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**PARALLELS IN FRANCE'S RESPONSES TO
RWANDAN AND ALGERIAN MASSACRES**

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*International Responses**In those countries, a genocide is not that important.*

François Mitterrand

1. Introduction

Rwanda and Algeria have witnessed horrific human rights violations of selective categories of citizens. The genocide in Rwanda did not occur spontaneously. It was the result of misguided colonial policies, the instrumentalisation of pseudo-ethnology for political domination, foreign interference and complicity. The massacres in Algeria are part of a policy which seeks to bring and maintain the Algerian people under the domination of the military and their international supporters and sponsors. The massacres were predictable following the elections results of December 1991 which saw the FIS (Front Islamique du Salut) party triumph. The military and the various vested interests felt threatened by that landslide victory and responded by a military take-over. The only alternative left to the military in their will to subdue the people's resistance was to crush the party and win over the people to their side through sheer brute force. The consequences have been terrible: endless massacres since the military coup of 11 January 1992.

The genocide perpetrated in Rwanda from April to July 1994 is one of the great tragedies that has befallen this century. Hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps about one million, were murdered because they belonged to a different race. Hutu racists undertook to wipe out the Tutsi minority as well as the moderate Hutu who opposed their plans. Once again, the whole world watched killings on a massive scale without facing up to its responsibility. The inaction of the international community and the complicity of a few foreign governments allowed the atrocities to take horrific dimensions. When killers are assured of international support, they continue with their crimes. They know that they are protected by 'friendly' powers. The genocidal regime of Rwanda had the support of France, a permanent member of the Security Council and a key player in the European Union.

The events that happened in Rwanda in 1994 and those still taking place in Algeria have common features. The then regime of Rwanda and the present one of Algeria are repressive, corrupt, undemocratic and heavily militarised. Both are underpinned by an elite which has built up lavish lifestyles through the pillage and plunder of the states coffers. France assisted the Hutu regime financially and supplied it with weapons even when the genocide was under way. Likewise, it continues to help the Algerian regime both financially and militarily while massacres of civilians are still going on. France shielded the Hutu regime from international action and is presently doing so with the Algerian one.

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What are the common elements in these tragedies? How could both regimes have escaped international scrutiny? Why did the international community stand by and not react? Certainly, many bystanders were aware of what was going on but did nothing. How did France manage to shield the regimes from being named and shamed by the international community? No doubt, all these burning questions require long awaited answers. Some answers can be found in recent books¹. In this paper, we seek only to draw some parallels between the Rwandan and Algerian regimes and question the role played by the French state in supporting them both morally and materially during the course of the atrocities. We examine also how the military regimes used a Francophone elite to tap into French networks for support and exploit the artificial proximity between the elite and French intellectual and decision-making circles.

The objective of such an exercise is to examine whether the close relationship of the French government with the regimes of both countries has contributed to exacerbate the human rights violations by shielding the regimes from international scrutiny. To set the scene of the Rwandan genocide, a brief history of Rwanda is first recalled in Section 2. Section 3 examines how France rushed in to fill the vacuum left by Belgium, the colonial power. The French role in Rwanda during the genocide of Tutsi is then reviewed in Section 4. In Section 5 parallels are drawn between the actions of the Hutu racists and their Algerian eradicationist counterparts.

2. Historical reminder

The Berlin Conference of 1885, which was convened to oversee the division of Africa among European powers, attributed Rwanda to the German Empire. The colonisation of the country was then spearheaded by the establishment of missions by les Pères Blancs (White Fathers), a society founded in 1868 by the first Archbishop of Algiers, Cardinal Lavigerie. In 1919, the treaty of Versailles gave Belgium a mandate over the country. The new colonial masters adopted a form of indirect rule that relied heavily on the promotion of a Europeanised elite. This led to the weakening of the traditional monarchy and the indigenous links and institutions which had ensured a peaceful co-existence of the various tribes for centuries. Ethnicity was promoted by the colonial power as a political and institutional construct. This construct was soon internalised and absorbed by the Rwandans. It led to the emergence of a class with supremacist pretences and to a feeling of resentment by the majority of the population. Human Rights Watch describes this policy as follows:

By assuring a Tutsi monopoly of power, the Belgians set the stage for future conflict in Rwanda. Such was not their intent. They were not implementing a 'divide and rule' strategy so much as they were just putting into effect the racist convictions common to most early twentieth century Europeans. They believed Tutsi, Hutu, and

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Twa were three distinct, long-existent and internally coherent blocks of people, the local representatives of three major population groups, the Ethiopid, Bantu and Pygmoid. Unclear whether these were races, tribes, or language groups, the Europeans were nonetheless certain that the Tutsi were superior to the Hutu and the Hutu superior to the Twa—just as they knew themselves to be superior to all three. Because Europeans thought that the Tutsi looked more like themselves than did other Rwandans, they found it reasonable to suppose them closer to Europeans in the evolutionary hierarchy and hence closer to them in ability. Believing the Tutsi to be more capable, they found it logical for the Tutsi to rule Hutu and Twa just as it was reasonable for Europeans to rule Africans. Unaware of the ‘Hutu’ contribution to building Rwanda, the Europeans saw only that the ruler of this impressive state and many of his immediate entourage were Tutsi, which led them to assume that the complex institutions had been created exclusively by Tutsi.²

The ethnic division of Rwandan society resulted, on occasions, in farcical situations. This misconception led to a tragic mistake in 1933. In a census carried out that year, a ‘Tutsi’ was defined as someone owning at least 10 cows! All the others were ‘Hutu’ or ‘Twa’ according to the work they performed. Thus a few rich Hutu became ‘Tutsi’ and many poor Tutsi became ‘Hutu’!³

The Hutu elite that was to emerge in the fifties would develop a discourse based on past grievances and historical resentment. An information mission of the French parliament highlighted, in a report, the role of colonial historiography in the creation and propagation of racial myths and their disastrous effect on contemporary Rwanda.

In a sense, strictly speaking there is no discovery of Rwanda, but rather an invention of contemporary Rwanda. The colonial historiography which set out to ‘build scientifically’ the racial model [...] structures even today the vision of a large part of the Rwandan population. Thus, the Bantu (assimilated to the category of Hutu land farmers) settled in a region that was reclaimed by the first inhabitants (the Twa). The Hutu and Twa were then confronted by the arrival of Hamit cattle farmers (a category progressively reduced to its Tutsi dominant composition) who, with their cattle, occupied all the vacant space and then imposed their order on the entire heartland of this region of Africa as well as on the bordering lands.⁴

The myth of an ethnic group born to rule and another to be ruled over was propagated by the colonial establishment. The report of the French information mission went on to say in this context:

Evolved Tutsi and Hutu designed to obey: this myth was methodically propagated during several decades by missionaries, teachers, intellectuals, ethnologists and academics who lent credence to the vision of the Rwandan society until the end of the seventies.

Belgium, which initially supported the Tutsi elite, changed its policy towards them to promote the Hutu elite. In a written submission to the Inter-

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national Tribunal on Rwanda, André Guichaoua, a Professor at the Science and Technology University of Lille, noted:

In its desire to thwart the increasing influence of independence calls among the princely elite of Rwanda and Urundi and to preserve a regional presence that is already strongly compromised in Kinshasa and Bujumbura, the colonial, administrative and religious authorities have, since the mid-fifties given their support to the Hutu leaders militating for 'a social revolution'.⁵

Belgium's support for the Hutu intensified as talk about independence started to gather momentum. Hutu were named to responsible positions in the administration. When the moderate Tutsi ruler, Mutara Rudahigwa, who had been in power since 1931 died in 1959, he was succeeded by a conservative half brother, Kigeri Ndahindurwa, whose reign was marked by increased ethnic division as described by Human Rights Watch:

Moderate parties that sought to organize across the Hutu-Tutsi divide lost ground as the Parmehutu (Parti du mouvement de l'émancipation des Bahutu), identified exclusively with Hutu, and the Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR), a royalist Tutsi party, gained in strength. In November 1959, several Tutsi assaulted a Hutu sub-chief. As the news of the incident spread, Hutu groups attacked Tutsi officials and the Tutsi responded with more violence. Several hundred people were killed before the Belgian administration restored order. The Belgians then replaced about half the Tutsi local authorities by Hutu. With the help of many of these local administrators, the Parmehutu easily won the first elections in 1960 and 1961. In September 1961, some 80 percent of Rwandans voted to end the monarchy, thus confirming the proclamation of a republic the previous January 1961 by the Parmehutu-led government. These events became known as the 'Hutu Revolution'.⁶

3. Enter France

Rwanda secured its independence from Belgium in July 1962. Soon after, new co-operation agreements in the economic, cultural and technical fields were signed between the Hutu-dominated government and France. Like Belgium, France adopted a strategy of support and cultivation of the Hutu elite, a policy described in the report of the French information mission as follows:

Its strategy for getting a foothold (in Rwanda) will therefore be limited to narrow governing circles in power and to the protection that it can offer them, particularly on the military level. The turning point occurred in the seventies when 'without oversimplification, we can say that France, with a general indifference, has worn the colonial shoes of Belgium, inheriting Rwanda through levirate'.⁷

During the 'Hutu revolution', also known as the 'social revolution', about 300 000 Tutsi fled to the neighbouring countries when fighting broke out between rival Hutu and Tutsi gangs. Massacres of the Tutsi population also took place. In the sixties, incursions by armed Tutsi exiles would inevitably

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end up in massacres of Tutsi inside Rwanda, easy hostages to the Hutu leaders. The exiles formed the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in Uganda, and on 1 October 1990, the RPF started a war against the regime of President Juvénal Habyarimana. During the war of 1990-1994 between the Hutu regime and the RPF, many massacres were committed against the Tutsi minority. These were denied by the French authorities who were instrumental in shielding the regime from international scrutiny. Human Rights Watch highlights particularly the role of French Ambassador Martres to Rwanda in defending the Rwandan President Habyarimana against charges of human rights abuses levelled against him by human rights organisations.

Ambassador Martres dismissed reports of massacres as 'just rumors' and a supporter within the French Foreign Ministry wrote soon after the International Commission published its report that the Habyarimana regime was 'rather respectful of human rights and on the whole concerned about good administration.' In a shocking echo of extremist Hutu propaganda, this author explained that the RPF, and not Habyarimana, should be blamed for the massacres of the Tutsi, because their agents (provocateurs) had infiltrated and caused the Bugesera massacre as well as the slaughter of the Bagogwe in 1991. As part of an effort to shore up Habyarimana and discredit further the RPF, the French secret service (Direction Générale des Services Extérieurs, DGSE) planted news stories about supposed Ugandan support for the guerrilla movement. On February 21, 1993, the reputable *Le Monde* published an account of a RPF massacre of hundreds of civilians that had in fact never taken place.⁸

President Mitterrand praised the model co-operation that existed between the two countries. He told his council of ministers on 17 October 1990: 'we maintain friendly relations with the Government of Rwanda which has drawn closer to France after it had noted the indifference of Belgium towards its former colony.'⁹ These close relations established by France with the Rwandan Hutu regime translated into military support of the latter as noted by Human Rights Watch.

From the outset of the war with the RPF, Rwanda had been firmly backed by France. Able to rely on this steady support from a major international actor, Habyarimana was in a strong position to confront threats from the RPF, reproaches from other foreign powers, and opposition from dissidents within Rwanda. Fluent in French, apparently a devout Catholic, Habyarimana impressed French president François Mitterrand and others with his assimilation of French values. In the French system, where the president exercised enormous control over African policy, Mitterrand's bond with Habyarimana counted for a great deal.¹⁰

On 6 April 1994, Habyarimana and the Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira died when the Falcon-50 executive jet on which they were travel-

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ling was downed by a missile as it was about to land at Kigali airport. The killing paved the way for the Rwandan genocide. The origin of the attack remains a mystery to this date.

4. France's responsibility

The Rwandan Hutu regime bears the responsibility for the genocide. However, the Hutu leaders were not operating in a vacuum. They certainly believed that, in their gruesome task, they had the support of some foreign governments. Human Rights Watch includes among the list of foreign governments France for 'having continued its support of a government engaged in genocide.'¹¹ French support to the Hutu regime was material and contributed to enhancing the regime's lethal capacity to inflict harm on what it perceived as its enemies. Early in 1998, the French daily *Le Figaro* published a series of articles by Patrick de Saint-Exupéry in which the journalist showed that France continued to arm the Hutu regime for nearly two months after the start of the genocide and two weeks after the UN arms embargo on Rwanda.¹² The revelations contained in *Le Figaro* were damning to the French government:

Despite the massacres Paris continued to supply arms to the Hutu killers [...] During these crucial weeks, and despite numerous official denials expressed at the time, French has continued in its co-operation policy with the Rwandan regime, with those who made possible the genocide.¹³

The journalist revealed also that:

The Hutu killers continued to be received in both the Élysée and Matignon weeks after the beginning of the genocide enterprise. Bruno Delaye who was in charge of the Africa Department in the Élysée confessed later to the following: 'I must have received 400 murderers and 2000 drug dealers in my office. One cannot keep his hands clean when dealing with Africa.'¹⁴

The newspaper noted that Mitterand was not so much preoccupied by the genocide as by the fall of Rwanda to Anglo-Saxon expansion in central Africa. In the summer of 1994, he was reported to have said to his entourage: 'in those countries, a genocide is not that important.'¹⁵

The reports of *Le Figaro* and the pressures of Human Rights organisations led to the creation of a parliamentary commission for the investigation into the role of France in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The commission was chaired by Paul Quilès, a Socialist and former defence minister, and an establishment figure. After a nine-month inquiry the commission concluded that France had no direct involvement in the genocide, and blamed the United Nations inaction which it attributed to a U.S. reluctance to intervene. The report also strongly criticised French policy in the region as short-sighted and naïve. As expected by human rights organisations, the report

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failed to come to a final conclusion. In presenting his report, Paul Quiles declared: 'we lack several elements, which explains why we could not come to a final conclusion.'¹⁶ The representatives of the centre-right minority party on the commission refused to endorse the report, claiming that it did not sufficiently exonerate France. René Galy-Dejean of President Jacques Chirac's Rally for the Republic party said: 'France has nothing to blush about. It had no responsibility for the genocide.'¹⁷

France was well placed to know what was happening in Rwanda. It had a strong presence in the form of military advisers who were training the Rwandan forces. The communication system used by the army was set up by French technicians who were, no doubt, also ensuring its maintenance. The preoccupation of France was not so much the prevention of a genocide as the protection of an ally as noted by Patrick de Saint-Exupéry:

Towards the end of April, three weeks after the beginning of the tragedy, Paris is not on the same wavelength as the other states. The silence is similar but it does not hide only a bad conscience: it hides also a deep desire to protect the Rwandan 'allies'.¹⁸

The French authorities continued to receive visiting Rwandan officials. The Human Rights Watch report singled out France for failing to 'respond with any new initiatives and continued to operate within the same constraints that had shaped their policy towards Rwanda for some time.'¹⁹ France said that it was not aware of what was going on in Rwanda but HRW stated that:

With close ties to Habyarimana and other high-ranking Rwandan officials and with an undercover intelligence operation in place, France certainly knew about the preparations for killing Tutsi and opponents of Hutu Power. French diplomats and military officers discussed the risk of genocide beginning in 1990 and, according to former Ambassador Martres, the 1994 genocide could have been foreseen in October 1993. Bound by its old loyalties, however, France continued to support the Rwandan government diplomatically, in discussions in the Security Council, for example, and militarily, with the delivery of arms. After the January 11 telegram, Boutros-Ghali had looked to France, Belgium, and the U.S. to support his efforts to get Habyarimana to halt the preparations for violence. According to Belgian diplomatic correspondence, it was France that prevented the three from addressing the issue when they met with the Rwandan president.²⁰

The report of the French information mission is less specific about whether France was aware of the gross human rights violations in Rwanda or not. Nevertheless, it raises disturbing questions:

The silence of the ruling authorities, which is largely explained by traditions of discretion, if not of secrecy, cultivated by our diplomacy and our defence, and the apparent indifference of the Parliament, have given rise to questions, suspicions, indeed to accusations of French policy that are all the more preoccupying as the ob-

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jective information elements that might have invalidated or corroborated them were rare.²¹

In June 1994, *Opération Turquoise* was launched with Security Council authorisation with the aim of saving Tutsi lives. The presence of thousands of French crack paratroopers was powerless to stop the killings, except in a few pockets of refugees. The passivity of the French soldiers was highlighted by *The New Yorker's* Philip Gourevitch in a book about the Rwanda genocide. He wrote: 'Often French troops were ordered to wait in small towns while mass killings went on just kilometres away in Hutu-controlled area.'²² He reported the following remark of a French soldier 'I am fed up with being cheered by murderers.'²³ Critics have always maintained that the real intention behind *Opération Turquoise* was to 'slow down the advance of the Patriotic Front and save the French-allied Kigali government.'²⁴ 'So what if that meant French complicity in one of the worst cases of mass murder of the century.' 'TV images made during the time embarrassingly show Hutu genocidaires holding pictures of Mitterrand.'²⁵

5. Hutu racists and Algerian eradicationists: the parallels

French support for the Hutu racists and Algerian eradicationists took many forms. Both factions enjoyed the benevolence of the French authorities and were warmly received during their frequent visits to Paris. In particular, the Algerian eradicationists have had easy access to the media to globalise the propaganda and raise support for the generals. The help received by these two factions was not only moral but material too. The economic as well as the military help must have sounded to the beneficiaries as a full endorsement of their actions. Some of the actions undertaken by France to support these two factions are exposed below. Some common features shared by both factions are also exposed.

The aims of the European Union mission and the UN Panel^A that visited Algeria in 1998 were strikingly similar to that of *Opération Turquoise*. Both missions had a strong French presence^B destined to reassure the Algerian

^A A nine-member delegation led by the French André Soulier visited Algeria on a five-day mission in February 1998. The delegates were from Austria, France, Spain, Greece and Germany, countries largely sympathetic to the cause of the military regime. The FIS leaders tried to communicate with the delegation members by sending them a letter. André Soulier publicly tore up the letter. A FIS spokesman commented on the action as: 'unbefitting political and diplomatic usage'. Soulier said that 'the delegation had concluded it was better to tear up the envelopes than open them, because they had promised the Algerian government they would not speak with Islamic rebels'. The quotations are from CNN, 9 February, 1998.

^B In July 1998 a UN panel visited Algeria with no human rights mandate. The panel included an influential supporter of the military regime: Simone Veil. Sometime prior to her visit, she had disagreed with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing when the latter had supported a policy of national reconciliation in Algeria. She opposed him and declared that the declaration 'committed only him' (*Agence France Presse*, 31 January and 1 February 1997). After her return from Algiers in the summer of 1998, she appealed

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regime, dilute recommendations and ultimately shield the regime from international criticism. Algerian media greeted the visitors as friends who came to help Algeria at a difficult time of its history. If the intentions of France had been sincere, it would have refused to participate in these missions on account of its links to the military junta. Amnesty International said about the report of the UN panel that it 'blatantly fails to address the key issues concerning the human rights crisis'.²⁶

When the RPF forces progressed and the full extent of the killings of Tutsi in the conquered areas was broadcast to the world, the French military spokesmen started to promote the idea of a 'two-way genocide' and called the RPF the 'Khmers Noirs' (black Khmers).²⁷ As evidence has mounted implicating the Algerian security forces in massacres and disappearances, some French officials and media have been promoting the two-way massacres theory which puts equal blame on both the regime and the rebels, referred to sometimes as *Khmers Verts* (green Khmers) in the French media. In this vision the regime's violence, however deplorable, is nevertheless motivated by the preservation of the state from destruction by barbarian hordes.

Like the Hutu supremacists, the Algerian eradicationists adhere to an exclusive vision of Algerian polity in which the political opponent has no place, or worse is to be eradicated. They claim to represent the majority of society, a claim not borne out by the outcome of elections, even the rigged ones, since the advent of political pluralism. They oppose the Arabic language and spare no effort in undermining its progress in the Algerian society. They despise Arabic culture and attack constantly the religion of Islam. Islam, fundamentalism or *intégrisme* and terrorism are interchangeable words to them. Democracy to them is whatever system incorporates their exclusivist vision. Everything else is undemocratic. They see the military junta as a bulwark for democracy. If the Hutu viewed society through a racial prism, the eradicationists use a cultural one instead. They behave as the rightful inheritors of the mantle of the nineteenth century colonialists who set out to civilise savages, occupy their land and subjugate them. Algeria's eradicationists seek today to civilise 'the Muslim, Arabic speaking Algerians' and introduce them to the wonders of 'French culture'. The power of this faction was demonstrated in 1988, when the then Algerian education minister was sacked immediately for naively daring to call for the replacement of the French language in schools by English.²⁸

The Hutu racists played on the 'victimisation' they suffered at the hands of the Tutsi elite to justify the demonisation of all the Tutsi. The media, especially Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTL), had a major role

for help 'to fight terrorism, against the fanatics, against an Islamism of hatred which seeks to impose its laws' (*Agence France Presse*, 14 September 1998).

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in bringing the Hutu militants to a state of frenzy. For their part, the Algerian eradicationists developed a world-upside-down rhetoric of victimisation, a discourse of a republic and a democracy in danger from 'barbarism'. They used the powerful media, *El-Watan*, *Liberté*, *Le Matin*, *L'Authentique*, etc. to demonise the opposition and promote the creation of ruthless militias and paramilitary patriots. If, for the Hutu, the Tutsi were 'cockroaches',^c for the Algerian eradicationists, the political opponents are 'infra-humans'²⁹, or animals: rats, locusts, dogs.³⁰ The eradicationist literature uses a colourful linguistic zoo³¹ to describe the Islamists. Rachid Boujedra speaks of 'these mortiferous beings. A fascist minority, a filthy and nauseating political party, a conglomeration of mad and plague-stricken rats.'³² Ferial Assima describes the events of 1991, when the army fired at demonstrators, in the following shocking terms:

For me, the reality of misfortune starts when the believers come out of mosques, when this host of men cross the city; when the mob roars and stirs up the street [...] The people is but a bloated belly which sucks in the earth [...] A mob, a mud flow, a landslide surging down onto us, uprooting our days from this too long slumber.

There was gunfire.

Luckily, the army has cleansed the town from these hotheads. Everything is calm, at last. Even the walls smile[...] The dead are dead. We wash our hands of them.³³

Hence, one can see that the process of killing the opponent is usually preceded by his dehumanisation. Certain French officials had irresponsibly echoed these theories, and in the process made them appear respectable. French intellectuals such as Bernard-Henry Lévy, André Glucksmann and Jack Lang have been very vociferous in their support for the Algerian eradicationists.³⁴

The French lobbies played a crucial role in shielding Rwanda from public opinion. Lionel Jospin, the French prime minister, is on record for his declaration: 'You must know that countless things on Rwanda have never been told.'³⁵ José Kagabo commented: 'there are briefs that are managed by different networks [...] administration places from where information does not filter.'³⁶ These lobbies are at work in Paris on behalf of the Algerian generals. Visits of their representatives to Algeria have intensified during the last few years. They never ceased, even at the height of the massacres. The expectations of the lobbies are understandable and have been articulated by the President of Le Conseil National du Patronat Français (CNPFI-international): 'There is not a country at two-hour flight from Paris that offers so many opportunities and possibilities as Algeria.'³⁷ Hocine Aït Ahmed, an Algerian

^c Cockroaches (Inyenzi) was a term used to describe Tutsi who invaded Rwanda in the 1960s. It was revived in 1990 to refer to members of the RPF.

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opponent of the regime and a leading figure of the liberation struggle, expressed his difficulty of 'understanding French policy' which is decided by 'commercial networks or special services' and hoped that French policy would cease to be 'hostage to the Franco-Algerian lobbies.'³⁸ He denounced 'the role of diplomatic protectorate of France over Algeria.'³⁹ The national council of the FFS echoed this fear of

seeing some key-persons being able, like in Rwanda, to render irreversible the French policy of support to the Algerian extremists in power, through occult networks.⁴⁰

The influence of the mercantile lobby cannot be underestimated at a time when Algeria is liberalising its economy at an accelerated rate. This is a golden opportunity for the Algerian generals and their protectors abroad. They never had it so good when it comes to plunder and pillage.

It has to be said, however, that certain French personalities have acted with conscience and honour towards both countries. They refused to condone inhuman policies accessory to genocide, gross human rights violations and echo the regime's lies. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, a former President, rejected the idea that the French intervention in Rwanda was humanitarian. He accused the French command of 'protecting some of those who carried out the massacres.'⁴¹ This is a far cry from the declaration of Charles Josselin, the aid minister: 'the French soldiers did not wield the machetes [...] and furthermore we were looking elsewhere.'⁴² Valéry Giscard d'Estaing took also a correct position with respect to Algeria when he repeatedly called for a negotiated solution which involved all Algerian political forces. His principled stand led him to condemn the military coup of 11 January 1992, which was welcomed by the French government. In an interview with *L'Express*, referring to the military coup, he declared:

On the other hand, the government and the whole political class were pleased. And for that reason, they have taken the side of the military clan which seized power.

He also referred to the counter-insurgency strategy implemented by the Algerian generals:

As a matter of fact, the army and the security forces use an old technique of this type of conflict which consists in implicating the civilian populations in the conflict by arming them. This inevitably leads to an escalation of violence since these civilian populations become the object of savage reprisals, on both sides.⁴³

6. Conclusion

The genocide in Rwanda was the culmination of years of low intensity massacres and cultural and political oppression of the Tutsi minority. This situa-

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tion was allowed to continue because there was complicity between the Hutu regime and the French State. France supported the Hutu regime ever since the country obtained its independence and did not stop doing so until the Hutu regime was overthrown by the Rwanda Patriotic Front. The international community had a number of leverages it could have used to put an end to gross violations of human rights: denunciations, sanctions, expulsions from international organisations and shaming. No leverage of this sort was used either against Rwanda, or is being contemplated in the case of Algeria. What put an end to the genocide in Rwanda was the defeat of the Hutu regime at the hands of the RPF.

In Algeria, massacres are continuing with total indifference of the international community. These massacres would have stopped by now if the Algerian regime had been challenged to open the country to an international inquiry into the mass killings of civilians. The massacres in Algeria constitute therefore a failure of the international community to uphold the norms of civilised behaviour. Human Rights Watch goes to the heart of the matter in its analysis of evil when, with regard to the Rwanda genocide, it writes: 'But genocide anywhere implicates everyone. To the extent that governments and peoples elsewhere failed to prevent and halt this killing campaign, they all share in the shame of the crime.'⁴⁴ This is indeed the reason which explains why, for instance, the Algerian regime continues to massacre innocent people with impunity. The Algerian regime has guaranteed that France will thwart any international inquiry into the massacres, let alone the prosecution of the perpetrators

The world owes a duty of conscience to the victims of the Rwanda genocide and the Algerian massacres. It failed to act in Rwanda and has been failing the Algerians who continue to be threatened in their very existence by a ruthless regime. It should learn the lesson of Rwanda and force the Algerian regime to accept an international commission of inquiry into all the massacres that have taken place in order to identify the perpetrators and punish them accordingly. If France continues to act as 'diplomatic protector' for the military regime in order to shield it from international scrutiny and frustrate the international community's demand for an independent inquiry into the massacres, it should be held legally and morally responsible for complicit behaviour with this killer state.

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NOTES

¹ Pascal Krop, *Le génocide franco-africain*, Lattès; Colette Braeckman, *Rwanda. Histoire d'un génocide*, Fayard; Francois-Xavier Verschave, *Complicité de génocide? La politique de la France au Rwanda*, La Découverte.

² Human Rights Watch Report, *Leave none to tell the story, Genocide in Rwanda*, 1999.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mission d'information de la commission de la défense nationale et des forces armées et de la commission des affaires étrangères, *Rapport d'information sur les opérations militaires menées par la France, d'autres pays et l'ONU au Rwanda entre 1990 et 1994*, N° 1271, 1998.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See reference 2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See reference 4.

¹⁰ See reference 2.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Agence France Presse*, 1 December 1998.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Le Figaro*, 14 January 1998.

¹⁹ See reference 2.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ See reference 4.

²² Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc., 1998.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Agence France Presse*, 1 December 1998.

²⁵ *Liaison-Rwanda*, 3 June 1999. Liaison-Rwanda is a three-monthly news bulletin and a forum for the associations working for the reconstruction of Rwanda.

²⁶ *Amnesty International*, press release, 16 September 1998

²⁷ See reference 22.

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²⁸ Rachid Messaoudi, *Algerian-French relations: 1830-1991 a clash of civilizations in Algeria: Revolution visited*, Editor R. Shah-Kazemi, Islamic World Report, London 1997.

²⁹ See papers in part III of this book.

³⁰ Feriel Assima, *Une Femme à Alger*, Arléa, Paris, 1995.

³¹ Moussa Aït-Embarek, *L'Algérie en murmure un cahier sur la torture*, Hoggar, Genève, 1996.

³² R. Boujedra, *FIS de la baine*, Denoël, Paris, 1992.

³³ See reference 31.

³⁴ L. Salem Badis, *French reactions to the Algerian Massacres*, paper No 14, in part IV of this book.

³⁵ *Libération*, 1 April 1998.

³⁶ *Libération*, 1 April 1998.

³⁷ *Algerian Presse Service*, 1 April 1998.

³⁸ *Agence France Presse*, 23 January 1997. Declaration made during a press conference in Rome during a meeting of the International Socialist Council.

³⁹ *El-Watan*, 26 April 1998.

⁴⁰ Political resolution of the FFS National Council, 16-17 April 1998.

⁴¹ See reference 23.

⁴² See reference 25.

⁴³ *L'Express*, 22 January 1998.

⁴⁴ See reference 2.

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