DECOLONIZING CHRISTIANITY: GRASSROOTS ECUMENISM

IN FRANCE AND ALGERIA, 1940-1965

by

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This dissertation, “Grassroots Ecumenism: Christianity and Decolonization in France and Algeria, 1940-1965” is the first major study of how French Protestant and Catholic engagement in the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) reshaped Christianity in the modern world and influenced global religious movements like Ecumenical Movement and Vatican II. The moral questions that surfaced during the Algerian War, including the French military’s use of torture, the repression of civilian populations, and debates about the legitimacy of the Algerian nationalist positions forced Christians across the world to rethink the role of Christianity in imperialism and its future in a postcolonial world. This dissertation examines the shifting dynamics of Christianity’s role in the French empire, from the role that Christianity played in supporting the moral foundations for French colonialism in Algeria, to the ways in which Social Christianity, which emerged in France in the 1930s and 40s, undermined these same moral arguments, including the belief that French colonialism was both benevolent and the only means through which Christian interests could be protected in Algeria.
Using private and governmental archives from France, Switzerland, Algeria, and Tunisia, this dissertation argues that the Algerian War, the most brutal and violent conflict over decolonization in the French empire, was a testing ground for the decolonization of Christianity itself. It traces a group of French Christians who used Christian theology and morality to argue for social justice for colonized peoples, and even political independence. Although many of these Christians were arrested and tortured for their support of the Algerian population, they worked toward a decolonization of the church in Algeria by initiating a dialogue with Algerian Muslims and working with them to solve some of the grave social problems that were at the root of Algerian discontent. This project thus traces the transformation of Christianity from its position as the moral foundation of European imperialism to its role as a radical voice of political and social change in the era of decolonization, and the complex tensions that resulted as Christians attempted to renegotiate their place in the emerging Third World.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Protestant Theology and Political Engagement in France, 1930-1954</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 Converting the Catholic Church to the Modern World, 1930-1955</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 French Christian Responses to the Algerian War</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 Social Action and the Radicalization of Christian Engagement in Algeria</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 Christianity on Trial: The Battle to Define Christian Morality</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 From Algerian Independence to Postcolonial Christianity</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations and Acronyms</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

“The Church in the colonies is a white man’s Church, a foreigners’ Church. It does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the white man, to the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor. And as we know, in this story many are called but few are chosen.”

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*1

In 1968, six years after Algeria gained its independence from France, the French researcher Jean Boisson-Pradier published a book called *L’Église et l’Algérie* (The Church and Algeria), in which he documented what Jean Loiseau, who wrote the preface, called, “the erasure of the Church in Algeria.”2 According to Boisson-Pradier, during the Algerian “war,” a group of French Catholics had “colluded” with Algerian nationalists and “contributed in large part to the granting of Algerian independence,” since “each act, each text that demonstrated sympathy and understanding for Algerian nationalism was taken by the FLN and exploited against France.”3 In doing so they had betrayed both France and Christianity, and consequently, “the granting of independence to Algeria meant that the million or so French living there were obliged to precipitately leave the territory,” and thus “the Church brutally disappeared from Algeria, driven by the vacuum that enveloped it.”4 The means of this betrayal, according to Boisson-Pradier, were the “collusion” of Catholics with the FLN (*Front de libération nationale*) through a number of support networks that provided material support to nationalist militants, biased journalism, and the betrayal of individuals like Mgr Duval, the archbishop of Algiers,

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3 Ibid., 289, 290.
4 Ibid., 297.
whom he accused of supporting the Algerian nationalists instead of his own parishioners. He detailed the alleged transgressions of these Catholics, including those of a social worker named Denise Walbert, who was put on trial with a number of other French Christians in Algiers in July 1957 for using her apartment to print FLN propaganda and shelter wanted Algerian militants. To cast aspersions on her motives, Boisson-Pradier quoted a statement from Walbert, from the time of her arrest, in which she said, “It was my Christian convictions that made me decide, freely, to take part in all of these activities.”

On the surface, Walbert’s statement is unremarkable, however in the context of the history of Christianity in Algeria, the position that she espoused was nothing short of revolutionary. In the spring of 1957, in the midst of the Battle of Algiers, Denise Walbert was one of a group of Christians that the French military arrested in Algiers and charged with “undermining the security of the French state.” The actions and motivations of these Christians, who also included a Catholic priest, several Catholic social workers, and an assistant to the mayor of Algiers, became the subject of heated debates on both sides of the Mediterranean. The majority of those commenting on the trial and the actions of these Christians vehemently denounced their activities as a betrayal both of the French nation and of Christianity itself. They were consistently described as “progressivists,” a term that referred to their alleged ties to communism. For conservatives, right-wing Catholics, and the French military – who made up the vast majority of the critics of the Christians

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5 Ibid., 28. Boisson-Pradier incorrectly dates Walbert’s arrest from “the first days of 1956.” She was actually arrested in February of 1957. See Walbert’s personal testimony: “Une Française en Afrique du Nord de 1929 à 1957,” Centre des Archives du Monde du Travail (hereafter, CAMT), Roubaix, France. Fonds Mission de France (MDF), 1999013 0154.
on trial – this was a crime in and of itself. For these conservative groups, who saw themselves as the protectors of Algérie française, which they claimed to be defending in the name of “Christian civilization,” Christians like Denise Walbert, who invoked Christianity in the defense of Algerian nationalists, highlighted the hypocrisy of everything they stood for.

Despite the polemics and hostility, the so-called “progressivist” Christians were, for the most part, neither communists nor revolutionaries. Rather they were men and women – both Protestant and Catholic – who worked on the ground in Algeria, initiating a dialogue with Algerian Muslims and working with them to solve some of the grave social problems that were at the root of Algerian discontent. By working in groups such as the AJAAS (Association de la jeunesse algérienne pour l’action sociale), which organized service projects for Christian and Muslim scout movements, and the Centres sociaux, in which Algerian and French social workers and teachers provided basic literacy, social and medical services for the Algerians in the shantytowns of Algeria, many of these Christians gained direct experience of massive poverty, illiteracy, and frustration that were the major legacy of French colonialism for the majority of the Algerian population. With the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution in 1954, these Christians realized that whatever moral authority they had left depended upon distancing themselves from the colonial power and demonstrating solidarity with the Algerians. For some this even meant supporting the end of Algérie française, a position that was tantamount to treason in the eyes of many in both France and Algeria. In examining the actions of these Christians during the Algerian War, as well as analyzing their origins and motivations and the impact they had both locally and globally, this thesis tells the story of
how this small group of Christians in France and Algeria came to realize that Christianity itself needed to be decolonized.

While it was their engagement in social justice projects at the grassroots level in Algeria that incited their commitment to transforming the relationship between Christianity and colonialism in Algeria, these Christians were tied into global currents and, ultimately, the impact of their actions reached well beyond the borders of France and Algeria. By the late 1950s, the Algerian War had become a central focus for Christians around the globe and a test case for the question of how Christianity would respond to the potential crises of decolonization that were developing throughout Africa and Asia. On a global level, both the Vatican and the World Council of Churches (WCC), which was attempting to unite Protestants around the world, were already engaged in the Algerian conflict. They realized that the escalating violence, and the increasingly vivid depictions of the conflict as a religious and civilizational war between Christianity and Islam had placed the future of Christianity in postcolonial Algeria in danger. Christians like the priests of the Mission de France (MDF), who were fully implicated in the 1957 trial of the “progressivist” Christians, or the Protestant aid organization Cimade, which provided moral and material aid to the hundreds of thousands of Algerians that the French military had placed in “regroupment camps” in the Algerian countryside, provided examples of Christian solidarity to colonized peoples that resonated far beyond the Algerian border.6

6 The “regroupment camps” were an attempt to stop rural Algerians from resupplying the FLN maquis. The French military moved mainly women and children from their homes and placed them in temporary camps (surrounded by barbed wire) where they had no access to livestock or any means to grow food. They were at the mercy of the French military and various aid groups who brought food and supplies to them. Chapter 6 examines in depth the issue of the regroupment camps.
At the root of this Christian engagement in the decolonization of Algeria was a major reconsideration of the role of Christianity in the modern world. In this thesis I demonstrate that for those Christians working on the ground in Algeria to bring about a decolonization of Christianity, their engagement in the Algerian War was not an isolated event, but rather the result of a long-term theological and moral examination of the relationship between religion and politics that was tested during World War II and in the anti-communist atmosphere of postwar Europe. With the rise of fascism and communism in the interwar period, leftist movements within French Protestantism and Catholicism struggled to find ways to make Christianity more relevant to the modern world.

French Catholics in the interwar period sought to win back the “dechristianized” working classes and find ways of demonstrating that despite close ties between far-right Catholic groups and fascist movements, not all Catholics were nationalist, capitalist, and anti-communist. Movements like the Mission de France, which opened a seminary in Lisieux, France in 1941 to train priests to be missionaries to the working classes, transformed the concept of the mission by pursuing a dialogue with Marxism and living in poverty with the working classes in order to demonstrate their solidarity through deeds, and not just words. French Protestants were greatly influenced by the German theologian Karl Barth, who argued that Christians had a duty to resist political ideologies or states (i.e. Nazi Germany) when they came into conflict with scripturally based Christian ethics; they worked within the Ecumenical movement during and after World War II to create a new vision of Christian social thought that stressed the concept of a “responsible society,” or one in which there would be political freedom and equality for all as well as
economic and social justice. It was through their grassroots social engagement with the working classes and North African immigrants in France and in social projects in Algeria that both Protestants and Catholics came into contact with Algerians in the late 1940s and early 1950s who themselves were working toward political independence.

While the celebrities of the Ecumenical and leftist Catholic movements were located within postwar Europe, many of the major actors in both movements played central roles in the decolonization of Christianity in Algeria. My dissertation argues that the Algerian War was a testing ground for new theological ideas about social justice, human rights, and dialogue that were being discussed at the highest levels of European Catholic and Protestant religious organizations as well as in international secular agencies like the United Nations. In the case of the Protestants, the World Council of Churches addressed these questions in their international meetings in Evanston, Illinois in 1954, and in New Delhi in 1961. For Catholics, questions of human rights and development in the Third World resulted in the 1961 Papal encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (On Christianity and Social Progress) and several declarations from the Second Vatican Council in 1962, including *Gaudium et Spes* (On the Church in the Modern World). In fact, in contrast to Jean Boisson-Pradier’s assertion that Christian “collusion” with Algerian nationalists destroyed the Church in Algeria, my dissertation demonstrates that in fact it allowed for the Church’s continued presence in Algeria after independence. In addition, these theological ideas and the emphasis that Christians in France and Algeria placed on radical

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social action and dialogue helped form the basis of Liberation theology in Latin America. This dissertation thus traces the transformation of Christianity from its position as the moral foundation of European imperialism to its role as a radical voice of political and social change in the era of decolonization, and the complex tensions that resulted as Christians attempted to renegotiate their place in the emerging Third World.

**Christianity in Algérie française**

The radical nature of the so-called “progressivist” Christian project can only be appreciated when contrasted with the long history of Christianity in Algeria. Like Jean Boisson-Pradier, Jean Loiseau viewed *Algérie française* as a sort of Paradise Lost, a “human mosaic [where] men of diverse confessions lived, side by side, sharing without complexes their sorrows and joys, the same work, the same struggles, the same hopes.” For him “this was the real Algeria,” and “It was there the presence of the Church in Algeria.” While Loiseau was not a European settler, this nostalgic view – or *nostalgérie* – is most often seen in the reminiscences of pieds-noirs, or the nearly one million settlers of European origin in Algeria, most of whom left Algeria at independence unhappily and often unwillingly, unable to face a future without the protections of the colonial state.

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10 Ibid., 10

11 The term ‘pied-noir’ is of obscure and contested origin, but is currently used to refer to settlers in Algeria of European descent who arrived after French colonization in 1830, who possessed French citizenship, and who were “repatriated” to France after the Algerian War. The term was used pejoratively during the colonial period but groups of “repatriated” settlers in France reclaimed the title to define themselves as something other than “repatriates.” Up until the interwar period, the European population called themselves “Algerians,” and then the “Français d’Algérie,” (French of Algeria) while at
Colonial Algeria was certainly a melting pot of different ethnic and religious groups, including Christian settlers from France, Spain, Italy, Malta; a similarly diverse group of Jews (including indigenous Mozabite Jews living in the Saharan M’Zab); and Muslim Arabs and Berbers. However despite this diversity, Jean Loiseau’s idealized “human mosaic” was hardly the reality.

As in many other European colonies, in colonial Algeria, Christian churches worked hand in hand with the colonial state to enact the “civilizing mission” and to maintain public support for colonial policies. From the French invasion in 1830 until Algerian independence in 1962, the French used the defense of Christianity in North the same time the indigenous Arabs and Muslims were called “indigènes,” or “français musulmans” (Muslim French). During the Algerian War, the “Muslims” reclaimed the title of “Algerian” to refer to the non-European Arab and Berber populations of Algeria. In this dissertation, I use the term “Algerian” in this way, while the term “Muslim” is used solely in its historical context, or in a religious context. I refer to the European settler population alternately as “European settlers,” “pieds-noirs,” or the “French of Algeria,” while they are distinguished from the “French” who were not settlers, but rather recent arrivals from France. On the complexities of these labels, and the “exodus” of the pieds-noirs from Algeria, see Todd Shepard, The Invention of Decolonization (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). On the phenomenon of nostalgie, see Andrea L. Smith, Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). Other important recent interventions on the pieds-noirs include Michelle Baussant, Pieds-noirs. Mémoires d’exil (Paris: Stock, 2002); Valérie Esclangon-Morin, Les rapatriés d’Afrique du Nord de 1956 à nos jours (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007); Éric Savarese, Algérie, la guerre des mémoires (Paris: Éditions Non Lieu, 2007).

Africa as one of the main justifications for the oppression of the indigenous Arab and Berber populations; in some cases it served to justify the colonial violence that characterized much of the colonial experience in Algeria. Historian Patricia Lorcin notes that even the 1830 invasion was depicted in the language of the Crusades, as a “campaign to achieve a Christian victory over a belligerent Islam.” The French could claim, of course, that North Africa had been Christian under the Roman Empire, and they drew in particular on the fact that one of the early church fathers – St. Augustine of Hippo (now the modern city of Annaba in eastern Algeria) – was born in Algeria to justify their claims that they were merely “liberating” Algeria from the Muslim Arab invaders and restoring the rightful Christian claim to the territory.

This vision was reinforced with the arrival in 1867 of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, who was appointed the Archbishop of Algiers. Lavigerie, who founded the Missionaries of Africa (nicknamed the White Fathers and White Sisters) soon after his arrival in Algeria, came to “restore the Church in North Africa to its former Augustinian glory.” His vision of Islam as a “regrettable” and “incorrigible” religion, led to his desire to convert the population of North Africa – and the Kabyle Berbers in particular – “back” to Christianity. When he found that North African Muslims were exceptionally resistant to

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15 Ibid., 20-23.
16 Ibid., 177-178. See also Oissilia Saâdia, “Le cas de l’Église catholique en Algérie avant la Première Guerre mondiale,” in Religions et colonisation XVle-XXe siècle, eds. Dominique Borne and Benoit Falaze (Paris: Éditions de l’Atelier/Éditions ouvrières,
conversion, Lavigerie created the White Fathers, a missionary order that would work to convert “barbaric” Africans with methods that included learning the indigenous languages and living among indigenous peoples. They focused primarily on mission education and orphanages, since working with children allowed them to begin with a *tabula rasa*, without the “deleterious” influence of Islam or local customs.\(^{17}\) Lorcin argues that these practices, particularly in Algeria, were an especially potent form of the French “civilizing mission” because Lavigerie viewed the French as the means through which Christian civilization would be spread across the African continent, which he consistently portrayed as barbaric and culturally inferior.\(^{18}\) Even though the French “civilizing mission” was portrayed as a secular endeavor, particularly after the institution of the Third Republic, historians J.P. Daughton and Elizabeth Foster have recently demonstrated that Christian missionaries played a central role in enacting its policies on the ground. In Algeria, however, the notable failures of French attempts to convert Muslims to Christianity meant that there were actually few missionaries, mission schools or hospitals, and most Christian institutions were set up to serve the European population, not the Muslim population.

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The failures of the “civilizing mission” in Algeria cannot be attributed solely to the lack of missionary support on the ground, however. For example, the term “Muslim” in Algeria was used to denote a legal rather than a religious category, and one that denoted an ethnic or racial distinction from the “European” population of Algeria (i.e. the European settlers).\(^{19}\) Although up until 1944 French colonizers had great confidence that their civilizing mission would eventually uplift the colonized Algerian “Muslims” to the point that they could become “assimilated” French citizens, the reality was that Algerian “Muslims” were governed under a different legal system (Koranic law) and Algerian Arabs and Berbers were not given French citizenship, despite having French nationality, until 1944.\(^{20}\) Whether this was due to racism or anti-Muslim sentiment within French Republican ideology is a subject of intense historical debate.\(^{21}\) Yet the reality is that in Algeria, the government consistently failed to provide funding and support for education or even basic social services for the Arab and Berber populations, leading to a situation that Germaine Tillion termed the “pauperization” of the Algerian population. In 1954, she noted, the rate of illiteracy among Algerian male “Muslims” was 94%, among females it

\(^{19}\) Shepard, 12.

\(^{20}\) On the complexities of the legal status of Algerian “Muslims” and “Israelites,” see Shepard, chapter 1. There was a potential exception to this law, but it required the abandonment of the Muslim personal statute, a situation that was not often pursued: Kamel Kateb notes that between 1866 and 1933, there were only 2,355 indigenous naturalizations. See Kamel Kateb, Européens, “Indigènes” et Juifs en Algérie (1830-1962) (Paris: Éditions de l’Institut national d’études démographiques, 2001), 194.

was 98% and only one in four Algerian children attended school.\textsuperscript{22} Even for those students who did attend school, until 1949, the government ran a two-tiered education system, in which “indigenous schools” provided rudimentary vocational training, while European schools were only available to the Muslim elites.\textsuperscript{23} Between 1830 and 1962, the Arab and Berber populations of Algeria experienced consistent racism and violence that were encoded into the very fabric of \textit{Algérie française}. Historian Kamel Kateb has described in detail how the French occupation of Algeria led to profound upheavals in Algerian society, including famines and disease epidemics that were related to policies of population regroupment, which removed indigenous Algerians from land that the French military confiscated for use of European settlers.\textsuperscript{24} In 1881, the French government established the \textit{Code de l’indigénat}, which, up until 1944, instituted much harsher penalties for “natives” who committed thirty-three specific crimes.\textsuperscript{25}

Algeria had few natural resources and there was very little industrial development before World War II. The vast majority of the Algerian population worked in the agricultural sector, despite having many fewer acres of far less fertile land than the large landowners (the \textit{grands colons}).\textsuperscript{26} In 1954, there were high levels of unemployment among the Algerian population, those who lived in rural areas (approximately 80% of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Germaine Tillion, \textit{Algeria: The Realities}, trans. by Ronald Matthews (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 58.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Jonathan Gosnell, \textit{The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria, 1930-1954} (Rochester: The University of Rochester Press, 2002), 47. Gosnell notes that “colonial schools served as training grounds for a Muslim labor force in French industries,” 67.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Kateb, 58-84.
\item \textsuperscript{25} See Weil, 223.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 219. Kateb notes that the average number of hectares for European \textit{colons} was 190, while for the indigenous population it was 14. In 1954, 25\% of the agricultural [\textit{exploitants}] possessed 80\% of the land, and close to 4\% possessed more than one third (35.4\%).
\end{itemize}
population) existed on subsistence agriculture, and those in the urban areas often lived in overcrowded shantytowns (bidonvilles) on the outskirts of the larger cities with no electricity, sewage, or running water. In the major cities, few Europeans ventured into the casbahs or the shantytowns and in the rural areas, it seems that there was much more contact between European and Algerian populations. The extent to which that contact was “fraternal” depends entirely on one’s point of view. In general, though, it is not a stretch to say that at the outbreak of the Revolution, colonial Algeria did not at all resemble “a human mosaic” where Christians and Muslims “lived side by side… sharing the same struggles and hopes,” and for the most part the Christian population did little to protest or change the situation.

During the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the European Christians in Algeria had developed into a self-contained and patriotic community that had very little interaction with the Muslim population they lived amongst, and in general were not all that faithful, at least in terms of church attendance. Their Christianity was more cultural than religious, but nonetheless deeply embedded in European settler identity. In terms of ecclesiastical structures, the Protestant and Catholic churches in Algeria were closely connected to their metropolitan counterparts. Catholic bishops all came from France and the Archbishop of Algiers was a member of the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops.

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27 Ibid., 276-278. In 1954, 30% (86,000) of the Muslim population of Algiers lived in the bidonvilles outside the city, 29% of that of Oran, 30% of that or Bône (Annaba), and 7% of Constantine. This number exploded after the outbreak of the war, as the fighting led to a rural exodus.


of France.\textsuperscript{30} On the Protestant side, the synod of Algeria was the third largest of the French Reformed Church, the largest Protestant denomination in France, despite comprising only six thousand members.

Throughout the Algerian War, most of the French clergy and the majority of the Christian population supported the cause of Algérie française. The reasons for this support, beyond the obvious defense of their property and way of life, were twofold. In the first place, Christians in Algeria had been constantly reminded for decades that their Christian duty included obedience to secular authorities, and through most of the Algerian War, the French government and military were fighting to keep Algeria French. By early 1960, those Christians who believed that Charles de Gaulle and the metropolitan French population had betrayed the cause of French Algeria then argued that the defense of French Algeria took priority over the duty of obedience. In the second place, the legacy of people like Cardinal Lavigerie was so strong that there was a deeply entrenched belief that the French in Algeria were not only promoting their “civilizing mission” but were also defending the Christian legacy in North Africa that was under threat, they believed, both from the Algerian Muslims and global communism. Christians in Algeria fully bought into French fears that North Africa had become a key battleground in the Cold War.\textsuperscript{31}

By the outbreak of the war, the handful of Christians who were attempting to draw attention to the injustices of the colonial system and to encourage the Christian population to face up to their responsibilities as Christians in addressing some of these

\textsuperscript{30} André Nozière, \textit{Algérie: Les Chrétiens dans la guerre} (Paris: Éditions Cana, 1979), 27.

\textsuperscript{31} On the question of Algeria and the Cold War, see Matthew Connelly, \textit{A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origin of the Post-Cold War Era} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
questions, encountered scorn and often outright rejection from the majority of the Christian population. When Léon-Étienne Duval arrived in Constantine in 1947 to take up the post of Bishop of Constantine and Hippo – not coincidentally the ancient canonical diocese of St. Augustine – he gained a reputation as an avant-garde cleric. In a series of interviews conducted late in his life, Duval recalled that even before his arrival in Algeria he had already come to believe that colonialism had run its course, and that his main preoccupation in Algeria was to achieve legal equality for the three religious communities of Algeria: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim.32 In 1950 for the fête of Saint Augustine, Mgr Duval told his parishioners, “I sometimes have the impression that the faithful don’t understand, or secretly reproach me for getting involved in that which I know nothing of, or that which does not concern me. One day, perhaps, my brothers, you will reproach me for not having talked enough, for not having warned you, for not having cried out your duty.”33 Anticolonial intellectual and Catholic André Mandouze, who was known for his outspoken support for Algerian independence was chased from his parish church in Hydra, in the hills above Algiers by parishioners who shouted “Since you love the Arabs, go to the mosque, and not the church!”34 As the war progressed and the pieds-noirs organized into the OAS (Organisation armée secrète) to defend Algérie française, the attacks became violent, as churches were bombed and people like Pierre Popie, a

33 Ibid., 62.
liberal Catholic lawyer and co-founder of the AJAAS, became OAS assassination targets.³⁵

In showing solidarity with the Algerian population, this small minority of Christians demonstrated what the abbé Jean Scotto called “the positive face of Christianity.” When the negotiations for independence began, a small committee of European Christians – including several notable “progressivists” – and Algerians organized under the auspices of the GPRA (the provisional government of Algeria) wrote a report on the Church in Algeria that would form the basis of negotiations on the status of Christianity in Algeria after independence.³⁶ The document was then sent in the form of a letter to the Catholic bishops of Algeria. It asserted that, although the Catholic Church would no longer have the privileged place it held in French Algeria, in “independent Algeria,” it would have a place that would permit it “to feel free and respected.”³⁷ The letter went on to state:

Never will we forget the understanding, the sympathy, and the support that we found, during the years of struggle, from the most conscious and authentic Christians, outside of Algeria, but also in Algeria. Nothing on earth would make us desire that, with us, these Christians do not feel at home. Finally, we are convinced that Christian values that are seriously lived in real-life can only increase the spiritual patrimony of our country.³⁸

³⁵ Pierre Popie was the very first victim of the OAS on January 25, 1961, when he was stabbed to death in his office. The lawyer who took over his office, Pierre Garrigue, was also assassinated by the OAS on March 1, 1962, just hours before he was to leave Algeria for good. Both Popie and Garrigue were known for their relationships with “progressivist” Christians and Popie was famous for having declared “L’Algérie française est morte!”.
³⁶ Nozière, 237-238.
³⁸ Ibid.
One condition of this acceptance, however, was that the Church transform itself to be of service to the Algerian people, a condition that was already in line with the vision of those who sought to decolonize the Church, but much more difficult for many others to accept. The paradox for people like Jean Boisson-Pradier and those Christians who felt betrayed by Algerian independence is that even as they accused Christians like Mandouze or Mgr Duval of inciting the “fratricidal struggle and hatred” in Algeria between Christians and Muslims and of “erasing the Church in Algeria,” it was people like Duval and the “progressivist Christians” who actually allowed for the Church’s continued existence in Algeria.

When Algeria became independent, the vast majority of the Christians left, but those admitted few who chose to stay witnessed the transformation of the colonial Église de France into the Église d’Algérie: the Algerian dioceses were no longer under the control of the French episcopate, and a text from one of the Mission de France priests on the relationship between church and state after independence noted that “In sum, the Church wants to be Algerian in Algeria.”

Mgr Duval supervised the handover of a significant number of Catholic churches that were transformed back into mosques, a symbolic and material indication that the Church was distancing itself from its colonial past. This was an outcome that few would have foreseen just a few years previously, and one that is all the more surprising given the fact that, as Todd Shepard has shown, before 1959, almost no one in France believed that Algeria could be anything other than

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40 Ray, 154-155. During the colonial period, the French had transformed a number of mosques into churches, including the Ketchaoua mosque in Algiers, which became the Cathédrale Saint-Philippe in 1832.
part of France. In France, as Shepard argues, the narrative of inevitability of the “decolonization” of Algeria was a postwar invention that allowed the French to sidestep what the war and its effects posed to the very fabric of the FrenchRepublican ideal. By contrast, for Christians in Algeria, it meant the discovery of exactly what Christianity was without the trappings of colonialism. The Church was not “erased,” as people like Boisson-Pradier claimed, but its role in society had fundamentally been transformed.

The Enactment of Grassroots Ecumenism

When historians of the Algerian War discuss the engagement of Christians in the conflict, for the most part they focus on Christian intellectuals in France. The focus on Christian intellectuals is largely the result of the phenomenon that Todd Shepard deconstructs so effectively in his book *The Invention of Decolonization*, in which French politicians and intellectuals reinterpreted their positions and actions during the Algerian War in light of Algeria’s independence, in many cases painting themselves as ardent supporters of Algerian independence and decolonization more generally when that was not necessarily the case. One consequence of this reinterpretation was the creation of a heroic myth that allowed many French intellectuals to claim that they had supported

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41 Shepard, 63.
 Algerian independence all along, when in fact, like the vast majority of French men and women on both sides of the Mediterranean, until 1959, most likely never even considered that Algeria could be anything other than French.43 Because Christian intellectuals – particularly those of the “new left,” including François Mauriac and those writing in reviews like *Esprit* – were among the most outspoken critics of the French military’s use of torture and repression tactics during the Algerian War, in the years following the war, they have been portrayed as among those heroic supporters of independence.44 There, however, has been a notable failure to acknowledge the fact that many of those who spoke out against military atrocities like the use of torture or the state of regroupment camps in Algeria did not necessarily do so in the pursuit of a belief in the justice and necessity of Algerian independence, and even more rarely in defense of Christian morality. Rather, in many cases, they did so to save the honor of France.45

While the public interventions of Christian intellectuals like François Mauriac, Pierre-Henri Simon or Henri-Irenée Marrou, who all spoke out against the use of torture, may have had an important influence on public opinion in France, the historical focus on

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43 Shepard, 63. Shepard notes that very few French men or women supported Algerian independence before 1959, and the arguments for independence tended to be linked to the iconoclastic intellectuals Jean-Paul Sartre and Raymond Aron.
45 Interestingly, despite the strong showing of Christian intellectuals in the discussions about the use of torture, very few framed the debate in terms of “Christian morality.” Rather they emphasized the extent to which the use of torture and military repression was doing damage to French honor, and the honor of the military. Even Henri-Irenée Marrou, the well-known Catholic historian of Christian Church Fathers, including St. Augustine, framed his critical 1956 article in *Le Monde*, “*France, ma patrie*” (April 5, 1956) within the values of French civilization.
intellectuals has often obscured the engagement of those Christians whose activism in both France and Algeria had a much more direct impact on the Algerian fight for independence and on the decolonization of Christianity. In some instances, even, these individual Christians openly declared their support for Algerian independence well before most intellectuals in France had considered it a serious option. In March 1958, for example, the Mission de France published a statement of support for Algerian independence in their monthly *Lettre aux communautés* that was the result of years of reflection and activism of priests in both France and Algeria, several of whom had participated in FLN support networks, including the infamous Jeanson network.\(^{46}\)

Whether or not the so-called “progressivist” Christians on trial in Algiers in 1957 for sheltering wanted FLN militants openly supported Algerian independence, the fact that many of them risked their lives and suffered torture for their decision to support their Algerian friends is one that merits historical consideration.

My intention in this dissertation is not, however, to substitute one “false” heroic narrative with another “true” one. For one thing, the itineraries of the Christians I explore in this thesis are far too complex to be distilled into a simple explanation of their anticolonial resistance.\(^{47}\) In many cases, for example, their objective was not the political independence of Algeria but the reform of the colonial system. This may have shifted over the course of the war, but it would be disingenuous to argue that even those who gave direct assistance to the FLN were all in favor of Algerian independence. Even the


show of solidarity amidst real dangers had diverse and individualized motives. Rather my goal has been to explore how these Christians came to their moral positions, and what motivated their actions. The Christians who made the choice to shelter FLN militants, or to work in the shantytowns or regroupment camps often took enormous physical risks that cannot, as I mentioned above, solely be explained by their political beliefs. An exploration of their social activism in France and Algeria as well as their Christian beliefs and theological roots, however, sheds some light on the reasons why many of them came to Algeria in the first place, and why the behavior of this small group of Christians differed so dramatically from that of most Christians in both France and Algeria.

My methodology can best be described as a social history of theology. In other words, my intention is to explore how Christians understood and used theological principles in their everyday lives, and how the actions of Christians then influenced shifts in theological principles. In many ways this methodology is derived directly from the subject matter, as several of the theologians I explore in this thesis, including Karl Barth and Marie-Dominique Chenu, argued that theology should not be a set of abstract concepts outside the grasp of most Christians, but needed to respond to the pressing moral problems that Christians faced in the modern world. Both Barth and Chenu, among others, encouraged Christians to be engaged in the world and to work toward social justice and were direct influences on several of the movements and individuals that I examine in my dissertation. This acknowledgement of theology as a living body of knowledge means that it not only influences people, but it can be influenced by them. So this dissertation also seeks to understand to what extent the actions of Christians in France and Algeria played a role in shifts in Christian theology that occurred in major
international forums, like the Second Vatican Council, which began in 1962, just as the
Algerian War was coming to its violent end. I trace direct influences through people who
were involved, like Yves Congar, who was an important contributor to Vatican II, as well
as the movement of ideas between individuals on the ground and intellectual forums.

One of the major concepts orienting this dissertation is a phenomenon I call
“grassroots ecumenism.” The Christians whose theological, social, and political
engagement I explore in this dissertation are a diverse group comprising both Protestants
and Catholics, some of whom were pieds-noirs with long family histories in Algeria,
while others arrived in Algeria in the midst of the Revolution. This diversity extends to
their social standing, and this story follows a range of personalities, from the Archbishop
of Algiers (who later became a Cardinal), to volunteer social workers who taught basic
health classes in the shantytowns of Algiers. Throughout most of French history, many of
these individuals would have considered each other enemies, yet during the Algerian War
they worked together in Algeria with little concern for confessional and class differences.
I demonstrate that what these Christians had in common – and what distinguished them
from the vast majority of the Christian populations in both France and Algeria – was a
belief in four basic principles that guided their actions: a belief in an Algeria where
Christians and Muslims (and Jews as well) could live together peacefully, although
necessarily in a state of equality and social justice; the necessity of Franco-
Algerian/Christian-Muslim dialogue; the role of solidarity, particularly experiencing the
same conditions as the poor and oppressed; and a new conception of “Christian presence”
in Algeria. These are the basic principles that define “grassroots ecumenism.”
Certainly this concept requires some further explanation, especially as many of the actors in this story are directly tied to the Ecumenical movement, and the term “ecumenism” has a complex history within contemporary Christian relations.\footnote{On the Catholic reluctance to engage in ecumenical dialogue and how this played out within French Christianity, see Étienne Fouilloux, \textit{Les catholiques et l’unité chrétienne du XIXe au XXe siècle} (Paris: Le Centurion, 1982).} According to the \textit{Oxford English Dictionary}, there are two definitions of the term “ecumenical,” the first referring to a universal Christian Church, and the other referring to a more general “doctrine, or quality, of universality.”\footnote{\textit{Oxford English Dictionary}, 2009 online edition, s.v. “ecumenical.”} The modern Ecumenical movement was a Protestant-led movement to unite Christian churches worldwide through dialogue in order to achieve stronger cooperation and unity across denominations and beliefs; although Protestants hoped to achieve Orthodox and Roman Catholic participation, it was not until the Second Vatican Council that the Roman Catholic Church demonstrated any interest in ecumenical dialogue that did not demand a Protestant recognition of the Roman Catholic Church as the “one true church.” The Ecumenical movement plays an important role in this dissertation, for it provided much of the theological and material support for Protestant engagement in the Algerian War. Well before decolonization was a central concern, the Ecumenical movement, which counted among its leaders a number of influential French Protestants, encouraged Christians to pursue dialogue and cooperation that had political as well as theological consequences. Yet when I use the word “ecumenism,” particularly in reference to “grassroots ecumenism,” it is not in direct reference to the Ecumenical movement. This is important to state upfront, as many of the French Catholics I encountered during my research enjoyed a good laugh at my naïve presumption to assume that they engaged in

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\item[48] On the Catholic reluctance to engage in ecumenical dialogue and how this played out within French Christianity, see Étienne Fouilloux, \textit{Les catholiques et l’unité chrétienne du XIXe au XXe siècle} (Paris: Le Centurion, 1982).
\end{enumerate}
what were often very dangerous acts during the Algerian War out of a “spirit of ecumenical dialogue.”

Rather the word “ecumenism” is used here in its more general sense, with reference to the most basic foundation for the movement toward universality in its modern shape: dialogue and cooperation. The idea of dialogue, in and of itself, carries with it a recognition of the other party’s right to exist (except perhaps in the case of a dialogue of the deaf, but that is a different issue). In diplomatic situations, engaging in dialogue with state or even non-state actors infers a certain willingness to listen to the other side’s point of view, even if one does not agree with their tactics or goals. Dialogue is difficult, if not impossible, if either side is not willing to concede that the other side has both the right to exist and a valid position, whether or not one agrees in principle with that position. Take the case of diplomatic negotiations between France and Algeria over Algerian independence, for example. For many years, dialogue between Algerian nationalists and the French government was impossible because for the French, the Algerian position was simply invalid: since Algeria was legally part of France, it could not be independent. Therefore there was simply nothing to negotiate; all that was to be done was to put down the “rebellion” and “restore order.”50

Yet in Algeria, even in the late 1940s and early 1950s, one finds pockets of students organizing groups like the AJAAS in order to promote dialogue between Algerian Christians, Muslims, and Jews on social and political issues, or the priests from the Mission de France in Souk-Ahras and Hussein-Dey, just outside of Algiers, who lived and worked among the Algerian populations in order to create dialogue between the

50 See Connelly, chapter 3.
Christian and Muslim communities and help bridge the enormous gap between the European settler and indigenous Algerian existence. Or there is the example of the shantytowns of Hussein-Dey, which housed thousands of impoverished Algerians without sewage or running water, and among which lived several ecumenical Christian communities including the Frères de Taizé and the Sœurs de Grandchamp, who worked closely with the local Catholic parish to provide social services to the shantytowns as well as later serving as liaisons between the Muslim families and those who may have had information on missing and “disappeared” loved ones as the war progressed.

These are just a few examples one finds in Algeria of dialogue and cooperation, between Protestants and Catholics, between Christians and Muslims, between French and Algerians, that took place well outside of the official realm of the Ecumenical movement, and well before Ecumenism was an acceptable practice within the Roman Catholic Church. This dialogue happened at the grassroots level, without any sort of premeditated program, and certainly was not designed in any way to lure the Algerians to the French side, or to convert the Muslims to Christianity. Rather, these various and numerous projects that Christians participated in and enacted in Algeria were social service projects that were designed both to meet some of the devastating material needs of the impoverished Algerians they lived among, and secondly to show a concrete sense of solidarity that was demonstrated through deeds, rather than simply through words. These Christians had learned through experience well before the Algerian War that without concrete actions to back up one’s good intentions, dialogue only goes so far.

In the end, the diversity of individual experiences and motivations makes it impossible to characterize this group of Christians as simply one adjective, like
“progressivists” or even “liberals.” One of the central figures in this dissertation is Jean Scotto, a pied-noir priest who started the first implantation of the Mission de France in Algeria and organized the first Centres sociaux in the shantytowns of Hussein-Dey. His vision of an Algeria in which Christians and Muslims lived in a just and equal society inspired Protestants and Catholics alike, and throughout the 1940s and 50s, a number of FLN leaders could be found in his presbytery, with the caveat that they left their arms at the door. After independence, he took Algerian nationality and later became the bishop of Constantine and Hippo. Then there are people like Tania Metzel, a French Protestant prison chaplain, who was one of the first woman pastors of the French Reformed Church and who spent much of the Algerian War visiting prisoners in both France and Algeria. Metzel had little connection to Algeria until the French Reformed Church first sent her on a mission in 1957 to examine the state of Algerian prisons. After several tours of prisons and camps, and interactions with Protestant pieds-noirs, Metzel came to believe in the inevitability Algerian independence. Her role as an intermediary between Algerian prisoners and their families was one that other Cimade team members took on as well.51

The fact that so many different people from such different backgrounds and experiences all ended up in Algeria working together toward the same goal of decolonizing Christianity and attempting to transform the relationship between Christians and Muslims indicates that something larger was at work than a coincidental convergence of events and individuals. The concept of grassroots ecumenism allows us to examine what it was that they had in common, and the larger project that was at stake. In this dissertation, I have taken as a starting point Denise Walbert’s claim: “It was my Christian

51 On Tania Metzel, see Adams, 91-92, 134-135.
convictions that made me decide, freely, to take part in all of these activities.” In the chapters that follow, I analyze what these Christian convictions were, and how these activities came to pass, bringing together a diverse set of individuals who altered the course of French, Algerian, and Christian history.

Chapter One examines the reactions of French Protestants to the moral challenges they encountered during World War II and the Nazi occupation of France and their important role in the growth of the Ecumenical Movement in postwar Europe. Even before the war began, French Protestants had already been interested in the ideas of the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth and were intently watching the results of the German Church Conflict, the battle within German Protestantism over the question of Christian support for the Nazi regime. Barth, who had fled to Switzerland during the 1930s, examined the theological implications of Christian support for nationalist movements and immoral governments, arguing that Christians had a duty to resist civil authorities when their actions went counter to Christian morality. Barth was also an important influence in the burgeoning Ecumenical Movement, which was based in Geneva during WWII under the leadership of Dutch theologian Willem A. Visser ‘t Hooft. In 1941, Wisser ‘t Hooft and a group of likeminded French Protestants met in France to formulate a theological basis for their resistance to the Nazi and Vichy regimes, which became known as the Pomeyrol Theses. After the war ended, French Protestants were important leaders in the growth of the ecumenical World Council of Churches, which was founded in 1948 under the leadership of Willem Wisser ‘t Hooft.
Chapter Two analyzes the influence that World War II had on several French Catholic movements, and especially the worker-priest movement, and in particular the Mission de France. The Mission de France was formed in 1941 around the same time as the publication of the text “France, a mission field?” by two French Catholic priests who noted that France was becoming a “dechristianized” country because of the growing divide between the “bourgeois” Catholic church and the working classes. It was comprised of a group of worker-priests, many of whom had come into contact with the working classes during WWII, whether in German labor camps or the French Resistance, who lived and worked among the working classes of France, in civilian clothes, as missionaries. Their “mission” was to minister to the working classes through acts and solidarity in order to show them that the church was open to everyone. In addition, they worked to create a Christian dialogue with Marxism, noting that the church needed to be more engaged with the problems of the working classes, especially the struggle for social justice. Throughout the 1940s and 50s, many conservatives in the Catholic Church, including the Vatican, perceived this dialogue and thus the Mission itself as a threat to Christianity and attempted to marginalize the movement by closing the seminary and banning publications that supported their worldview. In the end, the influence of the Mission and their work was too great to keep suppressed, particularly as their tactics and presence moved into decolonizing regions like Algeria.

Chapter Three is an analytical overview of the Christian response to the Algerian War and to decolonization more generally. Although French Christians were central participants in discussions on decolonization and the dangers of French nationalism, their work, their ideas and their connection to a global discourse of social justice and a shared
moral concern for the human costs of extreme nationalism are usually left out of narratives of decolonization, postwar Europe, and of the history of contemporary Christianity. For example, historical literature on the relationship between Christianity and colonialism has generally emphasized the ways in which Christians were complicit in abusive colonial systems. Here the diversity of roles that Christians played both in the colonial project and in anticolonial movements comes to the fore. I organize the Christian responses into four categories: those who supported the continuation of French Algeria; those who opposed the tactics of the war on moral grounds; those who saw the conflict in an international setting and its impact on the Christian missionary movement; and those who supported Algerian independence.

Chapter Four then traces the roots of the engagement of Christians in Algeria and the role that dialogue and direct experience with Algerian Muslims played in the radicalization of Christian positions on Algerian independence and the role of the Church in Algeria. Using oral interviews conducted in Algeria and France, as well as archival and printed sources, I highlight the role that French Protestants, especially those influenced by Karl Barth, and Catholic orders like the Mission de France played in Algeria in attempting to establish a dialogue with Algerian Muslims. I argue that while the theological developments that led Christians to rethink their role in the colonial project were extremely influential within Christian circles, it was not until they were put into practice on the ground in Algeria that Algerians recognized the possibility that Christianity was not completely tied to the oppressive colonial system.

Chapter Five follows these same Christians as they go on trial in a French military tribunal in Algiers in 1957 for undermining the security of the French state because of
their supposed ties to Algerian “terrorists.” It examines the propaganda and controversy surrounding their actions in the context of Christian concerns about the threat of communism to Christianity and larger questions about the relationship between Christians and the French state. I also analyze the enormous pressures on Monseigneur Duval, the Archbishop of Algiers, as he attempted to influence Christian morality and actions in the midst of the heightened political tensions of the Algerian War, and the Battle of Algiers. Finally I examine the influence that these Christians had on those in France who resisted French policies in Algeria through civil disobedience and even support networks for Algerian nationalists.

Chapter Six follows French Christians through the end of the war and the mass exodus of European settlers from Algeria following independence in 1962. I focus, in particular, on those Christians who decided to stay in Algeria and how they attempted to reformulate their role in postcolonial Algeria. I also examine the larger implications of their actions in a global context, including the role that French Catholics played in Vatican II, especially those who, like Mgr Duval, were directly implicated in the Algerian War. Finally I evaluate how many of the larger moral and religious issues that were at the center of Christian debates about the proper response to the Algerian War affected Christians globally, including their influence on Liberation theology and the Protestant rethinking of the missionary project in a postcolonial context.
Chapter 1 – Protestant Theology and Political Engagement in France, 1930-1954

In September 1939, as the German Army was preparing to invade France, one of the most chaotic and futile events of the French experience in World War II led to the formation of one of the most original organizations within French Protestantism. The French military strategy of the defense of the Maginot Line included a plan to evacuate the civilian population of Alsace-Lorraine, who, it was feared, would be caught under German occupation if the German Army were to break through the Line. The French government’s plan was to transfer the civilians living near the Maginot Line to southwestern France, and though the full plan was never carried out, the city of Strasbourg and some villages in northern Alsace were evacuated amidst mass chaos. The welcome that the refugees received in southern France was tepid at best, and the fact that many of them spoke German contributed to an added layer of hostility that exacerbated the lack of resources available to help resettle the refugees. Because a large number of these refugees were Protestant, their situation caught the attention of the influential Alsatian Protestant theologian and youth leader Suzanne de Dietrich, who was in Geneva at the time. Dietrich wrote to her friend Madame Pannier, who was president of the YWCA (the Young Women’s Christian Association) in France (the Unions chrétiennes de jeunes filles), and the CIM (Comité inter-mouvements de jeunesse), the Inter-Movement Youth Committee, which coordinated the activities of French Protestant youth movements, suggesting that the CIM should organize a sort of welcoming service for the
Alsation evacuees in southwestern France, particularly as many of them were being placed in “very Catholic villages.”

In October, the CIM examined Suzanne de Dietrich’s report on the evacuees and decided to send ten or so young women – scout and youth movement leaders – to go to the villages and live among the evacuees in order to facilitate their transition and resettlement. They also decided to change their name to CIMADE, adding the phrase “auprès des évacués” (among the evacuees) to the original “Comité inter-mouvements.”

Although Cimade’s evacuee project ended when the Germans actually invaded in May 1940, the idea of having teams of young Protestants to respond to the crises of war strongly appealed to Protestant leaders. Faced with the exodus of Frenchmen and women from the Occupied Zone in 1940, Pastor Marc Boegner, president of the French Protestant Federation (FPF), called on another young woman – Madeleine Barot – to reconsider the mission of Cimade and find a new way to provide a practical Protestant ministry to places and people in need. After some research, Barot concluded that Cimade could best be of service in the French internment camps, like Gurs in southern France, where thousands of political refugees were placed, alongside a few thousand members of the International Brigades, housed in the camp since the Spanish Civil War. As the war progressed, Barot continued to seek out new ways for Cimade to provide a ministry of

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2 The full acronym CIMADE stands for Comité inter-mouvements auprès des évacués, or the Inter-Movement Committee Among the Evacuees.
presence and solidarity, particularly to Jewish refugees in France. By late 1942, Cimade was one of the most successful clandestine resistance organizations in France, helping thousands of Jewish children and adults to escape deportation to the east.

Much has been written on French Protestantism during World War II, mainly because Protestants emerged from the war with their moral reputation not only intact, but heightened by their engagement in the French resistance against Nazism. This resistance occurred on several levels, ranging from spiritual and theological resistance against the authority of the Vichy government to active resistance in clandestine networks. Unlike the majority of those who engaged in the French Resistance, Protestant resistance was not merely the result of a patriotic reaction against the occupation of France or an ideological belief in the Communist fight against fascism. Rather it was the result of the combined influence of several theological trends that had been circulating within French Protestantism during the 1930s and the grassroots organization of Protestants who felt that they could not, as Christians, stay silent about the grave injustices they witnessed taking place in France. This chapter analyzes the influence that these theological ideas – especially the theology of Karl Barth and the burgeoning Ecumenical movement – had on French Protestants. It further examines the role they played in a spiritual conception of resistance and how these ideas were put into practice as French Protestants confronted the moral dilemmas posed by the German occupation of France, the installation of the Vichy regime, and the deportation of the Jews from French soil.

Since many French Protestants were already engaged with issues like the German Church Conflict, which divided German Protestants over the issue of support for Nazism in the 1930s, by the time they were faced with their own moral dilemmas caused by the
German occupation of France, they were already spiritually equipped to deal with them. However, the comparison to their counterparts in the Confessing Church in Germany, whose resistance to Nazism stemmed from their objection to the Nazi instrumentalization of German Protestantism and to the state taking control of the Church, is only useful to an extent. Although Protestants in Europe who opposed the Nazi regime often saw themselves as extensions of the “confessors” of Germany, the engagement of Protestants outside of Germany in resistance to Nazism often went much further than that of the Confessing Church in Germany, especially with regard to the situation of the Jews.

Historians of Christians in Germany during the Nazi period and after have shown that despite its opposition to Nazism, the Confessing Church and most German Christians were extremely ambivalent about the discrimination against the Jews. For example, in his examination of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s attitudes toward Jews, Kenneth Barnes notes that Bonhoeffer’s outrage against anti-Jewish actions in Nazi Germany was mainly directed toward the discriminatory measures aimed at assimilated Christian Jews. While Bonhoeffer did have a change of heart toward the end of his life, partly because of his involvement in the international Ecumenical movement and correspondence with theologians like Karl Barth, in the 1930s he argued that the ‘Jewish problem’ would

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continue until all Jews became Christians. This position was largely commonplace among Christians in Germany, many of whom truly believed that there was a ‘Jewish problem.’ Ultimately the Holocaust would cause some shifts in German theology, but Bonhoeffer’s theological and personal shifts away from anti-Judaism were the exception.

Even Karl Barth, who inspired such a strong reaction in France and Switzerland against the treatment of the Jews, was, in the 1930s, much more concerned with the fate of Jewish Christians (Jews who had converted to Christianity but were still treated as racially-defined Jews) than with the Jewish population as a whole.

However, in France it was the treatment of the Jews that radicalized Protestant resistance – both spiritual and in concrete actions – to the Vichy regime and the Nazi occupiers. As was the case for the majority of French citizens, early in the war Protestant support for the Vichy regime, and Maréchal Pétain in particular, was extremely high, mainly because of the potential they saw for moral renewal in the National Revolution. However the regime’s exclusionary legislation, the implementation of internment policies, and eventually the deportation of both foreign and French Jews disillusioned the majority of French Protestants who had supported the Vichy regime. In the end, the main form of resistance that French Protestants engaged in was related to protecting Jews from

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6 Barnes argues that Bonhoeffer was not anti-Semitic, but that he was anti-Judaism, in that he did not accept Jews as Jews until the end of his life, believing that Jews must convert to Christianity in order to achieve salvation.
7 Wolfgang Gerlach, And the witnesses were silent: the Confessing Church and the persecution of the Jews, trans. by Victoria J. Barnett (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 45-47. Historians have also noted that the Barmen Confession of 1934, which is cited as the Confessing Church’s formal opposition to Nazism, included no mention of the Jews.
both the Vichy regime and the Nazis. In some cases this involved a process of hiding Jewish children, in particular, in Protestant communities, as was the case with pastor André Trocmé in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. In others it meant guiding refugees to safety in Switzerland, where they were welcomed by staff from the World Council of Churches and the YMCA.

Historians of French Protestantism have suggested several explanations for this Protestant engagement. Some have pointed to the sympathy that persecuted Jews in France found in the formerly-persecuted French Protestant minority as one of the main reasons why so many Protestants became fully engaged in helping Jews escape the Nazi and Vichy deportation plans. Connected to this “instinctive” response to Jewish persecution was the memory of Protestant support for Alfred Dreyfus during the Dreyfus Affair in the late nineteenth century. There is also the “religious” explanation that emphasizes how the theological return to scripture within French Protestantism was an example of a “Judeo-Christian encounter” that occurred even before the German invasion. In addition there is the element of internationalism that continued to link French Protestants to currents of thought and Christians outside of France, namely

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8 For an overview of these positions, see François Boulet, “Juifs et Protestants 1940-1944” in Les protestants français pendant la seconde guerre mondiale, Special issue, Bulletin de la SHPF 3 (July-September 1994): 335-366.
9 Ibid., 335. See also Laborie and Boulet, 423, who point to the fact that the “Huguenot” minority were concerned that persecution against the Jews would soon mean persecution against Protestants as well.
10 Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt, Bruce Jovanovich, 1973), 93. Hannah Arendt argued in The Origins of Totalitarianism that this explanation was weaker, as the generation of World War II were much less Dreyfusard than their parents. Historian François Boulet seems to agree with Arendt that this is not the most valuable explanation for Protestant reactions to the Jewish statutes and persecution in WWII. See Boulet, 336-338.
11 Boulet, 336-338.
through the Ecumenical movement, that played an important role in the spread of information on the situation of Jews in Germany and Eastern Europe.\(^{12}\) While these explanations demonstrate the complexity of possible theological and historical reasons why French Protestants felt they had something at stake in the situation of the Jews in France, it should be noted that nearly all of the historians of French Protestant engagement in the French Resistance are members of the French Protestant Church.\(^{13}\)

The historiography of the French Resistance during World War II is both vast and fraught with ideological battles about what constituted Resistance.\(^{14}\) And included in this historiography is a substantial body of work on French Protestant Resistance, much of it highlighting the actions of a small group of Protestants who were actively engaged in hiding Jews in southern France and helping them escape into Switzerland or Spain. These works, many of which were the outcome of large colloquiums with a mixed population of historians of Protestantism, Protestant “resisters” themselves, and witnesses from the time, at times run the risk of glorifying Protestant “Resistance,” without fully defining the complexity of Protestant engagement in the “Resistance” and its results, thereby buying into what historian Henry Rousso has called the heroic “Resistance myth.”\(^{15}\) However, despite the fact that a number of French Protestants were engaged in the *maquis* during

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., 359-360.

\(^{13}\) This is a continual historical pitfall when dealing with a minority religious community, and a topic whose sources are often testimonial. The major published text on Protestant engagement in the Resistance and Jewish rescue is the proceedings of a colloquium held in Paris in 1992, and published as a supplement to the Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français: “Les protestants français pendant la seconde guerre mondiale.”


the war, or the so-called “active” or “armed” resistance, it is their engagement on behalf of Jewish refugees that remains remarkable, especially when faced with the statistic that the number of French citizens who participated in Resistance movements never exceeded two percent of the French population, and the number of Frenchmen and women who helped the Jews in France was likely much lower.\(^\text{16}\) In the end, it is estimated that, mainly because of organizations like Cimade and *Amitié chrétienne*, who organized shelter and escape routes, 85% of the Jewish children in France during World War II escaped deportation.\(^\text{17}\)

Although the rescue of Jews in France has been defined as an act of “humanitarian” resistance, it involved direct disobedience to both the Vichy and Nazi authorities, and those who participated themselves ran the risk of imprisonment, deportation, or death.\(^\text{18}\) Protestant engagement in the Resistance has also alternately been defined as “civil” resistance and “spiritual” resistance, with both terms emphasizing the ideological reasons for disobeying the political authorities. Although the term “spiritual resistance” acknowledges the theological roots of Protestant resistance, and was one that Protestants themselves used to describe their decisions to obey the authorities, it has its

\(^{16}\) On the proportion of the French population engaged in the Resistance, see Jean-François Muracciole, *Histoire de la Résistance en France*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993), 98. The number of Frenchmen and women who helped Jews in France will likely never be known, but as of January 2009, Yad Vashem had named 2,991 Frenchmen and women to the list of the “Righteous Among the Nations.”

\(^{17}\) Yagil, 16. She is citing Serge Klarsfeld, *De Vichy à Auschwitz*, vol. 2, 179-181

\(^{18}\) François Bédarida suggested categorizing resistance into three categories: armed resistance, civil resistance, and humanitarian resistance. See François Bédarida, “L’histoire de la résistance: lectures d’hier, chantiers de demain,” *Vingtième siècle*, July-September 1986. Other historians have divided resistance into “active” or “passive” engagement, although historians who study the engagement of women in the resistance or social histories of the period have questioned this breakdown. See, for example, Paula Schwartz, “Partisanes and Gender Politics in Vichy France,” *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (1989): 126-151.
own complex history and there have been several debates about its meaning.\(^{19}\) While these sorts of definitions and categorizations have their uses, if one examines French Protestant resistance in both its international context and its long-term effects, what emerges is a set of ideas and actions whose consequences extend far beyond the history of the German Occupation of France.

During World War II, French Protestants who engaged in various forms of “resistance” against the Vichy and Nazi authorities developed a theologically based set of principles around the proper relationship between the Christian conscience and political authorities. In other words, they defined, in the historical context of the rise of Nazism and its persecution of the Jews, the extent to which Christians had a duty to resist the authority of the state when it violated Christian morality and ethics, placing the laws of God before the laws of man. In addition, they put these principles into practice, through their engagement in various “resistance” activities, thereby solidifying a relationship between ideas and praxis that was both derived from their interactions with theologians like Karl Barth and the international Ecumenical movement, and greatly influenced the reconstruction of Christianity in the aftermath of World War II. More specifically, French Protestants argued that it was the duty of Christians to be engaged in the modern world, not set apart from it, and through this presence in the world, they would demonstrate the true face of a Christianity that was grounded in principles of justice, fraternal love and solidarity, and hope in the face of great suffering.

Pastor Marc Boegner once called Cimade the “light cavalry” of French Protestantism, and in many ways Cimade was the organization that was most effective at bringing together Protestants from diverse origins and ecclesiastical backgrounds in a common cause – assistance to refugees – that became the basis of Protestant resistance and practical Ecumenical action. Although it was a Protestant youth movement in origin, Cimade brought together pastors, laymen and women, Catholics, Protestant intellectuals, and rural peasants, with financing and support from Jewish groups, and international organizations like the YMCA, and the World Council of Churches. Its leader Madeleine Barot helped organize the meeting at the retreat house of Pomeyrol in October 1941 where a group of Protestants, including WCC leader Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, signed the Pomeyrol Theses, in which they laid out their theological justifications for resistance to the Vichy and Nazi authorities. After the war she helped organize Cimade into one of the most effective Christian service organizations in France, while leading the World Council of Church’s Commission on the Role of Women in the Church, and participating actively in the WCC’s commissions on development work. Although Cimade was clearly an exceptional organization, examining its role in World War II and after helps illuminate the larger history of French Protestantism engagement in the world and its role in the Ecumenical movement the 1940s and 50s.

French Protestantism in the 1930s

Between the Wars of Religion of the sixteenth century, and the French Revolution, Protestants in France identified themselves as a persecuted religious minority. This persecution largely ended when the Revolution gave them access to citizenship and marginalized the Catholic Church, which was the source of the
persecution, however the memory of it continued long after. In 1802, under Napoleon Bonaparte, the French Reformed and the Lutheran Churches were reorganized and through the first half of the nineteenth century, French Protestants became fully integrated into French social and political life. Yet the second half of the nineteenth century was a period of great internal conflict as the “liberal” branch of French Protestantism fought against the more “orthodox” Protestants who emphasized traditional church dogma and remained to a large extent apart from the modern world. 20 By 1872, this conflict, according to historians Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire, had the “allure of a dormant civil war.” 21 Always a vocal minority within a France that was overwhelmingly Catholic, French Protestants saw the rise of French Republicanism as a generally positive development, and although there remained a contingent of Protestants who opposed the 1905 law of the separation of Church and State, most saw it as a means to level the religious playing field. 22 Their support of the Republic made them the target of a number of intellectual critiques, notably from the royalist Catholic Charles Maurras, founder of the Action française, who saw Protestantism as the driving force behind the

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22 Cholvy and Hilaire, Histoire religieuse, 36-37. They note that at the end of the nineteenth century, there were approximately 650,000 Protestants in France, slightly less than 2% of the population. The loss of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871 cut off nearly a quarter of the French Protestant population, mainly Lutherans, leading the rise of the Reformed Church and the dominant denomination within French Protestantism.
French Revolution, and the secularization of education, two of the main targets of Maurras’ “integral nationalism.”

The early twentieth century brought several new developments in French Protestantism, including a move to bridge the divisions within the body of French Protestants. In 1909, the French Protestant Federation (FPF) was formed, bringing together the two unions of the French Reformed Church – the liberal Reformed Church and the orthodox Evangelical Reformed Church – along with the Lutheran and certain dissident Protestant denominations. Although the Federation was not much more than a “meeting place” for French Protestants, its existence was a step toward the goal of church unity that would become the major preoccupation of French Protestants by the 1930s and 40s. Another development was the growth of Social Christianity (christianisme social), which attempted to link together, in the words of Wilfred Monod, “socialism, a messianic movement without a messiah, and Christianity, which has a messiah without the masses.” It became one of the dominant movements in French Protestantism in the years preceding World War I. The war was the source of the movement’s pacifist agenda, and it openly supported the policies of Aristide Briand and French pacifists like Théodore Ruysen. By the 1930s, new adherents to the Social Christian movement pushed for a

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23 Ibid., 49. The secularization of public education began in 1882 with the education laws of Minister of Public Education Jules Ferry. For more on Maurras and Catholic fundamentalism, see chapter 2.
25 Dumas, 21.
26 Cholvy and Hilaire, Religion et société, 186-7.
more direct political engagement, generally with the socialist party, and in 1936, André Philip became the first Christian elected as a Socialist (SFIO) deputy in France.27

The interwar period brought new conflicts within French Protestantism, including the rise of a small royalist, far-right movement called the Association Sully that set itself in opposition to the Social Christian movement, especially over the question of conscientious objection. In the early 1930s, three pacifists, influenced by Protestant pastor Henri Roser’s *Mouvement International pour la réconciliation* (International Reconciliation Movement), objected to their military service. Although most Protestants fell in between the two categorical positions taken by the conservatives, who demanded sanctions against the objectors, and the Social Christians, who defended the right of objection, the episode highlighted the divisions within the Protestant community over their relationship to the nation.28 At exactly the same moment, the ideas of Swiss theologian Karl Barth began to seep into the consciousness of French Protestants.

Karl Barth was undoubtedly the most influential contemporary theologian for French Protestantism in the 1930s and 40s and his influence was largely due to his positions on the political responsibilities of Christians and his emphasis on the practical application of theological principles. Barth largely rejected nineteenth-century liberal theology and argued that biblical scripture should always form the basis of Christian ethics, as opposed to cultural norms, a position that the liberal theologians had advocated. He stressed that Jesus Christ was the living center on which all divine action and human

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 187. Pastor Marc Boegner, a leader of the liberal wing of the Reformed Church, testified in favor of one of the objectors and pushed for a legal statute for conscientious objectors.
activity should concentrate and emanate. As a specialist on church dogmatics, which would form the basis of his magisterial œuvre *Church Dogmatics*, Barth further emphasized the divinity of God and the danger of humans reasoning from themselves to God, which was the case with natural theology. Within this theological vision, Barth argued that Christians who used natural theology as a theological and ideological basis of support for Adolf Hitler and Nazism were propagating a false doctrine of Christianity, and one that true Christians should resist against. It was from this theological basis of resistance that Karl Barth explained that Christians had a duty to resist political ideologies or states (i.e. Nazi Germany) when they came into conflict with scripturally based Christian ethics.

Barth had been a professor of theology in Germany until 1935 when he was expelled from his post in Bonn for his opposition to Nazism and was one of the central figures in the “German Church Struggle.” This “struggle” was between the German Christian Church, which took control of German Protestantism with the support of the newly-elected Adolf Hitler in 1933, and the Confessing Church, led by Barth and later pastor Martin Niemöller. The “German Christians” drew on natural theology to form a nationalistic, anti-Semitic, and ultimately “Aryanized” church. In the spring of 1934, those within the church who opposed the growing alignment between the Nazi party and the Protestant Church split off, forming the Confessing Church. One of its founding texts, the Barmen Declaration (1934), was written, in large part, by Karl Barth. In this

31 For a more detailed account of the “German church struggle” see Barnett, 48 and Bergen.
32 Barnett, 34-36.
declaration, Barth and the other Confessing Christians stated that the errors of the “German Christians” and the Reich Church government were “devastating the church and also thereby breaking up the unity of the German Evangelical Church.”\textsuperscript{33} The Declaration went on to state that the church was free and independent from the “demands and political systems of this world,” and emphasized the “sovereignty of the Word of God over the laws of the state,” further setting the Confessing Church in opposition to the political regime as well as the “German Christians.”\textsuperscript{34} Statements like these only reinforced the Nazi Regime’s belief that Barth posed a potentially devastating challenge to its authority, and he was promptly forced out of Germany.

After his expulsion, Barth moved back to his native Switzerland where he took up a post as chair of systematic theology at the University of Basel. He continued to write and refine his arguments for the spiritual resistance to Nazism, and kept in contact with leaders of the Confessing Church, including Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Barth’s interrogation of the proper relationship between the church and the world and his emphasis on biblical renewal were issues that were also at the heart of the growing Ecumenical movement in Europe, much of the momentum for which was emerging from Switzerland as well. Although the Ecumenical movement had as its source the attempt at cooperation between foreign missionaries, and grew out of the 1910 international meeting organized by John R. Mott and J.H. Oldham in Edinburgh, by the 1930s it had developed into a body aimed at “a rediscovery of the universal dimension of the Christian faith” through interchurch dialogue and emphasis on the Bible as the meeting ground of

\textsuperscript{33} Casalis, Portrait of Karl Barth, 56.
\textsuperscript{34} Barnett, 4.
different denominations and faiths. According to Willem A. Visser ‘t Hooft, one of the major leaders of the movement, the context for its development in the 1930s was the growing estrangement between the Church and the world caused by the growth of materialistic ideologies like Communism and the pseudo-religious attractions of movements like Nazism. Barth’s theological influence on the burgeoning Ecumenical movement was undeniable and many of the same themes can be seen in the works of more approachable theologians like Suzanne de Dietrich, who was leading bible studies and conferences for youth movements around the world and was known especially for her focus on “biblical renewal.”

That Christian youth movements became one of the main routes of transmission for the theological ideas of people like Barth or Suzanne de Dietrich is unsurprising since they were among the most internationalized and ecumenical organizations of the interwar period. This was especially true in France. Dietrich was a leader of the French branch of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), known in France as the Fédé (Fédération française des associations chrétiens d’étudiants), and later became the international secretary of the Federation in Geneva. The Fédé and the WSCF grew out of the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) and YWCA (Young Women’s Christian Association), one of whose leaders was the Dutch pastor W.A. Visser ‘t

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36 Ibid.
38 World Student Christian Federation, YMCA, YWCA, etc.
Hooft. It was Visser ‘t Hooft who had in 1925 brought Karl Barth together with Pierre Maury, a former general secretary of the Fédé and a French Reformed Church pastor. Pierre Maury then became the main person responsible for introducing Barth to French Protestants and one of the figures who encouraged French Protestants to participate fully in the Ecumenical movement.

These youth movements, in their push for unity and dialogue among many different denominations and countries, formed the basis of the larger Ecumenical movement. Under Visser ‘t Hooft’s leadership, and with the participation of youth leaders from all over the world, the World Student Christian Federation held conferences on topics like Missions and the Church in the World and published a journal, The Student World that included such contributors as Reinhold Niebuhr, Barth, and even Catholics like the Dominican theologian Yves Congar, who discussed social and international affairs as well as theological questions. For Visser ‘t Hooft and the student movement of this era, the overwhelming issue was that of evangelism, in the sense that they were actively attempting to find a way to recruit men and women to Christianity so that they would turn away from mass political movements like Nazism or communism. In many ways, this was the new “mission field” and this preoccupation with the

40 Visser ‘t Hooft became the general secretary of the WSCF in 1932. Visser ‘t Hooft had served as the ecumenical pioneer John R. Mott’s personal assistant during the 1926 World Conference of the YMCA. See W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft, Memoirs (London: SCM Press, 1973), 21.
41 Pierre Maury also worked with Suzanne de Dietrich at the headquarters of the World Student Christian Federation from 1930-34. Weber, 66.
42 Visser ‘t Hooft, Memoirs, 44-45.
43 Ibid., 46-47.
“dechristianization” of the Western World, and particularly Europe, was one that would find an echo among youth and social Catholic movements by the early 1940s.44

In addition to Pierre Maury, the Ecumenical movement also had strong support from a number of prominent French Protestants, including Pastor Marc Boegner, the president of the French Protestant Federation. Boegner’s interest in the Ecumenical movement began at a young age, when he was influenced by his maternal uncle, Pastor Fallot, who had started a long-term dialogue with several Catholic leaders, working to overcome some of the major divergences between the two churches.45 Boegner became involved in the movement itself in its origins – the 1910 conference of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh – and through his position as a theology professor for the Evangelical Mission Society in Paris. The movement grew through ecumenical conferences on specific topics, including the meeting on “Life and Work” in Stockholm in 1925, after which several committees discussed the principle subjects of the conference with a view to organizing a second conference ten years later. This second conference took place in Oxford, England in 1937, and with a second 1937 conference in Edinburgh, it became the basis for the plan to create an ecumenical body called the World Council of Churches.46

The main argument for ecumenism was that the divisions between Christian churches had reduced them to impotence in the face of some of the greatest challenges to Christianity, like the growth of communism and nationalism, and those who attended the

44 For more on the Catholic concern for the “dechristianization” of France, see Chapter 2.
46 Ibid., 64-65.
1937 conference, the theme of which was “Church, Community and State,” worked to address this major issue. Boegner, as the head of the French Protestant Federation, saw this push for unity as something that would greatly benefit the “individualistic” and divided French Reformed Churches as well as the larger French Christian community. He organized ecumenical study groups in Paris that brought together Christians from Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed churches and cultivated relationships with Cardinal Verdier, the Archbishop of Paris and the Grand Rabbi of Paris.\textsuperscript{47}

The meetings to organize the formation of the World Council of Churches took place in Utrecht, Netherlands in May 1938, with seventy-five members from churches of Europe, America, and Asia forming the nucleus of the group. Willem Visser ‘t Hooft was elected the secretary-general and the others divided into committees that were to discuss the doctrinal basis for the Council for ratification at the first General Assembly, which was planned for 1941. Marc Boegner was asked to serve as the vice-chairman of the provisional Committee of the Council and as chairman of the administrative committee, which meant that he worked closely with Visser ‘t Hooft in the very process of formation of the institution of the World Council of Churches. Although the planned 1941 meeting did not actually occur until 1948, as World War II forced the original plans for the general assembly to a complete halt, Visser ‘t Hooft and Boegner, as well as the other Council committee members, worked throughout the war to maintain the unity between church leaders, even as their respective countries had become political enemies.

Although he remained somewhat suspicious of the Ecumenical movement and did not attend the meetings in 1937 or 1938, Karl Barth’s influence continued to spread, often

\footnote{\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 83-84.}
through the very ecumenical structures that he was questioning. During his theological lectures in Paris in 1934, Barth caught the attention of the Dominican priest Yves Congar, who was at that time thinking through the possibilities for a “Catholic ecumenism.” Marc Boegner recounted that during one of Barth’s lectures in Paris, he was “struck by the intensity of the attention with which Père Congar listened to Barth,” and the he and his fellow Dominicans had “felt themselves almost carried away by excitement at finding themselves in the presence of the man whom they regarded as plainly the greatest theologian of the day.”

In many ways echoing Barth’s emphasis on a return to Biblical principles, Congar’s vision of ecumenism, was that the unity of the Church could not be obtained except through the return of separate churches to the “one true Church of Christ.” Although most Catholics at that point took this to mean a return to the Roman Catholic Church, and people like Boegner believed that this vision of ecumenism was an “impossibility,” Barth’s influence was clearly at work in the ecumenical emphasis on a fundamental return to scripture, after which dialogue on the theological and practical points of divergence could be pursued.

In France, Barth’s theology was spread through ecumenical leaders as well; both Visser ‘t Hooft and Pierre Maury became some of the most important “translators” of Barthian theology to the French- and English-speaking worlds. As Visser ‘t Hooft noted in his memoirs, in the 1920s and 30s, Barth was strongly criticized someone who espoused a “theology of despair,” and Visser ‘t Hooft worked to explain that for his generation, it was exactly the opposite, stating:

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48 Ibid., 120.
49 Ibid., 122.
Barth opens for us the wonderful objectivity of God’s world... Others who have tried to keep their ideals of human achievement and progress alive in a world where those ideals are constantly submerged by the floods of this unbearably realistic life, have been saved from both their ideals and their disillusions by accepting the truth that God’s Kingdom comes at His appointed time and that God relates their efforts to it in His own way, which we do not and need not know.\textsuperscript{50}

Maury, as an important figure in the youth movements and director of the review \textit{Foi et Vie} (Faith and Life), a former Social Christian review that became “Barthian” under his leadership, pushed French Protestants to see Barth as a theologian who could provide moral and theological guidance for the difficult social and political situation of 1930s France.\textsuperscript{51} This project was not entirely successful, and was met with criticism from certain groups of French Protestants, particularly Social Christians who saw in Barth’s rejection of human-centered theology a misconception about the necessary actions of Christians in the public sphere.\textsuperscript{52}

Yet despite these critiques, Barth’s influence continued to grow in France throughout the 1930s, and by 1938 and the Munich Accords, there was a strong contingent within French Protestantism that was very well informed about the struggles of the Confessing Church in Germany and already engaged in what they saw as a

\textsuperscript{50} Visser ‘t Hooft, \textit{Memoirs}, 36-37.

\textsuperscript{51} Encrevé, 45-46.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 45. There is a certain amount of debate about the conflicts between the “Barthians” and those who supported Social Christianity. It appears that the conflict existed more within the older generation of French Protestants, but among younger believers, both movements had things to offer. By World War II, one could hardly critique Barthians for refusing to engage with political and social life in France. On this debate, see Bernard Reymond, \textit{Théologien ou prophète. Les francophones et Karl Barth avant 1945} (Lausanne: L’Age d’homme, 1985), cited in Patrick Harismendy, “Les chrétiens sociaux (1930-1945)” in \textit{Les protestants français pendant la seconde guerre mondiale}, Special issue, \textit{Bulletin de la SHPF} 3 (July-September 1994): 62-63.
spiritual battle against Nazism. For the Barthians, the Munich Accords were unacceptable, as they saw fight against Nazism as their Christian duty. Even the use of violence was justified in this fight. Pierre Maury’s journal *Foi et Vie* published a statement from Karl Barth in which he declared:

> What a remarkable time in which, if we have good sense, we can say but one thing, to know that for the love of the faith, it is commanded to rank second the fear of violence and love of peace and to put in first place the fear of injustice and love of liberty.

Those who supported Barth’s spiritual and physical call to arms were in conflict with many Protestants in France, and in particular the pacifists within the Social Christian movement, even if those pacifists had denounced Nazism as loudly as the Barthians in the 1930s. If there was a divergence of opinions on the best responses to the Munich Accords, by 1939, these two influential currents of thought in French Protestantism had already established a theological and political opposition toward Nazism that left little ambiguity. However once the German invasion of France gave way to the establishment of the Vichy regime, the challenge became how to respond to a political regime that to many Protestants offered a means to establish a Christian state that would work to put into practice many of the very values that they had worked to preserve during the 1930s.

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55 Ibid.

French Protestants, the Vichy regime, and the Jewish Question

The unification of the French Reformed Church in 1938 allowed French Protestants to put behind them many of the internal battles between the “liberal” and the “orthodox” factions that had characterized French Protestantism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This ecclesiastical unity helped Protestants to focus on more “external” issues, including the relationship between the church and society, and eventually to achieve a sense of moral unity on the issues that would emerge with France’s entry into World War II. The theology of Karl Barth continued to play an important role in the definition of the Church’s moral positions, particularly as French Protestants confronted two main issues in the early years of the German Occupation: first, their response to the Vichy government and their acceptance and participation in Maréchal Pétain’s National Revolution, and second, the treatment of the Jews in France. Yet despite having a strong theological base for a Christian resistance to fascism, the institution of the Vichy government as an intermediary between the French people and the Nazi regime (at least in the unoccupied zone) led to some confusion for French Protestants.

In a letter dated 9 July 1940, Willem Visser ‘t Hooft wrote to Boegner that he recognized the challenges Christians in Europe were facing and that European Protestants were “in statut confessionis,” a clear reference to the “Confessing Church” in Germany.

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and their moral resistance to Nazism. Yet, like the majority of the French Christian population, the first reaction of French Protestants to the installation of the Vichy regime with Maréchal Pétain as its head was grateful acceptance that the “vainquer of Verdun” was helping to lead a government that would not only protect them from German occupation but support and participate in the moral renewal of the nation. Even Pastor Marc Boegner, who had moved from Paris to Nîmes in June 1940 to be closer to the new government and exercise what influence he could as president of the FPF, had a positive opinion of the events and of Pétain, for whom he reserved a “deferent affection.” In a journal entry dated July 11, 1940, Marc Boegner noted some of the positive aspects of Pétain’s announcement on the creation of the new government, which included “some excellent things and reforms demanded well before the other war [WWI].” In addition, there were several Protestants selected to join the government and in January 1941 Boegner was named one of the 180 members of the National Council to advise Maréchal Pétain. With the institution of the National Revolution, which promised a renewal of Christian morals and the end of secularization policies, many Protestants thought that something quite positive had emerged out of a disastrous entry into World War II.

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62 Ibid., 71.
63 The National Revolution was one of Marc Boegner’s other main preoccupations in 1940, and he even met with Pierre Laval to protest the seemingly “Catholic character” of
The major preoccupation of French Protestants after the armistice, and one that especially concerned Marc Boegner and influenced his “policy of presence” with the government, was the relationship between church and state, and in particular the religious liberty of the church. One of the greatest fears of French Protestants was that there would be discriminatory measures against them, particularly if the government were built around a Catholic concordat like the one in Germany. Boegner, and even Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyon, believed that such an accord would greatly impinge on the spiritual liberty of Christians, a situation that Boegner, who was well informed about how this took place in Germany, was keen to avoid. Boegner had settled in Nîmes in the summer of 1940 and traveled constantly throughout the unoccupied zone, visiting Protestant pastors and congregations while spending a significant amount of time in Vichy to assure that Protestant interests were not ignored by the new regime. He was also charged with the task of making sure that French Protestantism would not be forced into a situation where it would have to act as a moral mouthpiece for the government like the pro-Nazi German Christian Church in Germany.

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the Revolution only days after the installation of the new government in Vichy. See P. Boegner, *Carnets*, 40. The date of the meeting was 27 July 1940 and Laval assured Boegner that the “government would energetically maintain religious liberty” and that Protestants, “far from being persecuted, would have their place in the nation.”


65 Ibid., 41. In his *Carnets*, Marc Boegner recounts his meeting on 27 July 1940 with M. Alibert, Minister of Justice in which he laid out his reasons for desiring that there be no concordat. M. Alibert told him that Cardinal Gerlier had made exactly the same argument to him a few days prior. In the end, few French Christians, including French Catholics, were interested in seeing a concordat between the Vatican and the Vichy government.

66 Ibid., 58-59.
Pastor Marc Boegner was certainly the most visible and important Protestant personality to interact so closely with Vichy and the wealth of evidence on his interactions with Pétain and the Vichy government provides many intriguing details of his viewpoints.\(^{67}\) Because of his relations with the Vichy government and his vocal respect for Pétain, Boegner has been accused of harboring a sense of *maréchalisme* (i.e., emotional loyalty to Maréchal Pétain) that is at odds with his image as the spokesperson for a French Protestantism whose reputation during World War II was built on active engagement in the resistance against Nazism and Vichy. Yet his relationship with Pétain and with the Vichy regime was quite complex. At one of his first meetings with Pétain after the establishment of the Vichy government, Boegner thanked him for all that he had done “against alcoholism, divorce, for the family, public morality and the youth” and Pétain clearly respected Boegner’s moral status, even telling him at one point that he himself felt “fairly close to Protestantism.”\(^{68}\) The invitation to join the National Council was one that even the French Protestant Federation saw as a great honor.\(^{69}\) Yet Boegner had no love for Pierre Laval who he saw as an open collaborator with the Nazi regime, and encouraged Pétain to stay strong against the demands of Germany and Laval.\(^{70}\) His support for the Vichy regime was conditional and, even if he argued that Protestants needed to give Pétain a chance, he saw part of his role as head of the FPF as safeguarding

\(^{67}\) Marc Boegner’s journals from the war, although redacted by his son, provide a very detailed day-by-day account of his meetings with various government officials and religious leaders. There is also a significant amount of his correspondence in the archives of the ERF and the WCC, and potentially of the FPF, although they are not open to researchers at this time.

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 45; 73-74.

\(^{69}\) Procès-verbal of the meeting of the Conseil national of the French Protestant Federation, 28 January 1941. Archives of the FPF.

\(^{70}\) P. Boegner, *Carnets*, 62-64.
the unity of French Protestantism and the interests of the Church. He also served as the spokesperson for French Protestantism to government leaders, and Pétain in particular, and did not hesitate to bring up difficult questions, like the treatment of the Jews, either in letters or personal interviews.

The French Protestant Federation, which had remained in Paris and under the leadership of Vice-President, Pastor A.N. Bertrand, praised Boegner’s work and influence with Vichy leaders numerous times in its meetings, and the FPF valued the fact that the fairly close relationship between Boegner and Pétain meant that their letters of protest were placed directly into the Maréchal’s hands.\textsuperscript{71} Boegner clearly had enormous spiritual influence within the French Reformed Church and the greater Protestant community and at one point was even labeled the “Protestant Pope.”\textsuperscript{72} He was also the representative of the World Council of Churches in France, and used this position to discuss foreign opinion on issues like French internment camps with people like Admiral Darlan, a colleague of his youth from the naval college.\textsuperscript{73} As one observer has noted, statements coming from Pastor Boegner, as president of the FPF, of the ERF, the Conseil Protestant de la Jeunesse and the vice-president of the WCC, were understood by French Protestants as directives.\textsuperscript{74} In many ways Boegner stood as the intermediary between a small faction of conservative Protestants that included members of the Association Sully, a far-right organization with links to Charles Maurras, and the leftist elements in French

\textsuperscript{71} Procès-verbaux of the meetings of the Conseil national of the French Protestant Federation, 22 October 1941, 18 December 1940, 28 January 1941, 31 October 1941, 9 March 1943. Archives of the FPF.
\textsuperscript{72} P. Boegner, \textit{Carnets}, 46.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid. Also in Halls, and in P. Bolle’s article on Mouvements de jeunesse
Protestantism, many of whom were attached to Karl Barth’s vision of the Church as a critical force in politics.

Yet despite their attachment to Pétain, and their initial support for the Vichy government, most French Protestants were not in favor of collaboration with the Germans, and by 1941 many were becoming disillusioned with the moral compromises that the Vichy government represented. For those Protestants who were attuned to the political and religious implications of Nazism, Karl Barth continued to inspire in them a spirit of spiritual resistance. In early 1940, the periodical *Foi et Vie* published excerpts of a letter from Karl Barth to pastor Charles Westphal in which Barth wrote that Christians “can not stay indifferent, ‘neutral’ when it is a question of rights, when we attempt to affirm human justice, even when it is not acceptable, in the face of blatant, unbounded injustice. In these circumstances, the Church cannot silence its testimony.” His critique of the “neutrality” of Christians, particularly in France, was a veiled critique of their willingness to accept the armistice, a critique he developed further in a second letter to Protestant Pastor Georges Casalis in October 1940, that was reproduced throughout France. In this second letter, Barth openly compared the Vichy regime and the National Revolution to what occurred in Germany in 1933 with the growth of National Socialism. The thing that worried Barth most was the fact that, like the Nazis did in Germany, the

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National Revolution was appropriating the language of Christianity to justify its actions morally. Referring to the National Revolution, he wrote, “these slogans, relatively legitimate and born of the best intentions, could signify the beginning of a withdrawal in which the Church begins to collaborate with that which, from the beginning, was its adversary...with national socialism.”  

Barth’s warning to French Christians stressed their duty to be “on guard” against the possibility of this collaboration.

Barth’s warnings did not fall on deaf ears, and several pastors, including Charles Westphal, Georges Casalis, and Roland de Pury, began to incorporate their own critiques of the Vichy government and the tacit willingness of many French citizens to collaborate with the German occupiers. In a July 1940 sermon in Lyon, Swiss pastor Roland de Pury engaged with the short verse from Exodus 20:15, “Thou shalt not steal.” De Pury explained that this verse was at the center of moral dilemmas facing French Christians, as it was the French who were the thieves, stealing liberty from prisoners, stealing the lives of those “who [had] died so that a bit of justice and truth could exist between nations,” and stealing peace from those who continued to fight the war. His point was that the tranquility of those who saw relief in the armistice and believed that France deserved peace was “stolen” from those who had the courage to continue the fight against the injustice of the Nazi regime. He declared to his congregation, in a stunningly prophetic voice, that “the breath that you take today, take care that it is not stolen from those who will suffocate under the bombs and the gas.”

In ceding to the “stolen peace” of the armistice, de Pury continued, France had “sold its soul.” He declared, “France would be

77 Ibid., 165.
78 Ibid., 167-169.
79 Ibid., 169.
better off dead than sold, defeated than a thief. A dead France, we could cry over her, but a France that betrayed the hope that the oppressed placed in her... would no longer be France.”80 Roland de Pury’s very public refusal to accept the armistice and the Vichy regime as a positive development for France, and in particular for French Christians, was both unusual and extraordinary. He was not completely isolated in his “spiritual resistance,” however.

The events that shattered whatever Protestant illusions remained about the Vichy government were directly connected to the regime’s treatment of the Jews in France. Some historians have argued that between 1940 and the summer of 1942 when the first major roundup of Jews occurred in what has become known as the “rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv” (Winter Arena Roundup) the plight of Jewish refugees and French Jews did not overly concern the majority of the French Protestant population.81 The summer of 1942 was clearly a turning point in the Vichy government’s Jewish policies, and for many French Protestants it was the moment when they realized that the Vichy government was no longer a benign blessing that would facilitate a moral renewal in the French population, or even the lesser of two evils (the greater being direct German occupation). The treatment of the Jews opened the eyes of many Protestants to what certain factions within Protestantism – the Barthians in particular – had been arguing: that “one must obey God rather than men.”82

80 Ibid.
The First Jewish Statute, which went into effect on October 3, 1940, defined Jews racially and excluded them from civil service positions and the military. On October 4, the Vichy government authorized the internment of foreign Jews in camps, a situation that was exacerbated by the fact that, as Robert Paxton has argued, “France was used as a dumping area for German Jews,” with over six thousand German Jews arriving in late October 1940 from Western Germany.\textsuperscript{83} The internment of foreign Jews hardly affected the majority of the French population (Protestants included). However it attracted the attention of Marc Boegner and Madeleine Barot, the new general secretary of Cimade, which had been reorganized after its initial task of helping the Alsatian evacuees in late 1939 was no longer necessary.\textsuperscript{84} Pastor Boegner was first alerted to the situation because of a clause in the Armistice wherein the Nazis demanded that France hand over German political refugees in France, many of whom were Jews.\textsuperscript{85} Boegner protested the measure to Vichy, and sent Madeleine Barot to Gurs, one of the largest internment camps in France, to find out what exactly was going on.\textsuperscript{86} Barot arrived to find that the October 23\textsuperscript{rd} measure had led to the arrival of more than seven thousand deportees from Western

\textsuperscript{83} Robert Paxton, \textit{Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 174. A further law on October 7 repealed the Crémieux decrees, which had given Algerian Jews citizenship in 1871.


\textsuperscript{85} Mehl, 150-51. The real issue here was the violation of the Protestant belief in the right of asylum, rather than a strong defense of the Jewish populations in France.

\textsuperscript{86} Gurs was a large camp in southeastern France at the base of the Pyrenees. It was one of the central camps that housed Basque refugees from the Spanish Civil War. On the history of Gurs and other French internment camps, see Denis Peschanski, \textit{La France des camps. L'internement, 1938-1946} (Paris: Gallimard, 2002).
Germany in the already overcrowded camp that housed political refugees from all over France, including refugees from the Spanish Civil War.\footnote{Jacques, 21. See also Madeleine Barot, “La CIMADE: une présence, une communauté, une action” in Les Clandestins de Dieu (Paris: Fayard, 1968), 30-31.}

Barot, realizing that something needed to be done even to ensure the basic survival of the internees, decided that Cimade, whose original mission was to help refugees of a different sort, could provide this service. The Vichy government had barred most organizations, including the YWCA, from entering the internment camps, so she decided not to ask permission, but rather showed up at the camp with clothing for several of the newborns in the camp and gradually established a presence there. By the time camp officials discovered them, Barot and Jeanne Merle d’Aubigné, a Protestant nurse, were providing such a useful service that they were allowed to stay.\footnote{Barot, 31.} Part of the justification for their presence was the significant number of Protestants among the internees, and they were given the label “Protestant Assistance,” despite the fact that their aide was distributed to any internee, regardless of their confession or nationality.\footnote{Ibid.} Barot gradually expanded the work of Cimade into other internment camps in the south of France, with teams made up of young pastors and members of Protestant youth movements, who lived in the camps among the internees and provided material and spiritual assistance. From its origins, Cimade rejected any attempt at proselytizing, insisting that its ministry was, rather, one of “presence,” and they attempted to demonstrate to the interned populations that they were not suffering alone.\footnote{Jacques, 23-24. During her interviews with biographer André Jacques conducted in 1988, and which are available in the Cimade archives, Madeleine Barot emphasized the
Barot, even as she traveled constantly between the camps, remained in touch with Marc Boegner and provided information to French Protestants about the conditions in the camps, and eventually the deportation measures that began in 1942.

In late 1940, the council of the Reformed Church of France met and asked Marc Boegner to intervene verbally with the Vichy government to protest the “evident injustices” in the Jewish statutes.\(^91\) In his letter to inform the leaders of the regional council of his actions, he noted that, despite the fact that the State, at certain points in time faced a “Jewish problem,” there was no such problem for the Church.\(^92\) He further noted that several members of the Council wanted him to speak publicly about the Church’s view of the Jewish statutes, but Boegner was most concerned about how the Church should speak to the State, and who had the authority to protest political measures in the name of the Church. He solicited comments and advice from the regional councils on the “official” response of the Church, and wrote, “It goes without saying that any Christian, and any pastor, has the liberty to express his opinion as a citizen or as a Christian before the evident injustices.” “However,” he continued, “This does not mean that he speaks in the name of the Church. Know how to maintain the indispensable distinctions between what the Church says, by the sovereign national Synod, and what we say, ourselves, in the light of Christian revelation.”\(^93\) Boegner’s cautious approach to a Christian critique of the Vichy regime, and in particular its Jewish policies, should be interpreted in the context of his delicate position as head of the FPF and the ERF and as a policy of “presence” as the most significant aspect of Cimade’s actions in the internment camps.

\(^91\) Letter from Marc Boegner to the Présidents des Conseils régionaux de la zone non-occupée, dated 23 December 1940. CHAN, fonds ERF, 107AS/138, dossier 2.
\(^92\) Ibid.
\(^93\) Ibid.
the representative of Protestantism most closely connected to the Vichy government. For example, he openly supported the right of individual Christians, and especially pastors, to speak out, even as he displayed deep hesitation about the most appropriate relationship between Church and State in these circumstances.

These moral dilemmas became increasingly more challenging in 1941 and 1942. The creation of the Commission on Jewish Affairs in March 1941 signaled a shift in Vichy policy toward the Jews, and in French Protestant responses to it. Historians have argued that its creation was the result of German discontent with the French application of racial laws, and “Vichy’s courting of Germany” after the fallout caused by Pétain’s ouster of Pierre Laval in December 1940.94 The three major Vichy leaders – Philippe Pétain, Pierre Laval, and Admiral Jean-François Darlan – had, prior to the outbreak of the war, no record of anti-Semitism, and even, to a certain extent, protected prominent French Jews from the statutes, which affected them equally as much as foreign Jews.95 Yet their concern for the Jews only extended so far, and Pétain and Darlan accepted the German call for a centralized “Commissariat-General on Jewish Affairs,” and named at its head Xavier Vallat, a renowned anti-Semite and Catholic who was associated with various far-right movements, including Maurras’ *Action Française* and the *Croix de Feu*.96 Boegner’s reaction to the creation of the Commission was to talk directly to Admiral Darlan, who, in Boegner’s words, “wanted to calm the anguish of our Churches by telling me that it was a question of saving the French Jews.”97

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94 Marrus and Paxton, 83.
95 Ibid., 84-88.
96 Ibid., 88.
Marc Boegner sent two letters in response to the creation of the Commission. The first was a letter of protest, in the name of the ERF, to Admiral Darlan, which received no response.98 The second letter was sent to the Grand Rabbi of France, in which Boegner himself expressed, in the name of the National Council of the ERF, “the pain that we all feel to see the racist legislation introduced into our country and to note the innumerable hardships and injustices that are striking French Jews.”99 Above all, Boegner’s letter expressed support for the French Jewish population, noting the difficulties the state was facing with massive immigration and “unjustified and hasty naturalizations.” “[We] are even more moved,” Boegner wrote, “by the rigorous application of a law that strikes, without distinction, French Jews, here for generations and even centuries, and those naturalized yesterday.”100 This letter, despite its being addressed solely to the Rabbi, quickly became public and was brutally criticized by the anti-Semitic writer Henry Coston, writing under the pseudonym Georges Virebeau, who argued that it was evidence that Boegner had “betrayed the French cause and sabotaged the work of the Maréchal [Pétain].”101 Yet in addition to what one historian calls “a spontaneous solidarity between two minorities who knew religious persecution,” the letter also demonstrates a troubling distinction, evident in other Christian texts and actions as well, between the fates of

100 Ibid.
French Jews and foreign Jews, most of whom were living in the very internment camps that Cimade had begun to enter.\(^{102}\)

French Christians were not the only ones to make this distinction, especially since, as Robert Paxton and Michael Marrus have argued, the elaboration of a specifically French “Jewish problem” was directly linked to the xenophobia that grew out of the refugee influx of the 1930s.\(^{103}\) The French “Jewish problem,” in their estimation, stemmed primarily from the Vichy government’s frustration with the German policy of sending wave after wave of foreign Jewish refugees into the unoccupied zone when France was struggling both to feed and employ its own population and to repatriate the refugees already living there.\(^{104}\) When combined with the xenophobia of the late 1930s, Vichy Jewish policies in 1940 and early 1941 appeared to many French citizens as Vichy’s strategy for dealing with the “foreign” Jewish problem, as opposed to an inherent anti-Semitism in the regime itself. Although historians have now demonstrated that Vichy officials were not under German coercion when they put many of their Jewish policies into effect (including deportation), and instead did so of their own volition. They were not simply responding to public opinion. Most French citizens were generally indifferent to the Jewish statutes, which makes Marc Boegner’s observation in late 1940 that Vichy was populated by “passionate” anti-Semites who pushed their policies without German pressure, all the more surprising in its clarity.\(^{105}\) While Boegner’s distinction between French and foreign Jews appears morally problematic, it must be understood in the

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\(^{102}\) Bolle, 152-154.

\(^{103}\) Marrus and Paxton, 36-44.

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 13.

context of a situation in which the extermination of Jews in Eastern Europe was not yet known.

Not all French Protestants were content with the strategy of church leaders that was based around private interventions with the Vichy government over issues like Vichy Jewish policy. In particular the second Jewish statute, which took effect in June 1941 and which expanded the quota system and the list of jobs Jews were forbidden to hold, convinced certain French Protestants that the Vichy government was going above and beyond the requests of the Nazi occupiers.106 In September 1941, fourteen prominent Protestant pastors, theologians, and youth leaders in the unoccupied zone met at a retreat center in central France called Pomeyrol. This group, which included Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, Madeleine Barot, Suzanne de Dietrich, and Roland de Pury, came together under the initiative of Visser ‘t Hooft and Barot.107 After two days of presentations and discussions on topics like the combat of the Confessing Church in Germany, “the Church and government,” and the “Right and duty of the Church to speak to the world,” they drafted a statement known as the “Thèses de Pomeyrol,” in which they outlined a theological declaration that addressed the relationship between church and state, the “limits of obedience to the state,” and their refusal to accept “any statute that rejects the

106 On the expanded Jewish statutes in June 1941, see Paxton, *Vichy France*, 177-179.
107 Pierre Bolle, “Les Thèses de Pomeyrol,” in *Spiritualité, théologie et résistance: Yves de Montcheuil, théologien au maquis de Vercors*. Colloque de Biviers, eds. Pierre Bolle and Jean Godel (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1987), 184. There is very little documentation on this original meeting, and Bolle’s conclusion that it was the initiative of Visser ‘t Hooft and Barot comes from his examination of Visser ‘t Hooft’s private archives on the meeting.
Jews from human communities.” Each of the eight theses was accompanied by a list of Bible verses from which the signatories derived their theological justifications.

As historian Pierre Bolle has noted, the first four theses concern the relationship between Church and State, with the second thesis openly stating: “It is the role of the Church, as a community, to give a judgment on the concrete situation of the State or the nation, each time that the commandments of God (which are the foundation of all common life) are at stake.” The basis for this judgment was expressed in thesis four: “The Word of the Church to the world is founded on all that the Bible says on the life of human communities, notably in the ten commandments and in the Biblical teachings on the state, its authority and its limits. The Church reminds the State and society of the demands of truth and justice…” Then it is in thesis five that the text addresses the limits of Christian obedience to the State: “… all Christians owe obedience to the State, under the conditions that this obedience is ordained and subordinated to the absolute obedience due only to God.” These first five theses organized the moral hierarchy of Christian obedience, and the authors made clear that the role of the Church was to obey God and to judge the actions of the State in accordance with Biblical teachings, with special emphasis on “truth and justice.”

The subsequent theses outlined very specifically the ways in which the State – the Vichy government – had diverged from the path of “truth and justice,” notably in thesis...
six, which declared that “the mission of the State is to assure each citizen a regime of law guaranteeing essential liberties, excluding any unjust discrimination, any system of denunciation, and all arbitrariness, particularly in the domain of the justice system and the police.”\footnote{Ibid. The verses accompanying thesis six are: 2 Chronicles 19:6-7; Ecclesiastes 5:8-9; Amos 5:15, 24; Romans 13:4.} In referring to the State’s duties, the signers were, however obliquely, pointing to the gross deficiencies of the Vichy regime in adhering to these principles. The specific references to the plight of the Jews are in thesis seven where they wrote that “while recognizing that the State finds itself facing a problem for which it needs to find a solution [the ‘Jewish problem’], [the Church] raises a solemn protest against any statute rejecting the Jews from any human community.”\footnote{Ibid. The verse for thesis seven is Romans 11:1-36.} The wording of this thesis, which in many ways parallels the phrases Marc Boegner used in his letters to the Grand Rabbi and to Vichy leaders, clearly refers to the Vichy regime’s Jewish policies, as opposed to seeing the Vichy government as a mere puppet of the Nazi regime.

The final thesis is both the most well known and also one of the most interesting. Even though it appears that they have taken an ambiguous position on Vichy racial policies, the signers of the Theses denounced all equivocation, and stated bluntly “the Church affirms that we cannot present the inevitable submission to the victor as a free act of adhesion [to the victorious regime].” Rather, they continued, “while accepting the material consequences of the defeat, [the Church] considers the resistance to all totalitarian and idolatrous influences as a spiritual necessity.”\footnote{Ibid. The influence of Karl Barth here is undeniable, particularly in the depiction of the Nazi regime as “idolatrous.”} The influence of Karl Barth here is undeniable, particularly in the depiction of the Nazi regime as “idolatrous.”
In addition, the call to a “spiritual resistance” among Christians directly echoes Karl Barth’s letters to French Protestants from 1938 and 1939, and was one of the first examples of a collective call to “resistance” among French Christians. Just a few months later, the periodical *Témoignage chrétien* was launched with much the same message to both Catholics and Protestants in France. Although it came more than a year after the introduction of the first Jewish Statute in France, the Theses provided a theological justification for action in circumstances that would turn rapidly more dramatic with 1942, when the Vichy government began the deportation of both foreign and French Jews from French soil.

**An Ecumenical Resistance**

As an influential member of the World Council of Churches administrative committee, Marc Boegner likely had access to information coming in from Germany and from the World Jewish Council on the situation of the Jews in Eastern Europe. According to Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, the WCC started receiving information on mass deportations in Eastern Europe beginning in the fall of 1941, and by the summer of 1942, when news of extermination camps was spreading in Christian circles, the WCC was working to secure Swiss support for the arrival of Jewish refugees.\(^{115}\) The summer of 1942 was also the moment when France began the process of deporting Jews back to Germany, a development that led to a radicalization of Protestant actions in favor of the Jews, and in particular the growth of clandestine networks across southern France that both sheltered Jewish refugees from Nazi roundups and helped others escape into Switzerland or Spain. The French Protestant resistance to the Nazi occupiers and the Vichy regime was both a

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\(^{115}\) Visser ‘t Hooft, 165-166.
grassroots and an ecumenical endeavor that involved a wide range of individuals, from rural parishioners in remote towns like Chambon-sur-Lignon to ecclesiastical and political authorities in both France and Switzerland. It had theological roots in documents like Karl Barth’s writings, and the Pomeyrol theses, but it also emerged out of the particular circumstances in which many Protestants found themselves, faced with the imminent deportation of Jewish refugees. Despite the reputation that French Protestants, and Cimade in particular, gained for their acts of resistance and bravery, they did not act alone, working instead in tandem with French Catholics and Swiss Protestants who all risked their freedom, and potentially their lives, to save Jews in France from deportation.

Two movements, both of which were created in late 1941, demonstrate the strength of this ecumenical action: Témoignage chrétien (Christian Witness) and L’Amitié chrétienne (Christian Friendship). Both movements were organized by a Jesuit priest in Lyon named Pierre Chaillet, a specialist in German theology and Catholic ideas on ecumenism, who was very well informed about the moral questions facing Christians in Germany in the years before the war. In his book L’Autriche souffrante (Suffering Austria), published in France in 1939, he was already using the phrase “spiritual resistance” to depict the task of Christians faced with the expansion of Nazism into Austria. After the armistice, he participated in social Catholic organizations in Lyon and in discussions with people like Emmanuel Mounier, with whom he disagreed strongly over Mounier’s decision to seek Vichy support for his Catholic periodical Esprit.

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116 Renée Bédarida, Pierre Chaillet. Témoin de la Résistance spirituelle (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 39-60. He was a specialist of the Catholic School of Tübingen, in particular the theology of J.A. Mœhler, and was in close contact with Yves Congar, the French Catholic specialist in ecumenical thought. For more on the Catholic vision of “Christian unity,” see chapter 2.
117 Ibid., 74.
a move that Chaillet thought was a dangerous example of the Catholic “policy of presence” at Vichy. Chaillet’s answer to this problem was a clandestine publication that would represent an “authentic resistance,” and a complete rupture from Vichy. In the summer of 1941, he met with Henri Frenay, a founder of Combat, one of the largest resistance movements in unoccupied France, and agreed to write the religious section of a small journal run by Bertie Albrecht, which eventually became the journal Combat. By the autumn of 1941, Chaillet, along with Père Fessard, decided to create a clandestine periodical that would serve as the mouthpiece for a specifically Christian resistance, and in mid-November, the first issue of Cahiers du Témoignage chrétien [The Journal of Christian Witness] was published in Lyon.

Although the original title of the journal was Cahiers du Témoignage catholique, Père Chaillet replaced “Catholic” with “Christian” in order to “create a spiritual resistance that would bring Protestants together with Catholics in an authentically ecumenical spirit.” French Protestants were engaged with Témoignage chrétien from the beginning, both in the writing and publication of the journal, and in its diffusion. Pastor Roland de Pury participated actively in the preparation of the journal until his arrest in May 1943, supplying Père Chaillet with information from Switzerland, whether news from the WCC or even the Confessing Church and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In fact, almost the entirety of issue number seven (December 1942) was written by Protestants.

118 Ibid., 114.
120 Ibid., 54. This information came from Renée Bédarida’s interview with Père Chaillet in June 1965.
De Pury also helped facilitate the diffusion of the journal in Protestant circles in the unoccupied zone, while René Courtin suspended his own bulletin, *Présence de l’Eglise* in order to hide issues of *Témoignage chrétien* inside. In addition, articles written by Catholics like Père Chaillet included quotes from people like Karl Barth, and members of the Confessing Church in Germany, demonstrating the extent to which Barth’s call for “spiritual resistance” had reached an audience far larger than just the French Reformed Church.122 Throughout 1941 and 1942, Willem Visser ’t Hooft passed information on the actions of churches and resistance movements in other countries, including the censored sermons of German Bishop von Galen, to the priests in charge of *Témoignage chrétien*.123 The movement itself, which eventually numbered approximately five hundred people, was made up of members primarily from Catholic youth movements in France, including a young André Mandouze.124

In addition to his clandestine journalistic activities, Père Chaillet was also actively engaged with various humanitarian organizations that were working with refugees in the French internment camps. While the Protestants were well represented with Cimade, and organizations like the American Quakers, the YMCA and a few others worked alongside Jewish organizations, Père Chaillet noted that there were few Catholic representatives in the internment camps. In order to remedy this situation, he wrote a report titled “Foreign Refugees and the Catholic Assistance Effort,” in which he called on the Catholic

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123 “Conversation entre le Dr. Visser ’t Hooft, le Dr. Freudenberg et le Dr. Barot, concernant les activités Cimade-WCC pendant la guerre,” Archives of the WCC, carton 301.43.31, file 6. See also Visser ’t Hooft, 131.
124 Yagil, 105. The importance of Catholic youth movements is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.
hierarchy to launch a “central organization” to help the Catholic internees, something that never occurred.125 In 1941, Père Chaillet began to work with a small group of Christians centered around a Ukrainian Jew named Abbé Alexandre Glasberg who had converted to Catholicism, and who had managed to get into the camp at Gurs and worked to help internees escape from the camps. In Lyon, with the support of Père Chaillet, Abbé Glasberg formed an “organization of solidarity” that would be “of a clearly interconfessional character,” that became known as Amitié chrétienne.126 This organization benefitted as well from the patronage of Pastor Marc Boegner and Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon, as well as from the substantial financial support of the French Jewish community.127 The membership of Amitié chrétienne included Pastor Roland de Pury, Madeleine Barot, Germaine Ribière, André Weil, and a number of other prominent Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in the unoccupied zone. Although Amitié chrétienne started immediately to attempt to help those who showed up on their doorstep looking for assistance, including fabricating false identification papers, their more audacious activities included daring public rescues of Jews during the process of deportation.

In early 1942, the Vichy regime permitted several “reception centers” (centres d’accueil) to begin operating in France. These centers allowed a small number of refugees to leave the internment camps of southern France under the condition that authorized organizations would take care of their basic needs, and that they would be under constant police surveillance. In early 1942 French Protestants opened three centers in southern France – Côteau Fleuri near Chambon-sur-Lignon, Mas du Diable near

125 R. Bédarida, Pierre Chaillet, 124-125.
126 For more information on Amitié chrétienne, see François Delpech, Sur les Juifs (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1983), 238-249.
127 R. Bédarida, Pierre Chaillet, 128-129.
Tarascon, and the *Foyer Marie Durand* in Marseille – that worked alongside several Catholic centers run by Abbé Glasberg. These centers were financed with money from the WCC and from Sweden, which had become aware of the situation in the camps after Madame Cedergren (née Princess Bernadotte), former president of the World’s YWCA, visited Gurs in early 1941. The centers, which mainly housed women, children, the elderly and infirm, allowed Cimade and other organizations to funnel several thousand refugees out of the internment camps into better living situations.

Although there was a steady increase in repressive measures against the French and foreign Jewish population in France from 1940 onward, several events that took place in the spring of 1942 indicated a distinct shift in Vichy policies toward the Jews. The first was the return to power of Pierre Laval, which left Pétain increasingly marginalized in a Vichy regime that had a much more cooperative (or one could say, collaborationist) relationship with the German occupiers. This new relationship was partly a strategy to maintain the autonomy of the Vichy regime, by demonstrating to the Germans that the French could keep order and fulfill Nazi policies in the unoccupied zone. It was also the moment when Nazi Germany began to embark on its campaign to exterminate all of the Jews in Europe, many of whom were in internment camps in France. The Nazi regime had for a while been pushing the Vichy government to institute a law requiring Jews to wear the yellow star. When the Vichy government refused, the

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128 Madeleine Barot, “La Cimade: une presence, une communauté, une action” in *Les Clandestins de Dieu* (Paris: Fayard, 1968), 33. Madame Cedergren and international organizations like the YMCA in Geneva also played a role in the “Nîmes committee,” and international group of aid organizations who were working in the internment camps in southern France, and coordinating aid and information campaigns from Switzerland. See Jacques, 23-25.
129 Jackson, 213.
130 Ibid., 216.
Nazis imposed it on the occupied zone in June 1942. The Vichy regime did not follow suit in the unoccupied zone, but Marrus and Paxton argue that it was more out of fear than out of a moral concern for the fate of French or foreign Jews.

Although there had been previous roundups of Jews in the occupied zone (August and December 1941), the summer of 1942, with the “Rafle du Vél d’Hiv,” was the moment when the deportations began in earnest. This roundup occurred on the 16th and 17th of July, when the French police, with meticulous planning and logistical assistance on the part of the German authorities, arrested nearly thirteen thousand Jews from Paris and the surrounding region and placed them into the Vélodrome d’Hiver, a winter sports stadium in the fifteenth arrondissement of Paris. Six thousand of them were sent directly to a camp in Drancy, a suburb northeast of Paris, which would become the major French staging center for deportations to the east. Yet this number was below the target of ten thousand set by the Germans, and so Pierre Laval promised to send several thousand Jews from the unoccupied zone, which led to roundups in late August in the major southern cities (Lyon and Marseille), internment camps and “reception centers” that produced another seven thousand “foreign” Jews for deportation. When Marc Boegner met Pierre Laval to protest against this measure, Laval told him that this was a policy of “prophylaxis” to prevent the deportation of French Jews. Yet the roundups continued throughout the rest of the war, and the southern zone became the major target after the Germans took over the unoccupied zone on November 11, 1942. Historian Limore Yagil

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131 Ibid., 359.
132 Marrus and Paxton, 234-40.
133 Yagil, 65.
134 Ibid, 66.
135 Boegner, 199. Boegner’s meeting with Laval took place in Vichy September 9, 1942.
notes that between the summers of 1942 and 1944, more than 76,000 Jews were deported from France, and only 2500 returned after the war, or approximately three percent of those who left.\textsuperscript{136}

In the wake of the \textit{rafle du Vél d’Hiv}, Pastor A.N. Bertrand, the vice-president of the FPF, wrote a letter to the Council of the FPF explaining the steps he had taken to protest against the further persecution of the Jews in France. He noted that he had written to several government officials, in a personal capacity (not as the representative of the FPF), expressing his disbelief that the anti-Jewish measures had gone beyond the humiliation of the yellow star.\textsuperscript{137} He wrote, in reference to the \textit{rafle du Vél d’Hiv}, that if anyone cared to ask the opinion of Frenchmen and women, they would find that “it would be false to conclude that they are indifferent to the extermination of a race, of the undeserved martyrdom of these women and children.” Despite the fact that he did not protest in the name of the FPF, his justification was that as a member of the Christian Church, he had the duty to protest against the injustices he had seen. “A Christian church would neglect its vocation,” he argued, “if it allowed the seeds of hate to spread, without raising its voice in the name of He who gave his life to combat the separation of men.”\textsuperscript{138} In his letter to the council of the FPF, Bertrand offered to resign if the council viewed that he had overstepped his bounds with these letters, a fact that demonstrates the general hesitation on the part of Protestant leaders in the occupied zone to confront the Nazi

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} Letter from Pastor A.N. Bertrand to the Council of the FPF, 8 August 1942 (including copies of his letter to the French Ambassador in Paris, dated 3 August 1941. CHAN, Fonds ERF, 107AS/138 (Dossier 2 - Dossier Autorités de l’Occupation- Incidents divers).
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
authorities openly, whatever their personal views of the Jewish persecution may have been.

In the unoccupied zone, Boegner also lodged several official protests with the Vichy government. He wrote in his journal that he learned of the roundup on July 24 when one of his Parisian parishioners met up with him in Chamonix. On his return to Nîmes in early August, he met with Madeleine Barot, who had just arrived from Gurs and Rivesaltes with horrific stories about what was going on in the internment camps, as the deportations from the southern zone were quickly becoming a reality. Boegner and Barot made the decision to send Cimade team members with the convoys. Several days later, on August 20th, Boegner wrote a letter to Maréchal Pétain in his capacity as president of the FPF and vice-president of the WCC, in which he declared that even though French officials claimed they were only sending back to Germany the Jews that had come from their originally, “the truth is that men and women have been delivered to Germany who found refuge in France for political and religious motives, knowing in advance the terrible fate that awaits them.” He also protested the conditions of the deportations, which he described as “inhuman,” with men and women “parked in freight cars without any concern for hygiene… treated as cattle.” Madeleine Barot had more details on September 5, when she arrived from Vichy with the news that five thousand of the promised ten thousand Jews from the southern zone had been rounded up, and that the others were hidden all over the place. Boegner made plans to meet again with Cardinal Gerlier and to see Pierre Laval in person the following week.

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139 Boegner, 193.
140 Ibid., 194.
141 Ibid., 196-197.
The deportations from the southern zone did not come as a sudden shock to
Cimade workers in the internment camps and welcome centers, but they struggled with a
sense of helplessness as the rumors grew stronger in the summer of 1942. In the camp at
Gurs, Jeanne Merle d’Aubigné watched the French police gather up the first group of
fifteen hundred deportees, mostly foreign Jews who were chosen from an alphabetical
list, with a feeling that Cimade and the other groups working in the camps, including the
Quakers, needed to do something to save as many lives as possible. Although the Cimade
volunteers did not find out until after the war, the first convoy from Gurs was placed in
trains headed for Auschwitz where the large majority were immediately gassed.142
Although there was little they could do as individuals inside the camp, beyond providing
support to those who remained, Madeleine Barot and the members of Amitié chrétienne
were working feverishly to save as many Jews – and in particularly Jewish children – as
possible from deportation. The humanitarian organizations in the camps, and
organizations like Amitié chrétienne were authorized to make up lists of those potential
deportees who would be exempt from transport for various reasons, including age or
infirmity. Unfortunately that also meant that, according to Cimade team member André
Dumas, that they “risked becoming accomplices to the selection.”143

This kind of dilemma became the norm for those who worked to save the refugees
from deportation. Just outside of Lyon, a decommissioned fort in Vénissieux became the
staging center for the Jews in the southern zone who arrived from the internment camps
and who were then to be sent on to Drancy. The committee decided that their energies

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142 Jeanne Merle d’Aubigné, “Déportations,” in Les Clandestins de Dieu (Paris: Fayard,
1968), 77-78.
143 Jacques, 67
should be focused, in particular, on rescuing as many children as possible under the age of thirteen. The members of *Amitié chrétienne*, with the help of several other social service organizations decided to set up a network of safehouses in which to hide the Jewish children that they hoped to help escape from Vénissieux. At the same time, a few members of *Amitié chrétienne* were able to penetrate the camp by posing as social workers who were hoping to get a look at the list of “derogations” for those who, for a variety of reasons, might be able to escape the deportation orders. The committee approached numerous families in the camp, offering to take their children and place them under the protection of French ecclesiastical authorities. Those who received derogations tended to get them because of medical exemptions and during the medical visits, which lasted three days, the members of *Amitié chrétienne*, including Madeleine Barot, who participated at the urging of Marc Boegner, and abbé Glasberg, had managed to smuggle around a hundred children out of the camp in three gas generators.

Three days later, Prefect of the Rhône-Alpes region Alexandre Angeli visited Cardinal Gerlier, demanding the immediate return of the children. Gerlier, who supported Père Chaillet’s moral arguments for rescuing the children, refused to hand the children over, arguing that since Angeli could not guarantee that the children would remain under French authority, he would keep the children under the protection of the Church. Angeli was not daring enough to accuse publicly Cardinal Gerlier of having impeded the

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144 Yagil, 148-149.
145 Ibid., 149.
146 The exact number is unknown. All that is known is that there were approximately three busloads of children, although Madeleine Barot said that there were two busloads of eighty-four children. See Jacques, 84-85, Delpech, 246. Another participant was the Service social des Étrangers, run by the French Protestant René Nodot. One of the conditions agreed upon with the families was that the children would be raised in the Jewish faith.
deportation attempts, so instead he placed Père Chaillet under house arrest at the psychiatric hospital in Privas, where he remained for two months before rejoining his team.\textsuperscript{147} For the remainder of the war, \textit{Amitié chrétienne} continued to maintain “evasion routes” and worked alongside the members of \textit{Témoignage chrétien} in the fabrication of false documents and other “resistance” activities, even though many of its members had to go into hiding after the German occupation of the southern zone.\textsuperscript{148}

Before the roundups, several hundred Jews had been residing in individual Protestant homes and “reception centers,” including \textit{Coteau-Fleuri} in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. This small town in the predominantly Protestant region of the Cévenol plateau in the department of the Haute-Loire, was a center of the region’s well-known effort to save several hundred Jewish children.\textsuperscript{149} Known since the seventeenth century as a “refuge center,” with several residences and schools in place for peasant and working-class children, the region had welcomed several waves of refugees in the 1930s and 40s, including Jewish refugees who arrived as early as the winter of 1940.\textsuperscript{150} Limore Yagil has argued that because the region already had structures in place to welcome numerous strangers, and an ethic of “refuge” that emerged out of their engagement in social Christianity, the community’s decision to shelter Jewish refugees was a continuation of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[147]{Ibid., 150; R. Bédarida, \textit{Pierre Chaillet}, 134. See also Jacques, 36-37.}
\footnotetext[148]{R. Bédarida, \textit{Pierre Chaillet}, 135-138. See also Delpech, 253.}
\footnotetext[149]{See Philip Hallie’s book \textit{Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed} (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994), which has a number of major errors, and the documentary film \textit{Weapons of the Spirit} (1987) by filmmaker Pierre Sauvage who was born in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon while his parents, Jewish refugees from Poland, were residing there during the war.}
\footnotetext[150]{The homes for children included numerous houses sponsored by organizations like the Quakers (who funded a home run by André Trocmé’s nephew Daniel), the Secours Suisse, and the \textit{Œuvre de secour aux Enfants} (OSE). On the OSE, see Sabine Zeitoun, \textit{L’œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (O.S.E.) sous l’occupation en France} (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1990).}
\end{footnotes}
their previous activities rather than a spur of the moment decision. Madeleine Barot has stated that, contrary to some reports, Cimade was not the factor that pushed the Cévenol Christians to take in Jewish refugees, but that Cimade profited from the attitude and atmosphere that already existed to pursue its projects. The town was also home to several well-known Protestant figures, including pacifist pastor André Trocmé and his wife Magda, and pastor Edouard Theis, the director of the recently-opened Protestant pacifist school, the Collège Cévenol, both of whom were greatly influenced by Social Christianity.

In the summer of 1942 Coteau-Fleuri, which was at that time run by Hubert Meyer and Mireille Philip, the wife of Socialist deputy André Philip who had gone to London in the summer of 1942 to join De Gaulle, received a message from Madeleine Barot that the refugees were in danger. Philip, Pastor Marc Donadille, Edouard Theis, and André Trocmé made a plan to hide the residents of the Coteau-Fleuri in the neighboring farms so that when the gendarmes came to the center, they found the building empty with no Jewish refugees anywhere. Throughout the war, the peasants and villagers in the area around Chambon continued to hide Jewish refugees who came and went, without any major consequences. One of the reasons for this is likely the tacit

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151 Yagil, 492-494.
153 Michèle Cointet, L’Eglise sous Vichy 1940-1945 (Paris: Perrin, 1998), 254-255. Cointet notes that part of the mystery around André Trocmé has to do with his “megolomaniac” personality and the overly private character of his archives. Trocmé and Theis founded the Collège Cévenol in 1938, just a few years after Theis had studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York, where he was greatly influenced by the pacifist theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Yagil, 497.
155 Jacques, 30.
support of the Prefect of the Haute-Loire, Robert Bach, who intervened in several instances to save individual Jews and protected these communities from exactions from Vichy and later from Nazi officials. He also submitted reports to his superiors in the Vichy government saying that the region had rallied to the regime – a fact that was patently untrue. 156

Over the course of the second half of 1942, the Coteau-Fleuri evolved into a relay station for the clandestine passage of Jews into Switzerland.157 Cimade, with the cooperation of Protestant pastors, civilians, Catholic priests and nuns, and the financial and logistical support of the WCC in Geneva, evolved into an organization whose main task was to create false papers and guide Jews out of France into Switzerland and Spain.158 They organized several evasion routes, including a network for escape into Switzerland through Chamonix and Argentière in the Haute-Savoie. Geneviève Priacel-Pittet, a Cimade worker who was charged with the task of organizing this network, worked closely with Protestant Pastor Paul Chapal in Annecy and Abbé Folliet (chaplain of a JOC (Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne) section) who opened the doors of several Catholic convents in the Savoie to hide the escapees.159 Many of these Jews came through Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, after escaping from southern internment camps through the assistance of people like Henri Manen, a Protestant pastor in Aix-en-Provence, who

156 Yagil, 502-504. Yagil notes that in August 1942, Bach went twice to Chambon to warn Trocmé and Theis about upcoming roundups.
157 Ibid., 498. There are several different estimates of how many Jews passed through the Cévenol plateau during World War II. André Trocmé gave a figure of 2,500, while in the film Weapons of the Spirit, the figure 5,000 was given. Michèle Cointet estimates the number at approximately 900 (out of the 3,500 habitants of the area). See Cointet, 252.
159 Ibid.
provided false papers and baptism certificates to Jews in the camp called “Des Milles” before hiding them in his home and helping them make their way to the Cévenol Plateau.\textsuperscript{160} Geneviève Priacel-Pittet, one of Cimade’s border guides, estimated that between August 1942 and December 1943, these evasion routes allowed approximately four hundred Jews to escape France.\textsuperscript{161} Mireille Philip, who later joined the \textit{maquis de Vercors}, became one of the main guides and worked closely with the abbé Folliet as well as several other Catholics in the region, to hide and guide the refugees into Switzerland.\textsuperscript{162} Madeleine Barot herself was one of the guides and was even arrested both in Switzerland (after accidentally toppling over a fence onto a Swiss guard in an attempt to escape from a German soldier) and in France.\textsuperscript{163}

In order to get into Switzerland, Jewish refugees needed the assistance of people inside the country who would be able to shelter and protect them, in addition to convincing Swiss authorities to allow them to stay in Switzerland and not be sent back. Just before war had broken out, Dr. Adolf Freudenberg, a German Protestant, was appointed as the World Council of Churches secretary for refugee work. Freudenberg found himself in Geneva when war broke out and stayed there throughout the war to coordinate Christian assistance to Jewish refugees in particular throughout Europe.

\textsuperscript{161} Priacel-Pittet, 120. The evasion networks continued after December 1943, of course, but Priacel-Pittet herself left at that point for North Africa to join the FFL.
\textsuperscript{162} Suzanne Loiseau-Chevalley, “Sur la frontière” in \textit{Les Clandestins de Dieu} (Paris: Fayard, 1968), 147-148 (see footnote on those pages). Mireille Philip, the wife of André Philip who had gone to join de Gaulle in London, is a fascinating character, and there is very little written about her. She received the title of “Righteous Among the Nations” in 1976. She joined the maquis de Vercors in January 1943 and no longer worked with Cimade.
\textsuperscript{163} Jacques, 98, 102. (French version)
Because it was already organized and working within the internment camps in southern France, Cimade became the main focus of the WCC’s refugee work in the early part of the war. Freudenberg and Visser ‘t Hooft also worked to coordinate alliances with numerous other Christian and humanitarian organizations in Switzerland, including the YMCA, which was at that time under the leadership of Pastor Charles Guillon, the former mayor of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon who worked in numerous roles to secure the entry of Jewish refugees into Switzerland.164 These organizations, both in Switzerland and abroad provided material aid to refugees, prisoners of war, and eventually resistance organizations in countries like France and the Netherlands.165 Switzerland’s frontier was closed to refugees, especially Jewish ones, trying to escape from Nazi-occupied territories, but in late September 1942 Marc Boegner met with Swiss officials and convinced them to allow a number of Jewish refugees, whose names Cimade would submit in advance, into the country.166 The condition was that the religious authorities – both Catholic and Protestant – and aid organizations would take them in charge, a situation that was greatly facilitated by both the WCC and the YMCA in Geneva.

On September 6, 1942, the ERF held its annual assembly at the Musée du Désert near Nîmes, where Marc Boegner gave a speech to the four thousand Protestants in attendance to “stay faithful until death.” According to his journal, he preached “very clearly of our duty to be Good Samaritans to the Jews who are suffering among us.”167 The congregation, he noted, seemed relieved to hear him talk about this “painful subject.”

After the meeting he gathered the sixty-two Protestant pastors from the unoccupied zone

164 Barot, “La Cimade,” 221. See also Yagil, 500-502.
165 Visser ‘t Hooft, 131-132.
166 Boegner, 207-208.
167 Boegner, 198.
who had attended the assembly to find out what exactly they were doing and their
opinion of Protestant resistance. He learned that already many of them had hidden Jews
in their parishes, and Boegner encouraged them all to help the Jews in France, including
French Jews, escape from the Nazis and French police.168 At the same moment, Cimade
was using this assembly as a means to hide a number of Jews who were in immediate
danger, and to help them escape into safehouses before being evacuated from France.169

Later that month, Boegner issued a statement to be read aloud, without
commentary, in the Reformed Churches of France on October 4, 1942. Boegner opened
by discussing the protests he had made to the “highest authorities of the state,” and while
acknowledging the “situations of extreme complexity that the country’s authorities now
find themselves,” and France’s “secular principal that refuses any intrusion in the
political domain,” he then stated that the ERF could “no longer stay silent before the
suffering of millions of beings who have received asylum in our land.”170 Most of the
statement was a justification of the Church’s right to speak out publicly in this situation
and an affirmation of the “unity of Christ” that brought Jews and Christians together into
one spiritual family. Divine law, he wrote, “does not allow that families created by God
are broken, children separated from mothers, the right of asylum and its mercy unknown,
the respect of the human person transgressed, and defenseless beings delivered to a tragic
fate.”171 The role of Christians in this situation was, in an echo of his sermon at the
Musée du Désert, to be “good Samaritans” to the Jews, and others who were suffering
under the Vichy government and German Occupation. Several historians have argued that

168 Jacques, 72. (French version)
169 Ibid., 73.
170 Bolle, 178. (Colloque de Biviers).
171 Ibid.
with this declaration, Marc Boegner essentially called on French Protestants to resist the authorities and protect the Jews of France from deportation. 172

Yet whatever moral concerns French Protestants may have had in resisting the Vichy government dissipated in the following months, along with Vichy authority. In November 1942, in response to the Allied debarkation in North Africa, the Germans took control of the unoccupied zone, marginalizing the Vichy government, but still working hand in hand with French police and milice in deportations and repression of resistance movements. This made the work of groups like Cimade even more difficult and dangerous, especially with the notorious Nazi official Klaus Barbie taking up residence in Lyon. By 1943, several important members of the evasion networks, including Pastors Trocmé and Theis and Roland de Pury, were arrested, forcing their networks to go further underground. 173 Marc Boegner moved back to Paris to take control of the FPF, and many other Protestants were forced into a clandestine existence as they continued to organize shelter and escape routes for Jews throughout 1943 and 1944. When Laval introduced the STO (Compulsory Labor Service) in February 1943, which demanded that all young men born between 1920 and 1922 go to work in Germany, the FPF issued a statement telling French Protestants that there was an implacable opposition between the Gospel and a society that “envisions work as a merchandise that one has the right to buy or requisition as it likes, without any regard for the worker, his conscience, or his most sacred

172 Larorie and Boulet, 433; “Discussion du rapport de Jean-Pierre Azéma” in (colloque de Biviers), 515. Roger Mehl notes that Boegner had told the pastors at the Musée du Désert “My dear colleagues, you have carte-blanche to do what you want for the defense of the Jews and for the Resistance!”

173 André Trocmé and Edouard Theis were arrested in February 1943, and released after a month, likely with the help of the Prefect of the Haute-Loire. Roland de Pury was arrested in May 1943 and stayed several months in prison before making his way to Switzerland after his release. He wrote Journal from my Cell while in prison.
feelings.” By this time, French Protestants were already holding firm in their belief that their “spiritual resistance” needed to take a material form as well.

**Political Engagement and Ecumenism in Postwar France**

As the Allies pushed the German army back across France, French Protestant pastors in approximately twenty departments of France participated in the Departmental Liberation Committees (CDL), and the ERF decided at a National Council meeting in October 1944 that pastors could temporarily accept political positions, with the notable exception of participation in courts of justice, until the French laymen and women could take over those responsibilities in the nation. While the Protestant experience during World War II justified the argument that Christians needed to take a more active role in the political life of the nation, particularly as a voice of morality, the political choices that Protestants confronted at the end of the war left them wary. With a Socialist Party that had difficulties rebuilding its base, the growing support for the French Communist Party in France, and the MRP (*Mouvement républicain populaire*), which despite its claims to bridge parties and confessions, quickly became known as a Catholic-run “Christian democratic” party, French Protestants were somewhat marginalized in the French political sphere.

During the war resistance to political authorities had been represented as a matter of individual conscience, because ecclesiastical leaders were wary of pushing the official

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176 Ibid, 469.
bodies of French Protestantism into the political sphere by openly criticizing political authorities or supporting specific political parties and movements. Even though the positions of Protestant leaders like Pastor Marc Boegner on public declarations against Vichy and Nazi policies and collective action evolved over the course of the war, French Protestants who helped Jewish refugees or joined Resistance movements generally did so of their own accord, or as adherents to Barthian theology, rather than through a call to arms from the French Protestant Federation, for example. When the war ended, French Protestants had to determine to what extent the new vision of political engagement that they had developed during the war should be carried over into peacetime. Debates about the role of Christians and Christian Churches in the political sphere continued, with the “Barthian” Protestants arguing that, even with the reestablishment of a morally legitimate government in France, the Church should continue to be engaged and concerned with the political, spiritual, and material problems of postwar Europe. Others were wary of wading into the chaotic postwar political scene, and in the end no real consensus was achieved on these questions. Although youth movements and individuals continued to consider the issue, the question of the Church’s role in the political sphere was put on the backburner in the 1940s and 50s until the onset of the Algerian War brought it once again to the fore.

As the war came to a close, most French Protestants turned their attention to more pressing issues, namely the difficult task of reconstructing their community. In addition to restoring the fragile unity they had established just before war broke out, they also had

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to physically rebuild many of the churches and communities that had been physically
destroyed across France during the Allied invasion and the German retreat. They then had
to redefine their involvement in the Ecumenical movement, which had been an essential
source of support for French Protestants during the war. In all of these tasks, Cimade was
a central player. Its actions during the war made it the ideal choice to help in the material
crises of refugees and displaced persons, and its ties to the Ecumenical movement and
international organizations strengthened the French Protestant involvement in the World
Council of Churches. Perhaps most importantly, its vision of social and civic engagement
helped Protestants define their larger role in postwar French society.

After the war, Cimade had a difficult time redefining its mission and future. Was
it simply an organization whose existence was a temporary response to the war, or did it
have a larger mission that they could fulfill in a time of peace? It was in its origins an
extension of Protestant youth movements, but after the war there was no real organized
youth movement from which to draw resources and personnel. Cimade also had the
backing and resources of organizations like the WCC, which provoked some jealousy on
the part of other Protestant groups who themselves faced financial ruin. Within the
French Protestant community, there were those who believed that Cimade should be
directly attached to the church, under the control, for example, of the French Protestant
Federation. Yet Cimade’s secretary-general Madeleine Barot, and Marc Boegner, who in
his capacity as President of the FPF was also the president of Cimade, believed that the
organization functioned best as an independent “movement” with ties both to the French
Protestant community and the World Council of Churches. Both Barot and Boegner also
wanted to strengthen the ecumenical aspect of the organization, both in its support for the
presence of Catholics and orthodox Christians on its teams, and in its more public activities, including ecumenical conferences with speakers like Yves Congar and orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov.\textsuperscript{178}

Within the organization, debates about the role of Cimade produced several key goals from the wartime experience that its members wanted to retain. The first was the idea that their mission was one of solidarity, particularly with refugees and those in need. Solidarity, in their definition was “not the charity that [they] showed during the war, at least not entirely.” They wanted to express, on the other hand, their “solidarity with the victims.”\textsuperscript{179} Based on a need that was demonstrable at that point in time, and one which has continued into the twenty-first century, Cimade became an organization that “specialized in the reception of foreigners,” and one that was financed, at least in part, by the WCC, which helped Cimade establish its headquarters at the former German Protestant church on the rue Blanche in Paris.\textsuperscript{180} In addition, Cimade members decided to maintain what they believed was a central aspect of their work – working in teams. This structure would facilitate not only more effective work, but also a sense of solidarity and spiritual unity among the members of the organization, who became known as \textit{équipiers} (team members).

Early on, Cimade’s skills were extremely useful in attempting to deal with the enormous refugee problem in France. According to a report from the Commissariat of Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees, there were 2.7 million people needing to be

\textsuperscript{178} Jacques, 132-133.  
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., 130.  
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 131.
repatriated to France. In addition, Cimade continued its ministry of “presence” by going to cities that had been destroyed by bombs during the war to help with rebuilding efforts and material assistance to the civilian population. The WCC provided money and barracks to support Cimade teams in cities across northern France, including Caen, Le Havre, and Dunkerque. The WCC also facilitated the arrival of a series of American clergymen and volunteers from all over the world, who came as “fraternal workers” to help Cimade in the distribution of material aid, including, in Barot’s words, “a million pairs of shoes and mountains of powdered milk.” At the insistence of René Courtin, the famous resister and Protestant professor with whom Cimade had worked closely during the war, they remained committed to working with refugees in the internment camps, although the new internees were those who had collaborated with the Nazis. Madeleine Barot herself went to Drancy to assess the situation and found a chaotic environment with refugees housed alongside suspected collaborators. The people she encountered there and elsewhere in France expected that Cimade would play the role of a social service organization, which in the beginning they did. Barot felt that this role, although necessary, was not Cimade’s “competence.” Despite Barot’s hesitation, Cimade’s presence in the internment camps with suspected and condemned prisoners was the basis

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181 Jacques, 109-110. Barot notes that this number included approximately 800,000 prisoners of war, 300,000 prisoners who had become civilian workers, 900,000 workers returning from the STO (Service du Travail Obligatoire), 60,000 deportees, 500,000 uprooted civilians from Alsace-Lorraine, 40,000 refugees from the empire, and numerous others. This number did not include the 1,480,000 people who were displaced in France itself.
182 Ibid., 110.
183 Ibid., 111-112; 115.
184 Jacques, 107.
185 Ibid.
both of Cimade’s future prison ministry and their presence in various other internment facilities, roles that Cimade continues to play to this day.\textsuperscript{186}

Madeleine Barot’s vision of Cimade was that it should be more than just a humanitarian organization, and certainly not one engaged simply in “charity work.” Rather it should be the concrete realization of practical ecumenism, whatever form that might take. In terms of the team members, Cimade would be a training ground for a lay vocation that was outside of the institutional Church, which inherently gave more possibilities to women. She also envisioned that Cimade would maintain its flexibility, that it would “hear the SOS of the world” and respond with a competent, and total consecration. But perhaps the most important aspect of Cimade’s ministry, in Barot’s eyes, and the means through which it would be an ecumenical organization, was that Cimade would be in a constant and open dialogue with those it was trying to help.\textsuperscript{187}

Cimade should, she wrote in a 1950 statement, “develop, in a practical fashion, the sense of the universal Church.” Furthermore, since ecumenism, she wrote, “shatters our habitual ways of thinking and condemns proselytism,” evangelization for Cimade would be “the announcement of salvation, of justice, of truth, the announcement of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom” through service to those in need, which should be “marked by the pure and simple desire to sow a good seed and suffer less fear of the result.”\textsuperscript{188} “The originality of Cimade that must be safeguarded,” Barot concluded, “is to be a witness given by laymen and women, a presence, a precise and rapid service, an ecumenical

\textsuperscript{186} More on Cimade’s work in prisons during the Algerian War will be in chapter 6.
\textsuperscript{187} Jacques, 135-136.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 137.
tie."

Just as Cimade had provided a service to refugees and, in particular, Jewish refugees during the war, without any attempt at conversion or proselytism, Cimade would remain a service organization whose mission was to help those in need with no strings attached. And in doing so they hoped to provide an example of an authentic and ecumenical Christianity.

In many ways the postwar preoccupations of Cimade were similar to those of other youth movements around the world and the Ecumenical movement. The 1947 World Christian Youth Conference in Oslo had as its focus both the need for Christian unity and ecumenism as a concrete way of life, in the sense that it would not rest solely on theological abstractions. One of the keynote speakers at the conference was Madeleine Barot, in her capacity as the new president of the Youth Commission of the WCC. In her speech she brought up the example of Cimade’s solidarity with refugees during World War II, but argued that “these sporadic facts are at this point only signs. It is necessary to go past the stage of temporary manifestations of Christian love to find more permanent forms of human relations.” It was up to Christians to create these new relations by refusing to isolate themselves in protected and privileged societies, instead choosing to engage with the problems of the modern world, and particularly of the oppressed. Similar discussions were occurring within the leadership bodies of the WCC commissions as they prepared the 1948 conference in Amsterdam that would finally officially establish the World Council of Churches.

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189 Ibid.
190 Ibid., 126.
191 Ibid., 127.
Those who attended the Amsterdam Conference, which brought together 351 delegates from 145 Churches in 44 countries, sought to work through many of the misunderstandings that had arisen over the Ecumenical movement and officially define the purpose and function of the World Council of Churches as well as the churches’ relationship to one another.\footnote{192}{H. Krüger, “Life and Activities of the World Council of Churches,” in \textit{A History of the Ecumenical Movement}, volume 2 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 37.} It was, however, the Toronto Statement of 1950 that most clearly defined these relationships, with the declaration that “the World Council of Churches is not and must never become a Super-Church.”\footnote{193}{Ibid., 29.} Rather its purpose was to “bring the churches into living contact with each other,” and as the WCC had no ecclesiology of its own, the individual churches had no need to alter their doctrines to become members. The sole basis for the fellowship was “the common recognition that Christ is the Divine Head of the body.”\footnote{194}{Ibid.} The statements were purposely vague in order to bring together as many churches as possible, and to open a dialogue about the future tasks of the WCC and the Ecumenical movement, which occurred through the individual working committees and the general assemblies, beginning with the 1954 Evanston Assembly. Throughout the 1940s and 50s, the WCC addressed issues as widespread as inter-church dialogue, relations with Catholicism, missionary work and evangelism, and the role of women in the Church. Although political issues were handled delicately, the integration of churches from formerly colonized countries and the diverse membership meant that issues like missions and imperialism, communism, social justice, and human rights were up for discussion, whether or not European and American Christians supported them.
Just as they had in the prewar Ecumenical movement, French Protestants played an important role in the establishment of the postwar WCC. Madeleine Barot, for example, was head of the Commission on the Role of Women in the Church (later the department of “Cooperation Between Men and Women in Church and Society”) and Marc Boegner remained a staunch advocate of Christian unity, both in France, and worldwide, and continued in his role as the president of the administrative commission to oversee the plans for the Amsterdam conference. In the 1945 Nîmes Assembly, the ERF affirmed that French Protestants were still committed to the Ecumenical movement, especially since the unity of Christians after a war that could have devastatingly divided them was a “miracle of God.” Pastor Paul Conord declared that French Protestants had more faith than ever in the Ecumenical endeavor, as the war had shown the importance of Christian unity when faced with an ideological menace like Nazi Germany. He was concerned, however, about the particular problem that faced French Protestants as a religious minority in an overwhelmingly Catholic country: unity and dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. His concern was not unfounded. In France the grassroots ecumenism that had grown up between Protestants and Catholic during the war, and particularly in the task of helping refugees and evacuating Jews, was tempered by old fears and a cautious attitude on the part of both Protestant and Catholic leaders.

In his introductory speech at the 1945 Nîmes meeting, Pastor Boegner examined the evolution of Protestant positions on Vichy and resistance, including an explanation of his “policy of presence” at Vichy, which highlighted the potential “clerical menace” that

195 Mehl, 208.
196 “Rapport de M. le Pasteur Paul Conord,” Nîmes Assembly, 125.
197 Ibid., 128.
pushed him to strengthen his relationship with the highest authorities of the Vichy government.\footnote{“Les Églises protestantes pendant la guerre et l’occupation,” Actes de l’assemblée générale du protestantisme français, Nîmes, 22-26 octobre 1945 (Paris: Messageries évangéliques, 1946), 15.} This was just one year after pastor Boegner responded to pastors who asked his advice about participating in several “Christian committees for civic action” that in this context “Christian” meant “Catholic” and “civic action” meant “political action,” and in particular the formation of Catholic political parties. The National Council of the ERF recommended that Protestants avoid participating in political movements in any way that could be regarded as collective or representative of French Protestantism.

Boegner also used the example of \textit{Témoignage chrétien} as a warning, noting that during the war, it “represented a common front of spiritual resistance,” but that it had become, after the war, “more reticent before the offers of Protestant collaboration.”\footnote{Marc Boegner, “Note confidentielle pour les pasteurs de l’Église Réformée de France,” 12 December 1944. The text of this note is published in footnote 38 of Bolle, “Les chrétiens dans la France libérée.”} In December 1945, pastor Boegner wrote to the pastors of the Reformed Church concerning the newly established “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,” noting that they could participate with those churches who were members of the WCC. He cautioned, however, that since the Roman Catholic Church viewed Christian unity as a “return of the heretics and schismatics to the Roman [center],” no prayers or services should be held with Catholics, as “unity” to Protestants and Catholics meant two very different things.\footnote{Bolle, “Les chrétiens dans la France libérée,” 471.}

In spite of the official warnings of both the Catholic and Protestant leadership against an overly hasty reunion between Catholics and Protestants during the heady euphoria of the Liberation, there were members of both confessions who pursued an
ecumenical dialogue, including thorough discussions in the newly-formed Protestant periodical *Réforme*. French Protestants were particularly fascinated by movements in French Catholicism that promoted biblical renewal and engaged with the working classes, such as the worker-priest experiment. In their eyes the worker-priests were symbols of a shift in Catholicism that gave laypeople more influence, particularly in evangelization, and many Protestants viewed that as a sign of “reform” in the Catholic Church that would help bridge one of the largest theological gaps between Protestants and Catholics, that of the ecclesiastical authority of the Catholic hierarchy.

On the Catholic side, Père Congar continued to engage with Protestants and examine ecumenism from a Catholic standpoint. But by the mid-1950s, both the worker-priest movement and Congar’s theological vision were condemned by the Vatican and marginalized within the Roman Catholic Church. In the eyes of the Catholic hierarchy, movements like these went too far in undermining clerical authority and in engaging with the materialist ideas of Communism, both of which were two of the Vatican’s major concerns in the 1950s. For those Protestants who had viewed the worker-priest experiment and Père Congar’s overtures as positive developments in Protestant/Catholic relations, the Vatican’s condemnations were evidence of the hierarchy’s refusal to truly

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201 Ibid., 472.
engage in ecumenical dialogue. By the mid-1950s, Protestant rapprochement with Catholicism had reached a bit of a stalemate that only shifted with the election of Pope John XXIII in 1958.

The French Protestant experience during World War II produced three important legacies that continued to guide Protestant theology and action in the postwar period. The first was the impact of Karl Barth’s theology of Christian engagement in the modern world that was grounded in biblical principles. Barth argued that theology needed to have a practical application in the world through a Christian ethic that was critical of the ways that men, political parties, and governments appropriated Christian ideas and symbols for secular purposes, particularly nationalists who attempted to use Christianity to legitimize their endeavors, as the Nazis had done. In his view, it was the duty of Christians to resist these movements, and in the postwar period he expanded his critique to the West whose fear of and aggression toward the Soviet Union was creating an anti-Communism that bred nationalism, militarism, and social conservatism. Although Barth was no Communist sympathizer, he did argue that Communism could only be defeated when the West could guarantee social justice and individual freedoms that would challenge the basis of Communist ideology. French Protestants, and especially those whose engagement in the Resistance had been inspired by Barth, took this message to heart. The members of Cimade, in particular, openly espoused a position of moral and material solidarity with the oppressed and worked to understand and challenge the “structures of

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204 See the synodal comments on the question of relations between the ERF and the Catholic Church for the 1955 Strasbourg National Synod. CHAN, fonds ERF, 107AS/92, dossier 5.
205 Casalis, 69-70.
injustice” that were at the root of many of the social problems affecting postwar society. Unsurprisingly, it was Cimade, youth movements, and the “Barthians” within French Protestantism who were among the earliest French Christians to discuss issues like the injustice of colonialism and the role of Christians in its propagation.

The second legacy was a broadened worldview that emerged from interactions with other Protestant churches through the Ecumenical movement and cooperation with Catholics and Jews during the war. In the 1930s, the news from Germany on the German Church Conflict, and Karl Barth’s reaction to it, provided a model for resistance to state authority that co-opted Christian themes and imagery to justify its political authority or nationalist and racist ideologies. Although there was some hesitation on the part of many French Protestants to include the Vichy government in that framework, by late 1941, a significant number of prominent Protestants, with the support of the World Council of Churches and Karl Barth himself, defined their own model of resistance that was based in scripture and Barthian-influenced Christian ethics. After the war, French Protestants were deeply engaged in the Ecumenical movement, both in its official form, and in everyday practice, which encouraged a focus on dialogue to forge Christian unity and to solve social problems. As we shall see in the following chapters, it was also ecumenism, whether from the World Council of Churches and people like its president Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, or through Cimade’s work in refugee camps and prisons, that awakened French Protestants to the problems of colonialism in the postwar period.

The third, and perhaps most significant, legacy of World War II was a recognition of the fundamental importance of laymen and women in French Protestantism. While

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206 Jacques, 115.
Protestantism inherently placed a strong value on the role of laymen and women in the church, mainly because of its lack of hierarchical ecclesiastical structures, the experience of the war highlighted the tension between the freedom of opinions and actions of individuals as Christians and the constraints church leaders faced when speaking out about injustice. Although Pastor Marc Boegner privately supported the clandestine and illegal actions of Cimade and Protestants like Pastor Roland de Pury, as the representative of the French Protestant Federation, he was limited to writing formal letters to political authorities or meeting briefly with Pétain or Laval to express the opinions of French Protestantism. This disconnect fueled discussions throughout the 1940s and 1950s about what the proper relationship between church and state should be, but there was no firm conclusion. The Algerian War once again forced this debate onto center stage, but many of the same constraints emerged for French Protestant leaders in speaking publicly against torture or military tactics. In the end it was the laymen and women, many of whom continued to be influenced by Karl Barth, who protested through words and actions the morality of the colonial system and the conduct of the war.
Chapter 2 – Converting the Catholic Church to the Modern World: 1930-1955

In September 1929, Pope Pius XI remarked, “The greatest scandal of the nineteenth century was that the Church had lost the working class.”\(^1\) Pope Pius XI’s statement was not particularly revolutionary – in fact he was merely repeating an argument that many Catholics on the left had been making for many years. However it illustrates one of the major concerns of Catholicism in the first half of the twentieth century, namely that the Catholic Church needed to find a way to win back the working class. French Catholics were particularly concerned about this problem, since they had a large working-class population that was historically attracted to left-wing revolutionary movements, and that tended to be hostile to the Catholic Church. The various approaches that French Catholics took to this problem illustrate the complexity of twentieth-century French Catholicism, including the constant renegotiation of its position in the French nation and the political sphere, its relationship to capitalism and bourgeois society, and even its fraught relationship with the Vatican.

This chapter examines the French Catholic project to “rechristianize” the working classes in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. It focuses in particular on several radical currents within that project that revolutionized the theory and practice of the Christian mission and led to a dramatic rethinking of the role of the Christian in the modern world. These theories, put into practice, then had significant implications in the Algerian War, and later in both Vatican II and Liberation theology. This French Catholic movement was the

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\(^1\) Pius XI made this statement to the Belgian priest, the abbé Joseph Cardijn, founder of the Catholic youth movement, the *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne* (JOC) on the occasion of the JOC’s audience with the Pope, who gave them the medal of Thérèse de Lisieux, patron saint of missions, on their first pilgrimage to Rome. Pius XI’s discourse was reprinted in the JOC’s bulletin *JOC*, n. 41-41, 12-29 October 1929. Cited in Emile Poulat, *Naissance des prêtres-ouvriers* (Paris: Casterman, 1965),138.
avant-garde of global Catholicism, and it included theologians, priests, laymen and women, many of whom the Vatican and the French Catholic hierarchy condemned for their radical positions in what has come to be known as the “progressivist crisis” in the early 1950s. This movement posed some of the greatest critical challenges to Catholic practice and doctrine in the modern era, and it did so by attempting to reform the Church from within. Although they were not entirely successful in their era, their influence was widespread and groups like the worker-priests, which this chapter examines in great detail, have been described as pioneers in the struggle to engage the Church with the problems of the modern world.

One of the most important sources of tension within the Roman Catholic Church in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was over this question of the Church’s relationship with the modern world. Its longstanding political and religious authority in much of Europe and the world had received fundamental challenges from political events like the French Revolution and from ideologies like Marxism. Through most of the nineteenth century, the Vatican responded by closing itself off from many of the social problems of the outside world, focusing on the restoration of Church authority through a glorification of an infallible Papacy (Ultramontanism), and aligning themselves with conservative forces who could seemingly protect the interests of the church, many of

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which were monarchies, or monarchist groups. To some extent this response shifted with
the election to the papacy of Leo XIII in 1878. Leo XIII, feeling growing pressure to
respond to the increasingly problematic “social question” in Europe, and the growing
alienation of the working classes from the Church, issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*
in 1891.

Pope Leo XIII’s direct engagement with the “social question” and in many of the
political conflicts of Europe in the late nineteenth century had encouraged many
Catholics, particularly in France, to believe that a new era of engagement with the
modern world had come. Social Catholicism saw a close connection between the
 teachings of the Church and political and social engagement on behalf of the oppressed,
and in particular the working classes. Yet this sense of engagement with social problems
was not one that future popes maintained, and Pope Leo XIII’s death in 1903 ushered in a
period that is often called one of “intransigent Catholicism,” in which the Vatican openly
rejected any attempt to reconcile Catholicism with modernity. Pius X, who “saw himself
as a fighter against the modern world,” rejected any sort of “modernism,” or any
theological or philosophical effort that “tried to adapt Catholic thought to a new age.”
This intransigent attitude, which some historians have argued lasted until the 1960s,
included a campaign of repression against any suspected “modernist” thinkers within the
Church. French historian Étienne Fouilloux writes that for the anti-modernists, “‘Real’

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University Press, 2006), 276-305.
5 Duffy, 319-321.
6 Ibid, 325. On the conflicts within the Catholic Church over “modernism,” see Étienne
Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté. La pensée catholique française entre
Catholics were ‘integralists’, accepting as a package-deal everything the Pope taught, not picking and choosing in the ‘pride and curiosity’ of their intellect.”\(^7\)

Many of the so-called “modernist” thinkers who were the targets of Vatican repression were French Catholics who had, through their direct experiences of living and working with the working classes in the First and Second World Wars, come to realize that the traditional Church teachings on the causes of working-class poverty and the Catholic responses to it were both erroneous and inefficient, and they did not hesitate to say so. In particular, they critiqued what French Catholics called the “interior” mission to the working classes in France. Its origins were in the numerous Catholic Action (Action catholique) and youth movements like the JOC (Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne – Young Christian Workers) and JEC (Jeunesse étudiante chrétienne – Young Christian Students) that began in the interwar period, many of which were based in Social Catholic doctrine. These were projects that sent lay Catholics as missionaries into working-class neighborhoods to preach the gospel and perform charity work for the “dechristianized” masses.

World War II was a key moment both in the history of the French Catholic engagement with working classes, and in the longer history of the Catholic reaction to decolonization. In the first place it created the conditions that led to the radicalization of the missionary movement of the Catholic left. By the mid 1940s, the radical missionary movement had rejected much of the “intransigent” language of the Rerum Novarum era in favor of a much more radical approach to the “dechristianization” of the working classes of France that was rooted in a radical theology of labor, an attempted dialogue

\(^7\) Ibid., 328.
with Marxism, and a missionary project that involved immersion in working-class life, as best exemplified by the worker-priest movement. Much of the impetus for this radicalization came from several new projects that were created in France during World War II, including the Mission de France, a seminary that was created for the sole purpose of training priests to be missionaries to the “dechristianized” masses in France. Those priests who became missionaries to the working classes often did so because of their experiences in prisoner of war, and forced labor (Service du travail obligatoire) camps during World War II. In these camps, they lived and worked with the working classes and discovered that there was a wall that existed between the working classes and the Catholic Church, and unless the Church itself fundamentally adapted to contemporary life, the working classes would be lost forever.

The basis of this approach to the Christian mission was, however, very different than the traditional approach to evangelism. Instead of expecting the “pagans” to convert to the culture of Christianity, these missionaries argued that the Church needed to convert to the culture of the working classes. So these specially-trained priests lived in teams in poor areas of France, and eventually realized that in order to fully integrate into the culture, they needed to undertake full time work in factories and construction sites, or wherever the population they lived among worked. Those who undertook this labor came to be known as “worker-priests.” They lived in poverty, often without telling anyone they

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8 The term “intransigent Catholicism” is often credited to French Catholic historian Émile Poulat, and he describes it as “anti-modern, anti-bourgeois, anti-revolutionary, anti-liberal, and anti-socialist”. This strain of Catholicism, in which Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* fits, sought a “third way” between Socialism and Liberalism, opposing the materialism of both ideologies. See Poulat, *Église contre bourgeoisie* (Tournai: Casterman, 1977), 219-220; and Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe from the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York: The Crossroad Press, 1991), 214.
were priests, demonstrating Christianity through their presence and their solidarity in the struggles of the working classes. They engaged in dialogue with the leaders of working class movements, including the labor unions and communist-inspired organizations in order to fully understand the desires and motivations of the proletariat, and working-class critiques of the Catholic Church and Christianity. Crucially, it was also through their direct experiences on the ground in factories and in shantytowns outside of Paris and Lille that many worker-priests first came into contact with North African workers and began to understand the exploitation of the colonial system, which paved the way for the early anticolonial positions of movements like the Mission de France.\(^9\)

An intellectual dialogue with Marxism that paralleled the actions of the worker-priests with the working classes occurred among theologians and journalists and also had its roots in the Second World War. Dominican theologians in particular, like Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar, who provided much of the theological basis of the worker-priest movement, had been attempting to use theology to engage with the problems of the modern world since the 1930s, although conservative Catholics and the Vatican often heavily critiqued their work.\(^10\) By the early 1950s, a major conflict was brewing within Catholicism over the supposed links that leftist French Catholics maintained with communism, and these theologians were at the center of the conflict. The Catholics who advocated some form of cooperation with communists or dialogue with Marxism were labeled as “progressivists” and the more that they attempted to engage working class in postwar Europe or the theological problems posed by the

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\(^9\) On the Mission de France’s role in Algeria and various other anticolonial positions, see chapters 3, 4, and 5.

proletariat, the more the Vatican attempted to marginalize and repress them, by arguing that they were attempting to undermine the authority of the Catholic Church.

Despite the violently negative reaction that the French worker-priest and progressivist movements received from the Church hierarchy, their intellectual and political engagement in the dialogue between Catholics and the working classes challenged the very fabric of Catholicism and the idea of the Christian mission in ways that would only become evident with the events of the Algerian War and the Second Vatican Council. The spirit of critique that the movement fostered allowed for the creation of revolutionary movements within French Catholicism. These paved the way for several of the major reforms that took place during Vatican II. The growing critiques also set the conditions for French Catholics to debate the relationship between Christians and colonialism in the 1950s. These same Catholics who had criticized the Catholic Church for its refusal to shed its bourgeois cultural trappings and its failure to engage with the working classes later argued during the Algerian War that if Christianity was to survive the political process of decolonization, then the Church had to break its ties with the colonial system and support oppressed colonized peoples.

This chapter begins with an overview of the history of French Catholicism in the twentieth century, with a particular focus on the roots of Catholic missionary movement, and the complex relationship between the French Catholic Church and the Vatican and the ambiguous rhetoric that the Catholic hierarchy developed around Catholic engagement in the political sphere. The second section examines the origins and growth of the worker-priest project during World War II, both in its theological foundations and how it functioned on the ground. The final section focuses on the “progressivist crisis”
after World War II, and I examine the meaning of “progressivism” and who was involved in the movement as well as the political crises that precipitated the papal condemnations of various journals, theologians, seminaries, and eventually the dramatic shutdown of the worker-priest project. Although these movements and actors were pushed to the margins of Catholicism for daring to openly dissent against the hierarchy, their dramatic story makes them anything but marginal to the history of twentieth-century Christianity.

**Catholics and the French Republic: the Allure of Vichy and the Roots of Dissent**

The complex relationship of Catholics and the French nation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a topic that has received quite a lot of historical attention. Ever since Catholics were marginalized from the secular republic of the French Revolution, they struggled to regain their place within the French public sphere. By 1898, any pretense of cordiality had completely broken down. The Catholic far-right had found a new cause in the Dreyfus Affair, and at the same time, their enemies, who included Republicans, Protestants, and Jews, had substantive proof of their longstanding claim that Catholics were undermining the nation: the anti-Semitic and anti-dreyfusard press was largely Catholic, and included even mainstream journals like *La Croix*. The backlash against Catholics was intense, and beginning in 1901, a series of government laws and decrees “progressively destroyed the religious structures edified

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during the nineteenth-century.”\textsuperscript{13} Laws dismantling religious congregations and limiting Catholic influence in schooling provoked the ire of French Catholics, but it was the insistence that the French government be in charge of naming French bishops that forced the “\textit{discordat},” or the breakdown of diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican in 1904.\textsuperscript{14} While many French Protestants saw the 1905 law of separation of church and state as a means of protecting their religious freedom, to Catholics it was a mortal blow.

The recruitment of priests diminished considerably in the years 1905-1914, and those priests that remained often received the greatest material support from royalist factions and far-right movements like the \textit{Action française}.\textsuperscript{15} The \textit{Action française} was more than anything a nationalist movement that made strategic alliances with groups like royalist Catholics who were violently opposed to the French Republic and the extent to which France, in their eyes, had become a country governed by “foreign or ill-assimilated bodies,” which included “Freemasons, Protestants, foreigners, and Jews.”\textsuperscript{16} Yet despite the continuing tensions between the Vatican and the French state, by the outbreak of World War I, most French Catholics had come to accept the idea of war and to feel patriotic as well. The fact that French Catholics rallied to the French cause was more than evident in their participation in the \textit{Union sacrée} (Sacred Union) during World War I. Not only did they morally support the French nation in the war, but Catholics, and more

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 101.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 107.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 117-119.
than 25,000 priests and seminarians were mobilized in 1914. In her study of religious practice in France during World War I, historian Annette Becker argued that the language of the “Sacred Union” should not be dismissed, since for the faithful, the war was understood as a crusade against evil, against the faithless Germans, who could be defeated by the Christian French.

Becker, among others has noted that the war produced “a general intensification of religious practice” among Catholics, as well as among Protestants and Jews, that continued past the end of the conflict. This inevitably brought up questions about Catholic participation in government, their loyalty to the Republic as well as the historical tensions over questions of nationalism, anti-Clericalism, and the Vatican’s position toward the secular French government. Yet enough cordial remnants of the “Sacred Union” remained after the war that both French Catholics and secular Republicans pursued the reopening of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Around the same time, the French Catholic leadership formed the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops (Assemblée des cardinaux et archevêques - ACA), which became the official voice of the French Catholic Church and the means through which much of the

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19 Ibid., 4. See also Cholvy and Hilaire, Religion et société, 18-19.
20 Pelletier, Les Catholiques en France depuis 1815 (Paris: La Découverte, 1997), 61. What came to be known as the Second ralliement was inaugurated when several French politicians participated in the canonization ceremony for Joan of Arc in Rome in May 1920, and diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican were officially reestablished in 1921.
dialogue between the Vatican, the French state, and the various movements within French Catholicism occurred, including, for example, the *Action Française*.21

Among conservative Catholics, the *Action française* had emerged from World War I stronger than ever, and continued to gain supporters as it made alliances with Catholic intellectuals like Jacques Maritain, one of the young leaders of the intellectual movement known as neo-Thomism in the early 1920s.22 During the early 1920s, neo-Thomism gained a large following in part because of the Catholic hierarchy’s active denunciation of “modernism,” and its support for movements like the *Action française* that claimed to be supporting a moral renewal based on vaguely Catholic principles.23 Yet by the mid 1920s the political nationalism of the *Action française*, whose motto was “politics first” no longer sat well with the Vatican, which had previously condemned the French Christian democratic movement *Le Sillon* in 1910 for being too politicized.24 In particular, Pope Pius XI was concerned that Charles Maurras, the charismatic leader of the *Action française*, had gained too much prestige among French Catholics. In an effort to regain control of French Catholic loyalties, the Vatican condemned the *Action française* in August 1926.25 Although the move was politically strategic on several levels for the Vatican, because it assured the French Republic that the Vatican was not openly

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21 Ibid., 63.
24 The major leftist Catholic movement in France was the Christian Democratic movement *Le Sillon*, which was founded in 1894 by Marc Sangnier. In the early twentieth century, Sangnier had the support of Pope Leon XIII, but the conservative views of later Popes and his decision to open the movement to non-Catholics resulted in a Vatican condemnation in 1910. See Hugues Petit, *L’Église, Le Sillon et l’Action française* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1998).
supporting anti-Republican parties, it caused great confusion among French Catholic supporters of the *Action française*, many of whom continued to secretly support Maurras and far-right nationalist movements throughout the 1920s and 30s.26

Despite the concentration of Catholic elites within far-right political movements in the 1920s, a significant number of French Catholics had also been engaged since the nineteenth century and the *Rerum Novarum* with Social Catholicism and more left-leaning Catholic movements that were revitalized after World War I. In particular, their religious fervor was channeled outward into newly organized Catholic service projects and youth movements that were targeted at the masses, not merely the intellectual elites. These movements also emerged from the experience of solidarity that had existed in the trenches during World War I. This effaced many of the conflicts that had historically existed between Catholics and various other groups in France, including Protestants, Jews, secular Republicans, and the working classes. During the 1920s, there was a great renewal of interest in the priesthood and in Catholic lay movements in France whose activities were targeted at groups like the working classes, who had historically been marginalized by the Catholic Church.

The Bolshevik Revolution and the establishment of the French Communist Party in 1920 made Catholics aware that they had enormous competition in attracting the

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26 This move was strategic for the Vatican partly because it had just reestablished diplomatic ties with the French Republic. If it was seen to be openly supporting far-right, anti-Republican movements that sought to overthrow the democratic government, there would be little progress in their diplomatic goals. The Vatican’s condemnation of the *Action française* assured the French government of its support against the rise of fascist and nationalist movements.
attention of the working classes to their message.\textsuperscript{27} Using the model of the *Action populaire*, a Jesuit social organization that had been founded in 1903 on the basis of the principles of the Church’s late nineteenth century social doctrine, French Catholics began to target working class youth in Parisian suburbs.\textsuperscript{28} A Belgian priest named Canon Cardijn started the *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne* (JOC) in 1924, which historian Susan Whitney calls “the most novel postwar initiative in youth and lay organizing” within the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{29} The movement had moved into France by 1926 and essentially turned young Catholics of working-class origin into missionaries to their own class, who were to teach the working classes that “their problems stemmed not from economic exploitation but from spiritual and moral distress.”\textsuperscript{30} The *Jocists*, as they were called, worked in direct collaboration with their priests, who were their spiritual advisors, and had received the blessing of Pope Pius XI in 1925.

The 1930s proved to be a high point of Catholic renewal in twentieth-century France, but it was complicated by the Vatican’s growing concern about the politicization of religion and a profound anti-communism that resulted in a tendency to reject ideas that it deemed too leftist or too openly political. One of the major Vatican initiatives within France in the early 1930s was the reorganization of the Catholic Action and youth movements like the JOC into one large organization called the Specialized Catholic Action (*L’Action catholique spécialisée*).\textsuperscript{31} This umbrella organization now included not

\textsuperscript{27} Susan Whitney, Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 82.
\textsuperscript{29} Whitney, 80.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 81.
\textsuperscript{31} Cholvy and Hilaire, 29.
only the adult Catholic Action groups, but also youth organizations like the JOC, the JEC
(Jeunesse étudiante chétienne), the JAC (Jeunesse agricole chrétienne – Young
Agricultural Christians) and the various other Catholic lay organizations, most of which
had corresponding (and separate) feminine sections.32 This move, which originated from
Pope Pius XI, gave the hierarchy more direct control over all of the Catholic Action and
youth movements since a priest had direct charge of each branch. In addition, the idea of
specialization was supposed to both spread Catholicism into every sector of society, and
to facilitate the mission process by allowing certain groups and social categories to
become missionaries within their own class and social groups: factory workers should be
missionaries to other factory workers, university students to other university students.
Historian Étienne Fouilloux notes that this specialization by social category pushed the
Catholic Church in France “from the defensive to the offensive, from preservation to
conquest.”33 French Catholics now had a structure through which they could combat both
dechristianization and their political marginalization from a secular republican
government by focusing on the “primacy of the spiritual.”34

On the level of Catholic intellectual life, the decade of the 1930s was also a period
of great production and intellectual fervor, particularly in the realm of neo-Thomism. Yet
as the French Catholic historian Etienne Fouilloux has meticulously demonstrated, the
Thomist currents of the 1930s were complex and multi-faceted. On the one hand, there
were conservative branches of Roman origin that wanted to protect a more orthodox

32 On the issues of gender in Catholic youth movements and the Catholic Action, see
Susan Whitney, Mobilizing Youth.
33 Duriez, Fouilloux, et al., 15.
version of the teachings of Thomas Aquinas from the modernist influences that were seeping into the Church (i.e. “neo-Thomism”). On the other hand, there were people like Étienne Gilson, or Jacques Maritain, one of the “theologians in jackets” who had broken with the *Action française* after its condemnation in 1926 and had become one of the leading scholars of neo-Thomism along with Dominican “theologians in robes” Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar. In essence, although the French neo-Thomist scholars of the 1930s like Maritain, Chenu, and Congar were classical scholars and theologians in their own right, their innovation was to bring medieval scholasticism to bear on the problems of the modern era, including the dechristianization of the working classes, and the political attractions of Soviet communism.

In his 1936 book *Integral Humanism*, Jacques Maritain laid out the reasons why in the midst of the political crises facing the world in the mid-1930s, including the threats of Soviet atheism and bourgeois liberalism, the medieval Christian philosophy of Thomas Aquinas provided a philosophical and historical model of practical humanism that could guide society through the current social and political problems of the age. He argued that Christians could not remain outside of the modern world, but that they must engage with it. “It will be necessary,” he wrote “to elaborate a social, political, and economic philosophy which does not simply stop at universal principles, but which is capable of descending to concrete realizations – all of which presupposes a vast amount of delicate

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35 Fouilloux, *Une église en quête de liberté*, 110-111. Fouilloux notes that this branch was notably influential among Dominicans and served as the “intellectual armature for a reemerging fundamentalism as well as for certain defenders of French Algeria.”

36 The distinction between the “theologians in jackets” and the “theologians in robes” merely distinguishes the lay Catholic intellectuals from those who were ordained as priests. Other “theologians in jackets” prominent during the 1930s included Gabriel Marcel, Jean Guitton, Étienne Borne, Emmanuel Mounier, Henri-Irénée Marrou, Joseph Folliet. See Cholvy and Hilaire, *Religion et société*, 167.
work.” He then described progress that had already begun with the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI, but also nodded to the diversity of opinions that would emerge when any project like this was undertaken. However, more development, in his mind, was necessary:

But the Christian conscious of these things will also have to enter upon social and political action, not only in order to put at the service of his country, as has always been the case, the professional capacities which he may have in this domain, but also and further in order to work, as I have said, toward a transformation of the temporal order.

For Maritain, this transformation should be toward a “civilization of Christian inspiration” that would follow the model of Pope Leo XIII’s social Catholicism, with a middle ground between socialism (or in this case Soviet communism) and bourgeois liberalism. He saw no need to put capitalism on trial, or to pursue a more radical version of the social doctrine of the Church.

The connections between the actions of lay Catholics in the Specialized Catholic Action movements or in the political sphere and the philosophical and theological innovations of the era were often taken up in a burgeoning intellectual press in the 1930s. While some of these journals – Emmanuel Mounier’s Esprit, for example – did not have direct ties to the Catholic Church, journals like the Dominican Sept, which was printed

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 114-115.
between 1934 and 1937 saw its role as providing a specifically Christian reflection on political and social events.\textsuperscript{40} Although the slogan of \textit{Sept} was “Above [political] parties,” it had close ties to the Specialized Catholic Action movements and was concerned with issues like trade unions and the problems of workers. This made it vulnerable to accusations of being too political, and \textit{Sept} was shut down when the Vatican withdrew its support after a string of accusations from the Catholic right that it had ties to communism, based on a number of articles from well-known Catholic personalities like François Mauriac denouncing fascism and focusing on the plight of the working classes.\textsuperscript{41}

\textit{Esprit} was an ecumenical review founded in 1932 by Emmanuel Mounier, a philosopher and proponent of Personalism, a school of thought that in Mounier’s vision would reveal a person who could achieve spiritual transcendence within the human community.\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Esprit} was a journal for the “non-conformists” of the 1930s, and in particular those who rejected liberalism, capitalism, and at least in the early years, communism, and sought some means to solve the crisis of civilization that Europe was facing. It drew on the talents of a wide variety of intellectuals in France, many of whom were not Catholic, which concerned people like Jacques Maritain and the Catholic hierarchy, but which expanded its audience and influence.\textsuperscript{43} By the mid-1930s, contributors like Marcel Moré began to examine Marxism in more depth, yet even though there was some appreciation for the ideas of Marx and the possibilities of a “personalist

\textsuperscript{40} On the history of the journal \textit{Sept}, see Aline Coutrot, “\textit{Sept}” \textit{Un Journal, Un combat (mars 1934-aôut 1937)} (Paris: Éditions Cana, 1982).
\textsuperscript{41} Coutrot, 27, 213.
socialism,” there was an unswerving condemnation of Stalinism in the pages of *Esprit*. Despite the fact that Mounier and many of the contributors to *Esprit* had rejected the Popular Front leader Maurice Thorez’s offer of co-operation (*la main tendue*) between communists and Catholics in 1936, Mounier’s positive editorial on the Popular Front and its support for the Republican forces during the Spanish Civil War led to fears that the journal could be condemned by the Vatican at any moment.44

It was one thing for lay Catholic intellectuals to debate the question of political engagement and the problems facing Catholics in the modern world in the pages of journals like *Esprit* and *Sept* even as the Vatican continued to stress the “primacy of the spiritual” in the Specialized Catholic Action movements in the face of the rising tide of political mobilization of the left with the Popular Front in France and the threat of fascism throughout Europe. Yet when a group of Catholic theologians, many of whom were associated with neo-Thomist circles in France and Belgium, attempted to treat many of these same questions through the lens of neo-Thomist theology, they quickly caught the attention of Vatican authorities who were concerned about the implications and influence of their thinking.45 The center of controversy was the Dominican theological and philosophical university Saulchoir, which had as regent in the mid 1930s a French theologian named Marie-Dominique Chenu.46

44 Ibid., 112-121.
46 The school opened in 1865 in France, but transferred to Tournai, Belgium in 1903 after the expulsion of the Dominican congregation from France in 1903. It then moved back to France in 1937 to Étiolles and finally to the convent Saint-Jacques in Paris in 1971.
Père Chenu was a Dominican who had trained at the Angelicum in Rome under the guidance of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, one of the Roman orthodox Thomists. Instead of remaining in Rome under the wing of his mentor, he took a position at Saulchoir, where he quickly established himself as an influential teacher and scholar in philosophy and scholastic history. In 1937, Père Chenu published a pamphlet called *Une école de théologie. Le Saulchoir* that was based on a speech to the community of Saulchoir reflecting on the “intellectual and spiritual experience of the house over the last thirty years.” In it he described the philosophy and method of Saulchoir, which critiqued the “baroque theology” of the Roman Thomist orthodoxy and sought to bring the theological and philosophical wisdom of the scholastics like Thomas Aquinas to bear on the problems facing contemporary society. Chenu described several of these problems, including the “original grandeurs of the Orient” (including Islam); the ecumenical movement, and the “moving and irrepressible appetite for union”; the social fermentation of the popular masses; and the “missionary expansion, the profound sense of which is revealing itself against so much mental and institutional narrow-mindedness, revived again and steeped in the feeling of its new dimensions in the world, its new solidarities, its new autonomies, its new adult peoples, beyond an outdated colonialism.” In the middle of all of these exciting new ideas and movements, Chenu argued, were the Christian militants and the youth who had an active desire to participate and needed the leadership of theologians who understood and could respond to these issues.

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48 Ibid., 39.
Chenu called out those “bad theologians,” who, “enclosed in their folios and their scholastic disputes, would not be open to these spectacles,” which were themselves theological “sites” in action, and he notably named the experience of the militants and chaplains of the JOC at Saulchoir, who by their mere presence demonstrate a “witness of Christian authenticity and the supernatural vitality of their austere theological work.”

For Chenu and the Dominican theologians of Saulchoir, the link between the theology of Thomas Aquinas and the militants of the JOC was their theological methodology, which has been called a “historical methodology.” This “historical methodology,” which Chenu trained in at the Angelicum under Père Garrigou-Lagrange, sought to examine theology as it was rooted in its historical moment, as opposed to an “intemporal theology.” The larger guiding principle was, however, that theology had a particular relevance to that historical moment, and that it needed to have relevance to the current moment as well, and as Chenu noted, “the dialectic of the past and of the present is the principle of intelligibility.” The apostolic engagement of the JOC and those who went out into the world was a sign that theology could and did have present-day relevance.

Chenu’s arguments caught the attention of the orthodox Thomists in Rome, who disagreed with several of his theological points, and in particular his historical methodology. Although Père Chenu himself traveled to Rome to dispel some of their worries, the brochure was pulled out of circulation, and he was ordered to sign ten propositions that were deemed litigious, which ultimately he did in early 1938. Things

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50 Ibid., 143.
51 Alberigo, 30.
53 Ibid., 51.
remained strangely quiet for four years, until February 1942 when Chenu learned that the brochures had been placed on the Vatican Index, and that he had been relieved of his function as regent of Saulchoir.54 From the Vatican’s point of view, the problem with Chenu was only partly his theological method, although his historical approach, which situated Thomas Aquinas as an important intellectual critic of Roman Catholic doctrine certainly set the stage for a difference of interpretation within the Thomist school of thought. Rather, in a later interview, Père Chenu noted that the role of the theologian is to be the “critical conscience of the faith at work.”55 This spirit of critique would hardly have been welcome during the rule of a Pope who prized obedience and order above all else.56

It was not only Père Chenu who was the target of Roman approbation. His student and colleague Yves Congar, who also took a historical approach to the study of Christianity, caught the eye of the Roman censors with his publications on ecumenism. Historian Étienne Fouilloux writes that “like Chenu, and at the same moment as him, [Congar] was persuaded that theology was not a discipline to be practiced in chambers, but rather in open air.”57 His theological goal was to uncover what he called the “true face” of the Church, which in his mind, could only happen when Christians who had been falsely separated could come together, something that was occurring within the context of ecumenical dialogue. His encounters with Protestant theologians like Karl Barth and Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, as well as Anglican and Orthodox Christians encouraged his

54 Alberigo, 30.
55 Duquesne, 12.
56 On Pope Pius XI’s character and his desire for absolute obedience, see Duffy, 365.
57 Fouilloux, L’Église en quête de liberté, 142-143. ["Comme Chenu et au même moment que lui, il se persuade enfin que la théologie n'est pas une discipline de cabinet, mais de plein vent."]
thinking on ecumenism and unity, and in 1937, he published *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d’un “œcuménisme” catholique* (Divided Christians. Principles of a Catholic “Ecumenism”). Since ecumenism was about as popular an idea as Soviet communism in Roman Catholic circles in 1937, Père Congar’s book received little appreciation at the Vatican.59

As the 1930s came to a close, the tensions between French Catholics and the Vatican only grew stronger. In March 1937, Pius XI issued two encyclicals concerning political events in Europe: *Mit brennender Sorge* on the German Catholic Churches in the Third Reich (March 14th) and *Divini Redemptoris* on “atheistic communism” (March 19th).60 Although the Vatican had certainly never been sympathetic to socialism or Soviet communism, *Divini Redemptoris* went further than any previous text, explicitly rejecting any possibility that these ideologies held any liberatory hope for Christians. It stated bluntly that atheistic communism “aims at upsetting the social order and undermining the

59 See the 1928 encyclical *Mortallium animos*, which argued that Christian ecumenism was incredibly dangerous and that “in reality beneath these enticing words and blandishments lies hid a most grave error, by which the foundations of the Catholic faith are completely destroyed.” Papal encyclical *Mortallium animos*, 1 June 1928.
60 Fouloux, *Les chrétiens français entre crise et liberation*, 19. Although there has been much discussion about the timing and presentation of the two encyclicals, as well as the language and intended audience of the texts (*Mit brennender sorge* was written in German and originally addressed to the Christians of Germany whereas *Divini Redemptoris* was written in Latin and diffused internationally) in the historical debate about the Vatican’s relationship to World War II and the Holocaust, in France, the text on Communism was much more widely printed and commented upon. On Pius XI’s responses to Nazism and Communism, see, for example, Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), and Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).
very foundations of Christian civilization.” The encyclical asserted that the Church was preparing to fight the long battle to save Christian civilization from the “satanic scourge” of materialist atheism, which “strips man of his liberty, robs human personality of all its dignity, and removes all the moral restraints that check the eruptions of blind impulse.” The necessary solution, according to Pius XI, was to return to the tenets of Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* and the social doctrine of the church: the cooperation between justice and Christian charity.

By depicting the Catholic Church as engaged in a battle of ‘good versus evil’ with “atheistic” Soviet communism, Pius XI moved past a condemnation of the political actions of Stalin and Soviet communists. Pius XI’s personal animosity toward Bolshevism dated from his negative encounter with Russian communists as the inexperienced Papal nuncio in Warsaw after World War I where, as Eamon Duffy notes, he came away “with the lasting conviction that communism was the worst enemy that Christian Europe had ever faced, a conviction which shaped much of his policy as Pope.” His political choices, including Concordats with Mussolini and Hitler, were influenced to a large extent by the belief that fascism and Nazism were the “strongest available bulwarks against Communism.”

Pius XI’s death in 1939 and the election of his successor, Eugenio Pacelli, who became Pius XII, did little to change the atmosphere in the Vatican. Pius XII was a skilled diplomat who had been groomed to succeed Pius XI and held a similar fear of communism as his predecessor. Pius XII’s relationship with Nazism and fascist

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61 *Divini Redemptoris*, March 19, 1937.
62 Ibid.
63 Duffy, 335.
64 Ibid., 340.
governments has been the subject of much historical inquiry, particularly where it concerned his perceived failure to denounce the Holocaust and to form political alliances with fascist leaders at the great expense of their victims.\textsuperscript{65} For Catholics in France, the first subtle sign of things to come was Pius XII’s reinstatement of the \textit{Action française} in 1939. The Vatican’s willingness to negotiate with and accept conservative, and even fascist, governments in Europe seems to have played a part in the French Catholic clergy’s acceptance of the Vichy after the armistice in 1940.\textsuperscript{66}

Although a small minority of French Catholics engaged in documentable resistance or collaboration activities during World War II, the vast majority of Catholics in France seem to have maintained a tacit support for Vichy, at least until 1943, and sometimes well beyond.\textsuperscript{67} The reasons for this support are numerous and complex, but many are rooted in the long history of tensions between the French Republic and the Catholic Church. Vichy was, in essence, a complete rejection of the secular Third Republic. At its head was the \textit{vainquer} of Verdun, Maréchal Pétain – a Catholic (despite a divorce and an affinity for Protestantism) – and among its cabinet was a notable number of Catholic officials. The revolutionary motto “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” was replaced with the more conservative “Work, Family, Country,” to which Cardinal Gerlier proclaimed, “These three words are also ours.”\textsuperscript{68} It could have been the motto, Etienne Fouilloux notes, of “intransigent Catholicism.”\textsuperscript{69} In addition, the blame for the defeat went to the secular Republican state, and the promise of moral renewal, with the guidance

\textsuperscript{65} On Pius XII, see Michael Phayer, \textit{Pius XII, the Holocaust, and the Cold War} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
\textsuperscript{66} Fouilloux, Les chrétiens français entre crise et libération, 102.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 99-100.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 104.
of the Church, attracted many of those who had viewed the Republican state, the Popular Front, or the “materialism” of interwar culture as the greatest enemies of the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{70}

In addition to the Catholic far-right, many of whom saw in the Vichy regime a vindication of their anti-Republican and anti-democratic tendencies, the greatest champions of Pétain and the regime were the Catholic cardinals and bishops. The onset of the war did not change the fact that their major concern was the growing “dechristianization” of France, and a government with a Catholic at its head who encouraged the integration of Christian moral principles into French society seemed to many like the surprisingly happy end of a long nightmare.\textsuperscript{71} The relatively advanced age of most of the cardinals and archbishops of France also meant that they were close to the same generation as Pétain (the exceptions being Cardinals Gerlier of Lyon and Liénart of Lille), which to some extent explains their attitude of loyalty toward the Maréchal, even when they disagreed with policies of the regime.\textsuperscript{72} When the first meeting of the ACA after the armistice took place in August of 1940 in Paris, the French Catholic leadership urged the clergy to “adopt a practice of loyalty to the legitimate authority,” meaning both the Vichy government and Occupation troops.\textsuperscript{73} Throughout the war, the majority of the hierarchy maintained this position of loyalty, publicly condemned those who joined

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\textsuperscript{72} Cointet, 20-21.
\textsuperscript{73} Quoted in Halls, 46.
resistance movements, refused to send chaplains to the *maquis*, and in a few cases (most notably Cardinal Baudrillart) collaborated with the occupying forces.\(^{74}\)

There is an urge, perhaps, to compare the conduct of French Catholics during World War II to that of French Protestants, who, as we have seen in chapter one, emerged from the war with a reputation of a heroic spiritual resistance to Nazism. Yet the temptation to make this comparison would be somewhat misguided, partly for reasons of the obvious pitfalls of historical memory related to questions of resistance and collaboration, and partly because many of the most interesting consequences of the French Catholic experience of World War II were not directly related to questions of resistance or collaboration, but rather to the lived experience of Catholics in the STO (*Service du travail obligatoire*) and life under the occupation.\(^{75}\) For example, the bonds of solidarity that were forged between Catholics and workers in situations like the STO formed the basis for the worker-priest movement, which was a radical new vision of the Christian missionary project. It is important to note that the majority of French Catholics did support Vichy’s National Revolution, just as many French Protestants and non-Christians did. The result of this support, which seems to have occurred with the full blessing of the Vatican, was that the French episcopate emerged from World War II in a state of moral chaos, largely discredited and with many calling for an *épuration* (purging).

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\(^{74}\) Cointet, 300-340.

of the Church. Regaining their moral authority, particularly in a postwar society with communists taking control, was not an easy task.

A Theology of Incarnation and the Worker-Priest Mission

In October 1941, Cardinal Suhard, the archbishop of Paris, sent out a letter to an unspecified group of high-ranking clergy announcing the creation of a seminary called the Mission de France in Lisieux. This seminary, which was created under the auspices of the ACA, was the realization of a long-term project of the French Catholic Church both to attract more young men to the priesthood and to combat the massive drop in church attendance. It was designed to be the French Catholic Church’s new great weapon in the battle against the dechristianization of the working classes in France. Movements like the JOC and the Specialized Catholic Action were reconstructed in the 1930s as internal “missionary” movements to combat this problem of dechristianization, but it was not until World War II that French Catholics began seriously to rethink the goals and structure of this internal mission.

Although it was only one of many key organizations, the Mission de France played a central role as a “research laboratory” in this revolutionary movement that was taking shape within the French Catholic Church. It was one that would lead to the formation of a new conception of the role and practice of the Christian missionary and a controversial new model of the priesthood, which took shape around the concept of the

76 Cointet, chapter 8.
78 Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 48; Denis Pelletier, Les catholiques dans la république, p. 26
This new mission model rejected the old formulation of “conquest” or even “reconquest” of Christian souls in favor of a model that was designed to convert the Church to modern society, stripped of “the coatings, the growths, the deformations that the mold of a culture have imposed upon it” in order to arrive at “the essential of the evangelical message.”

The Mission de France differed from the Catholic Action movements first and foremost in that, while the Catholic Action movements were designed for lay Catholics to be the ‘missionaries’ to their own social groups, the Mission de France was designed as a training ground for priests who “desired to consecrate themselves to the apostolic work of the ‘mission’ by living communally.” The reason for this shift to training priests as missionaries was the French episcopate’s realization that the problem of dechristianization was much more widespread than they had realized, and affected not just the urbanized working classes but the rural countryside and places where there were no priests at all. Recruiting priests from other dioceses to go into those regions seemed like an impossible task, particularly when they had no training in missionary techniques. The solution Cardinal Suhard and the ACA proposed was the creation of a seminary in Lisieux, the location of the convent named for St. Thérèse of Lisieux, a patron saint of missions, which would serve as the central internal mission organization in France.

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79 This conception of the Mission de France as a “research laboratory” and crossroads of the missionary movement belongs to Nathalie Viet-Depaule and Tangi Cavalin, 64. Some of these other fascinating organizations that will not, for reasons of space, be examined in great detail in this dissertation, include Les fils de la charité, Jesuits, etc.


82 Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 41.
The seminary opened its doors in 1942, with twenty-two seminarians and eleven priests, who came to undertake extra training in the missionary apostolate, as its student body. The faculty consisted of three professors, under the leadership of Père Louis Augros, the superior. He was a Sulpicien philosophy professor who sought to create a seminary that emphasized the value of solidarity, the need for the church to be itself in a “state of mission,” and the “constant attempt to find the means to insert faith into the culture.” Early on, the students were recruited from dioceses all over France with the help of a publicity brochure that emphasized the very specialized and vital work that the Mission aimed to do among the dechristianized populations. By the end of the war, this brochure was even spread through prisoner of war and STO camps in Germany, which helped to recruit a large percentage of the postwar student body. The leaders of the seminary wanted students and priests who came voluntarily and who were highly motivated by the problem of dechristianization. For many of those seminary students, clandestine chaplains and priests who had spent the war in prisoner of war or STO camps living side by side with these dechristianized masses and who had experienced a sense of solidarity with them, the Mission de France offered a perfect opportunity to gain training in missionary techniques before becoming more active missionaries to the working classes.

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83 Ibid., 78. For statistics on the number of priests and seminarians of the MDF’s first five years, see the helpful chart Cavalin and Viet-Depaule have provided, from the archives of the Mission de France, 79.
85 This experience is one that is recounted in detail numerous times in Emile Poulat, Naissance des prêtres-ouvriers as well as in a letter cited in Viet-Depaule and Cavalin, 81-82.
The basis of the Mission de France ideal was the formation of missionaries who lived and worked in teams, rather than as individuals. This was, in part, to avoid serving as a training ground for Catholic Action chaplains. More importantly, though, it was intimately connected to the emerging philosophy and strategy that the Mission employed. This strategy was based in a concept of community-building that was a radical shift from the Catholic Action missionary model. Although Louis Augros originally envisioned a program that would follow a classical seminary model, yet with a “missionary perspective,” he did not want a theological curriculum that would follow one of the straightforward, traditional models that were pre-approved by Rome. So he turned to Père Marie-Dominique Chenu for advice. In a 1941 letter to Père Chenu, Louis Augros wrote:

> It seems this solution requires a brand new study and comprehension of theology; that spirits from here on out will be shaped by a theology that will no longer be a catalog of abstract theses and treatises, juxtaposed and systemized on an abstract plane, but life, principle of divine life, principle of transformation of all of natural life: personal, familial, social, etc.

Like Chenu at Saulchoir, many of the professors at the Mission de France seminary tended toward a historical methodology in their theological courses, examining how theology was the product of a specific historical moment and how theology could then be used to adapt the Church to the modern world. They also had courses in philosophy, contemporary social thought, including in-depth explorations of socialism, Marxism, existentialism, and psychology.

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86 Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 97.
The intellectual orientation of the Mission received a further jolt in 1943 when Abbés Daniel and Godin, two former JOC chaplains who had participated in a retreat with the Mission de France, published a fifty-eight page sociological memoir on the problem of dechristianization titled *La France, pays de mission?* (France, a mission land?). Louis Augros had encouraged the production and publication of the study, which one high-ranking Catholic ecclesiastical personality claimed would be like “a bomb exploding on the Church of France.”

In addition to depicting in a sociological study how widespread the dechristianization of France actually went, the authors argued that the Catholic Church, despite a decade of intense work by the Catholic Action movements, had almost nothing to show for the internal missionary effort, and went on to examine in some depth why exactly that was the case. While in the end they concluded that the militants of the JOC and the specialized Catholic Action movements were not actually the appropriate “missionaries” to be undertaking the evangelization of the “pagans,” they noted that it was not the fault of the militants themselves, but rather an elemental problem of methods and strategy. The Church, they argued, needed to fundamentally rethink its relationship to the working classes and the mission. Instead of working toward the suppression of the proletariat, they should be working to create an “indigenous” church within the working class milieu.

Like many of those who joined movements like the Mission de France, Abbés Daniel and Godin were both personally disappointed with the French Catholic Church’s inability to escape from its bourgeois mentality, and its complete lack of interest in the working classes. They argued quite forcefully that in France there was a separation

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88 Poulat, Naissance des prêtres-ouvriers, 36, 90.
between the bourgeois Catholic Church and the working classes that could not be breached, despite attempts by the specialized Catholic Action movements to evangelize within their own “milieux.” Because of the Catholic culture that had developed around the Mass, around the parish life, with its expectation of dress, of habits of behavior, of speech, it was next to impossible, however, to expect a member of the proletariat to convert to Christianity and feel at ease within this culture. This discomfort then placed his entire conversion at risk because he would be leaving his friends, his family, his milieu for something entirely foreign, which was a risk few Christians could understand.89 Godin and Daniel compared this problem to foreign missionaries who attempted to “Europeanize” their converts, a situation they strongly rebuked (“Have we the right to refuse Christ to those who cannot or do not want to receive our culture?” they asked).90 Yet there was, however, a very simple solution to this problem: find in Christianity a pure evangelical message of Christ’s love, stripped of its bourgeois cultural trappings and regulations, and transform it for a proletarian culture. It should be the task of the Church, they argued, and not the pagan to “convert” their culture for the cause of the mission.91

Godin and Daniel frequently used the comparison with foreign missions to illustrate their arguments, and it reinforced their point that the old method of parish-based Catholic Action lay movements were ineffective because they could not conceive of the internal mission outside of the context of traditional church structures or a “reconquest” of a few lost souls. By comparing the “pagan” proletariat of France to the “indigenous”

90 Ibid., 125.
91 Ibid.
peoples of foreign lands, they could make the argument that the internal mission needs
tactics comparable to what had been successful for foreign missions. Drawing on the
discourses of Pope Pius XI, a great supporter of foreign missions and the creation of an
indigenous clergy, Godin and Daniel argued that just as St. Gregory instructed St.
Augustine not to destroy the pagan temples, ceremonies, or rites in his conversion of
England, they should not destroy the beliefs or culture of the French proletariat. Rather,
they should adapt the essential principles of Christianity to that culture, to give the
proletariat teachings that are “both Christian and popular at the same time.”92 It was for
this reason that it needed to be a priest who was the missionary (as opposed to a jocist,
for example), because only a priest had the training to understand at what point the
syncretism of this method might cross the line into false doctrine.93

Many historians have noted the enormous impact that La France, pays de
mission? had on the missionary movement as well as on the Catholic Church as a whole.
Cardinal Suhard was immediately struck by its message and ordered copies sent to
ecclesiastical colleagues. In the few years following its original publication, the book sold
more than one hundred thousand copies.94 It also served as sort of orientation manual for
the Mission de France and helped launch a second movement – the Mission de Paris –
that worked in tandem with the Mission de France, but specifically with the urban

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92 Ibid., 117.
93 Ibid., 176.
94 See Poulat, 36-51; Arnal, 56. Poulat cites an article from Le Monde, dated 17 January
1964 in which Père Chenu quoted Mgr D’Souza of India who said, “Do you remember
that extraordinary book that awakened us, France, a mission land? It set off a movement
that has brought us today to the Council [Vatican II].” (37).
proletariat. It was again Cardinal Suhard who set the wheels in motion, creating the Mission de Paris on July 1, 1943. It began in earnest in January 1944 as a team of eight priests, including Henri Godin and Yvan Daniel, who were independent of any parish responsibilities, devoted solely to the missionary endeavor. The Mission never really had any legal existence but was attached to the diocese as an association. In many ways, it was the ambiguity of its existence that gave its members the freedom of movement to break from the rules and traditions that maintained the wall of separation between the Church and the working classes.

In their early days, both the Mission de France and Mission de Paris teams found that life in the mission field was above all an experiment demanding inventiveness. Although they had theological training and theoretical orientations, there was little practical guidance from people like Cardinal Suhard on how to integrate into the urban proletariat. The Mission de France teams in rural areas tended to take up neglected parishes in rural “Siberias” or in the “red suburbs,” or in other words, the highly dechristianized zones of France. They lived in teams but went out into the community to make contacts, whether through part-time jobs or through voluntary associations.

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95 Poulat, 90. Louis Augros wrote to Godin and Daniel on March 3, 1943: “In this first year of our existence, at the moment when we must find our orientation, you have shown us exactly the direction.”
98 Viet-Depaule, *La Mission de Paris*, 9. In addition to integrating into the working-class milieu, Nathalie Viet-Depaule notes that the Mission de Paris had quite a lot of freedom of movement that led to innovations including the removal of the soutane, the introduction of French into the liturgy, shortened mass in the evening, the frequentation of cafes and restaurants in the quarter.
99 Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 111-124.
priests of the Mission de Paris formed smaller teams and found rooms in the working-class neighborhoods of Paris, in some cases close to large factories. However they soon found, as did many of the Mission de France priests, that living among the working classes was not enough to reach the proletariat and that they needed to more fully integrate into working-class lives. Through their sociological research, study groups, and conferences organized at the Mission de France seminary in Lisieux, for example, the priests in the field discussed their experiences and the successes and failures of their mission. They also explored subjects like the positive communitarianism of the working classes, and with their new understanding of the role that labor played in creating new forms of social solidarity among the working classes, for many priests, it seemed the only possible step to engage more directly with the proletariat was to join them in the factory as workers.100

The idea of priests working as manual laborers was not entirely novel, and, as a result of the apostolic fervor of many Catholic priests after World War I, a handful of priests and seminarians from diverse origins did short apprenticeships in factories and mines to engage more fully with the non-Christian population.101 However, in the 1918 Consistorial decree Redeuntibus, the Vatican made sure to remind priests that their sacred calling was incompatible with the life of the lay man, a life that they perhaps had been sharing in the trenches.102 The distinction between the clergy and the lay population was something the Church hierarchy held in great esteem, as the priest’s sacred status was the

100 See for example, the Mission de France’s internal bulletin Unis pour…, issue from December 1948 on the session discussing “Le monde ouvrier, le monde rural” with a theological exposé on the origins of working-class solidarity by Père Chenu. MDF Archives, Le Perreux. Viet-Depaule, La Mission de Paris, 8.
102 Ibid., 185.
clear source of his authority. This was something the Vatican worked to uphold throughout the interwar period, particularly through the promotion of movements like the Catholic Action that were clearly designed for lay Catholics under the guidance of priests. Already the rejection of this model by Godin and Daniel and those who joined the Mission de France and the Mission de Paris was pushing against the Vatican ideal, but it was the middle of World War II and they were in occupied France, so there was little Episcopal oversight. The concept of the worker-priest, which involved a full immersion in the lives of the proletariat through a full-time job in the same factories, sharing the same trials and tribulations, the same living conditions and salary, and potentially the same political engagements, was one of the most radical and controversial challenges to the Catholic Church’s status quo in the twentieth century. It also provided a fascinating new facet to the shifting debate around the role of the Christian missionary.

World War II had two direct consequences on the formation of the French Catholic worker-priest project. The first was that it caused the Vatican’s attention to be turned elsewhere, which gave French Catholics the freedom to experiment in ways that the Vatican would likely have put a sudden stop to in peacetime.\(^\text{103}\) The second consequence was that the experience of living side by side with the working classes in prisoner of war, concentration, and STO camps, or even in the *maquis*, became one of the main motivating factors for Catholics who eventually became worker-priests, many of whom joined through movements like the Mission de France or the Mission de Paris. Just as in the First World War, French priests were mobilized with the military when war broke out in September 1939. Even for those who were demobilized quickly thereafter,

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\(^{103}\) Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 64.
many encountered blistering hostility from the workers with whom they were placed.\textsuperscript{104}

Yet the camaraderie of the soldiers and artificial reality of military life and the war provided the conditions that allowed many priests to break through the “wall of separation” that existed between the bourgeois Church and the working classes back in their normal setting.

Historian Emile Poulat writes that more than four thousand French priests were taken as prisoners of war in Germany between 1940 and 1945.\textsuperscript{105} In the beginning of their captivity, they were treated like all the other prisoners and worked alongside them in forced labor camps. This changed for some when they were officially recognized as chaplains later in the war, although this was a statute meant to assist in their ministry rather than to exonerate them from manual labor.\textsuperscript{106} Rather than lamenting this state of affairs, many priests wrote back to France of how this situation allowed them to engage in a much richer ministry. One priest wrote to his local parish in Rennes, “There should be priests who are prisoners. We are absolutely in the right place.”\textsuperscript{107} Just as their counterparts in France were discovering that working and living alongside the working classes were possibly the only ways to gain entry into their milieu, the priests in captivity in the prisoner of war camps, and later in the STO, found that it was the experience of finding themselves completely embroiled in the lives of their compatriots – a situation

\textsuperscript{104} Poulat, Naissance des prêtres-ouvriers, 206-207.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 209. This number is an estimate from the records of the headquarters of the Military Chaplain (\textit{Aumônerie generale}) and that according to a doctoral thesis by the abbé Pierre Flament, the number of priests, religious, and seminarians who were prisoners was around 7,500.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 210-211. The abbé Rodhain, head of the Aumônerie militaire was able to get the priests in the \textit{stalags} and \textit{kommandos} recognized as military chaplains at the end of 1941.
that was completely normal in captivity – that allowed them to break out of their bourgeois sensibilities. It also allowed the working classes to see them as something other than the representatives of the bourgeois institution that was the Catholic Church. What mattered in the camps were one’s actions, one’s sense of solidarity with one’s fellow prisoners, and most importantly, the *incarnation* of the values of the Gospel.

The concept of “incarnation” was central to the theology behind the new missionary and worker-priest movement. A July 1947 session of the Mission de France described “redemptive incarnation” in these terms: “at the center of this mystery is the verb ‘incarnate’ and Redeemer, Christ on the cross, come to live in our world, live our condition of human sinners, to vanquish, by his death, our sins, and drive humanity to God…” The model for the missionary, and the worker-priest in particular, was Jesus who had in his human incarnation lived the Gospel and saved humanity from eternal damnation. Similarly in becoming “workers among workers,” and stepping into an environment full of temptation and sin, they were following in the footsteps of Christ and needed themselves to “incarnate” his same values. The MDF bulletin noted that this theology helped to avoid moralism but had to be subjected to constant self-reflection since it involved a full immersion in the community of sinners. This was the very reason for working and living in teams, however, since the other priests would assist in this process of self-reflection. For the worker-priests, historian Oscar Arnal argues, the commitment to incarnation meant that their vision of the mission shifted from a mentality of “conquest” that had dominated the vision of the JOC and the Catholic Action

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108 Arnal, 115-124.
110 Suaud and Viet-Depaule, 8-10.
movements, and even the authors of *La France, pays de mission?* to one of “presence.”\(^{111}\) Instead of spending their energy working to convert the proletariat, they perceived their mission as one of making a place for Christianity in the lives of the working classes; in sharing their daily turmoil and hardships, they were testifying to the possibilities of Christian solidarity with the working classes and breaking down the wall between the proletariat and the bourgeois Church.

The first Mission de Paris priests started full-time work in factories in 1944, with the agreement of their bishops and superiors. They went in as individuals, in civilian clothing, and were hired as unskilled workers with the main intention of entering into contact with the working classes.\(^{112}\) The first priest of the mission was hired in February of 1944 as a laborer in a boring and difficult job. He observed that life was difficult, at most he got six hours of sleep, the salary was insufficient, the boss (“unfortunately Catholic and known as such to everyone”) was completely closed off to the problems of the working class, and there was a very strong communist movement among the workers. He also noted that the JOC was completely useless in the factory and even caused further separation between the Christians and non-Christians with their difference in dress and behavior. While he was clearly shocked by the experience, he wrote:

Let me tell you… of my joy to be in the midst of the workers, to be one of them, to not be separated from them a priori. I compare this joy to that of Jesus when he was among men: unknown as God, but living our life, our whole life, without being noticed, without doing anything extraordinary in the eyes of his brothers, living simply as a brother.\(^{113}\)

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\(^{111}\) Arnal, 115.
\(^{112}\) Poulat, *Naissance des prêtres-ouvriers*, 395. Poulat notes that in the beginning, it was not a question of “worker-priests” as a concept, but rather a few individuals who got permission to work in factories or construction sites to engage more directly with the working classes.
\(^{113}\) Ibid., 396.
In the beginning, both the priests and the Church hierarchy had conceived of the factory work as something of a temporary situation, like an internship (un stage), and Cardinal Suhard had originally given permission for priests to undertake factory work for periods of one month with possible renewal. However, the experience of the first priests and the growing number of requests led the clergy and the movements themselves to rethink the role of the worker-priest in the missionary project.

The idea of the worker-priest was also filtering into other Catholic movements and orders that were not necessarily devoted solely to the working-class mission. Beginning in 1947, Alfred Ancel, the superior-general of the Prado missionary movement in Lyon, which had been founded as a mission to the poor in 1860, began sending priests into full-time manual labor, and eventually Ancel became the Catholic church’s first working bishop. In Marseille, a Dominican priest named Jacques Loew was the first full-time worker-priest, who had gone to work on the docks of Marseille in 1941. Loew was part of a Dominican movement called Economie et Humanisme, which was founded in Marseille in 1941 by Louis-Joseph Lebret. Their major project was one of research that would “work toward a confrontation between the social doctrine of the Church and the human sciences, so as to lay the groundwork for a ‘human economy’ that was compatible with Christian ethics.” As a worker-priest in the port of Marseille, Loew

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 400-401.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Arnal, 73.
\item \textsuperscript{116} On the history of Economie et Humanisme, see Denis Pelletier, Economie et Humanisme. De l’Utopie communautaire au combat pour le tiers-monde 1941-1966 (Paris: Cerf, 1996).
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 33.
\end{itemize}
engaged in a sociological study of the dockworker community, which allowed the team to understand the role of Marxism in the communities they were attempting to engage.\footnote{Ibid., 34; Arnal, 72.}

The year 1947 was a turning point for the worker-priest movement: the Second World War was finished, there was a growing number of new priests and seminarians who desired to engage in full-time factory labor, and the leaders of the movements had to deal with the question of ecclesiastical legitimacy. In November 1946, several French leaders of the missionary movement, including Louis Augros of the Mission de France and Père Jacques Hollande of the Mission de Paris, went to Rome for an audience with Pope Pius XII to attempt to get papal support for their projects. In their report in the Mission de France bulletin \textit{Unis pour…}, they described their encounter with the Pope and other Vatican officials. Père Augros described to a sympathetic Pius XII the Church’s separation from the pagan world and the need for papal authority to continue their mission “so that it is not us, but the Church who is going to fight paganism.” Père Hollande added that to succeed and push for incarnation in the pagan milieu, it would be necessary to have worker-priests. While the Pope seemed generally sympathetic to their project, he warned, “Be careful, their vocation is in danger.” It was this concern – that the priesthood would somehow be corrupted by the worker-priests’ immersion in working-class life and factory work that seemed most to worry the hierarchy at this early stage, and several Vatican officials expressed great concern about the project.\footnote{\textit{Unis pour…} 23 December 1946. MDF archives, Le Perreux.} At this point, not much was settled, including several other projects such as a canonical statute for the Lisieux seminary of the Mission de France, or permission for missionary and worker-priests to conduct mass at night, as they had done during the war. Yet the delegates
returned to France with a sense that Rome had heard their case sympathetically and understood their point of view.  

Back in France, the worker-priest mission was beginning to come together. Approximately twenty-five percent of the worker-priests had some training in the Mission de France, while others came from a diverse array of backgrounds and orders, including Jesuits, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Franciscans. Oscar Arnal writes that by the end of 1947, there were twenty-five worker-priests in France, with sixteen in the Mission de Paris, and the others in industrial areas outside of Paris. Although they continued to live in communities and both religious and lay movements developed to support them, including a female version of the Mission de France, and organizations like Madeleine Delbrêl’s missionary project in Ivry-sur-Seine, the engagement of the worker-priest involved an almost complete immersion into the world of the proletarian laborer. It was in the labor itself that the priests discovered the oppression and fate of the working classes, and at the same time a shared community.

Each of the worker-priests went individually to seek a job as a laborer, and in most cases, went into their jobs without telling anyone that they were priests. They did this partly to avoid being treated with suspicion by their fellow workers, who thought they were spies put there by factory bosses. Being incognito also allowed them to fully experience the life of a factory worker without being treated any differently or, more importantly, treated as an enemy. Léon Gahier, a Capuchin worker-priest said in an

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120 Poulat, Naissance des prêtres-ouvriers, 505.
121 Arnal, 68. At the high point of the worker-priest project (1952-1954), there were approximately one hundred worker priests in France.
123 Arnal, 78.
interview, “work was... the main path to our encounter with the workers. There, one couldn’t cheat. Even through our blunders, our clumsiness, our exhaustion, it was a path to truth, a path to proximity, a path to communion.”124 The worker-priests discovered that daily life in the factories was physically fatiguing and mentally alienating, and that the wages barely supported enough to purchase basic necessities. In addition, they also came into contact with dangerous working conditions of industrial life that led to the death of one worker-priest who was crushed to death on the docks in Bordeaux in 1951.125 But it was these hardships that they shared with the proletariat that finally allowed the priests to begin to feel a sense of community with the working classes, and a sense of solidarity in their daily struggles. After the accumulation of these experiences, when the laborers discovered that their comrade was, in fact, a Catholic priest, more often than not it was not derision or suspicion that they encountered, but initially shock and then a sense of openness. Oscar Arnal cites one incident in Marseille in which a militant communist told a priest, “I don’t want a priest at my burial, but André, if you want to bring one of your colleagues, you can.”126

One of the most fascinating results of the worker-priest engagement with the proletariat was their discovery that many of the most exploited workers (the sous-proletariat) were in fact North Africans – particularly Algerians – who had come to France to escape the widespread unemployment at home. The Urban Commission of the Mission de France, formed in 1953, issued several reports on the situation of these workers, including a report from February 1955 in which they noted that these workers

124 Interview with Léon Gahier cited in Suaud and Viet-Depaule, 205.
125 Arnal, 81-82.
126 Ibid., 83
were in a precarious situation in France, obliged to move from job to job, despite the fact that they were often cultivated men with families who were well-respected back home.\footnote{Les Nord-Africains en France” Rapport pour la Commission Urbaine. February 1955. CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1996028 0067, file Jan-Mars 1955.} They had become unwillingly dependent on the country that exploited them, because in Algeria there were no jobs at all. The report also describes the role of this economic exploitation in the growth of (Algerian) nationalist feeling among the Algerian workers, and the solidarity that Algerian workers had for the French proletariat, including adhesion to the CGT and their confidence in the French working class and even the PCF. The report notes:

It doesn’t take a long experience among the Algerians in the metropole to discover… this contact [between the Algerians and the working classes in France] has been a discovery for many Algerians: that the working class, with its lively forces, was as hostile as they were to the money that keeps their country in dependence – that these French were not in solidarity with the so-called French civilization that oppresses Africa.\footnote{Ibid., 9-10.}

They also observed the Muslim reaction to Christianity, and its great sensitivity to the connection between colonialism and the Church, and the tendency to automatically view Christians as racist. The worker-priests, though, were actually making strides in demonstrating that it was possible for Christians to break from their solidarity with colonialism and protest against injustice, even though the struggle against colonialism was only in its infancy.

To take the ultimate step in demonstrating solidarity, the worker-priests realized that they had to engage in the political battles of the working classes, so for most worker-priests, the decision to join labor unions was not even in question. At this time, the most obvious choice was the CGT (Confédération générale du travail), the union controlled by
communists, since the majority of workers belonged to this union as the most militant.

The other choice was the Christian union, the CFTC (*Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens*), but this union was generally seen as too bourgeois, and reformist. Joining the CFTC would likely have pleased the Catholic Church but would have appeared to the workers as a betrayal of the proletariat.¹²⁹ Oscar Arnal argues

> No matter what logic prompted their membership in this-or-that local or federation, their reasons for joining the working class movement in general were shared almost unanimously. Membership meant both full identity with the proletariat and total solidarity with its liberation struggle.¹³⁰

In the eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities, however, it also meant engaging in an openly partisan political struggle, and one whose objectives were in direct conflict with those of more conservative elements of the Catholic Church, including the Vatican.

While the ACA and the majority of the French Catholic leadership had never been entirely supportive of the idea of the worker-priests, it was the labor union question and the political engagement with communism that put the entire project into jeopardy, and even called the Mission de France seminary into question. The Vatican’s hard line position against communism had ruled out any possible official promotion of Catholic dialogue with Marxism. Yet the experience of the worker-priests and the missionary movement with the urban working classes was demonstrating that the only possibilities for success within a proletarian milieu that had hardened itself against bourgeois Catholicism was complete immersion in the poverty and difficult life of the working-classes and a shared sense of solidarity in their oppression and struggle for liberation. For the worker-priests, that also entailed engagement in their political struggle, which was

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¹²⁹ Arnal, 85.
¹³⁰ Ibid., 86.
expressed in terms of Marxist ideas and engagement in communism. Even as the worker-priests and Catholic intellectuals in France were struggling to find a way to engage with Marxism, which they viewed as an economic and political philosophy that had bearing on post-WWII Christianity, the Vatican was attempting to curb any attempts by French Catholics to renovate Catholic theology or practice with “atheism” because it would diminish the fundamental power of the sacramental priesthood.

**The Progressivist Crisis and its Consequences**

In the aftermath of World War II, the authority of the French Catholic episcopate was in crisis. Its enthusiastic support for the Vichy regime and its general refusal to support resistance movements or to denounce the deportation of the Jews or various Nazi atrocities had left them with virtually no moral authority. The argument of the Catholic hierarchy throughout the first half of the twentieth century that stressed the “primacy of the spiritual” had been publicly tossed out the window with the French episcopate’s open support for the National Revolution. One major consequence was that the postwar French government, in its pursuit of an *épuration* of the nation, demanded the resignation of twenty-two French clergyman, including three cardinals.131 Although the Catholic hierarchy still attempted to claim that Catholics should focus on the spiritual and stay away from political life, the postwar period ushered in a new era of Catholic support for the French republic and open engagement in the political sphere. Church collaboration with Vichy had completely discredited the Catholic Right, which led to the emergence of

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131 Émile Poulat, *Une Église ébranlée. Changement, conflit et continuité de Pie XII à Jean-Paul II* (Paris: Casterman, 1980), 62. In the end, the new papal nuncio, Mgr Roncalli negotiated the resignation of three clergymen, of which one took place, and a few subsidiary measures.
a diverse and broadly-defined Catholic Left. The Catholic Left was not a unified political movement, and it was divided, in particular, over the question of communism. In the first postwar elections in France, the French Communist Party had gained the largest number of votes, which shocked and frightened an enormous number of Catholics, who had been indoctrinated since the interwar period with the belief that communism was the enemy of Catholicism. The Vatican, which continued to maintain that atheistic communism was the greatest enemy to Christianity, did little to discourage this perspective.

In early 1949, several members of the French hierarchy, including Cardinal Liénart, the prelate of the Mission de France, and Cardinal Suhard, issued statements warning Catholics against collaboration with communists. Later that year, a decree from the Vatican declared that Catholics could not become members of the Communist Party, nor publish any document that supported the doctrine or action of communists. Furthermore, it stated, the Church should not give the Sacraments to any Catholic who violated these rules, and it was within the power of the Church to excommunicate “the faithful who profess the materialist and antichristian doctrine of the communists and especially those who defend or propagate [it].” Well before these decrees had set forth such stark penalties for those Catholics who collaborated with communists, the majority of Catholics in France were becoming increasingly concerned about the growing power of the Communist Party in France. As the Cold War climate began to take over, the small group of Catholics on the left who were advocating some form of cooperation and dialogue with communism were becoming the targets of suspicion and condemnations.

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132 Fouilloux, Les chrétiens français entre crise et liberation, 271-274.
The accusations were mainly directed at Catholics who were engaged in the missionary movement – the worker-priests in particular – and Catholic priests, journalists, and intellectuals who participated in movements like the Union of Progressivist Christians (Union des chrétiens progressistes), Economie et Humanisme, or wrote for journals like La Quinzaine, Jeunesse de l’Eglise, and in some cases Esprit.

The interlacing of the missionary movement and the Catholic dialogue with communism in the late 1940s and early 1950s was something that only occurred in France, and resulted in a movement that has been pejoratively called “Christian progressivism” (progressisme chrétien). In France, however, the engagement of the worker-priests in the CGT and in working-class political movements, including the peace movement, which advocated diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in the face of growing Cold War rearmament, coincided with a movement among leftist Catholic intellectuals toward a dialogue with Marxism. The collaboration and mutual support of these two movements led to them both being qualified as “progressivists” and denounced vociferously by the more conservative elements within the Catholic Church. It also made the worker-priest project incredibly vulnerable, and its connection to the political movement of “progressivism” was one of the main reasons the Vatican gave when it ordered the “experiment” to be shut down in 1954.

The definition of “Christian progressivism” is incredibly murky, partly because those who participated in the loosely organized movement rarely defined themselves as such. Rather, it was a term that was used by those who sought to denounce their religious
and political positions, and so from its inception had a very negative connotation.\textsuperscript{134} Yvon Tranvouez, who has written the most complete history of the movement, has distinguished two major phases: the first, which lasted between 1943 and 1949, was when the actors and ideas began to be defined, against the backdrop of the Second World War, and based in the heritage of social Catholicism and a rejection of the categorical anticommunism of the Catholic Church. The second phase, which he calls the “progressivist crisis,” lasted between 1950 and 1955 to 1957, and this was when the Catholic leadership called into question the ideas and projects of the movement, and eventually they were condemned, and in several cases, shut down by the Vatican.\textsuperscript{135}

Christian progressivism was not a movement with any sort of organized body, but rather it was made up of Catholics who were connected though personal ties, through adherence to organizations like the \textit{Mouvement de la Paix}, or the Union of Progressivist Christians, through journals like \textit{La Quinzaine}, \textit{Esprit}, or \textit{Jeunesse de l’Eglise}, or simply through religious institutions like the Mission de France or religious orders. Those who condemned them accused them of being fellow travelers of communism, which was in most cases patently untrue. However they did reject the outright anticommunism of the Catholic Church and they openly critiqued the social doctrine of the Church, which they viewed, in light of the experiences of the missionary movement in the previous years, as stuck in the mentality of the liberal, bourgeois Church. In the Cold War atmosphere of the postwar Catholic Church, this was enough for the Catholic hierarchy to attempt to marginalize them definitively from the Church, a situation that lasted until Vatican II.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 43-44.
The missionary movement and the worker-priest project were only one aspect of Christian progressivism, and, in fact, the more well-known “progressivists” were Catholic intellectuals and journalists, both lay and clergy, who wrote articles and edited journals that examined theological ideas and political events with the intention of engaging the Church in the problems of modern life, including the growth of communism. At the same moment that the Mission de France and Mission de Paris were taking shape in the Occupied Zone of France, debates about this question of engagement were taking place within the editorial team of the clandestine Catholic newspaper, the *Cahiers du Témoignage chrétien* (TC), which began in Lyon in November 1941 under the leadership of Père Chaillet.\(^\text{136}\) By 1943, TC had become the major mouthpiece of the Catholic left, taking the place of prewar leftist journals like *Esprit* and *Temps Nouveau* that were struggling to stay afloat in clandestinity in the unoccupied zone. The project of TC (both the movement and the journal) during World War II were always described in terms of a “spiritual resistance” yet their actions indicate a rejection of the dogma of the “primacy of the spiritual” and an acceptance of the fact that their Christian faith compelled them to engage in the temporal sphere and take political positions. As André Mandouze, the editor of TC noted, “the so-called ‘spiritual’ variant [of resistance] was in the end inseparable from all the others, civil or armed.”\(^\text{137}\)

Mandouze wrote the article titled “People, You are Free” that appeared on the front page of the issue that was published at the Liberation of France, and it largely

\(^{136}\) Renée Bédarida, *Les Armes de l’Esprit. Témoignage Chrétien (1941-1944)* (Paris: Les Éditions ouvrières, 1988), 47. Témoignage chrétien’s founder Père Chaillet was also the head of the resistance movement *Amitié chrétienne*, which worked closely with Cimade in Lyon. See chapter 1 for more on their actions in Lyon.

summed up the point of view of those who had fought the Nazis in the name of Christian principles, while subtly chastising those who had either supported the fascist position or done nothing.\textsuperscript{138} He wrote:

> For the last three years, our \textit{Cahiers}, and our \textit{Courriers} have proven that the true Christians have refused this slow, but progressive and mortal poison that wanted to absorb us... But you must know how to use this liberty... We must relearn political life, even though for four years, they have tried to make it disgusting to you forever by telling you that it was better for you to do other things, to take care of your own business.\textsuperscript{139}

The solidarity of purpose that the members of TC had felt during the war disintegrated over the question of communism, in a manner that reflects a larger division within the French Catholic left that occurred after World War II.

One of the most important developments within French Catholicism after the war was the establishment of a political party called the MRP (\textit{Mouvement républicain populaire}), which was the brainchild of a former Catholic youth leader, résistant, and \textit{Témoignage chrétien} collaborator named Gilbert Dru.\textsuperscript{140} The MRP was created in November 1944 with the intention of situating itself between the right and the communists as a Christian Democratic party in the tradition of \textit{Le Sillon}, and with the dynamism of the Catholic Action movements.\textsuperscript{141} It defined itself in opposition to the Vichy government, partly in its name – with the specific use of the word “republican” – and its open support for Charles de Gaulle. It followed a fairly mainstream political and

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 129.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 15. The MRP included among its founders Marc Sangnier, who founded \textit{Le Sillon}, as well as Maurice Schumann, Georges Bidault, and Gaston Teissier, one of the founders of the CFTC, the Christian labor union.
religious social platform that echoed the Catholic Church’s social doctrine. In the years immediately following the war, the MRP had considerable electoral success, becoming the strongest political party in France in the June 1946 elections, partly because of the considerable support of Catholic youth.\textsuperscript{142} For many French Catholics, the MRP was seen as the best defense against the growing power of communism.

In 1946, Père Gaston Fessard, a Jesuit priest who was the editor of the first edition of \textit{Témoignage chrétien} in 1941, titled “France, Beware of Losing Your Soul,” published a small book under the TC imprimatur called \textit{France, Beware of Losing Your Liberty}.\textsuperscript{143} In this book, Père Fessard condemned the totalitarianism and atheism of the Soviet communist system – in response to the electoral success of the French Communist Party in the postwar elections in 1946. The decision to publish the book had been taken by Père Chailllet without the input of André Mandouze, who felt that he was isolated within the journal because of his views on the possibilities of positive collaboration with communists, both from his experience in the resistance, and as an intellectual position.\textsuperscript{144} Mandouze then decided to leave TC, and took a position as a professor of Latin at the University of Algiers, while still writing articles, particularly for \textit{Temps présent}, and later for several other journals, including \textit{La Quinzaine} and \textit{Esprit}.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 15-16.
\textsuperscript{144} Mandouze, 156-158.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Temps Présent} was the direct descendant of the disgraced interwar Dominican journal \textit{Sept}. It began publication in November 1937, edited by the Catholic writer Stanislas Fumet, who had close ties to Jacques Maritain and François Mauriac, as well as to the Dominicans of Saulchoir. In the late 1930s, the journal published articles by Maritain, Mauriac, Maurice Schumann, and tended toward a moderate leftist Catholic perspective that critiqued fascism without adopting any revolutionary positions. After WWII, the journal fell apart because of the dispersal of its original correspondents (Mauriac now
In 1947, Mandouze became one of the members of an organization called the Union of Progressivist Christians. Ella Sauvegeot, the Catholic convert who was close to the Dominicans and who had managed the now defunct Temps présent, sympathized with the “progressivist” position and was friends with Mandouze (even visiting him in Algiers), and assisted several participants in the movement with the printing of a collective text called Les Chrétiens et la politique (Christians and Politics) at the Éditions du Temps présent in late 1948. In this book, Mandouze published an article titled, “Take the Outstretched Hand,” in which he articulated the major argument of the “progressivist” position: “The fact of progressivism signifies the recognition that no revolution is possible without the communists, but that the communists cannot do it by themselves.” He then argued that it was with the help of Christians, who brought to atheistic Marxism a sense of Christian ethics, that political progress could occur. But that did not mean that “progressivist” Christians necessarily adopted wholeheartedly all of the tenants of Marxism or Soviet communism. The basis of their position was that they recognized the fundamental value of Marxism in the analysis of the economic and political structures of the class system, but that dialogue should happen with the communists themselves, not with the political ideology.

One of the best examples of how “progressivist” Christians analyzed Marx and defined the need for dialogue with communists is in the theological work of the Dominican theologian Marie-Dominique Chenu. Ever since the Vatican placed L’école wrote for Le Figaro, Maritian was the ambassador of France to the Vatican, Maurice Schumann had joined the MRP, and Georges Hourdin had gone to found La Vie catholique illustrée), and discord among the administrators over defining their identity, and stopped printing in May 1947. See Tranvouez, 52-68.  

146 Ibid., 79.  
147 Mandouze, 193.
du théologie: Le Saulchoir on the Index in 1942, and he had been removed from his functions at Saulchoir, he had been living at the Dominican center in Paris and participating in the growth of the missionary movement, giving conferences on theology at the Mission de France seminary and publishing theological texts. In 1945, Chenu published an article in the review *Economie et Humanisme* that was a theological engagement with Marxism, in which he argued that Marxism was much more than just an economic theory. He wrote, “Communism does not only have the character of a historical social and political force, it includes a general vision of things and of men, it is built within a total universe of faith and thought. We are witnessing a spiritual revolution, even within an economic revolution.”¹⁴⁸ In recognizing certain fundamental truths in Marxist theory, Christians could begin to finally engage with a theology of labor and the working classes.

It did not necessarily mean either that Christians had to accept the atheism of Soviet communism or its totalitarian methods. Yet Chenu argued that Christians could not just “steal the good bits of Marxist humanism and leave the bad ones,” but that “what is needed is to show that economic analysis does not require us to make religion an ideology of superstructure. The main thing, in doctrine and in action, is to render vain the materialist motive of Marxism, and establish that religion is not an alienation of humanity.”¹⁴⁹ Père Chenu viewed the dialogue that should occur between Christianity and Marxism as something that should take place both on a philosophical level and on the level of praxis. In terms of theology, Chenu argued that the Church could only begin to

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 67-68.
fully engage with the working classes after it understood the revolution that had taken place in the nature of labor (which Marxism explained). It is clear why Chenu’s perspective provided much of the theological basis for the worker-priest project.

Père Chenu was collaborating at this time with a network of “progressivist” Christians that was developing in Paris around Ella Sauvegeot and a group of Dominicans, including several members of *Economie et Humanisme*, who were engaged in the working-class mission in the Thirteenth Arrondissement of Paris. In July 1949, Père Henri Desroches, one of the original members of *Economie et Humanisme*, published a book called *The Meaning of Marxism*, which was a collection of articles that had been published between 1946 and 1948 in a diverse array of journals including *Esprit*, and the *Cahiers de Jeunesse de l’Église*. Desroches tended toward an existentialist reading of Marx, but his theology was based in the experience of the missionary movement and the worker-priest project, both of which had in common a reference to Hegel. Although the book found a fairly warm reception within the French intellectual community, Père Fessard soundly condemned its philosophical reasoning, and on top of the decree from Rome against collaboration with communists, which occurred just after the publication of the book, Desroches was essentially ostracized for his views. The book also led to a rupture with Père Lebret and the *Economie et Humanisme*.

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150 On the Catholics in the XIIIe, who included the Mission de France, the Dominican team on the avenue d’Italie, and a large team from *Economie et Humanisme*, see Tranvouez, chapter 10.
151 Pelletier, *Economie et Humanisme*, 222-243. *Esprit* had more success in its postwar resurrection, although Emmanuel Mounier saw the need for the journal to break with its past, and its prewar ties to the Catholic Right and the now discredited episcopate. His views on communism had evolved over the course of the war, and the new *Esprit* advocated dialogue and cooperation with the French Communist Party and was openly hostile to both the MRP and the United States.
152 Ibid., 231-268.
Humanisme team, who were asked by the ACA to distance themselves publicly from Desroches’ positions on communism, leading Desroches to resign from the team in May 1950. In Paris, however, he was part of a group of likeminded individuals who were forming a new journal dedicated to a “progressivist” point of view: La Quinzaine.

Although several other journals of the period are known for their “progressivist” positions, the most well-known of which include the Cahiers de Jeunesse de l’Église on the more extreme end and Esprit, on the more moderate, La Quinzaine is in many ways the best example of what it was to be “progressivist” in France in the early 1950s. In examining its articles, its political and theological positions, its writers, its readership, and the reasons why the Catholic mainstream and hierarchy pushed for its extinction, one can get a sense of the issues at stake all those concerned. The journal was the brainchild of its managing-director Ella Sauvegeot and four Dominican priests – Pères Boisselot, Chenu, Desroches, and Robert. Led by Jacques Chatagner, of Jeunesse de l’Église, the journal was “a journal of militants, created by and for militants.” The editors and journalists were volunteers, not professionals, and included several workers, union militants, missionaries, and militants from movements like the Union of Progressivist

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153 Ibid., 271-281. In 1951, Père Desroches requested that his book no longer be printed, which avoided a Vatican condemnation. That same year, he also left the Dominican order.
155 After a series of internal conflicts, Père Desroches withdrew from the journal to avoid causing more scandal. Père Boisselot, who was skeptical about the whole affair served as a sort of watchdog, and Père Chenu was the theological influence over the journal during its entire printing. See Tranvouez, chapters 3-4.
Christians. The contributors were, for the most part, young Catholics and Protestants who had been involved in Catholic Action movements, or the resistance.\textsuperscript{156}

*La Quinzaine* was, from its origins, an ecumenical journal, bringing together Catholics and Protestants who opposed the anticommunism of the Christian churches and sought dialogue with communism both as a means to peace (announcing its “resistance to war” in the first editorial) and a Christian engagement with the proletariat. Its goal was to be an “informational journal, emanating from deliberately progressivist zones, for militant Christians.”\textsuperscript{157} It engaged directly with political issues, including the Cold War and communism. Some of its earliest issues included articles by Protestants like Karl Barth and Georges Casalis on German rearmament and communism, and by André Trocmé on “the spiritual basis of conscientious objection.” There were in the same issue as an article by Père Chenu that argued that, as opposed to the argument that many were putting forward that there were two types of peace (the military, and the “angels”), “the peace of the Gospel and peace on earth, there is only one, and it is easy to recognize: it is

\textsuperscript{156} Tranvouez, 116-118. Historian Yvon Tranvouez writes that *La Quinzaine* attempted to bring together three different currents within the “progressivist” movement, which made up its main readership. The first were the former members of the UCP or those who were politically engaged with the creation of a “New Left,” whether in their disappointment with the MRP or in a desire to form an alliance with the PCF (French Communist Party); in their political engagement, they had “escaped the orbit of social Catholicism.” The second group includes the worker-priests and those who were engaged around the question of the missionary movement to the working classes in France, and who were engaged with union activity or communism through their sacerdotal activity in the proletariat. The third were the “spiritual progressivists” who “rejected the model of fundamentalist Catholicism and sought an alternative model of thoughtful Christianity in the midst of the new world.” Although the number of readers who subscribed to the journal never rose much above six thousand, it seems to have been a fairly loyal and convinced group, even despite the various condemnations against it.\textsuperscript{157} Tranvouez, 110.
the peace of the small and the poor.” Several prominent members of the editorial team had also approved (if not signed) the Stockholm Appeal and the manifesto of “Christians against the atomic bomb,” which Père Desroches and the Catholics in the Thirteenth arrondissement organized.

The contributors to La Quinzaine also demonstrated a marked engagement in the problems of French colonialism, and in several cases strongly anticolonial positions. In March 1951, Claude Gerard wrote an article on Vietnamese Christians and the Indochinese War in which she deconstructed the argument that the justification for the war was to defend the indigenous Vietnamese Christians from communism. She wrote:

Solution of force, napalm bombs, scorched earth? In accepting this humiliating condition that consists of begging for weapons from a foreign power to accomplish this inhuman task. Indefinite extension of the conflict? French dead, Vietnamese dead, African dead? Torture and pillage… If this is the price for defending Christian liberty, then it is blasphemy to defend this liberty, or simply, this is a screen that is covering up something else, that is to say, the materialist interests of colonialism or government bad faith.

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159 Tranvouez, 277-. Those who approved the Stockholm Appeal included Pères Chenu, Desroches and Robert, along with forty-three other personalities within the Parisian Catholic Left.

160 This can likely be attributed to several factors, the first of which is that like the worker-priests and the Mission de France who discovered the injustices of the colonial system through their direct experiences of the oppression of the working classes in France, those who were engaged in combating the oppression of the proletariat politically (i.e., through some alliance with communism) were drawn into the issue of the oppression of colonized peoples, first through the war in Indochina (as a war against communism), and then in Africa, as a larger philosophical and political question. See the example of the Christians of the XIIe in Paris in Tranvouez, chapter 10.

Later articles on colonialism, including an editorial on “dependent peoples,” in which the journal answered the criticism that they had spoken very little about all of the “positive work” that France had done in the colonies by stating that this work was only for the benefit of private interests and not for either colonized peoples or the French, express much the same opinion – that Christianity should not be used to defend colonialism, particularly against the threat of encroaching communism.\textsuperscript{162}

The second factor is that among the personalities involved in \textit{La Quinzaine} and in the “progressivist” movement were several who were directly engaged in some form of anticolonial activities on the ground. The best example of this is André Mandouze, who was originally chosen to become the editor-in-chief of \textit{La Quinzaine} but who had decided to stay in Algiers, where he was in the early stages of his intensifying engagement in anticolonial activism. He continued to publish articles in the journal, however, throughout the early 1950s, especially on topics related to the devastating inequalities in Algeria and the rise of Algerian nationalism.\textsuperscript{163} In February 1951, a small article noted the launching of Mandouze’s new journal \textit{Consciences algériennes}, a “high quality review where, in a fraternal companionship – Christian and Muslim, “\textit{colons}” and “\textit{indigènes},” affront the scandal that led to perpetuating the division of a world in two humanities.”\textsuperscript{164} \textit{La Quinzaine} was a journal that seemed to take very seriously what people like Mandouze had to say, and an editorial from April 1952, in which the editors wrote:


\textsuperscript{163} Tranvouez, 100. See André Mandouze, “Le Front Algérien de la Liberté,” \textit{La Quinzaine}, n. 18, 15 August-1 September, 1951; André Mandouze, “Qui mettra fin aux deux formes actuelles de terrorisme autorisé : la police et la presse?,” \textit{La Quinzaine}, n. 92, 15 November 1954.

It is now clear that France – or more precisely the government, which, unfortunately speaks and acts in the name of France – has chosen a policy in North Africa. This policy, known as “firmness,” is, in fact, a policy of violence and repression that, under the cover of purely illusory reform, deliberately ignores the most legitimate aspirations of peoples to independence. The result is immediate. After Vietnam, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco are now passing to “Resistance.”

Although several other well-known Catholic journals and editorialists, including Robert Barrat and François Mauriac, were very much concerned about the situation in Morocco at this time, few were including Algeria yet as among those countries on the verge of independence. *La Quinzaine*’s inclusion was likely because of Mandouze.

The question of political engagement was at the center of the “progressivist” agenda, but it was also the cause of many internal conflicts, and the major source of criticism from the Catholic hierarchy. Although the “progressivists” were not unified in their ideas of how engaged Christians should be in political movements like the PCF, much of the basis for the “progressivist” viewpoint came from the critique of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church – which asserted that politics was separate from the social sphere – that had been developing since the interwar period. The real issue at stake was whether or not the Church had the right and duty to suggest “technical solutions” to social and/or political problems. In March 1953, an editorial in *La Quinzaine* exposed the complexities of this question and its historical context. The writer, in a moment of clerical attachment to the hierarchy, noted that because of the historical situation of the Church in the nineteenth century, it had been necessary to separate the spiritual from the temporal, which was the reason why the Church had adopted the

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166 Ibid., 177-179.
“primacy of the spiritual” path for so long. However, he continued, this no longer functioned when faced with the problems of the contemporary world: “our faith does not tell us direction of what the temporal organization of the human community should be… our faith, we have already said, gives us requirements, not solutions.”167 This situation, ideally, allowed for the Christian to be free to determine the best way to achieve these requirements, and their “technical solutions.”

In this vein, “progressivist” members of La Quinzaine who believed that some engagement in the political sphere and some cooperation with communists was necessary could use the Church’s own claim that it was not the entity that should be giving “technical solutions,” and that Christians should be free to decide for themselves their own political engagement to argue that the hierarchy had no real basis to criticize them for their dialogue with communists. The problem, however, was that this could hold true for laymen and women, but what about when it was the clergy who were politically engaged, as was the case with the worker-priests? Additionally, the Catholic hierarchy did not seem to be swayed by this logic, particularly when they sensed the influence of the so-called “progressivists” on the Catholic left.

La Quinzaine and the “progressivist” movement more generally had been preoccupied by the missionary movement; in part its membership was largely made up of members of missionary organizations, including the Mission de France and the Mission de Paris as well as the Catholic Action movements. By the early 1950s, as the Catholic hierarchy were beginning to call the theological orientation of the missionary movement and the political engagements of the worker-priests into question, those who were already

167 “Les chrétiens que le monde attend,” La Quinzaine, n. 52, 1 March 1953.
suspicious of the “progressivist” tendencies of *La Quinzaine* saw the journal as the mouthpiece of the worker-priest movement and the sign of their “unfortunate politicization.” Even though they were, with the exception of Père Chenu, laymen and women, the ACA found several of their positions objectionable and in December 1952, advised the militants of the Catholic Action movements to no longer subscribe to any directives in *La Quinzaine*. Just a few days before, Cardinal Feltin had sent the editors of the journal a list of the reproaches that the ACA had established against the journal, which included “the separation of the spiritual and temporal, linked to the minimization of the teachings of the Church on social matters”; “an abnormal sympathy for communism”; “constant criticism of the Church and a refusal to see its ‘good sides’ or its ‘fruitful activity’”; “a violent anticolonialism ‘without ever remembering what was valuable in the activities of so many French colonials (missionaries)’”; and “a ‘sometimes unjust’ opposition to the Franco regime.” The political complaints were tied to their positions in favor of cooperation and dialogue with communism, however the comments about the “constant criticism” are fascinating because this was also the moment when the French hierarchy was beginning to align itself more closely with the Vatican on questions of political engagement, anticommunism, and obedience to the hierarchy.

**The End of the Worker-Priest “Experiment”**

Although there had been criticism of the missionary movement and the “progressivists” since the early 1940s, the real drama began with the death of Cardinal

168 Ibid., 110.
170 Cited in Tranvouez, 161-163.
Suhard in 1949. As the inspiration behind the Mission de France and the Mission de Paris, and a powerful figure within the ACA, he had protected the missionary movement from many of the attacks from conservative forces within the Catholic Church. After his death, Cardinal Liénart, the archbishop of Lille, took over charge of the Mission de France, and though he was in sympathy with the seminary and the missionary movement, he could not completely head off the charges that the Mission de France was itself a “progressivist” institution. Ever since the end of World War II, the Mission de France seminary had been attempting to get permanent canonical status from the ACA and the Vatican. In October 1947, the ACA approved the statutes but wanted to submit them to the Vatican for approval. Rome provisionally approved them in May 1949, but the ACA appointed an Episcopal commission to oversee the seminary, and this commission found several elements with which to reproach the Mission de France, and in particular, its superior, Louis Augros.

In March 1952, Cardinal Liénart issued an admonition to Louis Augros and the MDF in the name of the Episcopal commission and the ACA. What this document demonstrates is how concerned the ACA was with the lack of control it had over the missionary movement, the theology behind it, and their growing discomfort with the political engagement of the worker-priests. The document listed numerous problems, both with the structure of the MDF, including the fact that bishops did not have enough say in the individual workings of the teams, and that the MDF priests were not really following the Vatican’s orders. The Vatican wanted the seminary to “give supplemental clergy to the dioceses the most in need of priests; animate a missionary spirit, adapted to
France and destined for the particularly dechristianized regions.\textsuperscript{171} Without naming any names, the admonition also subtly attempted to subvert the authority of the major theologians behind the missionary movement, including Pères Chenu and Congar by claiming that it was only bishops who were the “guardians of the faith, and the leaders of the apostolate.”\textsuperscript{172} Tangi Cavalin and Nathalie Viet-Depaule argue that this part of the document is disconcerting, considering that the role of the theologians at the seminary was not that of “the exclusive authority,” as the Cardinal was claiming. This overreaction against the theologians seems to indicate the extent to which they had destabilized the Catholic hierarchy, who perceived them as having a tendency to “reject established methods” and openly criticize the Church. Moreover they had an ally in the Vatican, which still maintained a suspicion of the “new theology” (i.e. Neo-Thomism).

Just a few years before the Cardinal’s admonition, the 1950 Vatican encyclical \textit{Humani generis} rejected any infiltration of Christian theology with modern philosophy like existentialism, or “a certain historicism, which attributing value only to the events of man's life, overthrows the foundation of all truth and absolute law, both on the level of philosophical speculations and especially to Christian dogmas.”\textsuperscript{173} What the encyclical clearly rejected was those Christians – and this seems to be directed at the missionary movement – who “are presumptive enough to question seriously whether theology and theological methods, such as with the approval of ecclesiastical authority are found in our

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid. On this point, see Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 151.
\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Humani generis}, 12 August 1950. Statement about how this is a critique also against Congar’s \textit{Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église}.
schools, should not only be perfected, but also completely reformed, in order to promote the more efficacious propagation of the kingdom of Christ everywhere throughout the world." The argument of the encyclical is that priests and theologians do not have the right to criticize the Church or attempt to reform it but that they are subject to the authority of the Church.

The question of authority lay at the heart of the ACA’s main criticism of the seminary, which was based on the MDF’s claim that it was creating a new genre of clergy, trained especially for the mission field, and therefore a new form of priesthood. The commission and the ACA rejected that idea, saying “the Catholic priesthood has received from our Lord its essential characteristics, which we cannot change. The priest is in charge of the worship of God and the mediation between God and men, his role is religious. He has a message to be transmitted in full and a sacramental ministry to exercise to communicate grace.” These statements are a very clear criticism of the new missionary point of view, in which the missionary priest’s role was to integrate himself into the culture of the proletariat, and a forceful negation of any allowance for political engagement on the part of priests. The document also warned the seminary against leading its students into thinking that their goal should be to become worker-priests, an institution he describes as “burgeoning and still undecided.”

The worker-priests were the most egregious example of this “new priesthood” that the ACA was so concerned about, and since the MDF seemed to be the seminary that was supplying many of the worker-priests, this was a situation that needed to be addressed. “Even if it is natural that the seminary should be interested in the worker-

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174 Ibid.
175 “Monition du Cardinal Liénart,” 110.
priests as an eminent form of the missionary apostolate,” the Cardinal wrote, “the Mission de France seminary ‘can’ give worker-priests, but it is not ‘made’ to give them.”176 At this point in time, when the ACA was struggling to take control of the worker-priests and the various movements that were quickly moving out of their control, they only had a few options, which included warning Catholics away, condemning those who dared to criticize the Church – another of the reproaches to the MDF – or shutting down the institution. Instead the ACA opted to remove Louis Augros as superior, and the seminary moved from Lisieux to Limoges, which threw the seminary into disarray, particularly as they were constantly invaded with “oversight commissions” from the ACA and Rome to make sure things were running according to the hierarchy’s plan.177 In July 1953, the Mission de France was swept up in the repression against the “progressivists” when the Vatican forbade all seminary students from undertaking any sort of work as “stagiaires” (interns), which hit the MDF hard, since that was their introduction to factory work. A few months later, the Vatican notified Cardinal Liénart that the seminary would be closed, although with some intense negotiation on the part of forces who were sympathetic to the missionary movement, including Mgr Montini (the future Pope Paul VI), the seminary was allowed to remain open.178

The worker-priests, however, did not fare so well. By 1952, the worker-priest project was at the center of the “progressivist crisis” in the French Catholic Church. The

176 Ibid., 110-111.
177 Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 161-163.
178 Ibid., 178-181. One of the conditions that Rome gave for the seminary’s continued existence was that its delegate to the Episcopal commission, Daniel Perrot, who had been hired to temporarily replace Louis Augros, not become the vicaire général, mainly because a book that he had published in 1949 (Sous la tente de Dieu) had been placed on the Vatican Index in 1954.
major issues at stake were the political engagements of the worker-priests, particularly in communist-oriented movements like the CGT and the *Mouvement de la Paix* and the increasing tensions between the priests and the hierarchy, particularly the more conservative bishops who felt they had no control over the worker-priests. The question of political engagement was by far the bigger problem, and it threatened to tear apart even the worker-priest community, as an internal breach was growing between those who believed that the worker-priests could and should participate fully in political engagements, including strike activities or playing leadership roles in the CGT. On one side of the spectrum were worker-priests like Léon Gahier who believed that “militancy [in the CGT] is not a choice, but is part of one’s being as a worker-priest.” On the other was Mgr Alfred Ancel, the superior of Prado in Lyon, who was completely against any engagement in trade union or strike activity, as it violated the very essence of the priesthood. The majority of the Catholic hierarchy agreed with him.

In 1951, in an effort to come to some agreement between the worker-priests and the bishops, Mgr Ancel came up with the idea to create an instruction manual called the *Directory* (*Directoire*) that would serve as the guide for the conduct of the worker-priests and be a document to which the worker-priests could offer suggestions, even though it was clearly an attempt to circumscribe their political activities. The project was first submitted to Mgr Ottaviani in Rome who made clear that the most important thing was to

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179 Arnal, 138-144.
180 Interview with Léon Gahier, cited in Suaud and Viet-Depaule, 281.
182 Ibid., 141.
steer the worker-priests clear of “doctrinal errors,” and wrote that “Since the fruits of this form of apostolate are still so limited, one wonders anxiously whether these priests, animated with such a spirit of sacrifice would not realize, even for the working class, a much greater good by returning to ordinary ministry in the popular quarters and suburbs of large cities.” The worker-priest movement had few allies in the Vatican, and it turned out, few allies within the French hierarchy either. The Directory ordered the priests to be submissive to their bishops, remember that they were sent to the proletariat to evangelize and not to lead their effort at liberation, and stay out of any “particular groups” (i.e. unions). They further demanded that a strict division between the clergy and the laity be maintained, so that instead of engaging directly in political or union activities, the priest should coordinate with the Catholic Action movements or the parish itself. They were also supposed to keep an “open spirit” to all social worlds and understand their legitimate aspirations, and not get completely “infested” in the “workers’ mentality.”

Unsurprisingly, the worker-priest response to the Directory was highly vocal and highly negative. In an emergency meeting of the worker-priests in Lyon in October 1951, a letter from Père Chenu was read aloud that expressed the view that Mgr Ancel’s intervention “betrayed the promise of their venture,” and the result of the meeting was that the worker-priests openly rejected the Directory. Over the next couple of years, the tensions between the worker-priests and the hierarchy continued to build, and in 1953,

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185 Leprieur, 324. Also cited in Suaud and Viet-Depaule, 455.
Cardinal Feltin ordered Jacques Hollande of the Mission de Paris to forbid his priests from exercising leadership roles in the CGT and the *Mouvement de la Paix*.\(^{186}\) Despite the French hierarchy’s concerns about the political engagement of the worker-priests and their lack of control, the push to shut the project down came from Rome, not the ACA. On September 23, 1953, the papal nuncio gathered twenty-six members of the French hierarchy together to announce that the Vatican had decided to end the worker-priest “experiment,” and that it was the task of the French bishops to announce the news to the priests themselves.\(^{187}\)

Cardinal Liénart, one of the main defenders of the Mission de France and the worker-priests, called the order “a catastrophe for the Church of France and for the working-class. They have greatly exaggerated the “accidents.” I can only praise my worker-priests. And I don’t see how they could have done anything other than they have… The repercussions of this suppression in the working-class milieu will be considerable.”\(^{188}\) He and Cardinal Feltin went to Rome to attempt to convince the Vatican to revoke the order, however several events the previous year, including the worker-priests participation in strike movements, and their denunciation of Gaston Tessier, the head of the Catholic labor union (the CFTC), had convinced the Vatican that the “experiment” had gone too far. The cardinals’ negotiations with Rome resulted in a sort of accommodation, so that the Vatican did not completely outlaw the entire missionary

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\(^{186}\) Arnal, 144.
\(^{187}\) Ibid., 145.
\(^{188}\) Leprieur, 341.
project for priests, in the sense that they would still allow “priests to the working classes,” however they would no longer be allowed to work.189

The cardinals returned to France to break the news to their priests, and the worker-priests put up one last fight to try and convince the Vatican of the necessity of their ministry and their engagement. The documents that they produced attempted to demonstrate that what they had experienced was something much greater and more permanent than a mere “experiment”; the “prêtres des barrages” [priests who worked on dams] wrote, “We have become workers, our beings have been profoundly transformed, our priestly conscience has been born and is married to this mission, to such a point that we cannot live outside of the working-class world.”190 In answering the charges concerning their politicization, the Parisian worker-priests argued in their famous “Green Document:”

We have learned that politics does not mean the same thing for a bourgeois as it does for a worker. In fact, for the bourgeois, who is assured of his bread and his future, it is nothing but a liberal art. For a worker, it is the defense of his bread, of his skin and his future. And in consequence, we must do the politics of the working class, on penalty of no longer being an honest worker. We have learned that this struggle is as much spiritual as material, to the contrary of what they say, for the working class struggles as well and at the same time for new human relationships, for a transformation of the conditions of human existence and for a new promotion of humanity.191

Although these explanations got to the heart of the discoveries of the worker-priests during their missionary experiences, they did little to sway the Catholic hierarchy. Rome gave the ultimatum that the worker-priests cease their full-time labor by March 1, 1954, and on January 19, the bishops who had worker-priests in their charge drafted a statement

189 Ibid., 341-344.
191 Leprieur, 362.
enumerating the details: priests could only work up to three hours per day, they had to resign from “all temporal responsibilities,” reattach themselves to a religious community, and renounce all intentions to form a national community of worker-priests.

On February 20, the worker-priests met secretly in Villejuif at the Café de la Paix for a final national meeting where they attempted to come up with one last solution. Over two days, they held dramatic discussions as they struggled to find a way to come to terms with their fate. They would have to choose between fidelity to the Church and fidelity to the working class. André Depierre explained that they went around the room and each priest was allowed to announce their choice simply, as explanations would have been too painful. They ended up divided into two groups, and when March 1 arrived, approximately one half of the worker-priests complied with the papal order and quit their jobs; the other half remained in their jobs, accepting the sanctions of the church.

Charles Suaud and Nathalie Viet-Depaule describe the betrayal that the worker-priests felt as something that physically broke them: several of them fell ill, and one even died when faced with the “impossible choice.” To disobey the Church meant that they could essentially be reduced “to the status of laity,” and be faced with potential excommunication. To leave their jobs, however, was a sign that the Church had, in fact, abandoned the working class. A worker-priest from the Mission de Paris testified, however, that those who refused to submit to the papal decree felt that their choice was

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192 Suaud and Viet-Depaule, 393.
193 Arnal, 150. On the various reasons and complications, including protection by a religious order or non-protection by a bishop, that led individual priests to make a decision about following the papal decree, see Suaud and Viet-Depaule, chapter 6. Suaud and Viet-Depaule note, however that nearly all of the priests, even the ones who followed the order, refused to be reintegrated as parish priests, 341.
194 Ibid., 349.
195 Ibid., 402.
justified by the gospel, and it was the Vatican hierarchy, and not the worker-priests, who were unfaithful to the gospel of Jesus.196 Others were harsher in their criticism. In an explanation of why certain worker-priests had chosen to stay in their jobs, Henri Barreau of the Mission de Paris wrote that “the Church is not only isolated from the proletariat, it is against its interests, against its rights… under the cover of charity, the hierarchy defends the privilege of the bourgeois class as the governing class and the elite.”197 None of the worker-priests recanted their mission. They regretted and felt betrayed by the conservatism of the Church hierarchy, but that was essentially what they had been fighting against all along anyway.

The Dominican order, several members of which had been some of the strongest supporters of the worker-priest movement, were also under severe scrutiny from the Vatican, and Cardinal Pizzardo, in particular. In late 1953, the Cardinal sent a letter to Père Suarez, the Maître général of the Dominican order listing several offenses that the Order (and the French branch in particular) had committed, including “a regrettably excessive spirit of insubordination and indiscipline in regards to the constituted authorities.”198 Père Congar’s ecumenical work, and Père Chenu’s theological support for the worker-priests movement did not work in their favor, especially Père Chenu’s article, which was published in La Vie intellectuelle in February 1954, which François Leprieur

writes “gave credit to the idea that the soul of the resistance to the Holy See’s decisions was Dominican.”

The result was that on February 16, 1954, Père Suarez sent a letter to Père Duccatillon in Paris ordering severe sanctions against the French section. The letter asserted that no book could be published without first being censured by the Vatican curie, and no member of the order could leave France without permission from the Père général. In particular, Pères Chenu, Congar, Ferret, and Boisselot were to be exiled to convents outside of Paris and Saulchoir.

Naturally, the Catholic press, and especially the “progressivist” journals like *La Quinzaine*, which were fully implicated in the Vatican show of force, was not content to sit on the sidelines during the crisis. Unsurprisingly leftist journals like *Esprit* published articles in support of the worker-priests, and condemned the Papal decree as destructive to the missionary project. But it was the two “progressivist” journals *Les cahiers de Jeunesse de l’Église* and *La Quinzaine* that both took the strongest defense of the worker-priests and received the harshest condemnations. Already in the fall of 1953, the ACA had issued a severe condemnation of *Jeunesse de l’Église*, denouncing in particular its “spirit of systematic denigration” and its “intolerable pretention to reform the Church without the Hierarchy.”

From that point on, the editors of *La Quinzaine* were much more cautious in their critiques of the Church, and the condemnation of the Dominicans, including one of their key members – Père Chenu – was disconcerting to say the least. However the worker-priest crisis, which touched the very core of their spiritual and political project, would not go unanswered.

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199 Leprieur, 73.
201 Tranvouez, 199.
The February 1, 1954 issue of *La Quinzaine* included several articles on the worker-priest crisis, including an editorial that reminded readers of the main arguments from *La France, pays de mission?*, and especially that “the working class is separated from the Church.” Further articles argued that the worker-priests made a major step forward in changing that fundamental problem. But as the condemnations began to unfold, the arguments became harsher. On February 15, in response to the sanctions against the Dominicans, *La Quinzaine* published a biting editorial that stated: “Since it is impossible to deny the necessity and the truth of the missionary movement, they aim to eliminate it altogether, to silence the theologians who express it. Will the Church continue to close itself up in a ghetto, in the appearance of Christianity that is more and more isolated from the real world?” Yvon Tranvouez writes that in observing the articles in *La Quinzaine* from the early weeks of 1954 that were responding directly to the worker-priest crisis, one notes the growing disconnect between the conception that the “progressivists” and the Church hierarchy each had of the role of the Church in the modern world. In essence, this was the crux of the crisis: the Church hierarchy wanted a return to a world where order reigned through tradition and obedience, and the “progressivists” argued that such a thing was not possible, that the world had completely changed and unless the Church adapted to it, the consequences would be devastating.

On March 13, Jacques Chatagner received a copy of the ACA’s “Declaration on the subject of the campaign of a certain press, namely the periodical *La Quinzaine.*” This

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204 Tranvouez, 209.
condemnation was delivered at the same time to the press, and it included a disavowal of many of the “attacks and insinuations” to which the Hierarchy had been subjected by the journal. It particularly stated, “They do not tell the truth, when they argue that the Church will now abandon the working classes. The Hierarchy has carried for years the anguish of the spiritual distress of the popular masses at the same time as it denounces social injustices, the causes of their material misery.”205 The declaration also condemned the “lies” that accused the Hierarchy of having political motives in ending the worker-priest project, and claimed that their motives were purely of a doctrinal order, and that the Church merely wanted to give priests to the working classes, “not militants of syndical or political action, but priests, fully and uniquely priests.” Finally, the declaration called on all Catholics who loved their Church to “join together more than ever in the missionary action that it hopes to pursue for the ‘evangelization of the poor’…”, a statement that one imagines the missionary movement could only really interpret as a slap in the face.206 The final blow for La Quinzaine was the condemnation from Rome, which came in February 1955, and prohibited Catholics from reading the journal. The editorial of February 23, 1955 announced to the readers the cessation of publication, but noted that “the end of La Quinzaine does not in any way signify that we are renouncing the struggle we share with all of our comrades to wrest the world from the law of war and profit.”207

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205 The document is reprinted in its entirety in Tranvouez, 207-209.
206 Ibid.
207 Ibid., 237. The Vatican condemnation is actually somewhat mysterious and could possibly be linked to political events around the fall of Pierre Mendès-France’s government. The ACA was not notified in advance, and it did little to help the tense relations between France and the Vatican. For more explanation, see Tranvouez, chapter 9.
The 1955 condemnation of La Quinzaine essentially marked the end of the “progressivist crisis” as many of the leading proponents of the working-class mission, dialogue with communism, and the effort to engage the Church with the modern world had been forced into exile, or at the very least a temporary silence. But the interventions that they had made had a resonance far beyond just the Catholic left in France. They provided several important lessons to the Catholic Church, all of which were incredibly useful for many of these same Catholics who then shifted their attention to the next major crisis in French Catholicism, the Algerian War of Independence, which was heating up just as the “progressivist” crisis was drawing to a close. As we examine the trajectory of these Catholics and their engagement in the problems of decolonization, we can see the lasting legacy of several themes: the argument that one’s actions mattered as much as one’s words, as demonstrated by the “incarnation” of the worker-priests, and in the case of the Church hierarchy; and that unless the Church adapted to the changes brought by the modern world, it would lose an even greater population of potential Catholics – colonized peoples.

For Catholics like the priests of the Mission de France, the decision to engage more directly with groups like North African workers in France, and even Algerian nationalists in Algeria predated the “progressivist crisis” in France. However, as their engagement with the working classes and their attempts to engage in dialogue with Marxism were increasingly repressed by the national Catholic hierarchy, much of their attention turned toward North Africa and the Algerian War. This engagement with the moral questions posed by the Algerian War would eventually lead many members of the
MDF, along with movements like *Economie et Humanisme*, into a long term analysis of Christian responsibility toward the Third World.\(^{208}\)

\(^{208}\) Cavalin and Viet-Depaule, 278.
Chapter 3 – French Christian Responses to the Algerian War

Despite a general belief that the French were willfully ignorant about issues relating to the French colonial project, the question of decolonization was discussed in Christian circles in France throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s.¹ For French Christians it was the Algerian War of Independence that forced them to face the realities of what had been up until then abstract discussions about the problems of colonialism or colonized peoples’ right to self-determination. Within the French intellectual and political communities, Algerian decolonization as an idea and as a fact was being defined as events unfurled. Todd Shepard has demonstrated that although the dominant post-Algerian War narrative attempted to portray the decolonization of the French empire, and of Algeria in particular, as a series of events that occurred within a Hegelian vision of “the tide of history,” the reality was much different. The decolonization of Algeria was never a given for the French government, nor for most of the French population. Instead, between 1959 and 1962 it “emerged as a structural cause that French people could and did refer to in order to avoid explaining why they now overwhelmingly accepted Algerian independence.”²

In terms of the Christian response to Algerian decolonization, Shepard’s analysis mostly holds true: with the exception of the worker-priests of the Mission de France and a handful of other Christian intellectuals and laypeople, very few French Christians openly supported Algerian independence before 1959. However, it is important to note that there were different issues at stake for Christians in the process of decolonization.

than for French politicians or for amateur revolutionaries, for example. Consequently, it is worth examining French Christian responses to the Algerian War in the larger context of global decolonization and not just within the debates about the Algerian War. In addition, shifting the analysis of Christian responses to the Algerian War away from discussions about national identity, whether French or Algerian, allows us to understand the ways in which the Algerian War of Independence was a critical testing ground for some of the most pressing moral and theological questions that defined Christianity after World War II.

Although much of the historical literature on the Algerian War of Independence focuses almost exclusively on the war’s effect on French and on Algerian history, it was an event that took place on a global stage. It was, for example, an important battleground in the Cold War, as historian Matthew Connelly has demonstrated.3 For those whose focus was directed beyond just the war’s consequences for France and French Algeria, the Algerian conflict was just one example, albeit one of the most tragic, in the global wave of political uprisings and negotiations that signaled the end of European empires. Algeria in particular raised some extremely important questions for all of those who were in some way implicated in the European empires. Many of these questions, including the implications of colonial violence and the relationship between Europeans and postcolonial states were especially important for those Christians who spent much of the late 1940s and 1950s reevaluating the role of Christianity in the modern world.

The question of decolonization was especially significant for Christians because it demanded a total rethinking of the relationship between Christians and formerly

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colonized subjects. Recent historical analysis of the relationship between Christians and colonialism has generally focused on the close collaboration between religious groups like missionaries and colonial authorities. Even if French Christians were not as closely associated with the French colonial project as were, for example, British Christian missionaries to the British colonial endeavor, the Christian mission was still an important cornerstone for French Protestantism and Catholicism. At the most basic level, by the end of the Algerian War in 1962, many French Christians had come to the realization that unless they demonstrated solidarity with colonized peoples in their desire for independence and an end to the colonial system, they would lose whatever moral authority they had left, and would cease to be welcome in the new independent nations-states that emerged from the process of decolonization.

The Algerian War became the center of debates about decolonization within French Christianity for a number of reasons. First of all, it was a war of decolonization that was fought close to home, and to a certain extent, even at home. The war in Indochina (1948-1954), which was France’s first major war over decolonization, had occurred on the other side of the world and in many cases barely affected the lives of

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French citizens. Events in Madagascar, Morocco and Tunisia in the mid-1950s focused attention on the military repression of nationalist movements, but it was the Algerian War that brought both the moral and political questions surrounding decolonization to life. As Christians in both France and Algeria began to take sides in the conflict, church leaders struggled to maintain church unity and moral authority as they pursued a double project of reminding Christians of their responsibilities toward the impoverished Algerians while not completely alienating those same Algerians in their refusal to openly support the cause of Algerian independence.

On a larger scale, many of the moral questions that emerged from the Algerian War, including the relationship between Christians and the colonial system and the legacy of colonial violence contributed to the discussions on the role of Christians in a postcolonial world that occurred at the highest levels of both Protestant and Catholic ecclesiastical bodies. In the case of the Protestants, the World Council of Churches (WCC) attempted to address these questions in its international meetings in Evanston, Illinois in 1954, and in New Delhi in 1961. For Catholics, these questions came to the fore during the Second Vatican Council, which began in 1962 just as the Algerian conflict was coming to an explosive close. Both the WCC and the Vatican were concerned, above all, with the future of Christian missions in a postcolonial world, and both closely watched the Algerian War, realizing that it was a particularly important test of the possibilities for positive postcolonial relations between Christians and formerly colonized peoples. In the end both bodies attempted to convince French Christians that the Algerian War was in fact an international concern, and one that went beyond the defense of French honor.
Although historians of the Algerian War have suggested a number of different methods for categorizing French responses to the Algerian conflict, French Christians tend to fit rather awkwardly into most of these categories. In some cases they are almost completely ignored, despite, for example, the central role that Christian intellectuals played in the debates on the Algerian War that took place within the French intellectual sphere. Christians do not fit easily into these categories mainly because, to a large extent, there were different issues at stake for Christians in the process of decolonization and in the Algerian War specifically. Historians, and intellectual historians in particular, have often focused on the fact that many of those who protested against the Algerian War did so in defense of political ideologies, whether republicanism, left-wing or revolutionary values, and even third-worldism. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who first introduced these three categories in the late 1970s, notes that Christians fit into all three categories, although few espoused the revolutionary theories of people like Jean-Paul Sartre or Henri Curiel. While Christians in France and Algeria were certainly not divorced from the major concerns of French citizens and the French government, including the future of the French settler population in Algeria and larger questions of identity that emerged during the war, they were also part of a wider current of thought and action that had historically

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6 This is especially the case for the literature published in English. See, for example, Tony Judt, Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); James D. Le Sueur, Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics during the Decolonization of Algeria (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001). French collections on intellectuals and the Algerian War are more likely to take Christian positions into consideration. See Jean-Pierre Rioux, “La Guerre d’Algérie et les intellectuels français,” Cahiers de l’IHTP 10 (November 1988).


8 Vidal-Naquet, 13.
been in conflict with French “republican values,” and revolutionary ideologies, including Marxism.⁹

At the risk of oversimplifying the complexity of French Christian responses to the Algerian War and to decolonization more generally, there is a different framework with which to examine these questions. In order to understand the specifically Christian motivations and stakes of these men and women, we need to shift the focus away from national identity to a perspective that takes into consideration the extent to which Christians had other preoccupations that went beyond a redefinition of French identity or the defense of French honor. Pierre Vidal-Naquet’s three categories provide a useful guideline, in that two of the three categories – the revolutionary and third-world outlooks – are connected to larger currents of thought that were not limited to France and Algeria. A similar model that allows us to examine both the national and the supranational concerns of French Christians and the ways in which decolonization presented different challenges and elicited different reactions depending on the mission and perspective of various Christian groups and individuals will allow us to better understand the Christian reactions to decolonization in the specific case of the Algerian War.

I would like to suggest four major categories through which to examine French Christian responses to the Algerian War. The first category includes those Christians, in both France and Algeria, who took a conservative position on the decolonization of Algeria, and openly supported the cause of Algérie française. This group of Christians,

which includes the majority of the French settler population in Algeria and a good number of military and political leaders, viewed the decolonization of Algeria as a danger both to France and to the Christian mission in Algeria, which in its most simplistic and harshest form was to defend the homeland of St. Augustine from the Muslim invaders. They argued that loyalty to the nation should be an essential characteristic of Christianity, yet the extremists among them – the ultras – helped form the armed militias of the OAS and took up arms against the French nation in defense of French Algeria. Their outlook was centered both on the concrete defense of their right to remain in Algeria (only under French rule, of course) and an abstract defense of the French colonial project. To a large extent, it was this category of Christians whose intransigence on issues like colonial reforms and social justice for the Algerian population convinced at least two of the other categories of French Christians that the French colonial system, in Algeria in particular, was itself a danger to Christianity.

The other three categories represent the range of Christian protests against various aspects of the Algerian War, from Church leaders who denounced in vague terms the immorality of the conduct of the war to those who openly supported Algerian independence and worked closely with Algerian nationalists to that end. The Christians in these categories are distinct from one another primarily in their worldview and their conception of their role within the Christian community. The Moralists, a group that was comprised of many church leadership bodies including the French Protestant Federation (FPF) and the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops (ACA) as well as prominent Christian intellectuals and politicians, were primarily concerned about the effects of the Algerian War on French Christians. They have often been critiqued for their failure to
take more forceful positions denouncing both the conduct of the war and the colonial system, yet from the beginning they argued that their goals were to maintain Christian unity and lead Christians to understand their responsibilities in the face of difficult questions like the morality of the use of torture and eventually civil disobedience.

While the Moralists focused much of their energy on French Christians, the other two categories had a more external worldview. The first is a category that I call Internationalists. Despite moments when French Christians had been aligned with nationalist movements in Europe, Christianity itself was a supranational body of believers and ecclesiastical structures. French Catholics had always been tied to the Vatican and to missionary orders that worked outside of France. After World War II, Protestants were linked much more closely with Protestants around the world through the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Organization. For these internationally-focused groups, the stakes of decolonization were high, as the end of European empires to a certain extent meant the end of a long collaboration between European governments and Christian missions unless Christians constructed a new relationship with formerly colonized peoples. As outsiders, they were less concerned with moral issues facing French Christians than they were with the effects that brutal wars of decolonization would have on their ability to engage with non-Christian populations.

The final category comprises the Christian anti-colonialists. This was by far the most radical group of Christians, and many of them spoke out in favor Algerian independence much earlier than is often acknowledged. The positions that these Christians took were in most cases the result of direct experience with the poverty and injustice that the Algerian people faced either in Algeria or in France. In some cases they
even pursued a course of action that led them into direct conflict with conservative Christians and pieds-noirs who, they argued, were one of the main sources of the injustice. This category intersects to a certain extent with Pierre Vidal-Naquet’s classification of revolutionary and third-worldist resistance to the Algerian War, as several of the most radical Christians in this category participated in FLN support networks in France and Algeria and in some cases directly with the FLN.\(^\text{10}\) As with the revolutionaries like Francis Jeanson or Jean-Paul Sartre, they viewed the colonial system itself as unjust and worked to end it, with tactics ranging from public declarations or newspaper articles supporting Algerian independence to direct action.

Pierre Vidal-Naquet noted that his three categories of French resistance to the Algerian War were not fixed, but rather three “ideal types,” and I should note that the categories suggested here are also not fixed. Groups and individuals moved between them and evolved over time, depending on events and their particular role at the time. I do not suggest, for example, that the public statements of those who represented French Protestantism or Catholicism are necessarily an indication of a particular individual’s belief or political perspective. I should also note as well that these categories are not necessarily in conflict with those of other historians, including Vidal-Naquet, as French Christians certainly acted with multiple motivations. This means, for example, that one could protest the use of torture because it went both against Christian morality and French republican values or shift from a moral resistance to military tactics to full support

for Algerian independence over the course of the war. What these categories allow us to achieve, however, is an understanding of the Christian motivations behind the engagement of French Christians in the Algerian War, as opposed to seeing their Christianity as secondary to their sense of national duty or adherence to a secular ideology.

**The Christian Defense of Algérie Française**

One of the most complex problems in the Algerian War revolved around the existence of the long-entrenched settler population and the divisions that existed between the European and Algerian populations. The French government’s legal and political claim that Algeria was not a separate country or even a colony, but rather part of France provided these settlers with French citizenship and rights while ruling the Arab and Berber populations of Algeria for many years under the harsh “native codes.”

The extent to which the settler population, who are frequently called *pieds-noirs*, created and maintained these divisions through, at worst a virulent racism toward the Algerian Arab and Berber populations, and at best a benign neglect or ignorance of the impoverished Algerians who lived among them is a topic of heated debate. Yet what is clear is a large majority of the pied-noir population lived “in a bubble,” whether self-imposed or not. The fact remains that the existence of this population was one of the major reasons why

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11 Shepard, chapter 1.
13 This phrase was used several times in conversations I had with pied-noir families including Pierre and Claudine Chaulet (Algiers, February 2009) and Simone and Pauline Gallice (Aix-en-Provence, April 2009).
the French government and military attempted to keep Algeria French at all costs and why French Catholic and Protestant leaders found themselves at the center of discussions of the morality of the conduct of the war and the legitimacy of European claims to the Algerian territory.

In Algeria, the complexity of the relationship between Christianity and the colonial project was heightened by the notable failures of French attempts to convert Muslims to Christianity, and the fact that the vast majority of Christian institutions in Algeria were set up to serve the European population, not the Muslim population. With the notable exceptions of a few Catholic missionary orders, like the Missionaries of Africa, otherwise known as the White Fathers (Pères Blancs) and White Sisters (Soeurs blanches), and a few French Protestant missions implanted in Algeria, for example the Mission Rolland, there was very little institutional interaction with, and very little evangelization toward, Algerian Muslims before the Second World War. It was not until after 1948 when the White Fathers and White Sisters were joined by the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus (Petits Frères and Petites Soeurs de Jésus), orders inspired by the desert wanderer Charles de Foucauld, and later the ecumenical orders of the Brothers of Taizé (Frères de Taizé) and the Sisters of Grandchamp (Soeurs de Grandchamp), that there was any significant Christian effort to serve the impoverished Algerian population.

Just as in France, the majority of the French Christian population of Algeria rallied to the Vichy government and Pétain’s National Revolution, finding in its

conservative policies a restoration of Christian values that had come under threat from
the growth of secular ideologies like communism during the years after World War I.  
Although Mgr Leynaud, the archbishop of Algiers from 1917 to 1954 was reputed to
have an “ecumenical spirit” and be on good terms with other religious leaders, the
bishops of Oran and Constantine were more conservative in their political and
ecclesiastical positions. Yet it was Mgr Leynaud who reminded Christians in Algeria of
their duty to obey the government with “discipline and confidence” and publicly paid
tribute to Marechal Pétain in a pastoral letter in March 1942. While there were some
priests who secretly supported de Gaulle and the French Resistance, including a young
priest named Jean Scotto, most rallied to the Vichy regime. Historian Jacques Cantier
even notes that while the representatives of other religious groups maintained a policy of
“presence,” the Catholic clergy in Algeria went further in their support for the Vichy
regime, at times even reaching a level of active engagement.

On May 8, 1945, the armistice celebrations in the eastern town of Sétif and the
surrounding area ended in bloodshed as Algerian attacks on pieds-noirs in the countryside
after clashes with the French gendarmerie led to a series of brutal reprisals on Algerian
civilians, ending with 103 European dead and somewhere between 1,020 and 45,000
Algerian deaths. The response of Mgr Thiénard, the bishop of Constantine, who was the
church authority in that region, was to deplore the attacks on the Europeans, writing in a

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15 See the section on the Catholic Church and Vichy in Jacques Cantier, L’Algérie sous le
16 Ibid., 267.
18 Cantier, 269-270.
19 Historian Alastair Horne writes that Raymond Aron’s moderate estimate of 6,000 as
the number of Algerian deaths is generally accepted. Alastair Horne, A Savage War of
letter to his parishioners that “innocent victims paid with their blood and their death for the beautiful title of French, priest, and Christian.”

Historian André Nozière notes that while Mgr Thiénard condemned the “murder and disorder committed by fanatics who were led astray” he also glorified the work that France had done for the Muslims, a theme that Mgr Leynaud, the archbishop of Algiers, took up the following month at the festival of Saint Augustine in Hippo. These were the only official statements from the Catholic Church on the events of Sétif and Guelma.

The conservative tone within the Catholic Church in Algeria shifted somewhat with the arrival in 1947 of Léon-Etienne Duval, who took up the post as bishop of Constantine and Hippo. On his arrival, he found a diocese that was still traumatized by the events of May 1945 and almost completely closed off from the Muslim population. A native of Annecy in the Savoie, Mgr Duval had adopted during World War II a mentality that he brought with him to Algeria, in which he attempt to “bring Christians to rise above partisan positions and place themselves on the level of justice, and solidarity among French people.” Under the Vichy regime, this meant that even if he did not participate in any formal Resistance organizations, he sheltered Jewish children and families who sought refuge in the Savoie. In the Constantinois of the late 1940s, it meant encouraging his parishioners to first consider, and then work toward social justice and engaging in dialogue with Algerian Muslims.

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21 Ibid.
23 This is according to his own testimony in his interviews in 1982 with Marie-Christine Ray, 39.
Although Mgr Duval would have a profound impact on Algeria, especially after his nomination as Archbishop of Algiers in 1954, he was to a large extent an avant-garde Catholic in Algeria, and certainly among the clergy.\footnote{Mgr Duval’s particular positions during the Algerian War will be examined in great detail in the following sections and chapters.} When the Algerian War broke out in November 1954, Mgr Pinier, a moderate figure and a close assistant to the recently deceased Mgr Leynaud, was the new bishop of Constantine while the bishop of Oran was a conservative critic of positions like those of Mgr Duval and to some extent Mgr Pinier that focused on dialogue and rapprochement with the Muslim community of Algeria.\footnote{Nozière, 103.}

The diocese of Oran was the Algerian diocese the most heavily populated with practicing Catholics, partly because of the influence of Spanish immigrants who had a taste for the more spectacular and mystical aspects of Catholicism.\footnote{Ibid.} Mgr Lacaste participated, along with the other Algerian bishops, in several collective letters from the Algerian episcopate during the Algerian War, most notably the letter of September 1955 that exhorted the Christians of Algeria to work toward peace and to end the injustice caused by French colonialism and “pacification” techniques.\footnote{“Lettre collective de l’épiscopat algérien,” 15 September 1955. Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 262, file 31.} However outside of these official statements, Mgr Lacaste maintained a marked silence on some of the same questions that preoccupied the other bishops, including the use of torture and social justice toward Algerian Muslims. He also maintained close connections with the French military, to the point of excusing their abuses and defending their tactics, even as Mgr Duval and much
of the Catholic and Protestant leadership in France were taking public positions against those same tactics.\textsuperscript{28}

Throughout the course of the Algerian War, much of the French clergy and the majority of the Catholic population supported the cause of \textit{Algérie française}. The reasons for this support, beyond the obvious defense of their land and property, were twofold. In the first place, Christians in Algeria had been constantly reminded for decades that their Christian duty included obedience to secular authorities, and through most of the Algerian War, the French government and military were fighting to keep Algeria French. By early 1960, pied-noir Christians who believed that de Gaulle and the metropolitan French population had betrayed their cause argued that the defense of French Algeria took priority over the duty of obedience. In the second place, the legacy of people like Cardinal Lavigerie was so strong that there was a deeply entrenched belief that the French in Algeria were not only promoting their “civilizing mission” but were also defending the Christian legacy in North Africa that was under threat, they believed, both from the Algerian Muslims and Communism.

Despite the overwhelming support for the cause of French Algeria, there was a significant group of Catholics and Protestants in Algeria who refused this position, even to the point of joining Algerian nationalist movements and engaging fully in the struggle for Algerian independence. Between the two extremes, there was also a group of moderates, or “liberals,” who advocated significant reforms of the colonial system in Algeria but who did not openly support Algerian independence, at least in the beginning. The divisions that these divergent political positions created within the Christian

\textsuperscript{28} Nozière, 110-111.
community deepened into hatred during the course of the Algerian War, leading to tragic consequences for both sides.

Christian Leaders in France and the Morality of the Algerian War

In a report that circulated through the Ministry of Algerian Affairs in late 1955, the French government demonstrated a deep concern about the fact that both the French Catholic and French Reformed churches were taking positions against repression and military solutions in North Africa. Specifically, the author was concerned about the public positions that resulted from study groups and meetings, like those of the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops (ACA), which could influence and sway French voters away from their support of French policies in Algeria. The writer of this document noted, “With such directives, the clergy is particularly at ease to explain its doctrine concerning Franco-Muslim relationships, and we know that this doctrine has often taken a stance of a true defense in favor of the independence of Muslim communities.” This fear is particularly interesting because throughout the Algerian conflict, statements from the ACA, as well as from French Protestant Federation (FPF) tended to be quite vague on the topic of Algerian independence. The main reason for this is twofold: a lack of unified opinion within these bodies on the role of the church in political affairs, and a fear that a pronounced stance for one side or the other would further divide the French Protestant

30 Ibid.  
31 The FPF did not represent all protestant positions, as several churches and denominations either chose not to participate or were not given membership in the Federation. But it generally united the major French Protestant churches – the French Reformed and Lutheran churches, under the leadership of Pastor Marc Boegner.
and Catholic communities and prevent any meaningful moral unity on the issues surrounding the Algerian War.

Although the French government was concerned that French Christian leaders were leading their flocks to protest French policies in Algeria, many contemporary observers and historians of French responses to the Algerian War have often noted the absence of statements and actions from French Catholic and Protestant leaders on the political questions of the war. Throughout the war both Protestant and Catholic leadership bodies like the FPF and the ACA issued declarations calling for peace and justice while refraining from suggesting political or “technical” solutions to the Algerian problems as this was “outside their competence.” They believed that their competence, on the other hand, lay in confronting the moral questions and problems that the conduct of the Algerian War forced French Christians to confront on a daily basis. For the better part of the Algerian War, it was to Christians that they directed their statements and recommendations. As the official representatives of the Christian churches, they also saw that their responsibility included letting the government know of the concerns of the Christian community, particularly on issues like the use of torture and the regroupment camps. Whether or not they should have taken public stances on political questions like the independence of Algeria is not a question that is easily resolved and during the 1950s

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and 60s debates continued to revolve around the proper relationship between church and state. Was the role of the church to take official Christian positions on “political” questions or should the church as an institution stay out of the political sphere? And where did the boundaries lie, particularly when these “political” questions directly affected Christian morality?

The issue of morality is a complex historical problem, particularly in the case of the Algerian War. For example, there are two well-known historical problems that have clouded the historiography on this question. The first is the fact that historians and participants have often conflated the moral stance against the use of torture during the Algerian War with an anticolonialist position. Todd Shepard has recently shown, however, that most Frenchmen and women, including the non-communist left, did not even consider Algerian independence as a possibility until after de Gaulle’s call for self-determination in 1959. Most of those who critiqued French military tactics in Algeria, and in particular the use of torture, actually did so for “patriotic” reasons (i.e., defending the honor of the French nation) rather than out of a commitment to Algerian independence. Yet in part because of the way they were depicted by the OAS (Secret Army Organization) and the defenders of French Algeria, who lumped this group in with those who did support Algerian independence in their category of those who had betrayed French Algeria, these positions merged into one.

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34 See, for example, the influential book by Raoul Girardet, *L’idée coloniale en France* (Paris: Editions de la Table Ronde, 1972), 219-225, in which he argues that “humanist protest,” which includes protestations against the use of torture, like that of Pierre-Henri Simon, are a form of anticolonialism. See my Introduction for a discussion of this issue.
35 Shepard, 65.
36 For some examples of this position see Jean Boisson-Pradier and Raoul Girardet, *L’Idée coloniale*. 
The second influential position, which was most notably espoused by Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, is that those who used moral arguments to protest the conduct of the Algerian War not only misunderstood the extent to which colonial violence was an inherent part of the colonial system, but were just as complicit in that system as those who perpetrated the violence. Whether or not one agrees with Sartre and de Beauvoir’s position, the fact remains that French Christians who were concerned with the morality of the Algerian War were above all concerned with the effects of this war on Christians and French citizens. Even those whose positions later evolved into support for Algerian independence were consistently concerned with their ability to influence and calm the tensions that grew within the French and European community as the violence threatened to spin out of control. In Algeria, Mgr Duval and Catholic priests like Jean Scotto attempted to convince Christian settlers of their moral responsibilities toward the Algerian population while the FPF and ACA debated how best to advise Christians on the question of when civil disobedience was morally acceptable or even advisable.

The ACA, which gathered archbishops and cardinals from the nineteen ecclesiastical provinces of France (including Algeria) did not have a canonic statue, but as Jean-Marie Mayeur has argued, it had acquired by the mid-1950s “a growing moral authority in the Church of France.” Their first public declaration on the Algerian War was in October 1955, and was published widely in the Catholic press. Their declaration quoted large passages of the collective letter of the Algerian bishops from September 1955.

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1955 and further stated that the ACA desired to safeguard both the love of the *patrie* and the rights of all men. It further stated, “individuals do not have the right to resist the legitimate authorities unless they directly order them to commit a crime or a notorious injustice.”\(^{39}\) This declaration contains no overt suggestion that Christians should consider Algerian independence, and it removed from the citation of the declaration of the Algerian bishops the contested line that suggested that “the free expression of legitimate aspirations should be assured.”\(^{40}\) Yet it is clear that this declaration, and that of the Algerian bishops, was what French officials were reacting to in the 1955 memo that warned that Christians could undermine the French effort in Algeria. The next declaration of the ACA did not come until March 1957, in the midst of the Battle of Algiers. In this declaration, the ACA issued this enigmatic statement: “It is never permitted, in the service of a cause, even a good cause, to use means that are intrinsically bad.”\(^{41}\) That the “good cause” was the support of French Algeria is intimated, however as an editorial in the Catholic periodical *Informations catholiques internationales* noted at the time, the words “torture” and “reprisals” did not appear in the declaration.\(^{42}\)

Throughout the war, the ACA continued to affirm that it was maintaining a respectful distance from political positions, and consistently reminded French Catholics of their duty to obey governmental authorities. As the crisis over conscientious objection and civil disobedience reached its high point in the early 1960s, the ACA condemned both positions, but expressed their concern for the “anguish of the young” who faced

\(^{39}\) *Informations catholiques internationales*, 1 November 1955, 6.

\(^{40}\) Mayeur, 40.

\(^{41}\) *Informations catholiques internationales*, 1 April 1957, 6.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.
these questions. It is undeniable that the public declarations of a body like the ACA, which brought together Catholic clergy who were united by office as opposed to their political or moral opinions, were the result of compromises within the group. Within this body, Mgr Duval, as the representative of the Algerian Church, was unsurprisingly one of the more outspoken individuals, consistently denouncing the use of torture and violence, even if his open support for Algerian independence did not become clear until very late in the war. Cardinal Liénart, the prelate of the Mission de France, which took an early and controversial stance in support of Algerian independence, continued to support the Mission from conservative attacks throughout the war, even if he never went so far as to openly express his personal support for this openly political stance. Mgr Chappoulie, bishop of Angers, was also known for his critiques of colonialism and his public condemnations of torture and the military and police repression of Algerian civilians.

The Catholic clergy included its share of supporters of French Algeria and the policies of the French government, including Cardinal Saliège, who signed the “call for the salvation and renewal of French Algeria” and publicly supported the policies of Guy Mollet in the Semaine religieuse of Toulouse before he passed away in 1956. What is evident from an examination of public statements of French Catholic bodies like the ACA is that the compromises needed to maintain the unity of those bodies significantly watered down any statements on the morality or immorality of French actions in Algeria. In the end, it was up to individual clergy members, orders, and organizations like the JOC or Action

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43 Mayeur, 41.
45 See Chapeu, chapter 3.
46 Mayeur, 44.
47 Ibid.
to act according to their consciences, even if they went against the recommendations of the ACA.

Things were not much different for French Protestants. As the unifying body of French Protestantism, the FPF issued declarations and acted on behalf of all French Protestant churches who were members of the Federation. This meant that in the tense climate of the Algerian War, the divisions that characterized French Christians and French society as a whole, were a potentially great threat to the unity that the FPF had attempted to establish since the 1930s.48 It is important to understand that this imperative to unity was such an overriding concern that it often overshadowed the desire of many French Protestants for the FPF to issue public statements on pressing moral and political questions like the rights and duties of conscientious objection or the legitimacy of colonized peoples’ aspirations to independence. An examination of the minutes of meetings of the governing council of the FPF demonstrates that questions like these were discussed in great depth at their quarterly meetings throughout the late 1940s and 50s, however the nuances of these discussions never emerged to the general public. What did emerge were frequent statements condemning the use of torture and other military tactics that French Protestants deemed immoral and calls for peace and reconciliation in Algeria and other places, like Madagascar and Indochina, where conflicts over colonialism directly affected French Christians.49

49 Bolle, 644. French Protestant historian Pierre Bolle notes that one overwhelming theme in the public declarations of French Protestantism during the Algerian War was the denunciation of torture. He noted eight occasions when the FPF and the ERF denounced the use of torture during the Algerian War.
Historian Geoffrey Adams writes that within French Protestantism in the late 1940s and 1950s, there were two main camps: the “progressives,” who he describes as “liberal in theological as well as in social and political matters,” and the “intégristes,” who were “devoted to the traditional Calvinist creed and tending either towards political neutrality or towards right-wing opinions.”  

This categorization, which resembles a similar division within French Catholicism is perhaps oversimplified, but it does illustrate the extent to which divisions within French Protestantism, and in the FPF more specifically, were not simply political differences. For example, for those who fell into the “progressive” camp, many of whom were instrumental figures in the French Protestant resistance to Nazism during World War II, their views on issues like decolonization and the Algerian War were rooted in the theological tradition of Karl Barth and the idea that Christians should maintain a critical distance from governmental policies that conflicted with Christian morality. This same tradition, however, stressed the importance of maintaining church unity and in certain respects, the collision of these two imperatives took place within the FPF’s debates on the Protestant response to decolonization and the Algerian War.

Within the council of the FPF, there were several members who had close ties to the World Council of Churches, and who were consequently more open to discussing the larger issue of colonialism. They included Pastor Pierre Maury, whose son Jacques was at that time head of the Protestant youth movement known as the Fédé and would later go on to lead both the FPF and Cimade, Pastor Charles Westphal and Pastor Marc

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50 Adams, 2.
Boegner.\textsuperscript{51} There were also those, however, who argued that the “colonial problem” was in essence a political problem and that the church should not pledge allegiance to any political party or political solution.\textsuperscript{52} The imperative for the FPF, as the umbrella organization of French Protestantism, was clearly to promote the unity of the church, however, doing so generally meant silencing the more radical voices, even as people like Pierre Maury argued that they should maintain the unity of the church on moral questions, “but not in silence.”\textsuperscript{53} Charles Westphal agreed, further elaborating that the \textit{raison d'être} of the FPF was both to “deal with the general interests of French Protestantism and to interpret the conscience of the churches.”\textsuperscript{54} One particular example demonstrates this conflict: in the October 1956 meeting of the Council, Pastor Marc Boegner noted that he had received several letters asking him to issues a statement protesting against the “excesses committed by the authorities in their repression” in Algeria. During an exchange of views on this, the more conservative members of the council insisted on the necessity of collecting facts and testimonies before issuing any public statement.\textsuperscript{55} This collection of facts was delegated to a committee who was

\textsuperscript{51} Procès-verbaux des réunions du Conseil de la Fédération Protestant de France. Archives of the FPF. See particularly the meeting on 4 November 1948, in which a discussion on the situation in Madagascar led Pierre Maury to state that the Protestants needed to think more long term about the “colonial problem” and examine what the church of Jesus Christ should be doing for these peoples. Marc Boegner then suggested that he visit the President of the French Republic to let him know that the FPF was very concerned about the colonial problem.

\textsuperscript{52} Procès-verbal of the 23 January 1951 meeting of the FPF. Archives of the FPF.

\textsuperscript{53} Procès-verbal of the 13 March 1951 meeting of the Council of the FPF. Archives of the FPF.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55} Procès-verbal of the 9 October 1956 meeting of the Council of the FPF. Archives of the FPF.
organizing a study day on the North African problems, scheduled for January 1957, and consequently the result was continued silence on the issue.

If the FPF’s goal of maintaining the unity of French Protestantism and disagreements even within the leadership council prevented them from issuing statements that more forcefully condemned repression in Algeria, the French Reformed Church (ERF), which was the largest Protestant denomination in France, faced a different set of problems. French historian Pierre Bolle has charted the various declarations and actions that the ERF and FPF took in response to the Algerian War, and his schema shows that the ERF was much more outspoken and prolific in its condemnation of French tactics in Algeria.56 Yet the problem for the ERF was that its third largest synod was that of Algeria, and leaders of the ERF struggled to find the appropriate responses to the concerns of Protestants in Algeria while condemning the general atmosphere there, which was to a large extent the result of settler society. In June 1955, the national synod meeting that was held in Strasbourg issued a statement in which it assured the Protestants of North Africa that it was “entirely in communion with them.”57 By the 1956 national synod in Royan, the tensions between metropolitans and Protestants in Algeria were becoming more apparent, and it also became clear that the Algerian synod itself was just as divided as those in France on how best to respond to the events in Algeria. Although a motion to support the movement for a truce that had been launched by Albert Camus was discussed, emphasizing a dialogue to be established with Algerian nationalists, it was viewed as far

57 CHAN, fonds ERF, 107AS/92, dossier 1.
too dangerous, and the motion was not adopted.\footnote{CHAN, fonds ERF, 107AS/93, dossier 1.} Even as the metropolitan synods of the ERF moved toward a position that supported Algerian self-determination in the late 1950s, the Algerian synod remained divided and openly resentful of the advice of metropolitans, who in their minds clearly did not understand the situation.\footnote{Bolle, 647-649. See also the Plan d’étude sur l’Église et le Problème Algérien à l’usage de l’Église Réformée de France from 1960, which suggests that autodetermination might be the best plan in Algeria.}

While the FPF and ERF struggled to maintain their unity both in terms of church institutions and their moral position on the war, both organizations continued to stress the importance for Protestant laymen and women to be politically engaged. Socialist deputy André Philip was one of the most prominent Protestant politicians and the center of the crisis within the SFIO over the decision by Guy Mollet to give Robert Lacoste, and consequently the French military, special powers in Algeria in 1956.\footnote{On French Protestant Socialists and the crisis in the SFIO over Algeria, see Adams, chapter 3.} Although Philip had voted to grant Lacoste special powers, he came to realize that the actions of Lacoste and Mollet represented both a betrayal of French Socialism and a crime against both the French and Algerian people.\footnote{Adams, 64-65. See also André Philip, Le socialisme trahi (Socialism Betrayed), published in 1957, Philip stated quite openly that the French tactics in Algeria were harming, rather than helping the French cause and that the only possible solution in Algeria was to take seriously the Algerian desire for independence and assist it in such a way that Algeria would maintain a “close solidarity” with France.\footnote{Philip, 190-191.}} In his text, Le socialisme trahi (Socialism Betrayed), published in 1957, Philip stated quite openly that the French tactics in Algeria were harming, rather than helping the French cause and that the only possible solution in Algeria was to take seriously the Algerian desire for independence and assist it in such a way that Algeria would maintain a “close solidarity” with France.\footnote{Philip, 190-191.} Although Philip’s position on Algerian independence was much more advanced than that of most French Protestants in 1957, the wariness over government ‘pacification’ techniques and the
seeming impossibility that European settlers in Algeria would cede to necessary reforms in Algeria were apparent in Protestant periodicals like Réforme.63

For French Christian laymen and women, there were three issues that set off waves of debate within their communities. The first was the use of torture in Algeria, which elicited responses, in particular, from Christian intellectuals and journalists who primarily denounced its effects on the honor of the French nation and the morale of the French army. This position is particularly apparent in the publications of prominent intellectuals like two of the “4 Ms,” Henri-Irénée Marrou and François Mauriac. Marrou, whose article “France, ma patrie” appeared in Le Monde in April 1956 and compared the techniques of the French military to those used by the Gestapo during World War II, argued that the France’s “grandeur” was in peril and that the “patrie” was in danger unless the French spoke up.64 Nobel prize winner and French Catholic novelist François Mauriac’s Bloc-notes, which appeared in several French periodicals, including the newly-formed leftist magazine L’Express, consistently denounced the use of torture in North Africa, beginning in early 1955 but, like Marrou and even Pierre-Henri Simon, his moral opposition to the use of torture was mainly framed in the language of French patriotism.65 Etienne Fouilloux, among others, has examined the question of whether the engagement of Mauriac, and other Catholic intellectuals was primarily of a religious or a political nature, concluding that it was both.66 However in analyzing whether his protests against torture were motivated by concern for Algeria or France, which the Algerian War was

63 Adams, 59-60. See, for example, the articles by Marcel Niedergang and Jean Bosc in Réforme in the spring of 1957.
compromising, Fouilloux accedes that the second option is more likely. Mauriac was evidently not alone in this, and like many of his colleagues, his protests waned after de Gaulle returned to power in 1958.67

There is no question that many of those who argued that the conduct of the Algerian War, and particularly the use of torture and violence against Algerian civilians, was in conflict with Christian morality did not question the entire basis of the colonial system. Since many of these Christian intellectuals and journalists protested the use of torture for what seem to be primarily patriotic reasons, it is difficult to see what aspects of their moral opposition were motivated by their Christian faith. The main way in which the average French Christian engaged with the question of torture was through direct experiences of French soldiers in Algeria and their friends and families. Christian soldiers who recounted their experiences in Algeria and the moral quandaries that the use of torture and other atrocities caused for them were one of the main sources of information on French military tactics in Algeria beginning in 1956 and early 1957.68 They were also at the center of the second major concern for French Christian moralists, which was civil disobedience.

Based on the public declarations from the ACA and the FPF, it is clear that the official position of the French Christian churches was that resistance to and civil disobedience against government and military authorities were only authorized in the most extreme circumstances, and for most Christian leaders, the Algerian War did not qualify as one of those circumstances. The question of civil disobedience was particularly

67 Ibid., 52-59, 82.
tricky for Christian soldiers, many of whom had been drafted to fight in Algeria and who were faced with the decision of following orders that went against their consciences. Yet for many French Christians it was exactly this issue that both motivated their engagement in the Algerian War, and in some cases the radicalization of their positions on Algerian independence. It is clear that in most cases, however, the issue of civil disobedience still fell within the realm of concern over the effects of the Algerian War on French citizens.

The military chaplaincy, a conservative institution already, responded predictably negatively to those who sought counsel on the decision to disobey orders. Some within this institution even sought to convince soldiers that actions like torture in the context of the Battle of Algiers and the fight against terrorism were not only moral but also necessary to defend Christian Algeria from the Muslims and communists. In many cases, soldiers turned to others for help, including to their friends in youth movements in France and to church leaders like Mgr Duval, who received numerous letters from Christian soldiers detailing their experiences and the offenses they observed.

In early 1957, the Catholic newspaper *Témoignage chrétien* published the journal of a recently deceased Catholic Scout leader named Jean Muller, a reservist who had died

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69 See Nozière’s section on the aumônerie militaire in Algeria, especially pages 129-141.
71 See Chapter 5. A series of letters from the “chef de la bataillon Chambrueil” to Mgr Duval, dated 17 August 1956 and 9 September 1956 are in the archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 282. Mgr Duval also received a long and detailed letter from André Thisse, a former reservist in Kabylie, detailing his experiences with military exactions and torture in the summer of 1956. This document is also in casier 282, and there are numerous others throughout his files.
in an ambush in Algeria in October 1956. Muller’s journal recounted in great detail the types of torture that were being practiced by the military, and consequently the agonizing moral choices he faced as a Christian soldier who had to follow orders that went against his conscience. The publication of this text mobilized, in particular, French Christian youth movements who recognized that they were the ones who would face these same choices if they were called to fight in Algeria. The Scouts de France, which was one of the largest youth movements in France during the 1950s, faced a crisis over the publication of this text, as the leadership of La Route, the senior branch of the Scouts, of which Jean Muller had been a part, resigned after the official publication refused to print Muller’s journal. The editors had deemed it too politically charged and argued that the Scouts should not be supporting a specific political position on the conflict.

The question of how a Christian soldier should respond to orders that went against his conscience was a topic on which both Catholic and Protestant youth movements sought guidance from their respective leadership bodies. The problem was that Christian leaders themselves did not necessarily know how to respond, or their declarations contradicted other authorities. For example, although Pope Pius XII had issued a statement in October 1953 saying that “No higher authority is empowered to order an immoral act; there is no right, no obligation, no permission to perform an immoral act that is inherently immoral, even if it is ordered, and even if the refusal to act causes the

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72 Coutrot, 126-132.
73 Ibid. More details on this crisis also came out during my conversation with Paul Rendu, one of the leaders of La Route who resigned, at his home in Bry-sur-Marne, April 30, 2009.
worst personal damage,” the ACA continued to insist that French Christians had the duty to obey civil and military authorities.74

In 1958, the national congress of the Protestant Fédé issued a text that had been voted by the entire congress that called for the ERF to both express their solidarity with Christian soldiers who refused to obey certain orders of their superiors that went against their consciences, and to “indicate concretely a certain number of points that [soldiers] should in no case pass in their eventual participation in military action.”75 The FPF continued to hesitate in its responses to the Fédé, and even by the 1960 Assembly of French Protestantism in Montbéliard, which produced several concrete recommendations on Algeria including direct negotiation with Algerian nationalists, their position on civil disobedience was that it “would only be justified if the state were basically perverted.” It is clear that the FPF thought that a sufficient level of “perversion” (i.e. the overthrow of a legitimate government) had not yet been reached, however the declaration stated that the church would provide “moral, material and judicial support” to those who refused to commit acts of moral or physical torture and to conscientious objectors.76

These same issues had motivated the formation of the Comité de résistance spirituelle (Committee of Spiritual Resistance), a diverse group of influential Christians that included such prominent Protestants as André Philip and Paul Ricœur as well as Catholics like François Mauriac, Jean-Marie Domenach, Louis Massignon, several priests of the Mission de France and former leaders of the Scouts de France. It was the Catholic journalist Robert Barrat who first organized the committee in order to publish the text

74 Mayeur, 41-42.
Des rappelés témoignent (The Reservists Testify) in the spring of 1957. Although the Committee’s original goal was to inform the public of the grave injustices that were being committed in Algeria, it also served as a launching point for many Christians who became more active in movements for Algerian independence, including the Jeanson network, whose 1960 trial became a public forum for debates about the question of civil disobedience. One of the important texts that emerged from the controversy surrounding the trial was the Manifeste des 121 on the right of civil disobedience in September 1960. This text, which was signed by people like Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, Marguerite Duras and many other prominent French intellectuals, declared that as the Algerian conflict was a war of national independence and not a foreign war, they “respect and judge justified the refusal to take up arms against the Algerian people” and “respect and judge justified the conduct of Frenchmen who believe it is their duty to bring aid and protection to Algerians oppressed in the name of the French people.”

Although very few Christians were among the signatories of this document, those who were, including Robert Barrat and Protestant pastor Roger Parmentier, had moved beyond a belief in their Christian duty to obey the civil authorities.

In the end, the majority of French Christians, whether or not they supported the right of civil disobedience or protested against military atrocities, rallied to the defense of the French Republic when it appeared to be under fire, first from the attempted military

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77 The list of members of the Comité appear at the end of the introduction to Des rappelés témoignent, which was published under their aegis.
78 See Chapter 5.
putsch of May 1958, and later from the OAS “fascists.” When French President Charles de Gaulle eventually suggested that the solution to the conflict was autodetermination, many understood that in the end, this was the solution that would save the honor of France. Although for some French Christians, the use of torture and the question of civil disobedience were the catalysts for their direct engagement in the Algerian conflict, for most these questions were simply moral issues to be resolved within Christian organizations. The Algerians, for most, were either terrorists or victims without a legitimate cause. Even most French Christians’ eventual support for Algerian independence was not because of some epiphany about the legitimacy of the Algerian nationalist cause, but rather as the final step in the process of restoring honor and Christian morality to France.

The International Christian Perspective: Rethinking the Christian Mission

Despite Algeria’s legal status as part of France and the great effort that European settlers and the French government went through to establish French civilization in North Africa, the Vatican and external Protestant mission organizations saw Algeria as a “pays de mission” (mission field). The contradictions inherent in Algeria’s unusual legal status as both a colony and yet not, were more than apparent to interested outside observers like the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. By the interwar period, for example, the glaring failure of French Christians to convert North African Muslims to

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80 On the depiction of the OAS as “fascists,” see Shepard, 83-90.
81 Scotto, 23-24.
Christianity was a growing concern in Rome.\textsuperscript{82} Few priests or Protestant pastors in Algeria spoke Arabic or Kabyle, and the task of evangelizing the Muslim population was almost entirely reserved for the White Fathers and White Sisters, and the Protestant Mission Rolland. The failure of Christian missionaries in Algeria was compounded by the existence of the settler population that seemed to be completely unwilling to engage with the Muslim population and yet represented the Christian presence in North Africa. Although the Algerian War was not the first major violent conflict over decolonization, Christians who had a stake in the outcome of decolonization watched it with interest and a certain degree of trepidation. When the Algerian War broke out in 1954, the Vatican and the World Council of Churches saw a continuation of French Algeria, albeit with significant reforms, as the best hope to maintain this Christian presence.\textsuperscript{83} However by the end of the war, they came to realize that it was French Algeria and the militant settler ultras who were endangering that presence the most with their hard line stance and actions that threatened to further alienate the Christian and Muslim communities, a situation that boded very ill for the future of Christianity in an independent Algeria.

While there is a fairly large gap in the history of the Vatican’s response to the Algerian War, mainly because of a lack of access to Vatican archives, we do have numerous public declarations and private archives from which we can begin to outline the Vatican’s position on decolonization generally and Algeria specifically. For the

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\textsuperscript{83} Nozière, 157. Nozière cites a letter from the French ambassador to the Vatican in which he wrote that the Pope Pius XII had told the French ambassador how much he hoped that France would stay in Algeria. This document was first cited in Boisson-Pradier, p. 259.
Catholic Church, which saw the missionary endeavor as merely a step toward the end goal of the establishment of indigenous clergy and churches in “young countries,” the decolonization of mission lands posed a problem only insofar as the churches in those lands had not yet achieved a state of maturity that allowed them to function independently.\(^{84}\) Although there was a well-known 1926 encyclical on the Catholic mission, it was not until Pope Pius XII’s 1954 Christmas address that the Vatican publicly tackled the problem of decolonization and the potential independence of mission lands.\(^{85}\) In this address, Pius XII took a position in favor of “a process of evolution to political autonomy for peoples considered until now as colonial.”\(^{86}\) One year later, Pius XII added that “a fair and progressive political liberty should not be refused to these peoples and that one does not put obstacles in their way.”\(^{87}\) Christine Alix has observed that the Vatican’s public positions on decolonization were both very general and limited in number, and that only three discussions on decolonization took place at the Vatican between 1948 and 1954. She also argues, however, that by 1957, decolonization had become one of the Vatican’s main preoccupations, leading to the encyclical \textit{Fidei Donum}, which examined “the present condition of the Catholic missions, especially in Africa.”\(^{88}\)

In \textit{Fidei Donum}, Pius XII exhorted his followers to turn their attention to Africa, “the Africa that is at long last reaching out toward the higher civilization of our times and


\(^{85}\) Ibid., 30. Nozière 154. The mission encyclical on missionaries is \textit{Rerum ecclesiae} from 1926.

\(^{86}\) Nozière, 154. He cited \textit{Les Eglises chrétiennes et la décolonisation}.

\(^{87}\) Nozière, 154, Alix, 30.

\(^{88}\) Pius XII, Encyclical letter \textit{Fidei Donum}, April 21, 1957.
aspiring to civic maturity; the Africa that is involved in such grave upheavals as perhaps have never before been recorded in her ancient annals.”89 While celebrating the mission work that had achieved a marked increase in the number of practicing Catholics, African priests, and ecclesiastical provinces, he added that there was still much work to do, and noted that with the rapid social, cultural, and political change that was taking place in Africa, the Church needed missionaries more than ever to make sure that Africans did not stray into “materialistic atheism” or an “excessive love of country.” While the description of Africans as “more easily unsettled and confused by the introduction of theoretical and applied scientific methods, with the result that they tend to be unduly inclined to a materialistic outlook on life” demonstrates the extent to which the Vatican had little confidence in their political and spiritual maturity, it seems clear that the Vatican no longer saw European colonial powers as necessary to defend and promote the Christian mission.90 However, in the allocution of June 13, 1957, Pius XII added that “it seems necessary that Europe maintains in Africa the opportunity to exercise its educative and formative influence.”91

Pius XII died in October 1958, and his successor John XXIII (formerly Mgr Roncalli, papal nuncio to France from 1944 to 1953) followed a similar line in his desire to maintain European influence in decolonizing areas and the need for more missionaries, although he also expressed his “great satisfaction to see progressively realized the accessions to sovereignty” in his address to the faithful of Africa.92 His concern with the role of the church in the modern world and social justice were undoubtedly influenced by

89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Alix, 36.
92 Nozière, 155.
the process of decolonization, and one of the major features of his papacy was the attempt to broaden the focus of the Catholic Church to bring in voices from outside Western Europe, including African, Asian and Latin American clergy. His major theological project was the Second Vatican Council, which he did not live to see in full force, but which led to *Ad Gentes*, a new decree on the missionary activity of the church which was passed by the assembly in 1965.93

Given the context of the Vatican positions on decolonization, it is easy to see why the case of Algeria presented a particularly complex and worrying situation for the Vatican. Historian André Nozière has argued that Pius XII’s position on Algeria was one of “moderation and prudence,” and that although he expressed to Mgr Duval his concern over the “grave problems that the relations between European and non-European peoples pose,” his discussions of Algeria tended not to include terms like “political autonomy” and “liberty” that he used when discussing decolonization in a universal context.94 His messages, like those of the leadership within the French Catholic episcopate, also tended to focus on “fraternal cooperation,” “the return of peace” and “reconciliation” in this land, which he noted was an important “meeting ground” of Christians, Muslims, and Jews.95 If, as some have suggested, Pius XII saw French Algeria as the best possibility for the continuation of the Christian presence in North Africa, one of his major concerns likely was the fate of the Christian population there.96 Whereas many of the other colonies heading for independence had a significant indigenous Christian population to protect the interests of the Church and its missionary effort even after independence, the

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93 For more on Algeria and Vatican II, see chapter 6.
94 Nozière, 156.
95 Ibid. He is citing Pius XII’s 11 January 1957 radio address from Radio-Vatican.
96 Ibid., 157.
minute missionary presence in Algeria could not guarantee any viable Christian presence after the possible independence of Algeria. Furthermore, Pius XII’s concern throughout the 1950s about the growing influences of communism and the conservative Christian propaganda about the dangers of communist infiltration in Algeria would likely have presented yet another reason to support the French presence there.97

A second interesting issue is the fact that the new missionary theories within the French Catholic Church were the result of intellectual and practical innovations of groups like the Mission de France, who in 1949 began to transition into Algeria. These theories were gaining ground particularly among leftist Catholics. The “dechristianization” of Algeria that Pius XII may have foreseen as a consequence of the end of French rule was already in evidence for the MDF, who saw the European Christian community of Algeria’s refusal to interact directly with the Muslim population as a major hindrance to the Christian mission there.98 The situation is even more complex when one considers the fact that the strategies of the MDF were in some ways a legacy of the Algerian experience of the Catholic hermit and Trappist monk Charles de Foucauld. His hermitage in the Algerian Sahara was the site where he came up with the idea to form a new religious association that would combine a monastic life with an apostolate of extreme poverty and holiness, rather than of preaching.99 His legacy included the Little Brothers

97 Nozière makes some interesting points on Pius XII’s advisors, including Cardinal Tisserant, who openly supported the French cause in Algeria. Since there is very little archival evidence on Pius XII’s views, however, one can do little more than speculate based on his past viewpoints and statements.
98 See Chapter 4 on the Mission de France’s implantation in Algeria. Nozière suggests that the potential “dechristianization” of Algeria was one of the possible reasons for Pius XII’s support of French Algeria, 158.
and Sisters of Jesus, orders which were not actually founded until 1933, several years after his death, and which had been established in Algeria under the leadership of Père René Voillaume. Like the worker-priests, the members of these communities performed manual labor within the secular communities they lived in, as well as focusing on prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist.

During the Algerian War, the success of both the Little Brothers and Sisters and the Mission de France in engaging directly with the Muslim population of Algeria was controversial in Algeria, particularly as it at times involved interactions with Algerian nationalists. Although these contacts were pursued in the quest for dialogue and solidarity with the oppressed and impoverished Algerian Muslims, in many cases they were interpreted as political actions, particularly by the partisans of French Algeria. The depiction of the MDF priests in particular as the enemies of French Algeria continued throughout the war, and only strengthened with revelations that in both France and Algeria a few priests were accused of participating in FLN support networks. Yet in the end, it was the vision of both the MDF and the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus of the Christian missionary as one who demonstrated his solidarity and his desire for dialogue in everyday life that proved to be much more successful than the European Christian community of French Algeria at defending the Christian presence in Algeria. This fact likely did not go unnoticed within the Catholic community, and the decree Ad Gentes of

100 For more on this, see chapters 4 and 5 on the expulsion of the MDF priests from Souk-Ahras and the trial of the “chrétiens progressistes.”
1965 displays the extent to which missionary tactics of solidarity and dialogue were seen to be necessary to the Christian mission.

Some of the more fascinating and new recommendations in *Ad Gentes* reveal the extent to which the Catholic leadership understood the necessity to adapt the missionary project to a contemporary and postcolonial world. Instead of working with colonial governments to spread the Christian gospel, missionary activity was to “transcend every peculiarity of race or nation and therefore [not] be considered foreign anywhere or to anybody.”

102 In addition to an exhortation to learn the local languages, the tasks of mission work itself were broadened to include Christian charity that “truly extends to all, without distinction of race, creed, or social condition: it looks for neither gain nor gratitude.”

103 It further instructed missionaries to “labor and collaborate with others in rightly regulating the affairs of social and economic life,” and to “take part in the strivings of those peoples who, waging war on famine, ignorance, and disease, are struggling to better their way of life and to secure peace in the world.”

104 While certainly not openly advocating that Christian missionaries engage in radical or openly political activities, this decree suggests a level of solidarity with the poor and oppressed that is much more reminiscent of the mission conception of the Mission de France and the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus than the self-contained world of European Christians in Algeria.

John XXIII seemed to recognize the limitations of Christianity under French Algeria, especially as the Algerian War progressed and threatened to turn into a French

102 Paul VI, Conciliar letter *Ad Gentes*, November 18, 1965, 8.
103 Ibid., 12.
104 Ibid.
civil war. One major difference between him and his predecessor was that he had direct experience with Algeria. During his official visit to North Africa as papal nuncio in 1950, he had spent a significant amount of time with Mgr Duval, then bishop of Constantine, who took him on a tour of the region that included meetings with Jewish and Muslim religious leaders.\textsuperscript{105} Mgr Duval later recounted that the future pope spoke to him in detail about his vision of Christianity in Algeria, which was a mission of “universal opening, in the respect of the liberty of persons and peoples, a mission of love in humility and a spirit of service.”\textsuperscript{106} In June 1961, the \textit{Journal de Genève} reported that the Vatican had publicly expressed its support for the policies of Charles de Gaulle in the face of divisions that threatened to tear both France and the Christian community apart.\textsuperscript{107} His support for an end to the war that maintained the unity of France, of the Christian community and assured the possibility of a Christian presence in Algeria was unsurprising, however his support for Algerian independence was expressed in a telegram he wrote to Mgr Duval in April 1961, just after the attempted Generals’ \textit{putsch} in which he wrote:

\begin{quote}
Your Excellency without difficulty understands the extent of our apostolic preoccupations in this critical hour for France, which is so dear, and that we see the menace of this fratricidal struggle, for the Algerian population that we had the pleasure to visit in 1950 and to whom we wish with all our heart the realization of their legitimate aspirations in justice and liberty.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

In many ways the preoccupations of the World Council of Churches on the question of decolonization were not all that different from those of the Vatican. Even if the mission of the WCC – to create Christian unity – resembled that of the FPF or even

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\textsuperscript{105} Ray, 66.  \\
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 67-68.  \\
\textsuperscript{107} “Le Vatican soutient la politique du général de Gaulle en Algérie” \textit{Journal de Genève} 7 June 1961. In the Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 309.  \\
\textsuperscript{108} Ray, 70. On the \textit{putsch}, see chapter 6.
\end{flushright}
the ACA in France, there was a major difference of scale that ultimately meant that the WCC approached issues of decolonization and the Algerian War differently from that of church leaders in France and Algeria. For the WCC, Christian unity meant *worldwide* cooperation and dialogue among Protestant churches, including the “young” churches in decolonizing countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. This unity was based on a dialogue on theological questions among Protestant churches, and to some extent with Roman Catholicism, however the WCC was also concerned with larger moral issues like social justice, racism, and decolonization that fell within the realm of international politics.\footnote{One interesting example is the long history of the WCC’s battle against *apartheid* in South Africa, which was the result of both theological and moral stance on equality among men.} Darril Hudson, who has written on the WCC and world affairs, argues that “the effect of the ecumenical movement’s first action in international affairs was that it attached significance not to church unity itself but to unified Christian action to relieve suffering in the world for the love of Christ.”\footnote{Hudson, 24.} Unlike the FPF and the ERF, the WCC did not shy away from openly discussing and attempting to influence “political” issues, and there was even a specific arm of the organization devoted to studying international affairs. This body was called the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and throughout the 1950s and 60s, it often focused on the issues surrounding decolonization.\footnote{Darril Hudson, *The World Council of Churches in International Affairs* (Leighton Buzzard, UK: The Faith Press Ltd., 1977).}

Since the ecumenical movement was in fact a result of the ecumenical action of missionaries, beginning with the World Missionary Conference in 1910, the question of Christian missions was a central consideration of the WCC, and at the center of the
CCIA’s work as well. Between 1947 and 1961, when the International Missionary Council (IMC) was formally incorporated into the WCC, the CCIA was an organ both of the IMC and the WCC. Its task was to facilitate the missionary effort around the world by helping to solve governmental and international problems that affected Christians worldwide, serving as a liaison between these two organizations and the United Nations. One of the major challenges of the CCIA in its early period was to reconcile the WCC doctrine of equality of man before God with the reality of Christian missions, which were almost entirely comprised of Europeans, many of whom still believed that “non white races were not yet equal to the whites in their administrative capabilities” and required the further “tutelage” of white Christians before they could achieve a level of advancement that would allow them to govern themselves. The first step was to attempt to eliminate racism within Christian churches, which the WCC pursued, for example, through efforts to end apartheid in South Africa and segregation in the United States.

The second step was to dissociate the Christian mission from imperialism. The fact that colonized peoples saw an inherent connection between European colonial powers and Christian missionaries was a problem that people like W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft were thinking about even before the organization of the World Council of Churches. In 1939, Visser ‘t Hooft wrote an article in the French Protestant youth journal Le Semeur in

112 On the role and structure of the CCIA, see Hudson, chapter 1.
113 Ibid., 59.
which he quoted Gandhi’s statement that Christianity in India was “inseparably tied to British domination,” and argued that the task of Christian missionaries was to move beyond the colonial context and focus on the creation of “young, independent churches.”

Before the 1954 Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, Illinois, the CCIA prepared a draft resolution on the “advancement of dependent peoples,” for discussion among the representatives of the member churches, in which they affirmed their hope to further “the acceptance by all nations of the obligation to promote to the utmost the well-being of dependent peoples including their advancement toward self-government and the development of their free political institutions.” Although the sub-committee subsequently advised against presenting the resolution at the Assembly because it was “inadequate, in view of the complexity of the question,” it is clear that there was a strong movement within the CCIA in particular to openly support decolonization movements. During the Assembly, several representatives of Christian churches in areas that had been or were still under colonial rule asserted the need for the WCC to support the aspirations and desires of the peoples of Africa, Asia and other “dependent” regions to a more free and equal relationship with Western Christians.

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116 An extract of this article appears in Les églises chrétiennes et la décolonisation, ed. Marcel Merle (Paris, Armand Colin: 1967), 125.
117 “Draft Resolution on the Advancement of Dependent Peoples” WCC archives, CCIA, carton 428.04, file 1.
118 Ibid.
119 The Evanston Report. See in particular statements by The Rev. Peter Dagadu, General Secretary of the Christian Council of the Gold Coast, 37; and Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, Director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 41-42.
Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the CCIA in particular continued to discuss the proper role of Christians in the process of decolonization. But just as with the Catholics, the case of Algeria was not easy to reconcile. One of the major issues was that French Protestants had played such an important role in the creation of the WCC and throughout the 1950s filled important roles so that dealing with the divisions among “our French friends,” as Visser ‘t Hooft put it, was a difficult challenge. Yet the WCC played an important role for French Protestants, and particularly for people like Marc Boegner who called on the WCC to intervene when French Protestants refused to tackle some of the larger moral and political questions of the Algerian conflict. At the request of Marc Boegner and Madeleine Barot, Willem Visser ‘t Hooft decided to wade into the churning sea of emotions and reactions that characterized the French Protestant responses to the Algerian conflict.

According to historian Geoffrey Adams, Visser ‘t Hooft initially sent a colleague from Geneva, André-Dominique Micheli, to Algeria to see what the situation was on the ground. Micheli’s report, which displayed his disbelief at the indifference of the Protestant community in Algeria to the conditions in which the Muslims lived, convinced Visser ‘t Hooft that something had to be done. In October 1956, Visser ‘t Hooft spent twelve days in North Africa preaching and visiting the Protestant communities in Algeria and Tunisia. In his confidential report to the World Council of Churches, Visser ‘t Hooft provided a starkly realistic analysis of the situation in North Africa. While he recognized a certain degree of open-mindedness among the Protestants he encountered (though he frankly admitted that they were the elites), Visser ‘t Hooft also outlined a number of major problems in the colonial situation, and commented that Algerian nationalism did
not seem likely to disappear anytime soon, despite the myth that “pacification” would return everything to the status quo.\textsuperscript{120} While he decried the violent methods of the “nationalist terrorists,” he also condemned the “terrorist” tactics of the French military and the use of torture.\textsuperscript{121} The solution, in his mind, was the establishment of a more positive relationship between North African Christians and Muslims based specifically on human contact \textit{outside} of the missionary context.

In his December 1956 letter to the Reformed church pastors in Algeria, Visser ‘t Hooft brought up the question of comparisons between Algeria and other countries, finding the closest parallel to be that of South Africa, although he noted that the French had “fortunately” not applied a policy of apartheid.\textsuperscript{122} He also noted the various arguments he had heard from those who defended the French presence in Algeria as a front against the installation of communism or as a means to increase European security. But, he argued, wasn’t the internationalization of the Algerian problem inevitable, and shouldn’t they, consequently, share the responsibility for the solution with other nations?

Although he wisely refrained from offering a solution to the Algerian problem, knowing full well how negatively European Christians in Algeria reacted to outside suggestions, Visser ‘t Hooft was well aware of the international consequences of the Algerian conflict.

\textsuperscript{120} These problems, which Visser ‘t Hooft also described a bit differently in his letter to the pastors of North Africa, are: the demographic situation, the ‘\textit{déracinement}’ of Algerian Muslims because of an educational system that focuses exclusively on French culture, the lack of contacts between Europeans and Muslims on a basis of equality and confidence, the Christian refusal to consider the validity of Islam, the lack of political reforms, terrorism, the failure to consider Algeria within its context in the decolonizing world, and pessimism.

\textsuperscript{121} “Notes on a Visit to Algeria and Tunisia,” Cimade archives, carton 3D 10/11 (DZ02), folder Wisser t’Hooft - Dec. 1956.

\textsuperscript{122} “Aux pasteurs des Eglises réformées en Algérie,” WCC archives, WCC General Secretariat, carton 42.3.002, file 3.
and the potential consequences of the growing hatred between the European and Algerian Muslim communities.

In a January 1957 memo to Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, Howard Schomer forwarded the analysis of French Pastor André Trocmé, who was considering the question of sending what eventually ended up being Cimade teams into Algeria. Pastor Trocmé thought that increasing the human contacts between French Christians and Algerian Muslims was not just important for Algeria, but in order to avoid an international catastrophe. He argued that there was a growing hatred within the Arab and Muslim communities toward the West and Christianity, but what French Christians in Algeria could do was to supply proof that this hatred was unjustified, in the case of Christianity. This proof, he wrote, did not exist in the eyes of the Arabs, as the church was seen to be completely aligned with Western powers and their “defensive tactics.”123 Although Trocmé (and Visser ‘t Hooft) believed that the workers should be French, he argued that the WCC should control the teams as the French tended to “confuse the task of the testimony of Jesus Christ with that of the political Franco-Muslim rapprochement.”124

Despite the moderate tone of his letter to the pastors of the French Reformed Church in Algeria, Visser ‘t Hooft’s report on Algeria to the WCC in December 1956 indicated that he saw little hope for the French cause in North Africa. He noted that it was interesting to go from Algeria to Tunisia and see the extent to which Tunisians had “a strong sense of independence and nationhood” as well as an enthusiasm for the cause of the Algerian nationalists. In his discussion with Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba,

123 Letter from Howard Schomer to Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, dated 2 January 1957. Archives of the WCC General Secretariat, carton 42.3.002, file 3.
124 Ibid.
Visser ‘t Hooft came away with the sense that Bourguiba was constrained in his attempts to normalize relations with France because of the uncritical support among Tunisians for Algerian nationalist leaders and their cause.125 Although Visser ‘t Hooft saw little possibility that the status quo could be maintained, he also saw little chance that France would turn Algeria over to the FLN, and little advantage in that path either. It could lead to a situation, for example, where France would be cut off from its other African colonies, which were “not yet ripe for independence,” and Algerians would be in a very difficult situation if French capital and resources were to be suddenly removed. Just as he noted to the Reformed Church pastors, the solution seemed to be located both in the internationalization of the political problem and in the increase in positive contacts between the two populations in Algeria.

Although the French continued to resist the internationalization of the Algerian conflict, the WCC, while resolving not to take sides in the internal debate within the French churches, continued to gently emphasize to French Protestants that Algeria was an international concern.126 The CCIA took up the question of Algeria several times throughout the war, originally at the request of French Protestants, and continued to monitor the action of Cimade teams in Algeria closely as they distributed large amounts of food and clothing provided by the World Council of Churches and the Church World Service. At the end of the war, the WCC worked closely with Cimade in the creation of the Christian Committee for Service in Algeria (CCSA), which worked directly with the

Algerian government in reforestation and development projects. At the Third General Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi in 1961, the CCIA issued a statement in which stated that the Algerian war was an international problem that could only be resolved by “means of free negotiations.” It elaborated on a 1960 statement from the CCIA that expressed the hope that French churches would press for the resumption of negotiations that would be “exclusively concerned with the welfare of the communities involved and the their members, in the setting of the broader international situation.” The statement was also sent to eighty members of the United Nations.

The 1961 Assembly in New Delhi crystallized many of the WCC’s policies on decolonization and the future of the Christian mission in much the same way as the Second Vatican Council expanded the Catholic Church’s commitment to social justice and a new mission relationship. A report from the Section on Witness at the 1961 meeting stated, in language that is similar to the Vatican II decree *Ad Gentes*, that

> The Church in every land is aware that new situations require new strategies and new methods, an adventuring into new forms of human social relationships with appropriately new ways of approach and understanding, a renewed sympathy with all me in their aspirations and sufferings and a fresh determination to speak to men the truth of the Gospel in the actual situation of their lives.

Further noting that the “strategies and techniques of evangelism must change from age to age,” the report stressed the importance for Christians to be “of service to the world in which men suffer.” In short, it was the role of Christians to help those in need, both

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127 For more on this transition, see chapter 6.
129 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
materially and spiritually, to achieve liberation. Evangelism, in these instances, would proceed from the Christian presence among the poor and the tactic of “dialogue” or having “conversations about Christ with them, knowing that Christ addresses them through us and us through them.”

Although an emphasis on dialogue had been a central tenet of the Ecumenical movement since its inception, its central place as a form of evangelism was something new, and seemed to grow directly out of the awareness that any successful relationship between Christians and non-Christians, and potential communication of the Gospel, consisted first and foremost in listening. Perhaps the most fundamental shift in a transition to a postcolonial Christianity within both the Protestant and Catholic governing bodies, however, was the basic underlying belief that a productive dialogue could only come through a mutual respect of the other’s beliefs, a position quite foreign to the practice of a large number of Christian missionaries under European colonialism.

**The Christian Anti-Colonialists and *Algérie algérienne***

Although a belief in the fundamental importance of dialogue did not become a part of the official Christian canon until the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, for a small group of Christians in France and Algeria, it was their openness to dialogue with Algerian nationalists that led to their belief that Algerian independence was both morally and politically necessary. For metropolitan Christians, this position is perhaps best illustrated in the examples of André Mandouze and Robert Barrat. Their early positions in support of Algerian independence gained them notoriety in both France and Algeria.

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132 Ibid., 82-84.
yet unlike those French Christians who eventually came to see Algerian independence as a means to restore French grandeur, Christians like Mandouze and Barrat argued for Algerian independence on the basis of its benefits for the Algerian people, and as part of a larger anticolonial project. As opposed to other prominent anticolonialists like Jean-Paul Sartre or Frantz Fanon who saw Algeria as the embodiment of a Third-World revolution, many of the French Christians who supported Algerian independence did so because they believed it was the Christian thing to do.

This group of Christians was evidently a very small minority within the Christian communities in both France and Algeria, however their impact was large and although they espoused more radical positions than their most of their fellow Christians, their radicalization often came out of their involvement in Christian protests against torture and military atrocities in Algeria and organizations like the Comité de résistance spirituelle. The one factor that links together those Christians who chose the more radical path of support for Algerian independence was that they all had direct experience with the poverty and oppression that Algerians faced in day to day life in France and Algeria. This is one thing that distinguished someone like Robert Barrat from François Mauriac, who although he was an outspoken critic of the use of torture, had never visited Algeria and seemed less concerned about the Algerian people than about the French people.

In January 1946, André Mandouze, the former résistant and founder of the Catholic newspaper Témoignage chrétien, boarded a ferry to Algeria to take up a post as a professor of Latin at the University of Algiers. A little over a year later, his article denouncing the “myth of the three departments” of Algeria appeared in the Catholic
periodical *Esprit*. This article, which launched his activism on behalf of Algerian independence, broke down the myths with which the French attempted to convince themselves that Algeria was indeed part of France. For the next several years, in addition to transforming the pedagogical system of the Latin department at the University of Algiers with field trips to Roman sites like Tipaza and close interactions with European and Algerian students, Mandouze continued to critique the French colonial system in Algeria. His controversial articles appeared in a diverse range of publications in France and Algeria, including several important Christian journals like *Le Semeur*, the Protestant student journal, and *Témoignage chrétien* as well as *Esprit* and *Consciences Algériennes*, a journal he founded in 1950.\(^{134}\)

In addition to his early and open support for Algerian independence, Mandouze was also known for his openly “progressivist” political views. As one of the original members of the French *Union des Chrétiens Progressistes*, a movement that promoted dialogue with the Soviet Union as a meant to promote peace, Mandouze pushed to break through what he called the “double incomprehension” of the Marxist and Catholic “intransigence” through dialogue between the East and West.\(^{135}\) He participated in the early issues of the “progressivist” periodical *La Quinzaine*, writing on the necessity of Algerian independence, and his journal *Consciences algériennes* took up many of the same themes, bringing together articles by communists, Algerian nationalists and Christians under a simple mantra: “There is no possible Algerian conscience without the definitive liquidation of racism and colonialism, and without a definitive engagement in


\(^{134}\) A list of Mandouze’s publications is at the end of *Mémoires d’outre-siècle*.

the direction of democracy.”136 While Mandouze’s journalistic polemics gained him notoriety in intellectual circles and the pied-noir community, it was his engagement with students in Algeria that was one of his most influential actions on behalf of Algerian independence.

Even though his openness to dialogue with Marxism and the intellectual anticolonialist position of his colleagues in the *Union des Chrétiens Progressistes* influenced his rejection of colonialism, it was his direct experience with Algeria that served as the catalyst for his activism on behalf of the Algerian struggle for independence.137 And much of this direct experience occurred because of his contacts with Christian and Muslim student movements in Algeria. Many of those Europeans who later supported the FLN and Algerian independence were Mandouze’s students, including Aline Charby, who with her husband Jacques, joined the Jeanson network in France in the mid-1950s.138 In 1954, he became the director of the journal *Consciences Maghribines*, which was run by European and Algerian-Muslim students in Algeria. These youth had come together in a movement called the *Association de la jeunesse algérienne pour l’action sociale* (AJAAS) that sought to improve relations between Algerian and European young people in Algeria through dialogue and social action.139 In 1956, Mandouze left Algeria after several dramatic confrontations with conservative

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136 Ibid., 214.
137 Mandouze, 188 (on the UCP).
138 On his influence for pied-noir activism on behalf of Algerian independence, see chapter 4.
139 For more on AJAAS, see chapter 4.
pieds-noirs but continued to work for Algerian independence from France, even after his arrest later that year.\textsuperscript{140}

Like Mandouze, Robert Barrat was a Catholic journalist and the early general secretary of the \textit{Centre catholique des intellectuels français}. The CCIF was one of the main centers of debate for Christian intellectuals in France, and in 1953 dedicated a debate to the “problems of North Africa before the Christian conscience.”\textsuperscript{141} The participants in this debate included Barrat, François Mauriac and Père Voillaume, guiding force of the Little Brothers of Jesus. Although they were apparently outspoken in their denunciation of the military repression in Morocco, it was not clear that any of them spoke out against the colonial system.\textsuperscript{142} The outspoken critiques of French tactics in North Africa did, however, prompt the resignation of several prominent Catholics from the CCIF and a large pile of hate mail for François Mauriac.\textsuperscript{143} Although Algeria would be the subject of three CCIF debates between 1955 and 1957, the Moroccan question and eventually the Algerian War divided Catholic intellectuals. In 1955, Barrat stepped down as general secretary, and Etienne Borne, who represented the tendency among the CCIF to avoid political questions, took over in the organization. Although in 1957 the center hosted a debate around Pierre-Henri Simon’s book \textit{Contre la torture}, by 1959 they had completely disengaged from the political issues surrounding the Algerian War.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{140} Mandouze, chapter 13.
\textsuperscript{141} Fouilloux, 64.
\textsuperscript{142} Claire Guyot, “Entre morale et politique: Le Centre catholique des intellectuels français face à la décolonisation (1952-1966),” \textit{Vingtième siècle}, 63, juillet-septembre 1999, 75-86. Guyot notes that no text remains of this debate, although it was covered by \textit{Témoignage chrétien}.
\textsuperscript{144} Guyot, 83.
For Barrat, the colonial situation was above all a political problem, and not one that Christians could ignore. His first discovery of the poverty of Algerian Muslims occurred in 1952, when he was doing research for an article on the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus, but he did not become actively engaged in the colonial question until he began reporting on the deposition of the sultan of Morocco and the repression of Moroccan nationalists for Témoignage chrétien.¹⁴⁵ His book Justice pour le Maroc, published in 1953, already displayed a sympathy for the nationalist cause born out of his horror at the repression of the nationalist movements and the racism of the colonial system. In September 1955 Barrat caused a scandal in France when he met with Algerian nationalist leaders in Algiers and published his interview in France-Observateur.¹⁴⁶ Not only was France-Observateur censored by French authorities, but Barrat was arrested and imprisoned for eight days after the publication of the article, charged with “not informing the competent authorities about the facts that [he] had learned” during his meetings with Algerian nationalists.¹⁴⁷ Although he was freed soon after, thanks to the intervention of influential friends like François Mauriac, his engagement in the Algerian conflict only accelerated.

In early 1957, he formed the Comité de résistance spirituelle with several like-minded Christians who felt a Christian duty to speak out against what they saw as the grave injustices being committed. In part, their publication of the text Des rappelés témoignent was a project of educating the “average Frenchman or woman,” who continued to think that never would a French person be capable of committing such

¹⁴⁷ Barrat, 71.
crimes, that such crimes did indeed exist. They were not at all trying, they insisted, to
“search for a scandal to exploit against our country,” but rather to point out that “the
active participation in such collective crimes profoundly contributes to the demoralization
of our soldiers and our officers.”148 Although many of the committee members never
moved past the point of protesting against torture or educating the French population on
the reality of the Algerian conflict, it was also a jumping off point for other members who
adopted a more radical response to the conflict.149

The Comité de résistance spirituelle was also known for the fact that its
membership included several members of the Mission de France, whose direct
experiences with North African workers in France and with impoverished Algerians in
Algeria motivated them to defend the movement for Algerian independence and those
whose consciences dictated that they should not participate in what they perceived was an
unjust war. The MDF had, since its creation in 1940, been part of the avant-garde of
French Catholicism, and their stances on the Algerian War continued this trend. In March
1958, their monthly “Letter to the Communities” published a series of thoughtful
theological arguments for both resistance to French government policies in Algeria and
support for Algerian independence. In the conclusions of the MDF session that debated
the response of the MDF and the Catholic Church to the Algerian War, they stated “If it
is a recognized fact that in Algeria a people exists and wants to be distinct from the
French people, we can then clearly declare that the Church can no longer oppose there or
anywhere the accession of this people to independence. Evangelization cannot be a

148 Comité de résistance spirituelle, Des rappelés témoignent, 1957.
149 On the influence of the Comité de résistance spirituelle for those who participated in
FLN support networks in France, see chapter 5.
pretext for the domination of one people over another.”\textsuperscript{150} Considering the hesitation and elusiveness of the French Catholic Church on the problems of Algeria, this declaration by one of its orders caused a scandal in both France and Algeria.\textsuperscript{151} However these declarations were not spur of the moment or passionate responses to issues like torture, but the result of several years of engagement, both physically and theologically, with the question of how the Church should deal with oppression and injustice.

While these few examples represent the intellectual trajectory toward Algerian independence of a number of prominent Christian intellectuals and orders in France and Algeria, and while their impact was great within the Church and public opinion, the most controversial and courageous defense of Algerian independence came from those who worked on the ground in France and Algeria to both create a more equal and just relationship between the French and the Algerians and in doing so came to recognize the necessity of Algerian independence. As we will see in the following chapters, in Algeria their efforts were treated with such suspicion by the government, the military, and those who supported the cause of Algérie française that even the most basic attempts at dialogue between these two communities ended up being a dangerous, and in some cases, fatal endeavor. However it was also the courage of these Christians in both France and Algeria who stood up to defend the cause of Algerian independence that saved both the reputation of Christianity in Algeria and contributed to the growth of a productive dialogue among Christians and Algerian Muslims that was built on mutual respect and commitment to justice for all Algerians – Christian and Muslim.

\textsuperscript{150} Lettre aux communautés, 3, March 1958, 47. Also cited in Chapeu, 132.
\textsuperscript{151} Chapeu, 143-140.
Chapter 4 – Social Action and the Radicalization of Christian Engagement in Algeria

In 1954, Hussein-Dey, a few kilometers to the east of Algiers, was a working-class commune with a mixed population of pieds-noirs and Algerians. The commune was the first installation site of the Mission de France (MDF) in Algeria and was the center of a Christian community that was intellectually and socially engaged with the problems of Algeria, animated by a pied-noir curé named Jean Scotto. Scotto, who was one of the pioneers of the Christian effort to shift the way that Christian pieds-noirs thought about their spiritual and social responsibilities, especially toward the Algerian community, also helped create the first two Centres sociaux (social centers) in Algeria to try to ameliorate the squalid conditions in the two large shantytowns (bidonvilles) next to Hussein-Dey. These centers, which became the models for Germaine Tillion’s government project that began in 1955, had also attracted the attention of a group of young people in Algeria who had formed an organization called the AJAAS (Association de la jeunesse algérienne pour l’action sociale) in 1952 in order to understand and respond to the grave social problems in Algeria.

The leaders and members of the AJAAS were made up of a diverse group of young people from Christian and Muslim youth movements in Algeria, including leaders of the Algerian Scouts (Scouts Musulmans d’Algérie), and the French Catholic student association in Algeria (known as the “Asso”) as well as new arrivals from France who were interested in the social problems in Algeria. The original goal of the organization was to create a space for dialogue among the various student groups, in particular a

1 Jean Scotto took over as curé of Hussein-Dey in January 1949 and worked there until November 1954, when he transferred to the parish of Bab-el-Oued in Algiers.
dialogue between Muslim and Christian students in Algeria, and to “coordinate the action
young Algerians in order to edify a human community in which all Algerians could meet
with each other and express themselves, permitting them to be enriched by their mutual
differences.”2 The AJAAS projects included the improvement of hygiene in the
shantytowns, the fight against illiteracy, and the creation of social secretariats to help
impoverished Algerians with administrative problems, such as legal problems, or filling
in government forms in a language they had never been taught. By 1954, approximately
three to four hundred students were participating in the conferences and social projects of
the AJAAS in and around Algiers.

What this example demonstrates is that well before the Algerian insurrection
officially began on November 1st, 1954, there was already a group of Christians working
to improve the conditions of impoverished Algerians both in France and Algeria.
Although many of these Christians were recent transplants from France, a large number
were pieds-noirs with long family histories in Algeria. Their awareness of the injustice of
the colonial system in Algeria came specifically through direct contact with the Algerian
population, whether through their involvement in youth movements or social projects, or
even through discussions and dialogues with their Algerian counterparts. By the time the
war broke out, many had developed strong relationships with Algerians, and in particular
with many of the young leaders of the Algerian nationalist movement. Because of these
relationships, these Christians were automatically suspected of supporting the FLN, and
the subsequent reaction to their engagement for Algerian independence became an
increasingly tense and political question.

2 “Où va l’Association Catholique des Étudiants d’Alger?” Archives of Cardinal Duval,
Archevêché d’Alger, casier 268, file 22.
By 1956 the actions of these Christians were already the subject of heated debates in French and Algerian newspapers and periodicals and within the Christian communities in France and Algeria. The first wave of arrests of young FLN supporters of European origin in 1956, many of whom were Christians who were closely tied to the AJAAS and Algerian youth movements, shocked both the pied-noir and the French population, and many quickly denounced them as traitors to the French nation. The major trial of Christians accused of supporting the FLN, which took place in July 1957, became a central topic of debate, especially for those who were concerned about the proper role of Christians in the political sphere, and in particular in the struggle for Algerian independence. The majority of these Christians were defined in the press and by the government as “progressivists” (progressiste) or “liberals” (libéraux), two labels which have endured in many descriptions of the actions of these Christians during the Algerian War, particularly in the French historiography.3

Among the Catholic pied-noir community in Algeria in the late 1940s and early 1950s, which is generally understood to be quite conservative, there was a small group who followed closely the innovations within social Catholicism in France.4 Alexandre Chaulet, a member of a prominent Catholic pied-noir family in Algiers, had been a leader of the ACJF (Action catholique de la jeunesse française) in Algeria in the late 1930s, a movement led by the Jesuits in the parish of St. Charles de l’Agha in the center of Algiers.5 It was there that he encountered Jean Scotto, newly ordained and working with

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4 On social Catholicism in France, see chapter 2.
youth and social Catholic movements in the parish of St. Charles, his first post.\textsuperscript{6} Alexandre Chaulet would go on to found the first section of the Christian labor union, the CFTC, in Algeria, and to work tirelessly, with his wife Suzanne, to improve the social conditions of both European and Muslim workers in Algeria.\textsuperscript{7} A second pied-noir family, the Gallices, was also active in social Catholicism in Algiers and followed closely the growth of movements like the \textit{Vie Nouvelle} in France. Cyril Gallice, who ran a small paper company in Algiers, had been active with Alexandre Chaulet in Catholic youth movements in the 1930s and by the early 1950s was part of a movement that have often been called the “liberals” of Algeria.

The term “liberal” is generally used to describe leftist French Christians in Algeria who were actively engaged in an analysis of the social and economic inequalities in Algeria, although most of those categorized as “liberals” were often advocates more for the reform of the colonial system than for Algerian independence.\textsuperscript{8} In the end, because their major project consisted of creating and maintaining dialogue and positive contacts between the European and Algerian communities, many came around to the idea of independence near the end of the war, yet they are differentiated from those Christians who were actively engaged in the FLN by their refusal to openly accept and support the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Alexandre Chaulet also founded the \textit{Caisse d’allocations familiales} in Algeria, and fought so that Algerians would also have access to Social Security benefits. See Scotto, 39. Interview with Pierre and Claudine Chaulet, February 2009, Algiers.
\item \textsuperscript{8} In a 1988 interview with Patrick Eveno, Pierre Chaulet noted that the term “libéraux” was created during the Algerian War to talk about a wide range of Europeans in Algeria who were interested in social and political reforms, and in some cases, the independence of Algeria. This interview was published in Nicolas Bancel, Daniel Denis, and Youssef Fat, eds., \textit{De l’Indochine à l’Algérie – la jeunesse en mouvements des deux côtés du miroir colonial 1940-1962} (Paris: La Découverte, 2003), 80.
\end{itemize}
mission and tactics of the FLN. It is interesting to note, however, that many of those who eventually became radicalized militants for Algerian independence came from families and communities that have often been qualified as “liberals.” To some extent this label, like that of “progressivist,” can be misleading and was often used for propaganda purposes to label negatively anyone who demonstrated any sort of sympathy with the Algerian population. Yet it is evident that a movement did exist within French Christianity in Algeria that attempted to analyze the problem of racism and reform the social and economic disparities between the European and Muslim population.

This chapter examines the origins of this movement, and in particular the intellectual and political shift for many of these Christians from nearly complete ignorance of the injustice of the colonial system in Algeria to the radicalization of their moral and political positions in favor of, if not Algerian independence, then at least major reforms of the political and economic systems in Algeria. What is important to understand is that for all of these Christians, their intellectual and/or political engagement with the problems of the colonial system in Algeria came about as the result of their direct contact with the Algerian population. The project of dialogue among Christian, Jewish and Muslim youth movements and the direct social action in places like the Casbah of Algiers or the shantytowns of Hussein-Dey gave them a direct experience of the severe poverty and social injustice that existed in French Algeria. Yet although the

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9 Nozière, IHTP et al. Conversation with Pierre Chaulet, February 2009, who noted that the “libéraux” were the enemies of people like him who were openly engaged in the FLN because of their refusal to take sides in the conflict. 1956 pamphlet from the liberal periodical Espoir-Algérie asking for support after their suppression by the Gouvernement Général, in the archives of the Archevêché d’Alger, casier 282.

10 The way the labels “liberal” and “progressivist” functioned in Algeria will be dealt with extensively in chapter 5.
direct contact with the Algerians was a major factor in the process of becoming engaged on the Algerian side of the War, the so-called “liberal” and “progressivist” Christians of Algeria were not completely isolated. This group had many more links with French Christianity and the French intellectual sphere than did most pieds-noirs. This contact, whether it was intellectual exchanges through the importation of French Christian periodicals to balance out the conservative viewpoints of the settler-owned Algerian dailies, or through the movement of people to and from Algeria, served as a major catalyst in the engagement of a small group of European Christians who began to work toward the reform, and eventually the end, of Algérie française.11

“New Wine in New Vessels”

The abbé Jean Scotto grew up in a modest family in Hussein-Dey, and after his studies at the Petit and Grand Séminaire at Notre-Dame d’Afrique in Algiers, he was ordained as a priest in 1936. He then worked in some of the more working-class parishes around Algiers, including his hometown of Hussein-Dey, where he was named curé in January 1949. A highly-decorated World War II veteran, Jean Scotto early on had a reputation for his sense of justice and his desire to make the Catholic church more open to the working classes.12 Unlike most of his fellow priests in Algeria, Jean Scotto was

11 In my conversation with André and Annette Gallice, they mentioned that one of the distinguishing factors of the so-called “liberals” in Algeria was that they subscribed to French journal like Esprit and Témoignage Chrétien for as long as they were available in Algeria, while the majority of the pied-noir community read only the local press like the Echo d’Alger.
12 Concerning his military service during World War II, Jean Scotto, according to the Préfet in Algiers, was mobilized in 1939, and was made a prisoner in June 1940. He escaped in September 1940 and made it back to Algeria. From October 1942, he reengaged for the duration of the war, serving in the campaigns in France and Germany. In September 1945, he was named a military chaplain and was awarded the Légion
concerned about what he saw as the destructive relationship between the pieds-noirs and the Muslim population in Algeria. Several friends and contemporaries have described him as someone who was profoundly concerned with the “human problems” that were especially evident in places like Hussein-Dey, with its massive shantytowns and grave housing problems, most of which emerged because of the vast urbanization that occurred after the Second World War. He was unsurprisingly one of the first Catholics in Algeria to exhibit an openness to leftist Catholic movements from France, like the Action Catholique and the Mission de France. As a young priest in the parish of St. Charles in Algiers, Jean Scotto helped lead student movements, including the Catholic Student Association (Association Catholique des étudiants), known as the Asso, where he met future influential Catholics like Alexandre Chaulet, whose family was deeply implicated in the fight for Algerian independence.

The first implantation of Mission de France priests in Algeria occurred in Hussein-Dey in 1949, specifically at the request of Père Scotto. After a few initial interactions with the Mission de France during his military service in France in the late d’Honneur, the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille des évadés. CAOM, 1k/963 (sous dérogation).

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14 Close colleagues including Pères Henri Bonnamour, Denis Gonzalez, Henri Teissier as well as Pierre Chaulet all mentioned the same thing in my conversations with them in January and February 2009 in Algiers.

15 Garnier and Planche, Archives of the Archevêché d’Alger, casier 182.

16 After his time in Hussein-Dey, Père Scotto was the curé of Bab El-Oued, a working-class quarter of Algiers, and then El Harrach (1961-1963), Belcourt before becoming the bishop of Constantine and Hippo in 1970. He retired from this post in 1983 for health reasons, and ultimately died suddenly and prematurely of a heart attack on September 8, 1993 in Aix-en-Provence. “Notice biographique du P. Scotto pour le service du chef du gouvernement” by Père Henri Teissier, 1993. Archives of the Archevêché d’Alger, casier 182.
1940s, Père Scotto, with the blessing of Monseigneur Leynaud, the Archbishop of Algiers, convinced a few young priests to come to Algeria and work with him in Hussein-Dey in order to engage more directly with the largely “dechristianized” working classes in Hussein-Dey. For many of the priests of the Mission de France, their first encounter with North Africa had come as a result of their military service or their interactions with North African workers in France, yet several of them jumped at the opportunity to live and work among the Algerian Muslims on their own turf. One of the first arrivals was Guy Malmenaide, one of the very first candidates for the MDF, who had expressed a desire to live a contemplative life among “a primitive population, like the indigènes of North Africa.” In Hussein-Dey, he worked mainly among the Muslim population, and was one of the first Catholic priests in Algeria to learn Arabic, which he studied with the Pères blancs in Tunisia. Honoré Sarda, who had discovered his “missionary aspirations” after his return from the STO (Service de travail obligatoire) in Germany had spent seven years of his youth in North Africa, and had a desire to return after his ordination. He arrived in Hussein-Dey in July 1951, around the same time as Henri Bonnamour, who came to replace Guy Malmenaide during his Arabic training in Tunisia, but stayed on as the fourth priest of Hussein-Dey.

In their report on their activities in 1952, the Mission de France team in Hussein-Dey described the commune as having approximately eighteen thousand European

17 The earliest reference I found to Père Scotto’s relationship with the Mission de France is in a biographical statement by Bruno Garnier and Jean-Louis Planche, who remarked that Jean Scotto first encountered the Mission de France after his demobilization from World War II, when he passed by Paris before returning to Algiers. He then met with Louis Augros, then superior of the Mission de France, in 1949. In the archives of the Archevêché d’Alger, casier 182.
18 CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1997015 0172, file 1952.
19 Ibid.
inhabitants, with twenty-five thousand “indigènes,” twenty thousand of whom lived in the shantytown on the outskirts of the city. The town was quickly shifting away from its agricultural origins with the influx of industrial laborers, creating a population that the team characterized as essentially proletarian and petite bourgeoisie. In view of the difficulties that the priests faced in attracting the largely uninterested working classes into the church, Père Scotto and his team instituted several changes in the parish, many of which were quite radical for the conservative European Catholics of Algeria. With the motto “new wine in new vessels,” he instituted liturgical changes that included moving the altar so that the priests faced the congregation, doubling the Latin liturgy with French. He also removed many of the statues and windows from the church, arguing that the goal was the “unification of the classes in simplicity” and asked Eric de Saussure, a brother from Taizé, to paint murals on the walls of the church.

By orienting the church more toward the reality of Hussein-Dey, in which the working-classes had been alienated by the church that they viewed as a bourgeois institution, Père Scotto followed the model of the Mission de France and the movement toward liturgical reform in France that had begun in the 1930s and 40s. Certain conservative Christians viewed these reforms negatively, and Scotto and the MDF team gained the reputation early on for being “progressivists.” The negative reaction to the Mission de France’s work in Hussein-Dey continued to grow in the early 1950s, especially as it became clear that in Hussein-Dey, the opening of the church also meant

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20 Ibid.
21 Honoré Sarda, “Histoire de la MDF à Hussein-Dey.” CAMT,onds MDF, carton 1997015 0172. See also Jean Scotto, 80. He notes that the priest read the text, mumbling, in Latin while someone else read the French translation aloud.
22 Scotto, 72-74.
23 Planche and Garnier, 73.
engaging the entire parish in church activities and social work projects, in particular with the Algerian community who lived in the shantytowns around the village.24

The MDF defined all of these reforms as necessary to the instillation of a “missionary spirit” among Algerian Catholics. In their 1952 report, the team wrote:

> Whatever anyone says, the Church in North Africa is not revived. It is not a question of a Church rising from the ruins, but a transplanted church for the exclusive use of a European population with Christian traditions. The world outside of Christianity is untouched by the structures of the Algerian Church. Worse than that, the more or less flagrant compromises with temporal values create an obstacle to the penetration of the gospel in the pagan and Muslim worlds.25

Although the Mission de France believed that “missionary work” was something greater than just conversion, the introduction of the gospel and a Christian influence on the largely “dechristianized” pied-noir population was clearly still a major motivation in the church reforms. In terms of their relationship with the Muslim population, it is unclear to what extent conversion to Christianity was a goal of the MDF teams in Algeria. What is clear is that they believed that their job was to open the Christian population to their responsibilities toward the Muslims in Algeria as Christians, and in doing so bridge the enormous divide between the European and Muslim populations.26 Their other major task was to change the perception among Algerian Muslims that the Christian churches were totally aligned with French political power and colonialism.27 Perhaps even more importantly in the political context of the mid-1950s, the MDF attempted to demonstrate

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24 Scotto, 74-75.
25 See the 1952 MDF report. CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1997015 0172, file 1952.
27 Scotto, 22-23, 79-80, 90.
through their actions the “positive face of Christianity” to the Algerians, one in which the
Church was not completely tied to the colonial system in Algeria, nor to the pied-noir
worldview in which the Algerian community was nearly invisible.28

In October 1950, the Mission de France established a second team in the town of
Souk-Ahras, in the eastern part of Algeria near the Tunisia border, in response to a call by
the then bishop of Constantine, Monseigneur Léon-Etienne Duval.29 The team was
comprised of three young priests – Pierre Jarry, Gabrielle Moreau, and Jobic Kerlan –
who had approached Jean Scotto in 1948 about the possibility of establishing MDF teams
in Algeria.30 In a 1951 report to Mgr Duval, the team in Souk-Ahras defined their work as
a double task, on the one hand helping the European Catholic community to grow in their
role as Christians, and in particular in the Church’s relationship with the modern world,
and on the other, the ‘missionary’ aspect of their work, in which they attempted to create
and nourish personal contacts with non-Christians, whether they were workers of
European origin, or Algerian Muslims.31 Their interaction with Algerian Muslims
occurred in the events of daily life –in the report, the priests note that they found
whatever means necessary to interact with the community, whether in the markets, or on

28 Exposé from Père Scotto, Jean Urvoas and Père Moreau on the situation in North
Africa to the AG at Pontigny, Sept. 1956, CAMT, fonds MDF, 1996028 0193.
29 For a more detailed description of the Mission de France’s experiences in Souk-Ahras,
see Sybille Chapeu, Des chrétiens dans la guerre d’Algérie, (Paris: Les Éditions de
Liénart” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1997015 0175, file 1954.
30 Chapeu, 20. She cites the testimony of Jean Scotto after the death of Jobic Kerlan,
found in the personal archives of Jobic Kerlan that she consulted.
31 “Rapport adressé par l’équipe sacerdotale de Souk-Ahras à Monseigneur Duval,
the sports field – as well as in the attempt to create a dialogue between communities through various associations, like the Association des Oulémas, or the Muslim Scouts.

Their radical approach to Catholic life, whether in the attempt to modernize liturgical traditions in order to create a more appealing and egalitarian atmosphere in the church, or through their emphasis on charity and the need for Christians to create more positive relationships with the Algerians, was a welcome addition for some parishioners in the region (a “slowly-growing core” of the Catholic community, they describe in their 1953 report to Mgr Duval). But in 1953, they noted that the majority of the Catholic community still existed in a different universe from that of the Algerians, or even from the working-class Europeans.32 On the far end of the spectrum, their continued emphasis on pursuing relationships with the Muslim community was viewed with extreme suspicion by more than a few pied-noirs, leading to tense relationships between the MDF teams and the military and government establishment, especially after the outbreak of the war.33

With the arrival of Louis Augros, the former head of the MDF seminary, in Souk-Ahras in late 1954, the team had reestablished its unity and continued its “missionary” project with renewed fervor. In its report to Cardinal Liénart in March 1954, the team wrote that in 1953 it had signed a contract with Mgr Duval that specified the explicitly “missionary” role that it was to play in the diocese. Although the priests wrote that they

33 “Objet: A/S des Prêtres de la Mission de France de Souk-Ahras,” CAOM, GGA, 10 CAB/155. This is a surveillance report on the MDF team in Souk-Ahras, dated 8 June 1954 reporting that several Catholic parishioners from Souk-Ahras were writing a collective letter to the Vatican protesting against the liturgical reforms instituted by the MDF team, as well as their close relationships with Communists, syndicalists, and “Muslim separatists.”
had not abandoned the work of spiritual leadership among the Christian community, they were more focused on cultivating relationships with non-Christians, both among the European working classes and the Muslim community. In their attempt to “demonstrate the true face of Jesus Christ,” the MDF priests opened the doors of the presbytery to whomever needed help or support, and by late 1954, when the priests noted the astounding growth of military and police presence and repression in the region, more and more of those coming to the Mission de France for help were Algerians.

In Hussein-Dey, Père Scotto and a community of like-minded Christians were also establishing direct contact with the Algerian Muslim population. In its 1952 report, the Hussein-Dey team wrote that Guy Malmenaide, the Arabic speaker of the team, had taken up residence in the shantytown of La Glacière (Bel-Air) where he “without the pretension of proselytizing, tries to give an example of prayer and service, approaching as much as possible their lifestyle.” Part of his service project there was to distribute food, clothing and medicine to the residents of the shantytown, a project that slowly expanded in the following years into one of the first Social Centers (Centres sociaux) in Algeria. In addition to Guy Malmenaide, the parish of Hussein-Dey had acquired in 1951 two parish assistants, one of whom was a French Catholic named Marie-Renée Chéné. Marie-Renée decided that her time would be better spent at the dispensary in the Bérardi shantytown, and from there she began to build the Social Center, with the assistance and support of Père Scotto, who viewed the center as a realization of the idea of ‘service’ that would

36 CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1997015 0172, file 1952.
demonstrate the ‘positive face’ of Christianity to the Algerians. In addition to the dispensary, the Bérardi center later opened a school for young girls who had no other opportunities for education, and eventually a school for boys. A second center opened in Bel-Air, the other large shantytown in Hussein-Dey, in 1953 after two pied-noir social workers, Emma Serra and Simone Gallice, suggested to Père Scotto that they could build a social center that would cater to the educational, social and medical needs of the quarter, modeled on a center that they had visited outside of Lyon.

Père Scotto decided to transfer Guy Malmenaide from Bel-Air to a different location in order to allow him to live more simply among the poor and also to allow the center to use all of the resources the church had available in Bel-Air. The center remained linked, however, with the Mission de France and the Catholics of Hussein-Dey in the minds of the Muslims who utilized its services. From this small dispensary, the young social workers founded the Association des Travailleurs Sociaux d’Hussein-Dey (The Association of Social Workers of Hussein-Dey), which counted among its board equal numbers of Christians and Muslims. The social centers in Bel-Air and Bérardi became

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37 Honoré Sarda, “Histoire de la MDF à Hussein-Dey.” CAMT, fonds Mission de France, carton 1997015 0172; Scotto, 77-80. Nelly Forget notes that Marie-Renée Chéné refused all attempts at institutionalization, and when Germaine Tillion’s project for the Centres sociaux got off the ground, Marie-Renée was asked to be the director of the center in Béraldi (also called Bou-Bcila), but refused. The Centres sociaux later took over that original center after her departure from Algeria. Some of the most important support for the early centers came from volunteers from the International Civil Service teams who helped construct the schools and ran the dispensary. This was the reason why several Frenchmen and women who eventually worked in the Centres sociaux came to Algeria in the first place, including Nelly Forget. Conversation with Nelly Forget, Paris, France, November 2008, and subsequent correspondence.

38 Scotto, 78.


40 Scotto, 79.
the center of an immense volunteer effort from groups of young people who came to work in the them on the initiative of the pacifist NGO, the International Civil Service (Service civil international), and several youth movements in Algiers that were educating a growing group of Catholic, Muslim, Protestant and Jewish pied-noirs and recent arrivals from France on the economic and social disparities between the French and Muslim population in Algeria.41

Marie-Renée Chéné, who had originally come to Algeria as a volunteer with the International Civil Service, had gathered around her a group of young Christians and Muslims who were eager to volunteer in social projects like the Social Center in Bérardi or later, the devastation in Orléansville after the massive earthquake in September 1954. While many of them found in Marie-Renée’s projects an outlet for their physical energies, they also found an outlet for their spiritual needs in the home of the Daclin family, a pious Catholic pied-noir family that was active in the parish of Hussein-Dey and that opened its living room to young people of all faiths and walks of life. The Daclins’ opening to the Muslim world came after an encounter with a French mystic who had received the stigmata in France in the 1930s, and who asked them, knowing nothing of their background, about the Arabs of Algeria. They worked with other Catholics in the parish, including the priests of the Mission de France, to open the eyes of European

41 The French branch of the Swiss pacifist service organization called the International Civil Service was created in 1935. One of its founders was the French Protestant pastor and pacifist Henri Roser, and it drew on pacifist and social Christian currents in France and abroad. Volunteers worked on “chantiers” both in France and abroad, and in 1948, a small section was founded in Algeria that had both European and Algerian members and worked to “try to bring our spirit of comprehension and mutual tolerance, in total racial equality” to Algeria. See Etienne Reclus, ed., 50 ans au service de la paix. Les mémoires de la Branche Française (Paris: Service Civil International, 1987), 57.
Christians to the enormous gulf that separated the European and Algerian communities.\textsuperscript{42} Both the Daclins, in their desire to provide a space where young people from all faiths could discuss religious issues and find a safe haven, and Père Scotto’s projects in Hussein-Dey demonstrated a spirit of ecumenism that came, not from an order imposed from the Catholic hierarchy, but from the everyday experiences that grew out of the Christian opening to the Muslim Algerians. In many ways, they were more advanced in their ecumenical ideas than many of the Protestants in Algeria who were part of the larger Ecumenical movement.

The Protestants in Algeria, especially those of the Reformed Church (ERF), which made up the majority, tended to be generally more conservative than their metropolitan counterparts. While Protestant student movements like the \textit{Fédé} and organizations like Cimade in France were bringing the question of Algeria to the forefront of discussion by the early- to mid-1950s, with a few exceptions, the Protestants in Algeria seem to have maintained a relatively cautious and conservative attitude toward the Algerian conflict, siding early on with the integrationist plan of the prominent Protestant Jacques Soustelle, who early in his tenure as Governor-General seemed to be working toward the peaceful end to the conflict.\textsuperscript{43} It is clear that, to some extent, the

\textsuperscript{42} I have found no trace of archival information on the Daclin family, but their name almost always comes up in conversations about the Christians in Hussein-Dey. Those who have mentioned the Daclins include Nelly Forget, Josette Fournier, Mgr Henri Teissier, and Jean-Claude Barthez, who told me the story about their experience with the Catholic mystic. He did not remember the name of the mystic, but it was likely Berthe Petit.

\textsuperscript{43} Geoffrey Adams, \textit{The Call of Conscience: French Protestant Responses to the Algerian War, 1954-1962} (Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1998), 25-37. Adams cites in particular an interesting debate in the \textit{Fédé’s} journal \textit{Le Semeur} between the French editor Daniel Galland, who wrote in the journal that “Algeria is not France” and Bernard Picinbono, the Protestant son of a colon in Algeria, who later changed his
Algerian Protestant community resented the more liberal viewpoints of metropolitan
Protestants, feeling them to be particularly uninformed on the situation in Algeria and
unduly intrusive. The famous retort of a Reformed Church elder to the ERF synods in
France concerning the Algerian War – “Shut up and pray!” – was reinforced in 1956 when
André Chatoney, the head of the Algerian synod at the national synod meeting in Royan,
while acknowledging its ‘brutality,’ argued that the sentiment still had value.44

Yet, with the beginnings of a movement of more “liberal” French Protestants into
Algeria, in the mid-1950s, the tone began to shift in certain Protestant communities. This
was the case, for example, in the fall of 1955, when a pastor named Max-Alain
Chevallier, a former head of the Fédé in France, arrived to run the Reformed Church
parish of Hussein-Dey. As “liberals” from France, Chevallier and his wife Marjolaine fit
right into the currents in the local Catholic community, pushing their parishioners
(somewhat unsuccessfully, it appears) to be more open to the Algerian community, and
working with a small community of ecumenical orders – the Deaconnesses of Reuilly, the
Soeurs de Grandchamp, and the Frères de Taizé – who lived among the impoverished
Algerians in the shantytowns and distant suburbs of Algiers around Hussein-Dey.45

Similarly, the arrival of Elisabeth Schmidt, the first woman pastor of the ERF and a

perspective on French Algeria and became a Cimade team member organizing
distributions between 1960 and 62. See the list of Cimade équipiers who worked with
44 The procès-verbal of the 1956 National Synod meeting of the ERF in Royan quotes
André Chatoney as saying, “Il [Chatoney] souligne d’abord combien il est touché par les
messages de sympathie venus des diverses paroisses et conseils. La demande de forme un
peu brutale d’un conseiller presbytéral d’Algérie, garde pourtant sa valeur : ‘Taisez-vous
45 This information on Max-Alain Chevallier and his wife Marjolaine is from Geoffrey
Adams’ book The Call of Conscience, based on his correspondence with Marjolaine
Chevallier in 1994, 53-54.
former Cimade team member, in Blida in 1958 challenged the status quo of colonial life. She was invited to Blida to help combat the growing “paganism” (both Christian and Muslim, the invitation letter specifies) in Algeria. She found instead that her work was less of a missionary nature, but rather trying to promote a spirit of openness toward the Algerian community in her parish, which was, as many others in rural Algeria, quite conservative.  

As in the Catholic community, there was a small group of Protestants in Algeria who were becoming conscious of the enormous economic and political disparities between the European and Algerian communities. To some extent they were part of a movement of intellectuals, and included François Hauchecorne, head of the National Library of Algeria and Maurice Causse, a teacher who arrived in Algeria in 1953 after a stint in Madagascar where he had supported the indigenous movement for autonomy.  

According to historian Geoffrey Adams, both Causse and Hauchecorne, who was himself a scholar of Islam, became involved in the Algerian Muslim community through their attempts to create a new form of dialogue between Christians and Muslims that was based on a mutual respect and a belief that each faith had as its source spiritual integrity.  

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46 Invitation letter from an unknown Algerian pastor, asking Elisabeth Schmidt to become pastor of the parish of Blida, Algeria (no date), in the BSHP, Fonds Elisabeth Schmidt – 014y, carton 2, file “Lettres au moment de son départ de Sète.” Elisabeth Schmidt, J’étais pasteur en Algérie (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976). In this memoir, Schmidt recounts the challenge of trying to shift the mentality of the Protestant community, and recounts an anecdote in which Pastor André Chatoney warned her that she should not subscribe to any French journals except Le Monde in order to avoid creating a new barrier between her and her conservative parishioners, 45.  

47 Adams, 87.  

48 Ibid., 86-89. For more on Hauchecorne’s view of Islam, see François Hauchecorne, Chrétiens et musulmans au Maghreb (Paris: Les bergers et les mages, 1963).
had been sent to Algeria to examine how the Protestant community could best engage
with the growing numbers of Algerian prisoners, found an enthusiastic welcome on her
arrival in Algeria in February 1957.\textsuperscript{49}

During her three tours of the prisons and detention camps in Algeria, Tania
Metzel began to establish herself as a spiritual and material counselor for Algerian
prisoners, and in some cases, European prisoners who had been arrested for various
crimes, including support for the nationalist movement.\textsuperscript{50} Although she encountered some
resistance from male Muslim prisoners who found it awkward to talk to a European
woman, she quickly became a trusted intermediary between the Algerian prisoners and
their families.\textsuperscript{51} In her later visits to internment camps and prisons, she began to
document the use of torture that she discovered, although she found a relatively unwilling
audience in the French prison and camp administrators in Algeria. She also attempted to
engage the Protestant community in Algeria through a radio address in June 1957, in
which she essentially called on Christians to ask God for forgiveness for their neglect of
the Muslim community around them, an address that was not, according to Elisabeth
Schmidt, well received by the Algerian Protestant community.\textsuperscript{52}

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\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 90. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few documents and Geoffrey Adams’
interviews with her, there is very little archival documentation on Tania Metzel and her
work in Algeria. In the Cimade archives, there is a letter between Jacques Beaumont and
Madeleine Barot from July 17, 1957 concerning whether Tania Metzel should continue
her work in Algeria as a staff member of Cimade. It seemed the ERF leadership in France
was not eager for her to stay in Algeria, as her presence was also invaluable in France.
Cimade archives, carton 2.3 (Jacques Beaumont).
\textsuperscript{50} Nelly Forget, who was imprisoned for several months in the spring and summer of
1957 received a visit from Tania Metzel in Barberousse prison.
\textsuperscript{51} Adams, 134.
\textsuperscript{52} Schmidt, 91-92.
\end{flushright}
In the Protestant community, however, most of the actual work of engaging with the Algerians occurred outside the church. For example, in addition to the independent work of Tania Metzel in the prisons, and the existence of some Protestants in more progressive youth movements, several of those who lived in Hussein-Dey in the 1950s have noted the importance of two small ecumenical communities – the Frères de Taizé and Soeurs de Grandchamp – who had installed themselves in the poor neighborhoods around Hussein-Dey in the early 1950s. The members of these communities in Algeria were there specifically to be of service to the Algerian community, through direct social actions and also through prayer and meditation. Both the Frères de Taizé and the Soeurs de Grandchamp worked in many cases in tandem with the Centres sociaux in Hussein-Dey and later during the Battle of Algiers, became the intermediaries between Algerian prisoners and their families, even attempting to find information on those who had simply “disappeared.”

Like the leading Protestants in France, W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft, head of the World Council of Churches, was also extremely concerned about the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Algeria and its impact on the Algerian War. The WCC was preoccupied by the moral issues surrounding Christians and colonialism, particularly as it

53 The first Taizé brothers, including Eric de Saussures who painted the murals in Père Scotto’s new church in Hussein-Dey, arrived in Algeria 1953 – this was the first overseas implantation of Taizé. Soeur Renée Schmutz of Grandchamp, who still lives in Algiers today, arrived in Algeria on November 2, 1954, unknowingly stepping right into the middle of the Algerian conflict. The baraque of the Soeurs de Grandchamp was in the middle of the Hussein-Dey bidonvilles. This information is from a conversation with Soeur Renée in Algiers in January, 2009. Other people I talked to, including former MDF priest Jean-Claude Barthez and Nelly Forget, also mentioned the influence of these two groups.

54 On “disappearances” as a military tactic, see Raphaëlle Branche, La torture et l’armée (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2001), 137-146.
sought to reconcile the WCC doctrine of equality of man before God with the reality of Christian missions, which were almost entirely comprised of Europeans. Many of these still believed that “non white races were not yet equal to the whites in their administrative capabilities” and that they required the further “tutelage” of white Christians before they could achieve a level of advancement that would allow them to govern themselves.  

After Visser ‘t Hooft’s 1956 tour of Protestant churches in Algeria, he wrote an open letter to the pastors of the Reformed Churches in Algeria, in which he outlined what he saw as the major barriers between the European and Algerian populations. As in his confidential report, Visser ‘t Hooft’s primary suggestion was to establish human contacts on a footing of equality, offering to the pastors the example and practical assistance of Cimade.

Like the Mission de France, Cimade was originally preoccupied with the problems of North African workers in France. In the summer of 1956, with the financial support of the WCC, they had set up a team in the outskirts Marseille, in the middle of a North-African quarter, where they opened a center for North African workers and offered literacy courses and activities for the children in the neighborhood. From this engagement came the impulse to establish a presence in Algeria. In September 1956, Jacques Beaumont became the new secretary-general of Cimade. Beaumont, a pastor in

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55 Ibid., 59. Although the sub-committee subsequently advised against presenting the resolution at the Assembly because it was “inadequate, in view of the complexity of the question,” it is clear that there was a strong movement within the CCIA in particular to openly support decolonization movements.

56 “La Cimade à Marseille 1956-1962,” from the private archives of Charles Harper. After this first center in the rue d’Aix, Cimade set up several other centers including in the Boulevard des Dames, in the shantytown of L’Enclos Peyssonel and in the former refugee camp at Grand Arénas.

the ERF, had previously been a leader of the *Fédé* and had international experience as a graduate of Sciences-Po and as a “Fraternal Worker” in the United States during the early 1950s.⁵⁸ In his acceptance letter to pastor Marc Boegner, Beaumont asserted that Cimade, while maintaining its historical role in responding to the urgent needs of refugees and migrants, needed to find a way to address the grave problems caused by French policies in its overseas territories, especially in North Africa.⁵⁹ Whether through aid to North-African workers in France, or through direct engagement in North Africa, Beaumont saw Cimade’s role in both spiritual and to some extent political terms, as a concrete form of Christian witness to the oppressed that demanded constant negotiation with contemporary political forces.⁶⁰

From the debut, Beaumont envisioned Cimade as an organization that functioned ecumenically, and with a certain liberty in regards to French Protestant organizations like the ERF and the FPF.⁶¹ In both its metropolitan and overseas implantations, Cimade undertook to work with a diverse group of secular and religious organizations, many of which already had experience on the ground. It is not surprising that the organization of the first team in Algeria greatly benefited from the assistance of the Frères de Taizé and the Soeurs de Grandchamp and the expertise of the personnel of the Social Centers (both

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⁵⁸ Adams, 74. See also the “Procès-verbal du Comité de la Cimade,” 29 mars 1956, in which the committee discussed the candidature of Jacques Beaumont to head Cimade. In the Cimade archives, Personnel boxes, carton 2.3, file Jacques Beaumont.
the Catholic and the government centers) in the Algiers region.\textsuperscript{62} The Cimade leadership in Paris decided in the summer of 1957 to send Isabelle Peloux, one of the team leaders in the prison ministry, to North Africa to scout out possible locations and actions for Cimade implantations. After talking with Protestant pastors and parishioners, city officials, visiting one of the Centres sociaux, and looking at possible locations in the shantytowns and slums around the city, Isabelle Peloux decided that the poor, and primarily Muslim quarter of Clos Salembier in Algiers would be the best place for the first Cimade team. In addition to Isabelle, the team was originally comprised of Suzanne Besançon, a Protestant military widow, and Soeur Claire Menegoz of the Communauté de Pomeyrol, a close friend of Madeleine Barot. The team members lived in a small house in the quarter, which they opened to the neighborhood children and worked specifically with men and women whose needs included access to medical care and social services.

Over the next few years, the Cimade teams in Algeria spread from Algiers to Médéa (where they were supported by former Cimade worker, pastor Elisabeth Schmidt) and into some of the regroupment camps. Cimade, as an ecumenical organization, worked with groups like the American Friends Service Committee, the American Mennonite “Pax Boys,” who helped with Cimade distributions of donated food and clothing to regroupment camps, and Catholic organizations like Secours Catholique, in addition to secular agencies like the Red Cross, the Algerian branch of which was run by

\textsuperscript{62} Isabelle Peloux’s interactions with these different groups are described in her letters to Jacques Beaumont and her descriptions of Cimade’s work. See, for example, her report on the Camp de Villemarie in carton 3D 10/11 (DZ02) and her correspondence with Jacques Beaumont in carton 3D 10/12 (DZ02-2).
a Protestant named Mlle Lung.63 While a certain number of Protestant parishes assisted in Cimade activities, for the most part the teams were made up of young Protestants who had been recruited through youth movements across Europe. Cimade, which later worked clandestinely with the FLN in France and Tunisia, was the most visible and successful example of Visser ‘t Hooft’s plan to show the Algerians a different side of Christianity, one that demonstrated their solidarity and worked to build the country for the Algerians, rather than just for the French. As was the case with many of the more open Christians in Algeria, it was this social action that led to a deeper and more significant engagement on behalf of the Algerian population, which in many instances meant an acceptance and promotion of Algérie algérienne.

The Radical Youth of Algeria

Despite the general understanding that pieds-noirs lived completely “in a bubble” in Algeria, with little interaction with and very little understanding of the lives of the Algerians, it is interesting to note that some of the most original and militant projects for the understanding and improvement of the social conditions of the Algerians emerged out of the pied-noir community, and in particular, Christian, and eventually ecumenical youth organizations that took their inspiration from the same social catholic movements that were occurring in France in the 1940s and 50s. An analysis of the shifting discourses over politics and the Algerian problem within several of these movements provides a

63 Many of the resources of the Cimade teams, including the food and clothing distributed to the regroupment camps came from the World Council of Churches, and in particular the Church World Service in the United States which shipped American surplus items to Algeria. The Cimade archives hold detailed correspondence on the daily operations of the distributions in regroupment camps and in the Cimade centers across Algeria. See in particular the files from Philippe Jordan in carton 3D 10/11 (DZ02).
fascinating example of the awakening consciousness of many young pied-noirs, whether from leftist families, or more conservative ones, toward the injustices in Algerian society. One important influence for many young people in Algeria was the Catholic intellectual André Mandouze, who was a professor of Latin at the University of Algiers between 1946 and 1956 and a friend and former parishioner of Jean Scotto. Mandouze, whose radical anticolonialism was well-known to the pied-noir population, and who ultimately left Algeria because of safety concerns after several dramatic clashes with pro-Algérie française settlers, lent his support to several student movements whose vision of the world was expanding beyond just the European settler community.64

For those outside of the university, or too young to have been Mandouze’s students, it was Christian scout and student organizations that first brought them into contact with the impoverished Algerian population. Through dialogues and debates with their Algerian counterparts, many European students became more fully engaged in both social activities, and for some, political engagement for Algerian independence. While many of the Christian youth movements in Algeria were branches of larger organizations in France, including the Scouts de France, the ACJF, the JEC, and the Protestant Fédé, there were some uniquely Algerian organizations like the AJAAS that were created out of the initiative of European and Algerian students to provide a space for discussion and collective action, specifically to ameliorate some of the immense social problems in Algerian society.

64 For more details on Mandouze’s encounters with pied-noir students in the university, and with Catholic parishioners in his parish in Hydra, see his memoir, Mémoires d’Outre-Siècle, tome 1, D’Une Résistance à l’autre (Paris: Viviane Hamy, 1998).
Some of the largest youth organizations in Algeria during the colonial period were the various branches of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim scouts. Historian Aline Coutrot describes the Scout movement in France of this era as one of education with a strong emphasis on patriotic and religious values. There were strong ties between the Christian Scout movements in Algeria, which were branches of the metropolitan organization, and the French movements. As in France, scout movements in Algeria were generally organized by confession, with multiple branches of Protestant and Catholic scouts as well as an independent Jewish branch, which were all divided by gender. Beginning in 1935, the Algerian Muslims had their own branches, the first being the Scouts Musulmans d’Algérie (SMA), which historian Gilbert Meynier argues was formed under the influence of the ulamas and the Algerian nationalist party, the Parti du Peuple algérien (PPA). He writes that after 1945 it was “practically a sort of juvenile section of the PPA-MTLD, despite the efforts of Mahfoud Kaddache to keep its autonomy.” Later the Boy scouts algériens was formed from members who split from the main group in 1948, because of their desire to remain apolitical.

In addition to Algerian branches of the JOC (Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne) and the ACJF (Action Catholique de la jeunesse française), which like their counterparts in France, were focused on the Catholic relationship with the working classes, several other

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66 Gilbert Meynier, Histoire intérieure du F.L.N. 1954-1962 (Paris: Fayard, 2002), 107. The PPA (Parti du peuple algérien) was an Algerian nationalist political party formed in 1937 out of the remnants of Messali Hadj’s Étoile nord-africaine (ENA). The MTLD (Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques) was a more public wing the PPA, formed in 1946. The PPA-MTLD produced an important number of Algerian militants who became leaders of the FLN after its formation in 1954.
Christian youth organizations in Algeria were discovering and discussing the range of social problems in Algeria. While most were focused on class issues and social problems within the European community in Algeria, a handful also began to consider the social implications of the French colonial presence in Algeria. For example, a Jesuit priest named Henri Sanson produced, through the Secrétariat social d’Alger, several sociological studies on the social and economic problems in Algeria, including the influential publication, *La lutte des Algériens contre la faim* (The Struggle of Algerians against Hunger), published in 1955. These studies, which were some of the first of their kind to study the reality of colonial Algeria from a sociological perspective, were important for the reason that their very existence meant that Catholics could no longer ignore the social question in Algeria, and for the fact that Père Sanson, who was also for a time the chaplain of the Catholic Student Association – the “Asso” – conducted the sociological research for these studies with the help of the young Catholic students in the Asso. These students went directly into poor, Algerian neighborhoods in Algiers to examine the reality of the conditions in which Algerian Muslims lived.

The Asso was created in 1929 as an organization for Catholic students that was governed by the students themselves, with only occasional intervention from the Catholic chaplain, a fact which distinguished it from youth movements like the JOC and JEC.

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In a report for Mgr Duval, the Archbishop of Algiers, on Catholic youth movements in Algiers, the author noted that in the early 1950s, even though the Asso was created as a Catholic organization, it also included as members Muslims, Protestants and Jews. By the 1940s and 50s, the Asso was one of the largest Christian student organizations in Algeria, with a membership, in the Algiers section alone, of somewhere between two hundred and fifty and six hundred students. Yet despite the efforts of some of the more liberal members of the Asso to awaken Catholic pied-noir students to the harsh realities of the colonial system, most members remained fairly conservative both in their politics and in their view of colonial Algeria. According to documents in the Asso files of Mgr Duval, several internal battles took place in the organization during the late 1940s and early 1950s that were focused on the political orientation of the organization and the perception that the liberal members were trying to push the Asso to take an openly leftist public position on the Algerian problem.

According to a January 1955 report for Mgr Duval titled “Where is the Algiers Catholic Student Association going?”, the problem first began with the arrival in Algiers of André Mandouze. Mandouze, the report states, did not get along with the chaplain at

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69 Ibid.
70 These figures are according to diverging reports to the Archbishop of Algiers from 1955. The lower figure of 259 is the unnamed authors who complain of the loss of membership due to the ideological conflicts within the organization over political questions. The figure of 600 is apparently from the late 1940s. See the document “Où va l’Association Catholique des Etudiants d’Alger?” Archives de l’archevêché d’Alger, casier 268, file 22.
71 “Où va l’Association Catholique des Etudiants d’Alger?” in the archives of the Archdiocese of Algiers, casier 268, file 22. The authors of this report remain unknown,
the time, the R.P. Pignal, who had personally asked Mandouze not to interfere with the Asso, after which time Mandouze left, taking many students with him. For the authors, the major problem with Mandouze was his association with communism, leading them to claim that those students who had followed Mandouze were “progressivists” and that they were trying to influence the political orientation of the organization through Mandouze’s influence on the clergy and their attempts to gain illegal power in the leadership bodies of the Asso. The R.P. Coignet, the chaplain of the Asso rebutted many of these claims in his own May 1955 report to Mgr Duval, but he expressly avoided supporting André Mandouze or the supposedly “progressivist” students like Pierre Chaulet and Pierre Roche, claiming instead that he was trying to avoid anything remotely political within the organization. He also states that he refused membership in the Asso to a young French-Algerian medical student named Jeanine Belkhodja, who was, according to both reports, a communist as well as a Catholic.

The other major source of conflict within the Asso was the constitution of a couple of new youth organizations that tried to unite Christian, Muslim, Jewish and secular youth movements in an attempt to improve relationships between these various groups and to avoid replicating in the youth movements what many saw as the harmful divisions in Algerian society. One of these was an attempt to unite the various Algerian youth movements under the umbrella of the World Association of Youth (WAY), which but according to a rebuttal report from the RP Coignet (the chaplain at the time), it was likely from a group of five conservative students who were opposed to the “liberal” or “progressiste” politics of certain members. See L. Coignet’s May 1955 report in the archives of the Archevêché of Algiers, casier 268, folder 22.

72 Ibid.

never materialized because it was condemned as communist by the conservative elements and as too conservative for the liberal members. After the WAY, the most obvious target of conservative students was the AJAAS (Association de la Jeunesse Algérienne pour l’Action Sociale), an organization that brought together students from Christian, Jewish and Muslim scout movements in Algeria as well as newly-arrived French youth, including several young volunteers from the International Civil Service.

In many ways, the AJAAS was the culmination of the efforts of different movements of liberal Christians in Algeria to create more respectful and productive relationships between the Christian and Muslim communities in Algeria. One of the first official examples of this effort occurred in April 1949, when the meeting of the Assembly of the Bishops of North Africa, which took place in Algiers took on the theme of “the problem of the relationship between the Christian and Muslim communities.”74 The conclusions of the assembly were that the Christian and Muslim communities needed to learn to live together and respect each other in order for them to live in peace in Algeria, and that only together could Christians and Muslims construct the Cité. The duties of the Christian community in this project were to demonstrate two fundamental commandments: justice and charity, as well as being open to rethinking their intellectual and political positions toward the Muslim community.75 The bishops clearly avoided taking any political positions on the Algerian situation, but the language of the

75 Ibid.
conclusions is starkly different from what came before, likely because of the influence of the recently-arrived bishop of Constantine, Mgr Léon-Etienne Duval.76

A few years after these conclusions from the North African bishops, it was the Christian and Muslim youth in Algeria who put them into practice. According to a 1953 report on the development of the AJAAS, the organization was created in the fall of 1952 after a series of contacts between Christian and Muslim scout movements, partly coming out of the Algerian committee for the preparation of the WAY, which involved the leadership of numerous Algerian youth movements. After the relative failure of the previous attempts at dialogue between Christian and Muslim youth movements, a few Catholic and Muslim youth leaders, including Pierre Chaulet (son of Alexandre Chaulet), Pierre Roche, and Mahfoud Kaddache, decided to form an organization whose goal was both to create dialogue and also to find specific points and projects on which European and Muslim young people could work together.77 Citing another founding document of the AJAAS, the report describes the objectives of the organization:

To coordinate the actions of young Algerians in order to enrich each other’s lives with our mutual differences; to implement a reconciliation [rapprochement] of young people by getting them into the habit of working together and the frank and objective confrontation of our own points of view to bring us all to move past reactions that have been conditioned by our own race or caste prejudices.78

The organization’s first outing occurred in February 1, 1953 at El-Riath, outside of Algiers, and included thirty Muslim and Catholic students, and scouts who decided that the organization should focus on three major social problems in Algerian society:

76 On Mgr Duval’s influence in Algeria, see Nozière’s chapter in Les Chrétiens d’Algérie, 47-77.
78 Ibid.
illiteracy, hygiene, and social aid. They decided to set up courses in the Casbah for uneducated young boys, to create sanitary aid centers in the interior of the shantytowns (much like those in the centres sociaux in Hussein-Dey), and to open a social secretariat in the office of the SMA.79

In addition to the practical social work that the AJAAS members committed to do, the organization also worked to create a forum for discussion of social and political problems raised by the members. A series of weekend camps, held in the beach town of Sidi-Ferruch (Sidi Ferdj) allowed for the AJAAS members to bring up topics like capitalism and Marxism, women and Islam, and the colonial system. Despite the insistence of some observers that the Catholics in the organization wanted very specifically to steer clear of political issues, the original statements from the organization itself reveal that an open discussion of a diverse range of political and religious questions was central to the success of the organization as one that moved beyond the ingrained prejudices of the pied-noir community. The first step in the realization of mutual respect and dialogue, according to the AJAAS, was the realization of the existence of the other:

“It seems to us to be capital that each of these youth groups, who are completely divided from the start, who are raised in parallel without any point of contact, sometimes as enemies, should come to understand, finally, that the other exists, that they have their own personality, and problems that the other never dreamed existed. For us, the future of the country rests in the mutual and reciprocal knowledge of the two youth groups.”80

Only from there would European and Algerian students be able to move past their cultural and historical prejudices and be able to work together for the future of Algeria.

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79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
The goals of the AJAAS were in many ways in line with the worldview of André Mandouze. It is difficult to say exactly what Mandouze’s influence was on the European members of AJAAS in particular, especially as members at the time have said that it was quite a bit less than what has been previously depicted. Nevertheless, Mandouze, who had been an important contributor to the defunct review *Consciences Algériennes* (1950-51), at the request of the editorial team, helped the AJAAS launch their bulletin *Consciences Maghribines*, with the first issue appearing in March 1954. The journal, which consisted of several “dossiers” on subjects like the repression of nationalist uprisings in Morocco and Tunisia, was from the beginning openly concerned with social and political questions. It was the students themselves who wrote the articles with an analysis of subjects that included the various nationalist parties in North Africa, an analysis of “the French of North Africa,” which describes the colonialist mentality, and “public health in Algeria,” on the medical structure and challenges of disease and lack of medical care for the majority of Algerians.

According to the unnamed authors of the January 1955 report on the *Asso*, the AJAAS was being led by “well-known Muslim agitators who, for the most part, have

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81 Conversation with Pierre and Claudine Chaulet, February 2009 in Algiers. In his autobiography, Mandouze depicts himself as one of the founders of a circle of like-minded Europeans created to develop “franco-musulman” relations, of which the AJAAS and Scout initiatives were one branch. See Mandouze, 208-209. Despite a genuine admiration for the political and anticolonial engagement of Mandouze, there also seems to exist among European activists for Algerian independence, some mistrust of Mandouze as a French outsider who had a somewhat egotistical attitude about his role in Algerian politics.

82 Mandouze, 222-223. The editorial team of *Consciences Maghribines* included Pierre Chaulet, Françoise Becht (a leader of the female Scout branch, the *Guides de France*), Mahfoud Kaddache (leader of the SMA), Pierre Roche, Jean Rime, Mohamed Salah Louanchi, Reda Bestandji, and several others.

83 Mandouze, 223. From issue nº 2 (May-June 1954), and nº 3 (Oct-Nov 1954) of *Consciences Maghribines*.
recently been the object of judicial measures."

In addition, the fact that André Mandouze was the director of the AJAAS’ periodical *Consciences Maghribines* and that the editorial board consisted of both Muslim Scout leaders and “liberal” Catholics like Pierre Chaulet and Pierre Roche led the authors of the report to the conclusion that the AJAAS was dangerous to the future of the *Asso*, as it attempted to lead the Catholic students to take political positions that were not in line with the ideals of the organization. This in turn led to the problem that the *Asso* had, in their eyes, a decreasing influence in the university. While the R.P. Coignet disagreed with the analysis that the *Asso* had a decreased influence, he nevertheless expressed a strong hesitation toward the AJAAS, which he described as having two tendencies: one profoundly, and sincerely religious, and the other “theatrical and polemical.” Although he seems to defend the Catholic members of the organization by saying that the organization took a political turn “despite the best efforts of some,” he also stated quite strongly that the AJAAS was not part of the *Asso*, even if they had members in common.

In October 1953, the R.P. Coignet expressed particular wariness at what he called the “Manifesto” of *Consciences Maghribines*. He sent a letter to the editors of *Consciences Maghribines*, who he claimed were the initiators of a certain “Letter to Bourguiba,” which openly called for the release of political prisoners in North Africa,

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84 “*Où va l’Association Catholique des Etudiants d’Alger?*” Archives de l’Archevêché d’Alger, casier 268, file 22, p. 5. They note in particular Muslim scout leaders Omar Lagha [written Amar Lagha] and Salah Louanchi, both of whom were later arrested during the Algerian War, but had not yet been at the time the report was written.
86 Ibid.
including the future Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba. His most profound objection was the politicization of the AJAAS, as it moved the Christian and Muslim members away from acting solely on their religious faith. What he meant by politicization was the passing from political discussion to political action, as he noted that each individual, whether Christian or not, had the right to take a political position. He admitted that the Christian community of Algeria did not have much in the way of political education, and that their Muslim counterparts were extremely disappointed in the fact that the Catholics, and the representatives of the church in particular, refused to take political positions against the colonial system. However, he then fell back on the favorite verse of those Christians who maintained that the church should stay out of the political realm, that of “rends à César [ce qui est à César].”

It was not only the more conservative elements of the Asso or of the Christian Scout movements that emphasized the fact that the AJAAS was not merely an offshoot of Christian and Muslim youth movements in Algeria, but also the members of the AJAAS themselves. AJAAS members like Pierre Chaulet emphasize that one of group’s the major principles was that each person would adhere individually to the organization without having to ask permission from, for example, the Catholic leadership or hierarchy. Because they adhered as individuals, they were also not obliged to be official representatives of their various youth movements, which allowed for a freedom of opinion and expression that did not necessarily exist in organizations like the Asso or the

88 I have not found any trace of this document.
89 This verse from Matthew 22:15-21, which translates as “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God” is used incredibly often during the Algerian conflict as the main biblical justification for keeping the Church out of political affairs. See chapter 5 for more on the question of Christians and political engagement.
90 From my conversation with Pierre Chaulet, February 2009 in Algiers.
Scouts de France. From the testimonies of several former members of the AJAAS, it is clear that it was the burgeoning awareness of the economic, social, and political conditions of the Algerians, both through discussion, and through direct experience in the shantytowns and other social projects of the organization that led many Christian members of the AJAAS to a political awakening that eventually led them to understand the desire and justification for Algerian independence. These Christians, many of whom were radicalized by their experiences in the AJAAS, began to move away from more “liberal” positions on Algeria to an understanding that the root of the problem was political, and they became more critical than ever of organizations and Christian institutions that refused to treat the Algerian problem as a political problem.

The AJAAS was clearly on the fringe of Christian youth movements in both Algeria and France, so it is not surprising that its members became the target of critiques from all manner of different sources, particularly from Catholics who argued that the church should stay outside of all political affairs. *Consciences Maghribines* is still today somewhat shocking in its openness to treat questions like the legitimacy of Algerian nationalism and the social crises in Algeria, including problems like the ninety percent...
illiteracy rate among North African Muslims.\footnote{\textit{Les Musulmans d’Afrique du Nord}, \textit{Consciences Maghrébines}, n° 3, Oct-Nov. 1954.} The articles in the journal were also reprinted, beginning in the fall of 1955, by the French Federation of the FLN, while at the same time \textit{Consciences Maghrébines} reprinted several FLN documents.\footnote{The n° 6-7 of \textit{Consciences Maghrébines} (fall 1955) includes a statement by the Fédération de France du FLN, stating their intention to reprint the articles from CM for their readers and saluting the courage, intellectual probity and devotion that they bring to the service of a just cause. CM reprinted a large number of FLN documents, including the proclamation of 31 October 1954, up through the tract on the first anniversary of the “Algerian revolution,” from 22 October 1955.} Yet despite their vilification, the members of the AJAAS had support from people like Jean Scotto, and from the leaders of youth movements in France, many of whom, because of their physical and intellectual distance from Algeria, were more progressive in their critiques of the colonial system than their Algerian counterparts. The leaders of the older branch of the Christian scouts in France, \textit{La Route}, in particular lent their support to various AJAAS projects, whether in their social activities, or in their political ones.\footnote{The relationship between \textit{La Route} and Scout movements in Algeria were recounted by me by Paul Rendu, in my conversation with him at his home in Bry-sur-Marne, France on April 30, 2009.} One of the most controversial documents that several AJAAS members participated in writing was an open letter from the leaders of several youth movements in Algeria to the Governor-General that was published in the Algerian journals on November 30\textsuperscript{th}, 1954.\footnote{The full text of the letter was published, for example, in the \textit{Echo d’Alger} on 30 November 1954, and the letters of protest from several members of the Scouts de France and the \textit{Asso} were published the following week, 2 December 1954. The original text with the handwritten signatures of the youth leaders exists in the archives of the Archevêché of Algiers, casier 185.} The carefully-worded letter protested in particular at the use of practices of “repression” and “ratissage” (sweeps) since the beginning of the Algerian uprising a month earlier. The students highlighted the project of organizations like the AJAAS that attempted to arrive
at solutions to the Algerian problem through a more solid base of friendship and an understanding of the social and economic causes of the uprising.

Although it is generally categorized as a movement of the so-called “liberals” of Algeria, it is interesting to compare the AJAAS to another important Christian movement in Algeria that emerged out of Christian scout movements. The Vie Nouvelle was a movement of young married Catholics and former Scouts that started in France under the leadership of André Cruiziat in 1947.97 The Vie Nouvelle group in Algiers was composed of approximately forty people, led by André Gallice, the son of Cyril Gallice, and Paul Houdart, both pieds-noirs and former Scout leaders. According to historian Jean Lestavel, a former member of Vie Nouvelle, the group in Algiers became conscious of the social problems of Algerians in part because of their close relationships with social workers in the original Centres sociaux in Hussein-Dey, including Emma Serra, and Simone Gallice, André’s sister.98 With the help and participation of André Cruiziat, André and Annette Gallice, both former Scouts whose first encounter with the Vie Nouvelle occurred in 1950 during their honeymoon in France, organized the first series of meetings in Algeria in April 1951 in the parish of Hussein-Dey.99 The Gallices describe Vie Nouvelle as a movement that trained young adults and young married couples for greater life responsibilities, whether they were the responsibilities of marriage and children, or

99 Lestavel, “Le Mouvement “La Vie Nouvelle” et la guerre d’Algérie,” 156. Lestavel writes that the first series of meetings that took place between the 13th and 26th of April in 1951 brought together between 40 and 100 people, most of them former Scouts and Guides.
political and social responsibilities.\textsuperscript{100} One of the things that attracted the Gallices to the movement was the sense that political engagement was a Christian responsibility, especially in Algeria, where the more progressive wing of the “liberal” milieu was becoming increasingly aware that the solution to the Algerian problem was going to have to be political as well as social.\textsuperscript{101}

It was in fact \textit{Vie Nouvelle} that led André to politics in the sense that the movement was key to his awakening to the reality of the colonial problems of Algeria, and it was at a meeting of the \textit{Vie Nouvelle} in Algiers where he first encountered the “liberal” mayor of Algiers, Jacques Chevallier. Chevallier had been a member of the Algerian Assembly before becoming mayor of Algiers in 1953, and he was also a Catholic with close ties to the Catholic leadership in Algeria, including the newly arrived Archbishop of Algiers, Mgr Duval.\textsuperscript{102} Thanks to the persistence of Père Scotto and his team in Hussein-Dey, one of the problems that Chevallier became acquainted with as a councilman was the housing problem in Algiers, particularly in the slums and shantytowns on the edges of the city.\textsuperscript{103} After the \textit{Vie Nouvelle} meeting he attended, Jacques Chevallier challenged André Gallice to put his ideals into action by coming to work for him as an advisor. Gallice, taken aback by the request and feeling he lacked the experience for the post, eventually agreed to take the job, but only if he could share the

\textsuperscript{100} This and the following information came from a conversation I had with André and Annette Gallice in Lyon, France on May 5, 2009.
\textsuperscript{101} This does not mean that the \textit{libéraux} were proposing Algerian independence, which was a very infrequent proposal within any European communities in Algeria in the early 1950s, with the exception of people like André Mandouze. Generally speaking, until the political scene shifted in the late 1950s, most \textit{libéraux} were calling for a reform of the political system, and in particular of the two college system of the Algerian assembly.
\textsuperscript{102} This biographical note is from Patrick Eveno and Jean Planchais, eds., \textit{La Guerre d’Algérie} (Paris: Éditions la Découverte/Le Monde, 1989), 51.
\textsuperscript{103} Scotto, 76.
tasks with his friend, and the co-founder of the Algiers section of *Vie Nouvelle*, Paul Houdart. Gallice and Houdart started working for the mayor in 1953, focusing particularly on the housing question, and interacting both professionally and personally (as a project of the *Vie Nouvelle*) with leaders of the Muslim community, including Benyoussef Ben Khedda and Salah Louanchi.\(^{104}\) They were also known for their outspokenness on the question of torture, including at a meeting of the Municipal Council in Algiers on January 12, 1955, where Paul Houdart spoke against the use of torture and was greeted with a “glacial silence”\(^ {105}\)

Although the *Vie Nouvelle* is in many ways representative of the “liberal” category of pied-noir Christians in Algeria, their friendships and connections with members of the AJAAS and with leaders of the Algerian community engaged them in the Algerian conflict much more than they could have anticipated. People like André Gallice and Pierre Chaulet demonstrate, for example, the diversity of opinions that emerged from a group of socially-minded pied-noir Catholics with similar backgrounds. Yet for conservative pieds-noirs, both Gallice and Chaulet and the organizations they belonged to represented a threat to the status-quo in Algeria, and in particular their privileges.

Through their dialogue with Algerian Muslims in youth movements like the AJAAS and their direct experiences working with impoverished Algerians in the shantytowns, these Christians had come to the conclusion that colonialism and Christianity had become so intertwined that unless Christians demonstrated solidarity with the oppressed Algerians in their struggle for social justice and even political

\(^{105}\) Paul Houdart’s comments were copied from the minutes of the meeting that were published in the Algerian press in *Consciences Maghrébines*, n° 4 (Jan.-Feb. 1955).
independence, they would lose whatever moral authority they had left and would cease to
be welcome in postcolonial Algeria. For those who believed wholeheartedly in the
defense of Algérie française, however - which was the vast majority of the settler
population – there could never be such a thing as “postcolonial Algeria,” and so these
Christians had chosen to support the Algerian “terrorists” over their European Christian
brothers and sisters, a treasonous betrayal.

The politicization of the “liberals” and “progressivists”

In November 1954, armed conflict broke out in the Algerian countryside,
signaling the beginning of the War of Independence. For those European Christians who
had been attempting to promote dialogue between the European and Algerian
communities, the outbreak of the conflict forced a more radical form of action. For some
the outbreak of the war and the French policies of pacification merely confirmed the
legitimacy of the Algerian nationalists’ calls for independence. Yet even for those who
were more in favor of reform of the colonial system, it was the police and military tactics,
including the use of torture and summary executions, that pushed them toward concrete
actions on behalf of Algerian nationalists – especially when the targets of French
“pacification” were longtime friends they had met through groups like the AJAAS.

By late 1955, the French police and military were suspicious of any signs of
friendship between Algerian Muslims and French Christians. Yet those Christians who
had built strong friendships with Algerians in movements like the AJAAS continued to
meet with and help their Algerian friends and neighbors, who they felt they could not
abandon in a time of great need. In fact, for many, it was this show of solidarity
specifically in the most difficult of circumstances that could demonstrate the “true face of
Christianity” – one that was compassionate, concerned with social and political justice, and one that took a moral position against the use of torture, and the various other repressive “pacification” techniques in use.

European Christians maintained their relationships with their Algerian friends by offering shelter to those in need. After the war broke out, suspected Algerian nationalists were arrested in droves. The threat of arrest, torture, and incarceration in French internment camps, drove Algerians, including many who had no affiliation with nationalist movements, into hiding. These so-called “outlaws” often sought help from their European friends, a few of whom were still – at that point – above suspicion.106 Salah Louanchi found shelter, for example, in the presbytery of Hussein-Dey, where Jean Scotto allowed several Algerian militants to stay, with the condition that they left their arms at the door. Benyoussef Ben Khedda stayed for several months with André Gallice during 1956, a “crime” for which Gallice would later be arrested.107 Evelyne Lavalette, a former Girl Scout and AJAAS member sheltered a number of Algerian militants in her apartment in Algiers, including Larbi Ben M’hidi and Krim Belkacem.108 Jacques and Eliane Gautron, a Catholic teacher and social assistant in the Centres Sociaux, and part of the Catholic community in Hussein-Dey, provided their apartment for meetings between Algerian nationalists as well as for the famous meeting between French journalist Robert

108 Interview with Evelyne Lavalette Safir in Médéa, Algeria, January 2009.
Barrat and Algerian militants Ramdane Abane and Amar Ouamrane in September 1955.¹⁰⁹

For some, like Evelyne Lavalette and Denise Walbert, the next step was doing favors for their friends, acting as a liaison between militants, or participating in tasks like the preparation, printing, and distribution of leaflets. In her personal testimony after her arrest in 1957, Walbert, who was accused of distributing tracts for the FLN, argued that in order to understand the context of her engagements with her Algerian nationalist friends, one first had to understand that rumors circulated all over town that the police were searching for Algerian militants everywhere, and that once caught, they would be subjected to torture, a known reality in Algeria, even as early as 1955.¹¹⁰ Evelyne Lavalette, whose contacts with the Catholic community led her to the apartment of Père Jules Declercq near the Casbah of Algiers, which housed the ronéo machine on which the first issues of the FLN periodical *El Moudjahid* were printed, herself helped with the printing and distribution of *El Moudjahid* and other nationalist tracts.¹¹¹ Lavalette and several other European women were later arrested in Oran after transporting FLN tracts from Algiers to Oran.¹¹²

By many accounts, the actions of these Christian pieds-noirs were openly political, and people like Evelyne Lavalette and Pierre Chaulet, who as a medical student

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¹¹⁰ Denise Walbert, “Une Française en Afrique du Nord de 1929 à 1957” in the CAMT, fonds de la Mission de France, 1999013 0154. That torture was an open secret in Algeria has been established by historian Raphaëlle Branche. See *La Torture et l’armée*, 57-60.
¹¹¹ Interview with Evelyne Lavalette Safir, Médéa, Algeria, January 2009.
¹¹² Evelyne Lavalette was arrested in Oran on November 13, 1956 and was then sentenced to three years in prison. She was freed before the end of her sentence in 1959 after the amnesty given to those with prison sentences under three years.
treated wounded maquis and who joined the FLN in 1955, have openly declared that they proudly took part in the nationalist movement. For others, even those who had begun treating the Algerian problem as a political one well before the outbreak of the war in 1954, actions like hiding friends or typewriters were not necessarily openly political statements in support of Algerian independence. As the war intensified and moved into the cities, even those Christians who had planted themselves firmly in the camp of the reformers, in the sense that their goals were the rapprochement of the Christian-Muslim community in Algeria and the reform of the colonial system, began to realize that they could not avoid being caught up in the politics of the war. This was particularly the case for the Catholic priests who had worked on the ground in Algeria to promote dialogue and Christian solidarity with the Algerian Muslims.

In the summer of 1955, a pied-noir curé named Alfred Bérenguer, from the town of Montagnac near Oran, decided to write a text on his thoughts on the Algerian War and the nationalist movement. In this text, *Regards chrétiens sur l’Algérie*, Père Bérenguer outlined several points on which he thought the Christian community needed to see more clearly, including the fact that the Algerian problem was as much a political as a social and economic problem, and that the Christian community needed to find a new relationship with the Algerian Muslims that was not a colonial or a missionary relationship.\(^ {113} \) The text, which was printed and distributed by his *Action catholique* group to various friends and Catholic leaders in France and Algeria, received, according

to Bérenguer, “lots of positive and negative reactions in Algeria.”\textsuperscript{114} It also led to his expulsion from the department of Oran in May of 1956.\textsuperscript{115} After his expulsion, he went to Algiers, to Bab-el-Oued more specifically, to the parish of Jean Scotto. There he met two priests from the Mission de France – Pierre Mamet and Jobic Kerlan – who had recently arrived in Algiers with a similar story.

After the outbreak of the Algerian War and the formation of maquis in the Constantinois, the MDF priests in Souk-Ahras were placed under surveillance by a Monsieur Schmitt, of the PRG (Police des renseignements généraux) for the reason that there were “lots of Muslims coming to the presbytery, and more and more often the Muslims that he [M. Schmitt] interrogated took an attitude of silence in front of him.”\textsuperscript{116} Another police official reproached Mgr Duval, then archbishop of Algiers, for allowing the MDF team to take a visiting Cardinal to visit one of the poor villages in the area. According to a 1955 MDF report, the official reportedly said, “It was the priests of the Mission de France who took him [Cardinal Tisserant]. Why did you accept that? They are going to show him the misery of those people and explain it in their own manner; we could have given the Cardinal the real reasons.”\textsuperscript{117} Even more suspicious for the local government was the fact that team agreed to participate in a “comité de soutien” (support committee) for the families of Algerian prisoners, and created information files on

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\textsuperscript{114} Bérenguer, \textit{En toute liberté}, 142.  \\
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 146-147.  \\
\textsuperscript{116} “Rapport chronologique et explicatif concernant l'Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras”, CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1999013 0159, file “Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras”.  \\
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid. Also cited in Chapeu, 30.
\end{flushleft}
examples of police repression that they would send to journalists and writers in France as well as church leaders and politicians.\footnote{Jobic Kerlan, "L'Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras," 1985, Archives of the Mission de France, Le Perreux.}

Historian Sybille Chapeu, who worked extensively in the personal archives of Jobic Kerlan, has shown that both Jobic Kerlan and Pierre Mamet had direct contacts with the Algerian nationalist party, the MTLD (\textit{Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques}) and later the FLN, a fact that caused unease among several other members of the MDF team, including Pierre Jarry who returned to France in 1955.\footnote{Chapeu, 31.}

Additionally, Kerlan had a fairly close relationship with Badji Mokhtar, a former member of the \textit{Scouts Musulmans} (SMA) and one of the Algerian nationalist leaders in the region. Mohktar had been the victim of torture by the French army, and his experiences and belief in Algerian independence were a defining influence on the political evolution of Jobic Kerlan.\footnote{Chapeu, 27.}

When Mokhtar was killed during a military operation in late November 1954, Kerlan gathered a small group of Christians from the parish in Souk-Ahras, and they began to visit Muslim families in the area. They also formed a discussion group in which they could discuss the social and political problems in Algeria with their Muslim friends, a fact that did not go unnoticed by the local officials who were conducting surveillance on the MDF.

The tensions between the MDF and the local authorities exploded in April 1956 when the prefect of Constantine, Monsieur Dupuch, ordered (for the second time) the expulsion of the MDF from Souk-Ahras. In an internal document chronicling the build-up of tensions before the expulsion order, the MDF notes that even during the period...
when Mgr Duval was still the bishop of Constantine (he became the Archbishop of Algiers in March of 1954), he had received letters from prominent Catholics, including local administrators and “gros colons” in the region demanding the replacement of the Mission de France priests because of their “teachings,” which put to question the relationship between the European and Muslim community. In the spring of 1955, General Allard informed Mgr Pinier, the new bishop of Constantine, that he had decided to expel the MDF team unless the Catholic Church replaced them itself. Word got quickly to Algiers where Jean Scotto intervened through Vincent Monteil, who was working at that time in the cabinet of Jacques Soustelle, and the order was revoked.

In January 1956, the MDF team in Souk-Ahras issued a statement (in reality a reprinted version of a sermon given by Père Augros a few weeks prior) concerning the responsibility of Christians within the growing culture of hatred and violence in Algeria. After pointing out that the Christian faith had for its essential doctrine that Christians “should not kill, should not unjustly take the belongings of others, and that they should respect their neighbors, his property, his family, his honor, and his liberty,” the team then stated that “for the Christian conscience, all of these attacks of the last fifteen months are crimes.” They went on to say that the Christian faith should not be limited to these principles, but should lead to attitudes that refuse “to condemn this or that category of person under the pretext that they belong to a certain class, nation, race or civilization... there are neither inferior nor superior races. There are only men, all sinners and all loved

121 “Rapport chronologique et explicatif concernant l'Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras.” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1999013 0159, file “Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras”.
by God as his children.”123 This statement was distributed to all of the Catholic parishioners in the area, and likely was one of the major catalysts for the expulsion order of March 1956, which, despite the best efforts of the clergy and sympathetic politicians in Algeria, forced the team to leave Souk-Ahras.

In a 1985 article that he wrote on the expulsion order of 1956, Jobic Kerlan described the order as completely unexpected. The three priests, Kerlan, Pierre Mamet and Louis Augros, were summoned before the police commissioner on April 16, 1956 (Louis Augros was traveling and could not attend) at which point they were presented with the expulsion order, which was to take effect immediately.124 They were given no warning, and no concrete reason for the order. Jobic Kerlan left the next morning for Constantine to meet with Mgr Pinier, and then took a flight to Algiers where Jean Scotto had already enlisted the help of Jacques Chevallier, the liberal mayor of Algiers. In the end, it was the journalist Jean Daniel of L’Express who arranged a meeting between Kerlan and Robert Lacoste, the French Minister, who, “very embarrassed, could not justify any of the reasons for the expulsion.”125 While Mgr Pinier and other Catholic leaders could not get any confirmation of the official reasons for the expulsion, an anonymous paper circulating through Algeria and France detailed the purported crimes of the MDF. This paper, titled “The truth of the affair of the priests of Souk-Ahras,” accused the priests of taking an attitude “that was of an exclusively political order,” that they frequented the milieu of Algerian nationalists, and had even been warmly received by

123 Ibid.
125 “Rapport chronologique et explicatif concernant l'Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras.” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1999013 0159, file “Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras”.
Colonel Nasser in Cairo on a trip they took to Egypt in the summer of 1954. The paper further accuses them of exercising a “double action, favorable to rebel bands that operate among civilian populations, whose activities include many assassinations of women and children.” Accordingly, the military, which apparently feared that the activities of the MDF were putting the security of the European population in danger, decided to proceed with their expulsion.

In their public response to the expulsion of the Souk-Ahras team, the leadership of the Mission de France was unequivocal about their support for the work of the team. A statement, signed by both Jean Vinatier and Cardinal Liénart, stated their affirmation that

> Every priest has the right and duty to help and assist the sick and the wounded, whoever they are; it is against the inalienable rights of humanity to prevent them from doing so. Every priest has the right and duty to give food to the hungry, clothes to the destitute and to exercise charity in all its forms; no state power can stop that which is the sign of the universal brotherhood of God.

It is clear that this statement was a direct response to the accusations that the MDF had provided food and medical care to Algerian nationalists. In reality, it is entirely possible that they did so, but not out of a political motivation. The “open door” policy of the MDF team had essentially been in effect from their arrival in Souk-Ahras, and their reports and statements make it clear that one of their most effective means of creating bonds between the Muslim community and the Christians was through the distribution of food and medical care to those who were in need, a category that was primarily made up of Muslim Algerians.

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Jobic Kerlan and Pierre Mamet left shortly after the expulsion order, going to Algiers to join the MDF teams in the capital, while Louis Augros stayed in Souk-Ahras. Père Augros had decided (with the full support of his bishop) to stay in Souk-Ahras, only leaving if by force. In the end, he was forced, as the military arrived the morning of May 10th to escort him to the train station and make sure he was securely on the train to Algiers.\textsuperscript{128} After the expulsion of their priests, several hundred parishioners and Muslims from Souk-Ahras wrote to Mgr Pinier with letters of support for the work of the priests. In their letter of support for the priests, “a group of Muslims from Souk-Ahras” (who were afraid to sign individually out of fear of “problems with the authorities”) wrote, “this measure [of expulsion] has thrown our community into confusion, especially because of the ties that unite these priests with the population are woven together by sincere friendship, indeed fraternity. Thanks to them, we have discovered the true face of Christianity and of France.”\textsuperscript{129} The anonymous tract denouncing the MDF team described these letters and this petition as “faked,” and the work of women, Muslim communists and extremists, while arguing that an opposing petition, signed by twelve hundred “practicing Catholics” who denounced the “treasonous” acts of the MDF, better depicted true public feeling.\textsuperscript{130}

In their various personal letters, collective statements, and internal discussions, the priests of the Mission de France demonstrated early in the Algerian conflict an

\textsuperscript{128} “Rapport chronologique et explicatif concernant l’Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras.” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1999013 0159, file “Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras”.
\textsuperscript{129} “Témoignages de paroissiens de Souk-Ahras,” Archives of the Archevêché d’Alger, casier 308.
\textsuperscript{130} “La vérité sur l’affaire des prêtres de Souk-Ahras,” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1999013 0159, file “Expulsion des prêtres de Souk-Ahras”.

awareness that the injustice of the colonial system and the racism that was quickly hardening into violent hatred could not continue. Their sympathies lay with the Algerians, and even if they did not openly support the means - guerilla warfare of the Algerian nationalists - they supported the ends of the independence movement. For people like the priests of the Mission de France and Alfred Bérenguer, their intellectual support for Algerian nationalism and their relationships with Algerian Muslims were enough for the government and the conservative pied-noir community to condemn them as collaborators with the FLN (which they have all publicly denied), as progressivists or communists, and in some cases as traitors to the French nation. An example of this is Jean-Claude Barthez, who had taken over from Jean Scotto in Hussein-Dey, and became his vicaire-général in Bab-el-Oued, and who was questioned in the trial of the Jewish communist Doctor Timsit in 1956. According to Barthez, Timsit came to visit him out of the blue one day saying that he regretted his involvement in the fabrication of a bomb with the Algerian Communist Party (PCA), for which he was later arrested, and sought a different way of engaging in the Algerian War, namely through joining the FLN. Barthez, who was surprised that Timsit would believe that he had direct access to the FLN, accordingly transmitted his request to Pierre Chaulet, who by that time had become fully engaged in the FLN. After Timsit’s arrest, Barthez was brought in for questioning. Originally the prosecuting judge wanted to charge him with conspiracy in the plot but in

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131 See the letter from Claude Renaud to “Vieux Francis,” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1999013 0153, file Guerre d'Algérie - Janvier à mai.
132 In his book En toute liberté, Père Bérenguer denies ever having adhered to the FLN, despite the fact that stories persist that his mission to Latin America was an FLN project, as opposed to a Croissant rouge project, 60.
the end only called him as a witness. Although he was never implicated in any actions in favor of the PCA or the FLN, the mere fact that he had some association with many of those Europeans and Algerians who were starting to become the object of military and police interest was enough to make him a continuous suspect.

The Christians who worked in the Social Centers found themselves in a similar situation. Even those for whom social action was the key means through which they engaged with the Algerian population, including social workers in the Social Centers, found that the circumstances of the conflict meant that even this had become politicized and polemical. The Social Centers have often been described as the prime example of the “liberal” project of French-Algerian reconciliation, yet there were some interesting features that indicate a more progressive project than just the reform of the educational system in Algeria. For instance, much of the instruction was done in Arabic (which entailed the recruitment of Arabic-speaking teachers and monitors), and a sociological survey was done in each locale where a center was being considered in order to determine from the local population what they needed, as opposed to having a curriculum imposed from the top down. Finally, unlike the work of the military-organized SAS or the SAU, there was no propaganda aspect to the Social Centers.  

From the beginning the centers recruited heavily from former scout and youth movements, both Christian and Muslim, and each team was made up of both European

133 Interview with Jean-Claude Barthez, Lyon, France, April 2009.  
134 See, for example, James D. Le Sueur, Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), chapter 3. Documents concerning the foundations and pedagogical policies of the Centres Sociaux exist in Nelly Forget’s private collection. Unfortunately there seem to be very few records of the Centres Sociaux in the various collections of the National Archives in France.
whether from France, as was the case with several former volunteers from the International Civil Service, or pied-noir) and Algerian social workers, instructors, and inspectors. Before their incorporation into the ministry of Education, many of these recruits had worked as volunteers in social projects, including those of the AJAAS, which were concerned with similar issues of basic education, hygiene, other social problems. Even though the official centers differed from the original Bérardi and Bel-Air centers in that they were governmental and completely secular, they continued to attract European Christians who wanted to participate in the construction of a new relationship between the European and Algerian communities in Algeria, specifically in direct interaction with the Muslim community. For the Algerian recruits, the Social Centers offered the stability of a salaried job (and a fiche de travail, which allowed them much more freedom of movement in Algiers) and the possibility to work toward the construction of a more equal and just Algeria in which everyone had access to at least basic education and health care. While there was an atmosphere of great urgency and a bit of apprehension at the enormity of the task before them, the former employees of the Social Centers that I have talked to also mention the great hopefulness that existed among the teams, particularly in the early years of the program.

Yet despite Germaine Tillion’s attempts to keep the Social Centers outside of the political battles of the Algerian War by making sure that they focused only on social

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136 Former employees and collaborators of the Centres Sociaux that I have talked to include Nelly Forget, “Zohra”, Soeur Renée Schmutz, Pauline and Simone Gallice.
programs and attaching the program to the Ministry of Education in France, as opposed to the office of the Governor-General in Algiers, the centers and their employees found that it was impossible to avoid getting mixed up in politics. Even before the Battle of Algiers began in 1957, social assistants were being recruited and used by the army in their raids on Muslim quarters in Algiers. One famous instance of this is recounted in a letter of protest that Marie-Renée Chéné wrote concerning the actions of the police in May 1956, who rounded up all eighty of the social assistants who were employed by the Governor-General on the night of May 26 and tried to force them to participate in a raid in the Casbah of Algiers, where they would be required to search the Muslim women while the soldiers searched the men and went through the houses looking for FLN militants. Marie-Renée and several other assistants with her refused to participate, even though many of the others went through with the order. Those who refused, for the reason that their role as social assistants to the Algerian population would be thoroughly compromised by the action, were forced to stay in the military truck for eighteen hours and subjected to threats and mockery from the police officers who not only questioned their choices but their patriotism as well.¹³⁷

As the Algerian War continued, both the European and Algerian staff of the Social Centers increasingly became the targets of suspicion both from government, police, and military officials, who suspected them of being in contact with FLN militants. In some cases, it was true. Whether or not they were involved directly in the FLN or in

¹³⁷ Marie-Renée Chéné’s letter is in the archives of the Mission de France at the CAMT, carton 1999013 0153. The letter is also cited in Dore-Audibert, 48-50. Nelly Forget noted that the social assistants of the Centres sociaux were excluded from this raid, and because of the vocal protest on the part of the Association nationale des assistants sociaux (ANAS), the forced participation of social workers never happened again on a national level.
other nationalist movements, many of these young men and women were close friends with those who were, including leaders of the AJAAS like Benyoussef Ben Khedda, or Salah Louanchi, who ran the French branch of the FLN in 1956, and who later married Anne-Marie Chaulet, a Catholic scout leader and the sister of Pierre Chaulet. As for the charge that the staff of the Social Centers was made up of nationalists, that also was likely true. As Soeur Renée Schmutz, a Soeur de Grandchamp, and an Algerian former member of the Social Centers noted of the Algerian staff, “Of course they were nationalists! They were working toward the future of Algeria!”

In February 1957, as the Battle of Algiers gained momentum, and the French police and military carried out a series of raids in which they arrested thirty-five people, including the twelve European Christians, accused of undermining the security of the French state. An April 5, 1957 article in *Le Monde* outlined the accusations against the defendants, which were further expanded in a report from the trial prosecutor to the Secretary of the Interior dated that same day. The prosecutor’s report makes clear that several of the defendants, both French and Algerian, had some connection with the Social Centers. The others, who were accused of being part of a support network for the FLN, all had some connection with Christian movements like Cimade, the Scouts, or the Catholic community in Hussein-Dey. The report portrays them as a subversive group of criminals, constantly hiding communist and FLN leaders, and serving as liaison agents for Algerian nationalists. It further accused at least one member of the Social Centers of

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138 They were married in 1959 in France in Fresnes, where Louanchi was imprisoned.
139 From an interview with Soeur Renée Schmutz and her friend “Zohra” in Algiers, January 2009.
having admitted to collecting and sending a large amount of medication to the maquis, despite the fact that she was collecting the items in her apartment in preparation for the opening of a new center, a fact that had been verified by Charles Aguesse, the director of the Social Centers.\footnote{Letter from M. Forget to Maître Maurice Garcon, dated May 8, 1957. CAOM/114APOM (sous derogation).}

The \textit{Le Monde} article paid special attention to the accusations against the abbé Jean-Claude Barthez, who was notably accused of having sheltered Amara Rachid, a Muslim student since killed in the maquis; to have had ties to the Doctor Timsit, a militant communist who was recently condemned to twenty years of forced labor for fabrication of explosives; of having helped in the creation of tracts and of \textit{Moudjahid} (organ of the FLN), and finally of having sheltered in two convents Raymonde Peschard, author of two bomb attacks.\footnote{“Vingt-huit personnes inculpées,” \textit{Le Monde}, April 5, 1957.}

The prosecution report further accused him of having hidden a ronéo machine in the presbytery of Hussein-Dey and of encouraging several of the other European defendants to engage in the conflict on behalf of the FLN.\footnote{“Lettre et rapport de la Ministre de la Justice à Monsieur le Secretaire d’État à l’Interieur, Chargé des Affaires Algériennes.” CAOM/FM/81f/917 (sous dérogation).} In this report, Barthez, who was a Mission de France priest and a close associate of Père Scotto, was very much portrayed as the ringleader of the group.

\textit{Le Monde} specified that, like Barthez, Denise Pepiot [Walbert] had also been caught with a ronéo machine that had been used to print copies of \textit{El Moudjahid} and that she had assisted, along with Chafika Meslem, in hiding Raymonde Peschard.\footnote{“Vingt-huit personnes inculpées,” \textit{Le Monde}, April 5, 1957.} A large number of those arrested, including Meslem, Nelly Forget, and Eliane Gautron, who was accused along with her husband Jacques and André Gallice of sheltering FLN leader
Benyoussef Benkhedda, were all social workers in the Social Centers. The prosecution report noted that most of the young women had originally been inspired by friendship or Christian charity and that they had come together in youth movements or courses taken with a well-known Latin professor at the University of Algiers (obviously Mandouze), but that they had become compromised by the dastardly leaders of the rebellion, and had themselves not hesitated to get involved in the dirtiest of deeds.

Unsurprisingly, there is not a single indication in the prosecution report that much of this information was extracted under torture, or that in some cases it was likely fabricated. Even those who were not tortured, including Jean-Claude Barthez, who, after his arrest was released into the custody of Mgr Duval, and André Gallice, whose position as advisor to Jacques Chevallier protected him to some extent, were subjected to long interrogations. André Gallice has stated that after several hours of interrogation, the police tried to force him to sign a statement of admission of things he had never said. Yet in some cases, the defendants openly admitted to committing specific acts, like hiding a ronéo machine, in the case of Jean-Claude Barthez, or hiding Raymonde Peschard, in the case of Nelly Forget and Chafika Meslem, because, they argued, she was innocent of the charges against her. It was the larger narrative of FLN activism and a plot against the security of the French nation that they continued to deny.

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145 Ibid.
146 André Gallice made this comment during my conversation with him in Lyon in May 2009. Jean-Claude Barthez has said that he never admitted to several of the statements in the prosecutor’s report, especially those that he had incited several other Europeans to join the FLN.
147 Serge Bromberger, “Première audience du procès des ‘progressistes.’” Plusieurs des inculpés ont été les dupes du F.L.N.,” *Le Figaro*, July 23, 1957. In this article, Serge Bromberger notes that on the stand, Jean-Claude Barthez admitted that he hid the ronéo machine, an act that he “regretted.” See also Marie Elbe, “Au palais de justice devant le
By the time the trial of the “progressivist Christians” opened in July of 1957, there were two competing narratives that had captured the attention of both the pied-noirs in Algeria and the French in France. The much more visible and provocative narrative, especially in Algeria, depicted the accused European Christians as part of a communist and/or FLN network that was engaged in a plot against the French state and pied-noir population in Algeria. Daily newspapers in Algeria published sensational stories about how people like Nelly Forget and Jean-Claude Barthez had betrayed France by aiding and abetting the “terrorists” like Raymonde Peschard. The second narrative depicted a group of Christians who had merely put the ideal of Christian charity into action. For some of those who had been arrested, including André Gallice, who described himself as extremely proud of the fact that there were Christians in prison with the Algerian Muslims, their arrest and even to some extent, their torture, served as a forceful testimony of their solidarity with the Algerian people. Nelly Forget wrote to her parents from prison, noting:

This is not an unhappy experience that I am living; perhaps unpleasant at certain moments, but one that prepares for a better life: so many beautiful things that we remain blind and deaf to for so long when we are not deprived of them. I know now how to give thanks for the smallest ray of sunshine, for bread on the table, for a bird’s song, and what to say about the love and affection of all of our friends. I won’t speak to you about “my affair.” I am that you never doubted me for a moment and you know that only these circumstances that we are going through could transform faithful friendship into a crime.148

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tribunal permanent des forces armées d’Alger, 32 ‘progressistes’ ou F.L.N. répondent de leur collusion,” L’Echo d’Alger, July 23, 1957. Elbe writes that on the stand Nelly Forget stated that she knew that Raymonde Peschard was innocent, which was why she agreed to help hide her.

In many cases the portrayal of these Christians as traitors to Christian civilization and the French nation reflected the fears of the pied-noir community more than it did the reality of the facts. It also shows the extent to which those who had been seeking for years to form more egalitarian and respectful personal relationships with the Algerian Muslim population were seen as suspect both in the eyes of the police and military, and the pied-noir community. As we will see in the following chapter, very little of what was reported in both the prosecutor’s statements and the media was actually true. Although the trial defense and the debate about their actions were framed in the language of “Christian charity,” what was at stake for Christians on both sides of the debate was both the definition of Christian morality – which position better reflected the true “Christian” position – and the extent to which Christians should engage in political questions. Yet the engagement of these Christians in favor of the Algerian Muslim population, whether it was an openly political choice or merely one that emerged from a moral sense of solidarity with them, represents a strikingly different choice from the majority of the European population in the Algerian War of Independence. If the measure of this position is the reaction of the Algerian population, then they were in many ways quite successful.

In an interview with the Algerian daily newspaper *El Watan* that occurred in January 1993, just a few months before his death, Père Scotto described himself as a partisan of non-violence and said that from the beginning of the Algerian war of independence, he viewed his role as one that:

consisted of making it so that those for whom I had a spiritual responsibility, in other words the Christians, and in particular those who came to church, break away from any spirit of violence, racism and vengeance. It was for that reason that when public opinion came to be aware of the cases of torture, I never hesitated, from the beginning, to denounce that during the course of my sermons... Considering everything, I think I can say that I served the cause of justice, while
also serving the cause of Algerian independence, but I don’t think one can use the word collaboration. During the same period, I had said to the FLN leaders that they should not count on me to help organize their operations, because my mission, my role was to educate those of my confession to a better comprehension of Algerian society and the justice of their cause. I confess that each time, the leaders responded: “We don’t ask anything else of you.”

Chapter 5 – Christianity on Trial: The Battle to Define Christian Morality

On July 17, 1957, a headline in the *Echo d’Alger* announced the opening of the trial of the “progressivist Christians” (*chrétiens progressistes*) in the military tribunal of Algiers. The defendants in the trial included twelve French Christians who were charged with “undermining the security of the French state,” which many observers in both France and Algeria viewed as tantamount to treason against France and against Christianity.\(^1\) According to the military prosecutor, their crimes ranged from printing and distributing tracts for Algerian nationalist movements to sheltering Algerian “terrorists” from the French military, which was attempting to dismantle the FLN network based in the casbah of Algiers.\(^2\) It caused a storm of reactions from all sides, from those who claimed that the defendants were merely fulfilling their duty to demonstrate “Christian charity,” to others who argued that these French Christians were aiding and abetting not only the “terrorists” of the FLN but also a communist plot to take over Algeria. The trial took place during the height of the Battle of Algiers, which to some extent explains the intense reaction on both sides over the accusations and subsequent trial of the defendants. Yet the charges of “progressivism” cannot be fully understood unless they are examined in the political context of the Cold War and the rhetoric within the European community.

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\(^2\) Report from the Ministre de la Justice to the Secrétaire d’Etat à l’Intérieur chargé des Affaires Algériennes, 15 avril 1957. Centre des archives d’outre-mer (hereafter, CAOM)/Fonds Ministériaux (FM)/81f/917 (sous dérogation), Aix-en-Provence, France. The FLN or *Front de Libération Nationale*, which together with the ALN (*Armée de Libération nationale*) made up the main Algerian nationalist organization, was founded in 1954 as a paramilitary organization to fight for Algerian independence.
in Algeria, which was attempting to frame the Algerian War as a conflict over the future of “Christian civilization” in Algeria. This was not the first trial during the Algerian War in which French Christians had been accused of aiding and abetting Algerian nationalists, but it was the first where the defendants’ Christian beliefs were also put on trial.

The trial of the so-called “progressivist Christians” was more than anything an elaborate public relations battle over who got to define what actions and moral positions were “Christian” in the context of the Algerian War. On one side were the defenders of Algérie française, including the French military, the colonial government, and the large majority of the European settler population, who all claimed to be defending “Christian civilization” and the legacy of St. Augustine in Algeria. On the other side were the Christians on trial who claimed that their actions represented an example of what the true Christian reaction to the Algerian conflict should be, an argument that called into question the entire basis of conservative Christian arguments that promoted Algérie française as the only means to conserve Christian civilization in Algeria from both the Muslims and the communists. This was not a low stakes game, and those who were caught in the middle were subjected to torture at the hands of the French paras. Political and military leaders like General Massu and to some extent even Robert Lacoste, the Governor General during the Battle of Algiers, defined their actions in comparison to the Christians that they accused of being “progressivists” and argued that anyone who

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3 For an overview of this position, see the Introduction in François Bédarida and Etienne Fouilloux, eds. La Guerre d’Algérie et les Chrétiens, table ronde du 17 décembre 1987 (Paris: Cahiers de l’IHITP, 1988).

4 Nozière, 27. See also Patricia M.E. Lorcin, Imperial identities: stereotyping, prejudice and race in colonial Algeria (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 177-178. Lorcin has demonstrated the extent to which St. Augustine was used as a symbol of conquest for nineteenth century French Christians like Cardinal Lavigerie, who preferred to overlook the fact that Augustine was a Berber and not a Roman.
questioned the military’s tactics were both supporters of the FLN “terrorists” and even traitors to the French nation. Although it ultimately backfired, the July 1957 trial seems to have been the French military’s attempt to legitimize their moral authority by using the justice system to denounce a vision of Christianity at odds with that of military leaders in Algeria.

Now, several decades after the trial took place, it occupies a fairly insignificant place in the historiography of both the Algerian War and Christians and decolonization, receiving in most cases merely a slight mention in most histories of the period. Even people like Jean-Claude Barthez, one of the primary defendants in the trial, have said that the trial seemed to have caused less stir in Algeria than, for example, the expulsion of the Mission de France priests from Souk-Ahras in 1956. Historian Sylvie Thénault, in her groundbreaking history of the French legal system during the Algerian War, mentions it alongside three other major trials that took place in July of 1957, including the well-known “trial of the bombs” that brought to trial Djamila Bouhired, Djamila Bouazza and several other well-known Algerian nationalists and Communists. Yet despite its relatively low historical profile, the trial of the “chrétiens progressistes” and the reactions

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6 Interview with Jean-Claude Barthez, Lyon France, April 25, 2009.

7 See Sylvie Thénault, *Une drôle de justice: Les magistrats dans la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2004), 81. The case of Djamila Bouhired in particular was highly publicized thanks to the efforts of her defense attorneys Jacques Vergès and Georges Arnaud who published the book *Pour Djamila Bouhired* (Editions de Minuit) in September 1957. The other trials Thénault describes are the trial of the bachaga Boutaleb and that of the “Communists of Oran.”
to it offer a fascinating case study with which we can understand the complexity of the relationship between religion and politics during one of the most tense and controversial moments in French and Algerian history. The 1957 trial and the debates surrounding the actions of the Christians on trial in Algeria also served as precursors to similar debates within Christianity in France and even influenced the growth of Christian movements of resistance against the French government that began to spring up in France within months after the trial.

Historians have noted that the spring of 1957 was one of the key moments in the Algerian War, particularly for larger moral questions revolving around the use of torture, and the military’s attempts to solidify their power in what they increasingly believed was a “revolutionary war.” The arrests and torture of the defendants in the trial coincided exactly with the growing violence and tensions of the Battle of Algiers, and the French military’s attempt to fill in the blanks in their diagram of the FLN leaders and their European collaborators. For the French government, the Europeans and Muslims on trial in July 1957 represented a shocking betrayal of the French cause, leading even Robert Lacoste, the governor-general at the time, to rant to French journalist Bertrand Poirot-Delpech of *Le Monde* that Nelly Forget’s sheltering of Raymonde Peschard “disgusted” him. Throughout the spring of 1957, the French military faced a serious amount of

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9 The notes from the interview between Robert Lacoste and Bertrand Poirot-Delpech were cited by Raphaëlle Branche, *Torture et l’armée*, p. 219. Her source was the notes from Bertrand Poirot-Delpech on his interview with Robert Lacoste, April 17, 1957, addressed to Hubert Beuve-Méry, BM 138 (CHEVS).
criticism for its tactics during the Battle of Algiers, most specifically its use of torture.\(^{10}\) Although French public opinion did not really react to the question until the publication the following year of *La Question*, Henri Alleg’s account of his torture experience at the hands of the 10th Paratrooper division, the French army’s use of torture as a “pacification” and “counter-revolutionary” technique was already the subject of debate in both France and Algeria, forcing government and military officials to justify its use publicly, and prompting religious leaders in both France and Algeria to make public statements on it as well.\(^{11}\)

Once again the main issue for everyone was the extent to which Christians, and the Church as an institution, should get involved in political affairs. By 1957, the Catholic Church, in particular, was walking on eggshells in Algeria. For Catholic clergy like Monseigneur Duval and Jean Scotto, who saw their role as finding a way to bridge the growing chasm that existed between the European and the Algerian communities in Algeria, taking an open political stance on the war carried an enormous risk. Openly supporting the goals and tactics of the French in Algeria would betray their sense of justice, while speaking out in favor of the Algerians, whether or not they openly supported the FLN, could potentially alienate the European Catholic community who supported the cause of *Algérie française*. In addition, the charges that the Christians on trial were part of a communist plot against the French nation brought to the forefront the

\(^{10}\) See Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, which recounts in great detail the French anticolonial intellectual responses to the growing evidence of the French army’s systematic use of torture.

tensions around the relationship between Catholicism and communism that had raged within the French Catholic community for more than a decade.

Despite the fact that the majority of the defendants were Algerian, the media coverage surrounding the event focused almost exclusively on the Europeans, labeling them alternately as the “liberals” or “progressivists,” depending on the political orientation and audience of the journal. Soon after the arrests of the European defendants, several of the pied-noir owned journals and some conservative French journals like Le Figaro wrote that the Christians on trial were active members of the progressivist community in Algeria, a charge that depended completely on a particular definition of progressivism – one that placed social Catholic movements like the Action Catholique firmly in the realm with those French Christians who had sought to create a dialogue with Marxism after World War II. For Mgr Duval, the charge of progressivism was in many ways more grave than that of damaging the security of the French state, and he spent quite a lot of time and paper updating the Vatican on the trial and the charges, and in particular reassuring the Catholic hierarchy that the accused Christians, and Jean-Claude Barthez in particular, were not progressivists.

As the accusations and propaganda swelled to a fever pitch in Algeria during the spring of 1957, Mgr Duval, the archbishop of Algiers, came to the realization that the

12 Conservative papers in Algeria, including the colon-owned L’Echo d’Alger, La Dépêche quotidienne d’Algérie, and in France Le Figaro tended to refer to the Christians on trial as “progressistes,” while papers with a more leftist orientation like Témoignage chrétien, L’Express, or religious focus like La Croix or Réforme tended to refer to them as “libéraux.” For other more mainstream papers like Le Monde or France Soir, it depended on the journalist.

13 Mgr Duval’s wrote at least five reports to the Vatican between August 1955 and July 1960 detailing events in Algeria and the reaction of Catholics. The reports are in the archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 283.
crux of the whole problem for Christians was not so much the reality of their positions
and actions as the public perception of them. This perception had serious consequences –
both positive and negative – for Christianity in Algeria at the end of the Algerian War.
Even early in the conflict, however, as the Battle of Algiers was heating up in the spring
of 1957, the role that propaganda and public perception played in the growing divide
between those who supported any and all means of maintaining French (and therefore
Christian) power in Algeria and those who supported the Algerians, was enormous. Mgr
Duval responded by prohibiting members of his clergy from making public statements
about the Algerian conflict, while privately assuring Catholic ecclesiastical authorities in
France and the Vatican that propaganda had blown the affair of the “progressivist
Christians” completely out of proportion. His carefully worded public statements were
somewhat ambiguous and often denounced violence and hate within the Christian
community without openly supporting the Christians on trial or their positions. In the
end, everyone saw what they wanted to see in his statements, with anticolonial Christians
praising his support for their position, and conservative pieds-noirs brutally denouncing
his foray into political affairs. As Mgr Duval and many others discovered, taking a moral
position in a highly political war was fraught with danger.

A Defense of Christian Charity

Throughout the spring of 1957, while most of the defendants in the trial of the
“progressivist Christians” were languishing in prison, there was a furious movement
among their supporters to organize the trial defense. While each defendant had his or her
own lawyer, there was also an attempt to create a unified defense, specifically in the case
of the European Christians, that would reject both the accusations that they were
collectively plotting against the French nation and that they were “progressivists.”” Even though all of the defendants could agree with the rejection of these accusations, not all of them were in agreement about how the defense should construct the explanation of their actions. Père Scotto, who had taken on the responsibility to organize the defense of Jean-Claude Barthez and the larger strategy of the Christian defense team, wrote in his memoirs, “we had the choice between two attitudes: plead guilty and defend a political cause or plead not guilty and protest that we were acting in the name of Christ. I chose the second position.”

Yet although Père Scotto saw a distinct difference between actions that supported a political cause and actions that were undertaken in the name of Christian charity, some of the defendants saw things differently. For some, like André Gallice, who left Algeria after the trial and other members of Vie Nouvelle, the connections between their Christian faith and their political responsibilities were central to their moral positions on the Algerian War. For them, as for defendants like Pierre Coudre or Pierre Chaulet, who for reasons of ill health did not participate in the July 1957 trial, the defense of “Christian charity” was merely a strategy that was focused, first and foremost, on defending the reputation of the Catholic Church. In the end, for the Christian defendants in the trial, the goals and implications of the defense strategy were just as complex as their motivations for engaging in the Algerian conflict to begin with.

15 This perspective came through in my conversations with Pierre and Claudine Chaulet in Algiers, Algeria in February 2009, with Jean-Claude Barthez in Lyon, France in April 2009 and André and Annette Gallice in Lyon, France in April 2009. They all testified to the fact that they were not necessarily in favor of a trial defense that avoided political questions.
In a report that he wrote for the Mission de France in August of 1957, Jean-Claude Barthez described the discussions and formation of the defense strategy for the trial, noting that there was a desire among the Christian defendants especially to create a unified defense that would allow them to demonstrate that their motives and attitudes were shared and that collectively all of the defendants on trial, both Christian and Muslim, represented the true Franco-Algerian community. In addition, the coordination of the defense strategy would ensure that none of the individual lawyers would make any statements that could implicate any of the other defendants in the trial. In this report, Abbé Barthez seems to corroborate Père Scotto’s statement that there were two choices for the defense strategy, the first being to highlight the political problems associated with the French reaction to the Algerian War, and the second being to avoid directly bringing up ‘political’ questions like the use of torture and the repression of the Algerian population.

Barthez notes, for example, that certain defendants – he does not specify who – were categorically against a political defense, arguing that “[their] actions had as a motive [their] Christian faith, the means of defense and [their] attitude before the court should focus solely on this same Christian faith.” In Barthez’s view, the collective decision to follow a defense strategy that avoided any ‘political’ questions was made in order to maintain some continuity with the “internal logic of our testimony,” by which he seems to imply that there was no consensus even among the Christian defendants on how best to situate their actions within the tense political atmosphere during the Battle of

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
Algiers. Several documents in the private archives of Nelly Forget, one of Barthez’s fellow Christian defendants, in many ways support Barthez’s account of the discussions surrounding the defense strategy. Forget’s letters to her lawyer from Barberousse prison, where she was held between her departure from the Villa Sésini and the start of the trial, reveal her own thoughts on the defense strategy, and in particular her desire that the orientation of her defense should focus on her “fidelity to [her] faith and [her] professional duty.” Furthermore, she emphasized that she refused to respond to the desires of certain police officials who wanted her to turn against her Algerian friends (Chafika Meslem in particular) and declare that she had merely been used as a cover for their nationalist activities. She went on to write that perhaps the lawyer saw this position as “pure sentimentality” but that if there was one thing she held true, and what she was called to testify to, it was friendship.

In order to implement this larger defense strategy, Père Scotto engaged two Catholic attorneys he knew well, and who he felt would be able to effectively raise the debate to the level of a serious discussion of the Christian motives of the European defendants. Maîtres Kalflèche, who Scotto described as of a somewhat Action Française mentality, and Lainé, a former member of the Asso with more conservative politics as well, led the defense team and pled the larger case in front of the court, while each defendant’s personal attorney oversaw their individual interrogations. Some of the other attorneys involved in the trial included prominent pied-noir Christians like Pierre Popie, a

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19 Letter from Nelly Forget to Maître Mercier, dated 3 avril 1957 from Barberousse prison. CAOM, fonds privés 114APOM. Sous dérogation, consulted with permission from Mlle Forget.
20 Ibid.
21 Scotto, 142.
former Scout and Algerian nationalist sympathizer who, along with Pierre Coudre’s attorney Pierre Garrigue, was later assassinated by the OAS.  

In keeping with the strategy to focus specifically on the question of the European defendants’ Christian faith and duty to their Algerian friends, the defense attorneys amassed as many character witnesses as possible to testify not only to their clients’ Christian faith, but also their moral character and their dedication to helping people in need, the Algerian people being simply one example. Yet even the selection of character witnesses was not without its political dramas. In the case of Nelly Forget, the strategy was to gather witnesses from each “slice of her life,” and particularly important pacifists as well as figures like Germaine Tillion whose credentials as a former résistant and member of Jacques Soustelle’s cabinet would impress the court. In addition to Germaine Tillion, there were letters of support from French pacifist Camille Drevet, who was at the time the honorary secretary of the French branch of the Service Civil International, and Charles Aguesse, the head of the Centres Sociaux in Algeria. In the numerous letters from these character witnesses, each of them testified to her loyalty, generosity and devotion to helping those in need. Several also emphasized the fact that she had worked as a volunteer in the SCI in France, Germany, and England even before her arrival in Algeria, demonstrating her longstanding commitment to the organization’s humanitarian

22 Scotto, 144-145. Pierre Popie disagreed entirely with Scotto’s vision of the trial defense, and in his memoirs, Scotto notes that Popie confronted him after the trial, saying that the Christians should have pled guilty in order to put in trial the political questions of the Algerian War. I will discuss the role of the OAS in chapter six.
goals. Forget also suggested several character witnesses who could testify on behalf of Chafika Meslem, whose defense was also being conducted by her own lawyer.

This aspect of the defense was especially important since even though the defendants had denied the charges of attacking the security of the French state, none of them denied that they had given assistance to their Algerian friends, or, in the case of Raymonde Peschard, that they had participated in hiding her from the French authorities. The task, then, was to explain why the actions of the defendants were evidence not of a plot against the French nation, but rather a striking example of Christian charity, performed under the most difficult, morally challenging circumstances. Each of the defendants was questioned individually by the prosecuting magistrate after which time the defense attorneys made their statements, arguing that the actions of the defendants were not evidence of a plot against the security of the French state, but rather a “complot de bonnes volontés,” a conspiracy of goodwill. Maîtres Kalfleche and Lainé further argued that the accusations against the defendants in normal circumstances would only be tried at the level of the correctional court, as opposed to a military tribunal, and that it was diverse pressures from the press and others (by which, I believe, we can infer

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23 These letters are in Nelly Forget’s private archives in the CAOM. Fonds privés 114APOM. Sous dérogation, consulted with permission from Mlle Forget.
24 Letter from Nelly Forget to Maître Mercier, dated 8 juin 1957. CAOM, fonds privés 114APOM. Sous dérogation, consulted with permission from Mlle Forget.
25 In the copy of her deposition before the juge d’instruction in the Algiers military tribunal on April 4, 1957 in Algiers, Nelly Forget laid out in detail her connection with Raymonde Peschard and the reasons why she agreed to help her. In the CAOM, fonds privés 114APOM, sous dérogation, consulted and cited with permission from Mlle Forget.
the pied-noir community and the French military) that had led to the accusation of a plot against national security.26

Jean-Claude Barthez emphasized as well that the defense attorneys went to great efforts to depict the personal motivations of each of the accused, emphasizing that all thirty-five of the defendants represented the true Franco-Algerian community. This community, they argued, was created through the effort of working together in the service of Algeria. Barthez went on to summarize the argument, writing:

These young men and women, who are capable of working together in the worksites of the International Civil Service could not abandon their friendships in difficult moments. That they have found themselves together on the same benches in the tribunal is a guarantee for the future.27

The letters of support for Nelly Forget also say much the same thing, especially that of Germaine Tillion, who was herself fully engaged in the battle to save what vestiges remained of a Franco-Algerian community.28 In her letter, Tillion wrote of Forget “... it is certain that the mission that she accomplished demanded, to be well executed, an authentic sympathy for the Muslim population. This sympathy is not a crime: France is not at war with the Muslims of Algeria.”29 While she went on to say that there were those who were fighting against the French within the Muslim population, and that there was a risk of confusion between them and the rest of the Muslim population, it would be unjust

27 Ibid.
28 See, for example, Germaine Tillion, Les ennemis complémentaires (Paris: Éditions Tirésias, 2005).
29 See the letter of support from Germaine Tillion in the CAOM, fonds privés 114APOM, sous dérogation, consulted and cited with permission from Mlle Forget.
to put the unique responsibility for those actions onto the shoulders of young people who were simply trying to fulfill their public service mission to the best of their ability.\textsuperscript{30}

In the case of the Christian defendants, and Jean-Claude Barthez in particular, the defense attorneys attempted to emphasize above all else that the actions of the defendants were a demonstration of true Christian charity. In their formulation, Christian charity was in essence a religious response to the poverty of the Algerian population that had little to do with the political questions surrounding the Algerian War. For those who sheltered wanted militants, they did so not out of any conviction about the political question of the independence of Algeria but rather out of a sense of longstanding friendship and a desire to help those in need, demonstrated, in the example of the many former SCI volunteers, by their longstanding commitment to international humanitarian and pacifist activities. In the case of Jean-Claude Barthez, Maître Lainé explained to the court that the role of a priest was to bring the charity of Christ everywhere: “charity which is less a gift than something shared.”\textsuperscript{31} Père Scotto in his own testimony highlighted Barthez’s passion for his work in the shantytowns and as chaplain for Catholic teachers in Algeria as well as his thoughtfulness about the social situation of the Algerian Muslims.\textsuperscript{32}

Surprisingly, given the political climate in Algiers at the time, the judge and the jury seemed to agree with this argument. With the exception of Pierre Coudre, whose activities were found to be overtly political in nature, every single one of the European defendants was acquitted, received a suspended sentence, or their case was dismissed for

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Barthez, “\textit{Le procès des “libéraux” d’Alger.}” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1996028 014, file juil-sept. 1957.
\textsuperscript{32} Père Scotto’s testimony was reported in detail by the \textit{Echo d’Alger}, 24 July 1957.
lack of evidence. Yet this forgiving attitude did not extend, for the most part, toward their Algerian co-defendants. Despite the fact that when questioned directly by the prosecuting magistrate about their support of the terrorist tactics of the Algerian nationalists most of the defendants declared their refusal to participate in terrorist actions, even if they supported, more or less actively, the political goals of the FLN, the jury judged them much more harshly than the Europeans for similar crimes. Essentially the verdict came down to a question of what constituted political activity, and what did not, and the court found that the same actions, depending on whether a European or an Algerian performed them, could constitute political activity in one case and not in the other. Yet it was not only the court that set up this distinction. In his trial report, Jean-Claude Barthez states, for example, that the activities of the European defendants were “clearly different from those of the Muslim defendants,” by which he infers that for all of the Muslim defendants, their actions were tied to a larger political cause. They could, he writes, “choose between the affirmation of their ideas and condemnation, or to ‘slip by soft’ and receive a moderate verdict.” Barthez’s interpretation of the verdict, in which it was clear that those Algerian Muslims who had not publicly declared their support for the independence movement in the court, and who were tied more closely to the European defendants, received lighter sentences than those who spoke openly about their support of the movement, in some ways reinforced a distinction between the Christians and the Muslims that was at the center of the defense strategy.

33 Numerous newspapers and periodicals announced the verdict, including *Le Monde*, July 24, 1957.
35 Ibid.
It is the question of torture that best illustrates this aspect of the defense strategy, and also sheds some light on the issues at stake for various parties, including the French military and the French Catholic Church. The French military and police’s use of torture was without a doubt one of the most controversial aspects of French military and police tactics during the Algerian War, and this trial might potentially have been a place where both the morality and legality of the use of torture could have been publicly debated. This question would have been especially explosive at this moment in view of the fact that the defense team could produce evidence that torture was practiced not only on suspected “terrorists,” but also on Europeans, a fact that few in France would acknowledge until the publication of Henri Alleg’s book *La Question* in early 1958.\(^{36}\) It could also have provided a common platform from which both the European and Algerian defendants could have made a moral defense that their actions were a direct response to the repressive actions of the French military and police, particularly for those who sheltered accused militants like Raymonde Peschard. In fact, several of the Algerian defendants actually did bring up the question of torture when questioned about their motives and actions.\(^{37}\) Yet the defense team, in some cases at the request of the defendants, made a concerted effort to downplay the question of torture, refusing to make it a central issue in


\(^{37}\)Barthez, “*Le procès des ‘libéraux’ d’Alger.*” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1996028 014, file juil-sept. 1957; Eliane Gautron, in particular, noted in court that she had been tortured. See the *Echo d’Alger*, July 23, 1957.
their arguments, and generally avoiding any line of questioning that would lead to a debate about the morality of French conduct during the war.\textsuperscript{38}

The most obvious reason for their avoidance of the question of torture is the desire of the Christian defendants, especially, to sidestep the more political questions that the trial could potentially have raised. Putting the question of torture front and center would likely have landed them right in the middle of a debate about the legitimacy of Algerian nationalism and the French response to it, not to mention the morality of French military and police tactics. This would have consequently set up the defendants in opposition to the French government and military tactics, “aggravating the sentences without advancing the problem,” according to Jean-Claude Barthez.\textsuperscript{39} He further argued that despite the fact that each of the defendants who had been tortured had filed an official complaint with the court regarding their experiences in the hands of their interrogators, everybody knew that the use of torture, like the acts of terrorism, could not disappear without political change, although what that change should be, he did not specify.\textsuperscript{40} The issue of the sentences is an important one, although in some ways it obscures some of the underlying reasons why the position of Catholic Church, and to some extent the Centres sociaux, would have been further damaged by an openly political trial.

In my view, there are several possible reasons why people like Jean Scotto and Nelly Forget wanted to avoid an overtly political trial, some of which have already been

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. Barthez who notes that it was at the request of several of the defendants that the defense lawyers avoid focusing on the fact that their clients had been tortured during their interrogations.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
mentioned. Since the defendants did not deny their actions, the only way that they could hope to achieve lighter sentences was to put them into the context not of the political situation in Algeria, but as part of a larger trajectory of humanitarian ideals and actions, of which these actions were just one “imprudent” example. Beyond just the question of self-preservation, it is evident that choosing to make the trial a platform for the political and moral questions of the Algerian War, while it would have allowed some of the defendants to publicly decry the use of torture and the repression of the French military against the Algerian population, would also have played right into the hands of the military and the conservative press, both of whom clearly hoped the trial would make an example of both the European and Algerian defendants. There was quite a lot at stake, for example, for the Social Centers, as they were already under suspicion of being a breeding ground for future ‘terrorists.’ If members of their staff were to publicly declare their support of the Algerian cause, they would likely lose all credibility with both the government and the pied-noir population. Finally it would also have forced Christians in Algeria, and in particular the Catholic Church, to publicly take sides in the debate about the morality of the conduct of the Algerian War, a situation that would have likely destroyed any successes that people like Jean Scotto and Mgr Duval had achieved in their attempt to awaken pied-noir Christians to their own moral responsibilities to the Algerian community.

“Qu’est-ce que le ‘progressisme’?”

A few days after the verdict was delivered in the trial of the “progressivist Christians,” Mgr Duval issued a public declaration on the outcome of the trial. He began his declaration by stating, “Up until this point, I have kept silent in order to avoid the
impression, by a declaration that many would find inopportune, that I did not sufficiently respect the independence of the justice system.” In this declaration, Mgr Duval appears to be concerned more than anything about the misrepresentation of these Christians as progressivists and the slander that had been directed at them, and at other Christians like himself, from those who functioned in an atmosphere of “hate and lies.”41 “Accusing someone of progressivism without proof,” he continued, “makes one guilty of seriously reprehensible slander before God, for which one can only obtain forgiveness through a sincere desire to repair the wrongs unjustly caused against his neighbor’s reputation.”42

Mgr Duval received a large number of letters in response to this declaration. Some of the letters, like those from Alexandre Chaulet and Cyril Gallice, fathers of Catholic defendants Pierre Chaulet and André Gallice, expressed their strong support for his declaration and their gratitude for his support of the Christians on trial and their actions.43 Many others, however, took issue with Duval’s negation of the charge of progressivism, arguing, for example, that “even if these Christians are not progressivists, they are playing the game of communism anyway.”44 For Mgr Duval, who was well aware of the influence of propaganda and public perception during the Algerian War, the charge that these Christians were somehow connected with communism and the perception that they had taken a political stand on the Algerian question was much more dangerous to his

42 Ibid.
vision of the Christian mission in Algeria than the charge of undermining the security of the French nation.

By 1957, Christians in France were publishing texts like *Des rappelés témoignent* and the *Dossier Jean Muller* that brought to light military abuses in Algeria, which put the French military on the defensive. As Christians in both France and Algeria criticized the military’s tactics, and especially its use of torture and summary executions, military officials had to justify their actions morally, over and beyond just proclaiming their success in dismantling the FLN network in Algiers in 1957. There was a concerted attempt at defining the specifically “Christian” justifications, mainly in the form of a theological treatise written by the R.P. Delarue, military chaplain of the 10th Parachutist division that defended practices like the use of torture.45

One important aspect of both the military and government’s depiction of these Christians was their insistence on using the term “progressivist.” They were certainly not alone in this, as much of the reportage from the conservative press in France and Algeria focused extensively on the supposed links between the Christians on trial and “milieux progressistes.”46 Yet it is important to contextualize this term in the Cold War mentality that dominated the discussion about the role of communists in the world among the French government, the French military and the Catholic Church during the 1950s. We must also take into consideration the extent to which the term, with its multiple


46 For example, articles by Marie Elbe and other reporters at the conservative daily *L’Echo d’Alger* consistently used the term “*progressistes*,” as did Serge Bromberger of *Le Figaro*. 
connotations and implications, had the potential to further divide the clergy and consequently the Christian community in Algeria, a situation that Mgr Duval viewed as catastrophic. Just as the “progressivist crisis” within the Catholic Church was a battleground over ecclesiastical authority more than a debate about the influence of Marxism on Catholic theology, the term “progressivist” in Algeria was a highly-politicized codeword for communism and political engagement that allowed supporters of Algérie française and those who were outraged by calls from people like Mgr Duval or Père Scotto to include helping Algerian Muslims in their expansive vision of Christian charity to brush off these teachings as merely evidence of the communist infiltration of the Catholic Church in Algeria.

It is important to understand that for the more conservative elements in Algeria, including the French military and the ultras of the pied-noir community, communism was viewed roughly on par with Algerian nationalism as the most dangerous threat to their existence and political goals in Algeria.47 For most pied-noir Christians, there was also the added layer of their perceived duty to keep the patrie of St. Augustine in Christian hands, an argument that was used with more frequency to justify French “pacification” techniques as necessary to follow through on this Christian duty. Under the double influence of the Vatican’s condemnation of communism and the right-wing propaganda that spread like wildfire through Algeria, European Catholics were particularly attuned to the nuances and implications of a term like progressivist and the danger that those who were labeled as such represented to the continuation of French Algeria. The French government only added to the anti-communist fervor when it outlawed the Algerian

47 Massu, 69-77; Connelly, 84-85.
Communist Party in September of 1955 and continued to censor and seize many communist publications, including *Alger Républicain*. And the perceived collaboration between the Algerian Communist Party and the FLN, particularly after events like the desertion of the communist pied-noir Henri Maillot from his military base with a large stash of weapons for the rebellion in April 1956 only further illustrated the double threat that communism posed both to Christianity and to *Algérie française*.

The accusations launched without foundation at the Christians on trial were full of allusions to their progressivism and their direct connections with communism, the least of which was the role several had played in sheltering Raymonde Peschard from the French military. The Mission de France’s key role in the Catholic progressivist crisis only added fuel to the rumors and insinuations about the link between social Catholics and communists. The level of Mgr Duval’s direct involvement in the trial is unclear, but he was on the forefront of the public relations battle that was growing more fraught with threats to his ecclesiastical position in Algeria and his moral authority.48 By the summer of 1957, Mgr Duval had become the target of criticism from all sides, including from the French government and military. Certain members of the more radical fringe of those Christians engaged in the Algerian War on the Algerian side critiqued his failure to issue any clear statements of support for Algerian independence and more forceful condemnations of French repression in Algeria.49 On the other end of the political spectrum, the *ultras* and Christian supporters of *Algérie française* believed that he had

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48 See Scotto, 144. In his memoir, Père Scotto recounted that he had related every aspect of the trial to Mgr Duval, although he made no mention of Duval’s opinion on the defense strategy or even on the outcome of the trial.

betrayed their cause, labeling him early on “Mohamed Duval” for his perceived support of the Algerian cause.\(^{50}\)

The truth, of course, lies somewhere in the middle, but attempts to pin down his positions on Algerian independence, or even on the engagement of Christians, like those accused in the trial of the “progressivist Christians,” have been somewhat unsuccessful. It is likely that his position evolved over time, especially with the influence of people like Jean Scotto, who witnesses at the time perceived as having a great influence over Mgr Duval’s thinking on the Algerian question.\(^{51}\) Mgr Duval was under great pressure from all sides, and as the highest representative of the Catholic Church, and the most visible public figure in the French Christian community in Algeria, his positions on the moral questions facing Christians in Algeria were constantly being interpreted as evidence of a political position, despite his attempts to avoid at all costs taking an open stance on the political questions surrounding the Algerian War.

Despite this aura of impenetrable complexity surrounding him and his legacy, a close examination of the enormous political and moral pressures that Mgr Duval faced in the spring and summer of 1957 sheds a significant amount of light on his thinking on the role of Christianity in the Algerian War. Part of the complexity of Duval’s character rests on the duality of his great concern for the human questions in Algeria and his somewhat

\(^{50}\) “Rapport très confidentiel sur les incidences religieuses des événements d'Algérie du 1 aout 1955 au 25 mars 1956.” Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 284. Duval explains this position in his March 26, 1955 report to the Vatican on the situation in Algeria. He writes, “Even if the majority of Catholics [in Algeria] demonstrate an affectionately submissive spirit toward Church leaders, a certain number of them have manifested, especially recently, contrary feelings. Under multiple influences... these Catholics accuse the Church of abandoning them and of taking the side of the Muslims.”

conservative belief in liturgical tradition and the importance of obedience to the church hierarchy. The relationship between Mgr Duval and the priests of the Mission de France illustrates this point quite well. In a letter to the Vatican concerning the trial of the Christians in July 1957, Mgr Duval critiqued the Mission de France for not having instilled in its priests “a sufficient love of discipline of the church and even less of ecclesiastical wardrobe,” going on to say that “under the pretext of evangelical piety or apostolic zeal, they easily believe themselves to be above the laws and rules... concerned above all with the efficiency of their apostolate without being preoccupied enough by the union that the church maintains.”\(^{52}\) Yet despite these critiques of their attitude, Mgr Duval worked closely with the Mission de France in Algeria and both publicly and privately supported their work, even as it came under heavy criticism from the government, the pieds-noirs, and conservative elements in the Catholic Church both in France and as high up as the Vatican.

Ever since his arrival in Constantine in 1947, Mgr Duval had worked toward the reconciliation of the Christian and Muslim communities in Algeria. Even if he had a belief in the inevitability of the decolonization of Algeria, before 1960, his public positions on the Algerian problems were concerned almost exclusively with themes of justice, fraternal love, Christian charity and reconciliation.\(^{53}\) In his public statements he attempted to maintain as neutral a tone as possible on political questions, and even to some extent on military tactics, tip-toeing delicately around issues like the legitimacy of Algerian nationalism and the Europeans’ right to self defense. In addition to exhorting

\(^{52}\) Letter from Mgr Duval to an unnamed archbishop (likely in the Vatican), dated 5 July 1957. Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 283, file 5.

\(^{53}\) Monseigneur Duval’s views on Algerian independence and decolonization will be treated in chapter three.
Christians to treat all the inhabitants of Algeria with Christian charity and fraternal love, there appear to be two primary missions that Mgr Duval was principally concerned with during the Algerian War: maintaining the unity of the clergy and the Catholic community in Algeria and preserving Christian influence and presence in Algeria.\(^{54}\) And it was these two missions that were under threat from the growing politicization of Christianity, especially after 1957.

This is not to say that Mgr Duval was not concerned with some of the important moral questions facing Christians in Algeria, and in particular that use of torture and other morally questionable practices that directly affected Christian soldiers as well as those on whom these techniques were used. He was remarkably well-informed on military and police atrocities, having received several letters from soldiers, like a former French Scout leader who recounted, for example, military-ordered exactions on Muslim villages if it was suspected that gunshots had come from there, including deliberate destruction of their agricultural and grazing fields and burning of their buildings as well as summary executions and cases of torture.\(^{55}\) Mgr Duval also received a letter from several Muslims who believed they were unjustly *assignés à résidence*, asking for his assistance.\(^{56}\) In addition, he had met at least one defense attorney for Muslim detainees – Maître Bouzida – who recounted that ninety percent of his clients were subjected to


\(^{55}\) This series of letters from the “*chef de la bataillon Chambrueil*” to Mgr Duval, dated 17 August 1956 and 9 September 1956 are in the archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 282. Mgr Duval also received a long and detailed letter from André Thisse, a former reservist in Kabylie, detailing his experiences with military exactions and torture in the summer of 1956. This document is also in casier 282, and there are numerous others throughout his files.

\(^{56}\) This letter is in the archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 282.
torture, with specific examples, including use of bathtubs for water torture and forcing a detainee to drink urine. According to his notes, Mgr Duval also learned that the large majority of European lawyers in Algeria refused to defend Muslim detainees, with only about ten agreeing to help them.57

Mgr Duval lodged several official protests with French government officials and military leaders, including a letter to an unnamed general dated 22 August 1956 in which he took the general to task for “thefts committed by soldiers in the course of control operations in the mechtas, the victims of which are often families already suffering from enormous poverty; odious treatment inflicted on suspects; summary executions of prisoners; the use of torture during interrogations (bathtubs, electric current, etc).”58 He had a number of meetings and a long series of correspondence with Robert Lacoste and his successor Paul Delouvrier, on questions ranging from the expulsion of the MDF priests from Souk-Ahras to protests against the use of torture and the relationship between religion and patriotism.59 In October of 1956, he met with Guy Mollet in Paris, where Mgr Duval brought up the “errors committed by certain police and army units,” which included cases of torture, the danger of counter-terrorism, and methods that he believed should “respect the dignity of the autochtones.”60

57 Mgr Duval’s handwritten notes from his meeting with Maître Bouzida are in his archives in the Archevêché d’Alger, casier 282.
58 Copy of a letter to an unnamed general from Mgr Duval, 22 August 1956. Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 308.
60 Mgr Duval’s handwritten notes on his meeting with Guy Mollet are in the archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 261.
As early as 1955, Mgr Duval used his moral authority as Archbishop to critique both military tactics and settler violence against Muslims in public statements. In January 1955, Mgr Duval issued a statement in which he quoted large sections of Pope Pius XII’s discourses on “natural rights,” and specifically the moral limits of police and legal action against citizens. Duval later admitted that he quoted the Pope “because it was the means to give my text more credibility in the eyes of Christians.” 61 He cited passages that were particularly relevant to Algeria, including a statement from October 1953 where the Pope had declared that, “judicial instruction must exclude physical and mental torture... first off because they damage a natural right, even if the accused is truly guilty, and because too often they give erroneous results.” 62

As a member of the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops (ACA) since his nomination as Archbishop of Algiers in 1954, Mgr Duval had frequent communications with Catholic leaders in France. In his 1982 interview with Marie-Christine Ray, Mgr Duval notes that he had participated in the March 1957 ACA declaration, one of the only texts from the ACA to, arguably quite vaguely, condemn the use of torture, terrorism and counter-terrorism by Europeans in Algeria. Although the Catholic journalist Joseph Folliet had written a recommendation for the declaration that explicitly condemned the use of torture and argued that the abuses of the other side should not justify the excessive use of violence and force, and numerous priests presented a petition to Cardinal Gerlier outlining both moral and political arguments against French military tactics, the ACA took great care to avoid taking a political position. The end result dealt not with specific

61 Ray, 129.
examples of violence, but with vague notions of “suffering,” “hate,” and the need to “respect human dignity.”

Although in his 1982 interview Mgr Duval stated that the March 1957 declaration had “condemned torture with great firmness,” it is clear that many Catholics were disappointed by its lack of explicit condemnations of torture and other military tactics that they believed were “destroying the honor of the French military and sullying Christian honor” by “profoundly deforming the conscience of Christian soldiers” and “creating a rift of hate between Christians and Muslims.”

Mgr Duval’s interactions with Catholics in France were not limited to the ACA. Toward the end of 1956 he sent a report on the situation in Algeria to the French episcopate in which he described the mentality of Catholics in Algeria, who were wounded by the attacks on them in the French press, and consequently were turning on the French Catholics, further dividing the two communities. This report illustrates quite well his two major concerns in Algeria in maintaining Catholic unity and a positive Christian presence in Algeria. His warning to Catholic leaders to keep the French Catholic press in check as much as possible was as much to safeguard the unity of the church as to avoid giving the Algerian War a connotation of a “holy war” and to maintain the possibility of fraternal contacts between Christians and Muslims, the likelihood of which decreased with the constant attacks on Catholics in Algeria. In the summer of 1957 he himself protested against several articles in newspapers like Le Figaro and even La

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63 A copy of Joseph Folliet’s text and the ACA Declaration of March 1957 are in the Archives of Cardinal Duval, the Archevêché d’Alger, casier 153.
64 These quotations are from the petition from several Catholic priests and public figures to Cardinal Gerlier, asking for a clear moral statement from the ACA condemning French military tactics in Algeria, dated March 1957. Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 153.
65 Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 261.
Croix that he believed misrepresented the actions of the Christians on trial, and especially Abbé Barthez, further turning conservative Christians against those who were labeled as progressivists.66

These two themes of Christian unity and Christian presence were also consistently repeated in Duval’s public declarations and confidential statements to the Catholic clergy in Algeria. The issue of unity was partly based on Mgr Duval’s vision of his role as archbishop, which consisted of assuring the unity of the clergy and the faithful, a necessary task that should assure that “no one feels marginalized, left to the side, forgotten.”67 It is clear that he viewed his position above all as the leader of the Catholic community, and for the most part it was to them that he spoke in his declarations and statements. Like Père Scotto, he saw his job in Algeria, and particularly during the war, as one of educating Catholics on their responsibilities toward their “neighbors” – Algerian Muslims – and their duties to work toward social justice and charity, a task which grew immensely harder as moral and political positions on the future of Algeria began to solidify in late 1956 and early 1957. During the Algerian War, the question of Christian unity took on an even greater urgency since Mgr Duval was well aware that much of the responsibility for the violence and brutality of the war lay in the hands of those who called themselves Christians. Mgr Duval, along with Père Scotto and the other members of the clergy who followed a similar line, were very conscious of the risk that taking any sort of public position on the political questions surrounding the Algerian War would entail. Above all, they feared that such a position would alienate the very group of

66 Ray, 121.
67 Ibid, 71.
Christians they were attempting to reach with their calls for justice and charity, and their condemnation of violence and counter-terrorism.

The arrest and trial of “progressivist Christians” in 1957 posed what was quite possibly the greatest challenge to Mgr Duval’s authority and to his vision of Christian unity until the emergence of the OAS in late 1960. The problems almost all centered around the charge of progressivism. Almost immediately after the arrests occurred in early 1957, Mgr Duval was on the defensive. The conservative press in both Algeria and France followed the story closely, printing sensational headlines accusing the Christians of sheltering ‘terrorists’ and having close ties to communists. Officials from the Vatican and from the French embassy to the Vatican expressed great concern over the accusations, particularly those against Jean-Claude Barthez, forcing Mgr Duval to write detailed reports on Barthez’s history and conduct in an attempt to deny the charge of progressivism, one that had a particularly echoing resonance within the Catholic hierarchy. If that was not enough, Mgr Duval also became aware in the spring of 1957 that he was the target of a plot contrived by a conservative Catholic movement in France with close connections both to Pope Pius XII and Robert Lacoste to remove him from the position of Archbishop of Algiers.

In his reports to the Vatican in 1957, Mgr Duval consistently pointed out that the conservative press in both Algeria and France were the ones peddling the theory that the Christian defendants were “progressivists,” a charge that he wrote was an example of “absurd slander,” and “excessive and passionate propaganda.”68 In his defense of Jean-

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68 Letter from Mgr Duval to an unnamed Archbishop (most likely in the Vatican, as the letter was in a file with Vatican correspondance), dated 5 July 1957. Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 283, file 5.
Claude Barthez, Duval recounted in detail Barthez’s relationship with the communist Daniel Timsit, who had visited Barthez the first time to express his regret at having participated in the fabrication of bombs, and also to ask Barthez to write an article for the FLN Revue, which Barthez categorically refused to do. Duval also wrote that Barthez himself admitted that he had been careless, but that his goal was merely to “help his visitor escape from the vicious cycle that he was in.”

Duval also went on to note that the charge of sheltering the communist militant Raymonde Peschard had been blown completely out of proportion by the press, who accused her of the Milk-Bar bombing with no proof whatsoever, a claim that some “high political officials” and “a magistrate with a large conscience and important functions in the court system” had recently declared to be false.

Raymonde Peschard, he further noted, would have been willing to turn herself in and prove her innocence, but for the fear that she would be “seriously mistreated in an effort to get her to reveal her whereabouts,” adding that “a certain rumor, based on the announced arrest in the press and almost immediately contradicted with reserve, tends to prove that these fears were well-founded.”

In the section titled, “Judgment of the Facts,” Mgr Duval wrote categorically that Jean-Claude Barthez and his colleagues were in no way – even indirectly – complicit in terrorist acts, and that Abbé Barthez had always denied any connection with the FLN or the PCA. He stated, in addition, that “the Abbé did not act by political passion but by compassion for his neighbor in specific cases.”

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
Mgr Duval was certainly no supporter of communism, identifying it simply as another form of the dangerous materialism that he felt was causing great harm to both Christianity and French civilization.\(^\text{73}\) However he never exhibited any real signs in his actions or his public declarations of being a militant anti-communist in either his political or religious views. Rather his views on social justice and Christian charity suggest that, in fact, he had more in common with organizations like the Mission de France (despite their lack of discipline and respect for ecclesiastical authority) than their conservative critics, and his strong support for the work of the movements of the *Action Catholique* puts him firmly in the realm of social Catholicism.\(^\text{74}\) There are also certain more subtle indications that suggest that his sympathies for the positions and actions of the so-called “liberal” or “progressivist” Christians were actually stronger than what he portrayed publicly and to Vatican and French government and military officials. In his memoir, for example, Jean Scotto recounts that Mgr Duval both knew about Raymonde Peschard and had even given permission for her to hide in the convents of the Soeurs Blanches and the Clarisses at Notre-Dame d’Afrique.\(^\text{75}\) There is no written evidence to support this claim in Mgr Duval’s files, and certainly if this fact had been publicly known, it would have greatly harmed Mgr Duval’s moral authority and likely cost him the position of Archbishop of Algiers.

In some of his earlier reports on Algeria to the Vatican, Mgr Duval did write that the Communist Party in Algeria was actively involved in the “terrorist” organization of

\(^{73}\) Ray, 47.  
\(^{74}\) Ibid., 64-66.  
\(^{75}\) Scotto, 148.
the FLN.76 Yet he also admitted that one of the basic causes of the Algerian rebellion was the misery in which most of the Algerian Muslim population lived, acknowledging indirectly the power that a movement that appeared to meet the demands of equality and social justice would have among the Algerian population, and especially the Muslims.77 Comments like these, however, have to be examined in relation to the larger body of his writing and actions. In this light, the moments when he expressed views on the danger of the communist influence in North Africa in his correspondence with the Vatican seem less like evidence of a strong anti-communist project, and much more like a calculated attempt to garner Vatican support both for clergy like Jean-Claude Barthez and Jean Scotto, who were attempting to reshape Christianity in Algeria with tactics that conservative Christians viewed as radical, and for his own projects in North Africa. By 1957, having the public support of the Vatican was essential for Duval, both to maintain moral authority in the Catholic community in Algeria, but also because he was becomingly increasingly aware that a conspiracy was brewing to discredit him and his positions that seemed to have connections not only with far-right movements in French Catholicism, but also to the Vatican, the French government, and even the French military.

The full extent of the danger that this conspiracy posed was likely not fully evident to Mgr Duval until July and August 1957. In the midst of the furor surrounding the trial of the “progressivist Christians,” Mgr Duval sent Père Lanfry, a Père Blanc to Rome to fulfill several missions before Duval’s scheduled arrival in mid-August,

76 Mgr Duval’s report to the Vatican on events from 1 November 1954 to 31 July 1955. These reports were written at the request of the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris. Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’ Alger, casier 284.
77 Ibid.
including meeting with French Catholic leaders and Vatican officials on the situation in Algeria, and in particular the trial. It is likely that Lanfry was sent to feel out the atmosphere and attitudes toward Mgr Duval in the Vatican as well as to directly counteract much of the propaganda against these Christians that characterized some of the French Catholic press. At the French embassy to the Vatican, Père Lanfry emphasized Mgr Duval’s loyalty to the services of public order while also recounting the “excesses” of General Massu and Robert Lacoste. He also reiterated to both French and Vatican officials that the Christians on trial were not progressivists, even if they were active in movements like the Action Catholique or Vie Nouvelle. He also “characterized the manner of Mgr Duval in these circumstances, the insidious attacks of which he was the object in the press and by the government. Certain have sworn to make him leave Algeria. [Duval] himself told me that he was ready to respond to any invitation from the Vatican to withdraw.”

This was a smart move, since suggesting the possibility that Duval was concerned above all with the Catholic Church in Algeria and was the victim of unjustified attacks on all sides seemed to counteract the testimony of the parties who wanted to have him removed.

One of Père Lanfry’s first visits in Rome was with Mgr Veuillot, to whom he recounted these problems as well as the evidence of the plot against Mgr Duval. The facts revolved around the suspicious activity of a man named Monsieur Félix, who while in Algiers, identified himself as the chief of the Parisian office of the Resident Minister of Algeria, at that time Robert Lacoste, and seemed to be collecting evidence against Mgr Duval. Lanfry described M. Félix as “an intelligent, cultivated, well-spoken Jew who

claims to be in relation with high ecclesiastical authorities in Paris and Rome,” and specifically the Cardinal Tisserant. Mgr Veuillot then suggested that Père Lanfry discuss these issues with an assistant to Mgr Samoré, the Secretary of State, or one of his assistants. Over the course of several weeks, Père Lanfry met with a number of Vatican officials, including M. Brouillet, the plenipotentiary minister for the French ambassador to the Vatican, who told him off the record that this M. Félix was probably using a false name, and was someone who was within Lacoste’s inner circle. M. Félix had apparently called M. Brouillet, asking to meet with him urgently, but as Brouillet was going out of town, the meeting did not happen until several days later when Félix arrived with Mgr Roche, the leader of a Catholic organization based in Poitiers called the “Cénacle,” and an unnamed Algerian priest. These three men then gave him several documents, including a photocopy of the report on the interrogation of Abbé Barthez, and several documents that they claimed implicated Père Scotto in FLN activities. M. Brouillet responded to these men that the documents implicated no one, and advised M. Félix to make his complaints through normal procedures of intervention through the nunciature in Paris or the embassy to the Vatican, and not to use such backroom methods.

In a section of his report labeled “very secret,” Père Lanfry also wrote that M. Brouillet had added, that while he respected the apostolic activities of the “Cénacle,” he found them very enterprising, very wealthy, and very well-connected. He also added that

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., 3. The evidence M. Brouillet had for this was that he had seen M. Félix dining with Lacoste in a Parisian brasserie. He also stated on this occasion that Lacoste had loudly said, “Brouillet, I’ve been looking for you everywhere! You have to help me understand all these affairs of curés.” Brouillet responded that he preferred to conduct business elsewhere, later meeting with Lacoste in his office, saying that he “seemed very attentive and upright, as always, but terribly ignorant of religious affairs.”
81 Ibid., 3-4.
in the person of Mgr Roche, the “Cénacle” had an audience with the Holy Father himself.” M. Brouillet further described the movement as a group of Poitevin priests who left their diocese after a disagreement with the Bishop of Poitiers, and who had an ideal that resembled certain political and ideological movements in France, which Père Lanfry noted was alluding both to royalism and integrism. Père Lanfry also had an interaction with Chanoine Papin, the bursar of the “Cénacle,” who had expressed a very critical displeasure at Mgr Duval’s July 30th statement to the press and at an article in La Croix that had treated the moral questions of the events in Algeria without saying a word about the “collusion between French communists and the rebels.” After several other meetings, including with Mgr Samore, the Secretary of State, and Mgr Dell’Acqua, the French ambassador to the Vatican, Père Lanfry also learned that M. Félix had likely met several times with the Secretary of State. While Père Lanfry’s report is filled with unsubstantiated explanations for the behavior and motivations of M. Félix, it does demonstrate that Mgr Duval was to some extent aware of the threat that M. Félix posed, especially if he truly was highly connected to wealthy conservative Catholic movements with direct access to the Pope and to Robert Lacoste.

In addition, to these challenges and the propaganda attacks on him and the Christian defendants in the trial, Mgr Duval had the further burden of dealing with the French military, which was quickly becoming antagonistic to his views on the morality of

82 Ibid., 4.
83 Ibid. [I am still trying to find out more on this “cénacle.” Some internet searches have turned up some connections between Mgr Roche and the far-right journalist Jean Ferré, who was implicated in the General’s Putsch and the OAS in Algeria, and incarcerated in France, before seeking exile in Franco’s Spain after his release in 1962. Hopefully I can find some more reliable sources on this group.]
84 Ibid., p. 2-3.
85 Ibid., 5.
their “pacification” tactics. General Massu, like many French officers in Algeria, was shaped by his experience fighting in Indochina, and tended to view the Algerian conflict through the lens of the Cold War. For the French military, Algeria was a “revolutionary war,” and the fight against the FLN was just as much a battle in the war against communism as it was the repression of an anticolonial rebellion. Raphaëlle Branche notes that whether or not the imagined links between the FLN and communism were real, French military leaders believed them to be so, supposing that the FLN “rebels” were incapable of organizing by themselves “such a subversion of the colonial order.”

General Massu also saw himself as a good Catholic, following in the footsteps of the famous Père Charles de Foucauld, the French Catholic mystic and missionary in the Saharan desert of Algeria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He understood that his job was to maintain French Algeria in the face of threats from the FLN (i.e. the “Muslim world”), and from the communists, and as he wrote in his memoir fifteen years later, “at the dawn of the Battle of Algiers, the army estimated that it could do a demonstration of pacification in the tradition of the great ancients – the Foucaulds, the Gallienis, the Lyauteys, adapting its action to aspects of the revolutionary war that had been imposed on it and pursuing the objective that it defined by the term Eurafrika.” Buried in that quote are many coded phrases, including “pacification,” a term that covered all manner of violent excesses, but essentially Massu’s worldview is quite clear: the army was not the aggressor; the soldiers were merely “keeping the peace” in the same way that the great nineteenth century Christian colonialists had done and

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86 Branche, 107. Branche also notes that the arrest of a number of communists in Oran and the capture of an airplane carrying arms from Egypt only reinforced this belief.
88 Ibid., 56.
protecting a vision of European and African cooperation that the communists were seeking to destroy with their revolutionary war.

In his book *La Vraie bataille d'Alger*, General Massu noted that, in his opinion, the most serious opposition to his tactics came from the “attitude of Mgr Duval, and certain priests, notably Abbé Scotto.”

Massu himself wrote to the Vatican in February 1957 to complain about the “surprising attitude of Mgr Duval” that “differed totally from that of Your Holiness in your Christmas letter of 1956.” Massu then added, “In a Muslim country, peace cannot be obtained except by justice and authority, true forms of Christian charity, and never by weakness. Any equivocation on this point can only spell trouble and disorder and provoke a tragic malaise for the Catholics of Algeria.” He then asked the Pope to investigate these problems on the ground in order to assure the union of Catholics.

Massu received a reply from the Vatican on March 14th expressing the Pope’s wish that all the “holy forces” would “work together for the reestablishment of peace.”

General Massu was concerned enough about morale within the French army, especially for those soldiers who felt attacks of conscience after participating in actions like torture, or ‘disappearances,’ or civilian repression, that he counseled any “disoriented or worried souls” to consult “Reflections of a priest on urban terrorism.” This document, a theological justification for the army’s “police action” in Algeria was written by Père

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89 Massu, 216.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 216-217.
92 Cited in General Massu’s book, 217.
Delarue, chaplain of the 10th Parachute Division. In his introduction to the document in March, 1957, Massu wrote, “the angry outbursts of a certain metropolitan press must not move us: it only confirms the soundness of our views and the efficiency of our blows.”

In his response to Père Delarue’s text, so highly recommended by General Massu, Mgr Duval described the text as “seriously reprehensible.” Duval criticized not only the misquotation and misrepresentation of statements from the Pope, but also the fact that a priest would viciously attack other priests, particularly the Mission de France, without any proof or regard for the consequences. These consequences, he wrote, were that the text would give laypeople the idea that the clergy was divided, already a serious problem. And, he asked, what would happen to the relationship between Christians and Muslims once the text fell into the hands of the Muslims, as it was bound to do?

Mgr Badré, the director of the French Catholic military chaplaincy wrote to Mgr Duval in July 1957 telling him that the text had not been approved on any level by the chaplaincy, neither in its subject nor in its form, and therefore had no official character. Mgr Badré, who was trying to avoid a scandal after the appearance and commentary on the text in Témoignage chrétien and Le Monde at the end of June, specified that the R.P. Delarue had been acting on the “perfectly commendable desire” to “see clear and
enlighten the consciences of those with whom he was charged.” Mgr Badré also wrote that he had asked General Massu to remove the text from circulation, and so “everything has been reduced to a local incident without important repercussions.” In his view, the problem was with the journalists who exposed the text, not with the content of the text itself. The real concern, as he saw it, was that “certain moral problems touching on revolutionary war were fairly well posed,” but that “the question was too complex to be treated in the public place.” Despite the superficial conciliatory tone of the letter, it is clear that Mgr Badré saw public interventions like those of Mgr Duval on questions of military tactics and torture as both unwelcome and harmful to the task of the military chaplains.

Massu’s antagonism toward both Mgr Duval’s moral judgment of French military tactics and the actions of the Christians that he labeled as “progressivists” was not, however, solely limited to support for texts like those of the R.P. Delarue. Massu himself was intent on demonstrating that his soldiers were not only innocent of charges that they had crossed the boundaries of Christian morality, but that they also had a great concern for Christian charity. In a letter dated 10 March 1957, General Massu stated:

After the warning shot given to certain European circles who have given charity an abusive and antinational interpretation, halted the proceedings against them, in a manner that would not annihilate the old and valuable efforts, of unselfish men and women, in their social programs.

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98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
This “warning shot” refers, however obliquely, to the arrest of people like Nelly Forget, the Gautrons, and even Jean-Claude Barthez, whose explanation of “Christian charity” he clearly found in direct violation not only of their Christian faith, but also of their national duty.

Judging from the prosecution report, the leaks to the media, the treatment of the majority of the European Christians while in military custody, and the conduct of their trial, it seems clear that the military had a preconceived idea of what had taken place and was shaping the evidence and characters to mount a spectacular show trial and once and for all publicly discredit the actions and positions of the so-called “progressivist Christians.” As historian Sylvie Thénault has shown in her research on the French justice system during the Algerian War, French military leaders, including Generals Salan and Massu, saw the justice system as simply an “instrument of counter-revolutionary war.”

While the military was prepared to use the justice system as one tool in their attempt to “dismantle the political-administrative structure of the FLN,” their main concern was with efficiency, and the necessity to obtain timely information from the prisoners, rather than the respect of legal procedures. This disconnect eventually led to a situation, between January 1957 and May 1958, in which the number of arrests greatly outweighed the number of judicial procedures. Yet the military justice system was also one of the most visible and public forums with which to promote the successes of the military in dismantling the FLN networks, and it gave a veneer of legality to tactics that were questionable not only morally, but legally as well.

101 Thénault, *Un drôle de justice*, 68.
102 Ibid., 94-95.
The highly-publicized trials of July 1957 all took place in the military tribunal of Algiers, presided over by military judges, many of whom were openly supporters of Algérie française.\textsuperscript{103} Sylvie Thénault notes that these trials had a few essential characteristics: large numbers of accused were tried together, often in highly-publicized trials where the media grouped the defendants together and labeled them with provocative titles like the “trial of the bombs,” the trial of the “Communists of Oran” and the trial of the “progressivist Christians.” In addition, Thénault notes that the trials were characterized by a “feverish ambiance” and often very heavy sentences.\textsuperscript{104} In the “trial of the bombs,” which \textit{Le Monde} declared the most important trial that the military tribunal of Algiers had ever faced, the sentences were heavy indeed. Despite the fact that the attorneys Jacques Vergès and Georges Arnaud publicly highlighted the fact that Djamila Bouhired, in particular, had been brutally tortured, and the fact that the other young woman, Djamila Bouazza demonstrated signs of insanity in the courtroom, the defendants were condemned to death.\textsuperscript{105} It is no wonder, then, that the defendants in the trial of the “progressivist Christians” were pleasantly surprised to find their judge seemed almost sympathetic to their predicament, even if he publicly lectured many of the Christian defendants about their misinterpretation of Biblical ideals.\textsuperscript{106}

The case against Raymonde Peschard offers a specific example of a situation where the military clearly attempted to manipulate the outcome of the trial. Several of the European defendants were on trial specifically because they had played key roles in

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 73-74.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{105} Djamila Bouhired and Djamila Bouazza, along with the other defendants in the “trial of the bombs” were sentenced to death, although none of them were execute.
\textsuperscript{106} Barthez, “\textit{Le procès des “libéraux” d’Alger.}” CAMT, fonds MDF, carton 1996028 014, file juil-sept. 1957.
hiding Raymonde Peschard, the Communist militant accused of the Milk-Bar bombing in September 1956, along with the bombing of a public bus in Diar-es-Saada in November 1956. Throughout the spring of 1957, several pied-noir newspapers in Algeria consistently reported on aspects of her case, repeating that she had placed both bombs, and that she had been an “abusive” resident at both of the Catholic convents where she hid for several weeks.\textsuperscript{107} On March 22, 1957, the \textit{Journal d’Alger} printed a story about Raymonde Peschard including specific details about the interrogation that French officials conducted with the two superiors of the convents in question, information that could likely only have been obtained from an inside source.\textsuperscript{108} According to the \textit{Echo d’Alger}, Raymonde Peschard had been identified as the “blonde woman” who placed the bombs based on the testimony of an arrested Algerian Communist named Georges Marcelli and a witness from the Milk-Bar bombing, whose description apparently matched that of Raymonde Peschard. However, the prosecutor later reported, when asked to identify her from a photograph, the witness was unable to do so.\textsuperscript{109} A victim of the Diar-es-Saada attack, who supposedly recognized Peschard from a photo, confirmed Marcelli’s testimony.\textsuperscript{110}

Yet as the Battle of Algiers continued and the military made headway in dismantling Yacef Saadi’s network, they realized that Raymonde Peschard had not been the blond woman who had placed the bomb in the Milk-Bar or in the bus. In a report to the minister of justice, dated June 14, 1957, the public prosecutor in Algiers announced

\textsuperscript{107} See the \textit{Journal d’Alger}, March 22, 1957; the \textit{Echo d’Alger}, March 22, 1957, March 26, 1957; the \textit{Dépêche quotidienne d’Algerie}, March 22, 1957.

\textsuperscript{108} See the article on Raymonde Peschard in the \textit{Journal d’Alger}, March 22, 1957.

\textsuperscript{109} See the report from the public prosecutor to the Minister of Justice, June 14, 1957. CAOM/FM/81f/917 (sous dérogation).

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{L’Echo d’Alger}, March 26, 1957.
that after the arrests of Djamila Bouhired and Abderrahmane Taleb, the FLN bomb maker, in April 1957, the military investigators came to realize that it was in fact Djamila Bouhired who had placed the bomb in the Milk-Bar, a crime for which she was convicted in June 1957 in the military tribunal in Algiers. Thus, on June 12th, 1957, the investigating magistrate dismissed the case against Raymonde Peschard. This information, however, apparently never made it to the prosecutor in the trial of the Christians and it was not until the first day of their trial (July 25th), when the judge in the case asked the government commissioner to investigate what had happened to Raymonde Peschard that the military released the information that the case against her had been dismissed.

Several newspapers reporting on the trial noted the particular importance of this information: as Serge Bromberger of *Le Figaro*, hardly an ally of the Christians on trial, noted in his account of the first day of the trial, if Raymonde Peschard was simply a wanted communist militant and not the woman who was “responsible for the explosion of a bomb that wrought horrifying human devastation among an anonymous crowd,” then the case against the Christians who were accused of sheltering her would be “infinitely less serious.”

The government’s case against the defendants centered around physical evidence like the *ronéos* and the copies of FLN documents like *El Moudjahid* found at various locations, including the presbytery of Hussein-Dey, as well as on testimony from previously arrested Algerian militants and communists and admissions from the

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defendants themselves. Yet the fact that several of these admissions were extracted under torture, or were falsified by the army, as was the case for André Gallice, had little bearing on their admissibility as evidence in the trial. Nelly Forget and several of the other European defendants noted that their interrogators specifically pushed them to accuse their Muslim friends of masterminding the whole plan, and the prosecution attempted to depict the young European women in particular as “dupes” of the FLN.\textsuperscript{114} Chafika Meslem, in particular, was consistently portrayed as the “public relations” person for the FLN, charged with infiltrating the “progressivist” community in order to both draw them into the struggle for Algerian independence, whether they were conscious of it or not, and to implicate them in the process, further legitimizing the Algerian cause.\textsuperscript{115} It was partly for this reason that the defendants in the trial agreed early on not to say anything in court that would implicate the other defendants, whether Christian or Muslim.

For the army, the morality of whose tactics were already being called into question, this explanation was likely much easier to digest than the explanation that these Christians were displaying what they argued was “true Christian charity.” For someone like Massu who saw his actions as those of a patriotic soldier doing both his national and his Christian duty to dismantle the Algerian terrorist cells that were threatening both the French nation and the Christian civilizing mission in Algeria, the claim that the Christians who had helped the so-called ‘terrorists’ defended their actions as an example of “true Christian charity” must have been infuriating. This reaction explains to a certain extent why the military actively asserted that these Christians were “progressivists,” meaning

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{114} The sub-headline for Serge Bromberger’s story on the trial in \textit{Le Figaro} on 23 July 1957 read “plusieurs des inculpés ont été les dupes du F.L.N.”

\end{footnotesize}
that they not only were colluding with communists and “terrorists” but that by taking a political position, which being a “progressivist” clearly implied, they were acting against the good of the French nation. From there it was not a difficult leap of logic to claim that they were even, in some cases, traitors to the French nation.

Mgr Duval had foreseen early on the consequences if Christians, and in particular the clergy, were perceived to have taken a political stance on the question of Algerian independence. In terms of his influence with the Christian population of Algeria, the accusation of “progressivism” was so important because it to some extent nullified the teachings of people like himself and Jean Scotto, who were trying desperately to convince the Christian population to search for peaceful and just solutions to the Algerian problem. As hard as he tried to be expansive in his statements on Christian charity and fraternal love, many Catholics had already decided to ignore his teachings and to condemn his perspective, claiming that they were too “political” and that the church should not be involved in politics or temporal matters. Whether or not the Christians on trial and even Mgr Duval were truly “progressivists” in the sense that they engaged in a political and moral collaboration with communism, which, of course, they were not, what mattered was simply the appearance of having taken a political position that could be interpreted as acting against the good of the French nation.

Throughout the course of the Algerian war, and especially after statements like the collective letter from the bishops of North Africa in 1955, or his declaration on July 30, 1957 after the verdict in the trial of the “progressivist Christians,” Mgr Duval received piles of letters from Christian pieds-noirs who rejected his perceived support for positions like those taken by the Christians on trial because he was getting involved in
political questions, which were “not the concern of the Church.” In August 1957, several of the letters condemned his support for the Christians on trial and affirmed the belief that these Christians had committed treason, simply through adhering to ideas that could be considered “progressivists.” One gentleman wrote that “what the faithful reproach them for is being ‘progressivists,’ and so half communists, and one cannot be both communist and French at the same time.” Later letters threatened that unless Duval openly supported the cause of Algérie française, pied-noir Catholics would “empty the churches,” a threat later made real through OAS bombings of churches led by people like Père Scotto. Throughout the war these letters continued to accuse “Mohamed” Duval and other Christians who appeared to oppose their political positions with doing the work of communists and terrorists, with abusing their position as leaders of Christianity by getting involved in political questions, and even with treason for refusing their Christian duty to support their patrie.

If the documents in the archives of successive Governors-General are any indication, the furor over the perceived connections between social Catholics and communists had not died down in the government either after the trial. In the archives of Paul Delouvrier’s cabinet, for example, there is a report titled “Qu’est-ce que le

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116 An anonymous letter to Mgr Duval from April 28, 1961, in which the author wrote, “my congratulations to you, sir, for supporting a policy of abandonment, since the church should not get involved in things like that.” Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 309.
117 These letters are collected in various locations in the archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger. The letters in casiers 308, 309, and 283.
119 An anonymous letter to Mgr Duval from “a group of Catholics who cannot sign after the repression of the police regime that you support,” no date. Archives of Mgr Duval, archevêché d’Alger, casier 309. There are also many other anonymous letters that threaten bombings and assassinations.
“What is progressivism?” [What is progressivism?], by an unnamed author that defined the progressivists in France and Algeria between 1947 and 1956 as the “fellow travelers” [compagnons de route] of communism.\(^{120}\) The author wrote that the movement was born out of the Christian, and especially the Catholic, community in France, and that its leaders and members were mostly Catholic militants, in other words, leftist Catholics involved in movements like the Action catholique and the JOC. The texts and authors that the report labeled as “progressivsts” comprised a broad swath of French Christian journals, like Témoignage chrétien, Esprit, and Libération, and personalities, including Emmanuel Mounier, editor of Esprit, the former Dominican worker-priest and sociologist, the R.P. Montuclard, and, of course, André Mandouze.\(^{121}\)

In general, the report portrays the progressivist Christians as direct political collaborators with communism, and to some extent the Soviet Union, who had sided against the French nation in Indochina and even in Algeria, as proven by the case of André Mandouze and his outspoken critiques of French colonialism in Algeria. Openly anti-communist, the author of the report regretted that the events in Hungary in 1956 did little to force progressivist Christians to rethink their ties to Communism. He argues that

\(^{120}\) “Qu’est-ce que le progressisme?” CAOM, Gouvernement Général, Cabinet des Gouverneurs Généraux – Delouvrier, 14 CAB/200 (sous dérogation). There are no names or dates on the report, but based on the events and publications cited, it appears to have been written in late 1958 or early 1959.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., 7-9. Mandouze in particular is highlighted in the report because of the political nature of his leftist Catholicism. While the influences of communism on French Catholicism remains a central preoccupation of the author, it is the political branch, and particular the Union de Chrétiens-Progressistes that presents the greatest threat in Algeria. After closely examining the publications of the Union, the author concludes that the leaders of the movement have been engaged in actions like the denunciation of the Atlantic pact, the support to strike movements, the “defeatist” action during the war in Indochina, and the beginning of the action in Algeria, where André Mandouze had become a professor.
even though journals like *Témoignage chrétien* denounce the Soviet repression, they
turned the focus immediately back to Algeria, focusing on the “torture” inflicted on
arrested Algerians and their French collaborators by French troops. Throughout the entire
sixty some pages, the author never wavered in the conviction that progressivist Christians
have direct ties to the Communist Party and that they are working specifically to
undermine the French mission in Algeria. The author writes,

> But could one, in the course of the years during which France has been engaged in
> Algeria, establish a precise frontier where progressivism ends? The doctrinal
> action has passed to the background... But the desire of the Communist Party? To
> weaken the action of France in Algeria. It is now almost the totality of the
> Catholic press that can serve its ends. 122

The author noted that for the Christians, the protest against the conduct of the Algerian
War remains primarily in the realm of morality. Because they have not precisely laid out
what is licit and what is not, the general impression is simply hostility toward the war.
The author’s conclusion, after examining the role of the progressivist in Algeria in 1957-
58, was that “the progressivist movement has merged into the grand movement that
undermines French morale in the Algerian affair.”123 Whether or not Delouvrier openly
supported this position, a circumstance that seems unlikely given his political interest in
easing tensions in Algeria after the arrival of Charles de Gaulle, the fact that such a report
was circulating among high government positions suggests it had traction somewhere.

The charge that Christians, and French Catholics in particular, were openly
supporting the goals of the Soviet Union and attempting to actively undermine the French
state in Algeria demonstrates the extent to which the perceived political positions of
French Christians who protested against the immorality of French government and

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122 Ibid., 59-60
123 Ibid., 52.
military tactics had led to an overwhelming paranoia around their lack of loyalty to the French cause. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, including the insistence by many Christians that their protests against the conduct of the war were primarily an attempt to protect the honor of France and the French military, many military and government officials seemed truly convinced that the Christians were out to destroy French Algeria, and consequently undermine the French nation. It was this attempt to position Christians who opposed French tactics during the Algerian war in opposition to everyone else, and to define them as disloyal to the nation that disturbed Mgr Duval and many Christians who were incredibly dismayed that their moral stance had been understood by the military, government, and much of the pied-noir community as treason. The truth, of course, is that those who complained so angrily about the Church having taken a political position likely would have been perfectly happy if the Church had taken their political position. In the end, the problem was not really about politics at all. Rather, those Christians whose support for Algérie française at all costs had taken a moral beating from their Christian peers, and even to some extent their Christian leaders, needed to find their own way to justify their positions, and charging their opponents with progressivism was the most expeditious way to do so.

In the end it mattered very little that Mgr Duval never made any public statements supporting the cause of Algérie algérienne in 1957 because the ultras believed that he was clearly against them, and many Algerians believed that he was firmly on their side. Despite the attempt by Jean Scotto and the defense attorneys for the Christians on trial in 1957 to avoid an overtly political trial, and the court ruling that exonerated most of the defendants, the trial had a significant impact on the future of Christian/Muslim relations
in Algeria. The negative press surrounding the arrest and trial of the thirty-five Christians and Muslims had, among other things, severely damaged the reputation of the Centres sociaux in the eyes of the supporters of Algérie française, and Centres and their staff became direct targets of the counter-revolutionary violence of the OAS. Furthermore, most of the defendants in the trial and a significant number of Europeans who had pursued the goal of Franco-Algerian rapprochement left Algeria soon after, whether by force or by choice, leaving precious few Europeans to continue their work, even as tensions rose to an extraordinary pitch by the late 1950s.

The Morality of Resistance

The accusations of treason against French Christians who protested the conduct of the Algerian War did not stop with the verdict in the trial of the “progressivist Christians” in July 1957. In fact, they had only just begun. But by 1958, much of the action had moved to France. The most infamous cases centered around the arrests and trials of the so-called “porteurs de valises” (suitcase carriers), both Christian and non-Christian, who had participated in “support networks” for the FLN in France. The Jeanson network, whose trial in 1960 caused a storm of debate about the limits of resistance and the definition of treason, is the most well-known case, however there were several other important examples, including the arrest and trial of Etienne Mathiot, a Protestant pastor accused of helping an FLN member over the border from France into Switzerland. It is interesting to note that in nearly all of these examples, there were strong connections that

124 I am using the term porteurs de valises here because it runs through much of the historiography, however I feel that the term does not accurately portray the range of motivations and activities of those engaged in resistance movements against the French government during the Algerian War.
existed between those in France who were engaged in the Algerian conflict in support of the Algerian Muslims, and the Christians in Algeria who were fighting for the same cause. Historians have often overlooked or downplayed these connections, yet many of those who were involved in groups like the Jeanson network or the Comité de résistance spirituelle had deep connections to Algeria, and in many cases, strong friendships with people like the Chaulet family, Mgr Scotto, or the priests of the Mission de France.125

While in Algeria Mgr Duval and Jean Scotto were fighting to maintain their moral and ecclesiastical authority in the face of accusations of progressivism and critiques of their perceived political engagement, by mid-1957, Christians in France were also intensely discussing the moral and theological guidelines for the relationship between Christianity and politics and to what extent one’s Christian duty also included loyalty to the nation. Although Stalinist repression in the early 1950s and the Hungarian revolution in 1956 had fueled strong anti-communist sentiment in France, the charge of progressivism seems to have been somewhat less potent than in France in 1957, although it came back with full force after the arrest of several priests of the Mission de France who were accused of helping the FLN in France in 1958. The consequence was that debates about the role of Christians in political life and the duty of Christians to resist against what they perceived as immoral government and military actions proceeded

125 See Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, Les porteurs de valises. La résistance française à la guerre d’Algérie (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1979) and Jacques Charby, Les porteurs d’espoir. Les réseaux de soutien au FLN pendant la guerre d’Algérie: les acteurs parlent (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2004). Some of the major histories of the porteurs de valises, including Hamon and Rotman’s book, only briefly mention the role that Christian activists for the Algerian cause in Algeria, including the Chaulet family had in influencing their political positions, despite the fact that many later testified in Jacques Charby’s book that their introductions to FLN members in France came through the Chaulet family, as Anne-Marie Chaulet was engaged to FLN leader Salah Louanchi.
beyond the feverish accusations of Communist plots and the vicious propaganda that characterized Algerian Christian life. As in Algeria, within French Protestantism and Catholicism, there was a wide range of reactions to the Algerian question.

Although French Christians had less at stake in the loss of Algeria than the pieds-noirs, many felt that loyalty to the nation and to the cause of Algérie française were important cornerstones of Christian conduct. And even though many of the Christians in France who spoke out against the conduct of the war did so out of concern for French honor, there was another group, whose arguments against the conduct of the war and, in some cases, for Algerian independence, had little to do with French patriotism. These Christians felt it was their moral duty as Christians to both protest against the immoral conduct of the war and to actively resist against it, even if that meant supporting the perceived enemies of France. But just as in Algeria, debates over the duties of Christians in response to the Algerian war were focused on the extent to which these duties were political and what the nature of the relationship between church and state should be.

Historians and observers have pointed out the ways in which those who opposed the government during the Algerian War framed their actions in the language of resistance, and specifically the French resistance to Nazism during World War II. It was no different for the committed Christians among them. For many of these Christians, there were direct links between WWII resistance activity and the Algerian War. This was the case, for example, of André Mandouze, who subtitled volume one of his 1998 memoir “From one resistance to the other,” and for Cimade, whose very existence was

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tied to the Protestant resistance during WWII. For others, the connection was more theoretical, although as historians Martin Evans and the testimonies collected by Jacques Charby have demonstrated, many of those engaged in the Algerian conflict had grown up during WWII and were marked by the resistance, even if they had not been not actively engaged in it. By tying their actions to the WWII resistance, these Christians not only drew on a myth that provided some political and moral legitimacy to their own positions, but they also drew on previous Christian examinations of the duties of resistance, including notable positions from theologians like Karl Barth. In addition, by defining their actions in the context of the WWII resistance, the comparisons between the actions of the French military and the Nazis, a common theme in early denunciations of torture and French army atrocities in Algeria, gained more historical force.

One of the best examples of this use of the concept of resistance is the Comité de résistance spirituelle (Committee of Spiritual Resistance), a diverse group of influential Christians that included such prominent Protestants as André Philip and Paul Ricœur as well as Catholics like François Mauriac, Jean-Marie Domenach, Louis Massignon, several priests of the Mission de France and former leaders of the Scouts de France. It was the Catholic journalist Robert Barrat who first organized the committee in order to

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128 Evans, chapter 3; in Charby’s book, nearly all of the actors interviewed discuss the role of World War II and the French Resistance in the roots of their engagement.
129 In my June 2009 conversation with Jacques Maury, a pastor who was formerly the head of the Fédé, the French Protestant Federation and Cimade, and came from a prominent French Protestant family, he discussed the importance of Karl Barth’s text, Christian Community and Civil Community for young French Protestants who faced the moral dilemmas posed by the Algerian War.
publish the text *Des rappelés témoignent* in the spring of 1957. This text is one example of an early reaction of those Christians who felt shocked and betrayed by revelations about the use of torture and the conduct of the French government and military in Algeria, which was to expose more fully and publicly the facts of this conduct. Publications like the *Dossier Jean Muller*, a notebook of letters from a French soldier, and former Catholic Scout leader who was killed in Algeria in 1956, which *Témoignage chrétien* published around the same time, and the periodical *Témoignage et documents*, which documented specific cases of torture, including that of Catholic social worker Denise Walbert in Algeria, fall into the same category.

In the introduction to the testimonies published in *Des rappelés témoignent*, the Comité responded to the question of why they had published the dossier, stating, “If we have imposed on ourselves this task, it is essentially because we have come to agree that in the presence of such horrors, we no longer have the right to keep silent.” For the Christians involved, their moral duty was above all to speak out against what they saw as the grave injustices being committed. In part, this was a project of educating the “average Frenchman or woman,” who continued to think that never would a French person be capable of committing such crimes, that such crimes did indeed exist. They were not at all trying, they insisted, to “search for a scandal to exploit against our country,” but rather to point out that “the active participation in such collective crimes profoundly contributes to the demoralization of our soldiers and our officers.” They were not taking a stand

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130 The list of members of the Comité appear at the end of the introduction to *Des rappelés témoignent*, which was published under their aegis.
133 Ibid.
against the army, but rather trying to address the causes of the moral dilemmas and mental anguish that French soldiers faced in Algeria.

They also pointed out that speaking out was their responsibility as French men and women, and compared their situation to that of German citizens, many Christian, who “in the presence of Nazi crimes, no longer had the right to stay silent: their duty was to protest! Many had the courage to do it, and most of them paid with their lives.”134 Keeping silent, they argued, made French men and women complicit in the crimes that were being committed in Algeria. In this text, the members of the Comité made no distinction between their duty as Christians and their duty as French citizens to protest against the conduct of the war. At this stage, the Comité’s concept of resistance was less about actively resisting against the government, although as the text was soon outlawed, continued printings were, in fact, breaking the law, than about resisting against a mentality of willful ignorance that they believed existed among the French population.

For some of the members of the Comité, their engagement in the Algerian War was limited to the task of information and intellectual activism. This was the case, for example, of François Mauriac, the Catholic novelist who spoke out against the use of torture and colonial repression in his Bloc-Notes, and who led committees in favor of André Mandouze after his arrest and the investigation into the Affaire Audin, but who never fully approved of those whose engagement led to direct action with the Algerian nationalists.135 For others like Robert Barrat or several priests of the Mission de France, the next logical step after the relative failure of their information campaigns to produce any substantive change, was a more active form of resistance. Some of the principal

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134 Ibid.
135 On Mauriac’s moderate position on the FLN, see Le Sueur, 210-211.
questions they faced centered around the point at which they were morally obligated as Christians to resist against the French government, and what form that resistance would take. The answers were certainly not the same for everyone, but there are several common threads within the examples of those whose concept of resistance took a more active form.

One of the first steps for those who engaged in resistance movements against French government or military policies, including the so-called “porteurs de valises” (suitcase carriers) for the FLN, was a shift in thinking away from focusing on questions of French honor when protesting the use of torture or other military atrocities in Algeria to asking Algerians what was best for them and for the Algerian people as a whole. There is a distinct difference, for example, between texts like Des rappelés témoignent or Pierre-Henri Simon’s Contre la torture that defend their critiques of French conduct in Algeria in patriotic terms, and Francis and Colette Jeanson’s polemical evaluation of the failures of colonialism, L’Algérie hors la loi. In Algeria, this shift had taken place well before the beginning of the Algerian War for Christians who were actively engaged in movements like the AJAAS, and to a certain extent, these Christians were influential in a similar shift that occurred with their French counterparts. Some interesting examples of these connections are the Catholic journalist Robert Barrat’s meeting with Algerian nationalist leaders at the apartment of Jacques and Eliane Gautron in Algiers in 1955, and the ties that Salah Louanchi, the leader of the French federation of the FLN from 1956 until his arrest in the spring of 1957 was able to form with the leftist Catholic community in France through his fiancé Anne-Marie Chaulet, who worked for the Catholic
progressivist journal *Le Bulletin* (the successor to *La Quinzaine*) after her arrival in France.\(^{136}\)

As in Algeria, many of the Christians who came to the decision to break French laws that they felt were immoral did so after direct dialogues and interactions with Algerians, whether it was nationalists in Algeria or North-African workers in France, as was the case with several priests of the Mission de France. Once these ties and friendships were built, for some taking the next step of sheltering their friends who were wanted by the police was a much more concrete realization of loyalty and solidarity with their plight. For people like Protestant pastor Etienne Mathiot who was arrested in December 1957 and charged with sheltering Si Ali, an FLN leader, their actions of resistance stopped there. Just as in the case of the Christians on trial in Algiers in July 1957, during his 1958 trial, Mathiot argued that his actions were not in defense of a political cause or support of the FLN, but rather a testimony to his belief “any gesture of love that brings with it the potential for change” and non-violence, since Algerians like Si Ali would more than likely suffer grave abuses at the hands of French authorities.\(^{137}\)

For those, like the Christian members of the Jeanson network, who took the further step of engaging in actions on behalf of the FLN, the understanding that change in Algeria would have to be both political, and to some extent revolutionary, was a common current of thought. Francis and Colette Jeanson had published in 1955 one of the most controversial documents from the early years of the Algerian War, the book *L’Algérie*

\(^{136}\) Hamon and Rotman, 54.
\(^{137}\) Adams, 112-114. In the end, Mathiot had not, in fact, committed this crime, but rather took the blame for his brother-in-law, Jacques Lochard, who had helped Si Ali over the border into Switzerland. Adams recounts this story in his book, but I also heard it in conversations with Jacques Maury, Bill Nottingham, and Cimade team members. The quote from Mathiot’s defense is cited in Adams, 114.
hors la loi [Algeria outside the law]. Although they were not practicing Christians who were informed by a sense of Christian morality, the Jeansons had strong intellectual and ideological similarities with Christians like André Mandouze and Mission de France priest Robert Davezies, which led to a close collaboration with the Christians who worked with their FLN support network.138

Francis Jeanson, a French intellectual and protégé of Jean-Paul Sartre who was perhaps best known for contributing to the public falling out between Sartre and Albert Camus, and his then wife Colette had first encountered Algeria on their honeymoon in 1948-1949.139 During this trip the Jeansons had come into contact with the Algerian population and the growing nationalist movement. Francis Jeanson had written several articles criticizing the French treatment of Algerian Muslims in the early 1950s, but it was not until 1955 that Francis and Colette became actively engaged in the Algerian conflict. Colette Jeanson made three trips to Algeria in 1955 to research the conflict and to meet the Algerian nationalists. After initial difficulties in trying to meet with nationalist leaders, she called André Mandouze, who put her into contact with Pierre Chaulet, who took her to visit one of the shantytowns on the outskirts of Algiers.140 Chaulet also took her to visit Mgr Duval, who she felt was more sympathetic to the Algerian cause than he let on, and Salah Louanchi, who was hiding out with Père Scotto in the presbytery of Bab-el-Oued. These interactions as well as interviews with Algerian nationalists like Benyoussef Benkhedda gave Colette the material she and Francis needed

138The most prominent Christian in the Jeanson network was Robert Davezies, priest in the Mission de France, although Jeanson worked with people like Mandouze, Christiane Philip (daughter of Protestant André Philip), Robert Barrat, and the Chaulets.
140 From Colette Tzanck (Jeanson)’s testimony in Charby, 69.
to produce their book on the origins of the nationalist movement, *L’Algérie hors la loi*, which was published in December 1955 by the Éditions du Seuil.\(^{141}\)

The Jeanson’s analysis of the injustices of the colonial system in Algeria and their searing critique of the projects of liberals like Jacques Chevallier, the mayor of Algiers, which they labeled “neocolonialism,” had more in common with the views of Algerian nationalists like Pierre Chaulet and André Mandouze than with those who advocated social programs like the Centres sociaux as measures of reform or of reconciliation between the Christian and Muslim communities in Algeria.\(^{142}\) It is no wonder then, that their political positions led them to take action by working directly with the FLN in France. The history of the Jeanson network has been documented in great detail by Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman in their book *Les porteurs de valises*, yet there are some interesting details to point out that concern their connections to Christian resisters. For example, it was the Catholic journalist Robert Barrat who first introduced the Egyptian “professional revolutionary” Henri Curiel to Francis Jeanson.\(^{143}\) Curiel also had ties to the influential French Protestant socialist André Philip, who broke with the SFIO over its support for Guy Mollet’s policies in Algeria and published the book *Le Socialisme trahi* in 1957.\(^{144}\)

While on the whole, the actions of the Jeanson network and other FLN support groups troubled French Christian leaders, especially with revelations that some of them

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\(^{142}\) See chapter III of *L’Algérie hors la loi*, titled “Néocolonialisme,” 102-108.

\(^{143}\) Hamon and Rotman, 90.

\(^{144}\) It is also interesting to note that Francis Jeanson later married Christiane Philip, daughter of the Protestant Socialist politician André Philip. Christiane Jeanson said in an interview with Jacques Charby that it was at her father’s house that she first encountered professional revolutionary Henri Curiel, who played a key role in the Jeanson network and led her to begin working with the Jeanson network. Charby, 220-221.
were transporting arms and money for the FLN, it was the engagement of several Mission de France priests that most outraged conservative Catholics in France. The Mission de France had been directly engaged in the Algerian conflict from the beginning, and the expulsion of the MDF priests from Souk-Ahras in 1956 and the arrest and trial of Jean-Claude Barthez in 1957 were precursors for their more direct political engagement in the conflict. In March 1958, the publication of the MDF’s *Lettre aux Communautés* caused a huge scandal in France because they had openly supported Algerian independence. However there are also several important discussions of the relationship between the Church and politics in the text. In the introduction to the issue, Jean Vinatier, the prelate of the MDF, affirmed that their primary pastoral task during this conflict was to “enlighten the consciences of those who wonder and to awaken those who, alas, are indifferent to a drama that engages, for better or worse, all French men and women,” a position not much different from that of Mgr Duval in Algeria. They also highlighted the religious aspect of their reflection, and affirmed that they were not searching for “technical solutions” or adhering to any particular political ideology, but rather that they wanted to use the reflections of the team to help those who were facing the moral challenges created by the Algerian War.

Yet in this impressively comprehensive reflection on the role of the MDF in facing the moral challenges that the Algerian War created, people like Père Martelet noted that even a truly spiritual pastoral action that sought to “educate consciences on the

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145 This position is especially clear on page 47 of the *Lettre aux Communautés*, March 1958. On the ensuing scandal, see Chapeu, 134-140.
146 LAC, March 1958, 4.
147 Ibid., 5-6.
problems posed by the Algerian War” would have political repercussions.148 “This work,” Marthelet wrote, “necessarily involves an attitude of the Church because it is precisely the role of the Church to relate to the problems of the world: economic, social, political, familial, cultural, not by virtue of a technical competence, but in the name of ethical and Christian values that these problems and their solutions engage.”149 Marthelet cautioned, however, against using the authority of the church to justify a political position, as had been done throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for right-wing causes. He also cautioned against the harm that would come if religious leaders abstained from making ethical judgments, which was in itself a way of supporting what was happening.150 How, then, should one interpret the role of the church in political affairs and the duties of Christians to the patrie during the Algerian War? Marthelet answers these question by noting that

when one talks of the patrie, one speaks both of the men that compose it and the spiritual patrimony that unifies them on common ground... loving one’s homeland does not consist of necessarily ratifying all of its gestures; loving one’s homeland means knowing how to judge it in relation to its patrimony, and fidelity to it is not guaranteed at all costs.151

The allusion to the “patrimony” undoubtedly refers to Christianity, and he goes on to argue that “the Church always has the right to judge the State, not politically, but spiritually, since even if the Church does not have a political competence, it has an ethical competence that includes politics.”152

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148 Ibid., 18.
149 Ibid., 19.
150 Ibid., 20.
151 Ibid., 22.
152 Ibid., 22.
The reflections of Père Marthelet and the Mission de France are interesting because they define the relationship between the Church and State as one that is connected but not driven by the same goals. The Church, in this formulation, is rather like a Supreme Court, in that it judges the actions of the state within the ethical laws of Christian doctrine, and should be independent enough from the state to protest against those actions that it finds unethical and immoral. The Church’s protest against the conduct of the Algerian War is therefore not treasonous or even disloyal, but rather a necessary moral counterbalance to the state whose goals are entirely political. This formulation of the relationship between church and state is quite similar to the one proposed by Karl Barth in his text, “Christian Community and Civil Community,” in which he argues that for the ‘civil community,’ or the State, “no appeal can be made to the Word or Spirit of God in the running of its affairs. The civil community as such is spiritually blind and ignorant.”

Barth also argues that “the existence of the Christian community is political” since the Bible asserts that all Christians are to “pray for all men and especially for ‘kings,’ that is, for those who bear special responsibility in the political sphere (which embraces all men).” Furthermore, he argues, “the object of the promise and hope in which the Christian community has its eternal goal consists, according to the unmistakable assertion of the New Testament, not in an eternal Church but in the polis built by God and coming down from heaven to earth...” Both Karl Barth, whose text was incredibly influential within French Protestantism, and the Mission de France argue that the role of the Church is to provide a moral compass for the state and to protest

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155 Ibid., 154. Here Barth is referencing Revelations 21:2, 24.
against those actions which are immoral by the standards of Christian ethics.\textsuperscript{156} But how, then, to extrapolate guidelines for action in a situation like the Algerian War?

The engagement of several Mission de France priests in FLN support networks, including the Jeanson network, presents a fascinating example of the shift from intellectual discourse to action. Jean Urvoas was one of the first to take this step. As a former member of the Urban Commission, and the founder of the sub-commission on the Algerian problems of the MDF who worked directly with North African laborers in France, he had early on taken the step of supporting the cause of the FLN, and was one of the founding members of the Comité de résistance spirituelle. In 1956, Urvoas was frustrated by what he saw as the failure of the leadership of the MDF, and Cardinal Liénart in particular, to take a more forceful stand on the Algerian conflict. In particular, he critiqued the fact that the Cardinal had stopped the publication of a MDF text on North Africa that was due to be published in L’Express on 1 June 1956.\textsuperscript{157} On a larger scale, Sybille Chapeu has argued that many of the MDF priests were frustrated by the “immobility” of the Church hierarchy, which they believed, contrary to Church doctrine, was in fact fallible and fundamentally conservative.\textsuperscript{158} Distancing themselves intellectually from the Church hierarchy, and the stasis of the conservative establishment allowed MDF priests like Jean Urvoas, Robert Davezies and Bernard Boudouresques to reorder their priorities and act according to their sense of justice and their belief in the

\textsuperscript{156} In my conversation with him in Paris, France on June 17, 2009, pastor Jacques Maury said that this essay was a key text for Protestants who were discussing the role of Christians in the political sphere during the Algerian War.

\textsuperscript{157} Letter from Cardinal Liénart to Jean Urvoas responding to Urvoas’ frustrations, dated 12 July 1956. CAMT, fonds Mission de France, carton 1999013 0160, folder - Projet de déclaration, prêtres.

\textsuperscript{158} Chapeu, 118.
legitimacy of the Algerian cause, rather than solely as representatives of the Church.

Urvoas resigned from the Urban Commission in November 1956 because of the inability of the CU to move forward on statements condemning French atrocities in Algeria and the fundamental inequalities at the root of the conflict.\(^\text{159}\)

In September 1956, a group of people consisting of MDF priests, Christian laypeople and other French men and women who supported the Algerian cause began meeting in the apartment of MDF priest Bernard Boudouresques. “Boudou,” as he is affectionately called by his colleagues, was also a member of the *Comité de résistance spirituelle*, and from then on his room on the Rue Saint Jacques in Paris served as a meeting place for people who were linked to the Jeanson network, and as a shelter for Algerians sought by the police.\(^\text{160}\) Boudouresques was arrested in October 1958 after an Algerian who had stayed in his room had denounced him under torture.\(^\text{161}\) Although he did not come to adopt a fundamental belief in non-violence until after the Algerian War, Boudouresques stated that he never collected money, carried arms, nor was he a member of the FLN. Instead his actions were based on a desire to demonstrate his solidarity with the Algerian cause and his respect for the human being.\(^\text{162}\) Like his counterpart Jean-Claude Barthez in Algeria, Boudouresques was never actively engaged in the FLN, however he became a symbol to critics of the positions of groups like the Mission de France of the reasons why priests should not become involved in politics.

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\(^\text{159}\) Letter from Jean Urvoas to the Commission Urbaine, no date. CAMT, fonds Mission de France, carton 1996028 0068, file 1957.

\(^\text{160}\) See Bernard Boudouresque’s interview in Charby, 174-175. See also Chapeu’s account of Boudouresque’s engagement, p. 142-147.

\(^\text{161}\) Charby, 175.

\(^\text{162}\) Ibid., 177.
Robert Davezies was by far the most visible and controversial of the MDF priests who engaged in active resistance against the French government. He was an active member of the Jeanson network from its early days and had published three controversial books during the Algerian War.\textsuperscript{163} Like Bernard Boudouresques and Jean Urvoas, Davezies was also engaged in the *Comité de résistance spirituelle* and had joined an FLN support network after being solicited by Jean Urvoas at a conference on Algeria sponsored by the *Mouvement de la Paix* in June 1957.\textsuperscript{164} Beginning with tasks like printing tracts and helping shelter Algerians, Davezies and Urvoas linked up with Jeansons in October 1957 to form what would become the Jeanson network. Davezies emphasized that they were not members of the FLN but rather worked as a support network for the Algerian nationalists who were extremely limited in their movements and ability to collect funds, and eventually arms for their struggle.\textsuperscript{165} Around the same time as Bernard Boudouresque’s arrest in Paris, a warrant was issued for Davezies as well and he fled into Germany where he worked in exile, even through the trial of the Jeanson network, returning to France in January 1961, where he was immediately arrested.\textsuperscript{166}

It was not only Catholics, however, who were engaged in FLN support networks in France. Cimade’s experience in clandestine work and the openness of their leadership and staff to the Algerian cause made them ideal collaborators for the FLN. Cimade’s collaboration with the French Federation of the FLN began during the period when Salah Louanchi was at the head. According to Maître Oussedik, a former member of the

\textsuperscript{163} Robert Davezies publications during the Algerian War were *Le Front* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1959); *Le Temps de la Justice* (Lausanne: Éditions de la Cité, 1961); and *L’amnistie des Républicains* (Paris: François Maspéro, 1962).

\textsuperscript{164} See Davezies’ interview in Charby, 148-156.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 151-152.

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
Federation, Louanchi had a policy that there should be no attacks in France, and that the FLN struggle was not against the French people, but against an ideological position.167 The FLN approached Cimade in 1957 because of their firm position against torture and repression in Algeria. Its work was diverse and met the demands of the Federation, including providing shelter for militants and assisting in administrative problems for Algerians in prison in France.168 With its important influence in some of the most notorious prisons in France with chaplains like Tania Metzel and team members like Jacqueline Peyron, Cimade had important contacts with imprisoned Algerian militants and even FLN leaders, doing small favors like providing books for people like Mohamed Sahnoun, who was arrested and tried with the “progressivist Christians” in Algiers in 1957.169 After 1959, Cimade was one of the main organizations working in regroupment and prison camps in Algeria, and was able to do much of the research on the ground to find out who had disappeared, been tortured or assassinated.170

So how did church leaders respond to these forms of active resistance in support of the FLN that the Mission de France and Cimade engaged in? In the case of Cimade, very few people knew what was going on. By its nature engaged in humanitarian activities in locations like poor immigrant neighborhoods of Marseille or prisons that housed Algerian militants, Cimade’s actions were not especially outside of its realm of competence. There was likely some agreement between Jacques Beaumont, Cimade’s secretary general and its president Marc Boegner, who was also the president of the

167 Transcript of the testimony of Maître Oussedik at the 27 November 1998 meeting of the Groupe des Anciens Equipiers de la Cimade, Cimade archives, 3D 10/11 (DZ02).
168 Ibid.
169 From the transcript of Geoffrey Adams’ interview with Jacques Beaumont, Cimade archives, given to me by Mireille Desrez.
170 Ibid.
French Protestant Federation, but according to Jacques Maury who was a member of the Cimade board at that time, very few members of the board had any idea what was going on.\textsuperscript{171} Cimade’s reputation as the militant arm of French Protestantism and their legendary activities during the French resistance during WWII likely shielded them from criticism from conservative Protestants who may have been concerned about their political viewpoints and actions.\textsuperscript{172}

On the Catholic side, however, the arrests of Bernard Boudouresques, Jean Urvoas, and the trial proceedings against the Jeanson network that heavily implicated Robert Davezies hardly went unnoticed in the French Catholic community. After Boudouresques’ arrest, the Mission de France as a whole was under suspicion, and beginning in October 1958, French DST searched the seminary, the Prelature, the secretariat, and nearly half of the seventy communities that comprised the MDF.\textsuperscript{173} Sybille Chapeu notes that Cardinal Liénart was in Rome at the time, attending the conclave that followed the death of Pope Pius XII on October 9, and it was during this absence that the French Interior Minister had decided to instigate this national search of the MDF, whom he suspected to be supporting the FLN. In the end not a single compromising document was found, however the public reputation of the MDF had been

\textsuperscript{171} In Jacques Maury’s response to Maître Oussedik’s testimony, at the 27 November 1998 meeting of the Groupe des Anciens Equipiers de la Cimade, Cimade archives, 3D 10/11 (DZ02). This is confirmed by an examination of the minutes of the meetings of the Cimade board during the Algerian War, where there was no mention of Cimade’s activities for the FLN. Cimade archives, Procès-verbaux des réunions du Conseil de la Cimade.

\textsuperscript{172} In a conversation with Reformed Church pastor Michel Leplay in Paris on June 26, 2009, I asked him if any French Protestants had spoken out against Cimade’s actions during the Algerian War. His response was, “they wouldn’t have dared!”

\textsuperscript{173} Chapeu, 159.
badly damaged.\textsuperscript{174} Just as in Algeria in 1957, the revelations that MDF priests had been assisting the FLN caused a new wave of accusations of progressivism that came both from the conservative press and from Catholics more generally.\textsuperscript{175} The leaders of the Mission de France did not hesitate to defend both their political and moral positions, but the episcopal council, who met in November 1958, was forced to reassert their “priestly vocation to be at the service of everyone and the denunciation of all forms of violence, whether on the side of terrorists or counter-terrorists.”\textsuperscript{176} The MDF also benefited from the support of some important Catholic figures, including Mgr Duval who reaffirmed his support for the Mission and its priests.\textsuperscript{177}

Just as in Algeria in 1957, most of the arrests, first of Boudouresques, but then others including that of Jobic Kerlan in Algiers in 1960, led to public trials during which time defense attorneys, witnesses, and the accused themselves continued to defend their actions as an example of their Christian mission, which included solidarity with the oppressed.\textsuperscript{178} By 1959, the political and religious climate of France had shifted considerably with the return of Charles de Gaulle in 1958 and the election of a new Pope the same year. The trial that caused the most controversy was unsurprisingly that of the Jeanson network, which began in the fall of 1960. Even then, French Christians were also facing some of the most controversial questions of the Algerian War, including \textit{insoumission} (insubordination), or the right of soldiers to refuse to serve in Algeria or to

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 160-161
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 163.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 164.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} The exception is Bernard Boudouresques who was released in February 1959 after four months in prison, during which time the justice minister had decided not to bring him to trial. See Nathalie Viet-Depaule and Tangi Cavalin, \textit{Une histoire de la Mission de France} (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2007), 276.
commit acts that went against their consciences, and the growth of the OAS in Algeria. Larger Christian bodies like the French Protestant Federation and the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops were still divided on how to respond to these questions, but the conservative powers that held sway over bodies like the FPF during much of the Algerian War were giving way to new influences.

The Montbéliard General Assembly of French Protestantism in 1960, had a “newly militant tone,” according to historian Geoffrey Adams, partly because of the influence of people like Jacques Beaumont, general secretary of Cimade and Jacques Maury, president of the Fédé who took their place on the national council.179 As president of the Fédé, Maury had become particularly concerned with the problem of insoumission and had pushed Protestant leaders to issue some moral guidelines to help those soldiers who were forced to make that decision. For Catholics, the arrival of the new Pope Jean XXIII, who was the former Mgr Roncalli, the papal nuncio to France during the early 1950s and the announcement of his intention to call a Second Vatican Council in January 1959 was shifting the tone within French Catholicism and bringing back to prominence those Catholics, including the Mission de France and other so-called “progressivists” who had been marginalized during the “progressivist crisis” of the 1950s.180 These fundamental changes in Christian leadership in France occurred at the same time that Christians in Algeria were starting to face the potential consequences of an independent Algeria.

179 Adams, 179-180.
Chapter 6 – From Algerian Independence to Postcolonial Christianity

By the spring of 1958, the Algerian War had shifted into a new phase. A series of major international scandals, including the French military bombing of the Tunisian town of Sakiet Sidi Youssef in February 1958 eventually pushed the French military to the brink of implosion and brought down the French Fourth Republic. As historian Matthew Connelly has shown, after Sakiet, the American and British governments placed enormous pressure on the French to discuss a settlement for the deaths of sixty-eight civilians, a strategy that the French military felt would weaken their position in Algeria.¹

As a result, French military leaders, led by Generals Massu and Salan, joined with radicalized pied-noir ultras like Pierre Lagaillard, an ex-para law student at the University of Algiers, and head of the Association Générale des Étudiants d’Algérie (General Student Association of Algeria) to stage a coup and overthrow what they saw as the ineffectual French government. Their ultimate goal was to bring Charles de Gaulle back to power. They believed he was a leader who would both restore the honor and power of France and be much more sympathetic to the cause of Algérie française than the government in power at the time.²

With the additional threat of an insurgency from within the French military and the increasingly militant pied-noir community, and a growing power vacuum in the French government, General de Gaulle was sworn in as Prime Minister on June 1, 1958. He accepted full powers from the French National Assembly and flew to Algiers three

¹ On the bombing of Sakiet Sidi Youssef and the resulting international uproar, see Matthew Connelly, A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 160-165.
days later, where he gave his famously ambiguous speech, in which he stated to the enthusiastic crowd: “Je vous ai compris” (I have understood you).³ De Gaulle immediately took up the Algerian problem, and for a little while at least the French population seemed satisfied that order would be restored. However, de Gaulle did not prove to be the great savior of Algérie française that its partisans hoped he would be. His main interest was the restoration of French honor and global prestige, and by late 1959, de Gaulle had come to the conclusion that Algeria had become too much of a liability for France, and the political solution in Algeria should be decided through self-determination.⁴

In his September 16, 1959 speech to the nation, de Gaulle offered the Algerians the opportunity to choose their own “political destiny” and acknowledged three possible choices: secession, integration, or association.⁵ In France, while it seemed that the majority of the population supported de Gaulle’s position, especially over time, this was not the case in Algeria. While Alastair Horne writes that the initial reaction of the pieds-noirs was varied, for the French military and the ultras, de Gaulle’s announcement was met with anger and feelings of betrayal.⁶ In early 1960, a group of ultras that included bar owner Jo Ortiz and a young medical student named Jean-Jacques Susini staged a dramatic insurrection against the French government with the complicity of several military officers, including two of General Massu’s most trusted subordinates. This event, which is known as Barricades Week, was set off by the recall of General Massu, who had made extremely critical remarks about President de Gaulle to a West German journalist.

³ Connelly, 173-174.
⁴ Ibid., 179-180; Horne, 344.
⁵ Horne, 344-345.
⁶ Ibid., 347-349.
On January 24, the *ultras* seized buildings, and built barricades in the hope of forcing General Challe and the French military to fire on them and essentially start a revolution.\(^7\)

For a week the *ultras* fought the gendarmes and the *paras* in a bloody guerrilla street fight in Algiers, resulting in the deaths of fourteen gendarmes and eight insurgents.\(^8\)

Ultimately their revolution was unsuccessful, and as the gendarmes closed in, Ortiz took off and Lagaillarde and Susini were arrested and ultimately put on trial along with several other *ultras*, while those military officers who were complicit in the insurrection were relieved of their duties.\(^9\)

One year later – apparently to mark the anniversary of the Barricades – two young pieds-noirs stabbed Pierre Popie to death outside his office in Algiers. These two young men would soon join a new organization called the OAS (*Organisation armée secrète* – Secret Armed Organization).\(^10\) Popie was himself a pied-noir and a well-known Catholic lawyer who had been one of the founding members of the AJAAS and had been a defense attorney during the trial of the “progressivist Christians” in 1957. Jean-Jacques Susini and Pierre Lagaillarde formally organized the OAS soon after in Madrid and decided to organize civilians and military deserters to use the same terrorist tactics of the FLN to fight against the enemies of *Algérie française*. In Algeria, the retired General Salan became a leader of the movement, along with several important figures in the Barricades. Their reign of terror began with assassinations in both Algeria and France, including

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\(^7\) Ibid., 358-372.

\(^8\) Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), 206. There were also 123 wounded gendarmes and 20 wounded insurgents.

\(^9\) Ibid., 207.

\(^10\) Horne, 440-441. Pierre Popie was assassinated on January 25, 1961 in Algiers.
attacks on political leaders like François Mitterrand and even an infamous assassination attempt on de Gaulle in September 1961.\textsuperscript{11}

The emergence of the OAS meant that the battle lines had hardened. Yves Courrière describes the OAS mentality as one that saw “those who ‘collaborated’ with Arabs were as detestable than the FLN or the communists… From now on it was war. The FLN, that is the Arabs, killed. So, we must kill. The strongest wins… and stays.”\textsuperscript{12} Many of the OAS attacks were aimed at FLN supporters, including several members of the Centres sociaux, the “liberals,” and Christians who were seen to be sympathetic to Algerian independence. Several members of the OAS had ties to intégriste Catholic movements like the Action française and saw in the “liberals” and “progressivists” the same enemy that people like General Massu had decried a few years earlier.\textsuperscript{13} By early 1962, the French government was actively negotiating the peace settlement and the conditions for Algerian independence with the Algerian Provisional Government (GPRA) and the OAS stepped up its violent campaign to maintain French Algeria. Although the war was nearly over, some of the worst violence was still to come. Alastair Horne writes:

In less than a year the OAS had killed 2,350 people in Algeria, and wounded another 5,418; according to the calculations of Vitalis Cros, in the Algiers zone alone their activities over the last six months of the war had claimed \textit{three times as many civilian victims} as had the FLN from the beginning of 1956 onwards; i.e. including the Battle of Algiers.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11} Thénault, 216-217.
\textsuperscript{14} Horne, 531.
The Algerian War tragically ended much more violently than it began and the achievement of Algerian independence also meant the abrupt departure of the majority of the European settler population. The ironic tragedy for those Christians who had spent the war working toward the rapprochement between the Christian and Muslim populations was that this departure both demonstrated the limits of that dream and also provided Christians in Algeria with an opportunity to rethink their position in postcolonial Algeria. This was the occasion to prove to the Algerians that they were no longer tied to the colonial regime and the colonial church, but were there to serve the Algerian people through service and dialogue. The departure of the pieds-noirs was for many Christians a devastating disappointment that people like Jean Scotto blamed directly on the violent tactics of the OAS who, Scotto said, “killed the soul of my people.”¹⁵ Many of the pieds-noirs fled precisely to escape the OAS violence, but the situation was somewhat more complex for others, despite the carefully negotiated settlement between the French government and the Algerian provisional government that guaranteed the settlers the protection of their property, non-discrimination in language, political, cultural, and religious affairs.¹⁶ Some left out of fear of Algerian reprisals, which did occur, but as historian Sylvie Thénault notes, the violence against Europeans at the end of the war was nowhere near the level of the violence inflicted by the OAS.¹⁷

Despite the mass exodus of the vast majority of the pied-noir community, around 180,000 European settlers remained in Algeria after independence. A significant proportion of those were Christians who had made the decision to stay for a variety of

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reasons, some of which included the desire to decolonize the Church in postcolonial Algeria or to participate fully in the economic and political development of the new nation. Independent Algeria became a site for experimentation in Christian involvement in development projects, as the concept and practice of “development” were just coming into usage on the global stage, particularly in organizations like the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. Organizations like Cimade, which dramatically increased its engagement in Algeria with their involvement in the regroupment camps, which were exposed to the French public in 1959, became the model for Christian humanitarian and development projects in Algeria and beyond. Cimade’s work in the regroupment camps is especially important to consider because it helped radicalize both their political stance on Algeria and was the origin of what became a long term engagement in the social and economic development of Algeria after independence.

The end of the Algerian War also highlighted how much decolonization and the shifts in Christian thought had affected Christianity on a global scale, and regime changes were not only occurring on the political front in France and Algeria. On October 9, 1958, Pius XII died in Castel Gandolfo, and on October 28, just a month after the French voted to approve the new constitution of the French Fifth Republic, the conclave in Rome elected Cardinal Roncalli as the new Pope John XXIII. Although he was elected as an elderly man, likely in the hope that his reign would be somewhat uneventful, in January 1959, one of John XXIII’s first acts as Pope was to call a new Council, which came to be

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18 Martine de Sauto, *Henri Teissier, évêque en Algérie* (Paris: Bayard, 2006). De Sauto cites the statistic that in 1964, there were 100,000 Christians in Algeria.
known as the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II.\textsuperscript{19} It was to be an “ecumenical Council,” as one of the two aims of the Council was “a renewed cordial invitation to the faithful of the separated Churches to participate with us in this feat of grace and brotherhood, for which so many souls long in all parts of the world.”\textsuperscript{20} Although much of the ecumenical potential of the Council was toned down in the final documents, there was a sense that the Catholic hierarchy was finally ready to address many of the major issues like dialogue between Christians and with non-Christians, the relationship of the Church to the modern world, and questions of social justice and human rights that Christians in France and Algeria had been working to practically address for decades.

This chapter begins with an examination of Cimade’s intervention in the regroupment camps in Algeria and their growing involvement in the Algerian independence movement toward the end of the Algerian conflict. It then examines the violent end of French Algeria and the complex tightrope that Christians walked in the final days of French Algeria. Next, it explores how Christians attempted to decolonize the Church in Algeria after independence, on both the practical and intellectual level, as well as examining how Christian development projects played a central role in Christian involvement in the reconstruction of the Algerian state. Finally, I examine the influence of the Algerian War, decolonization, and French Christianity on the World Council of Churches and the Second Vatican Council after 1962, exploring how Christianity became more global and concerned with issues of social justice, partly in response to the struggles of colonized peoples in violent wars like the one in Algeria.


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 15.
Cimade and the Regroupment Camps

In the fall of 1958, in the period when he and his cabinet were still actively intent on restoring peace in Algeria, General de Gaulle decided to shift strategies by instituting a massive economic and social development project in Algeria called the Plan de Constantine. Realizing that this plan could not function under the leadership of a military commander, de Gaulle appointed a civilian délégué-général in Algeria to take the place of General Salan, who had assumed both civilian and military powers after the departure of Robert Lacoste in May 1958. On December 19, 1958, a government finance director named Paul Delouvrier took on the role of délégué-général, and for the first time, the military was subordinated to the civil authorities in Algeria.21 One of his deputies, Eric Westphal, was the son of Charles Westphal, vice-president of the French Protestant Federation, and a former classmate of Michel Rocard, a young finance inspector who had recently arrived in Algeria and discovered the existence of what resembled concentration camps in the Algerian countryside. Surrounded often by barbed wire, and housing hundreds or thousands of Algerians in little more than tents or temporary structures far from agricultural or grazing land, the camps that Michel Rocard first encountered also included children starving to death in the arms of the French officers charged to protect them.22

These camps, which the French authorities called “regroupment centers” (the word “camp” bringing up too many connotations of Nazi concentration camps), were

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21 Thénault, 170-171.
22 Michel Rocard, “Premiers engagements,” in Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la guerre d’Algérie, eds. Vincent Duclert and Pierre Encrevé (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2003), 197,
neither a new phenomenon in Algeria, nor a major secret. However, their existence was unknown to the civilian population in both France and Algeria, and even to much of the French government, including Paul Delouvrier. Soon after Delouvrier’s arrival, Rocard arranged through Eric Westphal to meet with Delouvrier and inform him about his informal survey of the regroupment camps. Delouvrier, who had heard nothing of the camps, charged Rocard to do a more thorough investigation and write a report on the situation. Although he was never given any official mission, as a finance inspector, Rocard was able to access the camps under cover of topographical surveys and tax inspections.\textsuperscript{23} On February 17, 1959, after conducting the investigation with the help of six other finance inspectors in the regions of Orléansville, Tiaret, and Blida, Rocard handed in his report to Delouvrier.

The three conclusions of his report were that “the regroupments are hardly known to the Administration; the situation of the regrouped is often tragic; means of existence must be, with all urgency, furnished to the regrouped persons, who have been deprived of them.”\textsuperscript{24} Rocard’s report was quite explicit about the terrible conditions in the regroupment camps, and the structural problems that led to these conditions. The first aspect that he addressed was the administrative responsibility for the camps. There was no centralized authority in charge of the camps or the regrouped population, but rather each small area was under the specific local military authority of that region. He wrote, “All of the Centers we visited were created solely by the military. The reasons for the decision are always exclusively from the military; the setting up of a regroupment can

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 192-197.

vary to one or two kilometers away for economic reasons, even though such considerations are rarely brought up.”25 In very polite language, what Rocard suggested was that despite claims of the humanitarian nature of the regroupment, the entire procedure of population regroupment was subject to the whim of the local military commander, and that the concerns about the welfare of the population and their access to land for subsistence crops or grazing hardly even entered the minds of the military commanders. His later comments about the conditions of civilians starving to death in the camps and the lack of medical care for rampant tuberculosis made it clear that he had little support for the continued military control of the camps.

Although the policy of regroupment actually had a long history in Algeria, dating from the 1840s when the French colonial authorities began rounding up nomadic tribes from the countryside and placing them in secure villages with military-like organization and houses that “themselves reflected military hierarchy,” it was in 1956-57 that the French military instituted what Sylvie Thénault calls a “rationalized” and “systematized” practice of regroupment.26 As part of the military’s “pacification” strategy, they mapped out various zones in the Algerian countryside that were sites of rebel activity. In the most dangerous areas – the zones interdites – no settlement was to be allowed, and the civilian population was to be resettled in the French-controlled regroupment centers.27

26 Cornaton, 45; Sylvie Thénault, “Rappels historiques sur les camps de regroupement de la guerre d’Algérie,” in Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la guerre d’Algérie, eds. Vincent Duclert and Pierre Encrevé (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2003), 231. Sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad estimated that by 1960, the total number of regrouped Algerians was 2,157,000, one quarter of the population, but that including the number of rural civilians who left for the city, the number was not less than three million.26
27 Keith Sutton, “Army Administration Tensions over Algeria's Centres de
military attempted to claim that many of the regrouped civilians came voluntarily and that the movement was temporary, but Rocard and other reports make clear that there were very few, if any, civilians who went into the camps or enclosed villages voluntarily, especially as it separated them from their livelihoods and land into starvation conditions and brutality.  

Historian Sylvie Thénault notes that one of the major reasons for the lack of housing and subsistence for regrouped civilians was that from the military point of view, the necessity to use the tool of surprise to catch insurgents and cut off their supply lines made it impossible for the military to prepare properly for the displacements that would then follow, leaving hundreds of families without housing, resources, and material aid.  

According to the reports on the camps, and the analysis of sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu, who had spent many year studying Kabyles and rural life in Algeria, the greatest harm that was done to the regrouped populations was removal from their land, which provided their main source of income and food through farming and livestock.  

Removing farmers from their isolated land and placing them in closed villages or camps removed both their income-earning potential and their main source of food, which was never fully replaced by the military or the aid organizations who provided the main assistance. For the most part, those living in camps or closed villages did not have enough space to grow crops or provide grazing land for animals that normally provided both milk, eggs, and meat. These animals died off quickly, leaving starving children


29 Ibid., 230.
30 Bourdieu and Sayad, 20-21.
Rocard’s statistics demonstrated that when a regroupment camp reached 1,000 people, one child died every two days.

It was, in fact, Rocard’s report that indirectly alerted the French public to the existence of the regroupment camps and pushed Christian organizations like Cimade and Secours catholique to engage much more fully in the Algerian War in the capacity of humanitarian and development organizations. According to Rocard, when Paul Delouvrier received his report, he realized he had a potential bomb on his hands and that the report needed to reach Charles de Gaulle, however that was not exactly a simple proposition as Delouvrier claimed that he did not have direct access to de Gaulle. Delouvrier’s personal secretary typed nine copies, and gave two to Rocard, charging him to personally give two to the people he knew who were closest to de Gaulle. Rocard gave one copy to a friend who worked in de Gaulle’s office, and the other to someone who worked in the office of Edmond Michelet, the minister of Justice. Although no one knows if the report reached de Gaulle, Gaston Gosselin, who worked for the ministry of Justice, leaked it to Le Monde and France Observateur, and on April 18, 1959, large extracts of the report appeared in Le Monde.

In turned out, however, that Rocard’s report was not the first time the French public had been alerted to the existence of the camps. Just a few days previously, Mgr Rodhain, the head of Secours catholique in Paris, had accorded an interview to the Catholic paper La Croix, in which he had launched an appeal to the French in favor of the “million refugees” that he had found in a state of massive hunger in the regroupment camps.

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32 Ibid., 126.
33 Rocard, “Premiers engagements,” 200-201.
34 Ibid., 202.
camps he had visited in Algeria in March and early April. Mgr Rodhain had himself written a report on the state of the camps, which he had given to Delouvrier, and in the wake of Rodhain’s public appeal, in which he had noted that private charities like Secours catholique could step up their work on behalf of the “refugees” but that they could not be a substitute for the responsible authorities, and that “the first form of charity is to tell the truth.” In the wake of Rodhain’s interview in *La Croix*, Delouvrier made public his circular from March 31, 1959 in which he announced that no regroupment could operate without his agreement.

Until 1959, when reports of the terrible conditions in the regroupment camps began to appear in journals in France, the regroupment policy was unofficial and haphazard. One government official, commandant Florentin, described the Algerians as “refugees” because their houses had been burned to the ground and they had nowhere else to go. Michel Cornaton, a sociologist who wrote one of the first pieces of scholarship on the camps in 1967, noted that for the most part, civilians were kept in camps surrounded by barbed wire fairly close to their homes, but others were forcibly marched to camps up to eighty kilometers from their land. When the first reports appeared in the press, journalists were already using the language of “genocide” and making comparisons to Nazi concentration camps when describing the conditions of the camps in Algeria. As a response to this negative publicity, Delouvrier created the office of the “General Inspection of Population Regroupments” (IGRP), and transferred the control of the

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35 Thénault, 227.
37 Thénault, 228.
38 Cornaton, 67-69; Sutton, 252.
regroupments from the military to the civilian sector, although he recruited General Parlange, who organized some of the early regroupments in the Aurès in 1955 to head the IGRP.\textsuperscript{39}

After 1957, many of the regroupments were under the control of the SAS (\textit{Sections administratives spécialisées}), a civil-military project that former governor-general Jacques Soustelle had instituted in 1955 as a means of establishing more contact with the rural Algerian population.\textsuperscript{40} Their role was envisioned as a combination of a civil authority who provided official support, including access to bureaucratic services, medical care and to a certain extent education and material support, and a source of population control and counter-intelligence for the French military.\textsuperscript{41} Marnia Lazreg argues that they were “conceived as the modern version of the nineteenth-century Arab Bureaus,” and they were in theory supposed to be like French missionaries, converting rural Algerians to the French cause.\textsuperscript{42} SAS officers had a certain number of Algerian “\textit{moghaznis}” (military recruits) under their command who could assure the protection of the civilians under their control, particularly from attacks by the ALN.\textsuperscript{43} Relations between the SAS and the French military were complex, as military commanders like

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\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 67.
\textsuperscript{40} Grégor Mathias, \textit{Les Sections administratives spécialisées en Algérie. Entre idéal et réalité (1955-1962)} (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998), 20-23. The SAS and the SAU (\textit{Sections administratives urbaines}) were created at the same time as the Centres sociaux, however their objectives ended up being very different, as the SAS and SAU were meant to win Algerians to the French cause while the Centres sociaux had no propaganda component. \textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 43-117.
\textsuperscript{42} Marnia Lazreg, \textit{Torture and the Twilight of Empire: from Algiers to Baghdad} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 41-42. Lazreg sees the collaboration between the SAS and the French military as much stronger than others (like Mathias) have portrayed, and argues that, unlike some portrayals of SAS soldiers as those who only wanted to “help” the Algerian population and did not engage in torture, the SAS also participated in torture and military interrogation as part of intelligence gathering. \textsuperscript{43} Mathias, 135-151.
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General Salan viewed the SAS as civil administrators under their authority while fulfilling the task of the “conquest of souls” that Soustelle and General Parlange, who originally directed the project, had envisioned. As the French government’s vision of the regroupment centers shifted in early 1959, so too did the role of the SAS, who became the front line in the French government’s development project, which they called the “Thousand Villages.”

The “Thousand Villages” project was the combination of an attempt to reform the major problems with the regroupment centers – namely their temporary and isolated state – and to fit them into the official development policies that the French administration had begun with the Plan de Constantine in 1958. Beginning in May 1960, Paul Delouvrier put into place new directives that stated that regroupments needed to be organized in such a way that they were a step towards the creation of a new, economically viable village. For Delouvrier and French officials charged with the task of developing Algeria, the situation of the regroupment centers was a potential liability that could be turned to their benefit, as long as it was controlled by civilians, and used as a “humanitarian” tool to convince the Algerians that the French were attempting to renew and develop rural Algeria, as opposed to just removing them from their land and livelihood and burning their homes to the ground.

The “humanitarian” aspect was somewhat more complex, however, since the centers continued to remain under the control of the SAS, and much of the humanitarian aid was coming not from the French government, but from Christian groups like Secours.

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44 Sutton, 246.
45 Cornaton, 69.
46 Ibid., 71-72.
The revelations from the Rocard report had motivated Cimade in particular to expand their Algerian presence beyond their social center in Algiers. With their experience in refugee and humanitarian aid and their close ties to the World Council of Churches, Cimade teams could provide both the material aid to the camps and the positive Christian presence that Visser ‘t Hooft had called for in his 1956 letter to Protestants in Algeria. In early May 1959, Isabelle Peloux, who was directing Cimade’s projects on the ground in Algiers, met with Eric Westphal and representatives of the Red Cross in Algeria to discuss how to get into the regroupment camps. Peloux wrote to Jacques Beaumont in Paris that Westphal, who was Paul Delouvrier’s deputy, was waiting for Beaumont’s official letter of request, and he would then “pave the way here, particularly with Delouvrier,” to get them access to the camps. While Isabelle Peloux thought their best chance of access was through the Red Cross, Jacques Beaumont’s reply indicated that the Red Cross had lost a great deal of credibility, partly through their support of the military’s “humanitarian” projects like Madame Massu’s “Operation machine à coudre” (Operation Sewing Machine). In addition, the president of the Red Cross, A. François-Poncet had informed Beaumont and Mgr Rodhain of Secours Catholique that the Red Cross needed “their” material goods, and was “counting on them,” inferring that Cimade and Secours Catholique would supply the goods while the Red Cross would deliver them to the refugees in Algeria.

47 See chapters 3 and 4.
Jacques Beaumont was, in fact, working closely with Germaine Tillion and Mgr Rodhain of Secours Catholique in Paris to establish a plan for the camps in which they themselves would deliver the food and clothing they had collected. Germaine Tillion, in particular, insisted that the Algerian refugees needed to see that the aid was coming from an entity that was separate from the French government, and that only a joint action of “œuvres gratuites” (disinterested charities) that included Cimade, Secours catholique, and Cojasor (a Jewish charity) would send that message.  

Beaumont noted, “She [Tillion] believes that in the eyes of the Muslims, only Christians working together have a chance to be believed and accepted as people who are not in it for their own interests.”

While Beaumont worked through the World Council of Churches to get material aid through the Church World Service in the form of Canadian milk and American surplus goods shipped to Algeria, Marc Boegner and Cardinal Feltin, the presidents of Cimade and Secours catholique, organized a press conference in Paris on May 26 in which they launched an appeal to all Christians for material and personnel support for the “regroupés.”

Cimade’s role in the camps and the Algerian perception of it was a concern that expanded beyond the core leaders. In June 1959, Maurice Causse, the Protestant math teacher who had been arrested and put on trial in 1957 with the “progressivist” Christians, wrote to Jacques Beaumont about the camps. He noted that, based on the testimonies that he had heard, the Rocard report was actually quite moderate in its description of the camps, and that what had been presented as a simple humanitarian

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50 Ibid.  
51 Ibid.  
effort for the “refugees” was not that at all. He warned Beaumont that the military situation was as dire as ever, and that “no one takes seriously the Plan de Constantine, and even less the technical competence of its conspirators.” He questioned whether Beaumont had seriously taken into consideration the point of view of the Algerian Muslims, and if not, charged him to do so, and noted that it was possible that in participating in a humanitarian action for the “refugees,” it would look like the Church was simply “throwing holy water” on the whole project, since no one was calling for any sanctions at all for the parties responsible for the camps.

Whether or not he took Causse’s advice personally, Beaumont was playing a complex game with the regroupments and with the politics of the Algerian War more generally. In October 1959, he toured several camps and wrote a report that he distributed widely to several powerful and sympathetic figures within French politics, who included the French politician Simone Veil and Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz, the niece of Charles de Gaulle. In his report, Beaumont noted that even though there were not supposed to be any new regroupments constructed under Delouvrier’s new mandate, not a day went by when new populations were not being “regrouped” or “constricted.” Given the military situation, he continued, the regroupment strategy would only continue since from the point of view of military strategy, it was much simpler to evacuate an

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54 Ibid.
56 Jacques Beaumont, “Les Regroupements en Algérie.” Cimade archives, 3D 10/12. Beaumont wrote that in April 1959, there were more than 1000 regroupments, but that five months later, despite Delouvrier’s order, there were 1300-1400, housing 1,200,000 people.
entire region to avoid killing civilians in an operation and to promote surveillance. In addition, Beaumont noted that in some cases the regroupments were a preferable situation, since “in the state of famine and psychological misery (the lack of sleep is noted everywhere, although they can sleep in a regroupment center) of the population in certain locations, it is infinitely simpler to stay by the side of the road, where a doctor can take care of them, where relief can be distributed, or where schooling can be offered to the children.” The only way the regroupments would end, he wrote, was with the end of the war. 57

After describing in detail the urgency of the problem, and the precarious nature of most of the regroupments, Beaumont argued that Cimade should have two specific roles in the regroupments. The first was to facilitate the survival of the inhabitants through the collection and distribution of milk and sugar, both through donations from French sources – Christian and secular – and internationally. The second was to put in place a team of women in the region of Médéa, who could travel to the various camps in the region and help with distributions and medical and social services. 58 The advantages of working in the region of Médéa were that there were already strategically useful people in place who could assist in organizing Cimade’s work, including pastor Elisabeth Schmidt, who had the parish at Blida, and the Protestant prefect Robert Poujoul. 59 In November 1959, the executive council of Cimade decided to send two team members

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57 Ibid.
58 Ibid. Geoffrey Adams provides a fuller analysis of Beaumont’s report, including his supplemental materials that depicted the military’s psychological conditioning of the regrouped populations, 155-156.
each to Médéa and Orléansville, each with a nurse, to work directly with the regrouped populations in the camps and facilitate the distribution of aid.60

The aid was mostly coming from the “SOS” program, which provided American surplus wheat through the Church World Service, although Pastor Boegner and Mgr Rodhain were working to secure donations of wheat and dairy products from the French government as well as private donations from their joint appeals.61 The material goods were distributed through Cimade teams, Secours catholique volunteers, Protestant missionaries, and Reformed Church parishes who were willing to participate. Beaumont hoped that the distribution of aid in the camps would finally engage the Protestant pied-noir community in the problems of the Algerian Muslims.62 By April 1960, Cimade was distributing aid in eighty-five different sites with the help of a full-time staff member named Philippe Jordan who oversaw the distributions. By June 1960 there were over four hundred people involved in the distributions.63 Jordan coordinated the division of hundreds of tons of clothing, food, vitamins, and various other goods to the camps, working with Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, French officials, and even SAS officers who agreed to work under Cimade’s orders. At the same moment, several more Cimade team members – all young women – arrived in Algeria and were setting up more permanent quarters in the camp called Sidi Naâmâne near Médéa. In an interview with historian Geoffrey Adams, Jacques Beaumont called the implantation in Sidi Naâmâne an

60 “Procès-verbal de la réunion du Conseil du 16 novembre 1959,” Cimade archives. Beaumont stressed that Cimade’s distributions needed to be different than those of the SAS, in that Cimade was in no way representing the French government or colonial interests.
61 Ibid.
attempt to be *in* the situation of the regroupment camps, since the team members lived among the populations. The three young women worked particularly with the Algerian women and children and living there full time allowed Cimade to speak with more authority on the situation and to be of service to the population in a more useful way than simply as those who, for example, “threw holy water” on the situation.64

By mid-1960, however, Cimade’s position in Algeria shifted somewhat with arrival of Jean Carbonare, a pacifist engineer who was in charge of organizing new Cimade projects in the Constantinois. Carbonare was a radical in the sense that as an activist for working-class immigrants in the Besançon region in the early 1950s, he already believed in Algerian self-determination.65 In 1956, his reputation for closeness with the Algerian Muslim population in France caught the attention of Guy Mollet who sent him on a confidential mission to the Aurès region of Algeria to make contact with FLN leaders and find out their conditions for a cease-fire.66 The conditions were evidently unacceptable to the French government, but Carbonare maintained close contacts with the FLN and in 1958, an anti-colonial minister named Robert Buron, who often worked closely with Cimade, sent Carbonare again to resume his discussions with the FLN, this time in Tunis, with the GPRA.67 In 1960, Carbonare arrived in Algeria to oversee the Cimade programs, and found a distressing situation with the distribution of aid, where the destitute Algerians were fighting over goods, setting up a culture of charity and dependency. His solution was to start a reforestation program that both helped

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65 Adams, 58.  
66 Ibid., 58-59.  
67 Ibid., 135.
address some of the environmental degradation caused by French colonial policies and gave Algerians work, in exchange for which they received Cimade’s aid.  

Carbonare’s connections with the FLN and the GPRA were advantageous for Cimade, particularly toward the end of the war. Jacques Beaumont was constantly negotiating with French officials, including pro-\textit{Algérie française} SAS and military officers to gain access to regroupment camps and sites in Algeria, while at the same time he and other team members in France were secretly working with the French Federation of the FLN. At the same moment that they were beginning to move into the regroupment camps in Algeria, Cimade had also begun investing key resources in its prison ministry, which had two women chaplains running it: Tania Metzel and Jacqueline Peyron. After 1960, Marc Boegner was also able to get Jacques Beaumont access to several of the major prisons and prison camps in France as a prison chaplain, citing Cimade’s World War II experiences in these same camps as the reason why they should be given access. 

It was in the prisons that Cimade made contact with the FLN leaders who were there, including “the Five” who were captured in 1956 (Ben Bella, Khider, Aït Ahmed, Boudiaf, Lachraf) as well as people like Salah Louanchi and Mohamed Sahnoun, who had been one of the Algerian defendants on trial with the “progressivist” Christians in Algiers in 1957. Through people like Carbonare and the prison ministry, the FLN learned that Cimade was sympathetic to the Algerian cause, and began asking Beaumont to help improve conditions in the prisons, and in one particularly striking situation, Beaumont arranged through the Interior Ministry that on their release at the end of the war, Algerian

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\footnotesize{68 Ibid., 209.} 
\footnotesize{69 Geoffrey Adams’ interview with Jacques Beaumont, p. 8-9, 14. Cimade archives.}
political prisoners would have clothing and a sum of 15,000 francs, paid through Cimade but financed secretly by the French Federation of the FLN.\textsuperscript{70}

With the exception of Jean Carbonare and likely a few close confidants, no one within Cimade or the French Protestant Federation knew about Beaumont’s connections to the FLN or the GPRA, especially as the majority of his time was spent working with politicians to secure access to sites as by depicting Cimade as an apolitical, humanitarian organization. There were some within Cimade who were frustrated by the refusal of French Protestants to take a political stand on the conflict, including François de Seynes who wrote a document in 1960 for the Directors in which he argued

Cimade team members are engaged not only in aid work but in preparing to live together, where everyone finds themselves associated with one another, in one way or another. The Church, we think, cannot content itself with standing up against abuses. All Algerians should be given the right to freely choose their destiny. For Christians, this destiny can be nothing other than reconciliation. Christians have to talk louder and stronger to ask the head of state and the government to disregard those interests, ambitions, blindesses that are as dangerous as they are sincere, but also to take into account the inequalities of culture, fortune, power and the complexes that they incite, and consequently to: a) do more than they currently are to obtain the end of combat by negotiation… b) do more than they currently are to guarantee the honesty of these consultations – perhaps through an appeal for international aid; c) assure the good faith and disinterest of common studies that will be done between the cease-fire and the consultations for how Algerians can live together.

For Cimade team members in both France and Algeria, their work toward reconciliation necessitated French and pied-noir recognition of the injustices they had committed toward the Algerian population and some concrete efforts toward remedying the problem, beginning with the basic humanitarian efforts in the regroupment camps and shantytowns. Their movements in Algeria were facilitated by Jacques Beaumont’s good

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 13. Beaumont also met secretly in Geneva with high-ranking members of the Croissant-rouge as well as visiting members of the GPRA from Tunis.
relations both with French colonial authorities and the GPRA, but for the increasingly radicalized pro-
Algérie française population, their sympathies toward the Algerian civilians were seen as anti-pied-noir and by 1961, they were increasingly targets of the ultras.

Christians and the Violent End of French Algeria

By 1960, Mgr Duval was struggling to calm passions, particularly as events like the Barricades Week further divided the Christian community and only broadened the separation between the Christian and Muslim communities. Duval took a controversial stand, however, when he refused to allow a Mass to be said specifically for those who had died in the Barricades insurrection, citing unmet canonical requirements for an open-air Mass. As he explained in a letter to Paul Delouvrier, he did “not favor the proliferation of ceremonies that are both patriotic and religious.” Because of this stance, he received an anonymous letter of protest from someone who signed the letter “A Catholic, among others,” and who wrote that Duval’s actions were “sad and scandalous,” and that he “no longer had any respect and consideration among many faithful who, fortunately, still make a distinction between you [Duval] and their faith.” To add insult to injury, Duval also had to deal with the problem that several members of the Catholic clergy had more or less openly declared their support for the Barricades insurgents, and he addressed a letter to the clergy stating:

More than ever it is necessary that the priest be exclusively a “man of God”; instead of participating in the passions that agitate in the human masses in divers directions, he should brighten spirits, comfort hearts, and pacify souls… We should not follow our faithful but guide them… In the torment that rocks Algeria, the role of the Church is to proclaim, time and time again, the good news… to ‘kill the hate,’ to ‘make the peace,’ to ‘reconcile’ spirits, and to make ‘of two peoples one people,’ ‘one body’ (Ephesians II, 14).74

He added that there were to be no special religious services like the Mass for the Barricades deceased), as they had obvious political intentions and that anyone inquiring about such services was to be informed that they were forbidden.75

The situation continued to worsen, especially after the formation of the OAS in early 1961. One anonymous pamphlet addressed to other pied-noir Christians from the “Christians of Algeria” attempted to convince them that taking up the fight for French Algeria was, in fact, the Christian thing to do, and that “non-violence is more of a Buddhist concept than a Christian one.”76 The author argued

In any case, all moralists recognize that a legitimate form of violence, a recourse to the impetuous force that is the right of all victims of unjust aggression, is the right to legitimate defense… if the Algerian people, feeling on the verge of being delivered up to congolization and communism, don’t use right now their sacred right to legitimate collective defense… it will one day have to use its right to legitimate individual defense and it will be far more bloody.77

Historians have noted that the OAS had massive public support among the pied-noir population in Algeria, and it is clear that by late 1961, the arguments of people like Mgr Duval and Jean Scotto who were calling for peace and a more “Christian” attitude toward the growing violence were drowned out, and at times even violently negated.78

74 Circular to the clergy, nº 41, March 5, 1960 in Duval, 125-126.
75 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Thénault, 216-218.
On April 30th, 1961, Mgr Duval addressed a statement that was to be read *ex cathedra* in Catholic Churches throughout Algeria after the Generals’ Putsch in which he engaged in a bit of spiritual scolding, writing:

> The concern for truth obliges me however to proclaim – and I am happy and proud in my paternal love for you – that, despite the tragic circumstances and dangerous solicitations, the strays [*égarés*] who were prepared to use any means were only a feeble minority; in general, you persevered in the path of your Christian duty.\(^79\)

He also warned Catholics against following “false prophets,” a blatant reference to the leaders of the Putsch and the OAS. Certain clergy members, including one curé, refused to read the statement, partly because he did not see why the OAS should be seen as “strays” when they were the only ones attempting to defend Algeria from the “Muslim mass” who were a “band of fanatics” who were going to install a communist regime in Algeria.\(^80\) Duval received a bizarre series of anonymous letters with the phrase “Once upon a time there was a bishop named ‘pig,’” as well as death threats, including a letter from someone who wrote, “We are hesitating no longer. You will have a Beautiful Plastic Bomb.”\(^81\)

Protestant leaders in Algeria seemed to watch with their hands tied as more and more of their parishioners succumbed to the temptation to join the side of the OAS. In August 1961, the regional council of the Reformed Church in Algeria held a retreat to discuss the future of the church in Algeria that included a series of reflections on how the Church had responded to the Algerian crisis. Although they acknowledged that the ERF

\(^79\) Duval, *Au nom de la vérité*, 146.


in Algeria had several major weaknesses, including the lack of a precise idea of service to others, of the link between speech and acts, a lack of reflection on the “theology of the State” (i.e. the relationship between the Church and politics, and perhaps most tellingly, “a perpetual tendency for self-justification, one of the causes for the bitterness in the dialogue between Christians in the metropole and Christians in Algeria,” the report to a certain extent continued this self-justification by arguing that the Church was simply “not prepared for this ordeal.”82 The fact that more and more parishioners were rejecting a peaceful reconciliation and the possibility of Algerian independence as the “Christian” solution to the Algerian problem was only addressed insofar as the report addressed the sociological future of the Church as one in which there might be many fewer Christians in Algeria. In October 1961, the FPF met in France to discuss the situation in Algeria, and issued a message to Protestants in Algeria announcing support for those who wished to leave while encouraging as many as possible to stay. At their November meeting, the regional synod of the ERF in Algeria restated that those who had “profound motives of Christian vocation” should stay in Algeria if possible.83

Certain pastors, like Elisabeth Schmidt in Blida, did attempt to bring their parishioners to see reason with regards to the OAS and to the growing violence in Algeria, and during the attempted OAS putsch in Algiers in 1961, she told her parishioners that she did not think that the solution the pieds-noirs most desired, that Algeria should remain French, was the best way.84 ERF leaders in Algeria seem to have

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84 Elisabeth Schmidt, When God Calls a Woman, 173.
been paralyzed by early 1962, and even refused to participate in a communal call for peace from the “spiritual leaders” of Algeria that would have included Mgr Duval, the Grand Rabbi, and the Grand Hanafite and Malekite Muphtis. The reasons for the refusal were an attempt to avoid both theological and political “ambiguities.”85 In a letter of explanation to Mgr Duval, Max-Alain Chevallier, president of the regional council of the ERF in Algeria, explained further, saying that until the day when the crimes were occurring mostly on one side, a communal declaration would not be “rigorously justified on religious grounds.” There was also clearly some hesitation to further alienate the Christian population, since Chevallier added, “I would dread, in any case, for me to be the cause of the hardening of the faithful, rather than their guide to salutary repentance.”86

For the ERF then, the OAS was a problem that they would not face head on, but one that would not just go away.

The function of OAS bombs was, according to Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, one of “threat and intimidation,” but in the end they did not actually dissuade those against whom they were directly aimed.87 For example, although some OAS members entered Cimade’s offices in Algiers in May 1962 and announced that they were going to bomb the building if Cimade did not leave Algeria immediately, the Cimade team refused to leave, even though they did take the threat seriously enough that they cleared out of the

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offices and laid low for several days. And threats against people like Jean Scotto or bombs set in churches were also not enough to intimidate the “liberal” or “progressivist” Christians into doing the bidding of the OAS. As the pitch of the violence grew more hysterical through 1961 and into 1962, however, what the OAS did manage to do was to draw more and more pieds-noirs into their orbit, including many Christians who might at one point have stood behind people like Mgr Duval or Jean Scotto.

In anticipation of the announcement of the cease-fire in March 1962, violence exploded in Algeria. The OAS programmed specific days of killing in which they targeted pharmacy technicians and Algerian cleaning ladies, among others. One of the groups the OAS had in their sights was the Centres sociaux, which they believed was completely infiltrated by the FLN. In one of the most dramatic and tragic events of the war, on March 15th, an OAS commando squad walked into a meeting of six inspectors of the Centres sociaux éducatifs, and ushered them into the courtyard where they forced them against the wall and opened fire. Among the six dead was the Algerian novelist Mouloud Feraoun, who had been one of the most vocal advocates of a peaceful rapprochement between the French and Algerian communities in Algeria. The point of this “blind terrorism,” Rémi Kauffer argues, was to provoke the FLN into retaliating, since the Algerians had held firmly to the cease-fire agreement. OAS leader Jean-Claude Pérez said, “We knew that the Arabs were saying to the FLN: do something, we can’t

89 Duranton-Crabol, 146.
90 Thénault, 250.
91 On the OAS vendetta against the Centres sociaux, see Le Sueur, 90-92.
even leave our homes without the risk of being killed! We wanted to leave the Muslims to each other, without supplies, without doctors. To give them a taste of independence…”\(^{93}\) In early June, in anticipation of the announced referendum on independence on July 1, the OAS announced “Operation Scorched Earth,” which began with a brutally symbolic act: the OAS set fire to the library of the University of Algiers, burning more than six hundred thousand books.\(^{94}\)

Although Mgr Duval had the support of the Vatican and the ACA, which both openly supported the cease-fire and attempts to calm the violence in Algeria, his pleas to the Christian community in Algeria did little to shift their support from the OAS or convince them that Algerian independence was not a betrayal of the Christian identity of Algeria.\(^{95}\) This was particularly the case in Oran, where Mgr Lacaste, who had always been a strong supporter of Algérie française, refused to print Duval’s statements in favor of peace in the Semaine religieuse d’Oran and maintained an obvious silence on the violence of the OAS and its arguments that it was defending Christian civilization in Algeria.\(^{96}\) The OAS was just as brutal in Oran as in Algiers, and the “scorched earth” policy resulted in the destruction of schools, infrastructure, hospitals, and the port reservoirs of British Petroleum, in addition to the numerous human casualties.\(^{97}\) Oran was unsurprisingly the site of the worst violence in the days after independence, particularly the infamous July 5\(^{th}\) FLN exactions on the European population that were the worst in

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\(^{94}\) Ibid., 296.
\(^{95}\) Fouilloux, Les chrétiens français entre guerre d’Algérie, 23. The ACA statement from end of March 1962 seemed to condemn the OAS, or those who “croyant même servir la civilisation chrétienne et liant indûment leur foi à leurs vues propres, cèdent à la tentation de la force matérialiste qui détruit.”
\(^{96}\) Nozière, 119.
\(^{97}\) Duranton-Crabol, 217.
Even when Mgr Lacaste did make a statement on the events, his comments did little to calm the tensions. In André Nozière’s estimation, “By his blunt pronouncements and the enormous weight of his silences, the Bishop of Oran leaves the image of a Christianity closed off from the rest of the world.”

As the OAS and the FLN signed a tentative accord, the massive exodus of the pieds-noirs in June of 1962 marked the end of French Algeria. The accord provided some relief to many of the pieds-noirs, partly because it ended the OAS intimidation of those who sought to leave Algeria. The pieds-noirs who left did so in a spirit of anger and great frustration, most of them able to take only a few suitcases of belongings to a country where most had never lived before, and where many had no roots at all. Their reasons for leaving included, “bitterness,” “fear of bloody reprisals,” “fear for the future,” and “finding shelter for women and children.” According to Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, it was less the content of the Evian Accords than a progressive feeling that the struggle to keep Algerian French had become futile that convinced many that they should just give up and leave. It seemed then, that only those who were convinced that there was some future possibility of a productive relationship between the French and Algerian communities, or those who had no possible means to leave, were the ones who stayed in Algeria.

Decolonizing the Church and Developing Algeria

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99 Nozière, 120.
100 Duranton-Crabol, 225.
101 Ibid., 224-225.
By late 1961, Algerian independence was looking inevitable to everyone but the staunchest defenders of *Algérie française*. The leaders of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, of religious orders, and of organizations like Cimade began preparing for the transition to independence and negotiating the possibilities of their role in an independent Algeria. The utopian vision of an independent Algerian in which Christians, Muslims, and Jews could live peacefully in harmony was rapidly evaporating, however, as the country became engulfed in violence, much of it coming from the OAS. Although religious freedom was one of the protections that the French government negotiated for the pieds-noirs in the Evian Accords, Mgr Duval and other Christians were concerned enough about how Christians would fit into the new Algerian state to hold their own discussions with the GPRA on the future of Christianity in Algeria.

Despite the violent and tragic end of the war, Christians like Duval, Scotto, and the Cimade équipiers had great faith that the relationship between the Christians who remained and the Algerian people would be a positive one. Just after the Evian Accords, Mgr Duval received a letter from “Capitaine Mohamed” of the FLN’s Wilaya IV (Algiers), announcing that despite the legacy of racism and humiliation, the Algerians regarded the Europeans as “creatures of God,” and condemned only “the minority of criminals of the OAS who sabotage the peace, strike the innocent, and prolong injustice and oppression.” The Capitaine noted that Mgr Duval had “deployed ardent efforts among Christians of this country,” and hoped that he would continue his appeals to reason. He also hoped Duval would believe that the FLN condemned racial or religious discrimination, and that the Christian churches would make an effort to engage with the FLN in Algeria in order to promote a further rapprochement between “all the habitants of
this country.” He signed off, writing, “We pray to God to put an end to this effusion of blood and to help those who struggle to make tolerance, liberty, justice, and peace flourish in this country.”

In July 1961, Jean Scotto was accompanying a group of pilgrims from Algiers to Lourdes in France when he made a short detour to Gênes, in Italy, to meet with Pierre Chaulet, who had been sent by the GPRA to discuss the future of the Catholic Church in Algeria after independence. Scotto was there at the behest of Mgr Duval, who had informed the French government, which was in the process of negotiating the Evian Accords, that the Catholic Church would hold its own discussions with the Algerians, as the Church did not want its interests to be confused with those of the French government. The discussions centered around a report that two priests who had joined the FLN in Tunisia – Pierre Mamet, a Mission de France priest from the Souk-Ahras team, and Abbé Alfred Berenguer – had written with Pierre Chaulet to lay out the GPRA’s position on the future of the Church. The report entailed three primary points of transformation for the Church: that the Church would return to the Algerian state all of the Islamic religious buildings that French Christians had taken over since the conquest, notably the Ketchaoua mosque in Algiers; that the Church would not fight for the confessional school as an essential institution of its existence and that it would not oppose, for moral reasons, measures under national sovereignty (family planning, etc); and that it could foresee an eventual attachment to the Congregation of oriental churches.

102 Letter from “Capitaine Mohamed” to Mgr Duval, dated March 26, 1961 [seems to be wrong handwritten date based on letter’s context; it is more likely from March 1962]. Archives of Cardinal Duval, Archevêché d’Alger, casier 261.
104 Ibid., 164.
which would permit Arabic to become the liturgical language. Pierre Chaulet notes that while Père Scotto agreed to the first two conditions, his response to the third was “Now let’s not go overboard,” since a transition to the Eastern Orthodox Churches would entail a separation from the Roman tradition and things like the potential marriage of priests, not to mention the fact that the Catholic population was still almost entirely French-speaking, despite later attempts to push all Catholics to learn Arabic.

Historian André Nozière writes that this report served as the basis for a letter that the GPRA then addressed later that same year to the “Bishops of Algeria,” in which they stated their positions on the future of the Catholic Church in Algeria. In this document, the GPRA assured the Churches that even though they were losing their privileged place in society, they would have a place in Algeria where they “would feel free and respected.” The document brought up the question of the churches to be returned to the Algerians, and the other major issues addressed at the Gênes meeting, but also suggested the transformation of other Christian (specifically Catholic in this case) behaviors, like the processions and pilgrimages that were at the heart of pied-noir Catholicism. The various other important questions, like the future of confessional schools, hospitals and dispensaries as well as the question of the right of association were to be negotiated in the future, and the letter noted that the GPRA awaited the response of the Catholic Church to their proposals.

105 Ibid.
107 Nozière, 238.
109 Ibid.
In 1961, Louis Augros of the Mission de France drafted a document titled “Suggestions Relative to the Relations Between Church and State in the Algeria of Tomorrow.”

Augros, who had been the first superior of the Mission de France seminary and a member of the MDF team that was expelled from Souk-Ahras in 1956, understood the challenges of the church Algeria after independence, particularly as it transitioned to a situation where its very presence was a symbol both of its past ties to French colonialism and its potential for a radical new form of presence in a non-Christian country. Augros noted that, “At first glance, the Church can give the impression that it is a society with an occidental character that, under the direction of the Hierarchy, pursues a pro-occidental agenda.”

The reality, however, was rather different, since the hierarchy did not impose political views on its members but allowed them to freely choose their own engagements. If the Church makes its preference for or opposition to these engagements known, it is always in principle, since, “for wrong or for right,” he notes, the Church is interested in safeguarding the interests of the human person.

This is an oddly positive view of the hierarchy in light of Augros’ experience as head of the Mission de France during the late 1940s and early 1950s, but the point of the argument seems more to argue that the postcolonial Church in Algeria would not be controlled by a colonial agenda, particularly one coming from Rome or from a French-controlled episcopate.

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111 Ibid., 2
112 Ibid.
In terms of the concrete aspects of the relationship between Church and State, Augros noted that the particularities of the state of affairs under French law in some ways made the situation somewhat less complicated in Algeria. For example, under the 1905 laws, Church property acquired before that period belonged to the French state, making the transfer to the Algerian state fairly simple. Anything built after that period belonged to a “diocesan association.” It seemed to make the most sense to create equivalent accords with the Algerian government, excepting the cases of the mosques-turned-churches, which should be regulated, as was indeed the case by ceding the churches outright to the Algerians. The question of the confessional schools was one that was directly related to the Church’s missionary past, and one that Augros analyzed with some interest. Since many of the confessional schools were run by missionary orders uniquely for Muslims (the Sœurs blanches, for example), their future in Algeria was in question. Augros suggested that if these establishments were to continue, the training of priests would have to include a much better training program in Arabic, an opening to any student, regardless of their religion or status, the possibility of being integrated into the governmental education ministry and a recognition that previous religious authorities in these schools were not always doing the job they should have been doing.

The major issue at stake for Christians, however, was the integration of the Church into the life of Algeria after independence. Would it continue to be a symbol of colonialism or could it break free of those ties? Louis Augros’ conclusion was that the colonial nature of the Church was in opposition with “the profound vocation of this Church of Christ, which was created for universality and which, for that end, wants to be

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113 Ibid., 3-4.
114 Ibid., 6-8.
integrated into the civilizations in the midst of which it wants to be planted.” He concluded: “All in all, the Church wants to be Algerian in Algeria.” And the way that it demonstrated this desire was through the positions that its more conscientious members took since the outbreak of the Algerian conflict in 1954. The danger at independence, however, was that the Church would start to become ghettoized, which would be a catastrophe for both the Church and for Algeria, he argued. Instead, the Church needed to participate fully in the construction of the country, and be of service to the Algerian people.

Just after independence, Mgr Duval gave an interview to a journalist from Le Monde in which he also made the statement, “The Church in Algeria has chosen not to be foreign, but to be Algerian,” a statement that earned him a number of critiques from both theologians and Christians who disagreed with his claiming a nationality for Christianity. In a later interview with Marie-Christine Ray, Cardinal Duval explained that what he meant by that statement was that he wanted everyone to know that the Catholic Church in Algeria was not going to be a Church for the embassies, in the sense that it was only for Catholics in transit, but rather one that was “open to the population and to the realities of the country.” The fact that the Church was essentially serving a very small population of Christians, since the vast majority of its former parishioners, and a larger number of clergy, had left the country, meant that the Church essentially needed a new identity in Algeria, and a new project. The dioceses were restructured, and the hierarchy reconfigured so that the Église d’Algérie no longer depended on the French

115 Ibid., 10.
116 Ibid.
117 Marie-Christine Ray, 162.
118 Ibid.
episcopate. For the most part the religious orders remained the same, since they often had little to do with the pied-noir population in the first place and their status hardly changed at independence, with the exception of laws governing education and regulation of the social services and hospitals that they ran under the French colonial state. The larger questions revolved, as Louis Augros noted, about how the Church would integrate into the Algerian nation, and these questions were very much tied to the legacy of colonialism and missionaries and how to overcome that history.

Like the Catholics in Algeria, the Protestants began planning for Algerian independence several months before the actual end of the war. As a tiny minority within the Christian community in Algeria, they had little necessity to negotiate directly with the GPRA. Yet French government officials kept them informed about the negotiations for the Evian accords, according delegates from the ERF private meetings, just as they did with Mgr Duval and representatives of the Jewish community in Algeria. In the end, however, there were actually two different Protestant communities in Algeria that were negotiating their position in independent Algeria: the Churches and Cimade. Although they were connected, their interests and means of engaging with the Algerian Muslim population were at times divergent. In addition, there was the added factor of the World Council of Churches, since in March 1962, the WCC had decided to institute a major new development program called the Comité Chrétien de Service en Algérie (Christian Committee for Service in Algeria - CCSA) to help rebuild Algeria after independence in

response to a request from the GPRA for international aid in reconstruction.\textsuperscript{120} In the end, with the departure of the vast majority of the Protestant pieds-noirs, and the arrival of the coopérants (the name given to the workers who came to rebuild Algeria after independence), many of whom were not French, the makeup of the Protestant community changed dramatically, and despite their divergent interests, Protestants ended up working very closely together, and building much closer relationships with the remaining Catholics as well.

Within the Protestant community in Algeria, the Church institutions and missionaries seem to have faced the most difficult transition to independence. In their October 1961 report, the regional council of the ERF in Algeria put forward two hypotheses for the future: that French Algeria would continue for a while, a scenario that would give them time to address some of the weaknesses of the Church that the April “conscience examination” had uncovered; or that the policy of self-determination that de Gaulle had outlined would, in fact, take place, in which case Algeria might look something like Tunisia or Morocco.\textsuperscript{121} Both scenarios betray a somewhat alarming naïveté with the political situation so late in the Algerian War, and the fact that the council could still consider that French Algeria would continue much longer could indicate stronger sympathies with the dying cause of French Algeria than they were willing to admit publicly. If independence were to come, they noted, there would likely be a massive departure of Christians, as was the case in Tunisia and Morocco, and new Christians would arrive. On a juridical level, the situation of the churches would likely

\textsuperscript{120} Letter from Madeleine Barot to Cimade team members concerning the creation of the CCSA, dated 5 July 1962. Cimade archives, 3D 10/12.
change completely, since the Christian churches would be religious minorities in a Muslim country. What then, they asked, would be the situation of Christian missionaries, since “one should remember that for a Muslim, conversion to Christ is ‘unthinkable.’”

The concern with the future status of Protestants as a religious minority and the rights of missionaries continued to preoccupy the ERF through the end of the war. In his February 1962 meeting with M. Morin, the délégué-général to Algeria, the ERF delegate brought up the issue of religious liberty in independent Algeria as an issue that should be discussed in the negotiations between the French government and the GPRA, noting that the Protestant interest went beyond just the freedom of worship, but concerned the freedom to open religious schools and to have the freedom to preach without censorship. Although the guarantees that were eventually included in the Accords protected against religious discrimination, by July 1962, it appeared that the real concern for many of those who had held out and stayed in Algeria through the violent end of the war was not discrimination from the Muslim community, but the fact that the Algerian state looked like it was going to be “fueled by a ‘national and revolutionary’ ideology.” In this instance, “Christians are without a doubt less likely to be harassed than to be invited in an insistent manner to collaborate in the “revolution” and show themselves to be good “Algerians.” In the case of missionaries, the situation seemed even more dire, as one missionary reported this challenge being thrown at him: “The missionaries must associate themselves with the cause of the Algerian revolution; if not, they will be

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122 Ibid.
eliminated.” 124 How then to be a “good Algerian” when one did not particularly want to join the revolution?

It is difficult to tell whether Protestant leaders in Algeria realized the extent to which the Christian churches, and the missionary enterprise in particular, were tied to colonialism, particularly in the eyes of the colonized. Although there were Protestants who participated in more progressive movements in Algeria, including certain Cimade activities and the ecumenical Association d’études (Study Association), there does not the same to be the same degree of concern about how to engage with the Algerian Muslim community in independent Algeria as one sees with the Catholics, nor a concern with the decolonization of the Church. Rather, in a document that the ERF wrote, apparently for the Algerian authorities, in which they laid out their vision of their position in the new Algerian state, they stressed that they wanted to maintain their religious liberty, which included the freedom to worship, to preach, to teach, and to witness without social political or national discrimination. 125 In addition, in the spring of 1962 when the WCC announced their intention to create the CCSA, Protestants in Algeria took great offense to the fact that they were not consulted and that the WCC had not taken into consideration the work that the Protestant churches and missionaries in Algeria could do to assist in their projects. 126

The reality was that, particularly after WCC president Visser ‘t Hooft’s tour of Algeria during the war, and his experiences with the pied-noir Christian community, the

WCC had come to fear that French Protestants were too compromised by their colonial past and their support for French Algeria to be the most useful partners in a new development project in independent Algeria.\textsuperscript{127} In his memoirs, Visser ‘t Hooft wrote that after his 1956 tour of Algeria, he realized, “the only way of bridging the gulf between the nationalities was for Christians to enter into direct relations with believers in Islam. In the present situation this should not take the form of missionary work in the traditional sense. What was required, first of all, was an approach based on the desire to get to know one’s neighbour.”\textsuperscript{128} And this certainly was not the approach that he found among the Protestant community in Algeria. Yet in June 1962, Max-Alain Chevallier went to Geneva to discuss the formation of the CCSA and to be “the guy from Algeria,” always pleading to be kept in the loop and talking up the good that the church and the Christians who were already there could do.\textsuperscript{129} Chevallier was surprised to find that the WCC had added an appendix to the meeting notes that the director of the CCSA should not be of French nationality and that the project should be presented to the Algerian government as an international endeavor, and a prolongation of Cimade’s activities in the country, but with a new character, in the sense of a larger project of development and “cooperation” between international Christian churches and the Algerian government.\textsuperscript{130} Although Chevallier managed to achieve some agreement to allow a CCSA committee in Algeria, which consisted of himself and three other Cimade veterans, to start organizing things on the ground in Algiers, the tensions between the WCC’s reluctance to allow the CCSA to

\textsuperscript{127} On the formation of the CCSA, see the letter from W.S. Kilpatrick to Hugh Farley, dated 9 June 1962. Cimade archives, 3D 10/11.
\textsuperscript{129} Max-Alain Chevallier, “Notes sur mon voyage à Genève pour le Comité Chrétien de Service en Algérie (C.C.S.A.) (jeudi 21 juin 1962),” Cimade archives, 3D 10/11.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
become a “French” project and Chevallier’s insistence that the “French” Protestants and missionaries were not really so bad lingered on for a while.

Cimade, despite a certain integration into the Protestant community and the assistance of a few Protestant missionaries and parishes in the distribution of goods to the regroupment camps, was not in the same category as the Protestant missionaries or churches, partly because they were so clearly a separate entity, and had arrived in Algeria in the middle of the Algerian war at Visser ‘t Hooft’s request. In addition, their services to Algerian nationalists during the war made them much more welcome partners in the humanitarian and development projects that the new Algerian leaders were attempting to initiate at independence than were representatives of colonial institutions. It is not entirely clear how much WCC leaders knew about Jacques Beaumont’s activities with the FLN during the war, however they clearly appreciated the extent to which Cimade had developed a place in Algerian society that went much deeper than the troubled relations Visser ‘t Hooft had observed in 1956 between Protestants and their Muslim neighbors. This was why Cimade was both a model for their new Algerian development project and integrated into it.

Cimade’s transition into the CCSA was not without difficulties, as many Cimade team members were concerned that it would be swallowed into the larger organization and lose its identity, and in particular its ability to work and live among the populations it

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131 On the context of Cimade’s arrival in Algeria, see chapter 4. At times Protestant leaders in Algeria had even come into conflict with Cimade teams, disagreeing with the orientation of their projects, or judging their behavior to be unacceptable, an unsurprising situation when one notes the fact that most of the Cimade workers in Algeria were idealistic young French women faced with a fairly conservative set of clergymen in Algeria. Max-Alain Chevallier alluded to one such conflict over the orientation of the Clos Salembier team in a letter he wrote to Madeleine Barot, dated 3 February 1959. Cimade archives, 3D10/2.
served. Madeleine Barot wrote to the Cimade teams in July 1962 to reassure them that Cimade was, in fact, always in the minds of the CCSA as they made their plans and that they would be able to keep their own identity as well as highlight the particularly “French” aspect of their service in Algeria. By July 1963, everyone seemed to have found equilibrium, as a detailed Cimade report on their activities in Algeria noted that Cimade was one branch of the CCSA, and that they conserved their own personality and vocation within this new community. The report further elaborated that they now had three privileged objectives in Algeria: to be present in the country, among friends in “significant milieux,” including shantytowns, poor rural douars, teaching groups; to know the people who surround them by having an open and active attitude and an active search for dialogue; and to participate in the life of the country. These objectives, particularly the idea that to “know” the people they live with, they must be in true sympathy with them, and to love them, bear a striking resemblance to those of the worker-priests in France in the 1940s and 50s. Cimade team members recognized the ambiguity of their position in Algeria and like the worker-priests of the 1940s, realized that they would have to essentially “convert” their way of life to the reality of Algeria rather than maintain the status quo of the colonial era. It was essential, the report noted, that Christians adhere to the necessity to give up certain material benefits and live at a level of poverty that would allow them to better integrate into the Algerian community, and to learn Arabic.

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132 Many of these concerns were addressed during the meetings of the Cimade Conseil in the spring and summer of 1962. See the Procès-verbaux des réunions du Conseil de la Cimade, 9 February 1962-26 October 1962. Cimade archives.
133 Letter from Madeleine Barot to Cimade team members concerning the creation of the CCSA, dated 5 July 1962. Cimade archives, 3D 10/12.
135 Ibid.
The July 1963 report also highlighted the fact that Cimade occupied a position of tension between the Protestant churches who remained in Algeria, with whom Cimade staff had developed a fairly close relationship after independence, and missionaries, particularly because of what they called the “oft-debated problem: service-witness.”136 This was the essential problem for groups like Cimade and the CCSA, and for any Christian in Algeria who wanted to move beyond the historical relationship between missionaries and conversion of non-Christian people in colonial Algeria. To what extent could their presence in Algeria be a form of Christian witness without necessarily being a form of proselytism and how did the transition to “development” work fit into the idea of service to the nation and to the Algerian people? While these were not problems that were easily or immediately resolved in the months following independence, they provided the framework for Christian reflection on how to reimagine their presence in Algeria and their role in former European colonies.

By 1964, the CCSA had developed six different development projects in Algeria, which were funded with money from a number of member churches and staffed with an international group of young Christians, mostly from Europe and the United States. CCSA projects included: a medical service in eastern Algeria that ran dispensaries and mobile clinics; material aid provisioning, which was a continuation of Cimade’s early work in the regroupment camps with supplies donated by the American Church World Service; Cimade’s work with medico-social and education teams who lived and worked directly with Algerian populations in various locations across the country; the reforestation program in the Constantinois that was an enormous expansion of Jean

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136 Ibid.
Carbonare’s experiment; an agricultural school run by the Mennonite Central Committee in the southern Constantinois to train Algerians in farming techniques; and a community child development project. With their status as coopérants in Algeria, the staff of Cimade and the CCSA fully participated in the young Algerian nation along with several hundred thousand “pieds-rouges” who came to Algeria after independence to help develop the country in the wake of the pied-noir exodus and the destruction of the war. But they did so as a means to be present as Christians and demonstrate to the Algerians that not all Christians were colonialist and that Christianity itself had something at stake in decolonization and the liberation of colonized peoples from the oppression of the colonial system.

On the eve of independence, a small group of Christians who had decided to stay in Algeria, including several Cimade team members and Catholic laymen and women, formed a study group called the Association d’études (Study Association) to consider how best, as Christians, to integrate into postcolonial Algeria. The study group was in part the result of the efforts of a group of priests that included Père Henri Teissier, who worked closely with Père Scotto and the Mission de France in the early 1950s and later became the Archbishop of Algiers, and several Jesuit priests under the leadership of Jean Delanglade. This group was determined not to leave Mgr Duval and clergy like Jean Scotto completely isolated in their attempt to decolonize the church. The first meetings of the Association d’études were held in Algiers between the 2nd and 16th of June 1962,

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137 “Note d’information sur le C.C.S.A.” Cimade archives, 3D 10/11.
138 On the term “pieds-rouges” and their legacy in Algeria, see Catherine Simon, Algérie, les années pieds-rouges (Paris: La Découverte, 2009).
139 Martine de Sauto, Henri Teissier, un évêque en Algérie (Paris: Bayard, 2006), 79-80. This information was also confirmed in my conversation with Paul and Josette Fournier at their home outside Angers, France on December 11, 2008.
right in the midst of the OAS’ “scorched earth campaign” when only the most determined Europeans were willing to stay in Algeria. The themes of the meeting were quite practical: a study of the socio-political environment of the future independent Algeria, the sociological composition of the Christians of Algeria, and a discussion of the role of the Church in Algeria.140

From June 1962, the group in Algiers met nearly every month to discuss various aspects of the role of Christians in Algeria. As word of their existence spread, they gained more members, and Christians throughout Algeria formed their own small groups and sent letters of support or commentaries on the publications and summaries of the discussions that the Algiers group published and distributed widely to the members of the Association.141 The organizers of the Association included several prominent pieds-noirs like Dr. Pierre Colonna, a Catholic liberal from Algiers, and Bernard Picinbono, a Protestant physicist who worked closely with Cimade and the CCSA and was married to the daughter of the ERF pastor Henri Capieu.142 As more coopérants arrived in Algeria, they also joined the Association, a situation that often caused tensions, particularly when discussions about Algerian nationality or the legacy of colonialism came up at the meetings, since the newly arrived coopérants seemed to assume that the pieds-noirs were all racist colonialists, while the pieds-noirs thought the new arrivals came with utopian ideas and did not understand the realities of Algeria, nor the complexity of the situation for those Christians who chose to stay in Algeria after independence. Yet despite these

141 The Bulletin dated 24 September 1962 notes that the meeting of 8 September 1962 in Algiers had nearly 100 people in attendance.
142 Other names listed on the comptes-rendus of the Association include Hélène d’Arras and Bernard de Quillacq, whose origins and religious affiliation are unknown.
conflicts, the Association proved to be a site where both Protestants and Catholics could discuss the most pressing problems facing them – both as Christians and as “Europeans” – in independent Algeria.

Since there has been almost no historical examination of the situation of Europeans in Algeria after independence, we know little about their experiences during the transition from French colonialism to the independent Algerian nation-state. However, an examination of the range of issues that the Association addressed over the course of 1962 and 1963 demonstrates some of the complexities of their position and the ways in which the Christian community attempted to address them. At first, the Christians who remained in Algeria were concerned about how to distinguish themselves, in the eyes of the Algerians, from the “mass of Europeans” who had just fled back to France and who remained emotionally tied to the legacy of French colonialism. The notes from early meetings noted the fact that much of the groundwork had been laid during the war by those Christians who had supported the Algerian people, like the members of the AJAAS and Mgr Duval, “who is the object of veneration among Algerians.” It would also be important for Christians to separate themselves from things that were associated with the colonizers, including acting like wealthy philanthropists to the Muslims. Since the Christians were perceived as a wealthy group, their charity was often not well accepted, and “in certain quarters, one could hear ‘we would prefer to die of starvation than use flour from SOS.’” The first step for the Christians in the Association was a recognition of their complicity in the colonial system, and an awareness of how they were perceived.

144 Ibid., 2.
145 Ibid.
by the Muslim population they lived among – a step that was radical enough that it likely
did have to wait until the departure of the majority of the pied-noir community before it
could be undertaken.

Even before independence, as Christians were making decisions about whether to
stay in Algeria, one of the major concerns was the possibility of integration into the
nation. While the Evian Accords did not allow for the possibility of double nationality,
the conditions for obtaining Algerian nationality were unclear, and integrating into the
nation had cultural as well as juridical aspects. The chaos of the Algerian government
after independence clearly caused some concern, and certain issues, like the question of
whether Arabic would be the state language, or what the influence of Islam would be on
the Algerian nation, were also entirely unclear.146 By early 1963, it was clear that
becoming “Algerian” was not going to be as simple as just living in Algeria. The Code de
la nationalité (Nationality Code) that was being debated in the Algerian government was
one object of concern, but in the report that Père Delanglade shared with the Association
in March 1963, he wrote that being Algerian was going to mean wanting to be recognized
as such, which entailed wanting to participate actively in the creation of Algeria as both a
new, and ancient country.147 Père Delanglade recognized that this was an extremely
difficult choice for Europeans, particularly because it involved a certain feeling of
“uprooting,” in the sense that they are abandoning a part of themselves (the French part)
and choosing the share the destiny of Algeria – for better or worse – with the

146 Ibid., 5.
147 “Conscience algérienne, conscience nationale,” in the Bulletin intérieure de
Whoever made that choice would no longer be French, or even European, and for many it would take a strong Christian vocation and feeling of solidarity with the Algerians to make that leap.

Quite a few of the discussions revolved around this idea of the “Christian vocation in Algeria,” which was the theme of a presentation by Bernard Picinbono in September 1962. Picinbono argued that there were three major implications of the Christian vocation in Algeria: the announcement of the gospel, which could only be undertaken after a much more profound understanding of both Islam and Christianity, and in a “new language” that would be communicated through lifestyle, ways of thinking, intellectual frameworks and dialogue; service to others, which must necessarily be selfless and not serve one’s own interests, and not discriminate toward anyone regardless of their political or social position; and participation in building the state. In the discussion that followed Picinbono’s presentation, several Christians noted that the Church in Algeria was in a state of redemption for what had occurred during colonialism, even more than in a state of reconciliation, and that any “evangelization” (seemingly synonymous with “the announcement of the gospel”), should first be acknowledged as a witness of love through concrete action; several participants invoked the idea of incarnation, apparently drawing on theological ideas of French Catholic theologians of the worker-priest era in the 1930s and 1940s.

One of the other major issues that the Association addressed, and that Cimade also acknowledged in its reports, was the necessity for European Christians to shift into a state

148 Ibid., 5-6
150 Ibid., 7-8.
of relative poverty. Certainly for those who argued that Christian evangelization occurred through Christian actions and attitudes and that Christians were going to be constantly watched and judged, certainly for the first several years after independence, then it was necessary for Christians to not shut themselves up in a European “ghetto,” which had been the case during the colonial period, but to live among the Algerians. To fully participate in the construction of the state, they were going to have to share the difficulties and chaos with the Algerians, and that meant letting go of the privileges to which they had been entitled as the elite class under French colonialism. For some this was a complex issue, particularly if they had children, and several of the Bulletins note the tensions between the desire to stay and build the country and the desire to do what was best for one’s family, which might entail sending children to school in France, or even leaving altogether.151

Several times over the course of discussions in 1962 and 1963, the Association members invoked the differences between pied-noir Christians who had chosen to stay in Algeria and newly-arrived coopérants, both in their vocation in Algeria and in the way they were perceived.152 The role of Christians who stayed was to essentially decolonize the church, while the role of the coopérants was to participate in development projects, two different things that were connected but not necessarily with the same ends in mind. For one thing, many of the Christians who stayed in Algeria were planning to stay long-term, or at least as long as they feasibly could, depending on the legal possibilities and their familial situation. Certainly the Catholic clergy and religious orders envisioned a

151 Ibid., 9;
152 This is certainly the case in the numerous letters from coopérants contacting the Association before their arrival in Algeria, in the 31 October 1962 issue of the Bulletin intérieur de l’Association d’études.
long-term position in Algeria. For the coopérants, many of them had come on short-term contracts to work on specific projects, and even the CCSA was a project that was designed to help the Algerians with the transition to independence, but not as a long-term or permanent implantation. However despite their different situations, there were certain problems that both groups faced, including a tendency toward a “superiority complex,” in the sense that they, consciously or unconsciously, had trouble allowing the Algerians to work out their own problems. Instead of giving the Algerians the tools to run their own country, the Europeans had a tendency to step in and want to do things themselves in a fit of impatience.

It is clear that this was the moment when both Protestants and Catholics were figuring out exactly what “development” as an idea and as a practice meant, and Algeria was one of the first terrains of exploration. The shift from humanitarian intervention, as in the case of Cimade’s early interventions in the regroupment camps, to development projects like the CCSA’s massive reforestation project in the Constantinois or the work of the coopérants in filling the gap left by the exodus of the European population after independence, seems to have occurred without an enormous amount of intellectual forethought or planning. The reforestation project shifted from being a site of distribution of aid to one in which Algerian workers were trained in forestry techniques in exchange for material aid because of Jean Carbonare’s observation of the competition among the Algerians over the aid, and the realization that the situation was doing nobody any good.153 A World Council of Churches article later reported that this model was then expanded under the CCSA and used in other WCC sites as their main development

153 Adams, 209.
model: work training so that populations could earn their own livelihood at the same time that they were building infrastructure or agricultural capacity in their own countries.\textsuperscript{154}

Catholic leaders also took up this question at Vatican II and Pope Paul VI issued the encyclical \textit{Populorum progressio}, in March 1967, stating that the Holy See had added a new pontifical commission whose purpose was to “awaken in the People of God full awareness of their mission today. In this way they can further the progress of poorer nations and international social justice, as well as help less developed nations to contribute to their own development.”\textsuperscript{155} The encyclical also explicitly noted that these projects were aimed at nations who had recently gained independence and were struggling to overcome the effects of colonialism. Although it was qualified with some praise for technological innovation of the colonizers, in what is perhaps the most explicit denunciation of colonialism in Catholic official discourse, the encyclical stated:

\begin{quote}
It is true that colonizing nations were sometimes concerned with nothing save their own interests, their own power and their own prestige; their departure left the economy of these countries in precarious imbalance—the one-crop economy, for example, which is at the mercy of sudden, wide-ranging fluctuations in market prices. Certain types of colonialism surely caused harm and paved the way for further troubles.\textsuperscript{156}
\end{quote}

The encyclical invoked the example of Charles de Foucauld as a historical case of the Church’s interest in development, but argued that future projects should move beyond that of traditional missionary projects like schools and hospitals into a redistribution of the resources of the global economy.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{155} Pope Paul VI, \textit{Populorum progressio}, 26 March 1967. \\
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
Likewise, the Association d’études came to the conclusion in December 1962 that the simple distribution of material aid was in many ways an offensive gesture, especially if it stopped there. What Christians needed to do, someone argued, “was give the disinherited the means to pull themselves out of their misery (through professional training, basic education…”157 Although the term “development” had become the term du jour in Algeria, Christians had to adapt their language and practices to fit within the new socialist state that the Algerian authorities were establishing by early 1963. In some cases, the transition went fairly smoothly, as groups like Cimade and the CCSA were already functioning independently of the Algerian state. For the institutional Church, that also meant opening the diocesan schools to Algerian students, and often shifting the language of instruction to Arabic, which necessitated the training of qualified Algerian instructors and inspectors, a task that often fell to Europeans and coopérants.

Interestingly, a large number of both priests and religious went to work for the Algerian state in various capacities, often training Algerian workers in industry and educational posts, while some, like soeur Marie Thérèse Brau, picked up the relay of women like Marie-Renée Chéné and opened a basic education center in Hussein-Dey that later became a center for mentally-disabled children and adults that functioned well into the twenty-first century.158

The real transformation, as both Protestants and Catholics discovered, needed to be in the mentalities of European Christians, even more than in their activities. Instead of treating their interactions with Muslim Algerians as “mission work” or “charity,” they were now engaged in “building capacity” and training Algerians to run their own country.

158 Sauto, 97-98.
Any whiff of paternalism would be a sign that the Church had not abandoned its ties to the colonial regime, and so Christians – especially pieds-noirs and those who were holdovers from colonial Algeria – had to be extra careful to engage in development activities in a spirit of cooperation and humility. The emphasis on poverty was clearly an important aspect of this engagement, as was the pursuit of Algerian nationality, for those like Mgr Duval or Père Scotto who were serious about staying Algeria, because it was an outward sign that the European population was serious about rejecting their colonial ties.

The transition to independence and the decolonization of the Church in Algeria was neither smooth nor easy, and in the end, many of those pieds-noirs who had made the decision to stay in Algeria after the war ended up leaving for a complex set of reasons, many of which were related to their familial situation, access to employment and education, and even questions of nationality. After the 1965 coup d’état, many industries, including education, were nationalized, leading many Europeans to lose their jobs, another factor that led to a new exodus of Christians from Algeria. Yet the stalwarts who remained continued to be committed to pursuing a dialogue between Christians and Muslims and maintaining a place for Christianity in Algerian society. The Protestant community dwindled down to very few, but the CCSA continues to function in Algeria to this day under the name *Rencontres et développement* (Encounters and Development).

Mgr Duval was an active participant in Vatican II, which opened just as the Algerian War was coming to a close, and he noted in his interviews with Marie-Christine Ray that the event that most helped him “become African,” was on the second day of the Council, in which the bishops were divided by region in their study commissions, and the Algerian bishops realized that they should join the African region, as opposed to the French
bishops. In 1965, Pope Paul VI named Mgr Duval a cardinal, an honor that was particularly well received by the Algerian people. He continued to work to defend the rights of the powerless, both in Algeria and abroad, and trusted collaborators like Jean Scotto and Henri Teissier, who had long worked for dialogue and reconciliation between the Christian and Muslim populations in Algeria also rose in the Catholic hierarchy, both becoming bishops – Jean Scotto, the bishop of Constantine in 1970, and Henri Teissier, the bishop of Oran in 1973, and later the archbishop of Algiers, upon Cardinal Duval’s retirement.

Although a sense of solidarity had already developed between likeminded Protestants and Catholics who were working toward dialogue and rapprochement with the Algerian people even before the outbreak of the Algerian War, the situation after independence further demonstrated both the benefits and necessity of working together to form a solid Christian community in Algeria. The team members of Cimade and the CCSA were certainly pioneers in ecumenical action, and helped the Protestant community in Algeria, which was somewhat wary of the influence the WCC held over French Protestantism, engage more directly with Catholics, especially in groups like the Association d’études. The new push for ecumenical dialogue from the Catholic Church with the opening of Vatican II also allowed for a new spirit of openness within the Catholic hierarchy that only supported what was taking place on the ground. Although certainly differences of theology and outlook remained between Protestants and Catholics, by the mid-1960s, there was much more cooperation than conflict and something like a small, but unified Christian community in Algeria.

159 Ray, 170.
The World Council of Churches and Vatican II: The Role of the Church in the Modern World

Although the various moral crises associated with the Algerian War proved to be a central aspect of what Catholic historian Denis Pelletier has labeled the “Catholic crisis” and the decline of Christian Churches in France during the 1960s, it also served as a key moral referent to both Vatican II and the Ecumenical Movement. In the decades after the war, there was little discussion in France about the “events in Algeria,” even as the pieds-noirs continued to maintain both bitterness toward their lost homeland and nostalgia for a romanticized vision of Algérie française. The liturgical reforms that came after Vatican II, including an emphasis on vernacular languages and a move away from pageantry and processions, were often directed at churches in southern France that had high populations of pieds-noirs, causing further ruptures within the Christian community in France.

In many ways, the greatest impact of the Algerian War and the decolonization of the church there was on the global Christian community, since Algeria was a testing ground for many of the tactics and policies that both Protestants and Catholics would later use in other countries experiencing the impact of decolonization and development. One can see the influence of the Algerian example both in the 1961 World Council of Churches International Assembly in New Delhi, India and in the results of the Second Vatican Council. Above all, the Algerian War, and the process of decolonization more generally, forced both Protestants and Catholics to come to terms with the fact that Christianity could no longer remain tied to colonialism if it hoped to have any influence on newly independent peoples in the developing world. It also had to reformulate its
relationship to the concept of the mission and evangelism, since the old methods, many of which were deeply embedded in colonial cultures and European mores, were no longer acceptable in the former mission lands.

The World Council of Churches had already started to engage with these problems at its international assembly in Evanston, Illinois in 1954, but, as Willem Visser ‘t Hooft noted in his memoirs, the central question of the 1961 assembly in New Delhi was whether or not the WCC could really be a world council, in the sense that churches from outside Europe and the United States would fully participate in the life of the council.160 The meeting was also held in India specifically as a sign that the WCC was open to the “young churches” of the world and ready to move beyond the “old syncretism between the Christian faith and Western culture.”161 This move out of Europe was extremely important, for as Paul Albrecht observed in an article on ecumenical social thought, “It is a sobering thought that the ecumenical movement discovered the urgent problems of the nations of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East only after the process of radical decolonization was well under way.”162 Although he explained that there were institutional reasons for this blindness, and in particular the fact that the Christian interest in those lands was in missionary societies who could not be expected to see the need for revolutionary change as much as the indigenous Christians in those nations, Albrecht acknowledged that it was the influence of the Asian and non-European

160 W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft, Memoirs, 309.
161 Ibid., 317-318.
Christians on the WCC that pushed Europeans to understand the need for decolonization and the problems of revolutionary social change.163

The 1961 Assembly also saw the full integration of the WCC with the International Missionary Council. With a more global influence on the missionary council, there was a shift away from seeing missionaries as occidental Christians who went to impoverished “mission lands” in the global south, but rather the 1963 Conference on World Missions and Evangelism (CWME) in Mexico City covered the theme of the “mission on six continents.” Throughout the 1960s and 70s, the mission department was influenced by trends like liberation theology and there was an increase in the emphasis on development as a mission strategy, in a shift from traditional mission theology. The WCC’s emphasis on development also emerged from the 1961 New Delhi Assembly, and CCSA in Algeria was actually the WCC’s first large scale development project in Africa; it was partly the result of the WCC’s Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee, and World Service (DICARWS as it became known for short) new mandate from the Assembly: “to express the solidarity of the churches… especially in their service to the world around them.”164 It was the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva, however, that fully addressed the role of Christians in global economic development; the report made statements that were much in line with the Vatican encyclical *Populorum progressio*, which would be issued the following year, acknowledging the responsibilities of wealthier nations and suggesting changes to global economic structures to better serve the economic development of poorer nations.165

163 Ibid., 247-249.
164 Murray, ““Joint Service as an Instrument of Renewal,”” 221-222.
165 Ibid., 252.
For Catholics, the issues of decolonization and development were just two of many questions that were up for discussion as Pope John XXIII called a new Vatican Council in 1959. The decision to call the Council came as a shock to the Catholic community, particularly French Catholics who were increasingly wary of the Vatican after suffering numerous and severe rebukes over the course of the 1940s and 1950s. Etienne Fouilloux noted that French Catholics were not especially impressed with John XXIII (then Cardinal Roncalli) during his stint the papal nuncio to France, and his election to the papacy had not brought any major improvements in French-Vatican relations, but rather a new condemnation of the worker-priests and a condemnation against the Jesuit Père Teilhard de Chardin for his attempts to reconcile faith with modern science.¹⁶⁶ Yet French theologians like Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac, who had previously been condemned for their theological views, played an influential role at the Council and participated in the creation of several important texts, while Cardinal Liénart was among the most important leaders of the bishops within the Council body. In the end, the “ecumenical council” was an opening to the modern world that many Catholics had been working toward for decades, and included in that was an acknowledgment of the necessity for dialogue with other Christians, other religions (including Islam), a move toward a missionary spirit more in like with that of the worker-priests or Père Charles de Foucauld, and an opening to Catholics from outside Europe and North America.

Even before the actual Council opened in October 1962, Pope John XXIII issued the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961), in which he essentially reexamined the “social

question” in a global context. Gerard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire write that the 1960s marked a shift within leftist French Catholicism toward an attitude of “Third-Worldism,” and this encyclical was one of the first Vatican documents to address questions of economic development and global labor practices in the second half of the twentieth century.167 There is very little revolutionary in Mater et Magistra, and it continues the usual condemnation of “materialist conceptions of man” that suggest the reorganization of society along Communist or socialist principles, and supports Pope Leo XIII’s claim that “no practical solution of this question will be found apart from the counsel of religion and of the Church.”168 Yet the Pope also spoke out against destroying farm surpluses when poorer countries needed food, and claimed that it was the responsibility of wealthier nations to help developing countries improve their economies.169 Paul VI’s encyclical Populorum progressio in 1967 went much further in its discussions of economic redistribution and responsibility and stuck less to the line drawn since the Rerum Novarum that rejected any dialogue with Marxist ideologies.

Within the Council itself, there was some discussion of issues like development and decolonization, but most of the questions revolved around specifically Catholic questions, like the future of missionaries, or questions of ecumenism. Although the schema on missions was pushed until the final session of the Council and discussion was limited due to time constraints, bishops from recently decolonized countries actively participated in the debate. Vatican II historian John O’Malley notes that Michel Ntuyahaga, the bishop of Bujumbura, Burundi, who spoke on behalf of the Episcopal

168 John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, May 15, 1961, para. 16.
169 Ibid., paras. 161-165.
conferences of Rwanda and Burundi, and bishops from East Africa and Nigeria, stated before the council, “We live in a transition from missions properly speaking to a time of young churches, which are autonomous and exist in their own right.” Like the WCC, the Vatican responded to the shift in political authority in former mission lands by transferring emphasis from missionaries onto “young churches,” in the hope that these churches would eventually be run by indigenous Christians. There was also a strong emphasis on adaptation to local cultures, which was a move away from the emphasis, under colonialism, on conflating Catholicism with Western values. Although there was a strong movement to reform the influence of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith and its influence on Catholic missions, that did not make it into the final text of the approved schema, partly because of the aforementioned time constraints.

French Catholics, particularly the rehabilitated Dominicans and Jesuits like Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou made important contributions to a number of schemas up for debate at the council, and were at the center of several of the major power struggles of Vatican II, which tended to pit the conservative Roman defenders of tradition and hierarchy against those hoping for decentralization and reform of the entire system, especially the French and German episcopates. One of the major issues of the Council, and one that both reform-minded bishops in Europe and from Africa, Asia, and Latin America were intent on achieving, was the reform of the liturgy. In particular, bishops wanted to shift from Mass that was solely in Latin to Mass in vernacular languages and with priests facing the congregation, which was exactly what the priests of the Mission de

171 Cholvy and Hilaire, 281.
172 Ibid.
France had instituted in Algeria in the early 1950s to the shock of their parishioners. The tradition-minded conservatives at the Council, who had drafted the original schema for the liturgical reform that supported the Latin Mass, felt that shifting to vernacular languages was tantamount to Protestantism and set the stage for revolutionary changes in the Catholic Church, which to the reform-minded was not necessarily a negative thing.173

The French also had a particular interest in the schema that produced the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (On the Church in the Modern World), which dealt with many of the questions that French leftist Catholics had been struggling with for decades, namely how the Church could respond to the problems of the modern world. The text brought up the issue of human rights, claiming that human inequality was against God’s intentions:

> With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God’s intent. For in truth it must still be regretted that fundamental personal rights are still not being universally honored.174

The constitution put quite a lot of emphasis on the good of society, and the responsibility of Christians to ensure the education of all youth, the economic development of the poorer nations, and the well being of the human community. In one passage, which was likely the source of the criticism that the text did not do enough to condemn Marxism, it states, “The Church recognizes that worthy elements are found in today's social movements, especially an evolution toward unity, a process of wholesome socialization and of association in civic and economic realms.”175 The text affirmed that the Church

173 Ibid., 136-141.
174 Gaudium et Spes, para 29.
175 Ibid., para 42.
was willing to promote these movements and institutions that worked in tandem with her mission to secure the basic rights of the person and the pursuit of the welfare of the common good.

*Gaudium et Spes* also presented the role of the Church in the modern world as that of peacemaker, particularly in an era of nuclear proliferation and recent wars that “have wrought physical and moral havoc on our world.”\(^{176}\) The text further noted, however, that since the causes of many recent wars were “excessive economic inequalities,” and “the desire to dominate,” the Church needed to root out the sources of injustice that fomented these wars and attempt to ameliorate the base conditions that led to their eruption.\(^{177}\) To this end, the text made explicit that the Church should become involved in international efforts in global outreach and development:

> To reach this goal, organizations of the international community, for their part, must make provision for men's different needs, both in the fields of social life—such as food supplies, health, education, labor and also in certain special circumstances which can crop up here and there, e.g., the need to promote the general improvement of developing countries, or to alleviate the distressing conditions in which refugees dispersed throughout the world find themselves, or also to assist migrants and their families.\(^{178}\)

It was the role of the international community, they noted, to promote development and assure a more equal distribution of wealth and prosperity to the human community. And it was in the interest of Christians to take part in organizations that would promote these values and activities throughout the world.

Although this text made glancing references to dialogue with people of other faiths, there were two other constitutions that dealt directly with ecumenism (i.e. dialogue

\(^{176}\) Ibid., para 79.
\(^{177}\) Ibid., para 83.
\(^{178}\) Ibid., para. 84.
with other Christians), and Catholic relations with other faiths that were both the center of controversy in the Council and powerful symbols that major shifts had taken place within the Vatican. Although the term “ecumenical,” when uttered by Pope John XXIII in 1959, was utterly ambiguous to both Protestants and Catholics, it gained clarity under the leadership of the Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea. He was the head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, which was later appointed as a Commission at Vatican II, and undertook to formulate a constitution on ecumenical dialogue that was the result of efforts of people like Yves Congar and Dutch Catholics like Johannes Willebrands, who had both worked closely with Visser ‘t Hooft during the 1950s and 1960s.179 The text on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, still included language that suggested that the Catholic Church believed certain “separated Churches and Communities” to be “deficient in some respects,” but no longer were there calls for non-Catholics to “return” to the Roman Catholic Church, and the text recognized the “ecumenical movement” and their pursuit of dialogue as a useful and positive initiative.180

The more controversial document was *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions), which stumbled in the Council particularly because of debates about the Church’s relationship to Jews, and the political implications of the statement in the Arab world.181 In the end, however, Pope Paul VI’s visit to the UN in 1964, and some behind the scenes diplomacy diffused much of the tension in the Arab world, and the text focused on dialogue with several different religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. What emerged was a text that advocated dialogue and

179 Visser ‘t Hooft, 338
181 On the debates over the text, and the issue of the Jews and Jesus specifically, see O’Malley, 218-224.
collaboration with other religions, and became a useful tool for Christians in places like Algeria, who were working on the ground to promote those very principles. Père Henri Teissier noted that passages like this one, which stated, “Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom,” helped guide the work of the Church in Algeria. 182

Although they brought a much more democratic and global worldview to the Catholic Church, Vatican II and the changes it brought were not without their own problems and limitations, just as the shifting of momentum in the World Council of Churches away from Europe and North America did not necessarily entail a complete shift in mentalities. However, in both cases, decolonization proved to be the catalyst for a wake-up call in the Christian community that if Christians wanted to have any place in the areas of the world that were throwing off the shackles of colonialism, then they needed to take stock of their moral position relative to colonialism, capitalism, economic development, human rights, and various other issues that were global human concerns, and in which Christians were deeply implicated. Algeria, once again, became a testing ground for many of those questions, as Protestants worked to understand what “development” really meant, and Christians pursued dialogue with each other and with the Muslims they lived among. Although it was never easy or smooth, those Christians who worked in Algeria after independence sought to put the principles that many of them

182 De Sauto, 107.
had put their lives on the line for during the war into practice, only this time with support from higher up.

The Algerian War ended in an explosion of violence, and the dreams that Christians like Mgr Duval and Père Scotto had nurtured throughout the war that pied-noir Christians would come to understand and accept their moral and social responsibilities toward the Algerian community did not exactly work out in the way that they had hoped. However, Algerian independence allowed the Christians who remained to rebuild the Church from the ground up and to attempt to erase the damage that Christianity’s alliance with colonialism had done in Algeria. The decolonization of Christianity in Algeria was a difficult process, especially since it was undertaken in the complex circumstances of a country recovering from one of the most brutal wars of the twentieth century. Throughout the decades after independence, the Christians who remained in Algeria attempted to transform the Church into an institution that was of service to the Algerian people, despite the challenges that it faced in the form of hostility from government officials, or the growth of conservative Islamist movements. Just as the Christians who sought dialogue and cooperation with Algerians during the Algerian War served as a model for Christian movements globally, including the World Council of Churches and reformers of Vatican II, the Christians who remained in Algeria after independence present a fascinating model for Christian-Islam dialogue and the potential for Christian presence in politically challenging, non-Christian lands.
Conclusion

On the night of March 26, 1996, seven Trappist monks from the monastery Notre Dame de l’Atlas in Tibhirine, a village high above the Mitidja valley of central Algeria, were kidnapped from the monastery by a faction of the GIA (Groupe islamique armé), a radical Islamist faction that controlled the region. On May 21, the GIA issued a communiqué addressed to “France and its president Jacques Chirac” stating their “theological” reasons for kidnapping the monks and the conditions for their liberation, which included the release of several GIA prisoners. Although the French and Algerian governments attempted various means to recover the monks, the GIA announced on May 21, 1996 that as the French government had refused to negotiate, the GIA had beheaded the monks.¹ Nine days later, Mgr Teissier, who had become the archbishop of Algiers after the retirement of Cardinal Duval in 1988, mounted the hill to Notre-Dame d’Afrique, overlooking the bay of Algiers, where he learned that the Cardinal had just passed away; later that morning, he received a call informing him that the bodies of the monks had been found.² In fact, it was only the heads of the monks that were discovered, and their bodies have never been recovered, a situation that has only added to the mystery surrounding their deaths.³

¹ John Kiser, Passion pour l’Algérie. Les moines de Tibhirine. Trans. by Henry Quinson (Montrouge: Nouvelle Cité, 2006), 331
² Ibid., 336.
³ The real story of how the monks died remains a mystery. Although the GIA was blamed for their assassination, the fact that their bodies were never recovered, that their heads had been buried before they were recovered, and that a former intelligence officer came forward several years after the event to say that he overheard a radio transmission from an Algerian Army helicopter in which someone claimed that they had accidentally shot the monks during an attack on the GIA, has put the original claim up for question. At this point, neither the French nor the Algerian government will release documents relating to their deaths.
The death of the Tibhirine monks occurred in the midst of the Algerian Civil War, which began in 1992 when the Algerian government cancelled the second round of elections after the *Front Islamic du Salut* (FIS), a radical Islamist party that advocated the installation of a fundamentalist, Wahhabist-inspired theocracy in Algeria won a huge majority of the vote in the first round of legislative elections in late 1991. The FIS’ popularity came partly from its contestation of the FLN’s corrupt and unpopular single-party political system and its ability to engage the disenfranchised and impoverished young Algerian Arabophone population who had lost faith in the socialist government and the political class. Fearing the power of the growing Islamist movement, the Algerian army took control of the government, setting off a war for control of the country that would leave hundreds of thousands of Algerian civilians and foreigners residing in the country as collateral damage. Between 1993 and 1997, various Islamist factions attempted to “Islamize” the country by force, particularly targeting “sinners” like young women who did not wear the veil, or men who smoked or drank in public. Just as in the Algerian War forty year earlier, maquis took to the hills or the winding streets of the casbah and fought a dirty guerrilla war against the military and uncooperative civilian populations. The Christian community, like the civilians of the so-called ‘triangle of death’ on the fertile plains just west of Algiers where Notre-Dame de l’Atlas stood, was caught in the middle.

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4 On the history of the Algerian civil war, see Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). Evans and Phillips stress the importance of examining the conflict in the *longue durée* and on the role that economic and political crises of the 1960s-1980s had on the growth of Islamist movements in Algeria.

5 Ibid., chapter 5.
In October 1993, the GIA, one of the main armed Islamist movements, issued a statement declaring war on foreigners in Algeria, giving them the ultimatum to leave the country within a month. During the course of the war, both the French and Algerian governments attempted to convince French citizens, and especially Christians, to leave Algerian territory, as they were direct targets of Islamist violence, including both assassinations and kidnappings. Despite a number of frightening interactions with the GIA, including the brutal murders of several Croatian construction workers near the monastery, and Christmas Eve intrusion of the local GIA emir in 1993, the monks collectively, and with the support of numerous other Christians who remained – including Cardinal Duval and Mgr Teissier – made the decision not to leave Algeria. The complex reasons for this decision, which have been recently dramatized in the film *Of Gods and Men*, were based primarily in the deep ties that the monks had forged with the Algerian community in Tibhirine.

The Trappists had a long history in Algeria, as the first Trappist monks had arrived in Algeria in 1843, soon after the French conquest. Notre-Dame de l’Atlas was founded in 1938 with six monks from the Aiguebelle monastery in France and six others from Slovenia. In 1947, the monastery received the status of abbey after their community grew to twenty monks. After Algerian independence, the monastery faced a few decades of instability and in 1984, they voted to once again become a simple priory, becoming the only trappist monastery in a non-Christian land. By the mid-1990s, there were nine permanent monks who lived off the profits of their small garden, the honey they sold at

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6 Kiser, 207.
the local market, and the hostel and retreat center they ran at the monastery.\footnote{Bruno Chenu, ed. \textit{Sept vies pour Dieu et pour l’Algérie} (Paris: Bayard Éditions/Centurion, 1996), 10.} Since 1984, they were under the leadership of their elected prior, a young French Islamophile named Christian de Chergé.

All of the monks at Notre-Dame de l’Atlas had deep ties to Algeria. Christian de Chergé, for example, had spent two years of the Algerian War as an SAS officer working in a regrouped Kabyle village.\footnote{Ibid., 58. Christian de Chergé was in Algeria between January 1959 and January 1961. John Kiser writes that because of his high ranking among the reserve officers of his promotion at the École de cavalerie de Saumur, he was able to choose to do his military service in the SAS.} As a seminary student in Algeria, he found himself assisting a parish priest who refused to read Mgr Duval’s pastoral letters and believed that the end of \textit{Algérie française} would spell both the end of Christian civilization and the victory of communism in North Africa.\footnote{Ibid., 37-38.} The two oldest brothers – Frères Luc and Amédée – both arrived at the monastery in 1946, and stayed throughout the Algerian War. During the Algerian War, the monastery was located in a fairly hot zone, close to the town of Médéa and to the mountains where rebels hid, regroupments were numerous, and where the French army used napalm to subdue the countryside. Throughout the war, Frère Luc, the doctor, continued to care for anyone who arrived at the monastery needing care, never asking questions – a practice that continued up until the day he was taken from the monastery in 1996.\footnote{Ibid., 47-48, 233-235. Frère Luc had been at Tibhirine since 1946, along with Frère Amédée, a priest born in Algiers. Luc had also been kidnapped from Tibhirine in 1959, by FLN rebels, but was later freed after one of rebels recognized him as the only doctor in the region, who helped all the Algerian villagers, including himself.} According to John Kiser, during the war, the monastery and their crops were never attacked (a situation that many pieds-noirs apparently found
suspicious – were they “progressivists”?], and many Algerian families found refuge from the military bombs at the monastery, which was how the village of Tibhirine came to be formed.\(^{11}\) And the youngest brother, Frère Christophe, had spent his military service working with mentally-disabled children in Marie-Thérèse Brau’s programs in Hussein-Dey.

Yet the monastery almost closed its doors after Algerian independence. In 1963, the head of the Trappist order decided, with the accord of nine of the ten monks of Notre Dame de l’Atlas, to close the monastery. Mgr Duval, however, was profoundly opposed to the idea, since the monastery was the only Catholic mission in Algeria devoted to contemplation and prayer, which, he argued, the Muslim community greatly respected, and which the demoralized Christian community in Algeria greatly needed. After the sudden death of the abbé général and a personal visit by the new abbé, who came to the conclusion that it would be “better to close a monastery in France than to close Tibhirine,” it both remained open and became a symbol of the new mission of the Church in Algeria, as a Church of presence and service to the people.\(^{12}\) Mgr Duval called Tibhirine the “lungs” of the Church in Algeria, giving much needed spiritual oxygen to those who were struggling to keep it alive in difficult circumstances after Algerian independence.

Tibhirine is in many ways representative of the ideal of the Christian presence in Algeria after independence. The monks who lived there lived very humbly, and served the community directly, and Brother Luc continued to see up to fifty patients a day in the

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 48.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., 50-52.
monastery clinic until the day of the kidnapping. Although Christian de Chergé was viewed as a radical in his early days at Tibhirine, his theological and personal approach to Islam was that of a communal search for God. He, along with several other Christians in Algeria, including Claude Rault, the bishop of the Sahara region, formed a study group with interested Muslims called Ribât al-Salâm (the Ties of Peace) to engage in Christian-Muslim dialogue. At a 1989 meeting organized in Rome for Christians who lived in Muslim lands, Christian noted, however, that this dialogue “is rarely of a strictly theological order. Rather, we flee from this type of battle. I believe them to be very limited. A glass of water offered or received, a shared piece of bread, a helping hand, these say more than a theological manual of what is possible in living together.” It was this sense of community with the Algerian Muslims in Tibhirine that the monks did not want to desert; if they left, as the symbol of the Christian Church in Algeria, it would like Christianity had deserted Algeria in its time of need. The monks of Tibhirine were incredibly sensitive to the responsibility on their shoulders. In addition, if they left, they knew that the military would take over the monastery and the villagers would be swept into the violence of the war.

The monks of Tibhirine were not the first or only Christian casualties of the war. In 1994, a Catholic priest and nun were killed in the library they ran for Algerian students in the Casbah of Algiers, and several Pères blancs were assassinated in Tizi-Ouzou in

13 Ibid., 235.
14 Ibid., 92. Christian de Chergé had studied Arabic and Islam at the PISAI (Pontifical Institute for the Study of Arabic and Islam) in Rome for two years before he settled permanently at Tibhirine in 1974.
15 Cited in Kiser, 113.
Kabylia, both killings that the GIA claimed credit for. In August 1996, Pierre Claverie, the bishop of Oran was assassinated along with his young Muslim assistant by a bomb that was planted at the door of the bishopric. Yet it was these same Christians, who spent their days in Algeria struggling to bring the Christian and Muslim communities together, and who argued long after their deaths – through their writings and their testimony – that it was not the Algerians or Islam as a whole that should be blamed for their deaths, who seemed to best understand the necessity for forgiveness and reconciliation. More than two years before his death, Christian de Chergé composed a letter to his brother, which was to be opened only after his death. In this letter, which has come to be known as Christian’s Testament, he wrote:

If it should happen one day—and it could be today—that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to encompass all the foreigners in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, my family, to remember that my life was given to God and to this country…

I would like them to be able to associate this death with so many other equally violent ones allowed to fall into the indifference of anonymity. My life has no more value than any other. Nor any less value. In any case, it has not the innocence of childhood. I have lived long enough to know that I share in the evil which seems, alas, to prevail in the world, and even in that which would strike me blindly. I should like, when the time comes, to have a space of lucidity which would enable me to beg forgiveness of God and of my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who would strike me down.

I could not desire such a death. It seems to me important to state this. I don’t see, in fact, how I could rejoice if the people I love were indiscriminately accused of my murder. It would be too high a price to pay for what will be called, perhaps, the “grace of martyrdom” to owe this to an Algerian, whoever he may be, especially if he says he is acting in fidelity to what he believes to be Islam.

I know the contempt in which Algerians taken as a whole can be engulfed. I

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16 Ibid., 244-245, 262-263.
17 Robert Masson, Jusqu’au bout de la nuit: L’Eglise d’Algérie. (Paris: Cerf, 1998),19-29. In total, nineteen members of the clergy and (religieuses) were victims of the violence of the Algerian civil war in the 1990s.
know, too, the caricatures of Islam which encourage a certain idealism. It is too
easy to give oneself a good conscience in identifying this religious way with the
fundamentalist ideology of its extremists. For me, Algeria and Islam is something
different. It is a body and a soul. I have proclaimed it often enough, I think, in
view of and in the knowledge of what I have received from it, finding there so
often that true strand of the Gospel learned at my mother’s knee, my very first
Church, precisely in Algeria, and already respecting believing Muslims…

On June 2, 1996, under massive security, a funeral Mass was held at Notre-Dame
d’Afrique in Algiers for Cardinal Duval and the seven monks. Two days later, seven
caskets and a small group of intimate friends and family were transported back to
Tibhirine for burial, after long negotiations with the Algerian government allowed for the
monks to be buried at the monastery despite the security risks. When the cortège arrived
at the monastery, the villagers of Tibhirine had dug the graves for their neighbors, despite
the fact that the Algerian security forces did not allow them to participate in the
ceremony. The groundskeeper overheard one of the Algerian soldiers guarding the
monastery say, “… these men loved God. They loved Algeria more than the Algerians.”

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18 Christian de Chergé, “Testament of Dom Christian de Chergé, OCSO.” Reprinted in

19 Kiser, 350-351.
### Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACA</td>
<td>Assemblée des Cardinaux et Archevêques (Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALN</td>
<td>Armée de libération nationale (National Liberation Army)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCIA</td>
<td>Commission of the Churches on International Affairs – WCC</td>
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<td>CCSA</td>
<td>Christian Committee for Service in Algeria – WCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cimade Committee</td>
<td>Comité inter-mouvements auprès des évacuées (Inter-Movement Committee Among the Evacuees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERF</td>
<td>Église réformée de France (French Reformed Church)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de libération nationale (National Liberation Front)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPF</td>
<td>Fédération protestante de France (French Protestant Federation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPRA Government</td>
<td>Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td>Mission de France</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRP</td>
<td>Mouvement républicain populaire (The Popular Republican Movement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organisation armée secrète (Secret Armed Organization)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>Parti communiste français (French Communist Party)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>(Cahiers de) Témoignage chrétien (Christian Witness)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>Section administratives spécialisée (Special Administrative Section)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMA</td>
<td>Scouts musulmans d’Algérie (Muslim Scouts of Algeria)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCP</td>
<td>Union des chrétiens progressistes (Union of Progressivist Christians)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCC</td>
<td>The World Council of Churches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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