

Pubblicazione quadrimestrale
numero 3 / 2017

afriche e orienti

www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/africheorienti

rivista di studi ai confini tra africa mediterraneo e medio oriente

anno XIX numero 3 / 2017

International Solidarities and the Liberation of the Portuguese Colonies

edited by

Aurora Almada e Santos, Bernardo Capanga André,
Corrado Tornimbeni and Iolanda Vasile

AIEP EDITORE



The French Networks Helping the Independence Movements of Portuguese Colonies. From the Algerian War to Third-Worldism

Tramor Quemeneur

85

Introduction¹

The Algerian War was long, almost 8 years, and completely transformed the political landscape in France, where it contributed to create the third-worldist movement, notably notably through Frantz Fanon's thinking (1991). But, as Benjamin Stora confirmed, the third-worldist movement was only efficient in 1962, just when the Algerian War was finishing: "In 1962, at the moment when the Algerian independence was announced, the 'third-worldism' of Fanon was at its apogee. Too late for Algeria. The war was over" (Stora 1997: 91). In parallel, the Algerian War was also a kind of incubator for the decolonisation movements. The National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale - FLN) inspired a lot of nationalist and anti-colonial movements, notably those of the Portuguese colonies and of Portugal itself.

Although many works focused on the Algerian War, they rarely concentrated on the later period, *i.e.* the first years of independent Algeria. One of the most important book was written by Catherine Simon, a journalist of the newspaper *Le Monde* (Simon 2009). Her book deals with the '*pieds-rouges*', that is the French anti-colonialists who went

to Algeria after the independence. The thesis of her book – the disappointment of the *pièdes-rouges* – has been criticized by several of them. Nevertheless, it remains one of the most precise analysis on the subject. Another journalist, Roger Faligot, wrote about the revolutionary and third-worldist struggles during the same period (Faligot 2013). That important summation gives a large overview of a number of liberation movements, especially those in Algeria during the 1960s. At last, we can underline the importance of the book of Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of revolution. Algeria, decolonization & the third world order*, which focuses on the diplomatic relations of Algeria (Byrne 2016). Contrarily to what indicates the title of the book, only a part of it concerns independent Algeria. Indeed, the first chapter deals with the international relations of the Algerian nationalists during the colonial period (notably Emir Khaled and Messali Hadj during the first half of the XXth century), and the second and the third ones are focused on the Algerian war of liberation and the very beginning of independence. The fourth and the fifth chapters are thus central for this article, even if their focus is on Algeria within the frameworks of the cold war, the Non-Aligned Movement and, of course, the decolonization processes and third-worldism, rather than on the role of the French anti-colonialists.

Within this large scope, it is interesting to study the links that existed between a part of the French anti-colonial movements during the Algerian War and the wars for independence in the Portuguese colonies in Africa, and how and to what extent some of the clandestine French anti-colonial networks were effective for the liberation of these African colonies.

The first part of this paper will look at the activities of some of the French anti-colonial networks that were active during the Algerian War. My purpose is to concentrate on the action of some of the participants who had an effective role for the Portuguese situation. In this case, my interest is not in the resistance of the French anti-colonialists to the Algerian War; rather, it is in the role that part of this resistance played towards the liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies. The second part of this article will focus on a newspaper created in Algeria by French anti-colonialists, *Révolution africaine*. My aim is to highlight the way in which it presented what was happening in the Portuguese colonies. Then, the third part will analyse the role of Solidarité, an association created also by French anti-colonialists with the scope of helping other 'revolutionary movements', and which began supporting the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. Finally, the last part will address, more specifically, the support offered by Algeria to the liberation struggle in Angola.

French anti-colonial networks during the Algerian War

During the Algerian War there were several illegal networks helping the Algerians. They were created because some French activists thought that political parties did not develop an effective action against the war. I will not present a complete history of

those networks,² but highlight only a part of them, insisting on the figures that had a role in the independence struggle in the Portuguese colonies.

One of the most famous networks was created by Francis Jeanson, who was close to Jean-Paul Sartre. His network, of course, included existentialists but also priest-workers as abbot Robert Davezies. Born in 1923, Davezies graduated in mathematics and in literature in 1944-1945, and entered the Grand Séminaire of Tarbes in 1945 in order to become a priest. In parallel, he became close to the labour class and to the French communist party, and asked the bishop of Tarbes to enter the seminar of the Mission of France (which trained most of the priest-workers) in 1949. Davezies became a priest in 1951 and went to Paris in 1953 in order to work in the research laboratories of the École Normale Supérieure as a researcher. Then, he met another priest of the Mission de France, Bernard Boudouresques, who was also a researcher in the Atomic Energy Commission (Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique). He was a pacifist and was opposing the Algerian War, which was beginning.

Linked with Bernard Boudouresques, there was also Jean Urvoas, who was responsible for Northern-Africa in the Mission de France, and who was already helping the FLN. Urvoas received letters from French soldiers in Algeria who confided the methods employed by the French army (torture, illegal executions, etc.). In 1956, several meetings about those letters took place, notably in the house of a French catholic journalist, Robert Barrat, and his wife Denise. Robert Barrat decided to alert the public opinion about the methods of the French army. Therefore, he decided to create the Spiritual Resistance Committee (Comité de Résistance Spirituelle) at the end of summer of 1956. This committee published the letter in a brochure named *Des rappelés témoignent...* in March 1957 ('Recalled soldiers testify...'; Comité de Résistance Spirituelle 1957). This brochure fuelled a large debate in France in 1957 about the use of torture by the French army. All the soldiers who witnessed illegal treatments were anonymised, but the members of the Spiritual Resistance Committee signed the introduction and guaranteed the authenticity of the testimonies. Amongst them, there were, of course, Robert Davezies, Bernard Boudouresques, Jean Urvoas and Robert Barrat, but there were also people like Jean-Marie Domenach, director of the review *Esprit*, the French historian René Rémond and also the philosopher Paul Ricœur.

A few months later, on 1 June 1957, Jean Urvoas proposed to Robert Davezies to help the FLN. Davezies accepted, first by publishing leaflets and after by "morally, spiritually and materially helping all the Algerians, in their human needs (housing, food, work...) without getting busy with their 'ideas' and 'action'" (Chapeu 1997: 97). On 2 October 1957, the priests of the Mission de France met together with another group led by the French Sartrian philosopher, head secretary of the review *Les Temps modernes*, Francis Jeanson, who was helping the FLN since 1956. The two groups decided to work together in order to help efficiently the Algerians. This marked the creation of the 'Jeanson network', the most famous network of French activists helping the FLN. Within it,

Robert Davezies (with the pseudonym of Martin) was in charge of exfiltrating Algerian activists through the Franco-Spanish border. Robert Davezies was also in charge of the funds collected by the Algerian activists from their compatriots living in France.

From October 1958 onwards, Robert Davezies lived in exile, notably in Cologne, near the Federation of France of the FLN. He went also to Tunisia, near the Algero-Tunisian border, to visit the refugee camps. When he came back, he wrote a book named *Le Front* ('The Front'), which was a collection of testimonies from Algerians, published by the Minuit Edition on 2 October 1959 (Davezies 1959). The book was censored in France but was translated and published in several countries, and it had an important impact on French intellectuals such as Louis Aragon (Chapeu 1997: 106). Through that book, Robert Davezies inaugurated a new kind of political book focusing on individual testimony of anonymous victims of repression, rather than concentrating on a global denunciation.

Further on, a member of the Jeanson network, Jean-Louis Hurst, created another network – Jeune Résistance – that offered support to the young French soldiers that happened to disobey the authorities (deserters, absentees without leave).³ Hurst was a teacher and a communist activist that himself deserted the French army before going to Algeria. The idea of the Jeune Résistance network was inspired by another communist activist, very important for our subject: Henri Curiel. He was a Jewish from Egypt, and supported the revolution of the Egyptian officers in the 1950s but, like the other Jews from Egypt, he had to go away, losing his nationality and becoming thus a stateless person. When he arrived in France, he approached the Algerian struggle and met Francis Jeanson. The communist dimension was very important for Henri Curiel: he argued that he was acting with the support of the USSR, in an internationalist way. This was the reason why he was supporting the Algerian struggle. But he was also concerned with the 'masses': he did not want the young French anti-colonialists to break their ties with the French people. Therefore, he suggested to Jean-Louis Hurst to create Jeune Résistance in order that the French disobedience to the Algerian War would not be considered as disloyalty.

After several arrests within the Jeanson network at the beginning of 1960, Henri Curiel became the new leader of the French support to the FLN. By mobilizing its own activists, he reorganised the solidarity activity and professionalised it, notably for the funds that were transferred from bank to bank from France to Switzerland and not transported by car like before. Robert Davezies became also close to Henri Curiel and continued to act in his network and within Jeune Résistance. Several activists of the clandestine networks became known to the French people when they were arrested. A number of them wanted to form a 'mass struggle organisation', in particular the group Jeune Résistance. This was also the aim of Henri Curiel, who established the French Anti-colonialist Movement (Mouvement Anticolonialiste Français – MAF) during the summer of 1960. The MAF created also an organisation for the young people, which

was called Anti-Colonialist Youth (Jeunesse Anticolonialiste).

In September 1960, 23 activists of the Jeanson network and 6 Algerians of the FLN were prosecuted in Paris. It was one of the most important judgment of the Algerian War, involving 26 lawyers and almost 80 witnesses. One of the lawyers was Jacques Vergès, who was a member of the lawyer network of the FLN and who became later one of the most famous French lawyers. During the trial, the polemical declaration of Jacques Vergès led him to be condemned, avoiding him to plead during one year. Later he would become an indirect actor in the struggle for independence of the Portuguese colonies. When the trial began, 121 intellectuals – and in a second moment 246 – signed a Declaration on the right to disobey in the Algerian War, also called the 'Manifesto of the 121'.⁴ Among those intellectuals, there were notably Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, the actress Simone Signoret, the writers Marguerite Duras and André Breton. The double impact of the trial and of the Declaration gave a great resonance to the question of disobedience during the autumn of 1960.

In that period there were also a lot of arrests in the clandestine networks, such as in the case of Henri Curiel in October 1960 and Robert Davezies in January 1961. They were imprisoned when the war ended, together with the Algerian activists and the other French anti-colonialists, which were trying to train activists and to create new contacts. The French networks helping the FLN continued to act until the end of the war, and the police kept arresting several French activists even if the main problem was not the independence of Algeria anymore, but the terrorist actions led by the Secret Army Organisation (Organisation Armée Secrète), which was in favour of the 'French Algeria'.

"Christians go to Vatican, Muslims to Mecca and revolutionaries to Algiers" (Amílcar Cabral)⁵

In 1961, a young activist of the Henri Curiel network, Jean Tabet, who knew well the Moroccan activist Mehdi Ben Barka, went in exile from France, avoiding to be arrested. He reached Mehdi Ben Barka in Morocco, and remained in contact with Henri Curiel, who wanted to create links between liberation movements worldwide. In Oujda, there was also another Jewish Egyptian communist activist closed to Henri Curiel, Didar Fawzy-Rossano. Jean Tabet, then, met Aquino de Bragança, the famous activist from Goa, private secretary of Mehdi Ben Barka, and one of the leaders of the Conference of Nationalist Organisations of the Portuguese Colonies (Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas - CONCP). Jean Tabet considered Aquino de Bragança a "marvellous guy",⁶ who introduced him to a number of anti-colonial activists of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea and also of South Africa, Cameroon and other African countries.

The Moroccan regime supported Jean Tabet providing him with funds and offices to lead "the network of activists of the FLN towards a solidarity organisation for all those

[oppressed] peoples".⁷ Jean Tabet then met French deserters and absentees without leave, as well as Portuguese deserters. A mission was also organised in Lisbon, where Jean Tabet finally met Fernando Piteira Santos, a former member of the central committee of the Portuguese Communist Party. Important links between deserters and activists of the liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies were created. Jean Tabet then realised that "the experience that occurred in France and which was, in fact, still in progress, was a reference both for the desertion of the Portuguese soldiers and also for a few connections with some very advanced left wing Portuguese people, increasingly gaining confidence – first suspicion, then confidence – from the people of the Portuguese colonies... This is interesting".⁸

At the same time, Jacques Vergès arrived in Morocco too. Indeed, on 15 February, he had been sentenced to prison for 15 days with a suspended decision for hurtful words against the Prime Minister; moreover, that decision was prohibiting him to plead during one year. The Algerian leader Ahmed Ben Bella and the lawyer Abderrahmane Khatib, then, favoured the departure of Jacques Vergès to Morocco, where he became the adviser of the new Minister of the African Affairs, Dr Abdelkrim El Khatib. In this period, Jacques Vergès established close relations with a number of African leaders, and in particular with Amilcar Cabral.⁹ He was also in touch with the actual Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and was in the team which welcomed Ahmed Ben Bella when he arrived in Morocco after the end of his detention in France.

When Algeria became independent, part of the French anti-colonial activists went there to help at the construction of the new state, and they could not return to France because they were condemned and they were supposed to go to prison if they were to be caught. For this reason, these activists have been called the '*pièds rouges*' ('red feet') in opposition to the '*pièds noirs*' ('black feet', the European people who went to live in colonial Algeria).¹⁰ Initially, while the Algerian activists in French prisons were released, French activists remained in detention. But then they were also progressively freed between 1962 and 1963, as in the case of Robert Davezies and Henri Curiel who went to Algiers.

Ahmed Ben Bella officially asked Jacques Vergès to come to Algiers in November 1962 in order to create a newspaper funded by the FLN to promote the liberation of Africa. Consequently, Jacques Vergès contacted Gérard Chaliand, a student that he met in Langues'O, the famous university for the study of languages in Paris,¹¹ and who was a member of the networks helping the FLN. Gérard Chaliand accepted to become the head-editor of the new newspaper, which was entitled *Révolution africaine*. His wife, Juliette Minces (a future sociologist), went with him, as well as a young journalist, also member of the Curiel network during the Algerian War.¹² The famous novelist Georges Arnaud, writer of *The Wages of Fear* (Arnaud 1950),¹³ and the cartoonist Siné took part in the project too.¹⁴

All the editorial team arrived in Algiers at the beginning of January 1963. The

newspaper's headquarter was located in the former offices of *L'Echo d'Alger*, a pro-colonialist newspaper which disappeared at the end of the Algerian War. The first issue of *Révolution africaine* came out on 2 February 1963. Its editorial, called *Why We Publish*, began in this way: "The third of Africa, our motherland, is under foreign domination, especially in the Portuguese colonies, in Central and South Africa".¹⁵ The aim of *Révolution africaine* was then stated: it "will bring to light the struggle of the peoples of those territories and will call all the humans in love with freedom and progress to fight with them".¹⁶

Three parts composed the issue: the first one was on Algeria, the second one concerned Africa, and the third one was about 'culture'. In the last pages of the issue, an article of the Mozambican writer Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho was printed between an article by the Algerian writer Kateb Yacine and a poem of Nazim Hikmet. The article was entitled *The 'Volunteers for the Rope'*, and was about forced workers in Angola, named '*contratados*' and ironically called '*voluntários da corda*' by the Portuguese colonialists.¹⁷ Castro Soromenho underlined that the Angolan songs dealing with those '*voluntários da corda*' were becoming more and more songs of war and "songs of hope, for all free humans".

In the following issues of *Révolution africaine*, the newspaper continued to deal with the Portuguese colonies, notably in the second issue concerning Angola, in which the newspaper celebrated the second anniversary of the launch of the Angolan insurrection by the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA). In that issue, Joaquin Diaz highlighted the role 'international imperialism' had in the question of the forced labor in Angola.¹⁸ Moreover, Agostinho Neto, founder of the MPLA and future president of Angola, emphasised the support received by Ahmed Ben Bella, who knew the MPLA from the time he was still in prison in France and whom he met at the inauguration of the MPLA's office in Algiers.¹⁹

Progressively, *Révolution africaine* published articles about other Portuguese colonies. For example, Jean Mettas published an article on Mozambique in the sixth issue.²⁰ This article was the first one for *Révolution africaine* by the young historian, born in 1941, and who became an anti-colonial activist during the Algerian War. After the war, he continued to campaign for African liberation movements and third-worldism. Indeed, he met Amilcar Cabral in Dakar and interviewed him for *Révolution africaine* in August 1963. In that interview, Jean Mettas referred to Franz Fanon's theory and concluded his article by saying: "For Amilcar Cabral, for us, there is no doubt [that] the victory of his people and of his party is now coming. It is certainly inexorable".²¹

Mettas and Cabral became friends and, later, Mettas organised conferences led by the Guinean leader in France and founded the Support Committee for Angola and the Peoples of Portuguese Colonies (Comité de Soutien pour l'Angola et les Peuples des Colonies Portugaises; Dechamps 1975). In parallel, Mettas conducted important researches on slavery but he died prematurely in 1975, leaving important data on the

French slave trade in the XVIII century (Mettas 1978, 1984; Delcourt 1987). Gérard Chaliand also met Amílcar Cabral and welcomed him in Algiers.²² It was on this occasion that the Guinean leader wrote his first paper for *Révolution africaine*, in March 1963.²³ The newspaper also gave a forum to Portuguese opponents of the Salazar regime. The first article – a short one – was written by General Humberto Delgado and the Marxist mathematician of the University of Coimbra Rui Luís Gomes, former candidates to the Portuguese presidential elections. It denounced the opening of a concentration camp in Tarrafal, in Cape Verde.²⁴ At the time, they were in exile in Brazil; Delgado went later to Algeria before he was murdered in Spain in 1965.

Few weeks after this article was published, another significant article highlighted the issue of disobedience. It revolved around four deserters from Mozambique: Helder Martins,²⁵ Artur Marinha de Campos,²⁶ Fernando dos Reis Ganhão²⁷ and José Júlio Andrade.²⁸ They published in the Algerian newspaper a declaration which could have been influenced and inspired by the Declaration on the right to disobey in the Algerian War. Indeed, the Mozambican officers declared that the crimes of the Portuguese army "legitimate absolutely the desertion of the young people, native from the Portuguese colonies, recruited because of the colonial laws in that army".²⁹ The question of the legitimacy of disobedience was also the main point of the French declaration which claimed: "We respect and judge that the refusal to take up arms against the Algerian people is justified".³⁰

92 The impact of the French Declaration was more intense because of the numerous intellectuals which signed the text. But in the Portuguese case, texts concerning disobedience seemed to have a larger and even more international echo, and they occurred earlier in the process of war. So, the third-worldist movement developed during the Algerian War later provided opportunities to other anti-colonial movements, notably from the Portuguese colonies, through newspapers such as *Révolution africaine*. The arguments developed during the Algerian War and the Portuguese decolonisation wars had similarities. Indeed, an important article entitled "*Soldats portugais désertez!*" ("Portuguese Soldiers Desert!") was printed on the last page of the newspaper, inserted in a green frame. Moreover, this text was in the same issue along with an interview of Che Guevara. A large picture of the revolutionary leader was on the front page of the newspaper, under which the call for desertion was announced. This text was written by José Moura Pimenta, second lieutenant who deserted in Guinea with the help of the Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC). The author endorsed the desertion of the Portuguese soldiers, in Portugal and its colonies, and explained: "Comrades, our African friends who fight in anti-colonial movements for the just independence of their people and country are not our enemies. On the contrary, they constitute the natural allies of the Portuguese people for their liberation from fascism".³¹

The assertion that liberation from colonialism would liberate homeland from fascism or

would allow to establish socialism was also one of the main argument developed by the French anticolonialist networks during the Algerian War. For instance, the first issue of the newspaper *Vérités pour*, which was the voice of the 'Jeanson network' during the Algerian War, stated that "the main fact of the present situation, that we keep trying to establish as irrevocable, remains the cause and effect relationship between the Algerian War and the fascist danger. Our thesis is quite clear: 'Who says war in Algeria says fascism in France and inversely: who says peace in Algeria, imposed by the left wing, says renewal of the French democracy'".³² The main difference between the French and the Portuguese case is that Portugal was in a real situation of dictatorship whereas in France the extreme right was expanding (in particular through the *Organisation armée secrète*).³³

After the 18th issue of *Révolution africaine*, Jacques Vergès left the newspaper and created *Révolution*, a pro-Chinese newspaper published in France. *Révolution africaine* kept existing in Algeria, becoming a "peninsula of modernity" (Simon 2009: 82), directed by Mohamed Harbi, the former adviser of Ahmed Ben Bella and who became later a major analyst of the question of Algerian nationalism. Gérard Chaliand returned in France in 1964, because he was more and more critical about the Algerian regime and because Mohamed Harbi tried increasingly to 'algerianise' the team of the newspaper.³⁴ But Harbi continued to act in favour of the decolonisation of the Portuguese colonies. At the same time, the organisation Solidarité was providing a concrete help to many anti-colonial movements.

Solidarité

At the end of the Algerian War, Jean Tabet and Henri Curiel created Solidarité, with other people of their network: Robert Davezies, the Belgian brothers Jehan and Gerold de Wangen, Didar Fawzy-Rossano and another communist Jewish Egyptian, Joyce Blau. The first congress of Solidarité took place near Paris on 1-2 December 1962, after two informal meetings of preparation. About 30 attendees participated at the congress, most of them from the French networks against the Algerian War. Three activists of the French communist party took part also in this congress, as well as two vicars, a priest, a Belgian and a Swiss (Perrault 1984: 231). The direction of the organisation was elected and was accountable before the activists. The association seemed to be a classical non-governmental organisation but was, in fact, clandestine in order to ensure the security of the activists of the national liberation movements.

When Algeria became independent, Solidarité moved its office from Morocco to Algeria. Jean Tabet and Didar Fawzy were then the representatives of the organisation, which was composed of about 38 activists in Algiers, including Robert Davezies who arrived in the Algerian capital in December 1963. With Didar Fawzy, he came into contact with Ahmed Ben Bella in order to help the Angolan nationalists and Spanish anti-franquists. The Algerian President gave them 12 million of old French francs (about 155,000 euros),

which were in his desk's drawer (Faligot 2013: 122; Perrault 1984: 229). That money allowed Solidarité to support financially the Angolan representative delegation of the MPLA in Europe, notably for its tour of Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Switzerland (Perrault 1984: 231-232). From 1962 to 1965, Algeria regularly helped Solidarité and many African national liberation movements.

The aim of Solidarité was to put to good use its clandestine experience of the Algerian War by supporting other national liberation movements, with the help of dozens or even hundreds of anonymous activists, particularly in the case of the provision of accommodations. For example, the future university professors and life companions Michèle Riot-Sarcey and Denis Berger offered housing to Joaquim Pedro Silva as well as to several other activists of the PAIGC in Paris (Faligot 2013: 269-270). Other persons provided letterboxes, telephones and meeting places.

Solidarité ensured translation and printing of propaganda documents of the national liberation movements, developed an international solidarity with legal movements, associations, trade unions, churches and human rights' organisations. For example, ten Angolan, Mozambican and Guinean activists were taken in charge by Solidarité to go to the 8th Festival of the youth and students in Helsinki in 1962 (Perrault 1984: 232). The same way as for the Algerian War, Solidarité made and provided false documents through a 'paperwork group', and amongst its members there was the artist Maria Amaral.³⁵

94 Solidarité organized also clandestine travels: Martin Verlet, a member of the Curiel network during the Algerian War, helped some Angolan activists, taking them in charge in La Coruña and helping them to traverse to France clandestinely. Several cars ensured the transportation to the frontier, and then they crossed the border by foot in the Pyrenees, in the Basque country, with the help of a courier priest. Unfortunately, Martin Verlet broke his leg and was arrested by the police, but the six Angolan activists finally arrived in France (Perrault 1984: 232-233).

Solidarité increasingly took on the role of training the nationalist activists. The person in charge of the training regarding defence against repression was, for example, a former activist of the Algerian communist party, who was arrested by the French army during the war of independence and was tortured (Perrault: 1984: 233). However, sometimes this proved to be a difficult task. Jean-Paul Ribes, a former student of law and an activist of the Unified Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste Unifié, PSU), went to Mozambique through South Africa with another activist of Solidarité, known as John. They were supposed to recruit future activists and to take them back to Algeria where they would be trained. He had four contacts. When he met them he found out that they were all white people and that they did not know about Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO). Moreover, one of them did not come, the second was under police monitoring, the third one only wanted to have books and the last one agreed to go to Algeria on the condition that he could study economics. Consequently, the two

clandestine activists of Solidarité went back to Algeria alone (Perrault: 1984: 231). Finally, one of the main public action of Solidarité concerning the Portuguese colonies was the release of two books written by Robert Davezies. The first one, *Les Angolais*, was published in the Minuit Edition, in 1965 (Davezies 1965).³⁶ In this book, Robert Davezies explained how the Angolan War became a subject of interest to him. He stated that he met Angolans for the first time at the end of the summer of 1962 in Paris, in political and unofficial groups. They were MPLA or UPA (*União dos Povos de Angola*) activists. He detailed: "Some of them were even white nationalists, '*pieds noirs*' activists for the Angolan independence" (Davezies 1965: 17). He showed thus the link he made between the Algerian and the Angolan wars of decolonisation. Although he stated that "Angola was quite far, I lived for years in the Algerian universe" and that he had other tasks to do (probably concerning the amnesty of the French anti-colonialists) (*ibid.*), he began to help the Angolan activists: "I gave them a few basic favours. They were foreigners; hospitality implies well-known requirements, I believe" (*ibid.*). He summed up then the debate he had with his friends who did not understand his interest for Angola and the answers he gave them: "If the first tasks of the French people are in France, with the coming era of the artificial satellites, the earth becomes strangely smaller, people get united and peace turns indivisible. I said that we are related to the Angolan people, and the fight against all form of exploitation of man-by-man is the burden of all" (*ibid.*). He went to Brazzaville on June 7, 1964, where he lived with MPLA activists. He crossed through Congo and met UPA activists in Leopoldville. He went clandestinely to Angola, crossing the border by the mountains. "I was not there for the taste for subversion, as we say, but for justice, freedom or, more simply, for joy" (Davezies 1965: 18). He came back to France on July 12, 1964, and began to write a book in which he collected the conversations he had with Angolans, transcribing the contradictions and personal attacks within the different Angolan nationalist movements "leaving to the reader the care to evaluate their legitimacy [of the testimonies]" (*ibid.*). Indeed, as he did for Algerians in his first book during the Algerian War (Davezies 1959), the aim and the method of Robert Davezies was to provide a testimony, in the Christian meaning and leaving readers to make their own judgment, because he thought that "objective information, very close to life itself, is able, on the one hand, to mobilise all over the world men enamoured of freedom against the most obstinate of colonialisms and, on the other hand, to bring significant pieces of reflection to the allies of the Angolan fight" (Davezies 1965: 19).

That method was also employed in his second book, suggestively entitled *La guerre d'Angola* (Davezies 1967). It was published by the Ducros Editions, in 1967, in the collection *Documents Frères du Monde*. The fact that the book was published in that collection highlights the Christian approach of Robert Davezies, but also the involvement of Christians in the Curiel network in Europe and in Africa, especially to help the clandestine activists. Indeed, Robert Davezies made a second trip to Southern

Africa, notably to Angola, between 3 February and 16 March 1967. During this trip, he went to the Cabinda district with a guerrilla group. Furthermore, he interviewed Agostinho Neto in Brazzaville on 1 March 1967 (Davezies 1967: 151-161). Though this second book was entitled *La guerre d'Angola*, it contained only a few testimonies (about five), but Robert Davezies explained his choice at the beginning of the book. He underlined, with a critical eye analysing the sociological composition of the movement and its relations with the people, any problems which the MPLA would have to face. That's why Robert Davezies considered that "the attentive reader reading the last page, closing it, would admit that this book is rightly entitled: *La guerre d'Angola*" (Davezies 1967: 9). Even if Robert Davezies based his book on testimonies, he wanted to provide a global view of the Angolan War. It would have been very interesting to learn more about the role of Robert Davezies in Solidarité and his experience in Angola. Unfortunately, he died in December 2007.³⁷ I interviewed him only about the Algerian War,³⁸ and Sybille Chapeu, who is currently working on his biography, informed me that he did not keep any archive or data about his trips to Angola.³⁹

At the beginning of the 1970s, after a decade of existence, Solidarité had helped more than 100 revolutionary and national liberation parties and was acting in favour of about 40 of them, as we can see in one of the internal files of the organisation which was submitted at a Congress in 1971 and disclosed at the end of the 1990s.⁴⁰ The first movements mentioned in the file were those of the Portuguese colonies: MPLA, UPA, Frente de Unidade Angolana (FUA), FRELIMO, PAIGC, CONCP. At the beginning of the 1970s, Solidarité still had links with MPLA, FRELIMO and PAIGC. The association continued to act even after the independence of the Portuguese colonies, but the assassination of its leader Henri Curiel in Paris on 4 May 1978 led progressively the organisation to end its activities in 1984.⁴¹

Algerian solidarity

Therefore, as it has been shown above, French anti-colonialists and Solidarité gave a direct help to the liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies by providing information or even supportive actions. Those activists could count on their previous experience acquired during the Algerian War, on the circumstance that they could live legally (which was not the case during the previous period), and also on the support of a new country: Algeria. Indeed, the Ben Bella regime welcomed the French anti-colonialists, such as those of *Révolution africaine* and Solidarité, financing them, as well as the above mentioned liberation movements. A lot of them had offices in Algiers. For example, the PAIGC office was located at 3 rue Waiïsse, the FRELIMO one was situated at 26 rue de la Liberté, very close to the Place du gouvernement. The Portuguese anti-colonialists of the Frente Patriótica de Libertação Nacional (FPLN) were settled at 13 rue Auber.

The Algerian government even organised guerrilla, ambush, surprise raid and camouflage

training, as described in *Révolution africaine* in a short article praising this support which would be "the living evidence of the African unity and the guarantee of its success".⁴² Indeed, in January 1963, fifty fighters of the Mozambican Liberation Front arrived in Algeria for training, and 250 Angolan fighters of the MPLA had been trained in the Algerian trainings camps before May 1963 (Byrne 2016: 190, 192). But the help of the Algerian regime – which was real – was not dedicated to training alone: in 1963, Ahmed Ben Bella proposed to send 10,000 Algerian volunteers to fight in Angola. In response, however, Holden Roberto declared: "If they appear, we will kill them, we are the puppets of nobody".⁴³ As a matter of fact, the support of the Algerian regime to the Angolan nationalists concerned the MPLA and not the Frente nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) of Roberto Holden, reputedly supported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Byrne 2016: 198, 209).

In reality, there were Algerian soldiers in Angola since 1962, as the personal archive of José Luandino Vieira attests: indeed, the writer received letters of a man called Paul Heri (or Henri or Hedi),⁴⁴ who was imprisoned with him. Paul Heri stated that he arrived in Congo with 11 other persons on 27 June 1962 from North Africa, sent by the Algerian FLN to supervise Angolans. He even specified that he was arrested with a man known as 'commandant Barttier', reportedly named Chiheb Aboud, and who would have been a member of the Ben Bella family. Chiheb Aboud and Paul Heri allegedly bought weapons for mercenaries and were arrested on 21 January 1963 on the border, at Teixeira de Sousa (nowadays Luau).⁴⁵

Conclusion

A part of the French anti-colonialists involved during the Algerian War continued to act after the independence of the French colony. Some of them became '*pieds-rouges*', living in Algeria in order to help the construction of the new country. In parallel, they pursued their activities in particular for the liberation of the Portuguese colonies. An important newspaper like *Révolution africaine* dealt regularly with that subject, providing notably a forum for the Portuguese opposition and the Portuguese deserters, who relied on the experience of the struggles carried on during the Algerian War, and, notably, on the 'Declaration of the right to disobey in the Algerian War'. A clandestine organisation like Solidarité gave also a concrete support to the African nationalist activists of the Portuguese colonies, notably for clandestine training, drawing from the experience of persons who had been involved in the Algerian War. Furthermore, besides the involvement of the French anti-colonialists, the Algerian regime also directly participated in the Angolan War. It would be interesting to learn more about this involvement by reading the Algerian archives when disclosed.

The experience accumulated during the Algerian War was thus reinvested by the French activists in other struggles, in particular in wars of decolonisation and wars against 'imperialism'. It would be interesting also to learn more about the role of the

people involved in networks against the Vietnam War. All that involvement is part of the memory of the Algerian War, which changed the social and political landscape in France, putting the bases for May 1968 (Ross 2002). But, most importantly, it also shaped a small part of other African and international contexts, by being a model for other anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles.

Tramor Quemeneur is lecturer at University of Paris 8.

NOTES:

- 1 - All the translations are from me. I would also like to thank Lucie Compiègne for her careful rereading.
- 2 - On that subject, see notably Hamon and Rotman (1982), Charby (2004), and Evans (1997). More specifically, about the anarchist and trotskyist movements in the Algerian War, we can refer to the work of Pattieu (2002). At last, for a larger overview and a more complete bibliography on that subject, please refer to my thesis (Quemeneur 2007).
- 3 - On disobedience in the Algerian War and on the questions developed in the following lines, refer to the author's thesis (Quemeneur 2007).
- 4 - *Declaration on the right to disobey in the Algerian War*, September 1960, 4 p.: "<http://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100184110>" "<http://www.andrebreton.fr/work/56600100184110>".
- 5 - Declaration of Amílcar Cabral during a press conference just after the first Pan-African Festival in Algiers in August 1969.
- 6 - Interview with Jean Tabet, Paris, 10 December 2000.
- 7 - *Ibid.*
- 8 - *Ibid.*
- 9 - Library of Contemporary International documentation (BDIC), DV 266, *Interview of Jacques Vergès*, 60', Paris, 7 June 2010.
- 10 - About the pied-noirs, see notably Éric Savarèse (2002), Jean-Jacques Jordi (2002) and Clarisse Buono (2004).
- 11 - Langues'O, for Langues Orientales, now called the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations (INALCO).
- 12 - BDIC, DV 267 1-3, *Interview with Gérard Chaliand*, 120', Paris, 27 May 2010.
- 13 - The book was adapted on screen by Henri-Georges Clouzot (Vera Film / CICC / Fimsonor / Fono Roma, France, 1953, 142'), with Yves Montand and Charles Vanel (Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival).
- 14 - Siné (1928-2016) was before a cartoonist for *L'Express* and created the newspaper *Siné massacre* in December 1962. In 1968, he created *L'Enragé* with Jean-Jacques Pauvert. He joined the team of *Charlie-Hebdo* in 1981 and finally created his last newspaper in 2008, *Siné Hebdo* which became *Siné mensuel*.
- 15 - *Pourquoi nous publions*, «Révolution africaine», n. 1, 2 February 1963, p. 3.
- 16 - *Ibid.*
- 17 - F. M. de Castro Soromenho, *Les volontaires de la corde*, «Révolution africaine», n. 1, 2 February 1963, p. 23.
- 18 - J. Diaz, *La Sainte Alliance*, «Révolution africaine», n. 2, 9 February 1963, pp. 6-7.
- 19 - K. A. Badinka, P. McGowan Pinheiro, *Une interview de Agostinho Neto*. "Notre victoire dépend de tous les peuples africains", «Révolution africaine», n. 2, 9 February 1963, p. 8.
- 20 - J. Mettas, *Veillées d'armes au Mozambique*, «Révolution africaine», n. 6, 9 March 1963, p. 14.
- 21 - J. Mettas, *Notre lutte en Guinée*, interview with Amílcar Cabral, «Révolution africaine», n. 29 17 August 1963, pp. 4-6.
- 22 - Interview with Gérard Chaliand, Paris, 27 May 2010.
- 23 - A. Cabral, *800.000 hommes en guerre*, «Révolution africain », n. 7, 16 March 1963, p. 8.

- 24 - H. Delgado, R. L. Gomes, *Un appel des émigrés portugais*, «Révolution africaine», n. 10, 6 April 1963, p. 15.
- 25 - Helder Martins was a doctor who deserted from England where he was a NATO marine officer. He became one of the founding members of FRELIMO, and future Health Minister of Mozambique.
- 26 - Artur Marinha de Campos was a student in Coimbra. He deserted with Fernando dos Reis Ganhão, crossing the border with Spain in the snow. Helped by Spanish antifascists, he crossed the border with France in February 1962. In Algeria, he worked in the Mustapha Hospital in the neuropsychiatric service.
- 27 - Fernando dos Reis Ganhão studied in the 1960s in Poland and became chancellor of the University Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique from 1976 to 1986.
- 28 - José Júlio Andrade deserted with 16 Angolan deserters and members of their families from Portugal, in a small fishing boat. Near Morocco, the owner of the boat put them on a pneumatic boat. They reached Morocco with the help of a Moroccan fisherman. He studied in Moscow and became an activist for FRELIMO.
- 29 - H. Martins, A. Marinha de Campos, F. dos Reis Ganhão, J. J. Andrade, *Déclaration des officiers mozambicains*, «Révolution africaine», n. 14, 4 May 1963, pp. 14-15.
- 30 - *Declaration on the right to disobey in the Algerian War*, September 1960, 4 p., p. 3.: <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100184110>.
- 31 - J. Moura Pimenta, *Soldats portugais désertez !*, «Révolution africaine», n. 24, 13 July 1963, p. 24.
- 32 - Centrale d'Information sur le Fascisme et l'Algérie, «Vérités pour...», n. 0, September 1958, p. 2.
- 33 - The research launched by Miguel Cardina on disobediences during the Portuguese wars of decolonization will surely provide much more elements on the Portuguese situation and fruitful comparisons between the two situations.
- 34 - Neologism used by Gérard Chaliand in the interview led by the author. Interview with Gérard Chaliand, Paris, 27 May 2010.
- 35 - Testimony of Maria Amaral in Rogalski and Tabet (1999: 163).
- 36 - The Minuit edition, clandestinely created during the Second World War, was also really involved against the Algerian War: for example, it published *La question*, by Henri Alleg (1958), in which the author testified the tortures he endured.
- 37 - On the life and the death of Robert Davezieux, refer to *Trois questions à Tramor Quemeneur*, «Le quotidien d'Oran», 2 January 2008.
- 38 - Interviews in Paris, 11 December 1997 and 18 January 1998.
- 39 - I would like to thank Sybille Chapeu for the information she kindly gave to me.
- 40 - Personal archives, Solidarité, *Dix ans de liens. 1962-1971*, submitted at the 1971 Congress, in «Autour de l'action et de l'assassinat d'Henri Curiel. Documents annexes», files distributed for the international symposium under the patronage of Mrs. Catherine Trautman, Ministry of Culture and Communication, University of Paris 8, EHESS, La Sorbonne University, 13-14 November 1998.
- 41 - On the life and the hypothesis about the persons responsible for the murder of Henri Curiel, refer to René Gallissot (2009).
- 42 - *Frères angolais*, «Révolution africaine», n. 32, 7 September 1963, p. 24. The article is on the last page of the newspaper, the title is in red. It is announced on the front page, and it is illustrated by three large photo shots by the Agence France Presse, testifying the veracity of the article. On a photo, two officers in the discussion are anonymized.
- 43 - *Time weekly magazine*, 31 May 1963, quoted in *Sans commentaire*, «Révolution africaine», n. 19, 8 June 1963, p. 6.
- 44 - It is probably a fictitious name: the spelling changes frequently in the letters. The man had perhaps false papers made by Solidarité, and even if he could bear a French name (as Paul Henri), its spelling indicates that he didn't speak and write that language.
- 45 - Different letters of Paul Heri in Vieira (2015), in particular at p. 167 and 171. There are facsimiles of the letters. I would like to thank particularly Júlia Garraio who informed me about the existence of those letters.

References

- Alleg H. (1958), *La question*, Minuit, Paris
 Arnaud G. (1950), *Le salaire de la peur*, Julliard, Paris
 Buono C. (2004), *Pieds-noirs de père en fils*, Balland, Paris

- Byrne J. J. (2016), *Mecca of Revolution. Algeria, Decolonization Et the Third World Order*, Oxford University Press, New-York
- Chapeu S. (1997), *Délier les liens du joug. Trois prêtres et un pasteur dans la Guerre d'Algérie*, book prefaced by Jean-François Soulet, research Master in History, Groupe de recherches en histoire immédiate, University of Toulouse 2, Toulouse
- Charby J. (2004), *Les porteurs d'espoir. Les réseaux de soutien au FLN pendant la guerre d'Algérie : les acteurs parlent*, La Découverte, Cahiers libres, Paris
- Comité de Résistance spirituelle, *Des rappelés témoignent...*, Comité Résistance spirituelle, Clichy, 1957
- Davezies R. (1959), *Le Front*, Minuit, Paris
- Davezies R. (1965), *Les Angolais*, Minuit, Paris
- Davezies R. (1967), *La guerre d'Angola*, Ducros éditeur, Bordeaux
- Dechamps H. (1975), *Jean Mettas (1941-1975)*, in «Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer», vol. 226, pp. 5-6
- Delcourt A. (1987), *Le Mettas: une véritable banque de données sur la traite négrière du XVIII^e siècle*, in «Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer», n. 276
- Evans M. (1997), *The Memory of Resistance. French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, Berg, Oxford
- Faligot R. (2013), *Tricontinentale. Quand Che Guevara, Ben Barka, Cabral, Castro et Hô Chi Minh préparaient la révolution mondiale (1964-1968)*, La Découverte, Paris
- Fanon F. (1991), *Les damnés de la terre*, Gallimard, Paris
- Gallissot R. (2009), *Henri Curiel. Le mythe mesuré à l'histoire*, Riveneuve éditions, Paris
- Hamon H., P. Rotman (1982), *Les porteurs de valises. La résistance française à la guerre d'Algérie*, Le Seuil, Point Histoire, Paris
- Jordi J.-J. (2002), *1962: L'Arrivée des pieds-noirs*, Autrement, Paris
- Mettas J. (1978), *Répertoire des expéditions françaises au XVIII^e siècle*, vol. 1, Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer, Paris
- Mettas J. (1984), *Répertoire des expéditions françaises au XVIII^e siècle*, vol. 2, Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer, Paris
- Pattieu S. (2002), *Les camarades des frères. Trotskistes et libertaires dans la guerre d'Algérie*, Syllepse, Paris
- Perrault G. (1984), *Un homme à part*, B. Barrault, Paris
- Quemeneur T. (2007), *Une guerre sans 'non'? Insoumissions, refus d'obéissance et desertions de soldats français pendant la guerre d'Algérie (1954-1962)*, PhD supervised by Benjamin Stora, University of Paris 8, Saint-Denis
- Rogaslski M., J. Tabet (dir.) (1999), *Des Brigades internationales aux sans-papiers. Crise et avenir de la solidarité internationale. Rencontres internationales Henri Curiel*, Le Temps des cerises, Paris
- Ross K. (2002), *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago
- Savarèse É. (2002), *L'invention des pieds-noirs*, Séguier, Paris
- Simon C. (2009), *Les années pieds-rouges. Des rêves de l'indépendance au désenchantement (1962-1969)*, La Découverte, Paris
- Stora B. (1997), *Appelés en guerre d'Algérie*, Gallimard, Paris
- Vieira J. L. (2015), *Papéis da prisão. Apontamentos, diário, correspondência (1962-1971)*, Caminho, Alfragide

ISBN 8860861462



9 788860 861467

ISSN 1592-6753

€ 13,00

Numeri pubblicati

- 1/99 Esili e memoria
2/99 I conflitti in Africa
3/99 La transizione in Sudafrica
4/99 Elezioni e transizioni politiche in Africa
1/00 Comunicazione, immagini, linguaggi
2/00 Processi di pace e conflitti in Sudan
3-4/00 Emigrare, immigrare, transmigrazione
1/01 Informalità, illegalità e politiche pubbliche in Africa
2/01 Cultura popolare, sviluppo e democrazia
3-4/01 Sguardi antropologici sul turismo
1/02 La crisi in Afghanistan e Asia centrale
2/02 Migrazioni e xenofobia in Africa australe
3/02 Quale politica dell'Italia in Africa e nel Mediterraneo?
4/02 Idee di islam
Speciale 2003 USA-Iraq le ragioni di un conflitto
1/03 Culture coloniali e letterature dell'Africa sub-ahariana
2/03 La crisi in Zimbabwe
3-4/03 Economia e politiche dell'acqua
Speciale 2004 Voci di donne nel cinema dell'Africa e del Mediterraneo
1-2/04 Conflitto e transizione in Congo
3/04 Movimenti e conflitti sociali in Africa
4/2004 - 1/2005 Scritture dei conflitti
2/05 Ambiente e sviluppo sostenibile in Africa australe
3/05 Migranti africani in Italia: etnografie
4/05 Parole parlate. Comunicazione orale fra tradizione e modernità
Speciale I 2006 Stato-nazione e movimenti nazionalisti nell'Africa australe post-coloniale
Speciale II 2006 Occidente e Africa. Democrazia e nazionalismo dalla prima alla seconda transizione
1-2/06 Sudan 1956-2006: cinquant'anni di indipendenza
3-4/06 Trasformazioni democratiche in Africa
1/07 Il ritorno della memoria coloniale
Speciale 2007 Terra e risorse naturali in Africa. Quali diritti?
2/07 Narrative di migrazione, diaspora ed esili
3-4/07 Fondamentalismi nell'Africa del XXI secolo
1/08 Mondo arabo. Cittadini e welfare sociale
Speciale I 2008 Africa australe. Comunità rurali, sistemi di autorità e politiche di decentramento
Speciale II 2008 Decentralising Power and Resource Control in sub-Saharan Africa

- 2/08 La Cina in Africa
3-4/08 Donne e diritti sociali in Africa
Speciale I 2009 AIDS, povertà e democrazia in Africa
1-2/09 Africa in Europa: strategie e forme associative
Speciale II 2009 La povertà in Africa sub-sahariana: approcci e politiche
3-4/09 La schiavitù dalle colonie degli imperi alle trasmissioni postcoloniali
1/10 Il calcio in Sudafrica: identità, politica ed economia
Speciale 2010 Controllare la natura. Politiche di tutela ambientale in Africa sub-sahariana
2/10 Transnazionalismo dei saperi e ONG islamiche nell'Africa occidentale
3-4/10 La crisi afghana e il contesto regionale
1-2/11 Unione Europea e Africa
Speciale I 2011 Sviluppo rurale e riduzione della povertà in Etiopia
3-4/11 Cittadinanza e politiche dell'appartenenza in Africa sub-sahariana
Speciale II 2011 L'Africa sub-sahariana negli anni '70
1-2/12 Percorsi della democrazia in Africa
Speciale AIDS 2012 HIV/AIDS e comunità rurali in Africa australe: sudditi o cittadini?
3-4/12 Giovani in Africa. Prospettive antropologiche
1-2/13 Linee di conflitto: il mondo arabo in trasformazione
3-4/13 Fronti della guerra fredda in Africa sub-sahariana
1-2/14 Partiti islamisti e relazioni internazionali in Nord Africa e Medio Oriente
3/14 Il Rwanda a vent'anni dal genocidio
Speciale 2014 La questione della terra in Mozambico fra diritti delle comunità e investimenti
Speciale 2015 Rural Development and Poverty Reduction in Southern Africa: Experiences from Zambia and Malawi
1-2/15 Stato e società in Egitto e Tunisia: involuzioni ed evoluzioni
3/15 The New Harvest. Agrarian Policies and Rural Transformation in Southern Africa
1/16 I movimenti delle donne in Nord Africa e Medio Oriente: percorsi e generazioni "femministe" a confronto
2-3/16 Le pratiche dello Stato in Africa: spazi sociali e politici contestati
1/17 Storie dell'Africa e fonti nell'era della "rivoluzione digitale"
2/17 Frontiere, confini e zone di frontiera nella regione MENA