

# ETHICS AND VIOLENCE

## Simone de Beauvoir, Djamilia Boupacha, and the Algerian War

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“The most scandalous part of scandal is the getting used to it [Ce qu’il y a de plus scandaleux dans le scandale c’est qu’on s’y habitue].”<sup>1</sup> Simone de Beauvoir’s 1960 denunciation in *Le Monde* of the habitual and even habit-forming aspects of torture’s scandal is unsettlingly familiar. This assessment of the potentially numbing portrayal of torture during the Algerian War bears striking resemblance to what investigative journalist Mark Danner has recently referred to as “Frozen Scandal.” In this perverse condition, according to Danner, “revelation of wrongdoing leads not to definitive investigation, punishment, and expiation but to more scandal. Permanent scandal. Frozen scandal.”<sup>2</sup> The repeated scandals of today go by the names Guantánamo, Abu Ghraib, and Baghram; their existence as known unknowns have haunted the pages of elite journals of opinion, television, and movies screens in the context of the wars the United States has sponsored for much of the past decade. While their legally exceptional conditions have been disclosed repeatedly, their existence has not (yet) come to an end. An analogous pattern of repetitive revelation of torture and deferred resolution characterized the Algerian War. In Beauvoir’s day, these scandalous locales were called El Biar, Hussein Dey, Villa Sésini, and the ferme Améziane.

The historical parallel between the French war in Algeria and recent wars is itself familiar—and indeed, made infamous by the US army’s screening of Gilles Pontecorvo’s 1965 film *The Battle of Algiers* just prior to the invasion of Iraq. Alistair Horne draws the connection in the most recent edition of his classic history of the Algerian War. The Forward to a new English translation of *The Question*, Henri Alleg’s account of his torture by the French military,

cites these parallels as instructive, as does Marnia Lazreg's recent study of torture in the Algerian War, which ends with a reflection on the Iraq War.<sup>3</sup>

Simone de Beauvoir's punctual intervention in Djamila Boupacha's torture case may be seen to speak to the paradoxically numbing effects of scandal, both then and today. For example, critics have pointed to the perverse effects of the Abu Ghraib photographs' very visibility; the scandal provoked by these sexually charged images paradoxically obscured as much as they revealed.<sup>4</sup> One of the many lessons that we can learn from Beauvoir's intervention in Boupacha's case is how repetition may be written into the dynamics of scandal itself.<sup>5</sup> One of the dangers of such repetition is that "one gets used to it." In attempting to reveal sinister truths, how can one avoid restarting the cycle anew? In the face of such paralysis, Beauvoir wondered, how is one supposed to act? Might recognition of both difference and continuity with past acts of violence interrupt these numbing effects?

The title of Beauvoir's article "For Djamila Boupacha" alluded to repetition. In miming the title of Jacques Vergès and Georges Arnaud's 1957 manifesto, "For Djamila Bouhired," Beauvoir signaled both the urgency of intellectual engagement *and* her frustration at its failure. In order to understand what was at stake in Beauvoir's campaign on behalf of Boupacha, we need a brief overview of how intellectuals, and in particular those who were close to Beauvoir, had previously addressed the question of torture.

Arnaud and Vergès's earlier text was part of Éditions de Minuit's increasing engagement in the moral and legal politics of the war. Their book was written in defense of a Front de libération nationale (FLN) *militante* who had, like Boupacha, been arrested and tortured. By revealing both the procedural errors in her trial and the medical cover-up of the physical traces of her torture (including those left by electrical wires on her nipples and "sex"),<sup>6</sup> the authors hoped to obtain a revised sentence. When Bouhired was brought to trial, she and her lawyer Vergès had contested the legality of the military court's jurisdiction. "As long as my executioners have not been punished," she proclaimed, "I do not have the right to collaborate with what can be no more than a parody of justice."<sup>7</sup> Bouhired famously laughed when the French military tribunal pronounced its death sentence—a sentence that was ultimately commuted partly as a result of major international protests. In the wake of the trial, Bouhired became an iconic heroine of the Algerian national liberation struggle, as the title character in Youssef Chahine's 1958 *Djamila the Algerian* and as a model for the women who planted bombs in the European quarter in Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*. Beauvoir's readers would have recognized the reference to Djamila Bouhired immediately.

In the years that passed between Bouhired and Boupacha's cases, accounts of the military's systematic use of torture against those fighting for Algerian independence proliferated. Pierre Vidal-Naquet edited a volume documenting the case of Maurice Audin's death in El Biar, the same prison where Djamila Boupacha would be held two years later. Reviews such as *Esprit* and *Témoignage*

*Chrétien*, as well as *Les Temps Modernes*, published testimonies by soldiers who had witnessed the army's activities first hand. And, in what would become one of the most decisive publishing events of the war, Éditions de Minuit published Henri Alleg's *La Question* in February 1958. Sartre followed up with an article devoted to Alleg in *L'Express* on 6 March 1958. Even though the government seized the issue, Sartre's comments were used to further advertise the text, which was, in turn, censored—but only after some 60,000 copies had been sold. Intellectuals, including Sartre, André Malraux, Roger Martin du Gard, and François Mauriac, mobilized against this censorship, petitioning the president of the Fourth Republic and registering their protest against the army's recourse to torture.<sup>8</sup>

In his article, Sartre hailed Alleg as a hero who, by revealing the truth of French torture, had paradoxically saved the honor of France. *La Question*, in his view, “saved us [i.e., the French] from despair and shame because he is the victim himself and because he has conquered torture.” In the process, Alleg allowed the French to “regain a little of our pride: we are proud that he is French.”<sup>9</sup> Of course, as Sartre noted, Alleg's book was far from the first published testimony to denounce the army's practices. Indeed, *Les Temps Modernes* had regularly featured texts written by soldiers who condemned the French army's conduct in Algeria. These earlier accounts prefigured—and may well have influenced—Sartre's arguments about the perverse power dynamics of torture, and in particular how it physically embodied a symbolic struggle over masculinity and recognition. In 1957, the anonymous author of a “Journal de Campagne” described the fellow battalion members who tortured: “They have known the pleasure of being the strong ones, of being the masters; they believed in that virility that commands a language and imposes a conduct. The heroes, who returned from Indochina and recounted their experience, had balls. Now they also want to have balls.”<sup>10</sup>

Several months later, Jacques Pucheu also sought to explain how his comrades could have taken to torturing so easily. Their complicity no doubt arose, he wrote, “from a desire for a misconstrued virility, the prestige of ‘hard ones,’ which is almost more infectious because it doesn't entail any risk.” Intimately bound to the assertion of white superiority, the “dialectic of hatred” to which this systematic violence gave rise was not, in Pucheu's opinion, a form of “sadism.”<sup>11</sup> To the contrary, and this was what Pucheu found to be the most disturbing. While almost everyone in his unit was initially “overcome” [bouleversés] by the sight of torture and summary executions, “very quickly, one became used to it, in the strongest sense of the word.”<sup>12</sup> What struck Pucheu was that same sense of “habituation” or indifference that would trouble Beauvoir's text some three years later.

Alleg's testimony was different from these previous accounts, however, because he spoke as a victim, rather than as a perpetrator or bystander of torture. Unlike Pucheu's text, which colludes with the perpetrator's cowardly indifference, even in denouncing it, Alleg's “victory” overturned the torturer's

reign: “When the victim wins, then it is goodbye to their absolute power, their lordship.” In Sartre’s Hegelian inspired account, Alleg’s political triumph is also a recognition of virility. This heroic masculinity thus stands in opposition to the diminished masculinity of his torturers, who Sartre describes as “these little cads, proud of their strength, their youth, their number.” By contrast, wrote Sartre, “Alleg is the only really tough one, the only one who is really strong.”<sup>13</sup>

The national shame and degradation of torture was supposed to be brought to an end by another French hero, namely Charles de Gaulle when he returned to power in May 1958. In June, André Malraux, who was then acting as de Gaulle’s press secretary, proclaimed that “no act of torture, to his knowledge” had occurred since de Gaulle had acceded to power. And, he added: “none should occur from now on.”<sup>14</sup> Scattered media reports and soldiers’ testimony nonetheless attested to its persistence. Document collections such as the *Cahiers verts*, which were published in 1959 and excerpted in *Les Temps Modernes*, shed light on the cases of prisoners who had “disappeared” without judicial trace. Perhaps most disconcerting of all was *La Gangrène*, which Les Éditions de Minuit published on the provocative date 18 June. (It was also excerpted in *Les Temps Modernes* that summer.) Comprised of five testimonies by men—Bachir Boumaza, Mustapha Francis, Benaïssa Souami, Abdel Kader Beljadj, and Moussa Khebali—who were arrested and interrogated in Paris, the book definitively revealed that the “gangrene” of torture had indeed taken root in the heart of the metropole. Although seized by the government, press coverage of the affair worked to publicize its revelations.

These repeated “scandals” had initiated regular cycles of censorship and litigation; they were clearly established precedents by the time Beauvoir took on Boupacha’s cause. The scandal of torture was thus painfully familiar—even too familiar, in Beauvoir’s estimation. As Sylvie Thénault and Raphaëlle Branche have pointed out, by 1960 “it became difficult to recreate a scandal, because the practice of torture was already known.”<sup>15</sup> With her intervention in *Le Monde*, Beauvoir highlighted this disturbing commonplace in order to make a difference: she focused on indifference, rather than ignorance, as a locus of a scandal.

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Djamila Boupacha’s case was not exceptional. The French army made great efforts to monitor the activities of women, who were assumed to be conduits between FLN fighters in the maquis and the civilian population in cities and towns. Women who were arrested were regularly tortured; and rape was systematically practiced as a way of terrorizing and shaming the Algerian population.<sup>16</sup> Contemporaries thus pointed to women’s central role in the national independence struggle. While the French army increasingly targeted women as part of its “psychological operations” strategies, the FLN described the revolution as the crucible of Algerian women’s liberation.<sup>17</sup> As Frantz Fanon’s

essay “Algeria Unveiled” so famously signaled, women’s participation took on increasing symbolic as well as practical significance for both the advocates and the opponents of an independent Algeria.<sup>18</sup>

What did make Djamila Boupacha’s case exceptional was her decision to bring a suit against her torturers—and the skilled legal aid and dogged determination of her Tunisian-born, naturalized French lawyer, Gisèle Halimi. For it was at Halimi’s urging that Beauvoir took up the cause. Halimi had been working as a defense lawyer for FLN militants long before she assumed Boupacha’s case. In 1960, however, a new juridical context had emerged. A notorious 12 February decree revised the structure of military tribunals or Tribunaux Permanents des Forces Armées (TPFA). Among other changes, the law drafted civilian magistrates to become “procureurs militaires,” who would now investigate all trials relating to national security. Starting in June 1960, all trials against Algerian militants (who were, of course, also French citizens) would be placed under military, rather than civilian, jurisdiction. Defendants would, in turn, only have limited access to legal representation. The reaction of the defense attorneys was swift and strong: Vergès and his colleagues Michel Zavarian and Maurice Courégé promptly published *Le Droit et la colère* with Les Éditions de Minuit; and an article by Halimi appeared in the February/March issue of *Les Temps Modernes*. She condemned the decree for rendering that most essential of all French freedoms—the right to self-defense—“hors la loi.”<sup>19</sup> In the face of this procedural erosion of legal rights, Halimi was galvanized to defend the legitimacy of defense.

The state of what contemporaries described as “public opinion” in early 1960 seemed even more dispiriting. Commentators increasingly remarked that detailed revelations of widespread torture and extra-judicial executions failed to arouse the least indignation. One document, again in *Les Temps Modernes*, tracked the dominant media’s remarkable indifference to the Comité Audin’s named accusations of army officers (including Aussares, Devis, and Charbonnier). The author denounced both the army’s cover up of Audin’s death and the scandalous state of media apathy in no uncertain terms: “It took much less, in other times, to set off the Dreyfus Affair. Today, shock [l’émotion] does not extend beyond the same restricted milieu: an anesthetized opinion follows the development of the scandal with extraordinary indifference.”<sup>20</sup> Several weeks later the FLN press organ *El Moudjahid* echoed this sentiment and in the process condemned the public’s silence as an avowal of French complicity with colonialist crimes. This complicity, it provocatively declared, was not unlike that “of the German people in the Nazi crimes.”<sup>21</sup> The article noted the apathetic response to recent revelations in *Témoignage chrétien* that French army officers continued to be trained in “clean torture” methods (i.e., water and electricity) in the Camp Jeanne d’Arc of Philippeville.<sup>22</sup> While “the Affair Dreyfus stirred up passions,” the author continued, “torture only stirs echoes amongst small circles.” The FLN journal viewed this apathy, as above all “the total failure of the Left, of those whose role it is to make the people participate

in the direction of its affairs.” Given an exacerbated context of press censorship—newspaper seizures would rise sharply in 1960—the provocative accusation was no doubt unfair.<sup>23</sup> But the pointed critique nonetheless distilled an uneasy sense that French intellectuals’ power to provoke public outrage and, in turn, preserve their historic mission, was fading.<sup>24</sup> What is more, the charges leveled by *El Moudjahid* signaled a highly uneasy relationship between the FLN and leftist intellectuals, and in turn, amongst intellectuals themselves. This was especially the case for Sartre and those close to *Les Temps Modernes*, who were increasingly moving towards an explicit pro-FLN position and expressing sympathies for the concrete actions recommended by Francis and Colette Jeanson.<sup>25</sup> As a letter by Jeanson that was addressed to Sartre, and published in *Les Temps Modernes*, explained, leftist intellectuals could not afford to wait for “public opinion” to catch up with their positions; the time for mere words appeared to be over, only action, on the part of an “avant-garde”—who refused to serve in Algeria and gave material aid to the FLN—would count.<sup>26</sup>

The Boupacha case thus presented itself at a pivotal moment of intellectual self-positioning with respect to both the nature of political engagement and its relationship to “public opinion.” In her retrospective account in *The Force of Circumstance*, Beauvoir insisted that she had never thought of herself as “a woman of action,” and that she ultimately remained, with respect to her involvement in the war, a “woman of letters.”<sup>27</sup> Despite Jeanson’s cynicism regarding intellectuals’ appeals to a perpetually indifferent public, Beauvoir and Halimi realized that by joining forces they might actually be able to alter Boupacha’s legal fate. They hoped to both reinvigorate an unresponsive public and salvage the image of intellectual engagement. With her article in *Le Monde*, Beauvoir launched the “public phase” of her affair. Her rhetorical focus on the historic failure of public opinion actually shored up the ongoing importance of intellectuals at the very moment that their salience and influence seemed to be in doubt.

Boupacha registered her legal complaint of torture immediately and demanded to see a doctor in order to prove her case. But the appointed physician, who was selected by prison authorities, failed to fully investigate her charges, in particular her claim to have been penetrated with a bottle. At her arraignment for criminal association and attempted homicide on 15 May 1960, she again declared that she had been tortured. Boupacha did not deny her allegiance to the FLN and her political commitment to Algerian independence. She *did* argue that her confession, extracted under torture, should not be admissible before the military tribunal that was to try her. French officials in Algeria had, furthermore, limited Boupacha’s access to legal representation, by denying Halimi visas corresponding to her client’s court dates. Adopting the tactic that had been honed by Vergès in Bouhired’s case, Halimi and Boupacha contested the legitimacy of the Tribunal itself. Frustrated by the maneuvering of officials in Algeria, Halimi hoped that, with the aid of a prominent figure such as Beauvoir, Boupacha’s case might be furthered by an appeal to that jurisdiction of last resort: the court of public opinion.

Beauvoir courageously assumed this new role. Taking up the mantle of the intellectual, she denounced a miscarriage of “French” justice in the press. With a rhetorical strategy that echoed Zola’s *J’accuse*, and more recently, Arnaud’s text in favor of Bouhired, Beauvoir described the government’s criminal cover-up of torture as a violation and humiliation of “French” principle. She, too, proclaimed that military justice in Algeria was nothing more than a “sinister parody.” “It is high time they [i.e., the army in Algeria] were shown that they cannot violate the laws of France with impunity, in Algeria, or elsewhere,” she wrote. Explicitly aiming to humiliate de Gaulle, she urged that a failure to act was tantamount to “confessing [the government’s] inability to extract obedience” from the army. Such abdication would be, she claimed, a form of “treason” against “all of France.”<sup>28</sup> Beauvoir thus implied that de Gaulle—and not the conscientious objectors of the *jeune resistance* or members of the *reseau Jeanson*—ran the risk of betraying France.

Beauvoir’s text did not just remain at the level of legal and metaphorical abstraction, even if it drew clear parallels between the crime against Boupacha’s person and a systematic “violation” of French law. In keeping with her phenomenological approach to philosophical and political questions, Beauvoir recounted Boupacha’s physical violation in graphic and concrete terms. Indeed, *Le Monde’s* editors judged her language to be too explicit. When Beauvoir cited Boupacha’s declaration that her torturers had forced a bottle into her vagina, the newspaper substituted the more *puddique* euphemism of “ventre” or “belly.” Beauvoir was, however, allowed to maintain a parenthetical reference to Djamilia’s violated virginity. And this was no minor detail, as Boupacha’s physical and metaphorical “purity” became an important focus of the legal proceedings and the case that the *Comité* made before the public. Archived letters of readers’ reactions to her article in *Le Monde* suggest that, at the very least, Beauvoir succeeded in scandalizing some readers’ opinion, if not necessarily in convincing them of the righteousness of her cause. One outraged reader condemned her opinion piece as an “ensemble of details, so horrible and dangerous [malsaines], that one would believe them to be taken from the works of the Marquis de Sade.” Another described her purportedly “sadistic pleasure in laying out such extreme details” as an assault on the dignity of both *Le Monde* and its readership.<sup>29</sup> If in *The Second Sex* Beauvoir denounced the fetishization of virginity as the product of paternalistic ethics, here she nonetheless mobilized that figure for the sake of political argument.<sup>30</sup>

Djamilia’s status as a virginal “young girl” (she was twenty-two years old at the time) also figured prominently for Françoise Sagan, a contemporary icon of things young and girlish.<sup>31</sup> Tellingly entitled “The young girl and grandeur,” Sagan’s 16 June article in *L’Express*, also sought to shame de Gaulle into action. Sagan wondered with incredulity “how an intelligent man, who has a sense of grandeur and power, has not yet done anything.” No, she warned: “the trumpets of grandeur could not cover the screams of a young girl.”<sup>32</sup> These metaphorical screams were indeed heard in France—and beyond. Halimi

received hundreds of letters, as did Sagan, including one from a woman who wrote: "It seems to me that if those who govern could know, through your voice, that all the women in the country are expressing themselves, perhaps this nightmare could be over."<sup>33</sup> Adherents to the *Comité* multiplied.<sup>34</sup>

Beauvoir's involvement with Boupacha's cause was at once decisive and understated. Her two written interventions, one at the very outset of the affair and one that brought it to a conclusion, were carefully situated.<sup>35</sup> They were highly attuned to the violence against women that was practiced by the French army during its counter-insurgent war. In her texts, Beauvoir foregrounded an underlying tension between Boupacha's singular suffering, on the one hand, and the *un-exceptional* character of that suffering, on the other.

Beauvoir thus began her introduction to the volume that she edited with Halimi: "An Algerian girl of twenty-three, an FLN liaison agent was illegally imprisoned, subjected to torture, raped with a bottle by military officers: it is banal." The assertion itself was shocking—scandalous, even. Could a case of torture be banal? (The resonance here with Hannah Arendt, who was writing *Eichmann in Jerusalem* at nearly the same time is notable.)<sup>36</sup> Could we or should we still be moved by "a young girl's blood," she wondered, in the midst of a genocide (her own word) and mass internments, which Beauvoir likened to "extermination camps." (She also suggested that they served elite soldiers as brothels.) Boupacha was, after all, still alive. The initial investigating magistrate in the case, M. Patin, raised the question. He cynically commented that the "torture of the bottle," as it was practiced in Indochina, usually perforated the intestines and caused death. In other words, he implausibly claimed that what Boupacha underwent was not torture.<sup>37</sup>

Somewhat more pointedly, previously published documents and testimonies detailed the army's recourse to sexually humiliating torture and rape as part of its practices of interrogation and "pacification." Djamilia Bouhired had, for example, testified to being stripped naked and subjected to "obscene fondling" [attouchements obscènes] in front of several officers and parachutists. Her torturers' acting out of their fantasies of racial and sexual humiliation were epitomized by a threat to "bring her a Senegalese who had already served several times on Muslim women."<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, in his account of pacification in the Aurès mountains, Jacques Pucheu wrote that "many women were raped (my section chief, an Adjutant, encouraged his men to do it)."<sup>39</sup>

Beauvoir's introduction to the volume pointedly asked how Boupacha's singular violation might count in relation to suffering on a mass scale. Her description of Boupacha's torture as a scandalous banality steered between sentimentalizing pity, on the one hand, and heroizing martyrdom, on the other. Beauvoir's writing thus stood in marked contrast to Sartre's article on Alleg. If Sartre focused on a masculine pride embodied by Alleg's valiant resistance to the pressures of torture, Beauvoir's texts focused on feminine and feminizing shame.

As we have seen, Sartre's characteristic macho bravado amplified one dimension of *The Question*, namely its account of torture as a heroic trial of



masculinity.<sup>40</sup> Alleg's own text nonetheless denied the exceptionality of his agony; he described it as "almost indecent to talk about oneself" in view of the "enormous prison, where each cell houses a quantity of human suffering."<sup>41</sup> Sartre did not deny that torture was widespread. But his denunciation of it as a "system" was also bound to a vision of Alleg's transcendence of the "whirlpool of inhumanity" that it represented.<sup>42</sup> Beauvoir's defense of Boupacha refused to sanction such redemption in suffering. If Sartre sought to generalize Alleg's heroism, Beauvoir implicated her readers in Djamila's—and, by extension—France's shame.

This differential representation was not an inevitable effect of the victims' sexual difference. After all, Frantz Fanon wrote a biting rejoinder to Arnaud's *For Djamila Bouhired*, in which he presented the heroine of the Battle of Algiers as no less a stalwart figure than Alleg. Fanon claimed her "dignity," "fortitude," "obstinate determination to remain upright," and "her need to smile in the face of death" as "essential characteristics of the national attitude of the Algerian people." Published in *El Moudjahid*, Fanon's account conformed to that journal's image of the new Algerian woman.<sup>43</sup> More specifically, Fanon castigated sentimentalized portraits of suffering, especially when they involved women. And he censured "French democrats" for expressing "alarm only in connection with individual cases that are just fit to wrench a tear or to provoke little pangs of conscience." Fanon viewed these outbursts as indulgent efforts to shore up the French intellectuals' self-image.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to the French intellectual, claimed Fanon, the Algerian people fought not against torture, or "the rape of Algerian girls," but against French imperial domination *tout court*.<sup>45</sup>

Beauvoir's intervention in Boupacha's case, meanwhile, refused both sentimental self-indulgence and stoicism. By neither heroizing, nor sentimentalizing Boupacha, she sought to represent her singular suffering, while also condemning the systematicity of the French army's violence. In bringing Boupacha's case to public attention, Beauvoir thus modeled her own vision of intellectual ethics. It was a vision that was distinct from Sartre's (and Fanon's), even and especially when she engaged their previous engagements.

Beauvoir's earlier work, the *Ethics of Ambiguity*, which was written in 1948, had traced out a similarly difficult line between solipsism and sublation. At the time, existentialism was under attack from several quarters. Communists assaulted its subjectivism and Christians its pessimism. Sartre thus explained at the outset of his famous defense of his philosophy as a humanism, that he had been condemned for "emphasizing what is despicable in humanity," and hence according to the Catholic critic Jeanne Mercier, forgetting "the innocence of a child's smile."<sup>46</sup> Beauvoir's *Ethics* also took up the question of how and whether existentialism offered a viable ethical and political framework. Her text, like Sartre's, combined philosophical debate and political commentary, addressing colonial oppression in French Algeria at several crucial junctures. Indeed, one of the principal negative exemplars in the book, "the

serious man," is epitomized by "the colonial administrator," who is willing to sacrifice countless native lives in order to preserve an idealized abstraction of the French Empire.

Beauvoir argued that the "serious man's" effort to establish the fixity of his abstract objects—such as the Empire—was always precarious; the flux of the passage of time would inevitably undo that phantasmatic permanence. In other words, "the future will contest his present successes."<sup>47</sup> The contingency of future possibility interrupts the "serious man's" tyrannical fantasies of fixity: herein lay the ethical import of ambiguity for Beauvoir. The colonial case again furnished her with a concrete example. "In Algeria," she wrote, "I have seen any number of colonists appease their conscience by the contempt in which they held the Arabs who were crushed with misery: the more miserable the latter were, the more contemptible they seemed." Colonial racism attempted, in other words, to arrest man in what she described as "the immanence of his facticity." And yet, "with all this sordid resignation, there were children who played and laughed; and their smile exposed the lie of their oppressors." Reflecting on the empathic power of a child's face, Beauvoir urged: "it is not that the child is more moving or that he has more of a right to happiness than others." Instead, she claimed, the child has the power to represent "a hope, a project."<sup>48</sup> With this concrete image, Beauvoir critically responded to attacks on existentialism's purported pessimism and quietism.

While attending to these dynamics, Beauvoir's conception of ethics—and her related vision of politics—avoided sentimentalism. And, for this reason, she did not shy away from confronting the human reality of violence. Her ethics understood violence as constitutive of human relationships rather than as extrinsic or foreign to them. In her 1951 essay "Must we burn Sade?" she famously hailed the significance of Sade's writings for thinking about ethics, even as she denounced his efforts to assert sovereignty over others through sexual violence.<sup>49</sup> Beauvoir here pursued what she saw to be the central paradox of Sade's work: the universal significance of an insistently individualist ethics based on the equivalence of "coition and cruelty."<sup>50</sup>

Beauvoir, of course, did not endorse Sade's acts, either fictional or real. Indeed, she argued that his fantasies of individual tyranny were perpetually doomed to failure. At the same time, she saw his unrelenting pursuit of cruelty as a powerful counter to the no less powerful violence of indifference. Highlighting the political and ethical import of Sade's work in her conclusion, she wrote:

Is it not better to assume the burden of evil than to subscribe to this abstract good which drags in its wake abstract slaughters? It is probably impossible to escape this dilemma ... Thousands of individuals are suffering and dying vainly and unjustly at every moment, and this does not affect us. If it did, our existence would be impossible. Sade's merit lies not only in his having proclaimed aloud what everyone admits with shame to himself, but in the fact that he did not simply resign himself. He chose cruelty rather than indifference. This is probably why he finds so

many echoes today, when the individual knows that he is more the victim of men's good consciences than of their wickedness.

Beauvoir suggests that Sade's choice of cruelty, as a *choice*, was preferable to indifference and resignation. The shocking character of this choice is precisely why in her opinion we must read, rather than burn, Sade. The ethical power of his "testimony" lies "in its ability to disturb us."<sup>51</sup> In her project for Djamila Boupacha, Beauvoir likewise aimed to undo the less overt, but in her mind, no less real violence of complacency and indifference.

As I've suggested, Beauvoir's brief interventions also avoided sentimentalizing Boupacha's suffering. As she wrote in her introduction: "In telling this story Gisèle Halimi is not attempting to convert [toucher] those hearts that stubbornly refuse the deep shame most of us feel because of it."<sup>52</sup> At the same time, Beauvoir contended that her singular case would expose the "propaganda machine" devoted to denying the sinister truths of torture. For Beauvoir, "what is exceptional, in the Boupacha affair, is not the facts: it is their unveiling." The combined efforts of Boupacha, Halimi, and the investigating magistrate, Philippe Chausserie-Laprée, raised "the curtain of night and fog protecting the routine horror."<sup>53</sup> What Boupacha's case exposed was not the already known practices of sexual humiliation and torture, but the lengths to which the army was willing to go in order to shield her torturers from prosecution.

After the initial proceedings in Alger, Boupacha's case was successfully transferred to France, although with considerable delays. It would be heard by the Cour de Cassation in December 1960 and transferred to the Tribunal of Caen in November 1961. In the summer of 1960, Boupacha herself was transferred to prisons in the metropole in order to have new forensic examinations. As we have seen, much of the publicity surrounding her case had focused on the "bottle torture." The Algerian press had, for example, sought to cast doubt on the veracity of her claims by pointing to photographs in her dossier that showed her with young male militants in her room: "What are we to make of her charges that she was raped by soldiers?" they demanded cynically.<sup>54</sup> With certain indignation, Halimi cited this response as characteristic of public attitudes in Alger—and hence the impossibility for Boupacha to obtain justice while remaining there.

The veracity of Boupacha's torture claims came to rest on her virginity. A religious and culturally inflected shame of defloweration was foregrounded in the account of events written up by Halimi. Docteur Hélène Michel-Wolfrom's medical report, made after Boupacha's transfer to the metropole, thus became a centerpiece of the trial dossier. Her examination answered a decisive "yes" to the "fundamental question" of whether Djamila's psychic makeup corresponded "to that of a virgin."<sup>55</sup> The emotionally laden loss of virginity symbolized what was supposed to be specific and irrecuperable about Djamila's suffering. At the same time, it focused attention not only on her status as an Algerian woman, but also on the gendered and sexually humiliating aspects of

the French army's torture practices. These sexualized dynamics, while often alluded to in accounts of men's torture (the perpetual nakedness, the degrading positions, the use of obscenities, genital manipulation and penetration) were rarely framed explicitly as such. The homoerotic dynamics of torture, as Todd Shepard has argued, played an important role in figuring presumptively *piéd noir* torturers as foreign.<sup>56</sup> But it took a case of a woman's torture, publicized and litigated by women, for this intimate core to be articulated as a source of French national shame.<sup>57</sup> The interventions of Halimi, Beauvoir, and other members of the Comité Djamilia Boupacha highlighted this humiliating truth.

While Boupacha's body and mind were thus examined and re-examined for traces of torture, her case ultimately stumbled on a rather different problem of evidence: the army's refusal to furnish the investigating magistrate with photographs that would allow Boupacha to identify her torturers. A memorandum sent by General Ailleret in response to Chausserie-Laprée's request argued that the disclosure of the photographs of soldiers and policemen "would likely have negative consequences [repercussions fâcheuses] on their state of mind and on the morale of the corps to which they belong."<sup>58</sup> Commentators remarked on the hypocrisy of the army's move to hide the torturers' identity behind a screen of military honor and glory. As signatories of the Manifesto of the 121 in favor of the right to refuse military service had urged in the fall of 1960, the army could no longer claim to be a beacon of honor; it was, rather, responsible for "perverting the nation."<sup>59</sup> Françoise Mallet-Joris ironized with respect to General Ailleret's response that it was as if "this morale were not affected by the existence of tortures by electricity, the bathtub, and the rape of a young girl with a beer bottle; but it would be affected by the least revelation that tends to curb these *moeurs*, that risks in any way to punish these torturers, and not even: to force them to show themselves with their faces uncovered."<sup>60</sup> In a last effort to obtain justice for Boupacha, the Comité tried to bring a suit against Ailleret and the minister of the army, Pierre Messmer, in November 1961, in the hopes that they might be forced to turn over the photographs. It was with this final appeal that the collective book both closed—and remained open.<sup>61</sup>

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Beauvoir, Halimi, and Boupacha's pursuit of the case was a defiant gesture given a dispiriting state of affairs. Despite the odds, Boupacha, in bringing charges against her torturers, sustained a hope that they might, one day, be brought to trial (while also delaying her own trial). After detailing the mistreatment she received at El Biar, she stated plainly: "The facts related here constitute the crimes of sequestration of the person, with the following aggravating circumstances: this sequestration having continued for over a month accompanied by 'bodily torture.' These crimes are identified and condemned by articles 341, 342, and 344 of the new Penal Code."<sup>62</sup> In pursuing Boupacha's case, Halimi likewise refused to give up on the French courts. In

systematically attacking procedural irregularities, official obfuscations, denials, and delays, Halimi argued in and with French law. She held open the possibility of its legitimacy, rather than renouncing its jurisdiction entirely, as in the strategy of Jacques Vergès.<sup>63</sup>

The same persistence and sense of possibility animated Beauvoir's appeal—from her initial intervention in *Le Monde* through to the book's eventual publication. While she may have denounced, in the opening line of her article, a state of scandalous indifference, Beauvoir pursued her project against the odds. The text of "For Djamila Boupacha" thus continued: "it seems impossible that opinion could remain indifferent to the tragedy that a twenty-year old young woman is living through."<sup>64</sup> Beauvoir's writing, in other words, aimed to make it impossible.

While Boupacha was ultimately denied the opportunity to identify her accusers, Beauvoir's preface—written after the events had already unfolded—refused to definitively close the book. She imagined a return to legality, by denouncing Ailleret and Messmer's scandalous "violation of the constitution." And she urged that "the efforts devoted to Djamila would fail to fulfill their goal if they did not awaken a revolt against the treatment inflicted on her brothers, and of which hers is a very ordinary case."<sup>65</sup> Beauvoir thus affirmed the wider significance of Boupacha's trials—and remained fixed on the future as an open political possibility. To remain sentimentally mired in the past was, in her view, to choose the side of the perpetrator. And here her argument took a curious—and in keeping with her ethics—decidedly *ambiguous* turn. For she proclaimed: "if you cry so willingly and abundantly over past sorrows—Anne Frank or the Warsaw ghetto—you put yourself on the side of the executioners of those who suffer today. You consent peaceably to the martyrdom that thousands of Ahmeds and Djamilas undergo, in your name, and almost under your gaze."<sup>66</sup> Was Beauvoir suggesting that one girl's symbolically laden death—that of Anne Frank—needed to be eclipsed in order that Djamila's suffering and, perhaps more pointedly, French complicity, could come more sharply into view? If so, did her argument rely on a problematic logic of competing victimizations?

Of course, references to Nazi crimes appeared frequently in denunciations of the hypocrisy and hubris of French conduct in Algeria. As Sartre's own essay on Alleg clearly illustrated, however, invocations of the Gestapo most often presented the French as former victims, who had now ironically become torturers.<sup>67</sup> Beauvoir's concluding comments move in a distinctly different direction. They cite not French, but *Jewish* victims of German crimes—and this before the specificity of "Jewish suffering" had clearly emerged as a focus of broad public and political discourse. While acknowledging that historical specificity, Beauvoir also highlighted the dangers of sentimentalization, especially when it appeared to obscure present political exigency.

The context of her remark is partly illuminated in *Force of Circumstance*, where Beauvoir comments on her ambivalent reaction to a play based on

Frank's journal that ran at the Théâtre Montparnasse in 1957.<sup>68</sup> As she explained in her memoir, "Every evening a sentimental audience wept over the past misfortunes of little Anne Frank; but all the children in agony, dying, going mad at that moment in a supposedly French country was something they preferred to ignore. If you had attempted to stir up pity for them, you would have been accused of lowering the nation's morale." In making these observations, Beauvoir did not seek to exonerate herself. She was equally, if not more troubled by her *own* response to the Algerian War. For, she continued, "this hypocrisy, this indifference, this country, my own self were no longer bearable to me ... I felt that I was suffering from one of those diseases where the most serious symptom is the lack of pain."<sup>69</sup>

Beauvoir's own numbness, and the inadequacy of her emotional and political reaction to the war, became perceptible through a juxtaposition with the emotions elicited by the Anne Frank play. In this sense, her expression of shame—and, in turn, the shaming gesture of her introduction to the Boupacha volume—presumed, rather than negated, the powerful lesson of Jewish extermination.<sup>70</sup> Beauvoir's call to confront French responsibility for wartime violence in the present nonetheless drew on that past's powerful resonance.<sup>71</sup> And, its persistent echo could be heard in Beauvoir's final warning to her readers: "When the truth attacks you from all around, you can no longer continue to stammer: 'We didn't know.'"<sup>72</sup>

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## Notes

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2. Mark Danner, "Frozen Scandal," *New York Review of Books* 55, 19, 4 December 2008, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22117>.

3. Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: New York Review of Books, 2006); Henri Alleg, *The Question*, Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, trans. John Calder (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
4. Jasbir K. Puar, "On Torture: Abu Ghraib," *Radical History Review* 2005, 93 (2005); Errol Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008), film; Judith Butler, "Torture and the Ethics of Photography," in *The Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2009); Anne McClintock, "Paranoid Empire: Specters from Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib," *Small Axe* 13, 1 (2009). On numbness, "pornography," and the challenges of representing violence, see Carolyn Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
5. On the problem posed by compulsive repetition for the adequate treatment of the "memory" of historical violence, see Dominick Lacapra, "Psychoanalysis, Memory, and the Ethical Turn," in *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).
6. Georges Arnaud and Jacques Vergès, *Pour Djamilia Bouhired* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1957), 9.
7. *Ibid.*, 77.
8. Anne Simonin, "Les Éditions de Minuit et les Éditions du Seuil: Deux stratégies éditoriales face à la guerre d'Algérie," in *La Guerre d'Algérie et les intellectuels français*, ed. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (Bruxelles: Éditions Complexe), 228.
9. Alleg, *The Question*, xxxi.
10. X., "Journal de campagne," *Les Temps Modernes* 13, 137-38 (1957).
11. Jacques Pucheu, "Un an dans les Aurès," *Les Temps Modernes* 13, 139 (1957), 445.
12. *Ibid.*, 447.
13. Alleg, *The Question*, xliii.
14. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, ed., *La Raison d'état, textes publiés par le comité Maurice Audin* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), 211.
15. Raphaëlle Branche and Sylvie Thénault, "Le secret sur la torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie," *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps* 58, 1 (2000), 63.
16. Raphaëlle Branche, *La Torture et l'armée pendant la Guerre d'Algérie: 1954-1962* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001); Raphaëlle Branche, "Sexual Violence in the Algerian War," in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth-Century*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Palgrave-McMillan, 2009).
17. See, for example, "La femme algérienne sur la scène internationale," *El Moudjahid* 1, 4 July 1958, 524-25, and "Femmes et enfants algériennes face à l'action psychologique," *El Moudjahid* 1, 22 July 1958.
18. Frantz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled," in *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965). On women's role in the FLN and the French army's response: Diane Sambron, *Femmes musulmanes: Guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962*, Collection Mémoires Histoire (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2007); Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire*.
19. Jacques Vergès, Michel Zavrian, and Maurice Courrégé, *Le Droit et la colère*, Collection "Documents" (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1960). Gisèle Halimi, "La défense hors la loi," *Les Temps Modernes* 15, 169-170 (1960). For a detailed discussion of the law, see Sylvie Thénault, *Une drôle de justice: Les magistrats dans la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Découverte, 2001), 199-235.
20. M. P., "Documents: L'affaire Maurice Audin et la 'presse d'information'," *Les Temps Modernes* 15, 166 (1959), 1111.
21. "Lorsque la torture est scientifiquement enseignée!," *El Moudjahid* 2, 5 January 1960.

22. "Quatre officiers parlent," in *Témoignage chrétien*, 18 December 1959. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, ed., *Les Crimes de l'armée française: Algérie 1954-1962* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), 115-18. See Beauvoir's comments on the "indifference" to this revelation and to the Audin affair in Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1964), 470-71.
23. See the statistics in Martin Harrison, "Government and Press in France during the Algerian War," *American Political Science Review* 58, 2 (1964).
24. On the Algerian war as a crisis for left intellectuals, see James D. LeSueur, "Decolonising 'French Universalism': Reconsidering the Impact of the Algerian War on French Intellectuals," *The Journal of North African Studies* 6, 1 (2001).
25. See the statement "La gauche française et le F.L.N.," *Les Temps Modernes* 15, 167-168 (February/March 1960): 1169-73; the response by Jean Daniel, "Socialisme et anti-colonialisme," *Esprit* (May 1960): 809-14; and, "Réponse à Jean Daniel," *Les Temps Modernes* 15, 169-170 (April/May 1960): 1530-34. See also, in the same issue, Marcel Péju, "Une gauche respectueuse": 1512-29. For an account of these debates on the French Left with respect to its solidarity with the FLN, see James D. LeSueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics during the Decolonization of Algeria* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 233. And Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Les Porteurs de valises* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979), 232-42.
26. Francis Jeanson, "Lettre à Jean-Paul Sartre," *Les Temps Modernes* 15, 169-170 (April/May 1960): 1535-49.
27. Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, 461.
28. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 222-23.
29. Letter to Hubert Beuve-Mery from Pierre Barrucand, Paris, 4 June 1960, in Archives d'histoire contemporaine. Hubert Beuve-Mery Papers: BM 140 (1960)/ Courrier lecteurs 1960/Beauvoir-Boupacha. And, letter from Jean Lebuy, Paris 6 June 1960, in Robert Gautier papers/RG1/Affaires de sévices, 1957-1962/Djamila Boupacha. Many thanks to Emma Kuby for sharing these letters. In her memoir Beauvoir states that *Le Monde* received fourteen letters of sympathy in response to her intervention and "three furious ones." Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, 501.
30. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1989), 439.
31. Kristen Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 82; Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 133-34.
32. Françoise Sagan, "La jeune fille et la grandeur," *L'Express*, 16 June 1960. Also in Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*.
33. Lettres à Françoise Sagan, *L'Express*, 23 June 1960. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 68-69.
34. *Ibid.*, 95.
35. With the resurgence of interest in the history of the Algerian War, Beauvoir's long overlooked involvement with the case has earned some scholarly attention of late. See Julien Murphy, "Beauvoir and the Algerian War: Toward a Postcolonial Ethics," in *Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir*, ed. Margaret Simons (University Park: Penn State Press, 1995); Ranjana Khanna, *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation, 1830 to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Annabelle Golay, "Féminisme et postcolonialisme: Beauvoir, Fanon et la guerre d'Algérie," *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 10, 3 (2007).
36. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1965).
37. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 1-2,104.
38. Arnaud and Vergès, *Pour Djamila Bouhired*, 66.



39. Pucheu, "Un an dans les Aurès," 441 (reprinted in Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Les Crimes de l'armée française*). See also X., "Journal de campagne."
40. Ross Chambers, "Ordeals of Pain (Concerning Henri Alleg's *La Question*)," in *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory*, ed. Todd W. Reeser and Lewis Carl Seifert (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008).
41. Alleg, *The Question*, 33.
42. *Ibid.*, xxxi.
43. For an analysis of Fanon in relation to the FLN's "ambivalent" relationship to women, see Marnia Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 125-33.
44. Frantz Fanon, "Concerning a Plea," *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays* trans. Haalon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1994), 74-75 (originally published in *El Moudjahid*, 15 November 1957).
45. Fanon, "Algeria Face to Face with French Torturers," *Toward the African Revolution* (originally published in *El Moudjahid*, 10 September 1957: 133-36). On Fanon's critiques of leftist intellectuals in France, LeSueur, *Uncivil War*, 206-10.
46. Jean-Paul Sartre, John Kulka, and Arlette Elkaim-Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism* trans. Carol Macomber (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 17. For a discussion of the at once political and intellectual context of Sartre's essay, see Edward Baring, "Humanist Pretensions: Catholics, Communists, and Sartre's Struggle for Existentialism," *Modern Intellectual History* (forthcoming 2010).
47. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Citadel Press, 1962), 49, 52.
48. *Ibid.*, 101-102.
49. For an account of her treatment of Sade's ethics, Judith Butler, "Beauvoir on Sade: Making Sexuality into an Ethic," in *Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir*, ed. Claudia Card (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
50. Simone de Beauvoir, "Must We Burn Sade?," in *The Marquis de Sade: The 120 Days and other writings* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 5.
51. *Ibid.*, 63-64.
52. In her memoir, however, Halimi notably criticized Beauvoir for her impersonal treatment of Boupacha's case. See Gisèle Halimi, *Milk for the Orange Tree*, trans. Dorothy S. Blair (London: Quartet Books, 1990), 297.
53. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 2. As a reference to both the exceptional jurisdictions created by Hitler's December 1941 "Night and Fog" decree and Alain Resnais's eponymous 1955 film, Beauvoir's words appear deliberate, if allusive. The parallel between the German treatment of the French resistance and the behavior of the French army in Algeria was familiar enough by the time Beauvoir was writing.
54. See the *Écho d'Alger*, *Dépêche quotidienne d'Alger*, and the *Journal d'Alger*, 18 June 1960. And Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 94.
55. *Ibid.*, 142.
56. Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 193-204.
57. On the persistent challenge to understanding and interpreting the meanings produced by torture's intimate violence, see Joshua Cole, "Intimate Acts and Unspeakable Relations: Remembering Torture and the War for Algerian Independence," in *Memory, Empire, and Postcolonialism: Legacies of French Colonialism*, ed. Alec G. Hargreaves (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005).
58. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 195.
59. Text of the "Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie."
60. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 259.

61. The final section was titled "Ce livre reste ouvert." Ibid., 213-14. For an analysis of how the book offered up the possibility of a "virtual justice," see Khanna, *Algeria Cuts*, 80.
62. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 219.
63. In part as a result of her differences with respect to Vergès's methods, Halimi pulled out of the defense of two women who were implicated in the trial of the reseau Jeanson. For her declaration, see Marcel Péju, *Le Procès du reseau Jeanson* (Paris: Maspero, 1961), 43-45. On the differend between the two lawyers, see "L'incident Vergès-Halimi," *France observateur*, 15 September 1960.
64. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 221.
65. Ibid., 12.
66. Ibid.
67. The opening paragraph of Sartre's article highlights the irony that while in 1943, "Frenchmen were screaming in agony in pain," by 1958 "men should be made to scream by those acting in our name." Alleg, *The Question*, xxvii.
68. Marguerite Jamois directed the play, which Georges Neveux adapted from the American original by Frances Goodrick and Albert Hackett.
69. Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, 384.
70. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss how Beauvoir's introduction to the Boupacha volume relates to the preface that she would write several years later to Jean-François Steiner's *Treblinka* (1966) and her role in the controversy that ensued. But it bears noting that the Nazi victims she signals are explicitly Jewish, rather than "political" (i.e., French) victims. What is more, she appears to insist here on the historical specificity of Algerian victims rather than framing her argument in terms of continuity or equivalence. For a discussion of Steiner's book and its wider implications for thinking about memory and victimization, see Samuel Moyn, *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005).
71. On the dynamics of such criss-crossings, see Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
72. Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, 12-13.