

The Left and the Algerian catastrophe¹

Hugh Roberts

In explaining their sharply opposed positions following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, two prominent writers on the American Left, Christopher Hitchens and Noam Chomsky, both found it convenient to refer to the Algerian case. Since, for Hitchens, the attacks had been the work of an Islamic fundamentalism that was a kind of fascism, he naturally saw the Algerian drama in similar terms:

Civil society in Algeria is barely breathing after the fundamentalist assault... We let the Algerians fight the Islamic-fascist wave without saying a word or lending a hand.²

This comment was probably music to the ears of the Algerian government, which had moved promptly to get on board the US-led 'coalition' against terror, as Chomsky noted in articulating his very different view of things:

Algeria, which is one of the most murderous states in the world, would love to have U.S. support for its torture and massacres of people in Algeria.³

This reading of the current situation was later supplemented by an account of its genesis:

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This article was published in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (eds.), *The Socialist Register 2003: Fighting Identities*, London, The Merlin Press, 2002, 152-171.

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Christopher Hitchens, 'Against rationalization', *The Nation*, 8 October 2001.

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Noam Chomsky, Interview on MSNBC Chatroom, 2 October 2001.

The Algerian government is in office because it blocked the democratic election in which it would have lost to mainly Islamic-based groups. That set off the current fighting.⁴

The significance of these remarks is that they testify to the fact that the Western Left has not addressed the Algerian drama properly, so that Hitchens and Chomsky, neither of whom pretend to specialist knowledge of the country, have not had available to them a fund of reliable analysis on which they might draw. Outside France, the Left has accommodated this drama on the edge of its field of vision and entertained peremptory surrogates for an analysis of it.

That the Left, inside as well as outside Algeria, has been marginal to events there since the Algerian state went into flux in the riots of October 1988 may be thought to absolve it of responsibility for what has happened. The catastrophe which has overtaken the country, the undoing of the principal achievements of Algerian independence between 1962 and 1978, the brutalisation of the state-society relationship, the colossal toll in human lives, the subversion of the national identity, the erosion of the fabric of national society, the liquidation of much of the country's enormous investment in human capital, the destruction of much of Algeria's already sparse forest cover in the course of the army's counter-insurgency operations, the surrender of the substance of sovereignty in the spheres of defence and foreign affairs as well as economic policy – all this and more can certainly be laid at the door of the policies which have been followed by the Algerian authorities, and these policies have been those of the Right at home and abroad. But the Left can derive no comfort from this fact unless it develops the capacity to challenge these policies with a progressive alternative. And it cannot begin to do this until it recognises its complicity in the disastrous policies which have been followed.

The complacent attitude of the Western Left, and its abdication - by delegation to the French - of its responsibilities in this matter, have contributed to the fact that the Algerian drama remains unresolved and is still killing people. For the most part, external leftwing commentary on the Algerian drama has reflected, and so reflected back, the principal positions of the Algerian Left itself. Since the latter has been dependent on external sources for its own worldview, an entirely negative game of mirrors has been taking place, movement in the mind has been precluded, and the intellectual premises of a lethal impasse have been reproduced.

⁴ Noam Chomsky, 'The new war against terror': talk to the Technology Culture Forum, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 18 October 2001.

THE RISE OF IDENTITY POLITICS – THE PROBLEM STATED

Central to the conflict at one level has been the problem of identity politics. Far from permitting substantial democratic reform, the political ‘opening’ which occurred in the wake of the promulgation of a pluralist constitution in February 1989 facilitated a spectacular expansion of the Islamist movement, in the shape of the newly-formed Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS), on the one hand, and of militantly secularist and Berberist movements, based primarily on the largest of the Berber-speaking population, that of Kabylia to the east of Algiers, on the other hand. While the development of identity politics in 1989-1990 was not the only significant change to occur – for other important changes were simultaneously occurring in the internal structure of the régime (notably in the army and the intelligence services), its economic policy and its relations with foreign partners - it dominated the newly-established sphere of party politics and thus the foreground of the political stage, on which the Algerian Left itself was necessarily operating.

The rise of Islamism confronted the Left with a major challenge, since the FIS’s landslide victory in the local and regional elections in June 1990 raised the possibility of a FIS victory in the eventual legislative elections and thus the prospect of the domination of a politics opposed to Western-inspired conceptions of democracy and implacably hostile to the Left in particular. While the army’s coup in January 1992, following the FIS’s astonishing lead in the first round of the legislative elections on 26 December 1991, appeared to put paid to this scenario, the problem of identity politics and of Islamism in particular has continued to vitiate the prospects for a progressive outcome to the crisis. The violence which has been ravaging the country since the onset of the Islamist rebellion following the banning of the FIS in February 1992 has had devastating implications for the democratic cause, as we shall see. But the concomitant militarisation of Algerian politics has not occurred at the expense of identity politics at all. On the contrary, not only have the régime’s military decision-makers taken care to preserve the forms of political pluralism throughout the last decade, but they have also allowed a variety of ‘constitutional’ Islamist parties to remain in business and even to prosper, notably the Movement for an Islamic Society (HAMAS) and the Islamic Nahda Movement (MNI) - respectively renamed the Movement of Society for Peace (MSP) and the Nahda Movement (MN) in 1996 - while simultaneously indulging the Berberist movement and the militantly secularist party which developed out of this, the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD).

The rise and continuing salience of identity politics in Algeria should have been the object of the most searching interrogation by serious analysts and progressive activists. Virtually all Algerians are Muslims, about 99.7% of them are Sunni Muslims and virtually all of these are

Sunni Muslims of the Maliki rite.⁵ There has simply been no comparison with those states confronting a significant Sunni-Shi'i fault-line (Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, etc.) or Muslim-Christian fault-line (Egypt, Sudan), let alone Lebanon. And while the régime's refusal, until very recently, to recognise the claims to national status of *tamazight* (the Berber language, spoken by 20-25 per cent of the population) has long furnished the basis for a Berberist movement, the widely acknowledged fact that most Algerians are descended from Berber ancestors, that Berberism has been an essentially Kabyle affair, that the other Berberophone populations (the Shawiyya, the Mzabis and the Tuareg) have been indifferent to the Berberist cause and that the Kabyles themselves, far from suffering from discrimination, have actually been over-represented in the Algerian state and prominent in the army command as well as in all the main political parties (including not only the various 'democratic' and leftwing parties but also the régime-sponsored FLN and even the FIS), furnish strong grounds for questioning the advent of Berber identity politics as well.⁶

Yet almost all commentary has taken an uncritical attitude towards the explosion of identity politics which has occurred in Algeria, accepting these forms of politics and their explanations of themselves at face value. In addition, the Left has tended to align itself with one or another position in the debate between rival brands of identity politics, instead of keeping a healthy distance from them all by taking a position on a different ground altogether. In particular, since the onset of the violence following the fateful turning point of early 1992, the various leftwing organisations have allowed themselves to be drawn into the dispute between the two main policy positions within the régime itself, the so-called 'eradicators', notionally intent on 'eradicating' the Islamist opposition, and the so-called 'conciliators', supposedly intent on striking a bargain with it. Thus the Left has been sucked into the mêlée of identity politics and the mêlée of intra-régime factional manoeuvring at one and the same time, and has forfeited the possibility of exercising an independent influence on the situation.

LEFT ERADICATIONISM: THE EX-COMMUNISTS AND THE SECULARIST IDENTITY

⁵ Apart from the tiny Christian community, a legacy of the colonial era sustained by expatriates, the small Berber-speaking population (c. 100,000) of the Wadi Mzab in the northern Sahara are Ibadis, not Sunnis; a small element of the urban population belong to the Hanafi rite, a legacy of the Ottoman period.

⁶ I have discussed the Berberist movement in detail in *Co-opting identity: the manipulation of Berberism, the frustration of democratisation and the generation of violence in Algeria*, LSE, Development Research Centre, Working Paper No 8, December 2001.

The principal protagonist of the position of root and branch hostility to the Islamist movement on the Algerian Left has been the Socialist Vanguard Party (*Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste*, PAGES) and its successors, *Ettahaddi* and the Democratic and Social Movement (*Mouvement Démocratique et Social*, MDS). The PAGES, an evolution of the old Algerian Communist Party, performed dismally in the 1990 elections which resulted in the FIS's first landslide; it then boycotted the first round of the legislative elections in December 1991 which were again swept by the FIS, and was among those forces calling for the second round to be cancelled and applauding the army's coup in January 1992. At its congress in December 1992, a faction within the PAGES headed by its 'Coordinator', El Hachemi Cherif, secured the party's dissolution and immediately founded a new party, *Ettahaddi* ('Defiance') committed to supporting the army in the name of a 'they shall not pass' attitude towards the Islamists.

The change from PAGES to *Ettahaddi* involved the jettisoning of the PAGES's commitment to socialism and its orientation to the working class, and precipitated the eviction from political life of many of the PAGES's former leaders and militants. It also involved the adoption of an explicit commitment to a secular constitution. The substance of *Ettahaddi*'s positive vision was the embracing of an almost entirely vacuous 'modernity', in the name of which it rationalised its opposition to Islamism on the grounds that it was 'obscurantist' and 'reactionary'. The metamorphosis of *Ettahaddi* into the MDS in 1999 was little more than a change of name, El Hachemi Cherif and his associates remaining firmly in control.

There has been nothing particularly leftwing about the *Ettahaddi*-MDS position. Its opposition to Islamism – which has extended well beyond an understandable hostility to the armed Islamic movements and has embraced from the outset not only the FIS from the days when this was a legal party but all other Islamist parties – has been shared by at least two other parties of note, Dr Saïd Sadi's RCD, formed in 1989 as a development out of the Berberist movement in Kabylia, and former prime minister Redha Malek's *Alliance Nationale Républicaine*, ANR, formed in 1995 as a splinter from the FLN.

The antipathy of these formations to Islamism has not been predicated upon a rejection of identity politics as such, but has articulated a rival brand of identity politics, namely secularism. Their invocations of the ideal of 'the modern Republican state' has expressed their acceptance of the French state as the universally valid model of political modernity. Given Algeria's colonial history, it is understandable that it should be the French experience which serves as the principal reference for Algerian 'modernists'. What has defined their outlook, however, is the way they have been fixated on one aspect of the French model, the secularist aspect, to the virtual exclusion of all other aspects.

It is a striking feature of political debate in Algeria that the weaknesses of this position have not been pointed out. The first weakness is inherent in the uncritical borrowing from the French secularist tradition. This tradition arose in opposition to a Church, indeed, an international Church; French democracy became anti-clerical and secularist in reaction to the

absolute hostility of the Roman Catholic Church to the revolutionary advent of democracy in France. But there is no Church, or counterpart of a Church, still less an infallible Pope, in Sunni Islam. The model of the separation between Church and State cannot be simply transplanted into the Algerian context, for there is no organisation comparable to the Church whose exploitation of its authority in the political sphere for counter-revolutionary and anti-democratic purposes might warrant a democratic ambition to challenge this authority and end it.

In so far as the leaders of Algerian Islam – the *'ulama* - constituted themselves into an organised body in the course of the twentieth century, they did so with the founding of the Association of Muslim *'ulama* of Algeria (*Association des 'ulama musulmans d'Algérie*, AUMA) under the leadership of Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis in 1931. The AUMA did not take a counter-revolutionary position during the war of national liberation, but publicly rallied to the FLN in January 1956. And while the *'ulama* after independence certainly canvassed conservative positions, notably on the family and the position of women, they nonetheless served the independent nation-state and went along with its ambitious development project and even its socialist rhetoric throughout the Boumediène period, when the state was at its most progressive. In addition, although the anti-socialist wing of the *'ulama* was in the ascendant by the end of the 1980s, by which time the Chadli régime had in any case abandoned Boumediène's socialism, it should be noted that the *doyen* of the Badisiyyan tradition, Sheikh Ahmed Sahnoun, not only did not oppose the advent of political pluralism in 1989 but also explicitly opposed the formation of an Islamist party, and his followers played no part in the initial leadership of the FIS.⁷ The political rationale for the militantly secularist position which obtained in France from 1791 onwards simply did not obtain in Algeria in 1989 or thereafter.

Moreover, the secularist demand that Islam cease to be the official religion of the Algerian state, and be relegated to the private sphere as a matter of merely personal belief, has actually required the Algerian nation-state to relinquish its authority over the religious field, and thus to leave this field wide open to the various brands of radical Islamism and their external as well as internal supporters and sponsors, while furnishing fresh ammunition for the Islamists' challenge to the state by inducing the state to forfeit its own claim to religious legitimacy. It is a proposal to disarm the nation-state in the religious sphere while aggravating its vulnerability to the Islamists' critique. Finally, far from facilitating the constitution of a broad

⁷ Abdelkader Harichane, *Le FIS et le pouvoir* (Algiers, Éditions Lalla Sakina, undated but c. 1999), pp.26-28; Ahmed Merani, *La Fitna: témoignage d'un membre fondateur du Front Islamique du Salut* (Algiers, publisher not identified, undated but c. 1999), page 37. For the significance of this, see my article 'From radical mission to equivocal ambition: the expansion and manipulation of Algerian Islamism, 1979-1992', in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Accounting for fundamentalisms: the dynamic character of movements*, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, The Fundamentalism Project, University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 428-489.

front to resist the Islamist demand for *dawla islamiyya*, an Islamic state, the secularist position has played into the hands of Islamist propaganda by identifying resistance to the Islamist project with a conception of Islam as a purely private matter with which few Muslims would agree. It has therefore made it much easier for the Islamists to claim that their project is one which all Muslims should support.

The refusal of these parties to calculate the elementary *realpolitik* of the situation and to recognise that broadly-based resistance to the Islamist project could be developed only on the basis of the defence of the 1989 constitution, including its provision of official status for Islam – i.e. on the basis of a *non*-secularist position - has testified to the fact that the secularist position has expressed a form of identity politics every bit as much as its Islamist *bête noire*. The logic of this identity politics can be understood only in the context of the relationship of the secularist parties with both the Algerian army and the French political class.

All of these formations have functioned as sources of legitimation for the army's repression of the FIS and its endless war against the armed Islamic movements. But the harnessing of their support by the regime and its military 'decision-makers' has gone well beyond merely rhetorical legitimation. Both the RCD and Ettahaddi-MDS, for example, have been implicated in the development, since 1994, of civilian auxiliary forces, the so-called 'Patriot' militias, now known as *Groupes de Légitime Défense* (GLD), to which the army has delegated much of the business of resisting the Islamist insurgency on the ground, but their involvement has not given them any leverage or status in the military sphere. By licensing auxiliary forces, the army commanders have induced civilians to bear some of the burden and brunt of the violence, without surrendering an iota of their entirely unaccountable control over security policy. Ettahaddi-MDS has also allowed itself to be implicated by default in the régime's economic policies. In abandoning the PAGES's original socialist outlook and programme, Ettahaddi-MDS disarmed itself in the economic sphere, and its position evolved into a largely uncritical acceptance of the régime's surrender to 'globalisation' in respect of economic policy.⁸

This support for the régime has been only formally qualified by the party's rhetorical rejection of the régime's most indefensible features. In the resolution passed at its founding congress in 1999, the MDS defined its 'strategic line' as 'the rejection of the bureaucratic, corrupt and mafia-like rentier system and of all forms of compromise with political Islam' - that is, in entirely negative terms.⁹ At no point have Ettahaddi or the MDS outlined a positive

⁸ See notably the motion (especially clause 7) passed at the National Conference called by Ettahaddi to launch the MDS and held at Sidi Fredj near Algiers on 30 April – 1 May 1998.

⁹ *Congrès Constitutif du Mouvement Démocratique et Social*, Sidi Fredj, 7-8 October, 1999: *Résolution politique*, paragraph 2.

programmatic vision beyond vague invocations of '*l'État républicain moderne*'.¹⁰ Because its criticism of 'the rentier system' has been unaccompanied by any practical policy proposals or serious analysis, the régime and the army commanders – that is, the principal managers and beneficiaries of 'the mafia-like rentier system' – have been free to disregard this criticism altogether, and to take the operative element of the Ettahaddi-MDS position as being its opposition to any compromise with political Islam, and thus as legitimation for whatever repression of Islamists the régime has engaged in. And because this repression has never been total, but has always been tempered by selective indulgence and co-optation of tame varieties of Islamism (notably the MSP and the MN, both of which have been represented in the National Assembly and even the government since June 1997), the régime has been able to rebut the charge that it is the prisoner of the secularists, while leaving Ettahaddi-MDS and the other secularist parties constantly dissatisfied and demanding more sweeping repression.

In this way the secularist, modernist and, in their own estimation, 'democratic' parties in Algeria have connived at their own bankruptcy. They have allowed the Algerian army and its régime, and not merely the various Islamist parties, to stand between them and their notional constituency, the Algerian people. And their inclination to look to the French political class for external support, while the main aspect of their usefulness from the army commanders' point of view, has aggravated their isolation within Algeria.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc deprived the PAGS of its international bearings and made obsolete its claim to be the representative in Algeria of the 'true' model of 'scientific socialism' by virtue of which it could presume to criticise, but also to orient, the unsatisfactorily empirical socialism which the state professed in the 1962-1988 period. Its reaction was to reinvent itself, *qua* Ettahaddi and then MDS, as the representative in Algeria of the 'true' model of 'Republican' modernity *à la française*, a stance in which its connection to the French Communist Party assumed strategic significance, enabling it to canvass the radical anti-Islamist position with political opinion in France. By securing support for its position in *L'Humanité* and the other organs of the PCF, Ettahaddi-MDS has played an important role in determining leftwing intellectual opinion in France, while engaging in polemical opposition to those elements of French progressive opinion inclined to make an issue of the accumulating evidence of the Algerian army's involvement in massive human rights violations. In this way the last offshoots of the Communist tradition in Algeria have ended up acting as little more than a fan club for the Algerian army, performing increasingly

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Congrès Constitutif du MDS, Sidi Fredj, 7-8 October, 1999: Rapport politique et moral au congrès, paragraph 4.

desperate public relations services for it while helping to disable leftwing opinion in France and elsewhere from seeing the Algerian drama clearly.¹¹

LEFT CONCILIATIONISM

The principal party with leftwing credentials advocating a ‘conciliationist’ policy towards the Islamists has been Hocine Aït Ahmed’s Socialist Forces’ Front (*Front des Forces Socialistes*, FFS). A smaller leftwing party which has taken a similar line is the Workers’ Party (*Parti des Travailleurs*, PT), led by Louisa Hanoune, the first woman to lead a political party in the Arab world.

Structurally, the line-up of the ‘Left conciliators’ mirrors that of the ‘Left eradicators’. As a party based primarily on the population of Kabylia (and its ramifications in Algiers and other large towns, as well as in the Algerian diaspora in France and elsewhere), the FFS is the opposite number of Saïd Sadi’s RCD. But, as a party which originated in 1963 as a splinter from the historic FLN, of which Aït Ahmed was a founder-member in 1954, the FFS is also a counterpart of sorts to Redha Malek’s ANR, another chip off the old FLN block. And the PT, an evolution of a Trotskyist group called the Workers’ Socialist Organisation (*Organisation Socialiste des Travailleurs*, OST), is clearly the opposite number of Ettahaddi-MDS.

Neither the FFS nor the PT is really a form of identity politics. Although the FFS has sought electoral dividends from supporting the agitation over the Berber language and identity issue in Kabylia, it is not a product of the Berberist movement and has not taken its main political bearings from it. The principal rationale for its foundation in 1963 was opposition to the dictatorial style adopted by Algeria’s first president, Ahmed Ben Bella, and while Aït Ahmed found his main support in the disaffected guerrilla forces of the National Liberation Army (*Armée de Libération Nationale*, ALN) in Kabylia, his efforts to ‘de-kabylise’ the FFS enabled its armed rebellion in 1963-65 to elicit a degree of support across the country, in the Algérois, the Nord-Constantinois and the Sud-Oranais. Having maintained the FFS networks in being during his years in exile from late 1966 onwards, Aït Ahmed returned to Algeria following the legalisation of his party in late 1989. The FFS could claim to have pioneered the democratic opposition to the one-party system since long before the advent of the pluralist constitution in February 1989, and its democratic credentials have been widely accepted.

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For an analysis of how the formal positions of Algerian parties have been relayed by different sectors of political opinion in France and elsewhere, and how this has disabled international opinion from understanding the Algerian drama, see my article, ‘The international gallery and the extravasation of factional conflict in Algeria’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, XII, 1 (Summer/Fall), 1998, pp. 209-246.

Its socialist credentials are perhaps another matter. It called itself 'socialist' in 1963 essentially because socialism was the fashion of the time and because, as Aït Ahmed, a shrewd tactician, undoubtedly recognised, Ben Bella could be effectively challenged only on his left flank. The party did not, however, have a class base at all, and there is no reason to think that the socialist element of its discourse reflected the outlook of the disgruntled guerrilla fighters who formed the core of its strength. Since its legalisation in 1989, the FFS has had time to develop its programmatic thinking and expand its constituency in the townships of Kabylia and the cities of the Algerian littoral while sloughing off its association with the *maquisards* of yesteryear, but this has not enhanced its socialist character at all. While retaining the old name, Aït Ahmed and his associates have not canvassed recognisably socialist policies with respect to the economic and social problems which have beset the country. The FFS has actually had little to say about these problems and, apart from the Berber language question, the party's programme has concentrated almost exclusively on narrowly political issues. That it should have gained admission to the Socialist International (as a consultative member in 1992 and as a full member in 1996) says more about the condition of the latter than the outlook of the former.

As for the PT, it is, of all Algerian political formations, the one whose orientation to class, as opposed to identity, politics is most pronounced, although its small size, a consequence in part of its Trotskyist origins, has prevented it from living up more fully to the pretension proclaimed in its name.¹² While it has been committed to the secularist vision as a matter of principle, this commitment has not impeded it from taking other considerations into account in framing its attitude to the Islamist parties in general and the FIS in particular. In this, the PT has resembled the FFS, which has also espoused the secularist ideal, at least formally. Unlike the 'eradicationist' parties, the FFS and the PT have not canvassed secularism as a matter of identity and so have not interpreted it to imply the denial of democratic rights to Islamists.

Despite the FFS's credentials as a democratic party operating outside both the identity politics bazaar and intra-régime factional scum - credentials which have won it international respect and support – the party has actually allowed itself to be entangled in both the identity mêlée and the power-struggles within the régime in a way which has proved fatal to its stated objectives. It has been implicated in the competition between forms of identity politics both through the informal alliance it contracted with the FIS in January 1992, and which it sustained until at least 1995 (if not later), and, simultaneously, through its conflict with its Kabyle rival, the RCD, which has embroiled it in an endless struggle for leadership of the Berberist agitation in Kabylia. And since the factions within the régime have been constantly

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For the political positions of the PT, see the various issues of its publications, *Tribune Ouvrière* and *Fraternité*, and Louisa Hanoune, *Une autre voix pour l'Algérie: entretiens avec Ghania Mouffok*, Paris, La Découverte, 1996.

engaged in manipulating both Islamists and Berberists, the FFS's involvement in these matters has simultaneously implicated it in the factional conflict.

Having emerged from the first round of the legislative elections in December 1991 in second place (with 25 seats) to the FIS (with 188 seats) and ahead of the FLN (16), the FFS had a natural interest in opposing both the military coup on 11 January 1992 and the army's further decision to cancel the second round of the elections and establish an unconstitutional directorate, the High State Committee (*Haut Comité d'État*, HCE) to run the country in lieu of the deposed President Chadli. It was also perfectly consistent of the FFS to criticise the HCE's subsequent banning of the FIS, and to call thereafter for its re-legalisation on democratic and constitutional grounds. But what is striking about the FFS's behaviour is that it went much further than this, making the campaign to rehabilitate the FIS the crux of its strategy. This strategy appears to have taken the military aspect of the régime as its principal target. The FFS slogan: "*ni état islamique, ni état policier*" ("neither an Islamic state nor a police state" - like the Ettahaddi-MDS slogan, a tale of two negatives) formally opposed the Islamist project of *dawla islamiyya* as much as the army's régime, but it was clear from early 1992 onwards that it was the latter which the FFS primarily had in its sights. This attitude led the FFS into a tug-of-war which it was bound to lose.

For as long as the régime maintained a repressive policy towards the Islamist rebellion throughout 1992 and most of 1993, the FFS's championing of opposition to this policy was unproblematic. But when a 'conciliatorist' tendency within the régime began to assert itself in late 1993 and 1994, the FFS's position became an increasingly tortuous affair. For, far from throwing its weight behind the 'conciliators', the FFS apparently regarded them as rivals and certainly did nothing to reinforce them.

The emergence of the conciliators within the régime occurred in conjunction with the return to office of retired General Liamine Zeroual, first as defence minister, from July 1993, and then, from 30 January 1994, as head of state.¹³ On assuming the presidency, Zeroual immediately announced a 'dialogue open to all', which implicitly included the FIS, and released two FIS leaders to sound the leaders of the armed rebellion about a possible negotiation. Although forced by opposition from the 'eradicator' faction to backtrack for a while, Zeroual returned to this policy in August 1994 when he invited eight political parties to talks on how a return to the electoral process might be arranged, talks which initially went so well that it became possible for Zeroual to bring the imprisoned leaders of the FIS into the dialogue via parallel discussions. Five parties accepted the invitation – the FLN, ex-President Ahmed Ben Bella's Movement for Democracy in Algeria (MDA), Mahfoud Nahnah's HAMAS, Abdallah Djaballah's MNI and Nouredine Boukrouh's Party of Algerian Renewal (PRA). The two secularist 'eradicator' parties, the RCD and Ettahaddi, predictably rejected the invitation, but so did the FFS, for reasons it never explained. That a breakthrough was in prospect was strongly suggested by reports of two letters from the imprisoned Abassi Madani (the FIS's principal leader) to President Zeroual announcing his acceptance of democratic principles and floating the possibility of a truce in the armed struggle, and Zeroual's decision in response to release three imprisoned FIS leaders completely and to move Abassi and his deputy, Ali Ben Hadj, from prison to house arrest to enable them to consult those of their

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I have discussed the power struggle within the régime in 1993-1994 in my article, 'Algeria between eradicators and conciliators', *Middle East Report*, No. 189 (vol. 24, No. 4), July-August 1994, pp. 24-27.

colleagues in the ex-FIS leadership who were at liberty.¹⁴ While responsibility for the eventual failure of the talks can be attributed primarily to the ‘eradicator’ faction in the army, which engineered a dramatic escalation of the violence at this point in order to prevent the FIS leaders from consulting the leaders of the armed movements, the fact remains that the FFS did nothing to support Zeroual’s initiative, and its refusal of support undoubtedly tilted the factional balance in favour of the ‘eradicators’.

No sooner had Zeroual abandoned this attempt to broker a settlement than the FFS took the lead in organising two meetings of various political parties, hosted by the Catholic Sant’ Egidio community in Rome, in November 1994 and January 1995. The second meeting agreed on a *Platform for a Peaceful Political Solution of the Algerian Crisis*, signed by the FLN, the FFS, the MDA, the MNI, the PT and Abdennour Ali Yahia’s Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH), as well as by Anwar Haddam and Rabah Kebir, the two leading representatives of the FIS at liberty outside Algeria. All signatories committed themselves to accepting the rules of the democratic political game, notably pluralism, ‘*l’alternance*’ (the principle that a party voted into power will allow itself to be voted out again) and the renunciation of violence as a strategy for gaining or keeping power. In return, the platform proposed that the régime should revoke its ban on the FIS as the condition of securing its assistance and that of the other signatories in negotiating an end to the violence, and then permit the democratic process to resume.¹⁵

It was now the régime’s turn to dismiss this initiative. It appeared by this stage that the ‘conciliator’ tendency within the régime and its counterparts within the party-political opposition considered each other to be rivals rather than allies, and there is no doubt that the Rome Platform became in effect a rival to the proposal, which President Zeroual had already announced on 31 October 1994, to hold presidential elections a year early to inaugurate a return to the electoral process interrupted in January 1992. That the FFS should have been in competition with Zeroual and his supporters can be understood. What is remarkable, however, is that, while posing as the architect of a rival project, the FFS should have refused to contest the presidential election when this was finally held in November 1995.

By boycotting this election, the FFS forfeited a major opportunity to canvass its own position with the Algerian electorate and demonstrated its inability to follow through in practice its pretension to incarnate a democratic opposition worthy of the name. Aït Ahmed thus allowed Zeroual to secure a monopoly of popular support for a political solution to the crisis, and simultaneously allowed the RCD’s Saïd Sadi a free run in the election as the representative of Kabylia and the Berberist cause. By winning 1,115,796 votes (9.60% of total votes cast) on a secularist-eradicationist platform, Sadi erased the memory of the RCD’s paltry score of a mere 200,267 votes (2.9%) in December 1991, and eroded the hegemony which the FFS had enjoyed in Kabylia since then. And within weeks of Zeroual’s return to office as the constitutionally elected President of the Republic, Abdelhamid Mehri, the General Secretary of the FLN who had been allied with Aït Ahmed’s FFS since January 1992, was replaced by Boualem Benhamouda, under whom the FLN returned to its traditional role since 1962 as the docile mouthpiece of the régime, and the ‘Rome alliance’ was in ruins. The FFS’s campaign to instrumentalise the banning of the FIS and the ensuing armed rebellion, as

¹⁴ *Libération*, 1 September 1994; *El Watan*, 5 and 14 September 1994; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts: Middle East, 6 September 1994 (reporting Algiers Radio, 3 September); *Le Monde*, 8 and 14 September 1994.

¹⁵ For a fuller discussion of the Rome platform, see my article ‘Algeria’s ruinous impasse and the honourable way out’, *International Affairs*, 71, 2 (April 1995), pp. 247-267.

a means of putting pressure on the régime to concede a measure of democratisation, was strategically lost by November 1995.

Throughout 1996 and the first half of 1997, the FFS's position had no positive content. Bereft of allies, it proffered purely negative criticism of Zeroual's proposals for a revision of the constitution when these were published in May 1996, and won only 20 seats to the RCD's 19 when National Assembly elections were finally held in June 1997. And when Zeroual's adversaries in the army took over the secret negotiations which had been talking place with the leaders of the main armed movement, the Islamic Salvation Army (*Armée Islamique du Salut*, AIS), in the summer of 1997, and concluded a cease-fire agreement with the AIS the following September, the FFS could only protest in vain that this deal between the military wing of the regime and the military wing of the FIS behind the backs of the Algerian people and the entire civilian political class was the opposite of what it had sought.¹⁶

The appalling massacres of civilians at Raïs, Beni Messous and Bentalha in August-September 1997 and further massacres in late December 1997 and January 1998 gave the FFS a new lease of life, however, as Western concern grew and calls proliferated for an international commission of enquiry. The FFS repositioned itself in relation to these issues, and developed a new strategy based on a new alliance. In place of the old alliance with the FIS and Mehri's FLN, the FFS made itself the principal interlocutor for international concern about human rights violations in Algeria. This concern had long been pressed by leading elements of several European socialist parties, with which the FFS enjoyed privileged relations as a member of the Socialist International. In advocating international intervention from 1997 onwards, the FFS continued to act as the principal source of party-political opposition to the army-backed régime (and became the favourite of international human rights organisations), while tending to isolate itself further within the country and, in particular, forfeiting its alliance with the PT, which refused to endorse the violation of national sovereignty which international intervention would entail.

The extent to which the FFS had lost ground in the country became clear during the presidential elections held in April 1999 following Zeroual's decision, under pressure from the army commanders, to step down before the end of his five-year term. In addition to Abdelaziz Bouteflika, whose candidacy was sponsored by major military power brokers, six opposition candidates were allowed to stand. Aït Ahmed was among these, but was unable to capitalise on his earlier support for the FIS, since FIS supporters preferred Dr Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, whom they regarded as a more appropriate interlocutor;¹⁷ while much of the 'democratic reform' vote went to former prime minister Mouloud Hamrouche,¹⁸ and the old *maquisard* vote was spoken for by Khatib Youcef.¹⁹ In the event, the six candidates announced their withdrawal from the election on the eve of the ballot, a decision taken at the FFS headquarters in Algiers on 13 April and explained the next day in a communiqué which claimed that the authorities had failed to ensure an honest election.²⁰ But this withdrawal may

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Declaration by Hocine Aït Ahmed, Geneva, 3 September 1997, reported by AFP.

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The son of Cheikh Bachir al-Ibrahimi (1889-1965) who succeeded Ben Badis as leader of the Association of the Muslim 'ulama of Algeria from 1940 to 1951, Taleb held numerous ministerial portfolios between 1965 and 1988, culminating in that of foreign affairs.

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The leader of the 'reformers' within the FLN, Hamrouche was widely credited with the introduction of liberal reforms during his premiership in 1989-91.

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As commander of *wilaya* IV (Algérois) of the ALN in 1961-62, Khatib had led the resistance of the interior *maquis* to the seizure of power by Boumediène's 'army of the frontiers' in 1962; he was accordingly especially hostile to the candidacy of Bouteflika, Boumediène's close colleague at that time.

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For the text of the communiqué, see the *Journal of Algerian Studies*, volume 4/5, 1999-2000, page 171.

also have masked the prospect of a disappointing showing for Aït Ahmed's candidacy, while having the principal effect of de-legitimizing the entire proceedings and thus placing Bouteflika, the winner by default, at a massive disadvantage to his military sponsors, a position which he has struggled in vain to escape from ever since.

The 'Left conciliationists' are not primarily to blame for Algeria's disastrous evolution since 1992, but the failure of their successive strategies has certainly contributed to the fact that the general crisis of the Algerian nation-state has eluded all efforts at a resolution. Eventually, moreover, Kabylia itself, which despite incursions by Islamist guerrillas had survived as something of a sanctuary of democratic pluralism throughout the 1990s, became the arena for the latest brutal manifestation of this crisis in the series of riots which followed the unexplained killing of an unarmed youth by a gendarme at Beni Douala in Greater Kabylia on 21 April 2001, riots which the gendarmes repeatedly re-ignited by their own violent responses.²¹ The inability of the FFS to canalise and control the anger of Kabyle youth, or even defend its own party offices from the rioters,²² and the extent to which it has been marginalised by a new grass-roots protest movement in the region,²³ have testified to its failure to articulate effectively Kabyle - let alone wider Algerian - aspirations for democratic government. The party's response, its call for the convoking of a Constituent Assembly²⁴ as the pre-condition of a democratic departure from the impasse in which the Algerian polity has been trapped, fell on deaf ears, in part because this demand was entirely - and characteristically - unaccompanied by any suggestion of how the new constitution to be drawn up by such a Constituent Assembly might be a significant improvement on previous ones.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

With the onset of the riots in Kabylia, Algeria's crisis came full circle. The Kabyle youths who have been braving the gendarmes' bullets since April 2001 have not been mobilised primarily by the traditional identity concerns of the Berberist movement, but have been protesting above all against what Algerians call *la hogra*, the brutal contempt with which they are treated by the Algerian state, the intolerable humiliations they suffer through endless abuses of authority and denials of rights, in short against what they have in common with their fellow Algerians across the country. For this was actually what the rioters in Algeria's big cities were protesting against in October 1988, when the Algerian state first went into flux. The problem of *la hogra* is central to the crisis of the state-society relationship as a whole, and it has not been adequately addressed by the Left either inside Algeria or outside, because the explosion of identity politics has constituted both a perverted expression of this problem and a massive form of displacement activity, and the Left itself has been party to this continuous evasion of the issue.

In crystallising into the FIS in 1989, the Islamist movement became the vector of a political project, the establishment of an Islamic state in place of the nation-state created by the FLN in 1962 and modified by the pluralist constitution of 1989. It is accordingly remarkable that the Chadli régime should have licensed and tolerated the FIS's activities in the 1989-1991 period, since these clearly tended to subvert the constitution which this régime had just introduced. What is also remarkable, however, is that the Left should have taken this form of politics at face value, by taking its advertised political project as its principal if not sole *raison d'être*,

²¹ Hugh Roberts, 'Algeria: riots without end?', *Middle East International*, No. 651, 1 June 2001, pp. 16-18.

²² Seven FFS offices in Kabylia were destroyed between 23 April and 20 June 2001, as were seven RCD offices; see Roberts, *Co-opting identity...*, page 7.

²³ Hugh Roberts, 'Algeria: riots without end?', page 17.

²⁴ FFS: *Memorandum: 'Pour une transition démocratique'*, Algiers, 12 May 2001.

and that the Left should have framed its responses (of resistance or co-optation) towards the FIS in terms of the latter's notional political project alone. For the FIS was a very complex and ambiguous affair, a mediation of several distinct things all at once, and the point of departure of an effective response to it had to be a clear recognition of this fact.

To put matters in a necessarily schematic manner, we can say that the FIS mediated:

- i. the aspiration to leadership within Algerian Islam - and hence to influence in the political sphere - of a new generation of proselytisers disposed to contest the 'national Islam' of the state and who validated their claim to authority by reference to the latest ideological fashions in the Middle East;
- ii. the growing hegemony over the Algerian religious field of the neo-Salafiyya movement oriented primarily to the Wahhabi tradition of Saudi Arabia, and secondarily to radical Islamism elsewhere (notably Egypt);²⁵
- iii. the ambitions of Algeria's frustrated *arabisants*, resentful of the privileged position of the *francisant* élite, and disposed to invest in Islamist themes in order to validate their own claims to preferment and de-legitimate the claims of their rivals;
- iv. the hostility of the commercial and entrepreneurial petty bourgeoisie towards the increasingly predatory as well as inefficient state bureaucracy;
- v. the anger and despair of the urban poor and especially the popular demand for justice and good government, expressed in protests against *la hogra* and corruption.

In addition, however, the FIS mediated something else altogether. For the remarkable decision to legalise the FIS was motivated by the presidency's determination to 'play the Islamist card', that is, to play off the FIS against the FLN itself, because it was the FLN which was the bastion of nationalist resistance to Chadli's policies, especially his policy of *rapprochement*, at the expense of Algeria's national sovereignty, with Mitterrand's France.

In effect, Chadli and Co. were using the Islamists in 1989-90 as Sadat had used Egypt's Islamists against the Nasserists in the early 1970s and as Chadli and Co. themselves had used them in their campaign of 'de-Boumediénisation' in 1980-81.²⁶ Thus the FIS initially functioned as the cat's-paw of the Chadli presidency against its critics in the FLN. But matters became more complicated during the crisis over Iraq from August 1990 onwards. For, in the context of popular mobilisation across the Arab world against 'Operation Desert Shield' and especially 'Operation Desert Storm', the FIS leaders were forced to choose between their Saudi sponsors and their Algerian popular base, and opted decisively to stay abreast of the massively pro-Iraqi public opinion. This decision put them on a collision course with the Chadli presidency and enabled Chadli's adversaries within the power structure to turn the tables by converting the FIS into auxiliaries of their counter-moves, a development which precipitated a crisis within the FIS leadership and led inexorably to the régime's decision to suppress the party altogether. Thus a crucial aspect of the FIS was that it also mediated

- vi. the incessant - and by now no-holds-barred - factional conflict within the régime.

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The original Salafiyya movement, of which Ben Badis's AUMA was an extension, preached a return to the traditions of the venerable founding fathers (*as-salaf as-salih*) of Islam and thus privileged scripturalist Islam over later tendencies, notably Sufism, which they stigmatised as deviant or even heretical; in contemporary usage, the term 'Salafi' refers to Islamists oriented essentially by the extremely conservative interpretation of scripturalist orthodoxy pioneered by Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia. The influence of the Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) has also been noticeable in Algerian Islamism, especially in the disposition to contest the state as 'impious' and to envisage its overthrow.

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Roberts, 'From radical mission...'; see also my article 'Doctrinaire economics and political opportunism in the strategy of Algerian Islamism' in John Ruedy (ed.), *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, New York, St Martin's Press, pp. 123-147.

Recognition of the complexity of the FIS's mediating functions has been entirely absent from the discourse of all formations on the Left both within Algeria and without, with the result, *inter alia*, that these discourses have had *zero* educational effect on either Algerian or international public opinion. The Left 'eradicationists' have merely taken the notional project of *dawla islamiyya* as expressing the substance of the FIS and as justifying both the 'reactionary' (and even 'fascist') tag and a policy of absolute denial of democratic rights to the party. Left 'conciliationism' as developed by the FFS, on the other hand, has essentially taken the FIS's hostility to the régime from January 1992 onwards as its significant aspect and, while inducing the FIS leaders to declare their acceptance of democratic principles, has sought to use the FIS as an auxiliary in its own strategies of opposition to the régime.

An effective Left politics would have taken a very different attitude. Its strategic aim from 1989 onwards would have been to deny the FIS the role of principal – let alone exclusive – political representative of the urban poor and especially the unemployed youth in Algeria's crowded cities, by offering itself as a credible alternative. To do this it would have needed to neutralise the religious issue by defending the constitutional status of Islam as the official religion of the state, while simultaneously de-politicising the cultural-linguistic issue by canvassing thought-out proposals to promote access for *arabisants* to gainful employment. It would also have been intelligent to take account of the legitimate concerns of private entrepreneurs by proposing reforms aimed at cleaning up the administration and simplifying bureaucratic controls on entrepreneurial activity. But the main thing it would have needed to do is to address the problem of *la hogra* - the grievance of the masses – and the problem of the factional conflict within the régime – the problem of the élites, recognising that these problems are connected and have a common solution.²⁷

The immediate premise of *la hogra* is the arbitrary way in which Algeria is ruled, the fact that officials can treat ordinary Algerians with contempt by denying them their notional rights, and engage in myriad forms of corruption with impunity. The prevalence of arbitrary rule and abuse of authority at all levels of the administrative hierarchy is symptomatic of the fact that the Algerian state has not been a state bound by law. But it is also symptomatic of the fact that much of the behaviour of official power holders is determined by the ferocious rivalry between informal clienteles competing for control of state resources and, at the higher levels especially, by the incessant conflict between factions for control of the commanding heights of the state machine - the army command, the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and its ramifications in the public sector, and the government itself. The conflict between clienteles and factions within the state apparatus is the principal motor of arbitrary rule. Those not protected by a powerful patron or by membership of an influential coterie are permanently exposed to *la hogra*.

But the fundamental premise of this state of affairs is the massive predominance of the executive branch of the state – the armed forces, the presidency, the government, the police and the administration - over the two other branches, the legislature and the judiciary. The weakness of the legislature ensures that the principal social interests seek representation directly in the executive rather than in the legislature. The executive is accordingly where interests and viewpoints are effectively articulated and conflicts arbitrated, where the important political decisions are taken. But these decisions are inevitably taken informally, on the basis of the eternally shifting *rappports de force* between coterie and factions, and thus they rarely if ever conform to any rule other than the law of the jungle. And the weakness of the legislature means that it can never hold the executive to account and so can never curb its arbitrary power, and in these circumstances the judiciary is condemned to be the dependent appendage of the executive also, incapable of upholding the notional laws of the land against executive power-holders and incapable of guaranteeing the rights or redressing the grievances of the mass of the Algerian people.

It follows that the most important change which has needed to be made since the advent of formal pluralism in 1989 has been the empowerment of the legislature. Only if the balance of power between executive and legislative branches were altered to the advantage of the latter

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The PAGS in 1989 initially recognised the need to neutralise the religious issue, but entirely failed to address the other issues effectively.

could the Algerian government and administration become accountable, their capacity for arbitrary behaviour be curbed, and the judiciary acquire the minimum of independence of the executive that is the precondition of its acting to uphold the law rather than debase it. Only if the legislature became the locus of serious decision-making and, in particular, the source of ministerial mandates, could major social interests acquire the incentive to insist on effective formal representation in the Algerian Parliament instead of contenting themselves with representation through occult networks in the executive. Only if this were to happen would the Algerian middle classes realise their interest in insisting upon proper elections to the legislature and an end to the cynical electoral charades which the regime has been organising since 1990. Only in these circumstances could the parties come into their own as organisations providing effective representation of public opinion, and the factional conflict within the executive be reduced to the phenomenon of secondary if not minor significance that it is in most modern states. Only if a reliable framework of law were thus established could Algeria's numerous millionaires be induced to invest in productive ventures in Algeria instead of abroad. Only in this way could Algerian men and women become citizens in reality as well as in name, and the blight of *la hogra* become a memory. And only if the resistance to the Islamists in Algeria had been oriented by a positive political project of this order could it have hoped to provide an effective counter to the FIS's utopian vision of *dawla islamiyya*, whose fundamental appeal to its popular constituency lay in the fact it promised a state ruled by the Shari'a, God's law, when no alternative conception of law-bound government was on offer.

The terrible thing is not that this was not obvious to the Algerian Left in the bewildering flow of events in 1989-92, but that it still has not dawned on the Algerian Left ten years later.

THE DEARTH OF CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAS

Nothing in the Algerian Left's traditions equipped it before 1989 to develop an adequate conception of the necessity of law-bound government or a realistic conception of how this might be established. The derivation of the PAGES-Ettahaddi-MDS, but also the PT, from the Leninist tradition oriented these parties in the very different direction of Jacobin, vanguardist, revolutionism. But the derivation of the FFS and the ANR from the historic FLN oriented them in the same direction as well, since the FLN, as an offshoot of the radical nationalist tradition launched by Algerian migrants in France in 1926 with the formation of the *Étoile Nord-Africaine* under the aegis of the French Communist Party and the Comintern, was also the heir to the Jacobin tradition which the Communist movement had reinvigorated, such that the FLN was a kind of radical nationalist variant of Leninist substitutionism, the Front substituting itself for the Nation and the People much as the Party substituted itself for the Proletariat. Algeria's colonial history, and especially its early amputation from the Ottoman Empire prior to the experience of the Ottoman reforms, account in part for this state of affairs. The resulting absence from Algeria of a tradition of constitutionalist politics,²⁸ such as has been a significant feature of the political history of Turkey and Tunisia but also Egypt and Iran, has meant that virtually all forms of politics in modern Algeria have been oriented by authoritarian doctrines and utopian visions of one kind or another, and none of them have been able to draw on a national tradition of political thought oriented to the problem of establishing constitutional government, let alone representative government, through the arduous processes of incremental political reform.

Rooted in this legacy of a tragic history, the crippling lacunae in Algeria's political traditions have made the Algerian Left, like every other element on the political spectrum, intensely reliant on external sources of ideas and political bearings. But when the crisis broke in 1989, not only had the unhelpful Communist tradition foundered, but there was scarcely a European Left to speak of any longer, and the traditions of constitutional and democratic reform which had been sustained by previous generations of European democratic socialists

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For an elaboration of this point, see my article 'The struggle for constitutional rule in Algeria', *Journal of Algerian Studies*, vol. 3 (1998), pp.19-30.

were suddenly no longer available for the Algerians to draw upon. What the West had to offer was something else altogether.

From 1988 onwards, the increasingly monolithic Western discourse on Algeria, as on all other ex-colonies, has relentlessly insisted on 'economic and political reform', while rarely specifying what it has meant by this beyond measures to abolish national economy combined with the introduction of formal pluralism by decree. In Algerian leftwing circles, proposals for reform have been much rarer, whereas calls, especially from Leftist intellectuals, for something called 'rupture' (but also undefined) have been frequent. In fact, the notion of 'rupture' has tended to dovetail with what the West has really meant by 'reform', namely the abrupt and painful breaking with and dismantling of the Algerian state system as this was constructed by the FLN. This has now been largely although not wholly achieved, and reportedly well over 100,000 Algerians have been killed in the process. The failure of the Western Left to do anything to prevent this hecatomb has been connected to the advent in Europe since the early 1980s of a general condition of mindlessness in the matter of reform, which has aggravated and reinforced the Algerians' inability to recognise that what the West has meant by 'reform' in the Algerian context is not at all what this word has historically meant in Britain or the US (or even France) in previous eras, but what it has meant when the West been confronting older states which it aspires to destroy - the Ottoman empire and the USSR, for instance.

It is precisely the constructive concept of reform as reserved by the Western political classes for domestic use which has needed to be developed and applied in Algeria since 1989. The absence of a serious politics of constructive reform in the direction of a law-bound state has been a fundamental premise of the exaggerated salience of identity politics in the Algerian case. It follows that what is left of the Algerian Left will have to discover for itself what the Western tradition of political reform was all about, if it is to be able at last to chart a course out of wasteland that Algeria has been reduced to.

As for the French Left, it might ask itself whether it should not rethink its view of Algeria as well as of France, and question, among other things, the policy of the French socialist government in 1988-89 of insisting on the rapid advent of formal pluralism in Algeria at a time when no true counterpart to the French Socialist Party so much as existed in Algeria and when the Algerian Left was completely unprepared for the change in prospect, which could accordingly only benefit other political forces. And the rest of what is left of the Western Left might at last realise that it needs to take a serious interest in Algeria, if only in order to know what the devastating political implications of a wholly avoidable 'war against terrorism' may be.