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"Something Notably Erotic": Politics, "Arab Men," and Sexual Revolution in Post-decolonization France, 1962–1974*

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> Do you know that France already has cities that have a foreign majority? Maghrebin immigrants make up 60% of Roubaix! If you wait until things start to burn before waking up. . . . Have you seen the crowds in Egypt, in Tunisia, in Syria? The day that you have a crowd like that marching down the Champs-Elysées! . . . Who will stop them? And if they march down the Champs-Elysées, it's not to fool around. One of their goals, for example, is to sodomize the President. They want to make it to the rooster-adorned gates [of the Elysée Palace], break through them, and then to "spike" him [*le "sabrer"*]. I repeat: who will stop them? (Jean-Marie Le Pen, April 18, 2011)[1]

In a 1967 newspaper article assessing that autumn's literary output, critic Xavier Gall lamented that "for a long time, the French have relegated Algeria to literary purgatory." Finally, however, five years after the victory of pro-independence nationalists, what Gall termed "an Algerian Harvest" gave the French public an opportunity to gain some perspective on "the physical and moral drama of the [Algerian] war" (1954–62). There were, he noted, "easily a dozen titles I could cite," but the one he focused on was Pierre Guyotat's *Tombeau pour cinq cent mille soldats* (A tomb for five hundred thousand soldiers). Although he regretted the book's exaggerations and its obsession with violence, Gall embraced what he took to be the book's greatest insight: "it remains true that the Algerian war had something notably erotic about it." A note that Guyotat wrote to himself to describe the manuscript that became

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[1] Jean-Marie Le Pen, "Je ne ménage pas Marine, je la respecte," *France-Soir*, April 18, 2011; unless noted, all translations from French to English are by the author.

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Tombeau more acutely raises, I think, some of the issues at stake in 1967: "decolonization and 'de-eroticization.'"[2]

With this coupling, Guyotat gave voice to the hope that the mid-twentieth-century tide of decolonization had laid low not just European colonialism but also the foundations on which, historians tell us, orientalist erotic fantasies (and nightmares) had long flourished: the institutions that affirmed clear distinctions (between groups, between Metropoles and colonies, between colonized and colonizer); the hierarchies of power that relied on and affirmed such claims; and the endemic play of difference and sex, which proposed "desire" as the primary agent driving modern European colonialism, rather than brute force or the pull of ideology ("conquest . . . not by the Cross nor the Sword but the Penis," as ethnologist Roger Bastide put it). Guyotat's 1967 novel, through its excess and experimentation, highlights the explosive mixture of violence and desire during the Algerian war; it works (at least this is one reading) to exaggerate and disable—to de-eroticize—what made this recent history so sexual. This conflicted past is what Gall's commentary tames into "something notably erotic." As I read these contradictory statements, they are more compelling as primary sources than as histories: they give evidence of how quickly and with what intensity familiar sexualized claims about "Arabs" reemerged after the "tide" of decolonization, which had supposedly left new possibilities in its wake. Now, however, those claims primarily described people, relationships, and events located within France, even as they always also referenced Algeria.[3]

This article analyzes why talk of an erotic charge linked to Algeria surged into French discussions around "May '68." It focuses on a period that begins with the 1967 emergence of "sexual liberty" in public debates sparked by protests at Nanterre University and culminates in 1974, when government decisions that suspended legal immigration altered the discussion. Most claims were strikingly similar to those that had accompanied empire, yet

[2] Xavier Gall, "Une moisson algérienne," *Le cri du monde* 13 (December 1967): 52–53; Pierre Guyotat, *Tombeau pour cinq cent mille soldats, sept chants* (Paris, 1967), and *Carnets de bord*, vol. 1, *1962–1969*, ed. Valérian Lallement (Paris, 2005), 200.

[3] There has been much work on the intersections of sexuality and modern imperialism. Key texts include Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham, NC, 1995); Anjali Arondekar, "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (2005): 10–27. On male homosexuality in post-1945 French-ruled North Africa, see esp. Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (London, 2003), 344–411; on decolonization and sexual liberation in the West, see Henry Abelove, "New York City Gay Liberation and the Queer Commuters," in *Deep Gossip* (Minneapolis, 2005), 70–88. For Roger Bastide's 1953 summary of the claims of the Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre about "the Portuguese conquest of the world," see his *Anthropologie appliquée* (Paris, 1971), 101.

decolonization (the 1962 forced withdrawal of the French state into the continental Hexagon) did change both the reasons why such talk was widespread and the work it did. What follows maps the intersection of sex talk (the term I give to widespread and varied references to sex, sexual morality, deviance, and normalcy), "Arab men," and politics in the writings of radical political activists and journalists. It first sketches out why developments during the Algerian war made sex talk so important to French post-decolonization efforts to grapple with the history and ongoing effects of the eight-year war, the 132 years of French Algeria, and empire more broadly. As historians of the modern West have shown, sexuality has been a "persistent and recurring way of enabling the signification of power," to borrow Joan W. Scott's description of the field of gender. Several specificities of the Algerian revolution, however, explain why the post-decolonization reinscription of sexual orientalism in "'68 years" France was gendered male and fixated on representations of men, masculinity, and virility. The article then turns to the little-noticed gesturing of the far-right press in the months around the events of May '68. While brief, this section makes clear how many continuities there were between long-standing orientalist certainties and post-decolonization invocations that linked North African men and sex. It also suggests how far-right maneuvers in spring 1968—notably, efforts to erase connections to the history of French empire in Algeria—repositioned these stereotypes in ways that facilitated their subsequent reemergence in more mainstream public discussions. The final section moves forward into the 1970s to examine the quite widely commented on publications of the "revolutionary" far-left press—notably the writings of self-proclaimed gay liberationists. Here, the place of "Arab men" was striking, immediately controversial, and emblematic of larger developments on the far left. Gay liberationists merit special attention because they sought at once to celebrate and to politicize the erotics of Algerian difference, which others vilified and/or essentialized. They did so by insisting on the contemporary pertinence of histories of colonial domination and anticolonial struggle.[4]

This history speaks to scholarship on empire and race and to studies of the '68 years, as well as to the history of sexuality. During the '68 years, I argue, public debates about sex and sexuality repeatedly offered French people a

[4] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053–75, 1069. On the limited discussion of the gendering of men and masculinity in scholarship on North Africa, see Lahoucine Ouzgane, "Masculinity as Virility in Tahar Ben Jelloun's Work," *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 4 (1997): 1–13. The way this question played out in the reception of novels, films, and plays; the writings of intellectuals; and political debates about immigration and sexual violence is one focus of my *La France, le sexe, les Arabes (1944–1978)* (forthcoming).

chance to assess, evoke, and even analyze histories and memories of French Algeria, the war, and empire. An examination of the unexpected intersections of public sex talk and Algerians also renders visible the foundational roles postcolonial models and concerns played in French political developments over the course of the "'68 years." Finally, while some of the most influential recent analyses of this period describe arguments linked to sex as impediments to, or aftereffects of, politics, or as limited to the realm of "identity politics," this article presents the history of one way in which such arguments were constitutive of political understandings and actions.[5]

In sex talk during the '68 years, there was much talk of Algeria. Echoing Gall, many scholars have described how the French forgot their country's colonial past and silenced discussions of the "events of Algeria," an interpretation mapped out in Benjamin Stora's *The Gangrene and Forgetting* and visible in constant invocations of "the war without a name." Alain Resnais's brilliant 1963 film, *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour*, offers a filmic template for such analyses of traumatized repression, in which the levels and types of French violence that accompanied decolonization stymie efforts to understand or even just to recount. Other studies, however, question these stories of silence; historian Raphaëlle Branche, for example, points out that the years 1967–74 witnessed an outpouring of publications about the Algerian war, most particularly popular histories, which were written by journalists or amateur historians and purchased in the hundreds of thousands. My research shows that in those same years, and even more effectively than popular histories, sex talk—made possible by growing demands for sexual liberation and the transformative power of consumer capitalism—created a site where many French people could and did speak about race, empire, and Algeria.[6]

Secondarily, the history explored here deepens the insight of numerous cultural critics that the Algerian war directly shaped France's "'68 years": sex talk at once framed this dynamic and made it visible.[7] A discursive analysis

[5] On the "'68 Years," see Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "Conclusion," in *Les années 68: Le temps de la contestation*, ed. G. Dreyfus-Armand, R. Frank, M. F Lévy, and M. Zancarini-Fournel (Brusells, 2000), 495–502.

[6] Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris, 1991); John Talbott, *The War without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York, 1980); Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: Une histoire apaisée?* (Paris, 2005), 20–21. I argue elsewhere that, rather than traumatized forgetting, French government decisions around 1962 that actively erased France's imperial past offer more insight into post-decolonization silence. See "Introduction," in Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY, 2008).

[7] On the Algerian Revolution and May '68, see, esp., Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago, 2002); Robert J. C. Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (New York, 1990); Daniel Gordon, "Immigrants and the New Left in

of how political activists combined statements about Algerian immigrants and sex opens up possibilities of connecting explicit references to the war and decolonization with compelling recent work by social historians on immigrant actors and the (re-)emergence of the "immigration question." The events of May 1968, as Michelle Zancarini-Fournel argues, forced the "immigration question" to the fore in late twentieth-century French political debates. As she and others detail, the participation of immigrant workers in the general strike of May–June 1968 began this process, while the choices made by social scientists and far-left movements after "May" did much to highlight such concerns. Recent attention to immigrants is part of the historiographic return of the social, which focuses on the massive involvement of workers in France's "May" and argues for the causal role of longer-term economic and social crises. Here I attend to how far-right and far-left political activists conjoined references to the Algerian war, sex, and male North African immigrants to advance their claims to propose radical critiques and anchor their promises to renew politics. This reveals connections between social/economic interpretations of '68 and analyses of those events in terms of political crisis (of the legitimacy of de Gaulle and the Fifth Republic). My embrace of three overlapping chronological frames further emphasizes these intersections: attention both to the short-term moment of "May" and to the medium-term phase of the "'68 years" situates the crisis of empire and the Algerian revolution at the center of the longer period of post-1945 politics, with Algeria's decolonization in 1962 the crucial pivot in that longer chronology.[8]

France, 1968–1971" (DPhil diss., University of Sussex, 2001); see also Donald Reid: "The Politics of Immigrant Workers in Twentieth-Century France," in *The Politics of Immigrant Workers*, ed. Camille Guérin-Gonzales and Carl Strikwerda (New York, 1993), 245–78, 269; Michael M. Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian Students and Workers in 1968* (New York, 2004), 175, 247. On the anticolonial and anti-imperialist inspirations of events in Mexico, Czechoslovakia, France, and elsewhere in mid-1968, see, e.g., Luisa Passerini, "Foreword," in *Gender and Sexuality in 1968: Transformation Politics in the Cultural Imagination*, ed. Leslie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen (New York, 2009), ix–xii; Petra Rethmann, "On Militancy, Sort Of," *Cultural Critique* 62 (2006): 67–91, 81–83.

[8] For an astute summary of how recent historiography on France's "'68" has been reinvigorated by groundbreaking archivally based studies that highlight social interpretations and analyses that stress the interplay between multiple time frames, notably "immediate" ("May–June"), intermediate ("the '68 years"), and longer term, see Xavier Vigna, "Clio contre Carvalho: L'historiographie de 68," *Revue internationale des livres et des idées* 5 (2008): 17–22. On how the immigrant question became of such importance in post-1968 France and on the far left, see Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "La question immigrée après 68," *Plein Droit* 53/54 (2002): 3–7; Xavier Vigna, "Une émancipation des invisibles? Les ouvriers immigrés dans les grèves de mai–juin 68," in *Histoire politique des immigrations (post)coloniales, France, 1920–2008*, ed. Ah-

The history of how this topos engaged the far right and far left also contributes to ongoing efforts to revise histories of the "Sexual Revolution." It takes up the argument advanced by cultural critic Kristin Ross for the formative role of the Algerian revolution, but it rejects her effort to sideline the politics of sex and shows, instead, how sexual questions were central to the Algerian politics of '68 years France. This serves to extend the history of France's sexual revolution backward, "pre-1968." After Algerian independence, what I term the erotics of Algerian difference proved useful to deeply political efforts to grapple with wide-ranging uncertainties about gendered and class identities and the postcolonial boundaries of the French nation. This politicization of the erotic happened in part because of choices made by anticolonial activists and was visible over the course of the '68 years. The crucial terrain was immigration, and the most important focuses of claims and disagreements were the erotic relationships of France and the French to Algerian men. To misuse Freudian terminology, all engaged the unspoken question of whether the libidinal links between Algerian men and the French/France were to be repressed, through demonization, or cathected, through emulation or objectification.[9]

The Algerian Revolution and Sex

The Algerian revolution, which began on November 1, 1954, produced the context for this French debate about "Arab men," sex, and politics. In 1962, the fact of Algerian independence redefined legal bonds, ending French sovereignty and concurrent claims that Algeria was a purely French domestic affair. It affirmed that on the international stage the two were now distinct entities: two states and two wholly different peoples. Formal decolonization also cast into doubt long-standing, explicitly sexualized explanations for French domination, which included claims that Arab culture was profoundly decadent, that Algeria was peopled by brutes, that Islam was all consuming and stultifying, and that all three embraced the abasement of women—the result at once of obsession and frustration and signaled by the veil and the harem. The victory that Algerian nationalists won against the French Republic seemingly gave the lie to arguments that an overarching absence of sexual

med Boubeker and Abdellali Hajjat (Paris, 2008), 85–94. On 1962 and French politics, see Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*.

[9] The dismissal of sex by Ross (*May '68 and Its Afterlives*) is a direct response to claims that "'68" politics produced only "liberal-libertinism," an argument linked to Régis Debray. On the "pre-1968 Sexual Revolution," see Michael Seidman, "The Pre–May 1968 Sexual Revolution," *Contemporary French Civilization* 25 (2001): 25–41.

morality and self-control made the very possibility of civilization or (the goal more frequently advanced by the mid-twentieth century) modernity necessarily a gift from the outside—the notion, as David Harvey sums it up, that "the submission of East to West [was] as necessary to the progress of civilization as the submission of female to male authority and control." Yet the intensity with which the effects of the Algerian revolution, and militants' invocations of this event, framed political arguments that invoked sex and men in the late 1960s and early 1970s did not derive primarily from the fact of decolonization itself.[10]

During the struggle for independence, anti-imperialist writers and Algerian nationalist propagandists forced attention to and redefined the erotics of empire. Their tactics and arguments upset long-standing certainties and undercut French efforts to deploy them. While this dynamic can be identified in diverse struggles over colonialism in the mid-twentieth century, the Algerian revolution rendered it strikingly visible. Anti-imperialist critics directly targeted pro–French Algeria arguments that relied on long-standing orientalist and colonialist claims about how sex and gender were (and should be) organized. These worked either to assert essential differences (between East and West) or to promote what Algerian-born philosopher Jacques Derrida named a "white mythology" of "Western" institutions, mores, and values—notably around the celebration of correctly organized heterosexual relations—as universal and open to all. The analyses that anticolonialists proposed were not what subsequent critics might term queer: they accepted that the ways in which sexuality and gender were organized, how they were represented, and what they meant all did involve questions of self-control, of the necessary respect for gender difference, of normality, and of "civilization." Yet they did radically castigate pretensions that tied "success" in these domains to imperial projects, whether premised in the "white man's burden" or the "civilizing mission."[11]

The most well-known contretemps was what the *New York Times* termed, in

[10] David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York, 2003), 273. Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis, 1986); Leila Ahmed, "Western Ethnocentrism and the Perceptions of the Harem," *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982): 522–34; Zahia Smaïl Salhi, *Politics, Poetics, and the Algerian Novel* (Lewiston, NY, 1999); Robert Aldrich, "Colonial Man," in *French Masculinities: History, Culture and Politics*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (London, 2007), 123–40.

[11] Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London, 1986); Mrinalini Sinha, "Gender in the Critiques of Colonialism and Nationalism: Locating the Indian Woman," in *Feminism and History*, ed. Joan W. Scott (Oxford, 1996), 477–504; Partha Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question," in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Brunswick, NJ, 1990), 233–53. On "queer," see Henry Abelove, "The Queering of Gay/Lesbian History," in Abelove, *Deep Gossip*, 42–55.

1958, the "Battle of the Veil." In the struggle to garner international sympathy, nationalist propaganda successfully countered official French claims, which proposed that "Arab Muslim" misogyny, sexual obsession, and barbarism forced women to take the so-called Islamic veil in order to deny their humanity. Critics of French imperialism instead insisted that, currently, the murderous violence and dehumanizing effects of French rule were far more responsible for women's suffering and restricted choices than religious backwardness or problems particular to Maghrebian heterosociability.[12] Although this was little discussed by scholars, anticolonial critics had even more success in destabilizing French certainties about masculinity and male sexuality, notably during the wartime debates around torture. These again brought existing certainties to the fore, specifically the joined idea that some combination of barbarity, climate, Islam, immorality, and primitive physiology made Arab men, sexually, adepts of sodomy and accepting of man/boy pederasty, as well as, socially, either overly virile brutes or decadent effetes. A 1960 analysis of Maghrebin demography invoked this congeries of traits to categorize North African Muslim men as "*homo eroticus*."[13]

Domestic political debates during the Algerian war saw both troubling questions raised about French masculinity and, more unexpectedly, celebratory depictions of Algerian masculinity. "European" Frenchmen repeatedly tarred each other with "Oriental" vices, accusations of male sexual deviance that aimed to discredit political opponents. This phenomenon has not escaped scholarly attention: some of the most well-known historians of France comment on the frequent appearance of homophobic slurs in domestic political debates during the Algerian war. Yet while scholars can

[12] Hal Lehrman, "Battle of the Veil," *New York Times Magazine*, July 13, 1958, 14–18. For the classic analysis of how depictions of "native" female victimization authorized empire, see Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg (Chicago, 1988), 271–313, 297; On the veil, see, esp., Frantz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled," in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York, 1967), 35–67; Diana Fuss, "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification," *Diacritics* 24 (1994): 19–42; Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 186–92.

[13] Mahmoud Seklani, "La fécondité dans les pays arabes: Données numériques, attitudes et comportements," *Population* 15 (1960): 831–56, 836. The most well-known variant of this thesis was by Sir Richard Burton in his mid-nineteenth-century essay on the Sotadic Zone; it has since taken on a life of its own. See Richard Burton, "Terminal Essay," in *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, vol. 10, trans. Richard F. Burton (Benares, 1885–86), 63–302. The writings of Burton and other participants in European imperial expansion reactivated certainties that had long circulated in so-called Christendom. John Boswell identifies the First Crusade as the catalyst for subsequent links between male-same-sex perversions and "Muslims" in European discussions. See John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago, 1980), 279–82.

no longer simply ignore such sex talk, these historians reduce its meaning to expressions of either antisemitism or anti-intellectualism. They fail, that is, to examine how the specifically colonial valence of these sexual innuendos and insults were emblematic of a new willingness among French commentators to deploy orientalist tropes of unnatural masculinity to tar other French (European) men. Because they dehistoricize the outpouring of antihomosexual abuse (with suggestions that such nastiness is simply to be expected of far-right movements), they also miss how critics from all sides joined in—left and right, pro- and anti-independence. In debates over torture, for example, anticolonial critics described how colonialism had rendered French men soft and perverted, suggesting that the painful humiliation sadistic torturers inflicted on rebellious bodies revealed deviant desires to possess their manliness.[14] "Revolutionary" Algerian men, to the contrary, emerged in anti-imperialist depictions as the embodiment of healthy, virile, heterosexual masculinity. Just as some French radicals argued that the Algerian revolution was the yeast that would raise a world revolution, so books such as *The Gangrene*, *The Question*, or *The Wretched of the Earth* proposed that valiant rebels could remind the French of what it meant to be a man (see figs. 1 and 2).[15]

Anticolonial struggle engaged issues of sex and gender that would be at the heart of the so-called sexual revolution. In a set of key wartime debates about Algerian and French men and women (and their bodies), anticolonial critics countered gendered and sexualized orientalist presumptions. What they challenged was the claim that "civilizing" colonialism could impose sexual normalcy. Yet, inadvertently, the links they laid bare made it newly possible to think that sexual norms more generally might be understood in reference to colonial oppression. The questions they raised about the erotics of empire, that is, proved durably destabilizing and difficult to silence.

The sex and gender politics of anticolonialism opened up more ques-

[14] See, e.g., Jean-Pierre Rioux, *The Fourth Republic, 1944–1958*, trans. Godfrey Rogers (Cambridge, 1987), 249; Jean-François Sirinelli, *Deux intellectuels dans le siècle: Sartre et Aron* (Paris, 1995), 395, 325–29; Michel Winock, *La République se meurt: Chronique 1956–1958* (Paris, 1978), 22. While Kristin Ross, in *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), analyzes far-right statements, she makes no mention of how anticolonial critics also deployed the leitmotifs of failed masculinity that she links to the destabilizing force of consumerism.

[15] Jerôme Lindon [Béchir Boumaza, Mustapha Francis, Moussa Khebaili, and Benaissa Souami], *La gangrène* (Paris, 1959); Henri Alleg, *La question* (Paris, 1958); Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, preface by Jean-Paul Sartre (Paris, 1961); on *The Question* and heroic masculinity, see Judith Surkis, "Ethics and Violence: Simone de Beauvoir, Djamila Boupacha, and the Algerian War," *French Politics, Culture, and Society* 28 (2010): 38–55; on Fanon, see esp. Françoise Vergès, "Creole Skin, Black Mask: Fanon and Disavowal," *Critical Inquiry* 23 (1997): 578–95, 593; and Fuss, "Interior Colonies."

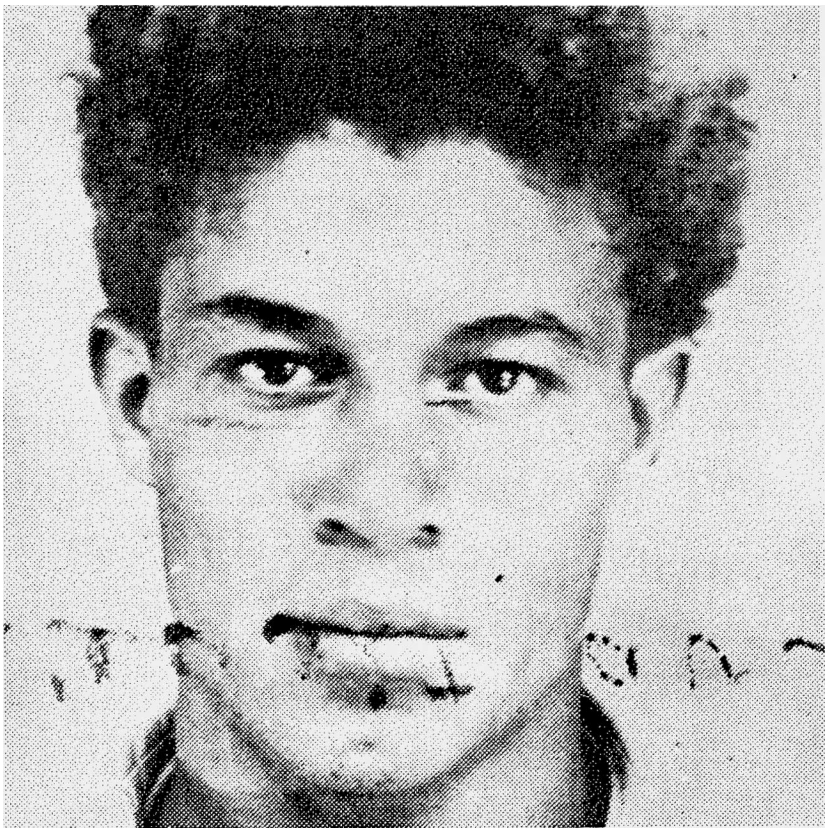

FIG. 1.—Revolutionary masculinity: "Ali la pointe" (nom de guerre of FLN fighter Ali Amar [1930–57]). Police photograph; reproduced by courtesy of *Journal l'humanité*, Paris. All rights reserved.

tions than they settled. This unresolved messiness, I argue, is what distinguished them from other critiques of France and "the West" that developed in reference to anticolonial and pronationalist activism. Once independence was a reality, French public officials and many French people would assert that Algeria and Algerians had never really been French with the same certainty that had previously accompanied their insistence that Algeria was French. Their new certainty, while arguably more accurate, left even less room to raise questions about what the Republic's colonial history or such claims of obvious and definitive difference might imply. Of course, this forgetting did not expunge the past and its effects nor the multiple connections that remained and developed. The stark boundary between French and Algerians that, after years of

FIG. 2.—Revolutionary masculinity: Brahim Haggiag as Ali la pointe in *The Battle of Algiers* (1965).

violence, anguish, and argument, had been legally recognized was a binary that denied much, even as it accounted for much else.[16] Yet the troubling implications linked to sex that had come to the fore during the Algerian revolution had not been neatly resolved, unlike the seemingly obvious realization that Algerians are Algerians, not French. This ongoing messiness helps explain why sex talk became a privileged site where wide-ranging concerns about difference (which decolonization supposedly had resolved) could be talked about. And they were.[17]

Over the course of the '68 years, most claims focused on Algerian or "Arab" men, in part because the vast majority of the large numbers of Algerians in France were young men. Yet numbers alone do not explain why—as public debates and, even more clearly, confidential government assessments after 1968 reveal—most French discussions about "immigrants" were specifically about Algerians. Nor does the overwhelming percentage of men among the Algerian immigrants (although lower than among contemporary South Asian immigrants in Britain, for example) fully explain either why wartime government attention to "Muslim families" in the Metropole shifted, after 1962, to a focus on "Algerian young men" or why long-standing orientalist interest in "Arab Muslim women"

[16] This is a key argument in Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*.

[17] Michael Seidman describes how demands for sexual liberties emerged among French students in 1962, just as Algerian independence was won, and states that debates about racism and "colonial" immigrants were crucial factors in the shape their protests took; see Seidman, "The Pre-May 1968 Sexual Revolution," 25–41.

was less central during the '68 years than talk of men.[18] Also important, I would suggest, was how successful anticolonial critics had been in positioning the "revolutionary" Algerian Man as the embodiment of (universal and true) manliness, a figure who had confronted the overwhelming force—and the sadistic unmanly tactics—of France and freed his nation and family from colonial oppression. On the world stage, the talismanic importance that Gillo Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers* (1965) and the "Algerian" writings of Frantz Fanon achieved in "Third Worldist" and *gauchiste* circles—notably, among the US Black Panther Party—amplified the effects of wartime debates. In addition, whereas the "veiled woman," even when revalorized for her heroic resistance to the colonizers, remained definitively not French (and too associated with Islam), anticolonial and Third Worldist representations of the heroic Algerian Man staked their claims on the same ground that French voices considered their own—that is, (a necessarily masculine) universalism. For some, such as '68-years new leftists, this meant that "Arabs" could be models and allies. For others, first and foremost far-right activists, this meant that the need to reject both such claims and an Algerian presence on French territory, alongside or with French people, could appear quite pressing. Both contributed to how immigration, "Arab" immigration above all, became an important political topic over the course of the '68 years.[19]

[18] If anything, official and popular fixation on an "Algerian problem" as the primary element of any "immigrant question" ballooned in the early 1970s. See, e.g., a 1973 prefectoral report from Lyon, which claimed that "the autochtone population is increasingly uncomfortable with the foreign population, notably the North African population, above all the Algerians"; Jacques Pélissier, "Evolution de la population étrangère dans le région Rhône-Alpes" (Villeurbanne, June 15, 1973), 4, in Centre des archives contemporaines, Fontainebleau, France: 19930317, art. 16. In 1962, Algerians constituted 85 percent of France's North African (presumed or "culturally") Muslim population of about 410,000; in 1970, their part had declined to around 75 percent. At that time, the number of "Muslim" noncitizens in the country was over 800,000 and counted approximately 608,000 Algerians (the largest group of immigrants, ahead of the Portuguese) but also 143,000 Moroccans and 89,000 Tunisians. The overwhelming majority consisted of male manual laborers, but the proportion of women and children had actually increased since 1962. See Ethan Katz, "Jews and Muslims in the Shadow of Marianne: Conflicting Identities and Republican Culture in France (1914–1975)" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2009), 314; on the United Kingdom, see Ian R. G. Spencer, *British Immigration Policy since 1939: The Making of Multi-racial Britain* (London, 1997), 19; on the shift from talk of "families" before 1962 to "young men," see Amelia Lyons, "Algerian Families and the French Welfare State in the Era of Decolonization (1947–1974)" (PhD diss., University of California, Irvine, 2004), 286.

[19] On French republicanism, universalism, and gender, see esp. Joan W. Scott, *"Only Paradoxes to Offer": French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA, 1996); Surkis ("Ethics and Violence") incisively analyzes how the "scandalous"

"*Ces etrangers obsedes sexuels*": The Far Right, Algerian "Perversion," and May '68

By mid-1967, the small world of the French far right was abuzz with discussions of the upcoming ten-year anniversary of the events of May 1958, when pro-French Algeria crowds in Algiers and their allies in the armed forces had toppled the Fourth French Republic and brought Charles de Gaulle back to power. They published books and polished arguments that, so it was hoped, would take advantage of all of the coming attention to advance far-right arguments. The approach of May 1968 intensified the already-rote references to the Algerian war that peppered their discussions. Numerous books appeared that allowed those on the far right to ruminate on de Gaulle's betrayals—of the "revolution" of May '58; of the repatriated *pieds noirs*, "Europeans" who had fled Algeria when the Fifth Republic accepted the decolonization of its former *départements*; of France itself—and related French failings. These volumes included the *Mémoires* of ex-general (and '61 putschist) Challe; *L'expiation*, by Pierre Laffont (ex-deputy from Oran); and *Les fils de la Toussaint*, the first volume of Yves Courrière's incredibly popular history of the Algerian war.[20]

What had been true since at least 1954 remained so now: the far right was traumatized by Algeria. Yet what these discussions brought into focus was the conflicting motivations among this agitated coterie of activists and writers for talking about Algeria and Algerians. Most wrote as if to keep the Algerian war—memories, recriminations, and comparisons—front and center. Some, however, explicitly identified Algerian immigrants as a current danger to France. The actual events of May 1968 both highlighted this tension and allowed these anti-immigrant writers to emerge more prominently. The evolution of far-right reactions over the course of "May," that is, advanced the efforts by the small group of theoreticians who would come to be known (over the course of the 1970s) as the *Nouvelle droite* (the French New Right) to pivot from *nostalgérie* (nostalgia about French Algeria) toward a focus on the Algerian "invasion" that, they argued, threatened France. Arguments that linked sex, violence, and politics caused this evolution.[21]

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trials of Djamila Bouhired and Djamila Boupacha reworked visions of "Algerian femininity."

[20] Over one million copies sold of the four volumes of *La guerre d'Algérie*: vol. 1, *Les fils de la Toussaint* (Paris, 1968); vol. 2, *Le temps des léopards* (Paris, 1969); vol. 3, *L'heure des colonels* (Paris, 1970); vol. 4, *Les feux du désespoir* (Paris, 1971). See Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie*, 20–21.

[21] On trauma, see, esp., Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, 2001). On proto–Nouvelle droite theorization, see, esp., Anne-Marie

In their efforts to alert their fellow citizens to the dangers that the "Arab invasion" posed to France, far-right journalists in the 1960s systematically linked Algerians to sexual crimes. Such an approach relied on language and on received opinions that, over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, orientalist commentators had elaborated and that, since at least the 1920s, French journalists, academic experts, and law-enforcement officials had invoked to warn of the dangers that Algerian migrants posed to France.[22] It is noteworthy, however, that these affirmations that "Arabs" embodied animalistic sexual excess were more than just long-available ideological crutches or far-right verbal tics: they reflected a well theorized set of tactics that a small group of far-right young men (e.g., Alain de Benoist, Dominique Venner, and Jean Mabire) who had been associated with the influential if short-lived journal *Europe-action* (1963–66) had defined and convinced other journalists and politicians to pursue. This fragment of the far right sought to analyze why activism to keep Algeria French had failed and how it was that, in this failed effort, most on the French far right had come to insist that "Algerian Muslims" were in fact wholly French. Together, they argued, these two strategic failures explained why their political family now found itself even more isolated than it had been at the end of World War II. Insisting that the Algerians and the French were two wholly distinct peoples that needed to be kept apart,they posited, would end that isolation.[23] The "Arab invasion" tactic was repeatedly and enthusiastically deployed (see, e.g., fig. 3) over the course of the 1960s, but it had failed to advance its primary goals, which were at once to replace depictions of Algerians victimized by French colonialism with understandings of "Arabs" as victimizers of innocent French people and, on these grounds, to reconnect the far right to the broad mainstream of the French right. The

Duranton-Crabol, "La 'Nouvelle Droite' entre printemps et automne, 1968–1986," *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire* 17 (1988): 39–49; Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?* (Aldershot, 2007). On "nostalgérie," see Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago, 1991), 330.

[22] On this language, see Tahar Ben Jelloun, *La plus haute des solitudes: Misère sexuelle d'émigrés nord-africains* (Paris, 1977), 8; Frantz Fanon, "Le 'syndrome nord africain' (1952)," in *Pour la révolution africaine: Ecrits politiques* (Paris, 1964), 13–25, 21; Dr. A. Kocher, *De la criminalité chez les Arabes* (Paris, 1884); and Emmanuel Blanchard, "Le mauvais genre des Algériens: Des hommes sans femme face au virilisme policier dans le Paris d'après-guerre," *Clio: Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 27 (2008): 209–22. On its development during the 1930s, see Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900–62* (London, 1997), 132–35; Ralph Schor, *L'opinion française et les étrangers en France, 1919–1939* (Paris, 1985), 126, 165–66.

[23] See Dominique Venner, *Pour une critique positive* (Paris, 1964); Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, chap. 3.

FIG. 3.—"Wanted: Mohammed el-Prick, Born in Algeria, Living in France. This Man is Dangerous! Liable to Kill! Rape! Steal! Plunder! etc., etc. You Won't Have to Look Very Far to Find Him . . . All Around You, There Are 700,000 Just Like Him!" in *Europe-action* 22 (1964), back cover.

(right-wing) government continued to encourage immigration, notably from Algeria, and to provide (limited) social services to immigrants; right-wing politicians continued to avoid any connection with public figures or political movements that had been linked to the OAS (Organisation de l'armée secrète, a terrorist group that emerged in 1961 to reject any move toward Algerian independence), or too closely to French Algeria; far-right politicians continued to see their extremely small electorate shrink. Yet in spring 1968, these xenophobic efforts gained substantial traction.

In early 1968, an editorial in *Minute* relaunched the campaign, with the proclamation that "the Algerian colony has set up camp," and summoned the weekly's journalists and readers "to expose the dangers posed by this invasion, which is now growing in leaps and bounds." Letter writers quickly responded to the editorial's summons. They produced not only numerous other examples of Algerian criminal deviance but also analyses of why this was allowed to happen. In one response the writer explained that "an FLN [nationalist] leader, while speaking in Tunis [during the Algerian war], said that 'France is a bitch nation, which will resist the male for a while, but always ends up giving in.' He was, it pains me to say, correct." Another *Minute* article, this one from early May and entitled "Now That's Cooperation, *mon'zami*," first reproduced an editorial from a Dijon daily claiming that "every day, young girls and women are being harassed by North Africans" before revealing the story of "another North African with an overly developed sense of sociability, who accosted two young soldiers the other evening in Nancy in order to involve them in a very special form of cooperation." A March article in *Rivarol* made the implication a bit clearer, drawing attention to "the large number of Algerian 'tourists' who cruise the dark streets and public gardens of Paris."[24]

In linking Algerian men to rape, sexual harassment, and homosexual promiscuity, far-right journalists worked to substantiate a larger traditional argument: only the French far right embodied a normal and healthy manliness capable of defending the French from their perverted enemies. Certain legal facts aggravated far-right outrage. Notably, these commentators bemoaned how French law—as a result of the Evian Accords, which French officials had negotiated with Algerian nationalists in order to end the Algerian war—authorized Algerians to enter, live, and work in France (liberal possibilities that could be revoked for certain individuals under defined conditions). Their arguments repeatedly insisted that healthy connections between French people

[24] François Brigneau, "Le défi de Boumedienne: Il veut les Champs Elysées," *Minute*, March 7, 1968, 10; M.P. (Draguignan), "Les frères ont droit au tariff reduit," *Minute*, March 14, 1968, 18; "Ca, c'est social mon'zami," *Minute*, May 9, 1968, 11; Georges A. Bousquet, ". . . et le fellagha Medeghri a eu les honneurs de l'Elysée," *Rivarol*, March 7, 1968, 2.

(and, most important, between men and women) depended on maintaining natural and necessary divisions—between normal and abnormal, healthy and perverted, French and Algerian—all of which the growing numbers of Algerians present in France actively undermined. The invaders' most potent weapons, far-right writings suggested, derived from their uncontrollable sexual lusts. In February and March this general theme—Algerian deviance profiting from and accentuating French decadence—was developed at length in a series of articles in the French press about that emblematic site of Fifth Republic policies: Nanterre University.[25]

Student militants calling for sexual liberty (protests that began in March 1967 and would lead to the March 22 Movement in 1968) had focused media attention on what was happening on the outskirts of Paris, within the recently completed US-style "*campus*."[26] Far-right Cassandras of the "Arab invasion" jumped into this discussion about sex and upheaval to insert warnings of Algerian male deviance into the story. In one month at least four different publications, all repeating the same "facts," linked the "crisis" confronted by the new university to Algerian perversity: the blame for what was described as widespread prostitution and drug use could be placed, on the one hand, on the largely Algerian inhabitants of the surrounding *bidonville* (ghetto) and, on the other hand, on Algerian students. *Combat* pointed out (inaccurately) that "25% of dorm residents are foreigners, with the majority from North Africa. Many of the latter, as their fellow students will admit, lack sexual maturity and think of women as servants who specialize in 'knob polishing.'" Algerians' abnormal masculinity, not only dangerous in itself, also corrupted those around them. In *Minute*, the article centered on a section headlined "Fans of Arab Boys." The description begins from the perspective of "those living in the dorms . . . their rooms look down on the *bidonville*, and they witness the constant traffic of debonair gentlemen, looking slick and shady at the wheel of their sports cars. The 'fans' are on the lookout for Arab boys, whom they pick up and then drop off before night falls." Seizing on another detail that appeared in all of the articles, the author revealed the close link between sexual deviance and the widely discussed political dissidence of student proponents of sexual freedom: "Certain students, known for their avant-garde

[25] On the far right and masculinity, see Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France* (Stanford, CA, forthcoming); Carolyn Dean, *The Frail Social Body: Pornography, Homosexuality, and Other Fantasies in Interwar France* (Berkeley, 2000); and Mark Meyers, "Feminizing Fascist Men: Crowd Psychology, Gender, and Sexuality in French Antifascism, 1929–1945," *French Historical Studies* 29 (2006): 109–42. For details of Franco-Algerian accords concerning immigration, see Jacques Simon, *L'immigration algérienne en France de 1962 à nos jours* (Paris, 2002), 229–32; and Laure d'Hauteville, "Algériens: Feu la liberté de circulation," *Plein Droit* 29/30 (1995): 87–89.

[26] See Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution*, 44–47.

ideas but characterized by their abnormal morality, were quick to follow suit: while the ways of our Lord are sometimes mysterious, those of Karl Marx and Mao are pretty straightforward. They, in turn, began inviting little brown-skinned lads into their bedrooms."[27]

While the left and the Gaullist government remained silent, rendered cowardly by their "Arabophilia," it was left to the far right to tell the truth: "Everyone at Nanterre tries to hush up certain activities of the North Africans. Fear reigns. Several co-eds, too caught up in their commitment to the decolonization of peoples of color, found themselves at parties of a very special kind, just the girl and numerous Algerian men. After the séance came to an end, the threats came out: 'shut your trap!'"[28] In February monarchist students warned of the "participation of Nanterre student leaders in white slavery." Through such warnings, far-right activists presented the dangers posed by leftist campaigns for sexual liberation as being closely linked to those posed by the "Arab invasion." They also bemoaned the willingness of the (insufficiently) right-wing Gaullist government to let the plague spread. The monarchist students demanded that the government intervene to stop "sexually obsessed foreigners" from running wild in French universities and threatening France.[29]

It was during the stunning, fast-moving, and seemingly revolutionary upheaval of "May 1968"—when student protests, which occupied the public spaces of Paris, joined up with a general strike, which shut down the country—that the far right's anti-Algerian campaign both blossomed and took root among larger audiences. As soon as the events of May began, far-right journalists again turned their attention to Algeria. The episode that provoked the most intriguing links with Algeria occurred when student protestors took over the Théâtre de l'Odéon and used the famed Latin Quarter institution to hold endless public discussions. It was not the speeches given by leftist intellectuals that drew far-right attention, nor the calls to change the world, but the location: for them, l'Odéon had become perhaps the most vivid and demeaning monument to the humiliation of defeat in Algeria and to the decadence that had destroyed the army and devirilized the Nation. In 1966, l'Odéon, a publicly run space that the French Republic paid for and protected, had staged a production of Jean Genet's *Les paravents*, in which the French

[27] François Cazenave, "Nanterre en folie: An III du complexe universitaire," *Combat*, February 14, 1968, 8–9; Marcel Signac, "Après les bagares [*sic*] de Nanterre: Un abcès à vider; Les 'Campus,'" *Rivarol*, February 1, 1968, 12; Pierre Grégoire, "Il s'en passe de belles au campus de Nanterre!" *Minute*, February 29, 1968, 12–13. On *Combat* and its history of pro-French Algeria politics, see Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, "*Combat* et la guerre d'Algérie," *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire* 40 (1993): 86–96.

[28] Grégoire, "Il s'en passe de belles au campus de Nanterre!"

[29] Pierre Chaumeil, "Scandale à Nanterre," *Aspects de la France*, February 8, 1968, 12.

Army in Algeria offers the setting and the manifest topic for a radical meditation on the author's great themes, among them homosexuality, prostitution, and criminality. The Odéon staging of the play's sexual motifs was at once intense and strikingly nonnormative: a British critic argued that the play's "profuse depictions of anal eroticism displaced any anti-colonial implications." Far-right groups had embraced multiple tactics, from blockades to stink bombs (and rats) thrown on stage, in a failed campaign to stop the play's run.[30] Alerting readers in early 1968 that another publicly financed theatrical season of *Les paravents* was in the offing, *Minute* gossip columnist Pierre-Jean Vaillard encapsulated the far right's lament: "If we still had a French army, it long ago would have taken over the Odéon. Since, however, our Great Leader [de Gaulle] has done everything possible to un-man it, a public theater is free to flaunt 'ass-*haute* culture' [*trouduculturel*] with nary a worry."[31]

Transfixed by the hated Gaullist regime's humiliation, the far-right press unanimously saluted left-wing students' mid-May takeover of l'Odéon: it was deserved. The notorious Holocaust negationist Lucien Rebatet went the farthest, trumpeting that "last week's student take over of l'Odéon was the type of announcement that filled me with joy." The occupation should be interpreted, these journalists argued, as an inevitable response to the desacralization that de Gaulle's ministers had authorized and the meaninglessness of French culture that Gaullist France had produced. France under de Gaulle, as another *Rivarol* journalist explained, "could no longer be thought of as normal" ("n'est plus normalement constitué").[32]

Most on the far right were more troubled than intrigued by the ongoing upheaval, yet all were pleased that would-be revolutionaries had taken l'Odéon away from Genet. The bigger point was that students had won victories against the Gaullist regime that the marginalized far right had identified as necessary but had been unable to achieve on its own. Yet hostility toward the events quickly displaced early empathetic reactions, as far-right journalists presented the student "*enragés*" as at once buffoons and a danger: indeed, it was their fundamentally unmanly "*clowneries*" that menaced France, through further devirilization. Rather than continuing to focus on the Gaullist regime as the primary danger, most on the far right turned their attention to other internal enemies: the Communist Party, as always, but especially the perverted cohort of leftists eager to sap the nation's ability to defend its purity.[33]

Ironically, the absence of left-wing violence provided the far right with its main argument that this May was not a real revolution but an effeminate farce.

[30] Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (London, 1968), 224.

[31] Pierre-Jean Vaillard, *Minute*, February 15, 1968, 31.

[32] On Rebatet, see esp. Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate*. Lucien Rebatet, "Les beaux draps," *Rivarol*, May 23, 1968, 3; "A chacun son boche!" *Rivarol*, May 16, 1968, 3.

[33] "Il faut en finir avec la chienlit des Cohn-Bendit!" *Minute*, May 2, 1968), 5.

The context was "nostalgeria." In every venue, far-right commentators compared May 1968 to pro–French Algerian activism, with its embrace of OAS violence. The most obvious difference—in a comparison that even some Gaullist politicians took up—was leftists' lack of patriotism. Yet they also found the leftists wanting in terms of revolutionary ability and vigor. One headline contrasted the "Blue-White-and-Red May" of 1958 to the current "Red May," but the article's central claim was that in 1958, "French Algeria activists crossed the Mediterranean," while in 1968 "the *enragés* hardly dared to cross the Boul' Mich [the main thoroughfare of the Latin Quarter]." The movement's "failure" to be suitably virile took visual form through repeated images of female protestors and served to explain, as captions and accompanying articles made clear, the movement's inability to act like true revolutionaries. The front cover of the May 16 issue of *Rivarol*, for example, presents a beskirted young woman on top of a burned-out car; the caption mockingly proclaims that "a cutie complains . . . she has a blister; the car has been roughed up as well." The text also highlights another leitmotif of far-right representations of the events, which was the failed masculinity of leftist men: she is said to complain "as her bored companion (who's unfit to help her in any case) looks on" (see fig. 4).[34]

In the first week of May, drawing a contrast with the pro-French Algeria "men" of 1958–62, *Rivarol*'s editorial picked out the word that would be taken up across the far-right press to describe leftist men: "twinks" (*minets*): "*nos 'minets' révoltés*"/our angry twinks; the "'*minets' de Nanterre*"/the twinks of Nanterre; "*minets marcusiens*"/Marcusian twinks. Descriptions of student leaders "Dany" Cohn-Bendit, Jacques Sauvageot, and Alain Geismar focused on their "Shetland and Cashmere sweaters" and mocked them as "dandies"; their ability to get university professors to support them revealed that both students and professors were driven by "the sado-masochism that so excites today's trendy intelligentsia." When Rebatet sought to discredit the students who had taken over l'Odéon, he castigated them as "little sows, bitches" under the sway of France's "pedants of decadence"—Sartre, Blanchot, Barthes, Lacan—who manipulated them through "verbal perversion."[35]

Through insistent presentations of the protestors as either women or

[34] "Dix ans après le 13 mai tricolore, la marée rouge déferle sur les boulevards," *Le Crapouillot*, n.s., 3 (Summer 1968): 30; Georges Bousquet, "D'un 13 mai l'autre [*sic*]," *Rivarol*, May 16, 1968, 6 and 1. On Gaullist politicians' use of such comparisons during "May," see Todd Shepard, "L'extrême droite et 'mai 68': Une obsession d'Algérie et de virilité," *Clio: Histoire, femmes et société* 29 (2009): 35–55, 52–54.

[35] "De Berlin à Nanterre, en passant par Nantes: L'internationale universitaire de la contestation," *Rivarol*, May 3, 1968, 5; Bousquet, "D'un 13 mai l'autre [*sic*]," 6; "La peste est entrée dans Paris! . . .," *Rivarol*, May 23, 1968, 2; "A chacun son boche!" *Rivarol*, May 16, 1968, 2–3; "L'action des 'etudiants en colère' se situe dans le droit fil des fastes libératoires," *Rivarol*, May 16, 1968, 2–3; Rebatet, "Les beaux draps," 3.

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France : 2,00 F.

" et... David Rousset vous expliquent

et comment
e est l'allié
ctif » des
de Nanterre

BIEN-PHU A GAY-LUSSAC....
J.-P. Duprey, héros du folklore sacrilège des
ient profané et souillé la tombe du Soldat In-

ens combattants d'Indochine et d'Algérie a te-
outrage en déposant, sous la conduite de Ro-
en l'honneur des morts de Dien-Bien-Phu.
Quartier Latin, une mignonne se fait plaindre,
compagnon (bien peu secourable) : elle a une
elle aussi, est cabossée.
ateurs font état, dès lundi, de... huit morts l
de la rue d'Isly ?
(Photos ADNP et Régis Galbrun)

FIG. 4.—The front cover of *Rivarol*, May 16, 1968

(mainly) devirilized, unnatural, and womanly men, far-right journalists set the stage for the shift from "nostalgeria," with its attendant fixation on de Gaulle and his "regime" as those responsible for French decadence, to a new source: leftists. This shift in focus allowed far-right journalists to connect French leftists to the larger "Algerian" danger/"Arab invasion" that, they proclaimed, worked to transform France into a "bitch nation," and a mongrel one at that. An early June report in *Minute*, "Genet Has It Bad for the Red-Head," described the writer's visit to the occupied Sorbonne and told of "how Genet swooned at 'the power this boy [red-head and student leader Cohn-Bendit] exudes," before noting that, "in the red head's absence, he found other Sorbonne twinks to his taste: 'Joy is pumping through my body,' he confided. . . . 'It's just so pretty, to see all these young men rebelling.'" No longer satisfied to see the students occupy "Genet's theater," here *Minute* uses Genet to define the students as eliciting homosexual perversion: "Let's hope," the journalist wrote, "that the 'young men' of the Sorbonne had enough tact to erase the slogan that the most conformist among them had spray-painted on the walls: 'Students, don't let yourself be *enc*—[buggered].'" Like the North Africans of Nanterre, the activists both attracted perverts and spread deviance.

The article ended with an insistent return to the far right's Algerian fixation—and Genet's: "The '*enragés'* must have writhed in delicious agony; Jean Genet already had revealed the secret source of his political opinions in a *Playboy* interview: 'perhaps if I hadn't gone to bed with Algerians I might not have been in favor of the FLN.'"[36]

A few recent studies of "May '68" compellingly examine how Algerian references shaped and served activists on the new left: leftist students and writers repeatedly sought inspiration in the Algerian revolution. It was one of the exemplary victories that the forces of progress and justice had won against international imperialism, capitalism, and the power of the French government. During these same months, however, far-right journalists and activists also looked to Algeria. They did so in order to incite orientalist fears of contamination and to link leftist calls for revolt and revolution—sexual or other—to an "Arab invasion." No matter that they had supported *Algérie française* (French Algeria): "May '68" would lead, they proclaimed, to a "*France algérienne*" (Algerian France).[37]

What distinguished this deployment of extant orientalist stereotypes by the far right was that, in the intense rush of "May '68," their efforts directly targeted leftist arguments based in solidarity and *tiers-mondisme*. This allowed a supposed French fifth column (of "twinks" and their ilk) to displace the unmanly (Fifth) Republic as the traitors who, the far right warned, were opening France up to invasion. Notably, spokesmen for the far right latched onto leftist arguments for sexual liberation, which the far right identified as foundational to the leftist movement, in order to link proponents to the Arab danger that supposedly menaced France. Their writings charged that the new left militants, like the Algerians whose revolution they so admired, were themselves perverted savages or, at best, the effete accomplices of the "Arabs." In either case, they threatened the nation.

Such interpretations of what was at stake and of how to respond proved very attractive to many people in France. They help explain, I would suggest, new restrictions on Algerian immigration and the start of a police policy of tabulating how many sexual crimes in France were committed by foreign nationals, both of which were announced in the summer of 1968. Both were greeted as victories by the far-right press. They helped set the stage for an outpouring of French anti-Algerian violence, which began in the Goutte d'Or neighborhood of Paris in 1971 and exploded around Marseille in the summer of 1973. They would take on a new intensity around the government's 1974 announcement that it was suspending all immigration. (One effect was that

[36] "Genet en pince pour le rouquin," *Minute*, June 6, 1968, 20; "Interview: Jean Genet," *Playboy* 11 (1964): 45–53, 51.

[37] On Algerian "inspiration," see n. 7. On "la France algérienne," see, e.g., Brigneau, "Le défi de Boumedienne."

current immigrants would be tempted to stay in France rather than return home for holidays; some commentators asserted that this might exacerbate the effects of immigrant "sexual misery"—on North Africans most particularly. The Ministry of Social Affairs began targeted campaigns in cities such as Marseille using references to Islam and health warnings to encourage "self-control." In 1975, the newly recognized principle of family reunification became the primary authorized mechanism for legal immigration.[38]) Over the course of the 1970s, the public link between a supposed "Arab invasion" and sexual danger continued to develop. This shaped the context in which leftist political organizations took up the immigrant question, including groups formed by "Third World"—notably Maghrebin—immigrants themselves.[39]

"We Have Been Buggered by Arabs": Sex Radicals' Invocations of Algerian Men and the Fight for Sexual Revolution

A December 1972 program on the public radio network *France-culture*, which interviewed the proverbial Parisian taxi driver, gives some indication of the purchase of far-right efforts to link French decadence and Algerian male deviance:

> Question: Mr., excuse me, can I ask what you think about homosexuals?
>
> Answer: the who?
>
> Q: Homosexuals.
>
> R: Oh! Homos, well you know . . . *merde*, they're fags . . . queers. . . . We don't like 'em, that's for sure. We had to deal with Algeria, now the homos: we're not going to take it anymore!

A bit later, in response to a follow up, the taxi driver explained:

> R: Yes, of course, the foreign influence is obvious, all those *bougnoles* [dirty

[38] For details of far-right responses to these laws, see Shepard, "L'extrême droite et 'mai 68.'" On laws of 1974 and 1975, see Simon, *L'immigration algérienne*. On the Ministry of Social Affairs, see "Immigrés: Le témoignage d'un psychiatre," *La France nouvelle*, October 24, 1977, 32–34.

[39] On the renewal of far-right and rightist connections, see Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution*, 221–24. On government statements on immigrants, disease, immorality, and crime, see, e.g., "Colloque Rhone-Alpes sur la Migration algérienne: Conclusions générales–Dimanche 15 octobre 1967," in Centre d'accueil et de recherche des Archives nationales de France, Paris: F/1A/5015. On the violence and restrictions on immigration, see Rabah Aissaoui, *North African Political Movements in Colonial and Postcolonial France* (New York, 2009), 160–65.

> Arabs] wandering around Paris; they say they're here to work but what they love is to get [bleep]. . . . If the French government doesn't start to limit foreign immigration, well, faggotry is just going to become even more widespread. Take my word for it.[40]

These accusations, of course, echoed long-standing orientalist tropes. Yet, as with far-right pronouncements that "Arab" males around Nanterre University were catalyzing sexual deviance, it was proponents of sexual liberty—many of whom talked in terms of a revolution—who had launched a public debate about supposed links between "perversion" and "immigration." A more substantial difference from previous episodes was how some on the left responded. Rather than arguing that to find the perverts, *chercher la droite* [look Right], some contemporaneous French activists made it clear that making "faggotry . . . even more widespread" was something they dreamed of. Writers associated with a new organization, the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action (referred to as the FHAR from its French acronym), argued that this would open up new possibilities for political action. They, like the far right, linked these developments to male "Arab" immigrants.[41]

It was through public evocation and exaltation of sex between "Arab" immigrant men, most particularly Algerians, and "French" and "European" homosexual men that the FHAR staked a claim to be at the vanguard of revolutionary action. In April 1971, the "Maoist Spontex" group *Vive la Révolution!* handed control of the twelfth issue of its magazine *Tout!* (the largest circulation leftist publication) to members of the FHAR. Diagonally splayed across part of the centerfold, in the midst of articles, collages, and headlines, they printed a more complete version of the statement Genet had made in *Playboy*: "Perhaps if I hadn't gone to bed with Algerians I might not have been in favor of the F.L.N. That's not so; I probably would have sided with them anyway. But perhaps it was homosexuality that made me realize Algerians are no different from other men." In June 1968, *Minute* had truncated the quotation to intimate that the students, like Genet, were driven by unnatural lusts rather than rational politics. The extended quotation, as published in *Tout!* at the center of four pages of calls for revolution and sexual liberation, read quite differently. Here it suggested that revolutionary political understandings and actions could result from thinking about sexual connections—such as that between the French writer and Algerians—because they

[40] Transcription in "Ceux qui nous aiment bien," *L'antinorm* 2 (1973): 5.

[41] On the FHAR, see Michael Sibalis, "L'arrivée de la libération gay en France: Le Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR)," *Genre, sexualité et société* 3 (2010): 2–17; Julian Jackson, *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics, and Morality in France from the Liberation to AIDS* (Chicago, 2009), 184–94; Frédéric Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France since 1968*, trans. Jane-Marie Todd (Stanford, CA, 1999), 20–48.

established bonds between types of people whom oppressive social structures at once constructed (repressed "homosexuals" and colonized Algerians) and worked to keep apart. FHAR-associated militants embraced such claims.[42]

During its brief existence, the FHAR shared with others on the new left—in France and elsewhere—a reliance on the joined struggles of anticolonialism and antiracism that had gained such leverage in public debate as well as in political organizing and action in the post–World War II era.[43] It was no coincidence that the initial group of activists—overwhelmingly women—had found inspiration in the inaugural issue of *Tout!*, which included a translation of imprisoned Black Panther Party leader Huey Newton's "Declaration in Support of the Just Struggle of Homosexuals and Women" (August 1970), nor that, after a group of FHAR women engaged in their first public action in March 1971, they registered with the authorities under the name Humanitarian Anti-Racist Front (*Front humanitaire anti-raciste*, or FHAR), rather than Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action.[44]

References to the Black Panthers, like contemporary invocations of the US Gay Liberation Movement, remind us how much trans-Atlantic exchanges shaped the sexual revolution—and radical same-sex sexual activism—in France.[45] Yet attention to this current has obscured the central role of anticolonial movements in the politics of the '68 years, in both Europe and North America, notably for sexual revolutionaries. The most significant antiracist and "Third Worldist" touchstones in FHAR-ist writings, bar none, were the omnipresent images and descriptions of Algerian men; a 1978 critic affirmed that "not a scrap of

[42] This reading draws from Jean-Paul Sartre's formulations, e.g., *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr* (Paris, 1952). On the publication of *Tout!* and the subsequent scandal, see esp. Ron Haas, "Guy Hocquenghem and the Cultural Revolution in France after May 1968," in *After the Deluge: New Perspectives on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Postwar France*, ed. Julian Bourg (Lanham, MD, 2004), 175–200, 190–91.

[43] For a particularly useful examination of this in the West German case, see Jennifer Ruth Hosek, "'Subaltern Nationalism' and the West Berlin Anti-Authoritarians," *German Politics and Society* 26 (2008): 57–81. On the importance of "third-worldism" [*tiers-mondism*] in France around 1968, see Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, esp. 80–100. On the postwar context and antiracism, see Todd Shepard, "Algeria, France, Mexico, UNESCO: A Transnational History of Anti-Racism and Empire, 1932–1962," *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011): 273–97.

[44] Sibalis and most other work on the FHAR detail how the FHAR became so male dominated; in my discussion of the FHAR in *La France, le sexe, les Arabes*, I argue that the "Algerian reference" is crucial to understanding the larger question of how post-1945 French homosexuality became gendered male in most public political discussions. Here, however, I do not explore these important questions in depth.

[45] See Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*; Francoise d'Eaubonne, "Le FHAR, origines et illustrations," *La revue h* 2 (1996): 18–30. On the importance of anticolonial models for US "queer" writers who inspired radical sexual liberationists in North America, see Abelove, *Deep Gossip*.

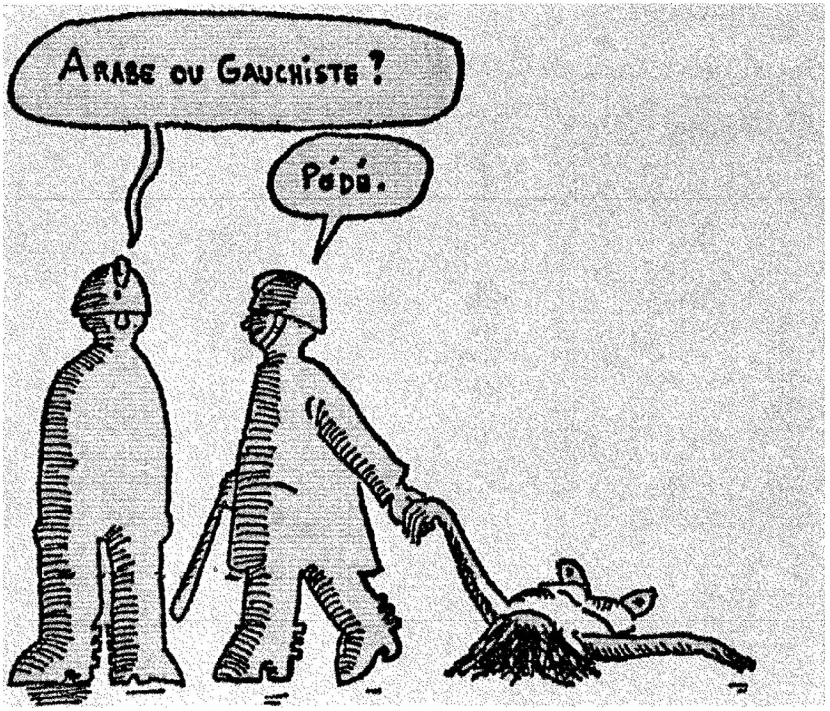

FIG. 5.—"Arab or leftist?" "Faggot." Cartoon taken from Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire, *Rapport contre la normalité* (Paris: Champs Libre, 1971); first published in *Tout!* 12.

pseudo-sexo-lutionary writing didn't caress *le sexe Arabe* [Arab erogenous zones], as if to hug close an FLN they never knew." Through this reference, FHAR writers made the role of the Algerian revolution in defining the French New Left explicit. In another special issue produced by members of FHAR, this one of the journal *Recherches* (1973), the central section was entitled "Arabs and Fags": in one article ("Twenty Years of Cruising") the author dated his political awareness to the Algerian revolution, reminiscing that "I became Algerian: I am Arab Algeria. If they lose, I'm out of luck; if they win, I, too, could triumph." As in this example, these texts identified Algerians as comrades in struggle and as models for action, exaggerating arguments widespread on the French far left. FHAR publications also drew parallels between the oppression that homosexuals faced and that suffered by North African immigrants; as part of their critique of medical institutions, for example, one flyer targeted the Hôpital St.-Louis in Paris to argue that its approach "conjoined anti-Arab and anti-fag racisms" (see also fig. 5). References to antico-

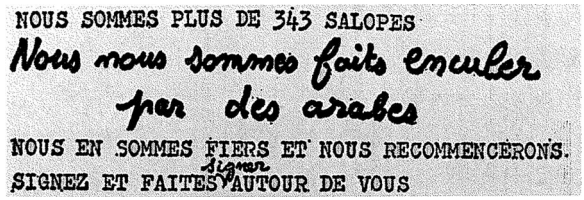

FIG. 6.—This FHAR "petition" parodied the famous 1971 "Manifesto of the 343" circulated by French feminists who advocated legalizing abortion in France. Reproduced from Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire, *Rapport contre la normalité* (Paris: Champs Libre, 1971); first published in *Tout!* 12.

lonialism and racism not only appeared with greater frequency but were also sharply inflected by the particular roles that representations of Algerian and North African men played.[46]

Tout! number 12 presented a petition that made this role clear: "We are more than 343 sluts. We've been buggered by Arabs. We're proud of it and we'll do it again. Sign and circulate this petition" (see fig. 6).[47] The author of "Twenty Years of Cruising" not only argued that "everything about my homosexuality can be linked to this history" of the Algerian war: he also claimed that his obsession with "[cruising] the toilets of Arab bistrots" was part of "this history." Getting "buggered by Arabs" and being willing to come out about it signaled male FHAR activists' claim to have a unique understanding of the experience of racism. "Arabs" were central to these stories because references to them worked simultaneously in terms of identity and ideology: to collapse boundaries between a tiny minority who did these things and the large majority who—like the minority—suffered from "sexual misery" and to connect "revolutionary homosexual action" to other forms of revolutionary politics.[48]

The multiple implications of the Algerian reference were much noted in

[46] *Recherches*, special issue, "3 milliards de pervers: La grande encyclopédie des Homosexualités," vol. 12 (1973); Emou, "Deux monographies parallèles . . .," *Recherches* 35 (1978): 249–64, 262; Le FHAR, "Appel aux médecins" (n.d.), in La bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine, Nanterre (hereafter BDIC): fonds Daniel Guérin: F delta 721/15/1, 1–2.

[47] From centerfold of *Tout!* 12 (1971).

[48] "Vingt ans de drague," *Recherches* 12 (1973): 56. "Coming out of the closet" was central to the ideology of the US Gay Liberation Front activists from whom the FHAR drew explicit inspiration, yet this metaphor was not used in their publications. Their embrace of similar self-revelatory tactics made explicit the nonessentialist and political nature of early 1970s arguments for this approach: "a small group from FHAR," for example, insisted that "anyone who wants to be part of FHAR must find a way to make public his or her revolutionary homosexuality," in Quelques uns du FHAR, "Bilan," *Tout!* 16 (1971): 5.

responses to *Tout!* number 12, both from those who embraced the revolutionary potential of the FHAR and from others who highlighted the dubious ideological implications of sex talk about "Arabs." One letter from a self-described homosexual published in number 13 argued that "no struggle against racism can avoid dealing with us." Also published was a letter from the well-known historian of the working class and Trotskyist intellectual Daniel Guérin, who announced he was joining the FHAR and signing the manifesto "We have been Buggered by Arabs," to which he added, " All my life, I have practiced a solidarity with Arabs based on shared oppression. *Salut* and long live our liberation!"[49] In parallel, others on the far left who insisted that members of the group *Vive la Révolution!* had left the revolution behind when they turned their biweekly over to the FHAR focused their critique on representations and the eroticization of "Arabs." In its analysis of *Tout!* number 12, the Trotskyist journal *Lutte ouvrière* asked "how it is that people who claim to be revolutionaries came to edit a newspaper with contents no better than the graffiti found on public urinals." Editors relied on the Genet text to anchor their argument that sexuality, repressed or not, did not offer a basis for revolutionary politics. They invoked two groups associated with the wrong side of the Algerian war to assert: "Happily for Genet he did not fall in love with a Messaliste [another nationalist faction, here defined as reactionary] or with a [French army] *para*[chutist]. Imagine the political problems he would have faced!" A letter to *Tout!* that denied that "fags" formed a revolutionary class also castigated the sexual dynamic between homosexuals and Arabs that so many articles in the periodical's pages had celebrated; its authors added that "to refer primarily to Arab *enculeurs* (*ou enculés)* [buggerers (or buggered)] gives support to racist ideas such as 'All Arabs are *pédés* [fags]', and in a moment like this when there's a large-scale racist campaign raging, that just adds fuel to their fire."[50] The title of an article in the leftist *Politique-hebdo* encapsulates how commentators on the far left fixated on representations of North Africans to question the claims the FHAR made about the revolutionary status of their combat, asking "Does it Suffice to be Sodomized by an Arab to be a Marxist-Leninist?"[51]

Worrying evidence about growing anti-Algerian racism, which had resulted

[49] Letter from Daniel Guérin, *Tout!* 13 (1971). On Guérin, his relations with FHAR, theories of sexuality, and revolutionary struggle, see esp. David Berry, "'Workers of the World, Embrace!': Daniel Guérin, the Labour Movement and Homosexuality," *Left History* 9 (2004): 11–43.

[50] 2 copains du SR – 19è, "Courrier des lecteurs: Pédés riches, pédés pauvres," *Tout!* 14 (1971): 2.

[51] François Duburg, "*Tout!* Ou rien?" *Lutte ouvrière*, May 4, 1970, 13. In response to Gabriel Glazounov, "Révolutionnaires par la bande? Suffit-il de se faire sodomiser par un Arabe pour etre Marxiste-leniniste?" in *Politique hebdo* 6, nouvelle série (1971): 26, a letter from Françoise d'Eaubonne in a subsequent issue insisted that

in numerous murders and attacks on Algerian-linked institutions in France, helps explain why the FHAR's Algerian references became such a lightning rod for far-left criticism. Indeed, one letter to *Tout!* stood out because, as the author explained, he "could care less about those 350 sluts who were mounted by Arabs. Everybody gets off however you can, and love has neither frontiers nor a homeland." What seems to explain its publication, and what made it so exceptional, was that the author, although he identified himself as a "simple worker" drawn to the far left, was "not at all in agreement with you about the constant support you give to immigrants, in particular to Arabs." With arguments that repeated those widespread in the far-right press he insisted that France and modern civilization, unlike "love," needed stark boundaries. This meant pushing "Arabs" outside them. For most on the far left, however, it was necessary to recognize Algerian differences and also to stand in solidarity with them, on both sides of the Mediterranean. As a much-repeated slogan, "same struggle!" (*même combat!)* suggested, revolutionary politics meant fighting for a revolutionary Third World and alongside "Third World" immigrant workers in France against imperialism, racism, and other forms of oppression.[52]

Yet more important than either the racist context or rhetorical reflexes in motivating concern on the far left about the FHAR's Arab "*enculeurs (ou enculès)*" was the fact that many leftists cared so much about their relationship to the "Arab masses." Here again, the FHAR's Arab obsession made explicit both the central position that Algeria and Algerians continued to occupy in French self-definitions and the importance of sex in these discussions. Frustrated by what they repeatedly explained was worker "quietism"—often equated with working-class support for the "revisionist" French Communist Party (Pcf)—far-left groups were desperate to find popular support, and "Arabs" in France seemed to offer a promising constituency. As the constant reiteration of the term "Arab" signaled in leftist lingo, invocations of the "Arab Revolution" tried to connect the heritage of the Algerian revolution to the contemporary urgency of the Palestinian struggle as well as to the struggle in the Western Sahara, Nasserism, and the ongoing intra-Algerian debates and to tie this global movement to local conditions in France.[53]

FHAR rejected exactly this proposition. See "Deux lettres à propos de l'homosexualité," in *Politique hebdo* 8, nouvelle serie (1971): 3.

[52] Anonymous, "Nos lecteurs . . .: NON la France n'est pas raciste," *Tout!* 15 (1971): 2.

[53] A key reference for many New Left claims of worker quietism (and the role supposedly played by Communist parties in this development) was Herbert Marcuse, *The One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston, 1964). See, e.g., Tariq Ali and Susan Watkins, *1968: Marching in the Streets*

Many "bourgeois" leftists had been motivated to action by the ongoing Vietnam War; yet it was far-left support for the Palestinian cause that (finally) drew "working class" militants toward *gauchiste* radical action and opened doors in immigrant neighborhoods—the Goutte d'Or, in Paris, most famously—to far-left campaigners. In 1971, they had joined together in a crowd of "4,000 who marched with the Palestinian flag and the flag of the Algerian revolution." Both the Mouvement des travailleurs arabes (Movement of Arab workers) and the Comité palestine organized to mobilize "Arab" workers;[54] a quotation from Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat, which identified France as crucial terrain for the "Arab Revolution," appeared on membership cards for the Comité palestine.[55] Meanwhile, internal discussions in organizations such as the Cause du peuple and the Gauche prolétarienne excitedly reported that Algerian immigrants, who had mobilized to support the Palestinian struggle, were both willing to draw lessons from the Algerian revolution and able to understand how they could apply these insights to local struggles in France. As one tract put it, "from the initial insight that 'we have the right to support the Palestinian Revolution,' we engaged revolutionary practices . . . [that] allowed Arab workers to gain a larger perspective." Leftists were also very aware of how quickly their organization could lose the trust and sympathy of Algerian immigrants. Talk of sex—and homosexual sex, in particular—would do just that. Or so critics of FHAR tactics presumed.[56]

As some leftist responses to *Tout!* number 12 had warned, the right-wing press proved eager to talk about any connection between homosexuals and "Arabs." As in the far-right press around May '68, such references worked to titillate readers at the same time that they emphasized the dangers Arabs posed to France. An April 1973 article in *Le Figaro*, for example, "The Risks of Marching," mocked the "freaky connections that emerge. . . . Young men, their eyes done up and their cheeks powdered shoved the FHAR's newspaper

(New York, 1998), 210. For a critique of this argument, see Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution*, 254–56.

[54] On Vietnam, see esp. Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 80–100. Comité paléstine–Sécours rouge 18è–Des habitants anti-racistes, "Tract: NOUS SOMMES DES MILLIERS PRETS A NOUS BATTRE POUR ECRASER LA BETE RACISTE" (late 1971), in BDIC: fonds Assia Melamed/Université de Vincennes, F delta rés. 696/22/3. See Aissaoui, *North African Political Movements*, 155–60. He notes that the MTA drew more Moroccans and Tunisians than Algerians. Camille Robcis notes that attendance sheets for Gauche prolétarienne cell meetings contained growing numbers of North African names in 1971–73 (communication with author).

[55] Comité palestine membership cards, BDIC: fonds Immigration en France: F delta rés. 705/1/dossier 3.

[56] See, esp., Abdellali Hajjat, "Les comités palestine (1970–1972): Aux origines du soutien de la cause palestinienne en France," *Revue d'études palestiniennes* 98 (2006): 74–92.

into the hands of immigrant workers, as the latter chanted slogans, only one of them discernible: 'Same struggle!'" In the FHAR committee newsletter that reproduced the article, someone inscribed "And why not?" above it.[57]

Rather than deny the stereotypes, the FHAR's emblematic tactic (a form of Debordian *détournement*) was to embrace and reinterpret them: "Arabs" and homosexuals did do what folklore and pontificating experts said they did. As their Manifesto and other stories made clear, they attributed great importance to a particular form of sexual relations that created complicity between those who, together, "had committed the act that bourgeois morality most denigrates," that is, sodomy. In doing this, they did more than *épater la bourgeoisie*: they drew explicit attention to orientalist certainties about "Arab" deviance as well as to homophobic beliefs that male same-sex sexual desire resulted from failed masculinity. The former presented active sodomy ("buggery") as emblematic of the excessive virility of "Arab" and Muslim societies—an uncontrolled, uncivilized, and crude exercise of male power that used sexual penetration to dominate women and boys and even to degrade other men. The latter, whether in popular culture or for many doctors and psychoanalysts, fixated on male effeminacy and sexual passivity as emblematic of the moral weakness, neuroses, and/or organic sickness that they believed gave rise to homosexual desire and identity.[58]

In FHAR writings, "Arabs" and "fags" were perverts, but the definition of perversion was historical and political, part of wide-ranging efforts to control and limit what people could do with their bodies and with other people. All people suffered from the way these harsh restrictions alienated their desires: in 1973, out of a world population of roughly 3 billion, the special issue of *Recherches* identified "3 Billion Perverts." Certain people, however, blatantly violated the rules. Some—FHAR's sex radicals pointed to revolutionary homosexuals—suffered for their transgressions yet also came to recognize their need for and pleasure in them; their confrontation with what this meant created the conditions under which political insight into how power worked and how to resist became possible. According to the FHAR, due to the types of sex homosexual men enjoyed (notably anal sex), they were able to understand the psychosexual position of women; because of the intense disdain they faced, they were singularly situated to articulate the "sexual misery, from

[57] Jean-Pierre Mogui, "Les hasards du défilé," *Le Figaro*, April 10, 1973; reproduced and commented on in *L'antinorm* 3 (1973): 13. Right-leaning and "popular" broadsheets also continued to give extensive coverage to murders and other crimes that involved "Arab" immigrants and homosexuals; see BDIC: fonds Daniel Guérin: F delta 721/15/3.

[58] On Debordian *détournement*, see, e.g., Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Berkeley, 1999), 48–73.

which we all suffer, homos, women, blacks, Indians, immigrants, proles, high schoolers, youth, the insane."[59]

To explain the supposedly widespread incidence of Algerian men in France having sex with French men, the FHAR's male sex radicals pointed to the sexual misery of immigrants in France, a theme widely invoked on the left; yet they also took up the orientalist certainty that "Maghrebin" culture facilitated such sexual encounters. In their telling the former was indicative of how the existing order limited the human potential of all people; they presented the latter as another way in which North Africa could serve as a model for French liberation. A number of FHAR writings, in a move that several outside commentators at the time identified as novel, targeted not "the West" (nor the Orient) but "Judeo-Christian civilization" and "Judeo-Christian religion" for their repressive and destructive approach to sexuality.[60]

The FHAR's sex radicals claimed, as part of their revolutionary agenda, to politicize eroticized Arab references. Texts situated ("European") Frenchmen's current sexual encounters with Algerian men in France in the context of histories of colonial domination and anticolonial resistance. An article in *Tout!* number 12 insisted that the sex they celebrated was no longer the "old European fag getting off on little Arab boys" (despite *Minute*'s '68 report on Nanterre); rather, it was now a form of anticolonial critique: "Let us note that, in France, it's our Arab friends who bugger us and never the reverse. Isn't it

[59] Yves Frémion and Daniel Riche, "La parole au Fléau social, groupe n. 5," *Actuel* 25 (1972): 8–9. Sexual misery was a theme that engaged numerous "French" commentators in these years; e.g., Roger-Pol Droit and Antoine Gallien, *La réalité sexuelle: Enquête sur la misère sexuelle en France* (Paris, 1974); Ben Jelloun, *La plus haute des solitudes*; Alain Corbin, *Les filles de noce: Misère sexuelle et prostitution* (Paris, 1978); Edouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Paris, 1981).

[60] For FHAR critiques of "Judeo-Christian" civilization and religion, see, e.g., the FHAR flyer, "Le Fhar, répondent à la Déclaration écrite du 18 octobre 1971 de Roland Castro" (October/November 1971), in BDIC: fonds Daniel Guérin: F delta 721/15/1, 1–2; Guy Maës and Anne-Marie Fauret, "Homosexualité et socialisme," *L'antinorm* 1 (1973): 3–5. For claims that this was novel, see Gabriel Glazounov, "Opprimées oppressantes: Le livre de l'oppression des femmes," *Politique hebdo (nouvelle formule)* 6 (1971): 20. Their positive references to the Islamic East rehearsed claims typical of various "homophile" organizations—an earlier transnational movement, which embraced "normality" and reform to confront social restrictions on same-sex sex and sexuality. In the United States, for example, the homophile magazines *One* and *Mattachine* published numerous articles that urged Western societies to learn from the more liberal attitudes toward sex in Muslim and Arab countries: "In some respects the Orient . . . [is] ideal for the gay element," as the inaugural issue of *One* announced; a 1958 article tied a similar claim to references to the Algerian Revolution and Lawrence of Arabia. See David S. Churchill, "Transnationalism and Homophile Political Culture in the Postwar Decades," *GLQ* 15, no. 1 (2008): 31–66; Bruno Roger Vitale, "Arab Revolt," *One* 6 (1958): 1–9. On French homophile activism, see Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*.

obvious that this is a form of revenge, offered to them by us, against the Western colonizer?" A short story in "3 Billion . . ." placed political agency onto the "colonized" when it pretended that "in buggering me the way he did, Hassan had wanted to wipe away the French presence from Morocco." The continued importance of colonialism in France, such statements suggested, explained why French male homosexuals and Maghrebin male immigrants had different relationships to history and, therefore, different sexual needs. The Algerian war, according to the 1973 text "Twenty Years of Cruising," had given Algerians back their virility ("être colonisé, c'est perdre un peu de sa virilité"/to be colonized is to lose some of one's manliness); in turn, the FHAR argued that its embrace of effeminacy, of transvestism, of sexual "passivity," of "perversion," its rejection of bourgeois morality, at once directly challenged repressive norms on which patriarchy depended and made possible the connection forged with immigrant Arab men. FHAR-ist references to this unlikely coupling of "virile Arab" and "effeminate homo" functioned as empirical evidence—on the ground, flesh and blood—of the acuteness of their analysis and the promise of their vanguardist vision.[61]

The kinds of actions that orientalist arguments—reframed by the far right for post-decolonization France—pronounced to be perversions typical and revelatory of "Arabs" and "Muslims" were presented by this FHAR discourse as the basis and model for radical politics (and represented as widespread in "Judeo-Christian civilization"). A left-wing politics of group difference—what Michel Foucault termed "coalition politics" (yet here framed by the lessons of anticolonialism)—becomes visible in FHAR writings.[62] It was possible, these arguments suggested, to recognize that different people had particular needs (sexual, among others) and struggles that were distinct from those of other groups of people because of history and politics and, at the same time, to make revolutionary connections (through sex as well as other means). On the non-Leninist far left in the early 1970s, the code words were "specificity," "autonomy," and "particularity." The Corsican and Occitan peoples, each fighting to maintain their culture against the French language, state, and society, had "specific" needs; women's fight for equality and against misogyny was "specific"; even the industrial strikes by Renault workers at the Flins factory or by the women of the Lip watch company had their "specificity," which could not be reduced to "the workers' struggle." The leaders of the Mouvement des travailleurs arabes highlighted their fight for the "autonomy"

[61] "Vingt ans de drague," 55–60.

[62] Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY, 1977), 205–17. For the classic critique of Foucault's definition, see Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

of "Arab workers" in their attempt to gain the right to direct their own struggles in France.[63] Yet all of these "particularities," gauchistes argued, were part of a joint and universal struggle for freedom and liberation, against oppression and capitalist exploitation. This was one of the ways they distinguished themselves from the "Stalinists" (far-left commentators always put the "Communist" in the French Communist Party in quotation marks: P"c"f) and all other "reductive" Marxists who insisted that only class mattered. As the FHAR-associated philosopher Guy Hocquenghem stated in defense of East Pakistan's revolt against West Pakistan, "revolutionary analysis is universal when its point of departure is the particular, and not when it refuses the particular as abnormal." As the East Pakistan reference suggested, this vision of the importance of difference derived directly from far-left, notably "tiers-mondiste," analyses of the "revolutionary nationalism" that proponents identified as emblematic of anti-imperialist movements, most especially in Palestine, Cuba, Vietnam, and Algeria.[64]

In this context, one claim that FHAR writers made was that their sexual relations with Algerian immigrants both linked together two "specific" struggles, those of immigrant North African workers and of homosexuals, and sharpened the revolutionary consciousness of each of the parties—through anticolonial buggery, perhaps, but also through mutual recognition and assistance. There were boundaries created by history and politics that required "autonomy," and yet it was revolutionary to make the *mutual* choice to connect across them. These arguments tell us relatively little about the accuracy of either their promises or the lived experiences and lessons drawn that they evoked. Such claims affirm, however, that they are part of something larger.

Conclusion

Expanding the chronology and the field of analysis to look far to the right as well as to the left makes it clear that FHAR invocations of "Arabs" tell us about more than homosexual identity politics. It was not just, as a number of critics have astutely noted, that (French) male homosexuals, then and since, have a problem with exoticism, racial fetishism, or "desiring Arabs"; it

[63] P. Mazodier (Salindres), "Nos lecteurs interviennent: Comprendre la lutte des minorités ethniques," *Politique-hebdo (nouvelle formule)* 2 (1971): 3.

[64] See Hosek, "'Subaltern Nationalism'"; also Bill Marshall, *Guy Hocquenghem: Beyond Gay Identity* (Durham, NC, 1997), 6–8. Hocquenghem and the other well-known intellectuals who were involved with FHAR publications (e.g., Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari) each analyzed the politics of sex in ways quite distinct from what emerged, I argue here, from the discourse produced by the multiple publications and voices (including theirs, although most were anonymously authored) that invoked "le sexe arabe."

suggests that it was because of structural problems in French politics that certain activists articulated that problem in the early 1970s and that they did so in these ways. French public discussions in the late twentieth century recurrently framed assertions about male sexual deviance—notably, homosexuality—through references to Algerians because sex (male and "perverted") emerged as privileged terrain for assertions about Algerian "difference" and for efforts to negotiate France's colonial history. Sex talk and Algerians also take their place as part of what made "the 1968 years" politically important. In spring 1968, the sparse forces of the French far right invoked and reinscribed sexual fears and fantasies about "Arabs" in ways that obscured their own ties to widely disdained political actions in recent history (around Vichy; in collaboration with Nazi Germany; against de Gaulle; for French Algeria). By displacing history, they facilitated new connections with the mainstream right. The ways they had learned to frame their Algerian obsession—to transform talk of colonialism (and Gaullist betrayals) into sex talk, with warnings of French victimization by sexually deviant immigrants—became a much-used toolbox for mainstream French politicians in subsequent years. In their effort to define their claims as political, even revolutionary, FHAR militants insistently pointed to what their sex talk about "Arabs" revealed about France's Algerian history; their reveries suggested how crucial claims of meaningful difference between French and Algerians were both to French politics, on the far left as well as more broadly, and to ongoing efforts by French people to define themselves. Largely accurate left-wing accusations that such statements were deeply problematic (which included numerous critiques published by other FHAR militants) closed down this discussion.[65]

The tactical and strategic successes and failures of these political groups set the stage for subsequent developments. The French left more broadly, French sex radicals, and the nascent gay rights movement all quickly moved away from engaging with the very explicit claims FHAR publications made about how (at least some) French people enjoyed the Algerian presence in France. Ironically, this silence reaffirmed the belief of some that racism was black and white and could be avoided by ignoring the multiple registers and hierarchies through which difference functions. As President Georges Pompidou warned in September 1973, in the face of heightened racial tension and the murder of dozens of Algerian immigrants: "Let's not let France get dragged into a cycle

[65] See Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago, 2007). For critiques of FHAR racism, see, e.g., Foucault and Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power"; Mekki Bentahar, *Les arabes en France* (Rabat, 1979), 155; Gary Genosko, "The Figure of the Arab in *Three Billion Perverts*," *Deleuze Studies* 1 (2007): 60–78; Maxime Cervulle, "French Homonormativity and the Commodification of the Arab Body," *Radical History Review* 100 (2008): 171–79.

of accusations of racism. Sometimes, just pronouncing the word summons to mind such ideas, and sometimes reality follows on from those ideas."[66] At the same time, of course, the far right continued to talk about sex and "Arabs" to advance their agendas. Antiracist calls for silence failed to close this down. Many others, from the Parisian taxi driver heard on *France-culture* in 1972 to more comfortably situated recent voices—including growing numbers who speak in English, Dutch, and other tongues—have taken up their arguments.[67]

[66] In *Le Monde*, September 1, 1973, cited and translated in Aissaoui, *North African Political Movements*, 188.

[67] For a particularly astute sociological analysis of how recent French public debates invoke "Arab" men and boys in France, see Nacira Guénif Souilamas and Eric Macé, *Les féministes et le garçon arabe* (La Tour d'Aigues, 2004).