IMPERIAL FRAGMENTS AND TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM: 1968(s) IN TUNISIA, FRANCE, AND SENEGAL

A dissertation presented

by

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Abstract of Dissertation

This dissertation explores the global protests of 1968 by examining three university cities—Tunis, Paris, and Dakar—that became sites of transnational activism after the collapse of the French empire. Newly independent African states in the post-1945 era invested heavily in education in hopes that indigenous talent would eventually replace European technocrats to carry out large-scale modernization projects. Rapidly growing populations of educated youth emerged at home institutions in the ex-colonies in the 1960s and maintained contact with activist circles living in the metropole. The dissertation answers the call to "provincialize Europe" by placing France's mai 68 in a global context with other related "1968s" in West and North Africa, and challenging its culturally and historiographically dominant position. I take the former French empire as a unit of analysis to trace transnational communication between activists in the metropole and the former colonies while also considering the context of each university to highlight the local characteristics of each movement.

My innovative transnational and comparative approach reveals that imperial fragments like the French university system shaped postcolonial protest in newly independent African nations and linked activists across Europe, Africa, and the Mediterranean. Using global protest to demonstrate the enduring links between France and its former colonies at the end of formal empire, I argue that intellectual migration from the colonies to the metropole—established during the colonial period—laid the foundations for transnational networks of activism in the protests that swept the globe in 1968. The dissertation transcends event-centered histories of 1968 by comparing the different trajectories Tunisian, French, and Senegalese activism in the 1970s. It combines original research gathered from interviews with former activists, previously inaccessible personal archives of protestors, and data from more than a dozen archive centers in
each of the three countries of study. I conclude that certain connections between France and its former colonies actually intensified after the fall of the empire in response to the protest movements of 1968.

My research reveals that, as Tunisia and Senegal transformed nationalist independence movements into autocratic single-party states, Paris became the site from which oppositional organizations were launched, and intellectuals often returned to home institutions in the former colonies to participate in political activism. While 1968 protests at universities in Tunis, Paris, and Dakar were linked through transnational activist networks and student organizations, student movements in each site were marked by certain local particularities. State repression in each case varied depending on student demographics and availability of opportunities for recruitment of elites, often into government positions. In response to state repression, activist organizations in Tunisia went transnational, operating with relative freedom from Paris, though never incorporating large sectors of the Tunisian population beyond university campuses. Activists’ concerns transformed from anti-imperialist causes like Vietnamese independence and Palestinian statehood to basic human rights and penal reform. Facing comparatively less repression, the Senegalese movement spread beyond the university campuses on the national level, yet did not witness a proliferation of transnational organizations as in the case of Tunisia. I argue that, as laboratories of modernization, universities were critical symbols for nations to measure their success, especially in the case of newly independent states. By 1968, the university had become a site of conflict between activist youth and the state over the future of the nation, and networks of support for protest movements often circulated through the former metropole. Ultimately, I conclude that the transnational connections of the former empire fundamentally impacted the nature of protestors’ claims in 1968, but that these claims transformed in the 1970s due to
varying degrees of state repression, cooperation between student and worker movements, and local economic conditions.
DEDICATION

For Addie & Gracie
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ideas on the pages that follow would not have been possible without the input and guidance of several individuals. Laura Frader has been a fantastic advisor and mentor. Her uncanny ability to strike the delicate balance between high standards of excellence and nurturing encouragement helped me to push forward when necessary and to know when to revisit material. I always felt I was in good hands with Laura steering the ship, navigating the sometimes choppy waters of grant and university administration, and willingly sharing her extensive historiographic knowledge to strengthen my arguments. Her expertise, generosity, and tireless work ethic have provided me with a scholarly role model I can only strive to emulate. In addition to quenching my thirst for 1960s culture and radical politics, Tim Brown helped me to write more clearly and to locate the heart of any research question. His support early in my graduate endeavors gave me the confidence to keep trying and to maintain a healthy perspective regarding history and the profession. And of course, without his deep knowledge of punk culture I would never have discovered the thrashing notes and lyrical prowess of MC5. Kate Luongo exposed me to postcolonial theory and piqued my interest in African history and anthropology. Her text selection is unequaled, and I will forever remember the rich enigmas of the story of Médard and the power encapsulated in the sauces of Songhay cooking. To this day, whenever I am feeling down about the state of academia or an impending deadline, I often glance at old written work from her courses, always looking for that positive comment, the beautifully penned purple ink radiating off the margins.

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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| AEMNA        | Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-Africains  
               Association of Muslim North African Students |
| CAL-UGET     | Comités d'action et de lutte-Union Générale des Étudiants de Tunisie  
               Committees of Action and Struggle- General Union of Tunisian Students |
| CGT          | Confédération Générale du Travail  
               General Confederation of Labor |
| CFDT         | Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail  
               French Democratic Confederation of Labor |
| CIE          | Conférence Internationale des Étudiants  
               International Student Conference |
| CISDHT       | Comité International pour le Sauvegarde des Droits de l'Homme en Tunisie  
               International Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Tunisia |
| CISL         | Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Libres  
               International Confederation of Free Trade Unions |
| CNTS         | Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs Sénégalais  
               National Confederation of Senegalese Workers |
| CRS          | Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité  
               Republican Security Companies |
| CSA          | Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes  
               African Trade Union Confederation |
| CST          | Confédération Sénégalaises des travailleurs  
               Confederation of Senegalese Workers |
| CTIDVR       | Comité Tunisien d’Information et de Défense des Victimes de la Répression  
               Tunisian Committee of Information and Defense of the Victims of Repression |
| CUP          | Comités universitaires provisoires  
               Provisional University Committees |
| FEANF        | Fédération des Étudiants de l’Afrique Noire en France  
               Federation of Students of Black Africa in France |
| FER          | Fédération des Étudiants Révolutionnaire  
               Federation of Revolutionary Students |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FF-FLN</td>
<td>Fédération de France du Front de Libération Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Federation of France of the National Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de Libération Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>Fédération Syndicale Mondiale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World Federation of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUA</td>
<td>Front Universitaire Anti-fasciste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anti-fascist University Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GILT</td>
<td>Groupe d'Information pour les Luttes en Tunisie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Information Group for Struggles in Tunisia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUPS</td>
<td>General Union of Palestinian Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCR</td>
<td>Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revolutionary Communist Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTDH</td>
<td>Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tunisian League for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDS</td>
<td>Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Socialist Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEOCAM</td>
<td>Mouvement des Etudiants de l'Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Movement of the African and Malagasy Common Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTA</td>
<td>Mouvement des Travaillers Arabes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arab Workers' Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUP</td>
<td>Mouvement d'Unité Populaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Popular Unity Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Atlantic Free Trade Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organisation de l'Armée Secrète</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secret Army Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUA</td>
<td>Organisation de l’Unité Africaine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAI</td>
<td>Parti Africain de l’Indépendance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African Independence Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>Parti du Regroupement Africain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSU</td>
<td>Parti Socialiste Unifié</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Syndicat des Enseignants Sénégalais</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUEL</td>
<td>Syndicat Unique de l’Enseignement Laïc du Sénégal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UED</td>
<td>Union des Étudiants de Dakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDES</td>
<td>Union Démocratique des Étudiants Sénégalais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGET</td>
<td>Union Générale des Étudiants de Tunisie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIE</td>
<td>Union Internationale des Étudiants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPS</td>
<td>Union Progressiste Sénégalaise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UJCML</td>
<td>Union des Jeunesses Communistes Marxistes-Léninistes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTS</td>
<td>Union Nationale des Travailleurs Sénégalais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USPA</td>
<td>Union Syndicale Pan-Africaine</td>
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</table>

In the spring of 1968, Tunisian students occupied university buildings seeking the liberation of incarcerated militant Mohamed Ben Jennet; massive strikes in Paris spread in mai 68 and brought the French Republic to its knees; and students and workers in Dakar protested the continued French presence in education and industry. Although Tunis, Paris, and Dakar were separated by their specific local trajectories after the collapse of the French empire, as former axes of imperial France they remained connected in significant ways throughout “1968” and beyond. They were linked through the colonial imprints of French language, culture, and authority, and as newly independent nations, they faced similar growing pains of rapidly expanding government bureaucracies, national programs, and development projects. After independence in 1956, Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba’s pro-Western economic policies fractured a Tunisian population in search of a national identity. In Senegal, Senghor’s efforts at “African Socialism” presented postcolonial issues related to over-dependence on single-crop agriculture, originally established to serve colonial France, and the continued presence of French and Levantine foreigners in economic and educational sectors that nationalists grew to resent. France also felt the effects of postcolonial social change as an industrial center that was, by the 1960s, heavily dependent on the labor of immigrants recruited from its former colonies. By 1968, the hangover following celebrations of liberation from France had set in, and certain segments of society called into question the direction of independent governments in the fragmented French empire. As Tunisia and Senegal transformed nationalist independence
movements into autocratic single-party states, Paris became the center from which oppositional organizations were launched, and intellectuals often returned to home institutions in the former colonies to participate in political activism.

Although the significance of the university as a site of protest in 1968 has been well established in metropolitan France, the links between social movements in France and its formal colonies has been largely ignored. By taking the former French empire as a unit of analysis and viewing the postcolonial university as an holdover of empire, this dissertation calls into question the degree of rupture after imperial collapse, and suggests that global protest highlights the enduring links between France and its former colonies at the end of formal empire. The post-1945 surge in intellectual migration brought increasing numbers of colonial subjects to the metropole for higher education. This created opportunities for transnational contact between students from across the empire, and provided colonial subjects with a blueprint for creating student organizations that carried over into the independence era. In the 1950s and 1960s, the French education system provided models for the subsequent creation and development of national education programs and student organizations in newly independent ex-colonies like Tunisia and Senegal. Rather than experiencing a clean break with the metropole in a postcolonial world, students from the ex-colonies maintained a strong presence in France and communicated across established networks with new universities back home. Certain ties between France and its former possessions—especially in terms of networks of resistance—actually strengthened after the collapse of the empire in response to authoritarian state repression of 1968 activism and made possible Third World protest in the metropole and vice versa. This intellectual migration from the colonies to the metropole—established during the colonial period—laid the foundations
for transnational networks of resistance that were activated in the protests that swept the globe in 1968.

This dissertation shines a light on 1968 university activism in Tunis, Paris, and Dakar while identifying transnational activist networks that shaped and influenced the nature of each individual movement. A new postcolonial nationalism emerged in which Tunisian and Senegalese activists articulated and deployed anti-imperialist claims that had once been designated for the French state and converted and redirected them toward their own newly independent state leaders. I also track the different trajectories of these social and political movements in the 1970s to show how 1968 impacted subsequent activism and how local contexts led to divergence after the confluence of 1968.¹ This work fits into an exciting new wave of scholarship on the “afterlives” of 1968 and its impact on 1970s immigrant activism in France.² In particular, it builds on and revises recent scholarship on the immigrant experience in France by employing transnational frameworks that look beyond the hexagon to better understand postcolonial France and its ex-colonies.

Global 1960s?: The Former French Empire as Unit of Analysis

The idea for this dissertation came out of a graduate seminar on the global 1960s at Northeastern University in 2009.³ Outside of stumbling upon "1968s" in Senegal and Tunisia about which I was previously unaware, out of the intense course readings emerged a few major questions: 1)

³ The seminar course, led by Timothy S. Brown, was entitled, "1968 in Global Perspective."
how can we study the transnational elements of the global 1960s in manageable and concrete ways without essentializing moments like 1968 in universal terms? and 2) what types of relationships linked different regions and movements? The answer to these questions rests in the development of an innovative method for investigating the global 1960s that is at once transnational—in order to uncover the global connections—and comparative, to take into account particularities of local contexts with varying student demographics, levels of state repression, and availability of resources and opportunities for youth. In trying to understand and define the impact and reach of the events of 1968—i.e. a veritable world revolution or a frivolous cultural adventure by bourgeois youth—historians have, at least since the 1980s, conceptualized 1968 in global terms.⁴ Yet for all of the attention historians have given to the global dimensions of 1968, there is still a void in scholarly research regarding the concrete linkages between political activists across geographic, economic, and ethnic divides. Existing scholarship on the global 1960s tends either to treat movements separately or reproduces Eurocentric narratives by focusing on the transatlantic industrialized world.⁵ And even if historians have reached a fragile consensus that 1968 was somehow “global,” the jury is still out on the extent of

interconnectivity, on its political and cultural significance, and even on who exactly were its perpetrators.\(^6\)

Here is where I believe that postcolonial studies can assist in understanding the global 1960s. Frederick Cooper’s *Colonialism in Question* made a splash in 2005 for its riveting critique of the practice of colonial history.\(^7\) This masterful exercise in historiographical inquiry interrogated a number of troublesome concepts, including the current “globalization fad,” or "quest for understanding the interconnectedness of different parts of the world," which could easily refer to efforts by scholars to globalize 1968.\(^8\) According to Cooper, colonial scholarship has assumed that the world is headed toward increased interconnectivity while sweeping under the rug the uneven development associated with global capitalism. While some historians claim that the “global” represents a powerful spirit of increasing interconnectedness, other scholars in subaltern studies focus almost exclusively on the enigmatic “fragments” or “margins” of history that Cooper finds missing in global narratives.\(^9\) I not only question whether the end of empire led to globalization or fragmentation but I also consider the limits of these two concepts.

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To test these limits for the globality, or at least the transnationality, of protests in 1968, I take the former French empire as a unit of analysis. Anthropologist Georges Balandier claimed as early as 1951 that understanding any “colonial situation” entails taking into account political and cultural activity in the metropole as well as in the colonies.10 In other words, colonialism is a system that transcends the territorial and cultural boundaries of any one colony. In empire studies, Gary Wilder has demonstrated how, during the colonial era, ideas and events taking place in both the metropole and French West Africa were mutually constitutive.11 Similar to Balandier, Wilder’s notion of an “imperial nation-state” describes Western nations and their overseas colonies as single entities across transnational spaces. In order to determine how systemic colonial influence was on regions across the former empire, I deploy these theoretical frameworks across France, West and North Africa in a “post-colonial situation” to compare varied regions of the former empire in terms of their experiences of colonial oppression, but also through ties such as language, culture, and education systems. This allows for the identification of connections between sites of 1968 activism within the former empire like Tunis, Paris, and Dakar that were specifically related through their colonial pasts. At the same time, it also reveals local differences among the movements and avoids making essential claims about the experiences of a global or universal 1968.

What Cooper has accomplished in upsetting a number of historical “givens” in the history of colonialism, such as "globalization," I build upon upon by applying them to postcolonial history, thus opening the door for similar critique of postcolonial studies. Outside of postcolonial history, thus opening the door for similar critique of postcolonial studies. Outside of

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10 Georges Balandier. “La Situation Coloniale: Approche Theorique,” Cahiers internationaux de sociologie, 11 (1951): 44-79. Balandier has recently stressed that globalization has led to a questioning of identity in which “we are all, in different forms in a post-colonial situation.” See Balandier’s preface in Marie-Claude Smouts (ed.), La situation postcoloniale (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2007), 24. Another more recent example of this approach can be seen in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

the field of the global 1960s, scholars of postcolonial studies issued calls to "provincialize Europe." I respond to these calls for the global 1960s, for which Western referents dominate historical discourse, by placing France's mai 68 in a global context with other related "1968s" in the former empire and challenging its culturally and historiographically dominant position. By examining three critical sites of political action during the tumultuous period of nation-building after the collapse of the French empire, I seek to remove the universal character of the Western experience of 1968—using France's mai 68 as an example—that has become in many cases a stand-in for the "global 1968." Indeed, Dipesh Chakrabarty claimed that "to provincialize Europe was then to know how universalistic thought was always and already modified by particular histories, whether or not we could excavate those pasts fully." If Western movements like mai 68 drew upon the images and ideas of Che Guevara and Mao Zedong, these were equally powerful in Senegal and Tunisia as they were in France. Incorporating mai 68 alongside other related 1968s in the francophone world, I reveal it as one discreet set of experiences that was linked to, but did not dictate, the experiences of other related 1968s. At the same time, I place third-world activists' stories at the center and explore their versions of 1968 against the more visible narratives that emerged out of state-controlled archive centers and media monopolies. Looking at these 1968s together brings us closer to understanding just what was so global about 1968, what 1968 meant to different global actors/activists, and how each movement changed in the following decade.


This project draws upon the rich field of postcolonial studies, while at the same time calling into question some of its foundational concepts. Even before Edward Said’s groundbreaking work on Orientalism sparked interest in postcolonial questions in 1978, postcolonial thinkers from across the globe drew upon a rich lineage of resistance literature dating well before Said’s time. By the 1930s, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Rabindranath Tagore were articulating long-standing battles against European normativity by celebrating indigenous cultures in their poetry. In the post-World War Two era, before the field of postcolonial studies had taken shape, Martinican maestros of postcolonial theory such as Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon were heralded for their ability to envision a francophone world beyond the controls of French empire, or a postcolonial world. Following its genesis in literary criticism, postcolonial studies has since exploded into other disciplines and even become institutionalized in its own right as a legitimate, stand-alone field. The field continues to reinvent itself and has been rejuvenated with its introduction into more interdisciplinary fields like history, while forcing a certain self-consciousness upon anthropologists following Said’s attack on the discipline.

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17 Most notably at NYU, Emory, and UCLA, though these are often attached to English departments.
18 Historian Dipesh Chakrabarty applies postcolonial theory to history, and has been cited no less than 2700 times since *Provincializing Europe* appeared in 2000 at the time this chapter was drafted. Herbert Lewis has pointed to the conundrum faced by anthropologists who, more so than scholars from other disciplines, have had to answer Said’s charges of Orientalism and Otherizing. See Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Herbert Lewis, “The Influence of Edward
Ever evolving, postcolonial theory has passed through a series of stages that can be broadly defined as: 1) an indigenous reaction to Eurocentric elitism; 2) a deconstruction of nationalistic elitism by way of a subaltern turn; and 3) a focus on the ills of cultural imperialism and the multiple identities it creates. The first phase could be characterized as exchanging “great white man history” with “great dark man history,” as evidenced in Cheikh Anta Diop’s focus on the grandeur of Egyptian civilization and C.L.R. James’ heroization of the great Haitian revolutionary, Toussaint L'Ouverture.\(^{19}\) In the second phase, Fanon’s critique of heroic narratives of the past led him to transfer focus away from great men and great civilizations, and to re-orient attention toward the revolutionary potential of the wretched of the earth, or the subaltern, that no longer focused merely on men.\(^{20}\) The next great shift occurred following Said’s intervention, which led to a literary turn and a focus on diffusionist discourses surrounding plural modernities and multiple subjectivities within new nations—including gendered ones—making space for women who could equally constitute the earth’s wretched, or capture its revolutionary potential.\(^{21}\)

Through each of its phases, postcolonial studies has also faced intense scrutiny. There is no shortage of critiques of Homi Bhabha for his abstraction and preference for obtuse language,
which continue into the present. In the anglophone world, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin had already responded to similar criticism on behalf of the discipline as early as 1989. What raises eyebrows is that it has had a significantly delayed and even hypercritical reception in francophone scholarship. Africanist and French scholar Jean-François Bayart has very recently labeled the entire field “a great academic carnival.” This begs the question: why has the field of postcolonial studies arrived so late in the hexagon? This delayed response from French scholars is particularly ironic in that many of the roots of postcolonial studies can be found in the very nation that, up until recently, spurned the discipline. Indeed, pre-eminent postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak made a name for herself translating Derrida—whose ideas on dissemination and "supplements" were instrumental to Homi Bhabha's critique of the "nation," and discursive representations of minorities within it—while postcolonial studies has drawn heavily on francophone thinkers like Césaire, Fanon and Albert Memmi, as well as other French post-structuralists like Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.

According to Bhabha, simply supplementing a dominant nationalist discourse with other minority narratives is not sufficient since it highlights their subordinate position. Drawing on Derrida, he states: "[c]oming ‘after’ the original, or in ‘addition to’ it, gives the supplementary

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22 For a powerful early critique of Bhabha, and postcolonial studies more broadly, see Aijaz Ahmad, In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures (London: Verso, 1994), especially 68-70.
24 Jean-François Bayart, Les études postcoloniales: Un carnaval académique (Paris: Karthala, 2010), 67. More recently, an entire special issue on “Racial France” has been devoted to the latent reception of Postcolonial Studies in France in Public Culture 23:1 (Winter 2011) with contributions from Bayart, Achille Mbembe and Ann Laura Stoler.
question the advantage of introducing a sense of ‘secondariness’ or belatedness into the structure of the original demand.” In the case of a global view of 1968, I attempt to undermine any potential "secondariness" to Tunisian and Senegalese 1968s by giving them equal treatment to France's mai 68. By starting my transnational history in Tunis in March 1968, during which Paris also played a central role in activism, this transnational activism does not come "after" an original, or French, mai 68; rather, Tunis and Paris were part and parcel of a global moment of contestation.

Postcolonial studies' belated arrival in the French scholarship has not made the task of incorporating France's mai 68 into a larger global narrative an easy one. Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak” was not translated into French until 2009 and France’s intellectual relationship with its former colonies has remained somewhat asymmetrical. For example—even though France welcomes thousands of students from the ex-colonies—while the majority of the History Department at Senegal’s Cheikh Anta Diop University received PhDs from French institutions, out of 237 Africanists working in France surveyed in a 1992 study, only one of these researchers was actually African. The famous Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe, who studied at France’s finest universities, has claimed that because of France’s “cultural insularity and a narcissism of its elite, France has cut itself off from new adventures in global thought,” and he has recently borrowed from Dipesh Chakrabarty to undermine the presumed universality of French cultural and colonial domination by “provincializing France.”

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27 Bhabha, op. cit., 222.
In a similar vein, Sandrine Bertraux has asserted that “[e]ven before having fully landed on French soil, the term *postcolonial* is anathema to France: it is associated with a diminished space of discussion, and the debate over its usage has nationalistic undertones.”\(^\text{30}\) This type of thinking can explain how postcolonial theory at once originated in, and was neglected by, French scholars, and the lag may best be attributed to the only recent serious efforts on the part of the French to confront their own colonial past in the last 15 or 20 years. For example, only in 1997 was there any public acknowledgement of the mass killings of Algerians demonstrating against racist curfews on 17 October 1961 at the height of the Algerian War, which was subsequently covered up by Paris police. Even then, the details of the 1961 crimes were only revealed as part of the trial of the Paris police chief, Maurice Papon, for crimes against humanity committed during World War Two.\(^\text{31}\)

What conclusions can be drawn from this lag in French interest in postcolonial studies? In spite of its rather aloof reception in French institutions—especially as it was taking off in the anglophone world—many French scholars have begun to incorporate postcolonial perspectives into their analyses. Indeed the editors of the 2005 *La fracture coloniale*, note that “to consider the postcolony ... is to accept that, in order to understand 21st-century France and its crises, it is absolutely imperative to take into account its colonial heritage both lucidly and objectively.”\(^\text{32}\) Others have also considered a number of postcolonial questions when trying to understand contemporary France.\(^\text{33}\) Yet for the most part these approaches remain Francocentric in scope in


that they do not include historical events outside of France’s borders. As a result, many scholars cite the urban riots of 2005 in the Parisian immigrant banlieue of Clichy-sous-Bois to justify the incorporation of postcolonial studies in contemporary France, yet the context beyond France’s immigrant question, or beyond France’s borders, remains largely absent.\textsuperscript{34} Can we really reduce the links between the present and the past on the chronotopic identification of a contemporary event occurring in urban banlieues? While French scholarship is heading toward an integration of postcolonial studies in historical analyses, it is still in its nascent stages, with ample room to expand spatially and theoretically outward.

It is one thing to acknowledge that contemporary France is influenced by its “colonial heritage,” yet to take it one step further would mean also taking into account life in the ex-colonies themselves, and to study them alongside postcolonial, metropolitan France. This is not to suggest that there is a shortage of Africanists in France; rather, the point is that studies of the postcolonial francophone world have often been segregated by antiquated regional thinking, currently institutionalized in French academia. This regional separation of immigrant communities and of former colonies was mirrored in French colonial administration and continues to be mirrored today in French archival institutions. In fact, diplomatic archives in France currently still separate sub-Saharan and North Africa; documents on postcolonial Senegal are located in the Affaires africaines et malgaches while those for Tunisia are found in Afrique-Levant. Of course, classification systems are a necessity in archives and not all documents can be filed into one single dossier. But systems created in the colonial period and adjusted in the

\textsuperscript{34} See, for example, Romain Bertrand, \textit{Mémoires d’Empire: la controverse autour du fait colonial}, (Bellecombe-en-Baufes: Éditions du croquant, 2006); Interview with Achille Mbembe, \textit{op. cit.}, 2006; Azouz Begag, \textit{Ethnicity and Equality: France in the Balance}, trans. by Alec G. Hargreaves (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007) and Jean-François Bayart, \textit{op. cit.}, 2010. For a notable exception that includes questions extending beyond metropolitan France, see Anne Berger and Eleni Varikas, eds., \textit{Situations postcoloniales et régimes de sexe} (Paris: Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2011), which came out of a conference of the same title held at l’Université Paris 8 in May 2008.
postcolonial period have had a resounding impact on the ways various regions of the former
French empire are viewed today, and France’s immigrant communities are often studied in
isolation from their homelands. If scholars are genuinely interested in questions related to both
postcoloniality and transnationality, and if it is important to study France’s colonial past to grasp
its postcolonial present, it should be equally important to study its ex-colonies, and not just the
communities that have landed within its borders. After the collapse of empire, French
immigration policies certainly had impacts on the former colonies to which they were directed,
and national economic polices and global market forces dictated migration flows to and from
France. Emigrant communities of intellectuals, laborers, and activists located in France also
played large roles in social life, as well as in social and political movements in their homelands.

It is thus my contention that postcolonial studies and migration converged in the global 1960s,
and that one useful approach for scholars of these fields is to eliminate regional separation by
studying activity in both France and its former colonies.

**Empiricizing Postcolonial Studies: The University as Imperial Fragment**

Despite the fact that postcolonial studies have had a relatively weak impact in France, such
analyses may be usefully applied to the study of the global social movements of the 1960s. For
all of Bayart’s misinterpretations of postcolonial studies, there is some validity in his criticism of
its tendency to remain in the abstract. In addition to pushing for a postcolonial approach that
unites First and Third World histories, the following study seeks to add some empirical weight to
the most recent, rather abstract phase of postcolonial studies. As early as 1993, Anne

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35 Ironically, this could be viewed as a return to the empiricism that David Ludden described regarding the
orientalism of the early 20th century. See David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial
Knowledge," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, edited by Carol
McClintock began interrogating postcolonialism after its explosion in cultural studies and literary criticism. She argued that the terms were in such ubiquitous use in scholarship as to render them almost meaningless, prompting her charge that “postcolonialism” had lost conceptual substance through its totalizing application as a singular term. She cites “the post-colonial condition,” "the post-colonial intellectual," and "the post-colonial Other” to argue for “a rethinking of the global situation as a multiplicity of powers and histories, which cannot be marshalled obediently under the flag of a single theoretical term...Rather, a proliferation of historically nuanced theories and strategies is called for..."\(^{36}\) Here McClintock questions any singular or universal experience that "postcolonial" might be used to describe, and calls for more specific and nuanced definitions of postcolonial that could describe multiple experiences. A WorldCat search for peer-reviewed articles and monographs with "postcolonial" or "postcolonialism" in the title yielded telling results. The 1970s only produced 37 such titles; in the 1980s the number climbed to 83; and by the 1990s, it skyrocketed to 2350, when McClintock was reflecting on the concepts (see Figure 1). As this trend has continued into the 2000s and 2010s, with postcolonial studies proliferating into new disciplines, much of its theoretical import and utility have become diffuse. Likewise, as postcolonial studies continues to grow in influence in French scholarship, it is worthwhile to revisit the multiple uses McClintock identified 20 years ago.

Postcolonialism has very recently been described as localizable “everywhere and all the time,” and even the godfather of Third Worldism in academia, Georges Balandier, recently stated

that “we are all, in one form or another, in a postcolonial situation.”

But if the postcolonialism is around us everywhere, what conceptual purpose does it serve us, either as global citizens or as scholars? It is clear that attempts like Nicholas Bancel's and others to mobilize colonial history in order to apprehend the French present was a necessary historiographical step. Yet these efforts have uncovered lacunae in the scholarship and led to new constructivist pathways. Along with subaltern studies, these tend to focus on and locate what is lacking, absent, or marginal in national histories; or, in other words, negation. The latent reception of postcolonial theory in

Figure 1: Lists the number of peer-reviewed articles and monographs featuring either "postcolonial" or "postcolonialism" in the title by decade since the 1970s, according to the WorldCat database. The number of publications per annum from 2010-2013 was used to estimate the total number of publications for the 2010s based on the current rate of publication.

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37 Urban Studies expert Jennifer Robinson made the former claim when presenting her research at a seminar in African Studies at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon on November 9, 2009. Much of the contents of the presentation can be found in her subsequent article “Cities in a World of Cities: The Comparative Gesture,”  *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 35, no.1 (January 2011), 1-23. In spite of our differences regarding postcolonialism, Robinson’s efforts to compare urban spaces that “stretch across the global North-South divide” should be commended. See also Balandier’s preface in Marie-Claude Smouts (ed.),  *La situation postcoloniale : Les Postcolonial Studies dans le débat français* (Paris : Presses de Sciences Po, 2007), 24.
French Studies provides an opportunity for scholars to benefit from a rich terrain of research and to build on the work of anglophone scholars. The interdisciplinarity of early-twentieth-century Orientalists provoked an equally interdisciplinary critique to which Said opened our eyes in 1978. He warned against the exoticization and cultural imperialism that accompanied Orientalist studies. However, one could argue that we have passed directly from the "will to knowledge" of the Orient, described by Said, to a "will to knowledge of the Third World," that we might qualify today as postcolonial studies. If we approach this proliferation of new knowledge about the postcolonial world with caution, we may be able to avoid some of the essentialisms of non-Western worlds, lamented so articulately by Said, as well as the essentialisms of universal applications of "postcolonial," as later demonstrated by McClintock in her critique of postcolonial studies in literary fields.

Arif Dirlik illustrates how “postcolonial studies” could carry more weight as a conceptual tool that goes far beyond the history of the former colonies “after” independence, and is something more akin to “produced by” colonialism. Cooper and Dirlik clearly represent a drive away from the literary preoccupations of Said, Spivak, and Bhabha. They seem to suggest more of a (re)turn to the socio-political, and a re-examination of the continued importance of colonial history that some wish to erase away with the story of globalization after imperial collapse. Yet they share in common with earlier iterations of postcolonial studies a self-consciousness and critical capacity to challenge dominant narratives, or what lies at the heart of postcolonial studies. In this regard, postcolonial studies should be viewed more as an operational mode of thinking. It can remain useful if we sharpen our gaze to bring into focus particular postcolonial situations, or spaces, that reflect colonial heritage in both the metropole and the former colonies.

I locate these postcolonial situations in the fragments, or remains, of the empire as they appeared in both France and its former overseas territories. I take into account, not just France’s colonial heritage, but the colonial heritage of former colonies—in this case in Tunisia and Senegal—to show how this shaped each nation’s education system, in particular the university. This is an effort to concretely trace links between the colonial pasts and postcolonial presents of these regions, as well as an attempt to trace the movement of people, ideas, and texts between these interrelated regions in the context of global protest.

I argue that the term postcolonial gains theoretical and methodological value in historical analysis when considered as operational in that refers to aspects of dynamic, decolonizing societies that are still in many ways informed by colonial pasts, rather than a broad definition based on a periodization after independence from colonial rule. While newly independent nations clearly experienced a rupture of sorts from the French empire, there were identifiable holdovers from the colonial period, even if colonial empire ceased to exist. This relationship can be seen in the cultural, political, and economic institutions and organizations in postcolonial nations. I call these “imperial fragments,” as they refer to remnants of the expired French empire. With this in mind, I demonstrate how the universities acted as imperial fragments of postcolonial Tunisia, Senegal, and even France, where debates took place in the 1960s between activist youth and the state over modernization strategies and the direction of the nation. The university—designated in Senegal and Tunisia to train the next generations to carry out industrializing projects and to lead the independence era—took on an extremely important role as governments in developing nations implemented ambitious modernization schemes across all sectors of society. For not only were universities in Tunisia and Senegal inspired in many ways by the French model, so too
were student unions and activist organizations that were created in Paris during the colonial era and came home to roost after the collapse of the empire.

Ann Laura Stoler has recently evoked "imperial debris" to describe the processual relationship between imperial formations, constructed during the colonial period, and the imperial ruins they leave behind. She argues that "[r]ubrics such as 'colonial legacy'... fail to capture the evasive space of imperial formations past and present as well as the perceptions and practices by which people are forced to reckon with features of those formations in which they remain vividly and imperceptibly bound." I take this as a call to locate specific and dynamic postcolonial relationships rather than assume their fixed existence, which I accomplish by uncovering concrete links between transnational activists connected through the imperial formation of the university. Yet I choose "fragments" over her preferred "debris" or "ruins" that she uses in a degenerative, rather than empowering sense. Stoler focuses on ruin "as an active process, and a vibrantly violent term" to ask the demoralizing question: "How do imperial formations persist in their material debris, in ruined landscapes and through the social ruination of people's lives?" Though the university in my case studies seems to fit with her concept of "imperial formation," I find it to hold empowering characteristics for formerly colonial societies. Though it wielded the potential to act as a tool for emerging state's domination and nation-building projects, in actuality it was also a center for regime criticism and the site of resistance discourse formation. As such, the formation of the university in Tunisia and Senegal did not represent simply "processes of ongoing ruination;" rather, as an imperial fragment the university campus provided the building blocks for a new society, and became a postcolonial battleground where states and educated youth debated notions of modernity, national identity, and democracy.

40 Stoler, "Imperial Debris," 194.
The university can thus be viewed as an imperial holdover, or fragment, that continued to
link former colonies to the metropole even after imperial collapse and, in some cases, fractured
1960s societies. Imperial fragments like the university and national student organizations
produced postcolonial formations like the webs of transnational activism that emerged in 1968.
Just as the university became a site from which anti-imperialist articulations emanated prior to
independence, it was also a site of conflict between leaders in newly independent states and the
educated youth over the future of the nation. By 1960, the population under 25 in both Tunisia
and Senegal made up approximately 60% of the total population, compared to approximately
30% for France. Concerned about shifting demographics, governments in Tunisia and Senegal
carried out large-scale education projects to accommodate rising numbers of youth in the
national populations, and also consolidated power into single, nationalist parties and student and
labor unions. Mamadou Fall has pointed out that for Senegal, “…each time the opposition is
muzzled and forced underground, the university becomes the natural site of expression for
political currents.” Indeed, the former colonizer/colonized antagonisms from the days of
struggle for independence were replaced, in the 1960s, by stark divisions between a disenchanted
youth and the postcolonial state over the theory and practice of modernization projects, of which
the university system was part and parcel.

The “fragment” as a theoretical concept in postcolonial studies has been especially
important for the Indian subcontinent, where postcolonial scholars have employed the term to

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41 Statistics gathered from the United Nations Statistics Division, available online at
42 Mamadou Fall, op. cit., 504-505.
deconstruct dominant narratives of Indian national unity, often regarding violence associated with partition in 1947 and 1971. According to Gyanendra Pandey,

The fragments of Indian society—the smaller religious, caste, and tribal communities, industrial workers, unemployed slum dwellers, and activist women’s groups, all of which might be said to represent minority cultures and practices—have been expected to fall in line with the mainstream, which represents but a small section of the society, has been flaunted as the national culture. ‘Unity in Diversity’ is no longer the rallying cry of Indian nationalism. On the contrary, all that belongs to any minority other than the ruling class, all that is challenging, singular, or local—not to say all difference—appears threatening, intrusive, even foreign to this nationalism.

Writings on Indian politics need to foreground this state-centered drive to homogenize and normalize, and the deeply contested nature of the territory of nationalism. Part of the importance of the fragmentary point of view lies in this: that it resists the drive for a shallow homogenization and struggles for other, potentially richer definitions of the nation and the future political community...I would like to suggest, in opposition to this established procedure, that for all their apparent solidity and comprehensiveness, what the official sources give us is still (in a Gramscian sense) but a fragment of history.

Pandey suggests that a minority group in power, the Hindu Indian bourgeoisie, has usurped national identity while elevating the idea of the nation-state. One could apply a similar notion to the nationalist narratives emanating from Tunisian, French, and Senegalese states in the 1960s. Bourguiba frequently made reference to the importance of national solidarity when arguing for a united single-party state that brought about independence in 1956, and would best carry out future nation-building projects. Senghor likewise condemned the African Independence Party (Parti Africain de l’Indépendance, PAI) in 1960 on the eve of Senegalese independence to secure unchallenged power within his Senegalese Progressive Union (Union Progressiste Sénégalaise, UPS). And though France experienced a greater degree of political pluralism in this period,

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44 Pandey, op. cit., 18, 42.
Charles de Gaulle had just concentrated executive power with the constitution of the Fifth Republic in 1958 in response to the Algerian War. Following Pandey’s logic, intellectuals and activists circulating within the former French empire can thus represent fragmentary voices countering state power.

The university was in many ways a microcosm of the tensions between nationalism and independence, on the one hand, and persistent colonial and neo-imperial ties on the other. Thus, by 1968, the revolutionary moment and climax of most studies of the global 1960s, the university had become the mouthpiece for many societal claims against state power in my three case studies. Yet if the first French studies of postcolonial situations focused on the national context, studies on mai 68 in Paris have hardly considered this movement alongside others in the ex-colonies. The present study of the global 1968 considers transnational elements of the movement, and uses the former French empire as a unit of analysis. From this expanded perspective, mai 68 in France can better be understood when studied alongside May ’68 in Dakar and March ’68 in Tunis. If including France’s colonial heritage can help us to better understand its metropolitan history, it is clear that incorporating ex-colonies into analyses would only further broaden perspectives on francophone colonial and postcolonial history. French colonialism produced certain “fragments” that collectively made up the empire. Here, I focus on specific fragments of colonial heritage that had particular influence on global protest. The French university, developed in the metropole and exported to the colonial centers of power like Tunis and Dakar to meet the needs of the empire, became an important and enduring remnant of the colonial system after independence. The university was at once a product and a producer of modernity. It was a national symbol of progress and a source of pride for developing nations. It

would train the nation’s doctors, engineers, teachers, and politicians. Thus both the state and the youth of the nation had a great stake in the university and its meaning for the nation’s future.

In addition to activist student youth as dissident voices outside of state-centered nationalist narratives, I argue for another use of the term “fragment.” I employ the fragment refer to non-state archival material, which Pandey rightly points out has dominated historical inquiry.

The official archive (government records, the papers of leading political parties and other institutions recognized by the state, the private papers of leading individuals, and for an earlier period, the records of various courts) remains the primary source for this historical reconstructions...By attributing a natural quality to the particular unity called India, and adopting its official archive as the primary source of historical knowledge pertaining to it, the historian has adopted the view of the established state...

I present the fragment here not as another piece, or even another kind, of evidence. I propose it, instead, as the suggestion of another subject position arising from a certain experience (and understanding) of sectarian strife, one that may say something about the parameters of our own subject positions and understandings.46

As will be evidenced in chapters devoted specifically to events in 1968 in each location, I analyze resistance pamphlets and underground media from intellectual groups that provided alternative truths to information flowing from state-controlled radio and newspapers. This expansion of the archive presents yet another fragment to be considered alongside the state. Finally, by considering Paris as just one of three important, if asymmetrical, university sites within the former empire, I write against the reification of a mai 68 that is exclusively the property of French history, and I contribute to “provincializing France” in the Chakrabartyan sense in that the mai 68 of Paris was but one protest movement among many in the global francophone 1968, and the global 1968 was not “first in Europe and then elsewhere.”47

The dissertation is divided into two major parts: the first on 1968 in each location and the second on the trajectory of each movement in the 1970s. Chapter one provides background for

46 Pandey, op. cit., 19, 39.
47 Chakravarty, op. cit., 7.
parts one and two by tracing the colonial heritage of intellectual migration to the metropole and the influence of French colonial education programs on Tunisian and Senegalese national ones. The chapter tells the story of intellectual migration from the colonies to France, which was important during the interwar period and witnessed a post-1945 surge. Intellectual migration was multi-directional—bringing large numbers of non-Senegalese African and French students to the University of Dakar as well as West and North African students to Paris—and resulted in the circulation of francophone intellectuals from a wide array of nationalities throughout the former French empire. This movement established lasting networks of intellectuals who created student organizations—often modeled on the French national student union—to articulate concerns related to material needs of foreign students and, eventually, claims for national independence. These networks persisted into the independence era in which students redirected their anti-colonial claims against the French colonial oppressor toward their newly independent governments.

Chapters two, three, and four (part one) analyze specific events in 1968 in Tunis, Paris, and Dakar, respectively. Chapter two identifies transnational networks of resistance that emerged during protests at the University of Tunis in March 1968. The protests erupted in response to the sentencing of a student leader to 20 years of forced labor for his role in demonstrating against the Six-Day War in June 1967, and elicited even stronger state responses and equally heavy sentences for many of the March 1968 participants. Tunisian students and other sympathizers in Paris played a crucial role in advocating for democratic rights on campus and in garnering French public support to pressure the Tunisian government to release imprisoned protestors. Over the course of the movement, protestors' goals shifted from a focus on international anti-imperialism in June 1967 to calls for human rights and democratic freedoms at the national level.
Chapter three addresses France's mai 68, with particular attention to the role of immigrants from France's ex-colonies. It argues that this understudied aspect of mai 68 demonstrates that postcolonial relationships were an integral element of mai 68, from the lingering and painful memory of the Algerian War to the fetishization of foreign workers by the French radical left as a potential revolutionary class it hoped to lead. Chapter four uncovers Senegalese student activism at the University of Dakar in May-June 1968 that sparked a broader workers' movement and achieved significant gains for the latter. In addition to linking Dakar's 1968 to the movements in Tunisia and France, it details important transnational connections with European sites of third-world activism like Paris and even Frankfurt, where Senegalese President Leopold Sédar Senghor's suppression of students resulted in protests by international activists located in Europe.

Chapters five, six, and seven (part two) trace the trajectory of each movement in the following decade. This section highlights a number of comparative elements related to these movements and attempts to explain why collaborations between student and worker activists varied depending on the region. Chapter five analyzes why in some cases, like Tunisia, workers did not support student opposition to the government in 1968, yet collaborated willingly during their own strikes in January 1978. Chapter six explains the idolization of the immigrant labor class by the French radical left and gives some specific cases of successful collaboration in the 1970s. It argues that the transnational activism of 1968 spawned the creation of the first autonomous immigrant labor organizations and, ultimately, sparked the first sustained immigrant worker movement in 1970s France. In chapter seven, I revisit the University of Dakar to show that it remained a contentious site well after 1968, and reveal it as critically important for the eventual democratization of the Senegalese political system in the mid-1970s. In Senegal, this
period marked the end of the single-party state and the gradual opening of the political system that remains one of the most democratic African nations today. I also demonstrate how Paris remained an important center of activism for 1970s movements in Tunisia and Senegal from which activists published counter-narratives and informed international communities of their causes, or articulations of what I term "postcolonial nationalism."
Chapter 1: Colonialism, Intellectual Migration, and the New African University

Colonial Context and Paths to Independence

Though French presence in Senegal dates to at least the 17th century, when Gorée Island acted as an important hub in the French slave trade, it was not until 1895 that the French established the Government General of French West Africa (AOF). From 1895 to 1956, the Government General oversaw an area nine times the size of France, consisting of present-day Mauritania, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Benin.48 Saint-Louis was named the seat of the colonial government in the AOF until 1902, when the governmental outpost was transferred to Dakar. Senegal had long held a special place in the French colonial hierarchy, with the four communes of Senegal acting as the only regions of the AOF in which French citizenship was possible. Native residents were considered colonial subjects in all other regions of the AOF. Yet in Senegal, originaires from one of the four communes were nominal citizens, and allowed to elect their own deputies in the French National Assembly, paving the way for the first Black deputy from Senegal, Blaise Diagne, in 1914. Gary Wilder has highlighted the complexities of this nominal citizenship, noting that different legal categories and differentiated citizenship existed based on ethno-racial lines, and even divided single African social groups from the same families or ethnic origins.49 This privileged citizenship in Senegal was measured, however, though Blaise Diagne obtained recognition of originaires and their descendants with 1916 legislation, and led massive efforts to successfully recruit some 60,000 tirailleurs sénégalais into the colonial army to fight in the Great War.50

Additional rights were extended to African colonies again at the conference of Brazzaville in 1944 when the "imperial civil war" between de Gaulle's Free French and Maréchal Pétain's Vichy led de Gaulle to curry favor with leading African politicians to defeat the Nazis and regain France's territories. In a legislative effort to avoid the spread of conflict beyond the borders of Algeria during the Algerian War (1954-1962), 1956 marked the passing of the loi-cadre in French West Africa (AOF). This initiative set the stage for increased demands for local autonomy in the AOF by enabling indigenous leaders to exercise administrative authority while granting voting rights to colonial subjects. By 1958, as the French military was entrenched in a costly and bloody conflict in Algeria with no clear end in sight, it became clear that France did not have the resources to maintain control over its colonies in Africa. When Charles de Gaulle returned to power in 1958 to solve the “Algerian Question” in a sweeping referendum, he brought with him the new Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which increased executive power and established the French Community, a federation of African member states.

Only after the creation of the 1958 French Community was citizenship extended to subjects originating in the AOF outside of the four communes of Senegal, save for a few rare exceptions. This marked France’s acknowledgement of eventual independence in “Black Africa” and laid out favorable trade agreements and aid packages with individual member states known as “cooperation.” Under the leadership of Sékou Touré, French Guinea was the only member to refuse to enter the French Community, foregoing development aid in favor of immediate independence. The aid offering to the remainder of the AOF proved insufficient to satisfy the


growing desire for complete national independence and, by 1959, Senegal and Mali followed the lead of French Guinea by forming the Mali Federation, and became separate independent states in August 1960.

Like the AOF, Tunisia was part of France's "second overseas empire" as it expanded in the 19th century after territorial losses in North America and the Caribbean. France established a foothold in North Africa beginning in the 1830s, and gradually incorporated Algeria as a French colony, and later in 1848 it was administered as part of France itself. The French presence penetrated into neighboring regions in Morocco and Tunisia, where the French established protectorates in the 1880s. Tunisia's port cities were already home to significant European populations hailing mainly from Italy, Malta, and France. Prior to falling under French control, Tunisia existed as a province within the Ottoman Empire. The province was administered by a bey, or provincial monarch, who exercised relative autonomy under the Ottomans in exchange for regular tax payments and the promise to conscript armies on behalf of the empire. With France's annexation of Algeria, throughout much of the 19th century beys Ahmad and Muhammad of the Hussaynid dynasty were torn between Ottoman and French influence.

Over the course of the 19th century, modernization programs had severely indebted the Tunisian bey to European powers, including France. Finally in 1881, French forces took advantage of a border skirmish involving Tunisian and Algerian tribes to invade Tunisia, effectively taking power in Tunisia with the signing of the Treaty of Bardo, which made Tunisia

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54 See Fatma Ben Slimane, "Entre deux empires: l'élaboration de la nationalité tunisienne," in *De la colonie à l'État-nation: constructions identitaires au Maghreb*, edited by Pierre-Noël Denieuil et al. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013), 107-117. Similar to France's efforts to maintain imperial control after World War Two with the *loi-cadre* of 1956, the Ottoman empire granted civil liberties to various ethnic groups in the Balkans and North Africa in 1839 with the *Tanzimat* reforms.
a protectorate of France. This placed Tunisia under the protection of France from military
invasion, and France guaranteed Tunisian debt to its European creditors. 55 From this point
forward, the French resident general assumed control over Tunisian finances and foreign affairs,
with the bey remaining as a figurehead. In spite of this distinction from a colony, as in the
Algerian case, Tunisia functioned in many ways as a colony. From the late 19th century, the
French colonial administration encouraged emigration of French settlers to Tunisia, and by the
evée of Tunisian independence, the French population had ballooned from 708 in 1881 to over
250,000 in 1956. 56 As an important Mediterranean port city, Tunis in particular was a strategic
center for the circulation of goods, people, and ideas. 57

Tunisians have exhibited nationalist tendencies and resistance to foreign occupation since
the Ottoman beylical period, and actively organized against French economic domination as
early as early as 1924, with the creation of the first indigenous labor union. 58 The organization
evolved into the General Confederation of Tunisian Workers (Confédération Générale des
Travailleurs Tunisiens [CGTT]) and was modeled after the French CGT. With the threat of
fascism in the interwar period, the Tunisian Communist Party was also born during this period,
consisting of a polyglot of Europeans and Tunisian Jews and Muslims. It borrowed its structure
and took orders from the French Communist Party. This placed the movement at odds with other
borneging Tunisian nationalist movements like future president Habib Bourguiba's Ne-

56 See Mustapha Kraïm, Nationalisme et syndicalisme en Tunisie, 1918-1929 (Tunis: Presses de l’imprimerie Union
Générale Tunisienne du Travail, 1976), 249; and Perkins, op. cit. 144. Kraïm suggests that the French population
skyrocketed in part due to naturalization laws passed in the 1920s specifically to increase the "French population"
vis-à-vis the Tunisian population. The French colonial administration began to recognize all non-Muslim residents
of Tunisia as French citizens. A 1921 decree granted French citizenship to "all individuals born in the Regency of
Tunis, for whom one parent justified with foreign title from a French tribunal of the Protectorate, is himself born in
the Regency." This granted French citizenship to a number of Italian, Maltese, and Tunisian Christians and Jews.
57 See Julia A. Clancy-Smith, Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800-1900
58 See Boubaker Letaif Azaiez, Tels syndicalistes, tels syndicats: ou les péripéties du mouvement syndical tunisien
(Tunis: Éditions Imprimerie Tunis-Carthage, 1980), 13; and Mustapha Kraïm, Nationalisme et syndicalisme en
Destourian Party (Party of the New Constitution) that would eventually lead the nation to independence. Through a consolidation of national organizations in the form of a political party, singular labor and student unions, Bourguiba was able to successfully lead Tunisia out of the protectorate period to national independence in 1956. While Algeria degenerated into conflict with the FLN's declaration of war against France in 1956, Tunisia and Morocco enjoyed independent status.

From Colonial Education to the Creation of the Third-World University

For centuries Tunisia has been a center of intellectual activity, with the heart of Islamic studies shifting from Kairouan to the Zaytuna mosque-university in Tunis in the 13th century and producing the famous Muslim historian, Ibn Khaldun. This remained limited to elites and, prior to the protectorate era, educational opportunities were limited primarily to kuttab, or Qu'ranic studies, the Bardo military academy and, after 1875, a more secular education was possible at the Sadiki College. In the early years of the protectorate, French Director of Public Instruction, Louis Macheul, began an aggressive assimilation program with the introduction of Franco-Arab elementary schools for Tunisians and Europeans, open to both Muslims and Jews, which included the study of Arabic. Some have argued that this push for inclusion of various ethnic and religious groups influenced the secularism present in Tunisia after independence. By the 1890s, with Macheul's increasing influence in curricula at the French Lycée Carnot (a converted Christian school) and at the Sadiki College, these proved useful recruiting tools for integrating

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educated Tunisians into colonial/protectorate government positions, many of whom had received portions of their education in France.⁶²

Habib Bourguiba was one such case, having graduated from the prestigious Sadiki College, the Lycée Carnot, and then studying law in Paris in the 1920s. Tunisian students played an integral role in articulating Tunisian nationalism, and in advocating for independence from colonial France. Bourguiba and a number of his future Tunisian government leaders cut their teeth in politics in an association of former students of Sadiki. In a 1937 speech to the Association des étudiants musulmans nord-africains (Association of Muslim North African Students [AEMNA]), Bourguiba pushed for a politicization of students sharing a similar "colonial situation."⁶³ Given the importance of the student movement for the Tunisian independence movement, Bourguiba viewed a strong national education program as crucial to Tunisia's vitality as an emerging independent nation. When he assumed the presidency in 1957, there were at least six types of primary schools and four types of secondary schools, including French, Franco-Arab, Sadikian (or Tunisian), Qu'ranic, and various all-girls' schools.⁶⁴ One of his first agenda items was to unify education under one national umbrella, and to convert the lone secular university in Tunisia, the Institut des Hautes Études de Tunis, founded in 1945 and dominated by the local French population, into the more populist University of Tunis in 1960.⁶⁵

In the AOF, William Ponty (Governor General from 1908-1915) pushed colonial education initiatives to stimulate French language and culture, and a colonial service training

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⁶² Kenneth Perkins, *op. cit.*, 64.
⁶⁵ See interview with Mohamed Sayah, in *Habib Bourguiba: La trace et l’héritage*, 611.
school was founded in 1903 and later set up on Gorée Island in his name. This training expanded to local elites in the 1920s with the implementation of reforms by AOF governor-general Jules Carde and education director Georges Hardy. These sought to decentralize urban education and offer courses in colonial history and African culture, which corresponded with shifts toward association and increased local autonomy, including customary law for non-French Africans. They were originally designed to help preserve France's colonial presence in the AOF but, with the proliferation of early education schools and new opportunities to study abroad—including at the École Coloniale in Paris—came increasing concerns about the quality of this preparatory education. In the late 1940s, Jean Capelle, French Director General of Education in the AOF, noted that, “[e]ver since the populations of the AOF received the right to send representatives to Parliament, like in France, it has become urgent that the school population that represents the elite benefit from an education modeled on the French system and that that these ranks be sanctioned by exams of the same quality and prestige as metropolitan exams.” French administrators and African elites alike have historically viewed education in the AOF, and in Senegal in particular, in comparison to the French system.

One of the primary concerns of African elites during the late colonial period and in the early postcolonial period was to achieve equivalencies for degrees earned so that these might be recognized in France and open pathways to higher education abroad. To ensure the quality of education in the AOF, the French government established the Institut des Hautes Études de Dakar and a Medical School in 1950, which were directly affiliated with the French

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universities. Like in Tunisia, the Institut des Hautes Études was transformed into the University of Dakar in 1957, on the eve of Senegalese independence, to provide higher education to surrounding nations as the first national university in francophone West Africa.

Presidents Habib Bourguiba and Léopold Sédar Senghor, both of whom received advanced degrees from the metropole, engaged in aggressive modernization plans in home universities. Bourguiba instituted radical changes in Tunisia’s education system, and Tunisia’s national budgetary spending for education climbed from twelve million dinars in 1962 to thirty million in 1968 (about one third of the annual budget). Senghor was not far behind, devoting over 20% of the 1967 national budget to education in Senegal, though still dependent on French subsidies, which covered as much as 70% of the costs of running the University of Dakar. More so than its Western counterparts in the United States, Great Britain, or Germany, France supported African foreign students at the university level, in large part due to the relative ease of transition for francophone Africans. Still receiving heavy subsidies from France, Senghor welcomed the establishment of a "Mixed Commission," comprised of both French and Senegalese officials, to offer consulting on Senegalese national education programs and make final decisions regarding university budgets and curricular changes.

Senegalese Education Minister Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow's proposals to "Africanize" curricula and teaching corps were balanced with concerns about maintaining French funding levels and degree equivalencies. Driss

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Abbassi has noted the struggle of education ministers in Tunisia to create, or even invent, a national identity through elementary history manuals. With Bourguiba's sociocultural project to establish "the idea of a Tunisian bridge between the two shores of the Mediterranean and between cultures," included a strong attachment to French language and culture that he thought would propel Tunisia into the modern era. This was ensured with the appointment of the French Jacques Grell as head of the Tunisian Education Commission and Inspector of Secondary Education in Tunisia until 1966. The contradictions of the controversial Arabization programs in the 1970s were revealed in the translation of French texts into Arabic as part of push to promote Maghribi identity, which still focused heavily on French culture. Both Tunisian and Senegalese national education programs faced postcolonial tensions between developing national identities and histories, and the historical roots of French colonial education.

**Intellectual Migration and Student Organizations Abroad**

Prior to the creation of universities in Tunis and Dakar, colonial subjects in search of higher education had to travel abroad. As subjects of a French protectorate until 1956, Tunisian intellectuals had a long history of studying in the metropole, especially prior to the creation of the University of Tunis in 1960. Some studied in other French colonies, such as Algeria, where universities were established earlier. Like Tunisia, sub-Saharan Africa sent its elite to study in France dating from the interwar period. However, this was reserved for only a handful of brilliant students like Léopold Sédar Senghor, and it only became official policy to recruit and

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74 Abbassi, *Quand la Tunisie s’invente*, 11.
organize African students in the metropole after the second world war. In 1963-64, 3,658 African students were studying on scholarships in France, with 2,662 funded by home countries and 996 by French universities. However, a French diplomatic report noted that by the mid-1960s, African leaders hoped to gradually reduce the number of students abroad since, “their traditional environment was more conducive to control and political recruitment” and that students who studied abroad were more likely to join groups in opposition to home governments.77 This also came at the heels of the Jeanneny Report, which advocated for a diversion of funding away from operating and administrative costs toward development and trade, and triggered a gradual decrease in investment in France's former African colonies by the de Gaulle administration.78 The increase in the number of primary- and secondary-educated Tunisians had implications for higher education as well. In 1961, over 50 per cent of Tunisians studied at foreign universities (primarily in France), but by 1968, only 31 per cent studied abroad, though the total number of students abroad remained relatively consistent. This meant that Tunisian communities in university hubs like Paris remained strong while the number of enrollments at the University of Tunis continued to climb. The Tunisian student population at the University of Tunis rose from 1,908 in 1960 to well over 7,000 by 1968, with nearly 3,300 studying abroad.79

According to Africanist Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, training programs for local administrators were still rather weak in 1960 at the height of the African independence movement, though it certainly ushered in a period of increased cooperation while new nations were playing catch-up.

Independence came much more quickly than foreseen, and the pre-existing structures were not sufficient to meet a variety of new challenges in filling political and administrative positions...It was thus necessary to replace them with local “elites.” These elites were trained hastily and à la française, hence an acceleration of the granting of scholarships and the spike in student immigration to France.  

While university cooperation between France and its former colonies was at an all-time high in the 1960s, the funding of rising numbers of African students to study in the metropole was untenable. In the early years of independence, most African universities were unable to offer diplomas in all necessary disciplines and African students continued to study at French universities; however, “by the 1970s, the development of national universities allowed [African nations] to maintain the majority of their students through high school, and later through masters’ degrees. This new development led to a gradual decline in the number of students in France originating from francophone countries abroad.”

Bourguiba’s policies resulted in an increasingly educated population across all sectors of society, including the countryside. Indeed student activists such as Ahmed Ben Othmani and Chérif Ferjani, both of whom came from rural peasant families, excelled in the Tunisian public education system and eventually studied in France, only to return to Tunisia and carry out political action in opposition to Bourguiba. Tunisians continued to study in France in large numbers, and many returned to higher education at the University of Tunis or to pursue careers back home. This created an international community of intellectuals with organizational poles throughout Europe (particularly strong in France) and Tunisia. Sub-Saharan African intellectuals followed a similar trajectory and, as the flagship university in West Africa, the University of

82 Interview with Chérif Ferjani, Lyons, 2010.
Dakar was home to an extremely diverse body of students from several nations. In 1949-50, 2,000 African students from French colonies studied in various European metropoles, yet ten years later, on the eve of African independence from French control, approximately 8,000 Africans were studying in Europe (close to 1,000 of them Senegalese, with 400 of these studying in France). At the University of Dakar, French students outnumbered Senegalese until 1965 and, on the eve of a wave of protests in the 1967-1968 academic year, the university comprised 3,826 total students: 1,480 Senegalese, 1,351 various African nationalities, 892 French, and 103 others. By 1970, the number of sub-Saharan African students in France began to decline as scholarships to study abroad were less readily available and African universities became more equipped to handle greater numbers. This meant that academic and intellectual ties to France had been forged during the colonial period, but also that networks of intellectuals and student organizations were transplanted to home institutions as student populations within the ex-colonies grew. As new institutions developed in the postcolonial period, they became sites of conflict over the direction of newly independent nations, even as they maintained close contact with French intellectual centers (namely Paris).

Foreign students who migrated to the metropole for studies often faced hardships related to racism in finding housing, securing proper visa paperwork and travel permits, and maintaining funding for education. The first student activist organizations for Senegalese and Tunisian students were actually created in Paris during the colonial period and drew heavily upon French models. Originally established to help foreign students transition to university life in France, the

84 See Pierre Fougeyrollas, “L’Africanisation de l’Université de Dakar,” 42 and Fiche no. 354 DAM, 17 July 1968, in ADMAE, Afrique: Sénégal (1959-1972), Carton 49, Politique intérieure, La Courneuve. Bathily cites figures compiled in 1980 from the University of Dakar that show a slightly higher percentage of total French students. I have cited figures from the Direction des affaires africaines et malgâches since they list a higher total number of students and thus, likely include a larger pool of university students in Senegal. See Table 1 in Bathily, *op. cit.*, 44.
unions initially advocated for affordable housing and adequate stipends. Before the opening of the University of Tunis, Tunisian students studying in Paris created the General Union of Tunisian Students (Union Générale des étudiants de Tunisie [UGET]) in 1952 to advocate for their interests and provide a support system to Tunisians abroad. UGET also had strong historical connections to Maghribi organizations created in the interwar period like AEMNA whose support Bourguiba had solicited. Not only did UGET’s founders draw heavily upon the founding Charter of the National Union of French Students (Union nationale des étudiants de France [UNEF]), they also modeled UGET’s bureaucratic structure after UNEF, establishing sections in university cities across France.

As with Tunisian students abroad, the first organizations representing students from sub-Saharan Africa were also born in Paris. Since at least the early days of the interwar period, when Senghor and Aimé Césaire were students in Paris, African students articulated concerns through broader organizations like the Committee in Defense of the Negro Race (Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre), with L’Étudiant Noir as their mouthpiece. The first official the pan-African student organization, the Federation of Students from Black Africa in France (Fédération des étudiants de l’Afrique noire en France, FEANF); however, did not emerge until 1950. FEANF linked various national groups of African students in France and held its inaugural congress in 1950 in Lyons. FEANF played an instrumental role in various African independence movements in the 1950s, often working in collaboration with more local sections such as the Dakar-based Union générale des étudiants de l’Afrique Occidentale (UGEAO) that were once part of UNEF.

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87 The UGEAO was created when the Association générale des étudiants de Dakar broke from UNEF when UNEF refused to recognize its autonomy. Ibrahima Thioub, “Le mouvement étudiant de Dakar et la vie politique sénégalaise : La Marche vers la crise de mai-juin 1968,” in Hélène d’Almeida-Topor, Catherine Coquery-
By 1958, FEANF had strengthened its ties with North African student organizations, and even faced expulsions, reductions in scholarships, and increased surveillance by French agencies after the publication of *Le Sang de Bandoeng* (*The Blood of Bandung*), which supported Algerian independence and denounced the torture of Algerians by the French Army.  

These unions transformed throughout the decolonization process, and the 1960s witnessed the emergence of a variety of student groups representing diverse political leanings in Dakar and in Tunis. After independence, their centers of power were transferred from French university campuses to local ones as students filled classrooms at universities in Tunis and Dakar, and as classrooms became increasingly accessible to Senegalese and Tunisian youth. Many students who previously would have been forced to pursue higher learning in France—as the only available option in the colonial era—stayed home for their education. Though governments in Tunisia and Senegal were able to incorporate a number of talented graduates from their national universities into expanding bureaucracies in the early 1960s, the opportunities for employment began to shrink over the course of the decade.

Aid packages from France were declining just as new governments were faced with the challenges of replacing former colonial administrators and picking up the tab for government operations. France significantly cut aid to Tunisia after the Bizerte crisis of July 1961, when Bourguiba demanded that the French evacuate a former colonial naval base, and French forces defeated a Tunisian siege and attacked surrounding villages. France finally left Bizerte in 1963 after the base was no longer necessary for operations in Algeria, but Tunisia was forced to look

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88 France created agencies like the Office des étudiants d'outre mer (Office of overseas students, OEOM) in 1955 and later became the Office de coopération et d’accueil (Office of university cooperation and orientation, OCAU), ostensibly to welcome foreign students but which also or in surveillance and control of students from overseas territories. See Guimont, “Les étudiants africains et leur organisation,” *op. cit.*, 119-121.
to the U.S. for aid after the heightened tensions.\textsuperscript{90} Beyond questions of employment and foreign aid, students at both universities lamented the strong French presence in curriculum content and in the professoriate. Bourguiba's modernization policies and investment in education coincided with shrinking opportunities for Tunisia's educated as finite positions in the expanding government reached their max, and as collectivization projects in agriculture produced economic hardship. The Senegalese government likewise faced limited resources for costly government bureaucracies to replace the old colonial administration, which was only exacerbated by a poor peanut harvest. Both nations faced a burgeoning population of young, educated, and frustrated students concentrated on third-world university campuses in their capital cities. According to Tunisian historian Mohamed Dhifallah, by the mid-1960s,

the situation became increasingly complicated for the [Bourguiba] regime with the decision of students on the left to no longer expatriate to France for their studies, but to enroll in massive numbers in Tunisian universities with the intention of filling the ‘political vacuum’ left by UGET, which was servile to the state. These new ‘internal activists’ energized the student movement, calling into question, for the first time, the legitimacy of UGET.\textsuperscript{91}

States and students often worked at cross-purposes where emerging state leaders sought to maintain unity within singular national organizations at the levels of politics, labor, and the university. These national organizations and parties expanded during independence movements, while certain extra-national groups of students and intellectuals viewed their role as a check on the power of state control, rather than as instruments of state authority.

By 1968, UGET’s stronghold had shifted to Tunis, yet it held influential sections from Paris to the French provinces. Initially a clandestine organization during Tunisia’s protectorate status in the 1950s, UGET became an integral part of the national independence movement and

\textsuperscript{90} Christopher Alexander, \textit{Tunisia: Stability and Reform in the Modern Maghreb} (New York: Routledge, 2010), 97.

evolved into a recruitment organization for Bourguiba’s Socialist Destourian Party (PSD). Clement Henry Moore has pointed out that by the 1960s, the once pluralist UGET had become increasingly dominated by the PSD, as “[p]arty control and personal opportunism had discredited the union in the eyes of most students.”

Disenchanted with UGET’s lack of autonomy and seeking an independent voice, Tunisian students and professors in Paris formed the leftist group, *Perspectives* in October 1963 when it became difficult to criticize the government from within UGET. Like UGET, *Perspectives* was founded in Paris and later established strong sections in Tunis and other cities with student populations, though *Perspectives* had significantly fewer members.

*Perspectives’* inception also coincided with Bourguiba’s suppression of the Tunisian Communist Party (PCT) and its printed journal, which continued to be published from Paris. These developments led to the exportation of political activism to France, where opponents and critics of Bourguiba could more freely circulate and articulate oppositional viewpoints. This was certainly not the first time that France provided a space for political subversion relating to the colonial sphere. As early as the 1930s Bourguiba himself advocated for Tunisian independence while abroad. France, and more specifically Paris, continued to function as an important pocket of resistance throughout the postcolonial period, and *Perspectives* members across the Mediterranean were instrumental in the 1968 movement at the University of Tunis.

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93 Also known as the Groupe d’études et d’action socialiste tunisienne (GEAST), the group was often referred by the name of its theoretical journal, *Perspectives tunisiennes*, which was eventually shortened to *Perspectives*.

94 *Perspectives* formed in Paris as a splinter group of Marxists, Trotskyists, and Maoists (both students and professors) who sought an alternative to the PSD-dominated UGET. About 30% of Tunisian students held UGET membership, or approximately 3,000 total students. *Perspectives* was much more loosely organized and never officially kept records, though some members estimate that there were 200-500 members internationally. See Clement Henry Moore, *Politics in North Africa*, 170 and interview with “Jamel,” Tunis, 2011.
The Senegalese UGEAO also worked closely with FEANF throughout the Senegalese struggle for independence, yet became a thorn in Senghor’s side in the early postcolonial era. Just as Bourguiba outlawed the Tunisian Communist Party in 1964, Senghor dissolved the UGEAO in the same year and opened the door for clandestine activism and the creation of alternative organizations.\(^95\) By the mid-1960s, UGEAO had been replaced by the Senegalese Democratic Student Union (Union démocratique des étudiants sénégalais, UDES) for Senegalese students and the pan-African Dakar Student Union (Union des étudiants de Dakar, UED), made up of non-Senegalese African students at the University of Dakar, and still held ties to FEANF in France. Both of these groups were sympathetic to the Marxist-Leninist African Independence Party (Parti africain de l’indépendance, PAI) that Senghor had been struggling to stamp out since he obtained the presidency in 1960. While Senghor vacillated in his recognition of the legitimacy of UED and UDES, these organizations maintained contact with FEANF in France, and were instrumental in 1968 activism that decried the persistence of neo-colonial policies in Senegal. Students railed against the continued heavy French presence in education, especially at the university level, as well as the persistence of French and Levantine dominance over key business sectors.\(^96\)

Of course, intellectual migration was not limited to colonial and postcolonial migrants destined for the metropole. In 1967, the University of Dakar was home to nearly 900 students of French nationality, and over one third of the student population was from neighboring African


nations. The University of Tunis was more homogeneous by comparison, though there was still a significant French presence among secondary and post-secondary educators in Tunisia. With the creation of post-World War Two agencies like the Investment Funds for Economic and Social Development (Fonds d’investissements pour le développement économique et social, FIDES)—which already spent 8 billion French francs abroad on the eve of African independence in 1959—and the Ministry of Cooperation, created in 1961, France played an active role in supporting development projects, particularly in Black Africa, and sent its technicians and teachers abroad. In lieu of mandatory military service, many French youth opted to serve as coopérants, meaning they would work abroad, often as teachers or in some other development capacity. These continued links between France and its former colonies contributed to the forms of transnational activism in the tumultuous spring of 1968.

The legacy of the French education system, rooted in colonial empire-building projects, left traces in independent Senegal’s educational and political landscape of 1968. For example, Senghor’s Secretary General, Frenchman Jean Collin, who had married into Senghor’s family, embodied France’s staying presence in Senegal and Senghor’s willingness to accept French leadership. In addition, French and Lebanese faculty at the University of Dakar far outnumbered African representation, which made up only 36% of the total faculty in 1967, and was run by a French rector. Senegalese students also railed against the presence of French students in the University with whom they competed for resources. In 1967, Senegalese nationals made up only 32% of the total enrollment, while the French made up 27%, and the remainder were mainly other francophone African students. But if in 1968 Senghor was reluctant to give in to demands

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98 See André Bailleul, “L’Université de Dakar, institution et fonctionnement” (PhD diss Université de Dakar, 1984), 204-220.
99 Bathily, *Mai 68 à Dakar*, 44.
to Africanize both university curricula and the professoriate, his reservations were directly linked to the colonial past. Many graduates from back in the days of the École William Ponty found that, in spite of its local prestige, their diplomas were not recognized as the equivalent of the 
\textit{brevet supérieur} in France, and they were unable to continue their studies beyond lycée.\textsuperscript{100}

Not only did coopérants, who traveled between France and their overseas destinations, deliver news from abroad to the metropole, many also engaged directly in local politics. Coopérants like Jean-Paul Chabert were politically active in both Tunis and Paris, which led to his imprisonment in Tunisia following 1968 protests, while coopérant and health worker Jean-Louis Ravel was indicted in Dakar for providing a Roneograph (a rudimentary copy machine) to Senegalese militants who reproduced political tracts calling for violence against the Senegalese state.\textsuperscript{101} Intellectual migration was thus multi-directional—bringing large numbers of non-Senegalese African and French students to the University of Dakar as well as West and North African students to Paris—and resulted in the circulation of francophone intellectuals from a wide array of nationalities throughout the former French empire.

\textit{1968 and the University as Postcolonial Battleground}

“[P]ostcolonial studies considers the manner in which traces of a colonial past become, in the present moment, the object of symbolic and pragmatic work, as well as the conditions under which these practices give rise to unprecedented hybrid or cosmopolitan forms of life, politics, culture, and modernities.”\textsuperscript{102}


\textsuperscript{102} Mbembe, “Provincializing France?" \textit{op. cit.}, 86-87.
With growing populations of educated and mobile youth, university campuses captured serious potential for radicalization. Yet with heavy investment on the part of the Senghor and Bourguiba regimes, they were also symbols of progress and modernization for newly independent nations.

Even before the May explosion at the University of Dakar, at a gathering in April 1968 of the Franco-Senegalese “Mixed Commission” charged with running the University of Dakar, Senghor pointed to “the importance that we attach to the University of Dakar…[whose] lineage, by the way, we have inherited from the French University.”\footnote{“Toa\^st du Président de la République au diner offert en l’honneur de M. le Sec. de’Etat aux Affaires Etrangères chargé de la coopération et de Mme. Yvon Bourgès,” 2 avril 1968, in Dossier Léopold Sédar Senghor : 1968, Archives Nationales de Sénégal (ANS), Dakar.} Bourguiba was similarly extremely involved with education programs and made a number of efforts to reach out to communities at the University of Tunis.

As early as the late 1930s during the Tunisian independence movement, Bourguiba was interested in mobilizing students across the political spectrum, including both Zaytunians (Muslim theology students at Tunis's Zaytuna mosque-university) and the often left-leaning students who studied abroad in France, in order to engage them in the independence movement and to select them for future ranks in government.\footnote{Dhifallah, op. cit., 315. “Zaytunians” refers to students of the Zaytuna theology school in Tunis who sought to increase the role of Islam in state government and maintained close contacts with theology students in Damascus.} Bourguiba viewed it as a great victory that he was able to successfully mediate conflicts between Zaytunians and expatriated student groups during national independence in 1956, though his relationship to the broader student community began to break down in February 1961 when he sided with Neo-Destourian student segments of UGET, and dispersed crowds of leftists during a ceremony commemorating the life of Congolese activist Patrice Lumumba.\footnote{Clement H. Moore and Arlie R. Hochschild, “Student Unions in North African Politics,” \textit{Daedalus} 97 (1968): 32.} Bourguiba, the self-proclaimed “Supreme Combattant,” became
increasingly frustrated with a fractious left, and lambasted troublesome student elements in a
1965 speech before UGET.

There is no pretext…to say that education is more important than the struggle against the
group Perspectives and what are known as progressives; you must focus on two primary
objectives: the first concerns your studies and receiving a diploma, the second is a
concern with national problems so that you can become good citizens.\textsuperscript{106}

Both Bourguiba and Senghor viewed the university as an extremely important symbol of
modernity and national achievement, and sought to strengthen relationships with student
populations. When in 1968, youth became frustrated with these governments’ failures to deliver
on the promises of decolonization, including job creation and the erasure of French influence,
their frustrations were expressed on the university campus, and the Tunisian and Senegalese
states battled with students over the meaning of a modern, independent nation. The university at
once represented France’s lasting colonial impact and the opportunity for new nations to
implement plans for development without relying upon their former oppressors’ technical
expertise.

In a sociological study conducted in the summer of 1972 among Tunisian students in both
Tunis and Paris, John Entelis found that the increased frustration of students was directly related
to the lack of available positions in the public and private sectors.\textsuperscript{107} UGET had initially provided
fertile ground for Bourguiba’s recruitment of bureaucratic administrators in an expanding, quasi-
socialist government. Based on findings from a survey questionnaire, Entelis found that:

Socio-economic ‘pay-offs’ in the form of guaranteed high-prestige jobs, once available to
almost every university graduate, are now virtually non-existent. The Minister of
Planning envisages the economy’s incapacity to absorb more than half of the new recruits
into the labour force during the next decade, or only about 23,000 of each year’s 50,000

\textsuperscript{106} Habiba Bourguiba, Speech of 21 April 1965, cited in Habib Bourguiba: La trace et l’héritage, 320.
\textsuperscript{107} John P. Entelis, “Ideological Change and an Emerging Counter-Culture in Tunisian Politics, The Journal of
additional entrants to the active population. This further weakens the régime’s ability to attract and retain its educated young.¹⁰⁸

In effect, Tunisia’s economy could only find room for about half of the qualified people it was training for new positions. As many as 19 former UGET leaders between 1952 and 1962 held ministerial positions under Bourguiba; yet by 1963, students sensed that the prospects for opportunities in the Bourguiba government were bleak, and the student alliance with Bourguiba had already begun to break down.¹⁰⁹

Likewise, Senegalese intellectuals lamented the bleak economic opportunities and new corrupt classes of Senegalese who had replaced the previous oppressors.

At the root of the problem is a neo-colonial situation, which is the product of neo-imperialism (French in this case) supported by a “collaborative” neo-bourgeoisie (Senegalese in this case)...The new generation of students [is] frustrated with their lot with respect to social mobility, the good positions are already taken by their opportunistic elders. It is not enough to mention in passing that a new bourgeoisie, namely bureaucratic in nature, has hijacked the fruits of independence for its profit.¹¹⁰

In 1964, Perspectives members in France returned to Tunis and began organizing on the university campus. The stage had effectively been set for both youth unrest and for transnational communication, as intellectual networks established during the colonial period were already in place. In Senegal, these intellectual networks led to the movement of a number of militants who returned to Dakar from Paris in the summer of 1968 to prolong the May protests and demand full independence. The movement of ideas and the migration of intellectuals to the metropole, and their return home as local universities expanded, played a critical role in the development and organization of post-colonial networks of resistance that will be explored at length in the case studies of this dissertation.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 550-551.
¹⁰⁹ See Dhifallah, op. cit., 318.
Conclusion

Colonial education policies, intellectual migration, and 1960s activism were intricately intertwined. In large part due to colonial education policies, large numbers of students, especially in the post-World War Two era, traveled from the colonies to the metropole to pursue opportunities for career advancement and education. Cooperation agreements and development projects also sent French technicians and educators to the colonies, creating multiple opportunities for transnational and transcolonial cultural and information exchange. The number of North and West African students studying in France at the university level grew alongside rapidly expanding elementary and secondary education programs in the colonies after 1945.

These students founded organizations based in France that were designed to assist in orientation and advocate for foreign students’ rights. What makes the emergence of new organizations postcolonial has less to do with periodization—that many came into existence after African independence—and more to do with their historical roots in the era of French colonial education.

The establishment of African and North African universities in the 1950s and 1960s, a by-product of the independence movement, proved to be a critical step in the creation and radicalization of student groups. The proliferation of networks of intellectuals and students responded to efforts by new nation states like Tunisia and Senegal to provide education for their own, but under highly restrictive political conditions.

African universities located in the former French empire were modeled exclusively after French universities in order to meet requirements for reciprocal recognition in France. They were often governed by French university administrators and featured primarily French faculty throughout the 1960s. Somewhat paradoxically, a large part of decolonization—educating
indigenous youth to replace colonial technicians and bureaucrats—was carried out through colonial education systems. The university thus constituted one critical imperial fragment left over from the colonial era that continued to play an important role during decolonization.

Student organizations of North and West African students founded in Paris were transplanted to home institutions after independence and continued to advocate for students’ rights in the former colonies.

Whereas university students provided fertile ground for recruitment into new governments and to carry out modernization projects, by 1968 they had also become an oppositional force. The university thus represented a persisting link to the former metropole, but it also represented the way forward for developing African nations. For state leaders like Habib Bourguiba and Léopold Sédar Senghor, the university was a symbol of pride for emerging nations and a potential tool to strengthen national unity and advance development. However, for certain intellectuals participating in the system, the university they experienced in France dating to the colonial period was a safe space for cultivating anti-colonial and anti-authoritarian ideas.

In developing nations where a university education was rather rare, students possessed a certain cultural capital and prestige beyond their European homologues. In addition to participating in general anti-imperialist global politics in 1968, students at universities in Tunis and Dakar were also concerned with decolonizing their universities to extricate many of the French influences and promote Africanization and Arabization of curricula and faculty. Because of the pre-existing connections with intellectuals residing in France—both of French and foreign nationality—the university became a site of contestation between states and activist students but also a key node in the web of transnational activism.
The shared colonial histories among territories of the former French empire created opportunities for transnational activism in the postcolonial world. As we shall see in cases of state repression of student movements in 1968 in chapters two and four, Tunisian and Senegalese intellectuals could count on sympathetic countrymen and other global activists residing in France to advocate for increased human rights, free speech, and democratic principles that rejected the notion of a single-party state. France also became the most frequented site of political exile to which numerous activists from the ex-colonies relocated and from which they continued to carry out transnational activism. For French activists like coopérants Jean-Paul Chabert and Jean-Louis Ravel, identifying with third-world causes like student movements in Tunisia and Senegal granted an opportunity to distance themselves from their bourgeois backgrounds in France. Likewise, chapter three shows how French activists gained political currency among the left by participating in what 1960s leftists would have considered an “authentic” movement for its third-world relevance and anti-colonial political positions.
PART 1: TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM AND 1968(S) IN TUNISIA, FRANCE, AND SENEGAL

In March 1968, the campus at the University of Tunis erupted in response to the incarceration of student activist leaders who had protested the Tunisian government’s failure to denounce Israeli aggression in the Six-Day War of June 1967. Just a few months later, campuses in Paris erupted in protest of police presence at the Sorbonne, which had shifted from Nanterre after its closure, and spread throughout campuses across the country. Clashes with police elicited nationwide sympathy for the student movement. This prompted a general workers’ strike that nearly brought about governmental overthrow if not for de Gaulle’s dissolution of French Parliament and special elections in June 1968 that salvaged his regime. Just weeks after events broke in France, African students occupied the campus of the University of Dakar in protest of financial cuts to student stipends. These material claims quickly spread to political ones and, like in France, workers opportunistically joined student demonstrations to make their own demands for higher wages and the Africanization of certain professions dominated by French interests.

In each of these cases, student unrest can be traced to specific postcolonial dimensions of the university. In Tunisia, student discontent was directly related to national education programs that produced too many educated youth for too few positions in the decolonizing government and national industries. After failing to take an unequivocal stand on the “Algerian question” a decade earlier, radical French students began to identify with third-world causes and, by extension, with immigrants in France. With the University of Nanterre’s construction in the 1960s in the heart of a working-class immigrant neighborhood, French youth in the Parisian suburbs were forced to confront their position of privilege for the first time in their daily lives. Nanterre was a microcosm of the migratory patterns of the “Thirty Glorious Years” in France, which had brought new social tensions with the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from
Southern Europe and from France’s ex-colonies to France for the post-World War Two industrial boom. The University of Dakar represented a sort of double-paradox: students occupied the campus in protest against the reduction of scholarships and stipends that were a necessary by-product of terminating dependence on French subsidies; at the same time, they pushed for the Africanization of faculty and curricula that were still dominated by French culture and personnel in 1968. As a symbol of modernity and the future provider of nation-builders and industry-drivers, the university was the natural site of debate and conflict over national politics, development strategies, and even labor. Based on French institutional models, the universities within the former French empire comprised a vast network of intellectuals and interlinked student organizations that maintained contact in the postcolonial era. Student organizations in each location exchanged information to diasporic communities and provided support systems for each other’s causes.

The three chapters represented in this section focus, on the one hand, on the transnational dimensions of each movement that linked them to a broader global 1968 and, on the other hand, they draw attention to the specific contexts that differentiated urban youth protest in each case. Collectively, these chapters seek to provincialize France’s iconic mai 68 by viewing it as one of many 1968s, but also by demonstrating the critical role of Paris as a central node in the transnational activism of France’s former colonies. By the same logic, I focus specifically on the postcolonial dimensions and on the role of immigrants in France’s mai 68. In this regard, I argue that these understudied aspects of mai 68 provide important historical fragments that contribute to a greater understanding of the fractious events. Rather than attempt to define “what is mai 68,” I have chosen to make a significant contribution to its understanding, to show that it was more
than merely a series of events with national implications, and to attempt to concretely identify the transnational elements that make it part of a larger global movement.
Chapter 2: March 1968: Practicing Transnational Activism from Tunis to Paris

Introduction

Few could have predicted that the self-immolation of twenty-six-year-old Muhammad al-Buʿazizi\textsuperscript{112} on 17 December 2010 would set off the largest social movement in Tunisia since its independence in 1956, ending the twenty-three-year reign of President Zin al-ʿAbidin bin ʿAli and sending shock waves throughout the Arab world. Since al-Buʿazizi’s act, intense media focus on the present has served to obscure the past historical context of Tunisian political contestation. Just as Guy Sitbon’s commentary cited above on political repression in the Bourguiba era (1957-87) resonates with characterizations of the Bin ʿAli regime in 2011, what the Western media controversially termed the “Jasmine Revolution” for its relatively non-violent character can be tied to a lesser-known movement in the 1960s. This chapter builds on the history of political activism in postcolonial Tunisia by drawing attention to the first large-scale call for democratic freedoms by Tunisians in March 1968.

In France, the events of May 1968 are widely documented and even integrated into the broad historical consciousness of the nation. With numerous national exhibits in 1988, 1998, and 2008 devoted to the remembrance of 1968, the waves of student protest and the general workers’ strike of what is known simply as “May ’68” have been etched into the French collective memory. By contrast, the university protests of “March ’68” in Tunisia are omitted from Franco-centric accounts of this period and even overlooked among scholars of Tunisia.\textsuperscript{113} According to

\textsuperscript{111} A version of this chapter was published in the \textit{International Journal of Middle East Studies} 44 (November 2012): 755-774

\textsuperscript{112} Al-Buʿazizi was a street vendor from Sidi Bouzid whose illegal fruit stand was humilitatingly confiscated by authorities for lack of permits, precipitating his desperate act.

\textsuperscript{113} This dearth of historical accounts of Tunisian actions against the state can be attributed in part to the stability and longevity of two dictatorships (Bourguiba from 1957-87 and Bin ʿAli from 1987-2011), which enforced strict media regulations and the suppression of opposition parties. While the Tunisian ’68 remains largely under-studied, John Entelis has highlighted growing youth discontent in the related university strikes of February 1972, while Mohamed
Marguerite Rollinde, “[i]ndependent Tunisia in the Bourguiba era witnessed only two important uprisings: the strike of January 26, 1978 . . . and the bread riots of January 1984.” The “Black Thursday” strikes in January 1978 were novel in that they severed previously existing ties between the Destourian Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste Destourien or PSD) and the General Union of Tunisian Workers (Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail or UGTT), and the “bread riots” of 1984 contributed to Bin ʿAli’s supplanting of Bourguiba in 1987. However, this narrative downplays the catalytic impact of 1968 on Tunisian activism during a turbulent nation-building period that, prior to 1968, lacked a political movement to counter a strong executive branch of government. Outside of a few biographies attesting to the profound impact that the events of 1968 in Tunis had on Michel Foucault—who taught in the philosophy department at the University of Tunis from 1966 to 1968—historians have paid little attention to these events and even less to contextualizing them within a global framework.

There is an emerging field of scholarship on what is often referred to as “the global 1968,” “the global sixties,” or “the long sixties.” Yet in spite of this global turn, many of these...
studies have reproduced Eurocentric narratives by focusing on actions in the transatlantic First World. Popular student and worker movements of the 1960s occurring in the Third World, including North Africa, have received far less attention.\textsuperscript{118} Even outside of the study of the 1960s, historians have noted the marginality of North Africa in frameworks for conducting world history.\textsuperscript{119} Moreover, as the flag-bearer for French postcolonial historiography, the Algerian experience has diverted attention from other areas of decolonization within the former French empire.

The following discussion places Tunisia’s ’68 firmly within a larger global narrative. While certain aspects of the Tunisian movement were specific to the local context, it was also transnational for several reasons: 1) activists identified with international and anticolonial causes such as Palestinian liberation and opposition to the Vietnam War; 2) actors and organizations involved in the protests frequently crossed national borders, especially those of Tunisia and France; and 3) the Tunisian and French states responded to specifically transnational activism with varying degrees of repression. I will attempt to demonstrate that Tunisia’s (post)colonial relationship with France established important Franco-Tunisian networks of students and intellectuals that took on new forms during and after the protests of March 1968. Just as imperial knowledge was constructed in a “web of empire” in which the colonies acted as relays of knowledge transmission, transnational circuits of activists emerged in the postcolonial era to

\footnotesize{(London: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also the special two-part forum devoted to the global 1968 in American Historical Review 114 and 115 (February and April 2009).}


\textsuperscript{119} For example, Julia Clancy-Smith has commented on the absence of the “people located on the margins of non-Western states” in Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems theory. See Julia A. Clancy-Smith, \textit{Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, and Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)} (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1997), 2.
constitute “webs of activism.”  

In the networks explored in this chapter, knowledge was exchanged directly between activist organizations in Tunis and Paris while also circulating within a broader global activist community. These networks of Tunisians moving between France and Tunisia and of French activists who had ties to Tunisia enabled the transnationalization of political activism—and often made it more difficult for states to contain. They provided access to information censored in Tunisia from the comparatively safe distance of the former metropole, and Paris became a meeting place for activists from other former colonies who were sympathetic to the Tunisian cause. The both hostile and friendly ties that linked Tunisians with Paris and the French with Tunis were evidence of a wider global process of building networks of resistance that resonated well beyond the moment of ‘68 itself. Moreover, Bourguiba’s extreme reaction to the 1968 protests contributed to a shift in the nature of protestors’ claims, which was eventually manifested in the creation of the Tunisian League for Human Rights (Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l’Homme or LTDH) in 1976 and the establishment of the first Amnesty International section in Tunisia in 1981, in which 68ers played an instrumental role. The state’s repression of activists fueled unprecedented human rights activism in the region conducted initially from afar, making 1968 seminal in the development and articulation of opposition to a Tunisian single-party state. Tunisia’s place in the “global 1968” thus goes far beyond the fact that it occurred simultaneously with other movements around the world.

Due in large part to the decentralized nature of sources on student groups, as well as to my own linguistic and geographic constraints, this study focuses primarily on postcolonial activist networks between Tunisia and France. Other recent scholars have explored activist

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120 The notion of “webs of empire” is borrowed from Tony Ballantyne’s discussion of transcolonial information exchange in the British empire, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).
networks created in the 1940s by young Algerians who came to Tunis to study at the Zaytuna mosque-university and by Tunisian students who traveled to Damascus and Cairo, particularly for religious studies. These groups established other relay centers of activism outside of Europe and Tunis, especially within the 1980s Harakat al-Ittijah al-Islami (Islamic Tendency Movement) that transformed into al-Nahda in 1989. It is to be hoped that future scholarship will continue to expand the global roadmap of Tunisian transnational activist networks beyond the temporal and geographic foci of this chapter.

Colonial Heritage of Franco-Tunisian Networks

In 1952, in response to Bourguiba’s arrest by French authorities during the independence movement, Tunisian students clandestinely created the General Union of Tunisian Students (Union Générale des Étudiants de Tunisie or UGET) and held its first congress in Paris. UGET held illegal meetings in Paris until Tunisia’s independence in 1956, at which point it moved its headquarters to Tunisia and was formally recognized by the Bourguiba government after the rival Zaytuna organization was subsumed under its umbrella. UGET continued to maintain influential sections in Paris, the French provinces, and Brussels, however, and while UGET and UNEF would take opposing positions on major issues such as Algerian independence, the two organizations were in close contact in the postcolonial era.

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124 UNEF has a complex history of vacillating between positions on both the Algerian revolution and Palestinian liberation. In 1960 it finally called for peace in Algeria, for which it was lauded by UGET. See telegram from UGET in Tunis to UNEF, 27 October 1960, in Archives d’Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 130, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau.
Higher education had been internationalized during the colonial period, and after 1956 the independent Tunisian state enacted policies to lure students back to Tunis. The government instituted radical changes and committed itself to heavy expenditure to modernize the national public education system. The investment yielded results, as the number of students enrolled in primary school rose from 213,000 on the eve of independence to over 900,000 by 1969, with the percentage of girls attending schools rising from 29 percent to 38 percent in the same period. Bourguiba’s policies resulted in an increasingly educated population across all sectors of society, including in the countryside. With large numbers of Tunisians in institutions of higher learning in France and at the University of Tunis, opportunities were present for organizational cooperation between communities of Tunisians in Europe (particularly France) and Tunisia.

After Tunisian independence, UGET transitioned into a talent pool for the lone Tunisian state political party, the Socialist Destourian Party (PSD). By October 1963, it had become clear to Tunisian students studying in Paris that UGET no longer exercised political autonomy, and Tunisian students and professors in Paris formed the leftist group Perspectives, or the Group of study and Tunisian socialist action (action Groupe d'études et d'action socialiste tunisien [GEAST]). Like UGET had done before it, Perspectives expanded from Paris to establish strong sections in Tunis and other Tunisian and European cities with sizable Tunisian student populations; Perspectives had significantly fewer members than UGET, however. The creation of Perspectives came at the heels of Bourguiba’s suppression of the Tunisian Communist Party. In 1963, Bourguiba took advantage of a foiled coup d’état by Yusufists to dismember the PCT.

126 About 30 percent of Tunisian students, or 3,000 in total, were card-carrying members of UGET. Perspectives was much more loosely organized and did not keep official records, though some members estimate that there were 200-500 members internationally. Clement Henry Moore, Politics in North Africa, 170; and interview with “Jamil,” Tunis, 2011.
in spite of the fact that the PCT denounced the plot.\textsuperscript{127} These developments fostered the exportation of political activism to France, where opponents of Bourguiba living in forced or voluntary exile could more freely circulate and articulate oppositional viewpoints. This was certainly not the first time that France provided a space for political contestation of its own policies and practices; since World War I, Paris had served as a base for North Africans and others opposing the colonial order of things. As early as the 1930s, Bourguiba himself advocated for Tunisian independence while abroad; in the 1950s, Algerian resistance groups named France the seventh and final 

\textit{wilāya}, or province in which Algerians were fighting for independence; and by 1960 French student unions were collaborating with North Africans in support of French withdrawal.\textsuperscript{128} France, and more specifically Paris, continued to function as an important center of resistance throughout the postcolonial period. When newly independent governments in Africa or Asia expelled local political undesirables, the latter often sought refuge in the former metropole, where they were relatively free to condemn censorship or the lack of human rights back home. Because of the links established between university-based organizations in France and Tunisia, groups like Perspectives and the PCT were able to publish oppositional literature in France and transport it to Tunisia, and also to transmit information from the ground in Tunisia to the intellectual immigrant community in Europe.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{127} Yusufists were supporters of Salih bin Yusuf, Bourguiba’s rival within the Neo-Destour who represented a more isolationist approach to governance and advocated a sharper rift with France. He was condemned to death for treason because of his open opposition to Bourguiba and was assassinated in exile in 1961 at a hotel in Frankfurt; his supporters continued to identify as Yusufists after his death.


\textsuperscript{129} There were approximately 75,000 Tunisians in France at the time of the March 1968 protests, the majority of whom were workers and likely not heavily involved in activist communication networks until the immigrant worker strikes of the 1970s. See also Chapter 1.
March 1968 in Tunis and “the Ben Jennet Affair”

On 5 June 1967, Muhammad Ben Jennet (Bin Jannat) and other Perspectives members organized a protest in Tunis against U.S. and British support of Israel in the Six-Day War. Protestors congregated at the British and American embassies to denounce Western imperialism and to reproach Bourguiba for condoning Anglo-American foreign policy. The protest spilled beyond the immediate proximity of the embassies and into popular quarters of the city, finally degenerating into anti-Semitic vandalism of Jewish shops and synagogues. Though protest organizers from Perspectives spoke out strongly against anti-Semitism, their pleas were not enough to stop the swell of anger at Israeli military initiatives. On 8 June, Bourguiba vowed to “severely punish the troublemakers” who committed injustices against the Jewish population.

The state responded with a heavy hand; Ben Jennet was arrested as the ringleader of the movement and sentenced to twenty years of forced labor. A student at the Zaytuna—the theological school alleged by Bourguiba’s regime to harbor Muslim fundamentalists—Ben Jennet became the scapegoat for the regime, which claimed he incited the attacks on Jewish neighborhoods, disrupted the peace, and threatened national security. Ben Jennet’s sentencing set off a series of political actions led by the student community, culminating in university-wide protests in March 1968. What began in June 1967 with a focus on international anti-imperialism transformed into calls for human rights and democratic freedoms at the national level.

The build-up to the March 1968 protests, which would occur on the eve of Tunisia’s celebration of national independence on 20 March, included a day of solidarity with Vietnam on 17 November 1967 in response to a call by the Soviet-backed International Union of Students.

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130 Many Perspectives participants in the events claimed that police officers, under instruction of the PSD, in fact sanctioned the violence against the Jewish community. Interviews with Simone Lellouche Othmani, Paris, 2010 and “Jamil,” Tunis, 2011.
131 L’Action, 8 June 1967.
based in Prague. Following the creation of the Grassroots Vietnam Committees (Comités Vietnam de Base) by French activists in late 1966, Dr. Slimane Ben Slimane (Suliman bin Suliman) had founded the Tunisian Committee of Solidarity with the Vietnamese People (Comité de Solidarité avec le Peuple Vietnamiens) in 1967. The committee helped organize a January 1968 protest of the diplomatic visits of U.S. Vice President Hubert Humphrey—who was on a tour of nine African countries—and South Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs Tran Van Do to Tunisia to meet with Bourguiba. Slimane co-signed a letter addressed to Humphrey himself imploring the U.S. to stop bombing in North Vietnam. Student members of Perspectives and the PCT used the Humphrey and Van Do visit to set aside their ideological differences regarding the finer points of Marxism and called for three days of action in solidarity with Vietnam. Perspectives had historically criticized the PCT for its revisionism and its uncritical support of Economic Minister Ahmad bin Salah’s collectivization, and the PCT was known to portray Perspectives as a divider of the Tunisian left. Yet on 10 January, the two groups jointly organized over 1,000 students at the University of Tunis to support the Vietnamese people. Days later, tracts from the Perspectives section in Paris reported highlights of the Humphrey-Van Do protest and called for solidarity with the Vietnamese and the imprisoned Ben Jennet. The Perspectives section in Paris, dating from 1963 and rooted

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132 “Mémoires de militants,” Perspectives Tunisiennes, brochure no. 3 (December 1968).
133 A former member of the Neo-Destourian Party, Slimane became an anti-Bourguibist and co-founded the PCT’s journal Tribune du Progrès, which was banned along with the PCT under Bourguiba in 1963, following Slimane’s increasingly scathing critiques of the government.
135 From 1964 to 1969, Bin Salah implemented a socialist plan to nationalize agricultural land into a series of collectives. The plan was largely unpopular with peasants, many of whom battled government corruption and lost their private holdings of small plots.
136 “La lutte des étudiants en Tunisie...et dans le monde,” Tribune Progressiste 1 (February 1968).
137 See “Appel du Comité pour la libération de Ben Jennet et des autres militants anti-impérialistes,” undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.
historically in Tunisia’s colonial relationship with the French education system, felt compelled to react to events taking place in Tunis, illustrating the role of Paris as a second site of action in the postcolonial web of resistance. Tunisians in Paris participated in transnational communication networks by spreading information and responding to actions conducted by their comrades back home.

In the context of a global 1968, the presence of First World political leaders and imperialist symbols such as Humphrey in a former French colony elicited a strong local response. Likewise, activists located in the West protested the appearance of Third World dictators in the First World. Timothy S. Brown has noted that, in West Germany, the diplomatic visits of Congolese Moise Tshombe (1964) and Iranian Shah Riza Pahlavi (1967) aroused the ire of students.¹³⁸ West Germans responded with indignation to the physical presence of American imperialism in their midst, much as Tunisians had done in response to the visit of Humphrey and Van Do to Tunis: “the Third World did not make its appearance in the West German ’68 in the form of fantasy borne posters of Mao Zedong . . . or the other cliché images of young protesters disconnected from reality and blind to the authoritarian realities of Third World nationalist movements.”¹³⁹ Engaging in transnational action, West German students, alongside foreign student activists, protested the very real presence of Third World authoritarians visiting Europe. This physical appearance was often bidirectional, as in the Tunisian case. In one direction, First World imperialism was represented in the Third World in the bodies of Humphrey and Van Do (considered a First World conspirator), or that of U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers, author of the controversial “Rogers’ Plan” to end the Arab-Israeli conflict who came to Tunis in February 1970. Indeed, cries of protest against Rogers’ visit could be heard from Tunis to Paris,

¹³⁹ Brown, “‘1968’ East and West,” 75.
as a Perspectives’ motion denouncing Rogers circulated in France’s capital.\textsuperscript{140} In the other direction, French and Tunisian activists protested against Bourguiba’s June 1972 visit to Paris.\textsuperscript{141} In all of these cases, the international travel of diplomats symbolized collaboration with First World imperialism, whether Third World figures appeared in the First World or vice versa. Their unwanted presence precipitated transnational organization in which acts of contestation occurred in both Tunis and Paris, regardless of the diplomatic destination.

In addition to the close attention students gave to international events, they also expressed concerns at the local, university level. In its February-March 1968 issue of \textit{L’Étudiant Tunisien}, UGET lamented the French university system that Tunisia had inherited, and called for a swift "Tunisification" of education.

> To be truly engaged [the university]'s teaching programs must be Tunisified to the maximum degree (in each case where this is possible). The applied work must be based essentially on Tunisian examples. A true Tunisification of programs must necessarily include a Tunisification of the faculty of our University...

> Moreover, since our system is closely linked to the French university system and since the latter has been modified, it is logical to take into account these French university reforms. It is all the more necessary to preserve the equivalency of Tunisian and French diplomas. We must coordinate the undergraduate degrees granted by the two universities.\textsuperscript{142}

Much like students in Senegal who would call for Africanization of the University of Dakar in May-June 1968, UGET pushed for a nationalization of the education system to meet local concerns. Many believed that France's adoption of the Fouchet reforms would propel the university into a new era of meeting increased enrollments and a shifting economy. Yet these specific reforms—designed to limit enrollments in certain subjects based on France's current

\textsuperscript{140} "Motion sur la Tunisie adoptée à l’unanimité par les participants à la journée internationale de solidarité anti-impérialiste du 21 février 1970,” in Fonds Othmani, SOL 3, BDIC, Nanterre.

\textsuperscript{141} Perspectives members in Paris solicited the help of French activists in protesting Bourguiba’s diplomatic visit with French President Georges Pompidou. See “Un seul combattant: le peuple!,” 24 June 1972, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 2; and “Tunisie: La curé néo-colonialiste,” \textit{Politique Hebdo} 35, nouvelle série (29 June 1972).

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{L’Etudiant Tunisien} (February-March 1968).
economic needs—did not reflect realities in the former colonies. In Tunisia and in Senegal, there was a greater need for educated professionals across all sectors, particularly in education, which was rapidly expanding and still dependent on the expertise of French teachers and professors who often taught culturally French content from a French perspective. Yet like in Senegal, advocates of specific reforms on the national level in Tunisia were forced to balance this issue with maintaining equivalency in the recognition of their diplomas with French granting institutions. At least on paper, Tunisian degrees were considered the equivalent of French ones. Also of note is that these specific claims for Tunisification did not come from the oppositional left, though many likely would have supported this cause, but from the government-backed UGET. Many government administrators also got behind these projects, including Mohamed Mzali, who ordered the translation of primary school textbooks into Arabic as National Education Minister in the 1970s. In the same issue of *L'Étudiant* that focused on local reforms, UGET included identification with international causes, pledging solidarity with "peoples and students still under foreign domination [and] reaffirms its attachment...to the students of Palestine, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, South Africa, and other countries for success obtained against colonialism in all its forms." The January 1968 protests of Humphrey and Van-Do’s visit set the stage for the March events. While many Tunisians around the country were preparing celebrations to commemorate independence, the Committee in Support of the Liberation of Ben Jennet swung into action. Activists in Tunis gathered 1300 signatures in a petition to Bourguiba condemning the

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143 Driss Abassi found that the 1970s witnessed a massive program of Arabization in which school textbooks and manuals were translated into Arabic, though much of the content initially maintained its French cultural referents. See Abassi, *Quand la Tunisie s'invente: Entre Orient et Occident, des imaginaires politiques* (Paris: Autrement, 2009), 67, 76. See also Abassi, *Entre Bourguiba et Hannibal: Identité tunisienne et histoire depuis l'indépendance* (Paris: Karthala, 2005), 109-111.

144 *L'Etudiant Tunisien* (February-March 1968).
president’s “arbitrary victimization” of Ben Jennet and demanding his release. The movement spread to the Faculté de Science and to neighboring technical and high schools where students held a series of free general assemblies. Student activist Brahim Razgallah (Ibrahim Razq Allah) declared solidarity with Ben Jennet before a large audience. Cheers roared as he accused the leadership of UGET of being apologists for U.S. imperialism, and called for a general strike of classes in protest of Bourguiba’s repressive dictatorship. The students linked U.S. imperialism to oppression in the Tunisian government while calling for reform in the students’ national representative body. The mobilization on the local level for what came to be known as “the Ben Jennet Affair” thus contained claims on a series of other levels. Ben Jennet’s original goal—to denounce Tunisian state support of oppressors in Vietnam and Palestine—fit into the broader context of the 1960s anti-imperialist movement. However, Bourguiba’s repressive response to June 1967 and March 1968 led to calls for democratic reform at the national level that were not present at the outset.

Authorities responded with force to student and faculty organizers as police interrogated hundreds of Tunisians and eventually made over 200 arrests following the March demonstrations. No less than eighty-one were incarcerated, most of whom were categorized by the state as either Communists, Perspectivists, or Ba’thists. Many were held without trial until 25 March 1968 and signed La Comité pour la libération de Ben Jennet et des autres militants anti-impérialistes, Paris, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.


September 1968, and reports of torture included acid burns on the feet, ripping off fingernails, leaving infectious wounds by burning the skin with ether, electroshock, and cigarette burns on the skin and breasts.\textsuperscript{150} Perspectives members Ahmed Othmani, Gilbert Naccache (Jilbar Naqqash), Noureddine Ben Khader (Nur al-Din bin Khadar), Brahim Razgallah, and Abdelaziz Krichen (ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Krishan) received sentences of up to sixteen years for participation in an illegal organization and attempted subversion against the state.\textsuperscript{151} Some were charged with the crime of offending a head of state for insulting Humphrey and Van Do during the January protest. One Perspectives member was even indicted for distorting Bourguiba’s self-promoting nomenclature “the supreme combatant” (le combattant suprême) into “the supreme hypocrite” (le comédien suprême).\textsuperscript{152} Many of the defendants in Bourguiba’s Special Court, created by the law of 2 July 1968 to deal specifically with March 68ers, did not have access to defense attorneys or to evidence that might support their cases.\textsuperscript{153} Even though the events in March were produced out of a local context (Ben Jennet’s sentencing), Bourguiba’s reaction was influenced by fears of international revolution as events in France unfolded during his visit to Europe in May 1968.\textsuperscript{154} Because the regime delayed the trials for political dissidents in Tunisia until September 1968, the events of the French May ’68 augmented the level of repression and heavy sentences experienced by Tunisia’s March 68ers. The Tunisian ‘68, though originating locally, resonated with other ‘68s and spilled across national borders into action in Paris. Even

\textsuperscript{150} See Othmani, Beyond Prison, 11; Tribune Progrésiste 3 (April 1968): 1; Jeunesse Démocratique (June 1976): 25-26; and Naccache, Qu’as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?, 136, 160. According to Naccache, women activists such as ʿAʾisha bin ʿAbid were not spared the torture; her breasts were scarred from cigarette burns while she was detained.

\textsuperscript{151} See “À la lumière du procès G.E.A.S.T.: Les acquis et les perspectives de la lutte révolutionnaire en Tunisie,” Perspectives Tunisiennes, brochure no. 4 (June 1969); and Naccache, Qu’as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?, 101.

\textsuperscript{152} “Mémoires de militants,” Perspectives Tunisiennes, brochure no. 3 (December 1968): 9. The law protecting the images of “heads of state” dates back to the colonial period, when it was applied to protect powerful beylical families from public criticism.

\textsuperscript{153} Cited in ibid., 4.

\textsuperscript{154} Gilbert Naccache notes that the May ’68 events in France made a deep impression on Bourguiba while he was visiting Spain, and that his advisers confirmed that Tunisian opposition leaders had been influenced by French “subversives.” See Naccache, Qu’as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?, 99.
Bourguiba’s repression of activists was shaped by events in Paris, and activism was realized both locally and abroad.

In many areas of the Francophone world, such as Paris and Dakar, student strikes in 1968 received the backing and support of workers and national labor unions. However, the lone national labor union in Tunisia, the UGTT, did not challenge the Bourguiba regime until 1978, and actually denounced the March ’68 student movement. Efforts by Tunisian intellectuals to recruit workers into the resistance movements initially failed, and the UGTT was allied in many ways with the Bourguiba regime in this period. The Tunisian ’68 was thus confined primarily to the university milieu. Calls to liberate Ben Jennet at the University of Tunis certainly symbolized the Tunisian students’ desire for democratic freedoms, but they also represented resistance to Tunisia’s complicity with U.S. imperialism in Vietnam as well as its soft position on Israel. The Ben Jennet Affair can be seen as the intersection of an international anti-imperialist movement and a national cry for freedoms of expression and association. Like many anti-imperialist movements around the globe at this time, Tunisian activists primarily focused on Vietnamese and Palestinian liberation. However, the state’s repressive response to youth protest caused a shift in the nature of students’ claims in a very local context. After Ben Jennet’s arrest, students not only denounced Bourguiba’s pro-Israel and pro-U.S. stance but also called for the liberation of Tunisia’s political prisoners and for rights to free speech and assembly. In countering the repression, students and professors organized an international network of support around “the Ben Jennet Affair” and created a transnational discursive battle

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156 In an effort to reach working-class Tunisians in the early 1970s, activists in Paris published the bilingual journal *al-ʿAmil al-Tunsi* (*Le travailleur tunisien*). It primarily targeted Tunisian immigrants in France and had minor clandestine distribution in Tunis, but did not make significant inroads into these communities. More successful were groups jointly founded by intellectuals and immigrant workers such as Le Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes, which emerged in the early 1970s and included a number of Tunisians (and other North Africans) residing in France.
over the affair’s meaning and the response to it. In fact, the Ben Jennet Affair spurred activism from an international community already in place, particularly strong between the French and Tunisian left, that fought against government repression of human rights.

**International Networks of Support**

Following Ben Jennet’s arrest in June 1967, Paris was reactivated as a hub for transnational action. Tunisian students held an information session in Paris in November 1967, where they were shown support by union representatives from Morocco and Algeria as well as by the principal organization of African students in France (La Fédération des Étudiants de l’Afrique Noire) and the Association of Muslim North African Students in France (Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-africains en France or AEMNAF).\(^\text{157}\) Paris constituted a central gathering point for activists from various former colonies who were sympathetic to the Tunisian cause and who transmitted information from the metropole back to student unions in their mother countries.\(^\text{158}\) The mass arrests and lack of due process for Ben Jennet’s March ‘68 supporters initiated further transnational action. On 27 March 1968—the day that the University Council in Tunis broke with legal precedent to definitively expel five Perspectives activists—the International Association of Democratic Lawyers requested that national organizations of lawyers work toward obtaining the release of Ben Jennet and of Tunisian university students and attorneys who had been detained in March.\(^\text{159}\)

Though the majority of the core members of Perspectives—who had returned to the University of Tunis in 1964 following study abroad in France—were arrested during the March

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\(^{157}\) *Perspectives Tunisiennes* 16 (December 1967).

\(^{158}\) For examples of correspondence between Perspectives and UGET sections in Paris and Tunis, see Fonds de la Fédération des Tunisiens pour une citoyenneté des deux rives, Carton G2/2 (1), UGET Paris, Génériques, Paris.

\(^{159}\) “Sur les journées de solidarité avec Mohamed Ben Jennet,” 12.
events, a number of second-tier members were still active in France. They were instrumental in disseminating information on the Tunisian movement to the French community. Though there is little evidence that the Tunisian March ’68 ignited activism during the French May ‘68, Tunisian students in Paris certainly expressed their support for the French movement and linked the two as part of a global revolution: “Comrades, French students, our struggle, whether it be in France, Tunisia, Spain or elsewhere is absolutely the same. Our respective struggles are inscribed in historical terms, that is to say in terms of the march of humanity toward socialism.”^160 Tunisian students also received invitations to the World Youth and Student Festival held in Sofia, Bulgaria in the summer of 1968. In spite of the Tunisian media’s claims that only PSD-dominated UGET delegations went to Sofia, student members from Perspectives also participated. A Perspectives tract calling for the liberation of Ben Jennet and the March 68ers was signed by over forty delegations, the largest number based in France.^161 Among the signatories were national student unions of the former French colonies Morocco, Algeria, and Senegal, as well as AEMNAF. The French National Student Union (UNEF) refrained from signing the tract, which may have been due to the fact that members of the UNEF delegation were unable to participate after being hassled when passing the Bulgarian border and expelled in the midst of the festival’s proceedings.^162

UNEF had a history of working with UGET dating to the 1950s, but this did not prevent the French student organization from contacting more radical groups like Perspectives, which was invited to UNEF’s International Congress in Marseilles in December 1968. Presenting

^161 See Tribune Progressiste 5 (December 1968): 30-35.
^162 Letter from UNEF to the Comité National Bulgare pour le festival, 30 June 1968, in Archives d’Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 107, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau.
before the congress, the Perspectives delegation provided an account of the protests against
Humphrey and Van Do and of the severe court sentences following the March ’68 movement:

Because our struggle is linked to the struggle of all progressive students of the world, we
pay tribute to the students who fight alongside their people against colonialism, neo-
colonialism, imperialism, and reaction . . . particularly in the righteous struggles of the
people of Vietnam, Palestine, Greece, Latin America, and Europe. ¹⁶³

The primary goal of the delegation members was to inform the global student community of their
own national struggle in Tunisia, which they charged was overlooked in French media; however,
they also joined the global movement by referencing international struggles in distant lands.

Tunisian students invited UNEF representatives to student activist meetings in Paris held at the
Maison de la Tunisie,¹⁶⁴ where UNEF expressed solidarity with the March detainees. Tunisians
thus networked with other students from abroad in order to gain international support and used
international student congresses as a forum to spread news from the ground in Tunisia. These
delegations acted as conduits of information that was repressed in Tunisia or ignored by the
international press. At the same time, they articulated an internationalist position vis-à-vis
popular global movements such as those for Vietnamese and Palestinian liberation, a position
that cost the imprisoned Tunisians of March ’68 dearly.

One of the future leaders of May ’68 in France, Alain Geismar, was present in Tunisia
following the events in March. Geismar, general secretary of France’s National Union of Higher
Education (Syndicat National de l’Enseignement Supérieure or SNESup), was invited to Tunis
by a number of French coopérants¹⁶⁵—who belonged to the French Federation of National
Education (Fédération de l’Éducation Nationale or FEN)—in order to help gain the release of

¹⁶³ “Intervention de la section étudiante de Paris du GEAST au Congrès de l’UNEF de Marseille,” undated, in Fonds
Mai 68, Carton 8: dossier 14, CHS, Paris.
¹⁶⁴ The majority of Tunisian students in Paris resided at the Maison de la Tunisie, which became a site for political
¹⁶⁵ In lieu of mandatory military service, many French youth opted to serve as coopérants, meaning they would work
abroad, often as teachers or in some other development capacity.
detained students and colleagues. Geismar and a number of other French professors and teachers working in Tunis were advised by the French ambassador, Jean Sauvagnargues, not to meddle in local politics since French educators in Tunis were not covered under the same legal rights to strike as those in France. Unable to participate in the strikes, many of the French educators passively resisted by holding vapid classroom sessions in which they did not advance the curriculum, so that detained and striking students would not be punished by missing out on crucial coursework.

Others, such as Michel Foucault, who was a faculty member at the University of Tunis in 1968, resisted more actively. Foucault allowed students to draft tracts from his home in Sidi Bou Said, gave sanctuary to student leader Ahmed Othmani while authorities sought his arrest following the protest of the visits of Humphrey and Van Do, and provided deposition testimony at Othmani’s September hearing. Often criticized for his lack of engagement in politics, Foucault stated “[t]hat is what Tunisia was for me: I was forced to enter into the political debate. It wasn’t May of ’68 in France that changed me; it was March of ’68, in a third-world country.” Following his return to France, Foucault continued to support Othmani’s liberation—signing hunger strike petitions and requesting testimony from Othmani’s former French professors—and later engaged in the causes of North African immigrants in Paris.

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167 Interview with Raymond Beltran, Carcassonne, 2010. In 1968, Beltran was a representative of FEN in Tunis, of which SNESup was an affiliate.
168 Ibid.
171 See petition of the CISDHT regarding a 4 December 1972 hunger strike signed by Foucault and letter from Professor Paul Kraugi to Simone Othmani, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28 bis, BDIC, Nanterre.
172 Foucault joined intellectuals such as Gilles Deleuze and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as French and Arab students from Comités Palestine, to protest the racist killing of an Algerian adolescent in a Parisian immigrant neighborhood, the Goutte d’Or, in October 1971. See Abdellali Hajjat, “Alliances inattendues à la Goutte d’Or,” in *68: Une histoire collective*, 521-27. CISDHT also linked the Jalali affair to the long-term imprisonment of Foucault’s former student
The involvement of FEN affiliates such as Geismar and Foucault in the March events suggests that while the events themselves were organized on a local level concerning politics on an international scale, the Tunisian government’s response to March ‘68 fueled an organized, transnational network of resistance. Geismar’s visit to Tunis was no accident; his presence was requested by concerned members of FEN who were stationed in Tunis and had witnessed the government’s use of repression. The efforts of Geismar prompted James Marangé, general secretary of FEN, to obtain a meeting with Bourguiba in order to pressure the latter to look into the accusations of torture and to liberate the detainees. This transnational network of political pressure contributed to the provisional release of a number of the detainees in January 1970, though many were kept under surveillance and later re-arrested.

FEN’s actions were bolstered by forty-four university professors and intellectuals in France who also showed their support of the Tunisian students. In a telegram addressed to Bourguiba on 31 May 1968, French intellectuals—including Franco-Tunisian writer Albert Memmi, French Communist Party member and historian Albert Soboul, and philosopher Jean Wahl—noted that many of the detainees were either their friends or former students at French universities, and demanded their release and reintegration into the university system. The timing of the telegram is worth noting; it coincides with the events of May ‘68 in France, just after de Gaulle had issued a national radio broadcast calling for order to be restored following the

173 In April 1968, Bourguiba purportedly assured Marangé that he would investigate the torture accusations and liberate any detainee who had been wrongly imprisoned. Le Monde, 16 August 1968; interview with Raymond Beltran, Carcassonne, 2010.
174 On the day of Tunisia’s commemoration of armed resistance, Bourguiba announced that it was time “to turn the page” by releasing many of the condemned students. Presse de la Tunisie, 17 January 1970.
175 “Sur les journées de solidarité avec Mohamed Ben Jennet,” 12.
“intoxication and the tyranny” of the students in France. The day of de Gaulle’s speech (30 May), 400,000 Gaullist supporters gathered in Paris to give voice to the “silent majority” who denounced the youth movement in France. Thus, at the height of political activity on the French national level by Gaullists, union activists, and students, a group of intellectuals turned their attention across the Mediterranean to implore Bourguiba to liberate detained Tunisians. Yet not all of the transnational activism supported the student movements; at the same time the French intellectuals were reaching out to Tunisian students, a group of coopérants from Alsace working in the textile industry in Tunis asked the French ambassador to send a letter of solidarity to de Gaulle in denunciation of the youth movement.

As the September trial date approached, the movement to free the Tunisian 68ers led to the creation in Paris of the first Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Tunisia (Comité International pour le Sauvegarde des Droits de l’Homme en Tunisie or CISDHT). What began as a cause to liberate Ben Jennet had expanded into a demand for the generalized protection of human rights. The group enlisted members in both France and Tunisia, including the famous Martinican attorney Marcel Manville. Manville, who had defended Algerian activists in the 1950s, was unable to defend the Tunisian detainees after being expelled from Tunis before meeting with his clients. One of CISDHT’s most active members, Simone Lellouche, was the fiancé of one of the Perspectives detainees, Ahmed Othmani. Born on Tunisian soil, Lellouche held French citizenship through her father and, following her arrest in Tunis in April 1968, she was expelled to France.

176 From Discours: Général Charles de Gaulle, transcription by the Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe (Paris: CLT, 30 May 1968).
177 Gobille, Mai 68, 88.
180 See letter from Simone Lellouche to the French embassy in Tunis, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.
While this was surely a government tactic to rid the country of another nuisance, what resulted was the exportation of a tireless activist who continued her cause from France. Using her intimate knowledge of Perspectives circles and of the prison conditions of her husband and other inmates, Lellouche acted as a crucial contact point within the resistance network. In preparation for the September trials, she wrote numerous letters to French university professors requesting testimony in support of the moral character of her fiancé and other detainees. She even contacted professors in the ex-colonies, such as Jean-Maurice Verdier of the University of Algiers, who wrote on behalf of Mohamed Charfi. Information gathered from prisoners and their families regarding their academic histories enabled Lellouche to locate prominent figures who could write on their behalf. She provided them with the address of the president of the Special Court and recommended that they send copies to foreign attorneys and observers. Upon hearing the reports from the international observers, the International Federation of the League of Human Rights (Fédération Internationale des Droits de l’Homme or FIDH) joined Lellouche’s efforts by applying legal pressure from afar. FIDH wrote a letter to Bourguiba in September 1968 denouncing the torture of prisoners and warning that Bourbuiba risked “transforming [his] historical image of liberator of Tunisia into that of oppressor.”

In addition to orchestrating legal counsel and international observation during the September trials, CISDHT also sought to sway public opinion. It organized meetings at the Mutualité in Paris, giving updates on the trials and discussing strategies for action. CISDHT invited Jean-Paul Chabert, a French engineer who held work contracts in Tunis, to share his experiences in Tunisian prisons. Like Manville, Chabert had been politically engaged long

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181 Letter of support from Jean-Maurice Verdier to Mohamed Charfi, undated, in ibid.
before March 1968. Chabert’s political education began in his teenage years, as he processed French defeat to the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and later, as a member of UNEF, he supported independence in Algeria.\textsuperscript{183} As early as 1964, Chabert was involved in Perspectives circles, and he was the only French citizen to be tortured for alleged involvement in the March events; he was finally given special clemency by Bourguiba in March 1969.\textsuperscript{184} Others, such as French professor and activist Jean Gattégno, carried out a campaign of letter writing to dailies, including France’s widely circulated \textit{Le Monde}, in an effort to arouse French public sympathy for the political prisoners.\textsuperscript{185} These networks of activism, created out of the aftermath of the Ben Jennet Affair, laid the foundation for the continued support of activists detained in a related movement in February 1972 at the University of Tunis.\textsuperscript{186}

\textit{The Transnational Battle over March ‘68}

Because the PSD held a virtual monopoly on access to Tunisian media—controlling the content of the daily \textit{L’Action} and frequently seizing international papers like \textit{Le Monde}—one of the most important tasks for organizations such as CISDHT and Perspectives was to act as alternative sources of information. The PSD reported on the March events in a pamphlet \textit{La vérité sur la subversion à l’université de Tunis} (The truth about the subversion at the University of Tunis),

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\textsuperscript{184} The Observer, 22 June 1969; and CISDHT, Bulletin no. 1, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28 bis, BDIC, Nanterre.

\textsuperscript{185} Gattégno wrote a series of letters to \textit{Le Monde} from April to September 1968. \textit{Le Monde}’s editorial staff responded by noting the censorship of \textit{Le Monde} in Tunisia. See Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.

\textsuperscript{186} The webs created out of the March events also proved vital to a series of demonstrations in February 1972, set off by the sentencing of Simone Lellouche Othmani for her involvement in March ‘68.
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widely referred to as the *livre blanc*, which *L’Action* published as a full-page article in August 1968, just in time to influence public opinion before the September trials.  

As the March events unfolded, Bourguiba was preparing for the highly anticipated visit of Ivoirian leader Félix Houphouët-Boigny, hoping to quiet the storm of activism and to preserve his reputation in the international community. On 20 March 1968, the day of the visit, the head of national education announced early spring vacation for students and the universities were cordoned off from the rest of the city. Instead of reporting on the student strikes, *L’Action* noted that the Maison de la Tunisie in Paris celebrated Tunisian independence by expressing “unwavering attachment to the figure of President Bourguiba, artisan of independence.” Much was made of the presidential visit and the commemoration of national independence, while the university strikes and police crackdown were not reported until twelve days later. On 27 and 28 March, *L’Action* published commentary from Defense Minister al-Bahi al-Adgham deploring the recruitment of high school students into the movement and claiming that violence had been limited to student-on-student acts.

To counter the PSD’s narrative of events, the CISDHT, with the help of left-wing French publisher François Maspero, released *Liberté pour les condamnés de Tunis: La vérité sur la répression en Tunisie* (Liberty for the convicted of Tunis: The truth about repression in Tunisia). Jean-Marie Domenach, editor of the political journal *Esprit*, penned the introduction, evoking his anticolonialist struggles alongside Tunisian leaders such as Ahmad bin Salah in the 1950s in order to hold the country’s new leaders accountable to democracy.

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188 “Tunisie: Le divorce étudiant.”  
My anticolonialist past does not grant me any right to intervene in Tunisian affairs. But for the same reasons that I was anticolonialist then, today I must give the same assistance to those who suffer for their people that we gave to the nationalist activists who have since become their persecutors. But first I must give them the voice they are refused in Tunisia . . . It is not because [Tunisian leaders] became ministers, ambassadors or government officials that we call them out. But it is our duty to insist that they answer us by refuting us, or by re-establishing human rights. Until now they have not spoken; we will not be silent.192

Much like the FIDH had claimed that Bourguiba’s Special Court risked transforming his image from liberator to oppressor, Domenach called upon Tunisia’s nationalist leadership to make good on its 1950s rhetoric of independence. He also described activists living in France in 1968 as messengers, suggesting that though Tunisians were intellectually capable of speaking for themselves, they faced severe consequences in their homeland for criticizing the government, which incarcerated them and judged them guilty a priori. The spreading of suppressed information, often conducted from France, became an integral part of the movement. Even the act of free speech had become revolutionary.

The rest of the pamphlet recounts the Ben Jennet Affair and the subsequent March movement from the activists’ perspective. It includes letters from Tunis written to the CISDHT in Paris detailing prison conditions as well as excerpts from the September hearings that record descriptions of torture and the lack of due process at trial. These portions of testimony illustrate the contradiction of the court’s position: defendants were accused of supporting a “fanatical Muslim” (Ben Jennet) who allegedly pillaged a Jewish neighborhood, while they were simultaneously cast as consorting with Jews and questioned regarding their Muslim faith.193 The information provided by the CISDHT countered claims in L’Action that “taking up the 5 June cause of Ben Jennet, who had incited fanatical gangs to burn and pillage in excited racist passion,

192 Ibid., 3-4.
193 Ibid, 36-40.
would constitute a grave offense against civil rights.”

According to *L’Action*, Tunisian activists were “maniacs under the influence of lying propaganda [and] following orders from abroad.” The CISDHT pamphlet published in Paris presented an alternative truth to the PSD narrative, one that would have been extremely difficult to articulate from Tunis.

The PSD went to great lengths to argue that the activists were influenced from afar, whether by Maoists, Jews, French imperialists, or Ba’thists. The fact that the March ’68 movement was launched by pro-Palestinian activists in June 1967 did not stop the Special Court or the PSD-dominated media from casting its members as both Zionists and fanatical Muslims when convenient. The *livre blanc* claimed that dissidence stemmed from three major foreign sources; Ba’thists took orders from extremists in Damascus and Beirut; Perspectivistes were “zealots of Mao Zedong”; and Tunisian Communists were puppets of the French Communist Party. The PSD falsely linked the Tunisian movement to French riots in May 1968 as part of a foreign-led plan in which French activist Geismar “traveled to Tunis where he was able to contact Maoists.” By creating a three-headed monster, the PSD laid the ground for the September show trials, putting itself and the Special Court in position to condemn diverse members of the political opposition by labeling them all anti-Tunisian (i.e., foreign). French authorities employed similar strategies when identifying May 68ers such as the German-born Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Senegalese Omar Blondin-Diop—both of whom were expelled from the country—as anti-French subversive agitators.

In December 1968, Perspectives pointed out the anachronism of the PSD’s charge that Geismar and other French May ’68 agitators had infiltrated and influenced the Tunisian March

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195 Ibid.
196 *La vérité sur la subversion à l’université de Tunis*.
197 Ibid, 43.
‘68 movement, which actually preceded both Geismar’s April arrival in Tunis and the events of May in France. In August, *Le Monde* published an article revising the *livre blanc* narrative in which James Marangé, general secretary of FEN, asserted Geismar’s role as SNESup representative rather than Maoist zealot. The discursive battle between *L’Action* and the PSD from Tunis on the one hand, and various Franco-Tunisian and French sources from Paris on the other, took on a transnational dimension in which the battleground over narratives of the Tunisian movement had spread to France in much the same way that the March ’68 protests themselves had resonated across the Mediterranean. The communication networks between human rights groups like the CISDHT and the FIDH, and intellectual-political organizations like Perspectives, enabled activists who had escaped detention to tell the stories of the March events. Observers at the September hearings were able to record details of the trials and family members and foreign attorneys released information on prison conditions. The contact between activists in France and Tunisia created a web of resistance and information flow that contributed to the international front against Bourguiba’s repression.

*Concluding Thoughts on Postcolonial Transnationalism*

By drawing historical connections between March ’68 and Tunisia’s colonial past, and tracing transnational networks in the postcolonial period, I have demonstrated that, in some ways, the process of decolonization strengthened certain Franco-Tunisian bonds, at least in the realm of activism. In order to successfully articulate a position outside the menacing controls of

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198 “Mémoires de militants,” *Perspectives Tunisiennes*, brochure no. 3 (December 1968): 14.
199 *Le Monde*, 16 August 1968.
200 For further discussion on the question of ruptures between historical periods, see Julia A. Clancy-Smith, “Ruptures? Governance in Husaynid-Colonial Tunisia, c. 1870-1914,” in *Colonial and Post-Colonial Governance of Islam*, ed. Marcel Maussen, Veit Bader, and Annelies Moors (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 65-88
authoritative governance, activists turned to the former metropole as an information relay center and a hub of political activity. Expulsions of French coopérants and Tunisian activists holding French citizenship did not quash activism; rather, they often led to the exportation of activism to the relative safety of Paris, where it could be carried out in ways that were not possible in Tunis. In addition, the presence of Tunisian students at international gatherings such as the Sofia Congress and UNEF’s Marseilles Congress in 1968 provided opportunities for young activists to garner support for local initiatives as well as to express solidarity with the global anti-imperialist movement. And while Tunisian workers and intellectuals did not join forces in activism until the 1970s, Bourguiba’s national education campaign leveled some class disparity as an increasing number of rural Tunisians earned university scholarships. Because of the reforms, coupled with Tunisia’s colonial ties to the French education system, the university became a space for both trans-class and transnational interaction through established organizational structures and proliferating networks of communication that facilitated activism against the repression of the March ’68 movement.

If the “Ben Jennet Affair” and its subsequent events can be classified as a “postcolonial situation,” it is not because, as the famous French anthropologist Georges Balandier has claimed, “we are all, in some form or another, living in a postcolonial situation.” Rather, it is more localizable and less abstract than that. And unlike histories that focus on a global “spirit of ’68,” this chapter has argued that the Tunisian movement transcended national boundaries in very concrete ways, from the physical presence of Humphrey and Van-Do in Tunis to the letters written from Simone Lellouche Othmani in Paris to the French ambassador in Tunis.

Bourguiba’s educational policies contributed to the expansion of the ranks of a class of educated

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202 Horn, The Spirit of ’68.
Tunisians with scarce employment opportunities but with ongoing intellectual connections in France. Moreover, repression of international anti-imperialist movements at the local level in Tunis led to the exportation of the movement to France, and to the merging of its goals with calls for democratic freedoms and human rights. In some ways, as the practice of the movement became more international, its actual political goals became narrower. Members of the CISDHT, which was born out of March ’68, would play instrumental roles in the creation of human rights organizations for penal reform and freedom of expression in the 1970s and beyond.\textsuperscript{203} The response to Bourguibist repression would not have been possible without vast networks in which Tunisians on the ground filtered information to Paris that often made its way back to Tunis.

\textsuperscript{203} The LTDH, created in 1977, is still in existence, as is the Tunisian section of Amnesty International in 1981, both of which included former members of the CISDHT.
And when the rain makes a quagmire,
Of the smallest earth path,
You’re splattered with mud from head to toe,
You’re never clean in Nanterre.
[Et quand la pluie fait un bourbier,
Du plus petit chemin de terre,
On est souillé d’la tête aux pieds,
On n’est jamais propr’à Nanterre.]
From “Aux bidonvilles de Nanterre” (“In the Bidonvilles of Nanterre”) song by Michel Murty and Monique Brienne, 1968.204

Introduction

Between industrialization, war mobilization, and reconstruction efforts, France experienced a number of shifting immigration patterns in the tumultuous 20th century. During World War One, for example, in addition to conscripting colonial soldiers for military service, France and Britain imported labor from the colonies to offset their devastated workforces. Somewhat surprisingly, the largest single group of immigrant laborers in France during this period came from China, rather than from one of the imperial colonies.205 Each new wave of immigrants brought with it new sets of challenges as these groups were differentiated from local populations that often felt culturally or economically threatened. Just as colonial fighting units experienced unequal training, outfitting, and treatment, so too did colonial laborers who had been brought to the metropole during the Great War. With strict work contracts, a wide cultural gap, and a number of

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205 Over 140,000 Chinese were recruited to work in France for British expeditionary forces and French defense companies toward the Allied war effort. See Xu Guoqi, Strangers on the Western Front: Chinese Workers in the Great War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 48. For the same period, Tyler Stovall cites figures of 330,000 workers from within Europe and another 222,793 from the French colonies combined, with Algeria topping that group at 78,556. See Tyler Stovall, "The Color Line Behind the Lines: Racial Violence in France During the Great War," American Historical Review 103:3 (June 1998): 741-42.
violent attacks against immigrant populations, the vast majority of these workers were immediately sent home at the close of the war.\footnote{On inequalities in the military, see Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). Tyler Stovall notes that some African soldiers remembered their wartime participation positively. By contrast, immigrant workers experienced more overt racism from French workers who viewed them as a threat to their jobs and their women, and blamed them for enabling more French men to die at the frontlines while they worked in relative safety. See Tyler Stovall, "The Color Line Behind the Lines: Racial Violence in France During the Great War," *American Historical Review* 103:3 (June 1998): 766-67 and "Colour Blind France?: Colonial Workers During the First World War," *Race and Class* 35:2 (1993): 33-55.}

Though European immigrants from Italy, Poland, Spain, and Portugal migrated to France en masse in the interwar period, the next great wave of immigration from the former colonies did not come until after World War Two. The law of 20 September 1947 granted French citizenship to Algerian colonial subjects, allowing for free movement between France and Algeria. The law led to an increase in the Algerian population in France from 20,000 in 1946 to 210,000 in 1954 at the onset of the Algerian War, and another wave of Algerian immigrants resumed again between 1962 and 1975, when the Algerian population in France reached 758,000.\footnote{Max Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism and Citizenship in Modern France* (Routledge, 1992), p. 41-2.} In addition to Algerians, the French government recruited workers for post-war reconstruction in heavy numbers from Morocco, Tunisia, Spain, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and West Africa, among others. The cheap labor of immigrants, primarily North African, contributed to a long period of economic prosperity in France after 1945 known as the "thirty glorious years." Already by 1968, the French government began implementing immigration policies favoring “those more likely to adapt to the norms of French society,” and began to limit strictly the immigration of North Africans whose numbers had swelled to almost 1 million by the late 1960s. This led to restrictive immigration policies known as the 1972 Fontanet-Marcellin decrees—to be explored in greater detail in Chapter 6—which limited residence to workers with full-time employment and encouraged repatriation. With the oil crisis of 1973, France's period of rapid industrialization, as
well as its desire for immigrant labor, had attenuated. The 1970s government crackdown on immigration was accompanied by a rise in race-related violence against immigrant communities. This racist violence was met with a strong anti-racist movement that had its origins in an interesting confluence of intellectuals and immigrant workers at the crossroads of the university campus and the immigrant shantytowns of Nanterre in the 1960s.

Founded in 1964 and constructed as a new modern campus by 1966, the University of Paris 10 Nanterre was in many was an experiment in modern higher education. It was designed to uncork the bottle-neck created in Paris due to rapidly expanding populations of university students in France, which had experienced a surge from 175,000 in 1958 to over 500,000 by 1968. Just outside the inner walls of Paris, the university at Nanterre was built in a Northwest banlieue (suburb) in the heart of working-class immigrant populations. With dorm-room vistas overlooking some of the poorest ghettos and bidonvilles (shantytowns) on the outskirts of Paris, students entering this campus directly confronted the harsh realities of working-class and immigrant life. By March 1968, with Daniel Cohn-Bendit's launching of the March 22 Movement, Nanterre had become the locus of student activism that would soon envelop Paris, and spread throughout several of France's provincial centers.

Narratives on 1968 in Paris are in abundance, with the historian Julian Jackson citing Michel Foucault's characterization of it as "a great mystery," Charles de Gaulle claiming it to be "unseizable," and Jackson attributing this to "an excess of [interpretations]." While this is certainly true, Jackson's critiques of the various perspectives on May—"it reduces '1968' to a few charismatic figures"; it "entirely ignores factory strikes"— make it seem that he is in search of a

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208 Daniel Singer notes that these figures were for registered students and estimates that, by 1968, there were actually more like 600,000 total students including unregistered. See Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 2002), 45.

grand master narrative. It is my estimation that this is too tall a task for any one historian, any one narrative. Mai 68 is nothing more than the sum of its parts, and this chapter is but one fragment that, combined with others, can construct a unifying picture of the movement. Using mai 68 as a lens through which to view France's postcolonial history, this perspective applies aspects of the approach of Ahmed Boubeker and Abdellali Hajjat, who sought to salvage the history of France's postcolonial immigrants that is under threat of being written out of nationalist French histories:

It's a question of encounters between immigration and French society which allow us to avoid [replacing one national metanarrative for another]: the intersection seen as a patchwork, a conflicting imbrication of inside and outside, a history of fragments for which it is essential to reconstitute the signposts by emphasizing linkage and comparison.\(^\text{210}\)

The answer to "what was mai 68"? cannot be easily located in one monograph or by focusing on a singular perspective; but this chapter will demonstrate that mai 68 was directly linked to third-world movements, and that it consisted of several postcolonial dimensions involving immigrant intellectuals and workers, and a French leftist identification with immigrant workers as revolutionary symbols.

There have been recent efforts by scholars to focus attention on the understudied 1960s activism in the Third World.\(^\text{211}\) However, these tend to locate third-world activism outside Europe when, in fact, in many ways metropolitan centers in Europe often provided fertile ground for such activism. The conjuncture of the constructed and state-produced contact zone in Nanterre, in addition to the impact of the recent memory of the Algerian War, and the development of immigrant workers as revolutionary symbols, created a veritable "postcolonial


situation" in France in May 1968. This chapter will highlight the postcolonial dimensions of mai 68 by locating its specific connections to France's colonial past, and identifying the historical roots of what Alec Hargreaves diagnosed regarding the 2005 riots of Parisian banlieues: "deep-seated socio-economic inequalities exacerbated by entrenched patterns of discrimination against immigrant minorities originating in former colonies." To do this I will focus on the role of postcolonial immigrants, both intellectuals and workers, in mai 68 and draw connections to anti-imperialist sentiments of the era like the anti-Vietnam War movement and the struggle for Palestinian statehood. I argue that these converged to lead the French radical left to an identification with postcolonial immigrant workers as revolutionary symbols, and that this ultimately contributed to the birth of the immigrant workers' movement in France that flourished in the 1970s. While I focus on the activism of immigrants from France's former colonies in general in 1968, I devote particular attention to activism specific to Tunisian and Senegalese immigrants in order to show the transnational connections to the specific 1968 movements in those regions.

Though the causes and origins of mai 68 were indeed multi-dimensional, it is clear that the cultural and societal intersection created by the physical location of the University Paris 10 played a significant role in student politicization. Henri Lefebvre, the famous Marxist sociologist at Paris 10 whom many credit for influencing mai 68 agitators, noted the impact of the bidonvilles on students at Nanterre.

Right now [Nanterre] contains misery, shantytowns, excavations for an express subway line, low-income housing projects for workers, industrial enterprises. This is a desolate and strange landscape...Situated in the midst of a civilization which, from the City of antiquity to the historic city of the European West, is based on the City, it might be described as a place of damnation.

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The suburbs and their shantytowns are more than a sad spectacle—they constitute a void...Nanterre is marked by a two-fold segregation—functional and social, industrial and urban. Functionalized by initial design, culture was transported to a ghetto of students and teachers situated in the midst of other ghettos filled with the 'abandoned,' subject to the compulsions of production, and driven into an extra-urban existence.213

The location of Nanterre in a bizarre urban but not-quite-Parisian setting made for an interesting meeting point between France's privileged bourgeois youth and its most underprivileged classes of workers. Nanterre represented neo-capitalism, the melding of industry and education, and a new state project (the university) to help meet France's economic needs. It is not quite surprising then, that Nanterre provided the launching pad for the first Bidonvilles Action Committee in the Paris region.214 As Kristin Ross has noted, because of this student-immigrant worker dynamic in Nanterre, "May '68, in fact, marks the emergence onto the political scene of the travailleur immigré (immigrant worker) in French society."215

Beginning with Yvan Gastaut's path-breaking work on immigrants in 1993, scholars have indeed begun to look into this neglected aspect of 1968.216 Gastaut opened up new frontiers and paved the way for scholars like Laure Pitti, Daniel Gordon, Xavier Vigna, Ahmed Boubeker, and Abdeljalli Hajjat to pose a number of important questions about the role of foreign communities in the events.217 Pitti has pointed to certain cases where class identification trumped national


214 "Nous, la pègre du Comité 'bidonviles,'" 27 May 1968, in Fonds Mai 68 en region parisienne, F delta 1061 (11)/2, Archives de la Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), Nanterre.


identity, particularly in the case of Algerian strikers at the Renault-Billancourt factory, who viewed themselves first and foremost as workers with common causes. Boubeker and Hajjat's recent important work is an admittedly political one in that it calls for a "political history of postcolonial immigration," which they believe deserves its place as a major part of French national history. Yet for all of its attention to "(post)colonial immigration," the edited volume never actually defines this term. For example, the contribution to the edited volume of Vigna, one of the preeminent scholars of immigrant workers' history in France, devotes as much energy to the story of Portuguese and Spanish workers as it does to immigrants from France's colonies. This begs the question: just what was so postcolonial about his immigrant protagonists, other than the fact that they lived and worked in France in 1968, well after France had lost the bulk of its overseas territories in Africa and Indochina? If that is the case, and if "postcolonial" is used in the strictly chronological sense (after French empire), then there are still interesting connections to France's colonial past related to this migration yet to be made in the scholarship on French immigration. There is still a need to clearly distinguish between different groups of immigrants whose political interest in 1968 differed dramatically across groups, and much of the early work on immigrants fails to include immigrant intellectuals. Even works

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dedicated to so-called "postcolonial" immigrant workers do not clearly establish how these differ from other foreign workers, or even "colonial workers."

To date, Daniel Gordon has written the most extensive and thoroughly researched work on the topic, "putting immigration back into the history of 1968," and "[putting] 1968 back into the history of immigration."222 This chapter is not so ambitious as Gordon's broadly focused monograph, and will be limited to what I term "postcolonial immigrants" and certain postcolonial aspects of 1968, which specifically link mai 68 to France's colonial past. Gordon uses the term "immigrant' in its simplest and broadest sense, to mean anyone born outside metropolitan France who subsequently moved there," whereas I am particularly interested in immigrants from France's former territorial possessions, to whom I refer as part of the process of "postcolonial immigration."223 I argue that their experiences are informed by their specific relationship to France as a former colonial power, and that this differentiates their experiences and roles as potential activists from other subgroups such as Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, and Polish immigrants.

In addition, this chapter enters immigrant intellectuals (i.e., students from the former colonies) into the discussion that tends to focus exclusively on immigrant workers. It also will demonstrate how the location of the University of Nanterre in immigrant-populated banlieues coincided with new intellectual currents on the New Left that represented a pre-Subaltern Studies subaltern turn toward postcolonial immigrants as objects of fascination and revolutionary symbols. Increasingly visible bidonvilles in Paris intersected with these intellectual currents—Althusserian-influenced Western and urban versions of Maoism, Henri Lefebvre's and Guy

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223 Gordon, Immigrants and Intellectuals, 12-13. He rightfully cites the tendency in the scholarship to focus exclusively on the Algerian case as a stand-in for the universal immigrant experience and to equate immigrants with immigrant workers.
Debord's neo-capitalist urban "situations," and the third worldism of Alfred Sauvy—to produce a strong interest in actively engaging in immigrant causes, and in viewing metropolitan France as a site of global protest. Given this convergence in 1968, these contact zones and encounters between the French New Left, immigrant intellectuals, and French and immigrant workers can be seen less as "improbable encounters," as some have argued, and more as actively-sought connections by actors living in a particular historical moment that produced them.  

*October 17, 1961 and Charonne: Restaging Algeria in 1968*

So what was so postcolonial about mai 68 in France? To begin, the recent memory of the Algerian War (1954-1962) and the French police brutality of 17 October 1961 and 8 February 1962 (which came to be known as "Charonne") played crucial roles in the ways that participants and spectators experienced and viewed the events of mai 68. Events and symbols from the Algerian War had driven a wedge in French society that was far from reunited after Charles de Gaulle's solution to the "Algerian Question": the 1962 Evian Accords that brought the conflict to an end. Certain symbols from the war were strategically restaged and redeployed in 1968 by both the right and the left, either to negatively depict a fascistic state (by the left), or to rally French pride against the crumbling of French morals and world power (by the right), and demonstrated the lingering pain of the war and the memory of France's last gasp of formal colonial power.

In October 1961, members of the Federation of France of the National Liberation Front (Fédération de France du Front de Libération Nationale [FF-FLN]) organized a protest against

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the government curfew imposed on Algerian immigrants, as well as to remonstrate against the French occupation of Algeria. Though figures vary regarding the numbers of actual participants, police recorded over 12,000 arrests on 17 October, and anywhere from 31 to 200 protestors (mostly Algerians) were killed by police and their bodies shamefully tossed into the Seine.\footnote{226} Former member of the FF-FLN and 17 October participant, "Kader," testified that he was held for 33 days and tortured with “hot iron rods to learn the names of leaders,” and finally deported to Algeria.\footnote{227} Kader’s commentary and experiences as an Algerian resistor living in Paris demonstrate the power of famed French anthropologist, Georges Balandier’s call to view the “colonial situation” as a totality.\footnote{228} In a spatial paradox, French oppression of Algerian resistance “extended” all the way to the domestic front and, according to one member of the FF-FLN, Algerian resistance groups named France the seventh and final “wilaya” or province over which Algerians must fight for independence.\footnote{229} The French police force applied torture tactics domestically that the military implemented abroad, right-wing vigilante groups like the Secret Army Organization (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète [OAS]) operated in France and in Algeria, and revolutionary activity likewise extended beyond the political boundaries separating metropole and colony.

While the events of October 1961 did not receive wide public attention until the trials of police perpetrators in the 1990s—followed by politicized historiographic disputes over its meaning—the state-sponsored oppression of October 1961 would be repeated against anti-war

\footnote{227}{Quoted by Jean-Louis Hurst, “Ils y étaient, ils se souviennent...” \textit{Libération}, 17-18 October 1981.}
\footnote{228}{Though somewhat dated, the merits of Balandier’s concept have been revisited and revivified in the recent work of colonial historian Frederick Cooper. See Cooper, “The Rise, Fall, and Rise of Colonial Studies, 1951-2001,” in \textit{Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 33-55.}
\footnote{229}{Kader’s experiences support the notion of the Fédération de France as a seventh “wilaya”, or battle zone for FLN resistors, the other six being located in Algeria proper. See Ali Haroun, \textit{La Septième Wilaya: La Guerre du FLN en France, 1954-1962} (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1986) and Joshua Cole, “Remembering the Battle of Paris...”, \textit{op. cit.}, 33.}
French activists near the Charonne metro station on 8 February 1962, and again throughout 1968.\footnote{This debate includes leftist Jean-Luc Einaudi’s account of the events as a “massacre” ordered from top police prefect Maurice Papon, in which he was accused by conservative historian, Jean-Paul Brunet, of exaggerating the extent of police brutality. See Jean-Luc Einaudi, \textit{Octobre 1961: un massacre à Paris} (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001); Einaudi, \textit{La Bataille de Paris: 17 Octobre 1961} (Paris: Seuil, 1991); and Jean-Paul Brunet, \textit{Police contre FLN: Le drame d’octobre 1961} (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).} On 8 February, left-leaning French protestors organized a demonstration against OAS and police violence targeting Algerians in France. The demonstration resulted in the deaths of eight French protestors who were trampled by riot police near the Charonne metro station.\footnote{Accounts vary from eight to nine “Charonne” victims.} While the police brutality was relatively mild compared to 17 October, political organizations like the French Communist Party staged a public outcry for the fallen victims of Charonne, forever memorializing the tragedy with a mass funeral procession, which gathered hundreds of thousands of workers, students, and activists across the French left, to march from the Place de la République to Place de la Nation on 13 February 1962.\footnote{Jim House and Neil MacMaster, \textit{Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory} (Oxford University Press, 2006), 250-251.} While the event displayed a new solidarity among a fractured French left, it also marked a shift in French attitudes away from the radical right's position on keeping Algeria French at all costs, including now-publicized forms of terrorism: the OAS had killed over 1,600 people in Algeria in extra-military actions in 1961-62 and brought the war home to the streets of France.\footnote{Todd Shepard, \textit{The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 85-86.}

The events of October 1961 and February 1962 established the participation of immigrants in protest movements on French soil, as both direct actors and as symbols. Not only were immigrants, especially from war-torn Algeria, heavily active in the Algerian independence movement and later in French labor movements, they were also crucial as symbols of identification for rebellious French nationals. Jim House and Neil MacMaster’s work on the Paris 1961 massacre draws concrete examples of the uses of Charonne at PCF-organized
commemorations, arguing that French leftist political parties identified more with Charonne than with 17 October since Charonne came to symbolize a united, anti-fascist left front, while 17 October witnessed little direct participation by the French left. Kristin Ross affirms this for its recasting in 1968, finding that the violence of 17 October 1961 became confused for that of 8 February 1962, and eventually merged into one metonymic event known simply as "Charonne." In May 1968, Charonne was deployed as a symbol of police brutality in slogans appearing in leftist newspapers and tracts deploiring the national riot police (Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité [CRS]).

In calling for public support for their causes, 68ers in France invoked the memories of police barbarism from the early 1960s. They also linked the local police to the atrocities of the Algerian War, which were laden with tales of torture and rape by French soldiers and vigilante groups. In a May 1968 pamphlet signed by the United Bronze Workers, an arm of the General Confederation of Labor (Confédération Générale du Travail [CGT]), agitators recalled Charonne in claiming that the state was responsible for the current violent clashes between police and students. Charonne was similarly referenced by leading student activist, Daniel Cohn-Bendit,

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234 Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *op. cit.*, 256.
236 See Kristin Ross, *May ’68 and Its Afterlives*, 47-48. Ross cites graffiti and slogans from 1968 in Paris such as “Nouveau Charonne à Paris” and “CRS: Assassin de Charonne.”
237 The Djamila Boupacha case was one highly publicized example taken up by Simone de Beauvoir, who was appalled by Boupacha's story. During questioning as an FLN militant in 1960, Boupacha was sexually assaulted and tortured for more than one month of captivity. Using Boupacha's case, de Beauvoir garnered public opinion to denounce the gruesome French war practices and end conflict in Algeria. Prominent Tunisian attorney, Gisèle Halimi, took on several similar cases of Algerian women. See Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi et al., *Djamila Boupacha* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962).
who cited Charonne as a moment of solidarity for the Algerian cause, as well as an early example of “SS tactics” that were repeated by the CRS in May and June 1968.239

The 3 May Action Committee also referenced Charonne in a document entitled “War Gas!” to connect the government repression of 1968 with the atrocities of the Algerian War.

Material Used by the CRS for Repression of Demonstrators...
Combat gas C.N. and C.B. (based on chlorine and bromide compounds already currently used by Americans in Vietnam; they cause asphyxiation and death).
-Disabling gas.
These devices have been used this week in the Latin Quarter for attacks in cafés, in the subway, buses, stores, and apartment houses.

Now It Is Clear!
We are the guinea pigs for the experiments of a sadistic police who already has Charonne and the tortures of Algeria to its credit. Thousands of youth who came to demonstrate have been harried, tracked down, bestially beaten.240

The 3 May Action Committee, emerging out of a revolutionary meeting called on the campus of the University of the Sorbonne on the same day, conflated the police brutality of 8 February, 1962 with the military and OAS activity during the Algerian War. This evocation of Charonne also spilled into images of American chemical warfare in Vietnam, demonstrating the malleability of the metonym that evolved into a general trope for identification with anti-imperialism. Famous 68er Alain Geismar—leader of the teachers’ union and member of the Proletarian Left, who was a Parisian student during the events of 17 October 1961—also recalled the brutality of Charonne in 1972. Following the death of Maoist militant, Pierre Overney, who died during a factory strike, Geismar drew comparisons between the neo-fascist OAS and the CRS police forces.241 From at least 1961 to 1965, Geismar was active in the anti-imperialist

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240 From “War Gas!”, distributed by the May 3 Action Committees on May 13, 1968, found in Alain Schnapp and Pierre Vidal-Naquet (eds.), op. cit., 183.
Unified Socialist Party (Parti socialiste unifié [PSU]), which clashed regularly with the OAS over Algerian independence. But the French left was not the only group to confuse Charonne with 17 October, or to deploy it in condemning police brutality. One Tunisian student who was active in 1968 while studying in France described how important Charonne was to Tunisian political consciousness, stating that Tunisians participated in, and were injured at, Charonne in support of Algerian independence. In all likelihood this activist had confused the 17 October massacres with Charonne; regardless, his identification was clearly with Charonne while making no mention of the much more fatal events of 17 October. The Palestine Committees—a group of pan-Arab nationalists and French Maoists—also drew on Charonne when reaching out to immigrant communities in the Parisian quarter the Goutte d’Or who were dealing with the racist killing of an Algerian teenage boy in October 1971. Charonne came to symbolize state repression and fascistic violence, in addition to leftist solidarity with marginalized groups.

By 1968, Charonne represented a moral victory for anti-colonialists over police brutality and leftist solidarity against fascism; but it also evoked the power of the masses, as estimates of as many as 500,000 people gathered on 13 February 1962 to mourn the dead. While historians such as Ross, House, and MacMaster have uncovered many of the complexities of 17 October, Charonne, and their “afterlives,” it should not be overlooked that Charonne also acted as a symbol of the power of the people to organize, and not simply a slogan to depict a fascist and repressive police force. Underlying the recollections of Charonne in 1968 and in the early 1970s was an implied challenge to police and vigilante oppression through mass organization, and a
rejection of the violence of France’s colonial past in its postcolonial present. These again played out as tensions heightened in 1968, culminating when Prime Minister Georges Pompidou appealed for reconciliation with former right-wing French General Commander of the OAS during the Algerian War, Raoul Salan. Salan, along with a number of other OAS veterans (some of whom were convicted assassins) were amnestied on 15 June 1968, while leftist activists like Geismar were being imprisoned and several radical-left groups, including Cohn-Bendit's March 22 Movement, were suppressed by government measures.245 The events related to conflict in Algeria of the early 1960s had polarized French society, re-energizing the right while galvanizing the French left in unprecedented displays of unity, however brief.

Anti-Imperialism: From Algeria to Palestine and Vietnam

Beyond the memories of the Algerian war, mai 68 drew on the anti-colonial language of the anti-Vietnam War movement and the struggle for Palestinian liberation.246 The confusion and division among French students on the Algerian question transferred directly over to the Palestinian question in the 1960s. UNEF, France's largest national student union, failed to take a position on Algeria until six years of combat in 1960, when it called for peace and a vague diplomatic solution.247 The same can be said for Palestine when in 1966, UNEF faced extreme criticism from competing international organizations—like the Prague-based International

245 See Revolt in France (New York: Les Evans, August 1968), 114-115; and “Déclaration de 15 organisations contre les mesures arbitraires du gouvernement,” AGEL, 21June 1968, in Fonds Mai 68, carton 12, Centre d'Histoire Sociale, Paris. Todd Shepard notes that the release of former OAS operatives may have been part of larger negotiations by de Gaulle in a 29 May meeting in Baden-Baden with General Jacques Massu—famous for his victory in the 1957 Battle of Algiers—to secure his support in case of an attempted government overthrow during the May events. Shepard, "Algerian Reveries on the Far Right: Thinking about Algeria to Change France," op. cit., 78.


247 Telegram from UGET in Tunis to UNEF, 27 October 1960, in Archives d’Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 130, Archives Nationales (AN), Fontainebleau.
Student Union (UIE) on the left, and the moderate Leiden-based International Student Conference (CIE)—for abstaining from a vote on Palestine.\textsuperscript{248} This type of indecision contributed to the proliferation of new student groups with firmer anti-colonial positions on such issues, and instances of double-affiliations with both UNEF and more self-assured, often left-leaning groups. But with the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, UNEF felt it necessary to order a special commission named from within its ranks to report on the issue. Under pressure from several groups in the pro-Palestinian international network of student groups such as FEANF, AEMNAF, UGEMA, UGET, as well as internal pressure from certain strong UNEF sections like Lyons, the report called for the co-existence of Israel and Palestine, and cautioned against giving in to pressures from Jewish student organizations, or the general French population's pro-Israeli sympathies based on France's own World War Two history.\textsuperscript{249}

But perhaps most interesting in the report's argumentation was that it called for a removal of race from the Palestinian question, claiming that anti-racist sympathies for Israel would cloud objective readings of "the imperialist character of [Israeli] interventions" and concluded that UNEF "must maintain its staunchly anti-imperialist positions, whether this be in Vietnam or in the Middle East."\textsuperscript{250} The authors of the report felt that racializing the conflict in the Arab world would lead to a more favorable reading of two of the most egregious practitioners of postcolonial, neo-imperialism: the U.S. and Israel. Interestingly, in this case their devotion to anti-imperialist causes like Vietnamese independence trumped other concerns, including anti-racism. After the 1954 French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the loss of the imperial crown jewel

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{248} "Rapport présenté par Jean-Louis Peninou, délégué de l'UNEF, sur la XIIe C.I.E., Nairobi, 17-27 August 1966," in Archives d'Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 110, AN, Fontainebleau.
\item\textsuperscript{249} "Le Problème palistinien: Rapport de la Commission Internationale," 9 Juin 1967, in Archives d'Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 92, AN, Fontainebleau. This report directly references the Vichy era and links France's world-war two past with anti-Semitism.
\item\textsuperscript{250} "Le Problème palistinien: Rapport de la Commission Internationale," 9 Juin 1967, in Archives d'Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 92, AN, Fontainebleau.
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Algeria in 1962, joining the anti-Vietnam War movement was a chance at redemption for French youth to finally and unequivocally denounce imperialism in its American form. As Daniel Gordon points out, the turn to third worldism that characterized this period on the French left was in many ways a reaction to the failures of the Communist Party, which "had been ambiguous in its relationship to French colonialism, failing to make a clear stand in support of Algerian independence until it was too late."251 These political positions on international events were a far cry from the purely corporatist (i.e., material) concerns to which leaders in Tunisia and Senegal attempted to limit their national student unions. UNEF's role extended well beyond advocating for the material needs of its members and, after grappling with Algeria, inserted itself, however reluctantly, into international-political debates. Not only had finally taking a position on Algeria firmed up UNEF's commitment to anti-imperialism, it also created opportunities for contact and coordinated efforts with Palestinian-friendly student unions like UGET, AEMNAF, UGEMA, and GUPS, which identified with Arab and anti-imperialist causes.

If UNEF was hesitant to declare support for Palestinians, many on the radical French left were not. Ali Mehrez, an Egyptian activist in the Arab League, successfully forged ties with French leftists during the May-June events in Paris. With the participation of Trotskyists from the Revolutionary Communist Youth (Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire [JCR]), Marxist-Leninists from the Federation of Revolutionary Students (Fédération des Étudiants Révolutionnaire [FER], and anarchists, Mehrez incited a pro-Palestinian protest outside of the Israeli embassy in Paris on 5 June 1968.252 The general sentiment of contestation and political action in Paris spread to immigrant neighborhoods like Belleville—once known as a

multicultural community living in relative harmony—where North African Jews and Muslims
violently attacked each other in early June 1968, and certain leftist youth supported North
African communities during the intervention by French riot police. Given the large
populations of North Africans brought to France's borders by what they deemed a neo-capitalist
system, it is not surprising that students on the radical left would find affinities with postcolonial
immigrant causes, and to view a pro-Palestinian position as part of an international, anti-
imperialist cause.

Yet even more so than the Palestinian question, Vietnam preoccupied the minds of
France's activist youth. If the consensus on Palestine was tenuous, anti-imperialist positions on
Vietnam were much easier to establish. These sensibilities were evidenced in the Grassroots
Committee on Vietnam, created in 1967 by French Maoists to break from the PCF's
comparatively soft position calling for peace in Vietnam, as opposed to outright national
independence and victory. Protest of war in Vietnam was generalized through UNEF's anti-
imperialist stance, and lay at the heart of early calls for student action in Cohn-Bendit's March 22
Movement, which was set off in Nanterre in support of a detained student who had broken the
while anti-imperialism related to war in Vietnam and conflict in Palestine were important
features of 1968 mentalities, these were not omni-present in all aspects of mai 68. Indeed,
Roman Bertrand argues that the March 22 Movement shifted away from anti-imperialism in
May: "[T]he 'nationalization' of the protest agenda came about rapidly, the international struggle

253 See Alain Geismar, Serge July, and Erlyne Morane, Vers la guerre civile (Paris: Éditions et publications
254 For a detailed discussion of the French youth's role in transatlantic anti-Vietnam War activism, see Bethany S.
Keenan, "Vietnam is Fighting for Us: French Identities and the U.S.-Vietnam War, 1965-1973" (PhD diss,
University of North Carolina, 2010).
255 Kristin Ross, May 68 and Its Afterlives, 90-91.
against American imperialism transformed into a domestic struggle against 'consumer society' and the Gaullist regime.  

Activism to end war in Vietnam also created common ground and opportunities for contact with foreign student groups like FEANF, which held film screenings of "Vietnam Viancra" ("Victory in Vietnam") in May 1968. The major claims of 68ers from across the former French empire vacillated between more internationalist, anti-imperialist, and postcolonial ambitions and local, national, and regional issues. Identifying these postcolonial moments and shifts helps to locate why French activists later pursued contact with immigrant workers. Though these postcolonial elements were not the essential quality of mai 68, or even of a more global 1968, they represent a sizable imperial fragment of the 1968 experience, and contribute significantly to any understanding of its whole.

In the case of mai 68 in France, anti-imperialist sensibilities dating to the Algerian War had politicized French students and youth, as well as foreigners living in France, and informed their positions on postcolonial conflicts in Vietnam and Palestine. If their targets shifted from distant American war-mongering politicians to the authoritative figures standing in front of them like university administrators, parents, and protest-busting riot police, these initial anti-imperial mentalities certainly contributed to an identification on the left with the wretched of the earth: immigrant workers. Invigorated by the unwavering rebellious spirit of the Vietnamese peasants who stood their ground against the world's greatest military superpower, many French youth felt they could absolve themselves of the guilt of bourgeois privilege by taking up immigrant causes at home.

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256 See Romand Bertrand, "Mai 68 et l'anticolonialisme," op. cit., 96-97
Établissements: Finding Militants in the Factory

Though only a short physical distance of less than 15km from the bidonvilles of Nanterre, the glistening hallways occupying 45 Rue d'Ulm in the heart of Paris's Latin Quarter seem as if from another dimension. There rests one of France's finest institutions of higher learning, the École Normale Supérieure de Paris, where Louis Althusser's reinterpretation of Marxism-Leninism influenced a young generation of activists. Althusser's critique of bourgeois society and the inaction of the PCF prompted the emergence of a group of his students, known as the Ulmards, to form the Union of Communist Youth, Marxist-Leninist (Union de la Jeunesse Communiste marxiste-léniniste [UJCML]), which would later give rise to the Proletarian Left after its dissolution in June 1968. The Ulmards, led by prized student Robert Linhart, were enchanted by Mao's Cultural Revolution and, in the summer of 1967, Linhart and other UJCML leaders were invited to the People's Republic of China, where they experienced the Cultural Revolution first hand. Upon their return in the fall of 1967, they searched in France for their own authentic experience with the working and peasant classes as part of a subset of activists called établis. The name, borrowed from Mao's speech "Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom," had several meanings: établissement referred to both the factory as site of class struggle and to the installation of a movement; établi also referred to the artisan's work bench; the verb s'établir referred to the action establishing oneself and settling into a new environment.

By applying Maoist principles to the French context, the établis found a way out of Althusser's diagnosis of consumer society: that it was impossible to avoid bourgeois ideology emanating from the ruling class of the state apparatus. To alter their "imaginary relationship of


259 Donald Reid made this connection to Mao's speech in “Établissement: Working in the Factory to Make Revolution in France,” 86.
individuals to their real conditions of existence," they would launch an "investigation" (enquête) by purposefully changing their habitat and environment and "settling in" with the working classes. This change in the real-life conditions of their daily lives would first mirror, then become part and parcel of, the lives of the working class and hence, of the revolution. It led to the assembly lines of France's industrial factories, and placed them in direct contact with France's most oppressed classes of immigrant laborers. This also satisfied the Leninist component of their UJCML identities since they would act as a vanguard group helping to awaken the revolutionary consciousness of their fellow workers and incite a workers' revolt.

The étalibs were rather significant in numbers—estimates exist that between 2,000 and 3,000 étalibs entered into factories in the 1960s and 1970s—and continued their activities investigating, infiltrating, and "settling in" to French factories into the 1980s.261 This participation in immigrant workers' struggles spilled over into other elements of the French left. After the dissolution of UJCML in June 1968, the Proletarian Left engaged in a number of anti-racist demonstrations and frequently sought contact with international student and worker groups like FEANF and, after its creation in 1970, the Arab Workers Movement. Another group highly influenced by the notion of enquêtes was the Cahiers de mai, which formed in 1968 and would later be instrumental in organizing immigrant workers in Rothschild-owned metallurgy factories across France in 1971-72.262 From the students of Nanterre, who witnessed the third-world conditions of the neighboring immigrant slums to the Ulmards, who returned from China to seek authentic experiences in the industrial trenches, the engagement on the radical left contained both postcolonial and transnational dimensions. For the former, the Third World was visible in France

261 Marnix Dressen, De l'amphi à l'établi: Les étudiants maoïstes à l'usine (1967-1989) (Paris: La Découverte,
262 I address their emergence in greater detail in Chapter 6.
in the figure of the postcolonial immigrant of the \textit{bidonville}, while for the latter they brought
third-world sensibilities back to France from actual experiences in Maoist China, or at the least
in an identification with Maoist principles. It seemed only natural then, for activists like Roland
Castro, a former member of the UJCML, to move to Nanterre to carry out post-mai 68 activism.

I moved to Nanterre, 
there where it had begun.
The sons of the bourgeois 
in the middle of the \textit{bidonvilles},
on the other side of the tracks,
in the depths of the \textit{banlieue}.
At [the train station] Nanterre-la-Folie

You look around, there where it's true, 
in the noise, revolt.
And at Nanterre there is no shortage 
of subjects of revolt.\footnote{My translation from passages cited in Daniel Gordon, "À Nanterre, ça bouge": immigrés et gauchistes en banlieue, 1968 à 1971," \textit{Historiens et Géographes}, 385 (2004): 77; from Roland Castro, \textit{1989} (Paris: Bernard Barrault, 1984). Gordon notes that the crossing train tracks at the Nanterre-la-Folie station represented the intersection of the University Paris 10 Nanterre and the \textit{bidonville}, where the "sons of the bourgeois found the revolt and the authenticity they were seeking."}

For French radicals like Castro, this active seeking of an authentic revolt, whether at Nanterre or
in the factories, was an attempt to escape their bourgeois identities and to re-educate themselves
in the Maoist sense. In a highly industrialized society and in the absence of a down-to-the
countryside movement for intellectuals (though some \textit{étalbis} did this in the summer of 1967 as well), Nanterre was the perfect venue to disengage with one's bourgeois roots and to engage with
the most oppressed, and therefore legitimate, revolutionary class: immigrant workers.

\textit{The Postcolonial Immigrants of Mai '68: Activists in Their Own Right}

The short historiography on immigrant participation in France's \textit{Mai '68} has produced a certain
level of discord. Yvan Gastaut, one of the first scholars to interrogate this participation, and
Xavier Vigna, have given very measured accounts of a limited role. Indeed, Gastaut claimed that "the role of foreigners in [Mai '68] did not appear center stage," and Vigna found that the participation of immigrant workers was "unequal: active in some sites, followers more often...immigrant workers went to meetings or were present during factory occupations without necessarily belonging to the groups of leaders."\textsuperscript{264} Other historians, such as Michael Seidman, have gone even further in minimalizing their role, declaring that “immigrants seemed somewhat marginal” and viewed strikes as “a French work stoppage in which they played only a passive role.”\textsuperscript{265} While immigrants might not always have been at the forefront of May events in France, there are a few clarifications that need to be taken up regarding their activity. First, the evidence used to support their lack of participation, which has appeared in multiple historical accounts, comes from one police report focusing largely on Spanish and Portuguese workers who fled factories due to their “fearful mentality” and an “apolicital nature.”\textsuperscript{266} Second, this police report ignores the fact that many of the tracts disseminated during worker strikes were translated into several languages and made claims for pay equal to that of French nationals. The report leaves out that foreign workers demanded better treatment and decent lodging; but it also fails to distinguish Spanish and Portuguese workers from those of France’s former colonies, who had a different relationship with both the French state and their home countries. Thus, while the source of the document is not sufficiently problematized, neither are its contents.

\textsuperscript{266} “Direction générale de la Police nationale, renseignements généraux,” 28 June 1968, AN 820599/41. Xavier Vigna found this same police report in the Bulletin quotidien de la DCRG, ministère de l’Intérieur, Centre des archives contemporaines (CAC), 19820599/41, which he dated 26 June 1968.
What did not make it into the report is that on 24 May in Lyons, following a violent rally in *la Guillotière*, out of more than 200 arrests, over 50 Algerians were detained in holding.\(^{267}\) Nor does the police account take into consideration the foreign CGT members who were deported following their involvement in strikes at a Citroën factory.\(^{268}\) Indeed French authorities reacted to events by immediately expelling well over two hundred foreign students and workers, and incarcerating others, all linked to “public disorder,” curtailing much of the potential participation of immigrants who feared reprisals.\(^{269}\) Even if immigrants made up a proportionally small percentage of participants in the events of May-June ‘68, they faced a disproportionate level of police repression and brutality, not to mention the scorn and violence of right-wing groups like Occident who were still yearning for the glory days of colonial France.\(^{270}\) Many believe that police were given specific orders to target foreigners in crackdowns, with foreigners making up as much as one in six arrests during the heightened period of protests, even though they made up one in nineteen of the overall population in France in 1968.\(^{271}\) Like in Tunisia and, as we shall see in Senegal, the de Gaulle government attempted to externalize the revolts. This was a much more difficult proposition for de Gaulle given the extent of the strikes, which quickly spread from Paris to other large university centers like Lyons and Bordeaux and even to parts of the countryside, eventually involving nearly 10 million striking students and workers.\(^{272}\)


\(^{269}\) *Le Monde*, 15 June 1968.


\(^{271}\) See Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 79-80. Gordon notes the relatively small sample size (accounting for under 3000 arrests in what appear to be urban centers). It is difficult to discern from these figures if this indicated heavy targeting in arrests by police or that foreigners were drawn to protests in greater proportion to their population size than French nationals.

Gaullist expressions of nationalism could equally be referred to as postcolonial nationalism in that they were a reaction to shifting demographics in France and the issues raised for national debate by the events of Mai '68. In his famous radio broadcast of 30 May, de Gaulle declared the dissolution of the General Assembly and announced a referendum and new legislative elections. He denounced the movement for blocking French workers from working, and students from studying, suggesting Soviet influence through methods of "intimidation, intoxication and tyranny exercised by organized groups for some time, and as a result of a party that is a totalitarian entreprise, even if it already has rivals in this regard." The broadcast was welcomed news to many who eventually voted on the referendum in overwhelming numbers to support the Gaullist government in late June 1968, in part out of fears of another national economic shutdown, as well as the tens of thousands of counter-demonstrators who gathered in Paris at the Champs Elysées in support of de Gaulle on 31 May. The socialist François Mitterrand had announced his candidacy for President in the event of new elections just days before the Gaullist demonstration. In response to declarations of solidarity with immigrant workers by the students of Nanterre and the Sorbonne, Gaullists at the counter-demonstration chanted slogans like "Send Mitterand to Moscow," "Right to Work," and "France for the French." This placed Gaullists in stark opposition to students donning posters from the Atelier Populaire of the ex-École des Beaux Arts declaring: "French and Immigrant Workers United." (See figure 1).

Figure 1: Poster designed by the Atelier populaire ex-École des Beaux-Arts, May 1968. "Workers, French and Immigrants United. Equal Work for Equal Pay." No known copyright. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9018507p

273 Discours: Général Charles de Gaulle, transcription by the Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (Paris: CLT, 30 May 1968).
274 En Bref Lyon 167 (1 June 1968), from Information Cercle Toqueville, in Fonds Mai 68, Centre d'Histoire Sociale, Paris.
Perhaps even moreso than participation by immigrant workers in 1968, which increased significantly in the 1970s, was that of students from the ex-colonies. One of the results of the intellectual migration discussed in Chapter 1 was that it brought Tunisian Mustapha Khayati to the University of Strasbourg for his postsecondary studies. Khayati worked closely with Guy
Debord on a number of key texts for the Situationist International (SI), including "Address to Revolutionaries of Algeria and of All Countries" that was clandestinely distributed in Algiers in July 1965 and published in 1966 in Internationale Situationniste. But Khayati was most famous for his 1966 "On the Poverty of Student Life," which diagnosed the alienation felt by many soixante-huitards. Khayati's essay set forth a critique of the merger between capitalism and the university that resulted in the student's direct subjugation "to the two most powerful system of social authority: the family and the state."  

The provocative text sparked the "Scandal at Strasbourg" during which Khayati's group challenged UNEF leadership at the university there—and, incidentally, a sociology professor, deemed a promoter of an oppressive system, was pelted with rotten tomatoes in October 1966—and was influential on the Enragés at the University Paris 10 Nanterre in February 1968 and the eventual March 22 Movement. Khayati declared that students were intellectual laborers and made the connection between the exploitation of university students and the working class, and set a number of 1968 activists on the path toward bridging their concerns with those of France's workers. "Student poverty is merely the most gross expression of the colonization of all domains of social practice." Given his interest in the Tunisian situation back home, and as a close follower of revolutionary events in Algeria—the standard-bearer for third-world revolutions—Khayati was sensitized to the colonial dimensions of university life and the French state. He later left SI to join the struggle for Palestinian liberation in 1969, only to renege on some of his pan-Arab nationalist positions in the 1970s to promote an end to war and the unity between the Israeli and Palestinian proletariat. 

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276 "On the Poverty of Student Life," 409-10.
277 See "Adresse aux prolétaires et aux jeunes révolutionnaires arabes et israéliens contre la guerre et pour la
Yet there was also a diagnosis of the emotional and sexual alienation experienced by students, which no doubt influenced pre-May grumblings at Nanterre regarding strict limitations on gender-divided campus dorms. The power of the pamphlet was not lost on Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who identified with its recognition that the university had become a sausage-making machine which turns out people without any real culture, and incapable of thinking for themselves but trained to fit into the economic system of a highly industrialized society... since many students were delighted to find their miserable condition brought to public notice at last, and since many lecturers were stricken with a bad conscience, we were able to air the whole matter in a number of sociology courses and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{278}

Khayati's Strasbourg pamphlet had traveled to the hallways of Nanterre, speaking to a number of university student concerns and pointing a finger at a plethora of authoritative figures that would be challenged in 1968: university administrators, professors, religious leaders, police, parents, agents of the state, politicians, etc.

Other young Tunisians living in France actively participated in \textit{Mai `68}, especially those who would have preferred to engage in their own national student movement, but who found themselves in France either for studies or to escape repression from their own March 1968 movement. \textit{Jeune Afrique} noted the massive support of the French movement emanating from the 115 blvd. Saint Michel, the headquarters of the Maison d'Afrique du Nord, following the "Night of the Barricades" of 10 May.\textsuperscript{279} One Tunisian student claimed:

\begin{quote}
from the first day [of the protests] I knew my place was by the side of the French students. Police repression is something we know about...We also won't forget that UNEF and the March 22 Movement adopted a clear progressive position on the Arab-Israeli conflict...Four Tunisian students were arrested during the night of 9-10 May; thanks to the actions of our French comrades, they were released the next day...What is \textit{révolution prolétarienne}," \textit{Khamsin} (Paris: François Maspero, 1976),
\end{quote}


\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
happening here holds great importance and the experience of this struggle will prove useful for us, even if the situation in our country is extremely different.²⁸⁰

Simone Lellouche, who was exiled to France in April 1968 following her participation in the movement at the University of Tunis, continued her political activism in Paris. Despite a staunch political education in anti-colonialism and third-worldism, Lellouche found herself in full convergence with the French movement due to circumstances outside of her control. With her imprisoned Tunisian colleagues on her mind and in a state of guilt and depression, she happened by accident on 6 May 1968 upon a large protest in front of the Sorbonne in the Latin Quarter, while attempting to register at the Saint-Geneviève Library.

One of the cops struck me with his billy club. After this blow, I spent every day at every protest. 'One hundred enraged'...'we're all German Jews.' One million enraged, one million German Jews, it was the first time I had ever seen such a possessed crowd 'in-phase' if I can use my real training [as a physics teacher] and we know what that means in physics. It was the first time that I found myself in-phase with the French, the children of those who had colonized us and with whom I was hurling the same slogans.²⁸¹

Lellouche's experiences in Tunisia had already radicalized her. Yet while maintaining activism in support of her imprisoned Tunisian comrades back home, she found unity with the French movement and felt a certain connection with the spontaneous crowds in early May.

We learned that on 10 May 1968 the Minister of Tourism in Tunisia was coming to give a conference on tourism at the Maison de Tunisie of the International University campus. With a small group of 'enraged,' 'chienlits,' 'riffraff,' like me, we wrote a tract calling this conference "Tourism in Tunisia: Bourguiba and the tontons macoutes, the beaches, the prisons," or something to that effect. Our French friends helped us organize a certain disorder in the uniformity and order of the speech that was about to be given. Our expected intervention first annoyed and then angered the Minister; the furious Destourians, about 90% of the attendees, threw chairs in the air trying to take out those who would dare to ask the Minister to organize tourist travels to visit prisons in Bizerte. After exchanging insults, I left before the end of the fight; the cops arrived, called by the Maison de Tunisie. They rounded up everyone on the spot. We didn't know that on rue Gay Lussac that same night that the students were building barricades against the

²⁸⁰ Ibid.
Not only do her comments speak to the spontaneity of the events, they also highlight the global reach of 1968. Her experiences with police brutality on 6 May had placed Lellouche in camp with French protestors, yet in her own right she was already actively organizing against the neo-capitalist tourist industry of Tunisia that served the French. After learning of the simultaneous protests in the Latin Quarter, Lellouche made it a point to participate whenever possible in Parisian activism, viewing her struggle against Tunisian authority as part of larger movement of her French counterparts.

Some May participants, such as the Senegalese Omar Blondin Diop, had already been active since the March 22 Movement at Nanterre alongside Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Blondin Diop frequented leftist circles and even landed himself a prominent role as a Maoist revolutionary in Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967). Far from being a passive participant, as some historians would suggest regarding immigrant involvement, he, along with Lellouche, was at the front lines in *Mai '68*. Others, like the activist couple, Marie-Angélique and Landing Savané, also participated actively in *Mai '68* having already exhibited Maoist tendencies prior to the protests. They used the backdrop of French activism to strategically make claims in support of university protests in Dakar, and even organized the occupation of the Senegalese embassy in Paris on 28 May 1968 in denunciation of government repression of the student movement.

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282 “Une Tunisiene citoyenne des deux rives: Simone Lellouche-Othmani,” *Mémoire & Horizon*, numéro spécial, published by Citoyenne des Deux Rives (April 2007), 43. Chienlit refers to havoc and chaos, a familiar expression literally meaning “shit-in-the-bed” that was popularized in 1968 by Charles de Gaulle, who famously used the term to denounce student agitation. Tonton macoute (“Uncle gunnysack”) refers to a Haitian mythological boogeyman who would steal children and have them for breakfast. The term was also used to refer to the militia force of Haitian dictator François Duvalier’s (“Papa Doc”) in the 1960s.


Just as the radical left in May 1968 carried posters calling for the unity of French and immigrant workers, immigrant students held their own banners proclaiming "Students of the Third World in solidarity with their French comrades." UNEF arranged for foreign student organizers to operate out of the fourth floor of the occupied Sorbonne as their headquarters. African students of FEANF responded to the police invasion of the Sorbonne on 2 May when it was shut down by administrators, as well as the police violence of May by issuing support of UNEF and the French movement, generally.

Far from staying on the sidelines of this vast movement of struggle against the fossilized French University, African students of FEANF, as early as 3 May, didn't fail to give their total support to UNEF and to its militants in their struggle for the democratization of the University, a veritable democratic reform in Education and the respect of university freedom and the right to organize...

The savage repression of which French students are victims recalls the massacres perpetrated by the colonialist and neocolonialist forces in our countries against the masses and African students in their struggle against pro-imperialist regimes installed by French neo-colonialists.

In their struggle against imperialist domination, African students from Abidjan and Dakar (reunited under UED: the Dakar Student Union) as well as those of France (organized under FEANF) etc., lead the fight against neo-colonialist education—cultural buttress of imperialist domination—which is forced upon them: in Abidjan and in Dakar, African students are contesting the content and the purpose of education imparted to them by professors named by the French government.

This FEANF communiqué demonstrates active engagement with the French student movement and a linking of the French events to anti-colonial student movements in Abidjan and Dakar. Though these activists did not reference historical events like Charonne, they established a clear connection between the police repression of 1968 in Paris and the "massacres perpetrated by the (ANS), Dakar.


colonialist and neocolonialist forces in our countries." And like Simone Lellouche, whose group of Tunisian activists took advantage of the momentum of the movement in May to protest representations of Tunisian authority in France—with the agitation at the Office of Tourism—part of the African students' participation in the French movement was to leverage support for events in their home countries.

Conclusion

Mai ‘68 took on a plethora of meanings for multiple different actors and spectators: Gaullists felt that it undermined French values the French resistance had fought so hard to regain; French Maoists viewed it as an opportunity to reach out to, and experience, the most oppressed classes of French society as part of their own re-education; and many immigrant intellectuals felt validation of their own anti-colonial national struggles in their solidarity with the French movement. But none of these experiences or perspectives can fully capture an essence of Mai ‘68, which was not merely a cultural revolution, a political one, nor a purely French one. I have tried to show that postcolonial relationships were important for each of the perspectives described above, as well as integral elements of Mai ‘68, from the lingering and painful memory of the Algerian War to the fetishization of foreign workers by the French radical left. If Algeria came to represent third-world power in the face of neo-colonialism for many on the French left, the postcolonial immigrant was its embodiment. And if the loss of French Algeria marked France’s most recent failure for those on the right, they also found new targets on which to project their ire in the figure of the immigrant and the culturally-deprived youth activist.

While Spanish and Portuguese immigrants made up a sizeable portion of the foreign population in France in 1968, ranking just ahead and below of Algerians, respectively, they did
not experience the same postcolonial relationship with France, or with the French population, as immigrants hailing from France’s former colonies. For those Southern European immigrants who joined workers strikes or student protests, their references as either political or corporatist activists differed from those who had directly experienced, or had been sensitized to, French colonial authority. Though immigrant workers certainly shared a number of common characteristics in often deplorable working and housing conditions, and shared the desire to find gainful employment to support their families, the political concerns of Portuguese and Spanish immigrants centered around their own local experiences with dictatorship in the figures of Salazar and Franco, rather than French colonialism or decolonization. So when Yvan Gastaut cited immigrant communities that fled in “panic” during the course of May 1968, he was referring to a certain set of immigrants from Southern Europe.\footnote{Yvan Gastaut, "Le rôle des immigrés pendant les journées de mai-juin 1968," \textit{International Migration} 23:4 (1993): 11-13.}

The postcolonial dimension may be but a fragment of \textit{Mai ’68}, but it is indeed an important one that has not been systematically or sufficiently treated in the existing literature. A key feature of \textit{Mai ’68} emerges when looking at this postcolonial fragment of the history of 1968: the desire for authenticity and the non-Western world. Indeed a certain orientalism reveals itself in the efforts of French Maoists to reproduce the down-to-the countryside aspects of the Cultural Revolution and to experience the existence of, and revolt alongside, the wretched immigrant worker.\footnote{For a critique of Western “pilgrims” who sought salvation through cultural revolution and interaction with the East, see Gita Mehta, \textit{Karma Cola: Marketing the Mystic East} (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1991).} Armed with Lefebvre and Althusser, some members of the radical left, like Roland Castro, actually moved to Nanterre to be at the site of revolt, and among the revolted and revolting. Observing the commotion at Nanterre, Henri Lefebvre proclaimed:

This fragment of a broken, rejected, and marginal university regains a kind of universality. Among the students all tendencies manifest themselves, especially all those
which oppose the established society. Even the institution called university, which has in fact already exploded, and which thought that it could regain strength and autonomy in a marginal location, is dissolving. The crack, the outlet for tensions and latent pressures, is widening. 289

The physical environment at the University of Paris 10 Nanterre forced French youth to confront the difficult conditions of working immigrants living in adjacent bidonvilles. This close proximity fed their double desire for contact with the foreign world and for political righteousness of third-world anti-colonialism. The anti-Vietnam War movement and the Palestinian struggle for independence offered opportunities to redeem UNEF’s weak original position on Algeria by putting forward a strong anti-colonialist position.

If the university was an imperial fragment, and the postcolonial dimensions of Mai ‘68 but a fragment of its entirety, they encapsulate a certain “kind of universality” of anti-authority, anti-Occident, anti-capitalism, and anti-colonialism that were all recognizable elements to both participants and observers of Mai ‘68, from the enragés of Nanterre and the Ulmards of the École Normale Supérieure, to the opportunistic Tunisian and Senegalese everyday activist intellectuals who combined their support of protest in France with homegrown anti-colonial causes. As I will explore in Chapter 6, the degrees of cooperation between French and immigrant workers, and between workers and students, varied significantly during this period. In some cases, Maoist and other leftist students experienced successes in connecting with workers. But unions like the CGT had complicated histories with immigrants whose membership and needs they did not always consider since they lacked voting status. It was not until the 1970s that unions began to seriously reach out to immigrants, and that immigrant workers began to engage in their own autonomous organizations.

Chapter 4: Indépendance Inachevée: Servants of Imperialism and May-June 1968 in Dakar

*Shouts* - who knows if it is hate? -
*Shot from the faces of rebellious adolescents.*
*Dust and sweating back, enthusiasm, panting.*
*Painful envelopes with landscapes of baobab trees,*
*Single-file duty patrols and vultures on the blue backdrop.*
*And many more secrets.*

-Léopold Sédar Senghor, from “Sadness in May.”²⁹⁰

*Has our cultural expansion just received a definitive blow? I don’t think so.*

-French ambassador to Senegal, Jean de Lagarde, in a 12 June 1968 telegram.²⁹¹

**Introduction**

Léopold Sédar Senghor’s poetic description above evokes his dismay and confusion at the groundswell of student discontent that erupted at the University of Dakar on 29 May 1968. For Senghor, it was a moment of heightened anxiety due to persistent threats since his accession to the presidency in September 1960. By 1968, he had already dismantled and abrogated rival political parties and even overcome an attempted coup by his Prime Minister, Mamadou Dia, whom he later imprisoned. Only this time, he was facing political challenges from one of the most privileged groups in society, African students for whom he had allocated enormous budgetary resources toward national education. For French observers like ambassador Jean de Lagarde, the moment constituted a challenge to France’s status in Senegal. With demands by students at the University of Dakar to Africanize university curricula and teaching corps, and additional support of the student movement from the Senegalese national labor union that denounced French domination in commerce and industry, de Lagarde wondered whether it was time to recalibrate the degree of France’s long-term cultural influence in Senegal.

This chapter argues that Senghor's handling of the student movement at the University of Dakar was directly related to the importance he placed on the university, and the African students it educated, as symbols of Senegalese progress and modernization. Himself a product of the French education system, Senghor sought to replicate the French system for Senegal and to eventually replace French technical expertise with educated Senegalese. With youth discontent brewing on the campus at the University of Dakar, students were bound to clash with the new Senghor government that they felt was an extension of the old French colonial regime. As a symbol of both the lasting French influence and the future of independent Senegal, the university became a postcolonial battleground over which youth and the state struggled over the nature of Senegalese decolonization more broadly. Drawing on Senghor's francophilia—including his adoration of French President Charles de Gaulle and his friendship with French Prime Minister Georges Pompidou—students easily transformed anti-colonial slogans once directed at France and aimed them at the Senghor regime. These reflected an alternative postcolonial nationalism that rejected Senghor's nation-building projects that called for a single-party state and deferential student and labor unions.

Unlike Tunisia, where the university activism of 1968 received scant attention during its 40th anniversary in 2008, Senegalese activists and journalists have continued to remember the university upheaval of May-June 1968 in Dakar.292 By comparison, in 2008 in France the Bibliothèque nationale de France held the exhibition “Esprit(s) de mai,” as did areas in the provinces such as the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon and the city of Montpellier, and no less

292 I did find a 23 August 2011 article in La Presse de Tunisie detailing the schism within the student movement at UGET’s 1971 Korba Congress which references both March 1968 and February 1972. However, another article from 2010, before the Arab Spring, observed the University of Tunis campus, noting that “The commemoration [of February 1972] went almost completely unnoticed and, without a few posters here and there, no one would have remembered the date February 5, 1972.” See “Le Mouvement contestataire du février 1972: qu’en reste-t-il?” in Le Temps, 8 February 2010. By contrast, an entire special edition of Sud Quotidien positively commemorated May '68 in Dakar in “Que reste-t-il de Mai 68?” 30 May 2008.
than 207 monographs referring to France’s *Mai ‘68* in the title appeared in 2008. Of the case studies of 1968 university protests represented in this dissertation, Dakar lies somewhere in the middle of the spectrum in terms of scholarly attention and in the historical consciousness of the various national contexts. Paris has arguably received the most analysis of any case study of university protest in 1968, while there is no comparable treatment of 1968 in Tunis. At least one book-length study exists for events at the University of Dakar, and the movement has received increased attention since the wave of 1968 studies in 2008.

Abdoulaye Bathily—a prominent Senegalese May 68er, historian, and current politician—offers a rich account and analysis of events from a decidedly Senegalese perspective. He claims that the student strike in Dakar "was planned and carried out from beginning to end by the Senegalese Democratic Student Union (UDES), supported by the Dakar Student Union (UED) and diverse African national student unions," while French and Lebanese students played no role whatsoever [in the strikes], much less French professors.  

Bathily’s insistence on the unique local context of university protests in Dakar is understandable given Senghor’s repeated charges that African students merely copied their French counterparts. Senegalese historian Ibrahima Thioub echoes Bathily’s assertions, claiming that “if, in May 1968, the state clashed with the student movement, the decision to do so, as with the reasons for the confrontation, were strictly Senegalese.”

Recognition of transnational connections between Dakar and other movements could be viewed as an admission that the Dakar protests were a copycat case, with profound political implications in a climate of anti-French sentiment in Senegal. More recently,

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Andy Stafford has questioned this politicized and reactive conceptualization, ultimately broadening the scope of the 1968 events in Senegal by highlighting certain aspects of its colonial relationship to France and referring to the movement as “Africa’s Revolt.”²⁹⁵ Françoise Blum takes this a step further with what she terms a “comparative,” “transnational,” and “polysemic” reading of events in Senegal’s May-June 1968, making reference to protests at universities in Abidjan, Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Paris, and Tananarive.²⁹⁶ Blum’s call to place African activism in global perspective on the scale of other European and Latin American cases is being answered by a new generation of young scholars, such as Matthew Swagler and Pedro Monaville.²⁹⁷

Since the discipline is only now making early forays into global histories of the 1960s that include Africa, it is not yet clear which methodologies are most effective for such lines of historical inquiry. More generally, in a 2013 webinar on the state of French colonial history hosted by H-France, panelist Laurent Dubois suggested that "global" in the colonial context has often meant, "reminding us to go to different locales."²⁹⁸ This would seem to describe the first wave of 1960s Senegalese student activism, which sought to expand conversations beyond


France's May '68. Andy Stafford complicates the nation-bound analyses of Bathily and Thioub by offering points of comparison to other movements, though his major goal is to first give voice to historical actors in Senegal, while global perspective is secondary. Blum—who highlights a number of important and enduring connections between Senegal and its former colonial oppressor—prefers to avoid messy historiographical implications associated with any “postcolonial” analysis, a term which she explicitly uses “not in the sense of Postcolonial Studies but in the literal sense: after colonialism.”

Monaville is slightly more bold in his willingness to venture into the Congo’s colonial past to explain 1960s protests but, outside of a few references to the United States’ involvement in Mobutu’s rise to power, his work to date appears limited in scope to the Belgian-Congo relationship. This chapter considers the impact of colonial history on post-independence student activism while maintaining that both national and global perspectives were critical to understanding 1968 in Senegal.

1968 in Senegal reminds us of the continuities of relationships forged during the colonial period in the years after colonialism. Drawing on this colonial past, I argue that at the root of the protestors’ claims at the University of Dakar lay a grave disappointment in the Senghor regime’s inability to shed the French colonial yoke by 1968. I further place the Senegalese case in global context by comparing the different valences of protests in Tunisia and France while showing the impact of transnational communities of activists in the former metropole on the Senegalese movement. Finally, I establish certain transnational dimensions of the Senegalese movement—such as a protest at the Senegalese embassy in Paris in 1968, participation of

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299 Blum, op. cit., 143, note 8.
301 On the colonial roots of the Senegalese university system, see my earlier chapter, “Postcolonialism in Question,” particularly the subsection, “Colonial Heritage of Intellectual Migration.”
Senegalese in France’s May ‘68, identification with anti-colonial movements in Vietnam and Palestine, as well as expulsions of foreign students and Chinese “subversives” by the Senghor regime—that call into question strictly national perspectives. Rather than focusing solely on the national and local aspects of the Senegalese movement, as is the primary goal of the few extant accounts of the Senegalese 1968 activism, this chapter uncovers its transnational and global characteristics. It places it in relation to similar movements of the same time period, and identifies postcolonial and transnational points of intersection with other locations and movements. Global forces like Maoist ideology and international communism linked students in Dakar with ideas emanating from—and events in—Paris, Prague, Beijing, and Moscow. These transnational connections informed the expressions of postcolonial Senegalese nationalism in 1968, without which it would be impossible to understand this at once national and transnational, event.

*Historicizing the Transnational Dimensions of May-June 1968 in Dakar*

The activism that emerged in May 1968 in Dakar in fact began much earlier during the Senegalese independence movement of the 1950s, itself one of many global post-World War Two nationalist movements. Prominent Senegalese members of FEANF supported Algerian independence as early as 1954, and specifically condemned the use of “tirailleurs sénégalais” (Senegalese infantrymen enlisted in the French Colonial Army as early as World War One) by the French military against their Algerian brothers. In 1958, Senegalese student activist Khar N’Dofène Diouf co-authored *Le sang de Bandoeng*, which was eventually seized by the French
police for its denunciation of the French use of torture in the conflict. In addition to supporting Algerian resisters, the student movement was also a critical element of Senegal’s own independence movement, opposing Senegal’s entry in 1958 into the “French Commonwealth.”

After founding the journal Étudiant Noir as the mouthpiece for Black students in France in 1934, Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire sparked an early era of cultural nationalism that evolved into increasingly robust political nationalism after World War Two. Indeed, Senghor’s future bête noire, Majhmout Diop, penned, ”The only way out is total independence" in a seminal special issue of Présence Africaine in 1953. Likewise, future Senegalese Prime Minister-turned-coup leader Mamadou Dia earned his political stripes as FEANF president in 1953 when he strengthened transnational ties with the UIE at international conferences in Prague, Berlin, and Warsaw, and promoted African independence causes within the international communist movement.

In fact, the experiences of African students in France who participated in independence movements provided a political education and forged international and regional networks that carried over into the independence era. Not only did student leaders like Senghor, Majhmout Diop, and Mamadou Dia become prominent figures in independent Senegalese politics across the

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304 Diané, Les grands heures de la F.E.A.N.F., 45.
ideological spectrum, but their efforts during the colonial era also established a transnational political infrastructure for alternately maintaining or undermining the independent Senegalese government of the 1960s.\textsuperscript{305} African students were under the watchful surveillance of French "cooperation" organizations like the Office of Cooperation and University Orientation (Office de Coopération et d’Accueil Universitaire, OCAU), an extension of the colonial era Office of Students from the Overseas Territories. The OCAU expelled agitators and suspended the scholarships of troublemakers like Fall Abd el Kader in April 1961, after surveillance revealed that he had stopped attending courses in order to make frequent Paris-Prague trips as the FEANF liaison to the UIE.\textsuperscript{306} Even after the August 1960 after the break-up of the Mali Federation—which crystallized the national geographies of present-day Senegal and Mali—students continued to struggle against the neo-colonial Senegalese state in 1968 that they felt had yet to be fully decolonized, often posing a threat to both French and Senegalese national security.

Following independence, Senegal’s first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor—a prominent literary figure and one of the forces behind the Negritude movement—immediately confronted challenges on the regional level. With the collapse of the short-lived Mali Federation and swift political change throughout Africa in 1960, Senegalese leaders were well aware of the fragility of national independence movements. Indeed Senghor’s Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS) battled with domestic rivals in the left-leaning African Independence Party (PAI) and the Senegalese branch of the African Regroupment Party (PRA), both of which had taken more radical positions toward France than Senghor’s UPS in the late 1950s. Senghor dissolved the PAI

\textsuperscript{305} Senghor was an instrumental member of the SFIO; as a PAI leader Majhemout Diop was in frequent contact with Moscow and helped organize clandestine PAI training sessions abroad; Mamadou Dia played the role of liaison between FEANF and the UIE in the 1950s, and UIE continued to support the Senegalese student movement during the 1968 events.

immediately after independence in 1960 and continued to confront serious threats from PAI members and sympathizers. After its dissolution, the PAI went underground and its General Secretary, Majhemout Diop, even called for armed uprising against the state from PAI strongholds in Eastern Senegal and Casamance. Senghor’s fears were not fabricated; with Soviet support Diop organized the clandestine departure of 90 PAI members into Mali to receive preliminary military training, and provided false papers for their eventual travel to Moscow and Cuba to learn guerrilla tactics.\footnote{Letter from Jean de Lagarde to to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 17 March 1965 in ADMAE, Afrique: Sénégal (1959-1972), Carton 48, Politique intérieure, Liaisse: Situation Politique, La Courneuve. For a general discussion of the PAI trajectory in the 1960s, see Pascal Bianchini, École et politique en Afrique noire: sociologie des crises et des réformes du système d'enseignement au Sénégal et au Burkina Faso (1960-2000) (Paris: Karthala Editions, 2004), 70-73 and François Zuccarelli, La vie politique sénégalaise: 1940-1988 (Paris: CHEAM, 1988), 93.} Malian President Modibo Keita cooperated with the Senegalese government and assisted in the capture of PAI guerrillas who had returned from Mali to Eastern Senegal in 1965. This resulted in a severe crackdown and the arrest of 750 political opponents, imprisonment, the alleged torture of several key PAI leaders, and Diop’s exile to Mali.\footnote{See “Déclaration du Comité Central du PAI,” 1 September 1964 in Dossier: Partis Politiques, ANS, Dakar; “Histoire du PAI: Conférence de mai 1967,” Wal Fadjri, 11 December 1995; and “La longue et tumultueuse histoire du PAI,” Le Soleil 12 September 1997.} While Senghor was confronting a national rival that called for nothing less than the overthrow of the current government, the initial dissolution of the PAI led the opposition groups to spill across national borders, and, though Senghor dealt the PAI a serious blow with arrests in 1965, he was never able to eradicate its influence over the student movement. In fact, many of its leaders, including former FEANF member Majhemout Diop, became politicized while studying in France in the 1950s, only to form the radical PAI in 1957 upon his return to Senegal.\footnote{P.F. Gonidec, Les systèmes politiques africains, (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1978), 114. While actively engaged in the political activity as a member of FEANF, Diop published “L'Unique issue: L'Indépendance totale. La seule voie: un large mouvement d'union anti-impérialiste,” in the Paris-based Présence Africaine 14 (4th trimester, 1953), 144-184.}

The PAI subversion brought Senghor to a heightened sense of paranoia regarding political opposition, and to rising intolerance of dissidence throughout the 1960s. In addition to...
Senghor’s continual efforts to root out insurgents, he also overcame an attempted coup d’état in December 1962 by his own Prime Minister, Mamadou Dia. Critical of Senghor’s strong ties to the French, as well as his friendly relationship with the Senegalese bourgeoisie, the populist Dia, allied with certain prominent government ministers and tried to usurp control of the government in a parliamentary motion of no confidence. This attempt failed, resulting in Dia’s immediate arrest, the replacement of Senegal’s top Army General, Amadou Fall, with loyalist and former French battalion leader, Jean-Alfred Diallo, and Senghor’s consolidation of a singular executive branch with a powerful presidency under a new Constitution. In June 1966, UPS integrated Dia’s former party, now PRA-Senegal, into its government by reaching an agreement that would allow participation of PRA in the UPS Cabinet Office and National Council, thus eliminating PRA-Senegal as a rival political party by subsuming it.

Senghor was effectively able to isolate adherents of the illegal PAI while removing the threat of a PAI-PRA coalition of opposition. Following this brief period of stabilization and victory for the new regime, would-be assassin Moustapha Lô made a failed attempt on Senghor’s life, thanks to a pistol malfunction, on 22 May 1967. Given that the attempt was later labeled the “Tabaski plot” since it was carried out after an organized prayer during the Muslim holiday known as Tabaski in Wolof—or Eid al-Adha in the Arab world—perhaps it is no surprise that Senghor responded with force to the student movement a year later in May 1968. The motives for the assassination attempt remain shrouded in mystery, and it is still unclear whether Lô’s actions were solicited by an outside party, prompted by his ardent Muslim faith (Senghor was

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310 “Brusque aggravation du conflit entre MM. Senghor et Dia,” Le Monde, 18 December 1962. Senghor’s new Constitution has been compared to Charles de Gaulle’s centralization of power with the Constitution of the Fifth French Republic.
In France, Senegalese FEANF Executive Committee member, Amady Aly Dieng, recalled activism in Paris following Congolese President Patrice Lumumba’s assassination in 1962, in collaboration with the attorney Jacques Vergès, who was famous for defending Algerians accused of terrorism. \(^{313}\) Lumumba’s death elicited similar responses in Dakar—where a student protest against his assassination was quelled in February 1971—and echoes reverberated in Tunis, where pro-Bourguiba students collided with anti-government factions during ceremonies in Lumumba’s honor over who could claim him as a hero and martyr of their movement. \(^{314}\) Just like the atrocities against Algerians in France in the metonymic symbol of "Charonne" were re-launched in 1968 in France to indict the violence of French riot police, Lumumba’s death became a symbol—from North to sub-Saharan Africa—of resistance to neo-colonial intervention and violence. Lumumba’s commemoration was yet another opportunity to express anti-colonial positions, and various factions battled over the ownership and authenticity of Lumumba the martyr. This anti-colonialist position found a home in segments of the Senegalese labor movement back home, and even fractured the National Union of Senegalese Workers (Union Nationale des Travailleurs Sénégalais [UNTS]) into two factions in 1964; one supporting adherence to the moderate African Trade Union Confederation (Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes [CSA])—which was created in Dakar and influenced by the Western-


leaning “Monrovian Group,”—and the other taking a more radical position under the Casablanca-based Pan-African Trade Union (Union Syndicale Pan-Africaine [USPA]).

Cold War divisions drove at all levels of Senegalese institutional and associative politics, from labor unions and student organizations to political parties (see Table 1). The CSA was in fact linked with the West-backed International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Libres [CISL]) while the USPA and the World Federation of Trade Unions (Fédération Syndicale Mondiale [FSM]) were sympathetic to communist causes. In the immediate post-1945 era, for every communist-leaning organization at any number of levels, there was likely to appear a rival organization backed by the West, and vice versa. Cold War organizations spread rapidly in order to keep pace with shifting landscapes in emerging independent nations. A second "scramble for Africa" ensued on the continent, this time involving Cold War competition for emerging nations and their institutions. Indeed the Soviet Union recruited African students into the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, though this was met with limited success, in large part due to local expressions of racism. It

315 Senghor led the moderate Monrovian group, which promoted economic cooperation with the West and gradual African unity, consisted of most of the former West African colonies and Tunisia, as well as Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Liberia. The more radical Casablanca group was led by Kwame Nkrumah and favored immediate pan-African unity to confront Western neo-imperialism, and consisted of Algeria, Morocco, Guinea, Egypt, Mali, and Libya. See Note no. DAM/2 “Sénégal: Les Syndicats” of 27 May 1964 in ADMAE, Afrique: Généralités (1959-1979), Carton 290, Questions Syndicales, Sociales et Sanitaires, La Courneuve. This details a split within UNTS, which was only created in 1963 over which pan-African syndical confederation it should join. The departure of the communist-leaning UNTS General Secretary Alioune Cissé—who had previous ties to the leftist French CGT—for an ambassador position in Algeria, paved the way for UNTS to eventually align with the moderate CSA. Interestingly, on May 21-22, just before the protests in late May on the university campuses in Dakar, the CSA and the USPA met in Dakar to discuss possible unification, though the meeting ended in a failure to unify. See Communiqué du Ministère des armées, “Collaboration discrète de la FSM, de l’USPA, et de l’OUA sur le problème de l’unification des syndicats africains,” 24 July 1968 in Archives de la Direction Générale de la Police: Information sur les organisations internationales notamment africaines, AN-001992003, Article 12, Liasse 1, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau.


should be noted that the political landscape on the left was further complicated with the Sino-
Soviet split, which had implications for the “communist-leaning” groups listed in Table 1. This
often caused internal rifts within these organizations, and even groups friendly to the West often
did so under the guise of socialism. After much dispute within the Senegalese labor movement
during the 1960s, by 1968 the largest national labor union, UNTS, had affiliated with the CSA
and aligned with Senghor’s Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS). The UPS student union
(MJUPS), on the other hand, did not fare as well, with the majority of students opting for more
radical organizations like UDES or the UED for non-Senegalese students, still under the
influence of the underground PAI. In 1967, the French embassy in Dakar reported that Senghor’s
MJUPS party consisted of a meager 30 student members, while the more radical UDES
maintained 650 adherents.\textsuperscript{318} Bourguiba faced similar declining numbers in Tunisian student
membership to UGET, which, by the 1972 crisis at the student congress in Korba, had lost all
hope for legitimacy among the student population. By either leading 1968 university protest
movements or fully supporting them, radical and progressive student groups effectively neutered
state-sponsored student unions like UNTS and MJUPS that wielded very little political power in
the 1970s.

Table 1. List of organizations by target membership, geographic scope, and political leanings on
the eve of student protests in Dakar in 1968. Table also lists the headquarters of these
organizations. See also “List of abbreviations.”

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Organizations} & \textbf{Labor} & \textbf{Student} & \textbf{Government} \\
\hline
International & \begin{tabular}{c}
West-leaning \cr CISL; Brussels
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
Communist-leaning \cr FSM; Prague
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
West-leaning \cr CIE; Leiden
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
Communist-leaning \cr UIE; Prague
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
West-leaning \cr NATO; Brussels
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
Communist-leaning \cr Warsaw Pact; Warsaw
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\hline
Regional & \begin{tabular}{c}
CSA;
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
USPA;
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
MEOCAM;
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
FEANF;
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
OUA;
\end{tabular} & \begin{tabular}{c}
OUA;
\end{tabular} \\
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\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Trouble at the University of Dakar began as early as 1966, and coincided with the populist Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah’s ouster. In Dakar, the organizers led students in a 28 February march on the American and British Chancelleries—in protest of those governments’ roles in the Ghanaian coup—and UDES declared on campus that “there was no doubt that the champion of pan-Africanism was victim to Anglo-Saxon imperialism.”\(^\text{319}\) Students at the campus went on strike in March 1966 to protest the expulsion of 5 students from French Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) and Benin, who were considered as the leaders of the pro-NKrumah and anti-American protest.\(^\text{320}\) The anti-imperialist and pan-African leader Nkrumah had wide support in FEANF and UED. Senghor felt as though he was losing control of the youth movement in the university, and issued directives to increase the influence of MJUPS.

The French ambassador to Senegal, Jean de Lagarde, noted Senghor’s frustration with “the vain efforts of the students affiliated with the UPS, whom the authorities had asked to calm the movement, which only served to underscore the powerlessness of the single-party state.”\(^\text{321}\) MJUPS, as with the Tunisian student union, UGET, began to lose legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of university students for its close ties to government forces and its failure to appeal to the growing discontent of the student body. In an effort to bolster the popularity of national

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pan-African</th>
<th>Dakar</th>
<th>Casablanca</th>
<th>Dakar, Paris, Abidjan</th>
<th>Paris</th>
<th>Monrovia</th>
<th>Casablanca</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>UNTS</td>
<td>SUEL/CST</td>
<td>MJUPS</td>
<td>UDES</td>
<td>UPS</td>
<td>PAI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


student unions and to counter the strong influence of left-leaning international associations like FEANF, many African and French leaders assisted in the promotion of the moderate, apolitical Student Movement of the African and Malagasy Common Organization (Mouvement des Etudiants de l'Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache [MEOCAM]) in 1966. Indeed, Senghor and Ivoirian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny were particularly instrumental in the creation of MEOCAM, which held its first constitutive congress in Niamey, Niger 2-4 January 1967. Congressional members criticized FEANF’s political preoccupation with the Sino-Soviet split, war in Vietnam, and capitalist and Marxist doctrines. France’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a January 1967 memorandum on African student movements, reported on MEOCAM that:

The Charter adopted is particularly telling of the state of mind of the movement’s proponents. After recalling that Marxism-Leninism had seduced the students of FEANF and UGEAO, the document denounces the erroneous political line of these organizations that have “lost their authority.” The students should then “assemble around OCAM [The African and Malagasy Common Organization]” and conduct “a radical disengagement with Marxist-Leninist doctrine in order to support the heads of state in their effort to unify Africa and Madagascar.” The text ends with a call to…“accept to work with the leaders of their countries ‘in trust and mutual comprehension.’”

The French ambassador to Niger also noted in January 1967 that MEOCAM declared itself “ready to fight any other association, old or new, which systematically denigrates their countries and heads of state.” With headquarters in Paris, Abidjan, and Dakar, MEOCAM provided an alternative organization to advocate for African students without taking political positions, and hoped to erode FEANF’s overwhelming influence.

The MEOCAM-FEANF confrontation and the coup in Ghana had implications for groups in several locales. Tensions were further exacerbated by Senghor’s refusal to recognize the

323 Note from the Ambassador of France in Niamey to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 6 January 1967, in ADMAE, Afrique: Généralités (1959-1979), Carton 282, Syndicats d’étudiants africains et mouvements subversifs, La Courneuve. See also Dieng, Mémoires d’un Étudiant Africain, 85.
existence of the Dakar Student Union (UED) in 1967. This resulted in an anti-imperialist response from FEANF and its affiliates in Paris, Dakar, and Abidjan that lambasted U.S. involvement in Ghanaian politics and Senghor’s pro-French trade policies. In Paris—just after MEOCAM’s constitutive congress—FEANF members released a tract denouncing Senghor’s regime.

[Senghor] is incapable of tolerating the presence of progressive organizations that denounce his servitude vis-à-vis foreign exploiters...[UED], like FEANF, denounces the reactionary coup d’état perpetrated by Anglo-Saxon imperialism and its servants against the popular regime of Dr. Nkrumah...[and denounces] OCAM, instrument of French imperialism in Africa, in its attempt to create a French commonwealth.

UED’s collective positions won’t please the Senghorian government, zealous servant of international imperialism, and French imperialism in particular. It prefers to spend millions stripped from the Senegalese people to sustain and uphold puppet groups that comprise bogus student groups like UNES [National Union of Senegalese Students] and MEOCAM.324

But perhaps most interesting in FEANF’s support of UED and its denunciation of MEOCAM was its indictment of the persistence of a French model of university education at the University of Dakar in the same tract. “Education throughout all of the colleges follows word for word the same curriculum as those in French colleges. Contrary to the African vocation that the Senegalese government claims to attribute to the University of Dakar, it remains a French University established in Senegal; it is a [French] state in the Senegalese state.”325 In an era of ubiquitous nationalist and anti-colonial sentiments, students wondered why Senegalese institutions not only borrowed constitutional language from French institutions, but also why independent Africans at African universities continued to study French poetry and history under French tutelage with French evaluation systems. As early as January 1967, the Senghor regime sought to reclaim influence over the student movement with failed parallel organizations like

325 Ibid.
MEOCAM, and local groups like UED responded on international issues but attached local university concerns to their global anti-imperialist stances. These claims against the Senghor regime and against the French-dominated curricula at the University of Dakar—often articulated in both Dakar and in Paris by pan-African organizations like FEANF—foreshadowed the May 1968 student protests and undermined later charges by the Senghor regime that Senegalese students were only mimicking the French student movement.

Back in Dakar, students vehemently contested MEOCAM’s first congress and Senghor’s intransigence regarding UED’s right to exist. On 4 January 1967, UPS leader and MEOCAM supporter, Moustapha Niasse,326 was roughed up by audience members when he tried to speak at a campus basketball game. Interestingly, the ensuing mayhem resulted in anti-government calls for a University strike on 5-6 January 1967 that were supported by FEANF in Paris and students in Abidjan. Students in Dakar drafted a resolution at the conclusion of the basketball brawl that protested the Ministry of the Interior’s refusal on 24 December 1966 to accept UED’s status as a student organization, refuted the reports presented by UPS student leaders, and contained numerous attacks against MEOCAM.327 If these acts of contestation at the university presaged the larger protests in May 1968, so too did Senghor’s response in January 1967. Already upset with the pro-NKrumah UED student activism that coincided with the First World Festival of Negro Arts in April 1966—when he evacuated the university campus and sent foreign students home—Senghor was now frustrated by possible perturbations and negative press on the eve of an international congress of jurists to be hosted in Dakar in January 1967. In a rather menacing threat, Senghor stated, “[w]e will let them have fun for a few days during the congress; but then,

326 Niasse is still active today in Senegalese politics and ran for President in 2012 against incumbent Abdoulaye Wade, losing to eventual President Macky Sall in a primary of opposition coalition Bennoo Siggil Senegaal.
if they take as weakness what was meant to be a desire for dialogue, they will have to confront
our commandos.”

Senghor did not yield to the January calls to recognize UED as a legitimate student
representative group. This failure on the part of the regime did not prevent UED members from
continued campus activism. The Prague-based International Student Union (UIE) addressed a
number of international student issues at its 9th Congress held in Mongolia, including a
denunciation of Senghor’s position on UED and a call to action in support of the Vietnamese
people against American aggression. Indeed the UIE had direct connections to the Senegalese
movement through PAI sympathizers like Amith Dansokho who, though past his days of student
activism, was stationed in Prague while working for the communist organ, *Nouvelle Revue
Internationale* in the late 1960s. According to one Senegalese 68er, "All of these international
movements of solidarity came [to us] through the UIE because we had a presence there; orders
from the UIE reverberated to our movement by the way of student members of the PAI." The
international protest against American involvement in Vietnam was set to take place on 17
November 1967, which was heeded by UED in Dakar, Perspectives in Tunis, as well as FEANF
and many other sympathetic groups in Paris.

As in Tunisia and in France, Senegalese students created a Grassroots Committee in
Support of Vietnam, with members on university campuses in France and Senegal. Student

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329 See “Projet de résolution sur les devoirs des étudiants relatifs à la paix,” presented at the 9th Congress of UIE in
Mongolia by delegates from Japan and Iraq, and passed unanimously in Fonds AGEL-UNEF: AG UN 7/14, 56e
Congrès de Lyon, July 1967, Bibliothèque Municipale (BM), Lyon Part-Dieu; and “Résolutions du 9e Congrès de
l’UIE,” in Fonds AGEL-UNEF: AG UN 16/1, Correspondances et Communications de l’UIE, BM, Lyon Part-Dieu.
The Vietnam struggle received continued support in Dakar in early1968 following the Tet Offensive. See “Journée
de solidarité et de lutte des étudiants africains,” UED, 28 February 1968 in Sénégal: Évenements Généraux 1966-
in spite of what he estimated as only about 30 or so underground student members at the university in 1968.
leaders Landing Savané and his wife, Marie-Angélique, were active in the movement while living in Paris in the late 1960s. Marie-Angélique was the first woman elected to lead a delegation of students at a university general assembly upon her return to Dakar in 1969. And although trailblazers like Senegalese women Marie-Angélique and Fatou Sow participated in activism Paris and Dakar, and there exist some examples such as Eugénie Rokhaya Aw, a political journalist who lost an unborn child while pregnant during incarceration in Dakar in the 1970s, the vast majority of protestors were young men. This limited participation can be explained in part by university access related to demographics (see Table 2).

Women

Table 2. University of Dakar enrollments by gender and percentage of female students at the College of Sciences and the College of Humanities, 1968-1969.\textsuperscript{332}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College of Sciences</th>
<th>College of Humanities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegalese</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Colleges Combined

Dakar movement, in spite of the relatively high number in Humanities tracks. This seems to corroborate the recollections of both French administrators and Senegalese activists, both of whom noted that support of the Dakar movement by French students enrolled at the university was almost non-existent. Many of these students were the sons and daughters of French diplomats and business people whose chief concerns were likely receiving credit for their coursework, recognition in France of their university degrees, and who did not stand to lose out on student scholarships with the new government reforms. In general, this demographic was less radical than the general French student population back home.

After the winter holidays, UED and Senegalese Democratic Student Union (UDES)—the relatively small but influential group of radical Senegalese students that was not legally recognized by the state—started the spring 1968 semester on a contentious note. In February 1968, UDES took up national concerns and released tracts linking failures at the university level to the weak national economy, and accused the Senghor regime of corruption. An 18 March strike elicited an intervention by authorities and, by April, UED had joined the action, calling for a joint struggle with Senegalese workers and entering into contact with national labor union leaders. Senghor had faced multiple challenges to his authority in the build-up to May 1968 from both students and political foes like Mamadou Dia, the PAI, and he even survived an assassination attempt. He had also progressively hardened his responses to these provocations, ordering the execution of would-be assassin Moustapha Lô and threatening student agitators that he would not hesitate to send Senegalese special forces to the university campus. The creation of puppet international organizations like MEOCAM only served to drive a wedge between the

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regime and the student body at the national level. Likewise, the mechanisms of organization around international movements like Vietnamese independence were re-deployed for national causes like official recognition for UED and an end to the corruption of the pro-French Senghor government.

*Indépendance Inachevée and May-June 1968 in Dakar*

The legacy of the French educational system, rooted in colonial empire-building projects, left traces in independent Senegal’s educational and political landscape that still lingered in 1968. For example, Senghor’s Secretary General, Frenchman Jean Collin, who had married into Senghor’s family, embodied France’s enduring presence in Senegal. In addition, French faculty at the University of Dakar far outnumbered African faculty, who made up only 31% of the total professoriate in 1967, and the university was run by a French Rector, Paul Teyssier. 335

Senegalese students railed against the presence of French students in the university with whom they competed for resources. In 1967, Senegalese nationals made up only 32% of the total enrollment, while the French made up 27%, and the remainder were mainly other francophone African students. 336 The University of Dakar mirrored the Senegalese government, employing Frenchmen to occupy primary leadership positions even nearly eight years into the independence era. With the university serving nearly as many French students as Senegalese, many wondered if decolonization had even begun to take place. Even without piling on currency devaluation and

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a national budgetary crisis with ramifications at the university level at the end of 1967, students at the University of Dakar had plenty of reasons to contest the institution.

In an effort to reign in rising education costs and to offset state revenue reductions related to low peanut-crop yields, the Senegalese Commission on Higher Education decided to cut student scholarships in October 1967. Monthly stipends would be reduced to either two thirds or one half, and they would no longer be distributed over 12 months, but over 10 months. The Commission never consulted with student representatives and refused to give in to student demands made in March 1968 to reinstate the original value of the scholarships. When confronted directly by leaders from UDES, university officials argued that several other African nations made similar cuts without protest from students. In response, members of UDES organized a “warning strike” on 18 May at the University of Dakar. After an unproductive meeting with the office of the Minister of National Education, UDES, with the backing of the larger UED—which included non-Senegalese African students—called for an unlimited strike of exams and classes on 27 May.

In a memorandum published on the eve of the student strikes, UDES attached a number of additional claims to their demand for the maintenance of scholarships. When the Ministry of National Education cited the dire straits of the national budget as a cause for the reductions, students lamented the increased spending on military instead of education, as well as citing a census, which noted that only 16 out of 320 businesses in Senegal were operated by Senegalese management, and that the head of Senegal’s Chamber of Commerce was French. They further denounced

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338 For a detailed narrative of events, see Abdoulaye Bathily, op. cit. and Blum, op. cit., 142-175.
[a] regime that has been rotting since nominal independence and which has been hitherto maintained by corruption and repression (dissolution of the PAI, PCS, and democratic organizations like the UGEAO and UGES).

The palliatives and consolidations for so-called ‘national unity’ have thus served only to augment the internal contradictions of the regime, whose 8 years of rule have proven its incapacity to resolve the problems of the country.339

The notion of an *indépendance inachevée*, or incomplete independence, emerged out of an initial protest to maintain funding levels. Students were dissatisfied with the progress of decolonization in Senegal in terms of the continued presence and domination of foreigners in the university, but also in industry, and even to the appointment of French civil servants to decision-making positions in the Senegalese government. Senghor’s General Secretary was French, as was the University Rector Teyssier, until 1969, when student strikes ushered in the appointment of the first Senegalese Rector, Seydou Madani Sy. In addition, UDES claimed that Senghor’s regime—in its creation of sister institutions reflecting national unity and deference to Senghor’s dominant party, UPS—had not allowed for democratic pluralism within the political system, and did all in its power to maintain a single-party state.

According to a UDES tract from May 1968, the University of Dakar was “in reality nothing but a French university installed in Senegal,” and UDES also maintained that “the claims that we, the students, are formulating, are located in the general realm of the claims of the Senegalese people”340. Since Senegal’s largest labor union, UNTS, also lamented French monopolies on management positions and sought autonomy from Senghor’s UPS, students felt that their anti-colonial demands for political pluralism in university organizations represented demands for the democratization of Senegalese society writ large. For them, the university had

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340 Ibid.
become a battleground for decolonization more broadly. If they could win resources otherwise
destined for military or foreign enterprise, achieve increased democratization of student unions
and Africanize teaching corps and intellectual content, then the process of decolonizing the
university might spread to other sectors of society. Indeed, after joining forces with students on
31 May 1968, the UNTS eventually obtained substantial gains in June 1968 such as a 15% increase in minimum wage and assurances from the government that it would consider
Africanizing, through nationalization, certain foreign-dominated industries. Adding to this
already tense context was a general uncertainty of the future following the deaths in 1968 of
prominent national politician Lamine Guèye, President of Senegal's National Assembly, and the
famous Mourid leader, Cheikh Mohamed Fadilou Mbacké.

Yet while the movement ended up spreading well beyond campus and grew to encompass
a number of different grievances—from issues like the scholarship amounts to anti-colonial
claims against the Senghor regime—one 68er recalled that the student strikes started on strictly
material grounds for the most affected population: Senegalese students.

There was practically unanimity among Senegalese students. The reticence was on the
part of non-Senegalese students from Benin, Togo, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Niger, practically all of the ex-AOF was present at Dakar. But the Senegalese made up the most important nucleus. The others didn't feel as concerned with the Senegalese struggle over education since it was also about the construction of their own futures... What I intended to do was to protest against a policy of my government. The others said "okay, you have the right to protest but that causes problems for us. We came here for our studies too." There was a long negotiation and, since the PAI was present [on campus]—for Senegal but also for other West African countries as a clandestine organization—that facilitated the arm-twisting of other national organizations to join in the strike.

Other African students were brought on board gradually, but crystallized their support after
police encircled the campus and restricted students from leaving. The movement also received
backing from high school students at prestigious institutions like Lycée Blaise Diagne and Lycée

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Van Vollenhoven, whose elite students stood to face scholarship reductions once they entered the University of Dakar.

The energetic eighteen year-old, Mamadou Diop Decroix, a senior at Lycée Van Vo in 1968, played a critical role in the May strikes. Decroix became politicized in the 1960s during the Dia-Senghor split, when he sided with Dia because some of his friends’ parents were imprisoned, and following the Arab-Israeli War of June 1967, when he sympathized with Arab causes in support of Lebanese friends in the Dakar community.343 His political education continued as he witnessed an elder role model, Landing Savané, lead the first strike ever to occur at the prominent Lycée Van Vo before Savané left for Paris to continue his studies and activism. Decroix worked alongside UDES leaders like Mbaye Diack, Abdoulaye Bathily, and Moussa Kâne, and cited the “mythical influence” of the unifying, supra-national organization, UED, led by the Guinean medical student Samba Balde. “When [UED] seized upon a problem and convoked a General Assembly, every student understood that the hour was grave.”344 He and other high school student leaders found themselves at the university campus attending a meeting of delegates in support of the May strike, and awoke the morning on 29 May to the sounds of police brutality on the campus grounds. As one participant recalled, “the regime was scared; I don’t know why, I was too young to understand, but in any case the regime was scared and Senghor promised to destroy the university, which was really saying something for a great intellectual like him.”345 Like Bourguiba, whose decision to smash student strikes was influenced by witnessing other global protests in the West, Senghor admired and drew upon the tactics

345 Interview with “Makhtar,” November 2010, Dakar.

In response to the protests, Senghor deployed the military to clear out the Dakar campus, attacking the students with ferocity. French Rector Teyssier convinced Senghor to negotiate a solution in spite of Senghor’s desire for immediate intervention and university closures. Teyssier declared that the regime would be willing to negotiate if students were to pronounce their goals as apolitical in nature and purely corporatist. According to political historian Leo Zeilig, "[s]tudents were not immediately galvanized into political action in 1968 to effect revolutionary change, or because they had been reading Lenin. On the contrary, it was the reduction of the grant, or more specifically its \textit{fractionnement} (splitting up), that triggered the action."\footnote{Leo Zeilig, \textit{Revolt and Protest}, 190.} However, when given the opportunity to limit their demands to material university issues, protestors declined and maintained their attacks on the broader political system. And while Zeilig is correct that the grant reductions ignited the protest, his centering of the material-corporatist aspects of the movement downplay the influence of leftist groups like the PAI and the Maoists, whose membership was predicated on a theoretical engagement with the texts of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. One activist, in discussing the difference between the current student movement and what she experienced in the 1960s, noted that "we learned; we had weekend political education sessions, we had to read so many books," while another stated that many PAI sympathizers sought "a return to the original texts of Marx and Lenin."\footnote{See interview with, "Mariane," November 2011, Dakar and interview with "Abdou," December 2011, Dakar.} This is not to suggest that the cutting of the grants was not fundamental to the movement; rather, the radical political education was
also a significant factor in the type of response Senegalese students showed in May 1968. Indeed, the regime expressed its dismay at the students' reaction, citing other regional universities who implemented similar cuts without incident.

Senghor made good on his 1967 threats to bring in “commandos” by ordering the paramilitary *groupes mobiles d’intervention* (Special Armed Forces) onto campus to break up the masses of students.\(^{349}\) Students reported that there were no university or government representatives on hand through which to hold any negotiation—having been convoked by Senghor during the invasion—and at 10:30am on 29 May, Senegal’s fiercest fighting forces breached the sacred university grounds to disperse protestors, just as the police had done at the Sorbonne in Paris.

The Senghor regime’s forces of repression were ready for war, and armed head to toe…The Special Armed Forces, reinforced by the police, charged and invaded the pavilions one after the other. They had orders to remove the students by any means necessary. They used billy clubs, rifle butts, bayonets, tear gas, even breaking doors and windows, looking for students in their rooms. The guards and police behaved like real thugs. They stole everything and smashed anything in their way, tearing clothes, and books. Pregnant women were mistreated and workers abused. At the pavilion of married students, women and children were beaten.\(^{350}\)

Students on campus were likely emboldened to occupy the university since they believed, along with their counterparts at the Sorbonne and at the University of Tunis, that university grounds were protected from state intervention. The French ambassador reported that “the students, armed with clubs, hurled insults at the brigades of police who had encircled the campus. Despite warnings from the Rector on the eve [of the campus invasion], they were convinced of the inviolability of academic freedoms and seemed to believe that they were untouchable on campus.

\(^{349}\) Françoise Blum, *op. cit.*, 161.  
grounds.” Students in Paris and in Tunis also cited breaches of law that require special permission from the attorney general before authorities may enter university grounds, further suggesting the application of French precedent on university campuses in the former empire. The clashes on 29 May resulted in 800 arrests, 70 injured students, and the death of one protestor, a Lebanese student, Salmon Khoury who, according to authorities, was killed when a molotov cocktail exploded in his hands. Four to five hundred students were sent to military camps in Archinard. As one participant recalled:

In ‘68 Senghor sent the troops on to the campus. They attacked us and threw us out. They put us in trucks and brought us to military camps, to the commandos’ camps. We stayed there several days. The union leaders were sent to Dodji, to the flax fields and to Ferlo, where it was extremely hot… We were prisoners. They were sent far from Dakar and isolated, because they were the leaders, and then, of course, there were no cell phones back then! Once a guy is out there, several hundred kilometers away, the problem is solved. They dispersed us in police stations while things calmed down and then let us go. That was the situation in ‘68.

Senghor announced publicly on 30 May that the university would be closed indefinitely, and privately stated that “the conflict called into question the existence of the Senegalese state.” He also expelled 48 student union leaders from the university for having protested in May 1968, and forced the expatriation of foreign participants. In the eyes of Senghor, a seemingly simple budgetary act regarding scholarship reductions—that had been passed at other regional

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352 See Burleigh Hendrickson, “March 1968,” 772, footnote 56.
353 Ibid. [Letter from Jean de Lagarde to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2 June 1968 in ADMAE, Afrique: Sénégal (1959-1972), Carton 49, Politique intérieure, Liasse: Crise de mai 1968, La Courneuve.] Dakar has maintained a sizable merchant class of Syro-Lebanese, many of whom immigrated to Senegal in the late nineteenth century and continued to do so clandestinely in spite of French efforts to control migration during the Mandate period in the Levant. See Andrew Kerim Arsan, “Failing to Stem the Tide: Lebanese Migration to French West Africa and the Competing Prerogatives of the French Imperial State,” Comparative Study in Society and History 53:3 (2011), 450-478.
354 Interview with “Makhtar,” November 2010, Dakar. Ferlo is a semi-arid region in Northeastern Senegal.
universities—led to violent clashes between students and the state, university closures, and a threat to the entire existence of independent Senegal.

Much to the chagrin of the regime, and unlike in the case of Tunisia, the movement was not contained to the university milieu. UDES and UED meetings with labor leaders in UNTS added another dimension to the protests, and increased repression. Yet the Senegalese case is unique in that, whereas large labor unions like the CGT and CFDT in France had a historically contentious relationship with government, UNTS was comparatively more subservient to UPS prior to the student strikes, and only officially broke with the party line in spring 1968. Indeed, Minister of public service, work, and social laws, Magatte Lô, advocated a “responsible participation” and integration within the government dating to 1963, though he pushed for Africanization of middle management positions and the limitation of *petits blancs* in intermediary positions that could easily be occupied by salaried Senegalese.³⁵⁷

The UPS integration of political parties and consolidation of power over the course of the mid-1960s led to increased pressures to work in tandem with, and exert control over, UNTS, Senegal’s largest labor union. The paradox of UPS’s relationship with UNTS revealed itself when UNTS, under pressure from UPS, was able to mobilize a number of autonomous unions under an umbrella of collective action. Yet this consolidation led to the integration of progressive and radical groups—akin to UPS's 1966 alliance with rival PRA-Senegal—that ultimately brought about demands as early as 1967 for autonomy from political parties and governments, increases in minimum wages, reforms in education, and even “the will of workers to join their

action with that of the people for total decolonization and social and economic improvement.”

Françoise Blum astutely observes that, after Senghor arrested Mamadou Dia and incorporated PRA-Senegal, “the only remaining audible voices of contestation were those of the students and labor union members.” In the case of labor unions, UPS efforts at consolidation actually led to collective action against the state.

Already with long lists of demands and complaints of continued French domination in education and industry, UNTS and other progressive labor unions like the secular teachers’ union (SUEL) and the union of dentists and surgeons (SPAS) joined the students in calling for a general strike on 30 May 1968. The government ordered police to occupy the UNTS headquarters (*Bourse du Travail*) in Kaolack and Dakar and sent a number of detained leaders to military camps Dodji. Once it became clear that national labor unions were backing students, Senghor laid out tough sanctions in Circular no. 47, threatening state employees with their jobs, or even imprisonment, for adherence to strikes, if they did not return to work on 5 June. Police statistics show wide participation outside of Dakar, with 364 functionaries on strike in Diourbel, 28% of teachers on strike in Kaolack, and 160 out of 260 followed strike orders in St. Louis. This growing support led the Senghor regime to release all detainees from military camps and prisons on 9 June and to enter into negotiations with labor leaders and businesses on 12 June 1968. These talks resulted in a series of 18 measures, including a 15% increase in minimum

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359 Blum, *op. cit.*, 156.
360 UNTS cited in 1968 that the French capital dominated 70% of commerce, 80% of industry, 56% of banking in Senegal. See Blum, *op. cit.*, 156. This was also reflected at the University, where non-Africans counted for about two thirds of the teaching corps in 1967-68.
361 See “Sanctions consecutives aux faits de grève,” 19 June 1968; Telegram of Ibrahima Faye, Governor of Siné-Saloum Kaolack to President-Intersen Dakar Info, 5 June 1968; and Telegram of Aly Diouf, Governor of St. Louis, 5 June 1968 in Dossier 149: Mai-juin 1968, Archives École de Police, Dakar.
wages, regulations on the duration of workdays, and employer contributions to employees’ medical costs.\textsuperscript{362} 

French ambassador to Senegal Jean de Lagarde noted the complex and dynamic relationship between labor and state politics that was somewhat distinct in the region. “In Mali and Guinea, as in Mauritania, Tanzania, or in Algeria, the national labor union is an extension of the Party and an instrument of the state over the masses. On the contrary in Senegal, UNTS, outside of the fact it only represents a portion of the workers, distances itself from the Party and the government and the problems of 31 May violently proved this.”\textsuperscript{363} Even after negotiations and significant gains, the once-loyal UNTS issued a tract in August 1968 lambasting the government’s failure to recognize union autonomy, and promised to continue to safeguard the interests of the people against French imperialism.

In the first phase of this dictatorship the neo-colonial regime of Senghor inaugurated the dissolution of political parties and democratic organizations [and replaced them with] carefully chosen lackeys…strikes were quelled under the fallacious pretext of “nation-building.”

The fundamental characteristic of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Republic is the worsening of the dictatorship in Senegal with the concentration of all powers in the hands of the President of the Republic…

This repression witnessed a degree of savagery never before attained. Under the direction of French experts Senegal ushered in modern methods of torture (by electricity). A heinous law on organizations declared ‘seditious’ was voted in. A special jurisdiction was created to judge summarily and to condemn patriots with heavy prison sentences whose sole crime is to have said no to the exploitation of their people. This dictatorial regime is reactionary, having turned its back on the aspiration and fundamental needs of the Senegalese people and has consecrated a rupture with the working masses. Ever since, to maintain its power it has used two reactionary weapons: corruption and repression…

On the eve of the electoral mascarade the Senegalese people demand their freedom of opinion, of gathering, of the press, etc… The Senegalese people demand the return of

\textsuperscript{362} Bathily, \textit{op. cit.}, 97.
political exiles. The Senegalese people demand the liberation of political detainees and a

It is clear that UNTS did not buy into the Senghor regime’s insistence upon a lack of political pluralism in the name of national unity, and that its members saw through efforts at consolidating state power with the post-Dia constitution in the name of nation building. The repression that followed UNTS support of the student movement only led to increasing the divide between labor leaders and the government, and louder outcries for political rights.

Not only did Senghor use his own oppressive forces trained by the French government to quell domestic resistance, he also did not hesitate to call upon the services of French paramilitary forces that were still stationed in Senegal following its 1960 independence.\footnote{Jakob Vogel, “Senghor et l’ouverture culturelle de la RFA en ’68. Pour une histoire transnationale l’Allemagne - France - Afrique,” Vingtième Siècle, vol. 2, no. 94 (2007):145. According to the independent journal based in Zurich, Die Weltwoche, Senghor’s inability to control violence in Dakar was a result of “permanent tensions between ethnic groups.” See also Jean Ziegler, “Krise im Senegal,” Die Weltwoche, 21 juin 1968, 2.} Senghor’s reliance on a French education system designed by French educators, and backed with the military support of the French nation, further fueled the fire ignited by the students of Dakar in 1968, who joined labor leaders in characterizing Senghor’s regime as neo-colonial.\footnote{See Momar-Coumba Diop, “Le syndicalisme étudiant: pluralisme et revendications” in Sénégal: Trajectoire d’un État (Dakar: Codesria, 1992), 440. Diop cites directly from UDES pamphlets from 1968 that call for “all democratic organizations and all patriotic forces to create a united front to rid Senegal of its neo-colonial servants.”} Journalist Vieux Savané remembered 1968 as more than just a series of strikes around student and worker concerns; “[a]rriving eight years after independence, [May 1968] also witnessed the youth’s thirst for liberty, bonded around a common referent, and which was far from being stressed about its professional and social future. It was about changing the world, making it better, and casting its dreams of fraternity, solidarity, and plural liberties into realities. These ideas landed on our
shores from Europe, America, and Asia.” Not only did Savané locate global aspects to the movement, his comments also support the notion of an *indépendance inachevée* in which students refused to accept a Senegal that was only partially decolonized.

But the students who mobilized in 1968 also protested the lack of opportunities that awaited them at the end of university study. Reflecting after the events of 1968, Hassan El-Nouty—a Franco-Egyptian Professor of French—captured the bleak future for Senegalese students facing scarce economic prospects and a new corrupt class of Senegalese that had replaced the previous oppressors:

> At the root of the problem is a neo-colonial situation, which is the product of neo-imperialism (French in this case) supported by a “collaborative” neo-bourgeoisie (Senegalese in this case)...

The new generation of students [is] frustrated with their lot with respect to social mobility, the good positions are already taken by their opportunistic elders. It is not enough to mention in passing that a new bourgeoisie, namely bureaucratic in nature, has high-jacked the fruits of independence for its profit…We deduced that the *raison d’être* of this neo-bourgeoisie is to run Senegal in order to fill the coffers of French neo-imperialism.  

John Entelis cited this same student frustration at the crisis of rising expectations in light of few economic opportunities among Tunisian students polled in the early 1970s at universities in both Tunis and Paris. Third-world universities faced growing pains due to rising numbers of educated youth with limited available positions in a squeezed financial system, as well as a stall in government hiring after an early period of expansion. Using the University of Dakar as a litmus test for how “decolonized” Senegal had become after liberation, students and workers alike found that after eight years of Senghor, they had not yet achieved full independence from French influence. Ironically, cutting ties from France also meant that Senegal could lose up to

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70% of its university funding to pay instructors and grant scholarships. In this regard, the students’ dual aims of Africanization and increased (or sustained) subsidies were incompatible. Even the government solutions to the strikes reflected Senegal's ongoing postcolonial relationship to France, as French Rector Teyssier initially tried to appease students incensed over the funding reductions by offering 300 supplementary scholarships to study in France.\footnote{Telegram of Jean de Lagarde to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 28 May 1968, in ADMAE, Afrique: Sénégal (1959-1972), in Carton 49, Politique intérieure, Liasse: Crise de mai 1968, La Courneuve.}

Joint efforts with labor organizers eventually led to negotiations with the government in which workers obtained wage increases while students forced Senghor to hasten the Africanization of the university. University classes had been canceled for the year, but Senghor reopened discussions with UDES leaders in September 1968. He initially wanted to take a hard line and close the university indefinitely until strict reforms were put in place; however, under pressure from Paris and his own university administrators, classes resumed in fall 1968 after students were granted the opportunity, as in France, to take exams that had been canceled in spring, and all who showed up were passed. Negotiations with UDES reaped benefits for the students; UDES leader Mbaye Diack signed an accord in which funding was reinstated, expelled students were finally allowed to return and, somewhat surprisingly, students successfully obtained participation in future discussions on reforms.\footnote{Details of the agreement can be found in "Communiqué final de la rencontre entre le gouvernement de l’Union Démocratique des Étudiants Sénégalais," signed 13 September 1968 by Emile Badiane, Minister of Technical Education and Professional Training and Mbaye Diack, President of UDES, in in ADMAE, Afrique: Sénégal (1959-1972), Carton 49, Politique intérieure, La Courneuve. Article no. 6 of the accord states: "The Senegalese government guarantees the participation of all students of Dakar in the elaboration of University reform." See also Blum, op. cit., 171.}

Though the movement was re-activated and clashes continued in 1971 (see Chapter 5), Senghor did name a Senegalese University Rector and African faculty members at the university skyrocketed from 34% in 1967 to nearly 50% by 1971.\footnote{See Table 2 “Africanisation du corps enseignant de 1970 à 1979) in Bathily, op. cit., 45.} After a brief period of calm, clashes with the Senghor regime resumed.
over the January 1971 presidential visit of Georges Pompidou. The French Cultural Center was
set ablaze, police apprehended perpetrators attempting to launch a Molotov cocktail in the
direction of Pompidou’s cortège, and UDES and UED were dissolved shortly thereafter.

The Senghorian Paradox: Between Negritude and Francophonie

During a July 1968 visit to Paris, Senghor stated that 300 years of French presence had marked
Senegal, and that “if there hadn’t been a May crisis in France, there would not have been one in
Senegal.” He further expressed a desire to solve the Dakar crisis through dialogue to “find a
balance between francophonie and Negritude.” Indeed, the university crisis forced Senghor to
face these somewhat contradictory dual state projects. Senghor made public reference on several
occasions to both concepts in the aftermath of the May-June events. On the one hand,
francophonie suggested participation in a larger community based on shared French language
and cultural values, of which the university was part and parcel. On the other hand, Negritude—
or pride in Blackness and celebration of African heritage—was not reflected within the
university, which still drew heavily upon the French system and employed primarily European
instructors in 1968. On the eve of the May events, Senghor claimed that

[f]or the francophones of the Third World, [francophonie] is about obtaining cultural
assistance that enables us to reinvigorate our national and continental values by
incorporating scientific technology and French techniques. For the francophones of
Europe and North America, it’s about incorporating our cultural values and adding our
strengths to theirs. United, us and them, we won’t land in the year 2000 empty
handed…This explains the importance that we place on the University of Dakar…This
explains the high standard to which we hold ourselves which, by the way, we inherited
from the French University.”

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373 “Être francisé ne représente pas que des avantages,” *L’Unité Africaine*, no. 315, 1 August 1968.
374 “Toast du Président de la République au dîner offert en l’honneur de M. le Sec. de’Etat aux Affaires Etrangères
Archives Nationales de Sénégal (ANS), Dakar. [Consider moving to Poco in Question Chapter as I cite parts of this
there as well]
This hybrid notion of francophonie, with cultural and technological exchange between the Third World and the West, was thoroughly rejected by protesting students who clamored for Africanization at the University of Dakar. Senghor openly admitted his fondness for the racial theories of the German anthropologist, Leo Frobenius, who deduced that both Europeans and Africans possessed faculties of reason; the European was analytical while the African was intuitive and emotive. Senghor felt the need to defend his position after May 1968, declaring to the French ambassador in March 1969, “In truth, we never stopped identifying as ‘Negroes,’ but we started identifying, at the same time, for two centuries, as men of French culture and, since independence, as activists for francophonie.”

At least six times in public addresses between 1969 and 1971, Senghor referenced the *cahiers de doléances*, or “grievance lists” destined for the French king on the eve of Revolution of 1789 and a major forum for the expression of popular dissent in the twilight of the ancien régime. He drew upon a long Senegalese history of merging francophonie and Negritude, declaring that representatives from the colony of Senegal, had already picked up the word Negro out of the mud from the [slave] trade, and reinstated its human dignity. And today we proclaim as militants of Negritude and francophonie, that a people cannot achieve national dignity by denying its ethnicity, its culture and its history.

Our spiritual ancestors, veritable precursors to Negritude and francophonie, declared their double quality as “Negroes” and “Frenchmen.”

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375 Senghor noted the strong influence of Goethe and Frobenius. He also admitted the appeal of Nazism for Negritude. “Unconsciously, by osmosis and reaction at the same time, we spoke like Hitler and the Colonialists, we advocated the virtues of blood.” Quoted in Jaques Louis Hymans, *Léopold Sédar Senghor* (Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 71. Gary Wilder also discusses Senghor's challenges with reconciling French cultural influence and Negritude at length in *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism Between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 147-200.


There seems to have been some merit to Senghor’s claims about the dual identity in the *cahiers*. The inhabitants of St. Louis in Senegal indeed wrote to the delegations in Paris to outline problems in the colony in April 1789.

Negroes or mulattos, we are all French since French blood runs in our veins or in those of our nephews. These origins give us pride and lift our souls! No other people showed more patriotism and courage! In 1757 when Senegal was handed over to the English, we wanted to defend it in spite of our colonial leaders…We viewed it as the best day of our lives when, in 1779, we had the pleasure of seeing the French flag fly on the port of St. Louis. We greeted the French as our liberators, as our brothers…

Though he did not acknowledge that the mixed race St. Louisians of 1789—many of whom were merchants—were likely employing strategy to achieve material gains by claiming French allegiance in their grievances, Senghor identified the complicated historical relationship between France and Senegal dating to the 17th century, when France first occupied Gorée Island. He also deployed historical rhetoric to support his claims for the mutual compatibility of the values and inherent nature of francophonie and Negritude.

Senghor faced no lack of challengers to this notion. Hassan El Nouty likened Negritude to a form of neo-colonialism in which “the African himself subscribes to the thesis of his ethnic specificity, different from the European, such that technological mastery and world domination are reserved only for the West…this neo-colonialism provides an ideological alibi that is disguised as symbiosis (the word reappears in almost obsessive fashion beneath the pen of Senghor) between Africa and the West.”

In a January 1969 speech in Kinshasa, Senghor responded to criticisms leveled by anglophone African intellectuals Wole Soyinka (Nigeria) and Ezekiel Mphahlele (South Africa)—who viewed Negritude as a form of cultural imperialism.

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emanating from francophone Africa and an extension of Rousseau’s "noble savage"—and urged the “diasporic world to end the Anglo-French rivalry… and focus on universalism.” But even outside of intellectual debates about the merits and origins of either francophonie or Negritude, it is interesting to note that Senghor found the two concepts inseparable, commonly referring to them in the same speeches, and even in the same sentences. He also found these concepts foundational for his approaches to Senegalese politics and social life, as they buttressed his notion of “African Socialism,” and justified the continued reliance upon the French university model and the need to maintain reciprocity and mutual recognition of advanced degrees which, given the importance he attached to Negritude, paradoxically precluded Africanization of university curricula.

The student protest in May can thus be viewed in part as a rejection of Senghor’s notion of francophonie, and of his connection of francophonie to “modernity.” In his mind, modernity would be best brought about through unity emanating from his political party down to union levels in labor and among students. “[T]he Party must, in its triple role of direction, control, and animation, be the principal instrument of our development…as for objectives, it is our duty to construct a modern nation, where citizens will rejoice in democratic liberties, on the level of a developed nation.” At the university level, the modernization project involved the Franco-Senegalese “Mixed Commission,” through which all decisions passed. For its part, the French

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384 Senghor's views on modernity were constructed during a period of nation-building and development that coincided with the "modernization theory" articulated by social scientists of the period. For a fascinating discussion of modernity and modernization theory in African historiography, see Lynn M. Thomas, "Modernity's Failings, Political Claims, and Intermediate Concepts," in American Historical Review 116:3 (June 2011), 727-740; and Frederick Cooper, Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History (Berkeley: University of California Press,
Ministry of Education sought to “safeguard its privileged ties by working to preserve and uphold our values in the name of a certain type of civilization, and to be able to help the African of tomorrow make his way through the modern world.” While there was no shortage of paternalism in these remarks, Senghor seemed to echo this view. He mentioned the gradual increases in Senegalese budgetary responsibility in education, and “Senegalese education reforms from pre-school to the university, from linguistics to mathematics, whose ultimate goal is the creation of a new Senegalese man, solidly rooted in Negritude to open himself up to modernicity [sic].” Senghor squarely tied francophonie and Negritude to modernity, and cited Senegalese education as the key to unlocking a new, modern African man. Protesting students, on the other hand, had an altogether different version of a modern university, and criticized the "inauguration in Senegal, under the direction of French specialists, of modern methods of torture by electricity," that the Senegalese state used to suppress PAI and its supporters. The Senegalese journalist Jean-Pierre N'Diaye explained that, "during this era when the continent was emerging from the pain of colonialism, the 'francophonie-Negritude' coupling was unacceptable...the recognition of francophonie was inseparable from the development of Negritude." Whatever revolutionary content of Negritude had been removed by 1968 with its connection to francophonie in an anti-colonial era. But perhaps he summed it up best in his 1971 article on the state of the African university: “In effect, how can the university promote scientific and technological development—one of the components of national liberty—and depend on a

capitalist metropole to give it direction? Therein lies the dilemma! The same problem continues to be posed today in all of the African national universities.”

A Transnational Battle Over the Events of May-June 1968?

“For Vietnam we held conferences to denounce the Americans [laughter]. Let’s just say, all that propelled the movement at the local level. It was more for us than for the people who were fighting [abroad]. We were too far away and too weak.”

Interview with “Makhtar.”

Just as Bourguiba had done in Tunisia, likening Simone Othmani to so-called foreign agitator, Daniel Cohn-Bendit (a Franco-German Jew), and just as young French nationalists denounced the infiltration of the German Cohn-Bendit, Senghor framed the student movement as

“subversion by foreigners.” He accused Senegalese students of “aping” their French counterparts whom they allowed to “control them by remote.” By undermining the Dakar movement as French mimesis, Senghor was able not only to delegitimize the Dakar students’ claims, but also to justify the use of violence in ways similar to the French state. The negative connotation of the colonial past led student leaders to associate Senghor with French imperialism, and it led Senghor to cast the Dakar student movement as juvenile mimicry of bourgeois French students. This desire to create distance from Frenchness was shared—on both sides of the protest fault lines—in a veritable postcolonial situation.

After initial negotiation with some student groups, Senghor reneged on his promises to work with students and, by February 1971, Senghor had dissolved the catalysts of Dakar’s May 1968, UDES and the UED, which were among the last vestiges of Senghor’s long-despised political opposition, the PAI.

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390 Interview with “Makhtar,” November 2011, Dakar.
391 See Bathily, *op. cit.*, p. 16 and *Dakar-Matin*, 1er juin 1968.
UED President Samba Balde was sent into exile to Mali’s capital, Bamako, after the May campus raids in Dakar. There, he organized a group of Malian activist students to provide UED’s version of the May 68 events by distributing copies en masse of its “Memorandum on the Events at the University of Dakar.” Back in Paris, the Senegalese branch of FEANF, the Association of Senegalese Students in France (AESF), outlined its steady support of the struggle in Dakar.

We organized numerous meetings, edited a special issue of our journal, *L’Étudiant Sénégalais*, and published a “memorandum on the problems of the university and of training management,” in order to clearly situate University problems more generally. We also occupied the Senegalese Embassy in Paris on 28 May 1968 with all of the African students of FEANF in solidarity with our comrades in Dakar. We sent a telegram vigorously protesting the government and supporting UDES and UED.

Landing Savané, who had led the first protests at the prestigious Lycée Van Vo just years prior, again led FEANF and AESF students into the embassy. Students entered the premises and implored the ambassador to send a telegram to Senghor in protest against the police intervention on the campus in Dakar, and demanding the release of all the detained students and the reopening of the university. These pan-African efforts were not only important in giving UDES and UED the confidence to sustain the movement, they also contributed to providing a counter-narrative to the Senegalese state. According to journalist Vieux Savané, recalling 1968 in Dakar 40 years later,

> [t]here were neither newspapers nor private radio stations to offer another dissident voice, one that didn’t conform to the official truths. On the national stage the only accepted voice came from the state-run stations. The only option was to go underground for those who enjoyed sneaking around the maze of side streets removed from the gaze of neighbors and officials. We gave each other code names only known by an inner circle. The tracts were distributed at night, typed up on stencil machines, copied on beat-up roneo machines that coughed up ink. Activism against the regime was risky, perilous,

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anti-militaristic, anti-white in the sense of the color of colonialism, imperialism, and oppression.”

It was extremely difficult to circumvent authorities in the aftermath of May-June 1968, and both the regime and the students accused each other of succumbing to French imperialism.

Interestingly, by 1968, the practice of colonialism had taken on racial characteristics in that activists viewed their rejection of the Senghor regime, with its ties to France, as anti-white as well as anti-colonialist; many identified colonial practices as white, and Senghor's background in French literature and his close friendship with Pompidou made for a short leap to associate him and his party with "whiteness," or at the very least, “Frenchness.” Perhaps Senghor himself, whose wife was French, described it best:

For me, French is no longer a foreign vehicle, but the natural form of expression of my thought.\textsuperscript{397}

From time to time I would dream that I was white. Each time, I was so tormented that I awoke suddenly. Not because I’m racist—as you know my wife is French—, it’s just that, if I were white, I had the impression that I would no longer know pain and suffering, nothing to struggle for. I prefer, in spite of it all, to remain in contradiction and suffering—to have the joy of struggle, action, and creation.\textsuperscript{398}

It is worth noting that not all students backed the movement. UPS youth leaders like Moustapha Niasse and Baro Diène denounced the anti-government elements of the protests.

Diène echoed Senghor’s claims of mimicry, noting:

There was a May ’68 in Dakar because there was a May ’68 in France. There was a contagion. The university was in effervescence. It was contestation. In France, there was Cohn-Bendit, here, there was Mamadou Diop Decroix, Bathily and others...We [in MJUPS] were mobilized to confront the strike. For us it was a conspiracy against our government and we needed to defend it. We considered ourselves patriots because we brought the country to independence and now we had to preserve the regime.\textsuperscript{399}

\textsuperscript{398} Quoted in Janet G. Vaillant and Roger Meunier, \textit{Vie de Léopold Sédar Senghor: noir, Français et Africain} (Paris; [Amsterdam]: Éd. Karthala ; [SEPHIS], 2006).
\textsuperscript{399} Baro Diène, “Il y a eu un Mai 68 à Dakar parce qu’il y a eu un Mai 68 en France,” in Special Edition of \textit{Sud}
Of course, these comments likely represented only a fraction of students based on MJUPS’s weak membership compared to UED and UDES. And though there may have been sympathy for the student cause from student groups in Prague and Paris, there was little support from the local French student population. They were concerned with school closures that might jeopardize the year’s work, as well as concerns over potentially losing the recognition of degrees in France if the University of Dakar were “Africanized.”

Learning from the French case—in which 12,000 unionized radio and television workers occupied France’s largest network, ORTF, and largely controlled and limited media coverage—Senghor protected national broadcast centers and released several broadcasts from Radio-Dakar. He ordered the seizure of foreign newspapers that conflicted with the state’s positions, announced to the nation as early as 30 May that the movement was being led from abroad, and implored workers to ignore UNTS orders to strike. Senghor further claimed that “yesterday morning’s [31 May] troubles were organized by African students from FEANF, having come [to Dakar] specifically from Paris,” and quipped: “it is curious that the students who abhorred us for succumbing to the will of French imperialism have waited for the student revolt in Paris to copy French students without changing a single comma.”

Given Senghor’s attempts to undermine the national character of Senegalese students’ and workers’ claims, it is not all that surprising that historians like Bathily and Thioub would insist on its local characteristics. 68er Mbaye Diack asserted in a 2000 interview that “there was no relationship linking the leadership of UDES and the French students. No contact existed at the time between students based in France

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400 Quotidien, “Que reste-il de Mai 68?” 30 May 2008.
402 Dakar-Matin, 1 June 1968.
and their counterparts in Dakar." Mimicry in this sense went beyond Bhabha's understanding of it for the colonial era, in which it could be used as a tool of resistance and as a way of even differentiating from the object of mimicry (i.e., British or French imperial culture). Here, charges of French mimicry were launched by both the Senghor regime and by youth activists as an accusation and indictment against an internal, Senegalese enemy (each other). To adopt either French culture, as in the case of student depictions of Senghor, or to imitate frivolous French youth activism, as in Senghor's accusation of students, was to undermine Senegalese nationalism.

Despite Diack’s claims, Senegalese students indeed had contact with organizations outside of Senegal as seen in the international support for the Dakar movement from the UIE in Prague, and FEANF and other French organizations in Paris. Even Bathily, who was adamant about the Senegalese character of the movement, identified key postcolonial activist networks that supported the cause. The UIE sent Moroccan Vice-President, Abdel Malek, on a clandestine mission to Dakar in early June to report on events and, upon his return to Prague, to launch an international campaign of support for UED. And while apart from chronology, there is little evidence to suggest that the Dakar student strikes were a mimicry of the French movement, there was certainly information exchange and mutual support from Paris-based groups, especially through Senegalese students with membership crossover in French organizations. For example, Landing and Marie-Angélia Savané, as well as Omar Blondin-Diop—the Senegalese actor famous for his appearances in Jean-Luc Godard films—ran in close circles with the Paris-based Maoïst group, the Proletarian Left (la gauche prolétarienne). One Senegalese female activist studying in France in May 1968 described how the actions in Dakar inspired a revival of

transnational activism in which Senegalese students in France became more engaged politically after May 1968.

In the summer of 1968, we decided that everyone who could take vacation back in Senegal had to do it in order to connect with the student movement here [in Dakar], and to see then how to coordinate the movement in France as much as in Senegal. Why? Because in France, we could carry out the work of explaining [the movement] to the French authorities as the former colonial power, et cetera. But most of all we could solicit the support of organizations like the French Communist Party and all of its democratic splinter groups on the left. You see back then the radical French left was extremely dynamic and popularized the Trotskyists and all of that, and popularized the movement. It was also a way to recruit students. Many of them were not necessarily members of AESF and it was a way to create a strong movement. And in fact, it was thanks to the movement of ’68 that the Senegalese student movement was revived and propelled in France. The following year in 1969, people responded in large numbers and the AESF had representation in all the large French cities. We hadn't seen this since the era of FEANF's peak before independence, when, in general everyone was mobilized. Then after [independence] there was a decline in mobilization and ’68 allowed for the revival of the student movement in all of the large French cities.  

While it is difficult to assess the degree to which French students were broadly interested in the Dakar movement, it is evident that connections from the 1968 movement influenced ongoing communication in the 1970s, and that Africans studying abroad became more engaged following May 1968.  

1968 thus contributed to the re-establishment of transnational networks with groups like FEANF—that lay dormant following independence—and to the establishment of new networks with leftist splinter groups that emerged out of 1968 like the Proletarian Left. Though there is no evidence that the leaders of the Dakar movement took orders from French activists, many of the protestors' claims were directly related to Senegal's continued relationship with France, and activists in Paris communicated shared goals with Dakar. Senegalese activists like Landing Savané—who returned to Dakar in the summer of 1968 and met on several

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occasions with Mbaye Diack to combine efforts—often wore multiple activist "hats" in
organizations at the national, international, African, and French levels. In addition, many of the
debates taking place within the international left, particularly regarding the Sino-Soviet split,
were re-energized by the 1968 movement and transported to Dakar when Senegalese activists in
Paris returned in the summer of 1968 to participate in activism back home. What separated 1968
from previous activism, according to one participant, was the "political realization that occurred.
In the movements of 1966, with the NKrumah coup d'état and all that, there was a pan-African
consciousness but it was vague. Now, concretely, the students saw that we had to defend our
university." 409 With an injection of new energy arriving from Senegalese students who spent the
May events in Paris, networks within France proliferated and students in Dakar had never before
exercised such agency, ultimately negotiating participation in decision-making processes at the
university.

The Senghor regime had difficulty comprehending the audacious claims that privileged
youth made against the state, and made several attempts to undermine the national character of
the movement. On 13 June 1968, a group of technical assistants working at the prestigious Lycée
Van Vollenhoven—linked to coopération programs between France and Senegal—signed a
petition denouncing police violence and the university and lycée evacuations. In response,
Senghor declared them undesirables and announced their expulsion from Senegal following
summer vacation. 410 In a study of the demographics of expelled persons from Senegal from
1948-1978, Momar Coumba Diop found a spike in 1968, when the government expelled
professors from IDEP and ENEA, as well as a number of Chinese. “On that note, it is worth
highlighting that the Chinese were the primary scapegoats of May 1968. The state declared over

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409 Interview with "Marianne," November 2011, Dakar.
and over that students at the University of Dakar in May 1968 were manipulated by the Chinese. This ‘Chinese intervention’ in ’68 was the justification for the expulsion of the Chinese…On these occasions, the state, to justify its argument of ‘foreign intervention’ in Senegalese domestic affairs, expels foreigners.”  

A11 Just as Bourguiba had done in Tunisia, the Senghor regime took advantage of the crackdown to eliminate perceived threats from Maoists and communists. The PAI and many of the more radical student elements had avowed their Maoist leanings, and Senghor did not hesitate to expel 47 Chinese people from Taiwan residing in Senegal, and rescind permits to correspondents from a Chinese news agency.412 His xenophobic assertions about foreign subversion transcended France to include China, which may have been influenced by his knowledge that FEANF had sent a delegation of African students to China for a 2-month visit in 1960.413

Indeed, the concurrent movements in the spring of 1968 ("1968s") fostered a number of transnational networks and communities of activists. Paris was a key site of information exchange and a central node connecting various movements. In June 1968, after being accused of organizing a series of protests in and around Paris, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a German national, was expelled from France and returned to West Germany. Cohn-Bendit’s Trotskyist March 22 Movement was dissolved in a French government crackdown in June 1968, along with at least six other radical-left groups.414 Cohn-Bendit’s Senegalese co-conspirator in the March 22 Movement, Omar Blondin Diop, was expelled from France in October 1969 after having been

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412 Ibrahima Thioub, op. cit., 278-279.
413 Dieng, Mémoires d’un étudiant, 7-10.
interrogated by French authorities for participation in a May protest in the Latin Quarter.415

While Blondin Diop and Cohn-Bendit are particularly important for illustrating the importance of France’s colonial past and its post-colonial 1968 present, they represent only 2 of hundreds of foreign students and activists arrested and either deported or imprisoned, many of whom were from France’s former colonies.416 And it was not only in France where activists faced the threat of deportation, as Senghor clearly employed these same strategies in Senegal. Given Cohn-Bendit’s and Blondin Diop's mutual participation in the March 22 Movement and their presence at the front lines of the Latin Quarter protests, it is highly likely that their relationship contributed to Cohn-Bendit's awareness and support of the Senegalese student movement.

Upon expulsion, Cohn-Bendit brought his passion for revolutionary activism to the SDS (Socialist German Student League) when he reproached the group for being “a boy-scout movement” which “in its pitiful state had forgotten international politics.”417 Shortly after making these comments, Cohn-Bendit was instrumental, along with Senegalese foreign students within the SDS, in organizing 2,000 students in a more globally-conscious protest in September 1968 of the arrival of Senghor. The acclaimed poet was set to receive a Peace Prize from the German Book Fair in Frankfurt just months after unleashing Senegalese authorities against protesting students at the University of Dakar. Cohn-Bendit provoked a situation in which the rejection of Senghor’s authoritarian repression of protestors in Dakar prompted yet another set of

416 Le Monde 15 juin 1968.
state violence against students in Frankfurt. German authorities used tear gas and mounted police to disperse students from behind barricades, and arrested Cohn-Bendit on the spot.\footnote{\textit{Le Monde}, le 24 septembre, 1968 and “Halting Movements Towards University Reform,” \textit{Minerva}, vol. 7, no. 3 (March 1969): 527-533.}

Image 1: Danny the Red inciting German protestors in Frankfurt to charge the gates of St. Paul’s Church on September 22, 1968, the site of the Book Fair where Senghor was set to receive an honorary literature prize. Photo by Gus Schuettler. Used with permission from Stars and Stripes. © 1968, 2013 Stars and Stripes.

and Senghor’s interest in Germany, yet the responses in the aftermath of the protest from Paris and Dakar can also demonstrate the symbolic power of historical memory that broadens our understanding of complex and interlinked events.

The Frankfurt protest highlights how Cohn-Bendit’s connections with global movements—through key figures like Omar Blondin Diop—reverberated even outside of the boundaries of the French postcolonial nation-state. Cohn-Bendit's expulsion to Germany by French authorities led to the exportation the French radical left’s particular anti-imperialist causes, and protestors even likened Senghor’s concept of Negritude to the racial essentialism of Nazism.421 Though the driving force behind the SDS student protest was Senghor's brutality toward Senegalese students in May and June, his past connections to France and his continued economic reliance upon France, coupled with his intellectual ties to Germany, heavily informed the demonstration in Frankfurt.422 Immediately following the SDS protest and Cohn-Bendit’s arrest, the executive committee of the UDES in Dakar sent a letter to the President of the German Federal Republic, Heinrich Lübke, and demanded Cohn-Bendit’s release, along with the other protestors.423 Though it is unclear whether Lübke ever responded to the students, it is quite evident that they were aware of events in Frankfurt, and expressed solidarity with Cohn-Bendit. In fact, the UDES members made certain to justify the actions of the SDS by educating the German President on events occurring in Dakar. In an act of associative historical memory, they also compared Senghor’s imprisonment of protestors to the prison camps under the Nazi regime, and claimed that Senghor’s selection as winner of a German peace prize was “the expression of a

421 Vogel, "Seghor et l’ouverture culturelle de la RFA en ’68,” 7-12.
423 Open letter to the President, signed by the Comité Exécutif de l’Union Démocratiques des Etudiants Sénégalais (UDES), 28 September 1968.
flagrant contradiction which unmasks the hypocrisy of neo-colonialism.” Comparing Senghor’s authoritarian reactionism to Nazism effectively accomplished what the French left sought with harkening Charonne (see chapter 2): each group created a series of symbolic images that linked oppression to groups of violent perpetrators (Nazis, CRS, OAS, or Ordre Nouveau), and associated these groups with the state. And while the conjuring of historical memories and acts of protest in the present manifested themselves at local levels, they shared certain global referents, such as a vilification of imperialism and neo-colonialism. Protestors from afar also employed historical memory when responding to local events like Senghor’s visit to Frankfurt. UDES even claimed that the SDS’s “progressive protest” of Senghor “symbolizes the most pure internationalist spirit by acting for an altruism and rich human depth that have been unfathomable for privileged minorities who tend to accumulate unjustly acquired material wealth on the sweat and blood of the masses.” In spite of UDES’s anti-French demands of May ’68 in Dakar, and Bathily’s claim to a purely nationalist student movement, the UDES letter to Lübke illustrates that even very local causes were not restricted to the national boarders of Senegal, or even those of France, for that matter. In this regard, expulsion measures by authorities in France actually exported transnational activism to other parts of Europe. Much like Paris had been for the protest of a Bourguiba visit, Frankfurt also acted as a site of third-world protest in which the presence of a third-world authoritarian elicited a transnational response. Similarly, radical youth in Dakar would later protest the February 1971 visit of French President Georges Pompidou as a symbol of neo-colonialism and perception of Senghor as a lackey to French power.

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424 Ibid. Vogel also notes that the SDS students, in true anarchist fashion, created an alternative Peace Prize, in which they nominated the assassinated Congolese leader, Patrice Lumumba, and the Maoist guerilla, Hamilcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau. See Vogel, op. cit., 146.
425 Ibid.
Conclusion

Though the protests at the University of Dakar began after the March 1968 movement in Tunis and the after the Parisian barricades of 10 May 1968, they arguably yielded the largest gains in terms of government negotiations with both labor and student movements. May 1968 struck both Paris and Dakar almost simultaneously. Both movements were ignited by students, suppressed violently by state authorities, and then supported by workers’ unions. In the wake of economic crisis due to peanut crop failures and a falling currency, Senegalese students faced cutbacks on university funding and housing access. Dakar 68er Abdoulaye Bathily characterized the movement as both nationalist and anti-government since, he claimed, students opportunistically utilized the university’s financial woes to lament the presence of an overwhelming number of French professors, as well as the relatively large number of French immigrant students occupying limited university enrollment. Even President Léopold Sédar Senghor, acclaimed for a particularly “African Socialism,” had named the University of Dakar “a French University in the services of Africa.”

Partly as a result of the country-wide economic crisis, Senegalese students faced a reduction in the number and amount of scholarships, which were slashed anywhere from one half to two-thirds of their pre-1968 values. Yet on the basis of this material issue, students demanded the Africanization of the faculty and of subject matter. While Senegalese students felt that French immigrants received access to education that should be reserved for Senegalese, workers faced similar limitations regarding coveted high-level positions in government and industry that

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were dominated by foreigners.\textsuperscript{428} Similar to how portions of the French left grafted their anti-imperialist causes onto the question of immigrants’ rights as workers, protesting students at the University of Dakar couched their demands in the context of the persistence of colonialism. The postcolonial elements—or specific historical links to the colonial period—of the Dakar movement reveal themselves in 1) the University of Dakar’s continued reliance upon French subsidies; 2) Senghor’s numerous references to francophonie and his rhetorical use of the the cahiers; and 3) both the students’ and Senghor’s labeling of each other as servants of French imperialism. For students, to be modern meant to be an African University independent from France, whereas for Senghor, the modern Senegalese citizen would be born of the synthesis between French reason and African intuition. 1968 also marshaled in an era of postcolonial nationalism in which students deployed anti-imperialist claims that had once been designated for the French state and converted and redirected them at the Senegalese state. In this regard, the 1968 strikes in Dakar should be considered as part of the larger decolonization process in which activists railed against an unachieved, or incomplete independence in Senegal.

As with Tunisia, the Senegalese state created a Special Tribunal to deal with subversion. UNTS was dissolved by decree on 12 June 1971 (replaced by the National Confederation of Senegalese Workers, [CNTS]), and the Court issued sentences of up to three years in prison and fines of 3000 CFA for subversion and attempts against national security for certain UNTS leaders.\textsuperscript{429} Yet reports of torture and the decennial imprisonments were much more common in Tunisia than in Senegal. While students and labor leaders spent time in military camps just after the May strikes, the vast majority returned to their homes in June during labor negotiations. As a

\textsuperscript{428} Momar-Coumba Diop, \textit{La Société sénégalaise entre le local et le global} (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 375-381.
result, the increased transnational communication after May 1968 between Senegalese activists in Paris and Dakar was not focused on penal reform or basic human rights; rather, they were able to successfully increase student representation and argue for inclusion in university decisions. This increased power would have been unthinkable in Tunisia, where rebellious students never achieved this degree of agency in university politics. It is all the more surprising given that Senegalese students were not even in the majority at the University of Dakar, which was heavily populated with French and non-Senegalese African students—whereas the student population at the University of Tunis was quite homogeneous. Despite these challenges, Senegalese students succeeded in forging joint efforts with African students in Dakar, and with the broader student community in France.

While certain aspects of the movement were specific to the local context in Dakar, students also identified with larger international causes beginning with Algeria, and later shifting their gaze to Ghana, Vietnam, and Palestine. In many ways, in spite of its very locally-rooted issues, May '68 in Dakar actually invigorated transnational activism abroad, rather than being catalyzed by it. As evidenced in the memories of Senegalese activist "Mariane," the AESF gained membership and expanded beyond Paris following widespread African student support of the Dakar movement in other French universities. And if support on the French left is rather difficult to gauge, this is likely due in part to their preoccupation with their own national movement. Senegalese students located in France returned home in the summer of 1968 to coordinate efforts with students in Dakar and to develop a plan of action to take back with them to France. This activist network organization had been absent since the independence movement

430 Though the French movement is commonly referred to as mai 68, scholars have recently highlighted the continued activism after de Gaulle's famous 30 May speech, especially among factory workers. See Bernard Pudal, Boris Gobille, Frédérique Matonti, and Dominique Damamme (eds.), *Mai-Juin 68* (Paris: Éditions de l’Atelier, 2008).
and also rejuvenated FEANF. The revival of transnational activism had implications for the direction of the movement that witnessed periodic clashes with government and university leaders, finally exploding again in 1971.
The 1968 activist theatres of Tunis, Paris, and Dakar—with varying degrees of protest and repression on university campuses and in urban environments—shared a number of characteristics and, in some cases, direct communication with each other. The children of the World War Two generation transformed into a dynamic youth that ignited protest movements in each case. This group constituted a rapidly expanding global university population, whether in France or in its former colonies, that bottlenecked on campuses ill-equipped to accommodate such influxes. What is more, students in each of these movements lamented similar university reforms, albeit for different reasons, based on their shared experiences under, and grievances against, the French higher education system. Many student activists also shared internationalist sensibilities such as identification with revolutionaries in Vietnam and Palestine that were seen as extensions of their own national independence movements. In each case, the specific material and corporatist demands of students were accompanied by larger political claims at both the national and international levels, and often included a denunciation of an oppressive head of state and a neocolonial relationship to France.

The movements referenced each other and each city became fertile ground for rising discontent with international events like Vietnam to rallies of solidarity with local issues by diasporic communities in France. In this regard, Paris acted as a site of third-world protest as Tunisians and Senegalese abroad transmitted valuable information to immigrant communities and mobilized in support of homegrown university protests. There were significant communities of Tunisians and Senegalese students living in France, and many participated not only in France's May 1968, but in their own national student movements as well. Each movement also articulated what I have termed a "postcolonial student nationalism" combined with transnational action, and
pushed for democratization in both local and international institutions. Yet in spite of these shared characteristics and transnational connections, movements in Tunisia, France, and Senegal took decidedly different turns in the 1970s.

In Tunisia, the 1970s witnessed the emergence of an Islamist movement that was not present at the outset of March 1968. Heavy state repression also led to the creation and proliferation of human rights organizations and a strong Franco-Tunisian network of activists. After March 1968, Tunisian students launched another campus-wide strike in February 1972 in protest of the prolonged incarceration of activists and the sentencing of one exiled protestor in absentia. And while Tunis was the only case study in which the 1968 student protests were not strongly supported by its national workers' union, by 1978, workers led their own general strike against the state. In France, migration patterns related to the recruitment of foreign labor for post-World War Two reconstruction and industrial expansion had significantly changed France's demographic landscape. By the 1970s, France had become the site of widespread immigrant worker protests, a growing anti-racism movement, while witnessing clashes over immigration issues between the left and right, and the introduction of the Marcellin-Fontanet decrees that continue to inform French immigration policy today.431 While the left continued to fragment after 1968, 68ers also reached out to the immigrant population and immigrant activists created their own organizations during this period. In Senegal, while Senegalese professors went on strike and students boycotted exams in 1971, radical groups in Dakar attacked a Pompidou cortège and torched the French cultural center. By 1973, the Senghor regime was forced to create a parallel national worker union and dissolve the UNTS. Students, meanwhile, created an autonomous organization and wreaked havoc on campuses and in the streets in response to the

dubious death in prison of youth radical symbol, Omar Blondin Diop. And by 1974, the
Senegalese government had accepted new parties into the political process, and shortly thereafter
included future president Abdoulaye Wade's Democratic Socialist Party (PDS).

By looking at these related but separate trajectories in comparison, this section highlights
points of transnational intersection as well as the uniqueness of each local movement. It also
demonstrates the lasting impact of 1968 on transnational activism through an analysis of the
relationship between student and worker movements in each location. I integrate official sources,
subjective accounts, and leftist and state propaganda to allow the reader access to the multiple
histories produced out of this period. Through an examination of discourses around social
activism from the perspective of various activist contingencies as well as the state, I argue that
the transnational networks that were re-activated in 1968 were critical for the articulation of
counter-narratives to state-controlled media in Tunisia and Senegal. These transnational
networks served as a check, albeit with limited degrees of power, to these states' monopolies on
public information. In France, the 1968 will to advocate for the oppressed led to a fetishization of
the immigrant worker as ultimate symbol of Fanon's "wretched of the earth." This led to both
cooperation and tension between immigrant activists and French activist intellectuals in the
1970s. In spite of its problems and contradictions, the immigrant and intellectual dynamic
propelled immigrant worker activism and the anti-racist movement in the 1970s.
Chapter 5: From Student to Worker Protest in 1970s Tunisia

Introduction

Contrary to France and Senegal, the student protests of 1968 in Tunisia did not represent the apogee of activism in the long 1960s there, or even a generalized students' and workers' strike. A larger Tunisian student movement struck University campuses and lycées beyond Tunis in February 1972, and even more widespread agitation occurred with Tunisia's first nationwide general workers' strike in January 1978. Though the influence of March 1968 did not eclipse either of these 1970s events, it provided the activist networks and infrastructure necessary to produce non-state sources of information, and, perhaps most importantly, the language of resistance to the authoritarian Tunisian regime. The revolutionary tremors felt on the campus of the University of Tunis in February 1972 were directly related to the prolonged state repression of March 1968 events, when the 1972 arrest of Simone Lellouche Othmani sparked campus-wide protests demanding her release.

This set off a state-run media smear campaign in which officials friendly to the regime cast protestors as foreign threats to the well-being of the Tunisian nation. In response, the webs of activism spanning the Mediterranean from 1968 were reactivated to engage in the production of information about state violence and incarcerations to counteract state narratives. I argue that the sustained and hardening position of the government vis-à-vis the student movement led to a transition from a student identification of global anti-imperialist causes (as seen in Ben Jennet's June 1967 demonstration) to much more narrow goals on the national level. When the PSD extended repressive measures beyond students to the masses of organized workers in January 1978, the vast network of activists from Tunis to Paris engaged in a successful campaign to release labor leaders and garner international public opinion in support of human rights in
Tunisia. The Tunisian leftist organizations faced several challenges in defining the political scope of their goals and experienced a series of fractures and splintering of groups originally linked to Perspectives. However, the concrete realities of the Bourguiba regime's oppressive measures—using tactics of intimidation, militia violence, and even torture—through events like February 1972 and January 1978, pushed groups like the CTIVDR to finally crystallize around issues they could agree on: core basic human rights for all Tunisians.

The Korba Crisis, February 1972, and Black Thursday

On 10 January 1972, Tunisian police arrested Simone Lellouche Othmani to serve out a sentence she received in absentia during the trials that followed the campus activism of March 1968. Lellouche Othmani had been expelled to France in April 1968 and later received permission to return in the summer of 1970.\(^432\) While in France, she was never served notice of the verdict, which was especially odd since she had freely entered Tunisia in 1970, when she married Ahmed Ben Othmani. She had even been detained in April 1971 in Tunisia, only to be released shortly thereafter with no indication of the pending sentence.\(^433\) After her January 1972 arrest, she was put on trial on 1 February 1972 and received a suspended sentence of two years. The massive protests that followed the announcement of her verdict led to what Lellouche Othmani later deemed, “the first democratic movement in Tunisia on a national level,” albeit with “the university as its point of departure and a provisional student organization that was only


\(^{433}\) Lellouche wrote to the ambassador of France describing her consternation upon hearing through the press the news of her prison sentence of five and a half years, after having been expelled by the Tunisian police in April 1968. Letter from Simone Lellouche to the Ambassador of France in Tunisia, undated, in Fonds Simone Lellouche et Ahmed Othmani, SOL 28; BDIC, Nanterre.
established for the student masses, and whose existence was constantly contested by the authorities.”

Indeed, news of her trial sparked massive protests in February 1972 in which over 4,000 students at various colleges at the University of Tunis went on strike. The February movement—viewed by many Tunisian activists as Tunisia’s equivalent to France’s May 1968—included larger numbers than Tunisia’s March 1968 as it quickly spread to high schools and even beyond Tunis, again leading the regime to close down the University. This time, students called for the liberation of Simone and Ahmed Ben Othmani, as well as for a more democratic student union. As during the Ben Jennet Affair, a Committee For the Liberation of Ahmed Ben Othmani was created, and students called for his release throughout the February movement. Compared to March 1968, students made fewer references to Palestine or Vietnam, and focused mainly on Ben Othmani’s liberation, for freely elected student representation, and for freedom of expression. Where the March movement began as a general anti-imperialist protest and ended with narrower goals of liberating Ben Jennet and company, February 1972 took the reverse order in that it was set off as a liberation movement and grew to a national democratic one. Much of the global anti-imperialism that accompanied calls to liberate Ben Jennet in 1968 had been replaced, by 1972, with more circumspect objectives on the national level. The PSD’s increased

434 Letter from Simone Lellouche Othmani to M. Claude Jullien of Monde Diplomatique, dated Paris 3 December 1977, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 29; BDIC, Nanterre.
435 For a comparison of Tunisia’s February 1972 to France’s May 1968, see “Une Tunisiene citoyenne des deux rives,” 47. Here Lellouche Othmani describes both as “spontaneous” movements “that completely transcended the realm of political parties and organizations, whether recognized or clandestine.” The Tunisian minister of National Education, Mohamed Mzali, announced closures of the universities of Tunis until September 1972 through the press. L’Action, February 8, 1972.
436 Simone was expelled to France for a second time on 5 February 1972. Ahmed Ben Othmani was re-arrested in April 1971 for allegedly having edited works published in a Perspectives journal, El Amel Tounsi (The Tunisian Worker), and remained in prison without trial at the time of Simone’s expulsion. Some editions were also published in French as Le Travailleur tunisien. Amel Tounsi later became the name of a Perspectives splinter group also known as the Organisation du travailleur tunisien in 1973, which created a new series of El Amel Tounsi, and gave birth to the current Parti ouvrier des communistes de Tunisie (POCT, or Tunsian Communist Workers’ Party), headed by former Perspectives member Hamma Hammami.
interference in the national student union (UGET) led many students to demand autonomy and the creation of alternate organizations, and to petition for the removal of political parties in university affairs. After the repression of 1968, the PSD's influence in UGET had waned significantly, and Bourguiba supporters were on the verge of losing control of UGET executive offices at the student elections set to take place in Korba in August 1971. When it became clear that Progressives held the majority, the PSD helped to orchestrate a coup of the elections to place its own partisans in positions of student leadership.

Students’ calls for better representation in university organizations were directly linked to political divisions within UGET. Many denounced the PSD-friendly coup that took place just months prior at the 18th UGET Congress held in Korba. Progressives on the left held the majority of support at the Congress yet were overrun by PSD leadership in the executive office that usurped elections. Already in December 1971, “mobilization in the university had reached peak levels.”\textsuperscript{438} Cries against infringements upon the democratic rights of the student body at large—as evidenced by the stolen election at Korba—dovetailed with students’ disgust at the violations of individuals’ rights following news of the Othmanis’ arrests. Protestors occupied the steps of the courthouse and took to the streets in solidarity with Lellouche Othmani on the day of her trial.\textsuperscript{439} Just days later, thousands of students gathered at the Law School in Tunis on 2 February 1972 to demand an extraordinary congress where they called for new elections, and

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\textsuperscript{438} Interview with Simone Lellouche Othmani, Paris 2011.
\textsuperscript{439} “Une Tunisiene citoyenne des deux rives,” 6. Lellouche Othmani also staged an individual protest in her own right by refusing to wear the traditional sefserei, a full body covering. “I demanded to wear civil clothes for the trial. They wanted to put me in a sefserei, but I said, ‘in my entire life l’ve never worn a sefserei, and it’s not today that I’m going to start.’ They told me ‘but you’ll be ashamed’ and I said, ‘no, it’s them who should be ashamed for having put me in prison!’” From interview with Simone Lellouche Othmani, Paris 2011.
\end{flushright}
challenged Bourguibist authoritarianism by chanting “the people alone is the Supreme
Combatant.”

According to a student who was present at the Korba Congress, the February movement
resulted in the marginalization of UGET, as well as to increased rifts within the left in treating
the issue of democracy in the student union. Mohamed Dhifallah notes that while March 1968
led the “administration of UGET to distance itself from the leaders [of the protests] and to align
with the party in power,” it was Korba in 1971 that resulted in the left successfully isolating pro-
regime students and, eventually, to the:

total effacement of the union, precipitating a rupture between the student movement and
the Bourguiba regime. From this point forward, the university theatre became a refuge for
all of the illegal political currents, while the party in power was nearly absent. The Neo-
Destourian was assimilated as an agent of the Ministry of Interior.

After the Korba crisis, the student movement was divided among leftists who sought to work
outside of UGET (or through alternative organizations), communists seeking to reform UGET
from within, and a minority of PSD loyalists who supported the new executive office. These
divisions were also reflected in the February 1972 movement in which the fractured left
consisted of communists and other reformers who abstained from, but did not denounce, the
protests. Many young communists still supported Ahmed Ben Salah, who had been cast aside as
a scapegoat by Bourguiba for the country’s failed collectivization project. This camp hoped to
“win back” UGET through political reform rather than create parallel organizations like its more
radical counterparts.

440 Bourguiba gave himself the moniker, “the Supreme Combatant,” which resulted in a plethora of puns from
protestors. “Mouvement de février 1972 en Tunisie : Un nouveau bond dans le combat de la jeunesse intellectuelle,”
Perspectives Tunisiennes, brochure no. 8 (1972), 6, 9.
441 See interview with “Abdel,” Tunis 2011.
442 Mohamed Dhifallah, “Bourguiba et les étudiants: stratégie en mutation (1956-1971),” 321 in Habib Bourguiba :
443 For an account of the failings of Ben Salah’s agricultural experiment and his subsequent charge of treason, see
150-152.
In many respects, the friction on the left between communists and the far left mirrored the Moscow-Peking tension of the same era, in which the PCT was viewed as subordinate to bureaucratic structures within the international communist scene (such as the PCF) whereas Maoist tendencies threatened centralization. The distrust of Destourian elements of UGET that began in March 1968 had resulted, by February 1972, in UGET’s loss of almost all credibility among the majority of the student population. And while the University of Tunis had become the center of political contestation, UGET was no longer seen as a potentially oppositional force to the regime. Activity within UGET thus denoted alignment with government politics, and non-UGET activists were targeted as dangerous to regime stability.

Indeed, Bourguiba’s crackdown on students, coupled with UGET’s lack of credibility following Korba, led to a significant decrease in UGET membership among students at the University of Tunis and in Europe as well. Students fled UGET for proxy organizations like the Provisional University Committees (*Comités universitaires provisoires* [CUP]) and the Committees of Action and Struggle (*Comités d’action et de lutte* [CAL-UGET]), or to organizations that had long been banned by Bourguiba, such as the PCT and Perspectives, with some crossover. In an analysis of the February events, one of the parallel CAL-UGET sections noted that, even prior to Korba, UGET experienced “massive desertion from the union” whose total numbers in Paris were not greater than 500, though there were more than 3000 Tunisians studying there. Of a sample of Tunisian university students surveyed in 1972 in both Tunis and Paris, only 1/3 supported the present system while 78 per cent did not feel they could express their political views.

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444 Interview with “Abdel,” Tunis 2011.
opinions freely in Tunisia, including a surprising nearly 1/3 of respondents who identified as "Destourian."\textsuperscript{446}

February 1972 had spread beyond the university halls of Tunis to the interior of the country, where high schoolers went on strike in Sfax, Jundamba, le Kef, Mateur, Tabarka, Sousse, Kasserine, and Gafsa.\textsuperscript{447} After learning from the March 1968 events, the regime struck hard at the movement, launching tear gas at protestors, intimidating sympathetic French coopérants, and engaging in mass arrests targeting many of the March participants who had since been released from detention.\textsuperscript{448} Ahmed Ben Othmani was implicated in the February events even though he was in prison at the time. Authorities arrested students and other members of undesirable political persuasions en masse and engaged in the same torture tactics used in 1968. Many imprisoned activists faced the common “balançoire,” where victims were suspended from a rod with their hands tied behind their legs and beaten in the genitals.\textsuperscript{449} One activist and Perspectives member—who had escaped arrest in March 1968 but was apprehended following February 1972—recounted in an interview that after 8 and 1/2 months in prison, “I then spent 2 and 1/2 months in the hospital after being tortured because my anus had been penetrated—with the bottle system and all.”\textsuperscript{450} Many were denied attorneys, though the majority of the accused were liberated without trial between September and December 1972.\textsuperscript{451} However, the Bourguiba regime never relented its attacks against its opponents, and several of the original Perspectives

\textsuperscript{447} \textit{Mouvement de février 1972 en Tunisie},” 6.
\textsuperscript{448} \textit{Mouvement de février 1972;” and “Bulletin d’Information du 27 mars 1972,” GILT in Fonds Simone Lellouche et Ahmed Othmani (Fonds Othmani), SOL 3; Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), Nanterre.
\textsuperscript{450} See intervview with “Jamel,” Tunis 2011. Jamel met with a lawyer for the first time after 6 months of intermittent isolation and torture. He was released without trial.
\textsuperscript{451} See Letter from Simone Lellouche Othmani to the LTDH in Tunis, October 28, 1977, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 26; BDIC, Nanterre.
leaders remained unlawfully imprisoned for most of the 1970s. While the Tunisian student movement may have reached its apogee in February 1972, it also precipitated sustained international activism against government repression throughout the 1970s. Organizations first constituted in March 1968 for human rights gave way to new committees in light of changing historical circumstances in 1972.

Additional International Networks of Support

Following the Korba Congress, alternate UGET sections surfaced in Tunisia and France alike— noted above as CUP- and CAL-UGET—each claiming to authentically represent Tunisian students. On 8 February, Tunisian students in Paris called a general assembly at the headquarters of the Association of Muslim North African Students (Association des étudiants musulmans nord-Africains [AEMNA]) during which they denounced the administrative commission "elected" at Korba. Staying true to the statutes guiding UGET’s charter, students challenged the UGET executive officers in leadership when a majority called for the extraordinary congress. They declared recognition of a separate extraordinary congress held in Tunis at the start of the February movement and elected a provisional group of CAL-UGET representatives for the Paris section. Though the statutes stipulate that the extraordinary congress must be called within 8 days of congressional elections (held in August 1971 at Korba), students still overwhelmingly

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supported the special congress convened at the University of Tunis in February 1972, after which point Neo-Destourian adherence became anathema in the university setting.454

In addition to the parallel UGET organizations, the February movement led to the creation of the The Information Group for Struggles in Tunisia (Groupe d’information pour les luttes en Tunisie [GILT]). GILT was made up primarily of Perspectives members who had escaped persecution from the Bourguiba regime in March 1968. Founded on 15 February 1972 in Paris, GILT sought to spread news of the February events in Tunis to the university milieu in France, though their larger goal was to eventually reach out to Tunisian workers.455 GILT not only relayed and published news of events in Tunis, it also printed information regarding other activist organizations such as the International Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Tunisia (Comité international pour le sauvegarde des droits de l'homme en Tunisie [CISDHT]) and held outposts beyond Paris.

On 15 February, students in Paris held a meeting of solidarity with Tunisians which was attended by Maghrabi activists in AEMNA, the national student unions of Morocco and Algeria, members of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS), and UNEF with CISDHT attorney Marcel Manville as a special guest. Revived by the momentum of February 1972, CISDHT gained the support of Tunisian communist students in Paris who sought the release of 68ers and published advertisements seeking contributions from the readership of Tribune Progressiste.456 The provisional Paris section of UGET denounced the regime’s oppression of students in Tunisia and called for the liberation of Ahmed Ben Othmani. Through student channels in France, news spread to provisional sections in the French provinces that called for

454 Interview with “Abdel,” Tunis 2011.
455 “Bilan présenté par la commission d’information,” GILT, dated Paris, August 8, 1972, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 3; BDIC, Nanterre.
456 See Tribune Progressiste, no. 13 (February-March 1972), 10.
syndical autonomy from the regime-backed UGET, declaring that the UGET executive office named out of the Korba coup was not representative of the students.\footnote{Tribune Progressiste, no. 13 (February-March 1972), 16-17.} GILT helped garner support from abroad for the movement by reporting in March 1972 that French coopérants had thwarted National Education Minister Mohamed Mzali’s effort to break strikes when they refused to give classes at special institutions—ostensibly for non-striking students. GILT further reported that a teacher was arrested and tortured in February in Gafsa and accused of being “a zionist agent on the payroll of a foreign embassy.”\footnote{See “Bulletin d’Information du 14 mars 1972” and “Bulletin d’Information du 27 mars,” GILT, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 3; (BDIC), Nanterre.} While repression indeed spread beyond Tunis, so did the news as GILT noted that Mohamed Ben Jennet—amnestied in 1970—was again arrested while with his family in Kelibia without having participated in the February events. GILT was still active in September 1972 when it denounced trials of the Special Tribunal that heard the cases of February activists, as well as those who had been arrested without cause.\footnote{“Perspectives: Nouvelles arrestations en Tunisie,” Correspondance APL of 2 August 1972, in ibid.}

Alongside the arrival of GILT, another oppositional media outlet, the Paris-based Tunisian Committee of Information and Defense of the Victims of Repression (Comité tunisien d’information et de défense des victimes de la répression [CTIDVR]), surfaced. Made up exclusively of Tunisians, some CTIDVR members were holdovers from the international CISDHT that was created after March 1968. They joined CTIDVR to narrow efforts from international to Tunisian causes. They also sought to reduce political tensions within the group following the Ben Salah Affair, which had divided many along ideological lines related to state-sponsored socialist projects.\footnote{“Tentative de Bilan sur les problèmes de la défense,” undated, CTIDVR, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 29; BDIC, Nanterre.} CISDHT members remained split between those who denounced
Ben Salah as a member of the corrupt Bourguiba administration and architect of a completely failed agricultural collectivization project on the one hand, and reformers who viewed Ben Salah as an oppositional socialist unfairly blamed for economic factors outside his control on the other.

To facilitate the creation of CTIDVR, former French coopérand CISDHT member Jean Gattégno acted as the primary contact for the association, though the organization was run by Tunisians. As a French citizen, Gattégno acted as a convenient frontman for the organization and eased the process of receiving mail, creating a bank account and obtaining publication and distribution authorizations. CTIDVR's main goals were to alert the public of events in Tunisia and provide legal, moral and material support to victims of repression, much like CISDHT before it became politicized over the Ben Salah issue.

CTIDVR engaged in a media campaign by sending "information letters" to various press agencies. After sustained efforts from 1972 to 1974, it contributed to the appearance of articles on Tunisian repression in French press agencies such as Le Monde, Libération, L’Humanité, Politique-Hebdo and Afrique-Asie, as well as foreign publications El Bayane (Morocco), El Hadeif and El Balgh (Beirut), and obtained German television and radio interviews with Tunisian hunger strikers and PCT activists. Members worked closely with CAL-UGET to organize a hunger strike at the Maison de Tunisie in February and December 1972. They also communicated regularly with Amnesty International, and assisted in setting up Amnesty's “adoption” of a number of prisoners. CTIDVR reported on events in both Tunisia and France, noting in a communiqué of November 1973 that 25 students at the University of Tunis were

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461 Simone Othmani provided similar cover for the Perspectives’ publication El Amal Tounsi, providing her address and opening a bank account in her name. See interview with Simone Othmani, Paris 2011.
463 “Bilan Novembre 73-Juin 74,” undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 29; BDIC, Nanterre.
forced to enroll in military service as a result of political activity, and that Tunisian immigrant workers in St. Etienne and Lyon had been expelled by the Tunisian Consulate. This shift toward the plight of Tunisian workers was further emphasized by efforts at working with the Paris-based Arab Workers’ Movement (Mouvement des travailleurs arabes [MTA]) during the same period. Their goals thus centered on the defense against repression occurring on both sides of the Mediterranean while they advocated for both students and workers.

In spite of certain successes in the defense of victims, CTIDVR was not immune to internal strife. Friction dated to the accord reached between Perspectives and the PCT in the formation of the Committee for the liberation of Ben Jennet in 1967 in Tunis. The Committee’s ability to reach consensus was jeopardized by Perspectives’ domination of the Paris section and their efforts to push the political agenda beyond Ben Jennet's liberation. Perspectives sent representatives to Paris specifically to carry out orders from Tunis. Hachemi Ben Fredj led the Paris section of Perspectives—in part to keep watch on rogue members like Khémaïs Chammari, who frequently disobeyed orders regarding publication—while Chérif Ferjani replaced Simone Lellouche Othmani as the voice of Perspectives within the CTIDVR after she proclaimed her independent position. Similar divisions could be seen within CISDHT regarding Ben Salah, who was generally defended by Communist party sympathizers and vilified as a vulgar Marxist and regime collaborator by the more radical left.

Moreover, CISDHT, whose original purpose was to defend those arrested in 1968, was forced to evaluate if it had the means and desire to also defend prisoners arrested following the

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466 Interview with Simone Othmani, Paris 2011. Unlike her husband, Lellouche Othmani was never an official member of Perspectives, though she maintained regular contact with many of its members.
protests of February 1972, and eventually CTIDVR fulfilled this function as CISDHT waned in influence. Simone Lellouche Othmani noted that CISDHT’s role was no longer clear following the release of many of the prisoners. “We were seeking liberation [and] it was not a question of overthrowing the government. It was not a question of engaging directly in politics.” As another CISDHT member put it, “[i]n the absence of a clear political line for defending victims, we have oscillated between opportunism, dogmatism, and sectarianism. This has often led us to a halt in action within the committee. All of the difficulties we’ve faced came from confusion between defense of democracy and a political program.” And although CTIDVR was created in many ways as a reaction to CISDHT’s fracturing, it eventually succumbed to similar internal disputes.

By late 1972, radical factions of the CTIDVR sent representatives to committee meetings in an effort to impose the participation of political organizations and expand the goals of the group. Older members, such as Khémaïs ChamMari and Simone Lellouche Othmani, resisted such initiatives, but the democratic nature of group meetings often led to domination by factions who organized larger numbers of participants. By the mid-1970s, CTIDVR had been weakened with many of its leading members in prison. As a result, ChamMari eventually shifted allegiance and was instrumental in developing the Tunisian League for Human Rights (Ligue tunisienne des droits de l’homme, or LTDH). Simone Othmani also wrote a scathing critique of CTIDVR’s practices, calling their efforts to assist prisoners counterproductive since they had failed to communicate with LTDH, which had already been working with Amnesty and obtained

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467 “CISDHT - La lutte contre la répression: information, assistance juridique, soutien des prisonniers,” undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28; BDIC, Nanterre.
468 Interview with Simone Othmani, Paris 2011.
470 “Tentative de Bilan sur les problèmes de la défense,” undated, CTIDVR, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 29; BDIC, Nanterre.
471 Chérif Ferjani returned to Tunis in 1975 only to be imprisoned for illegal distribution of activist literature. Interview with Chérif Ferjani, Lyon 2010. Simone Othmani verified this phenomenon in a 2011 interview.
improvements from prison authorities.\textsuperscript{472} So while international action was essential to reaching a public audience and providing support to detainees, the political differences of various organizations on the left were also reflected within groups like CTIDVR that attempted to organize activists under a larger umbrella.

In addition to working alongside groups like CISDHT and CTIDVR at different moments, Lellouche Othmani continued to support prisoners throughout the 1970s. Though the tour de force of the February movement had passed, the battle to obtain the liberation of prisoners continued. In the mid-1970s, Lellouche Othmani assisted at least 43 imprisoned Tunisian activists in enrolling at the University of Paris VIII in various programs.\textsuperscript{473} She first had to obtain the accord of sympathetic university administrators and professors in Paris to take on the imprisoned students who in many cases were blocked by Tunisian authorities from receiving books and other related materials.\textsuperscript{474} In 1976, Paris VIII President Pierre Merlin and economics professor Michel Beaud wrote a series of letters to the Tunisian Ministry of Interior requesting special permission to send a French delegation to conduct exams in prisons, and Beaud even traveled to Tunis on a fact-finding mission related to administering exams.\textsuperscript{475} All of these requests were denied by either the Tunisian Ministry of Interior or the Director of Re-education “for security reasons.”\textsuperscript{476} In spite of resistance from authorities, a number of prisoners were

\textsuperscript{472} Letter from Simone Lellouche Othmani to CTIDVR, January 1, 1978, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 29; BDIC, Nanterre.
\textsuperscript{473} These included such Perspectives figures as her husband Ahmed Ben Othmani, Noureddine Ben Khader, Chérif Ferjani, and Hamma Hammami, the current leader of the Tunisian Communist Workers Party (Parti des ouvriers communistes tunisiens, or POCT) in post-revolutionary Tunisia. Their registration cards can be found in Fonds Othmani, SOL 20/23; BDIC, Nanterre.
\textsuperscript{474} Hamma Hammami led hunger strikes from prison in November and December 1974 to obtain better prison conditions. Among his demands was the possibility to receive books.
\textsuperscript{475} See letter from President Pierre Merlin to M. le Directeur de la Rééducation M. Ben Taieb, dated 20 September 1976 and “Compte rendu de mission en Tunisie du 20.06 au 24.06,” dated 27 June 1977, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 20/23; BDIC, Nanterre. Mrs. Lellouche Othmani still has records of Ahmed Ben Othmani’s notes on university readings from this period, some of which were written on the backs of cigarette packages.
\textsuperscript{476} See Letter of Mohamed Ben Taieb, Direction de la Rééducation to M. le Président de l’Université de Paris VIII, dated 28 July 1976, in \textit{ibid}.
provided with additional intellectual stimulation and the hope that they might leave prison with a diploma. Merlin also wrote exonerations from student fees for the detainees, and professors and detained students corresponded when permitted. As in March 1968, the distance of Paris made this type of support possible, whereas instructors and university administrators in Tunis would likely have been reticent to engage in such overt activity. In some cases, the prisoners had been forbidden from ever taking another university course at the University of Tunis, so French universities provided the most plausible alternative, especially considering the status of diploma equivalency between French and Tunisian universities.

While international groups of support located in France, with contacts in Tunis on the ground, provided vital assistance to political prisoners, authorities maintained their own Franco-Tunisian networks. French police kept surveillance files on individuals such as activist Khémaïs Chammari, whom they linked to Mahmoud Hamchari, the leader of the Parisian section of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Hamchari, with whom Chammari was suspected of having ties, was eventually assassinated by the Israeli secret service on French soil. Palestinian liberation was a key element of the student movement in general, and especially for Tunisians; however, it was equally a point of emphasis for the national security of a number of countries, including France. After May 1968, French police created new surveillance programs to follow students’ activities and kept records of student meetings and protests, originating with concerns about the commencement of the fall semester in 1968.

Chammari, a founding member of...
Perspectives who was indefinitely expelled from the University of Tunis after March 1968 and later active in Paris for the liberation of imprisoned colleagues, made it onto the “List of Arabs of various nationalities suspected of supporting Palestinian terrorists” in the Paris region.\footnote{See the “Liste des Arabes de Diverses Nationalités Susceptibles d’apporter leur soutien aux terroristes Palestiniens,” created in September 1972 by the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire, in Direction des Libertés Publiques et des Affaires Juridiques, sous-direction étrangers, AN-19990260, Article 23; Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau. Figures such as Michel Foucault, Alain Geismar, and Alain Krivine, leader of the Communist Revolutionary League also appeared on surveillance lists.} It is unclear what, if any, relationship Chammari actually had with Hamchari. Though Chammari was in and out of Tunisian prisons throughout the Bourguiba and Ben Ali periods, he has never been linked to terrorist activity. His surveillance following involvement in March 1968 by both French and Tunisian police points to international collaboration on the part of state authorities that mirrored the transnational activity of opposition groups.\footnote{On collaboration and French colonial surveillance techniques, see Keller, Kathleen A. “Political Surveillance and Colonial Urban Rule: ‘Suspicious’ Politics and Urban Space in Dakar, Senegal, 1918–1939.” \textit{French Historical Studies} 35, no. 4 (September 21, 2012): 727–749; Robert Aldrich, “Conclusion: The Colonial Past and Postcolonial Present,” in \textit{The French Colonial Mind: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism}, vol. 2, ed. Martin Thomas (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 334-356.}

During a hunger strike at the Maison de Tunisie in Paris in late February 1972, French police intervened at the behest of the Tunisian embassy in Paris. Police interrogated 105 students and asked them to complete a questionnaire, provided by the Prefecture, in which they were asked if they were affiliated politically with Ba’athists, communists, or Perspectivistes.\footnote{These are the same oppositional groups cited by Mohammed Sayah, Secretary-General of the Destourian Youth and Deputy Director of the PSD, in \textit{La Vérité sur la subversion à l’Université de Tunis} (1968).} In some cases, French police reported confusion regarding the nature of these groups, and even asked the interview subjects what the terms meant.\footnote{See “La police coopère,” \textit{L’Express} (April 10-16, 1972); “‘Coopération franco-tunisienne’ à la Cité Universitaire,” \textit{Politique-Hebdo} 18 (2 March 1972); and “La traite des tunisiens,” GEAST-Paris, 13 June 1972, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 2; BDIC Nanterre.} This suggests a high probability that police interrogators were working with information provided by the Tunisian embassy—which had solicited the intervention—about groups they deemed dangerous; yet another form of
transnational cooperation at the state level. At the same time that anti-government activity was organized through transnational networks at the Maison de Tunisie in support of detainees, French police worked in concert with intelligence information emanating from Tunisia.

"Black Thursday": January 1978 and The Workers Movement

Just as the educational systems of Senegal and Tunisia were similar to the French national system, so too were Tunisian nationalized industries similar to those in France such as public transport and education. These industries were vulnerable to the power of a strong national labor union that often had monopolies on the commodity of labor. While the student protests of 1968 in both Senegal and France sparked general strikes with the participation of flagship national labor unions, workers did not participate en masse in Tunisia until January 1978. Labor unions were an integral part of the Tunisian independence movement, and the national labor union, the UGTT, had been allied with Bourguiba's Neo-Destour since 1946. These ties between labor and the state persisted into the independence era, and labor leaders backed the regime in its suppression of the student movements in 1968 and 1972. UGTT secretary general Habib Achour publicly stated of Simone Lellouche Othmani in February 1972 that "[UGTT] will never tolerate a strike in favor of a zionist woman...I affirm that the 'Red Guard' of the Party is the UGTT, which will always assume full responsibility for the defense and safeguarding of the fruits of the nation." This was a reference to Mao's Red Guard, a paramilitary group deployed in 1966 to protect the Cultural Revolution. Of course, the irony of Achour's statement is not lost as he was mobilizing workers to suppress communist and Maoist students. Yet state-labor relations eventually soured as the PSD encroached upon workers' rights. At the moment of Tunisian

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484 The Neo-Destour, created in 1934 and led by Bourguiba, was renamed the Parti Socialiste Destourien in 1964 following Tunisian independence.
independence in 1956, the workers numbered between 150,000 and 200,000, and was often divided by nationality. By the 1970s, the working class was much more homogeneous and ballooned to approximately 500,000 by 1974, almost 1/3 of the active population. This rising class became more demanding in the mid-1970s. From 1970-74, salaries increased 35% thanks to worker strikes, but the state put in place a repressive law in 1974 allowing the requisition to cease even legal strikes and up to one-year prison sentences for strikers who refused to adhere to state's orders.

The tensions between labor and the state were temporarily mitigated in a 19 January 1977 labor agreement (termed "the Social Pact") that was designed to increase wages in exchange for the state's authority to withhold the workers' right to strike. Yet already by September 1977, authorities had seized the UGTT's organ *Ech-Chaâb (The People)*, which had become increasingly critical of the regime. Meanwhile, labor leader Achour faced death threats in November 1977, allegedly from PSD henchmen. Achour distanced himself from the Bourguiba regime when, in a symbolic act demonstrating his desire for syndical autonomy, he resigned from the PSD at UGTT's national council meeting of 8-10 January 1978. Authorities retaliated by arresting a prominent UGTT labor leader and agitator from Sfax, Abderrazak Ghorbal on 24 January. Achour finally broke ties with the regime in a call for a general workers' strike set for 26 January 1978, the first of its kind since Tunisian independence. He borrowed a slogan from the student movement by exclaiming before a crowd of union members gathered in Tunis, "the only supreme combatant is the people." The violent state response led to the first

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487 Ibid, 280.
488 See Newsletter no. 02381 of the Collectif Tunisien 26 janvier, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 34, BDIC, Nanterre.
489 Quoted in Marguerite Rollinde, "Les émeutes en Tunisie: un défi à l'état?" in *Émeutes et mouvements sociaux au
instance in which students and labor leaders agitated for similar causes in Tunisia and the crystallization of a previously disorganized and nascent Tunisian Islamic movement. In addition, it also mobilized transnational human rights activist networks on behalf of detained labor leaders that had been forged during the 1968 and 1972 student movements.

The regime's crackdown on striking workers earned the events of 26 January the label "Black Thursday." As early as 25 January, authorities encircled UGTT headquarters, effectively blocking in 200 of its leaders who had ordered striking workers to stay home to avoid provocations by authorities. Upon the arrest of their leaders, thousands of workers took to the streets and clashed with police, military, and PSD militia forces. It was the first time in Tunisian history that the PSD acknowledged having recruited and deployed a militia. PSD director and former Information Minister Muhammed Sayah—who was also accused by activists of creating student militias to spy on Tunisians in France in the 1960s and of ordering the torture of students after February 1972—publicly acknowledged the existence of the militia forces in March 1978. He stated that he recruited about 500 members to provide support to police, though unofficial sources put the figure at over 2,500. According to Afrique-Asie, the Black Thursday clashes resulted in 250 dead, 1,000 injured, and 2,000 arrested or brought in for interrogation at a detention camp in Oued Ellil near Tunis. Authorities also apprehended 500-600 union members, many of whom cited the use of torture during their captivity. The regime declared a nationwide state of emergency that was not lifted until 25 February, and imposed a curfew in Tunis.

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492 “Le massacre du 26 janvier,” Afrique-Asie 154 (February 1978). After political claims against previous regimes were liberalized following the Tunisian Revolution of January 2011, UGTT leaders called for an investigation into acts of torture by the Bourguiba regime associated with the events of Black Thursday.
through 20 March. A number of labor leaders were brought before the Special Court that was created in 1968 to prosecute student protestors for crimes against the state.

In October 1978 the court sentenced Achour and Ghorbal to 10 years of forced labor with 13 other labor leaders receiving heavy sentences.\textsuperscript{493} Thirty union members were charged before the court with article 72 of the Tunisian Penal Code, for which the death penalty could be applied: “Aggression aimed at changing the government; inciting citizens to kill each other; inciting disorder, murder, and pillaging; distribution of arms and groups seeking to destroy the property of others.”\textsuperscript{494} At least 92 UGTT members were imprisoned for crimes related to the 26 January events. The majority of those charged would be released by summer 1979 thanks to the efforts of human rights watch groups.\textsuperscript{495} Though political opposition to Bourguiba experienced tensions throughout the post-independence era, many found common ground in seeking political rights for Tunisian citizens and more humane prison conditions. By 1973, Perspectives had been paralyzed by prison sentences of its intellectual core and splintered when a new generation on the left created the populist group Amel Tounsi (The Tunisian Worker). Original Perspectives members like Ahmed Othmani and Gilbert Naccache criticized Amel Tounsi for its naive support of global communism and for sacrificing the intellectual origins of Perspectives in its quest for populist support.\textsuperscript{496} Othmani explained the political and generational split within the left:

They were 100 per-cent pro-Albanian communists, whereas we—the old guard—had finished with all that long ago. It was then that I decided never again to work in politics with a capital P, but instead to fight for the defence of human rights. After the political

\textsuperscript{493} Marguerite Rollinde, "Les émeutes en Tunisie: un défi à l’état?” 114.
\textsuperscript{494} "Procès des libertés démocratiques et syndicales en Tunisie,” Bulletin spécial no. 27 (Sept. 1978), CTIDVR, Paris, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 32; BDIC, Nanterre.
\textsuperscript{495} See the International Labor Organization, "Interim Report No. 197,” Case No. 899 (Tunisia), November 1979, at http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/P?p=1000:50002:0::NO::P50002_COMPLAINT_TEXT_ID:2900103#1
\textsuperscript{496} Perspectives began as an intellectual journal addressing the national problems of Tunisian development through theoretical engagement.
and ideological break with Amel Tounsi, the first generation of Perspectives was thus intellectually ready to join the human rights movement from the mid-1970s on.

This evolution illustrates the capacity of the various components of the Tunisian opposition to come together again, no longer around a political programme, but in the wider defence of human rights. The Tunisian Human Rights League was founded in 1977 as a front uniting the political strands, no longer through partisan interest, but around the common denominator of the rights of the individual.  

On the eve of Black Thursday, the networks and infrastructure created during previous movements were in place. The last piece of ideological common ground crystallized with the creation of a homegrown, legally recognized Tunisian Human Rights League that had support systems and information dissemination groups located abroad. Their joint efforts led to the comparatively swift release of UGTT activists in 1979, the same year long-term political prisoners like Othmani and Naccache were released.

_The Transnational Discursive Battles over February 1972 and Black Thursday_

Along with demands to liberate Simone Lellouche and Ahmed Ben Othmani in February 1972, students also called for democracy within their national organization (UGET), and for the dissolution of the Korba executive office and its administrative commission. These demands reverberated from Tunis to Paris, as the 2 February 1972 extraordinary congress in Tunis was emulated in Paris on 8 February. In Paris, one year after the February events, the provisional section of UGET stated, “our movement responded to an objective local situation, linked dialectically to that of our comrades in Tunis regarding calls for a democratic, representative, and autonomous UGET. Our combative claims were ignored equally in Tunis as in Paris.”  

Yet while the liberations of Simone Lellouche and Ahmed Ben Othmani were only part of the larger

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democratic goals for February activists, the PSD-dominated media reports focused almost exclusively on this aspect, marginalizing the importance of the Korba conference of 1971 in which demands for free elections were completely left out of major media outlets.

Activists from March 1968 and February 1972 were not the only group to use transnational connections to push their agendas. After February 1972, Lellouche Othmani, who was born in Tunisia to Jewish parents, was labeled by PSD sympathizers as French and Jewish, and designated as the Tunisian version of Daniel Cohn-Bendit—the famous student leader of the French May 1968 movement who had Jewish parents and German citizenship, though was raised in France. The PSD, the UGTT, and even UGET acted as a pro-government tripartite front against Lellouche Othmani and any other “agitators” associated with the movements of June 1967, March 1968, or February 1972. Leaders from each of these organizations, through *L’Action* and *La Presse*, published a series of scathing critiques of what they deemed an incoherent movement led by foreigners with no attachment to the university or student life. On 2 February 1972, *L’Action* stated that Lellouche Othmani was a French national who had, along with her husband, been sentenced by the Special Court for crimes against the state, and that neither one was actually a student at the University of Tunis.\(^{499}\) While this was true, Lellouche Othmani had long finished her studies and Ahmed Ben Othmani had been forbidden from ever enrolling at a Tunisian university after March 1968. UGET leaders claimed that “this campaign orchestrated from abroad aims to propagate subversion in the heart of the university.”\(^ {500}\)

UGTT also released statements that the movement was led by “destructive zionism, embodied as much by Simone Lellouche Othmani as by Cohn-Bendit, from the children of

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\(^{500}\) Ibid.
former collaborators of the colonial regime...and from all sorts of anarchist rings.”

The Destourian youth group issued a statement expressing its total support of the “Supreme Combatant” and Prime Minister Hédi Nouira. The minister of National Education, Mohammed Mzali, called for a counter protest on 9 February—the day after announcing university closures—to combat the “directives coming from Ba’athist countries in the Middle East and from Europe.” Whether coming directly from the regime or from its minions in the UGTT and UGET, there was a clear strategy to paint anti-state claims first and foremost as anti-Tunisian. The regime's narrative, and the activists' counter-narratives, in fact reflected debates about postcolonial nationalism in independent Tunisia. When agitators expressed their desires for a modern Tunisia where free speech and a wide array of political currents were accepted, they were portrayed in state-controlled media as a foreign threat to the Tunisian nation: Jewish, Maoist, European, Communist, or Ba'athist.

In addition to vilifying Lellouche Othmani, PSD leadership also used the events of May 1968 in France to deflect any notion of a homegrown movement from Tunisia, in spite of anachronism given that the Tunisian protests occurred in March. In an interview with the PSD’s Arabic news journal, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammed Masmoudi noted the possibility of a “contagious phenomenon” following the French events, and “denounced ‘the absolute mayhem’ produced in the heart of the university and the petty and shameful imitation of agitators

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501 L’Action, February 3, 1972. The article also notes that Lellouche was convicted by the Special Court, not enrolled in the University, and a foreign resident. Incidentally, this was also the only time that Simone Lellouche Othmani was ever granted permission to visit her husband at the Civil Prison in Tunis. See interview with Simone Lellouche Othmani, Paris 2011.

in the Latin Quarter by our students.”503 Two days later, Masmoudi was cited in *La Presse* stating:

Thankfully, neither extreme leftism, nor Trotskyism, nor anarchism, nor Ba’athism can, under any circumstances, resonate in our country...By agitating alone, practicing verbal terrorism, and seeking to change everything all of a sudden, outside of existing structures and disciplines, without method, without organization, without programs and without allies, they will only succeed in creating fear and regression that will end by disappearing into folklore.504

Here Masmoudi used the rhetorical tool of referring to all forms of opposition as existing outside of, and in opposition to, *our country*, effectively creating the image of an exterior threat to Tunisia. Reports from *La Presse* and *L’Action* attacked the Tunisian and French activists alike in an effort to frame them as radical agitators acting in unison. In early March, *L’Action* attempted to show the dangers of rampant Maoism with an article on a “Maoist commando” who had taken a French CEO of the automobile factory Renault-Billancourt hostage following the death of French militant, Pierre Overney, who was killed by plant security on 25 February 1972 during a protest.505 The regime sought to depoliticize student demands by stating that they were unrealistic and went far beyond the university. This was an effort to render UGET like the UGTT, where orders were taken from above and claims were relegated to material issues like increased wages (for UGTT) or scholarships and housing (for UGET). According to the regime’s narrative, the current student demands were outside of that which was even relevant to Tunisian national realities, much less the University of Tunis. It was also a way of internationalizing the student movement in such a way as to deflect away anti-democratic Tunisian realities. By claiming that youth protestors were following orders from abroad, or influenced by distant and

503 Portions of Masmoudi’s interview in *Al-Amal*, the Arabic language journal of the PSD, regarding the February movement were translated and published in the French daily, *La Presse*, March 2, 1972. The Latin Quarter here refers to the primary site of student resistance during the French May 1968.


"un-Tunisian" political currents, the regime attempted to disqualify the national character of student demands.

Activists in both France and Tunisia reacted to these narratives. GILT relayed news of events at the University of Tunis to Tunisian students and other communities in Paris. This information contributed to the organization of the hunger strike at the Maison de Tunisie in Paris in February 1972, which was completely ignored by the Tunisian press. The PSD-friendly media downplayed Tunisian activism abroad, claiming that “the Maison de Tunisie at the University of Paris was the only building among all of the student dormitories that was not covered with graffiti and slogans.”

In fact, the Maison de Tunisie had become an important point de rencontre for students to debate issues from the future of UGET to possible courses of action, which often resulted in anything but a consensus. Attendance was not restricted to Tunisian students either, as FEANF, UNEF, AEMNA and others were regularly invited, and even CTIDVR made appearances.

While PSD-friendly organizations like UGTT and UGET were busy publishing newspaper articles against the February student movement, French police conducted surveillance across the Mediterranean that included Tunisian activists and others sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. At the same time, GILT helped to keep Tunisian activists abroad informed on developments throughout the movement. And as after March 1968, when François Maspéro published Liberté pour les condamnés de Tunis (Liberty for the Convicted of Tunis), the Tunisian left again published its own text to counter the regime’s account of the February 1972 protests.

In July of that year, Perspectives responded to media attacks on the student movement with a

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pamphlet claiming that the majority of students participated in protests, and detailed police repression including clubbings, illegal university occupations by police, and mass arrests.\textsuperscript{508} In addition, the pamphlet outlined the usurpation of UGET at the Korba Congress, where it stated that “in spite of the opposition of the majority of UGET’s members, ‘UGET’s leadership, composed of agents of the authorities, resorted to the lowest tactics (stealing the elections, violence following union meetings, etc.) in order to maintain its puppets at the head of the student confederation.”\textsuperscript{509} The Korba moment marked the serious decline of UGET as it lost legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of students who had once thought it could be reformed from within and used as a vehicle through which to effect university change. As with March 1968, Paris provided a comparatively safe distance from which to publish counter-narratives and base operations for human rights organizations and awareness. Yet the safety of Paris was limited due to cooperation between Tunisian and French authorities, which led to surveillance of activities taking place at the Maison de Tunisie.

Paris again proved to be a center of activism and coordination with Tunis when human rights groups took action after the atrocities of 26 January 1978. As they had done since 1968, activists across the Mediterranean responded to the state-sponsored violence of Black Thursday and actively sought the liberation of political prisoners. Paris was home to advocates of political prisoners in organizations like the "Tunisian Collective of 26 January" and the CTIDVR, while the Tunisian Human Rights League, which was founded in 1977 with the sanction of the Tunisian government, led efforts in Tunisia to liberate Black Thursday activists. The PSD media outlets sought to frame the events as a government response to a traitorous plot to overthrow the regime by a UGTT minority, whereas human rights organizations focused on state repression and


\textsuperscript{509} \textit{Ibid}, 13.
published alternative news reports. Much of their activities were devoted to information production and dissemination to communities in Tunisia and France. For its part, the PSD engaged in its own media campaign and narrative construction around the events of Black Thursday with the aid of a national radio station (Radio Tunis) and the regime-friendly daily, *L'Action*, as well as another *livre blanc* entitled *La politique contractuelle et les événements de janvier 1978* (*Contract Politics and the Events of January 1978*).

The Tunisian Collective of 26 January was created in Paris to "undertake the largest possible information and solidarity campaign with all those who wish to come to the aid of the working class and of the UGTT to actively and effectively express solidarity and to sensitize international opinion on the bloody repression in Tunisia."\(^{510}\) The organization released Newsletters and "Information Flashes" that acted as correctives to official Tunisian sources. On 10 February, Lellouche Othamni wrote to the collective expressing concerns of the spread of government misinformation:

> The international press has published information that contradicts many of the official Tunisian communiqués and has produced facts which are fairly close to realities. However, today, 15 days later, confusion persists in that certain information organs keep coming back to official sources. It seems important to me to affirm certain facts that we know to be confirmed.\(^{511}\)

The collective thus acted similarly to a public forum in which members and community activists could issue revisionist narratives (in the literal sense) and negotiate the publication of facts. Given the lack of faith in state-controlled sources of information, the major goal of the collective was to act as a check on the state's discursive power. In addition, human rights groups like the collective and the International Association of Democratic Jurists (Association Internationale des

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\(^{510}\) See "Plateforme du Collectif," in Newsletter of Collectif Tunisien du 26 janvier, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 34; BDIC, Nanterre.

\(^{511}\) "A Propos des événements du 26-1-78 en Tunisie," Letter from Simone Lellouche Othamni to the Collectif, 10 February 1978, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 34; BDIC, Nanterre.
Juristes Democrates [AIJD]), and Amnesty International sent legal observers to report back to Paris on prison conditions. An Amnesty International report released on 20 March 1979, the 23rd anniversary of Tunisian independence, denounced human rights violations in Tunisia regarding the use of torture on prisoners including cigarette burns and beatings by club, which resulted in the poor health of prisoners such as Achour. The collective's reporting aided in obtaining the support of French organizations like the French Socialist and Communist Parties, as well as the French labor unions CFDT and the CGT.

The Tunisian Human Rights League launched an investigation into the death of activist and UGTT member Houcine el Kouki, whom many believed to have resulted from the use of torture. The collective also published prisoners' personal accounts of prison conditions and torture. In a letter signed by 32 UGTT members detained at the Sousse civil prison, one prisoner described his experience:

In effect we were encircled by members of the BOP security services, the firefighters corps, the army and the Destourian militia, which ordered us to lift our arms and began to beat us, slap and kick us, along with blows on all parts of the body...

Other trade union members were thrown on the ground, against walls and windows, then stomped. To the point that one comrade suffered a broken vein and has problems with his arm today...The most odious was inflicted upon 10 women who were arrested with us. Their female dignity was besmirched with a rare cruelty. They were insulted, ridiculed, knocked down, and humiliated with degrading gestures and savagely beaten. This lasted until the morning in an atmosphere of terror and fear, in front of agents armed to the hilt and led by A...A and M...H.

These descriptions used only the first letter of the first and last names of the violent perpetrators

514 See Bulletin no. 4 of the Collectif Tunisien du 26 Janvier, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 34; BDIC, Nanterre.  
515 Flash d'information "Témoignages de l'intérieur de la prison de Sousse sur la torture," undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 34; BDIC, Nanterre.
who remained unidentified in the report. Prisoners received only one piece of harissa-dipped bread per day, and access only to contaminated water twice per day. Thanks in large part to the efforts of groups like the Tunisian Human Rights League, the CTIDVR, and the Collective of 26 January, Achour and several others received presidential pardons on 3 August 1979, well before their ten-year sentences had been served.516

Tunisian students at home and abroad joined in denunciations of the regime's use of violence. In Paris, CAL-UGET published a series of tracts in a pamphlet detailing its own version of events and calls for government reform. Students made historical connections between the Korba Congress of 1971, in which PSD loyalists hijacked the executive office of UGET, and a similar plot executed by Bourguibists in the UGTT, who denounced Achour and the 26 January protests while naming new leadership during a Special Congress in February 1978.517 In Tunisia, students called for unlimited strikes at universities in Sfax, Tunis, and Monastir when sessions resumed from vacation on 6 February, and regional high schools joined the strikes on 10 February.518 They also employed similar tactics to French and Senegalese workers of 1968, who used the momentum of the student movement to promote their own initiatives before the government and employers. This time, students fueled the flames of protest ignited by workers. While calling for the liberation of detained protestors, they also denounced a new policy laid out by Hédi Nouira that refused recognition of degrees granted to Tunisians from politically contentious campuses at Paris 8 in Vincennes and the University of Nanterre.519 Yet their support

517 “Les structures syndicales provisoires de l'UGET soutiennent la classe ouvrière tunisienne dans sa lutte pour une UGTT autonome, démocratique, représentative et combattive,"section provisoire de l'UGET, undated; and "À bas le congrès fantôche de l'UGTT!" le comité de section provisoire de Paris, UGET, 24 February 1978, in Fonds FTCR, G2/2 (2), Section provisoire de Paris; Génériques, Paris.
518 “Les structures syndicales provisoires de l'UGET soutiennent la classe ouvrière..." in Fonds FTCR, G2/2 (2), Section provisoire de Paris; Génériques, Paris.
519 See "À bas le circulaire de Nouira," l'UGET, section provisoire de Paris, January 1978, in Fonds FTCR, G2/2 (2),
of the UGTT was measured. They were aware of UGTT’s historical links with the CISL, an international federation of Western-friendly trade unions, as well as Achour's multiple rebukes of student movements dating to 1968. Tunisian university students in Paris pondered the following, "[w]e must choose between Sayah and Achour? No, we will not choose between the plague and cholera. We leave this choice to those who stay in the tow of the bourgeoisie." In spite of these critiques locating the privileged classes within the ranks of PSD and UGTT leadership, students demanded the immediate liberation of UGTT prisoners and identified with "the struggle led by the working class for an autonomous, democratic and combative UGTT [that] is the same as our goals for an autonomous UGET." The PSD responded with its own propaganda pamphlet, *Contract Politics and the Events of January 1978*, penned by party director Muhammed Sayah. This took a slightly different tone from *The Truth About the Subversion at the University of Tunis* (1968). This time, Sayah devoted an entire section of the pamphlet to data demonstrating Tunisia's economic growth and detailing the terms of the 1977 Social Pact that he claimed were carefully negotiated between the government, the employers, and the UGTT. Through statistical evidence of gradual wage increases, job creation, and increased consumption, the pamphlet sets out to paint Achour and the UGTT strikers as traitorous plotters who reneged on a contract with the state and employers. Without citing inflation rates, the pamphlet notes the increases in minimum wages thanks to the Social Pact. Sayah further accused UGT's organ, *Ech-Chaâb*, of defamation, psychological preparation for a coup, and of attempting to overthrow the regime. In addition to the new method

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520 "Les structures syndicales provisoires de l'UGET soutiennent la classe ouvrière..." in Fonds FTCR, G2/2 (2), Section provisoire de Paris; Génériques, Paris.
521 "Les structures syndicales provisoires de l'UGET soutiennent la classe ouvrière..." in Fonds FTCR, G2/2 (2), Section provisoire de Paris; Génériques, Paris.
522 Sayah furnished me with a copy of the pamphlet and confirmed his authorship in 2010.
of leaning on statistics, the PSD deployed battle-tested tactics from the aftermaths of March 1968 and February 1972. *L'Action* recycled charges it had leveled against the student movements when it labeled the UGTT as a "union infiltrated by Marxists and Ba'athists," and blamed January 1978 events on "communists, Ba'athists, and agitators linked to Libya." Contract Politics sought to prove the foreign influence of the French and Libyan national labor unions, thus extracting any Tunisian national character from the events.

We can explain [UGTT's] contact with the CGT in the months of September and October 1977...What affinities could the UGTT suddenly have discovered with the CGT to the point that it was charged with helping to hire our workers in France? Is this not an invitation to a foreign organization to meddle in our internal affairs? [emphasis added]

Initiatives of this sort would multiply.

On 3 September 1977, M. Habib Achour went to Libya...The two trade unions expressed their total adherence to the Arab liberation movement and state that what was taken by force can only be reinstated by force and that the fight against zionism is not a battle for borders but one of existence.  

Here the regime drew attention to the UGTT's relationship with the French and Libyan national unions and suggested that Achour was acting on behalf of foreign interests. Yet the PSD had experienced the shock and tumult of the end of Ahmed Ben Salah's collectivization and a new economic liberalization with assymetrical social impact. It had also broken ties with former Foreign Affairs Minister Muhammad Masmoudi, who was living in exile in Libya and organizing Tunisian immigrant workers abroad, as well as working on a failed attempt at a unified Tunisia and Libya. Former Interior Minister Ahmed Mestiri had broken ties with the PSD in 1973 and created the splinter group Democratic Socialist Movement (Mouvement des démocrates socialistes [MDS]). After being shunned by Bourguiba's administration and scapegoated for the country's economic problems, Ben Salah headed the Popular Unity

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525 *La politique contractuelle*, 67, 82.
Movement (Mouvement d'Unité Populaire [MUP]) once he escaped prison in 1973 and fled to Algeria.\textsuperscript{526}

In addition to claiming that protestors terrorized women and children, attacked banks and pillaged public and private property, the PSD pamphlet also noted a new form of protest. During Ramadan in August 1977, a group of devout UGTT members from Sfax allegedly attacked café and restaurant customers who failed to respect religious fasting during daylight hours.

On this day and the next, for the first time in Tunisia, a wind of fanaticism blew through the city. The vandals were led by the General Secretary of the regional workers' union in Sfax [Abderrazak Ghorbal].

Has the UGTT become a religious party? Tunisians, though all are attached to their religion, did not hide their astonishment and for the most part, their grave concern. What troubled them is that the UGTT took part in intolerance in a country that has done away with fanaticism. The Bourguiba reforms aimed at renewing Islam and adapting it to the conditions of modern life incited some discontent at first. But today, the overwhelming majority of Tunisians are behind them and consider them one of [Tunisia's] greatest achievements.\textsuperscript{527}

Not only did the regime fear splinter groups from within its former PSD ranks in the likes of Mestiri's MDS and Ben Salah's MUP, it now faced religious opponents organized through the sole legal labor organization. The group in Sfax was not merely upset over the regime's economic policies but clearly targeted infidels whose indifference to religious practices was enabled under Bourguiba's modernizing reforms. Of course, the framing of these events in the PSD pamphlet should be approached with caution and the direct connections with the assailants and the UGTT called into question. Just as many of the protestors' actions were blamed on foreign influences, the regime also sought to label actions against the state as fanatic.


\textsuperscript{527} \textit{La politique contractuelle}, 66.
However, given the ascendency of the Islamist movement in Tunisia in the late 1970s and the creation of the Movement of the Islamic Tendency in 1981, the timing and veracity of this event are not difficult to believe. Marguerite Rollinde concluded of oppositional Tunisian social movements that "[f]ar from weakening the state with their actions, they contributed initially to its reinforcement, through its capacity of repression and recuperation." The evidence set forth here suggests a slightly more nuanced position. Given the divisions on the left and the persistence of PSD political power beyond 1978, Rollinde's comments are not without merit. However, it should be added that contestation led to concerted and consolidated human rights efforts that continued beyond the Bourguiba regime to the present. Resistance also ushered in a new campaign of repression against a rising Islamist movement that was invigorated by its participation in opposition against the Bourguiba regime.

**Conclusion: Postcolonial Transnational Activism in 1970s Tunisia**

Members of the CISDHT, born out of March 1968, as well as the CTIDVR after February 1972, were later instrumental in the creation of human rights organizations for penal reform and freedom of expression. The response to the Bourguibist narrative would not have been possible without vast networks in which Tunisians on the ground filtered information to Paris that often made its way back to Tunis via the metropole. What began with a rather general anti-imperialist protest against Tunisia’s relationship to the West on 5 June 1967 had, by February 1972, transformed to focus more narrowly on basic human rights and democracy. And though the student movement had the wind knocked out of its sails by multiple arrests of key figures and

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528 Rollinde, *op. cit.* 126.
529 The LTDH, created in 1977, is still in existence, as is the Tunisian section of Amnesty International in 1981, both of which consisted of former members of the CISDHT.
harsh sentences, activists had successfully laid bare certain hypocrisies within the newly
independent Tunisia.

Ultimately, the movements of 1968 and 1972 laid the foundation for resistance to the
Bourguiba regime that occurred on more generalized levels in January 1978. Not only were
organizations in place to defend the rights of striking union members in 1978, “intellectual
workers” such as teachers and professors had been marked by the university upheaval and
educated in the language of resistance. Teachers and university professors were organized under
the UGTT and many had participated in either March 1968 or February 1972 as students. When
Achour finally severed ties with the PSD and the Bourguiba regime, this intellectual corps of the
labor movement responded by supporting and participating in both labor and student strikes.
Though the student movement did not directly catalyze the mass worker strikes of January 1978,
students were instrumental in providing oppositional discourse and infrastructure to defend
human rights and many of the calls for trade union autonomy and democratic freedoms mirrored
what students called for in 1968 and 1972. The transnational activism between Paris and Tunis
that began in March 1968 was revived with the 1978 movement, as seen through exile groups
like the Tunisian Collective of 26 January, the CTIDVR, and the provisional section in Paris,
which was larger and experienced greater success in liberating political prisoners than in the
past. Once UGTT leadership sought autonomy from the PSD over the course of 1977, Tunisia's
large national industries like textiles and mining exposed the regime to the collective action of
organized workers, as the CGT and CFDT had done in France, and the CNTS in Senegal in
1968.
Introduction

The convergence of a ballooning immigrant population, increased political activity nation-wide by both immigrants and French nationals, and the identification by French leftists with both anti-imperialism and immigrant worker rights contributed to a resurgence of right-wing fascism and racist violence. At the heart of this social tension was France’s colonial past that was selectively remembered and re-presented under a new set of circumstances by interest groups on the left and the right sides of the political theatre. Similar to the intellectual migration patterns that informed and influenced the nature of 1968 protests across France and its former empire, labor migration to France shifted the landscape of worker protests in the 1970s. The increase in immigrant worker protests of the post-1968 era was part and parcel of what Daniel Gordon refers to as the "rise of anti-racism in France." Through exhaustive research conducted over a ten-year period, Gordon successfully links the events of France's May 1968 to later, specifically anti-racist movements in the 1970s and early 1980s. Though he brings to life many of the individual experiences of immigrant workers, Gordon prefers to group them together regardless of country of origin. This typological choice may reflect the author's desire to create and focus on a subset of the working class who shared the collective experience of repression. By taking this one step further and breaking down Gordon's subset of workers into immigrants from France's former colonies, this chapter shows how in certain situations, this group had specific postcolonial experiences with labor, protest, and the left in France, and that

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531 He states: "An Andalucian in Barcelona, an emigrant from the mezzogiorno to northern Italy or a Portuguese worker in Paris, like a Breton or an Auvergnat in 19th century Paris, was an immigrant and an excluded outsider in ways that differed only in degree from the classic (post-)colonial migrant from North Africa to France." See Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 10.
these experiences were in many ways tied to May 1968. Indeed, French leftist groups created out of 1968 identified with immigrant causes and helped to organize immigrant workers, with varying degrees of success. In many cases, this engagement generated immigrant worker activism in the 1970s. Even in cases when immigrant activists resented French support as intrusive, I argue that this led immigrant workers to form their own organizations that did not exist prior to 1968. While French activists may or may not have had particular affinities for immigrants from former colonies over immigrants from Spain or Italy, Spanish and Italian immigrants were not the immediate targets of racist violence by neo-fascist groups. In a decolonizing world, immigrant workers from North and West Africa faced particular forms of racism that were practiced unevenly by governments, employers, and society writ large. The 1970s in France marked a new era of increased immigrant worker protest and government policies geared specifically toward subsets of postcolonial immigrants. While North and West African students in France played a limited role in immigrant worker protests, they displayed an increased interest in, and identification with, immigrant worker causes that had not been present prior to 1968. This reflected a common desire for authenticity and legitimacy on the left. This authenticity would be achieved by locating and advocating for the most repressed groups in society.

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532 Sartre greatly influenced this generation regarding a striving for authenticity and an existential responsibility to actively seek social change and to act out one's authentic self, which is not given. One example of this 68er era quest for authentic action for social good can be seen in Régis Debray's hyperbolic third-worldism in which he actually left France to engage in violence for third world liberation. Another can be seen in Chérif Ferjani's rather naive adventure to the Middle East to train with guerilla fighters, which was short-lived and he returned to France immediately after.
“Les Français sont-ils racistes?”

*Le Monde* journalist Jean Lacouture published a repeat column in the spring of 1970 raising the issue of French racism historically and in contemporary French culture. “Les Français sont-ils racistes?” (“Are the French racists?”) appeared from 20 March through 20 April and probed France’s historical memory of anti-Semitism and anti-Arabism from the Dreyfus Affair through the Algerian War. The timing of Lacouture’s submissions coincided with an increase in violence against immigrants, especially workers, which France had not witnessed since the first wave of colonial immigration during the first world war. Recruitment of foreign labor to replace Frenchmen who had left for the front not only precipitated France’s first experience with large numbers of ethnic minorities in its homeland, it also led to a marked increase in violence targeting immigrant workers. A second wave of violence took place during the Algerian War, when Paris acted as a battleground between Algerian resistance and French repression. This violence re-emerged in the early 1970s in response to the rise of the New Left and the events of 1968 with the arrival of neo-fascist groups like the New Order (Ordre Nouveau), which wreaked havoc on North African populations throughout France.

The New Order was inspired by the Organization of the Secret Army (OAS), a non-government-sanctioned, clandestine vigilante group of right-wing radicals who fought the FLN in Algeria and commonly attacked immigrants in Paris during the Algerian War. Following the

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events of May 1968 in France, Georges Pompidou amnestied several OAS veterans, some of whom were convicted assassins, while abolishing several leftist groups, including Alain Krivine's Revolutionary Communist Youth (Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire [JCR]). These former OAS members were instrumental in organizing and recruited young members in the New Order and Young Nation (Jeune Nation) to combat left-wing groups like the Anti-fascist University Front (Front Universitaire Anti-fasciste [FUA]) and the Marxist-Leninist Communist Youths Union (Union des jeunesse communistes marxistes-léninistes [UJCML]). Right-wing radical groups' attacks on the immigrant population increased with rising numbers of immigrants and, in turn, rising immigrant participation in activism in the early 1970s. The racism of new immigration policies and the activities of the New Order were the object of protest, not only by migrant workers, but also by organizations such as the Communist League, an offshoot of the defunct JCR led by 68er Alain Krivine.\footnote{Ibid, 13. See also Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville, \textit{Red Flag / Black Flag: French Revolution 1968} (G.P. Putnam’s Son, 1968), pp. 44-47. The Communist League was largely comprised of the members left over from the JCR (Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire), which was banned by the French government along with at least six other activist groups in 1968. The Communist League and the New Order were also both dissolved in the summer 1973 after the two clashed at a New Order rally.} Krivine’s support for foreign workers illustrates the intersection of the 1968 student movement with worker movements. It also brings to the fore France’s colonial past that shaped the post-1968 struggles that were bound up in racism, immigration, and the memory of the Algerian War.

The government’s juridical actions against leftist groups laid bare its position toward both past and present activism. Yet incarceration did not prevent certain Maoists from engaging in a hunger strike in refutation of the French justice system and in taking up the cause of working-class immigrants. François Maspero published \textit{Ce que veut la ligue communiste} (\textit{What the Communist League Wants}), in which Krivine called for solidarity with foreign and immigrant workers, and proposed a plan of \textit{alphabétisation} whereby French communists would implement
strategies to eradicate illiteracy among foreign workers.\textsuperscript{536} Krivine also used the Communist League's active participation against a New Order rally in 1971 and its outreach to immigrant workers to illustrate the authenticity of the League compared to the impotence of the more moderate French Communist Party.\textsuperscript{537} In addition to Krivine’s support of immigrants, a group of activist detainees were arrested for circulating copies of the Proletarian Left's \textit{La cause du peuple}, and later published a series of prison writings. One prisoner noted that the majority of inmates were “young rebels, immigrant workers, and people hit with bourgeois repression.”\textsuperscript{538}

Activists like Jean-Noël Darde and Serge Minoc declared solidarity with immigrant workers who were forced into abominable living conditions, hazardous work environments, and terrible pay. The issue of \textit{La cause du peuple} that resulted in the arrest of Darde and Minoc accused prominent industrialists like Henri de Wendel of assassinating workers by knowingly placing them in hostile work environments.

In a factory in Villerupt, a worker was poisoned by carbon gas. There it is! Who is responsible for these accidental deaths? Why is Monsieur de Wendel not here to be judged? But no, we have a false tribunal created specially for fascists of the OAS, where people are regularly accused of espionage, are going to judge me, for having distributed a journal stating that M. de Wendel assassinated people in his factories and that he should be judged.\textsuperscript{539}

While many immigrant workers became increasingly active in the 1970s, it is clear that their roles as symbols and causes of revolution helped propel the events of the long 1968. Darde, along with Maoists Gilles Sussong and Jean Stefanaggi distributed tracts denouncing the municipality of Argenteuil for restricting the housing of Muslim workers in favor of card-

\textsuperscript{536} \textit{Ce que veut la Ligue communiste} (Paris: François Maspero, 1972), 159.
\textsuperscript{537} \textit{Ibid}, 89.
\textsuperscript{539} \textit{Ibid}, 21.
carrying members of the French Communist Party and whites who paid bribes under the table.\footnote{Le Monde, 20 mars 1970.}

In addition, the virtually simultaneous crackdown on left-wing organizations that coincided with the amnesty of the OAS revived a consciousness of the Charonne events of 1961-62, which may have increased solidarity among students and foreign workers. Another inmate, Nicolas Canu, drew direct historical connections between the Nazi collaboration under the Vichy régime, police brutality during the Algerian War, the CRS (French riot police), and fascism.\footnote{Les Prisoniers politiques parlent, 23. Canu wrote, “But to stop the revolutionary struggles, it is insufficient to launch a press campaign and to unleash the CRS; it is also necessary to impede the revolutionaries from their work. This is what France has not seen since the repression of German Nazis and French police collaborators against the resistance, or since the repression of the French army and police against the FLN.”} Canu’s connection between the current fascism in France and the police repression “against the FLN” similarly evokes the remembrance of the Algerian War at home.\footnote{Ibid.}

As they had done in 1968, activists in the 1970s again revisited the experiences of 17 October 1961 and Charonne, holding anti-racist protests at the Charonne metro station and denouncing the repetition of racist violence that the war had brought home to the streets of Paris.\footnote{Ibid. Historian Jeremy Varon has recently interrogated the ways in which wars taking place in the “Third World” were experienced in the West. Varon’s analysis of the Weather Underground in the United States and the Red Army Faction in Germany shows how two radical groups responded differently to similar phenomena, and how foreign wars played out at home. See Varon, Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies (Univ. of California Press, 2004).} Charonne came to symbolize state repression and fascistic violence, in addition to leftist solidarity with marginalized groups. It was still a symbol of repression on 28 February 1972, when Geismar participated in a cortège commemorating Maoist Pierre Overney, who was killed by plant security at the Renault-Billancourt auto factory on 25 February 1972 during a protest.\footnote{See my discussion of 17 October and Charonne in Chapter 3, as well as Daniel Gordon, Immigrants and Intellectuals, 143-44; Jim House and Neil MacMaster, Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory (Oxford University Press, 2006), 250-256; and Kristin Ross, May ’68 and Its Afterlives (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 47-48. Ross cites graffiti and slogans from 1968 in Paris such as “Nouveau Charonne à Paris” and “CRS: Assassin de Charonne.”}

In this case, Geismar and other mourners selected the site of Charonne to protest brutality against

\footnote{French news footage of Geismar holding flowers in front of images of Overney can be found at the website \url{http://www.ina.fr/archivespourtous/index}.}
Overney was a member of the Proletarian Left and one of the *établis* hard-liners who clandestinely entered the work force for the purpose of revolutionizing immigrants. Both Overney and fellow *établï* Robert Linhart lied about their education in order to take manual labor jobs, with Linhart landing a position at the Citroën-Choisy plant.\(^{546}\) Despite his lack of experience or job skills, Linhart earned higher wages than the majority of immigrant workers due to his skin color and French citizenship. Like Geismar and Krivine, who utilized images and symbols like Charonne to identify with marginalized groups, Linhart effectively organized majority immigrant laborers to stage a strike in February 1969 against prolonged work hours without remuneration.\(^{547}\) While the strike succeeded in briefly slowing operations, Linhart and his followers were unable to secure the shorter work day, and Citroën employed such strikebreaking strategies as physical violence, firing, threat of deportation, and the eviction of immigrants from company-owned housing.\(^{548}\) Despite their limited success, back-to-the-factory organizers like Linhart and Overney reveal the importance of immigrants for certain ’68 protestors, as both direct actors and as victims of gross oppression whose rights as humans and workers had been violated.

French leftists were not alone, however, in reactivating metonyms surrounding immigrant oppression like Charonne. On 17 October 1968, exactly seven years after the 1961 atrocities in which police murdered Algerian protestors, the Algerian government under Houari

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\(^{545}\) *Établis* were inspired by the intellectual direction of philosophy professor Luis Althusser. Also influenced by the Chinese Cultural Revolution, these men and women went into the factories in France to put their philosophical beliefs into practice, and to engage and organize immigrant workers. Many of these intellectuals wrote memoirs or published novels chronicling their experiences. Historian Donald Reid has nicely synthesized many of these narratives in “*Etablissement: Working in the Factory to Make Revolution in France,*” *Radical History Review,* issue 88 (Winter 2004): 83-111.


\(^{547}\) *Ibid*, 85-106. Before organizing at the Citroën factory, Linhart and other UJCML members were invited to People’s Republic of China in 1967 to witness the Proletarian Revolution. See Donald Reid, *op. cit.*, 85.

\(^{548}\) Linhart, *Assembly Line.*
Boumedienne declared that 17 October would henceforth be commemorated as National Emigration Day. In addition, the Boumedienne government responded to French violence and racist immigration restrictions by temporarily suspending all emigration to France on 19 September 1973.\footnote{Le Monde, 21 September 1973. Quoted in Silverman, op. cit., 52.} The New Order's violence against North African immigrants elicited reactions from Algeria and the memory of the 17 October events set the tone for government intervention in emigration to the former metropole. Messoudi Zitoumi, spokesman for the Algerian provisional government's Information Minister Muhammad Yazid, issued a warning that Algeria would order the return of Algerian immigrants to their home country “unless French authorities took measures to allow ‘the Algerian colony to live in conditions other than anxiety and terror.’”\footnote{Quoted in Jim House and Neil MacMaster, Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory (Oxford University Press, 2006), 257.} The massacre of 17 October and the police violence of Charonne thus resonated in the political consciousness of actors in France and Algeria, whether for leftist students, racist neo-fascists or North African immigrants. Events taking place within France at the local level rippled across national borders to Algeria and dictated the transnational state policies of both nations. Not only did various groups deploy similar symbols for their own purposes, they also harkened France’s and Algeria's colonial pasts to make claims about their postcolonial presents.

One of the most egregious acts of unatoned racist violence of this period occurred when a 15-year-old Algerian boy was killed on 27 October 1971 in the Parisian banlieue the Goutte d'Or. Djellali Ben Ali was shot in the back by his apartment concierge's husband, Daniel Pigot, after a struggle in what became known as the "Djellali Affair." Community members confirmed Pigot's penchant for spewing racist vitriol directed toward Arabs, yet authorities failed to initially launch an investigation into Ben Ali's death. Though the event was tragic, it mobilized several elements of a fractured French left, who joined immigrant activists in denouncing racism.
Among the many significant factors surrounding the Djellali Affair was that it brought together Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault, both of whom had previously engaged in public media mudslinging. Sartre had accused Foucault of abdicating his responsibilities to promote social change, whereas Foucault criticized Sartre's simplistic positions on Marxism and structuralism. The outcry against this racist injustice brought together formerly opposed intellectuals, radical French and North African youth, and North African immigrant workers. At the same time, it marked a shift in the sites of resistance from the bourgeois student milieu of the Latin Quarter to the heart of the North African working class community in Paris: the streets of Barbès and the Goutte d'Or. A committee for Djellali organized two large demonstrations in late November and early December 1970.

The committee's efforts at justice for Djellali's slaying shifted into larger community-building projects like alphabetization of illiterate immigrants and legal assistance for filling out employment- and immigrant-related paperwork. These had limited success and the early engagement with Goutte d'Or residents on the part of super-star intellectuals did not endure. There were also a number of tensions among activists whose relationships to the Djellali Affair differed significantly. For some pan-Arabists within the Palestine Committees, the Goutte d'Or provided a potential breading ground for recruitment to the Palestinian cause. Foucault, on the other hand, deplored racism and inhumane living conditions, yet held sympathies with the plight of Israelis and also decried the prison system, finding it extremely difficult to take a strong position in the case where many were calling for Pigot's head, or life in a jail cell. Djellali's

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murderer was not brought to justice until 1977, when he received a sentence of five years in
prison. Yet the significance of the Djellali Affair spread far beyond the streets of the Goutte d'Or. 
The Franco-Tunisian Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Tunisia also linked the
Djellali Affair to the long-term imprisonment of Foucault’s former student Ahmed Ben
Othmani. Activists from Tunis to Paris accused state officials of repressing Maghrabi youth,
and activists in Paris tracked and reported repression and mobilized in the defense of victims
across borders.

The collection of groups known as the Palestine Committees (CP) issued a pro-
Palestinian platform as early as February 1969, and grew in numbers in September 1970 (Black
September) after King Hussein's Army forces killed thousands of Palestinians in an effort to
expel the Palestinian Liberation Organization from Jordan. The CP, comprised of Arab and
French activists with ties to the Proletarian Left, sent money and supplies to the Red Crescent to
show political support for the Palestinian cause. The group consisted of newly arrived students in
Paris who were not necessarily engaged in politics in their home countries, workers who had
been politicized by the Palestinian struggle, and the radical French left. Though they formed
around the singular political issue of Palestinian liberation, their participation in the anti-racist
protest of Djellali’s death demonstrated a new engagement with social issues within the larger
diasporic Arab community, and not just Palestinian politics. Historian Rabah Aissaoui has
argued that the CP transformed into the Arab Workers Movement in June 1972 in order to fight
racism in France and to better address immigrant workers' causes out of a fear that "their

553 See “On réprime ici [Paris], on réprime là-bas [Tunis],” undated tract, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28 bis; BDI,
Nanterre.
Editions Amsterdam, 2008.
555 Daniel Gordon makes a similar observation, noting that the Arab left interaction with workers in the Goutte d'Or
led to increased focus on local concerns such as working conditions in France. See Gordon, Immigrants and
Intellectuals, 121-22.
movement might run out of steam.” In addition to Aissaoui’s findings, I argue that the MTA was also created out of competition with other French activist groups on the left, such as the Cahiers de mai and the Proletarian Left that had been reaching out to Arab workers since 1968.

*The Cahiers de mai, Penarroya, and the MTA*

Founded in the 1880s by the Rothschild family to mine and manufacture nickel, the Penarroya Trust employed over 4,000 workers in France and over 12,000 total in 28 countries in 1972. The industrial powerhouse was the second leading revenue generator in France, ranked fourth Europe-wide, and could claim then-French President Georges Pompidou to its board of trustees. The trust had been mining in Tunisia since at least the 1930s and also held operations in Morocco, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Namibia, Gabon, and Madagascar, as well as throughout Latin America. Several Penarroya metal refineries were located in France and the factories recruited the bulk of the labor force directly from former French colonies during the decolonization period from the 1950s through the 1970s, or from neighboring European nations. At the Penarroya-Gerland factory in Lyon, North Africans lived in housing units adjacent to the factory. Two workers shared one bed, with one working a night shift and the

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558 After changing names several times through various acquisitions, remnants of the Penarroya Trust are currently grouped under the French multinational corporation, Imerys, which specializes in mining and industrial mineral processing. See “Correspondances et conventions collectives relatives aux salaires et conditions générales des employés de la société minière et métallurgique de Penarroya fondérie de Mégrine” (1936-1948), in Série SG/SG 2, Carton 358; Archives Nationales de Tunisie (ANT), Tunis; and Gilbert Troly, "La Société minière et métallurgique de Penarroya,” in special addition “La France et les mines d'outre mer,” *Réalités industrielles* (August 2008), 31-32.
559 Certain factories employed primarily North African immigrants while others also employed Portuguese, Moroccan, and Tunisian workers who claimed that French companies targeted foreigners with little education and limited French fluency. See poster, “Pour vous faire savoir...qu’avec un contrat de travail on est un esclave,” (undated) publié avec le soutien de L’Union Nationale des Comités de Lutte d’Ateliers et le Comité de Défense de la vie et des droits des immigrés, in Fonds Cahiers de mai, côte F delta res 576/5/9/2; BDIC, Nanterre.
other working the day shift so that they alternated usage of the living quarters. They were not allowed to wash up for meals and ingested lead from their hands. Workers also inhaled fumes throughout the workday and the evenings since the factories operated around the clock and their living quarters were on company property. While the factory conducted physical exams of its employees, workers did not have access to their own medical records. Independent doctors brought in by French activists to examine workers diagnosed several workers with saturnism (lead poisoning). The Penarroya Trust knew about problems with saturnism in its factories at least as early as 1936, when workers at a Tunisian plant were prescribed with one liter of milk per day and a weekly shower as antedotes to lead poisoning.\(^\text{560}\) Some Cahiers de mai activists like Michel Leclercq, who helped place workers in contact with doctors, continued to advocate for workers afflicted with saturnism through the 1980s at Penarroya factories located in Morocco.\(^\text{561}\)

On 9 February 1972, workers at factories in Lyon and Saint-Denis (on the outskirts of Paris) put down their tools to protest depressed wages, unsafe equipment—including lack of masks to combat lead inhalation and the death of a colleague on site that was covered up by employers—as well as deplorable housing conditions. These were the first coordinated efforts in France of immigrant workers across factories, and they were soon joined by workers at the Penarroya factory in Escaudoeuvres. Though each factory strike experienced its own trajectory, the over 100 North African workers at Lyon Penarroya site worked most intimately with the French left, held out the longest, and achieved the most gains. It took them over 5 weeks to

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\(^{560}\) See “Convention Collective,” signed in Tunis, 8 August 1936, in Série SG/SG 2, Carton 358; Archives Nationales de Tunisie (ANT), Tunis.

\(^{561}\) The Oued el Heimer factory, near Oujda in Northeastern Morocco near the Algerian border, was the home to a Penarroya metallurgical factory. Michel Leclercq travelled to Oued el Heimer to visit the factory in 1981 after the Association of Moroccans in France alleged that the factory caused the deaths of more than 30 workers' children due to lead poisoning. See interview with Michel Leclercq, 2011, Lyon; and pamphlet of the Association des Marocains en France, "Pourquoi 31 enfants morts en un an et demi," in private archive of Michel Leclercq.
achieve 18% wage increases, relocation to better housing off of factory property, the release by
the company of their medical records, and a full-time on-site nurse. Their case evinces the
direction of social movements in the post-1968 era, as well as the type of collaboration necessary
for the realization of these goals. Whether through direct contact or media, it is also highly
probable that the Tunisian workers at the Penarroya factory in Lyon helped to spark a concurrent
strike in March 1972 at a Penarroya factory in Megrine, Tunisia, in the environs of Tunis. The
leader of the Megrine strike, Belgacem Kharchi was later arrested by Tunisian authorities for his
participation in the January 1978 general workers strike. The simultaneity of the strikes at
Megrine and Lyon factories suggests that North African workers in Tunisia and France were in
touch with each other, or at least aware of each other’s actions. The French and Tunisian state
responses were similar in each case, where strikers in Lyon and Tunis were evacuated from
factory buildings by armed police officers.

Contrary to claims of worker activism in 1968 that “immigrants seemed somewhat
marginal” and followed union orders “but without enthusiasm,” this was certainly not the case by
the early 1970s. Kristin Ross has noted that “[f]ar-left groups in May and June acted as a
catalyst for distinctly new forms of expression, representation, and mobilization of immigrant
workers; by 1970, rent strikes, hunger strikes, squatting, and other collective struggles unseen

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562 “Grève victorieuse à Penarroya Lyon” tract of SGEN-CFDT Bellevue, March 1972, in Fonds Cahiers de mai,
cote F delta res 578/69; BDIC, Nanterre.
563 Though there is little documentation of the Megrine strike outside of a reference in the 16 March 1972 issue of
Politique-Hebdo, a Tunisian student activist stated that he had collected funds in support of the workers, and
confirmed Kharchi’s leadership role. See interview with “Abdel,” Tunis, 2011. The International Labor
Organization also released a report listing UGTT members, including Belgacem Kharchi, who had been released by
1979 in “Interim Report No. 197,” Case No. 899 (Tunisia), November 1979, at
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/P?p=1000:50002:0::NO::P50002_COMPLAINT_TEXT_ID:2900103#1
564 Ibid.
565 Michael Seidman, The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian Students and Workers in 1968 (New York: Berghahn
before May ’68 began to bring immigrants into direct confrontation with the state apparatus. Rather than merely following suit, the Penarroya workers indeed shaped the nature of their claims. However, evidence also suggests that collaboration with French activist organizations was absolutely crucial to the success of the strike, which would likely not have been possible without the influence and memory of 1968. The French activist group, Cahiers de mai, assisted workers in drafting their claims and coordinated efforts with French and immigrant workers at other Penarroya factories in Saint-Denis and Escaudoeuvres. They also located and funded translators to attend general assembly meetings and transcribe hearings to distribute to the other factories. Cahiers de mai attracted public attention to the workers’ cause, created a committee of support and raised funds that were critical for striking workers to survive. These funds were also used to pay for train tickets that ensured the circulation of workers between factories to attend general assemblies, to produce a film documenting working and living conditions, and to organize galas where celebrities further raised money for the cause. In this regard, the Cahiers de mai, which was formed out of the ‘68 movement, can be seen as facilitators and messengers for the immigrant cause. They provided an infrastructure and organization that helped workers articulate their goals in such a way that the Penarroya workers were able to win over public opinion and sustain their struggle until their needs were met.

Without the Cahiers de mai, it is doubtful that these immigrants would have come into contact with other workers at Penarroya factories facing similar problems, or that they would have been able to overcome the financial burden of a long-term strike. However, collaboration

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568 “Bilan Financier au 1er mars 1972 du soutien aux travailleurs de Penarroya,” signed by the René Gauthier, Treasurer of the Committee of Support, in Fonds Cahiers de mai, côte F delta res 578/69, BDIC, Nanterre.
between workers and the French left was not without tension. After the work-related death of blacksmith Georges Ravier at a Vénissieux Berliet factory on the outskirts of Lyon, a group of blacksmiths expressed annoyance at a tract distributed by "a Maoist enquête group" at the factory. *Enquête* (inquiry or investigation) was a new strategy developed by French Maoists and employed by the Cahiers de mai. The strategy was designed to

[place] the project under the direction and control of workers, who discuss and elaborate an initial text sentence by sentence...In its production, then, the *enquête* resembles any number of experiments in collective authorship 'from below' that proliferated in those years...it can be an instrument of liaison *between* factories so frequently disparaged in not actively blocked by the 'vertical communication' of union leaders.\(^{569}\)

In the case of Penarroya-Gerland, the Cahiers de mai approach was successful in placing workers from different factories in contact, and workers themselves controlled funds to cover the daily needs of striking workers. Yet the Penarroya-Saint-Denis strike, which was led and negotiated by the General Confederation of Labor (Confédération générale du travail [CGT]) in the sort of "vertical" relationship discussed above, lasted only one day after CGT negotiators were offered 3% wage increases and promises to discuss further other demands once the 550 workers returned to their posts.\(^{570}\) The blacksmiths at Vénissieux accused Maoist outsiders of manufacturing details of their colleague's death. "The blacksmiths, unified together, have no lessons to learn from these individuals who are remotely controlled and who try to turn attention to management. Mao, go practice workerism in the salons from where you came, but not in front of our factories, and definitely not by using our deaths to serve yourself."\(^{571}\) The acceptance of external activism

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569 Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, 112.
570 "Edmond Maire à Penarroya," *Politique-Hebdo* 19 (9 March 1972). It should be noted that, although the Saint-Denis site halted its February 1972 strike after only one day once the CGT stepped in, it had already achieved significant gains during a previous January-February 1971 strike.
by workers was thus uneven, and workers and organizers faced challenges coordinating united fronts across factories and industries.

The eventual success of the Penarroya strike in Lyon contributed to discourses on social movements for groups that were not directly involved. For example, the Palestine Committees, initially formed in 1970 after Black September in support of Palestinian liberation, evolved into the more worker-conscious Arab Workers Movement (Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes [MTA]) after Penarroya. What began in 1970 as a collaborative political movement between members of the primarily French Proletarian Left and various Arab leftists shifted significantly toward a more autonomous movement focused on the daily needs of Arabs living in France. The MTA was formed out of the first national Arab workers conference held in June 1972 in Paris that gathered Arab workers and activists from over 10 industrial regions throughout France. Activists weighed the merits of creating an autonomous, Arab-led group versus continued collaboration with French Maoists. As a result, they vowed to better organize Arabs in France in order to merge their struggle for Palestinian liberation with the struggle to improve the daily lives of Arab workers. While delegates from the northeastern town, Douai, portrayed the French Maoists as friends who were "leading the same struggle as us against imperialism and colonialism," representatives from Genevilliers, a northern suburb of Paris, pushed for "a truly autonomous organization" because "when we're Arab and we want to lead a struggle, we shouldn't have to seek out a French organization. We must organize ourselves to decide on and lead our own struggles." Others lamented French labor unions like the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (Confédération française démocratique du travail [CFDT]), which made decisions on behalf of workers without holding the more democratic general assemblies.

In voicing frustration over the lack of support of the Penarroya strikes by the Arab
activist community, one meeting attendee stated "the CFDT organizes Arabs across factories,
and it's the CFDT which speaks in the name of the Arab struggle! So why can't Arabs organize
themselves!"\textsuperscript{573} The success of the French left, and even more mainstream unions like the CFDT
and CGT, at mobilizing immigrant workers in France, helped to propel the creation of the MTA
that viewed itself in competition over constituents and influence. The MTA later became
instrumental in supporting immigrant hunger strikes and organizing protests against the racist
immigration policies of the Marcellin-Fontanet decrees throughout the 1970s.\textsuperscript{574} In spite of their
turn towards autonomy and the specific needs of Arab immigrants in France, the MTA continued
to work with French groups like the Proletarian Left. Many MTA members also broke ties with
North African Amicale organizations from their home countries due to suspicions that they were
linked to both the French state and state agencies back home.\textsuperscript{575} Just as 1968 led to increased
attention to foreign workers on the part of French activists, it had a similar impact on groups like
the MTA, which gradually shifted toward the \textit{sans-papiers} movement.

Increased immigrant activity coincided with a spike in violence against immigrants,
primarily targeting North Africans. At least twelve Algerian workers were assassinated across
France in just over one month in the summer of 1973, which resulted in not one conviction.\textsuperscript{576}

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\textsuperscript{573} "Procès Verbal de la conférence nationale des travailleurs arabes," 17-18 June 1972, Paris, in Fonds de la
Gauche Prolétarienne, côte F delta res 576 5/9/2, BDIC, Nanterre.
\textsuperscript{574} For more on the MTA’s activities in the 1970s, see Abdellali Hajjat, “Le MTA et la ‘grève générale’ contre le
Migrants in 1970s France: The Case of the Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes (MTA),” \textit{Journal of Muslim
\textsuperscript{575} The Amicales had been set up in France following independence in the Maghrib ostensibly to serve immigrant
populations. Each nation had its own office and reported to the home government such that the Amicales had the
dual function of assisting and surveilling immigrant populations. See Abdellali Hajjat, “Les comités Palestine (1970-
\textsuperscript{576} Bennoune, \textit{op. cit.}, 12. See also Yvan Gastaut, "La flambée raciste de 1973," \textit{Revue européenne de migrations
internationales} 9:2 (1993): 61-75. Violent attacks were particularly prevalent in the south of France, especially
Marseilles.
Violence aimed at immigrants and an anti-Arab public sentiment prompted French legislation restricting immigration to “desirable groups” who were thought to be more “assimilable” (i.e. white Europeans). These knew policies were part of the Fontanet-Marcellin decrees, which Catherine Wihtol de Wenden has called a critical moment in the politicization of immigration.\(^5\)

Under the new plan, workers would have to obtain a one-year work contract with a specific employer before being eligible for a residency permit (*carte de séjour*), which subjected laid off or seasonal workers to the status of "illegal alien" and ineligible for unemployment benefits. One of the MTA founders, Tunisian activist Saïd Bouziri, responded to the decrees with a series of hunger strikes and the creation of the Committee in Support of Life and the Rights of Immigrant Workers (Comité de Défense de la Vie et des Droits des Travailleurs Immigrés [CDVDTI]).\(^6\)

Bouziri's actions set off hunger strikes in Valence in December 1972 when 18 Tunisian immigrant workers were threatened with deportation related to the Marcellin-Fontanet decrees. One of the Tunisians facing deportation, Rabah Saïdani, had joined Bouziri in his first Parisian hunger strike, and brought this tactic to Valence.\(^7\) The relationship among the workers, their employers, the state, and the law was laden with postcolonial dimensions. North Africans in the community were targeted by corrupt police and faced regular threats of deportation. Workers left the economically depressed Maghreb in search of employment in the territory of their former colonial oppressor. Many employers withheld official pay stubs to avoid paying unemployment insurance. Journalist Michel Duyrat, a writer for the Proletarian Left publication *La Cause du Peuple*, interviewed a number of the hunger striking Tunisian workers who described their situations. Even those who had proper papers and a valid French social security number faced the

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\(^7\) Rabah Aissaoui, "Political Mobilization of North African Migrants...," 173.
threat of a corrupt police commissioner known as "Tebessi," who was known for collecting monthly fees from the Moroccan and Algerian cafés to allow them to operate.\textsuperscript{580}

Tebessi was an Algerian police chief of French nationality who allegedly targeted Tunisians since he viewed them as racially inferior, and was reported to have arranged the deportation of an Algerian café owner who refused to pay the monthly bribe. In 1962, Tebessi survived an assassination attempt by three FLN operatives in Valence who were later captured and mutilated by Tebessi in the police station. Once the hunger strike began, Tebessi visited all of the North African cafés to warn against the strikes, claiming he could sort out the paperwork but would ensure their deportation in case of non-compliance. Yet many employers refused to give immigrant workers pay stubs, which were necessary to obtain a social security number. Other employers lied to hospital staff who were treating work-related injuries, claiming that they had never employed the immigrants. Even those with papers in order were brought to the station by Tebessi, stripped of their clothing and forced to sit in isolation for several hours before being released.

Another strike sympathizer made direct correlations between the harsh conditions for immigrant workers and the postcolonial political situation in Tunisia.

No politics; we want to live in our own country where we were born and where we left our families. The Bourguiba regime controls the radio and the press to abuse and blind the Tunisian people. THE SUPREME COMBATANT IS THE PEOPLE.

The students' struggle is our struggle. The Bourguibist regime equals bourgeois exploitation of the people. We want to know where all the money is going?! Fifteen years of independence. Nothing has changed. How long will Bourguibist politics leave us to live abroad far from our land and our families? Tortured, naked, exploited, underpaid, and poorly housed. These are Bourguiba's promises? Before leaving the country, we were told that France is paradise. But unfortunately it's hell for us Tunisians.\textsuperscript{581}

\textsuperscript{580} Fonds Duyrat (1 1/4), côte F delta rés 708; BDIC, Nanterre.

\textsuperscript{581} From "Quel masque va mettre Bourguiba pour les prochains élections," in Fonds Duyrat (1 1/4), côte F delta rés 708; BDIC, Nanterre.
Rather than targeting French immigration policies like the Marcellin-Fontanet decrees, in this instance Bourguiba became the object of criticism and responsible for the plight of Tunisian immigrant workers. The author recycled student slogans in an identification with their democratization movement. The hunger strike also sensitized a number of other groups in the Valence community. A local church provided meeting space and engaged French supporters while CFDT delegates came to the sides of the strikers at rallies and local marches. One regularized Algerian worker joined the movement after police drove him 50km from Valence in the middle of the night and left him to walk home. "After that, I joined the strike with my Tunisian comrades against these racists...the expulsions today are for Tunisians. That could be us tomorrow."

Others harked the Algerian War by chanting FLN slogans, "war against racism" and "war against narks."

Ultimately, the hunger strikers' mobilization of a cross-section of the Valence community, coupled with the national media attention the strike received, resulted in Minister of State Edgar Faure's lifting of the expulsion orders and a Christmas Day promise to provide the 18 Tunisians with residency and work permits.

Indeed, the restrictive immigration policies, coupled with increased violence against migrant workers, set off a series of protests by North African workers in the 1970s. While right-wing papers like Le Meridional in Marseilles supported New Order activity denouncing “Algerian syphilitics, Algerian rapists, Algerian pimps, Algerian lunatics, Algerian killers...” and Marseilles groups warned against “The Brown Threat,” immigrant organizations like the MTA

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582 Fonds Duyrat (1 1/4), côte F delta rés 708/2; BDIC, Nanterre.
583 From an unidentified and undated newspaper clipping of an article entitled, "‘Valence: Grève de la faim contre l’expulsion de 19 Tunisiens: Nous, ce qu’on demande, c’est d’avoir les papiers en règle,” in Fonds Duyrat (1 1/4), côte F delta rés 708/2; BDIC, Nanterre.
584 Le Monde, 26 December 1972.
staged strikes in Marseilles, Toulon, Toulouse, and Paris in September 1973.\footnote{Schofield Coryell, “Europe’s Immigrant Workers: New Grapes of Wrath,” \textit{Ramparts} (March 1974), 19.} In response to repression from employers, French government expulsions, and fascist thugs, Maghribi workers overcame fears of a repeat of 17 October 1961 by organizing en masse. In February 1972, they organized on behalf of a Maghribi worker who had been killed by faulty equipment of which employers had knowledge, and in the spring of 1973 hundreds of militants at the Renault plant outside Paris demanded equal pay for equal work.\footnote{Ibid, 18.} This culminated in a strike of 9,000 migrant workers at the Renault factory, and sparked the organization of rent strikes over deplorable housing conditions in \textit{bidonvilles}.\footnote{Mahfoud Bennoune, “Maghribin Workers in France,” \textit{MERIP Reports}, No. 34 (Jan. 1975), p. 11-12.} In spite of threat of arrest and deportation, immigrants began participating in large numbers after the wave of violence in the summer of 1973.

\textit{Beyond North Africa: Sub-Saharan African Protest Movements in 1970s France}

North Africans were not the only immigrant group to actively resist following May 1968. Abdoulaye Gueye has addressed this "imbalance in the research literature" on immigrant activism in France by highlighting non-Maghribi African protest movements.\footnote{Though he avoids this terminology, Abdoulaye Gueye seems to refer to "Black Africa" when using the term "African." See “The Colony Strikes Back: African Protest Movements in Postcolonial France,” \textit{Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East} 26:2 (2006): 225-242.} It is worth noting, however, that this imbalance is in part due to the large difference in the number of immigrants across nationalities and regions. For example, officially there were only 20,000 sub-Saharan immigrants in France in 1962 versus nearly 500,000 from North Africa, though some have estimated that by 1969, the unofficial number of sub-Saharan African immigrants was closer to 200,000-250,000.\footnote{See Figure 1, "Immigrant population in France by region of origin," in David Lessaut and Cris Beauchemin, "Migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe: Still a Limited Trend," \textit{Population and Societies} 452, Institut national d'études démographiques (January 2009): 1. The figure for sub-Saharan immigrants may have jumped} The French recruitment of African labor was assisted by the poor
harvest and reduction in market price of peanuts in 1968 in Senegal, as well as the 50% devaluation of Malian currency in 1967.\textsuperscript{590}

In spite of their relatively small number, as part of the government crackdown on immigrants in Interior Minister Marcellin’s moment of panic, the African House was shutdown and all residents expelled in August 1972, and the French government attempted to close down residence halls of Congolese and Ivoirian students in Paris. Again in August 1973, police evacuated by force students from the Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) living in a designated apartment building in Paris, which doubled as the seat of the Association of students from the Upper Volta. While at least a dozen of the evacuated students had permission to reside there, as many as thirty others were staying while on vacation, eliciting a police response and an order of expulsion without a proper hearing. In response to the eviction, the FEANF declared solidarity with the students from the Upper Volta in protest of immigrant repression.\textsuperscript{591}

In 1970, the Senegalese journalist and intellectual Jean-Pierre N'Diaye dedicated a book on the Black workers of France to the memory of five Black laborers who died of asphyxiation during a fire at an immigrant slum in Aubervilliers. A slumlord had converted an abandoned factory into sleeping quarters and, after cutting off heat to portions building mid-winter due to lack of payment, some tenants resorted to starting a fire in a trashcan and were exposed to toxic levels of carbon monoxide.\textsuperscript{592} Maoists from the Proletarian Left used the opportunity to denounce the incident as a product of capitalist neo-imperialism, and literary celebrities like Marguerite Duras and Jean Genet joined immigrants in occupying the headquarters of an

\textsuperscript{590} N'Diaye, \textit{Négriers modernes}, 36-39.
\textsuperscript{591} \textit{Le Monde}, 8 août 1973.
employers' lobbying group. In response, French Primer Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas launched an investigation into the 300 or so immigrant worker slums that had sprouted up in Paris during the "Thirty Glorious Years," and announced a plan to eradicate Paris of inhabitable slums, which he deemed a "symbol of anti-modernity." Yet without the initial interest in the immigrant workers' cause of the 68er generation, it is unlikely that the Aubervilliers tragedy would have garnered such media attention. As Jean-Pierre N'Diaye noted, "the 'incident' became an event, feeding the written and spoken press for 15 days." Immigrant deaths caused by poor living conditions were no rarity dating to at least the early 1960s, yet the Aubervilliers "incident" drew national media attention and the support of the activist community. It also marked the beginning of sustained action on the part of, and on behalf of, the immigrant community that would endure throughout the 1970s. Aubervilliers was also a product of the idolatry that the radical left placed upon France's most wretched after 1968: immigrant laborers. This fetishization earned intellectual stars like Jean Genet a broken wrist and Pierre-Vidal Naquet a bloodied face—along with some "street cred" in radical leftist circles—when CRS riot police intervened during a demonstration. It also propelled potential immigrant protestors into action, as Malians from the Ivy shantytown occupied their landlord's office in the aftermath of Aubervilliers.

The immigrant worker movement was thus about working conditions and wages, but it was also about overpriced rents, unbearable living conditions, and racism. In 1972, African immigrants coordinated rent strikes against the plans of the National Company of Housing Construction for Workers (Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs

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593 Gordon, Immigrants and Intellectuals, 101-102.
595 N'Diaye, Négriers modernes, 13.
596 Gordon, Immigrants and Intellectuals, 101-102.
[Sonacotra]) to relocate them to new projects. Since employers were integrally involved in the construction and administration of the housing units, they could impose restrictions on the tenants such as curfews and limits on visitation, which they intended to implement in the new units. Abdoulaye Gueye has argued that at the root of the protestors' claims was their resistance to "an attempt to imprison them in the condition of factory workers." While attempts to organize and reach out to French public opinion varied in success across different regions, Sonacotra housing units faced repeated rent strikes throughout the 1970s from this point forward, which peaked in 1975 when majority Algerian residents linked up with Senegalese and Malian tenants to denounce 30% rent hikes. A Coordination Committee of residents and Maoists emerged to advocate and negotiate for residents, though they never succeeded in gaining official recognition from Sonacotra or the government, nor were they able to achieve a special category of tenants' rights for immigrant residents.

The African immigrant worker movement was in many was separate from the African student movement. While FEANF members were quick to denounce evictions and expulsions of Ivoirian and Upper Volta students from the African House, support of immigrant workers was less uniform. Problems with connecting these groups were brought to light at a meeting in Paris organized by the Office of African Studies and Research (Bureau d'études et des recherches Africaines [BERA] in 1963. Outside of the racism that immigrant laborers endured from employers and slumlords, they also faced classism from privileged African students who, in some cases, even expressed neo-liberal views. In response to one worker's call for students to

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assist them with learning to read and navigating a foreign legal system, one student—whose
cousin was an ambassadorial advisor—had this to say:

What you have to consider is this: these African workers, once they've acquired job
training and returned to Africa, they want cars and villas. This guy left Africa on 3 March
with papers to take a tour of all the states that send workers here and to collect subsidies.
I'm aware of the action undertaken by the BERA, but I find that it's bad to give clothes,
etc., which promote laziness, and we can see the creation of this laziness if they get used
to receiving clothing, coats, and other goods. I think that out of the 70,000 A.F. [Central
African Francs] that they earn each month, it should be possible to sustain 20,000 A.F. to
by a coat or something wind-proof.\textsuperscript{599}

Another African student insisted that workers explain exactly why they emigrated and what they
expected on their arrival.

When you investigate something, you have to go all the way. That's why I don't agree
with the actions and the tracts of BERA in favor of Black workers. The answer is not to
issue tracts or to give clothes, that encourages the exodus. We see them in the metro, in
the streets, everywhere they are poorly dressed, they don't speak French. The real
problem is that they [should] stay in Africa. Now the worker comrade should tell us with
precision why he came here.\textsuperscript{600}

Not all responses to African immigrants were so hostile. Some participants found it obvious that
Africans emigrated to France because there was no work in home countries and they needed to
feed their families. Sub-Saharan African workers from largely peasant backgrounds often found
themselves on the bottom wrung of the labor ladder behind Portuguese and North African
workers who had either been in country long enough to develop skilled trades, or had previous
exposure to mechanized industry prior to arrival. Indeed there were efforts by FEANF members
to work with the Senegalese Amicale, though this was an apolitical organization and could not
advocate for workers' rights in the same manner as a union. Senegalese activist Sally N'Dongo

\textsuperscript{599} N'Diaye, \textit{Négriers modernes}, 113-14. The figures represented the equivalent of approximately 1400 and 400
French Francs, respectively, in 1963. These are most assuredly wild over-valuations of average immigrant monthly
salaries. According to a study on private enterprises, the average salary of a French male employee in a non-
managerial position in 1963 was 9,747 French Francs per year (or around 810 French Francs per month). See Table
1, "Salaire net annuels moyens par sexe et catégorie socioprofessionnelle du 1950 à 1975," in Christian Baudelot and
\textsuperscript{600} N'Diaye, \textit{Négriers modernes}, 116.
was instrumental in the creation of the General Union of Senegalese Workers in France (Union Générale des Travailleurs Sénégalais en France [UGTSF]) in 1961. In a reversal of the trajectory of the CP and the MTA, which shifted from political goals to material needs, the UGTSF was originally established to provide services to Senegalese immigrants but transformed in the 1970s to address France's neo-colonial economic and political relationship to Senegal. Rather than blaming the poor conditions of African workers on the immigrants themselves, N'Dongo put forward a more systemic view, arguing that French neo-colonialism was in fact the culprit. French colonialism had produced Senegalese single-crop dependency, dissuading agricultural differentiation whilereserving mechanized industrial production to within France's borders. N'Dongo charged that French employers intentionally recruited sans-papiers to avoid paying workmen's compensation benefits and making double-profits through overpriced poor housing, all at the expense of African immigrants over whom they lorded contacting authorities with the threat of deportation.

Yet while Tunisian students in 1974 called for "greater coordination with the working class," and organizations like the MTA brought the two groups together, this merger was not so evident in the sub-Saharan African case. When asked about the Senegalese student perception of African immigrants, one Dakar 68er responded,

That was pretty far from our preoccupations... The drought was worse and closer to home. [Emigration] was a solution for these people to leave and find work. It was a strategy to

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be able to support their families. It's tough. It's true they suffered exploitation, terrible living conditions and hard labor, etc.. But, let's just say, it was a choice, just like today. But they thought that arriving in Europe no matter what the conditions would be better than living here [in Senegal]. Domestic questions were more at the center of our preoccupations.  

These comments illustrate that there were certainly limits to the idolatry of immigrant workers, even on the left. These statements were more measured than the neo-liberal reaction of some African students living in Paris, who seemed to direct even a sense of shame toward illiterate and poorly dressed African laborers. Yet there was still a sentiment that immigrants met their fates abroad by choice. The attitudes regarding displaced African labor by African students reflected another form of postcolonial nationalism. Immigrant workers were not met with blanket sympathy since they had, through free will, abandoned their developing nations without seeking job training or skills to bring home. And if sympathy was a finite sentiment to be rationed, African immigrants would receive far less of it from the African intellectual base than their brothers in Senegal who faced drought and dismal harvests, or those in Mali who had to cope with severe currency devaluations.

**Conclusion**

The activism of 1968 produced a desire for putting revolutionary theories into practice through direct engagement with society's most oppressed groups. This created a fetishization of immigrant causes on the radical left, as evidenced in Louis Althusser's *établissements* and the emergence of the Cahiers de mai. In many cases, these groups were able to help immigrant workers achieve real material gains through collective action. This success led to a desire for autonomous organizations led by Arab workers and for Arab workers who, once mobilized, the MTA hoped would simultaneously act as a force for both social change (in France) and political

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change (in the Arab world). Likewise, it is impossible to characterize the meaning of immigrants within the larger 1968 movement without taking into account the reverberations of “Charonne,” which represented continued police brutality as well as the clash between fascist and anti-fascist groups whose rivalries rekindled around the issues of racism and immigration. However, the heroization of the immigrant worker had limits within the activist community more broadly. In some cases, African students even expressed a disdain for what they perceived as a lowly class with little to contribute to the national cause. From this perspective, unskilled immigrant laborers who required social and material assistance rested at best on the margins of a newly expressed Senegalese postcolonial nationalism.

Broadening the study of the long 1960s in France to include immigrant activity reveals significant communication and circulation networks between French and immigrant activists in France, but also with organizations in the former colonies. Many of these networks are historically rooted in the colonial period out of the French structures of student and worker unions, but took on new forms following 1968. Likewise, strategies of control and repression by colonial governments informed state responses to activism in the postcolonial period. With this chapter I have sought to give added weight to the notion of a postcolonial situation beyond that of its chronological implications. By concretely tracing the historical fragments of the once-connected empire as they were revealed during post-war processes of immigration and decolonization, I have attempted to reposition 1968 as the beginning of the politicization of immigrant workers in France, rather than the last breath of the youth movement before de Gaulle’s intervention. This also shows the importance of student organizations across the former colonies that maintained contact and mutual support even after the “end of the empire.” While the “end of the empire” certainly altered demographics in both the metropole and the colonies,
with the proletarianization of France’s immigrant population and mass emigration from the former colonies, it is clear that the fragmentation of the empire did not result in the severing of all ties between metropole and colony. Indeed, webs of transnational resistance emerged alongside international networks of state control.
Chapter 7: The Birth of Political Pluralism in Senegal

Introduction

The heavy state repression of 1968 activism in Senegal led to a radicalization of certain elements of the student movement. The return of key student leaders from France in the summer of 1968 rejuvenated the movement, and after periods of intermittently hot and cold negotiations with University administration and the government, some members of the radical left turned to violence in the early 1970s. Although 1968 remains etched in Senegalese memory, the activism of the 1970s proved no less turbulent. While the state succeeded in quashing the most radical youth leaders through arrests and incarcerations, and in weakening the adversarial nature of the dominant national labor union, the victory over the movement was not total. Unlike in Tunisia where student agitation was never able to bring administration to the negotiation table, Senegalese students were successful in achieving at least temporary recognition of previously clandestine organizations and student participation in university decisions. In spite of continued splintering on the left, it exercised significant power in shaping the nature of state discourse on education, democratization, and development.

By the early 1970s, it was not uncommon for President Senghor to justify his positions publicly in relation to Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. Though political parties of these leanings did not gain a strong foothold in Senegalese government, Senghor's frequent referencing of leftist ideas marked a significant discursive victory for the left in shaping the political language of 1970s Senegal. The democratization of student representation in universities was paralleled in labor unions and the political parties, which were no longer the sole domain of the regime. This display of youth and labor voices against the Senghor regime spilled over into state
politics and ushered in the birth of political pluralism in Senegal and an end to the single-party state.

**CNTS, The Pompidou Visit, and the "Group of Incendiaries"**

The University of Dakar witnessed a brief period of calm after the September 1968 negotiations between UDES leaders, newly appointed Education Minister, Assane Seck, and government delegates. Senghor had selected Seck in June 1968 to replace Ahmadou Maktar M'bow in hopes of starting afresh with oppositional students. The calm was short-lived, however, when the regime ordered the evacuation of the university in April 1969 in response to a student strike after 25 engineering students were expelled for disciplinary issues. This time, the regime was prepared and, when UDES called for a boycott of exams, it adopted laws that allowed for declarations of states of emergency. The standoff ended with students ultimately losing out in an *année blanche* (voided year). Various sectors of labor held strikes in May and June, and a UNTS general strike was announced on 10 June. This culminated in the fracturing of the labor movement with the creation on 14 June 1969 of the UPS-friendly rival organization, the National Confederation of Senegalese Workers (CNTS) with UNTS defector and party loyalist, Doudou N'Gom, at the helm. This set the stage for the gradual weakening of UNTS through a series of government measures, and its eventual dissolution in April 1971. One student recalled that, in addition to the blow delivered to the student movement, 1969 was also an extremely difficult year for trade unions. "It was the year that Senghor succeeded in conquering the labor movement. Senghor,

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606 Bianchini, *École et politique en Afrique noire*, 76.
607 François Zuccarelli, *La vie politique sénégalaise (1940-1988)*, vol 2 (Paris: Centre des Hautes Études sur l'Afrique, 1988), 127-139. Bianchini mistakenly sets the UNTS dissolution in August 1969. However, while UNTS was marginalized after this date, its most radical elements continued to exist under the leadership of Abdoulaye Thiaw until it was officially dissolved in April 1971 following inquiries into the attacks on several French cultural symbols in January and February 1971.
who had been shaken by the strongest union in '68, was able to sever it." After the rather lofty successes of both the student and worker movements in 1968, the regime prepared effective hardline strategies to dismantle and exclude oppositional forces in 1969.

To avoid another lost year of studies, students begrudgingly accepted university reforms that included more stringent evaluation processes. The campus heated up again in February 1970 when students prevented Turner O'Neal, an African-American Senior Legal Counsel from the United States Embassy in Paris, from taking the podium at the University of Dakar. O'Neal had been invited by Rector Seydou Madani Sy and Economics Professor Abdoulaye Wade (future President and leader of the Senegalese Democratic Party [PDS]) to speak on civil rights. However, students' anti-Americanism was so heightened that the event degenerated into a skirmish leading to the broken wrists of American cultural attaché Leon Slawecki, and spilled into the university hallways, where graffitied walls read: "Assimilating Messieurs Sy and Wade to the SS and to the CIA." Never mind that O'Neal would have criticized the Nixon administration's record on civil rights had he been able to speak, with presumed U.S. involvement in Lumumba's assassination, NKrumah's removal from power, and the known atrocities in Vietnam, the United States was in many ways even more of a neo-imperial symbol than France. This shift from anti-French sentiment to anti-Americanism was widespread in the *les années 68* of the francophone world, as seen with similar Tunisian student protests of the diplomatic visit of U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers in Tunis, also in February 1970.

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608 Interview with “Makhtar,” November 2011, Dakar.
610 Ibid.
Anti-French sentiment was still present, however, and surfaced at opportune moments, especially when Senghor publicly drew connections between Africa and France. Charles de Gaulle died on 9 November 1970, after which Senghor issued a statement that his passing "has shocked Senegal as much as it has France," and gave homage "to the decolonizer of Africa, to the Father of Senegalese independence." While these comments were made through diplomatic correspondence, Senghor also stated in a public address to the Senegalese nation that "without [de Gaulle], we would not be independent today. It is he who allowed us to finally realize our ideal of national independence and friendly cooperation with France." It is worth pausing to remark that Senghor planted the roots of African independence at the feet of de Gaulle, rather than an African. This seemed a far cry from Senghor's anti-colonial stance from the pre-independence era, and also undermined his status as a mouthpiece for Negritude.

These pro-French stances proved easy fodder for opposition groups. By January 1971, the French embassy in Senegal reported the regime's fears of a resurgent PAI. Hoping to assuage rising opposition, certain members from within UPS, as well as foreign French diplomats, pressured Senghor to release Mamadou Dia, who had been a political prisoner in Kédougou since his failed coup d'état in 1962. Senghor did not give in to these requests until 1974, when he finally pardoned Dia. In the same year, he ordered the release of a number of University of Dakar professors, many of whom were sympathetic to the PAI and the student movement, and who themselves went on strike in January.

Though sources are unclear as to the nature of the

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615 Bianchini, École et politique en Afrique noire, 76.
professors' grievances, the strike coincided with reforms related to more stringent exam
evaluation policies in the university.

Senghor was again concerned about opposition movements as he prepared for the
impending visit of his colleague and fellow head of state, Georges Pompidou, who was set to
tour several African nations, including Senegal, in February 1971. While professors at the
University of Dakar were on a strike of their own, a radical group of youth activists—in
anticipation of Pompidou's visit—on 15 January 1971 set fire to symbols of French colonial
authority: the Department of Public Works, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the French
Cultural Center. On 16 January the radicals—whom the government would later give the
moniker, "the Group of Incendiaries"—circulated a tract proclaiming the French Cultural Center
to be an "instrument of propaganda and intoxication in the service of French imperialism," and
denounced the Senegalese government that "wastes public funds, gained through heavy taxation
taken from the sweat of the people to finance a cinema, a spectacle, to mask the reality of our
country, and to veil the misery and discontent of our people."\(^{616}\) The tract further called upon the
people of Senegal to "answer reactionary violence with revolutionary violence," claiming that
"Pompidou might be a friend of Senghor, but he is certainly an enemy of the people of Senegal
and all of revolutionary Africa," and inviting the population to "direct its hate at its enemy
number one, to abstain from hypocritical spectacles and to take power."\(^{617}\) Finally, it questioned
the legitimacy of the Special Court for Attempts on National Security, which had been created to
suppress opposition following 1968 events. In the eyes of the militant activists, it was a farce that
Senegal would open its arms to the head of state of its former colonial oppressor. This warranted

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\(^{617}\) Ibid. One can only guess that the "hypocritical spectacle" was the Pompidou's scheduled parade through the center of Dakar, where he eventually faced a foiled attack on 5 February.
direct action against both French presence in Africa and even against the Senghor government that perpetuated the French-African colonial relationship.

Despite the activists' heavy references to "spectacles" and the influence of Guy Debord's Situationist International via Omar Blondin Diop and other Senegalese student returnees from Paris after the May-June 1968 events, the Senghor regime initially suspected UNTS trade union leaders of starting the fires. 618 On 22 and 23 January, the regime arrested ten of its most prominent members, including General Secretary Abdoulaye Thiaw and Iba Der Thiam, General Secretary of UNTS-affiliate Senegalese Union of Teachers (Syndicat des enseignants sénégalais [SES]), all of whom were interrogated under the jurisdiction of the Special Court. 619 Following additional acts against the regime like the launching of a Molotov cocktail at Pompidou's cortège, new interrogations ensued as the regime continued to look elsewhere for perpetrators. Despite little evidence linking the labor leaders to the arson, Thiaw and Thiam, along with fellow UNTS member Mbaba Guissé, were condemned to three years in prison and large fines by the Special Court in July 1971 for distributing tracts harmful to the state. 620 Like Bourguiba in Tunisia—who took advantage of crackdowns of the February 1972 university protest to imprison political foes—Senghor took this opportunity to rid the regime of the pesky opposition leaders in the UNTS.

618 Artist and philosopher Guy Debord's famous La Société du spectacle (1967) was extremely influential on the 1968 generation and a foundational text for the Leftist group, Situationist International, in which Omar Blondin Diop and his brothers were active. They all studied in universities in France before returning to Senegal after the May-June events. Another group of Senegalese Maoists and Communists returned in the summer of 1968 to join the student movement. See Annex document no. 7, Letter from Dr. Blondin Diop to President Senghor, 18 April 1970, in Livre blanc sur le suicide d'Oumar Blondin Diop (Dakar: Grande Imprimerie Africaine, 1973), 31; and interview with "Mariane," November 2011, Dakar.

619 Dispatch of Hubert Argod to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 January 1971 in ADMAE, Afrique: Sénégal (1959-1972), Carton 36, Synthèses de l'ambassade de France au Sénégal, La Courneuve. See also Bianchini, École et politique en Afrique noire, 133.

Upon hearing the sound of broken glass, authorities caught and brought in three radical activists who were carrying a dozen Molotov cocktails intended for Pompidou's cortège on 5 February, as his car proceeded along Dakar's Avenues Lamine Gueye and Faidherbe. Under intense interrogation, the radicals admitted their connection to the January fires. Along with twenty or so others, the young men were implicated as members of the Group of Incendiaries. The group was interchangeably referred to as the blondinistes, for their connections to the politically active Blondin family, in particular Omar and two of his brothers, Mohamed and Diallo Blondin Diop, who were key figures in the Group of Incendiaries. In addition to the arrests of arsonists, authorities charged Jean-Louis Ravel, a French coopérant and psychologist at the Fann hospital, for his role in printing subversive tracts on a Roneo machine from his office. The "trials of the incendiaries" took place 25-27 July and involved 16 accused for having set fire to the French Cultural Center and two other administrative buildings, distributing tracts with subversive content, and/or possessing Molotov cocktails destined for the Pompidou cortège. The Special Court condemned two of the group's leaders to forced labor in perpetuity, while six other principal actors received sentences ranging from 5 to 20 years.

The French coopérant Ravel was found guilty of "complicity by aid and assistance and furnishing means of provoking crime or crime by drafting, producing and distributing tracts, conforming to article 250 of the Senegalese penal code," and handed three years of mandatory prison.

After significant lobbying on the part of the French embassy, Senghor finally agreed to
amnesty Ravel, on condition that he would leave Dakar for Paris in November 1971. Ravel certainly did not earn his amnesty due to remorse, as he declared the following to police:

Concerning the ideas of this revolutionary group, I would like to add that I agree with them. In my estimation, the French-Senegalese 'cooperation' is a fraud for the benefit of France. Minister Yvon Bourges declared himself that 80% of the aid granted by France to under-developed countries would return to France. I would also add that it is very difficult for a French coopérant to work in Senegal in collaboration with Senegalese. The daily conditions for Senegalese and those of the French only serve to separate them and lived several months in the bush, I observed and studied the misery and difficulty of the Senegalese peasantry. I know that French imperialism is partly responsible for this misery.

Ravel was 30 years old at the time of his arrest and identified with the May-June lamentations of an *indépendance inachevée* in Senegal. His denunciations of French neo-imperialism in postcolonial Senegal placed him in the global community of anti-imperialists. Like the French students of Louis Althusser, who rejected their privileged origins in search of authentic immigrant and worker experiences, Ravel disavowed the French economic and political "cooperation" that he witnessed first hand. Ravel's anti-French stance could also qualify as an articulation of postcolonial French nationalism that critiqued his nation's foreign policy.

Ravel's views were perhaps more in line with Senegalese students than with his French counterparts in Dakar. Senegalese university students boycotted spring exams in 1971 in a "crossing arms strike" while French students at the University of Dakar held their own separate meeting to discuss their future and try to understand "the position of Senegalese students through whom all solutions to conflicts must pass." In spite of the relatively high proportion of French students at the University of Dakar (nearly one third), and the fact that Senegalese students were

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not even in the majority, the events of May-June had established them as the most powerful student voice on campus. Ultimately, against the wishes of most French students, the university was again closed in spring 1971 following boycotts. While the majority of French students in Dakar did not side with the movement, there was a subset of activists like Ravel, who aided the cause. One Senegalese activist recalled:

At the time there were French, mostly teachers who helped the movement. They were coopérants, so that had a certain diplomatic status and they helped us. Either they typed up tracts or others in UNESCO, a teacher, even some in the private sector, who helped with finances, typing things up, or who bought equipment or even printed tracts from their offices. Mostly it was people from the left affiliated with the Communist or Socialist Party. There were links but after Pompidou many became fearful. After this time we had a lot of difficulty circulating literature...In France, the PCF always supported us. Not as much with the PS in France because they were close with Senghor.628

This involvement of coopérants paralleled the situation in Tunisia, where French sympathizers like Jean-Paul Chabert—coopérant at the Institute of Applied Economic Sciences in North Africa—were politically active abroad while engaged in Franco-Senegalese cooperation and development projects.629

Following independence, French assistance continued to pour in to both Tunisia and Senegal in the form of economic and military aid, as well as technical assistance. The human aspect of this assistance involved the physical migration of people to former French territories whose experiences that shaped their political positions. This led to individual actions that often ran counter to the larger French foreign policy mission and to newly independent nation's development projects. While support groups existed in France for movements taking place in Senegal and Tunisia, transnational actors like Ravel and Chabert embodied the transnational activism that crossed borders in either direction, whether from colony to metropole or from

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628 Interview with "Mariane," November 2011, Dakar.
629 See Michel Béchir Ayari's interview with Jean-Paul Chabert in Parcours et discours après l'indépendance (Tunis: Éditions Diraset, 2011).
metropole to colony. In both cases, angered regimes expelled these foreign trouble-makers and, somewhat paradoxically, exported political activists to France where they could influence French public opinion and increase international support for local causes.

Even among Senegalese activists there is no consensus on the importance of the Pompidou attacks to the student movement more generally. A series of interviews with participants revealed conflicting levels of identification with the arsonists. One activist who participated in protests in both France and Senegal, "Mariane," recalled that she was with a group at the prestigious Lycée Van Vo, another group set the French Cultural Center afire, and a third group attempted to launch a Molotov cocktail into Pompidou's car during the cortège.\textsuperscript{630} Sources from the French diplomatic archives and the Senegalese National archives document the attacks and subsequent arrests. However, Mariane's statements confirmed the coordinated activity at Lycée Van Vo that was nowhere to be found in archival sources. She was not arrested for the attacks, which were eventually attributed to the Blondin brothers. Omar was in France during the Pompidou visit, but his brothers were brought to trial and found guilty of crimes against the state.

For historians interested in postcolonial questions and transnational activism in nations with tight state controls on media, oral history proves a vital source that otherwise remains a missing fragment in the history of the global 1960s. Yet interviews regarding the attacks by young militants on French symbols, like Pompidou and the CCF, produced conflicting responses on the degrees of identification with these anti-colonial acts. Mariane stated clearly of the Blondins, "They were with us," and claimed that the attacks were organized jointly. However, "Abdou," who had not studied in France, claimed that the Pompidou Affair was "a situationist movement. It was not linked to the Senegalese political movement. It was a completely external

\textsuperscript{630} Interview with "Mariane," 2011, Dakar.
movement, and its referent was the Situationist International, with Guy Debord and all that. So Blondin Diop and his group were arrested. We didn't feel solidarity with this movement.“

Both Mariane and Abdou were entrenched in the protests at the University of Dakar, and each used terms like "we" and "us" to describe their relationship to the Blondins and the Pompidou Affair. Yet they provided two divergent claims about activist identification with the anti-colonial arson. Mariane, who had studied in France and was part of a circle of Maoists in the Proletarian Left, was open to, and in contact with, Senegalese Situationists who had received their political education (formation) in France. For Abdou, however, the student movement in Senegal was entirely about national issues and national politics, and he separated the attacks on the CCF and Pompidou from the student movement. In his eyes, the Situationists represented France and their goals and concerns were different from how Abdou perceived the movement in Senegal. He made frequent reference to Moscow and to Prague—rather than France—as sources of inspiration and influence, however measured. His anti-French sentiment spilled over into his view of the Senegalese student movement in which he attempted to extricate from the movement any French characteristics, including activism conducted by Senegalese returnees from France.

In the context of situating the blondinistes in the broader Senegalese student movement, Mariane and Abdou represented the Sino-Soviet split in Senegal. Mariane represented the Maoist, via France—à la Richard Wolin's *Wind from the East*—and Abdou, the New Left communist, concerned with a return to the fundamental texts of Marx and Lenin as they applied to present-day Senegal.632 Both described a fracture of the left in the 1970s that was explicitly tied to debates over Communist Party loyalty and a burgeoning interest in Mao's Cultural Revolution. This expansion of the archive to include oral history has produced contradictory

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interpretations of the importance of the Group of Incendiaries, but it has also provided a
democratization of viewpoints and of versions of the past. Not only do these testimonies offer
alternative versions to the state narrative, they also add nuance to subjective narratives
themselves. These conflicting interpretations of the Pompidou Affair speak for themselves, and
stand to be judged by the consumers of history in their own right, as historical fragments to help
us determine to what extent the Pompidou Affair was linked to the Senegalese student
movement.

*The Transnational Discursive Battle Over the Death of Omar Blondin Diop*

The "trials of the incendiaries" did not resolve the Pompidou Affair. In addition to further
igniting an already volatile campus that was shut down in spring 1971, it also set in motion a
series of retaliatory actions by the *blondini*stes. Though Omar Blondin Diop was not even in
country during the attacks, his brothers' involvement led authorities to suspect his complicity. A
gifted student, Blondin Diop studied at the École Normale Supérieure de St. Cloud in France on
a special grant from the Senegalese government that afforded him three times the funding of a
normal student stipend. He was active in Daniel Cohn-Bendit's March 22 Movement at the
University of Nanterre, and was detained for his participation in May 1968 protests in Paris and
eventually received an order of expulsion by French authorities on 9 October 1969. 633 Upon his
return to Dakar, Blondin Diop frequented intellectual circles of French Marxist Pierre
Fougeyrollas, the sociologist and head of the African Institute of Basic Research (Institut
fondamental d'Afrique noire [IFAN]), and assisted Blondin Diop in obtaining a fellowship at
IFAN. 634 Blondin Diop, however, hoped to return to Paris for his studies and, somewhat

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634 *Ibid.*, 8; and Bianchini, *École et politique en Afrique noire*, 76. Fougeyrollas occupied a tenuous position in which
ironically, Senghor helped him achieve this by personally writing on his behalf to Pompidou and successfully had the expulsion order lifted.  

To return the favor to Senghor, Blondin Diop left France for Bamako, Mali following the February 1971 arrests to plot the escape of his brothers from prison. Senegalese authorities suspected him of helping to orchestrate—from afar—an attempted prison mutiny at the Dakar civil prison of Rebeuss in April 1971.  

These events did not go unnoticed by supporters at home or abroad. Dakar campus protests led to the dissolution of UED and UDES and, on 27 April 1971, 100 members of FEANF responded by staging their own protest of state repression in front of the Senegalese embassy in Paris. Students in Paris expressed their solidarity with the mutineers and denounced Senghor’s repression of the UDES and the UED in Senegal. Even though a number of Senegalese students returned to the University of Dakar in the summer of 1968 to participate in the movement, they left behind a politically activated network of African students in France who increasingly participated in AESF and FEANF. Along with the embassy strike, AESF and FEANF released a tract on 2 May 1971:

> The arrest of the union leaders came about in a wave of general eradication of all undesirables during the French Presidential visit. Several people were picked up by police and brought to camps near Linguère in Ferlo some 280 km from Dakar; notably, 40 students were taken in the night from University residence halls. The campus has since been cut off from the rest of the city by a cordon of machine guns and police inside the campus prevented all student assemblies and meetings...

> Under these circumstances, students at the University of Dakar launched a protest movement against repression and the format of finals and examinations, freshly imported from France by Senghor, which challenge the particularities of our university and our

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635 Livre blanc, 8.
637 Le Monde, 28 avril 1971.
own concrete problems and which continues in the name of francophonie to transplant and impose everything that is done in France in our country.\textsuperscript{638}

The FEANF tract at once acted as a mouthpiece of the student movement to bring information of events to those interested in the French and immigrant communities in Paris and as an indictment of the continued French influence in Senegalese academia and institutional culture. By rejecting the Frenchness of the University of Dakar, students expressed a new postcolonial nationalism that continued to call for African independence well after the territorial and political independence of Senegal in 1960.

Senghor's use of the Pompidou visit to crackdown on opposition groups was very similar to Bourguiba's preparation of the visit of Ivoirian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in March 1968.\textsuperscript{639} And as with the Tunisian movement, Paris acted as a site of protest for African students abroad who expressed solidarity with activists back home and broadcasted Senghor's repression to diasporic communities in France and to the French. Senegalese students also resisted the continued adoption of French university reforms that they found even more oppressive than French soixante-huitards. The Senegalese National Education Ministry's implementation of stricter French evaluations of exams—designed to limit access of students from neighboring African nations—led to a lively response from activists in Paris.\textsuperscript{640} The FEANF and AESF members very consciously selected the Senegalese embassy—a symbol of Franco-Senegalese


\textsuperscript{639} Bourguiba chastised students for being disruptive, declaring that he would not allow protesting students to embarrass the nation and that foreigners must be protected. To make certain that students would not be able to organize on campus, he closed the university in anticipation of Houphouët-Boigny's visit. See Action, 16 March 1968 and "Tunisie: le divorce étudiant," Jeune Afrique, 377 (25-31 March 1968).

\textsuperscript{640} For more on this strategy of limitation, see "Construction et équipement des Universités des états africains et malgache d’expression française," Committee Director of the Aid and Cooperation Funding, 1 July 1970 in Education Nationale: Organisation de l’Enseignement Supérieur en Afrique, AN-19770475,Article 1, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau. Senegalese students were also upset with expedited programs like DUEST and DUEG (diplome universitaire d'études spéciales de technologie and diplome universitaire d'études générales). See interview with "Abdou," December 2011, Dakar.
cooperation—as their site of protest. Rather than taking its own direction based on the specific local context and challenges facing a young nation, prior to 1968 the Senegalese National Education Ministry applied reforms designed for a much larger and more complex university system in industrialized France. Yet by 1970, the Franco-Senegalese commission on higher education was very aware of the need to address Senegal's specific needs in agriculture and engineering, and implemented reforms that streamlined these necessities and distanced itself from French reforms. By this point, however, students viewed many university reforms at the University of Dakar as forms of French neo-imperialism and attached denunciations of political repression to education issues.

In a special diplomatic visit to Bamako in December 1971, Senghor arranged for Omar Blondin Diop's extradition from Mali in February 1972, and the Special Court sentenced Blondin Diop to three years in prison on Gorée Island in March. The Dakar campus again ignited with agitation in May 1973 when Blondin Diop was mysteriously found dead in his cell. Authorities claimed that he hanged himself on the night of 12-13 May, though several sources, including Pierre Fougeyrollas, suspected the Senghor regime of having ordered his assassination. Students in Dakar denounced the regime's alleged role in Blondin Diop's death as riots erupted on 14 May in the city center and extended into protests in the days to come. His death also elicited a condemnation of the Senghor regime in the *Nouvel Observateur*, in which a French colleague of Blondin Diop, Georges Kleiman, called on the "friends of Senegal, who naively thought that their silence would favor clemency from President Senghor" to denounce "all the regimes who

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641 *Livre blanc sur le suicide d'Omar Blondin Diop*, 9. His co-conspirators included Ibrahima Kanté, Alioune Sall (also known as "Paloma"), Moussa Kaba (Guinean), Dialo Blondin Diop (also known as "Papa Dio"), Nouhoum Camara (Guinean), Simon Artg (a British filmmaker), Mrs. Soukeyna M'Bodj (also known as "Lydia"), and Mrs. Anta Diouf.
gag the youth whose only weapon is their voice." The groundswell of emotion from within Senegal as well as on the international scene surrounding this suspicious death led authorities to publish a “white paper” on the affair. Indeed, Blondin Diop's death sparked a transnational discursive battle over the sequence of events leading up to this tragic event. Fougeyrollas alleged that the regime was responsible for his death in a June 1973 article in the Parisian daily, *Combat*, while the state-sponsored Senegalese *Le Soleil* reported it as a suicide, citing a coroner's report. Protesting students in Dakar and the negative press abroad prompted the regime to publish a *Livre blanc sur le suicide d'Oumar Blondin Diop* (*White Paper on the Suicide of Omar Blondin Diop*) before the end of the year. Fougeyrollas alleged that:

> Omar Blondin Diop was killed by a regime that, to continue to exist, had to take away the life and liberty of activists, workers, revolutionary intellectuals and real patriots who struggle for the liberation of their people. No humanist or pseudo-humanist declaration from Senghor will enable us to forget the heroism and martyrdom of Omar Blondin Diop.  

These charges were further supported by the text *Lettre de Dakar* that was written anonymously in 1973, supposedly from a Dakar prison, and later published by Champ Libre from the safety of Paris in 1978. Though the text was written anonymously, some believe it was penned by Omar's brother, Ousmane.  

The regime's *Livre blanc* and the *Lettre de Dakar* came to represent opposing narratives of Blondin Diop's death, and pitted the rhetorical powers of the state's press in Dakar squarely against anonymous Blondin Diop supporters (likely led by his brother, however) whose diatribe

\[643\] Bianchini, *École et politique en Afrique noire*, 77.  
\[644\] Quoted in *Livre blanc*, 12.  
\[645\] *Lettre de Dakar*.  
\[646\] Journalist Samboudian Kamara makes this claim in "Anniversaire du décès d'Omar Blondin Diop," in *Le Soleil*, 10 May 2013.
against the corrupt state was published, somewhat unsurprisingly, by the same press that
published famed Situationist Guy Debord's complete works.\footnote{Champ Libre was founded by publisher Gérard Lebovici in 1969, after having been radicalized by the events of May 1968 in France. Lebovici was mysteriously shot and assassinated in his car on March 7, 1984. No one was ever arrested for his murder. See Gérard Lebovici, Tout sur le personnage (Paris: Éditions Gérard Lebovici, 1984).} According to the Ministry of Information's \textit{Livre blanc}, Omar Blondin Diop received his political education in France:

The events of May 1968 and the agitation in the Latin Quarter of Paris constituted, for
Omar Blondin Diop, a decisive turning point. Indeed, he made his mark through his
active participation in the March 22 Movement as second in command to the rebellious
Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Next, he took part in the electoral campaign of the Trotskyist Alain
Krivine, candidate for President of the French Republic and head of the Communist
League.\footnote{\textit{Livre blanc sur le suicide d'Omar Blondin Diop}, 6.}

The Ministry's narrative established Blondin Diop as a gifted student who was afforded
opportunities by the Senegalese and French governments but radicalized by French agitators
Cohn-Bendit and Krivine. Even after Blondin Diop was expelled from France for his
participation in violent protests in the Latin Quarter on 3 May 1968, Senghor personally wrote to
Pompidou facilitate his reinstatement at the École Normale Supérieure de Saint-Cloud so that
he might continue his educational track that was not offered at the University of Dakar. Once
back in France in September 1971, Blondin Diop left the ENS de Saint-Cloud for Nanterre,
known as a center for French university activism and the site from which Cohn-Bendit launched
the March 22 Movement. The regime claims that Blondin Diop left Paris for Bamako to meet up
with other Senegalese activists who had been expelled from the University of Dakar for violent
strikes. The Ministry's \textit{Livre blanc} claimed that the network was composed of three groups
adhering to the extremist organization known as "the incendiary brothers."\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, 9.}

Perhaps what is most interesting about the pamphlet is its use of official documents to
prove the regime's innocence. Much of the \textit{Livre blanc} reads like a legal document, with
references to the annex, which includes reproductions of the letter written by Senghor to Pompidou advocating for Omar Blondin Diop, as well as the autopsy report stating Blondin Diop's death by suicidal hanging. Yet even the need to include such "official" documents suggests the regime's desire to regain legitimacy in the eyes of an increasingly skeptical public. Other documents include a long list of Blondin Diop's personal effects like cigarettes and several books to demonstrate he was treated humanely in prison. The last pages of the pamphlet include such language as "[s]uch are the presented facts" and "[t]he biases and positions taken following this suicide were, in the end, nothing but attempts to exploit the event for political ends even though all facts have been revealed from the beginning."\(^650\) Merely stating the state's version of the story in the \textit{Livre blanc} was insufficient in the eyes of the Ministry of Information, which deemed it necessary to mobilize a series of factual evidence in support of its claims and to reproduce an annex of seven "official" documents.\(^651\)

To counter the state narrative of events, the \textit{Lettre de Dakar}, which did not attribute any authorship other than an autonomous "Free Association of Free Individuals."\(^652\) This version of Blondin Diop's death and the attack on Pompidou's cortège begins with quotes from Friedrich Engels and Debord's \textit{Internationale Situationniste}. The \textit{Lettre de Dakar} claimed that the regime's characterization of the "Group of Incendiaries" was a lie; they were not in fact a "direct foreign

\(^{650}\) \textit{Ibid}, 12.

\(^{651}\) On the mobilization and use of series in the manipulation of event narrative, see Hayden V. White, \textit{Metahistory: the historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). On series, White demonstrates the use of series dating to medieval chroniclers: "The historian arranges the events in the chronicle into a hierarchy of significance by assigning different functions as story elements in such a way as to disclose the formal coherence of a whole set of events considered as comprehensible process with a discernible beginning, middle, and end." (7) Regarding the mobilization of "facts," in narrative creation, White claims that "History deals in \textit{real} events, in facts, rather than in \textit{imagined} events. It therefore requires a syntax of its own by which to contrive its statements about what the facts mean. And this syntax is nothing but the rules of ordinary prose discourse of the culture or civilization to which the historian himself belongs." (391)

\(^{652}\) \textit{Lettre de Dakar}, 5.
creation, 'communist' in appearance..."\(^{653}\) The authors further cited torture by police during interrogation of the Group of Incendiaries, in which police chiefs sought to connect the group to foreigners. They also called out the "idiotic editors" of the state newspaper, *Le Soleil*, who claimed that the actors were "driven by this sad fellow Iba Der Thiam (would this be because he's a fat and happy trade union leader!), whom they knew to be incapable of such acts."\(^{654}\) The *Lettre* thus served as a corrective to state claims that the activists were either led by UNTS leaders such as Iba Der Thiam or by French or Chinese communists. This battle over the retelling and narrative construction of events played out similarly in Tunisia. Bourguiba's political party issued *The Truth About the Subversion at the University of Tunis* regarding events in March 1968, while Perspectives activists responded with *Liberty for the Convicted of Tunis: the Truth about Repression in Tunisia*, published by François Maspero in 1969.\(^{655}\) As in the Senegalese case, the activists' response pamphlet was published from the relative safety of Paris, and was likely intended to influence French public opinion at least as much as to provide information back home.

Yet the *Lettre* was quite divisive. It slammed both the Senghor regime and various opposition groups that it deemed insufficiently radical. It even criticized the outcomes of the Group of Incendiaries acts: "The only real victory of the 'Group of Incendiaries' was, simply, to have existed."\(^{656}\) No group escaped the ire of the pamphleteers. They called out members of the PAI and the various organizations it influenced (UNTS, UDES, UED) as "sharks without teeth" who stopped short of carrying out complete revolution in favor of collaboration with "feudal-

\(^{653}\) *Ibid*, 11.

\(^{654}\) *Ibid*, 11-12.


\(^{656}\) *Lettre de Dakar*, 15.
marabout forces" and "Muscovite infiltration of the state apparatus and national unions." But the pamphlet shared notions of indépendance inachevée with protesting students of May-June 1968 and January 1971. The authors noted a "substitution" of French colonial elites with Senegalese elites who identified as a sub-class of state administrators prior to independence.

[C]reated to constitute the relay between the colonial state and indigenous masses, these elites of the underdeveloped world were meant to follow the radicalism of mass local movements, to ensure the maintenance and reform of the colonial state, but absolutely not to defeat the state as such. Created in the image of their former masters, these elites, who had no means of social promotion other than the colonial state, owed their titles to the great struggles of the European bourgeoisie against feudalism...these elites have only jumped on the nationalist bandwagon and, once in power, demonstrate the fallacious character of victories with cringe-worthy collusion with their former masters...

Given the deliberate upholding of the ignorance of the African masses, the elites of the underdeveloped world could never conceive of revolution as the work of the masses themselves. For them, the 'self-emancipation of the workers' is devoid of logic. They could never conceive of their role in the revolution except as leaders, because that corresponded in fact to their role as subaltern administrators aspiring to climb in the state apparatus that was previously in foreign hands.

This interpretation of the regime and state administrators in many ways mirrored what student protestors expressed in 1968 and after. It was a classic case of substituting one evil for another, of exchanging French civil servants with Senegalese ones whose goal was simply to replace their French predecessors, not to dismantle the system under which they operated.

What students called for in 1968 was not simply the removal of French professors in favor of Africans, it was also about ridding the university of French course content. In 1968, the Democratic Rally of Senegalese Students (Rassemblement Démocratique des Élèves Sénégalais) demanded that history and geography give primacy to "the study of Senegal and the principal countries of Africa" and "the study of the Third World (notably problems with

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658 Ibid, 15-17.
Another student group, during the second large wave of student activity in 1971, proposed a "patriotic ideal for youth schooling" by setting a cultural agenda to include organized events around "theatre, literary competitions around themes imprinted with African life and expressed in our national languages."\(^{659}\) The regime finally passed a 1968 initiative to officially recognize six African languages with the *loi d'orientation* of 1971.\(^{660}\) In addition, rapid Africanization of teaching corps was implemented throughout the 1970s as an appeasement to protesting students and with the approval of the Franco-Senegalese commission. By 1979, the total number of African professors at the university had increased from 91 in 1970 to 236, or from 47 per cent to 60 per cent of the total faculty. The student population experienced an even starker Africanization over this period, where the French student population plummeted from 27 per cent in 1967 to just 3 per cent by 1979, while the number of Senegalese students climbed from 32 per cent to 75 per cent in the same period.\(^{662}\) If Senghor was able to repress many of the more radical elements of the Senegalese student movement, it is quite evident that they were enormously successful in pushing through Africanization agendas.

*The Results of 1970s Activism in Senegal*

Underground movements like Landing Savané's radical Marxist group Reenu-Rew (Roots of the Nation) clandestinely published the journal *Xarébi* (*Struggle*) in the mid-1970s to counter state-controlled representations of events. While many radical groups like Savané's and the Blondin Diop brothers' were disrupted and truncated with state arrests throughout the 1970s, they did succeed in influencing national conversations and in forcing the Senghor regime to include

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\(^{660}\) Bathily, *Mai 68 à Dakar*, 133. Here Bathily cites a proposal from the Democratic Movement of Senegalese Youth (Mouvement Démocratique de la Jeunesse Sénégalaise).

\(^{661}\) Bianchini, 97.

outside political voices. This paved the way for political opposition that would challenge in future elections. With intense pressure from both student and labor groups even after May-June 1968, Senghor gradually began the process of political decentralization. Through a constitutional reform, Senghor began to share power, at least nominally, when he named Abdou Diouf as his Prime Minister in February 1970. While some have argued that this was no more than a ploy by the Senghor regime to offer up a scapegoat to his detractors—since wielding sole power in government also meant receiving sole blame—the new constitution nonetheless opened pathways for a plurality of voices in Senegalese governance.\footnote{See Momar Coumba Diop and Mamadou Diouf, \textit{Le Sénégal sous Abdou Diouf: État et société} (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1990), 39-40.}

In the aftermath of the Blondin Diop suicide scandal, the Senghor regime recognized future President Abdoulaye Wade's Democratic Socialist Party (Parti Démocratique Socialiste, PDS). By March 1975, less than a year after the creation of the PDS, Wade had already gained nearly 50,000 adherents.\footnote{François Zuccarelli, \textit{La vie politique sénégalaise}, 133-34.} An amended Constitution of 9 July 1975 enabled the entrance of three strands of political ideology to replace the previous single-party state. Even the despised PAI was recognized in 1976 after its dissolution in 1960.\footnote{La lettre du PAI au Ministre de l’Intérieur,” 1 September 1976, in Dossier Partis politiques (O-U), ANS, Dakar.} Wade, the head of the PDS that emerged in 1975 to challenge Senghor's Socialist Party, ran for the presidency in the 1978 elections and, after four attempts, finally gained the nation's highest office in 2000. The gradual democratization in politics in the 1970s coincided with increased national debt in that decade. As France pulled back the reigns on subsidies, droughts and reduced groundnut production led to defaults on state loans to farmers, and the 1970s oil crisis destabilized markets worldwide. By the late 1970s, Senegal had accrued over a billion dollars of debt that Senghor sought to
refinance. Mamadou Diouf has argued that Senghor's handling of this debt marked the beginning of a new era of intervention in the Senegalese state and economic affairs by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and, ultimately, to Senghor's stepping down on December 31, 1980. Diouf replaced him in 1981, and the Senegalese political system was finally open to all political currents.

Student protests starting in the late 1960s pushed Senghor on this path to recognition of political opposition. For a leader who openly criticized communism, Senghor spent significant political energy addressing Marxism-Leninism and Maoism, attempting to integrate them into his theories on Negritude. In a December 1971 public address at the University of Abidjan, Senghor historicized the dominant oppositional ideologies thusly:

Mao Zedong transformed Marxism-Leninism, Sinicizing it to adapt to Chinese realities. This is how he placed emphasis on peasants as much as workers, on the artisanal classes and small enterprises as much as on heavy industry, on the education of the national bourgeoisie and not on its physical liquidation...

To recap: Lenin refused the German model in order to create a Russian model; Mao refused the Russian model in order to create a Chinese one. And us, will we be the only ones to imitate instead of invent? You see, this question brings us to Negritude.

By this logic, Senghor was arguing that Negritude was a form of African Socialism with roots in Marxism. Just as leaders like Lenin and Mao had adapted Marx's teachings to their specific national economic and social contexts, Senghor was attempting to do the same for Senegal with Negritude. Yet with his hostile remarks regarding foreign subversion in the form of alleged Chinese propagandists that were expelled from Senegal, as well Maoist nodes that had returned to Dakar from studies in France, it would seem that Marxist-leaning activists had in some ways

dictated the terms of the discussion. Senghor felt it necessary to justify his own practices and ideologies using Marxist language, history, and logic. It was not that his version of Negritude was somehow in opposition to Marxism, Leninism, or Maoism; rather, Senghor was in fact following the lead of these influential thinkers by applying their concepts in an African setting. If Senghor succeeded in stamping out the most radical activist groups by the mid-1970s, their gains could be witnessed in the opening of the political process to moderate opposition groups and in the inseparability of leftist ideologies from national political conversations at the highest levels.

The Senegalese student movement was perhaps the least transnational in terms of wide reach beyond Senegal when compared to international organizations that emerged for human rights in Tunisia, or to the vast networks of immigrant worker and intellectual activists who were politicized in France in the 1970s. Somewhat paradoxically, it was also perhaps the most successful in terms of altering its own national political and education systems. It contributed to the decentralization of political power and the end of the single-party state in Senegal while expediting the Africanization of the University of Dakar in terms of student population, professoriate, and curricula. Its transnational dimensions were not insignificant, however. French figures like Jean-Louis Ravel and Georges Kleiman supported youth causes in Senegal and pointed to the continued French neo-colonial presence there. Paris acted as a site of third-world activism when Senegalese students again protested outside of their nation's embassy in Paris after convictions were levied against the Group of Incendiaries. Paris was also the site from which anti-state protest pamphlets like the *Lettre de Dakar* were published against the regime.

If Omar Blondin Diop became a paradoxical martyr for the movement, it was more because of his mythical status as a French-educated film star and *Mai '68* activist than any activities he carried out at the University of Dakar. In fact, he was not even present during the
events in May-June 1968 in Dakar, and had not actually carried out the violence directed at the 
French Cultural Center or at Pompidou's cortège. It was rather ironic, then, that the movement so 
keen on extracting itself from any French characteristics for fear of being labeled imitators, 
would find as its martyr a Mai '68 agitator. But Blondin Diop's death laid bare and affirmed the 
state corruption many activists had been excoriating since at least 1968. And if Senghor 
displayed a willingness, at least initially, to give Blondin Diop a second chance and personally 
request his readmission into France for studies, it was because the gifted Blondin Diop 
represented Senegal's future. Preparing Senegalese youth to undertake Senegal's modernization 
was at the heart of Senghor's political project. The university was the mechanism through which 
he hoped to achieve cultural synthesis and technological advancement for Africa. The university 
thus represented the key to Senegal's future and its link to the French colonial past, and a 
reflection of Senegalese political institutions more broadly. It is no surprise then, that as it 
increasingly opened its doors to the ranks of African students, professors, and subjects, so too did 
the government integrate a multi-party system and gradual decentralization. With decolonization 
in the university came democratization in government.
Conclusion

Transnational Activism and the Case for Comparison

In my past work, I engaged in the deconstruction of a key concept that I found critical to understanding the origins of the French Revolution. In the present dissertation, I have attempted to construct a methodology for analyzing multiple inter-related sites of political, social, and in some cases, cultural protest, over the long 1960s. This dissertation thus represents the development of both a transnational and a comparative model for studying the global 1960s.

What I have discovered is that the deconstruction (i.e., critique) is less problematic and, in some ways, safer, than a constructionist project. To try to say something relevant about the global 1960s without making gross generalizations or merely reproducing lists of concomitant events, I have focused on the concrete and tangible connections between three key regions of the former French empire. This was primarily a reaction to declarations in recent scholarship of a "global spirit" of 1968 that seemed to me both difficult to identify and largely abstract in nature. In an effort to avoid conjecture about presumed metaphysical connections between activists across the globe, this has very much been a project of building a roadmap of activist networks where there is evidence of direct communication. The former empire provided a useful model for connecting activist networks across both time and space.

Comparing the experiences of activists in Tunisia, France, and Senegal helps to highlight local difference between these movements while linking them through their colonial pasts. The preceding chapters build upon the scholarship of the “global 1968” by entering two important understudied areas of the francophone Third World into the conversation on the global 1960s. They further demonstrate that intellectual migration during the colonial period played a pivotal

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role in the creation of an international network of student and activist organizations, and youth activism led to the eventual democratization of Senegalese and Tunisian unions after independence. In the case of Senegal, this democratization spread to other sectors of political life including organized labor and the official recognition of multiple political currents in government. With these networks in place in 1968, social and political action in 1968 in one corner of the former French empire reverberated, often via the metropole, to other key postcolonial centers. An international community of activists from France and its former colonies responded to events in Tunis and Dakar with declarations of support from Paris and regular information sessions and pamphlet circulation. While the catalysts for protests on university campuses in 1968 were often based on very local conditions, transnational networks of activism were particularly important in the aftermath of protests and in response to state repression. Perhaps the most important feature of the transnational networks was their role in counteracting state-controlled media with alternative, student-centered versions of events. These were reactivated in the face of state repression, most notably in the case of Tunisia, to advocate for the freedoms of speech and assembly, and for the liberation of detained activists and for prisoners' rights.

Newly established universities in Dakar and Tunis, modeled heavily on the French system, represented important symbols of national modernity for leaders like Léopold Sédar Senghor and Habib Bourguiba, who themselves had excelled in French institutions. For both students and heads of state, one measure of the success of decolonization was to assess the degrees of progress of their young universities. University protests in 1968 in both Dakar and Tunis can thus be viewed as conflicts between a privileged sector of society and the state over unfulfilled expectations for independent Senegal and Tunisia. In Tunisia, heavy repression of
dissident intellectuals led to demands for human rights, while in Senegal protestors faced the incompatibility of seeking to cut ties with France yet maintain generous scholarships subsidized by France. In each case, the historical relationship to France was crucially important to the articulation of demands of these postcolonial intellectual communities.

I have demonstrated that a comparative study of the university protests of 1968 in Tunis, Paris, and Dakar brings local specificity to the surface while linking certain characteristics that may be shared by the broader movements of the global 1960s. I have linked the movements through activists' shared experiences with the French education system and the role of France in the creation of representative student organizations. Intellectual migration back to university campuses in Dakar and Tunis was directly related to the processes of decolonization as university populations were rapidly increasing in the postcolonial period, concentrating educated and discontented youth on campuses. In Senegal and Tunisia, student groups that were formed in Paris in the colonial period were instrumental in independence movements, but eventually splintered in the early 1960s into primarily leftist groups that refused to be subsumed by newly established single-party states (the UPS in Senegal or the PSD in Tunisia). With universities as symbols of modernity and progress, leaders Senghor and Bourguiba both placed heavy emphasis on education, and students held an elevated status in these societies as future nation-builders. After investing so heavily in their nations’ youth, it is no surprise that university activism was so troubling to third-world leaders undertaking development projects.

Yet the movements across the former French empire were certainly not uniform in all respects. In Senegal, like in France, the 1968 student strikes quickly received broad support from labor unions that were able to achieve their own sets of goals; however, the movement in Tunis never generalized to a large segment of the population until much later, first in 1972 and then,
led by the national labor union, in 1978. Interestingly, the circumscribed movement in Tunisia and subsequent over-reaction by the repressive Bourguiba regime led to the creation of new transnational, Paris-based Franco-Tunisian activist organizations like the CISDHT, dedicated to human rights. When Tunisia finally experienced a general strike involving workers in 1978, the same activist networks that advocated for student movements again mobilized on behalf of the workers' union that had spurned the earlier student agitation. Paris acted as a political space from which dissident opinions could be articulated with relative freedom.

In Senegal, where repression of the 1968 movement was less harsh than in Tunis, organizations were rooted locally and there was less of a need to create transnational ones. While Senghor actually negotiated with student protestors in 1968, albeit after a number of arrests and brief internment in military camps, Tunisian activist leaders faced repeated torture and some even spent much of the 1970s in prison. There were actually gains made in Senegal with workers’ wage increases and recognition of student groups outside of single-party organization (UED and UDES, at least temporarily). This initial victory for students set the stage by the mid-1970s for Senghor to release former Prime Minister Mamadou Dia from prison and to recognize oppositional political parties such as the PAI and future President Abdoulaye Wade’s PDS. Through their 1968 grievances against unfilled independence, students in Dakar paved the way for the integration of additional political parties in Senegal while Tunisian 68ers laid the foundations for transnational human rights activism in support of detainees. In both cases, activists converted anti-colonial themes of national independence movements, once directed at French colonial oppression, and redirected them toward new heads of state Bourguiba and Senghor. The outcome was the expression of a new postcolonial nationalism outside of the modernization and cultural synthesis discourses of their single-party state leaders.
Back in the former metropole, students' demands were slightly different. For obvious reasons, they were less concerned with the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of their professors and with the degree of national cultural content in their courses. They did, however, share serious concerns about the content of their education. Mustapha Khayati's 1966 essay expressed that many students felt they were living in "a society of commodities and spectacles" in which student life is "a rehearsal for his ultimate role as a conservative element in the functioning of the commodity system." This conceptualization of the student as an intellectual laborer exploited by the capitalist system allowed for a direct identification with other laboring classes, including large numbers of immigrant workers who had been recruited as cheap labor for reconstruction and the industrial boom of the "Thirty Glorious Years." The mass demonstrations of 1968 brought back the old clashes of the Algerian War between youth on the left and the right, where many students on the left combatted right-wing racist violence and hate speech with a new anti-racist movement. By the 1970s, the left had created its own network of pro-immigrant activists who worked in concert with new autonomous immigrant workers' groups. After failing to overturn the government and witnessing the splintering of the left over the course of May 1968, groups like the Cahiers de mai and the établisse sought concrete action in factories, direct contact with workers, and tangible material and corporatist gains.

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*A Note on Methodological Implications and Imperial Fragments*

One of the major goals of this dissertation has been to place postcolonial studies into the history of the global 1960s, and the history of global 1960s into postcolonial studies. This is especially important for studying activism in peripheral regions where subaltern voices do not always make

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it onto the pages of history books, and where postcolonial relationships dictated the nature and content of protests and of state responses. If scholars of 1968 have been guilty of assuming its "global spirit," postcolonial scholars have been equally guilty of assuming the postcolonial dimensions of contemporary societies. In this regard, the double-goal of the dissertation has been to identify both the global and postcolonial dimensions of 1960s activism. Drawing on the transnational links within former French empire and comparing different sites has yielded surprising and interesting results, though not without some faults. How do other regions that were linked to social movements in France, Tunisia, or Senegal, fit into the model? For example, Prague was an important hub of activity particularly for French and Senegalese youth movements, yet held no particular colonial ties to either region. This suggests that while the former empire is useful for identifying certain specific forms of transnational activism, there were other networks of global activism that existed outside of this structure.\footnote{HEATHER STREETS-SALTER HAS PUT FORWARD A SIMILAR ARGUMENT FOR TEMPERING IMPERIAL-CENTERED RELATIONSHIPS WHEN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND GLOBAL AND LOCAL DIMENSIONS OF EVENTS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY. [WAITING ON HEATHER TO GET BACK TO ME ON A FORTHCOMING ARTICLE TITLE].} It is also true that Belgian colonial relationships were not the same as in the French colonies, and did not produce strong 1968 activism to the same degree as in Tunisia and Senegal. Though not all that surprising, this points to a particular postcolonial relationship that is specific to France and its former colonies that cannot be applied universally across all global 1960s activism involving former metropoles and colonies.

Throughout the dissertation I have incorporated the concept of "imperial fragment" to describe institutions and social formations from the colonial era, such as the university and the student organizations associated with it. Borrowing Gyanendra Pandey's notion of the fragment as it relates to discourses of nationalism, imperial fragments also refer to the extra-state voices of youth and workers who articulated alternative versions of postcolonial nationalism. These voices...
resisted the continued French presence in Tunisian and Senegalese economic, political, and cultural institutions. They also rejected the notion that national unity would be achieved through singular political parties, student and labor unions, and demanded the right to include multiple currents in their nations' principle institutions. The 1970s immigrant activism in France also kick-started new debates about inclusion in French nationality and society that are still present in contemporary society.

There is another form of imperial fragment that occurred to me through the process of writing, but that I have been unable to treat in the current study. I argued in my introduction that the university did not quite fit Ann Stoler's description of "imperial ruins." Unlike some features of the imperial system that led to "social ruination" in colonies, the university contained empowering dimensions for resisting state authority.672 But one important imperial fragment speaks more to Stoler's ruination: the prison. While I have focused some attention on repression and even torture taking place in Tunisian and Senegalese prisons, I have not researched the connections of postcolonial prisons and torture tactics to the colonial period. This seems to me an area of important historical inquiry for future research. For example, the El Bordj prison that housed a number of Tunisian activists in the 1960s and 1970s was converted from an old French colonial prison, and one of the locations of the William Ponty colonial school located between Dakar and Thiès was converted into a prison following independence. There are also interesting historical questions worth asking regarding Michel Foucault's immediate surroundings while working on Discipline and Punish (1975).673 Shortly after witnessing the arrest of thousands of Tunisians after March 1968, and the incarceration of hundreds without due process, Foucault

returned to France and, in 1971 founded the Group of Information on Prisons. One of the group's co-founders, Jean-Marie Domenach, had also written scathing critiques of the Bourguiba regime's brutal response to student protests. One can only assume that his activities in the group influenced his ideas in Discipline and Punish, which was published just a few years later. It is also highly likely that his experiences trying to liberate his former Tunisian students from state-sponsored imprisonment and, sometimes torture, spurred his interest in tracing the genealogy of punishment and prison life in French society. Though this is somewhat speculative, it suggests that the importance of 1968 in Tunis extends far beyond even its multiple connections to other 1960s global activism and to the present human rights movement in Tunisia.

The Francophone 1968 in the Present

In April 2012, Senegalese youth gathered en masse to celebrate the election of President Macky Sall, marking the end of the reign of the octogenarian President Abdoulaye Wade, who was defeated after seeking a third term in office that many felt was unconstitutional. His defeated party, the PDS, had been integrated into government in 1975 only after youth unrest pushed Senghor toward political openness. Wade—who finally came to power in 2000 with the electoral support of young Senegalese voters who bought into his promise of economic improvement and educational reform—found that by 2012, youth had become an oppositional force. Indeed, the y’en a marre (enough is enough) movement received strong backing this campaign season following continual power outages in July 2011 and presumed widespread corruption. After calling an international body of juridical "experts" to evaluate the constitution Wade had himself enacted in 2000 to prevent presidencies of more than two terms, Wade ran for a third term that

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675 Senegalese musicians and journalists created the movement in 2011 to encourage mass youth voter registration in response to perceived government corruption.
many deemed unconstitutional. Youth agitators proved the power of their collective voices when they vigorously protested his campaign and ousted him at the polls with a democratic will that would not have been possible without 1968 (when only one party existed).

Across the former French empire, Tunisians, inspired by the self-immolation of a young street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, successfully dethroned Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on 14 January 2011 after 23-years of dictatorial reign, sparking waves of political contestation throughout the Arab world. Though Tunisia and Senegal shed the French colonial yoke in 1956 and 1960, respectively, many are still frustrated with old forms of oppression that have taken on new faces. Wade and, previously, Ben Ali, have both been accused of neo-colonialism, pillaging of local resources, and a lack of political pluralism and democratic representation in government. At the heart of both sets of demands, from sub-Saharan Africa to the Maghreb, is a notion that the goals of national independence have never fully been realized. Of course, this youth frustration was not born either in the y’en a marre movement or in Bouazizi’s desperate act. The concept of unfulfilled independence reared its head after the initial euphoria of independence in the turbulent 1960s. By 1968, the hangover following celebrations of liberation from France had set in, and intellectual segments of society, reflected in the freshly painted hallways of new universities, called into question the direction of independent governments in the fragmented French empire.

After recent reintegration as a legal political party in 2011, al-Nahda has emerged as a dominant force in post-Bin Ali Tunisia. The two-decade interdiction of its leader, Rashid al-Ghanushi, who recently returned from exile in London, echoes the suppression of “fanatical Muslims” in the 1968 livre blanc. The Tunisian Workers’ Communist Party has also been legalized under the new government; it is headed by former Perspectives member Hama al-
Hamami, who was imprisoned after having spoken to French media during the 2011 revolution and later released. After 20 years of injunction, al-Nahda dominated Tunisia's October 2011 elections, the first free elections since 1956. As Tunisia's modern history of both secularism and government repression lie in the balance, al-Nahda must approach its challengers with caution, or face the wrath of youth protest again.

Mai ’68 is likewise still ever-present in French society. Former French President Nicholas Sarkozy waged war on Mai ’68, going so far as to call for the "liquidation of its memory" from French history during his 2007 presidential campaign. Fortunately, Sarkozy's presidential powers did not grant him the authority to simply snap his fingers and erase the multiple memorial fragments and perspectives on Mai ’68. His comments do, however, underscore the importance of revisiting divisive events in national pasts so that politically interested parties do not act as sole judges or arbiters of history. Though Sarkozy succeeded in creating chaos for historians with plans to move national archives and dedicate a museum to French nationalism, he was unable to prevent the remembrances of 1968 that spread throughout the nation in 2008. Given the historiographic shifts in studies on 1968 and the global—and, if this work has any bearing, imperial/postcolonial—turn, it will be curious to see these representations in 2018, and the next wave of decennial literature that will likely emerge.

This dissertation has attempted to retrace early expressions of postcolonial nationalism on university campuses—in which students in decolonizing nations demanded expedited democratization and political rights—that have recently resurfaced in Senegal and Tunisia, and to link them through their shared colonial histories. At the same time, I hope to have drawn attention to 1968 activism in the francophone Third World that is often overlooked in scholarship on 1968 that either focuses on France’s national context or, when taking a more global approach, 676 "À Bercy, Sarkozy attaque les 'héritiers de Mai 68,'" L'Express, 4 April 2007.
highlights transatlantic connections in the First World. A comparative study of social movements in 1968 in Tunisia, France, and Senegal can help us to move beyond separate histories for the First and Third Worlds and to better understand 1968 as a global phenomenon. While the movements are linked through their shared colonial histories as former French territories, the impact of local conditions on each 1968 movement surface more clearly through comparison. In each case, students sparked movements in 1968 on university campuses, and the university became the site of conflict between a disenchanted youth and the postcolonial state over the future of the nation, replacing the old colonizer/colonized antagonism from the days of struggle for independence. Democratic freedoms, along with economic opportunity, are at the core of protestors’ demands in the Arab world and sub-Saharan Africa today. We should all be watching with great curiosity as the current government in Tunisia reintegrates political parties that are vestiges of the targeted groups from March 1968 movement, and as Senegal's leaders face charges of ongoing neo-colonialism.
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