REVIEWS

Millán, Márgara, Lucía Linsalata and Daniel Inclán, ed.

Modernidades Alternativas

Ediciones Del Lirio, 2016

Millán, Márgara, ed.
Prefiguraciones De Lo Político

Ediciones Del Lirio, 2018

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Modernidades alternativas (Alternative Modernities) and *Prefiguraciones de lo político* (Prefigurations of the Political), are the two latest releases from *Modernidades alternativas y nuevo sentido comun: prefiguraciones de una modernidad no capitalista* (Alternative Modernities and New Common Sense: Prefigurations of a Non-Capitalist Modernity), a book series coordinated by Dr. Márgara Millán Moncayo of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Taken together, the two collected works provide a critical group of essays exploring the crises of contemporary capitalist modernity, and the practices, possibilities, and potential of alternative forms of non-capitalist social organization.

Facing the contemporary civilizational crisis head on, the essays within these two collections offer varied approaches to the politics and practices of radical social change. Drawing from variants of Indigenous, feminist and critical Marxist thought, with a predominant but not exclusive grounding in Mexico, these two collections move us away from the tired debates of the 'revolutionary left,' creating their own unique conversation around alternative anti-capitalist politics, grounded in prefiguration, contingency and possibility.

Both collections draw extensively from the political and social thought of Latin American Marxist philosopher, Bolívar Echeverría—a figure

1 All translations done by the reviewer.

relatively unknown in the English-speaking world. The first collection, Alternative Modernities, opens up a dialogue specifically around Echeverría's approach to modernity, and alternatives to the dominance of capitalism in contemporary society. The compilation outlines the inherent contradictions in the development of capitalist modernity, between the potential latent in modernity and its 'capitalist, colonial, patriarchal or heteronormative configurations' (Millán, et al. 2016: 12). Put in another way, the tension between 'the present evanescence of identity cultivation and the totalitarian and fundamentalist fixation necessary for the realization of value on a global scale, embodied in concrete subjectivities' (Millán, et al. 2016: 12). Amidst these contradictions, this collection traces a non-capitalist modernity as is embodied, 'in forms of organization, in the economy, in knowledge and in living cultural practices' (Millán, et al. 2016: 19).

The idea of contingency is fundamental to this collection, an idea again influenced by Bolívar Echeverría's thinking on modernity. Echeverría theorized modernity as a long process of contradiction and dynamic conflict, between the potential inherent in modernity, and the empirical or dominant manifestations of modernity. For Echeverría, the potential of modernity—the past that always remains present, the possibilities of what has yet to develop—is always harassing the empirical or dominant modernity. Meanwhile, the empirical is always trying to prove the non-existence of the potential of modernity. As the introduction to the collection states, 'Thinking from contingency allows us to attend to and understand the potential of collective projects that have been subsumed, defeated or silenced by dominant forms of existence' (Millán, et al. 2016: 11-12). Thinking from contingency resists mechanical approaches to reality, illuminating a politics of potentiality and possibility.

In the vein of critical Marxism, Alternative Modernities digs beneath hegemonic capitalist modernity, de-normalizing the temporalities, practices, relations, and logic inherent to it. The first section of the book, 'Toward a Non-capitalist Material Culture,' explores the historical development of the separation between the economy and subsistence with three essays, one from Jean Robert Jeannet, another from Carlos Alberto Ayala Osuna, and a collective essay from Rodrigo Hernández González and Rodolfo Oliveros Espinoza. These three essays invite us to think about the possibility of again unifying economy with subsistence. The next essay by Victor Manuel Bernal García looks at the community of Magdalena Mixiuhca in Mexico City, which in 2010 began a community project oriented toward constructing

their own means of exchange, 'ending dependence on institutions, banks and governments' (Millán, et al. 2016: 80). This essay provides a practical example of a non-capitalist local economy grounded in alternative interpretations of value beyond exchange value celebrated by capitalism. The section closes with an essay by Daniel Inclán on the contradictions within the techniques of modernity, and the potential for techniques of reciprocity and solidarity to overcome capitalist modernity.

The second section, 'Episteme and Modernity,' destabilizes some of the conventional epistemological assumptions inherent to modernity. Maria Jaidopulu Vrijea leads us into a discussion of the constant negotiation and construction of a multiplicity of space-times in everyday life, and the possibility of alternative space-times being constructed from below in the practices of everyday life. Sylvia Marcos Tueme provides an insightful essay on the way in which Indigenous thought and practice, Indigenous theology, has influenced and reshaped the Catholic Church of the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. The complex constellation of an embodied theology of the Indigenous Maya, characterized by prophetic dreams, myth as history, and the impossibility of the separation between thought and practice, intervene and reshape the direction and character of the Catholic Church. In another essay, Daniel Inclán offers an important approach to thinking about historical time and the manifestation of history in the present. He argues for the need to think through the dialectic of temporalities, taking into account possibilities latent in the present, to understand that, 'actuality is not a necessity, but a contingency' (Millán, et al. 2016: 187). Lastly, Susan Buck-Morss, provides an essay stressing the need to rescue fragments of the past erased by official history, 'basing it in a de-privatized and de-nationalized structure of collective memory' (Millán, et al. 2016: 198).

An excellent essay by Bolivian social theorist, Silva Rivera Cusicanqui, 'A Ch'ixi world is possible: Memory, Market and Colonialism,' takes up a great deal of the middle section of the book, and serves as the heart of the book as a whole. In accordance with the collection's aim of investigating alternative modernities, Cusicanqui problematizes the current dominant social order, engaging the multiplicity, diversity, and contradictions of contemporary Bolivian society. She offers us the idea of the 'barroco ch'ixi,' as 'a way of not searching for synthesis, of working with and within contradiction, of developing it, insofar as synthesis is longing for the return to the one' (Millán, et al. 2016: 311). From contradiction and diversity, from the 'barroco ch'ixi,' derives the possibility of liberation, the possibility

of a society animated by a profound history against the dominant modern colonial order.

The final section of the book, 'Another Politics and Common Sense,' takes us into the politics of the commons, social reproduction and the capitalist war against autonomy and subsistence. The first essay by Jean Robert Jeannet looks at the politics of modernity, as the ongoing destruction of the autonomous subsistence of society, and the ever-encroaching dynamic of alienation brought by capitalism. The second essay, collectively written by María Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, Mina Lorena Navarro Trujillo and Lucía Linsalata, 'Rethinking the Political: Keys for the Discussion,' guides us through the reproductive work of the commons, which inherently resists the logic of capital accumulation. The book ends with an essay by Gustavo Esteva Figueroa, who argues for a (re)invention of society beyond capitalism and patriarchy, abolishing the separation between means and ends, and reconnecting with the past in order to (re)invent a future beyond the horrors of capitalist modernity.

In a graceful step forward, the collection 'Prefigurations of the Political,' leads us through a series of essays exploring in depth a politics of prefiguration, showing the possibility of different forms of organization, distinct from capitalist modernity. The strength of this collection lies in its subtle critique of the revolutionary politics of the past, of the dogmatic interpretations of historical materialism, and of the restricted understandings of where the politics and possibility of social change inhabit. Clearly influenced by Bolívar Echeverría's use of the idea, 'lo politico,' this collection defines 'lo politico' as 'the field of creative tendencies that emerge from the social body, from the permanence and persistence of concrete life-worlds, with their corporal axis and their ethos, in which life full of attributes opposed to bare life is put into play' (Millán, 2018: 11). In an attempt at highlighting the prefigurations of such politics, this collection directs us toward the politics of everyday life, of the ongoing practices of social and material reproduction, of the forms of organization and political practice that lie outside the frameworks normally denominated 'the political.'

From beginning to end, this book reads as a more cohesive collection, with a clearer thread tying the different essays together. The introduction, written collectively by Márgara Millán and Daniel Inclán, along with the first two chapters, one written by Millán and the other by Inclán, do a superb job of laying out the characteristics of the current crisis of capitalist

modernity and the prefigurative possibilities of another politics existing there within. Next, Susan Buck-Morss provides an essay covering the politics of the global multitude, and the strength of global diversity in the multitude's makeup, rather than a totalized subject as theorized by conventional Marxist thought. Diana Fuentes gives an essay on the critique of capitalist modernity from romanticism, with the persistence of romanticism in contemporary society, and the role romanticism plays as a source from which contemporary resistances draw influence, in opposing capitalist modernity.

The collection moves on with two essays that explore the feminist critique of totality, one from Guiomar Rovira Sancho addressing feminist activism online as connected networks and multitudes that resist totalization, and another from Silva L. Gil that engages feminism to critique the concepts of hegemonic modernity. In her essay, 'Doing from the impasse: Rethinking universals from feminism,' Silva L. Gil tells us:

> The above-mentioned feminist contributions offer clues to go beyond; a politics not of totality but of the unfinished (always in process); a politics of desire, but attentive to the differentiated and unequal ways in which desire is fixed in bodies; a politics not of dichotomies, but of connections; a politics not of unique subjects, but of irreducible differences. A politics that does not renounce the affirmation of a universal aspiration, but manages to do it in another way (Millán, 2018: 238).

Further along there is an essay by Rita Canto Vergara thinking through the 'modes of political existence that emanate from desire' (Millán, 2018: 276), and another essay by Rafael Mondragón Velázquez exploring the politics of telling stories related to violence: 'Through a set of vignettes, we have made the careful use of the word a theme in a certain art of narration, an ethic of listening, a search to build new languages and a rethinking of the aesthetic dimension of organizational processes' (Millán, 2018: 357). There are also are two essays located in specific contexts, one by María Jaidopulu Vrijea on the space-time of the Greek financial crisis and Greek resistance, and another by Rodrigo Hernández on the experience of democratic confederalism in Kurdish territories in Northern Syria. Taken together, the essays throughout the collection continually bring us back to the subtle practices and potential of another type of politics, beyond the politics of capitalist modernity.

What I found particularly interesting from these two collections was their commitment to the idea, derived from Bolívar Echeverría,

that modernity itself is full of alternative possibilities. What might be a controversial argument in some anticapitalist, antistate and anticolonial circles, these two collections argue that alternative modernities are present and possible, beyond the exploitative logic of capitalism and the authoritarian logic of the state-led techno-scientific organization of society. The pivotal point I drew from this argument, and from these two collections as a whole, is that modernity is not a monolithic, solidified, all-domineering civilizational project. It is rather characterized by contradiction and conflict, by a multiplicity of practices, processes, forces and logics, which embody alternative possibilities, and which open up all sorts of radical potential.

On a more critical note, after reading both collections, I was left longing for more voices from practical experiences of these alternative modernities and prefigurative politics. The two collections lean heavily on theoretical insight, eluding to alternative modernities and prefigurative politics mostly through the lens of political and social theorists. While there are practical experiences in both collections, I think a more robust dialogue with communities and peoples embodying or practicing the alternative politics theoretically highlighted in these collections, better uniting the theoretical with the practical, would have gone a long way.

Relatedly, I was also left longing for insight into concrete ways of engaging politically in the world in the face of the civilizational crises laid out in both collections. It is clear that the intention of the editors of both collections is not to provide ready-made plans or a blueprint for emancipatory political practice, but to open discussions into political possibilities and potentialities within and beyond capitalist modernity. I still kept asking myself how we can act proactively in the world with this insight. I think a more developed exchange between the theoretical insights offered here and the voices of prefigured political practice, would have perhaps opened up an avenue into thinking more practically about the possibilities and potentialities of emancipation from capitalist modernity.

Generally speaking, these two collections join a growing body of literature—including autonomous, feminist, anarchist, Indigenous, critical Marxist and other currents of social and political thought—that orient us toward a politics of embodied practice at the level of everyday life. There were times when the essays felt somewhat repetitive, with the overwhelming influence of Bolívar Echeverría in the theoretical and conceptual framing of the two collected works. Feminist and Indigenous politics animate a number

of essays in both collections, but I wanted to see to see a deeper engagement with their insights and inquiries. Furthermore, perhaps due to personal bias, I felt an essay or two mobilizing the insights of anarchism would have greatly enriched this discussion of anti-capitalist and prefigurative politics. On the other hand, the influence of Bolívar Echeverría, and the eclectic mix of essays within the two collections, provide an important alternative entry point into thinking about prefigurative politics and alternatives to capitalism that has not been so thoroughly covered in other texts.

Overall, I want to praise these two collections in opening up a multiplicity of new and unique approaches to thinking about alternative political and social possibilities. I think it is fundamental that we study and take seriously the insights put forth in these collections. It's a shame that this literature, along with the vast majority of Bolívar Echeverría's work, has not been translated into English. At the very least, I hope this review serves as an introduction to some of the ideas coming out of these critical discussions.

Majed Kayali
nqāš ālslāḥ.. qrāʾẗ fy ỉškālyāt āltğrbẗ ālʿskryẗ ālflsṭynyẗ

[*Discussing Arms: A Reading in the Complications of Palestinian Armed Experience*]

Arab Institute for Studies and Distribution, 2020

Reviewed by **Nadia Naser-Najjab**, *University of Exeter, UK*

After the establishment of the PLO in 1964, armed struggle became synonymous with the Palestinian national movement. The PLO adopted a militaristic iconography and symbolism and individual and collective acts of armed resistance became deeply embedded in its historiography. When the PLO entered into peace negotiations with Israel, Hamas effectively co-opted this culture and tradition and presented itself as the standard-bearer of armed Palestinian resistance. In the Palestinian context, it would therefore be a mistake to ascribe purely religious connotations to 'martyrdom' in the service of armed resistance, as it also has a secular meaning and significance.

The memory of those who sacrificed themselves for the national cause is still celebrated by Palestinian institutions and the general public, and

Majed Kayali's *Discussing Arms* therefore presents a controversial thesis when it attributes the militarisation of the Palestinian struggle to a general failure of insight and perspective. His closeness to the national movement does however mean that he is almost uniquely well-placed to offer a retrospective critical assessment of Palestinian armed struggle since the Mandate period. He shows how the adulation of armed struggle produced emotional decisions and imposed clear limitations that excluded non-violent alternatives.

Kayali's criticisms do not seek to dispose of the more general concept of resistance and can, in actual fact, more accurately be described as an attempt to salvage the concept from the limitations and constraints that have hitherto been imposed on it. He affirms that *Discussing Arms* 'is not about the legitimacy of Palestinian struggle against the occupation…it is about the forms of struggle and not to limit it to armed struggle… how to invest it and to manage it in a rational way with least losses' (p 154). Kayali's critique requires a cultural shift and a whole new way of thinking, that comprehensively breaks with this inheritance in order to preserve the sanctity of the principle of resistance.

His critique also argues the celebration of armed resistance is detached from reality ('[i]t is more about imaginative and a wishful thinking rather than a realistic possibility') (p117) and this is confirmed by the fact that the rhetorical celebrations of a number of political parties do not refer to concrete achievements; conversely, the act of resistance is in itself deemed to be worthy of celebration.

Kayali is equally critical of the thinking that turned 'peace' into an unquestioned imperative, which was to be pursued in the absence of critical scrutiny. Both were products of a rigidity and inflexibility of thought that culminated in the ongoing annexation project that was presaged by the U.S report *Peace to Prosperity* (White House, 2020). Kayali similarly dismisses the call for Palestinians to adopt methods of Gandhian non-violent resistance without international and regional support, by observing that they are poorly adapted to Israeli settler colonialism. (p168).

The adulation of armed resistance has been accompanied by an equally pernicious myth of 'Arab solidarity', which has occluded the realities of the situation in which Palestinians find themselves. But Kayali does not confine himself to observing the limitations of this solidarity or the efforts of particular Arab states to co-opt the struggle. Instead, he proceeds to the considerably more controversial claim that Arab regimes were, at a time

when they were ostensibly committed to the destruction of Israel, actually interested in ensuring its stability, on the grounds this would help maintain the status quo.

But such questions were essentially rendered 'off-limits' by the 'worship' of armed resistance, which produced a rigidity of thought and tactical and strategic stagnation. Critical thought was also discouraged, as those who sacrificed themselves to the national struggle were instead to be celebrated and valorised. It was deemed more appropriate to unquestioningly shout slogans, such as Yasser Arafat's *Sha'ab Al Jabarreen* ('the mighty people'), while submitting to the limitless wisdom of the leadership.

This conformity came with a clear cost, which was paid by Palestinian civilians in Jordan, Lebanon and occupied Palestine. In any case, armed resistance was also limited in its own terms – as Kayali observes, traffic accidents claimed more Israeli lives than Palestinian acts of resistance or wars with Arabs. (p152) But the dogma of armed resistance prevented an acknowledgement of this, in addition to Israel's military superiority and the international/regional context. It also detracted from Palestinian institution-building.

Throughout its history, the Movement was also limited by its reluctance to learn the lessons of past defeats. The interlude between the outbreak of the 1936 Arab Revolt and the 1948 War was, he observes, wasted as the leadership failed to develop a clear strategy or address existing weaknesses. While he accepts that the establishment of Israel was perhaps unavoidable, he contends that the loss of 77 percent of Historical Palestine was not.

He also cites the example of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* and notes that Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians rallied Israelis behind Ariel Sharon and enabled him to reoccupy Palestinian areas, destroy Palestinian infrastructure and further fragment Palestinian land. But rather than acknowledge these counter-productive effects, Palestinian political parties instead commemorate the event's anniversaries and sacrifice (p115). He is also critical of Hamas missile attacks on Israel, which similarly helped Israel's Right to advance its political agenda. He attributes Hamas's tactical oversight to its detachment from the national movement, which is perhaps surprising, as he is so critical of the latter's tactical and strategic shortcomings.

Just as the PLO once celebrated the 'sacrifices' made during Israel's 1982 siege of Beirut, Hamas valorises the 'bravery' and 'endurance' of the besieged Strip. But it is no great betrayal to observe that, in this latter case,

the main contribution of this 'resistance' has been to strengthen the locks of a wretched prison that insults the most basic notions of human dignity. And nor is it an insult to contend that Israel's 2005 withdrawal from the Strip should have been regarded as a colonial tactic rather than celebrate it.

Kayali correctly observes that the example of non-violent struggle by Palestinians within Israel for equal rights has not been adapted by Palestinians. But this is more attributable to the general weakness, or wholesale absence, of rights within the OPT and specific Arab countries. In any case, it could be argued that it is not realistic to expect imitation of this kind, as Palestinians will develop approaches, tactics and strategies that are appropriate to their specific (legal and political) context.

The limitations of Palestinian strategy are not just shown by its failure to achieve specific goals but also by the extent to which colonial power has strengthened and consolidated. For example, since the First *Intifada*, Israel has successfully co-opted parts of the national movement, and this has in turn created division and disunity. The emergence of a Palestinian 'client class' and the extent of Palestinian-Israeli 'security' cooperation confirm just how successful it has been in these respects.

These developments have helped Palestinian political parties to reach a shared consensus that Israel is a settler colonial state. The PLO originally upheld this position, which was enshrined in its commitment to liberate Historical Palestine. However, it was then gradually diluted as the organisation incrementally moved towards accepting the two-state solution from the mid-1970s onwards. The many failures that accompanied this transition mean that there is a clear and ongoing need to define goals, identify means of resistance and set out an encompassing vision (p102). Critical thinking, open-mindedness and research are the necessary preconditions and corollaries of genuinely revolutionary struggle, and must be welcomed by the leadership rather than resented as an encroachment on its exclusive prerogatives.

I strongly agree with Kayali's assessment of the First Intifada, and more specifically his claim that it provides a model of popular and non-violent resistance that can be applied to contemporary challenges. In my own work, I have also discussed the proposition that the 'militarised' Second Intifada narrowed the horizons of revolutionary action and limited the range of participation (Naser-Najjab & Khatib, 2019).

I would however take issue with Kayali's observation that the current regional and international environment is not conducive to Palestinian struggle. Before the First *Intifada* broke out, the 'Palestinian Question' was very low on the international agenda, and in any case the claim that Palestinians should wait for the international environment to change strikes me as too closely resembling fatalism. I would also argue that the project of internal renewal must be defined in relation to Palestinian needs and requirements, and not the limitations imposed by the wider regional and international environment.

In making this assertion, I do not propose to dispose of 'internationalism' in all of its forms and dimensions. Rather, I intend to reject the form that was embodied in the abortive Oslo Accords, which situated Palestinians as grateful supplicants who would take whatever was on offer from powerful international states and organisations. In its place, I would instead propose 'anti-colonial internationalisation', which is outlined in more detail by Salamanca et al:

> Such an alignment would expand the tools available to Palestinians and their solidarity movement, and reconnect the struggle to its own history of anti-colonial internationalism. At its core, this internationalist approach asserts that the Palestinian struggle against Zionist settler colonialism can only be won when it is embedded within, and empowered by, broader struggles – all anti-imperial, all anti-racist, and all struggling to make another world possible. (2012:5).

BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) is a clear example of this 'anti-colonial internationalism', which is clearly rooted in the historical antecedents of the struggle against South Africa's Apartheid regime. It also recalls Kayali's thesis because it seeks to explore the possibilities of non-violent resistance and envisages engagement across a wider range of points.

Historically, theorists such as Fanon celebrated violence as a cathartic act that would rid the colonised of the shame and humiliation of his/her degraded state. More recently, revolutionary nationalist groups sought to 'borrow' the actions and symbols of militarism for the purposes of revolutionary action, apparently unaware that, in so doing, they transferred a specific and rigid mode of thought that reified 'sacrifice' and hierarchical discipline while simultaneously restricting revolutionary alternatives and

modes of struggle. In many cases, armed resistance did not just fail to achieve its ends, but actually became a problem that needed to be traversed.

Kayali's analysis has far-reaching implications and I therefore think that *Discussing Arms* will be of interest to a wide readership. Although academics will find much of interest, I primarily view it as a practical contribution that seeks to extract the principle of resistance from the cloying and suffocating embrace of militarism. While I would recommend that members of the current Palestinian leadership should read the book, I would suggest that they do so with some caution, as its discussion of an ossified and anachronistic tradition of 'struggle' is in many respects an damning indictment of their failure to explore and develop revolutionary alternatives.

I find much to recommend in *Discussing Arms*, and my concluding suggestion is that it should be translated into English and other foreign languages, as this will help it to reach the wider readership that it undoubtedly deserves.

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Alistair Horne: A Savage War of Peace

NYRB Classics, 2006

Reviewed by **Jonathan William Alexander Hills**, *Independent Researcher*

Since early 2019 Algerians have been engaging in open resistance against President Bouteflika, who resigned in April 2019, and subsequent remnants of his regime. This resistance also seeks a resolution to entrenched economic issues and corruption in Algeria. Meaningful consideration of Algeria's period of postcolonial struggle is needed to properly comprehend both the significance of these events, as well as the choice of Algerians to engage in broadly nonviolent resistance in recent years.

Accordingly, *A Savage War of Peace* (*SWOP*) presents an appropriately gruelling narrative of the Algerian War. Comprehensive without being exhaustive, *SWOP* manages to consider the War's many factions and partisan perspectives into a cautiously objective yet compelling narrative.

If the narrative of *SWOP* is to be dichotomised it is into external (that of de Gaulle, Ben Bella, metropolitan France, and the GPRA) and internal (that of ALN and the FLN operatives within Algeria, French paras, the OAS, and General Salan) aspects. Global themes and narratives, such as post-colonialism, Pan-Arabism, and the then-new Soviet–US paradigm are very much secondary to events and processes pertaining to Algeria and France directly. For example, Nassar's empty promises to the FLN (who the French were convinced, even until late in the War, was the main sponsor of FLN insurrection); the uneasy and standoffish relationship between the FLN and the Soviets (as well as to a lesser extent, the PRC); and global (especially US) sentiments concerning Algerian independence and reflected voices at the UN are all mentioned and considered, but do not occupy a central position. This provides a possible lesson for historians researching resistance movements: despite the ostensible precedence of global/regional paradigms, processes, and international political influences, the complexities of internal country-specific dynamics must also be acknowledged—especially during sustained periods of widespread resistance.

Similarly, according to the aforementioned internal–external dichotomy, the internal takes precedence over the latter in *SWOP* (with the key exception of De Gaulle, who is given considerable, if not *Ex Machina*-like precedence). For instance, concerning the FLN itself, the role of the

GPRA and the exterior are portrayed as instrumental, but their narrative is secondary to that of *fellaghas* in the Aurès, or FLN bombmakers in Algiers.

Macrocosmically, Horne sees the Revolution as emerging from, though not caused by, a new global dynamic—that which emboldened nationalist movements such as those of Tunisia, Vietnam, and Egypt. While not being categorically stipulated as such, *SWOP* portrays the Revolution as being caused by the ending of the old imperial age rather than the beginning of a new Soviet one; most importantly, however, is the emergence of a literate and educated class in Algeria, one that could exploit the fading imperial power responsible for its creation and education.

The French response to the Revolution is stylised by a weakened post-war France, particularly France's tumble from her position as a leading power and her 'loss of face'—which had a particular severe effect on the French military—following the 1940 surrender to Germany and in 1954 with Điện Biên Phủ. More than anything *SWOP* is concerned with Algeria and, as far as she is connected with it, France, as well as the people and affected populations within these regions.

SWOP repeats the historical saw that, in times of violent conflict, those individuals that are most easily forgotten by history are often those with the most piteous experiences. Those who fared worst in the Algerian War were the moderate, 'third force', and liberal voices; Horne notes the crucial lesson for contemporary conflicts. Individuals such as Guy Mollet and Ferhat Abbas, who found their position increasingly untenable as the War became increasingly violent, were forced to radicalise or be silenced.

Accordingly it is the experiences of *people*, both individually but especially collectively, that remains the focus of *SWOP*. More than anything else the reader is left with a strong sense of pity for those 'forced into' the War. Those individuals who, in 1956 or even by 1959, did not identify with either the FLN or the FAS (whose Muslim membership reached 40% during the War), but who were subsequently forced into being pro- or anti-Algerian independence according to identities they could not hide nor relinquish. With the exception of the tragic Harkis, by 1962 the Muslim–non-Muslim dichotomy had been realised, and every individual gobbled up by the War's savage conviction.

Horne makes it clear that, before the War, the generally ambivalent of Algeria comprised the vast majority: Arabs and Kabyles pressured into funding or joining the FLN after FLN bullying, indiscriminate and heavy-

handed *ratissages* by French paras, or wanton and racially charged *pieds-noirs* (European colonists) violence; *petits blancs* (poor *pieds-noirs* with wealth relative to many Muslims who Horne likens to the Boers of South Africa, or the poor whites of the Deep South) ideologically exploited or else terrorised by the FLN and FAF/OAS into becoming militantly and ideologically bound to *Algerie Francais*; Harkis fighting out of loyalty and not ideology, promised repeatedly that France would never abandon them. All would be caught up in the 'gristmill' of the War and the immovable positions of the FLN and *pied noir* ultras, positions towards which they—sooner or later—would be forced to gravitate or even adopt.

However, above and between these two positions stood, first authoritatively then dejectedly, an arbitrating French government and military. As Algeria reduced itself into two opposing polarities, France's government and her military would tend increasingly toward a self-immobilising plurality, and indeed an actual plurality in the case of the military due to the General's putsch. These ostensible arbitrators also saw shifting role as the War continued, reflecting a strange almost-oxymoronic progression; ultimately, France herself would become the OAS' enemy more than it had ever been the FLN's. Initially pro-*pieds-noirs* and set on pacifying this untenable breakaway from the Fourth Republic (apropos of the 'Ici c'est France' mentality of Algeria and her being a singularly 'integral part of France'), the French government would, under an increasingly wearisome and metropole-oriented de Gaulle, eventually adopt a 'handwashing' policy, abandoning all desires on Algiers and her Saharan underbelly.

Finally, the complicated position of the French army further erodes the notion of the War as a two-sided issue. From the laudable heroes of the *pieds-noirs* following their victory at the Battle of Algiers (Horne mentions that red para berets filled *pieds-noirs* shops in Algiers for Christmas 1957), to besieging the *pieds-noirs* OAS stronghold at the Battle of Bab El Oued (1962), then standing by while *Harkis* were massacred within eye-shot by the FLN later that same year.

Horne is careful to note that for every ultra or OAS assassin there were a dozen *pied noir* forced into the conflict, one that would remove them from their homeland and the homeland of their fathers. Nevertheless, when taken as a whole (there were many poor *pied noir* but barely any wealthy Muslims) the material disparities of the European and Muslim populations in terms of land, money, and civil rights were extreme. Extremely pernicious

and unhelpful to the situation was *pieds-noirs* bigotry toward Muslims, their insecure inferiority–superiority complex toward metropolitan France, their macho '*mediterranéens-et-demi*' outlook, and their mulishness in preventing assimilation. Often, this makes sympathising with the *pieds-noirs* difficult when reading *SWOP*, at least until their tragic exodus of 1962.

Only the FLN, in its single-minded and uncompromising terms and *modus operandi*, emerges victorious from the Algerian War. Set against a far stronger and more effective enemy, the FLN managed to realise all of its initial aims. Horne repeatedly notes that these aims were stipulated in the initial 'excessively grandiloquent' FLN declaration before All Saint's Day 1954, the (generally unsuccessful) launch of the FLN campaign. Despite this, the FLN would achieve every one.

True to overall tragedy of the War, *SWOP* finishes by covering post-War difficulties experienced by the FLN and its key players. Ben Bella's proto-personality cult and his ascendency to power, FLN purges, and authoritarianism under Ben Bella and Boumediene—all ruined the initial principles of the FLN as much as France or the OAS might have during the War itself. This raises the question of the brutal cost of FLN victory and, reflecting the outcomes of numerous other violent anticolonial struggles, the immense difficulty of avoiding the emergence of an ideological-driven, postcolonial elite.

The first spark of the War-to-come, 1945 Sétif massacre, shows that the aforementioned change was not the origin of the War. *SWOP* portrays Sétif as a surprising explosion of hitherto-unanticipated emotion, a warning that France (both Algerian and metropolitan) failed to heed, an indication of the escalating brutalisation to come, and the related difficulty of realising a rational resolution. Horne argues that desire for change among Algerian Muslims before the War did not necessarily mean desire for independence. Keen resentment, sometimes hatred, for the *pieds-noirs* of Algeria stemmed was somewhat justified due to the latter's privilege. If *pieds-noirs* outlook towards Muslims was initially one of racist contempt and condescension, then this evolved into hatred once they had been forced to take the Muslims seriously following events such as Sétif, the Philippeville massacre, and the subsequent FLN campaign.

The portentous Sétif massacre also highlights the aforementioned Muslim–non-Muslim disparity. After French forces killed several individuals at a generally peaceful Algerian-independence demonstration, 100 *pieds-*

noirs were killed in reprisal. Horne notes that there were certainly proto-FLN activists at Sétif, armed and set on violence, an indication of the FLN's more militant and inflexible aspect that would ultimately triumph against its own moderates and France alike. Subsequently 500–600+ Muslims were killed in related indiscriminate village air-raids by the French military, with a further 1,000 being killed in the reactionary *pieds-noirs ratonnades* (a racially charged *pied-noir* term for anti-Muslim violence). Perhaps even more than FLN bombings and assassinations, these *ratonnades* and subsequent Muslim reprisals would expedite the vicious circle of violence, evidence the superior position of the *pieds-noirs* Algerians, and radicalise and drive the general population into FLN and OAS arms, respectively. More than the resentment caused by the stinging European–Muslim disparity, and more even than France's hesitation to stand up to the powerful *pieds-noirs* lobby and facilitate true assimilation, was the catalyst provided by France herself: education of the prospective FLN leadership.

SWOP presents unity and utter rejection for any rival group or internal inconsistency as key to FLN endurance and success. A founding tenet of the FLN that remained throughout the War (and later even exemplified under Boumediene's presidency) was the FLN's complete rejection of the personality-cult. Horne remarks on the absence of plaques in Algiers commemorating revolutionary heroes of the Algerian Revolution, which was from the beginning, he says, a movement of collectiveness: 'of collective leadership, of collective suffering, and collective anonymity'. Leaders of the FLN and GPRA presented a united front without cracks or heterogeneity during the War itself. This especially true concerning those militant and conservative figures, such as Ben Bella and Boumediene, who would dominate the latter War and be ascendant within independent Algeria at the expense of more moderate figures such as Ferhjad Abbas and the Kabyle Krim Belacem.

Excepting simple tenacity and endurance, the FLN's ability to compartmentalise itself to avoid wide-scale discovery and dismantlement, FLN's leaders' ability to solve or (more often) expunge internal threats or dissident activity, and the organisation's capacity to keep its internal struggles hidden were not necessarily key to its victory, but are certainly why the FLN did not fail despite moments of intense pressure and hopelessness.

Given the considerable emphasis on the problems of 'leaderless' nonviolent resistance movements (those nevertheless characterised as

having considerable unity, including those of 2019 Algeria), the presence of a cohesive even if anonymous leadership able to coerce unity lends itself towards more authoritarian political organisation following the movement's success. Nevertheless, unity of leadership despite organisational compartmentalisation, shared or disparate leadership, ideological reticence, and homogenisation present themselves as important dynamics for resistance movements to consider.

At the inception of the Revolution, the FLN arranged Algeria into six *wilayas*, each run by a *wilaya* leader. Despite FLN unity being threatened often due to heterogeneous practices (such as the Marxist and egalitarian system of *wilaya* 4 under Si M'hamed's leadership) or else overly ambitious or politically individual *wilaya* leaders (such as the Kabyle Abane Ramdane), the FLN was tenacious in maintaining unity. The anti-cult-of-personality principle that resulted in the killing of Ramdane (friend of Frantz Fanon, appointer of 'reformists not revolutionaries', and 'architect of the revolution') not only illustrates the importance of the principle itself, but possibly also its exploitation for serving other means—in this case, Boumediene's paving the way for his future personality-bereft government following his 1965 coup to depose Ben Bella.

The FLN leadership managed to keep many of its internal tensions that emerged following Algerian independence silent throughout the War itself. This helped the organisation position itself as the sole contiguous representative of Algerian independence by 1960. Still, unity came at a cost. Roughly one tenth of Algerian casualties were due to internal purges and the destruction of rival forces (such as the massacre of over 301 MNA troops by the ALN in 1957). Similarly, the tip-off that resulted in the liquidation of the Soviet-aligned *Kabyle rouge* by September 1956, a short-lived rival to the FLN, was likely FLN-sponsored.

The plight of Algerian women also reflects this 'conflict–peacetime' disparity in resistance movements. Instrumental throughout the war—both as medics in the *bled* of the Aurès and as bomb-placers, message-takers, and gunrunners in Algiers—Muslim women saw the erosion of the keenly paternalistic Algerian culture and greater equality when they were needed in wartime. Following peace and independence their plight returned, even worsened, as Arabisation and, later, Islamification was imposed and exploited under authoritarian leadership. The notable participation of Algerian women in opposing Bouteflika marks a possible echo of this trend;

accordingly, there is a lesson of caution for all resistance movements here regarding the depletion of rights and means afforded to repressed groups during and following resistance struggles.

The lack of exposition of FLN characters does not apply to Fahad Abbas nor many FLN players (FLN's female bombers under Ben Mhidi) in the Battle of Algiers, nor their experiences therein. Almost singularly in *SWOP*, chapters on the Battle are more human-oriented and story-like. Perhaps this is merely because the narrative and setting of the Battle, such as covert attacks launched from the Kasbah—it lends itself to a more character-driven narrative. The author also notes that the *Battle of Algiers*, which helps to 'flesh out' the experiences of these players with admirable objectivity, is referenced by Horne, and makes a singular accompaniment to the reading of *SWOP*.

Regardless, throughout the War FLN leadership remained collective. It is for this reason that the struggle does not fit easily into the postcolonial Arab-nationalism paradigm of Nassar or Bourguiba, despite the attempts of both of these men to ensure it did so. Accordingly, the movement could not be stopped merely by the removal or countercheck of any individual, as evidenced with Ben Bella's hijacking. If this collectivist character was culturally retained in Algeria, it may have proven beneficial during Algeria's 2019 Hirak movement. Nonviolence, like every human movement, must struggle against that aspect of mankind that leans lazily toward celebrity, heroism, and apotheosis.

The vicious cycle of violence, with each side seemingly trying to outdo the other, is perhaps *SWOP*'s most staying theme. Horne conveys the ubiquitous terror/war fatigue, which was rife among *all* Algerians by 1962, but which had not been enough to prevent Algerian independence altogether. The lesson for current resistance movements is ambiguous; even without moral considerations the indiscriminate use of terror is not recommendable as clearly terror both won (for the FLN) and lost (for OAS and ultras) the War. The number of times 'the violence escalates' is used in SWOP seems absurd, and yet the author substantiates each instance. Nevertheless, the most violent acts ultimately had their strongest effects in the outrage they caused, not their practicable outcomes (i.e. military or civil damage).

Similarly, the use of torture by the French authorities, though effective in the Battle of Algiers, was likely the most damaging of policies for *Algérie Française*. *SWOP* shows the effectiveness of terror in turning ambivalent

Muslims into FLN supporters, but also how OAS terror guaranteed the exodus of *pieds-noirs* in the final year of the war.

Highlighting uncertain outcome of violent revolution once the 'cat has been taken out of the bag' is an important point for nonviolent movements seeking to remain pacifistic in times of keen stress or the utilisation of violence and terror by the opposing force.

It is worthwhile for those engaged in resistance to seriously consider the utilisability of outrage, or even offence. One limitation on the FLN's terror was that it did not target leading French officials, de Gaulle, or—most importantly—civilians in metropolitan France. While OAS tried numerous times to assassinate de Gaulle, if the FLN had succeeded in doing so French, and possibly world opinion would likely have moved towards that of the *pieds-noirs* ultras. Even when FLN terrorist incidents on mainland increased in the wake of de Gaulle's return, they were targeted at non-civilian targets: policemen, the Eiffel tower, etc. Despite this, not one act of promiscuous bombing against civilians, such has been commonplace in Algiers (or as seen in IRA bombings in Britain 15 years later), took place in France herself.

The disparity between violence in Algeria and metropolitan France is exemplified; such a difference allowed metropolitan French (and indeed world) opinion to maintain its trend towards sympathising with the FLN following the Battle of Algiers and de Gaulle's return.

Comparatively, the 1961 Paris massacre of Algerian FLN protesters by French authorities and the OAS bombing and assassination attempt on Minister Malraux—which mistakenly saw four-year-old Delphine Renard blinded and maimed—put the nail in the coffin for *Algérie française* and, therefore, the 'clothes in the suitcase' for the OAS' ostensible protectorates. This attempt on Malraux's life, even as late as 1962 'would have been regarded as little more than an everyday event in contemporary Algiers', but in a comparatively 'less hardened' Paris it proved momentous.

This event caused a crowd of 10,000 chanting 'O.A.S. As-sas-sins' to amass in Paris the next day, an ensuring aforementioned massacre by Parisian police, then a subsequent half-million-strong procession under the sentiment 'it must end'. Clearly the role of violence was far less significant when compared with the specific direction and population towards which it was directed. Concerning specific/targeted violence, the FLN practice of murdering native policemen in Algeria, and brutally exhibitionist murders of loyal or ambivalent Muslims in the Aurès, resulted in mass defections

to the FLN, destroyed morale among native policemen and civil workers, and redirected French military efforts from anti-ALN missions towards policework (i.e. policing the police as well as the Algerian population). This point in particular is highlighted by Horne as a lesson for 21st century resistance/anti-resistance fighting.

The causes of success for the Revolution's violent side is twofold: first, force recognition among international media concerning the cause of Algerian independence, utilising this support when anti-colonial sentiments were ascendant; second, it forced the French government to resort to extreme measures, which would thereby destroy international and mainland support for *Algérie française* and the *pieds-noirs* ultras. Interestingly, neither of these concern violence as an end in itself; both advocate violence as a catalyst or cause of a secondary phenomenon.

The former becomes more complicated when one considers—in accordance with the narrative of SWOP—that domestic, then international attention was only piqued after the violence became sufficiently 'newsworthy', that is, egregious and extreme, and when the word 'torture' crept into news reports during the Battle of Algiers.

Excepting the *pieds-noirs* and sympathetic military contingents, the exposure of torture certainly did more eradicate support for *Algérie française* than FLN bombings of civilians did to bolster it. In combination with the General's coup and OAS terrorism in mainland France, torture was ultimately responsible for destroying metropolitan French support for the *pieds-noirs* and the 'Ici, c'est France' mentality. The power of utilising the opposing force's violent means and ends does not escape the modern reader, nor did it escape the victorious FLN.

Despite Algeria ostensibly being 'integral' to France, and her separation from France being unthinkable, the end of War proved otherwise. Following FLN victory, the paras, ultras, and *pieds-noirs* did indeed have somewhere else to go: France. Comparatively, FLN members had no such option throughout the War: they were forced to stoically endure a continuous military storm, often with risible medical and military means, low morale, and distrust of fellow-FLN members. They patiently waited for the slow political realisation that would win the War and a free Algeria. This, if anything, is *SWOP*'s lesson for all resistance movements today—force radicalisation, ensure your key activists are ready to weather conditions 'made enduringly unendurable' by the opposing force, suffer relentless hardship without glory, and experience

near-annihilation by superior forces before making repeated recoveries without respite. In the meantime regional or global opinions must be change or be changed in your favour for a political solution and victory.