7 November 2012
The Fourth Republic and the Last Empire
Culture and Technology: France in the 1950s
Nuclear power produces > 75% electricity. France is one of the world’s biggest exporters of electricity.

1945—Commissariat for Atomic Energy
1946—Electricité de France (nationalized)
1962—First generator operational
1974—Large scale expansion

“In contrast to the spirit of routine, we must have a revolutionary spirit. No doubt the workers can be very intelligent and can even escape from their roles to become government ministers. … Under the old system, those who performed direct work were excluded from its conceptualization; today, we seek to associate the workers with that conceptualization.”

Pierre Simon, first president of EDF (former résistant), 1946, quoted in Gabrielle Hecht, The Radiance of France (MIT Press, 1999), 79.
World peace cannot be safeguarded without making creative efforts. An organized and living Europe can make an indispensable contribution to civilization… By taking upon herself for more than twenty years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had peace as her essential aim. A united Europe was not achieved and we had war…

The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the end of the age-old conflict between France and Germany. With this aim in mind, the French Govt proposes that action be taken immediately on one limited but crucial point. It proposes that Franco-German coal and steel production be placed under a common High Authority… The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between Franc and Germany would be not only unthinkable but materially impossible.

May 9, 1950.
Spectacle and Myth of Empire in the Fourth Republic

“I am at the barber’s, and a copy of *Paris Match* is offered to me. On the cover, a young Negro in a uniform is saluting… I see very well what it signifies: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any color discrimination, serve faithfully under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro…”


Little Diouf has come from Ouagadougou [Burkina Faso] with his friends, children of the troops from French West Africa, to open the fantastic spectacle that the French Army will perform at the Sports Palace this week.

**THE RIVA-BELLA SINKS**

Investigators hunt for the cause and relive by photo the ten minutes of horror

**THE TRAGEDY AT LE MANS**
French Empire in 1945 (*la plus grande France* = “greater France”)
Challenges to French Legitimacy in “Indochina,” 1940-1954

Vichy government ruled with support of Japan

1945 brief period of direct Japanese rule

September 2, 1945—Ho Chi Minh and his supporters (Viet Minh) declare independence on basis that “all men are created equal” and “have inalienable right” to “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness”;

1948—France creates “autonomous” Vietnamese State with capital in Saigon (southern Vietnam)

March-May 1954 Dien Bien Phu (10% of French troops in Vietnam killed); French general committed suicide, French government fell; new government (Pierre Mendès France) supported withdrawal

soldier of the French Foreign Legion in military cemetery in Hanoi after ceasefire declared (July 1954); on the tombstone “here lies Vancembrock, dead on the field of honor, 22 April 1954” photo from French Min. of Defense, ECPAD
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Population of Algeria, 1954</th>
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<tr>
<td>9,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,100,000</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
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1830-1850s French military conquest of “Algeria”
1848    Algeria divided into three “departments”
1870    Algerian Jews granted full citizenship
1897    large scale anti-semitic riots
1946    “local” populations in all colonies made “citizens of the French Union”
1954    beginning of war
1958    all Algerians granted full citizenship
Algeria and Orientalism: Cultural Representations and Economic Realities

1946-1954
24.4% of French imports were from the colonies
37.6% of French exports were to the colonies
Sétif Massacre

May 8, 1945  Parade to celebrate German surrender leads to clashes between those carrying “down with fascism and colonialism” banner and local police

May 9-10  attacks on local “European” residents

May 11-20  police reprisals (official death toll: 1,020; other estimates as high as 40,000)
Founding of FLN, 1954

It is about time that the Resistance fighters had their own organ of expression…To be sure, the truth is appearing, even alongside the official French lies… Still, spreading the truth about the War of Independence prolongs our military successes and will consolidate unity. … our goal is to liberate ourselves of colonialist restraints in order to create democracy and equality for all Algerians, regardless of race or religion. …

Editorial to the first issue of *El Moudjahid* (1956).

FLN – “National Liberation Front”

founded by Ben Bella in 1954 (in Cairo)

Ahmed Ben Bella

(1987)
## Costs of the “Events in Algeria”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>French Troops</th>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>83,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>450,000</td>
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(18% of national budget)

### Casualties of “the events in Algeria” 1954-1962

- Algerian nationalists: 150,000 or more
- French military dead: 18,000
- Wounded: 65,000
- *harkis* [Algerians fighting with French army]: 30,000 deaths
From Fourth Republic to Fifth Republic in France

May 13, 1958—formation of “Committee of Public Safety” in Algiers; takes over government buildings in Algeria and Corsica; elects General Massu as “President”

May 19, 1958—De Gaulle says he is willing to enter government, but not under current constitution

June 1, 1958—French National Assembly elects De Gaulle head of government, give him special powers for six months until new constitution can be written

The disarray of the state has inevitably alienated France’s people and brought trouble for her army. For twelve years, the regime of party politics has shown itself too weak to deal with the difficulties it faces, and has led to national dislocation and the loss of independence. In the past, the country in its wisdom trusted me to lead it to salvation [	extit{salut}].

Today, in the face of grave new challenges, I want the country to know that I am again ready to assume the powers of the Republic.

The end of French Algeria?

June 4, 1958  De Gaulle tells French Algerians, “je vous ai compris” (I have understood you)

Jan. 24-Feb. 2, 1960 “Week of the barricades” in favour of Algérie française

Jan. 8., 1961 Referendum in France; 75% in support of Algerian “self determination”

March 18, 1962 Evian Accords grant Algerian independence; European residents given three years in which to decide whether to take Algerian nationality or remain as “foreign nationals”

May-Dec. 1962 “Exodus” of over 700,000 pieds noirs from Algeria