153\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/22/attendant-les-mots-d-ordre-de-paris-les-algerois-demeurent-reserves_2092153_1819218.html); 'Le général Salan ranime le souvenir du 13 mai.', *Le Monde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/10/29/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-le-general-salan-ranime-le-souvenir-du-13-mai\\_2110291\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/10/29/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-le-general-salan-ranime-le-souvenir-du-13-mai_2110291_1819218.html).

<sup>77</sup> 'Voice Out of Silence', *Time* 76, no. 26 (26 December 1960): 2.

<sup>78</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 149. Original: 'je n'ai jamais été seul'.

<sup>79</sup> 'Voice Out of Silence', 1.

<sup>80</sup> 'Le Front de l'Algérie française affirme avoir recueilli plus de cent mille adhésions'; 'Le Front de l'Algérie française revendique 420 000 adhésions'; 'Le front de l'Algérie française: Revendique six cent mill adhérents'.

<sup>81</sup> 'Le Front de l'Algérie française veut installer des permanences', *Le Monde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/29/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-veut-installer-des-permanences-dans-la-casbah-d-alger\\_2093955\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/06/29/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-veut-installer-des-permanences-dans-la-casbah-d-alger_2093955_1819218.html); 'Le Front de l'Algérie Française crée une "Délégation Générale en Métropole"', *Le Monde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/07/06/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-cree-une-delegation-generale-en-metropole\\_2101778\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/07/06/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-cree-une-delegation-generale-en-metropole_2101778_1819218.html); Horne, A

public meeting by the FAF to be held in Saint-Étienne was banned by officials after several pro-peace and communist groups complained.<sup>82</sup> According to a spokesperson for FAF, Jaques Belleval, the group opposition against the creation of an Algerian Republic was legal, emphasising that the group was constitutionally allowed to operate.<sup>83</sup> Hence, use of the word 'extremist' is interesting as, until December 1960, the FAF had not engaged in any violent activity. Therefore, was the label because of the people, such as Boualam, who were involved in the organisation or was it because of the manifesto that it espoused: pro-colonial and pro-right-wing France? The General-Secretary of FAF raised the same question in September 1960, wondering whether the 'defence of the integrity of a territory was a reprehensible crime'.<sup>84</sup>

In December 1960, de Gaulle visited Algeria and in response the FAF organised a general strike.<sup>85</sup> For two days protesters marched for *Algérie Française*, but after they broke into Algerian, pro-FLN neighbourhoods and began attacking them, violence erupted.<sup>86</sup> French paratroopers and armed European FAF supporters killed 127 pro-FLN Muslims.<sup>87</sup> Much of the FAF's Muslim support-base, previously half a million strong, disappeared or at least kept silent, and for the first time, French paratroopers opened fire on the Europeans.<sup>88</sup> Forty Algerian civil servants who had supported the initial strike were sacked, and the FAF itself was ordered to disband.<sup>89</sup> They, including Boualam, had learnt through a violent defeat that de Gaulle, mainland France and even parts of the army were deeply committed to allowing Algeria to seek self-determination.<sup>90</sup>

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*Savage War of Peace*, 480.

<sup>82</sup> 'Le préfet de l'Allier interdit', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/09/12/le-prefet-de-l-allier-interdit-une-reunion-du-front-pour-l-algerie-francaise\\_2106445\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/09/12/le-prefet-de-l-allier-interdit-une-reunion-du-front-pour-l-algerie-francaise_2106445_1819218.html).

<sup>83</sup> 'Le Front de l'Algérie française affirme qu'il n'usera que de moyens légaux pour s'opposer à la création d'une République algérienne', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/11/08/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-affirme-qu-il-n-usera-que-de-moyens-legaux-pour-s-opposer-a-la-creation-d-une-republique-algerienne\\_2095337\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/11/08/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-affirme-qu-il-n-usera-que-de-moyens-legaux-pour-s-opposer-a-la-creation-d-une-republique-algerienne_2095337_1819218.html).

<sup>84</sup> 'La défense de l'intégrité du territoire est-elle un crime?', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 31 August 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/09/26/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-la-defense-de-l-integrite-du-territoire-est-elle-un-crime\\_2106325\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1960/09/26/le-front-de-l-algerie-francaise-la-defense-de-l-integrite-du-territoire-est-elle-un-crime_2106325_1819218.html). Original: 'La défense du sol national, de l'intégrité du territoire... un crime répréhensible?'.

<sup>85</sup> Guy Pervillé, 'De Gaulle et le problème algérien en 1958', *Outre-mers* 95, no. 358 (2008): 15–27, doi:10.3406/outre.2008.4314.

<sup>86</sup> 'Voice Out of Silence', 1.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*; Behr, *The Algerian Problem*, 165.

The abandonment of the *harkis* had begun, and Boualam was growing more desperate as evidenced by his 'flirtation' with the OAS.<sup>91</sup>

### ORGANISATION ARMÉE SECRÈTE

In February 1961, after seventy-five per cent of citizens supported a referendum in France and Algeria for Algerian independence, a new organisation, desperate to hold onto *Algérie Française* was formed: *Organisation Armée Secrète* (Secret Army Organisation - OAS).<sup>92</sup> Some historians have commented that the FAF, led by Boualam, was a direct precursor to the OAS given the close alignment of goals and the increasingly radical actions of the FAF.<sup>93</sup> The OAS was operational between February 1961 and June 1962 when it signed a peace treaty with the FLN and was considered a terrorist organisation.<sup>94</sup> Headed by fugitive General Salan, it was supported by a plethora of pro-*Algérie Française* French administration and army figures including Colonel Jean Gardes (an old friend of Boualam's) and Jean-Marie Le Pen (the right-wing political figure).<sup>95</sup> Colonel Gardes had served under Salan and had worked in Algeria for the Ministry of National Defence; this is presumably how he knew Boualam.<sup>96</sup> Le Pen, perhaps best known for his right-wing political party, has remained an outspoken defendant for the *harkis*, especially Boualam's, continuing to speak out for them and 'give homage' even in 2011.<sup>97</sup> This long-lasting recognition also demonstrates the far-right political spectrum that Boualam inhabited and gives context to how his views of *Algérie Française* could have been perceived

<sup>91</sup> Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*, 62.

<sup>92</sup> John Ruedy, 'Organisation Armée Secrète (Secret Army Organization)', *Encyclopedia.com*, accessed 31 August 2017, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/organisation-armee-secrete-secret-army-organization>.

<sup>93</sup> A-M. Durantou-Crabol, *Le Temps de l'OAS* (Brussels: Complexe, 1995), 504.

<sup>94</sup> Ruedy, 'Organisation Armée Secrète'.

<sup>95</sup> Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora, eds., *La Guerre d'Algérie 1954-2004: La Fin de l'amnésie* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004), 464; Ruedy, 'Organisation Armée Secrète'; Jacques Soustelle', *Académie Française*, accessed 31 August 2017, <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/jacques-soustelle>; Michel Roux, *Les Harkis: Les Oubliés de l'histoire 1954-1991* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1991), 220; Abderahmen Moumen, 'Le Front National et Les Harkis. De l'Algérie Française à Marine Le Pen', *Fragments Sur Les Temps Présents*, 28 November 2011, <https://tempsresents.com/2011/11/28/abderahmen-moumen-front-national-harkis-algerie-francaise-marine-le-pen/>.

<sup>96</sup> 'Le colonel Jean Gardes', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 11 September 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2000/07/21/le-colonel-jean-gardes-un-soldat-perdu-de-la-guerre-d-algerie\\_82498\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2000/07/21/le-colonel-jean-gardes-un-soldat-perdu-de-la-guerre-d-algerie_82498_1819218.html).

<sup>97</sup> 'Jean-Marie Le Pen Rend Hommage Au Bachaga Boualem et Aux Harkis', *Jean-Marie LE PEN - Site Officiel*, accessed 11 September 2017, <http://www.jeanmarielepen.com/2016/09/hommage-harkis.html>.

when compared to the reception of the ideas forwarded by *Le Front National* under Jean-Marie Le Pen.<sup>98</sup>

The OAS embarked on a campaign of ‘senseless’ terror in Algeria and France.<sup>99</sup> De Gaulle was a primary target with almost thirty-one assassination attempts carried out against him by OAS agents.<sup>100</sup> However, the main weapon used by the OAS was plastic explosives with over forty bomb attacks in France and eight hundred in Algeria between January and February 1962; one of the most deadly attacks wounded fifty and killed thirty-five in Oran on 28 February, 1962.<sup>101</sup> The extreme and numerous attacks demonstrate the sheer desperation of the OAS and their fear of losing Algeria to independence and the FLN.

In March 1962, the OAS launched a plan formulated by Colonel Gardes; to create a front line in the Ouarsenis Mountains with the aid of five thousand *harkis* from Boualam.<sup>102</sup> Gardes already had the support of other French commanders and was accompanied by Boualam’s oldest son, Mohamed Boualam.<sup>103</sup> The operation enjoyed brief, initial successes, mostly due to the expertise of Boualam’s *harkis* who helped teach the operatives and provided housing for them.<sup>104</sup> However, after the operation stagnated and extreme pressure from French authorities who threatened to abandon Boualam and his family in Algeria, Boualam withdrew support.<sup>105</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, he does not mention his brief affiliation with the OAS, after all, they were a terrorist organisation whose leaders were caught, tried and sometimes executed.<sup>106</sup> His relationship with them indicated the lengths that he would go to protect or propel *Algérie Française* and his own identity as a French Algerian. This extreme manifestation of his nationalism came after other, more passive, measures had

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<sup>98</sup> Michel Wieviorka, *Le Front National: Entre Extrémisme, Populisme et Démocratie* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2013), 11; J.G. Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 221.

<sup>99</sup> Horne, *A Savage War*, 467.

<sup>100</sup> Harbi and Stora, *La Guerre d’Algérie*, 469; Christian Plume and Pierre Démaret, *Target: De Gaulle*, trans. Richard Barry (London: Corgi Books, 1976), 7.

<sup>101</sup> Benjamin Stora, *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 96; Abderahmane Bouchène et al., eds., *Histoire de l’Algérie à La Période Coloniale: 1830 - 1962* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2012), 500.

<sup>102</sup> Roux, *Les Harkis*, 221.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 221–22.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Marie-Monique Robin, *Escadrons de La Mort, l’École Française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 193–94; ‘Le tribunal de l’ordre public de Tizi-Ouzou’, *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 1 September 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/05/03/le-tribunal-de-l-ordre-public-de-tizi-ouzou-condamne-a-des-peines-legeres-les-comparses-de-l-aventure-du-commando-gardes-dans-l-ouarsenis\\_2347604\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/05/03/le-tribunal-de-l-ordre-public-de-tizi-ouzou-condamne-a-des-peines-legeres-les-comparses-de-l-aventure-du-commando-gardes-dans-l-ouarsenis_2347604_1819218.html); Plume and Démaret, *Target*, 12.

not worked including fighting for the French, involvement in French politics, and leading the FAF. Was the withdrawal from the culmination of his struggle to preserve *Algérie Française* a pragmatic decision to ensure his and his family's repatriation to France? Alternatively, was it a defeated realisation that *Algérie Française* no longer existed and he had to choose between being Algerian or French? It is doubtful that Boualam himself would have answers to these questions, however, in the preface of *Algérie Perdue* (Algeria Lost), he described the tears welling in his eyes and 'his heart tightening' when he thought about 'the country where he was born'.<sup>107</sup> The best way to describe his thoughts is in his own words: 'Again this Bachaga with his Algeria...but it's finished! One can turn the page of a history that lasted one hundred and thirty years, but one cannot erase the history'.<sup>108</sup> His profound connection with Algeria remained during his years in France. In conjunction with his conversation with de Gaulle about *Algérie Française* after the war, it was likely that his severance of ties with the OAS was pragmatic given the high importance he gave to protecting his family and followers.<sup>109</sup>

## REPATRIATION

After several months of attempted and aborted negotiations, the Evian Accords were signed on 18 March 1962, by Front de Liberation National and French representatives which, amongst other things, agreed to the gradual but total French military withdrawal from Algeria. In the months that followed an estimated one hundred thousand *harkis* were killed for their allegiance by the FLN or its supporters, and this figure does not include torture of thousands more.<sup>110</sup> In May 1962 around ten thousand Algerian personnel and their families (included in the figure) were allowed to travel to France where they were housed in military camps.<sup>111</sup> Soon after that, all repatriations were halted until September when public outcry in France over reprisal killings intensified.<sup>112</sup> Boualam and his family present an atypical situation as they were able to get to France with relative ease and were settled in a village (Mas Thibert), not in a camp.<sup>113</sup> This demonstrates the high regard in which Boualam was held in

<sup>107</sup> Pierre Nicolle, *Algérie Perdue* (Paris: Éditions du Fuseau, 1965), 11. Original: '...de ce pays où je suis né...j'ai senti mon cœur se serrer et les larmes me sont montées aux yeux'.

<sup>108</sup> Boualam, *Les Harkis*, 264. Original: 'Encore ce Bachaga avec son Algérie...mais c'est fini! On peut tourner la page d'une histoire qui a duré cent trente ans, mais on ne peut pas effacer l'Histoire'.

<sup>109</sup> Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 162, 169–73.

<sup>110</sup> Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*, 92, 97–98.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> 'Arrivée d'une centaine de musulmans', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 1 September 2017, <http://>



by the French: to be allowed to move to France relatively quickly and be able to bring around sixty-three members of his family and extended family with him.<sup>114</sup>

Nevertheless, Boualam still experienced the humiliation of disarmament before leaving Algeria.<sup>115</sup> This physically stripped him of his identity as a soldier, something he had possessed for his entire adult life. Boualam, at age fifty-six, in a country that was mostly unfamiliar to him, needed to create a new or re-imagined identity that reflected his socio-economic circumstances and the values important to him. It has been questioned whether any *harkis*, including Boualam, should be called repatriates, suggesting alternatives such as refugees or returnees.<sup>116</sup> None of these words fit the context of the *harkis* and their families: although soldiers may have visited France previously in a military capacity, it is doubtful that their family members ever had; thus, it was not a home that they were returning to. Nor were they refugees as they were technically French. This difficulty in defining what the *harkis* were is emblematic of other problems, both material and psychological (regarding identity), which pervaded at least the early years of *harki* immigration to France and can give an indication of the struggles faced by those who choose to collaborate when colonies collapse.

## LIFE IN FRANCE

Boualam was re-elected as the Vice President of the National Assembly one month before he left Algeria. This shows the continued public support that he received in France and Algeria (at least amongst pro-French populations).<sup>117</sup> However, his active political service ended in July 1962 with the end of the mandate for Algerian Deputies.<sup>118</sup> Nonetheless, this public interest and support extended to Boualam's arrival in Mas Thibert, which was covered extensively

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[www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/05/29/marseille-arrivee-d-une-centaine-de-musulmans\\_2347122\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/05/29/marseille-arrivee-d-une-centaine-de-musulmans_2347122_1819218.html); 'Ayant quitté en hâte l'Algérie', *LeMonde.fr*, accessed 1 September 2017, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/05/21/ayant-quitte-en-hate-l-algerie-le-bachaga-boualam-s-installe-en-provence\\_2348514\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/05/21/ayant-quitte-en-hate-l-algerie-le-bachaga-boualam-s-installe-en-provence_2348514_1819218.html); Moumen, 'De Beni Boudouanes À Mas Thibert', 24.

<sup>114</sup> 'Marseille'.

<sup>115</sup> Boualam, *Les Harkis*, 265; Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 30.

<sup>116</sup> Moumen, 'De Beni Boudouanes À Mas Thibert', 3–4.

<sup>117</sup> 'Mme Thome-Patenôtre et M. Raphaël-Leygues sont élus vice-présidents de l'Assemblée nationale, Le bachaga Boualam est réélu', *Le Monde.fr*, 26 April 1962, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/04/26/mme-thome-patenotre-et-m-raphael-leygues-sont-elus-vice-presidents-de-l-assemblee-nationale-le-bachaga-boualam-est-reelu\\_2368345\\_1819218.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1962/04/26/mme-thome-patenotre-et-m-raphael-leygues-sont-elus-vice-presidents-de-l-assemblee-nationale-le-bachaga-boualam-est-reelu_2368345_1819218.html).

<sup>118</sup> 'Assemblée Nationale - Les Députés de La Ve République : M. Saïd Boualam', accessed 10 September 2017, <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/trombinoscope/VRepublique/Legis01/boualam-said-02101906.asp>.

by the French press, including a televised interview, which Boualam organised and even insisted on.<sup>119</sup> In this interview, he spoke extensively about the issues *harkis* were facing in Algeria when they attempted to board boats to France and the lack of governmental support for those who wanted to leave.<sup>120</sup> As he organised the interview, his strong feelings about the *harkis* and his need to express them to a large audience are apparent. Interestingly, on this day, he wore a Western business suit, not his usual, traditional Algerian robes. This represents a conscious or subconscious decision by Boualam to demonstrate his 'Westernness' or 'Frenchness' in his new home that had a history of preferring cultural and racial homogeneity.<sup>121</sup> However, his adoption of Western dress was an exception from the norm; for most public engagements, including his tenure as Vice-President of the National Assembly and for receiving the Legion of Honour Award, he wore traditional Algerian dress.<sup>122</sup> This decision highlights his wish to see himself as both Algerian and French: his Algerian origins were reflected in his dress and his adopted French nationality in the actions he undertook.

However, despite his family's relatively easy arrival in France, their initial years living there were less so. With a second contingent of *harkis* arriving in late May, there were over 140 people who needed housing and access to essential supplies.<sup>123</sup> Many of these people lived in tents, even during winter, which provided insufficient protection from the elements.<sup>124</sup> This was coupled with a lack of employment and sanitation for the arrivals who, up until Algerian Independence, had clung to the hope that they may be able to return to Algeria.<sup>125</sup> These hardships were worsened by Boualam's struggle when he heard news about Algeria, particularly the bloody reprisals against *harkis* who remained there.<sup>126</sup> The lack of care or compassion by the French towards the *harkis* and their dependents demonstrates the incongruity between Boualam's fervent belief in his 'Frenchness' and the resultant rights that he possessed,

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<sup>119</sup> 'Ayant quitté en hâte l'Algérie'; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel-Ina.fr, 'Interview Du Bachaga Boualem', *Ina.fr*, accessed 7 August 2017, <http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF89005370>; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel-Ina.fr, 'Bachaga Boualem En Provence', *Ina.fr*, accessed 2 September 2017, <http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF94073469>; Moumen, 'De Beni Boudouanes À Mas Thibert', 29.

<sup>120</sup> Ina.fr, 'Interview Du Bachaga Boualem'.

<sup>121</sup> Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*, 88–89.

<sup>122</sup> Moumen, 'De Beni Boudouanes À Mas Thibert', 114, 117; Boualam, *Mon Pays*, 48.

<sup>123</sup> Moumen, 'De Beni Boudouanes À Mas Thibert', 28.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>126</sup> Nicolle, *Algérie Perdue*, 11.

with the French view of them as culturally different people who did not belong in France.<sup>127</sup>

On the 26 of February 1978, Boualam received the rank of *grand officier* in the French Legion of Honour, France's 'premier' award which recognises 'eminent accomplishments to the service of France'.<sup>128</sup> It symbolises the recognition by France of the actions undertaken by Boualam: killing a traitor of France, raising one of the first *harkas* and serving as a politician on a local and national level amongst others. This recognition also acknowledges the losses he sustained during his service and, perhaps most importantly his post-war work in continuing to fight for *harki* rights and recognition in France. Boualam did this because he believed he was a Frenchman from Algeria, that Algeria was part of France and that Algerian supporters of France should be protected and supported by France, even after their usefulness diminished. He physically fought for these ideas against fellow Algerians during a war, he advocated these ideas on a political stage and when those methods failed, he turned to more radical means: *Front Algérie Française* and the *Organisation Armée Secrète*. When that failed, he accepted defeat but continued to opine for more moderate versions of his belief in *harki* security and rights until his death in 1982, twenty years after he left Algeria.

### THE IMPACT OF COLONISATION

Boualam's relationship with France was nuanced and complicated: he was neither a blind follower of all things French nor was he an independent agent who sought to advance only his power or career. Throughout much of his service, he actively worked to promote *Algérie Française*, at times to his detriment or to that of others around him. After his move to France, he focused on not only bettering his and his family's position in France, but endeavoured to lobby the French government and convince the French public to protect and repatriate the *harkis*. He undertook this cause even though he knew by that time the duplicity of French regard and use for the *harkis*. This reflects Robinson's theory about the necessary assimilation of elite locals into the colonial power structure while maintaining imperial control.<sup>129</sup> Boualam became part of this 'elite' through his actions and his choice to collaborate instead of resistance

<sup>127</sup> Moumen, 'De Beni Boudouanes À Mas Thibert', 29–30; Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*, 7.

<sup>128</sup> 'Awards & Events', *French Culture.Org*, accessed 2 September 2017, <http://frenchculture.org/about/awards-and-events>; Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 345; Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*, 7..

<sup>129</sup> Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations', 118, 120.

to advance his own political and military position by aiding the capitalist colonising power. Therefore, his experiences and role reflect the tension between collaboration, survival and colonialism inherent in the recruitment of local personnel by an imperial power.

Boualam's views were the product of France. Throughout the period of French use of these soldiers, especially during World War II, they developed an ideological framework that encouraged these men to remain loyal to France, and for Boualam this became an identity: a melange of French and Algerian nationalism, with the French taking precedence. Boualam relished his identity and any moment to showcase this, whether by killing a traitor to the French, involvement in organisations like the *Front Algérie Française* or representing Algerians in the French National Assembly, all while wearing traditional Algerian dress.

Nevertheless, it seems that Boualam realised that his identity, partially created by the French, could not be maintained indefinitely with the breakdown of colonial Algeria and French power in the region. Choosing between France and the surety of violence which would have pervaded his and his family's life in Algeria, Boualam chose France. He realised that the French did not choose him or any *harkis*; they would have preferred for them all to remain in Algeria, regardless of their fate. This situation is one of the critical moments of the continued disparity between what Algerian local soldiers believed their rights as French citizens were and the way France exploited them with little regard for the potential ramifications. Additionally, Boualam's promotion for killing Maillot was regarded by the French as a measure by which to ensure continued loyalty; however, for Boualam, it was a mark of French acknowledgement and respect for his actions and identity.

## CONCLUSION

Boualam's life was affected by French colonisation since at least eighteen years of age when he voluntarily enlisted in the French military. His identity, his profession as a politician and military officer, his place of residence with the Beni-Boudouane and later in France were uniquely caused or affected by French colonisation in Algeria. French colonialism also led to his engagement in World War II and the Algerian War, and the deaths of many family members during these wars. Through his actions, he also became a traitor to the Algerian people by killing one of their supporters, Maillot, ignoring the FLN's proclamation of *jihad* and actively fighting and campaigning against Algerian independence. Boualam became a contradiction to the identity which he sought to embrace,

*Algérie Française*, as both France and Algeria came to the realisation that their conjoined existence could not be maintained.

Examining Robinson's theory of 'modern imperialism' from the point of view of a local soldier, rather than a colonising power, allows the adverse effects to become apparent, especially during the breakdown of colonial rule. As decolonisation was more prominent than colonisation in the latter half of the twentieth-century it is important to undertake this scholarship in order to understand impacts on minority groups such as the *harkis* that broadens post-colonial historiography. In the case of Bachaga Boualam, the economic imperialism practiced by France created a person who wholeheartedly believed that they were French and whose actions significantly advanced the French war-effort during the Algerian War. The breakdown of colonial rule cost him the life he knew in the country that was at least physically his home. In defence of his identity as a Frenchman, he killed at least one man, lost several family members to the war and even had assassination attempts carried out against him. Throughout everything, he remained loyal to his idea of France: a country whose borders encompassed Algeria. Nevertheless, when he realised his desires were incompatible with reality, he chose to be a foreigner in mainland France and to advocate for the rights of other collaborators (*harkis*) who bore the brunt of the negative effects of colonial breakdown: violence and statelessness.