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**Feraoun and the Algerian Revolution:
The identities of the Algerian Revolution and the ways in which an Algerian writer
interprets these identities**

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Introduction

The Algerian War is often viewed as a war between the French and the Algerians, fought during the years of 1954 and 1962. However, this is not an accurate representation of the Algerian war and those who lived and died during that time. The Algerian war was a war of identity and those caught up in the events had to forge their own identities within the context of the conflicting ideologies of the time. One man who was forced to do so was Mouloud Feraoun, a Kabyle born in Algeria but given a French education. This connection to all of the conflicting sides of the debate was not unique to Feraoun; it was actually quite common for an Algerian to have more than one identity to which they might identify.

As tensions started to rise to a breaking point in 1955 Mouloud Feraoun began writing a journal of the war. Mouloud Feraoun was a unique individual living during an incredibly unique time period. Feraoun was born in Tizi-Hibel, a village in Kabylia to parents that emphasized the importance of education from an early age. As a talented student he was recognized and given a scholarship to study at a French high school before attending French university in Algeria. However, he always maintained a connection to his Kabyle and Algerian roots. He married a woman according to Kabyle customs and she, “by most accounts, was a traditional wife, was deeply connected to her Kabyle customs, had no formal education, and spoke only Berber.”¹ All of these things had a deep impact on the way he addressed the issues in his *Journal*.

¹ Feraoun, Mouloud. *Journal 1955-1962: Reflections on the French Algerian War*. Edited by James D. Le Sueur. Translated by Mary Ellen Wolf and Claude Fouillade. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000. p. xii-xiii

His upbringing caused him to believe that he brought a necessary voice to the interpretation of the Algerian war. He was attempting to document his perspective of the Algerian war. Feraoun was in a unique position because of his connections to all of the different factions of the Algerian war. Feraoun was also a Kabyle and proud of this identity, one he emphasized regularly in his *Journal*. His fierce loyalty to his Kabyle identity provided a different approach to the Algerian war. Instead of simply being French or Arab he claimed to be a combination of all of these things. Identity was important to Feraoun and it was his own identity as well as those who surrounded him on which much of his *Journal* was focused. He was not only documenting the war but the individuals who played their part in the war as well. As an Algerian intellectual he was respected by many of the French. Intellectuals actually played a significant role in both the Algerian war and its aftermath. During this period they often intervened in the debates over decolonization. The state, military, police, other intellectuals, vigilante groups, and the OAS often targeted them for the role they played in the war and the decolonization of Algeria.² The OAS was the group responsible for the assassination of Feraoun just three days before the Evian accords for his membership in the Centre Sociaux Educatif en Algerie.³ His *Journal* was initially published in France and it is clear at times that he is writing for a French audience. He also was a Kabyle, which historically the French had viewed much more sympathetically than the Arab population. However, despite this he was also a Muslim and an Algerian making him sympathetic towards the

² Le Sueur, James D. *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. p. 3

³ Le Sueur, 55

Algerian cause. Towards the end of 1960 Feraoun began to review his writings and admits to the difficulty of writing such a book:

“I am frightened by my candor, my audacity, my cruelty, and, at times, my blind spots and prejudice... Now that is done, now that everything has been recorded—good or bad, true or false, just or unjust—now that we can foresee the end of this nightmare, must I keep all of this for myself?”⁴

However, in the end he believes that the writing of his journal is appropriate only because it adds to the already exhaustive writing about the Algerian war. He hopes that it is considered “one more document in an extremely poignant dossier. Nothing more.”⁵ Taking a closer look at Feraoun’s interpretations of the war, whether they were just or unjust interpretations is a way to formulate an answer to what exactly happened during the Algerian war. The many different groups that were involved, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, can be studied and looked at from all different angles. Looking at it from the angle Feraoun provides in his journals one can formulate an understanding of the war. Identity plays a large role in shaping the outcome of the war. The entire war was simply a question of identity in which every player had to ask himself where he or she fit. Feraoun focused on three identities in particular and so it is these three identities most of this paper will focus on as well. These identities can be broadly classified as Kabyle, Arab, and French. Like most identities, they cannot be defined in simple terms, instead they are often conflicting and changing and this was especially true for the Algerian revolution. However, looking at these three identities, even if they are broad, are useful in understanding the war. In the end it was the National Liberation Front managing to convince the French that Algeria was united behind an Algerian identity that managed to

⁴ Feraoun, 294

⁵ Feraoun, 295

win them their independence. Feraoun addresses each of these identities in his writings, both in the way he identifies to them and the ways others respond to them. Feraoun's *Journal* looks at the revolution through the eyes of a man who is not directly involved in any of the action. Feraoun was not a member of the FLN, the French army, or the OAS. Instead he was an Algerian citizen caught up in the conflict like the majority of the country. He was personally connected to these groups and so this gave him the chance to critically analyze them and their ideologies. With a man as multifaceted as Feraoun he was better able to understand the opposing sides of the conflict: the hope of the FLN, the desperation of the French, the anger of the *pieds noirs*, the exhaustion of the Kabyles, and so on. He addresses many of these concepts in *Journal* and it is specifically the way he addresses the French, Arab, and Kabyle identities, which will be addressed in this paper. However, simply because Feraoun provided a unique interpretation of these events does not mean that his interpretations should be relied on as the only true interpretations of what was happening in Algeria and around the world during this time. After all, Feraoun had always been writing his book to be published in France. His editor was a Frenchman named Emmanuel Roblés and it was to this man that Feraoun sent entries from his *Journal* to be edited.⁶ However, the book is useful as a tool to consider the Algerian revolution from a different perspective. Feraoun focused so much on the identities of the players and their roles in Algeria during the revolution that it is useful to look at each of these identities in turn, both in how Feraoun interprets these identities and how they are interpreted in history, in order to better understand what happened during the Algerian revolution.

⁶ Feraoun, xii

When Feraoun first began writing in November of 1955 a year after the war had begun.⁷ . The reason for this late start was the refusal of all those involved to gauge the important of the war. He talks about the Muslims and the Christians and how they had “nothing to say to one another” and the “Kabyles” like the “French” were “not thinking about anything.”⁸ By beginning his journal a year after the beginning of the revolution he is admitting that the conflict that began a year ago would continue and it was worth noting the changing of identities that occurred during this time period.

In order to understand these identities it is essential to return to the beginning, 1830, when the French first conquered Algeria. It was during the colonization of Algeria that the identities that would become influential during the revolution really developed. The French used their influence not only to establish themselves as the dominating power in Algeria but to also establish the Kabyle myth. French colonial rule also created the necessary conditions for the revolution to happen in the first place. Algerians rebelled against the colonial power and in order to do so they had to reevaluate their identity as separate as from what France had defined it during their colonial rule.

Historiographical Outlook on the Colonial Identities of Algeria

Algeria was France’s first nineteenth century colony and because of this it was often seen as the crown jewel of the empire. This made the outbreak of revolution in November of 1954 to be very surprising for the French. They had spent over a hundred years trying to make Algeria an integral part of France and it turned in to a complete failure, and ultimately the political independence of Algeria in 1962 and while the world

⁷ Feraoun, 13

⁸ Feraoun, 11

considered Algeria to be the “archetype of the mid-twentieth century struggle to end Western colonialism.”⁹ Therefore, the need to maintain Algeria as a colony of France was of the only goal of France during the revolution. The insurgent army of the National Liberation Front, however, was at an advantage because they were fighting for their homeland. Both the French and the FLN were two major aspects of the Algerian revolution and their importance is often examined in Feraoun’s *Journal*. Feraoun’s construction of the Algerian war places a lot of emphasis on the identities and ideologies of those involved. However, in order to understand these identities and ideologies it is important to return to the beginning. And at the “beginning” of Algeria were the Amazigh. It is with the Amazigh that the history of the people Algeria began; however, it is certainly not where it ends. After the Amazigh there came the arrival of other groups and even movements that were also crucial to the development and the understanding of the Algerian war. Only after understanding the history of Algeria can the identities of Algerians be understood and the distinct roles each groups involved in the revolution be explained.

In the past Algeria had always been a land of passages where civilization would converge from the East and the West. It was this land that the Amazigh¹⁰ first called

⁹ Shepard, Todd. *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006. p. 1.

¹⁰ Amazigh is the word that will be described to call the indigenous people of North Africa. They speak their own language, Tamazight, and were not originally Muslim. It is the term they use to call themselves and means “free men.” Another term that is often used is Berber. This is derived from the Latin word *barbarus* and was used to describe anyone not a member of the Roman Empire. The Amazigh are not a homogenous group and therefore it is simply used as a general term for the indigenous people of North Africa separate from the Arabs. For instance, a term that will be used a lot is Kabyle, who are a subgroup of the Amazigh.

home and they can trace their ancestry back to a time before 4000 B.C.E.¹¹ The Arabs came many years later and while they never conquered the Amazigh militarily they were able to bring with them a religion—Islam—that had a profound impact on the shape of the Amazigh culture and society. The invaders were able to convert the Amazigh leaders who, in turn, converted much of the Amazigh population of North Africa.¹² This common religion managed to bring about a melding together of the two distinct populations, Amazigh and Arab.¹³ However, some differences remained and it was on these differences that the French capitalized. For instance, Arabs were stereotyped, as nomadic plain-dwellers while the Amazigh were sedentary mountain-dwellers.¹⁴ The nomadic dwellers, the Arabs, were seen as dangerous, volatile, and very unlike their French colonizers. The Amazigh, on the other hand, were considered to be much more civilized than their Arab counterparts and so much of their attempts at assimilation were focused on the Amazigh. While this may have been generally true for certain groups of Amazigh and Arabs it was still a large generalization about groups that were far more diverse. Although there were many other types of people living in Algeria at the time, it is on these two groups that the French focused, using them both to their advantage when trying to establish control.

What is interesting is that, unlike many of its sub-Saharan counterparts, Algeria was not rich in natural resources. In fact the only two goods that were produced in

¹¹ Stora, Benjamin. *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History*. Translated by Jane Marie Todd. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. p. 2

¹² Stora, 3

¹³ Stora, 3

¹⁴ Lorcin, Patricia M.E. *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, prejudice and race in colonial Algeria*. London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995. p. 2

enough quantity to be exported outside of the region were olive oil and wax.¹⁵ The French wanted to consolidate its influence in the western Mediterranean basin when? Be more specific here.¹⁶ Algeria provided outlets to trade and human capital for industrialization. When France first invaded Algeria in 1830 it was supposedly to avenge the dey of Algiers' "fly-whisk attack" on the French consul that had occurred three years earlier in 1827.¹⁷ This invasion was initially called an expedition but in a decade the French military commander and governor of the colony in Algeria, Bugeaud, had encouraged the notion of military occupation and administration in France's first nineteenth century colony.¹⁸ The need for colonization soon seemed to become obvious for the Frenchmen on the ground in Algeria and the only question was how to go about colonizing its people. In France, however, the debate was centered on whether or not to conquer and colonize, marking the beginning of the discord between those still in France and the French settlers of Algeria.¹⁹ In order to establish the colony France needed to first subdue those indigenous to the region. The defeat of Abd-el-Kader in 1847 and the fall of Kabylia in 1857 marked the end of the military campaign to conquer Algeria. However, the military continued to rule Algeria. As this was its first nineteenth century colony the French rulers proceeded largely by trial and error with no coherent policy on how to treat the Amazigh and the Arabs.²⁰ While they did not succeed in their assimilationist goals they did succeed in creating lasting legacies of what it meant to be Kabyle, Amazigh, and Arab in Algeria.

¹⁵ Lorcin, 24

¹⁶ Stora, 4

¹⁷ Stora, 5

¹⁸ Lorcin, 6-7

¹⁹ Lorcin, 18

²⁰ Lorcin, 217

Very soon after the French arrived in Algeria they adopted a prejudice towards the Arabs based on old opinions of Islam. At first it seemed as though the French would give the Muslims a chance. In a proclamation addressed to the French troops in May of 1830 they were told that the Arabs would view the French as liberators from the Turks and would be seeking an alliance with them.²¹ However, as soon as it became clear that the Arabs would be very resistant to the idea of colonial rule the French returned to the old racial stereotypes of what it meant to be Muslim. The Muslims they fought with for control in Algeria were perceived to be nomads who “equated independence with the right to pillage and wander.”²² These Algerians, according to the French were very much uncivilized. Unfortunately for the French it wasn’t because of a lack of civilization that Algeria was resisting to colonial rule. Algerians already had a distinct understanding of their identities, which would come back in to play during the revolution, and so they were already fighting to preserve these identities.

In 1832 Abd-el-Kader was chosen by a collection of tribal leaders to lead a *jihad* against the French.²³ This opposition marked the beginning of the increasingly deteriorating relationship between the Christian French and the Muslim Arabs. The fact that the Arabs of Algeria had a religion to fight for marked them as an even greater threat to the French because they assumed, correctly, that this would make it even harder for them to assimilate in to French society. The French believed that the strength of the Islamic culture made Arabs into a “recalcitrant pupil” and so they believed they would

²¹ Lorcin, 18-19

²² Lorcin, 30

²³ Lorcin, 17

have to turn elsewhere to find a more willing student.²⁴ When Abd-el-Kader surrendered in 1847 the French in Algeria had already been convinced of the need for colonization and so an all out assault was launched against the Amazigh stronghold of Kabylia.²⁵

This region was the most densely populated area of Algeria and proved difficult to conquer. When Djurdjura, the mountainous heartland of Kabylia finally fell to the French in 1857 it was considered a measure of the French military prowess and the crowning achievement of the conquest.²⁶ The group that called Kabylia home were called the Kabyle²⁷ and the French the most generous stereotypes about them, creating de facto sociological structures that had a profound impact on the cultural development of the colony. At the outset of the colonial domination of Algeria, a certain myth was adopted that put the Kabyle at a distinct advantage to its Arab counterparts in Algeria. The Kabyle were seen as the good group, the group that was most likely to be civilized by the French, while the Arabs was seen as the bad group, or the group that they had the least chance of civilizing. This was an important distinction to the French as they considered all of the indigenous Algerian population to be less civilized than the French and therefore believed that assimilation was the only way in which a group could become civilized. The idea of assimilation was an important one, especially considering that the French annexed Algeria as an integral part of France and was governed through the French Ministry of the Interior.²⁸ This was in sharp contrast to France's other North African territories, such

²⁴ Lorcin, 7

²⁵ Lorcin, 17

²⁶ Lorcin, 18

²⁷ The Kabyles were an Amazigh subgroup that lived in the mountainous region of Kabylia and they were the most numerous group of the fragmented Amazigh.

²⁸ Horne, Alistair. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*. New York: New York Review Books, 2006. p. 32

as Morocco, which were established only as “protectorates” during the nineteenth century and governed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁹

The first examples of these constructed or perceived identities came from the early years of conquest in Algeria when France was battling these two groups. These definitions were often very vague and inaccurate, describing the Kabyle as “cruel and bellicose.”³⁰ The Arabs were subjugated first, which made them seem as though they were the less worthy opponent in the eyes of the French. However, once the French began battling the Kabyle the concept of the noble savage emerged. Tocqueville wrote about the Kabyle believing them to be receptive to French civilization because, unlike the Arabs, they were not committed to a specific religion and they had a “pragmatic nature and a curiosity that attached them more to this world than the next.”³¹ These speculations as to why the Kabyle were more civilized and more civilizable than the Arabs mirrored some of the other sentiments that the French felt. The Kabyle were considered a vital conquest for a different reason than the Arabs. Rather than seeing the Kabyle as a people that should be subjugated they believed it was necessary simply because of the economic independence of the Kabylia. The French believed that this independence would provide a poor example for the Arabs and it would be much harder to control them if they chose to leave them unconquered.³² The French believed the Kabyle to be worthy opponents, they assumed that the Arabs believed this as well and, therefore, would be unwilling to revolt against the French if the Kabyle were subjugated. According to the French colonial mindset, if the Arabs saw that the Kabyle had fallen to the French it was very unlikely

²⁹ Horne, 32

³⁰ Lorcin, 23

³¹ Lorcin, 24

³² Lorcin, 27-28

that they, the Arabs, would try to revolt, as they were inferior to the Kabyles. It was also important to see that the Kabyle, unlike the Arabs were seen as an important part of the French mission in Algeria.³³ Because of their status as the more civilized group the French hoped that if they were able to assimilate the Kabyle in to French society it would be much more likely that the Arabs would also be able to assimilate. When a significant proportion of the population was civilized it would then become natural for their rest of the country to follow and they would leave their uncivilized past behind.

Another important group that must be considered when looking at colonial Algeria are the *pied noir* community. No one is sure what are the origins of the term *pied noir* . It either comes from the black polished shoes worn by the French military or from the idea that the colons had their feet burned black by an excess of the African sun.³⁴ Either way the term was used to differentiate colonial settlers of Algeria from the inhabitants of metropolitan France. The numbers of this group grew rapidly, from just under 40,000 in 1841 to over 200,000 in 1870.³⁵ In 1870 it was this large population of *pied noir* in Algeria that demanded the right to civilian rule and forced the military occupiers out of Algeria starting the second period of colonial rule. Prior to this the French colonial army conducted a policy to eliminate traditional economic and political ties in Algeria and replace them with French institutions.³⁶ It was during this 1870 uprising that the French institutions established by the military evolved in to a government that more closely resembled that of metropolitan France.³⁷ These institutions

³³ Lorcin, 28

³⁴ Horne, 30

³⁵ Horne, 30-32

³⁶ Stora, 5

³⁷ Horne, 32

remained, with very little change, until the revolution in 1854. The government established a representational government that was able to send representatives to the National Assembly. In the representational colonial government of Algeria, the *pied noir* population carried the most voting power. The double electoral college system used in Algeria divided the electoral college between the first college which consisted of “French citizens” and a modest number of Muslims to the second college which embraced the whole Muslim population.³⁸ In 1954, at the outbreak of the revolution, there were a million Europeans present in Algeria.³⁹ Like in many colonized societies the social hierarchies established put the colonizers on top with the subjugated at the bottom. The *pied noir* remained at the top of this social hierarchy, with its greater access to political power, leaving the Muslim Arabs at the very bottom, with little access to political power.

Although it is difficult to trace the origins of the revolution, it can be seen from the way the colony was structured; the stereotypes that were perpetuated during the area, as well as the institutions established that resistance to colonial rule was inevitable. The fact that it took almost thirty years for the French to conquer Algeria is a clue to the depths Algerians were willing to go in order to claim their independence. The beginnings of violent conflict for independence can be traced to the time between the first and second world wars. However, this was not the only time since its conquest of Algeria that the French encountered resistance to colonization. The first major violence against the French happened in 1871 during the Great Kabyle Insurrection. It was at this time that the French wasn't as assimilated as they had believed.⁴⁰ This was partly due to the fact that

³⁸ Horne, 33

³⁹ Stora, 22

⁴⁰ Lorcin, 7

between the 1860s and 1870s the French settlers began expropriated most of the best lands, leaving the Arabs and the Kabyles with the left overs. What France believed to be fair conditions of assimilation actually meant that France never fully opened its cultural and political arms because its conditions for rapprochement were so unacceptable.⁴¹ Unless the people of Algeria renounced everything they had understood and grown up with they would not have been accepted in French Algeria. In fact, from the very beginning the French had structured the colony in such a way to prevent the emergence of any concerted Muslim opposition body, and for years this succeeded.⁴² The French limited the Arab's access to education, politics, economics, and even society. In 1954 the Algerian professional class accounted for one in ten thousand Muslims living in Algeria, a practically insignificant number.⁴³ In However, Jules Cambon correctly predicted what this would mean for the French, saying in 1894 "We did not realize that in suppressing the forces of resistance in this fashion, we were also suppressing our means of action."⁴⁴ This is why the French were so surprised in 1954 when the full-fledged revolution began despite the signs of resistance that had occurred before 1954.

These resistance movements didn't begin as revolutionary movements but instead as nationalist movements each with its own unique definition each with its own particular leader. There were three such leaders, whose ideologies formed the basis of the groups that eventually became the key players in the Algerian War. The first of these was the religious movement that provided the first momentum for the Muslim Arab nationalists

⁴¹ Le Sueur, 17

⁴² Horne, 37-38

⁴³ Connelly, Matthew. *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. p. 21

⁴⁴ Horne, 37

of Algeria.⁴⁵ The leader of this movement was Ben Badis, an Amazigh who was a descendant of a family with centuries of tradition in political and religious leadership. As the leader of the Association of Algerian Ulema he had significant influence over the Muslim population in Algeria. He used the Association as a way to recover Muslim history, especially since the group formed around the time of the centenary celebrations of French colonial rule in Algeria.⁴⁶ He and his followers were hoping to prove the existence of an Algerian nation through the recovery of Islamic history to inspire a new generation of Algerians.⁴⁷ Ben Badis made the famous statement: 'Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language and Algeria is my country.'⁴⁸ Badis was calling for a distinction between the French and the Algerians. While he wanted them to remain separated from one another he did not explicitly call for independence.

The first man to do so was Messali Hadj,⁴⁹ another great leader for those who would lead the call for independence. The National Liberation Front later adopted Messali's ideals of populist socialism.⁵⁰ This made Messali one of the most important people in developing in the ideology for the Algerian war. Messali's background was unique for political leaders as he had been a member of the French army. This gave him access to France and allowed him to start an organization called the Etoile Nord-Africain in Paris. He was able to establish a strong political base with Algerians in France while becoming the symbol of political nationalism in the country of Algeria. By the early

⁴⁵ Horne, 38

⁴⁶ Evans, Martin, and John Phillips. *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. p. 44

⁴⁷ Evans, 44

⁴⁸ Evans, 44

⁴⁹ Hadj is a name given to a person that has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

⁵⁰ Horne, 33

1950's he had become this great symbol of nationalism, with every one of his speeches being greeted by calls of 'the great one.'⁵¹ Both Ben Badis and Messali Hadj played important roles in separating the French and Algerian aspects of Algeria as they both defined themselves as being distinctly different from the French and attempted to return to their Arab Algerian roots which they believed to have existed before the French conquest. However, there was a third ruler that promoted a different approach to Algeria's future. Ferhat Abbas had a father who became a Commander of the Legion of Honour, making him the quintessential example of how Muslims could best exploit the French colonial system.⁵² Unlike the other two leaders Abbas did not believe that there was the existence of an Algerian nation and that instead Algeria should begin to pursue a goal of Franco-Algerian equality.⁵³ Through Franco-Algerian equality Algeria would become more independent while still having the benefits of a powerful country like France at their side when Algeria needed her. However, despite being a lot more sympathetic towards the French, Abbas was still not a supporter of colonialism. He rallied his supporters to press for equal political rights while other leaders, such as Messali, promoted a more militant kind of nationalism.⁵⁴

Despite the obvious rejection of French colonial rule most French didn't understand the idea of Algerian independence. Even French intellectuals who had encouraged French workers and colonized peoples to "unite as an international force in order to cast off the yoke of bourgeois capitalist oppression" only first started identifying the term independence to Algeria when Algerians began using the term to voice their

⁵¹ Evans, 45

⁵² Horne, 39-40

⁵³ Horne, 40

⁵⁴ Evans, 48

dissatisfaction with the French metropolitan government.⁵⁵ When Algerian nationalists first began calling for independence the French government refused to acknowledge the differences between the French state and their colonial territory. An attempt was made by the intellectuals to make a bridge between the two groups of people. During the war intellectuals took on the role of educating the French about the crisis in a way to make it understandable to people in metropolitan France.⁵⁶ These men were often seen as the tie between the colonized in Algeria and the colonists in France. Men like Mouloud Feraoun and Albert Camus are just two examples of these intellectuals who were in charge of educating the people of metropolitan France. They would write about their lives and the way they interpreted the war in order to provide a distinct voice on the war for the people of France. Feraoun's *Journal* was written with the ultimate goal of being published in France. He hoped that his voice would provide the French with another perspective on the Algerian revolution and indeed it did exactly that.

Despite this an understanding was never attained between the French and the indigenous Algerians. The stereotypes that had been established during the nineteenth century when Algeria was first colonized were already entrenched in to the minds of the Arabs, Kabyles, the *pied noir*, and the French. It is for this reason that the National Liberation Front formed and became so successful in starting a revolution against the French. The Algerian war began because of an attempt by the French to colonize groups of people that they did not fully understand. Both French and Algerian intellectuals like the author Mouloud Feraoun were given the role, however willingly or unwillingly, to connect these two groups together. Often they found themselves in the middle of the

⁵⁵ Le Sueur, 28

⁵⁶ Le Sueur, 96

conflict, unable to appease either side. These conflicts lead to assassinations, like that of Feraoun, which will be discussed later.

The French of the Algerian Revolution

Those who considered themselves French during the Algerian war are separated in to several distinct groups in Feraoun's *Journal*. These groups all played different role's in Feraoun's Algeria and should be looked at more in depth in order to understand the role of the French during the revolution. The first group was the military sent to defend France's colony from the rebels. The Algerian War involved two million French soldiers, as well as thousands of aircrew, sailors, gendarmes and police.⁵⁷ The second of these groups were the politicians who came from Metropolitan France. These were the men in charge of establishing the political arena in which Mouloud Feraoun lived, they established the rules and laws of colonial Algeria as well as deciding if, when, and for how long the French would fight for their right to maintain control over the colony. Feraoun even worked as a government official at the beginning of the war as he worked in a French school.⁵⁸ The third French group may have been the most opposed to what has happening in Algeria during the revolution, as they believed themselves to be liberal intellectuals who better understood the Algerian situation; however, they still like to preserve their French roots. These were the French intellectuals that Feraoun often spoke to, especially on his travels to France and their opinions and views can be closely linked to French intellectuals born and raised in Algeria. These intellectuals are a part of the

⁵⁷ Alexander, Martin S., and J.F.V. Keiger. *France and the Algerian War 1954-1962: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002. p. 1

⁵⁸ Feraoun, xii

fourth category and can be considered the least “French” as they were the settlers of Algeria, known as the *pieds noirs*. These men and women ranged from common workers to intellectuals, such as Albert Camus, a contemporary of Feraoun. Some of the *pieds noirs* became much more radicalized towards the end of the war after the announcement of the peace talks. It was known as the OAS, the Organization armée secrete and committed multiple acts of terrorism, including the assassination of Feraoun days before the signing of the peace agreement in 1962. Feraoun uses the terms *pieds noirs* and OAS interchangeably in his *Journal* to describe the Europeans attacking Muslims at the end of the war. Although these groups were distinct, overlap was common. A politician could be in the military but also a part of the *pieds noirs* population. This does not mean that the distinction between these groups is not important. Feraoun included these distinctions in his *Journals* because he believed that they accurately represented the different key French players in Algeria. In Feraoun’s *Journal* it is possible to see the ways in which these groups change during the course of the Algerian war. The repercussions of the Algerian war were widening the gap between the politicians and the military, between the metropolis and the *pieds noirs*.⁵⁹ Feraoun documents how this gap widens as well as his criticism for how the French handled the war.

In 1830, when France first conquered Algeria, there were only two major French players, the military and those who controlled the military. The military were the first presence in Algeria and effectively ruled the colony at its infancy. Although the settlers of Algeria had gained control by the time the revolution started in 1954, this does not mean that the French military no longer had any influence over what was happening in

⁵⁹ Stora, 55

Algeria. French soldiers became increasingly more present in the day-to-day world of Feraoun. During the two years after the initial attacks on November 1, 1954 France's only response was a series of major increase in troop levels.⁶⁰ In 1956, in order to appease the settlers of Algeria, the French national Assembly voted in special powers, which essentially gave the army a free hand to break the rebellion.⁶¹ Mouloud Feraoun saw this intervention as inevitable. He recognized that they would not be able to "allow this ambiguous situation to persist too long." Feraoun knew that once intervention occurred the fate of the Muslim population would be called in to question.⁶² The role of the French military during this time is infamous because of the brutal methods used in order to break the rebellion. This led to an international outcry, which left France isolated in international politics. The French, although continuing to win military battles, lost politically, which was far more dangerous to the maintenance of the colonial regime.⁶³ Men like Feraoun who had always been ambivalent in their support for the French now began to openly oppose colonial regime. In his Journal, Feraoun attacks the French by saying "I cannot disown your culture, but do not expect me to give up who I am, to accept your condescension, your racism, your anger, your hatred."⁶⁴

One of the most important branches of the French military in Algeria were the SAS, Sections Administrative Specialisees, or the 'blue kepis.'⁶⁵ They were established in May of 1955 and were designed to break the FLN through winning over the "hearts and minds" of the Muslim villagers in order to establish a remodeled but durable French

⁶⁰ Alexander, 9

⁶¹ Evans, 60

⁶² Feraoun, 89-90

⁶³ Evans, 61

⁶⁴ Feraoun, 90

⁶⁵ Alexander, 5

Algeria.⁶⁶ They would do this by recruiting Algerians to their groups, publishing newspapers and pamphlets that trumpeted the French cause, and working to discredit the FLN. The French romanticized the role of the SAS in the Algerian war.⁶⁷ These men were going to help the majority realize the importance of the French so that they would join forces with them and put down the insurrection. Whether or not the military was actually able to win over the hearts and minds of the Algerians is up for debate. In his capacity as an Algerian intellectual Feraoun had a lot of direct contact with the SAS. Feraoun was considered the model Algerian citizen and so the French officers felt as though they could address him almost as an equal. However, this was always done in a condescending manner where the French had to ensure their position above Feraoun. Feraoun had a negative encounter with a member of the SAS when he met a captain who “acts as a teacher and proposes to pacify” Algeria while treating those he worked with, such as Feraoun, abusively by threatening to send the police after them if they did not show up to the meeting they had planned.⁶⁸ Feraoun, understandably, became very dismissive of the role of the SAS in Algeria as they continued to be hostile towards him and his fellow Algerians despite promoting peace and harmony. This interpretation of the SAS is key when considering that Feraoun was writing this book to be published in France. He believed that the French were the least knowledgeable on what was happening in Algeria during this time and it was for this reason that he was so dismissive of the SAS in his *Journal*. He may have been hoping that those who read the book were part of another part of the French involved in Algeria at this time so that they may better address

⁶⁶ Alexander, 5

⁶⁷ Alexander, 5

⁶⁸ Feraoun, 84

such issues in the future. This group would have been the French politicians, men who were born in both France and Algeria but would have been raised to defend colonialism at all costs, especially when Algeria came in to question. It was to these men that Feraoun focused much of his book on, as they were the ones who needed to be shown that Algeria could become independent from France.

The military weren't acting on their own accord in the Algerian revolution. Although the French military were certainly a powerful force in Algeria it was the French politicians who were in true control of what was happening. The influence of these men can be seen as far back as 1830 when they decided Algeria needed to Europeanize for the sake of Algerians. This belief led them to bring European institutions in to the country, such as the European style schools that would one day educate men like Mouloud Feraoun. These men believed that a French presence was desired; after all they believed they were bringing colonization to a land that had none. It was this lack of understanding the people and cultures of Algeria in French politics that began at the time of the conquest that severely harmed the French during the revolution. The continued belief that the majority of Algerians would continue to support French colonial rule was incorrect. Even in 1955 at the very beginning of this Journal Feraoun did not believe in continued French rule. He was always appreciative of the advantage they had given him, however, their inability to understand him as an Algerian delegitimized their authority over the colony. Feraoun's opinion of French politicians only continued to deteriorate over every French denial of what was actually happening. When the FLN and other organizations were calling for strikes from the general population the French continued to see the Muslim masses as neutral or uninvolved to the nationalist cause, although vulnerable to

its 'contagion.'⁶⁹ The administrator of the school where Feraoun taught brought all the assistants together at the start of the war together to announce, "Gentleman, France is in danger: The Arabs have rebelled!"⁷⁰ Feraoun noted that in this instance the message was clearly supposed to mean the opposite. The French refused to believe the land they had controlled for over one hundred years no longer belonged to them. In 1954 the current minister of the interior, Francois Mitterrand, responded to the uprising by claiming that France would recognize no other authority in Algeria except for that of France.⁷¹

Escalation began about a year after the war began and the revolutionaries started to call for strikes. The French weren't worried until they began to realize that it was not just the Arab Muslims that had quit frequenting the cafés. The Kabyles had also joined the strike, whether voluntarily or due to pressure they were feeling from the FLN and other Nationalist groups. The French were so worried because the "age-old order of things [was] in immediate danger of collapse."⁷² This worry was slow to develop and it was only after they had exhausted all other possibilities that they began to change.

Feraoun's main criticism of the French was the way they denied what was happening on the ground. One of the ways this happening was through influencing the media, especially in Algeria. The "events" that occurred in 1954 barely made their way to the papers. These reports often came with denouncements of the "subversive schemes" of those perpetuating the attacks.⁷³ These, according to Feraoun, were transparent attempts to sway the Muslim majority to their cause and away from the FLN and other

⁶⁹ Alexander, 6

⁷⁰ Feraoun, 11

⁷¹ Le Sueur, 28

⁷² Feraoun, 15

⁷³ Stora, 35

organizations. Getting the majority on their side would have been important to the French as there was a very high population of Muslims, as it had grown twice as fast as Europeans in the years leading up to the war and their ability to assimilate as European citizens.⁷⁴ They would often ignore events in the ongoing conflict, making it very difficult for those on the French side to understand exactly what was happening on the ground. Men like Feraoun who weren't directly involved in what was happening were not fooled. For instance, after a skirmish near Michelet Feraoun talks of how the French reported the event. "The newspapers paid tribute to the armed forces that killed one of the rebels, captured two others, and did not suffer any casualties. It is sure that not all the readers saw the ambulance, the trucks, and the helicopters come by."⁷⁵ The French are clearly not reporting what actually is happening. However, in the way that Feraoun describes this interaction it is clear that he is sued to these attempts at manipulation. They don't work on him and they don't work on the Algerian people. What is perhaps most surprising is that the French, after over one hundred years, begin to change their tune.

At the start of the war no one in the French political class imagined any possibility of independence.⁷⁶ Because of their insistent denial French politicians had to remain optimistic in regards to the outcome of the war. This was crucial to their identity as colonizers and as major world powers, especially as this was the cold war. Despite the optimism of most French politicians presented to the public during the Algerian revolution there was a palpable sense of fear about the stability of French rule. Feraoun believed that the French who lived in Algeria often became convinced that independence

⁷⁴ Connelly, 17-18

⁷⁵ Feraoun, 59

⁷⁶ Stora, 39

was inevitable. Many government circles were very aware of the majority Muslim population that made the citizens of Algeria.⁷⁷ When discussing with officials and other French leaders Feraoun tried to emphasize that he believed in independence for Algeria. He was ignored until the end of the war. The French only began to accept change when it became public with Charles de Gaulle's televised announcement in September of 1959. In this announcement he declared that Algerian's had a right to self-determination and that France would begin talks with Algerian representatives.⁷⁸ Feraoun was not too surprised at the change of heart, after all, he ultimately believed that the French were good and had gotten involved in something that they did not understand. This lack of understanding of the Algerian people had been his main criticism of the French and so a victory had been one in their accepting defeat. What surprised him, however, was that those who he believed had a better understanding of Algeria soon declared their opposition to France's movement toward peace. These were the *pieds noirs*, the Europeans who also called Algeria home.

The *pieds noirs* in its simplest terms can be described as the European settlers of Algeria. At the time of the revolution there were approximately one million Europeans living in Algeria.⁷⁹ What is important to understand about this group of people is that, despite their differences, they believed themselves to be French citizens living in France on the southern shores of the Mediterranean rather than foreigners in an alien continent.⁸⁰ Feraoun also seemed to accept this idea, however, instead of seeing them as Frenchman

⁷⁷ Evans, 40

⁷⁸ Evans, 63

⁷⁹ Sherman, Alfred. "Climax in Algeria: The O.A.S. and the Pieds Noirs." *The World Today*, 1962: 134-142. p. 134

⁸⁰ Sherman, 134

he saw them as fellow Algerians. Feraoun believed that the *pieds noirs* would stay in Algeria once Algeria became independent because it was the way they had been since the first conquest:

“Thanks to France, for a century they have apparently been able to remain different from us, by maintaining themselves above us through sheer force. Now the time has come when France is about to leave them to us.”⁸¹

Feraoun hoped that in independence they would become Algerians as they no longer had a great colonial power to rely on for support, however, as the war developed it became clear that they would not accept Algerian Arab rule, as Feraoun had believed. These men and women argued that they were the most to lose with the independence of Algeria and responded to FLN attacks with mobs of *pieds noirs*, lynching Muslim men and attacking Muslim women with iron bars.⁸² Feraoun was always critical of violence, especially in this case when it was used as a means to reestablish the dominance of the *pieds noirs*. It seemed to him that they were determined as ever to remain separate from him and his fellow Algerians, a point Feraoun felt they had emphasized every Sunday when they attended Church while the rest of the Muslim population stayed home. Although an insignificant minority supported the Arabs, those that were outspoken in their support were arrested, killed, or forced to flee the country.⁸³ The majority of the *pieds noirs* were furious when de Gaulle announced the beginnings of peace talks in 1959.

Those who perhaps showed the most sympathy towards the Algerian cause were the French-Algerian intellectuals. These intellectuals were also the French Feraoun was also the most sympathetic towards. Intellectuals also played a large role in the Feraoun's

⁸¹ Feraoun, 298

⁸² Evans, 61

⁸³ Sherman, 137

Journal. After all, these were the Frenchmen that he came in to closest contact with and whom he had established relationships with. He was so close with these men that they felt they could share their opinions on Algeria with Feraoun, even if they were negative opinions. For instance, Roblés, a French intellectual, discusses the street “accidents,” as they are referred to in Journal, with Feraoun in 1957. Like any true Frenchman he believes the acts to be “despicable and unacceptable” and he had no pity for the perpetrators of these acts.⁸⁴ Feraoun criticizes these French-Algerians intellectuals because as he is discussing what is happening they “never, for one second, think that they could possibly be these profiteers, these fortunate, affluent people.”⁸⁵ Feraoun was always aware of his identity as an Algerian and a Kabyle and was also aware of the influence the French had on him. The identity of these French-Algerians was in turmoil after the revolution began. It is interesting that Feraoun was so critical of these men who’s identities were in turmoil, however, in his opinion they should have realized their position of power. After all they were intellectuals who regularly interacted with men like Mouloud Feraoun and so they should have been no strangers to the changes happening in Algeria. When Feraoun was being more critical of this group he referred to them as “liberals” and that they were “hardly sweet lambs” and that they were “simply a little sharper than others, or people who had a change of heart.”⁸⁶ One of the men referred to in this day was arguably the most well known writer that came out of Algeria at this time. This writer was Albert Camus.⁸⁷ Like Feraoun is an excellent example of the Kabyle Algerian intellectual thought, Camus is perhaps the best representation of European

⁸⁴ Feraoun, 184

⁸⁵ Feraoun, 14

⁸⁶ Feraoun, 310

⁸⁷ Evans, 40

liberal thought in Algeria. He always supported reform, tried to inform his compatriots to the famine conditions in Kabylia in 1938.⁸⁸ However, Camus despised the revolutionaries and refused to accept the idea the country he was born in to might one day be in the hands of what he believes to be a fascist organization.⁸⁹ This was also reflected in his fiction of the time, which depicted natives in generic terms and were prone to violence and irrationality.⁹⁰ This was a common perception of the Frenchmen that called Algeria home. Camus, like many *pieds noirs* did not want to admit that Algeria could become independent and “that he would be forced to show a foreign passport each time he returned.”⁹¹ He wanted, like many other Europeans living in Algeria, to be able to retain the privileges afforded to him as a Frenchman while remaining in Algeria. Feraoun understandably disagreed with this as he adopted the idea that all members of society should be equal in this new Algeria. These intellectuals were the men that Feraoun shared his professional life with, these were the men that had gone to school with him for most of his life and were still the men with whom he discussed events and other issues. They also would have been a large proportion of the audience for whom he was writing the book. Roblés, for instance, was his editor and so would have been an important influence on Feraoun’s work. It is for this reason that Feraoun’s disapproval of these men’s opinions was so important to his understanding of the *pieds noirs* identity. Feraoun saw a future in Algerian independence, even if it wasn’t necessarily the FLN’s future, and it was this that he was trying to impart to his friends and colleagues. These men were still deeply entrenched in the colonial mindset and Feraoun tried to show the importance of

⁸⁸ Evans, 40

⁸⁹ Feraoun, 184-185

⁹⁰ Evans, 41

⁹¹ Feraoun, 184

independence for Algeria. Feraoun saw Algeria as a country that would become independent from France, but still would reap the benefits that had come from colonialism. As a man who had benefited from certain aspects of colonialism, such as education, he believed that Algeria would be able to find a balance between these two worlds. Unfortunately, for many *pieds noirs* in Algeria, the idea of compromise was never a possibility.

The *pieds noirs* were initially extremely confident in the permanency of French Algeria, which is part of the reason they reacted so strongly to de Gaulle's announcement in September of 1959 that Algeria had the right to self-determination.⁹² When de Gaulle began to negotiate with the FLN, this community decided to become an important player of the war.⁹³ To them the talks that began in May of 1961 at Evian represented France's betrayal of themselves and everything else that France stood for.⁹⁴ Feraoun refers to this group of *pieds noirs* as reactionaries as they were reacting to the talks of peace that would fundamentally change the way in which they lived their lives. They believed this so wholeheartedly that they even killed Europeans who believed that Algeria should be free. Feraoun said that the OAS "feels that the Europeans must form a block and fight to the death against us, if we do not agree to live under their law."⁹⁵ What is so unique about this group is that they were openly opposed to the French government, much like the revolutionary groups that came before them, but not opposed to colonial rule.⁹⁶ This group opposed independence at all costs and carried out assassinations on those who

⁹² Evans, 39

⁹³ Sherman, 134

⁹⁴ Sherman, 139

⁹⁵ Feraoun, 307

⁹⁶ Sherman, 134

believed independence should happen, including Feraoun in 1962. This group formed together after the first failed talks when it became clear that Algeria would eventually gain independence. Although it only consisted of several hundred militants it coexisted with other “activist” groups that were also trying to prevent the peace talks from being successful.⁹⁷ An article written in *The Daily World* in April of 1962 talks about the way in which the OAS was gaining influence in Algeria. It claimed that a majority of pieds noirs supported the organization.⁹⁸ They began by protesting in the streets by banging saucepans and dropping plastic explosives nearly everywhere. At their start Feraoun found the organization to be exhausting, if not a bit amusing and stupid.⁹⁹ However, this began to change as the agreements began to solidify and the OAS became even more determined to prevent independence. They began to harass Feraoun as early as August of 1961. They would drop plastic bombs in his street and at one point they climbed on to his balcony to steal all of his laundry.¹⁰⁰ In September of 1961 Feraoun describes the OAS reactions to successful attacks on Muslims as a “sports exploit” while “on the other side, the Arabs are taking it all in...with the cold determination to avenge themselves.”¹⁰¹ They began their campaign, targeting Muslims specifically in order to ruin the agreements achieved. It is for this reason that they were banging on the pots and pans, stealing laundry, and dropping plastic bombs. They wanted to cause as much disruption as possible. However, Feraoun soon changed his opinion that the OAS was an amusing if stupid group. Feraoun says, “every act of terrorism that has been committed since last

⁹⁷ Stora, 81

⁹⁸ Sherman, 141

⁹⁹ Feraoun, 290

¹⁰⁰ Feraoun, 290

¹⁰¹ Feraoun, 303-304

October is the product of absolute madness...now they are killing people in city centers in broad daylight...They do everything they can to hurt people and to avoid being hurt themselves.”¹⁰² This continued even past the March 1962 agreements where they carried out terrorist actions aimed at the Muslim population.¹⁰³ The OAS committed murders in places a public as banks and post offices, resorting to blind terrorism because as Feraoun says, “killers are afraid that they will no longer be able to kill with impunity.”¹⁰⁴ They resorted to these extreme measures in the hopes that the French would not be able to stomach the necessary force required to repress them.¹⁰⁵ The OAS wanted to restore Algeria to its former glory as a colony. In order to do so the followers of the organization had to believe that this was something that was desired not only by them but by the rest of Algeria as well. In a pamphlet Feraoun found the OAS talk of the upcoming mobilization of both *pieds noirs* and Muslims to their cause because “the OAS feels that deep down, the Muslims are on their side.”¹⁰⁶

At the end of the war the *pieds noirs* began to flee from Algeria in droves because they finally began to accept, like the politicians had a few years earlier, that France would no longer be able to maintain control over Algeria.¹⁰⁷ This meant that the loss of identity they had feared at the start of the peace talks was no coming true. They no longer had a home in Algeria and instead were forced to return to the France many of their families had left generations earlier. This marked the true end of the war and the validation that what the Algerians had been fighting for, or at least hoping for, was finally going to come

¹⁰² Feraoun, 307

¹⁰³ Alexander, 151

¹⁰⁴ Feraoun, 313

¹⁰⁵ Sherman, 141

¹⁰⁶ Feraoun, 308

¹⁰⁷ Connelly, 285

to pass. The Algerians had convince the French that they were distinct form them and would never assimilate in to French society as Frenchmen. Instead, they believed themselves to have very distinct identities.

The Case for a Confusing Arab-Algerian Identity

The overwhelming majority of Algeria in the 1950's was made up of the second group to have settled Algeria. These were the Muslim Arabs, a group whose identity and ideologies conflicted as much as it brought the country together. Feraoun and the relationship he had with his fellow Algerians, or, more specifically, the Arab Muslims, was an incredibly interesting one. The relationship is so interesting because of the many conflicting ideologies between the Arabs, Feraoun, and everyone else living or interacting with the people of Algeria at this time. There were Muslim Arabs that were members of the harkis, a group that aided the French military in their campaign to quell the unrest. There was also another group, one much larger, that did not loudly call for independence. This was the majority Muslim population living in Algeria and although they may have supported the revolution they did so quietly, without joining the forces of the FLN or any other active group during the revolution. Perhaps the loudest voice of this time was the FLN, the instigators of the revolution. During the revolution the French never doubted that they were battling against the Arab Algerians, rather than the Kabyle or other Amazigh people. The French had always felt that the Muslims were an unstable group and therefore were most inclined to cause conflict within colonial Algeria. However, the French stereotypes were not accurate. They believed that this instability stemmed from their nature, which was violent and unreliable. The French had spent over

one hundred years trying to stamp this “nature” out of the Arabs through colonization. When the Arab’s finally revolted it was not because they were unstable and violent by nature and incompatible with civilization, which the French believed. Instead, they were tired of being ruled by the French and in a new post-WWII era they felt that they had earned the right to self-determination and would battle their way to independence. They recognized the hypocrisy of the French and set out to reclaim what they believed had always belonged to them, Algeria.

The FLN, the National Liberation Front, maintained a large amount of influence over what was happening during the war, especially at the beginning. It was the FLN that initially started the war in 1954. They started the insurrection on November 1, 1954.¹⁰⁸ In 1955 they continued to ask all of its militants and sympathizers to arm themselves and proceed to direct action against the French in the hope that each patriot will make it his duty to execute a traitor.¹⁰⁹ In 1956 they seemed even more powerful than the French. Feraoun comments on their apparent strength in the way that the FLN “makes its presence known when it wants, where it wants, and always in an efficient manner.”¹¹⁰ This ability to make its presence known would have been incredibly significant in the Algerian war as it was a battle of identities. This was partly due to the fact that the FLN always knew that it was fighting a war and an important one as they were battling for the right to their homeland.¹¹¹ When they initially declared war on France the war they were fighting was one of bare survival.¹¹² When the FLN first declared its independence from

¹⁰⁸ Alexander, 8

¹⁰⁹ Feraoun, 48

¹¹⁰ Feraoun, 59

¹¹¹ Alexander, 3

¹¹² Evans, 58

France they had expected the rest of the Muslim population to rise up with them. When this didn't happen they realized that they had to legitimize themselves as leaders of Algeria in the eyes of not only fellow Algerians but the French and the rest of the world as well. The FLN resolved to use any means necessary in order to establish control and it was with this philosophy with which Feraoun struggled. As the Algerian liberators, Feraoun seemed to hold the FLN to a higher standard. Feraoun often dismissed atrocities committed by the French because of their role as the oppressors. However, he could condemn the FLN for similar atrocities because he believed that if they resorted to the same tactics as the French they would be no better than those they were rebelling against. One of the ways that the FLN established its power in Algeria was instituting strikes and boycotts. The first of these were the strikes against tobacco and alcohol. Feraoun talks of his annoyance that he had to hide his smoking but also steer clear of the cafés.¹¹³ These cafés also called for the banning of gambling, which also go against the teachings of Islam. According to Feraoun, the logic was that gambling leads to laziness, dissipation, and neglect of family duties.¹¹⁴ These strikes against alcohol and tobacco were a clear example of the members of the FLN and other Algerian nationalists attempt at returning to their Islamic roots. Since Islam bans alcohol and tobacco, calling for a strike against these items was a clear rejection of the French colonial power. It was also a way to clearly demarcate the sides individuals had chosen. If any man had been brave enough to go to a café they would have been immediately targeted by the FLN, however, the lack of customers in these cafés would have been very frustrating for the French who wanted to maintain the status quo, which they could not do if customers were no longer coming to

¹¹³ Feraoun, 15

¹¹⁴ Feraoun, 51

cafés, something that had been an integral part of society previously. The FLN also terrorized civilians who were attempting to vote in the elections claiming that it was a “colonist’s referendum.”¹¹⁵ The FLN no longer accepted any of the institutions established by the colonists and intended to prove this by convincing the rest of the Muslim population not to trust these institutions as well. If the majority of the population began ignoring things like coffee houses and elections there was no way that the French could continue their hold on Algeria.

Feraoun was disappointed in the expectations of the rebels. One of Feraoun’s acquaintances went to a meeting at a local mosque where the rebels were listing of their expectations for independence. These expectations included “prohibitions of all kinds...dictated by the most obtuse fanaticism, the most intransigent racism, and the most authoritarian fist.”¹¹⁶ Feraoun referred to this as “true racism” highlighting how much his freedoms had been taken away and how much he had grown accustomed his usual way of life. Feraoun was used to racism coming from the French, in fact, he expected it from them. With the FLN calling for liberation for all of Algeria it would have been unforgivable for them to immediately begin their oppression of Algerians as well. Those rebelling against the French were calling for a new order and a new way of life for Algerians, which would have alienated many of the people within the country. Much like the French OAS resorted to terrorist actions in order to make their point towards the end of the war, the FLN also used such tactics in the early years of the war in order to establish themselves as the sole power. They worked in guerrilla groups and would single out electricity generating stations, post offices, petrol depots, railway ticket halls, level

¹¹⁵ Feraoun, 249

¹¹⁶ Feraoun, 53

crossings, arterial roads, and bridges.¹¹⁷ It became clear, at least to Feraoun, that this battle was more than just about the independence of Algeria. When speaking to a member of the FLN Feraoun learned that they felt disdain for “civilians” like Feraoun and that when the time came these people, whom he referred to as “the spineless” or “slaves,” would have to throw themselves at the feet of the FLN or, as he called them, “the saviors.”¹¹⁸ Feraoun believed that the FLN wanted just as much power as the French had and would go to any lengths to achieve this. Feraoun believed this strongly and continuously denounced the FLN in his *Journal* asking them, “Do you think that a drop of your blood is really worth anything more than a drop of anyone else’s blood?”¹¹⁹ He was accusing the FLN of becoming like the French oppressors where they only saw the use in the people they ruled over as long as they were able to exert their influence over them. Feraoun was actually calling the FLN to uphold a higher ideal because they were trying to overthrow the French oppressors. If they acted the same as the French then it would be impossible to excuse the members “for either their mistakes or their injustice.”¹²⁰ The FLN painted the French as the oppressors and so if they acted in a similar way then would they not become oppressors as well? Feraoun believed the answer to this was yes. He continues by likening the FLN to the French in his *Journal* by saying this:

“For the past hundred years, we have endured all of this and suffered the consequences of errors and injustice...if nothing is going to change, at least spare lives and let us be. When soldiers kill children, women, simpletons, innocents, it is neither new nor scandalous. You are neither French soldiers nor police officers. Do not consider yourselves powerful men or administrators.”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Alexander, 8

¹¹⁸ Feraoun, 162

¹¹⁹ Feraoun, 223

¹²⁰ Feraoun, 86

¹²¹ Feraoun, 86-87

Feraoun, like the French and the FLN recognized the power of the Algerian population, however, he believed that the best way to convince them to follow a particular group was by being the better man. The FLN were not the French who, convinced of the Algerian's stupidity, would say they held Algeria's best interest at heart while killing anyone who seemed to disregard French authority. He at first believed that the FLN could do this when they initially came to power. However, by the end of the war he was warning them that the majority population in Algeria, who were not involved in the war, would come to hate the FLN and would reject their power. This rejection of power may have been because Feraoun was writing for a French audience. However, due to the complexities of Feraoun's identity it also could have been because he felt threatened by the FLN. To him they represented a second round of colonialism. In an Algeria ruled by the FLN he would still be a minority, as a Kabyle, but would have none of the benefits he had as a part of French Algeria. The rejection of the FLN on these grounds makes sense as Feraoun would continue to be a minority in Algeria and he might have even shared less in common with the men of the FLN than the previous rulers of Algeria. French Algeria was something that he understood while an independent Algeria that rejected all ties to France would be a place that would have been very difficult for Feraoun to survive in. Feraoun believed that an FLN Algeria meant that he would have had to reject all ties to not only his French identity but to his Kabyle identity as well. This separation between two groups of peoples who called Algeria home and wanted independence for Algeria would have been exactly what the French wanted.

The French were smart in their colonization of Algeria. It was their ingenuity that created men like Feraoun. Although they could get away with ignoring the needs of the

majority, they still had to have some supporters, or at least a group that accepted their rule. It was because of this that they allowed a select number of Algerians to rule underneath their careful watch. Those who kept power in pre-revolution Algeria did so at the loss of prestige. Much of the native Algerian population marked them out as pro-French collaborators, calling them the pejorative term ‘old turbans.’¹²² The French knew that the key to traversing the terrain and understanding the people of Algeria was by using some of these people as their employees. The same was true for the French during the Algerian revolution. During the war the French recruited Muslims to their cause, which they referred to as auxiliaries. At the end of the war the French reported to the United Nations that they had around 230,000 auxiliaries serving them in Algeria in various functions.¹²³ One of these groups of auxiliaries was a semi-guerilla Muslim troop that the French created in order to fight in favor of French interests. These Algerians were known as harkis and were on the opposite side of the FLN, battling to keep the French colonial power intact. These men were recruited by the French army because of their knowledge of Algeria and were instrumental in helping the French military break the FLN.¹²⁴ The harkis were useful as political tools as well. Both the French and the FLN used the harkis as examples to support their cause. The French used them as proof that Muslims still supported a French Algeria while the Algerian nationalists defined them as absolute traitors and were used to aid in the definition of a unified Algeria. In both cases they were given an identity against their will either as “faithful servants of France” or

¹²² Evans, 58

¹²³ Stora, 101

¹²⁴ Evans, 62

“absolute traitor” to the Algerian homeland.¹²⁵ Although not part of the troops France created, Feraoun would have still been designated an auxiliary of France as he helped the military and other Frenchmen during the Algerian war. It is because of this status that he was able to meet with the French continually over the course of the war. Many other Muslims such as Feraoun, including many Arabs, had to overcome the struggle of being called an ally by France whether they wanted to or not. When the harkis were formed in Tamazirt, for instance, the first deserters would be punished in order to prevent the others from finding the need to leave.¹²⁶ Although Feraoun was not pressured in this same way, the French considered him an ally simply for being educated. Algerians felt as though they had no choice but to comply with the wishes of France because of the strength of their military and their ability to control through power.

Both the FLN and the harkis were separate from the majority of Muslims, the group to which Feraoun associated himself the most with, despite what the French may have thought. The majority of Muslims, although very much impacted by the Algerian war, did not play a direct role in the events. These men and women are some of the most evident players in the daily life of Mouloud Feraoun as he interacts with them wherever he goes. Muslims in Algeria often did not openly vocalize their support for either France or Algeria. However, although they might not have been vocal supporters of independence it was clear to Feraoun, and eventually to de Gaulle and other important players in France, that they wanted independence all along. Feraoun, being a Muslim, felt a lot of affinity for this group. Always referring to this group as a ‘we’ because he felt so strongly connected to them. As he says, “we are all Algerian Muslim civilians, all

¹²⁵ Stora, 102

¹²⁶ Feraoun, 190

candidates awaiting redemption through independence. We have all paid a great price for having the impudence to hope, and all we have left is the desire to live.¹²⁷ The FLN had caused the events of November 1, 1954 in the hopes that it would cause a general uprising among the Muslims. Most Muslims were in reality much more cautious and preferred to wait on events and so often the FLN had to resort to violence and intimidation to make them compliant.¹²⁸ However, they listened to whatever those in power were telling them to do. This was true for whoever seemed to be in charge, and it often changed from day to day within those confusing times. Feraoun describes a story of an Arab man accidentally running in to a Frenchman as he is walking down the street. This man immediately apologizes when he realizes he has run in to a Frenchman while the Frenchman is quick to accept the apology when he realizes the person who has run in to him is an Arab. Both men then walk away as if they had experienced a close encounter with death.¹²⁹ This interaction describes the situation in Algeria for those who called Algeria home. One was never sure of his place in it and who would be his enemy. This story emphasizes the danger in which Feraoun and other Algerians found themselves. The opposing sides to each seemed to be in control and so it would have been difficult to know whom to trust. In describing his interactions with anyone except trusted friends Feraoun rarely mentions asserting his own opinion. Instead, he waits and writes what he thought about the experience in his *Journal*. This silence seems to reflect many of the actions of Algerians at the time, like the man who encountered the Frenchman on the street.

¹²⁷ Feraoun, 251

¹²⁸ Evans, 58

¹²⁹ Feraoun, 309

The French as the colonial power maintained the power initially, Feraoun often witness officers pushing around those that it did not like in order to establish its dominance. The French would use the Algerians to their advantage, parading around the men that had surrendered in the hopes to convince them that they should not be supporting the rebels. The man would point out in each village they visited who had helped the rebels, these people would then be automatically arrested and often shot without any trial.¹³⁰ However, Feraoun says that the general population continued to feel sorry for their soldiers as they did not think that they were the perpetrators, that they were “absolute strangers to the disease from which” the Algerians did not want to suffer anymore.¹³¹ To them the French soldiers were like them, victims of circumstance who did not understand the cause they were fighting for. Yet as these were the only people towards whom they could target their frustration it was often these French soldiers who suffered the most. They did not have any pity for the French that claimed from the start that they understood the problems Algerians faced. These were the politicians and the military leaders and all of Algeria, including Feraoun, seemed sure that the French did not know the Algerians. He often mentions the propaganda written by the army’s psychological unit, which tried to convince Algerians that they should be on the French’s side.¹³² The propaganda and the French tried again and again to ally themselves with the Muslim population, as they knew that this group had the potential for being their greatest strength but also their greatest weakness. If they weren’t able to convince the majority of the Algerian people, which was the Muslim population of Algeria, they would be unable

¹³⁰ Feraoun, 199

¹³¹ Feraoun, 60

¹³² Feraoun, 203

to win the war. Yet the Algerians were never fooled by these attempts. They knew that the French were just doing this in order to maintain the power they had already established and although they may have pitied the French soldiers sent in to a conflict they did not understand they knew that their identity was one separate from the French. The Arabs were finally able to make the French understand that the “Arabs’ feelings toward them were exactly the same as the feelings they themselves had for the Arabs.”¹³³ Based on the assumption that the Algerians would ally with anyone but the French in order to gain their independence it is difficult to then understand why they chose not to support a mass revolution like the FLN wanted at the start of the war. However, when looking at the way the FLN treated the Algerians that were not directly aligned with them, within the context of the clashing powers, it is easy to see why the Muslims felt as though they could not join the FLN wholeheartedly. This did not stop them from supporting the FLN, who after all were trying to gain independence for Algeria. Feraoun describes their plight saying, “All Algerians would accept any radical remedy that might rid the country of its misery, any real solution to this problem which has yet to be solved.”¹³⁴ It is partly for this reason that when the FLN called for a general strike from January to February 1957 the strike was so well supported by Muslims that it “all but shut down retail manufacturing across Algeria.”¹³⁵ As the war dragged on it became clear that this group of people was the one to win over. Both the French and the Algerians tried over and over again to convince the Muslim population that it was their cause that they should follow. Unfortunately, this set up a situation in which the Arab Muslims were

¹³³ Feraoun, 283

¹³⁴ Feraoun, 247-248

¹³⁵ Alexander, 9

being used unfairly in the war. This made the Arab population grow increasingly frustrated with their situation. For instance, in the villages the villagers were expected to give money to the FLN, to provide shelter and good food for them, and to cease all contact with the French while still being able to provide themselves with all of the necessities of life.¹³⁶ While Algerians wanted independence, survival was even more important to them and they knew that they could not ensure their survival by giving in to all of the FLN demands.

Although not the last group to try and manipulate the general Muslim population during the war the pieds noirs also desperately tried to convince the Algerian population that colonialism was there to stay. These men tried to manipulate the general population in a different manner than the French or the FLN. They tried to terrorize these Muslims in to believing that colonialism was the only way that the country could continue. When the pieds noirs rose up against them, Feraoun noted, “the situation is clear: the Arabs—who nobody pushed and who became exasperated only when confronted with the pieds noirs and their bravado—go into the streets to shout their irritation, and they are fired on by the very people who claim to defend them, watch over them, and to fraternize with them.”¹³⁷ Despite this, the Muslims were still more upset at France and its army than at the pieds noirs. In discussing the feelings of Muslims with a Frenchman, Feraoun admits that although they hate and kill the pieds noirs, they know them and are not afraid of them because there weren’t as many and they were Algerians like the rest of the Muslim population.¹³⁸ Despite all the OAS and the rest of the pieds noirs community tried to do

¹³⁶ Feraoun, 188

¹³⁷ Feraoun, 279

¹³⁸ Feraoun, 298

in order to prevent independence, the majority population realized they were the majority and never succumbed to the threats of the OAS. In the end it was the pieds noirs and not the Arabs that fled Algeria.

It is clear that he feels that this community has been betrayed. First by the FLN who claimed to support them yet resorted to terrorism in order to coerce them into action, then by the French who resorted to brutal violence in order to keep their colony intact, and, finally, by the pieds noirs with whom they had lived together for years but still felt the need to kill. At the end of the war the general Muslim population was so tired of the conflict that had surrounded them for the past eight years that they willing to accept almost anything for peace. Feraoun says that even he is ready to accept almost anything in the hopes that it will bring peace.¹³⁹ Feraoun's actions throughout the book mimic those of the rest of the Muslim community. He often chooses to remain silent in the conversation he has with French Algerian intellectuals and doesn't attend the meetings held by the FLN. However, within his *Journal* he is much more critical of both groups and their role in the war. Although Feraoun is not an Arab Muslim, he is a Muslim just the same and so the way he views the events in Algeria is a useful tool in understanding how the silent majority living in Algeria would have felt had they chosen to act.

The Kabyle Identity in the Context of the Algerian Revolution

The Kabyles are by far the most difficult to identify, understand, and even see during this time. Their story is often ignored as they were simply seen as Algerians; their identity wasn't seen as separate from the majority. Instead, the Kabyle identity seems to

¹³⁹ Feraoun, 252

be almost exclusively defined by Feraoun and other Kabyles. The Kabyle's were part of a much larger group, the Amazigh, that live in many different groups around North Africa. In Algeria, the Kabyle's represent the largest percentage of the Amazigh and so it was on this group that the French focused when they first entered Algeria in 1830. This was a way of establishing the French as the dominant power in Algeria without having to convince the population as a whole. The Kabyle's were distinct enough that they could be recognized and separated by the French but still integrated enough in to Algerian society that the majority Muslim population accepted them. The French intentionally established more French schools in the Kabylia region so that a disproportional amount of Kabyle's had been educated in French schools.¹⁴⁰ During the revolution the Kabyles were much like the general population in that they felt used by both sides, each group using them in order to further their goals. In the Algerian revolution the Kabyles were not able to keep their identity, or even maintain it. Unlike the Muslims and the French the Kabyles were always integrated in to the movements of others and so when it came time for their independence they found that they had to accept an Arab nationalist group rather than one that would accept all of the different ethnicities that were living in Algeria at this time. An effective way to understand the Kabyle identity in the Algerian revolution is to look at them within the context of the already discussed French and Arab identities of the time. Contrasting the Kabyle identity with the French or Arab identities provided a useful tool in understanding the role Kabyles played in the revolution. It is for this reason that Feraoun proves to be so useful in understanding Kabyle identity. Feraoun identified

¹⁴⁰ Stora, 39

himself as a Kabyle, which to him was quite separated from the French and the Arabs that populated Algeria.

Feraoun was born and raised in Kabylia and so this is often what he relates himself the most to in his journal. As a Kabyle he has an authentic claim in understanding the identity of the Kabyle's during the revolution. However, as an intellectual he had the unique opportunity to be able to see the way the French viewed the Kabyle's during this time. The French would speak openly to him because they believed that his French education would lead him to support France and the continued colonization of Algeria. Feraoun was a Muslim as well and he also had many Arab contemporaries, which would have allowed him to see the way in which Arab Algerians would have viewed him. As a resident of Algeria he was a target of the FLN who was attempting to unify the Algerian people against the French. In his Journal he often wrote about the ways the French army, the *pieds noirs*, the FLN, and other actors of the Algerian revolution tried to influence his ideas. However, throughout this time he maintained his identity as a Kabyle, regardless of the opposing actors in the war pressuring him to adopt a different identity. It is because of this that he is so useful in understanding a small part of the Kabyle identity during the Algerian revolution.

This Kabyle identity is the reason Feraoun believes the French are so willing to be generous to him. They don't associate him as a rebel because of his Kabyle roots. To the French during this time period it was the Arabs that were revolting against them, as was demonstrated to them by the National Liberation Front. The French again used the age-old myth that the Kabyles were closer to the French than anyone else. Feraoun spoke to a French captain who was "filled with optimism" because he believed that the Kabyles

were tired of the rebels and were “returning in droves.”¹⁴¹ Feraoun and other Kabyles were not oblivious to French attempts to convince them that independence was not a good idea. At one point they even had a former rebel speak through a loud speaker in Kabyle. This “never-ending harangue” was only a small example of the French attempt at convincing the Kabyle’s that the FLN did not have their best interests at heart.¹⁴² This man also went to villages in Kabylia with French soldiers to denounce those that had helped him when he was a rebel. Feraoun believed this to be ridiculous because if every Kabyle were executed for helping a rebel, “all the Kabyles would have to be picked up and executed.”¹⁴³ It was clear that the French were simply trying to maintain their power rather than actually proving to the Kabyle’s they should be on their side. Instead the French believed that the Kabyle’s were almost as bad as the Arab’s because they were not Frenchmen. A Frenchman speaking to Feraoun on the subject of Kabyles told him that because he had lived for three years “in the heart of a village surrounded by mountains” he was more Kabyle than Feraoun himself. He goes on to refer to them as savages, savages whom he has “become familiar with the very depths of their psychology, their secrets, their appetites, their lives, their defects.”¹⁴⁴ This clear lack of understanding of what it meant to be Kabyle is apparent in all of the Frenchmen who interacted with Feraoun and other Kabyles during the war.

Throughout the war the French slowly began to abandon their previous assumption about the Kabyles. This was not because of a change in the ways that the French viewed the Kabyles, instead, it came around the same time that they began to

¹⁴¹ Feraoun, 190

¹⁴² Feraoun, 199

¹⁴³ Feraoun, 199

¹⁴⁴ Feraoun, 253-254

recognize the power of the forces behind the revolution. To the French the Kabyle identity was no longer a separate from the Arab Muslim identity that was waging a successful war against the French. Before, under colonial rule, there had been an understanding that as long as the Kabyle's didn't oppose the French they would be somewhat left to their own devices. With the revolution things that had once been ignored now were being brought out in to the open. Feraoun saw this beginning to change after the FLN began declaring Algerian's, including Kabyles, universal opposition to French rule:

“Fine, the French are responding to this the best they can, but guide often they talk to us. We resent this because we have persuaded ourselves that they believe us even though we have been lying to them. We should accept the following fact: They no longer believe us. They should themselves know once and for all that nobody either believes them or likes them. We act like good Kabyles, as we are supposed to, and they act like true French people. We can no longer anticipate their reactions and they can no longer prevent ours; for we have stopped hypocritical dealings between ourselves.”¹⁴⁵

The success the FLN had in convincing the French that the Kabyle people of Algeria were as united behind the Arab Muslim ideology of the FLN as that of all the other populations living in Algeria during this time was probably their greatest success. In convincing the French that they had a united front they were successfully able to negotiate for peace.

According to Feraoun, it seems as though the Kabyles were the group that tried to maintain the most regular patterns in Algeria. The Arabs were revolting and the French were retaliating, while the Kabyle population tried to continue living their lives as normally as possible. The French, terrified they would lose this valuable territory began clamping down and sending in troops while the Algerians were calling for all out revolt.

¹⁴⁵ Feraoun, 81

On the other hand, in January of 1956 the Kabyles were still going to the market on market day.¹⁴⁶ This was because of the role that the Kabyles played in colonial Algeria. Not seen as equals to the French but still given more rights than their Arab counterparts the Kabyles were perfectly placed within the system. Feraoun readily admits to the extra rights that he is given as a Kabyle, especially that of an educated one. The French, including the *pieds noirs*, viewed him as almost an equal and he continued to travel to France throughout the war. Feraoun happened to be the perfect example of what the French believed a Kabyle should be and so they used him to try and influence the greater Kabyle population. They would distribute leaflets of newspaper articles that spoke of Feraoun as if he were a great supporter of the French. Like Feraoun the Kabyles responded “with the same revulsion that they generally show when they receive other such tracts.”¹⁴⁷ However, this did not stop the French from attempting to pull the Kabyles, especially me like Feraoun, to their side during the war. Feraoun continually met with men in the French military, *pieds noirs* intellectuals, and other people with close ties to France.

The Kabyle also seemed to bear the brunt of the civilian suffering that seems to follow any war. By December of 1956 the situation in Kabylia had suddenly begun to deteriorate. Rationing, along with ongoing fighting, led to people becoming cold, hungry, and frightened.¹⁴⁸ Feraoun believes that this led to the Kabyle contacting different groups in order to sell information, in an attempt to be able to feed and protect

¹⁴⁶ Feraoun, 51

¹⁴⁷ Feraoun, 203

¹⁴⁸ Feraoun, 164

themselves, which led them to have their own people killed or thrown in jail.¹⁴⁹ Kabyles had to be involved in the war whether they wanted to participate or not. The Kabyles wanted to survive and so they wouldn't often resort to extraordinary measures in order to do so. While they may have been victims of circumstance this caused them to play an active role in the war. They were caught between two sides. As Feraoun says:

“Here is what it is like in Kabylia: there are the maquis on the one hand, and on the other, there is the army. Between the two there is the population, which gets beaten up. Just like a punching ball between two boxers...Healthy men flee, go to jail, or join the maquis when they can escape death. The children, the women, and the old ones stay behind as punching bags.”¹⁵⁰

These men women and children were very much like the Arabs in that they didn't have any control over what was happening to them. In fact, even though Kabylia was a predominantly Kabyle region there would have been Arabs that lived there as well, who were just as much “punching bags” as any of the Kabyles that stayed. The difference was that the Kabyle's were never given the right to their own identity while they were caught in the middle of the conflict. The Arabs were fighting for the right of self-determination while the Kabyles, on the other hand, were caught in the fight of a French Algeria or an Arab Algeria.

Feraoun mentions the “proverbial Kabyle solidarity” in his journal in order to emphasize how united the Kabyles felt during this time period.¹⁵¹ It is interesting that he is upholding the stereotypes first held by the French in order to describe his fellow countrymen. He writes, “the Kabyles have never felt so united, so homogenous and so

¹⁴⁹ Feraoun, 164

¹⁵⁰ Feraoun, 201

¹⁵¹ Feraoun, 164

invincible” and that this was something that “any mountain dweller can be proud.”¹⁵²

This shows that he as a Kabyle continued to feel autonomous from the Arab Muslims leading the revolutions, something that these Muslims would not have wanted. Part of the message of the FLN was that Algeria was an Arab Muslim country that was united against the French oppressors. For Feraoun to admit that there were other takes on what it meant to be Algerian went directly against the message of the FLN.

The ideology of the FLN was an important part of the Algerian revolution especially in the way it approached identity among Algerians. The FLN maintained the idea that they were a united Arab force. To them, Algeria was a country with a proud Arab Muslim heritage and it was to this heritage that they hoped to successfully return the country to after they had achieved victory. It was for this reason that they did not recognize the difference between the Kabyle and the Arabs. An essential aspect of their cause was that the country would unite behind Islam and so to them it did not matter if they were Kabyle or Arab. The Arabs, like the Kabyles, were much more able to recognize the fluidity between the Kabyle and Arab identities. They believed that this fluidity was because of the common cultural heritage of Islam and the Arabic language. This shared heritage could unite the Arabs and the Kabyles and would gain Algerian national independence.¹⁵³ The ideology of the FLN became more and more attractive to the Kabyles of Algeria. After the Battle of Algiers in 1957 more and more people began to ally behind the FLN, many of those were Kabyles.¹⁵⁴ Even Feraoun who did not

¹⁵² Feraoun, 165

¹⁵³ Zack, Lizabeth. "Who Fought the Algerian War? Political Identity and Conflict in French-Ruled Algeria." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 16, no. 1 (2002): 55-97. p. 56

¹⁵⁴ Zack, 85

necessarily support the FLN and their tactics rejoiced in January of 1961 writing, “We will have our independence, one way or the other.”¹⁵⁵

The Kabyle identity was lost in Algeria for several decades after the war. Upon gaining their independence the Algerian government made Arabic the only official language, removing the Tamazight¹⁵⁶ language and refusing to publish books written in Tamazight. It wasn't until the Berber spring in the late 1980's that there was a return to the Kabyle identity. The FLN believed that incorporating the Kabyle identity in to a holistic national one was the only way to achieve independence. At the end of the war the FLN put in place a linguistic and cultural policy that was one of Arabization and of re-Islamicization.¹⁵⁷ The Kabyle's may have seen the importance of this, as they did not insist on their right as a separate people in the days after the war. However, they were, and continue to be, the minority and so perhaps they simply did not have the opportunity to assert themselves in the chaos of the Algerian revolution. This war was one of grand identities and men like Feraoun were forced to place themselves within the context of these general identities, even if they had claims to many.

Conclusion

Although the Algerian revolution technically started in 1954 and ended in 1962 these years cannot fully encompass all that changed during this time. The history of the war began in 1830 when the French first colonized Algeria. However, the future is still being impacted by the events that took place during the years of 1954 to 1962. The

¹⁵⁵ Feraoun, 287

¹⁵⁶ Tamazight is the language spoken by the Amazigh people, including the Kabyle's.

¹⁵⁷ Chaker, Salem. "Berber Challenge in Algeria: The State of the Question." *Race, Gender & Class* 8, no. 3 (2001): 135-156. p. 137

Amazigh of Algeria led a Berber Spring in the last part of the twentieth century, attempting to reclaim their own identity much like the Algerian Arabs had during the 1950's. Identity was an important factor of the revolution as it helped to shape the outcome of the war. The three major identities to which Feraoun was most familiar with, the French, the Arab, and the Kabyles all played their part in changing the course of the war. The FLN, the French politicians, and the Kabyle citizens of Algeria all provided a crucial component to the war. Without the FLN there would not have been an organization to rally for independence and while Feraoun may not have agreed with their tactics he did believe in their call for independence. The French politicians were the ones that eventually relinquished their control over Algeria. Although this was done unwillingly any admission by the French that they may have been wrong in their colonial rule over Algeria was a feat in itself. Feraoun was finally able to see them accepting their role as colonial oppressors, a fact they had denied since 1830. The Kabyles provided the normalcy that such a confusing and conflicting time desperately needed. While the rest of the world seemed to be caught up in the violence the Kabyles, like Feraoun, were attempting to understand what was happening, writing down the things they experienced.

The Algerian revolution was a war fought not only for the independence of Algeria but for the preservation of Arab identity as well. The French had spent over one hundred years attempting to change Algerian identity; they changed the language, the culture, the economy, and the politics of Algeria. However, the one thing that they could not change was the people of Algeria. Even a man who seemed to be the perfect example of an Algerian that has integrated in to French society maintained his separation. This man was Mouloud Feraoun: a Kabyle, an intellectual, a Muslim, but most importantly an

Algerian. Feraoun was able to not only give one perspective of what was happening in the revolution but he also was able to examine the changing and evolving identities of the time.

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