

## Chapter 8

# The Loss of Empire: French Perspectives

Important though the development of *Francophonie* has been in the postcolonial francophone world, it does not give the whole picture of the development of postcolonial relations and attitudes, least of all from the point of view of French people themselves and the different sections of the postcolonial diaspora who have settled in metropolitan France. Neither the latter nor the populations of the Départements et territoires d'outre-mer (DOM-TOM) (essentially the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific island populations still under French rule) play a part in the world of *La Francophonie*, except as represented through the offices of France herself. It is, of course, well known that the French themselves do not on the whole fully identify themselves as part of the francophone world. There is a strong perception of a divide between France and the francophone world, continuing the us/them distinction between coloniser/colonised, albeit in more subtle form. This has been the cause of some considerable frustration to key figures in the *Francophone* movement, not least to Senghor himself, who urged the French to sign up more wholeheartedly to the universal ideal: 'Negritude, Arabism, it is also you, French people of the Hexagon!' (*Esprit* 1962).

This chapter will examine some of the other effects of the process of decolonisation on shifts in French perceptions and attitudes towards the former colonies, as well as the perspectives that developed to account for the ongoing presence of France in territories across the globe. A key aspect of these is the role played by memory and its translation into the public sphere through commemorative events of one kind or another. This chapter will therefore look at some of the effects of the historical processes of colonisation, decolonisation and the ongoing relations in the postcolonial world, to examine how they have impinged on the national collective memory.

## Memory and Commemoration

Over recent years, there has been a tremendous interest in France in the question of memory, particularly in its relation to an understanding of the French national identity and cultural heritage. This could indicate a real renewal of interest in the past, as well as a loss of confidence in the forward-looking modernist project. It could also be the sign of a major readjustment, involving a reconfiguring of the perceived foundations of French national identity, and an attempt to come to terms with, or equally to sidestep, issues arising out of the colonial past.

The memorialisation of the past involves more than the objective study of history. On the one hand, it implies that the past matters in certain ways that derive from the meanings that are currently attached to it and that constitute its ideological significance for the present time. However, as Sartre put it, it also involves the transformation of the past, or certain features of it, into a 'historical monument', in order for a particular society to assume its role in history.<sup>1</sup> The memory of the collective becomes the subjective prism through which the objective history is viewed.

This is not primarily about the quality or reliability of any particular memory, such as that of individuals, who recreate an approximate version of their past, using a variety of techniques and stashed-away snippets, as described by the narrator in Paul Smail's (pseudonym) novel *Ali le magnifique*: 'Our memory wanders all over the place: we don't remember anything exactly, we're always adding new touches, stitching the whole picture together with snippets taken from other scenarios, with flashbacks and offcuts, fuzzy images retrieved from the dustbin of our memory' (Smail 2001: 149). There is more involved in the process of constituting the collective memory. This type of memory is a social one, in which the ideological consensus governing the world view and belief systems of the group concerned plays a large part in determining the form it takes (Debray 1992: 385).

The practice of commemorating events considered to have significance in terms of the nation's past is a vital part of this process and has long been a major aspect of French public life. In recent years, in addition to the annual commemorative events marking Bastille Day on 14 July<sup>2</sup> and Armistice Day on 11 November, there have been a number of major commemorations, beginning with the Millennial Anniversary of the founding of the Capetian dynasty in 1987, the Bicentenary of the Revolution in 1989, de Gaulle's Centenary in 1990, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Normandy Landings in 1994, followed by those of other key events in the Liberation, the Liberation of Paris and then the VE celebrations. In 1996, the not entirely consensual commemoration of the 1,500th Anniversary of the Baptism of Clovis took place and, in 1998, the rather low-profile commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery (Vergès 1999). The year 2004 saw the commemoration and celebration of further events marking joint Franco-British endeavours: the Centenary of the Entente Cordiale, and the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Normandy Landings. It was also the year of the Bicentenary of the Code Civil and the founding of the First (Napoleonic) Empire.

The same year also saw more sombre events, marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide with ceremonies in Kigali, from which the French

representative left rather abruptly after criticisms of France by the Rwandan President. It was also the occasion to mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of the defeat of Dien Bien Phu (7 May 1954) and, later in the year, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the event for which it was a major source of inspiration, the launching of the Algerian insurrection on 1 November 1954. It was also the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Secession of French Indian territories to India on 21 October 1954. In 2005, there are more occasions for celebration, including the Centenary of the victory of secularism in France and, in Britain, the Bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The number of commemorations taking place obviously reflects a perceived need. Yet what precisely is their purpose and, more to the point, what are the features characteristic of a particular kind of discourse of commemoration?

When we engage in activities marking personal commemorations, such as significant birthdays or anniversaries, we are usually not just interested in finding an excuse for a good party, but also in marking important milestones in our lives, through which we affirm our own personal identity and consolidate our relationships with friends and family, thus rooting ourselves in a wider social context. When a nation-state decides to commemorate an event, a number of factors may be involved, ranging from the need to consolidate the national identity to the reinforcement of the legitimacy of the particular form of the state, the political system and its values. Often it is a question of making a statement about where the state wishes to position itself for the future, although the effect achieved may be very different from that intended.<sup>3</sup> It can be particularly relevant to diplomacy when the commemoration in question involves more than one country. In these cases, the nature of the commemoration, especially the form of the more or less official commemorative discourse, can be significantly revealing, not only of the current state of relations between the countries involved but also of the future direction they want this relationship to take. It is usually less revealing of the actual event commemorated and rarely leads to any further or deeper knowledge, but rather a reinterpretation, most often for ideological purposes. The relationship of such a discourse to a particular power configuration may be quite obvious and straightforward; on the other hand, it may also be highly complex and mediated.

In the case of France, the particular importance of commemorative events and activities, the role of monuments, particularly those to the dead and their relation to the national consciousness (Gaspard 1995: 21), as well as the notion of *patrimoine* and the spectacular growth in museums from the 1960s – forty-three military museums were created in the 1960s and 1970s (Stora 1992: 221) – has been well documented and analysed, most notably in Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1984–92).

Indeed, France is probably unique in having a body called the Délégation aux célébrations nationales, which is attached to the Archives de France and the Ministry of Culture, and was set up in 1978, not to organise commemorations itself, but to encourage, support and promote commemorative ventures organised by others (Gasnier 1994). It does this mainly through its annual catalogues and website, which list not only those events and individuals that are being commemorated in any

particular year, as well as the programme of activities associated with each of them, but also suggestions for anniversaries occurring in the following year that may be considered worth celebrating, notably the births and deaths of political figures, writers, artists, scientists, political events such as wars, battles and treaties, the publication of particularly significant works, important scientific discoveries, technical inventions and sporting feats. Moreover, they do not limit themselves to purely 'national' anniversaries but include figures and events from outside the borders of France, as well as a whole host of what might be considered purely regional manifestations.

Thus, in spite of a 'hands-off' approach to the actual business of organising these national celebrations, the Délégation aux célébrations nationales nonetheless provides a fairly good guide to what may be 'in' or 'out' in any particular year, not just by way of an examination of the lists provided, but also by a comparison of the list of suggestions of events suitable for commemoration in the following year, with the subsequent published programme of activities for that year. The content of the lists also provides some insight into the problematic areas of French memory and commemoration, particularly those linked to Vichy and collaboration, the deportation of the Jews and the Algerian War (Gasnier 1994). For instance, it is only since 2003 that a *Journée de la mémoire de l'holocauste et de la prévention des crimes contre l'humanité* has been added to the commemorative calendar, following an initiative by the European Education Ministers meeting in Krakow in October 2000, concretised in Strasbourg in October 2002. The date of 27 January, chosen for this event in France, as in other countries, has also been fairly controversial, being the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945 and thus not directly linked to the persecutions undertaken on French soil by French nationals, although Jacques Chirac initiated the acknowledgement of the crimes of the French state under Vichy in 1995.

Where events are celebrated, it may well be with the intention of giving governments the opportunity to reinforce 'une certaine idée de la France' (Vergès 1999). Indeed, over the last few decades, in the face of a perceived crisis of national identity, this recourse to memory has become much more than a sign of a real renewal of interest in the past; indeed, rather more, it is an important tool in the 'mission' that some intellectuals have assumed to re-ground French identity on the basis of an account of its founding national myths and origins (Gaspard 1995). However, given the conflicting interpretations of the past characteristic of French history and the mutually exclusive founding myths of the nation on the Left and on the Right, the extent to which the construction of a national collective memory may be successfully achieved often depends on the degree of superficiality, even frivolity, required to keep at bay all factors of dissent and problematic issues that might disturb the consensus. As far as key political commemorations are concerned, this is, however, rarely the case. Sometimes, the disagreements and tensions arise at the very heart of the state itself, with conflicts between its different branches, as during the cohabitation period of 1986–88, when conflicts arose between the Elysée and Matignon in respect of the organisation of the Capetian Millennium celebrations in

1987 (Theis 1994), although as far as the content was concerned, harmony largely reigned in a celebration of the long history of the French nation, its links to the past, as well as the monarchy – no doubt assisted by the clouds of vagueness surrounding the actual historical events of 1987 and their significance. This was to be in marked contrast to the polemics of the Bicentenary of the Revolution a few years later.

Attempts to construct a national collective memory may also be resented by individuals who have been touched by the events commemorated and who endeavour to retrieve and protect their own individual memories (Edwards 2000). There may well be conflicts between national and local interests, between the interpretations given to the event by different political and other interest groups, and even related to what is included or excluded from the commemoration. The approach to the memorialisation of the Vichy period in France is highly significant in this respect.

At the same time, the commemoration may well inspire efforts in the form of serious research to further objective historical knowledge of the event, thus bringing into play a scientific or academic discourse of a wholly different order. It may also provoke a challenge to the official discourse by way of the development of counter-discourses on a quite different plane.

The Bicentenary of the French Revolution was especially notable, not just for the conflictual approaches to the commemoration of the Revolution and the meaning to be assigned to it, but also for major challenges to the celebration itself, spanning the whole political spectrum, from monarchists and extreme right-wing opponents, via various types of liberal revisionists, to workers' strikes and movements in support of the *laissés-pour-compte* on the global plane.

The clash of discourses is not the only arena for conflict. Indeed, most commemorative activity takes on a decidedly theatrical character (Malaussena 2000), involving a number of different genres of cultural performance and distinctive public rituals, which can be a factor of mobilisation and political expression and an opportunity for articulating and confronting different positions.

## **The Non-commemoration of the Colonial Past**

Particularly interesting, however, in the light of the multiplicity of recent commemorations, are the non-commemorations – those events that have to all intents and purposes been ignored, and the reasons for this. Of these, there is one that stands out. It is the almost total boycott of the celebrations of the Bicentenary of Haitian Independence on 1 January 2004, particularly by the former colonial power, France.

On the one hand, this is in line with the general reluctance to recall events connected to France's colonial past. The almost total silence until very recently on the events of 17 October 1961 in Paris is a prime example, in spite of the considerable amount of information that was published at the time (Einaudi 1991; House 2001),<sup>4</sup> as well as the more general amnesia relating to the Algerian War (Stora 1992). The tendency to obfuscate France's colonial past is also a feature of scholarly

discourse. For instance, the virtual silence that is maintained on the subject in Nora's *Lieux de mémoire*, which we have already mentioned, is highly symptomatic. Indeed, there is only one chapter in the seven volumes making up this vast work that has anything to do with the subject. This is Charles-Robert Ageron's contribution in the first volume on the Republic, dealing with the Colonial Exhibition of 1931, 'L'Exposition coloniale de 1931. Mythe républicain ou mythe imperial?' (Nora 1984, Vol. 1: 561–591).

To a great extent, then, the French obsession with memory is only one side of the coin; the other has been an equally powerful tendency to forget (Rollot 1992). Moreover, this has often been a deliberate policy to draw a veil over certain aspects of the nation's past and the misdeeds of some individuals, sometimes, but not always, on the grounds of the need for national reconciliation and unity. For instance, de Gaulle had been unwilling to set a date for a commemorative monument to the Algerian War, which the Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants en Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie (FNACA), the association of French veterans of that war, had asked for (Stora 1992). It has to be said that this tendency is not peculiar to France, but has been characteristic of other countries, including Algeria, that have political systems largely based on a real or imagined conception of the unity of the nation. This may sometimes involve a certain amount of rewriting of history to fit political needs (Stora 1992). Jean-Louis Rollot, amongst others, has questioned the validity of the argument that claims that some things are best forgotten in the name of national reconciliation, pointing out that this collective amnesia is invariably a one-way process for the benefit of people who have never expressed any regret or asked for forgiveness, people whom he describes as 'nostalgiques des causes funestes', who never give up sowing hatred and exclusion in their wake.<sup>5</sup>

In 1992, Jean-Pierre Rioux wrote that this was not a question of amnesia (Rioux 1992). The Algerian War had neither been unwittingly forgotten nor wilfully repressed from the nation's memory, though, of course, there was a deliberate policy of censorship of images, films, books and archival records that has had its part to play in determining the way in which memory has been transmitted.<sup>6</sup> For Rioux, on the contrary, the memory of the Algerian War was 'still a bleeding wound after thirty years'.<sup>7</sup> What was lacking, however, was a collective, national memory of the war, and Rioux maintained that it was still too early for this collective memory to be constituted. According to his analysis of the time, the official silence on the Algerian War, backed by the use of amnesty (Stora 1992: 281–83), was also because of the fact that this war was difficult, if not impossible, to fit into the historical narrative of the French nation as represented in the collective national memory.

For individuals, there may be something of a general phenomenon involved, related to the passage of time, as was witnessed in 2004 with the accounts of the D-Day veterans, some of whom had been unable or unwilling to relate what had happened in June 1944 because of their own personal traumas. In their case, as in similar cases, time may indeed play a role in finally allowing these hitherto unspoken memories to be expressed (*Le Monde*, 6 May 2004). One of the Algerians arrested and subjected to police ill-treatment at the demonstration of 17 October 1961 described

in an interview published in *Le Monde* (5 February 1999) why he has remained silent about the events and why he would never apply for French nationality.<sup>8</sup>

On the collective plane, however, other factors have an important role to play. Clearly the way in which wars and conflicts are dealt with in the national memory depends to a very large extent on whether the nation emerged as victor or as loser, and how the victory or loss is perceived, whether merited or unmerited. As with the American veterans of the Vietnam War, the soldiers who returned home from Algeria had to deal with serious ambivalence about their involvement in something that had turned out to be worthless in the general perception (Stora 1992: 220). However, as a proportion of the population, the French veterans of the Algerian War were far higher in number (over two million), came from all classes, regions and sections of society and were thus more representative of the nation at large (Stora 1992: 220, 293). The involvement of a sizeable number of *harkis*<sup>9</sup> was a further complicating factor (Stora 1992: 261–70).

Rioux points out that all the surveys of French public opinion since 1962 show that the French did not consider the Algerian War to be a major event of the century and certainly not on the scale of the two world wars. They also did not consider that it raised ‘a real question of identity’ for the *communauté de métropole*, i.e. all those who were neither *pièds noirs*, *harkis* or immigrants of Algerian origin (Rioux 1992). Alain Resnais’s film, *Muriel*, was explicitly about the avoidance of the subject of Algeria (Stora 1992: 41). Or, to put it a different way, there has been no lack of individual memories of the war, as well as a plethora of oral and written sources, photographic, film and sound records; what was missing was any collective interpretation, a common ideological framework of reference, accepted by the nation as a whole, which allowed for the sanctioned expression of the individual experience. Just as for the events that occurred in Paris on 17 October 1961, a considerable amount of information about the Algerian War was published and well known at the time and since, including the use of torture.

The amnesia could therefore be described more accurately as obfuscation and silence concerning events that were not unknown. The opening of some of the archives, particularly some of the secret French military archives stored at Vincennes, and their cataloguing by the Service historique de l’armée de terre (SHAT) has made a contribution to revisiting the period of the Algerian War (*Le Monde*, 5 February 1999, 30 October 2001; SHAT/Jauffret 1990, 1998). General Jacques Massu’s ‘directive générale sur la guerre subversive’, issued in March 1959, codifying the methods of interrogation of suspects, including the ‘*gégène*’ (torture by electric shock), which he claimed, on several occasions, to be the best method for rapid gathering of information, was published in *Revue historique des armées*, 200, September 1995, without its appendix, which dealt with methods of coercion and which, according to experts, was not placed in the archives (see also *Le Monde*, 25 October 1995). Thus, in recent years, the so-called amnesia has finally begun to abate, notably through a flurry of official memorial activity.

This is clearly not just the inevitable result of the passage of time, but also the product of changes in the notion of French national identity. The activities have

included the erection in 2002 of a memorial on the Quai Branly in Paris to those who died for France in the Algerian War and other North African conflicts, the inauguration of 5 December as a national day of homage to those who died, as well as a separate day of homage to the *barkis* on 25 September. This followed the laying on 19 March 2002 by the Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, of the foundation stone of a memorial to Parisians who died in Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia in Père Lachaise Cemetery and the unveiling of a plaque in memory of the victims of the events of 17 October in Paris. On 20 April 2004, the Mayor renamed a square in the 12th *arrondissement* 'Place du 19 mars 1962', after the date of the ceasefire in Algeria following the signing of the Accords d'Evian (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20 April 2004). Elsewhere, and even more controversially, commemorations in honour of the OAS (Organisation de l'armée secrète) and other supporters of *Algérie française* have gathered apace, most notably with the erection of memorials to 'those who were shot or gave their lives in battle for the cause of *Algérie française*', such as the monument erected in Perpignan and inaugurated on 5 July 2003 to coincide with the anniversary date of Algerian independence, or the stele inaugurated in Marignane on 6 July 2005 to coincide with the anniversary date of the execution in 1962 of Roger Degueldre, chief of the OAS death squad, known as Delta commandos (*Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 19 June 2005; *L'Humanité*, 6 July 2005).

In spite of this recent burst of commemorative activity (some officially sanctioned, some not, but none of it without considerable controversy), it is interesting that the Délégation aux célébrations nationales placed the Toussaint uprising of 1954 only on a list of secondary anniversaries for 2004 (*Autres anniversaires signalés*<sup>10</sup>) and then under the rubric *Terrorisme en Algérie*, while the short text referred only to '*opérations de maintien de l'ordre*', avoiding any reference to the Algerian War, as such, in a curious hangover from the long-standing period of denial that it was in fact a war and not simply an internal fight against terrorism or a peacekeeping operation (Stora 1992).

One might have thought that sufficient time has passed since the loss in 1804 of Saint-Domingue, France's premier colony of the time, for a cooler look to prevail and a dispassionate position to be taken in respect of the Bicentenary of Haitian Independence. This has, perhaps surprisingly, not proved to be the case.

However, the fact that Haitian Independence marked a major defeat for French colonial power cannot, by itself, explain this boycott. After all, the way in which Dien Bien Phu was remembered in 2004 shows how even a defeat can constitute a significant landmark in the national memory and a cause for celebration – in this case, mainly of the heroism of the combatants, much in the same way as the disaster of Dunkirk is celebrated in Britain. The fact that only 25 per cent of the 15,000 fighters on the French side were from metropolitan France, with the vast majority coming from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa may also have something to do with it, and certainly helps to explain the multiple meanings that were attached to the event, whether it was seen as the decisive end of French power in Asia or a beacon of hope for the liberation struggles elsewhere in the empire.

In contrast, the Bicentenary of Haitian Independence hardly featured in the commemorative calendar in France itself, though there were a number of events in



Martinique. Indeed, the only event listed by the Délégation aux célébrations nationales as taking place in mainland France was a lecture by the Haitian poet René Depestre, ‘La France vue par un écrivain haïtien’, scheduled to take place on 20 January at the Bibliothèque nationale. On the other hand, another event scheduled for 2004, the Bicentenary of the birth of Victor Schœlcher, French architect of the abolition of slavery of 1848 and elected representative of the people of Martinique in 1848 and then of Guadeloupe in 1849–50, gave rise to a large number of ceremonies, exhibitions, conferences and cultural events.

### **The Particular Significance of the Bicentenary of Haitian Independence**

The Bicentennial of Haiti’s Independence was organised against a background of unrest in Haiti in January 2004. The only major international guest to attend the ceremonies was the South African President, Thabo Mbeki. According to the reports at the time, Mbeki may very well have regretted his participation, disrupted as his visit was by violence and gunfire. France was represented by its ambassador and two *députés* (*Le Monde*, 3 January 2004).

In France, the event was largely ignored, in spite of its major significance to France and its own history, given the central role that the former French colony of Saint-Domingue had played in the slave trade and plantation economy, at one time supplying two-thirds of all Europe’s tropical produce (Farmer 2004), its importance in the rise of the French mercantile bourgeoisie and plantation owners, the pioneering anticolonial liberation struggle that had taken place from 1791 under the leadership of Toussaint L’Ouverture, and then, after his capture in 1802, that of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, leading to independence in 1804, and the impact of this struggle within the context of the French Revolution and the key political debates of the time, as well as its subsequent significance, as a beacon of liberation for other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and an enduring symbol, as the first ever black republic, founded on a successful slave rebellion.

What coverage there was in the French media at the time of the bicentenary was mainly to do with the supposed unpopularity and undemocratic regime of the Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his impending fall, as a result of an opposition movement largely made up of thugs from the former Duvalierist regimes of Papa Doc and Baby Doc and members of paramilitary organisations that had been formed after an earlier coup against President Aristide in 1991, most notably Louis Jodel Chamblain and Jean Pierre Baptiste, both of whom had in earlier years been found guilty for their role in a massacre in the slums of Gonaïves and, in Chamblain’s case, for the murder of a prominent supporter of Aristide, Antoine Izméry, in 1993 (*Amnesty* 2004; Farmer 2004). A few weeks later, Aristide was toppled and sent into forced exile in Africa (*Amnesty* 2004), firstly to the Central African Republic and then, after a brief return to the Caribbean, though to Jamaica, not Haiti, ending up in South Africa, and thus outside the francophone orbit.

There has been an intense debate concerning the question of Aristide himself and the accusations of tyranny, arbitrary repression, violent rule and involvement in

drug-dealing that have been levied against him, on the one hand, and the claims to his sole democratic legitimacy and popular support, on the other. He was first elected in 1990, then restored to power in 1994 with American support, following the 1991 coup, to serve out his term, before standing aside for the election in 1996 of René Prével (the first Haitian President ever to see out his term of office), and coming back for re-election for a second term in a landslide victory in November 2000. There have been arguments on both sides of the divide (Dailey 2004; Farmer 2004), which cannot be explored further here. However, the fact that the year of the Bicentenary of Independence coincided with the toppling and subsequent ousting of Aristide from the country on 29 February by an alliance of American and French troops could be considered to be ironic in the extreme and a strong argument against France's involvement in this military endeavour. One might even have expected shock headlines in the press: 'France reoccupies Haiti in year of Bicentenary of Independence!' On the contrary, this type of connection was conspicuous mostly by its absence in the media. For their part, the French authorities showed little apparent concern about the possible effect that there might be on local, national or international public opinion.

This was, of course, in marked contrast to their position on the Iraq war – a fact that gave rise to a spate of comment at the time, in which the Franco-American alliance on Haiti and their willingness to cooperate as part of a UN peacekeeping force, the MIF (Multinational Intervention Force), which also included Canadian and Chilean troops, was portrayed as evidence of a great reconciliation, or even France's way of saying sorry after its opposition to the invasion of Iraq.

The reality is that France and America have been closely linked in the 'war on terror' for many, many years. When Pontecorvo's film of the *Battle of Algiers* (1966) was shown in the Pentagon just before the Iraqi invasion, this was not intended as a lesson in how not to conduct warfare of this type; rather, it was held up as a model of how to do it, from which lessons were to be learned.

There was nothing new in this. The American armed forces have long been turning to the French for guidance in conducting covert and overt military campaigns in Asia and Latin America. They have long used Roger Trinquier's *La Guerre moderne*, published in 1961 and translated into English as *Modern Warfare, a French View of Counterinsurgency* (1964), a result of experience during the wars in Indochina, as the standard textbook on tactics for waging war and campaigns of subversion against guerrilla forces. General Paul Aussaresses has also been an important contact and source of guidance, mainly because of his experience in the 'war on terror' in Algeria, especially during the Battle of Algiers (1955–57). Aussaresses has openly admitted to engaging in torture personally, justifying it by the need to extract information from prisoners under interrogation in 'real time' so that it could still be used effectively. He worked with the American military in the early 1960s, at the Infantry School at Fort Benning in Georgia, where his designation was French liaison officer. He was also adviser to the Counterinsurgency Department at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It was this establishment that first began to use Trinquier's book, *Modern Warfare* (Andersen 2002). It is

claimed that this work was a key influence on the CIA-run Operation Phoenix, which was intended as a counter-insurgency programme and used dubious methods to achieve its aims.

One of the US officers engaged in this programme, retired army colonel Carl Bernard, has been quoted as saying that 'We imitated the French army's torturing and killing of captured revolutionaries in Algiers in Vietnam,' though he also says that it did not work, mainly because of the lack of real knowledge not just of the enemy but also of the supposed allies, and he recently warned of the dangers of falling into what he calls 'this attractive trap' of using the same torture techniques as the French in Algeria (Andersen 2002).

Similar tactics also appear to have been used in Operation Condor, a vast transnational counterterrorism and anti-subversion programme operated in Latin America with the covert support of the US (McSherry 2001; Vazquez 2003). Once again, the specific link has been made with French counter-insurgency concepts and techniques (McSherry 2001).

However, what was of even greater significance in the year of the Bicentenary of Haitian Independence is that this collaboration between the French and the Americans goes back at least to 1804. Like France, the United States refused to recognise the new Republic. The success of the Haitian anticolonial struggle was perceived as more of a threat to its own slave-holding interests than in the light of any supposed anticolonial solidarity. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the declaration of Haitian Independence, France pursued a policy of close alliance with the United States and cooperated through the institution of a trade embargo and other sanctions.

Just as importantly and with even longer-lasting effect, both were in complete accord on the question of reparations. This does not refer to reparations for the evils of slavery, such as were supposed to be paid eventually with the abolition of slavery in the USA. What was at stake here were rather the reparations demanded of the new regime in Haiti, reparations claimed by the French for the loss of lands and, indeed, slaves. These amounted to an indemnity payment of 150 million francs in gold (or £10 billion, at today's prices) (*Guardian*, 23 March 2004), as well as the reduction by half of Haiti's import and export taxes, as the price demanded by France in 1825, in return for renouncing attempts to reclaim the colony and recognising its independence – a sum that it took more than 100 years for Haiti to pay. It took the US somewhat longer to give recognition to Haiti, incidentally, in 1862 (*Guardian*, 23 February 2004). By the end of the nineteenth century, Haiti was spending 80 per cent of its national budget in loan and interest repayments (*Guardian*, 23 February 2004). Indeed, the repayments of this debt were still continuing until after the Second World War and their impact was totally devastating on the economic prospects of the country, which was transformed from the richest colony to the poorest country in the western hemisphere (Farmer 2004).<sup>11</sup> Although this is shocking in itself, what is perhaps even more surprising and disconcerting is the fact that, unlike other instances of reparations paid after conflicts (the reparations paid by Germany after the First World War, or the payments made to Jewish victims of

the Holocaust after the Second), these were payments to be paid not by the defeated but by those who had supposedly emerged as the victors.

The enormity of the scandal of these payments is perhaps put into its true perspective when compared with the financial compensation paid following the general abolition of slavery by the Second French Republic in 1848, following the large-scale revolts in the French Caribbean territories. Although, yet again, the former slaves themselves did not receive any compensation for their suffering and loss of liberty, this time it was the French state that paid the compensation, theoretically to the colonies, though actually to the former slave owners, thereby acknowledging its responsibility and complicity in slavery and the slave trade or, rather, the responsibility of its predecessors, for, with the new Republican dawn, France was deemed to have passed into the post-slavery age (Vergès 1999).

The issue of responsibility and culpability was raised once again with the debate following on from the introduction of a bill by the Guianese *députée* Christiane Taubira-Delannon in 1998 (*Proposition de loi* no. 1297) to have the slave trade and slavery recognised as crimes against humanity. During the debate in the National Assembly, following the first reading of the bill on 18 February 1999, the disjuncture between slavery and the Republic was highlighted in the majority discourse. This had been a tenet of Republican thinking since the abolition. As Gambetta had pointed out in 1881, the fundamental incompatibility between the Republic and slavery was indeed written into the decree abolishing it in 1848, though not quite in the terms he suggested ('The French Republic does not permit slavery on French soil' – Gambetta 1910: 166). In fact, the provisional government of 1848 had pointed to slavery being an affront to human dignity, contrary to the natural principle of law and a flagrant violation of the Republican dogma of liberty, equality and fraternity, as well as to the danger of serious disorder arising if abolition were delayed (*Décret de l'abolition de l'esclavage du 27 avril 1848*).

In the discussions of the 1999 bill, the view was reiterated that the Republic had nothing to do with slavery. Thus, slavery needed to be recognised for its heinous nature; it should be commemorated as such, in a symbolic gesture of moral and cultural reparation to the erstwhile slaves. The then Minister for Justice, Elisabeth Guigou, for instance, insisted on the need to fulfil a '*devoir de mémoire*'. However, slavery was firmly relegated to the pre-Republican past and any question of paying any material reparations dismissed as completely out of the question (Vergès 1999), even though this had formed a major component of the bill (Clause 5). Various reasons were advanced for dropping this clause, which did not figure in the final version, only adopted in 2001 as Loi No. 2001–434. On a pragmatic level, the difficulties of determining how much, to whom and how these might be paid were put forward as insurmountable. Yet there were also more sophisticated attempts to justify the rejection of the payment of reparations in principle. For instance, none other than Frantz Fanon was called upon, in particular by the Ministry of Culture, to justify the desire to move on and not allow the legacy of the past to impinge on the present day. In what might be seen as a further sign of an attempt to put the current perceptions of the French national identity on a new footing, in which the links with the colonial

past are sidestepped, the words of Fanon were quoted in justification of this position: 'Je ne suis pas l'esclave de l'esclavage qui déshumanisa mes pères – I am not the slave of slavery which dehumanised my ancestors' (Fanon (1952)/1975: 186).

It is true that, in *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon dismisses the whole idea of demanding reparations for past enslavement, wishing neither to extract vengeance in the name of the slaves of previous centuries, nor to burden the European with guilt and, even less, to assuage any such guilt. As he says:

I do not have the right, as a man of colour, to desire the crystallisation in the White man of a feeling of guilt for the past of my race ...

I have neither the right nor the desire to demand reparations for my ancestors sold into servitude.

There is no Negro mission; there is no White Man's burden. (Fanon (1952)/1975: 185)

However, to use Fanon's text as a justification for the non-payment of reparations is, at best, a serious misunderstanding of his argument about the burden of the past or, at worst, a cynical abuse of the superficial ambiguity of what is basically a statement of his own existential right to freedom and refusal to be essentialised into an identity based on the myths of Negritude.

Yet, if Fanon was impatient with those who harked back to a glorious past, in part in compensation for their miserable present, he was not arguing for a denial of history. On the contrary, he was a vociferous proponent of the need to enter history and prepare for the future, in full recognition of the fact that this opportunity had been denied to the enslaved and the colonised, who had not been in a position to be agents of their own destiny. Thus, when Fanon asserts his intention to turn his back on the past, he assumes that he will be part of a community that will have won the freedom to take their future forward.

Indeed, he makes this explicit in his last book, *Les Damnés de la terre*, written shortly before his death in 1961. He writes here that: 'Independence has certainly given the colonised moral reparation and restored their dignity' (Fanon (1961)/1987: 57). However, he was also fully conscious at this time that this moral reparation would not be enough and that independence would mean an economic regression, which could and should be countered by a form of compensation from the colonial powers, whose wealth had been built on empire.

This European opulence is literally scandalous, for it has been built on the backs of slaves, it has fed on the blood of slaves, it comes directly from the soil and the subsoil of the underdeveloped world. The material well-being and progress of Europe have been built with the sweat and the corpses of the Negroes, the Arabs, the Indians and the Yellow races. From now on, this is something that we are determined never to forget. (Fanon (1961)/1987: 68)

It is equally clear that Fanon was not expecting this compensation, call it reparations, aid or some other term, to come from governments but from the people of Europe.

For Aristide and his supporters, the question of reparations was not one that has been confined to history. Whatever the form it takes, symbolic, moral or more concretely political or financial, it has certainly been raised as a fundamental part of the process of ‘repairing’ the wounded psyche by those critics relying on psychoanalytical theories, such as Françoise Vergès (Vergès 1999), who also recognise that there are indeed some wounds that are irreparable.

Whatever the truth about the nature of Aristide the man or of his regime, it has to be recognised that it was one of the key issues raised by him. He actually quantified the amount due to the people of Haiti, allowing for interest and inflation, as \$21 billion, more precisely, \$21,685,135,571 and 48 cents to date.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the financial penalties imposed on Haiti were to continue in a new form, following the withholding of payments agreed as loans and the blocking of aid in recent years, or its diversion into financing the presence of American troops on its soil, leading to Haiti sinking even further into debt (Farmer 2004). Following Aristide’s re-election in 2000, the US froze international aid, citing the disputes over eight parliamentary seats where the results were contested by the opposition. Loans from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for health, education, drinking water and road improvement were particularly affected. Only \$4 million of the \$146 million agreed in these loans had reached Haiti by 2004 (Farmer 2004). The indebtedness of Haiti to international financial institutions and foreign governments has been estimated at \$1.134 billion, an increase from \$302 million in 1980, as much as 40 per cent of this debt having been incurred as a result of loans made to the Duvalier dictators and their military successors (Farmer 2004).

There is no doubt that Aristide’s claim for repayment of the sums calculated as Haiti’s due – in a sense, reparations for the reparations – was made with absolute seriousness and determination. The figure 21 (from the 21 billion due) had become a potent political symbol in Haiti, with Aristide drawing up a 21-point development programme, one point for each billion owed (Farmer 2004; *Le Monde*, 3 January 2004). Moreover, in the face of demands for repayment, France and the USA were wedded in the same determination to avoid payment (in whatever form it might take), for any such payments would lift the lid off a cauldron of demands from all over the formerly colonised world, not to mention the descendants of slaves in the USA itself. Indeed, these demands have already been making themselves heard, not just in terms of political rhetoric, but also in the legal domain. The government of Vanuatu has raised the issue of compensation from both British and French governments for nineteenth-century ‘slave voyages’ that took islanders to Australia or Fiji to work in the sugar plantations (*Guardian*, 13 April 2004). Descendants of slaves, using DNA to support their ancestry, instigated a legal action against Lloyds of London and America tobacco giant RJ Reynolds for the recovery of \$1 billion for their part in the underwriting of the slave vessels and profiteering from genocide (*Guardian*, 30 March 2004). Legal actions were also prepared in February 2004 against the New South Wales government for misappropriation of wages owed to Aborigines (*Guardian*, 13 April 2004).<sup>13</sup>

Aristide’s claims therefore posed no mere rhetorical threat. As we have seen, the demand for reparations has already been raised and rejected in the French legislative

assemblies and, clearly, there will be resistance to any further demands for repayment by France. This will also be the case for the USA, which itself instituted a military occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934, which brought back black *corvée* labour and created a Haitian army that only ever went to war against its own citizens until it was disbanded by Aristide in 1995 (Farmer 2004). However, France continues as in the past to adopt a more sophisticated and subtle position, marked by various progressive-sounding discourses (*Francophonie*, diversity, pluralism, human rights, etc.). Although the military option is always there in reserve for when it is needed, there should be no underestimating the importance of discourse and ideology as a vehicle for maintaining France's position in the world at large, and especially as far as its relations with its former colonies and client states are concerned. Jacques Chirac, like his predecessor, François Mitterrand, is keen to promote himself as champion of the wretched of the earth, in Africa especially and, indeed, anywhere else but France itself. To this end, he set up a committee in November 2003, the Landau Commission, chaired by Jean-Claude Landau, Inspecteur général des finances, and including a cross-section of civil servants, business people and activists such as Jacques Cossart from Attac (Association pour une taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens), to look into the possibility of international taxation, amongst other options, to address the problem of global poverty (*Le Monde*, 14 May 2004; *Libération*, 21 September 2004). Proposals included a variety of taxes on cross-border activities, such as air and sea transport through a tax on aviation or shipping fuel, or on capital flows across national boundaries (*Guardian*, 28 January 2005). However, this was a much watered-down version of the so-called 'Tobin tax', devised in the 1970s by the Nobel prize-winning economist, James Tobin, which was also designed to act as a disincentive on the movement of capital and currency for purely speculative purposes. The taxes proposed by Chirac, as initially designed, were to be set at a minimal level – a rate of between 0.001 and 0.005 per cent of international financial transactions was suggested, enough to raise revenue for the fight against poverty and disease, but not sufficient to have any transforming effect on speculative practice. The terms of reference did not include the question of reparations for actions committed by France in the past. In the event, France has struggled to get its proposals accepted by other countries as an international measure, with only the UK and Chile initially signing up to the air travel taxation proposal and, at the time of writing, it remains to be seen how it will eventually be applied (*Le Monde*, 4 November 2005).

These proposals to finance poverty eradication and development, mainly in the countries of Africa, like the demands for the cancellation of debt, such as those made by the movement Jubilee 2000, may actually obscure the issues at stake, for all their real practical merit. For, in point of fact, the debt is the other way round. It is the former colonial and slave-trading and owning powers that owe an enormous debt to those they colonised and enslaved. There is thus a strong case for arguing that this is the debt that should now be repaid, either in the form of reparations or in the form of a global taxation that would affect individuals, companies, corporations and financial institutions, as well as national governments. Both of these constitute

political demands, not an appeal to the generosity or moral conscience of the well-off. As such, there are enormous difficulties preventing their achievement, given the present global configuration of political power. There is no doubt that, in the interests of justice, the latter option would be preferable, since it would take account of the continuing process of exploitation and the long-term effects of capital accumulation in the 'North'. At the same time, it would be even more difficult to achieve politically.

In the course of 2005, Chirac's proposals, along with the high-profile efforts of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown to extract a commitment from their European partners to meet the target figure of 0.7 per cent of national income for development aid by 2015, inevitably raised anew questions about the relations of Europe with Africa. Not least amongst these questions was the impact of the colonial past on present-day issues and relations, and how this colonial past is dealt with in terms of commemoration, as well as through the teaching of history in schools and universities. For both Britain and France, the two most important former European colonial powers, these questions again came to the fore, with a renewed significance, sparking off a number of new, if muted, debates.

Britain's low-key celebrations of VE Day, along with Tony Blair's absence from the commemoration event in Moscow, were not the only instances of political controversy in response to the sixtieth anniversary of 8 May 1945. In the relations between France and Algeria, this date figured as a crucial reminder of another set of events, which took place in the eastern Algerian town of Setif and a number of other towns that day.

In 1945, after the turmoil of war, Algeria remained a French colony, with a large population of European settlers, totally nearly one million people, some of whose families had lived in Algeria for several generations. They were nonetheless a minority, outnumbered nine to one by the majority Muslim population. It was this minority that had stifled even the most modest attempts at reform to give a limited number of Algerians some political rights. This was in spite of the growth of a nationalist movement, consisting of a number of different strands, ranging from reformists' demands for equality as an integral part of France, via the reforming Islamists' demands for recognition of their own religious and cultural specificity, to a fully-fledged independence movement, seeking to blend nationalism with a socialist agenda.

The nationalists had seen all their demands rebuffed. Many had fought alongside the French in the First World War, and more recently, along with the Free French in the Second. Even after the ousting of the Vichy administration from Algeria following the Allied landings of 1942, they were told to be patient, that politics would have to wait for the end of the war. Yet, when the reform proposals finally came through from de Gaulle's provisional government in 1944, they were essentially nothing more than a rehash of the proposals put forward by the Popular Front government of Léon Blum in 1936 and his Minister of State for Algerian Affairs, Maurice Viollette, and thus known as the Blum–Viollette proposals. In effect, the proposed reforms would have meant extending French citizenship and



thus political rights to a small group of those considered to be 'meritorious Algerians', in other words, those who had served France in a military or administrative capacity, and those who had acquired a certain level of French education. At most, it amounted to about 60,000 people. Yet the Algerians had seen the collapse of what had hitherto been perceived as a mighty military and political power with the fall of France in 1940 and then the warring between the Vichy and the Free French factions. They knew that France was not invincible.

Thus, with nationalist organisation proceeding apace in the towns and countryside, the demonstrations called to celebrate the victory of the Allies in Europe, and particularly the liberation of France, were seen, if not as a provocation, then as an ideal opportunity to counter with demonstrations for the liberation of Algerians.

It was in Setif that things came to a head most dramatically, with Algerian demonstrators defying the order not to show the national flag, and the outbreak of a bloody confrontation, in which demonstrators and French armed forces personnel were killed, before the violence spilled over to a generalised bloodbath, leading in its turn to a brutal and systematic repression, with arrests, bombardments and summary executions. Estimates of numbers killed have varied, with Algerian nationalists claiming 45,000 dead.

The flashpoint of Setif meant that it was thereafter destined to enter history as one of the key founding myths of the national revolution, kept alive in the national memory as the point of no return from which the armed struggle launched in 1954 was inevitable. The massacres of Setif were stamped upon the memory of the new post-war generation, which would come to age through the experience of the Algerian War. The football team of the town of Guelma have traditionally worn a black strip in memory of those massacred on 8 May 1945 and in its aftermath, and continue to do so. Against the significance of the events of 8 May 1945 for Algerians, the French have hitherto maintained a silence with regard to Setif. Thus, it caused something of a stir in Algeria, when a number of public figures, including the French Ambassador in Algiers, Hubert Colin de Verdière, and the then Foreign Minister, Michel Barnier, proceeded to break this silence and express some form of regret for what had happened sixty years ago.

In a sense, this could be seen as the French equivalent of Queen Elizabeth's expression of regret, though no apology, for the 1919 Jallianwallah Bagh massacre in Amritsar, during her visit to the city in 1997. It took place in the context of measures to improve relations between France and Algeria, summed up in President Chirac's recent offer of a pact of friendship, inspired to a large extent by French worries that their influence was diminishing in Algeria, to the benefit of other powers, notably the Americans.

These expressions of regret by the two former colonial powers have greatly differing significance, given their different historical experience of both colonialism and decolonisation, as well as the different trajectories of their postcolonial relations. Yet it is also clear that in both cases there was more to this than an attempt to make their peace with their former colonies, to put relations on a new footing and make a fresh start, drawing a line under the colonial period.

Significantly, in both cases, there have also been measures to validate the colonial endeavours. During his tour of African countries, the British Chancellor, Gordon Brown, regaled all who would listen with a list of the achievements of British imperialists. In line with much of recent British revisionist history of empire, he openly proclaimed that Britain had nothing to be ashamed of and much to be proud of.

In France, meanwhile, in spite of gestures in relation to Setif and the measures we have already noted, including the passing of a law in 2001 to decree slavery and the slave trade a crime against humanity and the proposed commemoration of the slave trade with an annual day of remembrance, now fixed as 10 May, a similar process is also at work to emphasise the positive elements of French imperialism. Most notably, this was codified in a new law, passed on 23 February 2005 at the instigation of members of the majority party, the UMP, to recognise the contribution and honour the memory of the *harkis* and others who fought alongside the French in the Algerian War and other colonial wars and to provide financial aid and other assistance for the members of this community, most of whom now reside in France.<sup>14</sup> While there was certainly a case to be made that the *harkis* were treated shamefully by the French, following the peace with the FLN, and many were abandoned to their fate as the French left the country, this was not taken on board by this law. The really remarkable part of this text was, in fact, the section dealing with the teaching of the history of French colonialism. Article 4 required that ‘academic research programmes devote to the history of the French presence overseas and particularly in North Africa the attention it deserves’. Quite how this was to be achieved was another matter. However, more tendentiously, this article continued with the following statement: ‘The school curriculum recognises the positive role of the French presence overseas, particularly in North Africa, and gives due prominence to the history and the sacrifices of those members of the French Armed Forces who originated in those lands, to which they are entitled.’

This provoked some outcry amongst French historians, including the veteran opponent of the Algerian War, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who attacked this law on the grounds that it gave official backing to a revisionist version of French colonial history, particularly that of *Algérie française*, and renewed legitimacy to such discredited organisations as the OAS (see also Liauzu 2005 and widespread debate in the French press). It also provoked stinging criticism in Algeria, beginning with the General Secretary of the FLN, Abdelaziz Belkhadem (*Liberté*, 13 June 2005) and most notably by President Bouteflika, who spoke out passionately against the law on a number of occasions, accusing it of ‘negationism’ and ‘revisionism’, most notably in a speech delivered in Setif on 25 August 2005 (*El Watan*, 30 November 2005). There was also severe criticism from other parts of the francophone world, notably Martinique, where it was attacked by the independence supporter Alfred Marie-Jeanne, as well as Césaire’s successor as Mayor of Fort-de France, Serge Letchimy, and the writers Patrick Chamoiseau and Edouard Glissant, amongst many others, following the failure of the socialists’ attempt to have it repealed (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 4 December 2005). Aimé Césaire himself expressed his opposition, refusing to meet the Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, during his visit to

Martinique, planned for 5 December (*Le Monde*, 15 December 2005). Attempts by the Minister for War Veterans, Hamlaoui Mekachera, himself a *harki* veteran, to designate the matter as an issue between French people, 'un problème franco-français' (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 16 September 2005), did little to address the questions raised. With the controversy showing no signs of dying down, President Chirac was prompted to set up a commission to try to defuse the tensions it had raised and ultimately took action to revoke the controversial clause in January 2006.

These developments seem to be acting as harbingers for a new, state-led, official, approach to the imperial past, on both sides of the Channel, in contrast to those who have argued recently that it is time to draw a line under the past, that postcolonialism and its various theories have now outlived any usefulness they might have had and that there is a need to move on to a new, 'normalised' phase in relations between the former colonial powers and the erstwhile colonies. All the signs are that it was perhaps too soon to write off the myths of colonial ideology, at least as long as the representatives of state are endeavouring to breathe new life into old imperialist dogma, whether or not this goes under the halo of saintly charity or civilised justice.

This chapter has highlighted some aspects of the role played in French national memory by the loss of the first French colony to achieve its independence, as well as the impact of the loss of one of the last, Algeria. The very different place that India occupies in the French postcolonial memory will be dealt with in Chapter 11.

## Notes

1. 'Si les sociétés humaines sont historiques, cela ne provient pas simplement de ce qu'elles ont un passé, mais de ce qu'elles le *reprennent* à titre de *monument*' (Sartre (1943)1994: 545).
2. The celebration of Bastille Day has not been uninterrupted. It was discontinued for more than fifty years after its first institution as France's national day, until it was reinstated upon a proposal from Raspail in July 1880.
3. Laurent Greilsamer, talking about Steven Spielberg's project to build a video archive of the testimony of Holocaust survivors, to leave a documentary heritage for future generations, says: 'le propre de la mémoire n'est pas uniquement de célébrer le passé. La mémoire est un outil qui nourrit l'imaginaire.' However, the interpretation of this archive will be open to these future generations; all the memorialist can decide is what is to be recorded for posterity, not the meaning that will be given to it: 'Le réalisateur américain tourne en réalité le dos au passé. Complètement, définitivement. Il délaisse la mémoire d'hier et ses vecteurs traditionnels pour construire une mémoire pour demain' (*Le Monde*, 7 April 1995).
4. Edgard Pisani's (non-)recollections are particularly instructive (Einaudi 1991), as are the instances of false memory syndrome, particularly the confusion of October 1961 with the events of Charonne in February 1962, which had eight victims and has always been commemorated by the Left ever since (Einaudi 1991; Stora 1992: 78–79).
5. 'Nécessité de la réconciliation nationale? Singulier besoin d'oubli et de pardon, toujours à sens unique, au bénéfice de gens qui n'expriment souvent aucun regret et ne demandent aucun pardon' (Rollot 1992: 1).

6. See Stora 1992: 271–73, on the question of the archives. There was no shortage of print (e.g. Colette Jeanson and Francis Jeanson's *L'Algérie hors la loi*, Henri Alleg's *La Question*) or audio-visual material available (films by René Vautier – *Algérie en flammes* 1959, *Techniquement simple* 1971, *La Caravette, Avoir vingt ans dans les Aurès*; the documentary by Yves Courrier and Philippe Mounier, *La Guerre d'Algérie* 1970–71; Alain Resnais's *Muriel*; Robert Enrico's *La Belle Vie*; Jacques Davila's *Certaines nouvelles*; Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina's *Vent des Aurès* 1967; Yves Boisset's RAS; Gilles Behar's *Le Vent de la Toussaint*), even if some of it was temporarily censored, such as Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Petit Soldat* (banned from 1960 to 1963), Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Bataille d'Alger*, made in 1966 but given a certificate by the censor in 1970, or Philippe Durand's *Lecteur Postal 89098*.
7. 'il ne faut pas laisser dire que la guerre d'Algérie, vue de France, serait depuis 1962 un point aveugle de la mémoire, que l'amnésie ou le refoulement, la censure ou la page blanche seraient son lot. Tout au contraire, son souvenir saigne depuis trente ans, vigilant, démembré et même, parfois, prolix' (Rioux 1992: v).
8. Toute cette histoire est inscrite définitivement. Je n'en ai jamais parlé ni à ma femme qui est française, parce que je ne veux pas qu'elle le prenne pour elle, ni à mes enfants parce que ça ne sert à rien de leur transmettre des horreurs. Mais ces événements ont fait que je n'ai jamais demandé la nationalité française. A l'époque, j'étais soi-disant français. Mais je me sentais algérien parce qu'on me traitait de 'bicot'. (Amar K. interviewed by Philippe Bernard).
9. The *harkis* were Algerian auxiliaries who fought alongside the French army during the Algerian War.
10. See the website of Délégation aux célébrations nationales at <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/celebrations2004/autresanni.htm>, retrieved 8 June 2004.
11. See the entry on 'Indépendance d'Haiti' on the website of Délégation aux célébrations nationales at <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/celebrations2004/haiti.htm>, retrieved 8 June 2004.
12. See Paul Farmer's analysis of the collapse of the Aristide regime (Farmer 2004) and the debate to which it gave rise in subsequent issues of the *London Review of Books*.
13. On the attempt to settle claims for compensation in a more or less equitable manner, see Richard Adams's account of the process that has taken place in New Zealand (*Guardian*, 16 April 2004).
14. The text of the law may be consulted at [http://66.249.93.104/search?q=cache:mls-5gRI\\_OEJ:www.admi.net/jo/20050224/DEFX0300218L.html+23+fevrier+2005&chl=en](http://66.249.93.104/search?q=cache:mls-5gRI_OEJ:www.admi.net/jo/20050224/DEFX0300218L.html+23+fevrier+2005&chl=en).