Hespéris-Tamuda LXI (1) (2026): 277-293

Decision-Making Process and Order Execution Modalities of the FLN in the Alpes-Maritimes (1956-1962)

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Abstract: This article offers a micro-historical analysis of Algerian nationalism in France based on departmental judicial archives, revealing the concrete functioning of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in the Alpes-Maritimes during the war of independence. In this region, where the Algerian National Movement (MNA) failed to establish a lasting presence, the FLN developed a clandestine organization based on compartmentalization, the mobility of its cadres, and the discretion of its meetings. The study highlights the hierarchical decision-making processes, the structure of the political-administrative organization (OPA), the monitoring of activists, and the central role of justice commissions and financial collection as tools of internal discipline. Finally, the article suggests that these organizational practices, developed under police pressure, helped shape the FLN's methods of exercising power after independence, particularly through the desire to maintain close surveillance of Algerian immigration.

Keyswords: FLN, Algerian Immigration, Alpes-Maritimes, Decision Making, Execution of Order.

Introduction

A review of the historiography of Algerian nationalism shows a much greater interest in the independence struggle on Algerian territory than anywhere else.[1] However, following on from the work of Benjamin Stora,[2] a great deal of research has been carried out, particularly in the Paris region, the Lyon area and the South-East of France.[3] The study of Algerian nationalism, through the consultation of judicial archives at the local level, makes it possible to highlight various aspects of the rivalries of the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the Algerian National Movement (MNA), a plethora of subversive actions, the political- administrative organization

[1] Sylvie Thénault, "Travailler sur la guerre d'indépendance algérienne : Bilan d'une expérience historienne," *Afrique & histoire* 2, 1 (2004): 193-209. https://doi.org/10.3917/afhi.002.0193; Raphaëlle Branche, *La Guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005); Sylvie Thénault, *Bilan historiographique de la guerre d'Algérie des années 2000 à aujourd'hui*, Rapport remis le 29 mars 2011 [online]: http://raphaellebranche.fr/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/RAPPORT-29-mars-2011.pdf

[2] Benjamin Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie. L'immigration algérienne en France 1912-1992* (Paris: Fayard, 1992).

[3] See Marc André, "Les Groupes de choc du FLN. Particularités de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne en métropole," *Revue historique* 669, 2 (2014): 143-78: https://doi.org/10.3917/rhis.141.0143; Benjamin Stora and Linda Amiri, *Algériens en France: 1954-1962: la guerre, l'exil, la vie* (Paris: Autrement-Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, 2012); Emmanuel Blanchard, *La police parisienne et les Algériens (1944-1962)* (Paris: Nouveau Monde éditions, 2011).

(OPA) of Algerian nationalist movements, control of Algerian immigration, criminal justice and Algerian 'delinquency,' etc. Greater investment by historians in departmental archives will offer important perspectives for a broader study of Algerian nationalism. "The local scale makes it possible to zoom in on the sharpness of the image, which loses nothing of its quality as the focus is expanded, ... Local actors are emerging, and, through them, by means of a better understanding of their role, another story can be written."[4]

This article is a continuation of my work on Algerians in the Alpes-Maritimes.[5] It tackles the issue of the historicity of democracy in the Arab world. I purport to question the *modus operandi* of the FLN, that is to say the decision-making mechanisms, the transmission of orders and their execution in a context of clandestinity, compartmentalization, infiltration and police hunts.

Establishment of the FLN in the Alpes-Maritimes and its Constraints

The Algerian community was estimated, according to a report from the prefect to the minister of the Interior dated October 21, 1953, at 2,387 individuals. According to a statistical table dated September 30, 1958, it reached 2,421 people.[6] This figure was around 5,000 people in 1961. In 1962, the number of Algerians reached 7277, including 533 women.[7] This population was characterized by high mobility between mainland France and Algeria and between the different French departments. Some wanted to regroup with relatives, seek better living conditions or simply flee to avoid prosecution from the French police or the FLN and the MNA.

The FLN gradually established itself in the Alpes-Maritimes department starting from the end of 1956. Salah Belkhiri, arrested by the police in Isola on September 13, 1956, declared: "I was contacted by a North African of the name of Benyaech Rabah, employed at the EDF. After having asked the reason for my coming to Isola, he informed me that I would have to pay the sum of 1,500 francs for the first month and 1,100 francs for the months to come, for the *fellaghas.*"[8] Fifteen days later, Belkhiri was contacted by another FLN militant: "Chaabane Loussif made the same comments to me

[4] Branche, *La Guerre*, 10.

[5] Riadh Ben Khalifa, "Collecte de fonds et violence dans le milieu des travailleurs immigrés algériens: Alpes-Maritimes: (1956-1962)," *Crimes, Histoire et Société* 2, 23 (2019): 77-98. https://doi.org/10.4000/chs.2507; Riadh Ben Khalifa, "L'organisation politico-administrative du FLN dans les Alpes-Maritimes (1956-1962)," in *Espaces méditerranéens (XIX^{e}-XX^{e} siècles): administration, représentations et mobilité,* Hommage au professeur Abdesslem Ben Hamida, ed. Riadh Ben Khalifa and Béchir Yazidi (Tunis: Centre de Publication Universitaire, 2019), 352-69.

[6] Departmental Archives of the Alpes-Maritimes (hereinafter A.D.A.M.), 177W322.

[7] *Statistique de la France publiée par le ministère de l'agriculture, du commerce et des travaux publics*, sd.

as Benyaech relating to the payment of contributions for the *fellaghas* and encouraged me not to socialize with French people or go to drinking places and not to smoke."[8]

Other clues as to the beginnings of the action taken by the FLN in the Alpes-Maritimes were discovered thanks to the interception, on January 23, 1957 in Villefranche-sur-Mer, of Salah Bourras while he was in possession of a page from *Al Moujahid* newspaper bearing the words "The Revolution by the people and for the people." This paper encouraged Algerian immigrants to go on a strike from January 28 to February 4, 1957, on the occasion of the UN General Assembly, which had placed the Algerian question on the agenda.[9]

The first judicial investigation opened against the FLN dates back to December 4, 1956 with the arrest of Sayad Allaoua who was sentenced, on January 22, 1957 by the Grasse criminal court, to one year in prison for undermining state security. From then on, the investigations multiplied. On June 26, 1957, Mohamed Ben Dhimi was accosted by an Algerian, Mohammed Boya, while he was on his way back to his home in Cannet. Boya demanded that he pay 20 thousand francs for "the fighters of Algeria." "We need money for the fighters in Algeria. You must therefore pay me the sum of 20,000 francs."[10] Faced with his refusal to pay, Mohamed Boya threatened his 'co-religionist' on many occasions, notably at the bar "La Brousse" in Cannet. The latter was prevented from attacking Ben Dhimi thanks to the intervention of the establishment's owner.

On June 29, 1957, between 11 p.m. and midnight, Mohamed Boya showed a lot of persistence: he called on a dozen Algerians to attack Ben Dhimi in front of the bar "La Brousse." One of the witnesses, Messaoud Beddar, made this statement: "About two months ago, while I was at the Terminus tobacco bar in Cannet, Bouya Mohamed called me out in a rather harsh way and asked me to pay him the sum of 10,000 francs, to help the rebels in Algeria. Having asked him for explanations, he told me that I had to pay this sum, that I only had to comply or that otherwise he would 'knock my teeth out."[11]

"The General Intelligence services noted, in January 1958, that FLN officials were endeavoring to extend the scope of their action to regions considered until recently as minor, such as that of the Alpes-Maritimes."[12]

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[8] *Statistique de la France*.
[9] Maurice Flory, "Algérie algérienne et Droit international," *Annuaire français de droit international* 6 (1960): 973-98.
[10] A.D.A.M., 307W26, Minutes, July 3, 1957, Hearing of Mohamed Ben Dhimi.
[11] A.D.A.M., 307W26, Minutes, July 3, 1957, testimony of Messaoud Beddar.
[12] A.D.A.M., 28W107, RG report, January 14, 1958.

This department was one of the traffic hubs for Algerians in France, because it represented both a place of transit for those who would like to go to Switzerland, Germany or Italy before moving to European countries or to Arab ones.[13]

In addition, this department was part of the operational areas of the FLN,[14] particularly in terms of fundraising, organization of the lifestyle of the Algerian immigrant population and repression of those who refused to pay dues or those who did not obey orders from the FLN (prohibition of the consumption of tobacco and alcohol, prohibition to go to European bars and obligation to be clean and well dressed). Being subject to close surveillance, the FLN counted on the heads of cells to persuade Algerian immigrants to follow the line of conduct imposed by the FLN: "An effort must be made in the direction of the clarification of our political positions and the political education of the people. Each cell leader explains the party line in his own way."[15] However, the FLN counted on these leaders more to transmit orders than to carry out propaganda work, and this because of the close surveillance of Algerian immigrants, the lack of training of cell leaders and also owing to the quasi-general illiteracy of the Algerian population living in the Alpes-Maritimes department.

According to the testimony of an Algerian who had questioned Hamlaoui Mansouri, the latter had said to him: "Pay and don't try to understand, if you want to live."[16] On September 7, 1958, Abdelkader Djarjir grabbed by the throat an Algerian who refused to pay the sum of 9,000 francs, saying to him: "You pay today. Otherwise tonight, you'll be done for."[17] These types of threats go to show that there was not too much room for persuasion by FLN militants. The police were kept informed of visits by senior FLN officials who had come to the department more to restructure the organization than to conduct propaganda meetings.

In order to ensure control of the Algerian immigrant population, the FLN set up a political-administrative organization (OPA) called *Nidham*. The department of the Alpes-Maritimes was considered as a peripheral zone, but one which had to be incorporated into the pyramidal structure of the nationalist organization. In 1957, the Alpes Maritimes depended on the "Centre" zone. "With the extension of the FLN which, from 1958, ensured definitive supremacy over the MNA and thereby almost exclusive control of

[13] Ben Khalifa, "La surveillance," 85-102.
[14] Jean-Bernard Lacroix. "L'activité indépendantiste algérienne dans les Alpes-Maritimes de 1954 à 1962," *Recherches régionales* 169 (2003): 99-118.
[15] Mohammed Harbi, *Les archives de la révolution algérienne*. Rassemblées et commentées par Mohammed Harbi (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1981).
[16] A.D.A.M., 228 W371, Final Indictment, June 2, 1959.
[17] A.D.A.M., 228W 357, Final Indictment, October 30, 1958.

the Algerian community, its organization was to include four Wilayas in 1958, six in 1959 and even seven in 1961. But for the organization, the number or name of the Wilaya is less important than the need to facilitate the task of managers and save them precious time so as to avoid the long journeys made by executives, which always pose a danger to security."[18] The architects of this territorial division took into consideration the evolution of the Algerian population and the need to guarantee the partitioning of *Nidham*, an imperative stemming from the wave of arrests of October-November 1958. "The head of the organization had no sooner set up its organization chart than it was already necessary to consider modifying it."[19]

FLN personnel were divided, according to their degree of involvement in the organization, into sympathizers, members and militants. This classification was designated by the acronym (SAM). According to Ali Haroun, "the sympathizer is the one who asks or agrees to join the FLN. He attends the meetings of his level, reads and distributes the writings of the organization and is generally interested in its evolution."[20] Working his way up, the sympathizer became a member. Members were called upon to become militants if they had particular aptitudes. "The linchpin of the organization of the French Federation of the FLN is constituted by the militants. They carry out the most diverse and dangerous tasks, thus proving to be the driving force of the Algerian community of which they will indisputably be the vanguard in combat."[21] Other categories were added to this classification: merchants, women and "the special ones" (cabaret artists and the Algerian underworld). "These shady individuals were under the strict control of the FLN. They contributed according to the directives, observed the discipline required of all Algerians."[22]

In addition to the pyramidal organization, the FLN proceeded to a territorial division of the metropolis while respecting partitioning and clandestinity, but without tracing its organization chart on the French departments.[23] The consultation of the archives does not give us complete satisfaction, since the data relating to *Nidham* in the Alpes-Maritimes are truncated. The grid depends on several factors such as the concentration of the Algerian population, the arrests of militants and, in other regions, the rivalry with the MNA.

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[18] Ali Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya. La guerre du FLN en France 1954-1962* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), 49.
[19] Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya,* 52.
[20] Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya,* 48.
[21] Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya,* 49.
[22] Omar Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN: Mémoires d'un combattant* (Alger: Casbah éditions, 2007), 114.
[23] Let us not forget that Belgium had two regions, the Saarland one, Germany three regions and Switzerland one region.

Let us then start from the general principles revealed by Ali Haroun and try to cross them with the investigations carried out by the French police. "The Wilaya comprises two Amala or 'superzones.' Each is generally subdivided, in turn, into two and sometimes three zones (…) As far as the militants are concerned, the region is subdivided into district, sector, kasma, group, fraction and cell. The cell includes two activists plus a cell leader, i.e. three members. The fraction, two cells plus a fraction leader, i.e. seven members. The group: two fractions plus a group leader, i.e. fifteen members… and so on up to the region which should ideally include 511 militants including the regional leader."[24]

Shortly before the signing of the Evian agreements on January 23, 1962, the arrest of FLN militants in the Cimiez district of Nice, and the search of documents in the grounds of an old castle, located at 24 of Dr. Ménard Street, facilitated a major investigation into the organization chart of the FLN in the Nice Côte d'Azur area.[25] The 312 bis zone[26] called "Nice Côte d'Azur" extended to the Var, except Toulon. That is to say, it went beyond the Alpes-Maritimes department. It covered the region of Nice bearing the code number 3121 bis and that of Cannes numbered 3122 bis. As for the region of Saint Raphaël-Toulon,[27] which adjoined the Alpes-Maritimes department and which depended on the same area, it bore the number 3123 bis. The Nice region comprised three sectors: Nice-Ville, Cagnes-sur-Mer and Menton. The Cannes region had two sectors: Cannes Ville and Cannes Banlieue. These sectors were organized into *kasmas*, sections, groups and cells whose scope and leaders changed according to circumstances.

Places of Decision-making by the FLN

The FLN was to act clandestinely and at the same time carry out repressive actions against recalcitrants. The tracking of the Algerian nationalist movement by the police made it possible to reveal data on its mode of action. "Shops constitute an essential point of observation and control as Algerian traders fulfill vital functions with their compatriots (accommodating, catering and consequently, the effect of attraction and fixation of migrants, power of influence due to collecting money, sending money orders to Algeria, setting up and managing a fund for the sick and the

[24] Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya,* 55.

[25] A.D.A.M., Minutes, 228W510 and 228W442.

[26] This depends on Wilaya 3 bis or the southern Wilaya. It is "*subdivided into two Amalas, one corresponding to Marseille and its suburbs, as well as the Côte d'Azur, Provence and the Basses-Alpes. The other stretches from the Rhône Valley to the Atlantic coast*." See Appendix 3 of Ali Haroun's memoirs, Haroun, *La 7e Wilaya*, 441-42.

[27] The Saint-Raphaël-Toulon region was set up on December 1, 1961. It previously had two sectors that depended on Cannes.

unemployed, etc.). The control of businesses is all the more necessary as commercial and militant figures are susceptible of being one and the same."[28]

Algerian immigrants had their own specific places of residence and frequented cafés, canteens and special types of accommodation: on the one hand, because they did not have easy access to housing in the city; on the other hand, because they were looking to save money; finally, they preferred to concentrate in particular places on a community, regional, tribal or even village basis. The FLN accommodated this situation because it could thus control the Algerians' mobility, state of mind and income.

The cafés, which generally took on various functions, were strategic places for both the French authorities[29] and the Algerian nationalists. "The café then reaches the extreme degrees of its political function, as a logistical base for war."[30] A memorandum addressed to the prefects, in September 1955, shows that the Ministry of the Interior was aware of the stakes involved in controlling the bars/restaurants run by Algerians: "I invite you from now on to take all useful measures in order to take control of their owners or managers, to make them the auxiliaries of the administration since they have currently become the instruments of an agitation which camouflages itself less and less."[31]

On June 22, 1957, the prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes sent a letter to the head of the departmental service of General Information(RG) to express doubt that hovered over the "multiplicity of purchases of drinking establishments by French Muslims" in the course of the first semester of 1957: "It would be necessary for your services to carry out a very strict control both of the transfers and operating conditions of the said bars because it comes back to me that these are very often transformed into restaurants and dormitories in conditions that are surely irregular."[32] Seven bars were closed in 1957 in application of article 62 of the Code of drinking places.[33]

Investigations later showed that the bars-restaurants run by FLN executives and militants served as places for coordinating nationalist action, identifying newcomers and recalcitrant, and possibly as a hiding place for

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[28] Sabah Chaïb, "Cantines et restaurants Algériens à Paris et dans le département de la Seine entre 1920 et 1950. Manger sous contrôle," *Ethnologie française* 44, 1 (2014): 38.

[29] Colette Granet, "Les cafetiers maures: 1914-1940," *Revue Européenne des migrations internationales* 11, 1 (1995): 125-32.

[30] Omar Carlier, "Le café maure. Sociabilité masculine et effervescence citoyenne (Algérie XVII^{e}-XX^{e} siècles)," *Annales, Economie, sociétés, civilisations*, 45^{e} année, 4 (1990): 975-1003.

[31] ADAM. 560W220, Memo, September 1955.

[32] A.D.A.M., 177W324, Letter from the Prefect to the Head of the Departmental General Intelligence Service, June 22, 1957.

[33] A.D.A.M., 177 W 329, Cafés Run by French Muslims in the Department, Administratively Closed since 1-1-1957.

documents, even weapons. “On September 7, 1960, the Nice gendarmerie learned that certain Algerians were meeting at the bar ‘L’Arlequin’ whose tenants were known to belong to the FLN.”[34] Indeed, during a search, the gendarmerie was able to seize documents relating to the FLN both in the kitchen and in the upstairs bedrooms, which were occupied by Algerians.

Police surveillance made it possible to identify the bars owned by Algerians close to the FLN. Let us quote the case of “L’Escallier Fleuri” (2, Saint Antoine Street in Cannes) managed by Salah Senoussi alias Bouaita known for “his active and influential participation in the FLN movement.”[35] The same person was cited as manager of the “Bar des Nations,” located at 13, Suisse in Cannes[36] where an emissary from Marseille, Allaoua Allouani, had been arrested on December 30, 1961.

The police identified suspicious bars, thanks to the follow-up of shady people: Sayad Allaoua recruited, during his stay in prison, a German named Hans Ruch to serve as a liaison officer. On his release from prison on October 14, 1957, he was followed by the police who noted that an appointment had been given to the former German prisoner at the bar “Le Corsaire” located at 9, Bonaparte Street in Nice and run by Omar Kouidri. It was pointed out that this bar was “suspected of serving as a meeting place for local members of the FLN.”[37] Also in Nice, an investigation targeting Rabah Nedjar made it possible to identify another site of nationalist action: “Manager of the Algerian café-restaurant located at 12, la Loge Street in Nice, Nedjar Rabah expressed anti-French opinions and his establishment has become a meeting center hostile to France.”[38] The “Bar à Tin” located in Cannes la Bocca, managed by Ahmed Abdelli, was identified as a place to centralize collections. Following several police raids, the latter was ordered to go to Switzerland.[39]

Various investigations showed that the cafés-restaurants-hotels operated by the Algerians served as fundraising venues. Mohamed Sendjasni was recruited as a fundraiser in Nice and arrested in February 1961. He “handed over the funds to a Constantine named Abdelkader, owner of a café-hotel near the [Nice] train station. This individual served as a mailbox. Abdelkader operated this café in association with two other Muslims named Ali and Hadj, who in the FLN organization serve as delivery agents. They

[34] A.D.A.M., 177 W 329, Cafés Run by French Muslims in the Department, Administratively Closed since, January 1st 1957.
[35] A.D.A.M., 28W107, RG Report, February 4, 1962.
[36] A.D.A.M. 307W128, Minutes, December 30, 1961.
[37] A.D.A.M, 28W107, Report of the Head of the Territorial Surveillance Brigade, October 10, 1958.
[38] A.D.A.M. 228W400, Final Indictment, January 20, 1961
[39] A.D.A.M., 28W85, Minutes, January 17, 1958.

often travelled to Marseille and sometimes went as far as Paris."[40] Furthermore, during his interrogation, Djilali Tarafi, who held the position of regional manager of Nice, "stated that the heads of sectors deposited in transit the sums received at the café '*l'Arlequin*'; as soon as their amount became significant, they were sent to the regional depot."[41] This place was associated with a leather goods trader named Ali Larbaoui whose shop was in the station area.

On many occasions, the French police got their hands on weapons and documents in the café-restaurants held by Algerians, militants of the FLN. On January 23, 1958, during a search of the bar "Les amis," located at 12, la Fontette Street in Grasse, the police seized "in the kitchen an automatic pistol, brand MAB, caliber 6.35, the magazine of which contains five cartridges - under the bar counter a barrel revolver (…) loaded with 5 refill cartridges."[42]

The premises of Algerian traders were also used to organize meetings, in order to make important decisions. In the wake of an embezzlement committed by a fundraiser in the Cannes area at the expense of "prostitutes of Muslim origin," infiltration attempts by elements loyal to the MNA, an increase in the number of people who braved the ban on the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, as well as the multiplication of the number of Algerians who turned to the police to denounce the fundraisers or their attackers, the FLN dispatched an official to put order in the Cannes sector.

Thus, we can read in a report dated November 19, 1958: "A reliable informant, who wishes to maintain the strictest anonymity, has just reported, already confirming what had been known, namely that a chief of Wilaya would hold clandestine meetings once a week at the home of a man named Robert, in reality Boumana Rabah, a merchant specializing in oriental products, 14, Georges Clémenceau Avenue in Cannes. These meetings, according to the words of the informant, had been held for a few weeks already to discuss the complete dismantling of the FLN 'network' of the Alpes-Maritimes, in particular that of the representatives of this group in Cannes."[43]

The police investigation could not reveal either the name of the FLN leader or his rank, except for the information that he came sometimes from Marseilles, sometimes from Nice. However, we can deduce that the restructuring of the Cannes sector was made in a consultative way. This type of meeting is an opportunity to take stock of the situation and to make known the decisions of the Justice Commissions. The meetings usually took place in

[40] A.D.A.M, 307W60, Minutes, February 14, 1961.
[41] A.D.A.M., 228W400, Final Indictment, January 20, 1961.
[42] A.D.A.M., 228 W 498, Minutes, 23 janvier 1958
[43] A.D.A.M., 28W107, Report, November 19, 1958.

a very specific order. According to a document in Arabic seized on October 9, 1959 in Juin-Les-Pins, at the home of the head of the Nice Côte d'Azur region, Mohamed Belalia Doumales, the meetings took place according to a very specific agenda. Ten points had to be examined each time: numerical tables; meeting and monitoring; description of the organization chart and review of the situation; discipline; execution of orders; difficulties and obstacles; accomplishment of missions; recruitment of "abandoned brothers" (sic); summary examination of the *Nidham*. The last point concerns questions and complaints.[44]

This agenda would be specific to *Wilaya* 3 bis, because according to Ali Boukerma, who relates the progress of a control meeting with a zone manager in Nancy, it was about arrests and infiltrations, remarks on the writing of reports, the transmission of orders and a review of the attacks committed against FLN militants by 'counter-revolutionaries.'[45] Irrespective of the agenda, the meetings of those responsible for the zone aimed to guarantee the effective execution of the guidelines of the French Federation of the FLN and put an end to a situation that did not allow the nationalist organization to maximize fundraising.

Among the locations, where the meetings of the executives of the Algerian nationalist organization were held, were the places of residence. The leaders of the FLN did everything possible to blend in with the population and not attract the attention of the police. In February 1962, the National Gendarmerie carried out an investigation that enabled it to identify the place of retirement of Brahim Bouarrouj, chief of the 312 bis zone, since January 5, 1962. He lived in the dependences of a castle in ruins, at 24, Dr. Ménard Street, near the Cimiez district in Nice. In the same place were arrested Abdelkader Mettah, a.k.a Kouider, head of the Nice region (3121) and Mohamed Demmanne-Debbich, regional head of the Committee for the Support of Detainees (CSD), also in charge of hosting those responsible for the region and Nice area.

The documents seized by the gendarmerie show the FLN's strong concern to rationalize the decision-making within the framework of the application of the general directives. Given the constraints of clandestinity and compartmentalization, the meetings could only involve a small number of activists. The reports that were seized disclosed information about the collection of contributions and their routing, lists of detainees and their families, officials who had embezzled collected funds, names of persons who had been punished and who were to be punished, the directives of *Wilayas*'

[44] A.D.A.M., 307W46, loose leaf, nd.

[45] Ali Boukerma, *La guerre d'Algérie en France (1955-1962) ou Les combattants du FLN en exil* (Alger: Éditions JUBA, 2018), 29-31.

officials, etc. By organizing nationalist activities from nondescript and isolated accommodation, FLN cadres wanted to take shelter, since the cafés and places with a high concentration of Algerian workers, were tightly controlled and infiltrated by the police.

The leaders of the FLN chose meetings venues haphazardly. A man named Abderrahmane from Mulhouse was kidnapped in Nice and forced into a car before being transported to Théoule-sur-Mer. "Abderrahmane was able to notice during his detention that the room where he had been sequestered looked like a stable both by the rings sealed to the walls and by the type of door giving access to it."[46] He was introduced to a person nicknamed "Si Mohamed," head of the FLN section in Mulhouse and Mokhtar Daoui, head of the FLN section in Cannes. "The latter, after having heard Abderrahmane who had supposedly admitted having lost in a ball the sum of 1800 NF belonging to the FLN, would have ordered the offender to appear the next day before the court of the FLN which would sit in Marseilles, on Chapelet Street."[47]

Oftentimes those who refused to pay dues and those who squandered the money of the nationalist organization were judged and punished without having been heard. But since this was the case of Abderrahmane, an FLN militant, the latter was auditioned and confronted with Si Mohamed, who came from Mulhouse, before being directed to Marseille, on his own. Thus, despite the decentralization of the Justice Commissions, some important decisions were taken at the level of the super zone or *Wilaya* 3 bis.

The FLN's Repressive Actions: Between Consultation and Primary Reaction

The repressive actions of the FLN obeyed general directives that boiled down, on the one hand, to the fight against those who refused to pay contributions and against those who seized part or all of the collections. The FLN had to fight, on the other hand, the police informers and those elements that threatened its existence. The internal bulletin of the FLN, distributed in January 1958, justified the use of violence as follows: "The FLN is not an opposition party, but the authority against the French occupier. This situation gives the FLN the right to levy taxes, issue judgments and have them executed."[48]

The assassinations were meticulously prepared at a logistical level, following decisions emanating from the Justice Commissions – created in

[46] A.D.A.M., 228W444, Report by Police Officer Raoul Bonnaure, May 12, 1962.
[47] A.D.A.M., 228W444, Report of the Principal Commissioner, Head of Urban Security in Nice, May 8, 1962.
[48] A.D.A.M., 228W85, Internal Bulletin of the FLN, January 1958.

1959 – and passed on by FLN officials to the shock groups before being executed. Other acts of violence were committed by FLN militants, either following orders received, or in reaction to non-compliance with the rules or because of a provocation.

On March 6, 1958, while he was at the bar "Chez Laurent" which was at 44, Risso Boulevard in Nice, El Hammel Dahli was addressed by Laid Bougherara: "You drink wine. You have money to get drunk. You have to pay 1,500 francs a month for the fellaghas." El Hamel Dahli told the police that he had answered as follows: "I am a veteran and I work to earn my livelihood." He added: "I wanted to leave the establishment and when I went outside he rushed at me, a razor in his hand, saying to me, 'Give me some money or I'll cut your throat.' He punched me in the face."[49] This news item also shows that certain reactions of FLN militants did not always obey specific orders, but general directives. Besides, the militants themselves did not scrupulously respect the obligation not to drink and not to smoke. Laurent Allione, owner of the establishment "Chez Laurent," told the police that he had served the attacker Laid Bougherara, who was accompanied by Naceur Derrar, glasses of wine before the arrival of the victim El Hamel Dahli.[50]

The creation of justice commissions in 1959 was a turning point in the rationalization of the functioning of the FLN. A report mentions the case of an Algerian who was strangled and left for dead in Saint-Laurent du Var, on the night of October 9 to 10, 1958. He was tried by a court composed, among others, of his attackers: Aissa Brachia, Belaid Knaizi and Hocine Belabed.[51] Thus, before the creation of the justice commissions, the functions of the militants were not clearly delineated and could trigger responses against the nationalist organization. In addition, executions committed by local activists could facilitate police investigation.

The Justice Commissions were tasked "to settle disputes between Algerian men and women - money lending, lack of respect, disputes, marriages and divorces."[52] For more than a year, the justice commissions were structured at the level of the Wilaya, but from August 1960, to thwart authorities, the justice commissions were downgraded to the sector level.[53] Some members of the justice commissions were identified by the police: Salah Snoussi, alias Bouaita, manager of the "Bar des Nations," 13 Suisse Street in Cannes, and in charge of depositing funds for the Nice Côte d'Azur region, was also a member of the Justice Committees. As such, "he was

[49] A.D.A.M, 228W349, Minutes March 6, 1958.
[50] A.D.A.M., 228W349, Minutes March 7, 1958.
[51] A.D.A.M., 28W107, GR report, October 16, 1958.
[52] Stora, *Ils venaient*, 229.
[53] Linda Amiri, "La Fédération de France du Front de libération nationale (FLN). Des origines à l'indépendance (1926-1962)," (PhD diss., Institut d'Études politiques de Paris, 2013), 228.

informed of all the executions that took place in the region since November 1961."[54]

Once a sentence has been pronounced, the head of the OPA intervenes to make it enforceable. "This is where the shock groups come in: their mission is to punish the 'traitors' condemned by the justice commissions and to discipline those who have disobeyed the 'internal regulations' concerning discipline. Their interventions range from beatings to killing, including severe correction which often leads to hospitalization."[55]

Some fundraisers were mistaken by the police for members of the shock groups. We can find in a report relating to Mohamed Bennani: "From the information collected, it appears that Bennani Mohamed is part of a shock group or group of fundraisers operating on behalf of the FLN."[56] What reinforced this confusion is that some boasted about being members of the shock groups without it being really the case.[57] Messaoud Sahraoui "bragged, among other things, about having perpetrated a gun shooting in Nice, in 1959, with Youbi Abdelmajid, targeting two police informers named Fatima and Yasmina. However, only one woman, who answered to the first name of Fatima and the nickname of Yasmina, was considered by the FLN as a police informer and killed for this fact (…) Sahraoui claimed he was the murderer, to which we can give him credit."[58]

Examination of police records shows that fundraisers naturally engaged in violence when people were unwilling to pay. On the night of August 30 to 31, 1958, Ahmed Boulkenafet was at the Bar "Chez Nenette" to drink beer. An Algerian asked him to follow him outside: "I complied and in the street I found another Algerian who told me to accompany him (…) The second Algerian asked me if I gave money to the FLN, I told him no and that I didn't want to give any (…) As I didn't want to pay that amount, he threw himself on me and hit me with his fists. I fell to the ground and he kicked me. I specify that the young Algerian joined him to hit me."[59]

The transmission of orders to the shock groups was made through OPA officials. The latter recorded the judgments of the justice commissions and followed up on the execution of orders. A report from the RG shows that three political assassinations, committed in December 1961 in Vallauris, had obeyed this procedure: "In all likelihood, it seems to be a question of settling

[54] A.D.A.M., 228W510, Briefing Minutes, February 23, 1962.
[55] Marc André, "Les Groupes de choc du FLN. Particularités de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne en métropole," *Revue historique* 669, 2 (2014): 156.
[56] A.D.A.M., 228W510, Minutes, April 2, 1960.
[57] A.D.A.M., 228W371, Minutes, March 23, 1959.
[58] A.D.A.M., 307 W46, Report by Police Officer Raoul Bonnaure.
[59] A.D.A.M., 307W33, Minutes, September 1, 1958.

of scores ordered after a judgment was rendered by a tribunal of the frontist organization for embezzlement to the detriment of the FLN."[60]

In addition, an investigation against two FLN officials in the Nice region led to the following conclusion: "If it is true that there is 'an FLN tribunal' responsible for ruling on the case of recalcitrants or witnesses who testify in court against the militants of this organization, it is no less true that the co-defendants Belaiche and Belalia Douma held the archives and that, in the last resort, it clearly appears that they carried out the sentences of this court. This is the case for victims whose names appear on the blacklist."[61] It is indeed a list of eleven people, some of whom were murdered.

Following the investigations, it turned out that Mohand Belaiche, head of the FLN sector of Cagnes-sur-Mer and a very important official of the CSD, was "the instigator of the murder perpetrated against the French Muslim Bekkouche Mahmoud in Saint-Laurent-du- Var." He was also "the instigator of the punitive expedition perpetrated at the furnished apartment 'Le Cameo' in Antibes." As for Mohamed Belalia Douma, head of the Nice Côte d'Azur region,[62] he admitted that he was the one to monitor the shock group headed by Maamar Meddah and composed of Maamar Ali Kouchiche and Mohamed Noui. Moreover, it turned out that Hamid Bouaddi, head of the Nice-Beausoleil-Menton Sector (1959) had ordered Djilali Saoul Kaddour to execute Maamar Bouadi, who was on the blacklist seized from Mohamed Belalia Douma's home.

In another investigation into the murder of an Algerian prostitute on the night of October 4 to 5, 1959 in Théoule-sur-Mer, because she was considered a "carte blanche by the FLN,"[63] the order to the murderers - arrested in Rome by the Questura in January 1960 - was given by "Si Mohammed," nickname of Mohamed Belalia Douma. This investigation confirmed that executions were the specialty of the shock groups, but the coordination was made through the OPA. It follows that the action of the FLN was controlled and that the power was centralized, but far from being concentrated in the hands of a few executives.

Conclusion

The FLN operated in the Alpes-Maritimes without any rivalry with the MNA. The rare attempts to establish the Messalist movement on the Côte d'Azur were neutralized. To protect itself from police prosecution, the FLN

[60] A.D.A.M., 28W107, GR Report, December 26, 1961.
[61] A.D.A.M., 307W46, Report of the Principal Commissioner, Head of the Territorial Surveillance Brigade, December 12, 1959.
[62] In 1959, the Nice Côte d'Azur region was structured into four sectors. See Ben Khalifa, "L'organisation," 352-69.
[63] A.D.A.M., 307 W46, Minutes, October 23, 1959.

adopted the strategy of clandestine war and partitioning. Its executives blended in with the population, took nicknames and changed their place of residence as soon as they felt threatened. The directives were transmitted from the heads of the French Federation of the FLN to the heads of the *Wilayas*, including that designated by the code number 3 bis, and at this level, militants transmitted the orders to the other levels of the OPA, hence the regular presence in the Alpes-Maritimes of emissaries from Marseilles. The meetings were held on a limited scale and they took place in small numbers, always respecting compartmentalization and discretion.

The regional chiefs were responsible for preparing financial reports concerning the status of funds collection and expenditures, as well as providing a justification of the increase or decrease in the sums received. They denounced those unwilling to pay and followed up on the execution of the sentences of the justice commissions and the orders emanating from the super zone, but this required local coordination. Thus, meetings were convened in bars/restaurants owned by FLN militants, at the premises owned by nationalist traders or in places where Algerians lived. Despite all caution, the French police arrested several nationalist cadres and militants, which contributed to weakening the FLN. The nationalist organization responded with a greater harshness in collecting funds and with more severe sanctions against 'traitors' and recalcitrants. This explains the reorganization of the justice commissions, starting from August 1960, in order to speed up investigations and the execution of sentences.

The operational mode of the FLN during the struggle for national liberation influenced the political culture of future Algerian leaders. The desire to continue to control Algerian immigration through the creation of the "Amicale des Algériens en France" in 1962 would find its origins in the awareness of the stakes of Algerian immigration on the political level.

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العنوان: آليات اتخاذ القرار وتنفيذ الأوامر لدى مناضلي جبهة التحرير الوطني في الألب–ماريتيم (1956–1962)

ملخص: يقدم هذا المقال اعتمادا على مقاربة التاريخ المجهري واستنادا إلى الأرشيفات القضائية والبوليسية دراسة معمقة لنشاط جبهة التحرير الوطني (FLN) بجنوب شرق فرنسا وتحديدا منطقة الساحل الأزوري حيث لم تتمكن الحركة الوطنية الجزائرية (MNA) من ترسيخ وجودها بشكل دائم. ولقد طورت جبهة التحرير الوطني منظومة سرية قوامها التقسيم الهيكلي الصارم، والتنقل الدائم لكوادرها وقواعد السرية المصاحبة لاجتماعاتها.

وتكشف الدراسة هيكلة المنظمة السياسية والإدارية ومراقبة النشطاء وتأطيرهم. كما تبرز الدور المركزي للجان العدالة ولعملية جمع الأموال كأداة لضبط الانضباط التنظيمي وتنفيذ الأوامر. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن هذه الممارسة التنظيمية التي تم تطويرها تحت ضغط الملاحقة الأمنية والاستهداف البوليسي أسهمت في تشكيل أنماط ممارسة السلطة لدى جبهة التحرير الوطني بعد الاستقلال. لاسيما من خلال إرساء مراقبة دقيقة للمهاجرين الجزائريين في الخارج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جبهة التحرير الوطني، هجرة جزائرية، الألب–ماريتيم، اتخاذ القرار، تنفيذ الأوامر.

Titre: Processus décisionnel et modalités d'exécution des ordres du FLN dans les Alpes-Maritimes (1956-1962)

Résumé: Cet article propose une analyse micro-historique du nationalisme algérien en France à partir des archives judiciaires départementales, révélant le fonctionnement concret du Front de libération nationale (FLN) dans les Alpes-Maritimes durant la guerre d'indépendance. Dans ce territoire où le Mouvement national algérien (MNA) ne parvient pas à s'implanter durablement, le FLN développe une organisation clandestine fondée sur le cloisonnement, la mobilité de ses cadres et la discrétion des réunions. L'étude met en évidence les circuits hiérarchisés de décision, la structuration de l'organisation politico-administrative (OPA), le suivi des militants, ainsi que le rôle central des commissions de justice et de la collecte financière comme outils de discipline interne. L'article suggère enfin que ces pratiques organisationnelles, élaborées sous contrainte policière, ont contribué à façonner les modes d'exercice du pouvoir du FLN après l'indépendance, notamment à travers la volonté de maintenir une surveillance étroite sur l'immigration algérienne.

Mots clés: FLN, Immigration algérienne, Alpes-Maritimes, prise de décision, exécution des ordres.