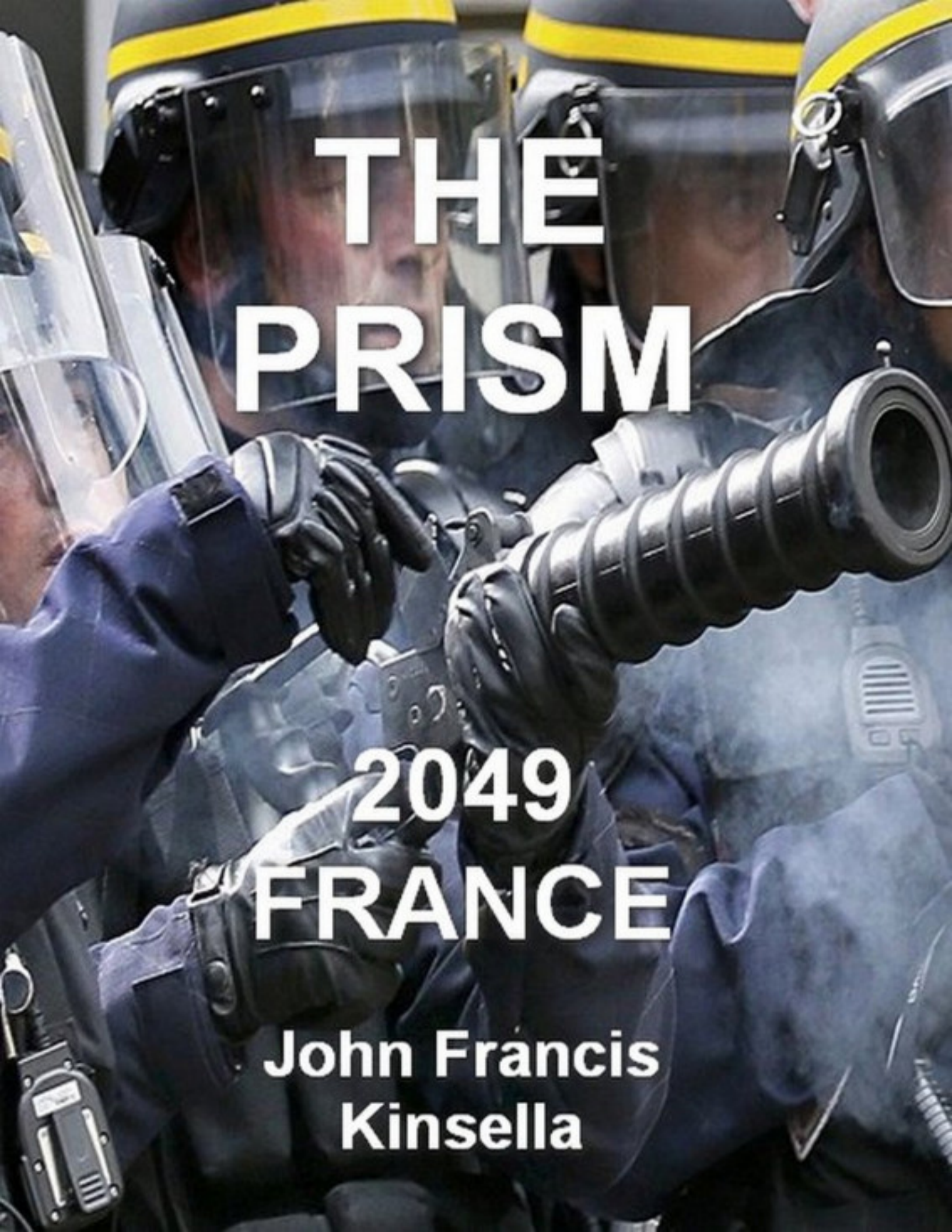
THE
PRISM
2049
FRANCE
John Francis
Kinsella

The Nation of France

THE PRISM

France 2049
a novel by

John Francis Kinsella

Author's Note

This novel was originally written in 1991 and I have altered relatively little in the story as it is told here. Many of the scenarios have come to be: a Middle Eastern Caliphate, the massive flight of refugees towards Europe, the rise of right wing political parties, encroaching Islam - where for example the population of the Parisian suburb St Saint Denis is forty five percent Muslim, the spread of communitarism, the retreat of the UK from the EU and the threat of disintegration of both. This was not by some miraculous foresight, but rather by the simple reading of events at that time and their broad extrapolation. The politicians of Europe and the USA are largely to blame for the situation that exists in the Middle East today and the paths that lay ahead for France the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe are fraught with danger.

John Francis Kinsella, Paris, September 2016

The Prism

Revised edition September 2016

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There is no nonsense so arrant that it cannot be made the creed of the vast majority by adequate governmental action.

Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970)

From us to you. Know that I do not consent to any of your people dwelling amongst us. I myself shall never be reconciled to you, nor shall I permit any dealings with you. Henceforth there shall be no exchange between us save those between Muslims and unbelievers - holy war, as the Almighty has enjoined on us. There is neither authority or power save in God on High.

A Caliph of the Fulani Empire in Africa. Circa 1900

Pauvre banlieue parisienne, paillasson devant la ville où chacun s'essuie les pieds, crache un bon coup, passe, qui songe à elle ? Personne. Abrutie d'usine, gavée d'épandages, dépecée en loques, ce n'est plus qu'une terre

sans âme, un camp de travail maudit, où le sourire est inutile, la peine perdue, terne de souffrance, Paris ‘le cœur de la France’ quelle chanson ! quelle publicité ! La banlieue autour qui crève ! Calvaire à plat permanent, de faim, de travail, et sous les bombes, qui s’en soucie ?

Louis-Ferdinand Destouches (1894-1961)

Introduction

‘Of all things in history the most intangible is Geography’ Bismarck ‘If you think this is impossible you are wrong. Everything and anything is possible, look at history’

This story has its roots in the early part of the twenty first century. During that period Europe and more particularly France had entered a period of intense transformation. In addition to the wave of continued immigration from Muslim countries, the sons and daughters of previous generations of immigrants reached maturity. The Muslim population of France reached eleven million. Islam had replaced Protestantism to a very large degree as the second religion of the country.

Successive governments had encouraged or condoned immigration, without looking further than their next election, without questioning the changes that were taking place in the world, without taking the decisions necessary to integrate the new arrivals into the mainstream population.

The result was a gradual radicalisation of attitudes of both the recent arrivals and the existing population towards each other. Most immigrants felt excluded or discriminated against and many were easily converted to the attitudes of their co-religionists in their countries of origin, who in turn were conditioned by events in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, where Islam was in conflict with the West. The non-Muslim population of France assimilated the immigrants with foreign extremists.

The twentieth century had been one of war, but the event that had most marked its end was the collapse of the Soviet Union. The new century commenced with the first signs that pointed to the end of the oil age; the

end of low priced energy from mostly Muslim countries, compounded by militant Islam the recurrent wars and revolutions in which Islam was the banner. The list crises had become long; Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Chechnya, Pakistan, Algeria, Iran and the Lebanon, aggravated by extremist regimes in Syria, Libya, Iran and the Sudan, or the hard-line Islamic petro-kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.

The cry of a radical Islam that echoed from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic should have alerted the politicians, but they refused to look, afraid of the accusations of racism or discrimination. They lived in the guilt formed by the long shadow that Nazism and Fascism had thrown over Europe. France's leaders were incapable of recognising an enemy.

For one hundred years, from early twentieth century Jerusalem to twenty first century Kabul, the cry for jihad and revenge echoed, resulting in wars and revolutions, terror and death, with the declaration of a new kind of war that started with the attack on Manhattan, a mile stone on the long road that led to the foundation of Algharb.

One morning had changed world; America had discovered its vulnerability. Since its birth no outside force had ever put foot on its home soil.

The Middle East since the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire had been ruled by an endless series of dysfunctional governments, bent on the pursuit of power and wealth, by kings and dictators with their families, clans and henchmen. Not one single state had been ruled democratically or had a democratically elected head of state.

America renounced its dependence on oil, abandoning the false friends of the Middle East to their fate and leaving Europe and its Federation to face the consequences. A huge wave from the Arab world threatened to transform France, as its poor and desperate sought refuge in the land of Liberté, Fraternité et Egalité.

The First Day

John Ennis looked out at the approaching coastline from the window of the decrepit Airbus of ACA Airlines. It seemed as though he hung suspended in the clear sky above the sea which reflected the afternoon sun like a silver mirror. The plane banked into a broad turn, entering its final flight path towards Medina Hurriya, the capital city of Jaziirat al Gharb. He glanced at his watch; it was almost five o'clock, an hour since they had taken off from Algeria, an Emirate of the Arabian Caliphate of Misr-Maghrib.

Jaziirat al Gharb was an autonomous region according to the Evian Agreement, signed in Paris fifteen years previously. It was administered, in theory, by the Nation of France under the tutelage of the European Federation.

Ennis was filled with curiosity; it was his first visit to that young country since travel restrictions to Algharb, as it was generally known, had been lifted for foreign journalists and in particular for Americans.

As the plane descended the airport he saw the sprawling city of Medina Hurriya lying beneath a fine brown haze of pollution. The city centre with its buildings and monuments, built in the characteristic rose coloured stone of the region, stood out against the parched hills that formed its northern boundary, to the west he could make out the endless shantytowns that stretched beyond the city suburbs, almost as far as he could see, covered by the pall of low-level haze.

The plane bounced on the runway, brakied violently then turned towards its gate. Once inside the terminal building Ennis followed the disembarking passengers towards the passport control where he joined one of the slow moving lines. Thirty minutes later he presented his passport to the uniformed official, whose shoulder badge indicated 'Police des Frontiers'.

"Tu vas rester combien de temps?" the official enquired in a curious French accent, whilst closely examining the visa Ennis had obtained at their consulate in Algiers.

"Ten days."

"You're a journalist?"

"Yes, I'm here for my work."

"Have you a permit? A letter from the Ministry?"

“Yes,” Ennis replied, presenting the letter of authorisation from the Ministry of Information of Algharb.

“You were born in London.” It was more of an accusation than a question.

“Yes, my father was Irish and I’m a naturalised American citizen.”

The agent gave him a sneering glance of disapproval, then stamped the passport and shoved it towards him.

“Remember the conditions in the letter. Don’t forget to report your arrival tomorrow morning to the Ministry,” he added referring to the numerous restrictions listed in the letter.

Ennis collected his bag from the carousel and turned towards the customs where he expected problems. He took one of the Green Lanes where a senior customs officer engaged in apparently idle conversation with two men in business suites feigned disinterest, and then with no more than a cursory glance nodded him towards the exit. A few moments later he found himself outside of the arrivals building where he pushed past a small crowd waiting for the newly arrived passengers. Relieved by the relative lack of formalities, he turned his attention to the taxi stand.

He headed to the first available taxi, passing two heavily armed RAS Corps men dressed in black uniforms, who inspected him with a look of contempt. He pulled out the confirmation for the hotel reservation and noted it indicated an address near the Old Port, in the city centre.

The air was stifling with the temperature in the mid-thirties and the humidity like a hamman. For late afternoon it seemed surprisingly quiet for an international airport with little movement outside of the arrivals terminal. He passed his bags to the driver and climbed into the taxi. It was an old model bio-fuel Renault; he noted that the telemedia and tracking system was new, the latest, apart from its frame, which was deeply scratched and twisted along the edges, probably the work of a heavy screwdriver. Perhaps stolen in France, he thought.

“Where to my friend?” asked the driver, in the curious style of French Ennis had remarked at the passport control.

“Hotel Medina Hurriya.”

“Okay, the Sofitel.”

“Maybe, I don’t know.”

“Yeah, before it was the Sofitel, I remember it was already there when I was a kid.”

o0o

The taxi drove at a reckless speed towards the city. On both sides of the autoroute, beyond the grass verge, stood a wall consisting of pre-cast concrete slabs and posts that separated an endless shantytown from the traffic. Here and there a slab was broken or missing, the opening in the wall acted like a doorway onto the autoroute where small groups of adults and children gathered watching the passing traffic. A few of them risked their lives by crossing to a low central dividing rail, which they clambered over to face the stream of traffic from the opposite direction. A small dark skinned boy waited alone, lost, unable to climb the barrier.

It was the only way to reach the shantytown on the other side of the autoroute. Now and then he caught a flashing glance of the miserable huts, mere shelters, built of almost any available material; rusty corrugated steel sheets, old wood from pallets, packing cases and even cardboard. The doors consisted of old blankets draped across the openings. There were carcasses of old cars, washing machines, fridges and other household appliances. A satellite panel stood incongruously on the roof of one of the huts.

The driver observed Ennis in his rear view mirror. “They arrive every day, from the north by train, from Africa by boat. We need money to build houses.” He shrugged as a sign of hopelessness. “They wanted independence, now it’s here. Look at it!” He accelerated to even greater speed as if to escape the landscape of misery.

Ennis had seen such scenes many times before, but he could not help being appalled by the transformation of Algharb from the prosperous land he had known as a student.

The city centre was quite a good distance from the airport and in spite of the light traffic it was almost forty minutes later when the taxi pulled into the forecourt of the hotel.

“Here you are my friend, that’s one hundred and seventy.”

Ennis gave him a two hundred note. The driver dug deep into his pockets with a semblance of searching for the change.

“Keep the change.”

“Thank you my friend, welcome to our country. Allah be with you! Here’s my card, if you need a taxi.... just call me on my phone.”

“Thanks, I’ll do that, bye!”

“Inshallah!”

The hotel was located in the quarter known as the Old Port; it overlooked the harbour with the boats moored at the nearby quay. The view was splendid. The hotel was surrounded by gardens, which were well maintained, it had been one of the best hotels in the city. Inside it was different, it was a little run down with an air of seediness, there had been an evident lack of maintenance and investment. It was no longer the five star establishment indicated in the brochures.

He checked in at the reception desk and filled in the obligatory registration card with his personal details and passport number, which would be transmitted to the police immediately over the net.

The bellboy, who appeared to be not more than fifteen years old, took his bags and pointed the way towards the lifts.

“Where are you from my friend?” said the boy without real interest, using the familiar form of tu.

“I’m from Boston.”

“Boston?”

“Yes, Boston in the USA,” Ennis reaffirmed.

The boy whistled with astonishment.

They arrived at the room door on the fourth floor, which the boy opened with the plastic key card and then carried the bags inside.

“Gimme a dollar my friend” he said in English with a large grin of pleasure and satisfaction at having the rare opportunity to use his few words of English.

Ennis looked in his wallet, selected a five-dollar bill and handed it to the boy, who had just started to show him the appointments of the room.

“Here’s your TS vision!” he said pointing the remote control at a plastic panel that rose with a soft swish exposing a life size mural screen, which lit

up. In one corner was an information window with a menu, in the centre screen an attractive girl stood before them and welcomed John Ennis with a smile.

“Nice,” the bellboy said with a sly smile. He zapped again and the girl disappeared giving way to a mosaic of entertainment channels. “We have all the interactive channels you want, even the French ones!”

Ennis thanked him and the boy left rubbing the five-dollar bill between his fingers with an evident satisfaction.

The bathroom was acceptable, nothing more, hot and cold water ran from the taps and a pile of towels was placed to one side of the washbasin, a row of toilette articles were aligned on the other side. It was clean and quite an improvement compared to Algiers, though it was a little worn and the style rather dated.

He looked at the folder on the writing table; there was a description of the hotel services. It was printed in two languages, French and Arabic. The French was strange, the spelling phonetic, the style colloquial and at worst illiterate, using a very familiar tone with the second person singular form of tu.

He opened his Satpac and switched it on and selected his personal securised uplink. His virtual assistant appeared and informed him with a regretful smile that the link was unavailable at that moment, suggesting that he try a connection via terrestrial cable, alternatively she could inform him later when a link became available.

Shit! Ennis thought, even in Algiers there were few problems with satellite connections. Perhaps he could connect using the hotel links. He glanced around for a connector, there were none. He zapped the TS to the hotel information desk. After a few moments a flustered girl appeared on the TS.

“Good evening Monsieur Ennis, can I help you,” she said with a sour smile.

“Yes, I’d like a secure uplink to a Boston site.”

“Boston? What address?

He gave her the address name and she informed him she would come back in a moment.

He swore silently. They were twenty years behind the times.

The girl from the information desk reappeared back on the TS mural.

“We don’t have a secure uplink to the USA at the moment, there’s a technical problem, the system is down.”

“What!”

He saw her face stiffen.

“I’m sorry, okay, when do you think it will be up again?”

“Maybe a couple of hours.”

“Two hours!”

He realised it was no use insisting.

“Yes, we have to go through Algharb Telecoms.”

"Okay, I’ll try later.”

He was surprised. In the Caliphate there had been little difficulty to communicate with the USA by an uplink, normally Algharb should have been more open. It was obviously not the case.

He looked at the mini-bar then opened it. It was full, cold beer and an array of other drinks. Splendid he thought, it was a great improvement after Algiers and the ACA in-flight service, which were totally dry; alcohol was forbidden throughout the Caliphate. It was more than four weeks since he had drunk a good cold beer; the last was at London, Heathrow, just before his departure. After that it had been as dry as the Sahara, alcohol was even off the drinks list on the Anglia National flight to Cairo in compliance with Caliphate regulations concerning all arriving flights.

o0o

Ennis had agreed to the assignment for several reasons, the most important to him was the research for his new book on European-Arab relations in the third millennium and especially those with the Caliphate of Misr-Maghrib. After that came his bank account and the numerous bills to be paid, those would be settled by his work for the new series being prepared for Global Focus Report. Then there was the series of essays for the Washington based International Herald Post. They required an on-the-

spot account, necessary for his reputation as one of their specialist correspondents in European and Mediterranean Affairs.

In truth, from the outset he had little enthusiasm for passing a whole month in the Caliphate, his real personal and professional interest lay in the Turkish Federation of the Levant rather than North Africa. He had let himself be pressurised by Steiner of Global Focus, who had convinced him that his presence in the Caliphate was necessary; it would give the show greater credibility and a broader view of the more recent developments in the region. Steiner was not a believer in second hand reporting or analysis by desk bound specialists.

The authorities of the Caliphate of Misr-Maghrib had only just started to ease restrictions on foreign journalists. Ennis, a fluent Arabic speaker, had gained a certain respect in the region for his unbiased reporting, which together with the reputation of the serious International Herald Post explained why he was one of the very first American journalists admitted to visit the Caliphate. His visit was carefully supervised in every detail by the Ministry of Information in the belief that his analysis and observations could be influenced to project a positive image.

The events that had provoked the sudden interest of the US media in the Caliphate had been the dramatic forceful expulsion of Muslims from Spain. Fear of the growing Arab population in their country and the endless conflict with the Caliphate over its last Moroccan territories had driven the Spanish government to deport all North Africans to its enclaves in North Africa, Ceuta and Melillia, which were then ceded to the Caliphate as a poisoned gift.

o0o

Ennis had been born in London, but looking back he sometimes had the impression he had spent a large part of his childhood shuttling backwards and forwards between France and England, when his father’s business brought him to Paris. It was normal he grew up bilingual, enjoying his frequent trips to Paris, a kind of escapism that made him a little different from his classmates. Later when his father’s work brought him further abroad, he followed from time to time for vacations, developing a fascination for foreign languages and strange places.

His father’s travels in the Near and Middle East with his endless stories of travels in Israel and Syria drew Ennis to the Orient. He was twenty when he made his first visits to the Levant, first to Istanbul and then Cairo. It was then he decided his future would be in journalism and languages.

He spent a summer in Israel, where his first long encounter with Middle East and its tumultuous history, political complexities and religious conflicts, reinforced his desire to specialise in the languages and history of the region. He continued his studies at the University of London then went on to Oriental Languages at the Sorbonne.

After graduation and acting as a freelance journalist he travelled extensively in the Middle East, earning enough to pay his way, adding valuable practical experience to his academic qualifications. It was during the turbulent period of the Palestinian revolt in the early years of the century that his reports and analysis were published in The Times of London.

Ennis then joined the Middle East desk at the International Herald Post in Washington where he slowly gained the respect of his colleagues not only by his objectivity, but also because of his language skills and knowledge of the complexities of the Islamic world.

A reputation was established with the publication of his essays and books, the first real success being a book on the future of oil and Islamic relations with the West. It was a warning to Western governments of the rapidly growing radicalisation of Arab political thought towards a totally Islamic society. A political concept he had alluded to as being more suited to an 8th century Arabia, though in spite of that certainly more relevant to the Arab world’s historical and cultural traditions as it was not born of foreign ideology.

The Arab world's rejection of Western political philosophy was in a great measure due to their difficulty to democratise their institutions and modernise their economies, but also the inability of the West to help them to resolve their conflict with Israel, which had burnt for more than a century.

Ennis then joined the team of WWN, the leading worldwide news channel, which brought its viewers to the heart of the world's hot spots in real time with TS Vision. He contributed, as a Middle East specialist, to the

WWN series, Global Focus that analysed the events behind major international developments.

o0o

With nothing more to do he passed the time putting a little order in his notes, his professional instinct obliged. Each day he prepared notes and ideas for the series based on his interviews and observations, he prepared a background presentation of the relevant reference material that could be used for the viewer's comprehension of the sequence.

First he scribbled the outline in an old fashioned note pad, then worked over the details, formatted it on his portable, before finally transmitting it by a secure uplink to the team in Boston, who then assembled relative archive footage and other material, which would form the base for the series once he had returned home.

He ordered a light meal in his room and reflected on the last weeks he had spent travelling across the Caliphate. It nagged him that the theme of the series seemed to be inconclusive; there was a lack of something solid, something that would hold the attention of the viewers.

An hour later he abandoned hope of a obtaining a secure uplink to Boston. He stood up and admired the night view across the harbour and looking up at the sky, mused that with a permanent station on the moon and manned flight to Mars, Medina Hurriya had not even a normal uplink to Boston, though it could have been a political issue. He figured that he would no doubt find the answer to that question the next day.

He took the last beer from the mini-bar and dropped onto his bed. He was tired but pleased to have almost completed his job with the perspective of returning home in just a few more days. He sipped his beer and took a last look at his notes before calling it a day.

Memorandum

WWN Boston

To: John Steiner

From: John Ennis

Global Focus Series - Special Feature Report

Islam, Oil and Algharb

The Decline of Oil, Consequences and Effects on the Arab World

The object of our new Special Report series, now in preparation, is to present the viewers of Global Focus, in association with the International Herald Post, an understanding of how the decline of oil, as a low cost energy resource, has effected the events that have led up to the present day situation in the Arab World, the birth of the Caliphates and Algharb, and consequences oil has had in relation to climate change.

The report will be broken down into a four or five part series that features the changing political role of Islam in the new Caliphates with an overview on the progression of Islam in Europe and more notably in Algharb.

The series will examine step by step the effects of the decline of oil on political development and the progression of nationalism as it stands in the European Federation today. To this effect I have composed my description with a series of background segments to be developed so as to provide explanations that would assist viewers in the understanding the geopolitical transformation that has taken place in Europe. These features are based on archive material and on my field research in the Caliphate and Algharb together with discussions held with the production team.

The recurrent need to explain to each generation the reason why the world is what it is and where it is and to predict where it is going is the role of serious analytical journalism. Why the world is polarised into an endless conflict between religious and political philosophy.

Oil had given an exaggerated political and strategic importance to the Middle East for more than one hundred years compounded by the State of Israel. Until the end of WWII the Suez Canal had been critical to the British

Empire's link with its possessions and dominions. Without free access through the canal and the Red Sea India, Malaysia, Hongkong, Australia and New Zealand would have been more distant from England. It was necessary therefore to control the strategic ports and lands along the shipping routes to the East: Egypt, Palestine, Arabia and Aden.

The end of WWI saw the conjunction of two new elements: the acquisition of new territories, chiefly Iraq, and the discovery of oil in Persia. This extended Britain's strategic needs to the control of the Persian Gulf. The importance of the Arabs grew, as they were critical to the stability of the numerous interests in the region.

After WWII all the countries of the Middle East gained their total independence from the colonial powers. They also gained control of their resources that included oil and the Suez Canal. With the Cold War, the East and West vied for influence and control in the region, money and arms flowed in as oil prices rocketed in the seventies.

All that should have led to development in those lands, which had been traditionally poor in revenues and influence, but somehow things went wrong. The question was what exactly went wrong?

The population of the Arab countries totalled nearly seven hundred million who were endowed with a rich cultural heritage, a great religion that had spread out in all directions from its source in Arabia, and beyond the Arab world to countries as far and as different as Indonesia, Nigeria, the Balkans and Russia.

Rarely a leader of any of the twenty-two Arab states voluntarily gave up power, democracy was non-existent in the Western sense, elections were a sham. The rulers used the obeisance of Islam to smother all forms of free expression or legitimate protestation from their people especially their youth, stifled by the burden of conservative religious tradition.

Economic and industrial development outside of oil and gas was rare with the exception of a few minor emirates. More than thirty percent of men of working age were unemployed, even more were underemployed, whilst the majority of women were confined to the home, almost none existent in the work place in most of the Arab countries.

Non-existent economic growth with a burgeoning population was a formula for disaster. Most Arab countries were governed by men who were

chosen for the relations and not their capacities to govern, it was as if the ancient tribal system governed by patriarchs continued, totally unsuited to the vast populations that had sprung up with accelerating speed over the previous two or three generations.

Whilst the Arabs were generally passive - from their earliest age they are taught to respect tradition, authority and Islam - they were highly volatile when provoked.

Little of the petro-dollars trickled down to the ordinary man; one fifth of the population lived on less than two Euros a day. The vast armies of unemployed and embittered Arabs turned towards the hope offered to them by the Islamic revolutionaries such as Rashidun.

At the beginning of the century the Arabs governments cracked down with extreme severity on Islam, an attitude that was little understood by their populations, who saw Islam as the foundation stone of their world. The Islam that preached justice, peace, tolerance and charity, which had above all defended Arab values and the Arab world against infidel invaders. The American intervention in Iraq linked with the widespread lack of political freedom led to economic disaster as the wave of upheavals and change flowed across the Arab world.

Oil with its petro-dollars had powered a revival of Islam for a century after the fall of the first Ottoman Empire. The re-emergence of the Arab's and their religion had marked the twentieth century's history of the Middle East. Their religion had become a world religion spreading across Asia to the frontiers of China and deep into Africa, it had made new in-roads into Western Europe where it had struggled for centuries to establish itself.

Iran, dependant on oil revenues, in its confrontation with the West found itself encircled and unable to transform its political gains in Iraq and the Lebanon. The result was that it slowly found itself overshadowed by a more open and dynamic Turkey and its unlikely alliance with Israel, thus capable of countering any nuclear threat.

The question was whether Islam had the force to pursue its conquests now that Oil Age and its riches were receding into history. The political force of Islam had momentarily been stimulated by great wealth and their confrontation through the intermediary of Palestine with the Judeo-Christian world.

The events which had marked the first half of the century were brought about by the decline of oil, events that transformed the Arab world. The first was the failure of the United States to consolidate its position in Iraq followed by the fall of the House of Saud and a redistribution of power in a new Arabia. The second was the return of the Turks, sometimes referred to as the resurgence of a new version of the Ottoman Empire. The collapse of Syria after the first Water War and the creation of the Greater Levant, under the Jerusalem-Ankara axis, had brought a new peace and stability to the Near East, though recurring drought had impoverished extensive regions lying to the south and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Basin.

The non-development of the Arab and Islamic world had far reaching consequences, forcing the citizens of many of its countries to seek the life that they could not find at home overseas, especially in Europe; the result was de facto colonies in several member states of the Federation, but more in particular in France.

As a consequence a profound change had taken place, in the very heart of Europe and in its civilisation. Islam had taken root in historic France, transforming, under the very eyes of blind politicians and almost without warning, part of Provence into Algharb, an Islamic colony on the northern shores of the Mediterranean.

Ennis

Today, 16 May, after ten days I finally got hold of John Steiner, he’s the producer of Global Focus. It was urgent that I come up with something solid for our Special Feature Report series, ‘Islam, Oil and Algharb’.

Sure there's plenty of content for the series but for the moment it's not really the exciting kind of stuff for the worldwide prime time transmission of Global Focus, ‘consequences and effects’ seems to be vague or elusive. The Islamic stuff is old rope, good for historians and geopolitical specialists, but for our kind of viewers, something new is needed.

“Well where are you? Do I have anything to start with?”

Steiner was giving me shit. The Caliphate was dying on its feet. There was misery, hunger, corruption and the rest, so what! That could be found in any one of a dozen places around the world.

“Look it’s not so easy here, you want me to come up with something serious!”

“Serious ! that I don’t know, we need something to interest our viewers.”

What did he think? That there was a revolution around the corner? I'm an academic, a political analyst, not a fucking variety show scriptwriter. That bastard Steiner's out to make trouble.

“What do you think? I’m a political writer! You know staid stuff, for serious people, not sensational front page stuff.”

“Okay, okay, so tell me what you’ve got, is there anything new?”

“New! Not exactly, but as I’ve just arrived in Algharb it’s not surprising. My first impressions are that it looks very different, it’s interesting, it looks promising I need some time to put my ideas together.” I told him searching around for convincing ideas.

“Okay.”

“I’ve started to prepare something and I think you’ll like it, a sort of contrast, it could be interesting.”

“Contrast?”

“Here it looks something totally different.”

“Tell me about it then.”

“It goes back a long way, I’ve tried to analyse the situation and it does look interesting.”

“What’s your analysis then?”

“First there’s the evident decline of the Caliphate, I mean stagnation, drought, encroaching desert…. Then there’s a kind of a new nationalism in France and Europe.” I tried to sound enthusiastic.

Steiner had heard that one. It had been making stories in the heavier news reviews for a couple of years now. Maybe the moment had come. He knew that political decisions lead down some strange roads. Most of the time things moved along somehow, but from time to time there was a drift

to catastrophic change. Steiner felt that Europe was approaching a point where the balance of force could provoke decisions of that nature. In the past there had been enough precedents; Germany, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Iraq. Then there was Israel; he knew, he was a Jew.

"Tell me about it then."

"You've got time?"

"Sure."

"Well, it seems to me that there is little question that the decline of the Caliphate is not disconnected with the expulsion of the Muslim population from Spain."

"There's nothing new in that," he said without any aggressive sign in his voice. "But go on, tell me why."

"First was its incapacity to react."

"React?"

"Yeah, it was powerless, unable to do anything more than make weak political protests and its usual gesticulations, naturally without the slightest effect on the Federation."

"I suppose you're right, any threat from them was empty."

"Of course, they've got arms, medium range crap, bought from China, what do you expect, they couldn't frighten Europe with one of the best shields around."

The world had looked on as the Caliphate acted in the only way it could, assisting with the means it had in the tragic transhumance from Spain to North Africa. Their navy consisted of a fleet of outdated and poorly maintained vessels. What had once been the pride of El Rashidun was no more than a ragtag assembly of patched-up wrecks, though they were certainly more reliable than the flying coffins of the Caliphate's air force, planes that even their pilots had refused to fly, built in Egypt under licence from Turkey.

"I imagine that there was a certain air of revenge in the Federation?"

"They loved it. As soon as oil and natural gas no longer counted the Arabs had had it as far as they were concerned."

“You’re right there, luckily for us the world’s transport, power and heating doesn’t need their oil any more, they had it good for over a century. Now that demand has gone down so have their revenues!”

“You’re right there.”

“The newly rich have become newly poor,” Steiner laughed.

o0o

It was a fact that over the years fossil fuels had been progressively replaced by a variety of alternative energy sources. Each country made its contribution, probing the advantages and disadvantages of new technologies. Europe opted for improved and cleaner nuclear power generation utilities feeding the electricity grids that interlinked the member states of the Federation, others experimented with bio-fuels for urban public transport. The USA concentrated its efforts on the development and application of fuel cells and plasma generators. The new motors that now equip goods vehicles and automobiles run on cheap, abundant, hydrogen gas produced by onboard electrolysis of ultra-pure water.

The major oil companies had had no choice but to diversify into new energy industries. They invested in the construction and operation of production plants for ultra-pure water and hydrogen gas, and the development of new chemical compounds derived from the plasma processes.

The remaining oil rich countries had integrated their oil resources downstream, it still remained an important raw material for the petro-chemical refining industries, which were delocalised from Europe and rebuilt near to the major oil wells.

What was once the nightmare of Europe, an oil embargo, had faded like a mirage and the advantages of relocation became evident, the obvious being finally admitted; petro-chemical and refining industries were highly polluting, and worse the profitability had waned. It was a gift from heaven for the major oil companies who proudly proclaimed their commitment to the environment by their decision to close their polluting refineries in Europe and the USA.

The refineries were shut down and shipped to the oil producing countries where they were re-built to continue their operations. The leaders of those

countries were delighted to announce the creation of new jobs. For the consumers in the West the advantage were double, not only have they rid themselves of a polluting industry but also the cost of imported oil based products went down. The refineries are now operated with cheap local labour and as a result lower prices for their products.

o0o

“That's exactly what happened! In the majority of cases they’ve become poorer.”

“Unfortunately for them demand has started to decline and will continue to do so.”

“Tough luck. Listen, replacement of fossil fuels by alternative energy sources, everybody knows that. What we want for Global Focus is something with punch, something that’s worth bouncing across the link to our subscribers. Remember ninety-nine point nine people on this planet are still concerned with their daily needs, resources, food, water, peace.”

“Well we can reassure them.”

“We don’t want to reassure the bastards. We want to frighten them into buying news, news on a changing world, a menacing world.”

“Yeah, hang on, let me think about that, my business is finding the facts, yours is putting a story together.”

“Okay, okay.”

“The younger viewers don’t know the complete story today, it could be interesting.”

“Good, something to get them to tune into Global Focus.”

“Well, what happened to oil changed the world.”

“What’s going to happen next, what’s going to ruin their holidays?”

“Let me explain.”

“What happened to the petro-dollars for example?”

“Let me tell you, they spent them. There’s nothing left, at least almost. Oil’s been replaced in most of its traditional uses, such as for plastics, by other abundant raw materials, bye-products of the hydrogen and oxygen

production processes. All that's a result of progress in science and technology in the West!"

"Get on to something interesting."

"Well now the Europeans are getting aggressive, exerting their recently rediscovered power."

"Okay."

"I think it's good to get into the history of it a bit."

"It could be interesting. Look, get some notes and ideas over and we'll talk about it as soon as I've read them, break the thing into several clearly defined chapters, after all it is a series!"

o0o

The fall of Saudi Arabia seemed like a good starting point - an outline of the causes that had led to the decline in the demand for oil and how the fall in prices had upset the balance of power in the Middle East. Explaining how it had affected the economies of the petro-dollar kingdoms and how it had progressively reduced the advantages of the welfare state and the subsidies that enormous revenue in petro-dollars had allowed countries like Saudi Arabia to lavish on its citizens.

It seemed to him that it would be good to recall to the viewers how the Universal Caliphate of Mecca had replaced the House of Saudi in Arabia was essential an essential part of the story, it was not only a pivotal moment in the history of the Middle East, but a drama with good viewing sequences.

It was important to dramatise the series with archive films describing how economic pressures had progressively weakened the Royal Family's hold on power. There was a lot of powerful footage available documenting how a group of army officers, who had called themselves the Young Arabians, mostly drawn from the middle classes, had attempted to install a modern democratic society through a coup directed against the regime that they accused of corruption, greed, hypocrisy and immorality. The drama had unwound with their attack on the Royal Palace in Riyadh; it was a blood bath that ending in the death of the King and a great many members of his extended family.

Then there would be an overview of the background events that gave rise to the political instability that was now threatening the European Federation

with new forms of Nationalism. Explaining how and why it was linked to North Africa and the Middle East.

The events of recent decades would form the geo-political background to the series. John Ennis had spent the last weeks interviewing the key actors and studying the consequences of those events. A mass of documents and reports had been accumulated and many of the sites visited. What did it all mean? He felt sure that the answer lay there before him in Algharb.

In a little more than a week he would be back in Boston. It was urgent to finalise the definition of the ‘consequences’ that would form the backbone of the series. The problem was that the obvious consequences could be seen but where would they lead to? That's what people wanted to know. Events that could have seemed isolated over a period of time were part of a greater change that was redefining the relations between the Western and Oriental worlds for generations to come.

The more he thought of dramatic changes in Arabia the more he realised how it had set the scene for another about turn in history. At the outset the Young Arabians had been supported by elite army elements from Oman and the Emirates whose motives were a mixture of Pan-Arabism and a desire to control the still significant oil wealth of Saudi Arabia.

He remembered the during the confusion of the five-day battle for control of Riyadh, as rebels and army units loyal to the King were locked in combat, Islamic forces, whose vision of the future was completely different, infiltrated the country from the Yemen seizing the Holy City of Mecca and then Jeddah on the Red Sea. Medina had quickly sided with the Islamic forces, to the north the Iraqi Revolutionary Army took advantage of the turmoil and swept down the east coast taking control of Dhahran and other key ports on the Persian Gulf.

Ennis felt it would be interesting would be to try to unravel the exact order of events that followed, most of which still remain under a cover of rumour and mystery, but in any event it was now clear was that the forces that were to form the Universal Caliphate of Mecca had been in the wings waiting for their moment to come. They had immediately taken the advantage of the bloody collapse of the house of Saud and the confusion that ensued, sweeping up the Red Sea coast taking the elitist Young

Arabians by complete surprise and quickly gaining control of the centre and south of the Arabian Peninsula.

Immediately the Holy City of Mecca had been secured the Islamists forces declared a Universal Caliphate, which initially included the Yemen, but also appealed to the faithful of Iraq, Syria, Jordan and all the other states of the Arabian Peninsula to join them against the unbelievers. The Caliph of Mecca, the successor of Muhammad and spiritual head of Islam, called on the believers to obey God, and obey his Messenger and those in authority, and to join them in a sacred jihad, the goal of which was to unit all the believers under the banner of Muhammad, against those who refused to obey the word of God as written in the Holy Koran. Thousands of princes and their families were then massacred in an indescribable reign of terror with public beheadings.

The House of Saud had seriously underestimated the power of Islamic politics and the loyalty of its common subjects in a period of growing economic crisis. The loyalty to the King had been gravely undermined by the growth of the immigrant population, non-citizens, thirty percent of the population, mainly Muslims from Pakistan and India, who had little civic or political rights in the kingdom, though it was they who had long provided the manpower and efforts to build the country into a modern state.

What would be interesting for American viewers would be to be to elucidate how the USA government of that time had been taken by surprise and the speed of the events, with previously unsuspected forces emerging and transforming the Kingdom into a new Caliphate almost overnight. Washington had been powerless before the fait accompli, but to the general astonishment to the world, after decades of interventionism, the administration attached a low degree of interest in the events, which in fact signalled the end of the de facto American protectorate.

It would be necessary to point out how the roots went back to 2001, when the USA had been first been confronted with a painful truth, discovering that fifteen of the nineteen terrorists who had attacked the Twin Towers were Saudi nationals. The Kingdom that they had considered as one of their closet and privileged partner was in reality a hotbed of militant Islamism and one of the most intolerant regimes on the planet, financing and promoting radical Islamic parties from Africa to Asia.

During the East-West Cold War, Saudi Arabia had been the principal source of energy for the USA and a valuable ally. It was an arrangement that suited both countries, as the petro-dollar revenues were recycled back to the USA, either by the sale of arms, or by the investment in Treasury Bills, or in the New York Stock Exchange.

At the same time when the majority of Arabs had lived in distress and misery the countless princes and princesses in the Saudi royal family led a life of extraordinary luxury in the playgrounds of the rich in Europe, a life style that was exactly opposite to that preached by the Koran. Saudi Arabia counted forty million inhabitants, of whom more than thirty percent were unemployed at the time when the decline of oil started to bite. Already the population had seen their standard of living decline with the average salary plunging to a mere twenty percent of what it had earlier known, as the princes continued to shamefully squander the nation’s wealth in a frenzy of spending on yachts, jets and palaces. Fabulous sums of money were thrown away on the tables of the most exclusive casinos in France and Spain, as princes with their extravagant entourages lived for months at a time in luxury hotels and palaces.

Arabia as a result was separated into two new states, totally opposed to each other, the Universal Caliphate based in Mecca, and the Greater Arabian Emirates. The latter a federation of states, composed of the Nejd, Al-Hasa, and the Gulf coastal region under Riyadh that were joined by the United Arab Emirates with Muscat and Oman to the east, and Kuwait to the west. It was a union of fear with the constant threat from the Revolutionary United Iraqi forces, forever seeking revenge for their past humiliations, under yet another dictator, a brutal Iraqi leader whose pretended friendship with the USA was nothing more than a façade, dissimulating Baghdad's eternal dream of re-establishing a great and glorious Caliphate under their own leadership.

Iraq, exhausted by decades of turmoil, had fallen into the hands of a pseudo-Islamist tyrant, a revolutionary who threw off Iran’s influence, jealously building his own power base on the divisions of the Shiite population, rallying the Kurds, who had not realised their dream of independence, and on the dollars that continued to flow from the still significant oil wealth the country possessed.

What irked many Americans was the fact that Iraq, decades after their rout, still dreamed of doing what Saddam Hussein had failed to accomplish almost half a century earlier, though almost to the indifference of their government. The strategic interests of America were no longer governed by the need of Arab oil. New technologies had rendered them almost invulnerable and indifferent to the endless disputes of the Middle East.

Why had America not foreseen the revolution? The fact was that their hands were tied. They could not substitute themselves for the Saudi rulers; they were not free to move troops and vehicles wherever they chose to move them. The US forces were forced to sit and watch from their main bases in nearby Qatar as the events unrolled, and though they moved in reserves and equipment to their bases, they were practically paralysed by the indifference of home politics.

The rebels were Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula, who naturally knew their home territory and its peoples, their language and dialects, their reactions and loyalties. The revolution was on a parallel to that which had taken place in Iran fifty or sixty years earlier.

Finally, in conclusion to the first part of the series, the role of the Turks in the Levant would be described, showing how they had stepped into the fray, taking advantage of the Arab's weakness and the American disinterest in the Middle East. They, with the Israelis, rolled the eastern Mediterranean Arab states into their Greater Levant, protected from the Universal Caliphate by the sands of the Nafud Desert.

A second number in the series should present the viewers of Global Focus with the less known recent history of the Arab states of North Africa. The countries that had formed the Western Caliphate under El Rashidun, a charismatic leader who had succeeded in unifying those countries for the first time since the 17th century under the Ottoman Empire.

Though an Islamic confederation, it was clear that it had not been the banner of Islam that bound them together, rather an extraordinary leader. Unfortunately for them their unification did little to improve the almost catastrophic economic situation of their young populations, impoverished by the scarce resources in the vast arid regions of North Africa, amongst the lands most affected by climate change.

It seemed to me that few people outside of France interested themselves in the decline of North Africa, which had commenced in the early years of the century with the successive crisis in Algeria. It was Egypt that drew the attention of the world to the changes with the arrival to power of the Islamic extremists. This had followed the brutal guerrilla war in Israel during which Egypt, to the disgust of a large part of its population, had not intervened. The war had depleted the economies of the region, the collapse of tourism and foreign investment, as well as damping the aggressive spirit of the different protagonists. The result of the war was a sullen compromise.

The changes hoped for in the Kingdom of Morocco after the death of Hassan II had not occurred. The country slipped into a stupor as hope of liberalisation evaporated as its introverted king stifled the palace and clamped down on the hope for reforms and on his populist cousin.

It was the tragic death of the young King in Morocco that accelerated the process of change, which had in any case already been under way, sweeping out the privileged classes and more especially the Francophiles.

Huge demonstrations in Rabat had commenced in favour of the Muslim control of Jerusalem. More than one million demonstrators marched to the Parliament building where they were joined by government members and parliamentarians. Before the iron gates of the Parliament they were met by armed riot police panicked by the size of the crowd and the hostile shouts.

The demonstrators included trade unions and political organisations joined by student movements shouting anti-government slogans, as Islamist militants shouted ‘there is no God but God, it’s for him we live and it’s for him we die’.

When the anger of the crowd turned towards the King and his family the police barricaded the iron gates and the prime minister fled in panic by a side door to the nearby railway station after realising that the demonstration had suddenly transformed into an anti-government protest. The enraged crowd attacked the police with stones and a shot was fired.

At the very heart of the Palace a fundamentalist Islamic cell bent on the fall of the Monarchy by any means went into action.

Morocco’s youth with its masses of unemployed graduates accused the king of not making the necessary reforms in the country’s education system, its universities were seen by the palace as a hot bed of protestation, they

condemned his continued refusal to extend parliamentary power. The only hope for the uneducated youth of the country was across the straits in Alcigeras.

A revolutionary government was formed by an alliance between the Islamists and the army following the fall the Alawis', a dynasty that had ruled Morocco since 1631. In the general euphoria that followed, and in the name of Allah, Morocco chose to join the Islamic Union with their brothers in Egypt and Algeria.

The European Federation and especially France looked on hypnotised as the events unfolded. What they had most feared had come about with an astonishing rapidity. The Federation could only observe the changes to the south and east of the Mediterranean with a deepening sense of unease.

The events in Algeria in the early years of the century had provoked the first great exodus of intellectuals and political refugees. Those who fled the chaos included not only political refugees, but also a mass of economic refugees, both qualified professionals and opportunists, fleeing the growing misery and poverty.

The arrival in Marseille and Paris of tens of thousands of Algerian refugees resulted in the fall of the Social Democratic Party's government. Two years later with the fall of the Morocco monarchy, a second wave of refugees arrived. The population of North Africans in France doubled within the space of ten years.

The right wing political founder of the Nationalist Party had not lived long enough to see his party lead a coalition to form a new government. It was in a furore of xenophobia that the coalition of fortune tried to lead a politically weakened country, tied in a greatly enlarged European Federation, dominated by Germany and its powerful political allies from the Nordic and Central European states.

The next morning Ennis was woken from a deep sleep by the shrill beeping from the TS speakers. He sat up in his bed and aimed the zapper at the screen and a man appeared.

“Ennis?”

“Yes, it’s me.”

“Welcome to Algharb!”

“Thank you.”

“It’s me, Abdelhamid from the Ministry of Information.”

“Ah! Hello! How are you?”

“Fine and you?”

“Fine!”

“Good.”

Ennis swung out of bed, he saw from the bottom of the mural an icon that indicated that the room camera was in the off position.

“I’m coming to your hotel! I’m your assistant whilst you're here, your guide if you like. I’m now going to drive you to the Director General, Monsieur Djellali Madani!”

“Good, at what time? Ennis looked at his watch.

“Now if you like. I’m in the lobby.”

“In the lobby?”

“Yes.”

“But....”

Shit, Ennis thought to himself.

“Okay. No problem, give me ten minutes.”

“No problem my friend, I’ll be here when you arrive, take your time.”

“Ten minutes, okay.”

Ennis pressed the off button. He still felt a little sleepy even though he had passed a good night, the bed had been comfortable and the room temperature agreeable. He had been awakened at dawn by the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer from the minaret of the small mosque nearby

the hotel; it had not prevented him from falling asleep again without any difficulty. The arrival of a man from the ministry had not really surprised him, the last four weeks in the Arab Caliphate had reminded him of the impromptu oriental way of doing things.

Forty minutes later the Ministry car dropped Ennis and his guide Abdelhamid, a brash young man of about thirty, in front of a building situated high on the slopes overlooking city. The facade was in an imposing rose coloured limestone. It had been constructed in the sixties under the French administration Abdelhamid told him with a satisfied smile. A large bronze plaque announced in French and Arabic ‘Ministry of Information’.

Abdelhamid presented Ennis’s passport to the reception and a chaouch guided them to an office on the second floor, leaving them with the Director General’s secretary. She pressed a button and a few instants later a green light on her desk indicated they could proceed and she ushered them into an imposing office.

Ennis was surprised, the General Director of Foreign Relations was obviously French, there was no mistaking it.

“Ennis, my friend!” he said smiling and advancing towards him with his hands outstretched and the palms facing upwards.

“Tap there!”

Ennis though a little surprised had already observed the style of greeting in the hotel lobby and then with Abdelhamid, he tapped his hands down on those of the General Director's.

“So how are you my friend?” He did not leave him the time to reply. "Welcome to our country, all our friends are welcome."

He was French, but his accent was like that of a Francophone Arab or a pied-noir. He was about fifty years old and well dressed, wearing an expensive and fashionable suit.

The office was not unlike those of Djellali's contemporaries that Ennis had observed in the Caliphate countries, though it was better maintained and the details were more stylish, giving the appearance of a certain affluence.

“Tell me Ennis, is this your first visit to our country?”

“Yes, as you know I’ve just arrived from Algiers.”

“Yes of course. Here it’s different, over there they are traditionalist, you know, the Caliphate and Islam. Here it’s more like Paris if you like and of course we’re a secular state.”

“Yes, I’m sorry,” said Ennis trying to excuse the ignorance perceived by the General Director.

“Don't worry, it’s nothing. There’s no excuses between friends,” Djellali said smiling and with a broad forgiving gesture of his hands.

“But don’t forget that the majority of us are Muslims, not in exactly the same manner as those in the Caliphates, but you know like Christians in Paris. There are no obligations, religion is a personal affair, we are free, not fundamentalists. It’s the desire of our President to make a compromise between fundamentalism with its strict application of the principals of Islam and an Islam turned towards the modern world. In our country we have no conflicts such as between the advocates of a religious theocracy and that of a secular society.”

“I understand,” replied Ennis in a conciliatory tone.

“You have to understand there is nothing more normal than to be a Muslim in our country. However, our President Hassan bin Ibrani is totally against all forms of extremism, whether they are religious or political.”

The secretary reappeared carrying a tray of oriental cakes and a pot of mint tea.

“Tea! What a good idea. Now we can talk about the reason for your assignment in Algharb.”

“It’s not exactly an assignment, that's to say that I have several objectives. As you are aware I am a journalist and a writer, specialised in European-Arab relations.”

“Ah, a reporter.”

“I’m not a reporter as such. My job is to analyse events and developments for the viewers of Global Focus, and the readers of the Washington newspaper the International Herald Post.”

“I’m right then, there is a newspaper,” he said disingenuously.

“Yes, but my role is to analyse situations.”

“I see, a subtle difference.”

“Then there is of course the preparation of a new book that I am writing.”

“So in a manner of speaking you will examine our performance in political and foreign relations?” said Djellali playing with Ennis.

“I don’t have any specific political interests or inclinations.”

“I see,” he said smiling and easing up.

“As I mentioned one of the reasons for visiting your country is also to collect material for a new book. It examines events over the last twenty-five years in the Islamic world. The book will explain how they have affected the evolution of Europe today.”

Djellali could not resist a smile and turned his head towards the large window of his office from which a splendid view of the port could be admired.

“Effectively, we are very close to Europe today, n’est ce pas?”

“Quite so.”

“Well John Ennis, I'm entirely at your disposition, today our governments policy is directed towards the development of relations with Europe and more especially our friend, France. It’s true that we've had some difficult times in the past, but today we are turned towards the future. For our independence and self determination it is necessary.”

“My objective, Monsieur Djellali, is not to present any partisan opinions. I simply wish to write an informative and balanced history of the changes that have led to present day Europe and the nearby Arab world. My book will be mainly addressed to readers of less than say forty years old, people who are not at all familiar with those events.”

“Interesting.”

“Yes, perhaps I’ll call my book a Bridge Between Two Worlds’”.

“A good title. Well I’m at your entire disposal and I suggest that you commence with a short guided visit to our beautiful and historic capital. After that Abdelhamid will take over, you understand that unfortunately I have many other responsibilities. Tomorrow evening we can dine together ... it’s true that this is your first visit to Algharb?”

“Absolutely. I have visited France in the past, but it’s really my first visit to your country,” Ennis replied with a smile.

“Excellent!”

North Africa

Of course the birth of the Western Caliphate and Algharb would be one of the key elements of the series. After a more general introduction, the events that led up to the creation of the Western Caliphate would be examined in more detail, including the effects of climatic change on the economies of its member states that ranged from the Red Sea to the Atlantic. How it had been founded by the unification of the North African Arab countries under the leadership of El Rashidun, the ‘Guide’.

The charismatic Guide had been a 21st century Ataturk, born into a modest family in a small village in Kabylie, a Berber region lying in the mountainous northern part of Algeria. Like all Algerians he was a Muslim, though not all the Muslims of Algeria were Arabs. At the beginning of the 21st century there were almost five million Berbers in Algeria and another ten million in neighbouring Morocco, they were the descendents of the pre-Arab peoples of North Africa, as in fact were the majority of North Africans, who had undergone arabization over many hundreds of years. The Berbers had been converted to Islam following the Arab conquest of the 7th century, though many had retained their languages and their traditions.

El Rashidun was not unlike another inspired leader, the son of a blacksmith, the champion of the Iranian working man who promised to put ‘oil income on people’s tables’. He like others before him had failed to raise living standards or prevent galloping inflation and unemployment, in spite of vast oil revenues of his country, which alone represented more than 80% of its export earnings.

Few details are known of Umar Rashid’s early life other than the fact he had been remarked by the local Imam, who arranged he be sent to a Koranic school in a larger nearby town. As in all such schools religious studies and

classical Arabic were at the centre of the curriculum, followed by Arabic literature and history. At thirteen he was sent to the Lycée in Tizi-Ousou, where at the age of seventeen he obtained the highest marks in the baccalaureate for the region.

Like all young Algerians, Rashid entered the army for his national service at the age of eighteen. He attended officer's training school with one year at the Egyptian Military Academy in Heliopolis, where he learnt English and discovered the military traditions inherited from the British. His training was completed at the French Ecole de Guerre in Paris where he graduated with brilliant results.

His experience overseas transformed him into a nationalist, proud of the history of his people, the Berbers, and his country Algeria and he dreamed of the rebirth of a glorious Arab Andalusia in North Africa. A brilliant young officer, a fervent Muslim with an unswerving dedication to his men and Pan Arabism, he was propelled to the rank of general, the youngest in the Algerian army. His charisma and mysticism won him the name El Rashidun from his men.

El Rashidun, as most military men, was trained to respect and defend the leaders of the military junta that ruled the country, in spite of the evident corruption of the system, a junta that had uninterruptedly held power since its independence from France. However, when the simmering civil war spread, he found himself unable to condone the atrocities committed with the encouragement of the military government, and by many of his fellow officers against the civilian population.

His sympathies lay with the Islamists, men of God, whom he had always respected as a believer. Approached by anti-governmental resistance groups he provided help and vital information, secretly joining the Popular Islamic Front. It was crystal clear that the government was about to lose control; demonstrations and violence in Kabylie had spread to other parts of the country. As the daily death toll rose, he had little choice but to openly side with the rebels, finally taking control of the PIF Revolutionary Army. His military leadership and outstanding organisational skills enabled the Islamists to quickly occupy most of the country with the exception of the capital and a few coastal cities.

Following his election to the Front's governing council he became one its leading figures. Then after the movement's religious leader was shot down by a government commando, the Front called on the population of Algiers to rise; the military junta that had governed the country for over forty years fell, the army siding with El Rashidun, who arrived triumphantly in Algiers, not unlike Fidel Castro's arrival in Havana in 1959, declaring a Popular Islamic Government, promising elections, reforms, economic progress and justice for all those who were willing to work to rebuild their country and its future.

The religious leaders were skilfully outmanoeuvred and given a purely religious role, as he imposed his will, rapidly emerging as supreme leader, proclaiming a Caliphate, not as a religious leader, but one whose duty was to uphold peace and justice in the nation. In this way he united traditionalist and religious factions, the Arab and Berber peoples, the army and civil authority, mediating between the diverse political parties, promising the restoration of the past glories of the historic Caliphate.

Rashidun's promise to his country and North Africa was to extend the Caliphate and unit the faithful from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, rejecting the failed foreign system that had been imposed by the Europeans, who had destroyed their culture with the foreign ways of the Nazarenes.

He focused his attention on the internal problems of his country, leaving traditional foreign demons to one side. The oil and gas riches were directed to developing agriculture and infrastructure, building industries adapted to the real needs of his country, pushing back the desert. He created an economic miracle, certainly modest compared to the economies of Asia, but considering the catastrophic state of his country, economically and psychologically, he achieved a success unknown in the Arab world outside of the small oil rich countries of the Gulf, giving his people pride in their unity, their religion and their economic advances under a purely Arab concept of government.

His achievements brought the admiration of the other countries of the Maghrib who prayed for the rebirth of Arab dignity. He created the Arabian Caliphate of the West composed of the North Africa countries, which became Sultanates in the Caliphate, the seat of which was Algiers. The Caliph delegated his power to the leaders of those countries, who acknowledged his authority, making it possible to reconcile the existing

political powers with the symbolic power of the Caliph. The ministers, or Wazirs, of the Caliph coordinated political affairs with the Sultanates and the Ulama watched over religious affairs. The Caliphate extended from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, in a similar manner to that which had existed during the early Arab expansion and during the Ottoman Empire.

The Caliphate was stable under the selfless leadership of the Caliph, El Rashidun - the Guide. It remained nevertheless a mosaic of states that always squabbled and competed with each other, incapable of any real cohesion throughout their history, exactly as all other Arab tribes, kingdoms or nations throughout their peoples' history.

Algeria, with its Sunni population, its agricultural resources; wheat, olives, citrus fruits, its industries, oil and gas and its proximity to Europe, gave it the role of economic motor, the natural leader and federator of North Africa. Attentive to the susceptibilities of Egypt, Rashidun acknowledged its pre-eminence as the cultural and religious centre of the Caliphate, though leaving no doubt as to the political and military leadership of Algeria.

The expansion of the Algerian Caliphate had first commenced with Morocco and Tunisia, then Mauritania and Libya, and finally Egypt, when its government realised that they had much to gain and that El Rashidun's ambitions were not motivated by his personal aggrandisement, but by the creation of a united Arab Caliphate with a privileged voice amongst the nations of the world and where the well being and prosperity of its peoples were placed above all other considerations.

Though Egypt remained the cultural and commercial centre of the Arab world with its great population and Cairo the capital of the Sultanate, the representative political power of the Caliphate remained in Algiers, which expanded into a city with a population of six million, reinvigorated by its new role as the seat of a new Mediterranean power.

Rashidun’s unaccomplished dream had been to extend the Caliphate towards the south, to the Islamic countries of Central, East and West Africa. Those countries weakened by decades of disease, depopulation and disintegration.

Arab intellectuals and nationalists had long dreamed of the creation of a new Caliphate after the decline and conquest of their world by the

Ottomans in the 16th century and the division of their lands into separate states with their borders drawn to suit the ambitions of the colonial powers of Britain and France at the end of World War I.

A number of caliphates had existed since the birth of Islam; the first was established in Medina, Arabia, followed by caliphates of Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo and other cities. The Turk, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, abolished the last so-called caliphate in 1924 after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Rashidun did not make socialist promises, empty of real substance, but concentrated on obtaining real results, jobs, education and training, encouraging the traditional Arab family and spiritual values, uniting the African Arab nations for their mutual benefit and not for personal ambition. His sincere rule set the example hunting down corruption and nepotism, promoting pan-Arab cooperation and joint projects, a trans-North African highway and railroad, electrical power generated by gas and oil in Algeria distributed by a grid serving all regions of the Western Caliphate.

His political ideas were not to the liking of the Americans or Europeans. To their great dismay he had little need for Western political concepts or reforms, which had done nothing but harm to the countries that had experimented with such political forms, especially Algeria with its calamitous experience of soviet style socialism and industrialisation that had handicapped the country's development over a period of more than fifty years.

The fundamental Islamic movement had evolved towards a larger concept of pan-Arabism with the traditional political structures of the Arab world, rejecting Western values, which to them signified European philosophy and the traditions of Christianity. These were not adapted to the Arab world for a multitude of different considerations: history, tradition, climate and geography, which had continued to exist and prosper without any fundamental change since pre-Christian times in the Middle East.

Why should Arabs have accepted Western values when they had their own beliefs and values, cherished by a people living in the vast arid region that lay between the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans? Why adopt so-called liberal democracy when political problems could be solved by chiefs and wise men, as they had been done since ancient times? Why accept the

concept of a separation between the God and his earthly realm when the two formed the very basis of Islam?

Those who rejected the instauration of the Caliphate were not persecuted, but were simply shamed by solid public opinion and those who were proud of their rediscovered destiny. The discontented were encouraged to change their ideas or leave.

The aspirations of the Caliphate came to a heartbreaking and tragic end when El Rashidun, who had become a living myth, was struck down by a grave and debilitating illness; his vision of the future and a monumental task was left in the hands of sincere but less capable men.

The Western Caliphate was almost paralysed and agonised in the hope of a miracle from Allah. It slowly slid into a long period of decline after almost two decades of hope and renewal.

The greatest legacy of Rashidun was the disappearance of the legendry animosity and competition between the different African Arab countries that once again looked to the east for leadership.

A certain degree of prosperity had reigned in the Western Caliphate and the past financial aid from the oil rich countries of Arabia was no longer needed, they had attained a degree of economic independence though there was the mounting problem of the falling oil and gas exports, and the growing problems of drought and desertification.

During the troubles in Algeria and North Africa, which had given birth to the Western Caliphate, the European Federation was engaged in the assimilation its new member states, ex-communist block members. Europe was concerned with its internal economic problems, the problems of national identities and minorities, human rights, women’s rights, and not least the dangers of the Federation's polarisation between north and south. Europe looked across the Mediterranean with a mixture of fear and contempt as they observed the birth of a new power with a population of two hundred million people. Grateful at the same time that their needs for oil and gas had declined and they were no longer dependant on the volatile decisions of the energy producing nations.

The hard line political attitude to non-European refugees from the Caliphate had become part of everyday life across the Federation, even

though the Federation remained the principal trading partner of the Caliphate.

The City

The Old Port did not resemble the postcards that Ennis had seen in the hotel lobby shop, though the sky was blue and the buildings in the distance were off-white and rose-coloured. The boats moored in the harbour were not so picturesque, mainly small fishing boats lacking maintenance, and a few other old wrecks with one or two exceptions. The oily black water lapped the harbour walls, flowing onto the sidewalk at high tide leaving an odour of salt, oil and sewers in the air. There was nevertheless a certain picturesque charm, when seen from a distance.

“So Ennis, here is the port. It’s true it’s changed but today it’s a working port, a fishing port, not for pleasure boats.”

“I thought there was also a bigger port, an industrial port?”

“Yes, the ocean port, in that direction,” he said pointing to the west.

“It’s still there?”

“Of course, all the commerce with the Caliphate passes through the shipping port. Under the French there were a lot of problems, you know dockers’ strikes, unions, communists...all that's changed now, people are happy to work.”

“I suppose it’s still possible to get a fish stew...bouillabaisse...and sardines in the restaurants.”

“Naturally, a bouillabaisse, let’s go and see,” Djellali said looking at his watch. “It’s lunch time.”

His many responsibilities forgotten, they lunched in one of the many harbour front restaurants; it was called ‘Le Rascasse’. A smart looking establishment specialised in sea food and owned by a Frenchman in his sixties, who greeted Djellali with a broad and familiar smile, he showed them to a table with a view on the harbour. It was obvious that he was a

regular customer and a man of standing, the waiters bustled around the table filling their glasses with cold mineral waiter and the owner handed them the menus recommending the specialities of the day.

The waiters were not young, almost of the same age as their patron, but they were professionals and impeccably dressed in waiter's white jackets and black bow ties. Without any doubt they had worked at the Rascasse for a very long time.

Djellali invited Ennis to the restaurant's fish tank and chose two enormous crayfish, which were then presented to them at their table split in two and still alive, were ready for the grill. The lunch was excellent served with a Pouilly Fuissé, passing the time agreeably. It was compensation, thought Ennis, for Djellali talked almost non-stop, and he seemed to talk for the pleasure of hearing his own voice.

The one-way conversation was however instructive. Ennis learnt that Djellali's family was of pied-noir descent and had chosen to remain in Morocco after independence, opting for Moroccan citizenship. He had been born in Casablanca, where he had lived until his early twenties. Djellali told Ennis that the government of Algharb counted to a large degree on pied-noirs, such as himself, especially at the higher levels of its administration.

On leaving the restaurant Abdelhamid was waiting for them with Djellali's car and driver that was to bring him back to his office at the Ministry.

"So John Ennis, I have to leave you here. Don't forget I am at your disposal if you have the least problem. Now Abdelhamid will continue as your guide. So I wish you a nice visit of our beautiful city."

The Ministry

Monsieur Ennis there remains just one formality to be completed before you can commence your work."

"Oh!"

“A visit to the Immigration Service at the Ministry of Internal Affaires, we’ll go there directly if that’s alright with you."

“No problem,” replied Ennis. Since the start of his trip to the Mediterranean region he had become used to the endless formalities. He had hoped for a little more flexibility in Algharb, but he realised that he had been too optimistic.

The Ministry was situated in a massive new building, in black granite and glass. It was monolithic block planted in the middle of a bright green garden, a startling contrast to the traditional architecture of the city.

Over the entrance the flag of Algharb hung limply in the stifling heat, a green background with a deep red star in the middle. Before the massive bronze doors two soldiers, in the grey uniforms of the paramilitary forces, stood guard. Once the visitors had passed through the doors a red cordon guided them towards the reception desk, where officials in dark blue suits and wearing red fezzes saluted Djellali, whom they recognised at once.

“Salem alekum,” said Djellali, greeting the officials.

“Alekum salem.”

“Monsieur Abdelmoumoun,” Djellali said announcing his appointment.

“Oui Monsieur,” replied the official with a sudden air of efficiency. Ennis detected a stiffening in the men at the mention of Abdelmoumoun’s name.

“Monsieur Ennis, your passport please.”

Ennis handed it over and one of the officials filled in a form, who then asked them to follow him to the director’s office.

The hall was vast and cavernous, the dim light reflected off the polished marble of the floor and walls giving the hall a sinister appearance, though the cool air provided a relief from the heat of the day outside of the building.

They arrived in a lobby area in front of a magnificent waterfall that cascaded down into a dense thicket of tropical plants. They took one of the lifts to the third floor where they followed a long corridor to an office market Secretariat. Posted before the doors were two aged guards in olive coloured police style uniforms wearing peaked hats, one of them

precipitated himself towards Djellali with an obsequious salute whilst the other opened the door towards the secretary's office.

Inside Djellali announced the visitor to the secretary who was expecting them, she showed them to a waiting room, a kind of antechamber, where they seated themselves in a pensive silence for some ten minutes before the secretary returned, ushering them through a double door into a spacious office furnished in a heavy French ministerial style.

Behind a large Empire style bureau sat a thick set man turning the pages of a dossier, attentively reading the documents it contained before signing them one by one in a flourish of self importance. He did not lift his eyes and ignoring the visitors took a second dossier from a pile.

After some minutes of silence and without lifting his head he started to talk.

"Why have you come to our country?"

Ennis was startled by the question and by the manner in which it was posed.

Abdelmoumoun slowly lifted his head and looked at Ennis with an air of impatience and despise. Djellali started to reply, but quickly stopped as the Director raised his hand.

Born in Fez, Morocco, Abdelmoumoun had been raised with a respect for order and severity by his father, the director of a large prison. After his baccalaureate his French mother dispatched him to Paris where he studied law and then took up permanent residence. As a French citizen by his mother and resident in France, he was called up for his obligatory military service on completion of his law degree, which he served in the State Security Force, a paramilitary organisation under the Ministry of the Interior. He realised with the changes that were taking place in the country that his future lay in the organisation.

His first significant promotion was to Commissar Principal in the State Security Force in the region of the Department du Gard to the north of Marseille.

With his Franco-Moroccan background and his experience, he was immediately enrolled as a member of the Security Committee of the Autonomous Region following the Evian Agreement, before being

appointed Director of Security in the Ministry of the Interior. Less than two years later he was nominated Director of National Security of Algharb.

Djellali had become indispensable in the state security apparatus in President Hassan bin Ibrani's regime, for the simple reason that he executed the presidential directives with efficiency and without the slightest question. He represented the makhzen, the family and clan structure, which exercised power in Algharb. It was a kind of clientelism mixed with a compromise that allowed the ruling class around Ibrani to maintain its authority, a system inherited from their North African traditions, redistributing favours to all those loyal to the regime.

"I'm here to prepare a series of articles on the Islamic world for the International Herald Post."

"A series of articles! Islam has no need for journalists, even less for their opinions!"

"They're to inform our readers."

"Who are your readers?" he asked with disdain. "We are not looking for publicity, besides we have not asked that our country be approved by Americans."

"Excuse me Monsieur Abdelmoumoun, I'm neither a politician nor a diplomat, I simply try to carry out my work with a certain objectivity, nothing else."

"If it was for me to decide there would be no American or foreign journalists in our country, spreading lies and sowing your seeds of hatred. We are perfectly capable of managing our own affaires, with the help of Allah."

A silence reigned in the room as Abdelmoumoun returned to his dossiers, he looked the paper for a moment and then with a look of distaste he signed it and pushed it across his desk towards Djellali.

"Voila, Monsieur Ennis, you will submit a copy of your article before your departure. I don't need to repeat that you will follow the recommendations of Monsieur Djellali."

Ennis nodded without conviction, surprised and dismayed by Abdelmoumoun, who, without another word, returned to his dossiers, signalling the interview was terminated.

In the corridor Ennis turned towards Djellali who made a sign discreetly lifting his index to his lips. Once outside of the Ministry in the car park he replied to Ennis.

“Monsieur Abdelmoumoun is a very powerful man, I strongly recommend that you follow his advice.”

“But why this interrogation, this attitude? My visa and my mission were approved by the Ministry of Information.”

“You must realise that we are a democratic country,” he said with a condescending smile, “and there are certain people who disapprove of your visit and the idea of developing relations with the USA.”

Ennis lifted his shoulders in a sign of incomprehension.

“It’s like that Monsieur Ennis, just be careful and you will have no problems.”

A New World

The difficulties at the beginning of the twenty first century would be recalled, describing how the present so called imperial era had taken form as the USA had taken count of the changing world and redefined its own specific needs and goals. The steam age had passed, the coal age had passed, and then the oil age passed. Who at the beginning of the century could have imagined the transformation caused by the electricity age, or to be more precise the atomic age? In 2000, the atom had been the target of every tendency of the world’s ecological movements, now the atom dominated, producing electricity, producing the hydrogen that powers land and air transport.

The Western governments had financed the huge investments to build the atomic power plants necessary to supply electricity to the consumer and to supply the electrolysis plants that produce hydrogen for fuel cell driven vehicles. Few other regions of the world could afford such investments, at least for the quantity of power necessary to replace oil. America no longer

needed oil in the vast quantities it had consumed in the past, with its newly found force its business and political legions ringed the globe defending its own specific interests; raw materials, security and the markets of its great multi-national business organisations.

From the moment oil was replaced for almost all sources of transport, heating and local power generation, American interest in the Middle East ceased. Its prime interest was the political stability of the region; the past dangers were no longer felt as life threatening.

The USA had become more introverted following the disasters that had struck the nation at its very heart. First the terrorist attack on Manhattan, the debacle in Iraq, economic crises and more especially the effects of climate change, which had seriously affected the southern states of the country. Desertification had wreaked havoc on California's agricultural industries, but worse rising sea levels linked with recurring tectonic action had resulted in a slow but continuous encroachment of the ocean on low lying areas of the Pacific coast, causing extensive damage to California's great cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco, forcing Washington to focus its attention on the country's own urgent needs. The economic effects were far reaching, indirectly delivering a fatal blow to the Chinese economy already severely shaken by badly managed economic crises under its rigid and out of date Peoples Liberation Army style regime.

The enemies of America had taken advantage of an enfeebled giant, plotting terrorist attacks on its major cities and infrastructure, which only confirmed the vulnerability of the nation's heartland. It was impossible to blame the enemies of the USA for the natural disasters. The search for the perpetrators of the terrorist acts was fruitless, in the sense that the country was in no mood to wage an Iraq style war, which would have served no purpose other than revenge.

The policy of Fortress America came into being, zero immigration and all asylum indefinitely suspended, aid was cut off to all but the most loyal friends, and any individual suspected of anti-American activities was instantly expelled to their countries of origin together with their families.

America in its own interests reserved the right to carry out unilateral surgical attacks wherever it was deemed expedient for the interests of their

nation, which nevertheless continued to be the most powerful nation on earth and independent of foreign energy sources.

There was a change of heart towards countries that put the interest of their own historical populations before that of recent arrivals, such as France and Germany. The White House notably refused to criticise France's internal policies against its populations of Neos.

Multi-national business organisations had become trans-national functioning without any consideration for geographical frontiers or politics. They had either rationalised or robotised all tasks for the production of consumer goods in developed countries or delocalised them to countries of low labour costs and low taxation.

These businesses then remained in a country or region until all the economic advantages had been exhausted by the increase of costs or when the demands of the workers became in their eyes exorbitant, whereupon they moved on to their next victim.

In France, hard jobs or dirty work, which had been reserved for the poorest and lowest members of society and above all Neos, had all but disappeared. The consequence for Europe was massive unemployment amongst the working class and the second and third generations of Neo workers.

France was especially affected with its large population of Neos, which had grown as a result of the political upheavals in North Africa. The massive disappearance of jobs in industry threw the Neo population into the ranks of the new poor and disinherited, with its unemployed youth roaming the fringes of large cities.

The first measures against illegal immigration had been modelled on the Californian laws, which foresaw the withdrawal of all rights to education, health services and socials assistance for all illegals. Up until that point illegals, once they had arrived on the national territory, enjoyed rights often superior to the poor indigenous population.

It was unjust to spend huge sums of money on those who succeeded in their perilous journey from their miserable homeland, when the same sums of money given to a family of new arrivals could have aided dozens of families in their homeland.

All persons were suspected of being illegal infiltrators if they could not produce the papers necessary, justifying their rights to social services such as valid identity cards.

The birth of Algharb was not because France had simply abandoned a part of its territory, but rather it taken the opportunity to get rid of a burden that had become socially, economically and, above all, politically unsupportable.

Algharb was one of those pseudo states with a fiction of independence, a kind of protectorate, awaiting a more acceptable long-term solution.

The departure of Neos and infiltrators to the new state had been to some degree voluntary, but many of those who did not leave with the first wave had been deported after the instauration of new laws of great severity, demanding that all persons of non-European origin should be in possession of a valid work contract.

The decline of the Arab world towards a subservient role, not unlike that of the early twentieth century, was due to the need of the mercantile powers to reduce the countries of the third world, a few countries apart, to suppliers of low priced raw materials and agricultural products with their industrial activities reduced to the role of suppliers of low cost labour.

Massive movements of refugees had transformed Marseille and Toulon, for the second time in living memory, into vast centres of transhumance. Refugees arrived by the hundreds of thousands, not only from Paris and Lyon but also from Wallonia and Brussels.

Belgium as a state no longer existed; the divorce between Flemings and Wallons had been consummated. In a referendum Wallonia had chosen, by an overwhelming majority, given a shared language, culture and common history with France, union in an enlarged Nation de France, with their autonomy and protection guaranteed by the Nation’s Premier Magistrat, Charles d'Albignac le Martel.

Europe was dominated by a new and confident Germany, reinforced through a privileged alliance with Austria, thus forming the heart of the Federation with its thirty states. The centre of gravity had swung towards the north of Europe with Berlin’s sphere of influence reaching to Finland in the north and Bulgaria in the east, and to the south Slovenia and Croatia.

The political influence of the Nation of France, in spite of absorbing Wallonia and the support it enjoyed from Spain and Portugal, had declined.

Medina Hurriya

Abdelhamid suggested that they commence by visiting the old town, a quarter that lays just beyond the port. They passed in front of the restaurants and small cafés that lined the pavement; the tables were of no-longer very white moulded plastic, covered with worn chequered plasticized tablecloths. They turned to the right and walked up a narrow stairway under the sombre shadow of the musty buildings, which seemed to lean over them.

The stone steps were worn by centuries of tired feet. To the surprise of Ennis a torn bill pasted, on a pillar, announced a grand procession dedicated to the Holy Virgin for the 15 August,

They then arrived in a small quarter where the streets were lined with small shops and bars that recalled the past. Above one of the shops were the barely visible traces of a sign which announced vollailles et lapins and a little further on a flaking wall lacques et peintures.

The quarter had an abandoned air, though the dilapidated balconies and roofs sprouted a profusion of satellite dishes and aerials. An odour of mint tea had replaced the smell of pastis.

On one of the pavements, between the shops, were a few small dusty cafes and bars, furnished with sad tables and chairs, where their few customers passed the time of day sitting before small glasses of café au lait or playing dominoes. An old man in a long and worn djellaba watched the occasional passers-by; rolled under his arm was a small prayer mat. There were also younger men; unemployment guaranteed the cafes and bars of a meagre, but constant supply of regular customers.

In another small restaurant an old French couple sat at a small table, it was covered with a simple white tablecloth. They were the only clients, perhaps it was still too early for lunch, they were both in their mid-

seventies, they were inspecting the menu with a certain old fashioned reserve. A sign announced spécialités français traditionnels; the restaurant had an air of sad and impoverished exoticism.

An Arab of about sixty shuffled past, broken by a life of hard work to support his large family with little attention to his own health, the wind provoked a tear from the centre of his left eye, it ran down his cheek. His old age would be short and lonely.

“Here we are in the old town!”

Ennis observed the scene in silence.

“Let’s go a little further.”

They continued up narrow steep streets over the uneven cobbles, which were strewn with debris as rivulets of black water ran down the gutters. Groups of dark skinned children played in front of the houses, elderly people sitting on their door steps or in the open windows observed the two strangers with passing curiosity. The houses were dirty and badly in need of repair. The cries of small children and music that echoed from the open doors and windows reminded Ennis of African towns he had visited.

“This part of the old town is the Black quarter.”

“They’re recent arrivals, I mean new arrivals?”

“No...they’ve been here for a long time. In our country uncontrolled settlement is forbidden, but unfortunately reproduction is not forbidden.”

Ennis felt more than a hint of racism in Abdelhamid's words. He used the same arguments that the French had used twenty years before. Population growth was uncontrolled whilst Algharb’s resources were limited without a further decline in the standard of living of its inhabitants. The third world was not far after a generation of independence and the pauperisation of a large part of the population seemed to be inevitable.

The industrialised countries no longer needed cheap labour, a large population had become an insupportable burden in a world where the automation of industrial production and high yield biogenetic agriculture were pushed to a degree previously unimagined, even by twentieth century futurists. Labour had become the domain of the highly skilled and the poor uneducated masses were useless, either as a source of skilled labour or potential consumers.

They arrived in a small square with a few bars full of Africans of all origins. Opposite the cafes was an abandoned parish church. On another side of the square he had a view over the city, where the old cathedral, now transformed into mosque, dominated the skyline with its four minarets.

The Mistral had started to blow lifting the dust and old plastic bags that lay in the unswept gutters and corners of the square, the rubbish swirled in mini tornados before falling back to the ground when the wind dropped leaving clouds of dust suspended in the air.

From time to time he saw a few people who were evidently French, they were old, miserable and poor, lost or africanised. The buildings, which had been fine in the past, were rundown, many appeared to be abandoned, exactly the same as those he had seen in Algeria.

They turned into a street leading from the square, in front of a school he remarked that the girls were veiled.

“Are the schools Islamic?”

“No, not at all.”

“Are they separated according to religion?”

“Yes, it’s better that way, it avoids the problems that France experienced in the past.”

“But Algharb has no state religion.”

“That’s right, but our school children and students are grouped together by their religious affinities. Like that each one can wear the traditional clothes of their respective religions, such as the veil or the kippa, or wear jewellery, crosses or the Star of David. Our choice of society imposes a separation between religion and the law, and it leaves each individual the free choice to exercise his beliefs, not like in France.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“In France there is no choice. Islam and its followers were thrown out like lepers. The French don’t want us. A lay society is what we have chosen. Our state protects us against the excesses of religion, as can be seen in the Caliphate, or in France where le Martel with his minister Boublil have imposed laws, directly copied from those of the Nazis!”

“Why complain when you have your independence,” Ennis said smiling, “you have a standard of living much higher than Algeria or any other country in Africa.”

“Unfortunately we are in a kind of Gaza, but worse! We have our independence! It’s nothing but a charade, we do not have the right to auto-determination, neither for foreign affairs or defence, and worse we are dependant on France to balance our budget. We are thrown the left-overs from le Martel’s table.”

Ennis was taken aback; he had not expected such a vehement outburst. It was certainly true the Algharb was separated from its neighbours by a frontier more effectively than a Berlin Wall plus the fact visas were parsimoniously distributed to its citizens wishing to visit the Caliphate or the countries of the European Federation.

Transhumance

I suppose we can fix a couple of events that constituted an important turning point in the history of modern times. First when the Cold War came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet empire. Then when America’s disastrous adventures in Iraq finally ended with its army camped within a besieged fortress, surrounded by a hostile population. A tenuous peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours slowly transformed the attitude of the oil consuming countries into indifference, in spite of Iran’s constant threats and Palestine’s internal dissensions. The price of oil had at last forced the rich countries to develop alternative sources of energy. When the peace of the world was no longer threatened and oil had lost its strangle hold, the problems of the Middle East were left to the Turks to solve in their quest for a role in the twenty first century, and not least as salve after their rejection from the European Federation.

The decline in importance of oil as a primary energy source resulted in a loss of strategic interest for the region by the Americans, allowing the great multi-nationals of the chemical industry to impose their conditions on the

oil producers, who saw the progressive decline in demand and a moderation in the price of their products, as they progressively gained effective control of markets, whilst the poorer non-oil producing Arab countries turned inwards in a climate of deepening economic crisis with the dramatic consequences change held for their populations.

Islam was however the only force capable of containing the explosive forces generated by declining fortunes and increasing hopes and desires of a new generation force feed by a tantalising vision of life in the consumer society by satellite television, a life beyond the reach of the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Middle East. Islam alone could unit those populations under its unique banner, where moral traditions and obedience to Allah was the rule.

The revolutionary leaders of the fundamental Islam of the twentieth century had achieved their objectives, but without the means to satisfy the economic needs and ensure an acceptable standard for the faithful. They had fallen into the same trap as the Imams of Iran, who after endless hesitations had opted for isolation and oppression, as the mirage of oil wealth receded and they floundered with the needs of a population that had more than doubled under the rule of the Imams.

Europe no longer feared a violent Islam, but rather its vast and poor populations, locked out, like the hungry watching the feast through the window of television, ever ready to roll over it in a vast wave. Europe had become immerged in a world of consumption, excessive and egoist, without any moral constraints, closing its eyes to poor who were knocking at its southern and eastern doors.

In Algharb the standard of living slowly drifted downwards following the departure of the French and the arrival of refugees from the Caliphate and other countries of Africa. The flow included those who were opposed to the Sharia, the law of the Caliphate. The refugees were the trained and educated: engineers, doctors, business people both large and small. They were the dynamic and thinking minorities, intellectuals and professional specialists.

When Rashidun el Kebir, the new Raïs, proclaimed a new Caliphate, the opposition that hoped for a secular state was seized by panic. The new leaders ceded to the pressure of the United States providing exit visas to

political opponents, believing they would be well rid of them, but only to those who had the means to pay their passage to Europe, and by imposing an exit tax of ten thousand dollars for each person, said to cover the economic loss to the state.

Rashidun offered a mirage, a simple solution to the problems that each nation of the Maghrib had been unable to resolve, the eternal crisis of unemployment and a search for identity.

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The country had been ripe for change when the military clique, tired and desperate, after having ruled the country for almost three generations had finally ceded to outside pressures for greater democracy. American diplomacy, in the face of French caution if not outright opposition, had encouraged the change without foreseeing the dramatic consequences. The persistent discord between Paris and Washington had finally led to the inevitable accession to power in Alger of a more intransigent form of nationalism and Islamic influence.

For decades when Algerians had risen from their beds each morning their first reaction had been to switch on their radios in the expectancy and fear of learning that the bearded fanatics had taken over the country. Certain local wits even said the President was amongst the most anxious listeners.

The same wave of politico-religious fervour that had rolled over Algiers had also submerged the neighbouring capitals. Tunis was torn between an alliance with Algeria or Libya. But following the fall of the FLN, the governments of the neighbouring North Africa countries intensified the repression of their own Islamic movements, pushing their populations to armed revolt. The dominos fell, first Tunisia then Libya followed by Morocco and finally Egypt, like an earthquake, with its after shocks bringing down the House of Saud.

The Islamists took their revenge with a bloody repression of all real and imaginary opponents resulting in an exodus of the educated population towards Europe as had never before been seen.

French and Arab intellectuals had always pursued a policy of reconciliation, first with the FLN and then with its successors. It had been a useless exercise since the ruling elite refused concession, anchored in corruption, bound in its pseudo-socialist rhetoric. They preferred their

version of a free market, without capital, without real markets, in reality giving priority to personal enrichment, which after all was what they really aspired to.

The majority of Maghribis had been rejected by their own governments; elitist, dirigiste and Francophone, frozen in a lay concept inherited from a colonial past.

To attack Islam was to attack everything that was sacred; it was an attack on the whole population and its identity. Islam was the refusal of westernisation or its concept of a liberal economy, and to the eyes of many an authoritarian modernity.

Once again, the transhumance from North Africa to the shores Europe commenced, adding to the ten million Muslims already present, enflaming the rightwing traditionalists and nationalists.

Between three and four million Algerians took refuge in France, Spain and Italy within the space of a few weeks. In France the reception centres established in the hangars of the ports of Marseille, Toulon and Sete were soon overflowing. The government created a committee to handle the crisis and to manage the exodus as in 1962, when in three months more than a million French fled Algeria, using the same procedures to provide assistance to the refugees on their arrival in Marseille and Toulon.

The France that greeted the new arrivals and refugees was a social paradise; five weeks annual vacation, a guaranteed minimum salary regularly readjusted to taken into account the cost of living, free education and health services guaranteed by law with generous retirement benefits provided by the state. A veritable paradise, where even the most underprivileged were provided with an allowance of five hundred Euros a month, accommodation assistance and universal health cover, a fabulous package to poor unemployed immigrants from the slums of Africa.

The wave unfurled, submerging Marseille and its region where the unemployment rate was already nearing twenty percent, provoking an explosion of protestation and demonstrations from the population.

“The deluge is threatening to drown us!” cried the Renaissance Party.

But the refugees were not only those with official visas. There were those who arrived by sea, as the boat peoples of Vietnam in the eighties, the

infiltrators from China and Kurdistan, the Africans who arrived in the Canaries in the first decade of the century. They left in fishing boats, pleasure boats, old cargo ships and almost any kind of floating hulk that could take to the sea. There were also joined by Africans who took advantage of the chaos, crossing the Sahara in taxis, buses and trucks, on camels and even by foot. The door was closing and it was an occasion not to be missed.

From the Moroccan coast, they even tried to swim across the Straits of Gibraltar; their bodies covered the beaches of Algeciras and southern Spain by the hundreds and thousands. The Spanish coast guard was powerless before such a flood, refugees debarking day and night along its southern Mediterranean coastline.

They debarked in vast numbers, in chaotic disorder along the Mediterranean coasts of France, where government and humanitarian organisations struggled to handle the flood by setting up camps in the region between Marseille and Toulon.

The population of Marseille had already a high proportion of North Africans, transforming the traditional easy going cosmopolitan image of the city with certain quarters becoming severely run down like a struggling copy of Algiers. With the fall of the FLN and creation of the Caliphate the trickle of refugees became a flood. The French fled to the north as the number of Arabs reached fifty percent and continued to grow.

The creation of Algharb had been the consequence of pressure exerted on France by the Federation led by Germany. The reaction of the French government came too late and the country was confronted with the transformation of one of its most beautiful region, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, into a North African colony.

After World War II the governments of France, all political tendencies included, had encouraged the arrival of workers from its former North African colonies and protectorates. The objective had been to provide the labour necessary for the country's reconstruction and industrialisation after the war to re-establish its position as a leader in Europe.

At the time of the first wave of migrant workers, Algeria had been part of France and the other North African countries were under French

domination, the arrival of immigrant workers was almost without formality and restrictions.

The flow continued in all its forms after independence, without interruption for fifty years, either in the form of pure and simple settlement, or by the right of family unification, together with those qualified as political refugees. Whatever the motives the movement was accepted and encouraged by the left and right in spite of the cries of alarm by the vast majority of the French, who were ignored or accused of racism and belonging the extreme right. They were no more racist than the others, but were helpless witnesses to the changes that were taking place in the country. They simply refused to accept the transformation that was taking place and the rejection of their traditional values.

However, the changes of the traditional values of France continued over three generations, unquestioned or ignored. Islam became the third, then the second religion of France. Many French citizens in search of spiritual guidance were converted to the new religion, an Islam that as a religion was tolerant and discreet, but in the hands of politically motivated men it became an instrument of power.

The Frenchified bearded zealots took advantage of their numbers to demand rights and exceptions from the politicians who were afraid to be seen as racist. In the cities of France the Neos took the place of the French workers, who with better education had aspired to jobs with improved prospects and living standards, moving on to better residential neighbourhoods.

The result was that in the year 2000, certain neighbourhoods in large and medium sized cities were inhabited by populations that were one hundred percent new arrivals or established Neos, and for a large majority North African or sub-Sahara African. Integration was impossible as the ghettos became isolated, and given the tradition of large families, the Neo population grew and flowed over from their housing estates taking over entire neighbourhoods.

The French moved on, more concerned by their own economic well being, whilst the government refused to see the problem, treating it as a simple social question and not the installation of ethnic groups having different and conflicting priorities.

General educational standards amongst the Neo populations were often disastrous, which in turn favoured the introduction and success of Islamic schools, resulting in the establishment of Islamic values and the progressive use of spoken Arabic.

The independence of Algeria and its revolution resulted in the introduction into that country of an alien system - socialism - based on the soviet model. The failure of this system was the failure of an alien system, imported from Europe, and the Algerian people democratically chose Islam, but they were cheated of their victory by the Military government with the country continuing under the iron control of the corrupt generals and their apparatchiks, a completely obsolete system that had not changed in almost forty years.

The consequence was a long struggle by the Islamists who progressively won the support of the majority of the country's citizens tired of state violence and the hopelessness of their situation. The FLN had thrown a whole generation into the arms of the Islamists before it was swept from power by a violent and bloody revolution, the cause of the first wave of refugees towards Europe and more especially France.

Algiers became even more sinister and oppressed than ever. Women disappeared from the cafés and restaurants, at public beaches their veiled or dressed in black from head to foot. Women were no longer equal to men under Koranic law, the veil had become obligatory, even for school girls, and finally women were excluded from higher education.

When Israel finally settled their difference with the Palestinians with the creation of the Greater Turkish Levant, extremist Islamic movements slowly lost their influence; nevertheless Islam remained the only political and moral alternative to a discredited political system, incapable of replying to the aspirations of an impoverished population.

War and peace in the Middle East had had their effects on the world economy through the price of oil, which rose and fell dramatically with each successive crisis. In 1970 its price was three dollars a barrel, rising to thirty-two in 1980 creating a huge mass of capital in petrodollars, then falling back, momentarily, to twenty in 2000, before rising to one hundred dollars at the end of the decade.

After the boom in the early part of the century, the world economy entered a long deflationary period; the result was oil-producing countries saw their revenues fall steeply with barely enough capital to finance the most modest developments.

Those who had dreamed of another Singapore in Gaza after the Camp David agreement had not allowed for the tribalism of the Arab world or the profound factional disputes that tore the Palestinians apart. During three generations each faction had been influenced by the respective ideas and the schisms of Islam of their benefactors. Gaza would never compete against a chastised Lebanon, which though it had thrown off its Syrian occupiers, was held in rein by Israel allowing the dynamism of its different peoples to rediscover prosperity and be reconciled by the memory and pain of its disastrous wars.

David

Global Focus had a more or less official freelance correspondent in Algharb, a Frenchman, who had lived there since the country's independence. He was a writer, an intellectual, who leaned towards the left with a strong sympathy for the Caliphate and its friends. He was what Parisians had once called gauche caviar.

He was short in stature and strangely addicted to Marlboro cigarettes, long after smoking was no longer fashionable, his cigarette holder had an unhealthy air and his grey moustache was stained yellow by nicotine, as were his fingers.

David was a man who Ennis found to be amiable and helpful; he was pleased to find an affable person to guide him in a country that had undergone so many upheavals over the previous decade.

The temperature was just under thirty-five degrees in the shade; the smell of the overflowing garbage bins outside of the restaurants and the piles of uncollected trash that filled the gutters forced him to avoid breathing through his nostrils. It was unsurprisingly typical in those hot dry

countries that struggled with poverty and hygiene, but he had not imagined such conditions in Algharb.

His hotel had the traces of a more prosperous past, when its clients were stylish tourists and visitors from a now forgotten world, richer and more sophisticated. The decline was visible from a glance at the swimming pool, in need of maintenance, an obvious lack of financial means as visitors were few and their stays short.

“Tell me Laurent, is there a fundamentalist movement in the country?”

“Naturally!” he replied forcefully at such a surprisingly naive question from Ennis.

“I’m simply enquiring, I don’t know.”

“It’s clear that the government stifles all information relating to the fundamentalist movement, but that doesn’t stop the Islamists, there are more and more of them, and they’re very active.”

“In the Caliphate that’s a little out of date.”

“You’re right, in the Caliphate the movement’s usefulness has ended, because they got what they wanted, a system based on their traditional values, based on Islam, which I must say has not brought them much in economic terms.”

“In Turkish Levant it works for certain of the Jews and rich Lebanese, even for better off Palestinians, who together control the wealth there, unfortunately the poor are more than ever fixed in their camps, now vast shanty towns.”

“That’s the tragedy of the Palestinians.”

“Yes, endless disaster; colonisations by the Jews, the creation of the Zionist state and repetitive wars.”

“The grievances of the Arab world come in many forms, historical, political and economic to mention just three. To some it commenced with the loss of Andalusia, then the Ottoman conquest and occupation. Those were the starting point of the Arab rejection of foreign cultural values, Europe in the West then the Turks in the East.”

“It’s a complicated story.”

“Maybe, but the problem between different peoples and expulsions are part of history. Most of the Arabs were expulsed from Andalusia in 1492, then the Jews, the Sephardim, which means Spanish in Hebrew, in 1609”

“And it continues even today, the eternal conflict between rich and poor continues. We can see the signs right here, the cultural and economic divergence between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.”

“Unfortunately you’re right.”

“I know, I’ve seen it in the last weeks, and now I’m witnessing it here, I got a hint of the attitudes at the ministry today.”

“What do you mean?”

“Abdelmoumoun.”

“The Director of National Security?”

“Yes.”

“Be very careful of that man.”

“Really!” replied Ennis with a hint of sarcasm.

“Yes, I’m very serious. The political situation here is very fragile, certain people here have spoken of a threat from Paris.”

“What do you mean?”

David glanced around nervously, “Paris has never accepted the creation of Algharb, plus the humiliation it felt as a great nation. Algharb has in reality never been any more than a temporary solution, a kind of dream, a mirage for the regime here.”

“A temporary solution?”

“Okay let’s talk about it another time,” said David scrutinising Ennis. He was no exception, naive like all Americans. “Be very, very, careful.”

An Invitation to Dinner

On his return to his hotel room he found the water had been cut. He called the reception, they explained it was not the hotel, but a problem with the mains supply; the supply would hopefully be restored at ten.

Ennis swore to himself, he had been looking forward to a refreshing shower after the oppressive heat and humidity of the afternoon.

The TS beeped, he flipped the button and saw the smiling face of Djellali on the mural.

“Good evening John Ennis, it’s Djellali. Is everything going well?”

“Ah, good evening. Yes, everything is fine thank you.”

“This evening, if you are free I would like to invite you to diner.”

“With pleasure,” Ennis replied, relieved to find something to do for the evening.

“Like that we can talk about different things. I’ll pick you up at eight, the hotel restaurant is good.”

Djellali had invited himself to the hotel, it was no a problem for Ennis, though the choice of the restaurant did not please him, he would have preferred one of the small restaurants that surrounded the square nearby the Old Port.

Djellali met him in the lobby and they went directly to the restaurant where the maitre d'hôtel installed them at a table with a panoramic view over the port. Ennis realised it was not a bad idea after all to eat in the hotel restaurant though it appeared to be nearly always nearly empty. He was pleased to note that the air-conditioning was functioning and the temperature was just right.

"Your first day has been agreeable I hope?"

"Yes, very interesting."

"So what are your first impressions of our country?"

"For the moment, I have a very good impression," said Ennis smiling politely, "but up to now I've seen relatively little."

"Of course. But you will have certainly noted that it's very different from the countries of the Caliphate that you've just visited."

"Very different!"

"As you know the philosophy of our country is based on secular principals," he said as the waiter approached their table making a small bow. Djellali glanced at the waiter, who held his order pad at the ready, then turned his attention to the menu with a slight sneer.

He ordered a diner of fresh boiled shrimps served with a mayonnaise sauce, followed by grilled sole and a bottle of chilled local rosé wine. But to start they took a cold beer to attenuate their thirst after the heat of the day and a small plate of salad between them composed of tomatoes, onions and olives to nibble as an appetiser.

"To your good health and the success of your visit!"

Ennis lifted his glass.

"You see my friend, we have inherited the French secular system and traditions, which might seem a little strange to you, but let me explain."

Ennis nodded his interest.

"It's necessary to accept that in Europe, and in particular France, the formation of their modern societies is the result of a long history full of war, death and politico-religious upheavals."

His eyes shone, Ennis could see that Djellali had embarked on a subject that impassioned him.

“It’s difficult for us today to imagine the people who lived in Europe during the Middle Ages, in a world so different from ours. An all powerful Church and clergy, an unjust hierarchy, both totally blind to social injustice. Even Americans know that, n'est ce pas?”

“Yes of course.”

“Fortunately a profound transformation has taken place over the centuries, because the Church had always dominated not only the spiritual needs of the population, but also many of its civil institutions, such as marriage, birth, education, hospitals, death and burial. So the Church’s dominated the community and the individual throughout the whole passage of his or her life. Thanks to the great intellectuals like Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot lifted their pens in protest against the oppressive power of the clergy.’

“A little like journalists of today,” Ennis interjected.

“If you like,” Djellali laughed and continued, "it was only with the Republic the Church lost its privileges little by little and France had to wait for the end of the nineteenth century until the divorce between the state and the Church was consummated.”

“Jules Ferry, I believe.”

“Ah, I see you’re familiar with the history of France! That’s exactly right, in 1882 a law rendered primary education obligatory and secular. Moral and religious education became moral and civic education.”

“This corresponded with the acquisition of liberties,” said Ennis concentrating his efforts on his shrimps, removing their heads and carapaces then dipping them in the delicious mayonnaise sauce, washing them down with the chilled white wine. It was a pleasant distraction from the ennuyant lesson of Djellali.

“Right! In 1905 the separation was promulgated under a law that guarantied the free exercise of religions but favoured none. Religion became facultative, a personal affair, it was the object of a free choice, protected and guarantied by a neutral state.”

“And this is the law in Algharb today?”

“Yes, but strangely not in France!”

“I know, they’ve gone backwards.”

“Exactly, le Martel with his ideas. There’s nothing new in politics, men always seem to come back to the same old formulas.”

Disenchantment

You see,” said Abdelhamid pointing to a small group of young men, “they’re everywhere in the Old Town of Medina Hurriya, they spend the best time of the day leaning against the walls, as though they were part of the scenery. They watch life going by, dreaming of a job, any job, which does not exist, or perhaps the impossible idea of finding a girlfriend? We call them hittistes.”

“What?”

“Hittistes!” he said with a sad smile, “that comes from Arabic, it means they hold up the walls.”

“I imagine it must be very hard for those young people.”

“Every year schools, which have long been blighted, send more than tens of thousand of new hittistes onto the streets. Only a small number of them, more by their family connections than by luck, benefit from one or two years in a training centre. After that like the others they return to the street. It’s a long time since there has been any work to offer them.”

“How do they live, I mean with what, money?”

“To dress themselves, buy a coffee or a piece of zelta, they sometimes find an odd job,” he said with a shrug of his shoulders.

“What’s zelta?”

“It’s cannabis that can be chewed.”

“Drugs and Islam don’t go together well!”

“You’re naive or what! It’s everywhere today, though it’s not legal like in certain countries of the Federation.”

“I suppose so.”

“Youngsters of sixteen or seventeen, some have already been two or three years on the streets, they start by selling newspapers – they’re still quite popular here, most people can’t afford virtual subscriptions - they make a twenty cents for every copy sold, with luck they find a good spot and with a bit of audacity some can sell two or three hundred a day, the trouble is that their older brothers muscle in and take over, forcing them out. They then make the rounds of the bars and cafés selling cigarettes and peanuts. Finally they end up selling zelta and other stuff. The little money they earn helps them to survive, help their mothers, who often live alone with their younger brothers and sisters.”

“I suppose the proportion of young people is very high?”

“Seventy percent of the population is under thirty, a problem for the city. The young no longer believe in the government of Hassan bin Ibrani. They see no hope in the future and expect nothing.”

The South was ‘free’. In reality it was isolated behind an impenetrable border, cut off by three hundred kilometres of concrete posts and razor wire. Cameras, armed patrols, spotlights and observation towers, surveyed the fifty metre wide no-mans-land. The citizens of Algharb and their neighbours lived in two totally separate worlds. Though the armies of ragged Clodos seemed to cross the border at will, taking refuge in Algharb whenever threatened, which saw them as a lever to bring pressure to bear on the French leader, Charles d'Albignac, called le Martel.

The Clodos were the feared new age travellers with the gangs of drug addicts and alcoholics who followed in their wake. They were loyal to no government with a nebulous structure dedicated to a life of stealing and scrounging. A sub-culture composed of society’s rejects and dropouts, whose vast hordes moved from region to region like locusts ravaging the countryside.

On one side of the barrier was a society that was rich and egoistic that had created the Clodos and to the other side an Arabo-African enclave who looked down on the Clodos as a caste lower than themselves.

The only regular authorized movements across the frontier were the buses transporting temporary workers from, or deportees to, Algharb. Under the regime of le Martel, officially the ‘Premier Magistrat de la Nation de France’, all non-Gallos found guilty of a crime, real or fictive, were automatically expulsed to Algharb, where their joined the forced workers in the plants recycling automobiles, household goods and other rejects from the affluent European countries.

The recycling of old gasoline or diesel powered motor vehicles arrived by train from all over Europe forming one of the country’s profitable industries. Those better vehicles were reconditioned and exported to Africa. Europe had to a great extent abandoned the automobile, especially in its great cities, in favour of mass transport for urban and inter-urban connections, whilst Africa, without the means to finance the necessary infrastructure, had no choice but to continue with traditional road transport, which was affordable, but highly polluting.

As they strolled through the streets they passed by a group of youths playing football in the middle of a narrow street between the odd car that passed from time to time. Others played street basketball with nets tied to street lamps. The kids resembled those of the black ghettos of Chicago or Pittsburgh.

On turning the corner of a street they saw a tourist bus; it was modern, one of the latest versions. Its load of tourists spilled out over the pavement as its air conditioning set at full power continued to function for the comfort of the driver and to ensure the passengers comfort when they returned. They were Americans carrying cameras that recorded and transmitted over their satellite link unforgettable images directly to their friends and families in New York.

The tourists crowded around the door of a building that appeared to be a factory, perhaps a carpet factory Ennis thought. He made a sign to Abdelhamid and they discretely attached themselves to the line and followed the tourists through the door. Once inside Ennis saw that it was not a factory: they were in a courtyard which resembled that of a school, on the walls were somewhat faded inscriptions which at first glance he took to be Arabic. Trying to decipher the words he realised they were not Arabic but Hebrew, there was a translation in French in smaller letters, Beth Hanna. It was a Hasidic school of the Jewish Lubavitch movement.

The guide pointed to the inscription proudly informing to his tourists of the religious tolerance of Algharb, a secular state, where each and every citizen was free to practice his religion.

“We are proud to have received the Jews of France and Europe who have fled neo-fascists regimes.”

Only the whirr and clicking of the cameras, which captured every word and gesture, broke the uncomfortable silence.

“Now let us visit the classrooms.”

After the Jerusalem War and the integration of Israel into the Turkish Greater Levant, many Jews of recent European origin joined the Sephardic Jews who immigrated to the new Republic of Algharb.

Israel had been abandoned America after decades of unconditional political and economic assistance. The relative decline of the Jewish-American political lobby, eclipsed by the needs of a massively enlarged Hispanic community, had coincided with the decline of America’s dependence on Middle East oil. Israel was sacrificed on the altar of American real politik and its relative retreat as a leading actor and decider in world affairs, turning inwards, sure of its strength born of the technology that ensured all of its vital needs.

The Jewish arrivals in Algharb were of all social classes and backgrounds, but above all those who could afford the deposit of fifty thousand euros per person in the state bank to guarantee their needs in their new country.

Tired by the heat of the afternoon they called a taxi. The taxis system was not unlike that he had seen in Casablanca, Petit Taxis and Grand Taxis. In both cases they were equally worn out. As the driver manoeuvred his way through the traffic he complained of the difficulty of earning a living in Medina Hurriya, explaining that the administration was totally corrupt and how, to obtain the least paper, it was necessary to pay baksheesh.

“It was not like that with the French,” he sighed wistfully.

The Federation

The Federation with its thirty member states had become highly polarised. The countries of the north and east leaned towards Germany, turning their backs to the radicalisation of France and the problems of the Mediterranean. The Latin countries looked towards Paris, where the strong right wing government offered them an alternative path to the future.

Nova Rossiya, had sunk back into the political tradition of its past, its oil and gas riches had been depleted, squandered on an unachieved renaissance of Soviet glory. To the south they were threatened by the demographic growth of the newly rich Central Asian countries, ex-members of the long defunct Soviet Union, whilst to the east the Chinese Peoples Republic was a constant threat to the Pacific provinces of Russia.

The development of the countries of Central Asia had been driven by the exploitation of their huge reserves of oil and gas and the development of relations between countries that shared a common language and religion, more open and tolerant than the traditionalist and fundamentalist version preferred by the Arab world.

In France, the right wing political movements had manipulated public opinion over the years, brandishing fear and the consequences of settlement, linked to an ever-growing rate of crime and violence.

The French population was glued to the TS vision nightly news, living in fear of another upheaval in the Caliphate or fear that the swelling population of Algharb would overflow and drown them in a catastrophic crisis.

Whilst the Muslims of Algharb felt little in common with the Christian Federation, its younger population, in a continuous conflict of identity, looked towards Europe with envy and bitterness, and at the same time both rejecting and regretting their African origins.

In a world without great monolithic power blocks, France, as England, no longer enjoyed the power and independence they had once known. Demographically and politically they had become weak, not very different in economic terms and influence to their neighbours and certain more distant countries. Within the Federation cacophony often reigned and the voice of France progressively weakened.

There were the ever-present problems of politics, national security, health and education, which had to be resolved on a regular basis as they had been in the past. However, the future of the country was hardly glorious when the major concern of the Premier Magistrat's government being Algharb, a burning wound on the side of France that he had resolved to cure in one way or another.

Internationally, the survival of the strongest was more than ever the rule. As Nova Rossiya's revenues from oil and gas declined it was submerged by the disaster of public health and environmental problems, absorbed by the crushing weight of military costs needed to shore up its eastern frontier with the Chinese Peoples Republic that coveted the vast empty spaces and potential mineral wealth of Siberia for its burgeoning population.

The unexpected fragmentation of China had contributed to the diffusion of missiles and arms to the belligerent nations of the Middle East, forcing the Federation to develop its own anti-missile defence system to ensure its own security, though the theatre of potential armed conflict had shifted to East Asia and the Indian sub-continent.

Though the balance of economic and military power was held by the USA, the European Federation's influence was considerable. The other powers, China, India, and to a lesser degree Turkey and Nova Rossiya, evolved in an ever changing configuration alliances.

In the background were numerous countries of the third world, desperately poor and often governed by unpredictable men, including the Western Caliphate. In spite of the apparent confidence of its religious rulers they were on constant guard against the threat of ambitious military men, who never ceased to test the resolve of the Caliphate's leaders, always probing for a weak spot, planning a surprise coup, or a suicide attack mounted by bitter army officers or by terrorist movements, in revenge for the enforced political and economic isolation of the Caliphate.

The globalisation of the world economy had profited the developed countries, those that disposed of advanced technologies and the capacity to invest in new research, requiring ever more capital, controlling communication, finance and production. Not only in the domain of high added technologies, but also for food crops, animal husbandry and pisciculture.

The poor countries were neglected like some kind of dropouts, left the lowest tasks in industrial production, manufacturing components at slave labour prices for the trans-nationals. These countries formed a vast second class and poorly organised market, a market where products and services were bartered. These markets were not unlike those seen on the perimeters of large cities where the poor lived a hand to mouth existence.

The only important sources of revenues in the Caliphate were its raw materials: oil, gas and phosphates. Oil and gas were no longer the black gold of the twentieth century, but they provided a flow of revenue in euros and dollars, which enabled it to buy adequate quantities of cereals for its vast population, undernourished as a result of the recurrent droughts that regularly threatened their crops. Revenues ceaselessly plundered by the military offering itself the toys claimed to be necessary for the security of the Caliphate.

Tourism had become almost non-existent with the exception of certain cultural visits; the Imams refused, in the name of Islam, to bend their rules accepting tourists and the polluting pleasures of alcohol, music and scanty beachwear.

In Europe's north led by Germany, right wing governments ruled, encouraging the return of their Turkish population to their renascent and powerful Turkish homeland, whereas other undesirables such as, Afghans and other Islamic populations, as well as gypsies, where expedited to their countries of origin.

France had been joined by French speaking Wallonia and Flanders formed a union with the Netherlands. It was logical outcome after almost two centuries of incongruous cohabitation by the two populations of Belgium. With the entry of the Eastern European states and the Baltic countries into the Federation, Germany had become the centre of gravity of Europe while the countries that constituted the poor periphery to the east and southeast were abandoned to their misery caught between the Federation and a renascent Turkey.

Politically Italy had foundered. It had transformed itself into two autonomous regions, the north turned towards the heart of the Federation, and the south leading a loose confederation of small Mediterranean regions dominated by Naples including Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily and Malta that

lived under the shadow of the Caliphate. Naples, with the blessing of Brussels, controlled Muslim Albania, treating it as a protectorate, to pre-empt any interference from the Caliphate.

The Federation was more concerned by its own needs and comforts and preferred to contain the problem of Islam rather than resolve it. The Europeans of the twenty first century did not want to die for any abstract concept such as religion, whether it be Christianity or any other belief, for them life was much more tangible on earth where life expectancy was eighty five years with a guaranteed pension, in spite of the grim forecasts to the contrary made at the beginning of the century.

Wealth had never ceased to grow with the development of countries such as the new China states, where demand for manufactured goods produced by highly sophisticated and reliable technologies continued to progress.

Cheap manpower no longer played a significant role in the production of manufactured goods as labour costs rose in Asia; even textiles could be manufactured cheaper in Europe, meeting the fast changing needs of its fashion industry for which those countries, once competitive, could no longer respond to the instant whims of market demand.

Germany dominated Europe, both economically and politically, having resolved its problems of surplus labour by separating itself from its gaste arbeiters either expulsing them to the south or imposing its poor on those who were even poorer.

Thirty percent of France’s population was over sixty in 2025, at the same time the total population of the Caliphate exceeded four hundred million, equal to that of the whole European Federation. The pendulum of history had swung again and the weight of population was now on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

At the end of the previous century four hundred thousand new arrivals and infiltrators penetrated the EU each year. Family members: husbands, wives, children, the parents of those already established. At that moment nine million naturalised Neos lived in France and with infiltrators they totalled over eleven million.

Islam had become a terrifying spectre for Europe. However, in spite of the poverty and misery of its populations, the Caliphate had rediscovered a

certain tranquillity in its isolation and self imposed exclusion, a simple life without great aspirations, except those offered by Allah.

The frontiers of Algharb were amongst the most guarded in the world, it was a sanitary cordon that evoked that of the German occupation of Northern France during the war of 1939-45. Little uncensored news flowed from one side to the other, prompting rumours the stimulated fear, anxiety, hope and determination.

Hamad

Ennis decided to explore the city and taking advantage of one of the bicycles put at the disposition of the hotel's guest he set off in the direction of boulevard de Notre Dame, where to his right he was stirred by the Basilica with its strange minarets. He pedalled slowly up the slope of the boulevard trying to fade into the background, his baseball cap well pulled down. The progress of the cyclists under the hot sun of Medina Hurriya was slow, they were not used to an unnecessary excess of effort. It was a little after one and there were few people in the streets.

He looked at the broken pavements and the incomplete repair works. The streets were scattered with uncollected litter. Rubbish was everywhere, plastic bags, old papers and bottles of all kinds. He turned right into rue du Dragon then rue du Paradis and towards avenue du Prado and the better class areas.

The privileged classes and Arabs from the Gulf States and other regions of the Middle East inhabited the wealthy districts. The streets were lined with fine buildings and luxury boutiques. There were expensive cars with chauffeurs waiting for their owners who perused the boutiques or lunched in the expensive restaurants. Household servants collected the purchases or made the more mundane shopping rounds, children were looked after by nannies in the nearby gardens. Wealthy women were dressed in the latest Paris fashions as the poor and old looked on dressed in their faded djellabas, begging for a few coins.

In the nearby streets the trees and shrubs in the gardens seemed to be dying slowly from lack of water and the omnipresent pollution. In the side streets he noted a good number of unfinished structures, the remains of ambitious real estate projects, abandoned for lack of capital.

He made his way up a fine avenue its central garden planted with tall noble palm trees, the deep green grass was well watered and the flower beds planted with bright flowering shrubs. Upper class apartment buildings lined both sides of the avenue.

A panel announced the transformation of a cathedral into a cultural centre for the Wilayah of Medina Hurriya. It was not a sacrilege, but rather due to the disappearance of its congregation.

Further on was a public garden that seemed to have been transformed into a filthy refuse dump, certainly due to the negligence of the local authorities and the loss of value of collective civic values by the population.

Ennis sought for an explanation, was it due to a cultural or economic phenomenon, he asked himself. He had seen countries in the Gulf States less rich than before, but nevertheless well organised and clean. He was perplexed before the transformation of a country that he had known as a student.

In one of the public gardens he observed a scene that confusedly recalled the French past, a typical merry-go-round with its gaily painted horses, children laughed and shouted as it turned, the music however was the strident music of North Africa.

He then passed through a market place, the air filled with the smells that drifted from the cheap cafés and restaurants that lined its pavements, the smells of spices, grilled mutton and mint tea. Further on commenced a district filled with shops that specialised building materials, pumps and electrical equipment, the signs of the small businesses were like those he had seen in Casablanca, written in French and Arabic.

From time to time he passed an elderly French woman making her way to the market place. They wore their old-fashioned print dresses covered with small blue flower patterns. He pedalled past a young girl who balanced a platter loaded with flat round loaves of bread on her head. He could not resist the idea that certain scenes were not unlike those he remembered at

the beginning of the century in Barbes, a district to the north of the Gare du Nord in Paris.

He then entered a high class district and a square lined with fine plane trees and palms. He rode past the Consulat General de France a splendid 19th century edifice built in white stone, lined with elegant columns, in the traditional French Hausmanian style. It was surrounded by a garden enclosed by a wall and solid ornamental railings in cast iron, a magnificent portal bearing the arms of Napoleon III led to the entrance of the Consulate General; it corresponded to the dignity of Algharb's grand protector. Through the portal Ennis saw the well-watered lawns trimmed to perfection.

It was lunchtime and there was little movement, the guard wearing the uniform of the RASE paramilitary forces surveyed the scene, bored by inactivity, alternately scratching his crotch and behind.

Further on there were private schools for the children of the upper classes; panels announced courses in computer skills and communications.

For the most part the streets retained their French names and the map the hotel given him was not to difficult to follow, but here and there the names of streets had been replaced by those of great Arab figures, there was avenue Hassan II, boulevard Moulay Yosef, but also named after heroes such as cours Saddam Hussein and to his astonishment boulevard Muhammad Atta.

In the cafés, as in all the offices Ennis had visited, he had observed to his own discomfort the enthusiasm with which almost everybody smoked. There seemed to be a mania for cigarettes, which seemed to serve as a social accessory, and which persisted with an astonishing insouciance in the Arab world and lesser developed countries, even more than half a century after the link between tobacco and cancer had been proven.

He slowly returned taking a slightly different route passing small-whitewashed houses that were no longer very white. A total calm had fallen over the city in the heat of the afternoon. He watched a cat stretching itself in the sun, no doubt after its morning rest following a night fighting with the numerous other cats of the district. Its ear was tattered attracting a small swarm of black flies. Further on more cats squabbled over the remains of a

meal on a filthy plate under the shade of the plane trees that lined the sides of the street.

He continued a little before stopping for a pause, taking advantage of the shade and an old bench.

“How’s life?”

“Hello,” Ennis replied looking up, there was a young man of about seventeen or eighteen years old standing before him.

Since the outset of his journey he had become used to such casual meetings with the locals. Young people who were simply curious or wanted to speak with a foreigner, offering their services as guides, asking for a cigarette or money.

“You’re a foreigner.”

It was more a confirmation than a question.

“Yes.”

Ennis said nothing more not wanting to engage a conversation and certainly demands that he would refuse.

“You’re a journalist.”

Ennis was surprised. It was not a question but a affirmation.

“Me, I’m Hamad.”

He offered his hand. Ennis could not refuse the out stretched hand from his engrained sense of politeness.

“I can help you.”

“Help me?”

“Better we don’t stay here, come with me, we can sit down and take a coffee,’ he said pointing to one of the small cafés opposite.

“We’ll go inside, it’ll be better,” he said as he bowed his head and made a discreet sign with a finger to his lips.

“Sit down, I’ll tell you my story.”

The café was poorly lit but it was secluded.

“My father came here after the Morocco’s independence, there was no war then, it was not like in Algeria.”

They sipped their coffees slowly as Hamad casually told him of his life in Algharb.

“I would like to show you something interesting, if you will come with me.”

For reasons he could not explain, his professional sense was awakened, it was probably due to the young man’s evident knowledge that he was a journalist.

‘Leave your bike here, it will be safe.”

They turned into one of the small insalubrious side streets where small children played in the shadows. Above them washing hung on lines stretched between the old buildings, three or four floors high. A dog scratched at one of the broken door.

“Come on, quickly.”

Ennis followed Hamad into a dark porch way where the odours of old cooking fat assailed his nostrils. The dirty paint peeled off the damp walls. In the dim light Hamad took a small stairway up to the second floor where he paused, looking carefully behind them, then he turned into a narrow corridor. Bright light poured in as he opened a door, he nodded Ennis through; he stepped out onto a roof where lines of washing were strung out to dry in the hot sun. Ducking, they crossed the roof and through another door entered into the darkness of an adjoining building.

“Wait here a moment.”

Sheik Abassami

Ennis waited in the dark listening to Hamad's footsteps. After what seemed a long moment he returned.

“Come with me, it’s OK.”

He followed him then entered into a small room. After a cursory glance at Ennis a bearded man led them into a second room.

Seated in one of two armchairs positioned before a low table a man of uncertain age looked at Ennis and made a sign towards a long sofa facing him. He then turned to Hamad.

“Thank you my brother.”

Hamad bowed slightly touching his breast with his right hand then turned and left the room without a word.

“Sit down Mister John Ennis. Welcome to our country.”

Ennis sat down on the sofa. The man was dressed in a white djellaba. It was difficult to say whether he was European or not, he wore a small beard and Ennis could not help thinking he resembled a traditional image of Jesus. He could have been Lebanese, maybe Spanish or Italian. His hair black and straight, not like that of a typical North African, his skin was slightly olive coloured, his cheeks close shaven. He had a calm patrician air.

“Perhaps you would like a coffee?” He made a sign to one of the two men standing in attendance, who turned opened the door and issued instructions in a low voice to another person outside.

“Excuse me Mister Ennis for this impromptu invitation.”

He spoke English almost without an accent.

“Let me present myself, I’m Sheik Abassami bin Khalid, I have the honour of being the leader of the movement El Assad el Arabiya”.

Ennis had vaguely heard of this movement. Assad Arabiya he seemed to recall was a movement dedicated to the restoration of the historical pride and culture of the Arab world. Religion was an integral though not overriding feature of their philosophy, which focused on traditional values harmonised with modernisation, the acceptance of women in public life, and a moderate form of nationalism, though rejecting Western ideas incompatible with the purer values of the golden age of their history. They valued Arab art, the development of literature, sciences and architecture in the tradition of Andalusian culture.

“You have heard of our movement, n’est ce pas?”

“Yes.”

“Contrary to what certain people might think we are not fanatics of God, we respect and obey his laws, but also those of wise men who guide us on

earth in the interest of our temporal life."

With a gesture of his hand he invited Ennis to take the coffee that one of the guards had placed on the table before them.

"We are against the corruption practised by the collaborators of Paris and Berlin. We are not against the European Federation, our goal is auto-determination, but as an equal partner. We are against these men who seek to destroy our youth, our future, with the continuity of the evil heritage of the FLN."

Ennis sipped his coffee and listened carefully.

"You are a journalist visiting our country, I would like to inform the world of our objectives and tell them of the corrupt charade which calls itself the government of Algharb.

We are against the barbarism practised by the so-called Caliphate in Cairo and Algiers, the amputation of thieves, men exposed in cages in the market places, public executions. The image that is propagated by the press of the Islamic world and more particularly the Arab world, unfortunately reflect the laws of Allah interpreted by men uniquely interested by their personal hold on power and wealth."

"And you Sheik Abassami, what is your personal interest?"

His eyes flashed anger for an instant then he continued.

"Myself, I have no personal interest, only that of my people who have experienced shame, poverty and hopelessness for generations, led by weak men and exploited by the West, presented to the world as underdeveloped, we who invented mathematics, science and the glory of Andalusia, we who gave the world the greatest religion of tolerance offered to man by Allah."

"And the Jews?"

"The Jews and the Copts lived by our sides for centuries, as did the Christians, in cosmopolitan Damascus, Baghdad and Cairo. Remember it was the Europeans who murdered the Jews. Our disputes with the Jews concern the rights to the land and holy places that the Arab peoples and their ancestors occupied since the beginning of history."

He lifted his hands in a sign of peace.

"Let us speak about today."

“That’s fine with me.”

“Ask your questions.”

Ennis reflected during a few instants.

“What are your intentions towards Europe and your close neighbours?”

“We have no particular demands towards France, however we would like them to cease their support and aid to the criminals who govern and who are destroying our country.”

“That will be difficult, the problem of Paris is the return of foreign populations back to their homelands.”

“We are prepared to help them. We will accept any persons rejected by Paris because of their race or origins. The tradition of the Vel d'Hiv is unfortunately well rooted in Paris,” said the Sheik in reference to the surrender of Jews to the Nazis in WWII.

“What about the Kurds?”

“I make no apologies for Iraq or for the Turks, we are against all forms of oppression, our only wish is dialogue.”

“Are you for taking power by force.”

“As I said we prefer dialogue, but you know as well as I do that the use of force for good is not the same thing as aggression or oppression.”

“I have heard people speak of Sheik Abdelbaki Sahraoui, the leader of the fundamentalist movement. Is it true that he is held in the prison of Tarascon?”

“It is true, a sincere man, but he wanted to seize power by declaring a jihad and using his moudjahidins. The torturer Ibrani had no intention of letting him leave into exile as in the past, to foment revolt from abroad. The moudjahidins are too weak today with little support from outside.”

The discussion had lasted nearly two hours when one of the guards made a sign to the Sheik who immediately stood up.

The Sheik saw Algharb as a sanctuary, his principal target was the Caliphate and too engage in subversive activities in Algharb would deprive him of the refuge.

“Mister Ennis I regret that I must leave you now, I believe that you are a sincere man and you can transmit our message to the world. If you permit we shall stay in contact, discretely as they say.”

He took Ennis by the hand and then left. A few seconds later a guard returned with a young woman who guided Ennis back to the street.

“My name is Asma, I’ll accompany you to your hotel as though we were friends.”

“I prefer to find my own way.”

“Non, it’s better, it is necessary to protect the Sheik in case of danger. I know the signs.”

“Okay, I have a bike.”

“That’s no problem, we’ll walk.”

“Our leader is a good man and sincere, he has many followers in our country.”

She guided Ennis by a route that passed around the old quarter towards the Grande Mosque, then the Old Port where she pointed him towards his hotel.

“Here you are Mister Ennis, if ever you have a problem during your visit in Algharb and have need of our help just ask for me, Asma, speak to the hotel concierge, he is one of ours.”

“Thank you and good luck.”

“Inshallah.”

Ennis slowly pedalled the last few hundred metres around the port to the hotel. His meeting with the opposition had been unexpected and surprising, he had not had the slightest inkling that such an organised movement existed and that its ideas were so radical compared to the religious line of the Caliphate or the old fashioned dictatorship of Hassan bin Ibrani. The political situation in the country was more complex than he had been led to believe.

He knew that an opposition had existed. In Algiers he had read in the newspaper Asharq Al Awsat that certain sympathisers of the underground opposition had been imprisoned in Algharb. But the traditional Islamist opposition had rejected Assad Arabiya as infidels. That had been the first

time he had learnt of the existence Sheik Abassidi's movement, but he had known nothing of their political ideas.

Ennis now realised that an opposition existed, and that they together with Hassan bin Ibrani's regime observed with trepidation all developments in Paris, fearing the intervention of France and the consequences it would have for their future.

Hassan bin Ibrani

The next morning his guide arrived early accompanied by a person he presented as Mahmoud Cherif, a high level official responsible for internal security in Algharb.

"Mister Ennis, we have been accorded a great honour, a very great honour!" announced Cherif enthusiastically. "Our President Hassan bin Ibrani will receive you at eleven. An interview! Let us be quick, there are many formalities to be completed concerning the security controls."

Ennis was pleased, since the beginning of his trip he had only been received on one occasion by a head of state, by the Grand Imam of Tunis.

The party in power in Algharb, the Partie National du Salut, was modelled on the lines of the FLN of Algeria and was the tool of Hassan bin Ibrani, a paternalistic style dictator, but behind the public bonhomie was a dictator with a paranoid complex, produced from the same mould as the long list of such leaders who had ruled the Islamic world since the creation of the Arab states at the end of World War I.

Ibrani was the grandson of a 'pied-noir' who had been born in Rabat, Morocco, and who had held a high position in the Ministry of Mines, controlling one of the richest phosphate industries in the world. His father by deft manoeuvres had remained in Morocco after independence, acquiring Moroccan citizenship, arabising his name and with a nominal conversion to Islam, he succeeded in remaining as a loyal adviser a confident to the King.

His son married a girl from a high-ranking family and later became a director of Office Cherifien des Phosphates. They had three children, the youngest of whom was Hassan.

When the stability in Morocco had become doubtful, Ibrani's father had dispatched his family to the safety France under the guise of long holidays, higher education needs and medical care, a long tradition in the Arab world. The sudden rise of the Islamist movement and the young King's attempts to hold the reins of power by reinforcing his role as the kingdom's rightful spiritual leader, as he was in theory, resulted in a violent struggle between the monarchists and the Islamists for power.

The young Ibrani successfully studied engineering and political science in France, where his father through his political friends had found him a good situation in the Ministry of Industry and the Environment.

When Ibrani saw that the sick president's power and influence were slowly was slipping away, he with a small group of less than one hundred persons, generals of the paramilitary forces, heads of the police services and other key persons, prepared their take over. Even before the old president was declared dead, they had effectively seized control of all the levers of power in Algharb, pushing aside all institutional procedures.

Hassan bin Ibrani had continued to exercise his authority as President of the Executive Council without the least visible protestation ever since his arrival to power nine years previously. His rise to power from a relatively little known, though senior officer in a semi-government organisation was by a series of chance events, like many dictators before him.

He had been the head of the financially and politically powerful Regional Water and Environmental Authority for Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur before the events that changed everything for him and the country. His life had been uneventful, laid out before him until retirement in comfortable privilege, exactly like that of many high level public servants.

He had however dedicated a great part of his time to cultivating political relations and privileging the influential pied-noirs population of the region. He was the President of several influential associations and as a life long sporting enthusiast was on the board of directors of the Racing Club de Marseille, one of the country's leading football teams. In his private life his close friends and relations consisted mainly of his pied-noir cronies.

During the rebellion in Marseille, he evacuated his family to Paris where he observed the creation of the Autonomous Region. He could not help thinking that his comfortable life under the Mediterranean sunshine and his position at the Water and Environmental Authority were definitely lost.

The situation was chaotic and the Autonomous Region was temporarily taken under the authority of the European Federation that had the responsibility of re-establishing the normal functioning of authority and public services. The loss of the key personnel in the administration and utilities was dramatic; there were few volunteers amongst the French. Ibrani, understanding the situation, seized the opportunity and was detached by the French Government as executive adviser to the President of the Committee du Salut National, which was in effect the Provisional Government of the Algharb Autonomous Region, to advise on the reorganisation of the region's administration and finances.

Ibrani was well equipped to take advantage of the situation; he spoke fluent Arabic having been born and raised in Rabat, the capital of Morocco. His experience in the administration of regional bodies, coupled with his degrees in engineering and political science, provided him with the necessary academic achievements that were sufficient to counter any opposition accusations as to his administrative capacities.

He was proud of his pied-noir origins, which he had not really been aware of before his arrival in Paris. For Ibrani, Morocco was a splendid country; his father had never ceased to describe it as being abandoned by the French. Though with the arrival of the Islamists to power and the proclamation of the Caliphate, Morocco was lost forever for the Ibranis.

The King as spiritual leader of the believers had accepted, against his will, the instauration of an Islamic state. The twenty or thirty thousand active fundamentalists of Gamaat al Ismaleya and the Jihad Islamic movement who had been imprisoned for plotting against the King were released after riots, which had shaken the monarchy to its very foundations.

The King survived a little over a year; his life coming to a violent end one hot sunny morning before the Grande Mosque of Casablanca with the flash of a sword and the cries of a delirious crowd as the royal blood gushed out, ending a dynasty that had reigned over Morocco for centuries.

The King was replaced as spiritual leader by the Grande Imam of Dar el Beida, who was backed by the violent and unstable General Walid bin Choukri, the leader of the religious-military coup.

The days that followed the regicide saw a panic never before witnessed in the Maghrib. Under Choukri a reign of terror spread as the army clamped down on the traitors; the upper and middle classes, accused of stealing the nation's wealth as they sought to flee the country, their properties were confiscated, businesses nationalised and bank accounts seized.

When Ibrani left Paris for Algharb, it seemed in many ways a return to the source, almost like a return to Morocco. He instantly took advantage of the situation, manipulating the inexperienced and elderly president, whose appointment was nothing more than an interim arrangement pending the organisation of elections. With the help of his pied noir-cronies, whom Ibrani placed without difficulty in key positions, the seizure of power was a mere formality.

He easily took on the role of a pasha, surrounded by sycophants and subservient officials. He was courted by the ex-Neo French, who had not hesitated to openly proclaim themselves as Arabs, and who, though they had acquired power, were disorganised and without a clear vision of the future.

As the son of a pied-noir father and a Moroccan mother, Ibrani understood better than most the rules of intrigue and how to play the different factions off against each other, thus advancing his own ambition. However, fearing intrigue he soon developed suspicion of those around him, verging on paranoia, imagining enemies and plots around every corner, without the slightest qualm he proceeded to eliminate all of those who opposed his ambitions and consolidating his power. His Arab upbringing served him in his new role, those who were not his friends were his enemies and he excluded from authority all those he perceived as not sharing his views. In effect he had the mind of an oriental with the veneer of French culture, with the selfishness and arrogance of a pied-noir.

He was boastful and vaunted his power, exaggerating his influence in Paris and his personal relations with Charles d'Albignac, who in reality despised him as an upstart, a mere pied-noir and a profiteer, taking advantage of France's temporary weakness. Ibrani liked to pretend that his

voice was the most listened to in the capitals of the Levant and the Caliphates.

He quietly ingratiated himself to the government in Paris, realising that without them Algharb was unviable. He gained their support whilst assuming the style and appearance of an oriental potentate in Algharb, to the amusement and exasperation of le Martel who derisively called him a pantomime Alibaba.

Ibrani, who had taken the name Hassan as a tribute to the King of Morocco who was a hero of his youth, now instituted a personality cult; his image was omnipresent, in government offices, in schools and in public places. He was declared the father of Algharb. Elections were quickly forgotten and the opposition was gagged by methods reminiscent of a Middle Eastern dictatorship. The discomfort of France was observed from the Federation with a mixture of foreboding and barely hidden glee; France was bound by the Evian agreement, which any overt intervention.

In effect, Ibrani reigned as the puppet of the Paris government, neutralising the threat of a politised Islam and assuring a secular state. His knowledge and his political astuteness won the respect of the warring factions that constituted the Committee de Salut National. He surrounded himself with a tight network of personal friends and sympathisers, including high-level officials and members of the police and paramilitary forces who were close to Paris. For the most part his cronies were pied-noirs, Jews or interested parties, including businessmen of North African descent who felt more at ease with an Arabic speaking pied-noir, whose interests were more transparent than those of the ex-FLN socialist gangsters who had fled Algiers and never known life in France.

Ibrani also had the support of the numerous sons of the Harkis, Algerians who had fought for France during Algeria's war of independence, in exchange for privileged positions for their community in the public services of Algharb. They responded with enthusiasm to Ibrani's offer after the generations of sufferance in France, stigmatised and rejected as third rate citizens, their loyalty to France had been barely acknowledge generations after the events.

The ineffective first President of the Committee de Salut National, Karim Lamrani, had owed his position to a political compromise between

the European and African tendencies, and had been no more than a symbol adroitly guided by Ibrani, for the good of the Autonomous Region.

The sudden death of the sick and aging President brought the risk of seeing Algharb transformed into another Beirut or Gaza, which neither France nor the Federation would tolerate

Lamrani's death arrived at a moment of political crisis provoked by strikes and riots. The leaders of the mobs had designated Paris as responsible for the Autonomous Region's disastrous economic situation. Ibrani, with the backing of paramilitary forces, took control; attributing himself extraordinary powers to direct the forces of law and order to restore calm.

Martial law was declared and Ibrani was appointed interim President by the Committee for the duration of the crisis. His strength lay with the backing of the paramilitary forces, the business community and the middle classes, who had no wish to lose their privileges in a useless civil war. He did not refuse the help of the French secret service, which defending the interests of Paris discretely his path smoothed to power, in a situation where the risks of destabilisation by the Caliphate and other enemies of France were great.

The only possible opposition was disorganised and preoccupied by fighting a fruitless war of factions. With the connivance of Paris, Ibrani proclaimed the independence of Jaziirat al Gharb with Medina Hurriya as its capital, bringing to an immediate halt any opposition and his nomination as President of the Committee de Salut National. It was a coup de theatre that diverted the attention of the mob from the woes of the Autonomous Region's woes. Any thought of elections were suspended during the state of emergency and then put back to an indefinite date.

The proclamation of independence was no more than a fiction, due to the crisis that Paris could not afford and which in its own time would repair. The opposition was stifled, the media was censored, and the entry and exit to the territory were subject to draconian controls. Ibrani's regime tracked down all religious fanaticism, all tendentious textbooks, all oriented lessons and anything that was politically tendentious.

When the international press accused the regime of racism towards former French citizens, he replied, "Racists! Not at all!" But nevertheless

the system had changed and the oppressed had become the oppressors.

The key figures of the government were known as Fassis, a clique of Moroccans close to Hassan bin Ibrani, chosen for their complaisant attitudes to the methods he employed and his objectives. The Algerian tendencies held the less politically sensitive cabinet posts with the Ministry of Health and that of the Environment. The only key post held by the Algerian tendency was that of the Ministry of the Interior, attributed to an ex-Algerian general who had been responsible for the anti-terrorism department in Algiers before the arrival of the Islamists.

Any manifestation that hinted of a lack of loyalty towards Ibrani's regime, real or perceived, was instantly and severely reprimanded by the political wing of the special police forces, the RASE, the Regiment Armé de la Securité d'Etat, under the Ministry of the Interior. Those guilty or suspected of such crimes were put into preventive custody on Ile de Porqueroles, then convicted in a parody of justice by Ibrani's closed courts and exiled to a certain death in the swamps of Casamance in Senegal.

Algharb maintained what could be described on the surface as cordial relations with the states of the Caliphate through representative offices in their capitals. Diplomatic relations and defence were the prerogatives of Paris under the Evian Agreements. However, each of the states of the Caliphate maintained a certain degree of independence in their foreign relations, exchanging treaties of mutual non-interference with foreign governments.

However, extremist movements in the Caliphate and Arabia saw Algharb as the weak underbelly of Europe. They dreamed of a new Andalusia in the Western Mediterranean and sent their moudjahidin to infiltrate Algharb, through religious institutions such as Koranic schools and mosques and seeking to gain influence in Algharb; their ultimate goal was to influence the faithful and draw them away from France.

Ibrani's closest and most loyal supporter was the head of the special operations and intelligence service of the RASE. Colonel Destouche was one of Ibrani's Fassi cronies and a boyhood friend from Rabat, who was in fact French. His father had served in the American forces in Morocco after WWII, and his extraordinary adventures inspired his son's career. He had escaped from occupied France and fought in the British army, then joining

the American forces to fight in Korea before finally being rewarded with a civilian posting to Morocco, where he was attached to the US Air force.

The young Destouche held dual nationality; in addition to his French passport he also held US citizenship. After his service in France he joined the US Marines and served in the USA forces, fighting in the Gulf Wars and then attached to the British SAS in Afghanistan, where his knowledge of Islam and Arabic was vital for interrogation of North African Arabs fighting for the Talibans.

He did immediately replied to Ibrani's call, establishing a corps of Special Forces, putting down insurgents and then directing the shadowy war against the enemies of Ibrani. His most immediate task was against the French, who at the same time were his allies against the fundamentalist Islamic movements, but could not accept seeing Algharb as a model society and a bridgehead of Islam into Western Europe for those who dreamed of a green flag flying over Paris and London.

Meanwhile the struggle against the perceived threat of an Islam that had been transformed into an ideology, on a parallel to war against Communism in the twentieth century, which allowed fundamentalist leaders to manipulate populations in revolt against what was seen as an egoistic and corrupt West, where each person was perceived as a mortal enemy of Islam. It had been used inspire new vitality and legitimacy for the cause of Arab nationalism in its political conflict with the West. Its values were turned to ideological ends to achieve political aims.

America had abandoned its role as the planets law enforcer, it had failed to deal effectively with its enemies in the Middle East and Asia, its had failed to resolve the never-ending Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its armed forces quit their overseas bases and Congress rejected military involvement, except in defence of the homeland, concentrating the nation's forces to combat aggression at home.

Islam saw its heroes as pious, selfless and courageous Jihadists, dedicated to the defence of their religion and their way of life, defending the word of the Prophet and Islam's vision of morality and justice. Christianity and democracy meant nothing to them.

The towns and cities of oil producing countries such as Nigeria had become nightmares, images from catastrophic future fiction, rusty refineries

rotting in the sun and emitting poisonous chemicals, seventy percent of their populations watched on, helplessly, as their oil was pumped for American consumption, shipped to a people wallowing in wealth built on cheap energy, whilst the poor of Africa fought to survive in filth, dirt and misery.

The population of Cairo had reached twenty five million, for the most part living in extreme misery. However, Cairo remained the intellectual capital of the Arab world, though its film industry was censored by the imams, it was also a great centre of Islam with learned religious leaders. Cairo had changed, from a city where religion had its traditional spiritual place to one of the strictest religious centres of the Caliphate. From the early part of the century Islam became a major political force and was expressed by daily the wearing of veils by an ever-increasing number of young women and beards by young men.

In the Western Caliphate even taking a simple photo became suspect and the unwary photographer could be arrested on the spot and imprisoned for spying or anti-Islamic activities. The Egyptian government, as many Arab governments, had created a multitude of diversions from their internal problems, focusing their attention on the external enemies, Israel and the USA.

The Arabs had long been consumed by deception, rage and even jealousy at the prosperity of the West and above all Israel, too narrow sighted to see that their own problem lay in a system belonging to a past age.

The Interview

They crossed the bridge to the Presidential Palace, the Palais du 1er Juin, a gift from the Nation of France, in gratitude to Algharb and for the eternal friendship between their two peoples. The exact reason for the gratitude was not clear, but certain local wits explained that it was due to the role of Algharb in France’s programme of ethnic restructuring - the ethnic cleansing of its Arab and African population. The palace had been

constructed by the French construction company, Bouygues; it was situated across a vast square facing the Grande Mosque, which had also been built by the same company on the orders of Hassan bin Ibrani, for the citizens of Algharb and for the glory of Islam and the Prophet.

It was the greatest mosque outside of the Arab world, its two minarets rose high into the sky, fifty metres higher than the Grand Mosque of Casablanca. It was built on an island, an artificial plateau that dominated the city. The mosque's prayer spaces could hold one hundred thousand the Prophet's faithful followers. It reached to upwards to heaven so that Ibrani could converse directly with Allah according to the more disrespectful Algharbis. The mosque was built in white stone that reflected the harsh Mediterranean sunlight whilst the dome, in rose coloured ceramic tiles, sparkled in the light reflected from the sea.

The bridge that joined the island was built in that same noble stone. Both visitors and believers were inspected with the same suspicion and scorn by the presidential guard, composed mainly of veterans of the Turkish-Arab War, at the bridge.

Ennis, after numerous controls and a body search, was finally ushered into the Presidential reception rooms reserved for private audiences. In a vast art deco salon sat Ibrani ensconced behind a magnificent Empire style bureau worthy of his position as Head of State. The usher discreetly glided out leaving Ennis alone with Ibrani who raised himself from his chair pushing on the table as though he had difficulty with his legs. He was a man of medium height, his hair was grey and his face lightly tanned.

His wore a friendly expression, relaxed, perhaps a little tired thought Ennis. He smiled softly to Ennis, putting him at ease, then speaking as though Ennis was a long standing friend, he said, "How are you my friend? Welcome to our country, Jaziirat al Gharb, a strange name n'est ce pas! You know what it means?

Ennis took his hand, disconcerted by the lack of formality from a head of state, he hesitated.

"It Arabic it means the Southern Island. It's quite appropriate don't you think? Naturally Paris does not approve. As for myself I sometimes think of it as Al Jaziirat, the Island, which it is after all."

He pointed to the large armchairs placed before a low table.

“Please sit down. There is no need for formality with me.”

At that instant a boy appeared dressed in a white robe and placed a silver tray bearing an ornate teapot and a plate of oriental pastries on the table.

Ennis was still surprised to find himself in a real tête-à-tête with Ibrani.

“We are alone. I don’t like all of these people around me all the time, they tire me. A little tea?”

He poured the mint tea for Ennis and himself.

“An oriental pastry?”

Ennis carefully selected a corne de gazelle.

“What do think of my country? Feel free to speak openly.”

“Extraordinary,” replied Ennis weakly without reflecting, intimidated by the presence and the reception of Hassan bin Ibrani.

“I will be frank with you John Ennis, though you must excuse my English, I have been told you speak excellent French, even Arabic and understand our local manner of speaking,” he said smiling apologetically. “We need the sympathy of your government and public. We have friends, but new friends are always good to have. Our country is the creation of France, but between us I cannot truly say the French are our real friends. It is necessary to think about the future, because one day I fear certain people in the Nation of France may try to recover what they think is theirs.”

Ennis quickly noted down the thoughts of the President; it was an exceptional opportunity, as Ibrani was not known for his openness to the media. It was as though changes were coming and he was being sounded for the kind of reactions that might be expected in the USA.

“In my country there are also people with radical ideas, who would like to change everything and make us part of a caliphate, more compatible with the needs of the Middle Ages than the third millennium. They want to put the clock back a thousand years! I want to work for the future, new technologies with modern infrastructures, universities, a universal health system and a reformed Islam.

My friend, le Martel, never ceases to reiterate the support of the Nation de France for an Algharb, modern and prosperous. Remember the deep and sincere bonds between France and Algharb should never be underestimated

by the US government. As you know we are bound to France by the Evian Accords, and through our associate membership of the European Federation."

Ibrani had launched into a monologue, true to the form of dictators of his style.

Ennis then realised that Ibrani was not unlike the leader of any other oriental dictatorship. There was hardly a single Arab nation that was not governed by despotic type rulers, whether they were Kings or Presidents, they were all Islamic since Islam was the religion of the Arabs and to be an Arab not only was it necessary to speak Arabic, but to obey Allah and follow the Prophet. Their populations had no form of free expression except through Islam, which was radicalised and used to suit their political goals.

Ennis had seen it for himself and had either preferred to ignore what he saw or see it as an isolated problem, like elsewhere in the world, or even pretend that it could be explained by a multitude of understandable reasons. But the fact was that in general, outside of the expensive districts that housed the fine hotels and the privileged classes, life was squalid, dirty and hopeless.

People were such hypocrites, we love your country they said to the Algharbis, but in Paris they were bougnouls or some other kind of foreigner. Ennis re-concentrated his thoughts on the present, Ibrani had launched into a monologue, like men of his style with grandiose ideas and as usual without the means to carry them out.

"Monsieur le President, your projects will require a great effort to finance..." said Ennis trying to interject.

Ibrani gave a knowing smile as he lifted a finger in a sign to let him explain the obvious.

"My dear friend, our country is rich, this land has always been rich, we have not overlooked the slightest detail in our plans. Commencing with education and training, these are the keys that will open our doors to investors from the Federation and the world. Our workers are skilled, Europeans, trained by Europeans, to European standards and with low costs and low taxes."

The Federation had experienced a long deindustrialisation that had accelerated since the early years of the century with manufactured products being imported from Asia and the developing areas of the world where industry had rapidly grown. Europe had reserved high technologies and specialized services for its own population that was shrinking and aging.

“Our natural role is that of a privileged supplier to the Federation. As you know, through your press, we are constantly pursuing and strengthening our economic links with the other countries of the Federation.”

Then with a ferocious look that startled Ennis he added, “It’s better they aid us than create same kind of the problems on their own doorstep as did their politicians before the Insurgency.”

It was political blackmail. Algharb was paid by the Federation to contain the demographic pressures due not only, but mostly, to the flood of refugees from North Africa and the Levant, encouraged by Ibrani’s regime to bolster his country’s negotiating position, projecting Algharb as a haven for those thrown aside by the political upheavals created between the rich and poor, and the polarization of the Islamic and European Christian world, those who were refused entry into the Federation.

“The Evian Agreement foresees that defence, the external security and foreign affairs of Algharb remain in the hands of the Nation of France.”

“Perfectly correct.”

“I could not help noticing the presence of a large number of paramilitary forces in the city.”

“You see my friend, we, like other nations, have the duty of not only having to protect ourselves against external enemies but also the means to protect ourselves from those threats within.”

“Who are these enemies Monsieur le President?”

“Listen carefully! The enemies are everywhere, in France there are racists who have a misplaced nostalgia for Provence, they see it as the Arabs see Andalusia,” he smiled at the comparison. “In Africa there are the Islamists and in the Levant the orthodox hard line Jews of Israel, both see Algharb as an anti-God, a haven for terrorists,” he said laughing at such a ridiculous idea.

“The Jews?”

“Certain want to create havoc in our country, in our institutions, it’s the extension of Zionist ideals against the Muslim and Arab world!”

“But there’s a lot of Jews in Algharb?”

“Of course! All my life I’ve lived with Jews and Arabs. In Morocco, when I was young my friends were French, Arabs, Berbers, Jews and Spanish. There were no problems between us. It was certain Arab nationalists and Islamists who provoked all of the problems.”

“But today you are a Muslim country?”

In a flash of anger Ibrani lifted his index finger.

“No, no and no! We are a secular and liberal country. Each one of us is free to practice his religion without the slightest restrictions. Except! And I repeat, except, political agitation, turning religion to political ends. Religion and politics are two things apart. We, the government, we look after live here on earth! The imams and rabbis look after our spiritual life and death.

“Ethnic cleansing commenced in North Africa with independence. French, Spanish and Jews after hundreds of years of presence were thrown out. We here are a truly multiracial society, with Arabs, Jews, Africans and Europeans. As I said we are a secular society, but certainly not hostile to Islam, the religion of the majority in Algharb, our secular spirit resides in the separation of the state and religion, however, we guaranty a close link with Islam, especially in our moral and social traditions. Our North African brothers have chosen to reject all forms of society except that of a totally Islamised society, where Allah and the Koran are the only guides in everyday life.

“The domination of the West has reached its end, not because of a material bankruptcy or because it has lost its military power, but because its moral values are exhausted, the origin of its past domination. The technical and scientific revolution is finished, as is territorial nationalism. Now it’s the turn of Islam.

“There is no separation between faith and life for Muslims. Before God we are all equal, but each of us has a different task to accomplish here on earth. The guides, such as myself, have special responsibilities, such as the maintenance of law and order, which should be rigorously applied to

preserve the rights and lives of the faithful, to guide them morally and ensure social justice.

“You know what Muslims believe? They should fight until all men say There is no God but God and Mahomet is the Prophet of God. I believe that fight should be peaceful and those how advocate violence will not receive a welcome in Algharb.”

“Permit me to change the subject and ask about the economic development of your country,” Ennis interjected to break the monologue.

“Our future will be constructed on the skills of our Mediterranean peoples, for thousands of years enlightened peoples such as ours have traded across these seas creating wealth and prosperity.” He paused looking out of the vast window towards the sea. “My vision is to build here in Algharb a doorway to the Federation for the Caliphate and the Levant, it is logical and normal. The Algharbi Arabs and the Jews have the knowledge and the skills to join both worlds for the greater prosperity of us all. Medina Hurriya will become a new Singapore or Hong Kong, a trading and manufacturing centre, we have already investments from China for components from new plasma produced materials.”

Ibrani looked at his watch and sat down with a sigh, tired by his oration.

“My dear John Ennis it was a pleasure to speak with you. I wish you a pleasant and fruitful visit in our country. Beware of distracters, who seek disorder, they are nothing but Bedouins…camel and goat herders.”

He held out his hand and an usher appeared as if by magic to show Ennis out of the audience room.

A Just Settlement

The presentation of the events that had led to the declaration of independence, seen from the point of view of the Algharbi establishment, to Ennis, was essential to an objective analysis. That evening, the object

Djellali's invitation had been to convince Ennis of the prosperity and continuity of Algharb under the benevolent regime of Hassan bin Ibrani.

Ennis took advantage of the relaxed atmosphere of their dinner, in a smart restaurant in the embassy district, by carefully drawing Djellali into the direction of his own questions. Djellali had mellowed under the influence of the good wine and a large after diner cognac.

"As far as I can recall," said Ennis, "once the events had crystallised into a full insurrection, and its leaders had emerged, the initial object had been the demand for a semi-autonomous region in the same style as Catalonia or Euskadi in Spain."

"That's correct. A cease-fire was proclaimed under the supervision of the Federation, pending the start of negotiations in Evian. However, on our side we knew that the French government would take advantage of that period to consolidate their military positions, so we maintained the pressure with a series of surprise attacks on the French army across the cease fire line and against the enclaves they held within our territory."

"So when did the idea of a full autonomy emerge?"

"The French played for time, hardening their negotiating position. We had no choice, by the time the negotiations in Evian had opened our struggle had intensified. In the streets of Medina Hurriya there were massive demonstrations day and night, French symbols were destroyed and administrative buildings were burnt. The remaining French population fled."

"The French authorities had lost control?"

"Yes. The French government was overwhelmed by the magnitude of events. Fighting had spread to other cities and towns. The situation was on the verge of total anarchy. The government law enforcement bodies, such as the CRS, were more experienced in dealing with demonstrations or riots, and were insufficient in numbers and material to deal with a massive armed rebellion of the non-Gallo population."

"What about the army?"

"The military forces were trained for foreign wars. They were unable to react with the force necessary to limit the explosion of insurgents who

armed themselves with weapons taken from the police stations and army barracks that they attacked."

"Did you believe at that time you would obtain some kind of autonomy?"

"Yes. There is no doubt in my mind. As oppressed minorities we would not have been the first to have won our freedom."

"French leaders feared an Islamist revolution. They feared that Islamist factions would establish their state with the aid of their brothers overseas."

"That was unrealistic, you cannot compare our desire for freedom with a threat to France or Europe."

"Why not? History has shown such revolutionary movements with powerful ideologies have produced inspired leaders and gone on to dominate a whole region or continent," said Ennis provocatively.

"Maybe, though the leaders of our insurrection, the Insurgents, were heroes we cannot seriously compare them to Muhammad or Jesus Christ. We have no Lenin or Mao, and, even less, Hitler. The extremists usurped the words of the Prophet to suit their own political ends. Sincere men and true believers are for Islam, the extremists are the enemies of Islam. Radicals like them have divided the world into two parts, themselves and the rest."

"You are quite right," Ennis agreed. "They are not unlike Christians at the time of the Conquistadors. They saw all those who refused Christianity as heathens, whose only fate was to die by flame and sword."

"For a long time Israel was sacrificed to such people. That is why we accept Jews who are not fanatics. On the other hand the Caliphate and especially the Algerians, both Islamist, and others have a long record of bloody acts, they have killed tens of thousands of their own, women and children, were they not innocents?"

"Acts of terror are all the same. In Paris today there are still attacks."

"They are carried out by extremists, not Algharbis, we are totally against such methods, we are even victims of such attacks."

Ennis nodded in agreement.

“You Americans complain about the death of innocents in the war against terror, but you are not alone.”

“You have nevertheless admitted certain changes that do not favour non-Muslims.”

“Such as?” said Djellali suddenly alert.

“Well the Grande Mosque.”

“It was something that happened before our president's time.”

“Our first president, before his death, allowed the Cathedral of Marseille to be transformed into the Grande Mosque. When our president, Hassan bin Ibrani, became leader of Algharb, he had no choice but to accept that, it was a fait accompli, in any case he had the total support of Algharb's Muslim population.”

Ennis remained silent.

“Remember Mr Ennis, most of us have our roots in the Maghrib, for us, France's history of the Maghrib is nothing other than the history of foreigners on African soil.”

“What do you mean?”

“We are here as a result of France's colonisation of North Africa. In a certain manner of speaking it is our compensation. A just settlement so to speak.”

Asma

Ennis left his room, it was ten in the evening, the heat was unbearable with the air-conditioning off and the noise was unbearable with it on. In any case it was much too early and he could not have slept with the thoughts that churned through his mind. The strange world of Algharb, his interview with Hassan bin Ibrani, was difficult to fit into the world of Islam he had seen over the recent weeks.

He walked along the quay in the direction of the Old Town, it was quiet, it was a little better with the light breeze that wafted the warm but refreshing air around him. After about ten minutes he crossed the road to the opposite pavement, there were several small cafés and restaurants with tables outside. He stooped at one, selected a table and sat down facing the port; the masts and riggings of the boats twanged and whistled in the breeze, and the weak lights winked as the boats jostled on the wavelets.

He tried to imagine it as it had been twenty-five years before. He had already visited the city in his early twenties, on holiday with his best friend and their girl friends. They had rented a small farm in the Baux about twenty or so kilometres from the city. Though the coast crawled with tourists from every country of Europe, life on the farm was another world, the four or five weeks they had spent there had been idyllic. They had eaten fresh melons every evening and drunk the local wine at less than one euro a litre.

Everything had changed, the prosperity had evaporated. Already at that time the centre of the city had been transformed into a North African colony. Now he thought sadly the metamorphosis was complete. The Europeans were mostly pied-noirs and Israelis, or officials and businessmen from France and the Federation about their affaires.

“May I?”

Ennis turned his head; he was surprised to see the girl, it was Asma. She was dressed differently, smarter, chic.

“Please,” he flustered, making space, moving one of the chairs that crowded the small table.

“You are surprised?”

“Yes, rather.”

“I don’t live far from here.”

“What can I offer you?”

“An orange juice would be fine.”

He made a sign to the garcon and ordered an orange juice and another beer.

Asma smiled nonchalantly and looked around, taking in the scene in the café. There were few customers; just two couples engaged in their own conversations.

“I called you at the hotel,” she said lowering her voice, “half an hour ago, they said you had gone out.”

“Yes, about thirty minutes ago,” he confirmed.

Ennis was curious, but because of the tense situation in the country he did not want to go beyond his brief; collecting information for Global Focus and for his book.

“They are putting up new camps just at the border, in the Queyras.”

“Camps of what?”

“We don’t know exactly, but there is a lot of work going on buildings, fencing, road works...the buildings are very basic and could hold several thousand people. We know that much because there are a lot of our people working on the site.”

“Why are you telling me all that?”

“You have to tell the world what they are doing here and in France, it’s against all the principals of human rights!”

Ennis knew he could do nothing before leaving the country without compromising his work and perhaps worse. He had little faith in the justice of such a regime and the smooth words of Ibrani.

“Have you heard of the code name ‘Savannah’?”

“No, why?”

“Nothing, never mind. Why don’t we take a stroll?” she said standing up.

Ennis paid the drinks and followed Asma along port, walking slowly towards the avenue the led into the city centre.

“You see John Ennis, Hassan bin Ibrani is not the kind of leader he would like you to believe, he is a brutal tyrant, worse he is the marionette of Paris. The Autonomous Region of Algharb is nothing less than a gigantic ghetto.”

“Come along now, that’s turning reality into some kind of psychoses. What more do you want? You have elections, your own government, you

have auto-determination. That's what you wanted!

"No, you are wrong! Ibrani is not elected by the people, Paris decides everything here. The Nation of France is a Fascist country, ultra-nationalist. If le Martel was nothing more than a poor man's Napoleon or a poor copy of Mussolini it would not be so bad. Le Martel is infinitely more dangerous, he has declared an insidious war on Africa, just when things seemed to be settling down on the other side," she nodding in the direction of the sea and the horizon. "You think that the Caliphate has reached its objectives, that they are satisfied with what the have?" she added.

"I think that they certainly have need of economic assistance, but they are happy to have rediscovered their world and their values."

"They have regressed and very poor. I believe, in the near future, there is the risk of a real explosion because of their large population, the pressure is enormous. For the most part they live in misery, especially in Cairo and Algiers. It is evident they will never find their mythical Al Andalusia or even their more recent pre-colonial past. Their future is full of dangers with a population of two hundred and fifty million!"

She paused pensively.

"What do you think of us?"

They stopped and Ennis looked at her, he had not realised it, but now he saw she was very attractive, her dark eyes sparkled under the harbour lights.

"What do I think of you," he hesitated, "I think you are very beautiful."

"Don't be stupid!" she laughed showing her white regular teeth.

"What do I really think of Algharb? I don't know, I had an interview with bin Ibrani, I haven't formed any really clear ideas yet. What is certain is that the country is much poorer than before. Yes of course there are prestigious new government buildings, new monuments to the glory of the Insurgents, but all together there is little real progress that is visible."

"Well I'm pleased that you're objective."

"Journalists should be objective, at least serious ones," he replied smiling to her.

She was close to him and took his arm.

"I like you John Ennis."

“Be careful the mullahs will punish you!”

“I’m a Christian.”

“So how do you have a name like Asma?” he said smiling softly.

She laughed, “Asma means sublime in Arabic, it’s not specially linked to a religion, it's a traditional name, my mother must have liked it. I’m a beurette, if you know what that means?”

He vaguely remembered that beur was French slang for Arab and beurette was the feminine.

“Yes, I seem to remember that.”

“My mother was Algerian, my father was born in Sicily, he was Italian, naturalised French. Some Italians say Sicilians are Africans. Anyway that's why I'm Christian.”

They returned slowly to the hotel, where she left him at the entrance to the driveway.

“A bientôt!”

Ennis went up to his room questioning his unexpected meeting with Asma. Assad had tried to use him for political motives, for his movement. The story of the camps in the Queyras seemed provocative. He took out his Michelin guide for France and searched in vain, there was no town that bore that name.

The Set-up

Friday morning the loud speakers continuously broadcast recorded texts from the Koran calling the faithful to prayer in the mosques of Medina Hurriya.

The streets in the centre of Medina Hurriya were filled with a mixed crowd reminiscent of Algiers before the Caliphate: men in business suits, traditionalist bearded Arabs wearing djellabas and turbans, the young

people wore jeans and many of the older women were veiled and dressed in black.

Ennis heard a voice and looking to his left he saw a man surging towards him, he was of medium height, wearing a large smile with his hand held out.

“Bonjour, comment ça va!”

Ennis looked at the man a little perplexed, he did not recognize him, he felt embarrassed, evidently he should have known him.

“This square is called Al-Tahir, in English that means Liberation, in memory of the Insurgents who fell in combat against the government of Paris.”

Ennis smiled weakly.

“You don’t recognize me! At the airport three days ago, Monday or Tuesday!”

“Yes at airport,” Ennis replied without much conviction.

“I’m the head officer at the airport customs,” he announced with a broad and generous smile. Ennis, after an instant of reflection, had not the least recollection of the man.

“No, you don’t remember me? It’s normal, the uniform and the hat.” He made a sign with his hands as though he was straightening his hat.

“It’s me who let you through with your bags and your computer, let me see your name is...”

“Ennis.”

“Ennis, that’s it, John, you’re American.”

“Yes.”

“When are you leaving?”

“Friday, next week.”

Ennis was puzzled; he did not know how to handle the stranger, who after racking his brain he still could not remember.

“Listen my friend why don’t we take a coffee together, over there,” he said pointing to a café, “That’s my car parked in front of the café.”

Ennis looked across the road, there were several late model cars parked in front of the café. He looked at his watch.

“Look, I’m sorry but I really don’t have the time,” he said unconvincingly.

“Don’t worry my friend, I’ll let you through on Friday, count on me.”

Shit! Shit! I’m really a stupid sucker, he thought as he followed the man across the road. The customs man took a corner table.

“I’m Salem Alawi,” he said holding out his hand, then snapping his fingers imperiously he called the garcon and ordered two short black coffees.

“What do you think of our country Mr Ennis?” Alawi did not leave him the time to reply. “Me, I was here at the time of the French,” he paused in a moment of real or feigned nostalgia, “today it is necessary to construct our country, we are not rich,” he sighed and lowered his voice. “You know that Algharb is ripe for becoming an Islamic emirate?”

Ennis looked around him uncomfortably, was the man a provocateur?

“My wife is sick,” he said his face fixed in a look of desperation.

Jesus Christ! What a stupid fool, caught like a naïve tourist.

“To buy medicine it’s necessary to have dollars....”

Ennis looked at his watch, in the vain hope of escaping from the trap that had closed on him.

“I can offer you a good exchange rate,” said Alawi, his face brightening.

“I’m sorry, but I have all the currency I need.”

“Monsieur Ennis, I’m an honest and sincere man, I can help you at the moment of your departure, here’s my card.”

Ennis took the card and looked at it, Alawi’s name was printed without a title or address.

“I’m sorry....” said Ennis desperately.

Alawi took him by his arm. “Listen Monsieur Ennis, be chic, help me!” He took out a photo of his wife with two young children. “The mother of my children, she has grave health problems, women’s things. I only need five hundred dollars.”

Ennis wanted to escape at any price. At the bar he could see people were watching, a foreigner talking desperately with a local.

“Look okay. Okay, but I really have to leave at once.” He discretely took out his wallet and slipped out a five hundred dollar note and slid it across the table under his hand to Alawi.

Alawi took it and passed a bundle of soiled Algharbi government scrip to Ennis, who waved it aside. “Please Monsieur Ennis, I insist, I’m not asking for charity,” he folded the money and lent over tucking the money into Ennis’s shirt pocket.

He stood up.

“Allah’s blessing on you my friend,” he held out his hand, “until Friday.”

“Friday,” said Ennis forcing a smile, then hurrying away cursing to himself. Screwed like an American! He felt like a naive tourist. This cheap little conman Alawi had screwed him, maybe he was a customs officer or perhaps from the police.

The Plastic Bag

He returned to his hotel where he had a lunch appointment with David. He did not repeat the story, it was too embarrassing to have fallen into such a trap. David would take him for a fool.

He went up to his room, he had just enough time to shower and change before lunch. As he came out of the shower with a towel wrapped around his waist, drops of water fell from his head as he leaned over, searching for a clean shirt in one of the tier of drawers of the wardrobe. To the left he noticed a plastic bag next to his shoes, he was puzzled, it was not his. It was one of those fancy plastic bags from a boutique with its name printed on the side.

He lifted the bag out and opened it with a certain apprehension, the light from the lamp in the wardrobe was not very bright, but he could distinguish what seemed to be bundles of money.

He took the bag to his bed and took out one of the bundles, they were Algharbi scrip, thousands, tens of thousands. There were also Euros. He felt a surge of anxiety, where did such a sum of money come from, what was it doing in his room?

He looked into the bag again turning over the bundles of money, there was a wallet, he opened it, there were papers and an identity card, it was that of a young woman, he looked a the photo, then the name, Asma Saïd. He looked again at the slightly faded photo, it vaguely seemed to resemble Asma, one of those photos taken in a photo booth, it was of a much younger person, the hair was different...no it could not be her...it could be any young woman of Maghribi origin.

Who had put the bag there? He was certain it had not been there earlier that morning, before he had gone out. At the bottom of the bag was some feminine underwear. He decided to put the bag back where he had found it, hoping that during lunch its owner would collect it. Maybe the young woman or a friend had mistaken the room for their own. Was it the room maid? Perhaps it was Asma, she had inexplicably put it there for some reason?

It was a large sum of money for a country in grave economic difficulties. What was worse was that it could cause him some serious worries. He was nevertheless intrigued and even excited by the find. The girl Asma was perhaps the mistress of a rich man, perhaps a Saudi, there were still quite a number of rich Middle Easterners, they liked to frequent the casinos and night clubs that flourished in Medina Hurriya, where the laws of Islam were not those of the country, it was not like in Jeddah or Algiers. On the other hand, perhaps it belong to some kind of local traffickers in sex or drugs, he shivered at the thought.

With all kinds of explanations churning around in his head he carefully put the bag back in the wardrobe and then went down to the lobby to meet David.

The Accusation

The sun shone harshly, in the distance he heard the noise of the traffic, in the hotel room the airconditioning was switched to maximum, emitting a steady breeze that kept the room temperature at an acceptably steady twenty-four degrees. He took his breakfast in the restaurant, coffee, a croissant and a couple of slices of cake. He looked at the fruit, a mixture of dates, prickly Barbary figs and oranges and decided he would give it a miss taking a freshly pressed orange juice instead. He felt better and was ready to start his day with a visit that was more touristy than professional.

The previous day, following lunch with David, he had returned to his room where to his relief the bag had disappeared from the wardrobe. Obviously its owner had realized his or her mistake and had recovered their belongings. Though he had felt uneasy, he was intrigued by the bag, but he dismissed it as nothing more than a bizarre incident. He had then busied himself delivering an envelope containing a copy of his article on his visit to Algharb to Djellali's secretary at the ministry.

He had got out of bed that morning feeling good in the knowledge that his long trip was almost at an end. In a few days he would be back in Boston where it was midsummer. He felt a renewed enthusiasm as he started to put his ideas in order, mentally going over the mass of notes and information he had collected, building the theme for the programme and his book.

He was pleased with himself, what he had seen had confirmed his views of the gradually drift of Islam into normality after a century of violence, which had seen the progressive independence of the Arab world after WWI, the Israeli wars and other Middle East conflicts, followed by the undeclared war between the Islam and the West.

His conclusion was that both had had enough of the fruitless war that neither could have won. The two civilizations had entered into to a prolonged conflict because of their overlapping interests in the oil riches that nature had given a mainly Islamic world, a poisoned gift. Ever since the demand of oil had declined, aided by the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the establishment of the Turkish-Israeli axis, the involvement of the West had been gradually transformed into a wary

indifference. Politically, the protagonists had arrived at a slow acceptance of the unalterable differences between their two worlds and a status quo, not unlike that which had existed during the long Ottoman period.

The economic consequences of the loss of oil wealth was confirmed by a more than certain impoverishment of the previously rich oil nations, no longer able to afford the acquisition of military arsenals, with their geopolitical role greatly diminished when their American backers were no longer around to encourage and finance their ambitions.

With those thoughts in mind it was though a burden had been lifted, he now had a clear vision and he headed for the lift with a light step. As he passed in front of the reception the concierge made him a sign, he had a message. Djellali asked him to be at the Ministry as soon as possible concerning an urgent matter. Ennis was surprised by the word ‘urgent’, he had handed over the draft of his report to Djellali the previous afternoon, there was nothing in it that could be considered contentious. In any case, he thought, the procedure was no more than a charade, when he returned to Boston he would write whatever he liked. The convocation no doubt concerned the minister’s comments on his report and was certainly nothing of importance, the Arabs liked to dramatize events.

“Monsieur Ennis, please take a seat.”

Djellali had a worried look as he pointed a chair to Ennis. He took a cigarette and lit it with an antique gold Dunhill lighter. “Monsieur Ennis, we have a delicate problem,” he hesitated, “how can I put it, you have been indiscrete,” he said forcing a smile.

Ennis remained calm anticipating bad news.

“Do you know a young woman by the name of Saïd, Asma Saïd?”

It was the name indicated on the identity card in the bag in his hotel room.

“No...”

“Strange, the family of this person has accused you of stealing a large sum of money that belongs to her.”

Ennis suddenly felt his stomach lurch, it was a set up. He swore silently.

“You really don’t know this person?”

“No.”

“You deny this story.”

“Yes.”

“That’s strange now. My men have found a bag containing the money in your hotel room together with the identity card of this girl.”

“Is that so!” he said innocently.

“Yes.”

“I’ve never heard of this person and I’ve had no contact with any woman here.”

“Monsieur Ennis, I am responsible for the supervision of your visit in our country, it is clear that there has been an attempt to compromise you. In addition you were observed in a café not far from your hotel with an agent of the Customs Service, making an illegal exchange transaction!”

At that instant the door opened and Abdelmoumoun entered into the office, his faced was twisted in anger. He saw Ennis and fixed him with a look of rage.

“Bonjour Monsieur Abdelmoumoun,” Ennis said greeting him in an attempt at normality.

“No! No! Not Monsieur Abdelmoumoun! Enough of that! Who the hell do you think I am? You know my name? Here facing you, it’s Monsieur le Ministre! You understand? Monsieur le Ministre!”

“Excuse me Monsieur le Ministre...the President Hassan bin Ibrani said...”

“Chkoun anta?” screamed Abdelmoumoun, asking him what right he had to invoke the name of the President in his miserable affairs.

“I’m sorry Monsieur Abdelmoumoun...”

“Whom do you take me for? I won’t repeat it again, it’s Monsieur le Ministre when you’re addressing me? Now you’ll stop this insolence! Do you realise that you’re addressing a member of the government of this country!”

“My mission...”

“You’re mission! Enough! I don’t give a dam about your supposed mission!”

The violence of Abdelmoumoun transpired from his face, he was in a state of uncontrollable rage.

“What do you want? Who do you think...you’ll pay for this insult to our hospitality?”

“I’m really sorry if I’ve done something that...”

“Enough! You know what authority is? Well I have it and I intend to use it! You’re a dead man, Mister shit reporter Ennis!”

He fixed Ennis with a look of pure icy hatred mixed with raw power and violence. A surrealistic silence reigned in the room for a long moment. Then Abdelmoumoun continued calmly, it was as though the storm had passed.

“Mister Ennis, do you take us for fools? You, an American journalist, are the guest of our government, but you are seen in the company of enemies of our country.”

Ennis remained silent looking at the dangerous man in front of him.

“In this agreement signed by you, it is expressly forbidden that you engage in acts that could be harmful to our state,” he said raising his voice and tapping on the paper with his finger.

Shit! Ennis thought to himself fearfully. What a stupid bastard I am, this is not true. I’m really in deep shit now.

“What do you say to that?” Abdelmoumoun said thrusting the paper under his nose.

“I was entrapped!”

“So you admit there is truth in this accusation?”

“Yes…no.”

He suddenly realised that he was sweating profusely, he knew what this man was capable of, he knew no limits. Algharb was no different to those countries on the southern shores, where brutality and torture were accepted means for the extraction of a confession.

The telephone rang and Djellali answered it. He handed it to Abdelmoumoun who replied speaking Arabic rapidly. He then left the room

giving what seemed like instructions to Djellali. There was a long silence after the door closed, Djellali shook his head slowly and then spoke to Ennis.

“I warned you at the start to be careful of any contacts here, you know there are many people here hostile to your country, who wanted to provoke an incident.”

“The money in the hotel room was a trap. Alawi set me up like a fool.”

“The problem now is what to do?”

“What to do? Me, I’ve got nothing to do with all of that!”

“Maybe the police will think otherwise?”

“The police!”

“Yes, the police, they said Asma Saïd, was fished out of the port this morning near your hotel, she had your visiting card in a pocket!”

“Jesus Christ!”

“Quite right Mister Ennis, you would do well to invoke the help of your Prophet.”

“Shit!”

“And you are certainly in the shit.”

“What am I going to do?”

“You will leave at once, return home, no scandal.”

“What!”

“Don’t worry, I’ve arrange for your things to be collected at your hotel and we shall both leave for the airport immediately.”

He made a sign to the bewildered Ennis to leave. In the parking they took Djellali’s car and left in the direction of the airport in silence, the only noise came from the telecom screen where the pictures flickered on and off and the sound crackled incomprehensibly on the police frequencies. Ennis was in a trance unable to understand what had happened in the last couple of hours. They arrived at the airport and parked in a zone reserved in front of the police and customs building.

The car phone buzzed and Djellali spoke excitedly saying he would be back in his office in about an hour.

“Wait here a moment, I’ll be back in a moment with your exit visa and papers.”

He got out and disappeared into the building.

Ennis looked dejectedly at the two RASE men guarding the entrance to the building, they looked bored and paid little attention to the car with its ministry number plates.

He waited anxiously, five minutes passed, then ten...he looked at his watch. He wondered what was keeping Djellali; he nervously slipped his hand into his pocket feeling his passport and his plane ticket that Djellali had returned to him. His thoughts turned wildly in his head, he wanted to get out of the country as quickly as possible and if possible to recover his notes intact with his computer and equipment. Then he heard his name, he looked at the telecom screen, it flickered and the sound buzzed and crackled. Urgent! Urgent! Calling all police and frontier guards, apprehend John Ennis, American nationality, suspected of murder and robbery, believed to be in a stolen car, direction Independence Airport, by order of the Minister of the Interior.

He immediately understood. He slid over into the driver’s seat and calmly turned the key in the contact without looking at the two guards. The car started and he slowly reversed out of the parking spot and headed back in the direction of the city centre.

The Flight

His first idea was to go the American representation, there was no embassy. Then he decided for David’s apartment, it was not far from the hotel, near the market place behind the Old Port.

As soon as he arrived in the city centre and could see the Grande Cathedral with its minarets he abandoned the car, choosing a quiet side

street, squeezing it between a white van and a minibus, where it could not be too easily spotted with its ministry number plates.

Fifteen minutes later he found himself standing in a street that lay off the main avenue, about one hundred meters or so from the entrance of the apartment building where David had his apartment. He hesitated, waiting, looking carefully around to be sure that the street was not being watched. He could smell cooking odours and oriental spices. There was the sound of the cars and motorbikes accelerating away from the traffic lights, the blue smoke rising in the heat of the sun. The concrete roadway was polished by the tires of the vehicles.

With the red light a driver lit his cigarette and in a practiced movement crushed the cigarette packet launching it into the gutter already overflowing with detritus. The notion of civism and public hygiene was not one of the habits of the Algharbis, who had little consideration for anything they did not own directly.

The main avenue had once been the pride of the city, where some of the regions finest restaurants, cafés and boutiques had proudly served well to do locals and many visitors, it was now renamed avenue Muhammad VI. It had been transformed in a vast slum, though to be objective, even before the revolt the broad avenue had already commenced its decline into an unkempt third class zone for the Neos.

In spite of an unemployment rate of over twenty five percent, low wages and a willing labour force, hiring of cleaners had never been envisaged. Rubbish and filth had become invisible, it was part of the everyday environment. Algharbis visiting Paris or Düsseldorf were marvelled at the cleanliness as thought it existed by some mysterious force in those cities.

After a long moment, once he was sure there was nothing suspicious he crossed the road and approached the building, the main door was locked, it required a code to enter. He hung around for some minutes in the hope that somebody entering or leaving would open the door for him, but he soon realized that he could wait a long time. Time was pressing and the police could arrive at any moment.

As he looked around he saw the light over the entrance to the basement garage flashing, the door lifted and a car drove slowly out onto the street. Quickly he slipped under the door as it closed and walked down the ramp to

the first basement level where he found the door to the stairwell and the lift. He walked up the stairs and in the hallway buzzed on the visiophone.

A few moments later he was standing before the door to David's apartment.

"I told you that this man is very dangerous, his is very close to a group of pan-Arab Islamists."

"I thought this country was secular."

"Secular doesn't mean apolitical, he is a nationalist...a Muslim nationalist. People like Abdelmoumoun want an Arab traditionalist political system, an Emirate, not a Western republic."

"But what has that got to do with me?"

"Nothing in particular, but he is against all that you represent. Our friend had a long record of extremist activities before he became important in Algharb. He was deported from Germany some years back, for agitation in the Turkish community under the anti-terrorism laws. When he returned to France he continued his activities and ended up with two years in prison for association with known terrorists when an army officer was injured in a reprisal attack against an army barracks. It happened soon after the death of Abdelmoumoun's wife in a bomb attack on the Côte d'Or Mosque, which was attributed to a French right wing extremist movement. There was little doubt in official circles that it was the BLC, that's the Brigade de la Croix de Lorraine, which was an early paramilitary organization close to le Martel."

"Terrorism?"

"Yes, but in reality he was set up, he had been promoting Islamic schools in Paris when new legislation introduced by the Renaissance Party excluded all forms of non-traditional religious education, private or not, that is to say non Judeo-Christian."

"What happened after?"

"Well he was again deported, this time to Algiers, but he was not to the taste of the local Mullahs, who saw him as some kind of revolutionary, they did not want agitators either."

"…and then?"

“Well, he then turned up in Istanbul, in the Muslim Nationalist Party. They were not really what you could call fundamentalists, but were nostalgic for the glories of a Muslim empire, you know Suliman the Magnificent, the Ottoman’s and all that. They dreamt of a new oriental empire from Dacca to Rabat!”

“When you say they are not fundamentalists you don’t mean to say not religious?”

“As I said they are not fundamentalists, but they are of course believers, but in the same way as the majority of Christians in Europe. Theirs is a political movement, fighting against corruption, petro-dollar kings, and also against mullahs and such who would like to return to medieval times, but, and this is important, against the West, they see at the root of all the problems in their world.”

“A sort of Ataturk?’

“Certainly not Ataturk, in their eyes he was a traitor, he abandoned traditions, abolished the Caliphate, and attacked the foundations of the oriental world.”

“They are revolutionaries then?”

“Exactly, fanatics of a certain kind. They want to return to the traditional values of their world in which progress and change would not be excluded, but adapted to their needs.”

“But Abdelmoumoun seems to prefer extremely strong arm methods!”

“Unfortunately all those who pretend to work for the good of the people have the same ideas, they will use any means at their disposal to attain their goals, even marching over the bloodied bodies of the people they are going to save!”

“...including mine by the looks of it!”

“Unfortunately for you my unlucky friend, you fall in the category of the worst enemies, an Anglo-Saxon.”

David described Abdelmoumoun’s ideas of how the British, for their imperial needs, had destroyed the natural balance of the Middle East, setting up their puppet governments and kings, followed by the Americans with their insatiable thirst for oil, using local tyrants for their own ends.

They had humiliated great leaders, Mossadeg, Nasser, Saddam, Yasser Arafat and the whole of the Palestinian people for the profit of the Zionist colonists.

David was a most respected orientalist, whose specialty was political history, he had an enormous sympathy for the Arab world and Islam in general. Both Arabs and Westerners respected his opinions. He was a frequent contributor to the International Herald Post, valued for his balanced opinion, but above all his ability to present that of the Arabs.

“Listen we’ve got more pressing problems than a philosophical discussion, which we could talk about at a more propitious moment...let’s hope. The question is what are we going to do with you? Abdelmoumoun wants your head at any price!”

He stopped, thinking hard, his cigarette holder clenched between his teeth.

“You cannot stay here, things could turn out very badly, you would be a hostage. The Nation of France cannot help you, they wouldn’t help you given their relations with the rest of the Federation. The problem is that we have very little time, they will be here very quickly.”

He stood up and went to his library where he looked for something in a drawer whilst talking.

“Your best chance is Italy, it’s the nearest and the frontier is perhaps a little less difficult.”

He turned around holding several maps, he selected one and started to unfold it hurriedly.

“You’ll have to take small roads, I have a bike, it’s not new but it’s serviceable, you can take it....”

“A bike!” Ennis exclaimed, he had been thinking of something more rapid, more reliable, solid.

“Yes, you’ve had a little practice, like that you’ll pass unseen, remember they are not playing games, their methods are brutal. You’ll have to change your clothes, I have an old djellaba in the garage,” he smiled, “it’s not very chic but it’ll help to hide your foreign appearance.”

He leaned over the map, it dated from the French period, it was a Michelin regional road map, well detailed with all departmental routes.

“There,” he said pointing to the other maps he had selected, “they are IGN maps, very detailed, they are used by cross country hikers, 1:25000 scale. Once you reach the mountains you should take the old foot paths, today they are forbidden to hikers and tourists, though the local peasants use them to bring their cattle to grazing pastures.”

The Bike

La voyage c’est la recherché de ce rien du tout, de ce petit vertige pour couillons Céline

David showed him the quickest and safest way out of Marseille, then the secondary roads along which he would be relatively safe. It would not be easy, the region was mountainous and difficult for a bike, and especially as he was not in that good a condition for such sport. First he was to follow avenue du Prado, then continue east in the direction of Cassis and La Ciotat.

“When you arrive there, you should make your way north to the frontier, there’s a pass and on the other side you’ll see the bus station,” he said tracing a line on the map with his nicotine stained finger, which Ennis had difficulty to follow in his nervous state.

David then collected together the things Ennis would need, money, half a loaf of French bread, a lump of saucisson, a couple of tins of sardines, maps and a pocket torch, stuffing them into an old khaki shoulder bag.

“I’m really sorry, I don’t have the time to set you up like a Boy Scout, but you have the most important things, the maps and money, you should be able to manage with that!”

Ennis changed into an old tee-shirt and jean jacket keeping the same trousers, those of David’s were too small, and a scarf he wound around his head Bedouin style. They took the lift to the underground garage level

where David produced a bike, at least twenty years old, but in working condition.

“Here’s the pump. I normally go for a ride on Sundays, it should be alright, if you go easy it will get you to the frontier at Sospel. There’s not many people there once you pass the Col de Brois.”

He in an after thought David rummaged in the cardboard boxes piled up against the wall of his garage and pulled out what appeared to be an old brown blanket.

“Here, the old djellaba, put it on, it will hide your clothes.”

Ennis slipped it on, then they made their way up the ramp to street level where David punched in a code opening the garage door onto a backstreet.

“Good luck my friend, telephone me, but only if you are in dire need, speak in English, about your holidays, okay!”

Ennis wheeled the bike out onto the street, it was not in that good a condition and after a few yards of wobbling he pedalled off, following David’s instructions in the general direction of Aubagne and Toulon.

He passed his first night in a small pine wood near to Trets, where he ate a sparse meal of bread and sardines whilst studying his options with David’s map. There were three possibilities, Monaco the closest, Italy and the route David had suggested through France.

The Kingdom of Monaco was about one hundred kilometres distance with the frontier at Port Grimaud, but it would be too dangerous there, both sides no doubt heavily guarded.

David had suggested Italy, but Ennis spoke no Italian, knew little about the country and even less about Italians. France on the other hand offered several different possibilities, in spite of the risks for an American citizen not only because of the poor relations it maintained with Washington, and of course he spoke the language. To the north the nearest border crossing point was just a few kilometres from Carpentras near Venasque, from there he could reach Lyon, but he would be far from any friends and an escape route to London. To the southwest was Montpellier, where perhaps he could find help with the aid of an old friend, Elliot Stone.

Elliot Stone was not too young, but he was a man of imagination. With his help he could find a solution, either to Paris or through Spain. His

immediate problem was getting to Montpellier, the direct route would be dangerous, too many people, too much traffic and too many police controls.

If he took an elliptical route towards Pertuis then Apt and Mur, he could reach Montpellier from the border crossing at Venasque, near to Carpentras. He plumped for the Pertuis route and the next morning headed north.

In spite of his fatigue he passed a restless night. Endless thoughts and images of the last days continued to run through his head. The next morning, after eating the last of his small supply of food, he continued his route towards Pertuis. It was difficult uneven road rising steeply at points. At the first village he made his first contact with the locals buying a galette of flat bread in a small Arab baker shop.

His appearance attracted less attention than he would have imagined, he was unshaved and his hands were dirty after sleeping rough in his djellaba. His European features were no problem either, there were many who French people who had opted for the new territory rather than leave the home of their birth.

The baker showed no sign of misgiving. He took the money and gave back the change without even saying good morning. Ennis felt more despised than being suspected of being a fugitive.

He passed through the occasional village with his djellaba pulled over his head, like a protection from the morning chill, as did the local peasants and old people of the country, no one took the least notice of him.

A little before Apt the front tire went flat. He continued on foot slowly pushing the bike. The morning mist had lifted giving way to a clear blue sky. He transpired under the hood, but kept it pulled down afraid to show his face.

Arriving on the outskirts of the small town he saw an SNS garage, Société Nationale d'Enérgie, with hydrogen, natural gas and petrol pumps. It had a neglected air, the forecourt was deeply stained with oil and grease, in a corner empty oil cans and drums were piled on a jumble of old tires. He wondered to himself why people kept old tires.

“Salem alekum mon frère, you have a problem?” The attendant, a boy of about sixteen or seventeen, wished him good day, pointing with a greasy finger at the flat tire.

“Alekum salem, I’ve a puncture. I’m in a hurry, can you repair it?”

“You’re in a hurry! You have a meeting with the President?” the boy said in a malicious and mocking tone.

Ennis had forgotten his appearance.

“I mean I have to meet my brother this evening, he lives not far from L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue.”

“L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue! You’ve got a good way to go! You, you don’t have an accent from here?”

“No, I was brought up in Germany,” Ennis replied without thinking.

The boy was already taking off the wheel, it seemed evident that the garage did not have that many customers.

“You got money?”

“I’ve got what it takes. Where can I buy a newspaper?”

“You want to check up on the stock market?”

Ennis ignored the boy’s sarcasm, who pointed with a screwdriver to a couple of dinghy shops further down the road. He wanted to keep his cash in case of emergency, there was no question of drawing money, his biodata and the locality would be immediately identified by the police, in any case cash would be of little use in France and would draw attention.

In the tiny self service store he bought bread, tinned tuna, a few cans of Heineken and a box of Vache Qui Rit, amused that it had survived the changes. He also picked up a copy of Le Matin at the check-out.

Back in the garage he avoided conversation with the boy who was to talkative for his liking and sat waiting for his a bike on a small wall a short distance away and unfolded the newspaper. The headline out ‘American sought for murder of girl’, below it was his photo, he closed it instantly looking around himself, nothing had changed, only a thin mangy dog sniffing in a pile of old rubbish.

He waited five more minutes and made his way over to the garage.

“There you are, like new!” the boy said leaning over the bike.

“Great, how much?”

“Twenty five.”

It was expensive.

“Plus ten for the patches.”

He paid and took the bike hoping that the repair would hold. He regretted having told the boy he was heading towards Orange.

“Hey, another thing, don’t hang around in Apt, they don’t like strangers here.”

Ennis got on the bike and peddled off slowly. He remembered the Midi when he was young, it had been a rich easy going region of France, old men playing bowls under the shade of plane trees, the camping sites and the small auberges. He could not help thinking that the French of the Midi at that time did not like the Arabs either.

He skirted around the centre and once on the départementale road for Carpentras he stopped, leaving the bike against a tree and then sitting on an old stone wall pulled out the newspaper.

The paper, of the previous day, reported an American, John Ennis, was sought in connection with the murder of a young woman aged twenty, found dead floating in the port the two days before. He was described as being of British origin and suspected of anti-governmental activities entering the country illegally. The public was informed that he was dangerous and any person having information as to his whereabouts was asked to contact the militia immediately.

Jesus Christ, not only am I a murdered, but I’m also a terrorist!

Two hours later after another nineteen kilometres, he reached Mur. The small town was neglected, the houses in the town centre were much less well maintained than the houses he had seen on the road. Sheets hung out the windows and the parking areas were mostly filled with old or abandoned vehicles of every kind.

A little further he passed a housing project dating from French times, it was shabby and rundown, the walls were streaked with black, like he had seen in Bombay or the poor districts of Hong Kong. Piles of rubbish smouldered in the parking areas amongst the carcasses of old dismantled vehicles.

There had been little traffic on the départementale, just the occasional truck overloaded with agricultural produce and one or two crowded buses

that he recognised as old Parisian models. The cars had been for the most part old Mercedes-Renault hybrid models that were overtaken, at high speed from time to time, by more recent BMW hydrogens.

After another ten or twelve kilometres he saw the red stop lights of a line of vehicles. It was a police roadblock. He stopped and slowly got of his bike inspecting the front wheel whilst wondering what to do. Calmly he laid the bike a little way back from the grass verge then took out his bread and opened a can of tuna. Looking at the map he saw a detour would have been long and tiring, he checked his watch, it was a quarter to twelve, the police would soon be gone for lunch.

An Intruder

The third night he slept off the road in an old olive grove to avoid any chance of being discovered. He was out of luck, he was awoken in the night by noises, the sky was clear, at first he thought it was animal or perhaps his imagination, then he saw something move. He froze, the noise continued, he slowly pulled out his pocket torch, pointed in the direction the movement and switch it on. He was surprised to see the form of a man who cried out frightened by the beam.

“Who’s there!”

“I’ve done nothing!”

“Who are you?”

“I’m doing no harm, I looking for a place to sleep.”

Ennis pointed the light into the intruder’s face, a Black, a Black tramp. He was frightened and seemed inoffensive.

“There’s no problem, I’m sleeping here myself,” replied Ennis, his own fright dissipating.

The Black, an older man had a white beard, his backpack lay at his feet where he had dropped it.

“I was lost.”

“Where are you going?”

“No where, I’m a just a wanderer.”

“Sit down,” he said switching off the torch, keeping his finger on the button just in case.

It took a couple of minuets to get used to the obscurity then he could see more clearly.

“You want to drink something, I’ve got some beer?”

“That would be great.”

Ennis dug into his sack and pulled out two cans of beer.

“You’re not from these parts? asked the Black, then regretting his inquisitiveness added, “Sorry, I shouldn’t be asking so many questions.”

“It’s no problem. I’m German.”

“German!”

“Yes, I was hiking and my money was stolen, now I have to get home as best I can.”

“Me, I lost everything a long time ago.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Me too.”

They sipped their beer. In the distant they could here the piercing tones of oriental music borne by the warm night air of the Midi. Ennis was now awake, he was curious to hear the man’s story, who in spite of his presence misfortune seemed to have a good education. His accent was from the Paris region.

“Are you French?”

“Me, I’m French, I mean I was French. My parents came from Guadeloupe to the Metropole in the eighties. I was born in Paris where I went to school, not brilliant, but I got my bac, then studied marketing for a couple of years and graduated. After, I joined France Telecoms.

He sipped his beer then looked at the can pensively. Ennis let him take his time, there was no hurry, the night would be long.

“Then I married, but it’s a long since I last saw my wife. A Parisian, white. I was grabbed in a razzia by the RASE, that Jewish son of a bitch Boublil deported me down here, said I was an African, me a Frenchman!”

He let out a sad laugh.

“Arabs, Gypsies and Blacks thrown out like vermin, and for once the Jews were lucky with their pal Boublil.”

o0o

The next morning he left the bike with the old man, who pointed the way up to the pass, through the mountainous Foret Domaniale de Venasque, on the other side, near the ancient town, he would find the frontier crossing point. He followed the old path, probably used by hikers in the past, now forgotten by a population who had other concerns. It rose steeply and after two or three hundred metres his lungs felt like they would explode. Three days of pedalling with a very sore backside was already difficult, but the climb was another story. He paused, sitting on a marker stone that bore traces of paint that were at least fifteen years old. He looked below at the countryside, the sky was thankfully filled with heavy grey clouds, he was pleased he would not have to affront the mountain under the heat of the Mediterranean sun.

There was not a soul to be seen, just the white rock of the hills and the sparse vegetation. The trail was not easy to follow over the rocky terrain,

overgrown after years of neglect. The sound of the cicadas echoed like endless rolls of thunder. After two hours walking he finally found his breath and a steady rhythm, he calculated he had another fifteen or twenty kilometres march before he reached the frontier, at a rate of three kilometres an hour he would need another six or seven hours.

The Frontier

From the hill top he could see the lights of Carpentras in the distance, directly below he watched the buses arriving and the long queues at the frontier crossing point. Night was falling and he decided to wait until the early morning before daylight, it would be the best time, when people were less alert and he could melt in with the crowd. Security should be lax, no one fought to get in to Algharb. Observing the layout of the terminal he sought a point where he could slip in unseen, where there were fewer offices or other building, it was not too difficult, the toilettes and rubbish bins were relatively separate, near the bus area for obvious reasons, in addition there was adequate cover with a few pines, low shrubs and other vegetation.

It was still dark when he slipped into the toilettes, to his surprise there was a lot of coming and going. He joined the crowd, almost exclusively composed of Neos, as though he was looking for his bus. At first he did not understand, the destinations indicated on the buses were in France, then it clicked, it was the early morning crowd of day workers leaving for their jobs in France, admitted daily during their working hours. It was like the Tijuana border crossing in San Diego, where Mexican day workers were admitted daily, returning home in the evening or at whatever time their work finished.

He observed the pass check points, they seemed to be minimal, no doubt due to the more severe police controls on the French side. Many of the buses' passengers hurried to the toilettes, taking advantage of the stop, certain had come from as far as Salon-de-Provence and still had a bus ride of another hour or more ahead of them.

Ennis returned to the toilets where he took time washing his hands. He looked around and saw a bag on the floor, there was a wallet half stuck into one of the pockets, turning his head he saw that the owner had gone to urinate. Ennis quickly picked up the back and slipped into a WC. He sat down to wait, it was no more than a few seconds before he heard the shouts.

“My bag! Where’s my bag! Someone has stolen by bag!”

Then there were hurried footsteps that faded as the owner of the bag disappeared outside. Ennis looked into the wallet, there was an identity card, a bus card and a work permit for a factory in Montpellier.

He abandoned the bag in the WC, then making sure the way was clear he casually walked out, found the bus for Montpellier and climbed in taking a seat near the back. A few moments later, as the bus pulled away, he saw the Neo, an Arab, gesticulating to a border guard who was shrugging his shoulders.

At the crossing check point an Algharbi frontier guard climbed in, he proceeded to inspect the passengers’ identity cards and work permits without looking too closely at their owners. He was looking for fake cards. Ennis, his skin darkened by the hot sun and with a four day beard, bowed his head and turned slightly towards the window, as he had observed the other passengers do so, their faces masks, without expression, wax masks of submission.

By the time the controller reached his seat he seemed satisfied, just touching the outstretch cards with his finger, he then left the bus. Twenty metres further was the French check point, the routine was the same except at 5.30 in the morning the controller yawned, his evident indifference was in the best Gallic tradition, after a cursory check the bus slowly started off in the direction of Montpellier.

Nobody spoke, they were deep in their thoughts no doubt thinking of the long nights work ahead of them, or perhaps it was the long line of buses they passed with their load of deportees waiting to cross into Algharb, watched by heavily armed RASE Guards, who displayed none of the indifference of the controller.

An hour later they pulled into the bus station in Montpellier, where Ennis got down leaving his djellaba behind him on the overhead rack. It was just before seven.

Stone

Rue Saint Firmin was in the heart of the old town. Ennis found the landmark he was looking for, an Arc de Triomphe built to the glory of Louis the Great. If he remembered rightly Stone's place was on the street to the right hand side going down from the arc, at number 16. It was an elegant off white stone building typical of Montpellier, constructed in the seventeenth century, and from the outset an apartment building.

It was almost nine when Ennis rung on the visiophone.

"Who's there?"

"The King of Ireland!"

There was a silence, he was being scrutinised, he slipped back the hood of his djellaba.

"Beggorah! To be sure it's you! Entre old boy!"

"Ennis heard a click and pushed the heavy coach door, entering into a porch he found himself standing before a steel gate, like in a prison he thought to himself, but it was to keep intruders out, protect the residents. He waited before the camera for another click then pushed the gate open. He was in what appeared to be a medieval court, he looked around and saw several floors with balconies in stone and sculpted pillars, then he took the large wide stairway in front of him, the steps were worn by centuries of use by long dead residents and their visitors.

There was little light and he could not find the switch situated at each floor losing himself in the dark. He could not remember which floor Stone lived on, it was years since he had last visited him.

"Where are you?"

The light suddenly blinded him and he was surprised by an enormous dog.

"What's this beast?"

“That’s Caesar, the most stupid animal in all of France and Navarre!”

“It’s not dangerous?”

“No, you’re the dangerous one! What are you doing here for Christ’s sake man,” he said laughing.

“It’s a long story.”

“I don’t doubt that, the bastards are looking for you everywhere.”

“Who?”

“Who do you think! The police!”

“Putain de merde!”

“Well I glad you haven’t forgotten your French. Come in quick, don’t speak so loud, things aren’t like they were before.”

He showed him into a spacious living room with a grand piano in one corner and modern paintings on the walls that contrasted with the sculpted ceiling and wall mouldings.

“Let’s get rid of those clothes,” he said hold his nose, “you want something to drink, perhaps you should take a shower first?”

“Yes, a glass of water, then a shower.”

“I’ll give you some fresh clothing, not the latest fashion, but clean, after that we’ll eat something and you can tell me everything.”

He showed Ennis the bathroom and gave him a plastic bag for his old clothes.

“By the way, the beard, don’t shave it off for the moment.”

A quarter of an hour later he rejoined Stone in the spacious kitchen where he was preparing a meal.

“Here taste this!”

“What is it?”

“Taste.”

Ennis took the glass that Stone had filled with a brownish liquid from a carafe.

“That my friend is good for the digestion, a herbalist around the corner from here recommended it to me, it’s a plant from Africa.”

Stone was a bio fanatic and an amateur of miraculous remedies and exotic cuisine.

“Now we’re going to eat a decent breakfast, an omelette with ginger, and sweet South American potatoes. I haven’t eaten meat for years now.’

As Stone prepared the meal Ennis recounted the story of his flight from Median Hurriya. Then changing the subject he turned to Stone and his life in France.

“Where is the family?”

“In Paris, Claire has abandoned me,” he said in a ferocious tone.

“It’s true?”

“Seriously, she’s in Paris with the two girls.”

“How are they?”

“Fine…I don’t like the type Celine is fixed up with, a real fascist, he works for the Francophone morning news. Can you imagine it, in the middle of the twenty first century the news is controlled by the state, every word approved by Paris, the worse thing is this dictator wants to drug us with his government’s philosophy of well being!”

Stone, a no longer very young Scot had lived in France for the best part of his life, he was one of those very rare Anglo-Saxons who spoke French without the least sign of an accent. Stone had always been a rebel, he was a journalist turned writer, as a young correspondent he had covered wars and crises in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Levant and Arabia. He had abandoned the press in despair of all that he had seen and experienced to consecrate his life to international geopolitical analysis, hoping that he would find an answer or at least an explanation to the world’s problems. His works were published in Europe and the USA, but his opinions caused him endless problems with the powerful.

“Our problem in Europe with this so called Federation is that we think we are the only ones capable of organising the world, and above all with our so called Judeo-Christian values. After five hundred years of discovery and domination we did not see the others coming.”

They watch the TS London news. The president of Nova Rossiya was in London on an official visit at the invitation of the Lord Lieutenant of New England.

“Look always clowning, he is the king of nothing, like Pinocchio, speaking as though England decided the future of the planet, he does not even have the Scots as his subjects.”

Stone voiced in Paris Info and they half interestedly watched a report from Brussels on import quotas for China.

“Finally, what’s changed in the last twenty five years? I’ve been here over fifteen years already, in a building that’s three hundred and fifty years old, it’s true that my kitchen produces hot water or ice on demand, the equipment is in carbon fibre and I cook with nuclear electricity, but the furniture is still in wood. Of course there is the TS in every room, it’s different, but in reality it’s still the old fashioned television, like fifty years ago, with the same old shit.”

“You haven’t changed. Instead of complaining why don’t you pour me a little of that excellent wine you used to have.”

“Listen maybe you’re the King of Ireland, but if you’re not happy I’ll sling you out and then you’ll see how things are!”

He fished out a bottle and filled Ennis’ glass.

“Albignac wants us to shut up, enjoy ourselves, we live a in a country where we have everything, even growth has almost come to a standstill for our ecologist friends, everything is fine except for all the poor Horban bastards, we don’t work anymore, we amuse the planet, we invent fashions, they come to see us, just like a huge theme park, Galloworld! Anything we don’t like we throw out, next door,” he said pointing his thumb over his should.

“But that’s just what you wanted.”

“Not exactly, at least not me old boy!”

“But the majority had systematically elected governments who have closed their eyes to reality, until it was almost too late. The consequences are dramatic and now the time bomb is not over the water, but at our door.”

“The democratic model that existed forty years ago is finished. We are all so equal that the least difference tilts, but in reality we are all prisoners in this reality, watched, numbered, every step of our lives planned in advance.”

“Generations dreamed of this utopia?”

“Utopia? We can’t even park our cars where we want to, we are forced to pay every kind of tax God invented, we can’t choose how we educate our children, we can’t even be sick!”

“Not like ‘next door’.”

“Our freedom, liberty, call it what you like, has become a fiction. What’s more the government we have chosen now wants to punish non-conformists by withdrawing the only right the remains, the right to work!”

“Wonderful.”

“You know next door, our neighbours…I’m sorry I have difficulty using the name they have given it…there was a population of two million thirty years ago, you know how many they are today?”

“I don’t know, perhaps three or four million.”

“My arse, that’s what they say in their press, it’s more than twice that!”

“Why do they hide it?”

“They’re frightened, they wouldn’t have the aid from the Federation, in addition it would frighten the life out of the French!”

Ennis contemplated his glass in silence.

“What is worse, it’s us who finances them.”

“That’s the price of a peaceful life.”

“Peaceful my arse! Look at free Algharb! Free from what, from who? France? Algeria?”

“I suppose it was once one of the greatest cities of the South, France and Europe, full of promise, but now the promises are gone…. It’s true that it was always a Mediterranean city, never really at ease with the North, but today it’s future is with the south.”

“Now the managers and engineers have gone, it’s become a symbol of the failure of France’s North-South politics. It’s a kind of Bantustan that we

have created in our country, when I say a reserve it's not against those people there, but why in France?"

"Was there another choice?"

"Another choice! In their country of course! In their putain de pays!"

Ennis was surprised by Stone's reaction, his vehemence.

"Let me give you another example. The Asmat of Papua Niugini, whose name means 'humans' that is human beings, consider all other tribes as Manowe or 'food', those who can be eaten. The world is made up of friends and enemies, members and non-members.

"I wouldn't like to be a Manowe when they're around."

"Seriously, it's a universal phenomenon for all peoples. Home sapiens is a rotten species, but culturally we see ourselves different, we are genetically programmed to choose and favour those who are close to us."

"But we are not in the jungles of Papua Niugini."

"No, but the ideas are the same. In tribes that are far away from our so called civilisation, foreigners are considered as nothing more than game, to be tracked down and eaten, because there are considered dangerous and non-human, different and therefore inferior, to whom normal rules don't apply."

Stone stood up, time had flown by, it was midday.

"I have to walk the dog. He is one of us. You want to come?"

"It's okay, I mean the police?"

"Not at this time of day."

They walked towards the cathedral, a monument to the architectural genius of the Middle Ages, with an extraordinary purity of line.

"Hey! There's an Irish pub here, not far, let's go and grab a beer."

They walked down the small ancient cobble stoned street, it was quiet, the French were at lunch. Stone stopped suddenly.

"I have to take a piss."

He urinated against the stone wall of a centuries old building just as a young woman passed by, she mumbled something like 'dirty old sod',

Stone shrugged. When nature called…especially at his age.

"You know what the income of the people in that place was thirty years ago?"

Ennis made a sign to say tell me.

"Thirty thousand Euros a year."

"And today?" Ennis replied to satisfy his answer.

"Today it's around ten thousand!"

"Perhaps it's not their fault."

"No, it's not the fault of those poor buggers, it's the fault of their leaders. They're all corrupt, look at Monaco, the casinos and luxury hotels, they're full of them, throwing their country's money away at the roulette tables. Before, in France the Neos wanted housing, education, trade unions and health. Well now they've got all they deserve, pauperism and misery."

"Tell me one thing, how did France come to accept the dismemberment of their country, I mean the French fought two world wars to defend their vision of civilisation and their ideas?"

"Listen old boy, it's very simple, as you said France was not the same country that fought against the Germans."

"Not the same country!"

"I mean the people, you know, Jean, Jacques, Pierre became Mohammed, Rachid, Mamadou, the history of France and its traditions, its religion, were not theirs, they couldn't have cared a damn about all of that, it was gone, forgotten."

"But Mohammed and company were not the only people in the country."

"True, but they were city dwellers, the grass roots French had left the cities or lived in the smart districts, they had no more influence, being able to demonstrate or show their anger without being accused of being racists. On the other hand the Neos set fire to their neighbourhoods and instantly had the attention of not only the government and press, but the entire world, as well as the actors and politicians who adored being seen by the cameras, making worthless promises."

"They could vote."

Of course, but the Gallo votes in the towns and cities of country had little effect, the Neos also voted, choosing their own representatives, mostly socialists and extreme left wing parties.

“So the Neos changed France…at least temporarily.”

Toulouse

They were up just before six the next morning, first light of day had just appeared on the horizon. They drank their coffee in silence then Ennis collected his few belongings and they went down to Stone’s car parked on one of the narrow side streets. They left Montpellier taking the autoroute in the southerly direction, by the time they reached the first toll booth the traffic had started to build up with the normal morning rush. Outside of the city centre things had not changed very much with personal vehicles being the main form of transport to outlying districts.

After the teletoll there would be few police over the four hundred kilometres that separated them from Toulouse. Stone’s plan was to visit an old friend, owner of an antique bookshop.

He flipped on the eight o’clock news and listened to the usual stories, international politics and disasters in Africa. The local news announced that the Algharbi police was seeking an American journalist implicated in the murder of a young woman, the suspect was believed to have crossed the border at Montpellier with the papers stolen from a day worker.

“They’re on to you, those bastards!” said Stone with a hard laugh.

“I can’t understand why they’re so obsessed, there must be something else behind it?”

“In any case you’ve really got them excited, is there something else?”

“If only I knew.”

“You’re probably a scapegoat to cover for something else.”

“It’s a possibility, the story of the money in the hotel is bizarre, it was no doubt a plant.”

Ennis reflected in silence watching the concrete flash by.

“The girl talked about someplace, Queyras, or something like that.”

“La Queyras?”

“That sounds like it, she said they were building a camp.”

“Funny place to build a camp, it used to be a ski station, been abandoned, too near to Algharb.”

“What about the French police in all that?”

“It’s difficult to say, but the fact the story is on the national news is a clear sign they’re interested.”

“Maybe, but why?”

“You know the French, they like a peaceful life! You, you’re just an American, a pawn to throw away, your government can’t and won’t do anything.”

“You’re dead right there, the time is long gone when they would send a gun boat for one of their citizens, they’ve got other problems, home grown Hispanic terrorists, Central American wars and the rest of it.”

Stone took the slip road to a service area, it was time to eat something.

“In any case they’re nothing but incompetent fools.”

“Who?”

“Governments, it’s a long time since they had the courage to face up to reality, thirty years ago that would have sent in the Marines and their missiles, today they’re ready to give away anything. The French would give Lyon away for a quiet time.”

“The world has changed.”

“My arse, anybody could have seen what was coming if they had opened their eyes, but raise your voice and you’re a racists or fascist. Me I’ve always fought against racism all my life, for Israel, for the Kurds, and the Copts, but it doesn’t mean opening my home to the down and outs of the world.”

“I know.”

“But, I was never for handing over a chunk of Europe to mad men like Ibrani with his uncontrolled colonization.”

“I’ve heard there’s already a backlash building up.”

“You’d better believe it boy! From Brussels and Paris there’s trainloads of them every week transported to the frontier. The problem is that in Algharb it’s like a pressure cooker and one of these days it’s going to explode, another Bantustan or Gaza on our very doorstep. They should have sent them home or better never allowed them to come here in the first place!”

Stone slowed down to ninety kilometres an hour as they approached the teletoll of Villefranche. Passing through the tollgate they saw ahead of them a group of Gardes checking cars.

One of the Gardes lifted his white-gloved hand indicating to slow down the stream of traffic. There was a road check ahead.

“Shit! Just stay calm, don’t make any signs of being afraid, be natural!” Stone hissed between his closed teeth.

There were several Gardes, it was evident that they were looking for somebody, and Ennis was worried that it was himself.

Stone advanced in the right hand side lane, he slowed down and opened his window. With the air of an idiot he looked at the two Gardes who waved him down. One of them pointed to the spot where he should stop. It was the shorter of the two. Both wore Ray-Ban style sunglasses, their helmets bore the insignia of the Nation’s elite Corp de Garde, a double-edged sword in a curling flame. They uniforms were black and in each lapel a silver cross of Lorraine sparkled in the sunlight. Their high black leather boots gave a final touch to their sinister image.

Stone braked a little too abruptly and the car shuddered to a stop. There was a screech of brakes from the car behind.

“Good morning officer, excuse me, I’m looking for Villenouvelle,” he said with the air of a country yokel. “I’m going to visit an old friend of mine, the Curé, I’ve got a map, but I don’t know the area too well.”

He pushed the map out of the window clumsily unfolding it and pointing with a finger to the name of a village on the map. The Garde half listened inspecting the interior of the car. On the back seat Ennis had left a newspaper, the International Herald.

“Your papers messieurs,” said the Garde officiously saluting with one hand and holding out the other, waiting for Stone’s driving license and identity card who started to fumble in the glove compartment.

Ennis felt his stomach weakening. The Garde looked a hard nut, he wore a thick black moustache, the taller of the two had taken off his Ray-Bans, his eyes were blue and he looked a very slightly better disposed. The shorter Garde looked hard at Stone, who seemed to be overdoing his show, acting a little too naively, raising the Garde’s suspicion.

Suddenly from behind there was a screech of brakes and a loud bang, the noise of two cars colliding, then a second bang and the sound of breaking of glass. There was a pile up, an inattentive driver tried to avoid the queue of cars too late.

The two Gardes turned in the direction of the crash at the same instant as Stone and Ennis. They saw the drivers and passengers stumbling out the cars, they were hurling insults at each other in good French style, one of the drivers was bleeding from his forehead.

The Garde made an impatient sign to Stone to pull over onto the verge then he turned in the direction of the accident.

Stone edged forward slowly looking into his rear view mirror and saw the Gardes disappear into a small crowd of drivers who had got out for a better look at the spectacle. He heard shouts and saw raised arms. The other Gardes hurried in the direction of the accident, waving the waiting cars on.

Stone accelerated very slowly gliding away from the scene.

“Let’s get the fuck out of here,” he said crouching over the wheel. “As soon as they have settled their little problem, those bastards will turn their attention to us. We’d better get off the autoroute at the next exit.”

Expulsion

One by one they got down from the buses that stopped in a large parking zone. They were lined up on the roadside by the wire fencing where they waited shivering in silence, their faces full of apathy and resignation, in the fog and drizzle. Certain of them carried holdalls, others plastic bags, but the most were empty-handed. They wore the same jeans, trainers, tee shirts or jackets, exactly as when they had been picked up in Paris or in some other town, on the streets, in the Metro, on a bus or at home. They had been transported without formality by train and then by bus to the Algharbi frontier.

'Our objective is not repression and above all not racist, it is simply to put order into the house of the Nation. We are accused of all kinds of acts against human rights, even atrocities by certain who would better look at their own shameful record," Boublil declared to the international press assembled at the conference in the Elysée Palace. "It's true there have been a few regrettable incidents as our representatives of law and order have carried out their duty in the maintenance of civil peace, it was unfortunate, but given the degree of the problem that confronted the Nation it was unavoidable.'

The transfer of non-Europeans to Algharb was nothing less than expulsion, a spectacle of cruel regularity that took place deep in the night of almost every day of the week.

The NASE Guards stood at the ready wearing anti-riot helmets with shaded visors covering their faces, they had the look of threatening extraterrestrials, their stun-guns pointed at the sad group of men.

A uniformed official made a sign with his club to the group to move forward towards the gate in the fencing that had been half opened. They passed through ignoring their guards with an air of indifference. They were dehumanised, mere cattle to be sorted. The thick fog that hung in the cold morning air at Col Bayard, near to Gap, hid the buildings and the fate that awaited them on the other side of the frontier.

Without looking back the officials climbed into one of the buses that started and turned towards the office buildings for a warm breakfast, and the empty bus was cleaned for the next trip.

In no more than a quarter of an hour the Nation had rid itself of another hundred or so non-Gallos. Without cries, without words and without wasted effort. It was as though they were not human beings, but simply a herd of animals that had been brought home to their paddock as quickly as possible with the gate carefully closed behind them.

Boublil, the Minister of Ethnic Affairs, instigator of the denaturalisation laws, congratulated himself on the smoothness of the operations; seventy thousand non-Gallos had been ‘repatriated’ in less than two months, one of the most massive acts of ethnic purification carried out by the Nation since the Partition and in fact in the history of France since the Jews had been expelled following the Inquisition.

The system functioned perfectly, a well-oiled machine that had reached its cruising speed. The remaining illegal non-Gallos, those without Guest Worker Cards, tried to avoid being trapped in the nets of the NASE patrols. They took refuge hiding in the SPZ’s, only a few dared to enter the Gallo towns and cities and only after night fall, others hid in abandoned house and some even took refuge in the woods near the large towns.

In the manhunt that had continued over the previous two months, the authorities, the army, the national and municipal police and the NASE Guards had joyously thrown out all notions of human rights in their enthusiasm to fulfil the objectives defined by le Martel’s government.

Not only those who could not produce the necessary papers were arbitrarily arrested, but also those in possession of valid GWD’s, they were humiliated, separated from their families, their papers destroyed, they were beaten and certain even died from their injuries. Observers from international human rights organisations watched helplessly as those who resisted expulsion were beaten at the frontier at near Gap. They were ordered to leave by a senior NASE officer, his shirt splattered with the victim’s blood, who explained that they had defended a ‘repatriation candidate’ who had been attacked by criminal elements.

Jean-Paul Michel, the under-secretary to the Minister of Ethnic Affairs and Non-Gallo Questions, was a self made arriviste, an enthusiastic partisan of the ethnic purification policies of the Nation. He explained to the observers that ‘the police are not here to distribute chocolates’. With his Jean Gabin looks and his pretended air of sympathy, he had never given the

least consideration to others to advance his own position, ruining careers on his quest for power. He had started out as a lowly employee in the National Employment Agency, where using his position he had aided corrupt officials to obtain valued jobs for their friends and families.

He progressed patiently climbing step-by-step, using his well practised methods, until his political friends rewarded him with a place in the Ministry, where he excelled, fulfilling his duties with the zealous enthusiasm of the Vichy police.

Michel was nevertheless a man without much imagination and unfeelingly accomplished his evil job, separating families, men from their wives and children from their parents.

Once arrived in Algharb the young men had little to do but hang around on street corners or in cafés, work was scarce and what there was, was paid ten times less than in France, however, the ever present RAS ensured that they accepted their fate passively.

One young man had told Ennis, “They grabbed me in Paris, in the street, shoved me into a police van and dumped me at the Repatriation Centre. I showed them my ID card, told them I was French, they punched me and tore up my card, ‘a forgery’ they said. They didn’t even leave me the time to collect my things and call my family. At the Centre I met a fellow who told me he would leave with his family…he found himself on the same bus as me, without even being able to tell his wife and children where they were taking him.”

Then another young man told him how the NASE had burst into his flat in the middle of the afternoon.

“I was having a doze, I was dressed just in my underpants. I just had time to dress, they wanted to take me like that!” he said, then adding he had been denounced by his landlord. Local TV stations regularly appealed to the public to inform the police of any persons suspected of being Infiltrators, ‘Protect our Nation from Infiltrators and subversives!’ was the slogan. Many were betrayed by their bosses, only too happy to get rid of them when work fell off.

After having crossed the frontier into Algharb, the new deportees boarded another bus and were dropped of at an arrivals centre where they were questioned and sorted by a points system, separating the desirable

from non-desirable based on the lists provided by the French authorities. Those who had useful professions were sent to destinations where they could possibly find employment, the non-desirable were mostly common law delinquents, but also those who were politically suspect who were transferred to holding centres for further investigation.

The most difficult cases were the sick and infirm or elderly without means. The French authorities provided financial aid for such cases, but this aid disappeared into the coffers of the government of Algharb rarely assisting those in need.

In parallel were those with money, they had been invited to quit the Nation to a destination of their own choosing, that is if they found a country that would accept them, either their country of ethnic origin or another that offered asylum, though there were very few. Those persons were free to transfer there belongings or money, selling the properties they owned in the Nation, but not before signing a declaration, abandoning all rights of residence in the country, the Federation or in a French territory.

All non Gallo-Europeans were required to possess a GWR card, graded according to a degree of priorities based on their profession. All GWR holders were obliged to report once a month to their local Agency for Ethnic Affairs.

The Federal Authority in Brussels had a policy of non-interference in what the Permanent Council decided were the internal affairs of a member states.

Brussels was the seat of the Federation, which had been declared Federal Territory with a special status following dissolution of Belgium. The Federal Authority was an administrative structure with limited power; its role was to implement decisions taken by the Permanent Council of the European Federation, it was composed of a Representative from each member state. The Representative was a plenipotentiary Minister and necessarily member of the government of his country, in certain countries, as in the case of the Nation of France, the Representative was also Prime Minister or Head of State. Le Martel was the Representative of the Nation of France on the Permanent Council.

The governments of Sweden and Denmark loudly proclaimed their reprobation though they encouraged their own Muslim populations to take

the road to Algharb via France with all its risks. France justified its right to offer ‘freedom’ to all those who had taken up arms against the State, the ‘freedom’ they had so fervently desired. Boublil simply brushed aside criticism from the Swedish government, which overlooked the sneering attitude of its own citizens’ attitude to their own Neos, referring to them as ‘black heads of the south’.

The governments of the member states of the Federation deported not only those classified as racially undesirable, but also small time criminals and even entire families of the unemployed Neos whose numbers never ceased to grow. Business had only too readily understood the advantages of the government’s policy and played the game by ridding themselves of their trouble makers and surplus workers replacing them by computerized robots that did not answer back and worked twenty four hours a day.

Manpower was a criterion of the past, even the service industries had eliminated a large part of its labour force. Algharb was a dumping ground, but dangerously close and consequently an interim solution. Le Martel’s government plans would restore power and respect for the Nation and a Special Task Force was created to prepare the implementation of his plans in the greatest of secrecy.

Algharb became a pole of attraction for disillusioned or idealistic Settlers from the north of Europe. From a distance it appeared a paradise in the sun, free from the dangers they had fled in their distant homelands, free from the discrimination and oppression they felt in the cold North. To reach Algharb, they risked living clandestinely in France, a country that refused their presence and saw Algharb as their own exclusive reserve for their own unwanted non-Gallo populations. Those of the new Exodus lingered in France and Italy waiting for a passage to Algharb by illegal passers who would guide them through the mountains of the Southern Alps to the Promised Land.

There were also those who arrived legally, those who were qualified, teachers, engineers, nurses and other skilled persons who could contribute to Hassan bin Ibrani’s dream of economic transformation of his country, a new Singapore, a doorway to Federation for the Caliphate and the Greater Levant.

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The creation of a homogeneous majority by the mass deportation of those who did not conform to vague historical, linguistic and religious criteria was an old and practised method of ethnic purification that served xenophobic needs, justifying the inability of people to accept inevitable change. The methods employed had a regular and murderous efficiency, justified by the overriding well being of the majority, threatened by alien cultures, suspected of seeking to destroy the establishment and the status quo it enjoyed.

The Bible tells of the Jews exile to Babylon and into Egypt, the method was repeated with improvements and different actors again and again over three thousand years, into to the twentieth century with the flight of the Palestinians from Israel, the flight of six hundred thousand Jews from Muslim countries, mostly Arab states and especially North Africa. The last century had ended with the massacres of the Hutus in Rwanda and the Serbian ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, the new millennium with Darfur.

Today, the same method continues to function efficiently with the expulsion of the Arabs and non-Europeans from the Nation of France, to an enclave of misery and an oppression of another sort. Throughout history the victims who refused mass deportation were eliminated by atrocities, committed by not only by civil and armed forces, but innocents massacred in their homes and villages by the madness of their own neighbours and fellow workers.

Under the domination of a powerful unifying force multi-ethnic societies have prospered, not always without stress, but have often survived centuries, the Roman Empire, the Ottomans and the British Empire. The Ottomans reigned over a great diversity of peoples with a religious, linguistic and cultural tolerance that survived five hundred years.

The Hapsburgs united a multiplicity of different nations and more recently different communities had lived together in the Lebanon until the balance was upset by the sudden growth of the Shiite community that provoked a bloody civil war.

The dismantlement of empires and the arrival of democracy gave birth to a struggle for power and supremacy as in the case of those peoples who had lived peacefully in the Soviet Union. During the Soviet period the borders between two Soviet republics had relatively little importance. However,

with independence nobody wished to find themselves as a minority population, without power or representation, and countries such as Moldavia and Transdniper declared either their independence or the wish to join to the ethnic group having the same affinities in Romania or the Russia.

Certain ex-republics of the USSR had developed their own programmes of ethnic purification, forcing Russians to quit their country, whilst others, still bound to the Russian Federation, declared independence throwing themselves into bloody wars such as Chechnya.

The USA was a melting pot that had functioned admirably until the arrival in mass of Settlers as a result of the successive economic and political crises in Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean. The Settlers formed a vaguely homogenous group with a common language and the geographical area of settlement in the USA, principally in Florida, Texas and California. Spanish became the principal language in a number of states, preventing the traditional process of integration, creating centres of poverty with low levels of education and exclusion from the mainstream of the English speaking population.

The situation in France and Belgium had been similar with their Maghribi populations, who experienced great difficulty integrating themselves into the mainstream population for the same reasons as the Hispanics in the USA. That is to say a massive influx of newcomers over a short period of time, concentrated in dense colonies, which prevented integration into the respective countries with their secular institutions and resulted in the continuity of the cultural and religious traditions of the newcomers countries of origin, creating a society within a society and a mutual rejection of the others values.

Rebellion

It was said that the conditions of life in the poorest districts of Marseille had become insupportable for a population, mainly composed of immigrants, who occupied the lowest rank in French society. Ennis doubted

it could have been worse than what he had observed over the previous days. In any case prior to the rebellion the North African population in the region had exceeded two million and their level of unemployment was not more than forty or fifty percent in certain quarters, and of those employed many were in temporary and precarious jobs. Industry had progressively eliminated the need for basic labour and tasks needing low skill levels. The service sector provided most of the jobs available, but at the low end of the scale in restaurant, cleaning and delivery services. The few employed in banking and office jobs were younger women.

The presidential and legislative elections in the late spring of that year had resulted in a breakthrough of the nationalist candidate whose party then went on to win seventy seats in the National Assembly. The Renaissance Party had long become part of the political scene in France, their success rising and falling with the country's economic fortunes. At the same time the extreme left had risen squeezing the fractionated parties with conventional democratic principals in the centre with nevertheless a large majority of the seats in the assembly. The parliamentary electoral system had prevented greater progress of the Renaissance Party, but their votes exceeded ten million.

Democracy in France had become fragile and the country wavered on the edge of political disaster. The Renaissance Party had evolved moderating their position as regards the Federation, in which France had become an inextricable member, engaged in all of its institutions. The Federation had moved from the political centre towards the right with several countries having large nationalist minorities in the parliaments.

As the gulf between the rich and poor grew and the economic crisis started to bite the distress of the underprivileged increased. It was late in the year when the first signs of troubles appeared, that year Christmas coincided with the end of the Ramadan, a time of celebration for Muslims. A strike had been simmering in the country's social services and some of poorest families who been unable to claim their benefits were in a desperate situation. The police had manhandled mothers demonstrating outside of a social services office with a number of young mothers hurt in a scuffle.

That evening cars and buses were burnt and when the police tried to intervene, stones and Molotov cocktails repelled them. The trouble simmered over several days then seemed to die down with promises from

the city mayor to provide assistance to the needy families and the withdrawal of the police from the quarter.

Some days later, as the country was preparing for the New Year festivities, two youths were caught by security guards in a supermarket stealing food and drinks. A fight broke out and one of them succeeded in escaping into the car park, where he stopped and hijacked the car of a shopper.

His escape coincided with the arrival of a police patrol, whose intervention resulted in a crash and the death of the youth provoking a riot and pillaging in the supermarket and its surrounding shops. Men, women and children from the nearby housing project poured in stealing meat, drinks, clothes and electrical goods. It quickly transformed into the worst rioting ever seen in France in modern times.

The arrival of the CRS aggravated the situation and the supermarket and surrounding buildings set on fire. By the early evening the riot spread to the nearby housing projects with cars burnt and barricades set up to prevent the fire services entering into action. The violence of the night surprised even the hardest of the police and fire services.

The following day the barricades remained in place in spite of appeals from the mayor and immigrant associations. That same evening under the cover of night the first shots were fired killing a CRS and provoking counter fire.

The following Monday morning Transport and City cleaning services went on strike, the same day Unions and workers' associations in Paris and other cities condemned police brutality and called for a general strike. Riots broke out in the large working class suburbs and looting broke out.

In Marseille the mob turned its attention to the city centre, looting shops and department stores, and burning cars. The mayor called in a large contingent of CRS who tried to evacuate the Cannebier with tear gas, water cannons and clubs without success, the mob then turned its attention to the city hall and the CRS riposted with tear gas and then rubber bullets. The mob became enraged and over turning cars set up barricades certain returning fire with real bullets, the city hall was invested by the mob, looted and then burnt to the ground and in the ensuing battle twenty-six people died. The City of Marseille was in a state of unprecedented rebellion, law

and order had completely broken down, the rioters armed themselves with iron bars and slings, many carried firearms.

In the better districts of the city mobs attacked residents and burnt their homes and cars, looted shops and wrecked banks. The fire services were either overwhelmed or driven away by the rioters.

Firearms were abundant. Over the years they had poured in from the multiple conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East, arms of all types, hand grenades, automatic rifles, mortars, pistols and even anti-tank grenades and hand held anti-helicopter missiles, readily supplied by criminal arms dealers or Muslim extremists. A Kalashnikov or a M92 could be bought by any small time criminal by the sale of a few grams of cocaine imported from the Middle East through the Balkans.

The President of the Republic ordered the government to declare a state of emergency. The government once again manifested authority's incapacity to act in any other way than by repression. Reassuring images of emergency aid and assistance were transmitted by an acquiescent media, a truck or plane load of food and blankets, a few high profile political personalities assuring the French that all was under control, followed by images of the fire service and the usual humanitarian and aid associations, displaying their crosses, crescents and stars.

In the meantime food supplies were seriously disrupted, the injured were left to the care of their families, public transport brought to a halt, military road blocks hampered all movement, hospitals were overloaded, offices, banks, shops and factories closed down.

The National Assembly was reconvened from its summer recession for an emergency debate. The pale faced Minister of the Interior, a normally smug superior blonde, expensively dressed, close to the Socialist Prime Minister, who read a declaration the government's to the assembly, playing down the seriousness of the crisis.

The government and the ruling coalition of France had been too concerned by their narrow own party politics to address the real problems of their country, unaware of the pressures that were building up, ignoring the persistent transport and public services strikes, ignoring the warnings of the police and justice as crime soared.

Madame le Ministre was violently harangued not only by the right, but also the extreme left fractions and the Greens. Papers and files were thrown at the benches of the governing party, fists flew in a tumult not seen in the French Parliament since 1968.

The Prime Minister, Guy Charret, was conspicuous by his absence. He was pinning his hopes on new elections and the presidency. He was typical of the gauche caviar, known for his cigars and his support of certain less than respectable politicians in his party. He counted on the minority vote and the support of women voters. He ensured his popularity by giving foreigners resident of more than five years presence in France voting rights. Then he awarded more than half of the cabinet posts to women, his favourites, including loyal followers such as Madame le Ministre de l'Interieur. As a token to the Neos, the Algerian born son of an Arab settler was appointed Minister of Sport, an ex-football star.

The rebellion in Marseille had taken Charret's government totally by surprise, especially since they had dedicated so much effort to addressing the needs of the minorities. However, the violent reaction to the rebellion by the public at large was largely due not only to his government, but previous governments, both left and right, and their deliberate refusal to accept the real message from the majority of French voters.

Madame le Ministre was forced into a panic retreat from that afternoon's session of the National Assembly, under protection of the huissiers as a barrage of insults and cries of 'Resign' were hurled at her, after she had attempted in vain to complete her declaration in a shaking voice, announcing that the situation was under control, and trying to place the blame on the opposition for exaggerating the crisis and the National Front for provoking the riots.

A general strike commenced the following day, trains came to a halt, the Parisian Metro came out against the government, the Municipal cleaning services, teachers Unions, civil service organisations, social security services joined them. Students poured onto the streets and the country slowly ground to a halt in an atmosphere of a general uprising.

The far right took advantage of the situation by blaming the Neos, Islamists and the policy of the Socialist coalition government. Any hope that the situation could have been brought under control, as the mob ran out

of steam with the arrival of army troops, evaporated with the burning of the Grande Mosque in Paris some days later. The following day all gatherings were forbidden, including Friday prayers in all mosques, and a curfew was imposed in all the major cities of the country.

That did not prevent angry crowds pouring into the streets and rioting broke out with increased fury as the news of the fire in the Grande Mosque spread. In Paris the far right sensing that their moment had come fought running battles with the mobs that had flooded in from the sprawling housing projects that lay in suburban neighbourhoods as the police looked on helpless.

The conservative President of the Republic, Pascal Berat, who had maintained a low profile hoping to win power from the Socialists, in a general election that would be inevitably called, had no choice but to appeal to the Nation.

President Berat was noted on the international scene for his firm stand against terrorism and militant Islamism on the other side of the Mediterranean. His greatest weakness however was his lack of political judgement as regards his fellow citizens. He had lost contact with a France divided between the prosperous classes and the underprivileged generation born of settler parents, a divide increased by the massive flood of recent refugees fleeing the tumultuous upheavals in North Africa and the Near East.

It was crystal clear that France was about to traverse another of the great convulsions that had changed the course of its history over the previous two centuries.

The President demanded the resignation of his Prime Minister, Guy Charret and his Socialist government, announcing a provisional government of national union, having exceptional powers during the crisis. He then dissolved Parliament and announced elections once the state of emergency could be lifted and law and order had been restored.

The provisional government included Senators and leading figures from all political groups. They immediately stumbled into a trap of their own making, the need for firm political decisions. The proposition from the Communist representative, the acting Employment Minister, called for

presidential elections running concurrently with parliamentary elections, according to the system established by the Socialists in 2001.

The right cried it was a political manoeuvre to remove Pascal Berat, various left factions riposted that Berat bore a large part of the responsibility for the crisis and that the country needed a new leader, one unsoiled by the tragic events, one of their own.

Politicians were guided by their own ambitions and backed by sycophants whose values were no better. Europe looked on aghast though not without a certain schadenfreud as the crisis endured. Across the country gangs of extremists attacked Neos, killing and wounding hundreds. They attacked the housing projects firing on anything that moved. The Neos organised defence groups and fought back armed with their stocks of illegal arms. The police looked on doing little to prevent racist violence, as though they approved, it was as though they were taking revenge for the years they had been deprived by the politicians of the necessary authority to impose law and order in the neighbourhoods. On the other hand they replied with brutality against the Neos.

It was then a young centrist Senator from Chalon-sur-Saône, Charles d'Albignac, emerged as a leader, a reluctant compromise between left and right. He was seen as honest, unscathed by scandal, standing for law and order, family and moral values. Albignac was firm in his position on the problem of the Neos, he believed they owed an unswerving loyalty to the nation, where they lived or where they were born.

His small party bore the label Democratic Liberal Socialist Movement, and though he preached a centrist line he often tended towards authoritarian nationalism, advocating a strong centralised state, refusing the nation’s loss of sovereignty to the Federation. He had previously run for president, winning a little over nine percent in the first round, a respectable score against a line up of serious candidates and the usual gaggle of political opportunists that popped up with regularity at every French election. He came from a strong Catholic background, which appealed to the traditional middle of the road French voter, in spite of coming from an old family that still proudly bore the coat of arms of the Ducs d’Albignac, though nobility had no been recognised in France for more than a century.

His leadership appealed to the public, as he was neither linked to the Socialist coalition, which had more than its share of responsibility for the crisis, nor was he bound to the traditional Gaullist party whose endless disputes would have left the path open to the Socialist coalition composed of Socialist Party, Greens, Radical Democrats and extreme leftist splinter factions. To the country's desperate leaders he represented new ideas and a compromise in a dire situation that had damaged the image of most of the leading political figures.

The German Chancellor implored Berat and the provisional French government to take action, the Euro was in free fall and the Paris Bourse had all but collapsed with a knock-on effect throughout European markets. The smaller members of the Federation were in a state of shock as they watched the events unroll on their screens in real time.

The convulsions that shook France were in opposition to the politics practised by its government over the previous half century. Europe had become a federation of mono-ethnic/mono-religious nations, a process that had commenced with the reunification of Germany, the division of Czechoslovakia, the implosion of the Soviet Union, the fragmentation of Yugoslavia. During the same period the autonomy of the Spanish provinces and the separation of Belgium into its ethnic parts were taking form alongside the devolution of the United Kingdom, leaving England struggling with its ethnic minorities.

France remained the only European nation that made the pretence at being an integrated multi-ethnic society. It was no more than an illusion, since the attribution to minorities of exceptions and privileges in education and religion practises by the Socialist, only served to alienate the growing ethnic minorities from the main stream, as did their cultural intrusion in the media and entertainment. The resentment generated manifested itself in an occult racism that permeated through the whole of French society setting a double standard. In public, the vast majority French of all backgrounds 'adored' the country's minorities, whilst in private they barely tolerated them or even detested them with the changes that they were brought to France.

Segregation was both economic and social, it was blatant in employment, preferred residential areas, meeting places and holiday destinations,

wherever possible the French sought to escape what they were forced to accept in their capital and almost all their large provincial towns and cities.

The tolerance of the French had reached its limits, they were sapped by the demands of Arabs, Africans plus the whole gamut of so called refugees and asylum seekers, who were completely indifferent to ‘nos ancetres les Gaulois’, resulting in the exclusion of those minorities from work places. Unemployment resulted in poverty and delinquency, creating further prejudices and divisions, aggravating the status of the hapless minorities.

As the General strike swung into its stride, the inner suburban neighbourhoods organised themselves. Radical leaders appeared at the head of young Neos groups who took up arms, these leaders were an elite who had fought in Palestine, North Africa and the Central Asian conflicts. Men who were members of Islamic movements, or so called freedom fighters, or even plain criminals who frequented martial arts clubs initiating young men in theology, politics and crime. They spread not only ideas, but also techniques including the use of arms and explosives, house to house combat and terrorist methods using abandoned factory sites, old quarries, mountain hideouts and isolated farms.

Networks had been established for different tasks. The more dangerous initiates specialised in bank and supermarket hold-ups, ostensibly for funds to finance their movements, though certain did not hesitate to line their own pockets. Others defended their brothers against injustice, real or imagined, by the police and the authorities. These Neo sons of Settlers were recruited by the older members, the more serious setting examples by not smoking or drinking, reciting verses of the Koran, learning Arabic, whilst others introduced them to base criminality. In any case many had become hardened combatants for the cause, whether it was for Islam or against their rejection by French society.

They, together with sympathisers, young blacks and whites from the Settler neighbourhoods, who either admired them, felt rejected or for simple excitement and adventure, formed the hardcore of the rebellion.

The provisional government feared that Marseille would be turned into another Beirut or Gaza. Christians against Muslims, guerrilla warfare with foreign interference, arms smuggling, the pillage and destruction of the City and its surrounding areas.

The President, fearing a political stalemate, ordered the Army to put down the rebellion by force. What he did not foresee was the refusal of certain army units to obey orders. Many of the military were themselves non-Gallos and sympathised with the insurgents. Marseille and several nearby towns resisted faced by a discourage army, they were besieged but not defeated. The rebels then launched an appeal for international assistance. The Caliphate called for volunteers.

The situation turned for the worse when hesitations appeared in the ranks of the provisional government, either they backed the President's call for an all out assault against the rebel bastion of Marseille, or back the socialists' proposal of power sharing with the minorities. The country's leaders were split between hardliners, who rejected as preposterous any idea of power sharing with the minorities, and the left who refused the continued use of force at any price.

An alliance of conservative hardliners and the extremist National Front threatened to take up arms against the extreme left and their allies to prevent any form of appeasement threatening to transform the situation into civil war. Demonstrations were called for and fighting between the different supporters broke out in Place de la République in Paris.

During the night of the 14th February, d'Albignac, backed by a hard core of followers, army generals and police heads seized power. A cease fire was declared supervised by Federation forces and the provisional government disbanded. All key figures were rounded up and put under house arrest, whilst less important personalities were held incommunicado in a Chateau on the outskirts of Paris.

D'Albignac was acclaimed as a new de Gaulle when with the aid of the Federation the situation was quickly brought under control. Guy Charret, the ex-Prime Minister, together with his close followers were unceremoniously packed off to an unknown destination and President Berat wisely accepted the offer of an honourable retirement in Martinique.

It was nothing less than a putsch.

The huge demonstrations acclaimed d'Albignac as the saviour of the nation, who declared that France would not tolerate the violence of those who had accepted its generosity. The rebels had committed high treason and would not be forgiven for their criminal acts against the nation that had

striven to integrate them with the gift of citizenship, providing them with homes and protection.

The 14th February was declared a solemn national holiday, not only for those who died in the terrible battle against the Rebellion in the lost Region of Provence, but in memory of those who died in the French colonial wars.

In addition to the French of Settler origin, the Rebellion had been backed by Gallos who also lived in the rundown neighbourhoods of France's cities. Those of Gallo-European origin were considered traitors or sympathisers and even more brutally treated than the Neos. They were branded by the word 'Excluded', stamped on their identity documents, signifying that they were deprived of all civic rights, social benefits and government employment however low the level.

During the cease fire secret negotiations were held in Evian under the auspices of the Federation. D'Albignac proposed a plan whereby Marseille and an area stretching to Toulon would have the status of a special region, supervised by a committee formed by representatives from all parties, during a cooling off period of six months, whilst a more permanent solution was examined.

Official talks were publicly announced and the French Army withdrew from the agreed zone. Slowly France got back to what could be described as almost normal. D'Albignac declared a Special Period during which all political, associative and union activities were suspended. Protesters were quickly rounded up and dispatched to holding centres.

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The lesson to France could not have been more brutal, fifty years of continued settlement had ended in a disaster and on a scale not seen since the Commune of the 19th century, following the defeat of Napoleon III by the Prussians.

Albignac assumed power, popularly known as le Martel, after the Charles Martel, or Charles the Hammer, Duke and Prince, de facto King of the Franks, victor of the Battle of Poitiers in 732, over the army of the Umayyad Caliphate led by Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi, Governor-general of al-Andalus, who was killed in the battle. Le Martel's solution was the collective isolation of all traitors considered to be linked directly or indirectly with the treacherous rebellion. A form of preventive internment,

the responsibility for which was confided to Alain Boublil, named as Minister having special responsibilities for national security and for determining the responsibility for the acts of treason committed by the mutineers.

The Federation in Brussels voted special budget reductions and temporary privileges for Paris. Belgium had also suffered riots from its Neo population, and declared the dissolution of their Federation. Brussels became Federal Territory, whilst Wallonia and Flanders decided for respectively independent futures.

Le Martel invited the Wallons to join what he declared would be the Greater Nation of France, doted with a new constitution and a new pride in their common heritage.

The Nation and its citizens were the bearers of shared values, a people who shared a common culture, institutions and laws, transmitted by countless generations whose sons had sacrificed themselves across the centuries defending the Nation's soil against invaders and enemies.

The shared values were defined in the new constitution, these values included the Christian faith as the official, French as the mother language of the Nation, though regional languages such as Breton and Basque were declared as an integral part of the common cultural heritage. In the absence of these a strictly European culture or ancestry was obligatory for citizenship.

Le Martel introduced the obligatory oath of loyalty to the Nation. The oath applied to all those who fulfilled the constitutional requisites for citizenship. All persons were required to register at the office of their local town hall for the issue of new identity cards. These cards were officially entitled as Ayant Droit à la Citoyenneté de la Nation de France, commonly abbreviated to Ayant Droit. The cards in effect confirmed the privilege of citizenship on their holders.

Applicants were obliged to demonstrate, by the presentation of adequate proof, their French or European ancestry complete with certificates from parish churches or synagogues that confirmed their attachment to a constitutional faith. Certificates of education were necessary to prove their French or European culture.

The Ayant Droit armed with their new cards were Citizens of the Nation with full rights to residence in Greater France and the privilege to transmit those values to future generations as defined in the new constitution.

All others residents were issued provisional identity cards noting their ethnic group or origin, religion and linguistic family. These cards ominously omitted the right to residence in the national territory.A line had been crossed in the history of France and Europe. The unexpectedness of the insurgency, its intensity and the shockwave it produced on the Gallos had far reaching consequences for all. The Gallos realised that they could never again trust those who had settled in their midst who had nurtured in their hearts and minds a rejection for all that their host country held dear.

China Capitalism and Energy

Coal, oil and gas still provided electricity for the underdeveloped masses of the world without access to advanced fuel technologies, in countries where whose economies had never evolved or had faltered under the burden of their vast populations. Amongst them was China, where contrary to popular belief in the West, life for the majority of its inhabitants was little better than in India or Pakistan, where the poorest had no fuel other than the wood cut in the last of the country's open forests, where life had continued unchanged for centuries resembling that of Europe during medieval times.

Capitalism had first brought previously unimagined wealth to China's great cities and coastal regions, whilst poverty and disorder developed in the inland provinces as its government struggled maintain the economic growth necessary to restructure costly state owned industries, and at the same time tried to control the flood of peasants flowing towards the cities in search of jobs.

For thirty years the economy of China had grown at a phenomenal rate, eight, ten or twelve percent a year. Or had it? The wealth of Shanghai and Canton was undeniable, the sleek, gleaming, skyscrapers, the vast shopping centres overflowing with goods and the dense crowds of shoppers that

flowed through them day and night. Deep from the hinterland the mingong were drawn towards the cities, from the land and from ruins of state factories. Beneath the surface China was as ever full of contradictions, corruption, inequality and injustice. The government had squandered the country's wealth borrowing on the future, just as capitalist bankers and industrialists had always done.

The four principals of the regime were: the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dominant role of Chinese Communist Party, Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought and Socialism. This vision was in contradiction with the reality of pseudo-capitalist China and the needs of the great masses of its poor peasants.

China was ravaged by pollution, the richest 10% of the population controlled more than 70% of the wealth. Over the early decades of the twenty first century, the cost of doing business went up and the hopes of the disinherited went down.

Hundreds of millions of Chinese lived on less a dollar a day and countless millions surged into the country's seething cities, giving the birth to a new violent proletariat with the inevitable riots and demonstrations. As housing costs rose and hopes for jobs fell, riots and protests against corruption, frenetic property and stock market speculation became almost daily events.

But the question could be asked what had China to do with the Arab world? The answer to the question was not too difficult. To sustain China's growth, energy and American markets were vital. However, Washington finally realised its trade imbalance with China was unsustainable as its dollars continued to flow by countless billions into Beijing's coffers, equally the Middle Kingdom's vast needs and military build-up were gradually perceived as an ominous threat.

China's ambition was to establish itself as a great power with military supremacy in East Asia and the Pacific, controlling its trade lanes, and its oil supply routes from Central Asia and the Persian Gulf. This implied the modernisation of its armed forces, necessary to project its power and influence.

To accomplish this Beijing decided that Taiwan should rejoin the fold, it was unsupportable affront for the men who ruled China that Taiwan

continue its provocative pretence as a sovereign state. Beijing invested vast sums to carry out a military modernisation program, developing its own weapons and aerospace research and development programmes.

China’s attempt to invade Taiwan, coinciding with the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Peoples Army, ended in an ignominious fiasco, in spite of the vast sums of money squandered on its armed forces. The consequence was the collapse of financial markets in Shanghai and Hong Kong, the secession of the rich capitalist coastal provinces and their economically powerful twin capitals of Canton and Shanghai, ruled by powerful industrialists, abandoning the north to poverty and disorder.

Taiwan resisted the invasion thanks to the supply of superior weapons from the USA and its all-powerful Pacific fleet. In spite of China’s deluge of missiles on the island, there was little long term damage, however, the Mainland's fleet and air force suffered a devastating defeat, its armada limped home, humiliating political leaders in Beijing and the generals of the once proud Peoples Army, bringing economic disaster to China.

Simultaneously the financial centres of Shanghai and Hongkong suffered two disasters, the first they survived when many of their banks and institutions collapsed under a mountain of bad debt. However, it was the non-payment of the massive loans made for unproductive investments by the state’s industrial sectors and uncontrolled speculation by private investors that finally caught up with them, when the world’s economy staggered and stalled under the strain of debt and political upheaval.

China’s growth had been extraordinary with huge speculative investments in construction and infrastructure in and around their great cities. Vast programs, such as the Three Gorges Dam, the Olympics, aerospace and weapons development, had created a mountain of debt.

Over two hundred million mingong roamed the country in search of work, most from the inland provinces of Sichuan, Hunan, Hubei, Henan, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, Anhui and Guangxi. At home their families’ had traditionally depended on their tiny subsistence farms. The mingong was an uncontrollable floating mass, a threat to the government and the stability of China.

The second and fatal disaster came with the collapse of China’s main export market. The war over Taiwan and the deep recession in the USA

resulted in the collapse of the dollar, transforming China's wealth into worthless paper and the disappearance of export markets overnight. The country's economy stalled and the Middle Kingdom fell into a new period of disorder as its people's dynasty suffered the same fate as those before them.

Infection

Jean Berthelot arrived in Paris from Libreville, the capital of Gabon in West Africa, on a regular Air France flight. The young Parisian was an education advisor working on an aid programme for a department of the French Ministry of Education dedicated to development and cooperation in French speaking Africa.

He was attached to the Ministry of Health in Libreville making frequent visits to outlying areas to report on an aid program providing training and assistance to village clinics financed by the French government. Amongst the many visits carried out on his last tour of inspection was a clinic situated in a village near to the frontier between Gabon and Congo-Brazzaville some days before his departure to Paris,

The clinic was nothing exceptional in equatorial Africa, it was poorly equipped, supervised by a trainee district doctor based in a larger town thirty kilometres away, the staff was consisted of a couple of willing but inexperienced nurses who had little more than basic training. They were short of all but the most rudimentary medical supplies and equipment, for the most basic needs. Their principal task was caring for expectant mothers and young children, as well as treating malaria and malnutrition.

During his overnight stay in the district guesthouse he met with Labib Jabbarin, a medical sales representative, a Lebanese, born in Beirut, who spoke French and had studied pharmacy at University of Jerusalem. The Lebanese had been long established as businessmen in Africa and the French often employed them because of their knowledge and experience,

but also because they were amongst the few who accepted the dangers of modern Africa. Labib just arrived in Gabon from the nearby Congo.

Labib was returning to the Lebanon, first with a stop over in Paris, where he was scheduled to visit the pharmaceutical company he represented, but first a few days rest and shopping in Paris. When the two young men discovered that they would be travelling on the same Air France flight to Paris they agreed to meet at the airport the following week. Meanwhile Labib continued his visit to the regional hospitals whilst Berthelot returned to Libreville to complete his report and prepare his departure.

A week later as planned they met together at the airport in high spirits, pleased to be leaving Gabon. They checked in and on boarding the aircraft found to their satisfaction the plane half empty, occupying two rows of seats across the aisle from each other, where after dinner they settled down to a nights sleep.

The plane arrived in Paris on schedule at six the next morning, the night had been bumpy and Labib complained that he had slept poorly, he was feeling tired and felt a cold coming on with a headache that he attributed to the ventilation.

At the airport they bid each other goodbye, Berthelot wishing Labib a pleasant stop over in Paris and a Happy Christmas, forgetting for a moment that he was a Muslim. He then made his way to the domestic terminal where he was booked on a flight to Bordeaux.

Arrival in Paris in the cold early morning of Christmas Eve could have been described as anything but an exceptional event, other than for Berthelot whose fiancée would be waiting for him in Bordeaux. The young men were amongst the hundreds of thousands of Christmas travellers arriving or departing from Paris for the year-end holidays.

The airport health and immigration authorities had established strict controls for international arrivals, especially for those travellers arriving from Africa. Controlling visas was easy, however, it was much more problematic to control every single individual for disease, the visible only proof apart from the vaccination certificates was their apparent good health.

Berthelot had no problem, he held a French passport and a vaccination certificate issued by the Institute Pasteur in Paris. Labib as a medical sales

representative working for a major French pharmaceutical company was equally well set up with the necessary visas and vaccination certificates.

The head office of the pharmaceutical company Labib represented was at Issy-les-Moulinaux that lay at the end of one of Parisian metro lines. It was just a thirty minute ride from the small but modern hotel where was staying, the rooms were well equipped with murals, a minibar and a limited room service. He had used the hotel on a couple of his previous stays in Paris, it was situated on rue Boetie, just off the Champs Elysée, near to the shops and lights of Paris.

He took the Air France bus to Port Maillot and then a taxi to the hotel arriving at eight thirty, too early to check-in. It was very cold and a fine snow had started to fall. He decided to sit it out in the warmth of a nearby café watching office workers gulp down a morning coffee. He took a window seat where he could watch the passers hurry by to their business and read the Figaro quietly as he drank a hot chocolate and savoured a warm croissant. He was pleased to be back in civilisation though his head throbbed as he felt the cold building up. It was ten before his room was made-up and he could fall onto the comfortable bed.

A virulent strain of haemorrhagic fever had broken out south of the town of Franceville in the border region of Gabon and the Congo-Brazzaville. A number of villagers living on both sides of the border had been infected. By the time the medical authorities in Libreville were informed of the nature of the disease Berthelot and Labib were already on the way to President Bongo International Airport. They were totally ignorant of their contact with the disease and the many villagers amongst the 227 persons who would be identified as having been in contact with the deadly virus.

By Christmas day more than two-dozen people were already dead and a sanitary cordon had been thrown around the village with little information leaking out, the authorities fearing the news would worsen Africa plight, which was going through one of the direst periods in its tragic history. They need not have bothered, such news had little interest in Europe where the public was saturated by the news of disasters and where Christians were concentrating on the festivities in the warmth and comfort of their homes.

Labib woke up that same evening, his mouth was parched and he was running a fever, he took a bottle of mineral water from the minibar and

swallowed a couple of Aspirins. He then went back to bed realising that he would not see the Christmas lights on the Champs Elysée that evening.

The next morning, Christmas Day, a Saturday, he had not improved and asked the maid, Charifa, a Neo, not to make-up his room, only changing the towels. He lay in bed all day only calling room service to replenish the water in the bar.

Paris was quiet the following day, just those in jobs such as Charifa's worked. She lived in the Zone and was classified as an Arab resident in France, though her grandparents had arrived in Paris from Constantine in Algeria at the beginning of the century. Her work pass allowed her to enter into Paris each day from the Zone during her working hours and the time necessary for transport to and from her place of work.

Charifa tapped on the door of Labib's room, there was no reply, she tapped again and then slipped the plastic pass into the key slot and the door opened. The day before Labib had complained of fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache, and a sore throat, now he lay on his bed in a pool of vomit and excrement mixed with blood. It was Sunday and the Neo weekend manager, who wanted no trouble on a quiet Sunday, decide to call a doctor, not alerting the emergency medical services, it was two hours before the doctor arrived, by then Charifa had returned home carrying the infection home into the Zone.

The Gallos

When we examine the social structure of France prior to the rebellion it can be seen that little had basically changed since a century. The Gallo population was divided into a broad spectrum of classes with their sub-divisions. The governing class was composed of an elite political and business class based on a meritocracy system. Meritocracy it was, most of the ruling class had been through the elite higher education system composed of grandes écoles, such as the Ecole Polytechnique, Central, Ena and others. The weak link in the meritocracy system was that the majority

of those who succeeded the severe entrance exams, who had above average intellectual abilities, were the sons and daughters of parents who were often the products of the same institutions or had already succeeded in reaching the class of the politically or economically privileged.

There were few barriers in passing from one class to another, a trade unionist could enter the political system and eventually become a government minister, then if his children showed above average learning abilities, they would enter the higher education system with its advantages.

Hand in hand with the politicians were the prosperous industrialists and businessmen who wielded wealth and provided employment for the rest of the population. They belonged to the same meritocracy system as the politicians.

Then came the liberal professions, at the top of the category were doctors, lawyers and architects followed by the accounting professions and financial advisers. These classes were for the most part economically privileged.

Scientists and engineers as non-independents were less wealthy than the liberal professions fell into its sub-division. After came a sub-division composed of a broad group of academics ranging from university professors to schoolteachers. These were followed by small business people, often one or two man firms in a wide variety of business activities from travel agents to small building firms, closely followed by the commerçants, that is to say shopkeepers, high street services, restaurateurs and cafe owners.

At the end of the scale came the workers, divided into skilled workers including non-professional hospital personnel, office workers and qualified factory workers. Finally came those with rudimentary skills such as public transport workers, bus and truck drivers and shop workers followed by those who had little or no skills. At the very end of this category were those with the most basic educational qualifications, they worked as cleaners, as unskilled building labourers and drivers.

The status of any class of salaried employee was considerably improved if they were in government employment, which in France brought an extraordinary number of advantages to all those who achieved that enviable position. Government employees were composed of a vast privileged mass

described as fonctionnaires who had special pension rights, negotiated salary deals, special health insurance rights and improved holidays, the list was long. They included members of all classes with a broad range of classifications from high-level civil servants down to pen pushers and garbage disposal workers, in addition there were also those who were fonctionnaires assimiles, who did not have the full status of functionaries, but who enjoyed many of their privileges. In total the number of government employees was over four million. The fonctionnaires defended their acquired privileges tooth and nail, there ultimate arm being the threat of bringing the whole country to a standstill.

The system of fonctionnaires was also a shelter reserved for the many Gallo workers with low educational qualifications, who would have been otherwise unemployable.

France had not been exempt from the transformation that modern technology had brought to industry with the gradual decline of employment in the traditional manufacturing sectors of the European economy. Automatisation and computerisation had replaced manual labour with the disappearance of millions of jobs in industry, in parallel machines reduced labour needs in a wide range of other sectors including building, construction and industrial cleaning, not forgetting the automation of mass transport as bus, tram, underground and railway services were robotised, with disappearance of hundreds of thousands of jobs in the name of cost savings and modernisation.

It was not only the more menial jobs that became more precarious as employment patterns changed, there were fewer jobs for all, however it was the lowly skilled and the poor who were effected first and foremost, those who formed the underprivileged class, who had no hope of ever owning a home or acquiring pension rights.

The progressive cost of healthcare and longer life expectancy coincided with the fall in the number of jobs. Governments strove to invent new forms of employment and jobs, both in government service and in the private service sector, to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth that in spite of the transformation had continued to grow.

The great mass of lowly skilled and unskilled labour, was provided by the non-Gallos, who through the pass system were employed as temporary

foreigner workers on a short-term contractual basis, which was however renewable. The foreign workers were lodged in the Special Residence Zones, reserved districts in major towns and cities; requiring day passes to travel to and from their work places.

To take advantage of the low price of the vast pool of labour, factories were set up nearby both sides of the frontier between France and Algharb by Gallo-European businesses as well as those from other countries of the Federation. However, family units were strictly forbidden for the foreign workers.

Politically the French had always had a strong socialistic tendency, though a majority of votes were cast for the right. Both the right and left in French politics were fragmented into a wide spectrum of tendencies from Trotskyites to Greens, floating centrist variations, to moderate and conservative parties on the right and the nationalist parties of the far right.

However, whatever party the French voted for, it was the same technocratic elite that returned. As in the Fourth Republic governments came and went but the same old political hacks returned with different ministerial portfolios. The cynicism of the political classes reached an extraordinary degree contradicting what was visible to the general public from foreign settlement to unemployment and corruption and the loss of autonomy to Brussels.

The socialistic vision of French politics was worn out to the point where it was no longer believed by their followers, it was the same for the vestige of the communist electorate based on their nineteenth century Marxist concepts. The world had changed whilst they debated dead ideas.

Socialism in all its traditional forms had been invented with the industrialisation of Europe demanding the collectivisation of the economy and production. It had persisted in its ideas until the late twentieth century; the vociferous and supposed humanist extreme left wing had forgotten that they had been raised in totalitarianism with its adherents marching over the unmarked tombs of their victims. Then the new economic theory took over explained how the interaction of all the economic actors provided wealth to the masses.

When problem of distributing the riches of the nation, by the creation of jobs, no longer responded to political stimulation, for the simple reason that

fewer and fewer jobs were needed in industry, as a consequence the stress within French society had slowly built up until it reached breaking point.

The state had been unable to halt the progress of science and technology, dictated and powered by the needs of capitalism, virtually eliminating the need for manual labour in industry. Cost reductions were the prime motivation as production lines and packing lines were automated and goods were distributed by automated logistics systems, disposing of all manual labour and unskilled handlers.

The unemployed were the unskilled; the computer illiterate, they had the choice of working in precarious lowly paid service sectors or accepting the sop of benefits. The non-Gallos represented the vast majority of the unskilled.

The Federation and globalisation of the economy had changed everything, not that globalisation was global, it could have been defined as embracing those it affected, the labour markets, consumers and capital, the rest were abandoned to their fate. The developed economies consumed, they also provided the capital, they no longer needed mass foreign labour for production, they controlled communication, media and transport, and in short globalisation was a thing of the rich.

The utopian vision of the socialistic philosophy: the state, nationalisation, contestation was dead, unable to reply to the needs of the working classes, either providing employment or an ideology adapted to a world that had changed. Socialism was replaced by a doctrine of empty promises by populist politicians who struggled with forces beyond their control or comprehension, promises based on the sole idea of election and waving the mirage of nationalistic glory and acting out their brief moment before the masses that sat hypnotised before their TS screens, duped into believing in the power of democracy.

Ethnic Affairs

The Ministry of Ethnic Affairs and its Department of Ethnic Regroupement was responsible for the application of the Boublil laws relating to the revision of naturalisation and the Non-Gallo question.

Revision of naturalisation was one of the principal articles in the legislation that defined the rules that determined those who were by culture and ancestry Gallo-Europeans and those who were not. The Nation of France was not racist the minister proudly proclaimed pointing to Jews and blacks, who were classified as cultural Gallo-Europeans. He explained that the auto-determination of non-Gallo-Europeans had been accorded, under the enlightened guidance of le Martel, at their own demand.

The law defined those being Gallo-European on the simple premise of :

their place of birth and that of their parents and grandparents

their nationality and that of their parents and grandparents

their language and the maternal language of their parents

their religion and that of their parents and grandparents

No physical sign or distinction was taken into account, but the system efficiently separated those non-Europeans who had arrived in France since the middle of the last century. In practise it was a points system though the officials could by applying any single criteria, as defined in the law, cancel an individual's nationality or naturalisation. Those who failed to meet the requirements were deported to a country of his or her choice within a period of two months in which they could lodge an appeal. A Tribunal of Exception listened to appeals, which did not interrupt the two-month period. The appeals were treated in an expeditious manner, few being accepted. The deportation orders were supervised by a special police service and in the case of refusal by a person or country in question; they were escorted if necessary by force to the frontier of Algharb where they were deported.

Boublil underlined that the law had not been voted in a spirit of hatred, revenge or racism, but only to protect the historical identity and traditions of the Nation and to ensure that peace and civil order were guaranteed.

Albignac had proclaimed in his inaugural speech 'The national territory belongs to the Nation of France, it is the incarnation of the nation and is not to be shared, discussed or negotiated.

By Gallo-European I mean all those who cherish in their souls and hearts our spiritual and cultural concepts, the ideas of the Nation that go back to Charles Martel.

Our nation has generously accepted for centuries not only Gallo-Europeans, but all men and women seeking a homeland, seeking refuge, we have never refused any person willing to embrace our ideals.

We refuse those false friends who have invested our towns and villages, who betray our cultural values and deride our beliefs.'

At the Place de la Nation, at each intersection the image of Maurice Boublil, Ministre des Affairs Ethniques, appeared on the giant murals that transmitted the latest news and information. Boublil announced the latest restrictions relating to the Paris Zone and its inhabitants. The Minister was of the classic mould of a totalitarian state commissar; even his appearance was reminiscent of his distant precursor in the art, Lavrenti Beria. He applied law of which he was the prime architect with loving zeal.

From a Jewish Algerian family Boublil had never forgotten his father's stories of the flight of his family with the Jews from Algeria. Jews who were refused Algerian nationality in 1962 and were forced to immigrate to exile in France or Israel.

Henri Boublil was a 'juif pied-noir'. One of the French who had fled Algeria in 1962 and who had formed a clan in France, the 'pied-noirs', detested the Metropolitans for their betrayal and hated the Arabs who had 'stolen' their country. The Jews who had lived in Algeria for centuries shared the same fate as the colonialists when France retreated after a long and cruel war. In exile in France, a country that many amongst them barely knew, they shared the same tribulations and many common memories enhanced by their loss, however, they barely tolerated each other, only paying lip service to childhood friendships whenever it suited them. The spirit of mutual distrust and suspicion that existed between them in Algeria continued.

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Stone guided him to an old but stylish restaurant, Santiago de Compostela, situated in a 17th century house built in the traditional rose coloured stone of Toulouse. He assured Ennis that there were two or three

guest rooms. It was an agreeable short walk from the Capitole, the ancient seat of the regional government, in the heart of the old city.

The owner, Jean-Loup Klein, was old friend of Stone. He had retired from a long career in the French diplomatic service, weary from his endless excuses and tortured explanations to the world on the convoluted policies of le Martel.

Klein was a republican and in his heart against all that le Martel represented, although he had not approved of the transformation of France and the events that had led up to his takeover. He managed his fine restaurant in style with the aplomb of the diplomat he was.

Toulouse suited Klein with its mild winter climate as far from Paris as possible. The speciality of the Santiago de Compostela was its unusual cuisine, selected from the both the French and Spanish sides of the Pyrenees, and was greatly appreciated by his regular guests.

Stone explained that Klein carefully cultivated his clients, or guests, as he liked to call them, encouraging all those that discreetly shared his ideas of a free society in the republican and secular traditions of the old France that he believed would inevitably return. He was an Alsatian Jew and had opposed all racist tendencies, swearing that he would fight the likes of those who had persecuted his grandparents in Vichy France occupied by the Nazis. His quandary however was that he detested the Arabs and their invasion of the country he loved twisting its cultural values that his own Jewish family had accepted over the centuries.

“Let me introduce you to my old friend John who I told you about. He’s in France to study wine and he would like to continue in the Rioja!” he said introducing Ennis to Klein with a broad grin and an exaggerated wink of an eye.

“Excellent,” he shook Ennis by the hand, “we’ll see about the Rioja later but first we’ll settle you in, I imagine you would like to freshen up before we have dinner.” He took the room keys and led them up an elegant staircase to the first floor and showed them the rooms. “Dinner is a eight in the restaurant then we can talk about all that at ease over a good bottle of wine.”

As agreed they joined Klein at his table in one corner of the elegant restaurant. The dinner was excellent, as Stone had promised, they talked

about everything and nothing, from time to time Klein left them to greet one of his regular guests and exchange small talk. Towards eleven the dinners started to leave and soon they were alone. Klein rose and returned from the bar with a bottle of Cognac.

“Now we shall talk about wine!” he said with a serious air. “So John wants to leave for Spain, what can I do to help?”

“Correct, our friend here,” he said placing his hand on Ennis’ arm, “has made some highly placed enemies.”

“I don’t want to know about that, but a friend of Stone is a friend of mine.” It was his turn to pat Ennis on the shoulder.

“I knew I could count on you old crook!”

“Okay, let’s talk about practical matters, why Spain?”

“Because it’s nearby and because it could be a departure point towards the USA or London.”

“No! It’s true that it’s not far but today Paris and Madrid have become very close together in another sense. Madrid needs Paris because of the Caliphate and is ready to render le Martel’s men any small service they can.”

“What do you suggest then?”

“John here will have to go up to Paris, I have good contacts with the Flemings, they get on well with the English.”

“Paris!”

“Yes, but not direct from Toulouse, it’s watched too closely, he’ll have to leave from St Jean de Luz with the holiday makers returning home, there’s plenty of Flemish tourists and even English amongst them.”

Stone looked at Ennis who shrugged his shoulders.

“It’s the same to me, here or St Jean de Luz, the question is how to go there?”

“No problem,” replied Stone.

“Okay then, I’ll organise it for Friday evening, you’ll take a train from St Jean de Luz to Paris where our friend Jean-Marie will look after the

arrangements so that you can continue on. You'll also need papers, everything will be fine."

"It's really very kind of you," replied Ennis not knowing how to thank them.

"Well we can't lose time, there's rumours going around about some kind of a rebellion brewing in Paris. I don't know what but it's certain that something is going on."

"Now let's lift our glasses to our wonderful Nation and le Martel our saviour and hero," said Stone with Klein looking at him with a wary eye.

"There's nobody on the world stage who can possibly claim to be a match for me, nobody who has my past history. When I met a visiting premier or head of state, it's up to them to try to prove they are cleverer than I am."

He was smooth and charming, his energy and charisma seduced the voters who had enough of laxest governments. He was compared to Eva Peron, a new Napoleon or even Citizen Kane. Nevertheless many northern European politicians especially the Scandinavians worried about his alliance with the far right National Front and the xenophobic laws he introduced.

Charles d'Albignac was the scion of an old noble family of bankers whose holdings included an industrial empire that ranged from military aircraft to telecommunications, the manufacturing centre of which was based in their region. He had inherited the industrial and banking fortune and had headed his empire until he entered politics that he saw as a means to defend the family interests and those who worked for them.

As a Senator of the French upper house he could pursue his long-term interests having a mandate of nine years, above the political squabbles of the Representatives. In each of the administrative departments of France, Senators were elected by a college of grand electors composed of Parliamentary Representatives as well as Regional and local Councillors. His Department, Saône et Loire, elected three senators. As an important notable in his Region, the French tradition of clientelism ensured his election. It was a forgone conclusion when he presented himself for the seat left vacant by the death of the previous Senator.

A Fellow Traveller

The next morning Stone together with Ennis set off in the direction of Bayonne on the Basque coast. Ennis was given a new identity card with its electronic chip, and a train ticket from Hendaye to Paris.

Hendaye was a busy border town that had prospered by its proximity to the Spanish city of San Sebastian that was no more than eighteen kilometres away to the south and the towns of Biarritz and Bayonne, which lay to the north.

Since the creation of Algharb the enlarged Principality of Monaco had received the overflow of the Gallic population which had taken refuge from the dramatic changes that had overtaken their region. The result was the cost of property in the Principality, already exorbitant, had soared to new levels, not to speak of the pollution and the proximity of the new Region.

As a consequence many northern Europeans, in addition to those from the north of France, turned towards the south west region and in particular the Basque coast, which lay between Bayonne and Hendaye. Though the Atlantic climate was fine it was nevertheless wetter than that of the much warmer and dryer Mediterranean region, further they found it environmentally cleaner and safer with a low level of criminality.

Klein had considered a flight from the airport of San Sebastian just across the Bidassoa River from Hendaye but the security controls were stricter in airports with instant visual identification of wanted persons. The high speed Atlantic Rail Service though not so comfortable was less risky with the large holiday traffic.

Ennis thanked Stone and bid him adieu heading through the car park directly on to the platform avoiding the cameras in the main entrance hall. The station was relatively easy going with the main controls being made for international arrivals and departures.

Surveillance systems, cameras, GPS trackers and scanners were operated by the police and customs authorities in railway stations, airports and public

places, where the identities of suspicious persons could be instantly checked against information stored in the authority's national data bank.

The police services had become the principal instruments in the application of the Gallo-European ethnicity laws. Frontier controls had been reinforced in spite of free movement within the Union. Electronic surveillance systems did the work discreetly satisfying the need for security of a docile public.

Ennis bought a newspaper at the kiosk. The press reflected the ideas of the government, anything else would have meant censure and reprisals from Boublil's National Security Bureau, they were everywhere, even in the cathedrals and churches.

Ennis took his place in the train and watched the flickering screen that announced the services available during the journey to Paris. The train was packed; the passengers were mostly noisy young French and Flemings returning from their holidays. It was impossible to change to a quieter seat.

At Saint Jean de Luz a man no longer young joined the train and took his seat next to Ennis. From his clothes he was certainly retired. He had no doubt been a functionary or a schoolteacher thought Ennis.

"Bonjour," the man greeted him politely.

"Bonjour," returned Ennis. He wanted to avoid conversation and turned his head towards the window watching the white house and apartment buildings glide past. The countryside was green and peaceful in the late summer sunshine, far from the conflicts of Algharb and the unknown that awaited him in Paris.

His neighbour took out a newspaper and slowly turned the pages.

"Look at that!"

Ennis looked politely but no more.

"The Balkans! Always problems, politics."

"Yes," replied Ennis without thinking, he was lost in comparing Charles d'Albignac to Eva Peron, a new Napoleon or even Citizen Kane. Many European politicians especially the Scandinavians worried about his alliance with the National Front and his xenophobic laws. He was smooth

and charming, his energy and charisma seduced the voters who had enough of laxist socialism.

He was the scion of an old family of bankers whose holdings included an industrial empire that ranged from military aircraft to telecommunications, the manufacturing centre of which was based in their region. He had inherited the industrial and banking fortune and had headed his empire until he entered politics that he saw as a means to defend the family interests and those who worked for them.

He was elected to the French Senate through the indirect and consensual system of electors composed of mayors, councillors and parliamentarians from all political tendencies from his region. One third of the Senate was renewed every three years for a nine-year term.

The important question was: Who were the Gauls? French school children had for generations learnt that their ancestors, the Gauls, were tall, blonde, bearded heroes bravely resisting the invading Romans legions. The Bonapartists saw their ancestors as something between the Roman Empire and the Gauls whilst the royalists chose the Franks of Charlemagne. Later under the Third Republic it was the French language that was the cement of the nation unifying Alsatians, Flemings, Bretons, Basques, Catalans, Savoyards and Niçoises.

All were myths in the same way as the happy multi-ethnic nation, composed of Arabs, Africans, Asians and Europeans from both sides of the east west divide, as the politicians of the late twentieth century wanted to believe.

At the beginning of the twenty first century the population of Trans-Alpine Gaul was French, but not all the French were Gauls. At the beginning of the new millennium the government had firmly believed in the secular model of Republican France, though it had been transformed over the previous half a century into a multi-ethnic society. They believed in the ability of their institutions and the French language to weld together the diverse elements of their changed society. However tensions had already developed in a large part of the population of ten million born outside of France. They and their children sought an identity that they felt was refused to them, they turned towards their roots where dividing issues emerged, religion and cultural traditions. The Arabs proclaimed their belonging to

Islam with its traditions; the significant Jewish population reacted by proclaiming their difference. The Christians were bewildered by the emergence of the vociferous minorities in their midst claiming respect and special privileges the rift between them widening as they took sides in the Middle East, or reacted to Western intervention in the Islamic world.

Le Martel arrived creating his own myths, of the peoples of modern Trans-Alpine Gaul, glorifying the ancient Celtic tribes of Europe as their ancestors, a culture that had covered a vast region ranging from Poland in the east to Ireland in the west and Spain in the south as the source of the modern Nation of France. These were collectively defined as Gallo-Europeans, a convenient fusion of Celts, Latins, Germans and Slavs.

The warrior Celts, their culture and ultimate conversion to Christianity by heroes such as Saint Patrick, were glorified and transformed into a myth, the banner and sword of the Nation. The symbol of le Martel, the Celtic cross, had replaced the cross of Lorraine.

“The Balkans, always problems, it never ends!” the neighbour repeated.

“Yes,” replied Ennis.

“They’re such a hotchpotch of races, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians, Albanians, what else can you expect?”

“I know,” said Ennis hesitantly.

“The further east you go the worse it gets, Chechens, Armenians, Georgians, Turks and a lot of other trouble makers.”

“Yes it’s complicated.”

“Those people don’t understand anything.”

“Oh!”

“Yes, it’s simple, we in France spent a thousand years trying to build a nation of Flemings, Bretons, Basques, Catalans, Corsicans and others. After the War our country was finally unified and we all called ourselves French and lived in a peace co-existence.”

“Yes in the good old days,” replied Ennis humouring his neighbour.

“What happened then, those fools of politicians imported boat loads of Arabs, Blacks and Chinks. Their difference was written all over their faces, their minds thought differently formed by the culture and religion they

brought with them. That screwed up centuries of nation building. Luckily for us le Martel put the house in order."

"That's for sure!" It was not the moment to enter into a political discussion with such an obvious admirer of le Martel.

"You're not French?"

"No." Ennis felt his heart beat faster. "No, I'm Scots."

"Ah, a beautiful country. I spent a holiday there a long time ago now. Near St Andrews, a pity it rained all the time."

Ennis forced an approving smile.

"Some of the blacks, I mean the West Indians, who had some French culture, were easier to integrate than the Africans," he continued. "The Africans spoke many different languages and had different religions. Some were Christians, others were Muslims or Animists, and sometimes all mixed up together."

"Probably."

"On the other hand the Arabs, even when they came from different countries, were much more difficult to integrate. I suppose they were from a more resilient culture, their religion was stronger and more dynamic. We had been persuaded to abandon our religion. But Islam was strong in black Africa, in Senegal, Mali, Nigeria and the Cameroon's amongst others."

"Yes Islam has a powerful attraction."

The man looked at Ennis and frowned.

"For people who are a little naive I mean," Ennis added quickly."

"Exactly, certain so called specialists even pretended that we were all brothers, biologically I suppose that's true, I don't question that, but you cannot make an amalgam between genes and the culture aspects which have been a dividing factor in inter-tribal relation since the beginning of time. Tribal and culture difference have never ceased to be the source of misunderstanding, conflict, war and atrocities of all kinds."

"Without any doubt."

"It goes back to Cain and Abel which was a very bad start for brotherly love," the man said with a laugh.

“Yes,” Ennis replied weakly.

“You want me to tell you something,” he lowered his voice and glanced about him. “Personally I’m not very easy with those Jews in the government.”

“Ah!”

“Wait a moment, don’t misunderstand me, I’m not a racist, but I can’t stand Boublil and his gang of Yids. I’d even go as far as saying I’d put them in the same bag as the Arabs.”

“I see.”

“I taught history and geography in a Lycée, in the 11th arrondissement of Paris, for thirty years. I know what I’m taking about and I can assure you that different races, I mean cultures, don’t mix very well, and the Jews are no exception.”

It was like the many Berbers who had immigrated to Algharb, those who had been in conflict with the Arabo-Muslim rulers of the Caliphate. The Berbers liked to point to their history that preceded that of the Arabs going back in antiquity to 950 years BC when the Berber King Aguelid Chachnaq defeated Ramses III. The Berbers revolts against the rulers of Algeria and Morocco and had been brutally put down. The civil war had divide partisans of the military government and those of the Islamists and Berbers, more than two hundred thousand had died before the military were overthrown by the popular revolt that led the Islamists to power.

The lip service of French anti-Semitism was expressed by a French Ambassador who had called Israel ‘a shitty little country’, and it was emphasised with a view to calm the Arab population, however, the result was the opposite with the Arabs feeling encouraged to vent their pent up feeling of repression against the Jews. The Israeli government encouraged the French Jews to immigrate to Israel to bolster their numbers against the every increasing Arab population that surrounded them. The consequence was an increased pressure on the State of Israel with the violence turning into a war of attrition.

The great events of history did not form the future rather they were the result of deep changes that were already in an advanced stage of development. The fall of Constantinople was not due to the sudden arrival

of the Turks and Islam but the consequence of their inexorable rise and the long decline of the Christian East.

At the beginning of the century the attacks on the USA were equally due to the expansion of Islam against a still powerful empire. It was the first riposte directly against the fortress America after a long series of events when the Islamic world had started to reassert its deep lying roots of proselytising and conquest.

The young men without education or law, who had become the enemies of a society that they rejected and were determined to destroy, were without any fixed objective but the unconscious creation a state of anarchy. Parents, schools, justice, police, the authorities, the parliament and the government had neither the intellectual courage nor the desire to face up to reality in an atmosphere of defeatism and fear of the racist accusation. They rejected democracy tolerance and the liberty of others without the least notion of patriotism.

The politically correct establishment decried the crimes committed by France during the period of decolonisation and the struggle for independence of Algeria but without ever citing the crimes of terrorism and assassination committed against France.

The state employed its totalitarian methods against the law-abiding wielding sanctions, tax controls, but refused the least effort against those who flouted the law with impunity destroying property, perpetrating crimes of violence and refusing the values of the Republic. A too great indulgence by the authorities of traditions alien to a modern society, the supremacy of the young men and the subservience of the women promoted an inequality of the sexes alien to modern Western society which had taken centuries to throw off.

It started in the schools that by fear or complacency refused to address the problem hindered by the law and the accusation of racism.

The citizenship of the Republic was a two way street, which not only conferred the Republican values on the citizens, but commanded the respect of its citizens for those values. The loss of family values people uprooted from their society. Americans were above all Americans because they were forced to accept their new country. No church

The country demanded the restoration of authority. The basic authority of the father, the teacher, the officer of the law and the state was laminated. Young criminals were condemned to prison by justice but were immediately released to continue with impunity their criminal activities.

The result of uncontrolled foreign settlement, linked with the development of a selfish society where the values that had transported it over the centuries had disappeared leaving a vacuum of moral disorder

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At the time of the infamous terrorist attack on New York the USA counted amongst its population six million Arabs and half were Muslims. In total with its other Settlers from other Islamic countries it counted a total of six million Muslims. California and Michigan were homes to large Arab populations and cities like Detroit had large Arab minorities whose votes counted. They became more vociferous after the outcry against Islam after Al Qaeda had been defeated and the situation had calmed down.

The events presented Islam to the American public as they had never seen it before, threatening and wrathful, almost like a vengeance from the sky. Certain came to see Islam an as a means of venting their grievances, their unsatisfied ambitions and spiritual needs, against a society where money and success were the only criteria for acceptance, it was an arm against the establishment.

The number of Muslims increased by the arrival of refugees following the successive convulsions in the Near and Middle East. To these were added an ever-increasing numbers of conversions so that the numbers of Muslims represented almost ten percent of the population, concentrated in key States that held the balance with a large number of grand electors for the election of the president.

The American Muslims organised themselves to counter the greatly weakened American Jewish lobby after the creation of the Greater Levant, so that they could present a favourable view of Islam to the world.

In Saudi Arabia the population had doubled in the space of twenty-five years and the revenues per inhabitant were halved. Saudi Arabia’s sole source of income was oil and when the USA followed by the other industrial nations launched their programmes to reduce their dependence on volatile oil the writing was on the wall for its rulers. The House of Saud was

a dynasty frozen in its concepts and by its inability to evolve dependant on the support of a vast number of Princes and their families who existed thanks to the largess distributed with the petro-dollar revenues, and where there was no opening for a transition to a more modern state.

It was the assault by the hard line fundamentalist Wahabite successors of Bin Laden that had brought the House of Saud down.

The American presence in the Middle East and Afghanistan was perceived as an imperialist presence and was resented not only by the Arabs but also by Pakistan and India as a destabilising factor. Chinese ambitions were also thwarted by the American presence.

The ambition of the Arabs and Islam was the total destruction of the state of Israel but not necessarily the Jews who had their place, but not as rulers or as an elite. The liberation of Palestine came in the form of the Protectorate of the Greater Levant where all parties took their place in a representative government after the surrender of the Knesset facing the possible slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Arabs.

Twelve percent of the total French population was Muslim in 2000 and eighteen percent of under-twenty-fives.

The government of France tried to buy integration with social benefits, state housing, schooling, concerts and unemployment benefits. The appeasers of all political colours transformed the whole of France into caricatures of anti-Semitic anti-Arab war criminals torturing innocents who should repent and accept into their home with open arms those who had been wronged. Even the Pope in grovelling appeasement asked Islam for forgiveness of the wrongs done by Christianity and asked forgiveness from the Jews for the wrongs done over the centuries.

Paris

The train arrived in Paris, Montparnasse three hours after its depart from Hendaye. Ennis felt tired and tense after the journey next to his opinionated neighbour. The heat had been unbearable, the train was almost thirty years

old and nothing worked correctly, the air-conditioning had broken down and the windows were not designed to open because of the speed that was the only positive aspect of the journey.

He saw three armed RASE in their sinister black combat uniforms and high parachutist boots scrutinising the passengers as they left the platform in the direction of the exit. He looked around making an exaggerated pretence of searching for somebody ignoring the regard of what were clearly plain clothes police who stood behind the three RASE.

He took the escalator down to the street level, the forecourt of the station was crawling with people, many of them seemed to be menacing; Clodos and drug addicts who aggressively demanded a coin or a luncheon voucher, they were all Europeans and though unwashed were surprisingly well dressed with the cast-offs of the pampered Parisians. He was surprised to discover that Paris did not reflect the picture promoted by le Martel's government.

The litterbins were overflowing and the ground covered with old newspapers and plastic bottles, long dirty streaks of dried liquid stained the off-white artificial granite surface of the forecourt.

Groups of RASE anti-riot police patrolled holding back massive, ferocious pit bulls that strained on their leads. They looked through their visors at the crowd around them with an intimidating air of disinterest. They were heavily armed ready to intervene to disperse the frequent disputes and scuffles around the litterbins.

Ennis could not help remembering the Paris he had visited when he was a student. He had shared a small apartment in the 20th district of Paris not far from Porte de Montreuil. He recalled shopping in the hypermarket Carrefour that was just over the bridge that crossed the Périphérique. In the streets next to the hypermarket was a popular flea market that attracted large crowds of settler shoppers. In the thronging crowd of shoppers the Gallos were a small minority, there were Arabs, Blacks, Asians, and just about every other foreigner imaginable.

He recalled a poster on a news kiosk showing the cover page for a French weekly magazine; the three men with a caption 'the men who control France'. Three Gallos, whose knowledge of the 'French' in the street market was as great as that of the inhabitants of Niu Guini. That was of

little importance, what was important is that they held power and the privilege of power with their party apparatus, their ministries and their hangers-on.

At that time the National Popular Party had about twenty to twenty five percent of the votes in Paris, which the leftist and politically correct press described as protest votes. In reality it represented a very large part of the Gallos in the total population of Paris.

At that time seemed obvious to Ennis that the future was clearly laid, France was a multi-ethnic society as the politicians liked to describe it, but he had not counted on the grass roots French, who were inwardly aghast when they visited Paris and saw the creeping loss of Gallo power. Their last chance to keep the power from the Neos and Settlers came with the Marseille revolt, they seized the opportunity and never looked back.

Others had done the same thing before them in Cairo, in Tangiers, in Beirut, in Istanbul, in Trieste and many other cities of Europe that had experimented with a cosmopolitan society and had opted out of the experience.

He headed towards the taxi station where he found a long line waiting. He joined the line and waited patiently as his neighbours complained of the lack of taxis in Paris, nobody wanted to drive a taxis, there was a lack of labour of all kinds.

After twenty minutes Ennis gave up and turned in the direction of the Metro. There he found the same crowd of unwashed on street level. He bought a ticket from the machine and took the line N°6 to Nation. At three in the afternoon the train was not crowded, the passengers were mostly Clodos and elderly people, there were few young people.

At the station Nation he left the Metro and walked past the police patrol towards Place du Trône. National flags hung vertically on the ornate lampposts that surrounded the huge circus and lined the Cours de Vincennes. The flags were royalist blue with a red Celtic cross on a white lozenge. The leaves of the Horse Chestnut trees planted on both side of the broad avenue were already turning brown.

He remembered in his student days the Place du Trône had been called Place des Antilles, at that time it was common to see a good number of

Arabs and blacks, but now as he looked around there was not a single non-European in sight.

Large high definition murals on tall pillars transmitted news and information from the state television service and from the City Hall.

The heat of the day weighed on him as he passed before the full terraces of the cafés with smart looking people seated before their cold drinks. It was a totally world different from that of the Metro and the railway stations, an underworld where the disinherited classes of the Nation dwelt.

The Place de la Nation had been transformed into a vast monument dedicated to the Heroes of France. The surface was paved with polished granite, permanently cleaned by machines and reserved for pedestrians, as was the avenue leading to place du Trône that continued the length of the Cours de Vincennes to the port de Vincennes. It had become a symbol of the Nation where rallies were held to celebrate the national day of St Jean d'Arc, the most important day in the Republic promoted to the same level as the 14th July.

Just beyond the Place du Trône a white copter was parked in a white circle with two RASE armoured Hydros ready to intervene if necessary at the entry to the zone which lay hidden from view a short distance to the north of the avenue in the 19th district of Paris.

Paris had been transformed into an almost city free of motor personal vehicles. The main surface transport was the Magnotrams that silently glided unimpeded along the main arteries at an even regular speed of thirty kilometres an hour between the stops every four or five hundred metres. The massive flow of commuters that the Capital had known in the past had been greatly reduced; most offices served merely as face-to-face meeting points. Only the shopping and entertainment areas needed their daily flow of workers who used the Metro to travel in from the suburbs. The Parisians preferred the cleaner, safer, Magnotram.

The population of the Capital and its suburbs had been greatly reduced with expulsion of the Non-Gallos; many of the low class residential areas and eyesores had been raised to the ground to make way for gardens and parks.

However, certain districts and suburbs had been abandoned, left in ruin to the hordes of Drogo-alcolos or infiltrators who crept out of the miserable

hovels at nightfall. The Zone were separated from the rest of the capital by plantations of trees that hid a one hundred metre wide no-mans-land, where the buildings had been demolished leaving an open area up to the wall that surrounded the Zone, it was patrolled day and night by units of the RASE.

The Zonards, or Ombres as they were often called, were permitted into the Capital as day workers; they had no residential rights in the Capital. They wore luminescent green armbands that indicated their status as day workers. An identity bracelet emitted a permanent signal that enabled the RASE to locate their exact position at all times. The Ethnic Affairs database responded to the signal providing all personal details of the Zonards' status and work permit. If their work and travel time allowance outside of the Zone was exceed an automatic alarm signal was emitted and they were picked up by the RASE. Without an acceptable explanation the least infraction could be sanctioned by their immediate transport to the frontier and expulsion.

Settlement was non-existent, though the Capital remained a tourist magnet for the world, all of whom received signal emitting visas at their arrival points. Asians, Arabs and African visitors were visible in the tourist centres; they were required to produce valid credit cards that guaranteed their departure on the expiry of their visas. The registration systems in hotels was connected to the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs so that all visitors were discreetly but strictly controlled. The same went for foreign delegations from countries that were considered to be sensitive.

Visitors and workers from the countries of the Union freely circulated in the Capital without limitations, though they were obliged to justify an adequate income if they elected permanent residence in the Nation.

Guiglione

Ennis found himself before a small apartment building on the boulevard de Picpus. He entered the code and opened the door entering into a small lobby closed before a second door. There was a set of letterboxes with a list

of names and buttons, he went down the list and found the name Guiglione and pressed the button.

After a moment a voice answered.

“Bonjour, I’m the friend of Elliot Stone,” Ennis replied to a video camera.

“Take the lift to the sixth floor.”

There was a click and Ennis pushed the door called the lift and went to the sixth floor where he found himself in a private lobby before the door of the penthouse apartment. He waited a moment and the door opened.

“Hello, I was given this address by our friend.”

“Welcome to Paris, I’m Jean-Marie Guiglione,” he said holding out his hand at the same time inspecting Ennis. “Come in.”

Guiglione was a friend of Stone, he was a cardiologist and had been introduced to Stone a few years earlier at an aero club near Paris, they were both amateur pilots and also shared an interest in firearms.

“Did you have any problems?”

“No, nothing special.”

“No problem in the station or Metro, you know with the Drogos.”

“No, nobody troubled me, I had a little difficulty finding your address, there’s also a street called rue de Picpus.”

“Well you’re here now, what can I offer you to drink, a beer?”

“That would be nice with the heat outside.”

“Take a seat,” he said showing Ennis into his living room. He then disappeared and returned some moments later carrying two beers that he put on the low table before Ennis.

“Life has become complicated in Paris today, the Drogo-alcolos seem to be everywhere, the authorities don’t know what to do with them. You just have to be careful. Taking away their rights only complicate matters and they can’t expulse them,” he said laughing, “they’re good Gallos.”

Ennis filled his glass and took a drink of the cold beer.

“That’s better, the train was hot and crowded.”

“I’m sorry about that, but the train was safer for you than the airports, they’re much more strictly controlled.”

“I imagine so.”

“Well you’re safe for the moment. What I suggest is that you take a shower and a rest, later on before we eat we can take a walk so that I can show you around the quarter and talk about the arrangements we’ve made for the next leg of your journey.”

He showed Ennis to his room and left him.

“Take your time and when you’re ready we can check up on the mural to see if there’s any news, I mean about you.”

There was nothing special on the news programme, eight days had passed since he had been on the run and there was little probability that his case interested the media, or that the authorities gave him a high priority.

It was just after eight as they walked slowly towards Place du Trône under the shade of the trees the lined the boulevard, the heat of the afternoon still hung heavily in the air.

“I see you haven’t shaved, I suggest that you keep that beard, I imagine your photo is displayed in just about every Commissariat in the country.”

Ennis was surprised to see La Grinoterie; a small Chinese restaurant with an unlikely name was still there, he remembered it from twenty years earlier.

“There are still Chinese here?”

“Yes,” Guiglione laughed, “they know how to survive all kinds of situations. Ethnic restaurants have a special dispensation for non-Gallos, otherwise they wouldn’t be Chinese or Indian would they?”

“I suppose not.”

“There’s dozens of exceptions to the Ethnic laws. Fortunately otherwise life would be dreary, few French know how to cook today.”

“That doesn’t surprise me.”

“Frozen or pre-cooked meals are the rule, you don’t find the quality of MacDonald’s today!”

They went into the Grinoterie; the decoration had barely changed in twenty-five years. Ennis thought he recognised the elderly Chinese behind the bar at the payment register. The waiter showed them to a table and ordered two Qing Dao beers whilst the studied the menu. The restaurant was full and noisy; it was just as popular as Ennis had remembered it before.

“What do you want to eat?”

“It’s up to you.”

Guiglione ordered. The meal was good; each dished was guarantied prepared in the kitchens of the Tang Frères in Paris with ingredients flow in from Saigon. The dishes were deep frozen and distributed to the restaurants they controlled in all the towns and cities of the Nation.

They ordered coffees and Guiglione flipped over the pages of the Nation Soir he had bought on the boulevard.

“Listen!” he said, and then read an article to Ennis.

“Arms found in Paris. Pan-Arabist group suspected of trafficking. Based on information supplied by the Ministry of the Interior, the special anti-terrorist unit of the RASE raided a house in the Zone, discovering an arms cache belonging to the terrorist organisation El Assad. The authorities have reason to believe that the American journalist and sympathiser of the Pan-Arabist terrorist groups, John Ennis, also wanted by the police of Algharb for murder, is suspected of being implicate in the affair. According to police sources Ennis is believed to be hiding in Paris.”

Nowhere could France’s de facto segregation be seen clearer than in Paris, simply by crossing the cours de Vincennes that separated the 20th district from the 12th district. The suburban districts that adjoined them were Montreuil and Vincennes were the same type of segregation existed. Montreuil was densely populated with Neos and infiltrators from the Maghrib and black Africa, its streets and houses were run down, the customers of its shops were those with the lowest incomes. The street market was little different from that which could be seen in Casablanca, stalls selling all kinds of cheap goods and second hand bric-a-brac. The shoppers came from every corner of the underdeveloped world: East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Russia and Eastern Europe, and all parts of Africa.

They were the new proletariat, unrepresented in France, statistics classified as social problems. The French Communists and their philosophy were light years away from the understanding or wanting to understand such people, and even further from their needs.

The neo-proletariat, as the Communists called them, or Neos, as they were pejoratively referred to by the Renaissance Party, had little in common with the few old fashioned Gallo Communist workers that remained who equally had nothing in common with Africa or Islam.

The Metro line N°1 ran from Chateau de Vincennes to La Defense, passing through the heart of the city via Bastille, Hotel de Ville, Louvre, Concorde, Champs Elysée and the wealthy district of Neuilly. The line was an example of how the different populations were separated. From Monday to Friday during the office rush hours the passengers were almost exclusively confident, smart, well-dressed Gallo white-collar workers. On all days including Saturday and Sunday from six to eight in the morning the carriages were filled almost exclusively with lowly service workers, shabby, sad faced Neos, it was they who did the dirty jobs, cleaning offices, maintenance, in restaurant, on building sites or in transport and delivery, they carried out all the low paid manual tasks necessary for the daily life in a great city, naturally they were supervised by the Gallos.

A great many of the Gallo Parisians were Bobos, bourgeois-bohemians, and would have vigorously protested if they had been accused of being racist, of course they were, but outwardly they defended leftist notions of integration and assimilation of the Neos, on the condition that they did not live near them, they did not want them as neighbours, they did not want their children in the same schools.

Even though there were mixed marriages there was no middle ground, they were accepted to the better side of the class divide, or they drifted over to the under-class that the Neos formed.

In the 16th district a Gallo shopped at one of the expensive delicatessens where a roast chicken cost the equivalent to half a day's wages for a Neo worker, at the same time in Montreuil an African infiltrator struggling to survive hawked eggs on the pavement of a side street selling them one by one to other infiltrators.

That was nothing unusual in a big city except that France, by proclaiming equality and fraternity, had projected itself as the defender of the weak and poor against social injustice. That had been fine when France had been populated by Gallos and the little brown brothers had lived on distant shores, but once they knocked at the door in Paris poor and hungry they were turned away, ignored except in the Bobo press who cries of protest were as false as their desire to have them as next door neighbours in the smart districts of Paris.

The Parisians were more Bobo than other large city of France, or than any other department of the Region, Ile de France, where Paris lay. It was logical, the poor and lower classes had been slowly forced out of most districts of Paris by economic pressures, the high cost of property and rents, the lack of social housing. The only districts where the Neos remained predominant were the 18th, 19th and 20th, where housing was still affordable, but even those districts were under pressure as the price of property rose and the number of jobs available fell pushing the Neos into depressed and sinister ghettos where social workers and police feared to tread.

It is necessary to explain the administrative structure of Paris to understand how the barriers were built. Paris lies at the centre of an administrative Region called Ile de France. The city is one of the five administrative Departments of the Region. Paris itself is divided into twenty districts, called in French: Arrondissements, number from one to twenty in an outward spiral starting with the 1st Arrondissement in the centre. Each Arrondissement is divided into four quarters and each named according to local history. Those in the centre are the smallest in surface and population and the largest laying on the outside of the spiral.

Each Quarter had its own identity and traditions so that even in the Arrondissements that were dominated by Neo populations there were Quarters that were almost entirely Gallo, such as Les Buttes de Chaumont, which was also the home to a large number of Jews.

The property market functioned by Quarters, which often resulted in sharp demarcation lines between Gallo and Neo populations, thus forming social and economic barriers. As the two populations retrenched behind those invisible barriers so the difference between them was accentuated.

The authorities sought to integrate the Neos through the school system; the result was that when the concentration of the Neos became too great the level of achievement fell. It was an inevitable consequence given the family background of the Neo's children, where the French language was not that of their parents, who themselves were mostly from simple families with little formal education.

The Gallos withdrew their children from the integrated schools placing them in denominational schools, mostly Catholic and Protestant, which were paying, though the fees were generally modest, and they were naturally open to Christians though there were a few Jews and a small number of non-Christians were accepted.

After Oil

The rich world had slowly entered the nuclear-hydro economy with the cheap production of hydrogen for fuel cells that powered vehicles and generators that provided buildings with heat, light and air-conditioning. The first units were commercially available in the early years of the century and they real started to make real inroads to the market after the second round of Middle East Wars. The supremacy of the internal combustion engine was over though it would take another half a century before oil fuelled vehicle and generators were finally phased out.

Electricity from nuclear power provided the rich with electricity, most renewable sources were nothing more than a green pipe dream, a ‘plan B’. Only hydrogen was unlimited though the development of the technology and distribution network was a huge challenge. It was the poor who suffered as always.

A new era was born almost unheralded. The new technology repeated past industrial history, transforming society as its predecessors had done: railways, electricity, the internal combustion engine and the computer. It produced its advocates and enemies. Within a couple of decades it was

present everywhere for transport and power generation in the industrialised countries.

Oil producing countries introduced laws forbidding the use of fuel cells in their countries in order to support their oil industries and their refining facilities. Their efforts were of little avail, a slow and inexorable decline in the industrialised world's demand for oil commenced.

The instability of the Middle East producers had only accelerated what was inevitable given the finite reserves of fossil fuels.

The major automobile constructers had launched programmes at the end of the last century and competition linked with the arrival of new technologies spurred the development. In 2002 the US government announcement of its programme for the development of fuel cells to reduce the countries dependence on foreign oil was the real turning point with huge funds flowing into research and development of new and existing technologies. The production of hydrogen from demineralised water by a compact plasma process reduced the need for the bulky hydrogen tanks and the risks linked with its storage.

Renault of France and Nissan had commenced by developing cars with a fuel cell that ran on gasoline. The companies invested huge sums for the development and started marketing fuel cell vehicles as early as 2005. Renault had also worked with PSA Citroen to speed the development of commercially viable fuel cell cars by 2010.

The USA was consuming twenty five percent of the world’s oil with Europe and Japan not far behind. The consequence of the new technology was a fall off in demand for oil and gasoline in 2010 that accelerated over the following ten years. From 2020 onwards the decline was less pronounced but the consequences for the producer countries were dramatic, not only their total revenues fell because of the lower demand but prices followed the same pattern, and worse their populations continued to grow.

Medical and health services had lengthened lives but the cost of those services had grown to a level that could only be supported by the better off. France with its tradition of limitless health care for its population had faltered under the burden of rising costs leading to the economic crisis that ended with the revolt. The expulsion of the non-Gallos also exported the burden of health care.

Internet purchasing had finally enabled shoppers to make their basic purchases electronically; however shopping remained an event that had become almost a leisure activity for clothing, luxury goods and large items. It had also transformed television news and entertainment to a point where viewers could choose from a worldwide range of programmes paid and free. News and information from state controlled sources was transmitted on murals permanently in public places inter-dispersed with popular variety video clips and advertising.

Digital identity systems offered secured payment systems but also enabled the authorities to follow every movement of each citizen through RSN, the national web.

Crimes and offences against the Nation were sanctioned by the withdrawal of social and civil rights for a period of time that corresponded with degree of the offence. As a result the poor were forced out of the city to the misery of the almost abandoned suburbs emptied of their non-Gallo population.

The non-Gallo infiltrators who hid in the city were hounded out by the special squads of the RASE and sent to holding camps in the suburbs before being transported to Algharb.

“Our ancestors the Gallo-Europeans and the Celts lived on this land for five thousand years,” d’Albignac had declared to the Nation in his inaugural speech, “and their ancestors since twenty thousand years. Christianity the religion of Rome and our Latin language has been with us for two thousand years giving birth to our present cultural values.

The aberration of the so called multi-racial Republic gave power, flaunting our heritage, to those who were in our land for a mere twenty, thirty or forty years, bringing with them the concepts alien to our culture. Our values were rejected at the end of the Colonial period that we accepted. We are not against Islam but in those lands that embraced it, not in our Motherland the Nation of France.”

The Zone

Cameras, infrared heat detectors and laser beams surveyed the no-mans-land. The images were transmitted to a data treatment centre where the least irregular sign immediately alerted one of the RASE patrols. In most cases it was nothing more than a cat or dog, from time to time.

The Zone was not only the home to day workers but was the refuge of Drogo-alcolos, infiltrators and criminals. There were also other rejects from society, the chronically poor, who were often physical and mentally ill, abandoned and uncared for in their misery. There were not only the rejects but also the Resistance movement that had led an unequal struggle against the regime of le Martel. The resistance was a coalition of old time Communists and other extreme left wing movements joined in an unholy alliance with fascists and other isolated groups.

They ordered coffees and Guiglione flipped over the pages of the Nation Soir, the free evening newspaper he had picked up from the distributor on the boulevard.

“Listen!” he said, and then read an article to Ennis.

“Arms found in Paris. Pan-Arabist group suspected of trafficking. Based on information supplied by the Ministry of the Interior, the special anti-terrorist unit of the RASE raided a house in the Zone, discovering an arms cache belonging to the terrorist organisation El Assad. The authorities have reason to believe that the American, a terrorist agent, using a false identity, that of a journalist a member and sympathiser of a Pan-Arabist terrorist group, John Ennis, also wanted by the police of Algharb for murder, is suspected of being implicated in the affair. According to police sources Ennis is believed to be hiding in Paris.”

“False identity!”

“Keep your voice down! We must be careful, they know you are in Paris,” Guiglione said urgently. He folded the newspaper, paid the bill and they left the restaurant.

“Do you really think they know I here in Paris?”

“No, they couldn’t have followed you, they’re working on supposition.”

“Why this arms business?”

“It’s manipulation, they’re no doubt trying to accuse Washington of interfering.”

“Maybe, it’s possible.”

He felt tired by the intrigue; it was urgent to get out of the country.

“In any case you must be on your way as quickly as possible, if not you’ll be picked up sooner or later, then who knows, a show trial, imprisonment or worse!”

“This is crazy, I don’t know what’s become of France, it so far from what I knew as a student. It’s as if Vichy France had been reborn with Nazis and the rest.”

Suddenly they were violently pushed to one side by a man running as though it were for his life, he was followed by a two RASE agents, one of them pulled by a massive pit bull that strained on its lead. The dog handler let go of the lead and the pit bull in a single bound launched itself onto the fugitive, throwing him to the ground in a savage flurry, then with its jaws firmly fixed on one shoulder, shook him like a helpless rabbit. The dog handler viciously beat the dog with his truncheon whilst grabbing the lead pulling the dog off its victim. The second RASE agent, a woman, pulled out a heavy automatic and pointed it at the fugitive who lay on the pavement, his shirt torn and his shoulder and face bleeding profusely.

“Help! Help!” the man screamed in terror.

“What’s happening?” Ennis asked shaken.

“I don’t know, probably a fugitive or a dealer,” replied Guiglione. “Let’s get away from here.”

The RASE man pinned the man’s hands behind his back, then dragged him along the pavement like a sack of rubbish.

“Help me! They’ll kill me.”

“Shut your filthy mouth,” the woman shouted hitting their prisoner about his head with the butt of her automatic.

The passers by watched from a safe distance without mixing in the affair. A few moments later an unmarked RASE Hydro pulled up and the captive was bundled inside. They agents climbed in and the Hydro accelerated away with sirens wailing.

“Jesus Christ, that was strong arm stuff!” said Ennis his heart still beating fast.

“There’s a lot of violence. The Police or the RASE are everywhere, ready to act at the slightest incident not only against the Zonards but also the Drogos if they step out of line or just about anybody else.”

“Let’s get going,” said Ennis. He had enough for one evening.

They returned to the apartment, it was too early and too hot to turn in. The night was clear and they installed themselves out on the roof top garden sipping beer and talking.

“I suppose the Zone is a ghetto,” Ennis asked.

“That’s right, it’s only a few months ago that they built the wall.”

“Why, they couldn’t control the situation?”

“Why, I don’t know,” he said with a weary wave of his hand, “there’s a problem of money, education, but above all drugs and alcohol. People live in a virtual world; they don’t know what the real world is. They are manipulated into a kind of hypnotised state of docility. Young people pass their time on their couches with their virtual visors, recreational drugs and alcohol, they’re not interested in real sport or even real sex.”

“What does the government do about it?”

“Nothing, it’s all part of the authoritarian state.”

“Is it really that bad?”

“Each person carries an obligatory TRIP nanocard....”

“Trip?”

“Yeah, a transmitting, receiving, indicating and positioning device, powered by body heat. Information can be received at all times, benefits paid, taxes, medical information, fines as well as personal identification, social security number, health, you know if the person is a carrier of disease, for example aids, criminal records, driving licence, employment. With the nanocard a person can be located in seconds, if he has an accident or falls ill his family can be informed, and the hospital can get to his medical record and blood type.”

“It’s not all negative.”

“By all means no, but it’s still Big Brother.”

“I imagine it’s possible to hack into the system and change information.”

“Of course, nothing is perfect but any person found guilty of breaking into the system and modifying data is very seriously reprimanded, the only ones outside of the system are the Clapos and Horbans.”

“What!”

“Clapos,” laughed Guiglione, “it means ‘que de la peau’ – only skin, skin and bones, it rhymes with Clodos, Drogos, Alcolos. The dregs of society.”

“I see,” said Ennis absorbing the information. “What about Horbans?”

“Banished, I suppose, beyond the pale. Most of them smuggle drugs from the Zone by the sewers and the Metro during the night from beyond the Périphérique.”

Wanted

The next day they were up early to meet a passer, who would guide Ennis in the Zone. They were to meet in one of the cafés nearby the Place du Trône. It was a fine day; the morning was a little cooler with a certain freshness in the air.

They stopped to look at the murals before the columns near the 17th century customs houses. The face of Boublil filled the public TS screen and his high voice echoed across the avenue, his head was bowed reading from a paper.

“... man is dangerous, wanted for murder and association with terrorists. Do not hesitate to contact the police of your quarter or the Ethnic Affairs Brigade. Your safety is in peril, help us to protect your rights and our Gallo-European privileges.”

Then a picture appeared on the screen, it was Ennis.

Guiglione pulled him as he stood hypnotised by his own image.

“Don’t panic. Come on let’s get away from here. We’ll get on the Magnotram,” he said pointing in the direction of the silver tram that glided towards its stop.

They looked up as a copter passed above them with an almost silent swish of its rotors heading towards the Zone on its surveillance patrol. The RASE copters carried ultra sophisticated equipment connected to Ministry of Sate Security where all movements, noises and transmissions were analysed in real time.

“Were lucky I suppose there’s a better chance of escaping detection in crowds than standing in line, like in airports or Metro turn styles.”

“The most important thing right now is to get you into the Zone!”

At that instant three RASE men appeared at the base of one of the columns, they ran slowly, their arms at the ready, looking around, scrutinising the bystanders.

“There!” cried an elderly woman who seemed to have been waiting for them. She pointed a finger in the direction of Ennis and Guiglione.

“Quick, run!” shouted Guiglione

They started running with the armed RASE men hot on their heels about thirty metres behind them. Their pursuers wore heavy bullet-proof armour with full visored helmets, knee and elbow protectors and lace up parachutist boots. The RASE men were handicapped by their equipment but they knew that help would arrive as soon as the copter picked up their signal.

“Halt! Police! Halt!”

Guiglione pulled out an automatic and fired a shot in the direction of their pursuers.

“Faster, they’ll kill us!”

Guiglione knew the risk, under any other circumstances they should have ended up in handcuffs, but today that was not to be, what Boublil wanted was Ennis dead, Guiglione would have simply been unavoidable collateral damage.

That evening the colonel of the anti-terrorist section of the RASE explained on the National News, “Our mission was to avoid bloodshed, to take the suspects alive for the purposes of the enquiry. Towards nine thirty this morning, a person who had observed two men acting suspiciously near the Magnotram stop at Place du Trône alerted us, one of them resembled the suspected terrorist Ennis.

A unit of the RASE and a two Zone Patrol Guards were dispatched to the scene. Ennis was sighted with an accomplice in the doorway of the old customs house. Our units approached and stopped about twenty metres from the terrorists and ordered them to place their hands on their heads. The American replied by pulling out an arm and firing at our men.

Warning shots were returned but they refused to surrender, instead they continued to fire, five shots, our units had no choice but to defend themselves.”

o0o

Ennis passed the night in an uninhabited building that was in the course of renovation on Rue de la Voute. He had heard the sound of police sirens all through the night after the gunfight. He thought of Guiglione whose desperate courage had enabled him to escape, he had been certainly wounded and was perhaps dead.

Towards six thirty in the morning he left dressed in a plasterers overalls and hat that he found in the building and went up to the second floor where he climbed out of the window onto the abandoned tram line that had once been a railway. He followed the line over the bridge that crossed the Cours de Vincennes and continued to the Barrier where he climbed into a ruined building and down to street level where he headed east crossing Boulevard Davout into a derelict area that adjoined the Périphérique, the covered urban motorway that encircled Paris, which had been converted into an underground Magnotram line.

Ennis made his way along the roof of the Périphérique overgrown with weeds and bushes northwards to Montreuil where the Périphérique formed

the eastern wall of the Zone.

He was careful to avoid being seen as he slipped down the wall into an abandoned parking lot filled with the rusting carcasses of old cars.

Ennis saw smoke rising slowly from one corner of the car park and he quickly took cover between the heaps of rusting debris. It looked like a camp of Clodos but there was little movement, it was too early and they certainly had no urgent appointments. To his left was Rue Avron and two blocks to the south was the Barrier, running along the centre of what had been Rue des Grands Champs, a concrete wall topped by razor wire

The day was going to be hot and dangerous. He had no idea how he was going find the meeting point Guiglione had indicated to him. He was sure that his dramatic escape had been reported on the news and was in little that the Zone Patrol was out hunting for him.

The Périphérique was a no-man's-land between rich Paris and the suburbs that were now almost deserted dotted with islands of a working class and ethnically correct population, who did not enjoy residential rights in capital but many of whom were daily commuters holding non-residential MARA work permits, sparingly issued by the Ministry for the Attribution of Remunerated Activities. It provided work in honest but lowly paid jobs in the capital, a means of supplementing the meagre state allocations to poor unqualified Gallos.

The Zone was sandwiched between Paris and the northeast arc of the Périphérique; it was what had once been part of the 19th and 20th arrondissements of the city. It had been designated as a temporary transit Zone fifteen years earlier during the PEP, the Population Exchange Programme with the Autonomous Region, but like many temporary measures it continued to serve as a special Zone to accommodate non-Gallo short-term contract workers.

He followed the wall and found a Metro station, Maraichers, where he studied the map looking hopefully the street mentioned by Guiglione. He was not sure of the exact name there was one that seemed that sounded right just a couple of blocks further on. It was not difficult to find but he was surprised by the dense crowds of people on the streets that reminded him of certain run down districts of Moscow. Shabbily dressed people sold their shoddy goods on the pavements. From time to time an old petrol

scooter passed by in a cloud of blue smoke sometimes pulling a small trailer loaded with plastic jerry cans and cardboard boxes.

There were few four wheeled vehicles, Guiglione had explained the number of permits issued by the Ministry of the Environment were limited and too expensive for the Zonards and the underclass's.

A copter passed overhead, they patrolled the sky above the Zone, surveying all activity but they rarely intervened in the problems or disputes of the Zonards, their only concern was to see that the troubles did not overflow into the City.

A Revolutionary

He was astonished to see several small black pigs. They grunted noisily as they rooted for food with their snouts in the piles of stinking rubbish. The canal was overflowing with rotting detritus and oily bubbles rose to the surface in the putrefying black water. It was two weeks since the rubbish had been collected and a nauseating haze hung over the quarter. The Zonards waited stoically for the municipal sanitary services to carry out their irregular cleaning operations but there was a lack of labour and the Zone was their last consideration.

Ennis watched the Clodos digging in the heaps that lay on every street corner. The population he saw was mostly composed of old people, sick, lame, with few children. It was if he was in slums of Calcutta or Cairo. The women were working at their menial jobs in the hotels, restaurants and prestige business offices of the City whilst the older men worked in the sanitary municipal services and other lowly jobs that the Gallos refused.

The Zonard workers were subject to quotas in the different districts of the City avoiding the potential risk of their concentration. Besides there were few healthy young men admitted to the Zone and even fewer into the City, they were considered as an unnecessary and undesirable risk.

Swarms of huge black flies took off as the Clodos and scavengers advanced through the garbage. Abandoned children searched for food in the

bins of the miserable cafés and greasy spoons.

The old autobuses rumbled past spitting a nauseous cloud of black smoke from a mixture of half burned bio-fuel and recycled oil from their tired motors, a smoke that ate into the filthy black stone facades of the buildings. The streets were an advanced state of disrepair, there were huge pot holes filled with pools of filthy black water that leaked up from the broken sewers.

Many of those in the crowd were in an advanced state of pauperisation, men looked furtively at each pile of rubbish in the hope of finding something that would change their dismal day and women looked at the merchandise on the dilapidated stalls in the desperate hope of finding something affordable to feed their family.

Ennis was overwhelmed by the misery of the vision before him, men, women and children excluded without rights or hope, driven out of their homes by men like Boublil into a ghetto where they were parked and exploited waiting for a permanent solution.

The solution was the great question that occupied France and its government over the preceding decade, as did its ‘lost provinces’ as had Alsace Lorraine after its loss to the Prussians in the nineteenth century.

Ennis had difficulty in deciphering the rusted enamelled panel that hung on the brick wall at a crazy angle on the corner of the Rue Avron and Rue de la Volga. On the small square lay the carcase of a van that had been transformed into a shelter for two aging Alcolos who watched Ennis with an air of suspicion.

The buildings were in ruins, windows were broken, there were holes in the rendering of facades, and the paint peeling off doors. Grass and weeds grew in the cracks on the balconies, the blinds and shutters had ceased to work years before. The pavement was in a state of advanced disrepair and the gutters were flooded with wastewater that flowed from the broken pipes from the old apartment buildings and derelict shops.

A snotty child appeared from nowhere and pulled his sleeve and pointed to a slim young man who stood casually by a doorway.

Ennis waited a moment and then followed the young man down a side street along the broken pavement, past the ruins of shops with their rusting

metal blinds closed and the piles of bricks and burnt facades. After thirty metres or so he slipped into the doorway of a very run down building. Ennis hesitated in the sombre door.

“Welcome to our modest refuge,” a voice said in the half-light.

Ennis straining his eyes could make out face of his follower it was determined but wore a sad smile.

“Welcome John Ennis, welcome to the Front.”

“Ah, the Front.”

“Yes the Republican Resistance Front, we welcome all fighters to our battle for the Restoration of the Republic. No more questions, just follow me,” he said softly placing a finger on his lips. He turned and disappeared into the dark hallway.

He followed him up a staircase half blocked with debris and old papers. The first floor was covered with old wood planks and rusting pipes. A door slammed.

Guiglione had not spoke of the movement and though there was a nagging doubt about the meaning of ‘battle’ Ennis felt that he was in safe hands for the moment.

“Let me introduce myself, I’m Philippe,” said the young man softly. “We are going to help you so that you can tell the world the truth about the le Martel’s France.”

He nodded and waited unsure of himself.

“But before you will see how those expelled have been replaced by a new sub-population excluded politically and economically, without the most basic human rights.” He slowly looked left and right. “They are described by that criminal Boublil and his cronies as Clodos and Drogo-alcolos, parked in the Paris Zone and the other Zones surrounding Paris, waiting for his solution.”

The great artisan of the Ethnicity laws was Henri Boublil who obeyed the war cry of the Renaissance Party ‘the Nation the Motherland of the Gallic race will never be abandoned to the foreigner’.

Ennis could not help a rising feeling that he was a political hostage but now on the other side on the Barrier.

“We most be most careful, Boublil’s Zionist agents are everywhere even here in the Zone.”

“Zionists!”

“Yes, Paris is full of Jews, led by Boublil and his torturers, it’s they who have imprisoned us in this ghetto!”

Albignac’s Plan

Le Martel’s government had clamped a censure on the repeated attacks and incursions into France from Algharb by terrorist groups, both Islamists and Republicans.

Le Martel had patiently rebuilt the Army of the Nation and the State Security Forces after years of decline and lack of funding under the defunct Republic. The state of decline of the Armed forces and its lack of will had been an important factor in the inability of its generals to prevent the Catastrophe. The Republic had perceived danger as beyond Europe and not within. For two generations the forces of law and order had been paralysed by legislation and political appeasement that had prevented them from executing their duty giving power to the forces of crime and disorder.

To John Ennis, Rudi Steubler was a typical German, pushy and full of himself, Rudi had his opinions and had no doubt that they were right but in spite of that Ennis found him likable.

“Let me tell you John, is the just the start. Le Martel and his followers have never accepted the loss of part of France and his intention is to take it back by whatever means necessary.”

“That won’t be so easy, he can’t wage war without the intervention of the Union.”

“That’s where you’re wrong he doesn’t need the Union, at least not all of it, but he is counting on the help of Germany.”

“Germany!”

“Right, our information is that Affentranger won’t oppose his plan, at least Germany won’t intervene, in fact Affentranger will support le Martel’s plan. Germany has its own problems, millions of jobs have disappeared in the last few years, he has to find a solution for the excess population.”

“How?”

“The rumours of Germany’s ambitions in Africa are not unfounded. It has been clear for some time that Affentranger is backing the South African government. Our sources indicate they will start by providing logistical assistance to help them to absorb Namibia and Botswana into the Republic of South Africa. Part of those territories will be conceded to Germany administration, which will provide colonists. The question is who are those colonists? Who wants to go to Namibia? What we think is that Affentranger is waiting for le Martel to announce his plan and when the dust starts to settle he will implement his own programme for South Africa using their own unemployed, though Germanised, population.”

“So that’s why they’ve increased military spending.”

“Yes, the Luftwaffe has acquired an additional fleet of long distance troop carriers, it’s easy to transport large numbers of troops to Windhoek, only a ten hour flight from Frankfurt.”

“But what has that got to do with Algharb, le Martel does not want those people?”

“No, for the same reasons as the Germans. But he wants his territory back so he has got to move them.”

“Where?”

“He’s going to ship them to the Mediterranean islands to give them their own country, a real country!”

“Mediterranean islands?”

“Corsica and Sardinia.”

“Corsica! Sardinia! But that’s crazy!”

“Think about it! It’s a great idea, real islands...surrounded by sea. Corsica has been nothing but a thorn in the side of France for more than fifty years, the independentists have never hesitated to use Algharb against Paris, it will be le Martel’s revenge!”

“But Sardinia?”

“No problem he’s made a deal with the Nova Fascists.”

“My God, won’t that mean civil war!”

“No ... Corsican trouble makers will be shipped to Senegal where their labour will be needed. As for the Insurgents if Corsica doesn’t appeal to them, they can take the short boat trip home to the Caliphate.”

“How can they ship eight million people to Corsica?”

“First, not all of them will go to Corsica, all the blacks will go to the new territories in Africa. Secondly, most of the Arabs and Islamists, about five million in all, will be shipped to Corsica. The plan will be carried out in phases, Algharb will be split into zones, the army will use ferries, troop carriers and the like. They estimate that the plan can be carried out in eighteen months, it even has a name, Transco, or Transmigration Corsica.”

Corsica had been flooded by refugees from all sides. From Algharb, from France and from Monaco. The camps festered like sores next to Corsica's major towns, Bastia, Bonifacio, Ajaccio and Calvi. They were hot beds of political activity. Corsica was more cut off than ever from the mainland and it was said that le Martel let them suffer the joys of the independence that they had sought for a century.

The transit camps were for non-Gallo Europeans who were rejected by Algharb and unrecognised by their countries of origin. They included persons of almost every nationality who refused to decline their identities or who were impossible to identify. They were sent to camps were the more fortunate found seasonal employment in agriculture, local services and the small industries in the localities of the camps. Almost one million people lived in the misery of the camps that though they were not prisons prevented the freedom of movement on the island with an absolute interdiction to leave the island.

The isolation centres were built to hold those persons of non Gallo-European origin convicted of crimes ranging from simple infractions to the anti-infiltration laws and petty criminals to those convicted for serious crime under the penal laws. In total there were two hundred thousand in the isolation centres.

In addition were the refugee camps. At the time of the rebellion almost a million people had sought refuge from the fighting and retributions fleeing to the island. Years later, a great number of those refugees still remained there, unwilling to take the risk of returning to Bin Ibrani's pseudo state, rejected by both France and Monaco. Amongst them were black Africans, Serbs, Albanians, Kurds and Asians, none of who wanted to return to their countries of origin, preferring to wait for a change in the situation on the mainland.

The refugee camps were deliberately ignored by le Martel's government, they were given the very lowest of their priorities. The camps survived beyond well after they had served their purpose, perpetuated by the humanitarian aid given by the Federation, the UN, the Red Cross, the Green Crescent, and the international aid organisations for refugees but above all those whose political interest it served to see the camps festering like an indictment of the nationalist regime in Paris.

“The plan is that Algharb will be strangled economically, that will result is large scale civil disorder with bankruptcy and rebellion against the bin Brani regime and France will be obliged to intervene imposing marshal law.”

“What is the USA going to do?”

“Nothing, they want the raw materials of South Africa and to safeguard their investments in Europe. They will do nothing to help Algharb, which they see as a temporary aberration. They have never forgotten what Islam has cost them in terrorist attacks and more half a century of black mail by the Middle East oil producing states. The Jews of America are still a powerful force and the Greater Levant for them is a betrayal to the Arabs, the fault of the Turks.”

There has been a lot of construction activity in Corsica; the military bases in Ajaccio have substantially extended up over the last twelve months. Our people have told us that the perimeter fences are being replaced by concrete walls. The naval base facilities have also been extended.

Albignac had become Premier Magistrat de la Nation; he was honoured with the title by a unanimous vote in the National Assembly for his victory against the insurgents and as saviour of the Nation.

The Diaspora

“What have the Jews got to do with that?” asked Steiner.

Ennis had the impression that Steiner always got touchy when the subject of Jews came up.

“Well in that they are part Middle East history.”

“I know that,” he said sounding exasperated. “Tell me what they've got to do with France?”

“I will, but first we have to fill the complete picture with some background.”

Ennis persisted pedantically repeating what Steiner knew as well as he, that there were two and a half billion Muslims in the world and twelve million Jews did not change anything. There were more than one million Jews in France, few of whom were practising and amongst them a few thousand Loubavitch.

What was more interesting however, was the growing number of Jews in Algharb. They had little confidence in d’Albignac whom they saw as little different from Petain, the leader of Vichy France during WWII. France’s history was full of anti-Semitic incidents, though there were moments when enlightened men had spoke out in the defence of the Jews. During the French Revolution on the 27th September 1791, Deputies of the Assembly adopted a decree emancipating the Jews of France, the Deputy Clermont-Tonnerre cried, ‘Everything must be refused to the Jews as a nation, as individuals they must be granted everything’.

The Jewish Law explicitly asked them to be real patriots of the country where they lived. Henri Boublil set an example, he was a real patriot of the Nation of France, it could even be said that he was a true zealot applying the laws against the non-Gallos and especially the Muslims with an iron fist.

The Jewish population of France had seen a very slow decline until the creation of the Turkish Protectorate of the Greater Levant, when France opened the door to those who saw the dream of Zion evaporate and preferred Europe to an unpredictable coalition with the Turks. At the same time the holocaust had quit the world's living memory, fading into history and replaced by the atrocities of the war against the Palestinian-Syrian coalition.

The creation of a Palestinian rump state with little means or political power, with vague frontiers and no agreement on its capital changed little in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It evolved into a running guerrilla war as the Palestinians realised that Israel with all its force could not destroy them. Many factors worked against Israel and not the least was world opinion. The unequal force of the two protagonists shifted the sympathy that had reigned for the Jews since the end of World War II to the Palestinians.

It was a change of roles that was both understandable and incongruous. On the one hand the Jews as a small population were alone, there was no other Jewish state on the planet, their religion was shared with no other people, and they had no natural resources in a country the size of Wales.

The Palestinians on the other hand were part of the Arab peoples; twenty-two independent Arab states existed in the early part of the century with a total population of two hundred and fifty million, at that time many of those states were rich with petro-dollars covering a vast territory from the India Ocean to the Atlantic.

Further the Arabs were the founders of the Islamic religion and Arabia was the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad with Mecca the holy centre of that religion. The faithful counted one third of the world's population amongst them.

The logical conclusion to the Palestinian conflict should have been a political arrangement that would have enabled the two peoples to live and prosper together as they had done at different moments in history. The interests of the Arabo-Muslim world prevented that, as did the stubbornness of the Jews, which could be understood given the fear of the Jews and the hatred of the Muslims who saw their territory and holy places occupied.

However, the stalemate continued, erupting into greater violence as each side struggled to impose its will in the Holy Land. As time passed Israel

was weakened politically and economically by the endless war without allies on whom they could depend. The Federation continued its fickle stance on the Turkish question and its attitude towards Israel whilst the Americans were exasperated by an insoluble situation.

Faced with the resurrection of Iran as a Middle East power, Israel and Turkey became odd, but natural allies, Israel offered a nuclear umbrella to Turkey, which in turn menaced Iran.

The Water War, as it was called, started with the damming of the Euphrates by the Turks. Syria had been progressively weakened by the downward slide of the Arab world's power with the slow decline of oil and the collapse of Saudi Arabia. Fourteen hundred years of increasing population with less and less resources for each person the situation of the Arab world had become dramatic, oil had been no more than a mere interlude.

When the Syrian president gesticulated by mobilising his armed forces to threaten Turkey, the Turks in seized the opportunity to invade and crush the Syrian army in a Blitz Krieg, ignoring Iran’s threats and occupying Damascus as Israel invaded the Lebanon and Jordan whilst closing the door from the Sinai.

With the fall of Saudi Arabia and the declaration of an independent Hijaz, the Turkish army swept into Iraq and Jordan and established their rule over much of the Middle East, as had the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire. The West looked on approvingly as the region, which had been the cause of so much strife in the struggle for oil, fell under the control of the Turkish-Israeli coalition.

Ankara was encouraged by the European Federation to extend eastwards in compensation for Europe's continued refusal to admit Turkey into the Federation as a full member state.

De facto, the bipolar axis formed between Ankara and Jerusalem, ruled what they called the Greater Levant, with its frontiers reaching south to Egypt and to the Indian Ocean in the East and the Red Sea in the south.

The Treaty of Istanbul signed by the Federation, Russia and the USA, to the chagrin of Iran, recognised a Turkish-Israeli ‘Zone of Influence’ called the Greater Levant, which was in fact a power sharing condominium guaranteed by the treaty’s three signatories.

The world awoke to a new Middle East when the Turkish and Israeli armies victoriously met at the Syrian frontier. The two countries had long been allies against their common enemy: the Arabs. It was no great surprise when Israel willingly responded to the Turkish request by closing its own frontier with the Caliphate's eastern Emirate of Egypt, preventing any external intervention. They joining forces with the Turks and swooped on Amman crushing the Islamist supporters who had proclaimed a Jihad to fight the Turkish invaders and were prepared to cross the frontier into Syria.

The Greater Levant was further reinforced by a treaty in the Turkey-Israeli axis broke the countries it controlled into administrative regions, separating troublesome ethic and religious groups.

The old enemy of Turkey, Iran was isolated losing the influence it had exercised over the Iraqi Shiites. The Gulf States became protectorates of the new federation, weakened by the loss of oil revenues and their narrow political vision.

A new calm settled over the Levant after more than a century of blood, war and revolution. The only disturbances were the occasional intercommunity violence, which had existed since civilisation had dawned in that region, which erupted from time to time, between Jews and Arabs, between Turks and Arabs, and between the Lebanese Arabs and Christians.

In effect, the Greater Levant transformed the region into a Turkish-Israeli protectorate, offered security at the price of peace and retrograding the Arabs to their position of more than a century earlier.

However, many Jews and Lebanese disapproved of the way the Levant had been redrawn. Mixing with Turks and Syrians was a step backwards, reminiscent of their confused past. They feared the Turks, the Turks were not Arabs, they were strong, organised and determined in their new powerful role that also extended into the Turkmen regions of the Caucuses and Central Asia.

Great numbers of Israelis and Lebanese flocked to Europe, and in particular to France, especially the Sephardim many of whom spoke French.

“The Jews are all over the place in Paris, encouraged by Boublil and Lehmann.”

“The Jews?” Ennis was puzzled.

“Don’t be naive, since the end of the Second World War and the decolonisation of North Africa, they’ve worked their way into dominant positions in all the liberal professions, banking, commerce and show business. From there they’ve moved into politics.”

“There’s no law against that,” said Ennis exasperated by such attitudes.

“No, but from there they’ve used their position to increase the influence of the Jewish community. Let me tell you some facts. Initially they used politicians sympathetic to their ambitions and the special needs of their religion.”

“That’s nothing exceptional.”

“Then with their own candidates with a profile acceptable to the majority in circumscriptions where they were strong in numbers, such as the 12th arrondissement of Paris, little by little they gained influential positions in the other arrondissements, then in the City Hall of Paris.”

“That’s just Paris.”

“You’re right, outside of Paris their only other bastions were Lyon and Strasbourg, but that was enough.”

“So you’re against the Jews.”

“Yes, not only because I’m an Arab, but because they employed the same methods they accused the Germans of, and also the other enemies of Israel. Don’t forget Boublil was the architect of the expulsions, we call it ethnic cleansing and that’s what it is.”

“You’re right, but it’s incomparable to the holocaust.”

“At present I’m talking about plain human rights, God only knows were they will go next with their transportation plans? I know I’m right and there’s not only the expulsions, there are also the Zonards, the Clodos and the Ombres that the French government has thrown on the junk heap of Lehmann’s economic efficiency. This is the reason that Boublil and Lehmann are our enemies, targets to be destroyed.”

“I can understand your attitude against Boublil but that doesn’t mean all the Jews are to Blame.”

“The problem is that most of the Parisian Jews are from North Africa, they never knew the holocaust, they cried out against anti-Semitism from their expensive cars, flashing their gold watches and their women dressed as though they were going to a wedding party. They put up Boublil against us. His family lived off the back of us Maghribis in our countries, which were the home of his likes for centuries, now he pays us back treating us like goats.”

Ennis knew there true some truth in what he said. The European Jews were much more discrete and an old part of the community compared to their extroverted North African cousins.

“Boublil is certainly a sinister individual, hiding behind his corporatist background and the state education system. His rise to power through the left wing teachers union is certainly a contradiction, he’s without any doubt an opportunist.”

It was strange but the Muslims bore many resemblances to Jews. The more a Muslim lives by the Sharia, the more he lives like an Orthodox Jew. Both are surrounded by infinite numbers of minute details of ritual observance. Further, the two groups share much in the ways they dress, greet, speak, gesticulate, celebrate holidays, and the like. The Islamic requirements for halal food resemble those of kosher food. Like Jews, Muslims open butcher shops and restaurants primarily for their own good, whereas Italians and Greeks open ethnic restaurants because those are a fashionable business, catering for non-Italians and non-Greeks.

The Muslims shared many of the Western prejudices built up over the centuries against Jews, however, both sides had always used the Jews as middlemen to settle their affairs in an even handed manner.

In France, Maghribi Arabs and Sephardim Jews shared a common North African culture and life-style, which allowed them to go beyond the conflicts that had divided them elsewhere.

The time was long past when successive waves of pioneers, bonded together by the Zionist ideals and the spirit of the pioneers, had fought to found the state of Israel. They established their kibbutz in the desert, where tens of thousands of young Americans and Europeans had flocked to experience the purity of their spirit to build a new land after the holocaust. The young pioneers were bonded together in the defence of the Promised

Land against the overwhelming Arab enemy and commitment to an egalitarian, communal way of life.

Fifty years later Israel was riven by internal divisions. Jews from the Arab countries, Sephardim or Orientals, whose elites emigrated to France rather than Israel, resented the political power of the Ashkenazim. They were housed far from Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv in development towns cleared of their Palestinian inhabitants in 1947-1949, and came to occupy the lowest level of Israeli society, just above Israel's Palestinians.

The difference that separated the Ashkenazim and Sephardim was also in religious attitudes and rivalry between the various communities. The ethnic and cultural differences were accentuated by social differences in a society, following industrialisation and globalisation of the Israeli economy, which had become seriously inegalitarian.

Israelis had become less motivated by the vision of the founding fathers, and for many of them coexistence with a Palestinian state and integration in the regional environment seemed inevitable.

The Palestinians' establishment of an independent state gave them a limited right to self-determination, but the question of their capital in East Jerusalem remained. The questions concerning borders, Jerusalem and the status of the holy places, settlements, the right of return of three and a half million Palestinian refugees, and water rights were unresolved.

The conflicting interests of Israel’s neighbours weighed heavily on the effort to find a lasting solution. As time passed Israel’s neighbours changed, the Caliphate was born, Arabia was rocked by revolution and disintegration, though the interests of Syria and the Lebanon were in the continued status quo.

The events in the Levant ricocheted deep into the heart of French politics. With its Arabo-Muslim and Jewish populations increased by the mainly impoverished new arrivals from the Caliphate and Israel, intercommunity strife became commonplace, with the attacks on synagogues and reprisals against mosques. The politicians incapable of facing up to the reality of the situation replied with their usual formula by preaching understanding and integration whilst the rightist political groups screamed a halt to the settlement of non-Gallos.

It was too late, twenty five percent of the population was of Arabo-Muslim origin, they represented the poorest part of the French, the least privileged, and the greatest unemployed. A social Apartheid had been unconsciously created as employment fell with the dawn of the third generation technological revolution.

France had been transformed unwittingly into the scene of twenty-first century ethno-religious confrontation with the Europeans ranged on one side and the Arabo-Muslims and their sympathisers on the other where there could be no winner. A conflict that the French colonialists of the early twentieth century could have never imagined even in the wildest dreams.

The Autonomous Region

This Global Focus feature describes the background to the Autonomous Region of Provence or Algharb, as it is called by its government. Amongst the documents that can be discussed is the Evian Peace Agreement that accepted the principle, within the cease-fire line and the Mediterranean coast, of an Autonomous Province in France. This would provide a region of self government for the different ethnic groups represented by the non-Gallo New French Alliance, which had expressed its desire for a separate identity within the Republic of France. The Peace Agreement was concluded within the framework of the UN resolutions and the conditions accepted by both the French government and the New French Alliance.

Dear President Suarez,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of the Government of France, the following declaration of sympathy with the aspirations of the New French Alliance, which has been submitted to, and approved by the President.

“The Government views with certain reserves - notably its refusal to entertain any other status to the region than a certain autonomy within the Republic of France, as defined by our constitution - the establishment in Provence of an autonomous region for the populations that have manifested

their desire to be considered as separate minority ethnic groups with certain specific rights defined under the terms outlined by their representatives, the so called 'New French Alliance', and our government will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing French communities in Province, or the rights and political status enjoyed by those minority ethnic groups in Metropolitan France."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the New French Alliance.

Yours sincerely,

Marcel Berat

Treaty

Whereas the European Federation has agreed, to guaranty the status of the Autonomous Region of Provence, which constitutes a province of the French Republic, within such boundaries as fixed by the Conference of Evian; and

Whereas the European Federation has agreed that they should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made, by the Government of the Republic of France, and adopted by the European Federation, in favour of the establishment in Provence an Autonomous Region for the minority ethnic groups represented by the New French Alliance, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing communities in Province.

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the established connection of the minority ethnic groups represented the New French Alliance with Provence and to the grounds for constituting an Autonomous Region in that region.

Whereas the European Federation has accepted the Republic of France as responsible for the Autonomous Region; and

Whereas the responsibility in respect of the Autonomous Region has been formulated in the following terms and submitted to the Federal Parliament for approval; and

Whereas the French Republic has accepted the responsibility in respect of the Autonomous Region and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the European Federation in conformity with the following provisions; and

Whereas by the afore-mentioned, it is provided that the degree of authority, control or administration to be exercised by the French Republic, not having been previously agreed upon by the European Federation, shall be explicitly defined by the Commission of the Federation;

Confirming the said mandate, defines its terms as follows:

Article 1.

The French Republic shall have full powers of legislation and of administration, save as they may be limited by the terms of this agreement.

Article 2.

The French Republic shall be responsible for placing the Autonomous Region under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the minority ethnic groups represented by the New French Alliance, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region, irrespective of race and religion.

Article 3.

The French Republic shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy.

Article 4.

An appropriate agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of the Autonomous Region in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment the region and the interests of the minority ethnic groups in the Region, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the Autonomous Region.

The New French organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the French Republic appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with the French to secure the cooperation of all groups who are willing to assist in the establishment of the national home for minority ethnic groups.

Article 5.

The French Republic shall be responsible for seeing that no part of the territory of the Autonomous Region shall be ceded or leased to, or in any way placed under the control of, the Government of any foreign Power.

Article 6.

The Administration of the Autonomous Region, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate the settlement of ethnic minorities under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the New French Alliance settlement by minorities, on land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.

Article 7.

The Administration of the Autonomous Region shall be responsible for enacting a residence law for the ethnic groups present as well as for new Settlers. There shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of permanence residence status by ethnic minorities who take up their permanent residence in the Autonomous region.

Article 8.

The privileges and immunities of foreigners, including the benefits of consular jurisdiction and protection as formerly enjoyed by citizens of the French Republic, shall not be applicable in the Autonomous Region.

Article 9.

The French Republic shall be responsible for seeing that the judicial system established in the Autonomous Region shall assure to foreigners, as well as to natives, a complete guarantee of their rights.

Respect for the personal status of the various peoples and communities and for their religious interests shall be fully guaranteed. In particular, the

control and administration of Muslims shall be exercised in accordance with religious law and the dispositions of the founders.

Article 10.

Pending the making of special extradition agreements relating to the Autonomous Region, the extradition treaties in force between the French Republic and other foreign Powers shall apply to the Autonomous Region.

Article 11.

The Administration of the Autonomous region shall take all necessary measures to safeguard the interests of the community in connection with the development of the region, and, subject to any international obligations accepted by the French Republic, shall have full power to provide for public ownership or control of any of the natural resources of the country or of the public works, services and utilities established or to be established therein. It shall introduce a land system appropriate to the needs of the country, having regard, among other things, to the desirability of promoting the close settlement and intensive cultivation of the land.

The Administration may arrange with the New French Alliance to construct or operate, upon fair and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration. Any such arrangements shall provide that no profits distributed by such agency, directly or indirectly, shall exceed a reasonable rate of interest on the capital, and any further profits shall be utilised by it for the benefit of the country in a manner approved by the Administration.

Article 12.

The French Republic shall be entrusted with the control of the foreign relations of Autonomous Region and the right to issue exequaturs to consuls appointed by the European Federation. He shall also be entitled to afford diplomatic and consular protection to residents of the Autonomous Region when outside its territorial limits.

Article 13.

The French Republic shall see that complete freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all forms of worship, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, are ensured to all. No discrimination of any kind

shall be made between the inhabitants of the Autonomous Region on the ground of race, religion or language. No person shall be excluded from the Autonomous Region on the sole ground of his religious belief.

The right of each ethnic community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language, while conforming to such educational requirements of a general nature as the Administration may impose, shall not be denied or impaired.

Article 14.

The French Republic shall be responsible for exercising such supervision over religious bodies of all faiths in the Autonomous Region as may be required for the maintenance of public order and good government. Subject to such supervision, no measures shall be taken in the Autonomous Region to obstruct or interfere with the enterprise of such bodies or to discriminate against any representative or member of them on the ground of his religion or ethnic group.

Article 15.

The Administration of the Autonomous Region may organise on a voluntary basis the forces necessary for the preservation of peace and order, and also for the defence of the country, subject, however, to the supervision of the Republic of France, but shall not use them for purposes other than those above specified save with the consent of the Republic of France, Except for such purposes, no military, naval or air forces shall be raised or maintained by the Administration of the Autonomous Region.

The French Republic shall be entitled at all times to use the roads, railways and ports of the Autonomous Region for the movement of armed forces and the carriage of fuel and supplies.

Article 16.

The French Republic shall see that there is no discrimination in the Autonomous Region against the nationals of any Member State of the European Federation (including companies incorporated under its laws) as compared with those of the French Republic or of any foreign State in matters concerning taxation, commerce or navigation, the exercise of industries or professions, or in the treatment of merchant vessels or civil aircraft. Similarly, there shall be no discrimination in the Autonomous

Region against goods originating in or destined for any of the said States, and there shall be freedom of transit under equitable conditions across the mandated area.

Subject as aforesaid and to the other provisions of this agreement, the Administration of the Autonomous Region may, on the advice of the Republic of France, impose such taxes and customs duties as it may consider necessary, and take such steps as it may think best to promote the development of the natural resources of the region and to safeguard the interests of the population. It may not conclude a special customs agreement with any state outside of the European Federation.

Article 17.

French and Arabic shall be the official languages of the Autonomous Region. Any statement or inscription in Arabic on stamps or money in the Autonomous Region shall be repeated in French, and any statement or inscription in French shall be repeated in Arabic.

Article 18.

It is agreed that if any dispute whatever should arise between the French Republic and another Member of the European Federation relating to the interpretation or the application of the provisions of the agreement, such dispute, if it cannot be settled by negotiation, shall be submitted to the European Court in the Federal Territory of Brussels.

Article 19.

The consent of the European Federation is required for any modification of the terms of this mandate.

The present instrument shall be deposited in original in the archives of the European Federation and certified copies shall be forwarded by the President of the European Federation to all Members states of the Federation.

Done at Evian the twenty-fourth day of July in the thirty fourth year of the European Federation

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Under the terms of the Evian Agreement the transfer of populations between France and its Autonomous Region of Provence commenced, the

result was a vast humanitarian crisis.

Before the partition the population of the region had been three million of which over one million were Gallos. Following the rising and the battle hundreds of thousands of Gallos fled the combat zone, taking refuge outside of the towns and cities that had revolted. Few returned and those who remained left following the signature of the Evian Agreement. Initially there were few forced expulsions from the Autonomous Region but as Paris increased the deportation non-Gallos a climate of retaliation grew.

Attacks on French property were perpetrated such as that against the Consulate of France when a bomb exploded causing serious damage to its building.

The French media gave the bombing headlines setting off waves of anger among the Gallos against the Arabo-Muslims. The attack by the angry mobs began against Arabo-Muslim property. The police calmly watched and even encouraged the mobs, in their relentless path of destruction. The authorities reacted by increasing the deportations by trains and buses from the Paris region to Marseille. Screaming slogans the mobs beat and killed Arabs and Blacks.

Many New French were terrorized and forced to flee their homeland. In Marseille the population responded by destroying churches, war memorials, monuments and statues, manifestations of the France's glory and its heroes, so as to eliminate future reminders of the French past.

The remaining Gallos of the Autonomous Region were ill treated or tortured. The elderly ex-Mayor of Marseille, who had refused to leave the city and who had tried to reason with the crowd on the steps of the City Hall, was beaten and dragged through the streets by the mob, dying shortly after.

The authorities in Paris protested claiming that the aggression against the Muslim population in France was gross exaggerations.

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"You're right, outside of Paris their only other bastions were Lyon and Strasbourg, but that was enough."

"So you're against the Jews."

“Yes, not only because I’m an Arab, but because they practised exactly what they accused the Germans of, and also the other enemies of Israel. Don’t forget Boublil was the architect of the expulsions, we call it ethnic cleansing and that’s what it is.”

“You’re right.”

“I know I’m right, but there’s not only the expulsions, but the Zonards, the Clodos and the Ombres, who the French have thrown on the junk heap of Lehman’s economic efficiency. This is the reason why Boublil and Lehman are our enemies, targets to be destroyed.”

Boublil had been a leading activist before the Rebellion in the Teachers Union, demonstrating against the uncontrolled arrivals of non-Gallos at the moment there was a huge rise in the numbers of children in the education system whose level of French was low due to the Arabisation of education in their countries of origin in the Maghrib, the result was pulling down the level of education in French schools to a disastrous level.

Boublil had made a speech at an annual congress of the Teachers Union declaring, ‘It is beyond our possibilities both financially and materially to provide an education for every child between Casablanca and Cairo or between Algiers and Timbuktu.’

The cost of education and health care for the refugees and infiltrators had climbed year after year and with the influx after the events in North Africa and the Middle East the system was in a state of collapse.

“Today Boublil considers the Zonards and Ombres are parasites responsible for their situation, as though they had deliberately chosen exclusion or misery.”

“What about the police?”

“Ah, since Jean-Bernard Pogu was named head of the National Police Force he has taken what he calls firm action to rid the City of its non-Gallo infiltrators, first in line were the Arabs and Blacks.”

“Was that not already the rule?”

“Yes, but with the new laws and the creation of the Ethnic Affairs Department, it has been Pogu’s task to apply the laws. Using a register of all non-Gallos that had been drawn up according to the exact definitions stated in the act.”

The ambition of Boublil was to see the implementation of le Martel's most secret plan code named 'Savannah', only known to a tight circle of his very closest lieutenants. The object of the plan was first to recover the lost departments of Provence expulsing the population to Corsica, and second to transport the Clodos and all the other malingerers to Africa, in the colony of Senegal where a new life would be waiting for them to rebuild and repopulate the Nations newly acquired territory.

Boublil's idol was General de Gaulle and he liked to recount what he had confided to one of his entourage, 'During the war, I realised that those people do not like us ... and that the Arabs are inassimilable.'

Ennis was weary of the constant, ethnic and religious divisions, anti-Arab, anti-poor and now anti-Semitic, each used the same arguments to satisfy to his own vision of France and for the most part linked to their own political desires and ambitions.

Savannah

By the early years of the century a large part of sub-Saharan Africa had been wasted by a combination of disease, war and natural disasters. The demographic explosion forecast by demographers had not taken place. The ravages of Aids, Ebola and the collapse of civil order had left vast regions emptied of their human populations. The West had long lost its interest in Africa through fear of contagion of both disease and chaos.

The only region to survive was South Africa, though its black population had been reduced not only in numbers but in spirit accepting a permanent role of service to the whites as a consequence of the inability of its leaders to defend their political and economic place in their country, for the same reasons that had plagued the rest of Africa, tribalism, poverty and disease. The whites imposed their rule as they had always done spreading and reclaiming their lost territories of Botswana, Namibia and Zambia.

Africa had ceased to be of interest to the USA or Russia once the Cold War had ended. Only the nostalgia of ex-colonial powers lingered on as

long as there was an economic advantage to be gained such as oil or minerals.

Senegal had been emptied of its population and Dakar had almost become a ghost town. When General Mamadou Dongo had offered a large swath of territory to le Martel in exchange for economic aid with the suggestion that it could be repopulated by European Africans encouraged by free land to return home to rebuild the country.

There was the fertile soil of the country south of the Gambia River with its agricultural potential. The enclave of the Gambia a forgotten ex-British colony had separated Senegal into two parts. The southern part of the country had been isolated by the Gambia River making the connections with the capital Dakar difficult to Ziguinchor the principal town of Casamance. The north of the country from Saint Louis to Dakar was arid, suffering under the worst droughts that had ravaged the country for decades. Bathurst in Gambia was to be the southern base controlling the south bank of the Gambia River to the Casamance.

The country was ripe for plunder and d'Albignac saw it as the occasion to restore the glory and power of the Nation of France in the Union by enlarging its territory by an overseas colony. He was discretely encouraged by the Union that had observed the Caliphate's creeping expansion into the neighbouring Sahel countries. Brussels had encouraged le Martel to pre-empt further expansion by his occupation of Senegal and Mali.

The Caliphate had halted the progress of Aids by a draconian application of the Sharia; the result was a continuation of their demographic growth. In order to consolidate Islam in the countries to the south and to gain new fertile lands they had progressively increased their presence and influence in the Sahel countries that bordered the Caliphate.

Germany and England had blamed France for its predicament that was nothing more than result of the poor management of its relations with its ex-colonies in the Maghrib. France had accepted the inevitability of the politicisation of Islam in Algeria with the consequences it would have on its neighbours. With the foundation of the Caliphate the government of France hoped that by a policy of appeasement that things would work out. The French government feared for its own Islamic population whose loyalty hovered in a state of pathological schizophrenia.

The French of Arab origin felt they were Tunisian, Algerian or Moroccan, a sentiment that was mainly due to the fact that they were refused the idea of being considered French.

The USA after its successive wars against the Islamic world that had changed little had great satisfaction seeing France transformed into another Satan and the European Union once more in a state of internal dissent.

England had integrated its Neos in a certain manner, though some said it was the Neos that had integrated England into their communities.

The Caliphate accused the Mourides of blasphemy and called for a rising against the Marabouts to bring Senegal into the Caliphate.

The Holy city of Touba, one hundred and fifty kilometres east of Dakar was the centre of the Mourides that was part of the Sufi Muslim brotherhood. The Mourides valued their independence and their style of worship. They were governed by the Grand Caliph and they practised an Islam more tolerant than that in northern Nigeria. The clerics were called Marabouts.

Smets

Smets, a tall rather slow Fleming, spoke French well though with a pronounced accent, it could even be said that he was Francophile, though he was bitterly anti-clerical and especially opposed to the Legion of Saint Jacques de Compostelle, founded by le Martel, soldiers of Christ fighting a life or death struggle against the infidel.

“I’m always pleased to help people hunted by the perverted Jesuit, le Martel,” he said laughing, as he looked at Ennis through his old fashioned glasses that had become green with age and crass.

“He wants to re-colonise Africa with Christians to stop the Caliphate from doing the same thing with their believers.”

“I’ve heard about that, Dakar or somewhere?”

“It’s not Dakar, it’s to the south, there was a Club Med holiday camp there, closed quite a few years ago, Aids and all that.”

“They’ve transformed it?”

“The accommodation, I don’t know, I shouldn’t think so, too old, if it was in wood then it must have rotted away a long time ago. Though the runway, roads and port I suppose and some of the building in concrete can certainly be used.”

“Why this site?”

“It’s easy, if it was good for a holiday camp then it must be good for a colony. It’s well away from Dakar and its filthy ruins with its beggars and disease. I suppose it would be a new capital.”

“It’s a forced labour camp!”

“It depends how you see it, the Zonards are transmigrants, they will construct new housing, they will have medical care, schools and all that. The only thing they don’t have is the freedom of choice.”

“That’s sure after what I saw in Paris.”

“Maybe it’s not a bad thing?”

“What!”

“In the camps in the Queyras they’ll be rehabilitated, with medical and fattened up, put back into good health and prepared with training courses to prepare them for their new home. After, they’ll be transported down to Africa by boat and a new life.”

“Like the Indonesian did in Borneo.”

“Yes if you like, but it’s more like Australia or the West of America.”

He explained how le Martel had conceived it as part of their plan to re-establish France in West Africa. It would get rid of an unsightly sore on the side of the Nation where the majority of its Gallo-European citizens lived in a prosperity never dreamed of after the loss of Provence.

The good citizens lived in security assured by the RASE, the church surveyed the soul and morality of the Nation and the Department of Ethnic affairs took care of all affairs judged to be non-conformist and a threat to the tranquillity of the Nations honest citizens.

A state of providence reigned; the good citizens were guaranteed certain social rights that included full medical care, a remunerated occupation with adequate pensions protected against disloyal competition from parasites, and free transport.

In return they accepted a government structured on a paternalistic form of totalitarianism. Work was provided by large organisation, both private and state owned, that functioned in the interest of the Nation. Each private or government employee obeyed the rules of the company and followed the orders received without question.

Jobs were allotted based on the principals of a system that guaranteed a share in the national wealth to each and every law-abiding citizen. The most severe sanctions for non-conformity were the withdrawal of employment and social rights. The number of hours worked was limited to twenty-eight hours a week. The accumulation of employment was proscribed for all, heads of business, employees, civil servants or even politicians. A minimum of seven weeks annual holidays was guaranteed to each person in addition to national days and special non-working days decreed at the discretion of the government.

In spite of the work laws exceptional dispensations were made for persons employed in essential tasks such as the police and certain government employees and leaders.

The authoritarian utopia functioned as the result of a docile population that had their needs satisfied by a highly organised system. It was based on a technology that ensured the production of all that was essential, light, heat, food, housing, health, education, transport and entertainment.

The manufacturing industries represented less than ten percent of the national economy concentrated in high added value items in aerospace, defence, high-tech equipment and goods such as fuel cells, biotechnologies and pharmaceuticals. The majority of needs in everyday consumer goods were imported from low cost countries.

Farming, food production and transformation had been entirely industrialised providing all national needs and providing a large part of export revenues to the country.

Hidden from this propaganda image was the twilight world of the Special Urban Zones where the Ombres, a precarious labour force that

provided lowly services and unskilled labour that allowed the cities and industries function. A vital necessity for the prosperity of the Gallo-Europeans. It included amongst its ranks the Dailies, Specials and Ombres who were paid a pittance for their labour that enjoyed little or no legal status and benefited from no access to social services.

Beyond the frontier with Algharb were banished industries, the unclean and uncompetitive industries that required low cost labour. They recycled waste or employed polluting processes unacceptable to the Nation, those that were considered too dangerous were delocalised to Africa and the waste exported via Algharb that acted as a storage and transit area sorting and exporting the toxic waste to those countries.

Algharb assured the services to the Nation with its vast pool of unskilled labour destined to the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs. The labour pool consisted of not only of the poor and those at the bottom of the ethnic scale as defined by Bin Ibrani's administration but also common law and political prisoners.

Le Martel restored pride to the Gallo-Europeans who had been convinced by decades of anti-racist publicity that they were at fault and had become ashamed of their own history and culture, they had even come to believe that they had no culture. Governments had sought to appease the Neo populations by means promoting their cultures whilst denigrating the culture of their host country. Islam was to be admired whilst Cathos were the racist oppressors as they had been throughout their history; the result was the encouragement of the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and the rejection of Christian values.

Smets was a resistance leader; Boublil would have described him as a terrorist. He was one of the few dedicated to the old fashioned idea of human rights. He was one of the few who realised that Europe and especially France were following a path that had led to disaster more than a century ago. However, there was no saviour on the horizon the world had changed and the task ahead was long.

Defender of the Faith

The Martel declared, I am neither right or left I am the defender of the Nation's body and soul. The body was his Christ like euphemism for the Gallo-Europeans and the soul was Christianity.

The Legion of Saint Jacques de Compostela held mass floodlight rallies giving huge popular support to le Martel and his policies.

The voters had lost faith in their politicians in many circumscriptions of the large cities where barely fifteen percent of the voters turned out in, leaving the field open to the extremist parties.

Democracy functions well in an economy that is in a state of positive equilibrium, but, the moment a grave economic crisis interrupts the balmy picture, forces are unleashed that are difficult to control. The first is to find a leader that will miraculously solve problem and he is not found amongst the current leaders who are responsible for not seeing or avoiding the crisis.

Such leaders have the greatest difficulty in accepting democratic principles which are against their very nature, they refuse to accept limits to their power, in fact it is the first thing they promulgate, extraordinary powers.

In the pre-Rebellion conditions the Union had removed all individual initiative from the governments of the member countries leaving them with little possibility of manoeuvre but the same Union was unable to propose satisfying solutions to those crises.

The media had become instrumental in government power in Italy and France where television news was used to condition the minds of the populations. The vast majority of the population accepted that without the least worry opening the path to dangerous populists who were quickly transformed into tyrants and who always appeared as saviours in grave crisis.

Unmanned military aircraft patrolled the Med whilst low orbital interceptors watched for suspicious activity over all the sensitive regions of the globe.

The emotion created by the assassination of the populist leader, shot down by an Trotskyite in the street with three bullets in the head just before

the parliamentary elections, caused a great surge of emotion against an attack on democracy bringing to his party one hundred and sixty seats. The party composed of a collection of groups representing a diversity of popular themes against the frustrations and discontent of an impersonal non-caring state and government of technocrats and the hysteria of the leftist intellectual press and the media that had transformed the populist leader into a demon to all except those who felt concerned by his ideas.

The hysteria that created hate against those who by democratic means protested against the change in their society, changes against centuries of a certain style of European life. Hysteria that protested against violence and aggression of those who dared to vote against the concept of a society envisage by the minds of the leftists, leftists who lived in their comfortable apartments in a life style that had little in common with the cities.

The media legitimised violence in the name of the Republic and their own vision of democracy. They explained the progress of the far right movement by describing its followers as misguided critics of the country's immigration and social policies, when in fact they were convinced followers of the Renaissance Party's ideology.

The media confused xenophobia with the normal pride a citizen should have for his nation and rejected their refusal to accept every stranger who knocked at his door, even those who spat on the Republic. The press went as far as to criticise France for having only white and catholic presidents. But in spite of the media's efforts to run down the Renaissance Party and its followers, they progressively increased their share of the votes at every election.

It is an undeniable fact, many French have always held a latent dislike of Maghribis, not to speak of Jews, this was at the same time the politicians and the media minimised the flow of Settlers, describing it as a 'transfer phenomena', accusing all those who opposed it as Islamophobics, when in reality it was nothing less than a vast population movement, some said an invasion.

Albignac on the other hand had never hesitated to say out loud what others thought, winning supporters across the nation who shared his views.

To the never ending ire of le Martel the Caliphate sought the roll of cultural and spiritual protector of Algharb. He secretly vowed that if they

wanted them they would get them and laid his plans to retake Lost Provence with his loyal friend and military head of the army General Dedieu.

The war of words between Algharb and the Caliphate was a struggle for the minds of the people. The religious leaders of the Caliphate took every opportunity to declare their historical and cultural links with the population of Algharb, which gave the Caliphate an inviolable right to be concerned with their spiritual and cultural well being. They protested that it was unacceptable that fellow Muslims had not the right to freely practice their religion and use the language of Muhammad. The government of Hassan bin Ibrani has thwarted the sacred rights of the people of Algharb to worship according to the instructions of the Holy Koran.

The parliament and the constitutional council were dissolved by the president and the people were called for a plebiscite giving a seven-year mandate to d'Albignac as Premier Magistrat de la Nation, with full power to implement a new constitution. The state of emergency was extended until the date of the plebiscite that was to take place fourteen days from the date of the decree. To reinforce law and order 50,000 men from the armed forces and Republican Guards were mobilised occupying all official buildings, railway stations and airports. Units were posted at the main access points to Paris, the Périphérique was closed to traffic, and other units stood guard at every street corner of the capital. Meetings and demonstrations were totally forbidden. At the same time all leaders of the opposition were put under house arrest in ex-communicado whilst know potential troublemakers were rounded up and transported out of the capital to military detention centres.

Two weeks later the political crisis had ended and a new Republic was born, the Nation of France. Le Martel had acquired legitimacy as undisputed leader of the Nation plebiscited by an overwhelming majority of its citizens. He then announced parliamentary elections according to the rules of new constitution, which stipulated a single round where the candidate having the most votes was elected.

The National party of le Martel led the right wing majority with 483 seats, various other right leaning parties totalled 48 seats, the opposition parties limped in with 71 seats.

The Bastille

The next morning Ennis set out for a stroll towards the centre of the city. The weather was fine and it seemed a good idea to revisit the city that he had known as a young man. He walked to Place de la Nation and then along the Faubourg St Antoine towards the Bastille. The Faubourg had become a vast pedestrian area lined with trees and benches. The only form of transport was the Magnotram. Paris had completely changed, it appeared cleaner, it was full of greenery, squares and gardens. The only thing that spoilt the idyllic image were the menacing groups of Clodos and Alcolos, eyesores that even le Martel had not cured.

Entire street blocks had been razed in quarters previously occupied by Neos, one of them was the Marché d'Aligre where Ennis was amazed by the transformation. It had been a working class district with a cosmopolitan street market that had always been densely packed on market days. There were now well-maintained grassy lawns, flowerbeds and decorative trees and bushes, all arranged in the best taste. The nineteenth and twentieth century buildings had been restored, amongst them new apartment buildings had been artfully blended in. Almost all of the small streets were pedestrian zones dotted with cafés, restaurants, bookshops and galleries. There was an air of prosperity and middle class cleanliness and order, an impression of space with the absence of cars.

The colourful cosmopolitan grime of the market had disappeared with its immigrant population replaced almost exclusively by white bourgeois Parisians. Here and there he had crossed the odd black or Asiatic face but he had not seen a single Arab since he had left Guiglione's apartment.

He stopped at Place de la Bastille and chose a café terrace where he ordered a beer. There were still the crowds, less dense than he had remembered, the vast place lined with well swept granite slabs was empty of cars, the only vehicles were silver Magnotrams that slide by with the electric ring of their bells.

He sipped his beer glancing around, to his right was a woman, quite attractive he thought, maybe forty. She returned his look.

“Haven’t we met before?” she said. In other circumstances he would have been pleased but now he hesitated.

“At Frankfurt, the Book Fair!”

“Perhaps, I’m the editor of a literary review,” Ennis lied, he was taking a risk but he had little choice.

“What review?”

“Well it’s not that well known, you know art and literature. And you?”

“Me, I’m not in the same line, I’m a fashion journalist, I was in Frankfurt to make an interview, the author of a new book.”

“Ah, fashion, you’re in the fashion business.”

“Not really, I mostly look after reviews, books and cinema.”

“I see.”

“You’re American?”

“I’m Canadian, Vancouver, Jim Crawford,” he replied hoping that he was convincing.

“I’m Françoise de la Salle,” she said smiling and holding out here hand. “It’s your first visit to Paris?”

“No, though it’s a very long time since I last had the pleasure to visit Paris.”

“Oh! What do you think of it today?”

“To be honest it’s changed a lot. I suppose it’s less cosmopolitan.”

“You mean there are less Arabs and Africans,” she replied laughing, adding, “Personally I’m not a racist.”

Ennis shrugged his shoulders in a sign of indifference; he had no intention of entering into a political discussion.

“The Disengagement was a free choice of the non-Gallos, I mean they even fought for it, they wanted their emancipation.”

“Emancipation!”

“Yes, you know freedom from restraint. They wanted their own social and legal rights according to the Koran and the Prophet.”

“I see,” said Ennis surprised by what he heard.

“Before the Rebellion they were excluded, in the suburban ghettos. They felt rejected, it was a normal reaction, the politicians at that time talked of integration and so on, but it was just talk. Instead they used repression, it wasn’t surprising that the Neos felt rejected. Delinquency and crime was the reaction to unemployment and rejection.”

“Why did the government not react?”

“They were incapable of calling a spade a spade, finally they were overtaken by the enormity of the problem and events.”

“You mean the Rebellion?”

“No, before that the French were split amongst themselves, those who suffered as a result of the problems and those who refused to see a problem. The ordinary French only saw the ghettos and the criminality; they blamed the politicians for their inaction. The Neos refused to be passive victims of the politicians’ inaction.”

“So there was a kind of crystallisation of the problem?”

“I suppose so. The real crisis came with the problems in North Africa and the Caliphate.”

“Why?”

“There were two reasons, one was the flood of refugees and second many of the immigrants identified themselves with the country of their parents with a refusal of our values.”

Demography and Strategy

At the beginning of the century the Muslims represented a little more than twenty percent of the world's population, today they are thirty percent, making Islam the greatest religion of the planet with more than two and a half billion believers.

With a faith that dominated all others the Muslims were certain that God had designated them as his people, as a consequence certain felt it was their life's obligation to participate in the jihad of the Prophet; the submission of all infidels to the true universal religion.

In North Africa the population had reached three hundred million with Egypt alone accounting for more than a third of that number. They were packed onto the banks of the Nile from Aswan to the Mediterranean. In the great dusty cities of Alexandria and Cairo, the desert pressed at their door as the climatic changes menaced their existence.

Along the south Mediterranean coast from Alexandria to Tangiers the growing population crowded onto the shoreline in vast and densely crowded cities.

To the north the Federation observed the oriental disorder with fear in their stomachs from their sanitised modern societies, where labour and work had almost become discretionary, for some even a privilege. For the Europeans the menace was already at their door with Islam's bridgehead firmly fixed in Algharb.

The consequences of the Federation's weakness could be seen in Algharb, it could even be said that Algharb was the child of Brussels born of its politically correct stance for the self determination of a minority group.

Brussels had for too long left the prerogative of leadership and action to the USA at the high cost of its ability to influence political events on the borders of the Federation.

The USA had led its foreign affairs policy in a strict self interest and dispensing any restraint on its actions through the United Nations or other bodies. With the decline of oil and outside military threats the USA simply overrode the desires of other nations when it served its own interests.

The extent of America's power became unprecedented in human history. Its military spending was greater than the worldwide total, larger than the arms budgets of the next twenty nations put together. No previous military empire from the Roman to the British had enjoyed such power, or America's global reach.

The government of the USA was not interested in policing a chaotic world and freely described their strategy as, disinterested latitude, that was to say that each nation was free from interference in its internal and foreign affairs provided that they did not upset the status quo of their neighbours.

With its powerful space observation and listening systems the USA ensured its own security and that of its traditional allies. Its superiority in space, land, sea, and air with missile defence and militarisation of space protected its interests and investment in the confusion of the divide between the rich and miserable nations. The extraordinary military advantage in addition its self-sufficiency in energy and raw materials had breed indifference in the affairs of the poor and violent nations.

The power of the USA had become apparent at the end of the century after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Following its successive military interventions the lessons of power were forced on the rest of the world. The USA was accused of threatening the very principles of self-determination with its disproportionate power that it was capable of projecting on a world scale.

With less than three percent of the world's population it was accused of dictating to the rest of the planet its own terms and conditions and defending its own interests against all others by both military and economic pressure.

The only serious challenge to the power of the USA came from China but following the implosion of the Peoples Republic and the ensuing civil war the USA remained the omnipotent world power. The European Federation declined the role of being an international power through lack of its own serious desire to take on the task - that was until le Martel demonstrated the will to take on the challenge in the face of the Islamic encroachment in continental Europe.

Marseille

Marseille had throughout its long history always been a crossroads, it was the Mediterranean gateway to France, with foreigners arriving others leaving, it was a natural consequence of its geographical location. No other French city, with the possible exception of Paris, had experienced the same constant movement of its populations.

In more recent history, it became the departure point for long for migrations towards distant new lands, the Americas and France's new colonies in North Africa and West Africa.

That flow was then slowly reversed following the First World War, as Marseille became a port of entry for workers entering into France as the need for labour developed as a result of that war and the with population ageing.

The end of the French-Algerian war brought the arrival of the pied-noirs, French Settlers fleeing from newly independent Algeria. Some one hundred and fifty thousand pied-noirs settled in and around Marseille. They were followed by an estimated two million people, Settlers from North Africa and in particular Algerians in the following two decades. The city port became the entry point for the influx of a foreign work force to France.

The city was the third largest city of France; it was the administrative capital of both the Region and the Department, situated in the Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, the Region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur in southeast of France.

Over the years Marseille suffered severe economic and social problems. The city's population had slowly declined by the year 2000, with many professionals and well-qualified people leaving for other towns in the region. The city of Marseille had a crisis zone within the prosperous Euro-Mediterranean economic arc that stretched from Valencia in Spain to northern Italy. The population census at the end of the century showed that the population of the city was almost eight hundred thousand compared to two mil1ion in the whole Department.

At that time it was estimated that one hundred thousand foreigners most of whom were foreigners were resident in Marseille or about twelve percent of the city's population. I addition were about fifty thousand black Muslims from the Comores Islands in the Indian Ocean who were of French nationality.

A high percentage of the foreign Settlers living in Marseille were North Africans. Another estimated fifty or so thousand persons of North African descent held French nationality, by the automatic acquisition through birth, or by naturalization.

As a result the Settlers and their children represented twenty five percent of the population of the city of Marseille, whilst in the whole Department the number of persons of settler origin was estimated at almost four hundred thousand.

The majority of the North African Settlers were concentrated in one sector of the city that was called the triangle of poverty. The base of the triangle lay to the north of the centre, between La Rose and Estaque. The apex of the triangle pointed south, situated in the centre of the city, between the Cours Julien and the Prefecture.

Over a third of the Marseillais lived in that triangle, almost three hundred thousand persons in ancient insalubrious apartment buildings and squalid public housing projects, living in poverty with their large families, almost fifty percent were unemployed. The triangle had the highest number of people living in poverty in any French city. There was an army of sixty thousand hopeless, unemployed men pointing menacingly at the run down heart of the city.

The division in the city of Marseille was not the typical class division between the working class and the bourgeoisie, but between the French and the mostly Neo-settler population. The residential distribution of that group had given rise to the emergence of the North African as an ethnic political group with foreign roots, from whom the old Gallo-European population sought separation.

The social differentiation between the north and the south of the city became an ethnic division. The Settlers and Neos were organised in associations with a clear ethnic, religious and cultural reference. In most of the quarters situated inside the city's poverty triangle there were many youth associations mainly composed of young people of North African origin.

For the authorities, the associations were a method of regulating social life inside a difficult area of the city. It allowed young population to develop life outside of their narrow family circles. The associations also served to acquire materials benefits and certain rights from the local authorities.

They were also the centres of socialisation for young North African men within their own environment giving them social independence from official social structures accused of not understanding the Neos.

However, those associations soon developed a political orientation outside of the conventional national political organisations. They then went on to organising their own civil rights demonstrations and declared a clear ethnic or cultural identity, functioning solely on behalf of their own ethnic minority interests.

As time passed an association was created by ex-militants from the Arab Workers Movement and social workers whose idea was to bring together individuals of the same cultural background focused on the Arab world. The Mouvement des Arabes de Marseille, defended Arabism and Islam, and were against any notions of assimilation developed by the public authorities.

There organised their own radio and TV stations, legitimising the presence of the North African community run by North Africans.

The religious associations allowed them to practise the Muslim religion on a regular basis. Twenty odd places of worship were opened in Marseille, as a result of religious groups creating their own unofficial worship places such as in garages, depots and the like. Once they were recognised by the authorities, the number of Islamic associations and places of worship grew rapidly.

The governments of the Muslim countries from where the Settlers had originated continued to influence them. They also attempted to organize the Muslim minority in France. Their objective was to build a basis for negotiation with the French state and in Marseille; the Algerian minority was the most active in this respect.

From the early eighties onwards, the Paris mosque was considered the Algerian government's key institution in the religious field. They attempted to assert a unifying role on the different streams of French Islam so as to appear as the single legitimate representative of Muslims and the French government and local authorities.

Their leaders tried to launch the idea of regional federations for Islamic associations in the south of France. They had more than two hundred and fifty associations from the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, more than forty of

which were based in Marseille. In spite of those efforts, no single religious leader emerged who could have been accepted by all the Muslim minorities in Marseille, until the rebellion.

Foreigners, with the exception of citizens of European Union countries, did not have the right to vote in French national or local elections. The Settlers who had not acquired French citizenship could not vote.

At the beginning of the nineties, the number of naturalisations in France reached thirty five thousand each year. By the end of the same decade, the number of naturalisations in France passed one hundred thousand, less than half of one percent of the registered foreigners resident in the country.

The demand for the Settlers' right to vote in the local elections had been one of the persistent demands in the campaigns by the leftist political parties. It had been one of the favourite subjects inside the French Communist and Socialist parties for many years. The Settlers' right to vote in the local elections was even part of François Mitterrand's political programme as far back as 1981. Mitterrand never put this measure into practice arguing that French society was not ready.

A small group of individuals emerged from those associations, and were considered as mediators between the authorities and the ethnic minorities.

This group was comprised of relatively young men of North African origin. They had all grown up in the northern areas of Marseille. They oriented the local political institutions away from a simple social idea of Settlers to one that was more culturally and ethnically based. This evolution was not only due to ethnic minorities creating they own associations, but also to the growing difficulties of social workers faced with the social violence in northern Marseille. The institutional recognition of these mediators enabled North African Settlers to be gradually considered as a separate ethnic minority, which was to say as Neos with their own specific identity. Though mediators were only concerned with the social aspects of the lives of ethnic minorities in Marseille, the religious aspect could not be avoided.

The Mayor of Marseille formalised relations with the ethnic minorities, thus accepting their status, by naming a local government as officially responsible for them. Marseille became the only city in France to have opted for that type of organization.

Several prayer centres functioned as mosques in Marseille and though they were well attended on Fridays they maintained a low profile. There had been a long-running controversy on mosques involving the local authorities of Marseille, the leaders of Islamic organisations and the governments of the Settlers' countries of origin. The Mayor of Marseille had declared that he was in favour of the construction of a mosque in Marseille but under two conditions. The first was that the person who had the religious authority of the place of worship would have to be a Muslim of French nationality. The second was that funding from foreign countries could not be limited to a single country, but from several different sources. Finally the mosque would be a place of worship and nothing else.

The objectives were to control religious activities that took place in the city, but also the recognition of a population that represented an important electoral potential.

The result was that the Muslim community in Marseille reacted strongly to the idea of the mosque being nothing more than a place of worship. Cultural issues were as important to them as religious issues, resulting in a rivalry developing among the local Islamic leadership.

In order to gain independence from the Muslims' former states, and mainly from the Algerian government, certain religious leaders put forward the idea that either the state or the local authorities finance the project. This however, was against one of the fundamental principals of the Republic 'l'Etat ne reconnaît, ne salarie, ni ne subventionne aucun culte' (the state recognises neither employees nor finances any religious organisation).

The North African settler population was therefore identified as 'Arab Muslims' rather than having any specific national identity. Thus the question of the divide of culture and religion that separated the Settlers and Neos from the grass root French population is fundamental to our understanding of how the rebellion of the Arabs exploded in Marseille.

The Neo population of Marseille voluntarily retained all the characteristics of an ethnic minority, long after they should have become integrated into the mainstream of life in that city. The common denominator was Arabo-Islamic culture rather than Algeria for example. The building of the old Grand Mosque focalised the Neos, ultimately fixing their choice of identity with a non-European world.

That fatal summer, a group of youths of Arabo-Muslim youths attacked social workers in a district of Marseille. Their explanation was that they had reacted in order to attract attention to their dramatic situation; neglect and chronic unemployment. They demanded respect.

Embarkation

In the small Mediterranean port of Sete, to the north of the Franco-Spanish border, the night trains arrived with their human cargoes. Men, women, children and old people. They were debarked from the trains dazzled by in the bright late summer sunshine.

The officials of the Department for the Development of New Overseas Territories wore armbands marked ‘Operation Espoir’ oversaw the operation under the orders of one of Boublil’s most loyal followers, Rita Martinez, a hard woman known for her insensibility towards the underprivileged classes whom she despised.

Martinez had arrived in Sete to inaugurate the first operations for transportation of transmigrants to the New Territories in West Africa. She was on the station platform surrounded by the officials directing the first arrivals to the reception area. She was radiant, enormously enjoying her outing.

The reception centre was set up in the hangers of an old fertiliser warehouse, part of a factory that had been shut down many years earlier. It was not far from the centre of the town and had the convenience of having a railway siding and its own shipping dock.

The children were half asleep; the faces of parents were both resigned and filled with anxiety before the unknown that awaited them. Four weeks in the Queyras had not prepared them for the forced voyage to a distant destination, full of dangers and uncertainties.

They carried in their hands their suitcases and rucksacks full of the necessities for their sea voyage to Dakar. They had few souvenirs of their previous life, simply their memories and a few photos.

Some kilometres from the port the inhabitants of Sete arose that morning occupying themselves with their daily chores. However certain had worked in the preparation of and transformation of the site into a reception and transfer centre for the transmigrants. They understood that the centre would handle a large number of persons but knew little else as to the origin or destination of the voyagers.

The port had been transformed into a high security military zone and access was forbidden to all except of those workers who held passes. Unwelcome or curious visitors were quickly moved on by the heavily armed NASE Guards.

In the bars and cafés of the town men spoke in low voices of the strange comings and goings of the military and the people of the Ethnic Affairs Department. Sete had always been a working town where people had always earned their honest working class living from the port activities or its fishing industry. They looked suspiciously at Paris and had a deep feeling of fear and unease, knowing that not far from their homes the regime of le Martel was about to perpetrate a dark crime, the mass deportation of impoverished French who for various reasons did not match the Nation's model for its citizens.

The deportees were not totally unlike those transported to the prison colonies of the nineteenth century, the difference being that they now included women and children and had committed no crime other than to be poor.

Operation Savannah was under way and there was nothing that could stop it. In the port the ships awaited their passengers among them were two aging trans-Mediterranean ferryboats chartered by the Ministry for the transmigrants. In addition there was a troop carrier and supply vessel for the RASE Guards and an escort frigate that would accompany the convoy to its destination, Ville d'Albignac, the administrative capital of La Nouvelle Côte.

An Ordinary Man

My parents moved in when I was a kid, I was about eight, at that time it was a paradise for us. At that time my father was a storekeeper in a furniture factory somewhere near Roissy. Every morning between the 20th arrondissement and his work the traffic was a nightmare. Our apartment was a real dump; the building was run down with the toilet on the landing, nothing worked.

“When the council gave us the new apartment it was a dream, there were gardens with grass and trees, lifts, hot and cold water, bathroom and toilet. I remember my mother cried with joy the day we moved in.

“Almost all the people were French, real French, Parisians, ordinary working class people, honest. At first it was good then, little by little, the others moved in. At first we didn’t notice them because as I told you there were a few West Indians and Arabs who had been in France for ages.

“We voted mostly Communist, sometimes Socialist; we were in the unions, the CGT or the CDFT. There was a continuous battle for better wage and conditions. There was no question of race as such.

“My father died in an accident when I was seventeen and I had to leave school to work,” he said laughing, “I wasn’t brilliant and I went to work for Carrefour, the hypermarket as a store keeper, like father like son!”

“My mother took my father’s death badly. I suppose that’s normal, with my sister we had to take care of her.

“About that time the number of Settlers and Neos started to really go up in out district and the living conditions started to seriously go down.

“I still don’t know what motivated the politicians to let that happen, it was an invasion, I think they couldn’t care less, the socialos and cocos, the rotten mayors and town halls, they must have needed supporters, they encouraged the blacks and Arabs.

“Gradually it was not the wages that counted the most in work, I mean the discussions, it was respect and equality, suddenly I had to respect people and ideas that I had never even thought about, I mean before they were just workmates, now I owed them respect, I owed their religion that I knew

absolutely nothing about respect, I had to be careful what I said. If I placed a wrong word I was a racist.

“When I came down the stairs by foot because the lift was out of order, I’d find my old car broken into or I be insulted by the young Beurs, excited and aggressive as usual, I went on holiday once to Tunisia - you know organised by the works committee – they’re like that in their own country, aggressive by nature.

“It’s like that on housing projects, cités, a continuous fight for survival against violence and vandalism. Old people are attacked in the lifts, when they die nobody cares, their bodies can rot for weeks in their flats. Gangs and drug dealers fight in the streets with knives and iron bars.

“Life is like that in the cities, it stinks, it bleeds, and it’s not worth living.”

He remained silent for a few moments then he continued.

“Then I voted for the Right that changed nothing. Politicians don’t give a dam about people like me, you remember Jospin and Hue, equality for the Neos and asylum seekers, they let them vote, as for us we were racists. Then I voted for the Front National, to start with I kept it to myself or I’d get a smack in the mouth for my trouble. Imagine, the Communists, who left a trail of blood and disaster across half of the world they accused the le Pen and then le Martel of being devils, they were guilty of what, looking after the interests of the French? Not privileging the wogs?

“What did we get from all of that? I ask you? We lost a good part of France, more than we lost to the Germans before. Imagine if the France of 1958 could see us now! Provence inhabited by who? Asterix? The Gauls? The grand children of the 39-45 Resistance? The veterans of Algeria? My arse! No, the sons of fucking goats and camels! The fucking wogs, who for a thousand years have done nothing but cultivate dates and flies.

“For me and the likes of me, we are for le Martel, sweeping this cancer that has eaten into us into the sea once and for all!”

Algharb

Viewers should be reminded that Algharb was theoretically part of the Federation, since it was in fact an autonomous region of France. The ambiguous secession proclaimed by Algharb was ignored by the Federation on the other hand it was taken as a declaration of independence by the Caliphate and most other Islamic countries. Since then its status hung in limbo since Hassan bin Ibrani could not risk provoking the wrath of le Martel and loosing the autonomy of Algharb.

Algharb resembled the cosmopolitan Tangiers between the two World Wars, its government closed its eyes to the freebooters of both the Christian and Muslim worlds on condition their objectives were non-political. Hassan bin Brani had an open door policy towards asylum seekers willingly accepting Jews from the Greater Levant and the political refugees from the Caliphate on the sole proviso of their non-participation in religious-political activities.

Medina Hurriya was nevertheless a hive for every kind of intrigue and traffic imaginable, its politicians were corrupt as were its police and security services, reputed for their brutality. The agents of the Nation were everywhere as were those of bin Ibrani. They were not alone; there was also the Caliphate and those of almost every other country in the Federation.

Algharb had been transformed into a doubtful offshore financial centre and tax free zone. For Paris and Brussels it was also a centre arms and drug trafficking, smuggling, forgery and every other kind of criminal activity.

The most fervent desire of le Martel was to repossess the lost province and rid the Nation and Europe of the sore on its side. He realised that as time passed the task would become more and more difficult, it was vital that he act soon, the problem was the evacuation of the population of Algharb which had now reached fifteen million and was increasing as bin Ibrani raced to defeat le Martel by his open door policy.

Huge shantytowns that were a reminder of the townships that South Africa had known sprung up around the main population centres.

The population change involved the movement of three and a half million people. Three million in the direction of the Autonomous Region and one and a half million towards the Metropole.

The three million who remained in the Autonomous Region were composed of the Insurgents and their supporters, for the large part Neos, the others were mostly old people and those who lived on the land and in small towns or villages who refused to abandon their homes and way of life.

The new arrivals were allocated housing in the empty houses and apartments abandoned by those who had chosen to flee. Their conditions were cramped and the overflow was settled in camps that took on the look of Gaza, built by the Provisional government with the assistance of the Federation and international organisations for refugees.

The Autonomous Region covered a little over twenty five thousand square kilometres with a population of six million compared to Switzerland with its forty one thousand square kilometres with a population of six and a half million.

The transfer took place over a tumultuous period of six months. Those uprooted travelled by train, bus, by their cars and taxis, others made their journey by plane and by boat, some even made their journey by foot.

Algharb had taken on an appearance of what Ennis imagined Tangiers must have look like a century ago, a hive of cosmopolitan activity and conspiracy.

La France

The insecurity developed in spite of the repressive measures taken by the government, the dream of every Parisian was to be as far away as possible from the city and its inner suburbs so that life was as agreeable as possible, where they could relax and enjoy a little silence and fresh air, far from the noise and pollution of the traffic, and not the least a population that was so far removed from the mid-twentieth century that many quarters of the capital had become totally unrecognisable.

Each morning and evening they faced a long haul into and out of their work places situated in and around Paris. In the stations and on the streets they rubbed shoulders with the hordes of Clodos and lost youth of all kinds,

infiltrators recently arrived from the tumult in North Africa but those from the border regions beyond East and South Eastern Europe, young men who had fled the misery of Nova Rossiya and the wars that burst into flame every now and then as minorities fought for self determination against oppressive states that struggled to contain the disorder that menaced their existence.

Feeble efforts were made to enforce laws forbidding the Clodos from squatting the public parks and garden, begging and vagabondage was forbidden, a few infiltrators were expelled when their country of origin could be determined.

The government slowly lost control, totally disconnected from the everyday reality of the population. Opportunist and populist politicians gained a foothold. It was a common event to see mainstream politicians and their parties were mired in scandals linked to scandals from influence peddling to financial corruption.

The National Front slowly gained a degree of respectability as it preached its nationalistic ideas. On the periphery of the cities and large towns millions of people lived in housing estates and districts without services, without shops, cafés or cinemas, people who lived in fear once night had fallen, in fear of aggression and in fear of burglary.

The housing estates and inner suburban districts became lawless centres where the police feared to tread, where crime and drug trafficking reigned and unemployment levels exceeded fifty percent.

It was in these cities that another form of order slowly took hold as schools and parental discipline failed. The major part of the population in those areas was Neo; those French who could fled. The Neos and Settlers from North Africa, Sahel Africa, Turkey and Central Asia were Muslims. Their Imams established mosques and prayer halls, founded Koranic associations and opened Koranic schools and sponsored sports centres. They preached Islamic values and rejected the secular state.

The political leaders of France were terrified to address the problem, they simply plunged their heads in the sand through fear of being accused as racists leaving the mullahs the freedom to do what was forbidden for Christians in their countries of origin, or fear of provoking the ire of the Neo population.

The North African civil wars with their terror overflowed into France as the Islamist and Traditionalists struggled against the established regimes, the politico-military establishment in Algeria, the royalists in Morocco and the more paternalistic dictatorship in Tunisia.

Opposing groups led their terror campaigns in the large cities of France, they fought each other, they fought against the French declaring that if they were not with them they were against them, the used all the arms of terror, human bombs, car bombs, bombs in trains and cafés, attacks on police stations.

They brought their vast experience of terror and guerrilla warfare from North Africa and the Middle East, they organised themselves in autonomous cells, they were trained and disciplined. They were blind to all reason, their objective was victory, but for what it was not exactly clear, their ideas were certainly guided by Allah, but their ultimate demands were vague though many sought a paradise on earth and not in heaven. It was with the Insurgency they realised that they could attain what they had not dreamt of, a land of Islamic haven on the Mediterranean coast of the European Federation.

They extremists were joined by their more pragmatic brothers in the inner suburbs who had identified with their heroes, who had fought against the Israelis against the military governments in North Africa and who did not hesitate to defy the powerful French state to defend their rights. It would be a vengeance against the French who had rejected them relegating them to second class citizens, deliverers of pizzas, lowly factory workers, cleaners, resigned to a life of petty crime in order to survive, banished to the ghettos and poor inner suburbs.

The young Beurs who had been marginalized without any future prospects were willing candidates joining their brothers in their armed resistance against their oppressors, the state the police, the law and the establishment in general.

During the history of the French colonisation of Africa and ttheir ‘mission civilatrice’, the missionaries and the administrators had never imagined that their little brown brothers would colonise the towns and cities of France, bringing with them their religion.

The French army had never imagined it would fight against the Arabs in the towns of France. The French schoolteachers at the time of the Colonial Exposition in Paris in 1925 could never have imagined Arabic would be taught to a large settler population in the schools of France.

When did the reversal take place, maybe in 1940, perhaps in 1958 or 62, or was it when the Settlers arrived in numbers in the early seventies, on the other hand it could have been in the eighties or nineties as the Neos were extended rights and became permanent Settlers. Some said it was when the flow of infiltrators could not be held back in the early part of the century. In any case it was too late when the troubles broke out in North Africa that led to the establishment of the Caliphate with another outpouring of refugees towards France.

The refusal to face up to the problem and take painful decisions simple transferred the problem towards the future. A powerful undercurrent of discontent built-up flowing across the country as a large part of its citizens was excluded from all possibility in the choice of their future. There were the Gallos who felt ignored by the politicians, there were the non-Gallos who were excluded from the system they included a huge Muslim minority that had no effective political role that corresponded with their beliefs and aspirations.

The political parties had chosen to close their eyes to the subject that most effected the lives of many of the fellow citizens concerning themselves with ideas which no longer corresponded with the changes that had been brought by the demographic changes that had been brought about by massive population transfers from Muslim Africa.

The Gallos whose ideas and protestations went against the intellectual and political elites' vision of what was politically correct were ostracised as racists, when their only real sentiment was their attachment to their country and its institutions and traditions that had been built over more than one thousand years, that were being brushed aside for what were undeniably alien concepts to Christian France.

The opinion leaders were composed of an intellectual elite led by the crusading media and leftist show business and political personalities, the gauche cavier and Parisian bobos, that preached multi-culturism and where all that was French, except their particular vision of 'culture', was execrated.

They persistently sought to accuse their country of crime of all kinds both present and past against the third world and the settler populations.

The same clique even encouraged the flow of infiltrators by defending their demands for rights in spite of their illegal entry into the country.

The intellectual elite asked that the Gallo French accept the fait accompli and even embrace the values of the Settler population, which represented the majority of Settlers from the African continent and Muslims. Islam they explained was a great religion and deserved respect as such, however, in the context of the confrontation between the third and first worlds, Islam had become a political vehicle, employed by radical movements from Arabia to Egypt to Algeria and to Europe.

The Muslims could not help supporting their brothers and co-religionists wherever they were in danger and conflict. Palestine was a symbol of their struggle against the state of Israel. The conflict against the Zionist state was a rallying point for all Muslims with the consequence that the Muslim community in Europe opposed the Jews giving rise to a fragmentation of society into distinct ethnic groups each claiming their rights and traditions thus promoting their ancestral animosities. The French, as most Europeans harboured an ancient tradition of anti-Semitism in their collective memory, they even condoned the rise anti-Semitism in the Arabo-Muslim population and the acts of desecration and vandalism, even procuring a certain sense of satisfaction from the acts that they themselves would not dare perpetrate.

The Europe Federation inspired no idea of patriotism; the kaleidoscope of nations that the thirty states formed was a political concept and not something that the average European could identify himself as being a part of.

The unemployed non-Gallos fell into a spiral of permanently assisted in areas where the hope of real employment was inexistent where job training and academic achievement had lost their meaning. The arrival of refugees, legal and illegal, and their families, unadapted to the needs of industry and commerce were unemployable; they joined the ranks of the unemployed and those whose social integration was compromised by their economic status, falling into the category of the permanently assisted.

The government of France was totally powerless to act; they were surrounded by a bewildering choice of causes. The flow of new refugees

had caused the Neo population to swell to an unprecedented number. Separating the opposing factions, then finding the guilty in such a vast population was an impossible task. There were movements that supported the warring factions in their homelands, there were Islamist extremists, and there were those who fought for rights and privileges in France.

The poor and those without adequate qualifications who lived in precarious conditions were different to those of past generations. They were confronted not only with the problem of poverty and exclusion but also race, religion and even hate.

In Paris and in the centres of large cities butchers shops were became kosher and halal, animals were slaughtered according to religious rites. The French butcher disappeared from suburban centres leaving his place to Neos; the Christians were faced with changes they were incapable of understanding let alone accepting. The social centres on the housing estates were transformed into Islamic centres or for specific ethnic groups, the French residents were not welcome, they had nothing in common with the new comers. Finally they had no choice but to leave the district.

The immigrants were parked in the neighbourhoods kept apart, condemned to life in isolation, where the French finally rejected them.

The population of Neos and those who counted Settlers amongst their parents and grand parents had reached fourteen million or almost twenty five percent of the population.

When it could be observed in Europe even fifty years after the signature of the Treaty of Rome that the relations between the elites of the leading countries remained superficial and those of the their populations in general were zero, it is not difficult to understand the difficulties of communication between the Settlers and the French. At the beginning of the twenty first century the average French man or woman under fifty new little or nothing of the colonies, knew little or nothing of their inhabitants, their religion and the culture. Some had experienced vacations in those countries in hotels and clubs where French was the language and their prime objective was a week or two of sunshine on a beach. Communication was difficult; Arabs or Muslims were known for throwing bombs, committing terrorist acts, the war in Israel, for their poverty or a distant petro-dollar Princes.

The incompatibility that existed in the social systems of the Maghribis and French societies was could have been overcome in an open society, but instead the gulf was broadened by the ghetto like living conditions of the Settlers and aggravated by the political polarisation. Many Settlers not having French nationality could not vote and of those who had become naturalised or were French by jus du sol few bothered to vote. As a consequence they were not courted by the political elite, they did not count; only an intellectual lip service was paid to them by the gauche caviar.

To integrate into the mainstream of French society the Settlers would have had to abandon their traditional family structure and culture, but the resistance to this change and the promotion of their culture and religion naturally came from Islam. It was Islam that awoke their search for a political life that was refused to them in their countries of origin where religion and secular life was one and the same thing. This religious and cultural divergence was exactly what had persistently undermined all attempts at integration.

The countries to the north of Europe observed their neighbour France attentively. The dismantling of the frontiers within Europe allowed the citizens of the member states to move freely within the Union, as a result the large settler population in France crossed over into the neighbouring countries. The collapse of the North African countries into a state of civil war, and the Israeli-Palestinian war, resulted in the massive arrival in France, Italy and Spain of refugees, many of them then proceeded to Germany. These events coincided with the start of the economic deflationary crisis in the industrialised countries.

The government was faced with an impossible problem, first trying to prevent the inflow of refugees that was bleeding the country’s resources. Its hospitals, social services, charitable organisations had reached breakdown point.

France was menaced by a civil war not of its own making as crime and violence became uncontrollable and threatened to turn into rebellion as the authorities transformed the cités into ghettos circled by its menacing paramilitary force, the CRS, whose units were armed to put down civil revolt.

At the beginning of the century Montreuil was proud to declare it was the second most important Malian city after Bamako, but its residents protested at the inadequacy of the services provided to them, people whose own country, Mali, had perhaps the lowest and one of the most miserable standards of living in the entire world.

The dollar or the euro replaced the national currencies in many countries that floundered under extreme economic difficulties, their economies in ruins, crime rampant and pollution that pervaded the cities and countryside as the state structures and services broke down.

Fear spread through the government, politicians blamed the demonstrators who they said took the law into their on hands preventing the lawful functioning of elected central and local government, banks cut credit lines, businesses closed, jobs disappeared, the housing market collapsed.

Everybody was for himself, the bourgeois slipped into poverty, the poor and the unemployed roamed the streets, whilst those who had jobs saw the reduction of their salaries

There were not enough euros and since there could be no devaluation, the euro not being a national currency, the only route out for the government was as the printing of ‘State Bonds’ with which pensions, unemployment and other benefits were paid in part or entirely. The ‘Bonds’ were in effect a parallel currency and to the despair of those who held them their value against the Euro declined as the crisis intensified.

Massive crowds gathered every day at the Bastille and République from there they marched to Concorde and the Champs Elysée to demonstrate before the Assembly. They were reinforced by the unemployed whose numbers reached twenty five percent of the working age population. In certain towns and suburbs the jobless exceeded sixty percent. Hordes of the unemployed roaming the country in search of jobs became commonplace.

The French Problem

The French were unable to face up to a reality, but decades of non-Gallo settlement had produced a multicultural society that had changed the nation

Few articles of France's republican creed were more sacrosanct than the principle that all citizens are equal and indistinguishable in their relation to the unitary state. Be their origins Algerian, Senegalese, Corsican or Alsatian, French citizens are deemed identical in their Frenchness. Unlike the U.S. or Britain, where diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious groups enjoy rights and recognition based on their minority status, the idea of such distinctions is anathema to France's traditional dogma. In France, the new arrivals became French whatever their origins.

In reality, France had become a multicultural society in all but name. The melting pot of integration, which turned generations of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese into Frenchmen and taught their children to recite history lessons about of their ancestors the Gauls, was far less efficient at assimilating the post war Settlers from the Maghrib, sub-Saharan Africa and other non-European cultures.

Integration had become a serious problem in certain towns nearby Paris there were as many as thirty different ethnic groups among for fifty thousand inhabitants. A fractured culture developed with each group apart.

For political reasons, the French state released few statistics on arrivals beyond the numbers of foreign-born legally resident in France, or the several million that had acquired French nationality. There were no official figures for the total number of French residents of foreign background, nor any breakdown of where they come from. It was estimated that fourteen million French citizens, a quarter of the population, had at least a settler parent or grandparent.

A large proportion of the post WWII Settlers and their offspring came from Algeria and other former French colonies in North Africa. While the first generation of guest workers expected to return to their homeland, their children lived in a sort of cultural no-man's-land between the host nation that did not accept them and the homeland that many of them had never seen.

Their children were born in France, they were brought up French speaking, they had never known anything else apart from a smattering of dialectal Arabic. They were caught between two desires. But, as full-

fledged citizens and potential voters, many second and even third generation children claimed their rightful place and the equal opportunity in France.

Much of that population was concentrated in suburbs and urban centres, like Marseilles and Lyons that have generated ghetto-like enclaves. Large migrations and high birth rates have made Islam France's second-largest religion. The Neo-dominated working-class suburbs, that ring most French cities, have generated a unique culture with unemployment, poverty, crime and drugs.

As those Neo groups brought their special style to the New France, indigenous regional cultures saw a resurgence of their own, formerly suppressed, identities. This revival was marked by the proliferation of Basque and Breton-language schools, the rising popularity of Celtic music, the boom of regional tourism, the cult of local cuisines and the spread of provincial festivals that borrow as much from global trends as they do from ancestral traditions. The downside, in areas like Corsica and Brittany, is the persistence of a militant separatism that occasionally flares into violence.

Not all communities saw France as a land of equal opportunity and a melting pot. Despite mixed marriages, groups like the North Africans were excluded from socio-economic integration. Their unemployment rate was forty percent among young people of North African background. And though North Africans and black Africans had a token place in music and sports, they were almost totally absent from the social and economic mainstream. People say the presence of non-Gallos is good because it gives us athletes and artists. They say I'd like to see business people, lawyers, teachers, intellectuals, men and women policymakers. We're not seeing that. The hurdles are higher for those of foreign background. Our problem is that even if we have an education and ideas, we're up against little François and little Claude, whose parents can help them get jobs. We don't have this network.

The French did not have the mental reflexes or institutions to be a multi-regional, multicultural society. It was not simply a problem of Settlers, but one of regional societies such as the Corsicans and Basques. There was already a great danger for the implosion into social micro-groups.

Almost six decades later, the plight of France's African community, of which Algerians constitute the majority, remains bleak and discouraging.

The Republic had been based on the equality of all its citizens, the national territory, the French language and a secular state. The introduction of Islam as the second religion of France with a majority Arab followers forced concessions on weak politicians. Then came Corsica demanding a degree of autonomy so as to promulgate its own laws and the use of the Corsican language.

The Republic did not deny differences and left its citizens free to practice whatever religion they desired. However, the codification of the differences not only extended a permissive attitude to non-constitutional notions, it encouraged and broadened the divisions between the communities.

This was due to a consensus of opinions afraid to defend the constitution by appeasement for those who demanded greater rights than the majority and the generations and men who had laid the foundations of the Republic.

The political voluntarism of the citizens to defend the Republic and its constitution had slowly waned, leaving the road open to men who were prepared sell its values and traditions to for votes without looking beyond their immediate interest.

The French had waited for a man with the courage to face the reality of their nation that accelerated towards disorder and disintegration.

The result was the concentration of France's African population in poor neighbourhoods of the inner suburbs after decades of state investment policies that encouraged illegal moonlight labour, and a housing policy that has gradually driven France's non-Gallo working classes to the fringes of major cities.

The inner suburbs, with their run-down public facilities, substandard schooling, and high unemployment rates, had become home to all the social ills of a developed society, crime, drug abuse, family breakdown and gangsterism that repeatedly erupted in riots.

The Housing Projects

Cités, or housing projects, a word that had become synonymous with settler and Neo neighbourhoods, have almost all disappeared from France today, all that remains are the abandoned ruins of the vast housing estates that have been long emptied of their inhabitants. The remaining non-Gallos, who provide the vital services to cities such as Paris, live in the notorious Special Residential Zones. As I prepare these notes the Paris Zone is threatened by invasion as part of Boublil's solution.

In started with the rage and violence of the Neos, in their neighbourhoods in the large cities, this contrasted sharply with that of their foreign born parents' docility. The pent up rage contributed to the worsening conditions in those neighbourhoods with the profound changes in French society that had resulted from the incapacity of the authorities to provide adequate solutions to the growing problems of economic and social integration of the new populations.

In certain cities such as Lyons, as much as seventy percent of the non-Gallos between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five were unemployed. Their frustration was frequently expressed by acts of vandalism and violence against their generation's isolation from both France and the countries of their parents or grandparents. The Neos explained that first arrivals had been a generation of victims, whilst their children, the Neos had become a generation of avengers, who did not try to hide their hatred for the French system that had confined them to being second-class citizens.

In response to the crime and random acts of vandalism by the young Neos the French authorities had reacted by zero tolerance tactics that included police raids and arrests of suspected delinquents in the no-go neighbourhoods. The consequence was more violence and resentment of the police who targeted young men with the wrong coloured face or accent.

The effects of globalisation on the French economy deeply affected industry and business during the early years of the century exacerbating the conditions in the underprivileged mostly settler and Neo neighbourhoods where persistent unemployment reigned as industrial production facilities were delocalised, with the loss of jobs, to countries where labour and social costs were lower.

Economic liberalisation and new energy technologies had reduced jobs in the automobile and manufacturing sectors, causing employment among the lowly skilled to soar, reaching up to forty five percent in certain areas of the country. The rate of juvenile crime had increased reached catastrophic heights. Trouble in the cités and suburban housing projects had become a daily event, covered by the press and television with nightly images of confrontation with the police, riots, burning cars, drugs and gangs. The consequence of the social disarray of the family and educational institutions was the opening of new cultural and religious associations that responded to the needs of the minorities.

The Gallo institutions faced a profound crisis as the Neo problem reached a degree that prompting the government to implement harsh law and order measures.

Those measures increased police surveillance in no-go zones where the law of the Republic was totally absent. After the Islamist bombings wave, the government introduced additional measures to control suspected terrorists from entering Paris, targeting youths from the cités. Patrols of riot police and armed soldiers were visible at every railway and Metro station, carrying out random identity checks on Neos and Settlers. Entry to Paris was policed to prevent trouble makers entering the capital, targeting vehicles driven by Neos.

The underprivileged neighbourhoods were cut off and slowly asphyxiated, creating a barrier between them and the Bobo city of Paris protected by the Périphérique, the ring road surrounding the capital, and above all, an ever-increasing security force of national, municipal, riot, and private police.

Across the European post-industrial society, few issues provoked as much discussion as the issue of Settlers. The Federation was pressed on all sides by legal and illegal arrivals, asylum seekers, who brought with them numerous other problems such as the schooling and integration of their children.

The dramatic and visible change in the traditional societies of Europe appeared like an invasion which was transformed into a fear that whereby many felt their world was in danger, and that the Europe simply could not provide a home to all those in need. Public opinion soon turned rapidly

against both legal and illegal non-Gallos. The almost biblical vision of ramshackle vessels grounded on the beaches of the Adriatic or the Mediterranean carrying infiltrators to the shores of Europe caused questions to be asked at levels of society.

A wave of xenophobia swept through France, Germany, England, Holland and Belgium, rejecting both existing and new Settlers. Across Europe the attitude towards accepting refugees and Settlers entered a new phase when the long privileged notions of assimilation, acculturation, and multiethnic harmony were overwhelmed by the birth of a violent Gallo European reaction. In France, the idea that French culture could assimilate all Settlers groups was overturned. Towns in France passed bylaws preventing foreign Settlers establishing homes within city limits.

The Flanders region of Belgium elected a coalition, which included the nationalist Vlaams Bloc, to power controlling major cities such as Antwerp where the mayor was a leading figure of the party. Their slogan was, ‘Our people first, seal our borders, send the Settlers home’. At the same time in Denmark and Austria, nationalist parties were elected to power with the problem of unwanted Settlers as the principal theme in the electoral programmes.

At the end of the millennium, the outcry against immigration became one of the great the main political themes of that period. What were the facts about Settlers? At the outset it was European governments that promoted the recruitment of foreign workers to feed the demand of industry for low cost labour that started the great movement of population to their countries.

In spite of high unemployment rates in Europe some sectors of the market continued to rely on foreign workers to do the jobs that Europeans did not want to do, that is mostly dangerous and demanding work. Whilst the anti-settler movement gathered force governments announced that tens of thousands of foreign workers would be needed each year to fill jobs that Gallos refused.

Mass migration was also a by-product of the sudden global economic and political transformations. Ease of transportation and the opening of economies of developing nations reinforced the wave of migration.

In Europe the rapid changes with the collapse of the soviet system and the extension of the Federation to the countries of the former soviet block.

Political upheaval coincided with the growth of ethno-nationalism.

The governments of European had observed helplessly the developments in the Maghrib and in particular Algeria, and when the inevitable collapse of the regime took place there was little they could do to prevent the huge exodus to France that they had feared for so long. Over half of the Maghrib's population was under twenty-five years old and without hope in the face of the massive unemployment that reigned in the country with as much as fifty percent in Algeria. The chaos that followed the overthrow of the regime was a golden opportunity for the ever-growing army of unemployed and desperate to flee to France as refugees.

With the mounting flood the man in the street saw with his own eyes that there were simply too many uncontrolled new arrivals. It was evident that there were limits to granting asylum to the refugees. Over the years the state had been unable to contain the arrival of infiltrators and asylum seekers arriving year after year.

There were the inevitable economic consequences of mass migration. In the past in Europe the conventional economic sectors had grown providing jobs for the newcomers, but with the post industrial transformation the labour demand fell and the rates of unemployment among Neos increased in startling proportions with up to four times more unemployment among the Neos than that of the Gallos, causing the generous French social security system to sag under the load.

Little by little the Neos were transforming the demographic landscape of France. Two-thirds of all Neos in France had their organs in North Africa. They were visibly different and provoked a growing concern when they were concentrated in the cités and banlieues.

Their neighbourhoods were clearly delimited and forming a barrier, preventing the assimilation of the new populations into the mainstream of French society, provoking cultural conflicts that many French saw as unacceptable as the recent were reluctance to give up their cultural traditions compared to the earlier waves of Settlers.

As the events in Algeria spread to its neighbours France was faced the greatest wave of non-Gallo settlement it had ever known. The refugees were different from those who came before, they arrived in large numbers and were grouped together forming clear ethnic units, with less knowledge of

the country to which they had arrived. They had less education, following the Arabisation of Algeria they had less knowledge of the French language and culture, they were less skilled, more prone to have difficulties with the law, and consequently less inclined to share French culture and values. They felt little or no loyalty to France and saw very little need to become French in name or spirit, listening to the Muslim religious and cultural associations that were by then well established in the big cities of France.

The cultural norms and values of the new refugees were incompatible with those of France's centuries old cultural traditions. Almost imperceptibly political ideology had given way to cultural and ethnic identities not only amongst the Neos who had forged their own specific identity, but amongst the Gallos, who counted amongst them Corsicans, Flemings, Alsatians, Bretons, French West Indians, Jews, Armenians and a long established Muslim community. The French, who continued to promote their cultural identity and language, were faced by the insurmountable problem by the assimilation of the non-Gallos.

With an officially recognised population of over six million Muslims, and no doubt much higher, France had the largest Islamic presence of any country in Western Europe, in both absolute and relative terms. Of this number, ninety percent had their roots in North African and especially Algeria, followed by Morocco and Tunisia.

The Settlers and Neos lived concentrated together in the suburbs of its towns and cities, transforming them into islands of Islam, relegating Neos to the second class citizens on the periphery of the cities, living isolated from the prosperous Gallos, thus creating their own subculture and stoking their anger.

The Arabs drifted towards crime, and often of a violent nature. Arab gang, rammed stolen cars into banks, foreign exchange offices and jewellery stores, without the least hesitation used violence and firearms. In Nice and Marseille behind the idyllic appearance of the Côte d'Azur, a violence society stoked up pressure that was to finally lead to the confrontation and explosion.

Many Gallos started to see the very nature of their country was in danger. Some believed that France was on the road that would transform it into an Arab and Muslim country within three or four generations unless the

politicians took decisive action. The reasons were visibly demographic and political. Whilst the French were not replacing their own population, the North Africans on the southern shore had one of the highest rates of reproduction in the world. The menace was that the North Africans would ineluctably fill the vacuum in France unless pre-emptive action was taken.

As a post-Christian country, France, not for the first time in recent history, lacked the will to take decisive action against a force that menaced them. Men like d'Albignac had realised that the force had been nurtured from within; Islamisation had taken root and was accelerating, propelled by the arrival of a new wave of refugees. As the Muslims rapidly gained in numbers and political sophistication, the possibility of French civilization being replaced by the Neo sons and daughters of the Settlers was becoming frighteningly real for many Gallos.

At the beginning of the century a quarter of the population had its roots in foreign lands with the percentage in Paris being much higher. Tens of thousands of blacks and tens of thousands of Asians and hundreds of thousands of Arabs walked the streets beside the native born Gallos, of real Christian European ancestry.

Not since fifteenth-century Spain had any Western European country had so substantial a Muslim presence. And for years settlement of populations from the Islamic countries has looked destabilizing, as tension has increased between the children of Arab Settlers and alarmed Gallos who questioned their assimilability.

Looting and burning became the common expression of the Neos rampaging against their second-class status but also applying pressure on the weak politicians to give in to their demands.

The Neos of Maghribis origin were visibly different from the Gallos; discrimination against them was on the basis of both race and class. It worked on the principal that a non-Gallo by his race was by definition part of the non-class. Few succeeded in crossing the class divide and being assimilated into French society, becoming French, those who did discreetly abandoned their origins and even though they were non-Gallos by race they were accepted.

However, this posed a problem since in inevitably meant the Neos accept a secular society, as most Gallos did, by denying their religion. The

majority of believers could never such a condition, and since Islam holds that all legitimate political power flows from the Koran in an Islamic state. France, on the other hand, was a secular society where the Church was separated from State by law. As a consequence a conflict between a state based on the Rights of Man and a religion that, strictly interpreted refused that vision, was inevitable.

The new waves of Settlers shook the foundations of what being French meant. Islam overtook Protestantism and Judaism becoming by a long distance the second religion of France.

Soon France had more Muslims than practicing Catholics. By the mid-nineties thirty percent of Muslims were believers and practicing, which meant that Islam would inevitably become the country's predominant religion.

Islam's emergence in France was however much more significant than that, more especially in the years that followed. The Settlers and their Neo descendants were concentrated in a few major cities and regions such as Paris, Marseille, the Rhône-Alpes region, and around Lille. Whilst France’s Gallo population had barely replaced itself with a birth rate similar to that of the other countries of the Federation, the Settlers from Islamic countries had been many times more fertile.

Gradually the disparity in birth rates and the concentration of the Muslim population meant that in those French cities a new and unforeseen element in Gallo French society came into being, the Muslims, who numbered over one third of the population and who became a potential political force to be reckoned with.

The Bridgehead

Medina Hurriya looked like a North African city. One of its quarters, still called La Bricarde, was a cluster of old council tower blocks built in the later part of the 20th century at the far northern edge of the city. It was part of the Bricarde-Castellane-Plan d'Aou housing scheme, where more than

nine thousand Algharbis now live, at the time of the French it had been considered poor, it was still poor by Federation standards but for Medina Hurriya it was fairly average.

Asma told Ennis that its claim to fame was that the legendary footballer Zinédine Zidane who had won the World Cup for France half a century ago had grown up there. At that time a quarter of Marseille's population of eight hundred thousand had been Muslim, today it is almost one hundred percent Muslim and the population has now passed two million.

They walked through the courtyard in the blistering heat of afternoon sun, a teenager girl in a tight black sweater walked past them with two pregnant friends, they gave Ennis a curious glance. An old lady in a djellaba sat on a broken bench gazing up at the satellite receivers that sprouted from the facades of the buildings Almost every one of the apartments displayed its satellite receiver, aimed skyward to pick up signals from the Caliphate.

"Unemployment is over thirty percent in Medina Hurriya," Asma told him, "and well over fifty percent in neighbourhoods like this."

She explained pointing to a run down block that the inhabitants seemed to gather together according to their origins. "Over there you see, they are recent Algerian arrivals, and those are Muslim blacks." Then pointing to a slightly better maintained building she said, "Most of those are Beurs, born in Medina Hurriya, or new arrivals from the north of France. There a no Gallos here."

In the very beginning the cités had housed the French working class but little by little they had been replaced by the Settlers ending with the transformation of the cités into North African ghettos, which turned inwards inventing their own version of French culture. The politicians had hoped that integration would arrive naturally but it never happened. The communities lived apart and the old culture of Marseille disappeared with its French population who sought their own kind in outlying suburbs and towns. Though it could be said that the prejudice of the Gallos was encouraged by the National Front and its offspring, the fact was the Gallos did not want integration, they wanted neither the Neos nor their settler culture, they had been forced upon the French heartland by political decisions coming from all sides, right, left and communist.

The better off had fled Marseille, and as a result most of its growth was in the outlying areas. Compared to Marseille the majority of French cities were wealthier, law abiding, and politically to the right with impoverished, overcrowded, and violent suburbs. Marseille was the only major city in France where the opposite was true with the centre worse off than its suburbs.

The politicians saw the city as a centre of poverty, crime, maladjustment, and alienation; they could only create jobs in the government and municipalities. Private sector investment moved to towns like Aix-en-Provence, transforming from a sleepy tourist village into a booming town of one hundred and fifty thousand people.

The Neo-French of North African descent, looked for their own solution to the Muslim community's focusing on their own values, and self help. They created their own political party called the Neo-French Union, rejecting connotations of migration, race or religion, though that is in fact what they came to represent, people of settler origin who were Arabs and Muslims.

The law banned state funding of religious institutions but it supported the funding of political parties. The Neo-French Union supported the mosques and promoted their own schools in contradiction with the secular policy of the state. It was a paradox that a settler group practicing a minority religion had circumvented a law intended to limit the power of the French Catholic clergy.

The Muslims had no fixed assets as did the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish institutions that owned a wealth of buildings and facilities and real estate. Islam did not have a hierarchical clergy in the same manner as the Catholic Church did. Paris's grand mosque was mainly funded by the government of Algeria, others by Saudi Arabia. The Neo-French Party solved that problem by gaining control over the mosques. This led the Gallos to believe that the Muslims constituted a kind of fifth column and polarised French society into two opposed communities.

Those politicians who had been intent on integrating the Muslim presence into conventional institutions failed since their objective had been to preserve the secular nature of those institutions with little concern for the physical or spiritual well being of the Muslim Neos or Settlers.

Colonisation

The origins of the ethnic problems in France could be dated back to the scramble for Africa. At that time the European powers arrived as conquerors in all parts of Africa. They were in effect latecomers, the British, Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch had all preceded France. When the French and the Belgians joined the race the better parts of Africa had already been spoken for, Eastern and Southern Africa with healthier climates were already occupied by the British, who had also established tropical Africa trading posts along the coast on the route to their Indian empire and Australia.

The result was that France established its colonies and zones of influence in North Africa, which unfortunately for them were already occupied by vigorous homogeneous populations. The result was a serious of long colonial wars was necessary to pacify and subjugate the new colonies.

During the period of empire and colonisation France paid little thought was given to the possible impact and influence of colonial peoples on the development of the French nation, in fact the idea of Settlers arriving in mass from Africa was unimaginable, the local populations were needed to build the colonies.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, France received more Settlers than any other European country. In fact, in the first half of the nineteenth century France had a higher percentage of foreigners in its population than had the United States.

France had always been a land that had welcomed foreigners, a rich and powerful country situated on the crossroads between northern and southern Europe, its wealth was a natural magnet for artisans and creators over the centuries and also for refugees fleeing religious and political persecution from nearby countries.

The majority of migrants that flowed into France were from Europe and as time went by the opportunities in manufacturing, construction work and

agriculture opened the way to the movement of labour. As new industries developed the flow of France's rural populations attracted to industrial centres was insufficient to meet the labour needs of a nation that was rapidly industrializing. As a consequence workers were drawn from the north and north east of Europe to the coal, steel and textiles industries, whilst Italian and Spanish workers were attracted by the work in agriculture and on the land.

The process continued and increased in scale as France emerged as a major industrial power. In 1851 foreigners represented merely one percent of the population but by the mid-1880s they had increased to almost three percent.

The trend continued during the period of First World War France when foreign workers were needed for its munitions factories. The war resulted in huge losses of manpower and the shortage was met mostly by Polish workers who represented half of all the foreign workers in the mining industry. The arrival of foreign workers reached a peak in the 1930s when the Great Depression with its unemployment arrived. The foreign workers were no longer needed, some left willingly and others went by force. The French government forcibly repatriated Polish workers by trainloads.

It was not until the mid-1950s that the French government's started to recruit workers. Many came into the country illegally but were but they were absorbed by the labour shortage as they were prepared to accept low-paid jobs that the French refused.

During the post-war period France's economic reconstruction needed labour to offset France's traditional low population growth. At the outset the planners had hoped to meet France's needs for labour with workers from Europe, culturally compatible in rather than those from the colonies. However, the growth of prosperity in Europe resulted in less Italians, Spaniards or Portuguese being attracted to France. There was no choice but to accept workers from the colonies of North and black Africa.

The flow of workers from these regions continued to flow over the next half a century. The historical and cultural links; that is to say the French language was a motor for what became settlement in France. They came from the Maghrib and Sub-Saharan and West Africa countries. In addition refugees arrived from Indochina driven by the Vietnamese War whilst

others arrived from the French West Indies, French Guyana and the Indian Ocean Islands. Maghribis have been the most significant group of Settlers into France. The vast majority of these were not from Morocco or Tunisia, but from Algeria, that had been the jewel in the crown of the French colonial empire.

Before the Second World War there was a minimal number of Algerians in France. There were a few exceptions to this: during the First World War, for example, so-called ‘native’ troops were recruited into the French army and thousands more were sent over to compensate for the labour shortage in France. They were only required temporarily and were repatriated at the end of the war when they became ‘superfluous’. Between the wars, there was some temporary movement of Algerians to France with the new Settlers returning home once they had made enough money to be replaced by another.

The Repatriation Office

Boublil's Ministry of Ethnic Affairs had created an office for the repatriation of non-Gallos to their countries of origin according to Law of 8th May, relating to the right of residence in the Nation of France. It was named the Repatriation Office, a euphemism for expulsion office of the denaturalised.

The Nation was not only the home to Gallo-Europeans as defined under the Ethnicity Laws; there were a large number of persons of evident non-Gallo origin who were classified as Gallo by their birth, culture and allegiance to the Nation and as a consequence enjoyed the rights and privileges of any other citizen. There were also a large number of non-Gallos who enjoyed the right of semi-permanent residence in the Nation, on a priority basis relative to its manpower needs.

The country could not function without the manpower that was needed for the basic everyday needs of a modern economy. Work permits were issued to non-Gallo Short Sojourn Workers for jobs that were qualified as

being in the public interest by the Office of Employment, these jobs were mostly in the traditional list of occupations held by non or lowly skilled workers, the dirty jobs. A monthly schedule of such jobs and the numbers admitted was published each month, organised by class and priority. This was always underestimated for ideological reasons resulting in a black market for infiltrators.

The issue or renewal SSW work permits was linked to not only to a fluctuating demand but also to political pressures. When the real or perceived need declined those whose work permits expired and whose classification did not qualify them for renewal was required to quit the territory within a period of three months. Those who did not conform were rounded up and subjected to forced repatriation.

Priority was accorded to those of mixed families who enjoyed a quasi-permanent residence status, however, the least infraction to the laws of the Nation risked expulsion.

Those who refused to return to their ancestral countries or who were refused entry by those countries were conducted to the border of Algharb were they were handed over to the authorities in accordance with the Evian Agreement.

The SRZs, such as the Paris Zone, were the homes to a large number of non-Gallos infiltrators had taken refuge in the hope of finding a new job, hiding from the Enforcement Units of Boublil's Special Security Forces that surveyed the coming and going of all non-Gallos. Their task was easy, the non-Gallos did not need to wear badges - Boublil, as a Jew would not have approved of that - they were easy targets as they always had been, their non-Gallo ancestry was written on their black, brown and yellow faces. A swift scan by the SSF men and their ID tags divulged all including the limit dates of their SSW work permits.

The population pressure in Algharb had become a worry to the le Martel's government. Bin Ibrani's regime had persistently ignored warnings from Paris and had permitted the arrival of large numbers of refugees from the Levant and Settlers from many parts of the Federation, with the population of Algharb reaching alarming proportions.

The Nation was menaced by an increasing number of infiltrators from Algharb and Bernard Pogu who fought le Martel’s secret war against terror

on all fronts, feared that terrorists and arms were crossing the frontier. He fought a secret war because censure blocked out all public knowledge of the struggle, though in private Worldweb allowed information to circulate in spite of the elaborate surveillance system operated by Boublil's services.

The terrorist bombs had the same effect as they always had, fear, anger and revenge, but in the finally count it was resignation that over rode all those sentiments in the face of an unstoppable force, the struggled against a totalitarian regime.

Terrorist organisations existed in Algharb and in France. In Algharb there were several, the Islamist groups who wanted to transform the State into a bridgehead for Islam in Western Europe then there were those who wanted the return of Algharb to France.

In France the Islamist terrorists wanted to undermine the Nation, the Republicans wanted the restoration of the Republic, the Immigrants wanted to return, the anarchists wanted chaos, the Cathos wanted God on earth.

"Can you define what French is? Am I French?"

"No."

"But I speak French don't I?"

"Yes, but you are American."

"Am I? I thought I was Irish!"

"I don't see what you mean."

"It's simple, in the USA every person who arrives has only one idea in his mind and that is to assimilate himself into the USA. It doesn't mean he rejects his mother tongue or his religion, but what comes first is the USA. In Europe and more in particular that's the last thing people wanted to do, that wanted to remain Arab or something else. Why? Probably because French society rejected them, but in any case the last thing they felt they were is French."

Historically the development of terrorism into a non-territorial structure was first recognised with the organisation Al Qaeda in Afghanistan at the beginning of the century. After the defeat of the Talibans, Al Qaeda adopted new tactics spreading its organisation into the Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and the Sudan. There were emanations of all types some with fixed bases where the

political conditions allowed it and others whose bases were virtual permitting the terrorist organisations to resist all efforts by the USA to eradicate them or to dismantle their structures.

Al Qaeda and its successors with other terrorist structures had formed an invisible enemy dedicated to the destabilisation of the American Empire.

Migration

It is necessary for us to look at the flow of migrants towards France in the period that led up to the creation of Algharb to understand how the Neo-French came into existence, and the reasons for the events that led up to the revolt.

Until about three decades before the end of the last century non-Gallo settlement had not been a major issue in French political life. The flow of Settlers, drawn by the post WWII boom, had been going on for over two decades, it been to a large degree the concern of a few government departments in consultation with industry, the labour unions and the governments of the Settlers countries of origin. Government had seen the arrival of workers as essentially an economic matter; it had been assumed that those who had arrived in large numbers over the previous twenty five years from North Africa would eventually return home after having accumulated savings in France.

The idea of temporary non-Gallo workers began to change as the settler presence in France continued to grow forcing the government tighten its policy towards permanent settlement. The Yom Kippur War led to an oil crisis and global recession ending the post-war WWII expansion and the French government took measures to halt the uncontrolled arrival of non-Gallos.

The government initially tried to encourage many of the would be Settlers to return to their country of origin by offering financial incentives; the invitation was not taken by the Maghribis. Then when the government proposed forced repatriation they failed to gain parliamentary support.

From that point the Settlers become more and more visible in France, in the past, workers were often men living in hostels separated from the main French population, but as they were joined by their families, or started families, they began to move into the housing estates and working-class neighbourhoods alongside other French families.

Unlike earlier generations of Europeans workers from Poland, Italy or Spain, they were distinguishable by the colour of their skin and by their religion. They were recognisably different, and they obviously had the intention of making France their permanent home.

With their attachment to Arab culture and to Islam, the Maghribi community was seen by many, and especially by the recently founded National Front, as a threat to French national identity, they were considered as culturally inassimilable, and even a menace to French society in the face of rising extremist Islamic movements abroad.

People started to question the growing numbers of Settlers and the threat they posed to social cohesion, they talked of the threshold of tolerance, as their numbers became too high on housing estates. Conflict between the French and the Settlers became inevitable. What in fact happened was that the French little by little quit the housing estates and districts where the settler numbers grew, leading in the long term to huge neglected and poor settler ghettos.

Within a couple of decades, settlement of non-Gallos went from being an economic consideration to a serious social problem that became the centre of all political, cultural and religious debate across France.

A significant question is who were the French? Historically the ancestors of the modern French were a mixture of Celts and Franks who together formed the population of the Roman province of Gaul. Charles Martel, grandfather of Charlemagne, established Frankish authority in the north and then southern Gaul. In 732 he fought and threw back the Muslim Arab invaders from Spain in the battle of Poitiers a turning point in history, since an Arab victory would have meant a Muslim Europe.

Over the centuries France became a crossroads between the Germanic peoples to the north and the Latins to the south. At the same time they fought their hereditary enemies, the English, disputing the control of large regions that now form part of what is now modern France. The very form of

France at the end of the 20th century included German speaking Alsatians, Celtic speaking Bretons, the Flemings in the north east, the Basques in the south west, Italian speakers in Nice and Catalans in the eastern Pyrenees. As a consequence the population has been mixed and re-mixed, however, the new arrivals were always European that were assimilated without difficulty by the first generation of every wave of foreign workers and refugees.

When did it change? It appeared to many French at the end of the 20th century that almost one thousand three hundred years after the Battle of Poitiers, the descendents of those Arabs defeated by Charles Martel were once again invading France. The difference was that they arrived imperceptibly one by one.

It was as if the threat of Houari Boummedian had come true, ‘we will conquer you by the bellies of our women’. Since the middle of the century, economic and demographic pressures in the Maghrib pushed a growing number of North Africans to immigrate to France in search of work, the vast majority from France’s former imperial possessions in North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, with the greatest numbers from Algerian.

Amongst the French population of sixty million were eleven million of North African origin, new arrivals, Neos, their children and their children’s children; included were several hundreds of thousands of North African Jews. As the years passed settlement continued and combined with continued higher birth rates among the Muslims in France, the French Muslim population continued to until it exceeded an estimated seventeen million at the time of the revolt. The Gallos, with their lower birth rate had difficulty in even maintaining their numbers and seized the occasion seek separation to avoid the Islamisation of the French nation.

The French were proud of their culture, a culture that had once dominated Europe. In the past the French had always embraced those who accepted their culture. But with the Settlers they were faced with an insurmountable problem, the Settlers brought with them their own culture and one very different from that the French, the culture of Islam, a strong and resistant culture, that would not be assimilated. The threat was that the Muslims would retain their religion and culture transforming that of its host country into a Muslim society intolerant of Christianity as it is in almost every other part of the world. Europe saw the threat of a Muslim in the fold.

The very basis of French political philosophy was based of the famous concept of liberty, equality and fraternity and the distinction between French citizens by race, religion or origin was historically alien, as a consequence there were few available statistics published relating to the settler population or religion.

Settlers and foreigners resident in France were defined as those born abroad not holding French citizenship and were therefore classified foreigners. Those who then acquired French nationality became whole French citizens, Neos, and were no longer foreigners but were of settler origin. Officially the non-Gallo population consisted mostly of foreign nationals, and technically it excluded French citizens who had acquired French citizenship. Therefore, a foreigner was not necessarily a settler, but most Settlers and a great many Neos were in fact foreigners by birth and culture.

The number of newly arrived Settlers resident in France at any year appeared relatively small, one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousands arrivals. Successive government constantly pointed to this figure to prove that the number of Settlers was stable. The reality was that the same number had acquired French citizenship each year thus becoming Neos.

In spite of those definitions Neos continued to be called Settlers in a double talk by the authorities and the media.

The General Population Census indicated that towards the end of the last century the settler and Neo population was estimated at over four million, of which less than one and a half million had taken up French citizenship, about seven and a half percent of the total population.

The number of Neos, or, children born in France of settler parents, was estimated at about three million. Although the children of Settlers did not consider themselves to be Settlers, they were seen to be by the population at large.

In fact all of those figures were biased, what was a Neo to the average Frenchman? To him those who were called Mohammed or Jamil, in his mind were not really French, even though they were the grandsons of Settlers, no longer classifiable as Settlers in statistics.

Infiltrators and therefore non-declared Settlers were estimated by some at almost one million a large number of who were Africans. With the

political and economic disasters in North and sub-Saharan Africa the legal and clandestine arrivals was transformed into a flood a, tidal wave from Africa, tens of thousands each year, the authorities were incapable of controlling the flow, not only because of incompetence but also because of the political constraints imposed by politicians of all political colours, red, blue and green. Every politician was naive, cynical or incompetent. The new population brought aids and other diseases such as tuberculosis and sickness of the poor, producing large numbers of children in the most extreme misery.

The reality was no doubt quite different, in the year 2000, the total population of settler origin, who had arrived in France over the previous half century, including recent Settlers, nationalised French citizens and foreigners, resident legally or illegally in France, including the children and grandchildren of all categories probably amounted to eleven million people, or almost twenty percent of the French population in the early part of the century.

Eyewitness accounts would have refuted any claim to the contrary; the difficulty was that it was not politically correct to pretend otherwise, it was even racist to mention it.

Boublil's Decree

The displacements or expulsions of populations and ethnic groups from their homes is as old as history. The expulsions of so-called non-Gallos in recent years, confronted Europe with a profound crisis. Not out of sympathy with the refugees but the desire to treat their own problems in a similar fashion.

The problem of refugees in France and in occupied Provence, or Algharb as it calls itself, is a result of the political changes in North Africa, Arabia and the Greater Levant. New England had experienced a flood of refugees from the Indian sub-continent following the Hindu-Muslim wars whilst

Germany and the eastern countries of the Federation had received a huge influx of refugees following the disaster in Russia.

The movements of populations far exceeded those who had arrived in Europe in the later half of the last century. The displacements and expulsions shook the foundations of international law and of those human rights. The result was an explosion of nationalism that often hid concepts of a religious or racial character.

The Nation de France introduced laws that were nothing more than the justification of an ethnic cleansing not seen in Europe since World War II. The ethnic laws introduced by Henri Boublil are known as the Boublil Decree.

THE BOUBLIL DECREE

Law of May 8th

The National Assembly of the Nation de France passed the following law:

Article 1

Any act committed during the period of rebellion in Provence, the object of which was to restore Republican law and order, or which represented just reprisals for actions of the rebel forces and their accomplices, is not illegal, even when such actions may otherwise be punishable by law.

Article 2

This law will come into force on the day of its official announcement; those commissioned with the execution of the law are the Minister of Justice and the Minister for National Defence.

Appendix I

Edict of the President of the Nation of France, involving property rights from the time of the Rebellion and resulting partition and concerning property assets of rebels, traitors and collaborators and of certain organizations and associations, upon proposition of the government I, the President of the Nation of France, decree:

Article 1

All transfers and transactions by non-citizens, as defined by the Ethnicity and Citizenship Laws, involving property rights regardless of whether they involve movable or immovable, public or private property are invalid after the Declaration of the State of Emergency in response to the Rebellion in Provence inspired by foreign agents and traitors.

Article 2

1. The property of foreigners from unfriendly nations and traitors, being within the territory of the Nation de France, will be placed under national administration in accordance with the further provisions of this edict.

2. Property transferred by such persons shall also be deemed to be property of traitors and enemies unless the person acquiring such property had no knowledge of the fact that property of such nature was involved.

Article 3

All enterprises and all property assets shall be taken under national administration wherever this is required in the interest of continuous production and economic life. This applies especially to production plants and other enterprises, which have been deserted, and to property assets relinquished or to such facilities or such property assets, which are in the possession of, or administrated by, or leased to persons declared to be enemies or traitors.

Article 4

As persons the country cannot rely on shall be considered:

a. Persons not of Gallo-European origin,

b. Persons, whose activities have been directed against the governmental authority, independence, integrity, democratic-republican system, security and strength of the Nation, who instigated such activities or tended to

induce other persons to take such actions, and intentionally supported the traitors or enemies in any manner whatsoever.

Article 5

Those persons shall be deemed as traitors and enemies, who served intentionally and knowingly the rebels during the Rebellion in Provence.

Article 6

As persons not of Gallo-European origin shall be considered those who on the occasion of the Rebellion and subsequent partition acknowledged their adherence to another nationality or who became members of national groups or organizations or political parties not of Gallo-European origin.

Appendix II

Edict of the President of the Republic

Concerning the confiscation and disposal of property of traitors and enemies of the Nation de France.

Article 1

1. With immediate effect and without compensation and for the purpose of the land reform such rural property shall be confiscated as is owned by

2. All persons not citizens of the Nation or not of Gallo-European origin,

3. Traitors and enemies of the Nation without regard to their citizenship or origin especially those who demonstrated their hostility during the Rebellion in Provence and leading up to the Partition,

4. Corporations, partnerships and other associations the owners and management of which knowingly and intentionally supported the traitors and enemies of the Nation.

5. The property of persons not of Gallo-European origin who had participated in the combat for the protection and integrity of the Nation shall not be confiscated.

6. The District Committee is competent to decide upon application of the decrees. Doubtful cases shall be submitted to the National committee, which shall forward them with an opinion to the Ministry for Ethnic Affairs for final decision. The latter shall decide by agreement with the Ministry of the Interior.

Article 2

Those persons shall be considered as foreigners or not of Gallo-European origin who acknowledged a nationality or who became members of national groups, organizations or political parties in which persons of foreign nationalities were united.

Article 3

1. Those persons shall be considered as traitors and enemies of the Nation de France

2. Whose activities were jointly or separately directed against the sovereignty, the independence, the integrity, the democratic-republican system, the security and the defensive power of the Nation de France, who instigated such activities or seduced other persons thereto, and, in any manner, intentionally and actively supported the rebels or traitors.

3. Such juristic persons whose activities intentionally and actively served foreign powers or traitors carrying on the rebellion or served purposes of the enemies.

2. The authorities competent to decide whether or not a natural or juristic person is subject to the provisions of the above articles are: the National Committee in the area which the rural estate concerned is located, upon application of the competent National Committee. Doubtful cases shall be submitted by the National Committee to the Ministry of the Interior for a final decision. The latter shall decide by agreement with the Ministry of the Interior.

Appendix III

Constitutional Edict of the President of the Republic, concerning the right to citizenship of the Nation of France for persons not of Gallo-European origin.

With regard to the proposal of the Government and in accordance with the Agreement with the National Council, I the President decree:

Article 1

1. Persons not of Gallo-European origin who acquired foreign citizenship as dual nationals shall have lost the citizenship of the Nation de France by so doing.

2. The other persons not of Gallo-European origin shall lose the citizenship of the Nation de France on the day this edict comes into force.

3. This edict does not apply to non Gallo-Europeans who, during the period of the state of emergency defended the Nation of France.

4.Gallo-Europeans and persons of other European nationalities who during that time professed themselves of other origins under pressure or under extenuating circumstances shall not be adjudged non Gallo-European insofar as the Ministry of the Interior, after a thorough examination of the particulars quoted approves the attestation of national reliability as issued by the appropriate District National Committee.

Article 2

1. Persons to whom the provisions of Article I are applicable, and who prove that they remained loyal to Nation de France, that they never committed any offence against the people of the Nation de France, and that they either participated actively in the fight for liberation or suffered under the rebellion terror, shall retain their citizenship of the Nation de France.

2. The application for a certificate stating that Nation de France citizenship may be retained can be submitted to the appropriate District National Committee within 6 months of the day this Edict comes into force and, if the applicant resides abroad, can be submitted to the appropriate consular authorities. The result of the application shall be decided by the Ministry of the Interior after considering the recommendation of the Provincial National Committee and, in occupied Provence, the proposal of the National Council. The persons in question shall be considered as

citizens of the Nation de France until a final decision is made, provided that the District National Committee or the authorities representing it Issue a certificate stating the circumstances mentioned above.

4. The retention of citizenship of the Nation de France in the case of military persons of non Gallo-European nationality shall be decided on ex officio in the shortest possible time by the Ministry of the Interior after considering the recommendation of the Ministry of National Defence. Until the official decision is made they shall be considered as citizens of the Nation de France.

Article 3

Persons, who have lost their citizenship of the Nation de France under Article I may apply to the appropriate District National Committee or the authorities representing it for restitution within 6 months of the date which will be appointed in the promulgation of the Ministry of the Interior and published in the Compilation of Statutes and Enactments. The Ministry of the Interior after considering the recommendation of the Provincial National Committee, after considering the recommendation of the National Council shall decide the result of such an application after an objective consideration of the case, it shall not approve an application, however, if the applicant has violated his duties as a citizen of the Nation de France. Provided that no Government Decrees stipulate otherwise, the general regulations concerning the acquisition of citizenship of the Nation de France shall apply also to these cases.

Appendix IV

Edict of the President of the Nation, concerning the Confiscation of Enemies and Traitors Property and Funds. With regard to the proposal of the Government and in accordance with the Agreement with the National Council, I the President decree:

Part I Confiscation of Enemies and Traitors Property

Article 1 Extent of the Property Confiscated

1. Any immovable and movable property shall be confiscated without any compensation to the benefit of the Nation, and to the extent that this has not been effectuated until now, in particular properly rights (as claims, securities. immaterial rights) which on the day of the Partition was owned or which is still owned:

a) By the traitors and enemies supporters of the regime established in occupied Provence, by legal persons incorporated under the public laws of the occupied territories, by the Islamist Party, by the political parties and other groups, organizations, enterprises, institutions, associations, funds and property of these regimes or connected therewith as well as of other non Gallo-European legal persons, or

a) By natural persons of non Gallo-European origin with the exception of persons who prove that they faithfully defended the Nation of France, that they never committed any offence against the Nation and that they either participated actively in the combat for its defence, or suffered under the rebel or Islamist terror, or

c) by natural persons, who have displayed activities directed against the sovereignty, the independence, the integrity, the democratic-republican system, the security and defence of the Nation, who have instigated such activities or have solicited other persons to carry on such activities, who, by any manner, have intentionally supported the enemies and traitors or during the rebellion.

2. The provisions shall apply also to legal persons to the extent that natural persons who are members thereof or share in the property or in the enterprise (shareholders) are responsible for the steps taken by the board representing the juristic person or that these persons have failed to use the appropriate diligence in the selection and supervision of the board.

3. Likewise subject to confiscation is any property which during the period subsequent to the rebellion, has been owned by persons mentioned in subsections I and 2 and which during the time set forth In subsection I, sentence 1, has been owned or is still owned by persons in the possession of which it would not be subject to confiscation unless the inclusion of such property in the confiscation would not comply with the principles of equity.

4. The competent District Committee shall determine whether or not the prerequisite-sites of be confiscation under this edict exist. The decision can be served by publication, even if the prerequisites of the Governmental Ordinance, Concerning the Procedure in Matters Which Do Not Fall Within the Competence of Political Authorities (administrative procedure) are not complied with.

An appeal can be filed from the decision of the District National Committee with the Provincial Committee, National Council. The Provincial National committee may even in the course of the proceedings assume the carrying out of the procedure and decide the matter as the first instance. If the Provincial National Committee decides in this manner as first instance an appeal may be filed with the Ministry of the Interior.

Refugees

Asma had recounted her memories of the partition. She told him how she clearly remembered the pictures of the daily trek of those expelled from Autonomous Region. More than one million French who were ethnically cleansed after the partition.

Their faces expressed the same torment which marks all those unwanted, made homeless and stateless not knowing where to turn for shelter, huddled together, hungry and thirsty, rejected with their loss of identity and of alienation. Families deprived of their citizenship with nothing more than a suitcase full of meagre belongings.

Rooted from their homes by force, cut off from all that was familiar to them, they were expelled into the unknown, losing their human and

constitutional rights, without justice or social protection. Ethnic cleansing left a deep would on their souls, a wound that that never quite healed, with the feeling of rejection, guilt, humiliation, sham, and angry with those who rejected them.

The fate of the Gallos living in Provence, who were expelled or forced to flee after the partition, showed the forced exodus and maltreatment of the ethnic French minority in Algharb. The only crime they were guilty of was being ethnic French, Gallo-Europeans.

After the partition millions of French fled or were driven from their homes where they had lived for centuries. Hundreds died during the forced exodus, many died in the holding camps or suffered from illness and disease.

The methods of expulsion used included the burning of homes, separating men from women and children, brutality and violence against men. The homes that were confiscated were occupied by the flood of new arrivals, though many were left to decay in villages that disappeared from the map.

Those who remained became a minority after the treaty of Evian. The police of the Autonomous Region responded to their protest marches by killing many innocent civilians who were treated as second-rate citizens.

They were expelled by the Algharbis from their homeland; more than one million of them became victims of all the cruelty connected with ethnic cleansing. Their homes and businesses were expropriated virtually ignored by the international community ignored their misery.

It was many years since they had been expelled from our homes, millions were ethnically cleansed merely because they were not Settlers, thousands of innocent civilians were tortured and murdered, supposedly to revenge French misdeeds that they did not commit.

A joint commission was set up a few years ago between the two governments with the purpose of resolving the misdeeds perpetrated on both sides; it ended with nothing more than a simply declaration of intent.

The Algharbis side was vehemently opposed to the representation of expropriated French in the commission, thus objecting to discussions with

the only group which has a legitimate grievance against them in reparation of the losses incurred by their expulsion, and the right of self-determination.

Atrocities were committed by both sides in People's Courts. The Immigrant partisans went to the nearby villages and collected all of the men between sixteen and sixty and even older and drove them on foot to Avignon. During the journey they were beaten and rifle shots were fired over their heads to prepare them for the tribunal.

The same day hundreds of armed Algharbis, so-called partisans, arrived in trucks. They gathered in the market place for a demonstration, one of their officers made a fervent speech, which was greeted with roars of approval. It was as if by previous agreement, they then dispersed in all directions. It was not long before it was clear what was going on.

The French men and with them many women and children were driven in larger or smaller groups to the square, all the houses were thoroughly searched to insure that all of the men were present, old and young, also invalids and those seriously ill. The individual groups of French were escorted by yelling Algharbis, heavily armed, who shot blindly in all directions and knocked down anyone who came in their way. Meanwhile, other troops of Algharbis brought the men they had rounded up to the town centre. More than a thousand French men were rounded-up in the square in the afternoon. They were ordered to fall in and they stood there with their hands above their head, waiting for what would happen next.

There followed the most horrifying scenes. The men were forced to lie down on the pavement, to stand up quickly and then get in line again. The Algharbis passed down the lines, brutally kicking the men. They hit them with whatever lay convenient to their hands; they spat at them and loosed off wildly with their rifles.

Many men were too badly wounded to get up again and lay in great pain. But this was still not enough. There was a large fountain in front of the town hall into which the victims of this terrible madness, were finally thrown one after the other, they were struck at with sticks and poles and kept under water. The Algharbis even shot into the mass and the water slowly reddened.

Whenever anyone tried to scramble out of the fountain, they stamped on his fingers with their rifle butts. While these atrocities were taking place,

the so-called people's court established itself on the terrace of a restaurant opposite the Palais des Papes, behind tables, which had been set up, the Algharbis partisans seated themselves.

Around the table stood a number of persons, who functioned as prosecutors and who selected the individual French out of the rows. One behind the other, with their hands above their heads, the French had to appear before the tribunal. The last twenty or thirty steps up to the tribunal had to be made in a creeping position. Arriving there, each one of them received his sentence, which was written on his back with a marker.

One of the first victims was Franck Durand, a restaurant owner. After he had been selected, he was placed against the wall of the Palais and shot to death by the Algharbis with their automatic pistols. He was followed by others who had to stand against the wall with their hands raised falling without a word before the bullets of his executioners.

The cries of the bleeding victims soon drowned out all of the other sounds; many of the living sat or lay with the indifference of despair beside the bodies of the dead. By the early evening, the majority of the men, who had been rounded-up, were taken into custody; only a few were sent home. A member of the Town Council was sentenced to death by hanging. He was strung up on a street-lamp, after he himself had placed the noose around his neck.

The situation became much worse. Almost daily, politicians, the media and even prominent Muslim leaders refered to French crimes, without mentioning even such crimes against humanity, committed by the Algharbis, during and after the partition. There was also total silence about the oppression of the French who remained in Algharb.

The internment camp was built for the refugees who fled from Algeria and Morocco decades before. They were run down with age and insalubrious with primitive sanitary facilities and kitchens. The camps were surrounded with barbed wire fences and watchtowers for the guards.

Upon arrival in the camp, they were housed in those barracks, sixty to eighty persons to a one dormitory. In the morning they were given and bread. Only those with money could supplement the basic menu of soup without fat or meat and one small loaf of bread at midday.

Whole families and even villages were ordered to pack up and interned in the camps. They were allowed to take the basic essentials clothing, shoes, bedding or utensils. Most of their money and jewellery were taken into ‘safe keeping’. They were transported by crowded trains

The train camp was heavily guarded during the whole trip. They were not told where they were going, but they soon realised that we were going north towards the partition line.

After about four days waiting in the trains they finally crossed the line into France. During the trip they could not leave the train that was not cleaned or supplied with toilet essentials. They were given the minimum of food and drink. As the train crossed the border, the guards quickly left and the French authorities provided the first hot food since they had left the camps.

After about a one-hour bus ride, they arrived on the outskirts of a small village. There they were lodged in a transit camp, an army barracks that was a considerable improvement on the camp in Algharb. They were provided with medical attention, good sanitary facilities and food.

It was nevertheless a camp and the duration of their temporary home was undefined as the authorities sifted through the claims of each person.

The Nationalists created the fiction of an independent state with the blessing of the Federation and the United States. They promised to become another Catalonia with an absolute autonomy and rights for all its inhabitants Gallo or non-Gallo. Instead of equal rights things turned from bad to worse for the French.

Those who were expelled or interned, they soon realised they were in foreign countries. The property was confiscated; they were often thrown into camps. Their buildings fell into ruin, businesses abandoned and their families fell into poverty and despair.

Although the Autonomous Region had an elected government, no attempt was been made to rectify the crimes committed during the rising and the partition by returning land and property to the rightful owners. The Ibrani Decrees permitted the imprisonment, without a trial of Gallos and non-Gallo collaborators, the confiscation of all private property and the law to expel all Gallos and even certain non-Gallos.

Christian churches, chapels and abbeys fell into ruin in desperate need of repair. Many were transformed into warehouses or purposely destroyed; others simply fell in decay beyond repair. A great number of farms and their buildings, small factory structures and hundreds of thousands of homes of the Gallos were abandoned beyond repair; the newcomers had no agricultural culture coming from towns and cities.

Tax revenues disappeared as industries and commerce closed down and the Gallos were expelled. The administration all but collapsed.

Explosion

“I looked for work for a while, but there is nothing for anyone of my age. Impossible. Life is very sad and difficult. Not just for me but for lots and lots of people.”

“We still have the same car, but it’s really old now. My son gives us a few euros every week for petrol. I suppose we're lucky because at least he still has a job.

“I never had a private pension and I will only qualify for my state pension when I’m 70. For the time being I get nothing.

“The only way I get by is by offering my services as a carpenter in barter markets. I meet with other unemployed people and arrange to do some carpentry for them if they help me with food or clothes.

“But now there is a state of emergency, the barter markets might be banned since they happen in the evening. God knows what we’ll do.

“The problem is that everyone is hurt and affected by the crisis. France is living without a future. We don’t know what will happen tomorrow. No one can make plans.”

Anne-Marie sat on a sofa and drew wearily on an early-morning cigarette and pronounced that the end was near for the French ruling class whose corruption and incompetence have brought public anger to boiling point.

She says: “A couple of hundred years ago you'd see the guillotine being used. The politicians are very afraid. They don’t go out on to the streets.”

Anne-Marie was the charismatic leader of a party called a Republic of Equals. She had made her name crusading against corruption at the highest levels of France’s public life.

Now, she says, she is the only politician who can walk out on to the streets.

“I have struggled for years for the things people are calling for now. People take photos of me and kiss me,” she says with a smile.

Anne-Marie was a slim, glamorous university teacher of law in the suburb. She was a Republican, a straight-talking campaigner whose attempts to expose money laundering and fraud have not yet brought anyone to justice but have made her a symbol of the public demand for a cleaner democracy.

Anger against the ruling classes for leading the country, one of the richest in the world a century ago, to bankruptcy has grown in recent weeks as outraged The French suffered the fallout of the country's mammoth default and subsequent.

Hundreds protest daily outside the Paris tribunal building calling for the judges to resign. The city centre is daubed with angry graffiti. One, in Place de la Republic, read: 'Serve your country. Kill a politician!’

Politicians have been accosted in streets, cafes and shopping malls, by crowds brandishing saucepans and demanding justice.

Last week a Gaullist party congressman, Marc Bruno, had to be escorted from a city centre bar by police after a crowd of protesters spat and hurled insults at him. Earlier, several hundred protesters set fire to the home of another Gaullist deputy in Paris province.

Anne-Marie continued: “Last year, I was screaming in the desert. But now there is a kind of public awakening. I have great hope for the future.”

She says corruption is the cancer at the heart of France's crisis, allowed to spread during the former President’s term of office and condoned by the President before he was toppled in August amid bloody riots that left more than twenty five dead.

France’s economic crisis is also widely blamed on failed free-market reforms introduced by the Socialists and rampant public spending by irresponsible governments over decades.

Anne-Marie says the country needs new elections and new leaders and is heading for a painful but necessary revolt that will force the renewal of all its institutions.

Meanwhile, the President, the fifth President since August, is struggling to rescue the collapsing economy as an irate public calls for food supplies and its money back from banks where reserves have virtually dried up.

He has faced accusations of corruption in the past and plunged Paris province into deep financial trouble by overspending when he was Mayor of the City.

Analysts say the month-old presidency holds the last chance for France's traditional political classes to survive. The two forces that have vied for power in recent decades - the Gaullists and the Radicals - have united behind the President in the face of popular pressure for them all to go.

Anne-Marie Cathary has refused to collaborate. “You can’t join forces with the same people who robbed the country,” she said. Last week she announced, rosary beads and cigarette in hand, that she would lead a formal opposition bloc of twenty-nine deputies from five different parties.

The President, who took office without an election, has struggled to balance the losses from devaluation between anxious banks and foreign investors on the one hand and the angry French watching their reserves plummet and their savings reduced to a fraction of their original value on the other.

“People’s hate is directed at the politicians and the government is trying to divert it to the banks,” said Jerome Barat, a political analyst in Paris. The city’s financial quarter has turned into a fortress, with many banks barricaded behind sheets of corrugated aluminium.

“His time is measured in weeks,” said Barat. “If he does not succeed in reining in the crisis, probably we will have another social explosion.”

Cathary, was tipped by some as one of the few in line to pick up the presidency should he be forced to go. But, although she rates high in

opinion polls, disenchantment with the whole political class rates even higher.

Cathary, with her straight-talking style, has been feisty in opposition, but most analysts believe she lacks stability and clear policies to lead the country.

Several other politicians who were casualties of the last year of the previous government stand a chance of weathering a future political storm.

Cathary accepted reality. “If I get swept away in the storm, it’s not a problem,” she says. “What matters is that the New France is born.”

France’s president resigned last night after thousands of angry and impoverished protesters took to the streets of Paris in a revolt against the government’s handling of a devastating economic crisis.

His quit after two days of rioting and looting that left at least twenty two dead and scores of protesters injured in cities around the country.

The president resigned after opposition parties refused his request to form a coalition amid the most severe civil unrest for more than a decade.

He will be replaced provisionally by the Gaullist president of the senate, until the national congress chooses a successor to rule the nation until elections are called. The crisis sent jitters through the international markets.

Harrowing images of unrest were transmitted round-the-clock to a stunned populace. In Paris, a police officer guarding the doors of the congress from demonstrators trying to storm the building was killed by a pavement stone hurled by a protester.

“We are bunkered in here,” said a TV journalist broadcasting from inside congress. “The legislators can't leave and nobody can get in.”

His resignation came half way through his term of office. Arriving in office on a campaign based around the slogan "I know I'm boring’, he had promised to end the rampant corruption under his flamboyant Gaullist predecessor, who drove a red Ferrari and was reputed to have had a string of affairs with French starlets. But his own government soon became bogged down in corruption charges similar to those once made against his predecessor, and his abrupt end in office came with his popularity rating at four percent in the polls.

In Paris yesterday, mounted police fought running battles with demonstrators demanding the president’s resignation. Teargas and water cannons were deployed

Several hundred people were in a standoff with police last night in the Place de la Republique. The demonstrators included a middle-aged woman who, despite having had one of her toes hacked off by a horse's hoof, still railed against the government’s starvation plan.

“France is empty,” said another protester. “My children want to leave this country, there is no future here, and our politicians are too corrupt.”

Among the dead was a boy of fifteen was reportedly shot during the riots in Lille in the north of the country. Other victims were thought to have been shot by shopkeepers trying to deter looters by firing into the crowds.

Markets across the world were last night watching to see whether the crisis would have a domino effect in other economies in Europe.

In a desperate attempt to bolster his survival chances, he had spoken to the nation yesterday, asking the opposition Gaullist party to join him in forging a new economic programme to assure social peace. He had pledged to hang on to his post.

The unrest erupted after the country's free market programme turned sour. In the past two years France has felt the pressure of a deepening political, social, and economic crisis. Hampered by strikes called by Gaullist labour unions, France lurched towards a default this year from its loans as the BCE imposed ever-tighter conditions. Unemployment soared and now stands at over twenty percent especially amongst the New French and recent Settlers.

Wednesday night’s riots forced the resignation of the economy minister behind the austerity package. “He resigned after he saw five thousand people banging pots and pans outside his home,” a source close to the former minister said.

The spontaneous gathering outside the minister’s apartment in the exclusive Paris inner suburb of Neuilly brought together people from all social classes, who kept up a constant clatter from around eleven on the Wednesday until the Friday morning.

The pots and pans marches had been preceded by two days of food riots, with groups of up to over two thousand unemployed people breaking into supermarkets around the country.

“We’re coming back and we’ll be bringing all our neighbours,” screamed mother to workers in a supermarket in a well to do district, after the mob had accepted free food in place of looting the store.

“The real looters are in the government,” said an opposition deputy, talking to the protesters at Place de la Concorde.

The Riots

Police blasted mainly middle-class, peaceful protesters with tear gas and youths looted and set fire to the Assemblé Nationale in Paris in a night of protests over the week-old Gaullist government's handling of the country's economic crisis.

Parliament was dissolved by the president and general elections were called. When the results of the first round were’ announced on the TS the Renaissance Party held the lead. Enraged supporters of the left and centre poured into the streets in spontaneous demonstrations. Though the election was entirely democratic abstention was high, well over forty five percent. The demonstrators howled against the Renaissance Party and their leader.

The second round was two weeks away and the left organised massive demonstrations in support of their candidate that inevitably ended in violent confrontation.

Things can change quickly; look at what happened with the Soviet Union, when it collapsed the countries of Central Asia returned to the middle ages in less than five years, no law, no order, no government, no public services, no health system, no work, no pensions, no food, no nothing, just chaos. What was interesting was that those who initially helped the Islamist movements soon understood that they had nothing to offer, why because they had known a better system in spite of its faults.

In reality the French political system was fragile, at the mercy of a man, a party, a religion, a doctrine, which was capable of casting aside the country's institutions in a brief moment of time, imposing a regime of terror as do revolutions, which are the consequence of explosive change due to external aggression, severe economic crisis or profound conflict in society caused by new factors, such as population movements bringing ethnic conflicts due to cultural, linguistic and religious factors. Such were the events that beleaguered France at the beginning of the third millennium of the Christian era.

Thousands of pot-banging demonstrators, some wrapped in French flags, swarmed to the National Assembly in the Place de la Concord at two in the morning, calling for an end to crippling cash restrictions, a corrupt legal system and complaining that the new government was no better than the last.

When a group of chanting, bare backed youths climbed the palace entrance gate, police fired tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannon into a crowd that included elderly people and children. The clashes came barely a week after bloody street riots forced the President to resign and left many dead.

As the protest degenerated, men threw rocks and stick at riot police and smashed the windows of several city centre banks. Fires burned in the streets around Place de la Concorde and youths broke into the parliament building, a few blocks from the Elysée Palace, lighting fires and smashing windows until they were forced out with tear gas. Local television reported seven policemen injured in the clashes.

The middle classes helped bring down the government with a massive protest. With the return of familiar faces from previous Gaullist governments, many feel their call for not only a new economic policy but also a new class of politician went unheeded.

"We had a revolution. But all we got is just more of the same. Just more of the same corrupt politicians stealing from our pockets," said one of the demonstrators, wearing goggles to protect his eyes amid clouds of tear gas.

The government seemed unprepared for more public unrest and protesters easily reached the palace front gates and climbed onto its lower

windows. The newly nominated cabinet chief who had been forced out of politics in 1991 by a corruption scandal, resigned amid the protests.

People from wealthy districts of Paris marched spontaneously on Friday evening after a day of chaos in the country's struggling banks. Queues of irate people clamoured for their money after a weeklong freeze on basic transactions such as clearing cheques was lifted.

“The government has changed but the economic policy is just as bad. They are not letting us get our money out of the bank. They are keeping our deposits captive,” said a government worker with his wife and son in the Place de la Concorde. “This is the worst summer in our history.”

The French struggled to cope with a monthly five hundred euro cash restriction introduced to prevent people from withdrawing their salaries or their savings out of the banks as it hurtled towards a disastrous crisis. The Bank of France rejected appeals to end the cash restrictions.

Partition

According to the French authorities, Oussama Benoum was a visitor in his own country, a Short Sojourn Worker in the SRZ of the Toulon enclave, in a one of its working class suburbs near the naval shipyards.

He had been born in Toulon which had been populated by a high percentage of people of North African settler descent like that of his grandparents. It was over ten years since his family had he been forcible deported to Algharb where he had searched in vain for a job in Medina Hurriya, a name that he had never accepted. What ever happened to him he could have never consider himself as anything else other than French, he neither liked Medina Hurriya or the majority of people who lived there. Even worse for him were its totalitarian government that was no better than that of France.

After endless negotiations and difficulties he had obtained a permit as an SSW in Toulon where he had lived for most of his life but where he would return as a foreigner. He was unable to reside out side of the SRZ because

of his temporary status, and he risks immediate deportation if the authorities refuse to renew his permit.

After one year's presence as a SSW his wife and two children be able to apply for a TRP for a period of three months. Any infraction to the Aliens Laws and they would be deported immediately without the least appeal.

Oussama had been deprived of his French nationality under the Ethnicity Law ruling; although three of his grandparents were non-Gallo European.

The story of Benoum was by not unique. Soon after the Boublil was up to old policy, trying to create an image of Algharb depicted in the Nation's propaganda, a land without people for a people without land. They have exploited the delay in negotiating independence to deprive the Neo-French and their Algharbi families of their rights of family reunification and by cancelling residency rights.

The Evian Treaty with its Partition Plan initially assigned Toulon to the Rebels, who claimed that the majority of the city's population was of settler origin. In the fighting, however, the French maintained control of the naval base and its port as the Rebel forces were pushed from most of the city and beyond the airport at Hyère.

The French redrew the boundaries of the Toulon enclave to include as much territory as possible, thus providing sites for construction of housing for the Gallo population expelled from Marseille. The French policy was aimed at reducing the number of non-Gallos entitled to live in the Toulon enclave.

In this way, they hoped to create a totally Gallo population, crushing any Algharbi hope of regaining control of the enclave and its port and naval ship yards, the most important naval base on the previously French Mediterranean coast. Although the Federation, in principal had refused to accept French position, regarding Toulon as Algharbi territory, it turned a blind eye to their claims, the excuse being Brussels' defence strategy that defined the Toulon base as being vital to the protection of the Federation's southern flank.

In Toulon as in the rest of France, the policy toward non-Gallo residency and family reunification was cloaked in a guise of legality. Underneath the surface, it is clear that the policy of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs were aimed at reducing the number of non-Gallos entitled to live in Toulon and

to have access to such services as public schooling and national health insurance.

By entangling non-Gallos in a bureaucratic web, and by denying their right of residence with their families, the French government continued its policy of ethnic cleansing to remove its non-Gallo population and create a totally French community.

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When they took over Toulon the French authorities conducted a census. Non-Gallos not present in Toulon before the revolt were deprived of their residency status. More than thirty thousand non-Gallos lost their right to live in the city and were transferred to the Autonomous Region.

The remaining non-Gallo residents were issued temporary ID cards pending the decision of the French authorities as to their status. The Toulon ID card was required to live in the enclave, to buy a house, to get a job and to receive benefits such as health insurance, social security, and public schooling.

However, they continued to deny the non-Gallo residents of Toulon, who had momentarily left the enclave during the fighting and Treaty negotiations, re-entry rights, even for temporary visits.

All non-Gallo persons having a criminal records or prisoners who were still serving their sentences were listed for expulsion.

The non-Gallos accuse the French authorities of not respecting their basic human rights, whose policies contravene the internationally recognized right to family reunification, the Ministry of Ethnic affairs require that non-Gallo wives must provide documentary evidence of permanent residence in Toulon or France.

Plans exist to integrate into the Toulon enclave border towns and villages in Algharb for security purposes. This process bolsters the aggressiveness of le Martel's government and diminishes the territory of Algharb.

Meanwhile the French are consolidating their administration of Toulon and the border zones so that in the negotiations with the Federation it will appear to conform to international human rights standards.

If the Algharbis wait to discuss Toulon as part of the final Independence negotiations, the French will be free to pursue their objective of cleansing

the Toulon enclave of its settler population.

Tags

All citizens carried programmable nanocells implanted inside the body, injected into the muscle tissue on the upper arm, at first it had been in theory voluntary, but those who refused them were faced with great difficulties in their daily lives. Under Boublil it became an obligation, a national duty to protect the Nation against criminal non-Gallos.

The nanocells stored all personal data including identity data with past and present addresses, medical data, social security data, employment records and criminal records.

“People never thought about how the nanocells would be used in the future, they only saw the good aspects, for accidents or emergencies.”

“Then it was used little by little for more subversive purposes,” he said. “One of the most important things today is that it allows satellite tracking of an individual's every movement. The device is voluntary for Gallos but for all others it is obligatory. It’s a sad time when people are spied upon in their own interest,” he said.

“The authorities encode the nanocells with whatever information they like. It is a special department of the social security services that inject the nanocell device; it’s smaller than a grain of rice. A medical assistant inserts it with a kind of hypodermic needle. It takes a couple of seconds and is totally painless and free from infection or side effects.”

“Won’t they move about in the body?”

“No, they're injected into solid muscle tissue and they’re coated with a special film that attached itself to the cells of the muscle.”

“What happens when it stops working?”

“It’s easy, they’re bio-degradable in the body and are dissolved and absorbed into the system when they are switched off or if their power system fails.”

“Power system?”

“Yes, they generate their power from the heat of the body.”

“They are activated by a signal and microscopic transmitter emits the data they contain.”

“The nanocell only responds to the right signal, otherwise it will not transmit its data. Only authorised persons have nanocell readers such as the police, hospitals and emergency services.

“The nanocells are totally invisible from outside.”

“The emergency services would be able to read all the medical data and know whom to contact,” he said. “They would have the social security codes and identity data, many a life has been saved by nanocells.”

“The computing power in such a small device is quite extraordinary, the only problem is that it also serves an authoritarian state. Once they’ve got hold of you, there’s no escape.”

“In buildings and transport systems when you pass the portal your nanocell is activated and emits a stream of data which is picked up and recorded.”

“Big brother!”

“Yes, but it also recognises you, so avoiding tickets, identity checks and all kinds of such things.”

Doors open for the persons identified as having right to access. Computer systems respond to the signal emitted, credit systems approve purchases and so on.

“Does the system work in Algharb?”

“No, but I’ve heard that certain people have been equipped with nanocells without their knowing it.”

“In Algharb?”

“I suppose so.”

Ennis was puzzled.

“What I mean is that it was done by Boublil’s men. To keep tabs on suspects and the like.”

“I see what you mean.”

“It was not only the French. The Algharbis do the same thing, to the French and their own.”

A History Lesson

The sea was calm and the only noise they hear was the throb of the engines and the sea as the boat headed along the north African coast. It was late in the evening and they could take cool relief from the night air on one of the lower decks. They sat on the slated bench facing the portside.

“Let me tell you something my young friend,” Ennis said taking on the role he liked as professor of political science.

“Hey, first I’m not that young and secondly if you continue like that I won’t be your friend for long!”

“Sorry,” he replied half seriously. “I’ll start again. I was talking about American policy. It’s a fact that since the end of the twentieth century the strategic policy of the USA has been developed along lines whose main characteristic was self-interest. That self interest was translated by the need to control vital resource across the whole planet, and the key to that was the control of vital energy resources, oil and gas.”

“But that’s no longer the case,” Asma said smiling knowing that she had launched him into one of his university lectures.

“Off course, we all know the events that changed the policy of the USA. Some of us have lived through a really interesting moment in history, when major planetary change comes about, a watershed in our times.”

“You mean like that fall of the Soviet Union?”

“Yes, but there are other events, for example if we look at what television did for the world, or computers, mobile telephones, flight, space travel. They were technological events that have transformed future history.”

“So what were the most important changes in my life time?” she said smiling

“It’s what I call the losers tragedy. It has happened many times throughout history. The demand for a certain natural resource grows to the point where those who monopolise its production become greedy or try to use their position as a lever to control those who buy it. Then the product is synthesised or replaced.”

“You mean oil?”

“Yes, but as I said it’s not the first time in history such a thing has happened.”

“Oh, when?”

“Well take potassium nitrates for example.”

“What?”

“Let me explain. At the end of the nineteenth century nitrates were extracted from deposits of saltpetre that were mined in Chile.”

“What was the use of that?”

“Well one was fertilisers, but the most important for Germany was explosives.”

“Explosives!”

“Yes, and the Great Powers of that time were unconsciously preparing for war. The fact that the deposits were far away across the oceans in Chile posed a major problem for the Germans, since the British Empire ruled the waves and could cut, in a single stroke, the supply of nitrates to Germany’s arms factories.”

“So what happened?”

“Somebody synthesised the production of nitrates, a German.”

“I see.”

“It’s a thing that has happened again and again throughout history, the discover of South America and gold transformed the history of Spain, which ruled the world for two hundred years with its newfound wealth.”

“So it was the same thing for oil?”

“Absolutely.”

“Explain to me what happened to oil then.”

“Well it was fairly slow, as usual when the price was low there was no problem. Then when the owners of the oil deposits put up the prices they provoked a worldwide crisis in the early 1970’s. But the worse was to come, as more and more nations became industrialised the competition grew, in addition the oil deposits were in regions of the world that had become politically volatile.”

“Become?”

“Yes, we should remember that those regions, such as Arabia had lived in relative calm for centuries. They fought over oasis and water between themselves; they were warlike out of necessity. But since the time of the crusades they had lived in isolation and relative peace.”

“Then oil was discovered.”

“No first, the British and the French built the Suez Canal to reach their colonies in India and Indo-China, they needed to control the passage through to the India Ocean with ports and fuelling stations.”

“That was the first step.”

“Yes.”

“Then oil was discovered.”

“Yes, in Iran, Iraq and then in the new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Region contained almost sixty percent of the world’s known reserves.”

“And so they became rich.”

“Not only that but like all the rich they attracted a lot of false friends and poor relatives.”

“Then the fight started.”

“Yes and it continued, as I said the greatest reserves in the world were in the countries that surrounded the Persian Gulf.”

“What about Central Asia?”

“That came later. The first event came almost at the end of WWII when the American President Franklin Roosevelt pledged to King Abdel-Aziz ibn Saud the protection of America in return for access to their oil resources.

That continued for eight decades until the House of Saud was overthrown, due in part to the decline of American interest in oil that was a consequence of the last economic crisis."

"Because of new technologies?"

"Well partly, what was more important was the conjunction of two major events. The first there was Iraq, then the changes that were on the march in Iran and Saudi Arabia, changes that no amount of American military power and technology would have been able to stop. Remember America's greatest defeat was inflicted by a peasant army in Vietnam.

Then there was the fact that the overall oil reserves relative to world demand had declined. OPEC under the impulsion of the Saudis thought they could push up the prices and the result was a global economic crisis."

"Which would have stimulated the alternative energy sources?"

"Well in reality there were no alternative energy sources like oil, gas or coal, it was technology that took over. President Bush had launched a huge programme at the beginning of the century to accelerate the development of the fuel cell to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels. By 2020 it was already in use, for vehicles and small power generating plant. It did not replace aviation fuel but that only represented a relatively small percentage of oil needs.

Fusion had already made considerable progress though it was expensive. The crisis tilted the balance in favour of its introduction and over the last two decades it has finally got over its initial problems."

"So America is not interest in oil?"

"Yes and no, yes because oil still has a role to play as a raw material for the chemical industry, but very much less important, and no because today American's interest is focalised on other resources, minerals in Africa, essential for the manufacture of fuel cells and catalysts from rare metals.

"But oil is still important."

"Of course it's important but it is not vital, the economy will not grind to a halt, the producer countries consume a lot of it in their home based chemical industries around the Gulf and to export their added value chemical products they keep the prices reasonable for their own industries."

“What about the future?”

“The new technologies like hydrogen fuel cells and cold fusion processes will continue to replace fossil fuels, because firstly they don’t depend of imports from problem countries, secondly they are cleaner and finally inexhaustible. Remember America still controls the production of those technologies.”

“That means that America is independent, for the first time in a century, it controls its own energy needs, it also controls space, and can project its military power where it likes, instantaneously.”

“What does that mean for the rest of the world?”

“It means everybody for themselves. The ex-petrodollar countries are the newly poor struggling to survive. China is looking after itself, and India is mired in the aftermath of nuclear war.”

“What about Europe?”

“Well you can see for yourself, they are doing what they have always liked to do, it’s as if the good old days are back, re-colonisation, the rebirth of the nation state in a slightly new format.”

They looked out of the porthole and could see the dark outline of the African coast on the eastern horizon.

“The Federation is united in the interest of self-protection. Europe main problem is that the hungry of the world is at its gate, with every economic swing the pressure increases.”

Transformation

When I was a teenager I was interested in how the world worked, my father told always reminded me that short term political decisions were made based on the everyday events that surround us, current economics, government spending, employment, crisis, disasters, foreign affairs and so on.

Whilst those everyday events took place there were forces working in the background, little understood by the politicians not to speak of the general public, forces that are continuously forming the future.

Those forces are generated by planetary events largely beyond the control of governments, the struggle for resources, demographic growth and the movement of populations, the environment, and the development of science and discovery. They all influence the formation of political ideology and thought, and the geopolitical attitudes of nations.

At university where I studied political science and economics I was taught how the future is predictable based on certain known facts: our courses explained for example that when Airbus or Boeing decides to build a new broad bodied aircraft to carry eight hundred passengers, they know it will take six or seven years from drawing board to production and that the production will have a life of thirty years, whilst the aircraft will have a life of approximately twenty years, so that in fifty years from the initial decision the last of those aircraft would still be flying.

From the time a new oil reserve starts production thirty years or more would pass before it was exhausted. Therefore the decline of vital mineral reserves was predicted with a certain degree of accuracy.

I learnt that a high speed train line from the political decision to build it would take eight years to build and would be operated for at least fifty years. A new office building in the City of London or Shanghai would have a life of fifty years. A new chemical production unit would have a life of twenty years, extendable ten or more years. An automobile is planned five years in advance and is produced during a five-year period with a vehicle life of seven years, which is a total from conception to the end of the life cycle of seventeen years. Fuel cells will reign for fifty years or more, just think the internal combustion engine powered motor vehicles for well over one hundred years. The life of a military aircraft or tank is thirty or more years. So it is evident that in thirty to fifty years from now many of the things we see around us will still exist.

A politician has a life of forty years and a president or prime minister between five to fifteen years. For example historical figures such as Winston Churchill had a long political life that covered more than sixty years, many more recent European political leaders have been around for

thirty years or more and in power for fifteen. Men like Mao reigned over the Chinese Communist Party more than forty years. Middle Eastern despots ruled over countries like Syria and Iraq for over thirty years and many dictators in African countries, such as the Congo, ruled for over thirty years. Castro held Cuba in an iron grip for almost fifty forty years.

So it is easy to see over a fifty-year period many of the persons, institutions, industries and technologies remain stable.

In the second half of the twentieth century the world learnt to live with the atomic bomb, there was the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the transformation of Communist China into a capitalist economy, there was creation of the European Union that was transformed into a Federation of States, and the abrupt disappearance of the communist systems of Eastern Europe.

During the same period Apartheid had reigned and disappeared in South Africa. Wars started and ended in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. Wars blew hot and cold in Israel, between India and Pakistan. Civil wars simmered in Algeria. Rebellions broke out in Turkey with the Kurds, in Russia with the Chechens. Other wars broke out in the Balkans and against terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda.

New technologies arrived, the personal computer, the internet, the mobile telephone, satellite television, air travel was democratised, high speed train travel arrived, credit cards, electronic banking and cash points, hypermarkets and motorways ... the list was long

In the first half of our century we saw the first nuclear exchange between belligerent powers. First there was decline of the petrodollar economies, then the end of the Israeli-Arab wars. New technologies such as the fuel cell transformed industry; fusion technology gave us cheap electrical power.

On the other hand the population of the planet has increased by three billion, which is sixty million a year. Hunger has increased, war and strife has not disappeared. Islam dominates the world religions and controls the lives of half the population of the planet.

The rich have become richer; the powerful have become more powerful. The economic crisis split our century into before and after, a little like WWII in the twentieth century. The poor countries have never really

recovered from that crisis; most of Asia has seen a decline in their living standards. Only East Asia, Coastal China and Japan have progressed.

The rich could afford organ transplants and replacements through regenerative drugs. Life-spans had grown for certain but many countries life expectancy had fallen, even in Algharb.

Most Asian countries do not have the capacity to invest in new technologies, power cells for motor vehicles and electricity generation. They cannot rebuild their car factories overnight, in the West it was already difficult, but we had planned for it. It even helped us out of the economic crisis with new production plants and the service economy linked to the new technology.

India and most of Asia still continue to use petrol driven vehicles and oil fired power stations, so they are forced to have rationing for fuel and energy.

Today America is content to pull the strings from a distance whilst it lives live in comfort far from the crisis zones. They watch every corner of the planet with their satellites, leaving Europe to settle its own problems on its southern and eastern flanks.

France and England for example were transformed in the blink of an eye. My grandfather, who was, incidentally, born in 1940, told me when I was a kid that when he saw for the first time a black man, he was eight years old. He lived in central London at that time and the ‘blackman’ he saw was an American soldier. He was fourteen when the first coloured boy, he was light skinned and had no accent he could remember, arrived in his school.

That same district of London, nearby Harrow Road, which I visited as a student, it was over ninety percent Black or Indian. It was obvious to anybody, but the most blind, in the second half of the twentieth century that cities like London or Paris had undergone an extraordinary transformation. They had become greatly different to a vast part hinterland of their own country, of course there were other city areas that had also changed.

However the politicians whilst preaching integration and assimilation told the country nothing had changed, ‘there is little migration, there are few foreigners,’ in a certain manner of speaking they were right as the non-Europeans took British or French nationality. Mitterrand had the face to say there were only two hundred thousand Settlers in France in the early

nineties, he was of course right in the strictest sense, the others had been naturalised.

My father who lived in Paris for many years told me that in the nineteenth and twentieth arrondissements the whites had become a minority at the beginning of the century. We saw the result in the Zone; the majority were Blacks and Asians, both from the sub-continent and from East Asia.

Pau

They sat by the pool in the warm evening sunshine, Gabby had opened a bottle of chilled Champagne and place a bowl of olives and slices of saucisson on a table.

“Let’s drink to your safe return home.”

“I’ll drink to that,” said Ennis.

The lifted their glasses and sipped the Champagne.

“Excellent,” said Ennis, “I’m pleased to see some things haven’t changed.

“Down here in Pau we’re far from all the troubles, life is pretty much the same as it has always been. There were some troubles in Toulouse a few years back but since thing things are fine.”

“Is your family from Pau?” asked Ennis.

“Yes, as far back as we can trace it. I’m retired from business today but for over fifty years my family owned a very profitable concessionaire for Renault in here in Pau, it was started after the Second World War by my grandfather. Together with the garage and after sales service I have to say we have lived very comfortably. Being the only son I suppose I was spoilt but my father brought me up to run the business, which I did. After leaving school I went to University in Toulouse to study economics, I had a good time, didn’t do much studying so my father pulled me out and sent me to a business school for international commerce and after that I started in the business.”

He refilled the glasses and checked the barbecue where he had two enormous ribs of beef over the glowing embers.

“I enjoyed the garage, I always had a great car and was well paid with a guaranteed future.”

“Alright for some,” Stone said with a laugh.

“Well it wasn’t entirely without problems. The difficulty we experienced came suddenly with the wars in the Caucuses and the price of oil started to go up. At first it didn’t effect us much, sales continued as usual, the people in this region are fairly prosperous, but them came the problems in the Gulf with the Saudi revolution and then another oil crisis, that really hurt our sales of new cars.”

“That’s when the recession started.”

“It hit us in Europe fairly badly, I suppose it was the start of all the problems, or at least when they came to a head.”

“It was after that we the parallel currency made its first appearance,” said Stone.

“Well we had started to sell electric utility vehicles at the beginning of the millennium, not many, they were more of gadget than anything else, you known environment and all that, it gave Renault a good image. The first serious fuel cell vehicle I saw was at the Geneva car show in 2002, we knew that several constructors were working on them but it was a kind of futurist thing.”

“I remember that, it was all rather futuristic.”

“That’s what I thought but in 2005 we had the first fuel cell vehicle in our show room, it was a utility vehicle, a delivery van, it ran on natural gas that was converted to hydrogen for the fuel cell. It was mostly sold to the municipality. They worked very well.

Then with the war in the Caucuses, things started to change quickly, we saw a series of small electric cars and then fuel cell cars arriving on the market. At first the problem was recharging the batteries and then hydrogen or gas for the fuel cells, but by about 2015 about half of the vehicles we sold were fuel by alternative fuels.”

“So that was the end of the internal combustion engine.”

“No those cars were expensive and there were still a lot of problems, refuelling, maintenance, spare parts were expensive and things like that.

It was when the second Gulf War broke out, things permanently changed, it was a real crisis, not only did the price of oil rocket but rationing was introduced and for two years our business went really sour, on the other hand the demand for electric and fuel cell cars shot up, unfortunately for us at that time the car builders couldn’t follow the demand.”

“So what happened in 2020 when the oil market had returned to normal?”

“First people had lost confidence in petrol driven vehicles, the age of the hydrogen powered cars had finally arrived, they were clean almost silent and they were powered by cheap pure water and better still they had become fashionable, they were modern. The hydros as we called them represented fifty percent of the market.”

“In addition the same time public transport had been improving for a long time,” Stone chipped in, “the high speed train network covered the country, it connected with safe and fast local networks. The municipalities built tramways and underground systems in the large towns and cities, buses were given priority and many streets were dedicated solely for public transport.

The result was that the number of private cars actually started to decline because of restrictions in city centres, people used their own cars less, they used city cars that they could pick up and drop off at simple rental points and of course there were taxis.”

“Let’s see how our barbecue is doing.”

They joined him, their glasses in hand, whilst he inspected the ribs that were nicely grilling over the barbecue. He fanned the glowing embers with an old-fashioned hand bellows to give the coals a little more life.

“Well my son Philippe runs the business today, I just want to enjoy my life after more than thirty years of work, do the things I like.”

“The best thing about it all is that we don’t have to rely on imported oil and gas. Unfortunately the Arabs are still there in their millions at our door, even poorer because we don’t need their oil,” said Stone.

“And our friend le Martel is doing his best to keep them out.”

“The trouble is he reminds us of a person with a little moustache,” said Stone. “Our grandparents knew what that meant.”

“Our information sources tell us that he’s planning to go even further with his so called ‘Gallo-European’ ideas.”

“Like what?” asked Ennis.

“The idea is to recover Lost Provence.”

“That doesn’t match with his Gallo concept, I mean Provence is full of non-Gallos.”

“You’re dead right there old boy,” Stone replied getting excited. “You know what they’re going to do?”

“No.”

“Deport them, all ten million.”

“Where?”

“That’s a good question, but we’ve heard of several ideas. One is to Corsica and the second is to Africa.”

“But that’s impossible!”

“Why? Just stick them on boats and there you are! Good old fashioned ethnic cleansing.”

“That’s not the only thing they’re up to, the other is to clean out all the ghettos.”

“Ghettos?” asked Ennis.

“Yes, perhaps you don’t know about them, but the surround all big cities. It’s where they have parked all the residual non-Gallos. Those are the workers, an underclass who do all the dirty jobs.”

“As they’ve always done.”

“They don’t have any rights whatsoever. The live in what are called SRZs, that’s Special Residence Zones. They have passes to leave the zones to go to their work places and that’s all. In addition they are all tagged.”

“Tagged!”

“Yeah biological tags. Injected into them, almost impossible to get out without surgery.”

“But that’s inhuman!”

“So what! Everything is inhuman, even we have them, on a voluntary basis, progress you know, science and all that.”

“When you arrive in Paris your way out will be through the zone, you will be safe, there out passers set you up with all your papers and the rest.”

“What we would really like is that you let the outside world know what is happening here.”

“How?”

“When you get home put all of what you have seen in your newspaper and in your books. It’s the only way. This is France not some African banana republic.”

“Is it!” said Gabby. “Okay, let’s eat or this will be too cooked.”

They seated themselves at the table set out by the poolside under the branches of an old plane tree that towered above them. There was a slight breeze, a welcome relief from the heat of the afternoon. Gabby placed the first rib of beef on a plateau before them; he had cut it in thick slices at right angles towards the rib. They served themselves as Gabby poured them a Rioja, a red wine from the other side of the Pyrenees. The meat with delicious, tender, with a fine perfume of the charcoal grill and olive oil spiced with garlic.

“What kind of opposition exists in France today.”

“Very little from the so called Gallos, the others keep their mouths shut or it’s out for them or worse.”

“But the French approve?”

“Yes, the vast majority do, live has improved. They don’t depend on oil any more. Things are cheaper because of low energy costs. Jobs are evenly distributed for those who conform.”

“Who are the non-conformists?”

“At the bottom of the scale are the Clodos, Alcolos and Drogos. They took advantage of being Gallos for a certain time but now the government has declared war on them.

Then there are the Socialos, but they are not really serious, they dream of the past when they had to defend their jobs, real jobs. Today jobs are a system for the distribution of wealth; I know that was always the case, but now its different. Most jobs are invented and distributed on the basis of conformism. The real jobs belong to the establishment that supports le Martel's system, a sort of nomenclatura."

"But is there a real opposition?"

"Yes, people like us, an underground opposition. We are not resistance fighters, but we help those who are victims of the system. What are our political ideals, they're not clear to be honest, we don't want to go back to the chaos before le Martel, we don't want the country to be invaded," he said alluding to the Caliphate. "We don't want to be dominated by Brussels."

It seemed to Ennis that they were honest and sincere people but they were torn between a system that they refused and an unacceptable alternative.

He turned to Stone, "If you were in power what would you do?"

"First we'd introduce democracy, then with the wealth and knowledge we have, we'd try to improve the lot of those countries in difficulty."

"What about the Caliphate."

"We'd try to establish normal relations."

"And Provence?"

"Well we wouldn't open the doors at once, we'd help them to build a viable economy, we'd promote a secular society."

"And if they didn't want that."

"They must accept that, we don't want a volatile Islamic state in Provence."

"You still call it Provence."

"It is!"

Ennis had his answer, for them it was a confrontation between civilisations, with the enemy's front established on the French shore of the Mediterranean.

A Chance Meeting

Ennis remembered le Martel paraphrasing the words spoken by General de Gaulle almost one hundred years before, ‘It’s good that there are yellow Frenchmen, black and brown Frenchmen ... on condition that they remain a small minority. Otherwise France will not be France.’

The Arabisation of the Maghrib was accelerated by Rashidun. It had already been commenced many years earlier by the FLN in Algeria with the suppression of the language of the ex-Colonial power. The French language had nothing to do with the Algerian people, its culture or traditions. Even the presence of a Francophone press was in contradiction with the Algerian constitution. An Algerian intellectual said ‘French is a language to be used when talking to dogs.’

It was Sunday morning and Ennis was up early. He told Guiglione that he wanted to take a walk to explore the district and to see if he could buy an English newspaper at the Bastille as he had done years earlier. Perhaps he could find a ‘Sunday Times’ or even his own ‘International Herald’.

He walked down the Faubourg Saint Antoine, the weather was fine and quiet, it was a pleasure to breathe the cool morning air under the leafy plane trees. He had thought of taking the Magnotram but finally preferred to walk. It was about two kilometres and would give him some exercise. He stopped before a Lebanese restaurant; cosmopolitan restaurants were as fashionable as ever in Paris, they were even run by foreigners who were part of the useful foreign quota who held privileged residence permits.

As he approached the quarter of Aligre the shops were opened with shoppers making their Sunday market. The atmosphere was more orderly then he remembered, there were still the piles of market refuse, but it was all much more sedate, more bourgeois.

The district was much more up-market, the buildings though old were renovated and well maintained; there were art galleries and smart cafés.

He turned into rue Charonne and then into rue Lappe. It had not changed, modish though not really chic restaurants lined both sides of the narrow street. He stopped before what had been probably a restaurant, it had been transformed into a temporary gallery, there was a poster with the image of Che Guevara. He peered inside, there were one or two visitors, it was still early. The walls were in white plaster blocks covered with posters of Cuba and its heroes.

It was obscure; the theme was a tribute to the lost revolution. They were selling tee shirts and in the darkness flickered a slide show of the great moments in the history of the revolution, the dialogue was in English.

He flipped through the pages of the books on sale; the Che had never ceased to be popular theme with the intellectuals and art world. He was a folk hero like Marylyn Monroe, John Lennon and JFK.

“Mon ami!” He felt a hand on his shoulder and half turning was surprised to see an old friend, Frank Ellaert, a successful painter he had known some years earlier. “It’s better to die young than in shame and misery! How are you my old friend, what’s brought you to Gai Paris?”

“Frank, what a surprise!”

“Let’s go and take a coffee and croissant chez-moi, my gallery is just down the street.”

“So how’s life,” said Ennis inspecting his friend.

“Fine, fine, I thought it was you but I wasn’t sure, I followed you from rue Charonne, I can’t believe it.”

“What are you doing here, in France I mean?”

“I left New York about five years ago, I had enough, France looked more exciting I suppose, I was looking for inspiration” he said laughing.

Frank held Ennis back with one hand whilst he put his head out looking up and down rue du Lappe. They walked back towards rue Charonne and entered by a large iron gate through an arched coach way. They were in a broad courtyard typical of the buildings of the Bastille district. Ellaert pointed to the left where Ennis saw the large window of what was the gallery. They entered and Ennis recognised the artistic style of his friend’s oils that hung on the walls.

“Well it looks like you’re still very productive.”

“There’s plenty of ideas in France today contrary to what you might think.”

“There’s no political problems?” said Ennis looking at the paintings whose message was clearly anti-establishment.

“No, artist’s privilege, or licence, what ever you like,” he said with a wave of his hand laughing. They can they have say free speech and artistic expression.”

He looked through the window left and right making sure that they had not been followed.

“Tell me John,” he lowered his voice, “is it you that they’re after?”

“Unfortunately, yes.”

“Have you been followed?”

“No, that is I’m pretty sure I haven’t.”

“Be very careful John, they can tag you without you knowing it with an invisible nanocell then follow you anywhere, you’ll lead them to your friends and the opposition.”

“I have friends who are helping me.”

“Good, I don’t want to know the details but whatever help you need from me just ask.”

“I appreciate that.”

“Let’s get the coffee going.” He turned towards a percolator and switched it on, then put the fresh croissants on a plate. “I imagine all I’ve heard about you on the media is some kind of machination.”

“Yeah, that’s about it.”

“Listen, maybe your friends haven’t told you but something is going on, I don’t know exactly what, but there’s been a lot of movements going on towards Lachaise. For the last few days there’s been nothing but bus loads of Guards taking up position, it’s not far along rue Charonne about a kilometre from here. Tonight I’m leaving for Monaco, I’d do the same if I was you.”

“Why Monaco?”

“You’d be safe their, it’s neutral.”

“Neutral?”

“In a certain manner of speaking it is. It was always independent and then in the Evian Agreement other territories were added to Monaco.”

“Tell me something about the background to Monaco’s independence then? Monaco seems to have played a strange kind of role in the conflict between France and Algharb.”

He told him how the Côte d’Azur had become a Demilitarised Region, one hundred kilometres long from the Italian frontier in the east to Toulon in the west, a narrow strip of territory only fifteen kilometres at its widest. It had been the scene of fierce fighting around Nice during the uprising when a local militia had been formed under the banner of Autonomy Niçoises, fighting at the same time rebels and the Nationalist forces.

Nice had been attached to France in 1860; it had been part of the Italian province of Piedmont. In 1799 Napoleon had first attached it to France and in 1815 it had been returned to Victor Emanuel. During the Italian wars it chose its attachment to France by referendum.

Under the cease-fire agreement it had been declared a demilitarised zone. Under the terms of the Evian Treaty a referendum had been held when its population had voted for its attachment to the Principality of Monaco refusing the Nationalist government in Paris.

Monaco had become an autonomous region of France after the Prince had failed to produce a male heir to the throne to the chagrin of its inhabitants. The son of the Princess inherited the title of Prince of Monaco without authority until he was restored as head of state following the separation from France.

The Principality of Monaco and the Côte d’Azur was the home of the rich and wealthy who had fled Paris, Algharb, the Greater Levant, Arabia and the Caliphate. It was a cosmopolitan paradise for those who could fulfil the requirements for permanent residence. It was also a haven for many simpler Settlers who provided the needs and services for the wealthy. The Principality bathed in prosperity next to its impoverished neighbour.

Monaco was accused by its neighbours and the Federation of being a haven for financial crime that was nothing new. However Monaco as

Algharb enjoyed a particular legal status within the Federation, they were not recognised as independent states, only as autonomous regions of France. They were therefore under the responsibility of Paris who in reality exercised little or no control over the governments of the two regions.

The business capital of Monaco was Nice with its six hundred thousand inhabitants whilst Monte-Carlo was the economic and administrative capital. Capital had flooded into Monaco after its status had been endorsed by Brussels. The Côte d'Azur remained the playground for the wealthy and the stars. Nice-Monte-Carlo outshone Beirut as the capital of the Mediterranean.

"As you see it's a bit of a long story but interesting."

"But how did Monaco and Nice get together?"

"As you can imagine the history of Monaco and Nice is fairly complicated. If we start in the middle of the 19th century, Nice still belonged to Italy. But King Immanuel, sold Nice to Napoleon III in exchange for French financial and military help," explained Frank.

"I see, very democratic."

"As a matter of fact yes, because the Niçoises were allowed to vote, even though Garibaldi, who was born in Nice, urged them to vote no. Apparently the voting booths were manned by units of the French army," he laughed, "I suppose this may have affected the outcome."

"Nothing like a little bit of friendly persuasion."

"It was all a tug of war between France and the Italian states. In 1792, the French Army had invaded Savoy and the County of Nice. Then Nice asked that the County become French and the department of the Alpes Maritimes was created. At the same moment Monaco asked to be attached to France and so Monaco, Menton and Roquebrune were joined to the Republic."

"Perhaps the Italian connection explains why France was reluctant to take over Monaco."

"Maybe, but there were many changes that followed."

"Okay, let me continue."

"Sure."

“It wasn’t so simple. After the Napoleonic wars, Nice was returned to the King of Sardinia. Monaco was once again under its Prince.”

“When did Nice become French then?”

“That was in 1860, Nice, with the disputed territories of Menton and Roquebrune, were ceded to France by the King of Sardinia. It was in return for the military help given to him to win over the Italian province of Milan. France then recognized the sovereignty of Monaco and gave the Prince the title of Most Serene Highness. Monaco in return abandoning all its claims on Menton and Roquebrune.”

“Complicated,” said Ennis bewildered by nineteenth century European history. "What happened to the princes then?”

“Actually that goes back to the French Revolution when Monaco was annexed by France and the wife of Joseph Grimaldi was guillotined. After, when Napoleon was finally defeated, the first Treaty of Paris in 1814 restored pre-revolutionary rights to Monaco and the Grimaldi family, then putting Monaco under the protectorate of the King of Sardinia under the treaty of Vienna in 1815.”

“That’s back to the Italian princes.”

“Right, but in 1848, Menton and Roquebrune declared themselves free cities under the protectorate of Sardinia making them part of the district of Nice.

“When Prince Charles came to the throne, he gave the towns of Menton and Roquebrune to France and because of that the Principality lost eighty percent of its territory, on the other hand its independence was recognized.”

“At least the Grimaldis survived.”

“Yes, they were pretty good at that. I suppose you could say that Monaco’s history is that of the Grimaldi family. In 1918 the treaty with France stated that should the Grimaldis die out, Monaco would become an autonomous state of France.”

“That’s what has happened today?”

“One of the useful articles of the treaty of 1918, from France’s point of view, was that Monaco promised France not to cede all or part of the

principality to any power other than France, which in part explains the independence of Monaco today."

"Is the Prince the absolute ruler?"

"No, back in 1911, Prince Albert I promulgated the first Constitution, which shared legislative power between the Prince and a National Council elected by universal suffrage. However substantial powers remained in Prince's hands."

"So that's why France doesn't interfere too much."

"No. In 2002 the government of Monaco changed the law to ensure that if the Prince was childless, then the Princesses or their children could inherit the throne. Before it barely covered a couple of square kilometres and was not a full member of the Federation. Residence permits were given to wealthy Federation citizens, those who could justify an obligatory minimum of three months annual residence by purchase or rental of a residence at the astronomical prices of the principality."

"Right, so I suppose as long as long as things stay calm and there's no political interference in Algharb. It's a kind of safe haven."

"The Prince of Monaco has an ambiguous attitude towards the Renaissance Party in Paris. He detests them but has accepted the protection of le Martel under a defence pact against incursion from Algharb. The Prince's government operates its own policies against foreigners of all kinds, it accepted the rich and law abiding, but the most draconian laws are applied to foreigners found guilty of crimes and who are promptly transferred to the appropriate frontier post with Algharb, France or Italy, as were all infiltrators, without the least formality.

"As you say it's for the wealthy and powerful."

"Convenient, maybe I'll give it a try," he said regretting his decision to head up to Paris.

They drank their coffee and ate the croissants talking about Frank's paintings. It occurred to Ennis that sitting there chatting about art was almost as surrealist as Frank's paintings, they talked of art as Ennis who was tracked for murder in a city that was on the brink of events that would change the future of France.

They said goodbye and Ennis left walking in the direction of Pere Lachaise drawn by a dangerous curiosity. The rue Charonne went almost directly east towards the 20th district. It was not very broad and rose gently crossing several large avenues that led to Place de la Nation. As he progressed the district became less smart, it was more working class, the street was lined with small shops and cafés. At Avenue Philippe Auguste the road was barred by a white RASE bus. Several Guards, who were heavily armed, inspected the identity cards of those who wished to continue further up the street. Ennis remained on the opposite side of the avenue observing the scene. He could see the street was lined with buses and other vehicles. He turned right and headed towards Nation. At almost every street to the left it was the same scene, barriers with Guards. Frank was right, something was going on.

Fifteen minutes later he arrived back at the apartment. Guiglione seemed relieved to see him.

“What did you see?” he asked, obviously not interested in his impressions as a tourist.

“There are Guards everywhere along Philippe Auguste.”

“Yes, it looks like they are getting ready to go into the Zone. We don’t have much time. I’m sorry but we’d better get going as soon as you’ve got your things together.”

“I met an old friend.”

“Who!”

“Don’t worry he’s an American who I’ve know for years, a painter.”

“Be careful, you can’t know who people are with or what their motives are.”

“He’s not for le Martel.”

“Maybe, and even if he’s not he could be watched.”

Jews and Arabs

The co-existence between Jews and Arabs had not always been an unhappy one, as the history of Andalusia demonstrates. In Algharb many Jews and Arabs saw the historic parallel of a rich Mediterranean land opened to a new vision of the future. Many Israelis arrived before and after the partition to escape the dangers of the Turkish Levant hoping to find a new life far from the turmoil of a century of hope and despair.

To many Arabs the origin of their problems at the beginning of the twenty-first century could be traced back to 1843 when Yehuda Alkali, a rabbi of Sarajevo, proposed the Jews should return to the Holy Land, then a backward little populated corner of the polyglot pluralistic Ottoman Empire, a sprawling state of vastly diverse peoples with Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews and Arabs scattered across its vast territory in a heterogeneous union without frontiers.

After WWI the House of Saud became the ruler of Arabia. They were Wahabites, then a relatively obscure Arabian branch of Islam that preached a return to a pure authentic Islam of the Prophet. For most Arabs of the Peninsular Islam is a brotherhood of believers to whom secularism has no place, the past tolerance under the Ottomans was consigned to history.

To the Saudis and their followers religion had become the basis of their power and authority and served as their reference and identity, infidels were rejected. Justice was administered by the religious government, in the form of Islamic law and custom, as their duty to their subjects whose place it was to obey. They saw their enemy, Israel, as a regional superpower that possessed the bomb and enjoyed the protection of American Zionism.

The regime of Hassan bin Ibrani was not blind to the fact. They realised that a prosperous Algharb was their hope for the future. It was an experiment that had to work, the alternative was too grim to imagine, the re-occupation by France and the possible expulsion of the Muslims. Bin Ibrani knew what was in le Martel's mind; his spies had not wasted their time. He also knew that there were a great many opposing forces all to ready to take his place and install a regime that would certainly provoke d’Albignac's ire.

Hassan bin Ibrani’s grandparents had been pied-noirs, even his parents had been born in Fez, Morocco, he had a grudging admiration for the Jews

and knew their history in North Africa by heart. He had read the history of the Jews written by Josephus on many occasions, the greatest lesson was not to provoke the wrath of the Romans who would destroy him.

Josephus had written of the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King, conquests that extended as far west as the Morocco and the Iberian Peninsula. Some modern historians believe that the first Jewish settlements in that region were inhabited by Jews exiled there by the King. It appears that they arrived in that region at about the same time as the Greek merchants that swept across the Mediterranean settling among the Celtic and Iberians tribes who had lived there from prehistoric times.

Whenever bin Ibrani read how in 135 AD, Rome had crushed the Jewish Revolt in Israel, it reminded him of the rising of the Muslims in Marseille. The difference in modern times was that those forced to flee France had been the Muslims, to escape French revenge and oppression.

The Jews had been forced to flee Israel from the oppression of Rome. Josephus described how their ancestral homeland, Israel, was occupied by the Romans and transformed into a Roman province. Some of the Jews immigrated to Italy and Spain whilst others spread westwards along the North African coast. In Spain Jewish life flourished under the Romans in their rich provinces for hundreds of years whilst Rome was tolerant and prosperous.

As the Roman Empire declined in the fourth century so did the Jewish way of life with and the introduction of Christianity as the state religion conversion to Judaism became a crime punishable by death.

In the fifth century the Visigoths overran Spain that had become mostly catholic, those who were baptised. Jews became excluded possibly by the news that in the wars between the Byzantium and Persian Empires the Jews had sided with the Persians against Christian Byzantium.

During the rule of intolerant kings, the Jews would flee to Morocco or France. The Visigoth King Erwig ordained that all transactions between Christians and Jews should commence with the Lord's Prayer and a dish of pork.

The Muslim conquest of Spain was another victory in the process of Islamic expansion. A reconnaissance party sent to survey the situation in Spain by an Arab general named Tarifa found them welcomed as liberators

by the disgruntled population and persecuted Jews. Encouraged, the Arabs sent a larger invading force in 711; within four years almost all of Spain had capitulated to the Arab invaders. Sicily followed soon after, until the westward expansion of Islam was stopped 732, by the Battle of Tours, in France.

The conquest of Islam, Spain, fell under the authority Caliph of Damascus. The Spanish population was of great diversity, composed of Christians and Jews to who were then added invaders composed of Berbers, Syrians, Egyptians and Yemenites. The result was Muslim Spain with its great cultural and linguistic diversity, which accounted for its instability and intellectual effervescence.

Jews aided the invaders, many of those who had fled past persecutions returning with the Islamic conquerors and creating a wave of invading Settlers. Soon Jewish settlement transformed Spain as the spiritual centre of Jewish thought.

In Muslim society the Jews and Christians were permitted to worship in their own tradition though they were forced to wear clothing of special colour and styles. Limitations were set on the size and building of new churches and synagogues with a ban against conspicuous worship.

The Arab legend of Andalusia grew under the Umayyad emirate in Cordoba. They established a solid army and bureaucracy and unified the divided country. Their desire to equal the splendour of Baghdad ensured that the Persian traditions of statecraft, social life, art and architecture continued to flower, as would new forms of cultural expression. By the 10th century, Cordoba was a capital city unequalled in splendour by the west or the Islamic east. The Islamic legend tells of Allah creating the world and the Spanish province of Andalusia asking for five things: clear skies, a sea well stocked with fish, trees laden with every imaginable fruit, beautiful women and a just government. Allah agreed to every one but the last, having decided that if all were granted, Andalusia would rival Paradise.

Cordoba had a population of two hundred thousand, with three thousand public baths, the streets were paved and illuminated, hundreds of villas lined the river landscaped with tropical trees, fountains and waterfalls, ceramic tiled basins and reflective pools. There were thriving market centres around the city. Cultural prospered with seventy libraries, schools of

architecture and schools specifically for the translation of classic works into Arabic.

New and profitable crops were introduced into the economy, citrus fruits, bananas, figs, cinnamon and almonds. The introduction of cotton, silk, flax and wool produced the cash needed to satisfy the growing prosperity.

In spite of this progress, discord and turbulence was never far away. Christians, under Islamic discriminatory laws, appealed to neighbouring Christian rulers to intervene on their behalf. New Christian converts to Islam were considered with suspicion by the Arabs and had little possibility of gaining any real power in their Islamic society. The Jews alone and without allies seemed to have no claims to historical sovereignty over Spain. They were the Sephardim, or Spanish in Hebrew.

As many Muslims left Spain to study with famous scholars in North Africa, Cairo and Persia, so did Jewish scholars travel to the Jewish intellectual centres like those of Yeshivot on the Tunisian coast and in Baghdad where the Babylonian Talmud had been written.

International trade was the paths along which many Jewish families acquired prestige in Muslim Spain. It was common for Jews to travel great distances and they were noted as regular passengers on boats commuting between Seville and Alexandria. The business partnerships and formal friendships between Jewish, Muslim and Christian families were signs of a peaceful and profitable coexistence between those communities groups at that time.

Some of these trading companies acquired huge monopolies due to factors particular to medieval Jewry. Muslims were excluded from European markets and Christians were barred from Islamic waters. Only Jews could travel freely as commercial agents in both realms. And Jews were assured hospitality among other Jews living all along the trade routes. Jewish multilingualism further facilitated the expansion of trade.

Because of their complex history, Jewish traders were able to converse in Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Greek as well as the languages of the Franks, the Andalusians and the Slavs. It is the same today, the Israelis speak Hebrew and Arabic, whilst those from North Africa spoke French, and others spoke Russian, Persian or English. In history the lingua franca of the Jewish traders and the Jewish communities they visited was Hebrew.

Cordoba was the centre of Andalusian government and it was, for a while, to become the centre of Sephardim Jewish life as well. Sephardim assimilation into Spanish society took many forms. Jews worked as vintners, farmers, traders as we have discussed, members of the royal court, physicians, scientists, textile workers; but a much more important role was that of cultural intermediary.

The Jews were well equipped to arbitrate between the mutually exclusive and hostile worlds of Christianity and Islam because they had lived in the very heartland of both worlds. In the third millennium they continued to be the intermediaries between Paris and Algharb, at the best they were considered neutral and at worse suspected of every trickery imaginable.

Algharb had become the western capital of the Jews following the absorption of Israel into the Greater Turkish Levant; the psychological loss of independence was great for many who refused to be bound to a creeping orientalisation of their way of life and the risk of cohabitation with the Arabs whom they had fought for a century.

The Golden Age could not have happened without the involvement of outstanding Sephardim in government and its bureaucracy. They made the ground fertile for the cultural explosion that was to follow. But the Golden Age of Jewish life was more than politics and administration. It was art and science, culture and philosophy.

The Jewish courtiers shared a cultural orientation and political ethos with the ruling Muslims. Their secular education was exceedingly broad and included astronomy, astrology, geometry, optics, calligraphy, rhetoric and language. When one went to see a court physician, the patient would be talking to a poet, philosopher, linguist as well as a physician.

To some extent, the history of the Jews in Muslim Spain is indeed a history of huge personalities who dominated the Jewish communities with their charisma while negotiating themselves into Gentile society. These individuals integrated Jewish traditions with Arabic and Islamic culture to create a new Jewish dynamic. Jewish people would not again experience such a synthesis of Judaic culture and thought until the modern era.

Rejection

What were the reasons for a revolt? Who were unhappy and with what? The origins of the revolt ran deep. The revolt had been led by both recent non-Gallos Settlers and the Neo French. The rebels were not only the Caliphate Arabs but also the sons and daughters of the first wave of Settlers long installed in France, they were called the Neo-French, the Beurs and Beurettes, born and educated in France of parents born and educated in France. The majority of whom had lost all contact with the lands of their grandparents and even more so since the installation of the Caliphate.

The population pressure from the Caliphate to France had intensified to levels never before seen, as war and strife pushed the young generation to escape the poverty trap that faced them and the incapacity of their leaders to provide them with jobs.

In the first decades of the century the only hope of millions of North Africans was to move to Europe. The doors of the Arab countries of the Gulf had slowly closed as oil started its long decline.

The population of the Caliphate and the Turkish Levant had more than doubled over the first decades of the century. The population of Egypt, whose territory was over ninety percent desert, had reached a staggering one hundred million, all crowded onto less than five percent of its territory. It was a human disaster in terms of poverty, misery and environment. During the same period the European Federation had approached zero growth.

The man in the street in France resented the presence of the Arabo-Muslims; to him they were the evidence of what was no longer a creeping but massive invasion from the Caliphate, responsible for the ills of France, with its unemployment and social problems. Without them France would have been a prosperous post-industrial country.

Unlike the first wave of Settlers that came to France from North Africa in the second half of the last century as unskilled labourers, the Beurs refused the humble place in society that had been that of their parents.

The Beurs were easily identified by the Gallos because of their North-African appearance, their darker skins and often wiry hair, and for many, their specific style and body language. That was part of the problem of their integration; they can easily be singled out by the Gallos who feel felt threatened by what was perceived as a Beurs culture that certainly bore vestiges of their settler background.

The New French Beurs were faced with mounting intolerance as the flood from the Caliphate increased, many sought to escape by identifying themselves entirely with the fellow citizens, the Gallos. It rarely worked and as a result they adopted more and more rebellious attitudes. Better educated than their parents and with more in common with the rest of the French of their generation with the same ambitions, they were forced by apartheid into adopting their own sub-cultural styles and language. They were the children of a forgotten generation.

Little difference was made by the man in the street between the New French and the recent arrivals from the Caliphate and Levant. He saw the Beurs' search for acceptance and equality as factors responsible for rising levels unemployment, the dire situation of the country’s social security system as well violence, crime, drugs and religious fanaticism.

In trying to avoid exacerbating the situation the authorities instructed institutions and school not to bow to religious pressure by rejecting ostentatious religious signs. This approach was based on the republican principle of secularism that had been observed almost without question for a century and was under threat. The demands for special exceptions were perceived by most of Gallo French society as a threat to their culture and traditions.

The situation of the New French Beurs was also linked to the political turmoil in the Caliphate. The recurring civil war that raged in the Caliphate between the Government and secularist reform movements flowed over into France as it targeted foreigners as well as Arab intellectuals, university teachers, journalists, and any vocal opponent to terrorism. The murder of the human rights supporters in Algiers and Rabat had received considerable media coverage.

Thousands of people lost their lives in the oppression by the authorities of the Caliphate against dissidents whilst the opposition responded with

bombs and other terrorist acts. The attitude of the French to the civil war was radicalised as the war flowed over into France, the home of several millions of Caliphate Arabs. Bombs were exploded in the centre of Paris and in Marseille.

The link was made to the Caliphates population in France. It was impossible that such acts of terrorism be carried out without inside help. The accusation was extended to the Beurs, many of whom had sympathies with the different factions of the terrorist movements. The Beurs were a visible target and were made scapegoats, accused of being responsible for all the evils of a war that for the most part did not concern them.

The French saw the inner suburbs with their cités where most Settlers and Neos lived as zones of danger, which were spawning grounds for terrorism, violence and crime. The cités consisted of high-rise apartments buildings that were built in the last century for the French working classes. The cités had little amenities such as shopping centres, cinemas, easy access to public transport, social facilities. There were few jobs, sports facilities or recreation areas.

With the rate of unemployment at its highest level ever in France all the ingredients for an explosion were assembled as riots and pitched battles with police became regular events. Across the country over two hundred such cités were considered no-go zones by the police, places where the instant the police arrived, crowds of violent youths assembled ready to do battle, Molotov cocktails were thrown, ambushes set up, and cars burnt. The scene was set for an explosion of hatred whilst politicians totally out of contact with reality announced ineffectual programmes to rock the Gallo voters into complacency and the gauche caviar preached their pretentious leftist ideas from a safe distance in their bourgeois comfort in the smart districts of Paris.

A Bomb

Ennis chose a café with a good view across Place de la Bastille. He picked up morning newspaper from the rack and settled himself at a table ordering a coffee from the waiter. The headlines announced that late the previous evening the National Marine had seized a ship carrying fifty tons of weapons and ammunition for a terrorist organisation. He was astonished to read ‘the shipment was believed to have been coordinated by the American John Ennis, a suspected terrorist sympathiser, who is currently sought by the police of Algharb on murder charges’.

The report described how a naval commando force seized the ship and its crew, some 100 km off the coast of Algharb. The ship was carrying a variety of weaponry; among them were short and long-range rockets, anti-tank missiles, mortars, mines, explosives and sniper rifles. The Caliphate is undeniably linked to this arms smuggling attempt. Intelligence reports that the Caliphate purchased the ship and was responsible for shipping the arms it to Algharb. The financing of the whole operation was carried out subversively by the Caliphate.

The captain of the ship has been identified as a senior officer in the Caliphate military forces. This attempt confirms the terrorist organisations are intent on carrying out their attacks against Algharb deep within its territory. This smuggling contradicts the agreements between the Nation de France and the Caliphate. Once again it clearly demonstrates that the Caliphate has not intention of respecting international agreements.

If the weapons were to reach the hands of the terrorist organizations it would totally transform the nature of their attacks against Algharb. The seizure has saved the lives of numerous innocent people.

The editorial cried out, ‘We are witnessing the double standards of the Caliphate that is sponsoring a terrorist organisation. The Caliphate and other terrorist states are dedicated to the overthrow of the President bin Ibrani and the instauration of an Islamic state.

On the public TS, Ennis watched the image of le Martel, he had difficulty in hearing what was being said, but it appeared to be a grave declaration. Straining over the noise of the café he heard the word ‘operation’ mentioned several times. Albignac denounced a terrorist complot against the Capital by extremist politico-religious elements that had infiltrated the Paris SRZ. They had planned to destabilise the Nation by

terror and chaos through a biological attack creating an epidemic by spreading a deadly filovirus.

He announced to the Nation that the Special Residential Zone in the Capital was at that moment being invested by specialist National Biological Warfare Defence units. A total quarantine was declared and the population of the Temporary Guest Workers SRZ would be immediately evacuated under the responsibility of the National Armed Security Enforcement Brigade.

A state of emergency was declared for the duration of the crisis, but le Martel reassured the country that there was no danger for the population of the capital, a curfew would be declared so that the humanitarian operations could be carried out efficiently.

He declared the SRZ a hotbed of violent radical ideas aimed at destabilising the Nation and that very morning cowardly attacks had been perpetrated by the terrorists against the sanitary and humanitarian services that had gone to the aid of the SRZ population.

His announced the government's decision to quarantine the population of the SRZ to avoid all risk of contamination. The Zone would be decontaminated and at the end of the quarantine period a vast programme of reconstruction would be undertaken to transform the SRZ. In addition "slum dwellings, inherited from the pre-Restoration period, would be demolished and parks created, new residences would be built to provide worthy accommodation for our Temporary Sojourn Workers, so to make their stay in the Nation an agreeable one for them and us".

Ennis left the café plunged deep into his thoughts. The situation was becoming too complicated and it was urgent to quit France. He walked towards the Magnotram stop, several people waited. A few metres away were two Guards. A tall dark skinned young man wearing a black leather pilot's jacket joined the waiting queue next to several teenage girls; he flirted with one of the girls. Ennis could not help thinking that he looked out of place. One of the Guards nodded to the other and the moved forward, they recognised a Zonard.

Ennis looked at the young man, who had also seen the Guards move, it did not seem to worry him. As Ennis watched the scene he locked eyes with the Zonard, he was probably an Arab, his face paled and he seemed to

freeze. He had switched off, showing no emotion. Something instinctive told Ennis to move on as he saw the Guards approach. He turned and walked towards the Metro entrance.

As he descended the steps he glanced back, the young man was slowly unbuttoning his jacket, the two Guards were within arms reach, he slipped his hand inside the jacket, there was a blinding flash. The young man was gone, obliterated.

The blast was so intense that it tore limbs from the victims' bodies, scattering body parts across Place de la Bastille, the bomber was vaporised, the two Guards and the teenage girl with him.

Bodies lay everywhere, there was a silence before the screams and the moans started. Twelve people were killed and dozens injured.

Ennis felt some wet on his face, it was blood, he was not hurt. Blood and limbs had been thrown everywhere by the blast. He stepped over a man's left leg, without trousers, but still with a sock on the foot, there was flesh virtually everywhere.

The carnage and destruction was unbelievable. The front of the Magnotram that had just arrived at the moment of the explosion was covered in blood, a passing hydro had its windows blown out, its doors crumpled in.

Ennis wiped his face and hurried towards Line 1. A Metro was waiting with its doors open. It was stopped following the explosion, passengers stood on the platform. They looked at him.

“What’s happened?” a man asked.

“A suicide bombing.”

Who, where, when, the questions came fast and furious. The anger of the Parisians boiled over.

“They should shot!” cried a woman.

“Guillotined!” shouted a man.

Ennis, shocked, was taken to one of the first aid vehicle that was quickly on the scene of the bombing, he was checked over by a young paramedic who offered him a mild sedative that he declined. He pulled himself together wiping the blood from his face and dust from his clothes, he then

headed back to the safe house by foot, along rue Charonne, reaching the run-down three story town house that faced the Zone alley some minutes later. There he found Poiget and together they returned into the zone through the maze of ancient underground cellars.

Poiget informed him that the bombing that been perpetrated by a group of freedom fighters led by an Islamist named Jamil Assloum whose goal was to transform France into a multi-ethnic society based on the model of New England in the hope that they could win back their lost rights

The bombings, which spread fear and despair across the Nation, proved to be the deadliest weapon in the terrorist's arsenal against le Martel's regime. The bombings and other attacks had already claimed dozens of lives.

That evening they ate in a small café that served couscous and tagine to its Maghribi regulars. They sat at a table in a back corner of the small café, a table for four persons. After eating they ordered coffee and a man joined them discretely slipping onto the chair with his back to the doorway.

Poiget introduced him to Ennis. It was Jamil Assloum.

"My friend I am pleased to meet you, Philippe has told me about you. If you need our help just ask me, we shall look after you, inshallah!"

Ennis felt revolt and disgust at the man who had been responsible for the terrible attack, but he was in no position to judge.

"Tell me about your objectives."

"Our struggle is for a just society, where we can all live together as before."

"Are you for Algharb?"

"No, we did not want partition, we are French. We are against the fascists, whether they are here in Paris or in Medina Hurriya. Even if we can't reach our goal to end the Zones and Ethnic Laws and the right to a normal life, we are inflicting losses on the fascists," he said with a quiet passion. "Le Martel's regime will have no stability and no security until the Ethnics Laws are abolished. Our heroes that they call 'suicide bombers' are the future of our multi-ethnic nation."

“When I talk to our young men they say, ‘More bombing will deliver us,’ and I cannot disappoint them. They don't have to wait long our moment is at hand.”

Another young man joined them at the table. Assloum introduced him as a Rachid, a volunteer, a hero of the anti-fascist resistance, then asked him to describe their objectives.

“Our movement has from five to twenty volunteers awaiting orders to carry out suicide attacks. We have thousands of men ready to take up arms,” said Rachid. He was young, not more than twenty or so thought Ennis. He spoke with the macho accent of the Zonards and it was evident that he had little formal education.

“At our Islamic school in the Zone, we teach our volunteers how to kill what ever the sacrifice. To transform their bodies into bombs that will blast the flesh of Zionists of Boublil, the sons of pigs and monkeys,” Rachid said. “We will tear their bodies into little pieces and cause them more pain than they will ever know.”

“Our reward is the virgins awaiting our pleasure in paradise,” he said referring to one of the rewards awaiting martyrs.

Assloum looked at his watch, made a sign, they rose and the two resistance fighters excused themselves, the moment had come, they quietly slipped out of the café nodding discretely to older men who murmured calling on Allah to bless them. Maybe it would be that night, maybe tomorrow; they would fight alongside the Zonards, ready to offer their lives in the coming battle against the fascist Guards of Boublil.

Poiget ordered two more coffees. “You don't start educating a martyr at age twenty-two.” He knew hat he was talking about, he was an expert in a terrorism and ex-officer in Boublil’s secret service who had revolted at the injustice of the system. "You start at kindergarten so by the time he's twenty-two, he's eager for the opportunity to sacrifice his life."

He described how suicide bombers had arrived at their deadly missions by a different route. They turned themselves into human bombs as a consequence of their oppression by the Nation and their hopeless lives in the Zones.

The leaders of the MEF explained Poiget, most of whom could be described as charismatic religious leaders, such as Assloum, looked for several qualification in potential recruits, an intense interest in Islam, a hatred for the Gallos, a clean criminal record and especially a Gallo type appearance so as not to raise the suspicions of Henri Boublil's Special Intelligence Services.

Rachid Tawil, the perpetrator of the Bastille bombing attack, had been only twenty years old and had all those qualifications. "He had been a devout Muslim who used to pray, observed fasting and performed all his religious obligations to the letter and spirit," Poiget told Ennis. "He was one of six children, he left Medina Hurriya, for the Capital to earn money to support his family, he worked as a labourer on construction sites."

In the Zone, he and two other Algharbis attended an illegal mosque where the Imam, a fanatical follower of the Grande Caliph, persuaded them to join a special Islamic study group run by a faction that called itself Islam's Brothers in Arms. They were to be eventually trained to become freedom fighters and suicide bombers, specialised in attacks in the Capital itself.

At the Brother's classes, recruits are reminded of how the Nations banished the Faithful with the collaboration of the traitor Hassan bin Ibrani, and the barbaric treatment of Zonards. The Prophet had called for Muslims to wage war against infidels. 'Kill the idolaters wherever you find them,' was the slogan of the Imam.

The agents of the SSF had infiltrated the terrorist organisations with orders to arrest or assassinate leaders such as the Imam.

"If someone confiscated your home, deports your family and friends, imprison you in a ghetto wouldn't you want to fight for your rights?" the Poiget asked.

He told Ennis how the families of the suicide bombers were aided, their pictures would be posted in schools and mosques in Algharb and in the Caliphate, and that they were persuaded they would be rewarded with a special place in heaven, seventy-two virgins awaited them, the younger volunteer Rachid had told them. The Koran described them as 'beautiful like rubies, with complexions like diamonds and pearls' and the martyrs and

virgins shall ‘delight themselves, lying on green cushions and beautiful carpets’.

“That fact is however, most of the bombers don’t sign up for martyrdom for the promise of unlimited sex. They join because of their absolute devotion to God and their desire to die with Gallo blood on their hands,” said Poiget. “It’s not simply a heroic thing, it’s their only choice against le Martel’s vision of the future.”

“Why don’t they leave, I mean go to Algharb or the Caliphate.”

“Here they can work, in Algharb there is nothing for them, in the Caliphate they are tainted, they are not pure, they are Franquaois, they are trapped.”

He continued describing the methods used by the terrorists, the bomber was chosen only days, even hours, before the attack took place. The bomber was taken to a cemetery, where he was prepared for death by lying between graves all night praying to Allah. He was covered with a white shroud that covers his whole body, the same used to cover bodies for burial.

He was then taken to a room in the mosque where a video recording was made in which he declared his faith and desire to become a martyr for Islam and his people. The recording was then shown on illegal web sites after his death. His photo was distributed and displayed on the street walls of the Zones, in Algharb and the Caliphate to honour his sacrifice.

The terrorists carefully selected their target, they prepared the bomb attaching it to the suicide bombers body, guiding him to the site. Secrecy was their greatest priority, the attacker could not even say goodbye to his family.

At the pre-selected site, the recruit was been trained to act normally, blend in amongst his potential victims and when there was a sufficient number of Gallos near to him, he pressed the detonator to explode the bomb. If the slightest thing went wrong he detonated the bomb, destroying himself and any possible leads. It was extremely rare for the SSF to capture a bomber alive.

They then turned their attention to the news on the TS with a report on the terrorist attack. They speaker announced twelve dead and over fifty injured. There was silence as those in the café watched the TSF and the

images that showed the desolation of the bombing scene. Ambulances and emergency services were everywhere, dominated by the presence of the heavy security forces.

The crowd looked at the scene of the devastation, trying to absorb it, trying to understand what had happened here. Ennis recognised the spot where he had been standing when the bomb had exploded, he realised that he had been extraordinarily lucky, an instant earlier and he would have been dead. It was the eleventh bombing that had taken place since the curfew had been imposed in the Zone had been, since riots had taken place eighteen months ago.

A witness declared to the cameras, “All of a sudden, I was in hell. I was blinded by the flash. Then there was total chaos, people running screaming, people on the ground, blood everywhere.”

The Siege of Avignon

The tanks rumbled into Avignon as dawn broke and thunder rolled on Sunday morning as its population were brutally awakened from their weekly repose. Hassan bin Ibrani's minister and governor of Avignon, Yousef Jebouz, knew why they were there. He closed himself in an office high in the Palais des Papes, a small archers’ window gave him a restricted view on the square below. He had assembled his key staff as soon as he received the alert from the frontier guards and prepared for the siege.

The previous evening Hassan bin Ibrani had called an emergency cabinet meeting. Algharb's intelligence services had been observing the movement of the Nation's forces at the edge of the zones across France. It was clear that le Martel intended to go ahead with his plans to eradicate the zones and deport the Immigrants to Algharb where the economic situation was near to collapse. The country could support no more massive arrivals.

Late that night, with the encouragement of the Caliphate and the opposition parties in the Federal parliament, he declared that the population

of the Zones was under the diplomatic protection of Algharb, in the hope of halting their imminent destruction and expulsion of their populations.

However, the declaration had little effect on le Martel, who announced that Bin Ibrani's declaration was nothing less than seditious, other than to provoke his ire. Le Martel promptly ordered armoured units to cross the border towards Avignon late in the night.

He was confident of his strength, since his arrival to power his government had increased the Nation’s defence spending, so as to be able to pre-empt any threat from the south as well as giving military means to his strategy in Africa. The result is that France's military forces are by far the most powerful in the Federation. The other states of the Federation had seen no menace in le Martel's aggrandisement of the country’s armed forces, in fact it was encouraged as it reduced their own military expenditures not only providing their arms industries with valuable orders but reinforcing the Mediterranean flank of the Federation against adventurism by the Caliphate which was in reality a toothless lion.

The order of top priority military standby was given to the two enclaves of Toulon and Hyères that remained French territory housing the key military bases for the Nation's Mediterranean Fleet and Air Force. The naval base at Toulon gave France control of all naval movements along its southern flank thus protecting the Nation against subversive intervention by the Caliphate. The airbase of Hyères, a dozen kilometres to the east of Toulon provided protective air cover to Algharb and Monaco.

For the moment all Yousef Jebouz could do was put out desperate calls to Medina Hurriya as armoured units of the Nation’s Army entered Avignon, more than one hundred armoured personnel carriers, sixty tanks and four thousand soldiers encircled the walled city, their gun barrels swinging menacingly into position. Jebouz and his men desperately spoke though the links, calling diplomats around the world, appealing for help.

Sources inside Jebouz's office told Global Focus that he warned of a bloody battle between his forces and the Nation's army, hoping that prospect would prompt the international community to force the French to desist. He called the Brussels hotel room of Tony Burns, the U.S. special envoy to the Federation, and pleaded with him to inform the President and the US Administration to stop what was about to happen.

"It's an attack on our leader Hassan bin Ibrani personally," Jebouz cried. "They want to destroy him."

He was right. A communiqué issued by Boublil's department told Global Focus some hours latter that the assault on Avignon was in response to the unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Nation which had been no less than a call for revolt and insurrection in the SRZs, and for the terrorist bombing at the Bastille the previous day.

The Nation's ministry of defence spokesman explained that the objective of the incursion into Algharbi territory was to arrest Jebouz and to expel him from the Algharb to the Caliphate.

"We are obligated to remove Jebouz from the occupied region," Boublil said. "We cannot let him stay to organise terror and chaos."

The hard-liners in le Martel's government, considered the incursion as a warning, had they been able to choose they would have decided to settle the affair of Provence once and for all. For them the terror campaign orchestrated from Algharb and Hassan bin Ibrani's refusal or incapacity to stop it, was a staggering display of aggression. The last straw had been his incitation to the Zones to rise against le Martel's government. It was the signal for the start of the most dangerous confrontation that ordinary people on both sides of the border feared and from which it was impossible to escape.

Certain knew that it was just the start of le Martel's only acceptable solution, however, the moment was not yet ripe and the incursion was to serve as a warning. The acts of terrorists guided from bases in Occupied Provence were to stop; it was to be part of a softening up process. Step by step he would prepare world opinion for the final assault and the expulsion from the Nation's soil of the colonisers.

The tanks penetrated into the town, a few shots were fired, as the tanks were positioned before the walls of the City des Papes. Helicopters over flew the city firing warning missiles that fell harmlessly into the Rhône, it was unthinkable to touch the historic city, Jebouz was comforted with that knowledge.

Jebouz spoke with the Palace in Medina Hurriya and was instructed to sit still whilst the President appealed to the Federation and the world to intervene.

The scenes of a potential war in Algharb seemed to have a particularly stimulating impact in Brussels. After a long period of calm during which le Martel had pursued his policies of ethnic cleansing Algharb had become an unacceptable reality on the western Mediterranean shores of Europe. At last the scene was set for a new battle to cleanse Europe of its ills, for many le Martel was none other than the reincarnation of Henri de Navarre who would rid Europe of the invading Moors forever.

France was stronger and prosperous, the Caliphate was weak and Africa was prostrate. New technologies had transformed the economies of the industrialised nations, nations that had become lean with a fall off in their populations but strong by their technologies and a more equitable distribution of wealth. Countries that no longer depended on oil and imported energy where technology provided industry with the means to provide almost limitless goods and services to elite populations whose average age had risen giving them greater experience and new determination whilst providing their youth with the privileges of wealth and superior education.

Once again the position of Brussels would be to wait and see. Their diplomats informed Washington to caution the Caliphate and the Turkish Levant against any acts that would encourage Hassan bin Ibrani to resist France.

By Monday elite units of the Nation's armed forces had penetrated into the ancient city and the Palais des Papes was surrounded. Before storming the palace, the French blared over a loudspeaker to those inside, "Lay down your arms and come out." French officials told Global Focus that a highly specialised unit of commandos had led the room-to-room raid through the palace and that Jebouz's quarters were surrounded.

Within 24 hours, the French had arrested over one hundred wanted terrorists. Only a handful of senior aides and bodyguards remained with Jebouz twenty-four hours after the incursion.

With electricity cut, Jebouz was forced to rely on candles. He had little food, water or medical supplies.

"He won't be able to go to the toilet without us knowing about it," said a French army officer.

It was soon clear what the French had accomplished. Avignon was under French control and bin Ibrani could do nothing to change that.

The Caliphate and Istanbul endorsed a peace proposal by Arabia that, for the first time since the partition in France, offered le Martel normal relations with all Muslim states, in exchange for France's withdrawal from Algharb and its agreement that Muslim refugees be allowed to return to their homes in France.

Diplomats from Muslim states interviewed by global Focus accused le Martel of deliberately sabotaging the peace overture with his attack on Avignon. In an interview, the Caliph called le Martel's assault on Avignon "a brutal, despicable, savage, inhumane and cruel action." He continued, "The acts we are witnessing represent the views of a criminal who has blood on his hands," and he vowed, "The resistance to the occupation will continue."

The success of the deployment encouraged le Martel to advance his plans with the army repeating the same exercise in other border towns. By the end of the week French tanks had rolled into the suburbs of several border towns and began to prepare troops near the border for further action.

While the French had selected Avignon for its symbolism, the seat of the Catholic Church during two centuries, it was also because of the presence of Ibrani's minister responsible for the settlement of refugees, Jebouz. He was an Islamic militant who had provided help and assistance to resistance movements in France. It was a fact that Avignon was crawling with militants.

French intelligence sources said forces were hunting two key leaders of the UFMF Martyrs Brigades. Nasser Awwas, a founder of the group, is thought to have gone underground in Avignon, along with the Brigades' effective leader, Marwan Barghouti. Having judged Ibrani unwilling to arrest his own people, the French had decided to do the job for him.

It was the augur of yet another defeat to an embittered Islamic world, embittered by its own weaknesses and divisions, embittered by its loss of wealth and power as the principal supplier of the world’s almost unique form of liquid energy.

The Clodos

On the edge of le Martel's 'brave new world' lived the hordes of Clodos, for the most part hidden from the eyes of the bourgeois living in their smart city centres far from the camps and districts in the zones infested by the new age travellers and their hangers on, the Drogo-alcolos.

Who were the unruly hordes of Clodos who squatted the public parks and railway stations? First they were Gallos, they were dregs of the Gallo-Europeans, the drop outs, the hardened rebels who never escaped their juvenile imaginations, the incompetent and the good-for-nothings with their fringe of composed the Drogo-alcolos and those on the edge of internment suffering from grave social problems and mental disorders.

Why did they exist in the authoritarian state of the Nation? It was simple that they were Gallo-Europeans. It was said that the Rase recruited its thugs from their ranks and used them to harass the non-Gallos, burning their homes and property when it suited the regime.

Others said that le Martel would look after them when the time came, shipping them out to some distant New Territory.

The exploding population of Africa spewing its desperate hungry people out towards Europe the only possible haven for the majority. A paradise where there was food, shelter, health care and benefits, it would have been crazy not to attempt to reach that land of milk and honey.

At the beginning of the century France counted amongst its population almost eight million persons of Arab extraction. The vast majority of who lived in the so-called cities, state housing projects that lay in the near suburbs of the big towns. Many of the cities had been built for the white working class French a few decades before; they had gardens, lawns, well-lit pedestrian areas and parking places. At the time they were built they were considered a luxury at a time when new housing was scarce and expensive.

Over the years most of the white working class moved on, the economy expanded and there were better jobs with more pay that raised their expectations, giving them the possibility to join the middle class and buy

their own houses in the leafy suburbs that lay further out of the towns, or apartments in the bourgeois town centres.

The cities slowly filled with the new arrivals, Settlers from North Africa and then Black Africa, whose levels of schooling and civic values were not the same as the French who had left. It was a fact; most had arrived seeking jobs that they could not find at home, low-level jobs on assembly lines and on construction sites.

The Settlers worked hard and produced families, the children of which were handicapped by the traditional values of their parents that were foreign and in adapted to France, there was also their parents' lack of education and consequently guidance. The new generation was unruly without the cultural guidelines necessary in the country where they were born. There was also the underlying racism of the French who had built an African empire from the Mediterranean to Equatorial Africa. They had fought vicious wars of conquest followed by rearguard wars of colonialism. Their sons and fathers learnt a double talk pretending to be against racism whilst secretly detesting the Arabs.

The scene was set for a violent confrontation and it was only a question of time and a suitable detonator to set the events into action.

Boublil's Solution

"What is the plan for me? How can I get out of France?"

"London! London is your destination by Calais or Brussels."

"There's nothing I would like more."

"You will leave at dawn tomorrow, before day light with our guide. But first you will visit the Zone."

Ennis groaned to himself. It had begun to appear more complicated than he had started to hope for escaping from the strange and frightening totalitarian Nation of France that was nothing less than a neo-fascist regime, worse than that Italy had become.

He had no choice but to accept and they left in the direction of the Wall. They were not far from the South Barrier, where Poiget had brought Ennis up to the third floor of an abandoned apartment building that gave them a good viewpoint along the Wall. He pointed to the band of plantations beyond the open stretch of no-man's-land; where Ennis was surprised by the number of white RASE buses parked along the perimeter road.

The road was used exclusively by the RASE Security Forces that patrolled the Zone perimeter day and night. The RASE buses transported the Special Security Forces to their guard duties around the Zone and to other key places in the City. He could also see the antenna and tops of what looked like military vehicles partially hidden by the trees.

"As you can see we are sealed off from the world. But we are not only physically separated we are also socially separated. We are non-existent excluded from all citizens' rights, to education, health and social benefits, as well as being economically and ethnically excluded."

"Ethnically?"

They left the Wall turning north in the direction of Gambetta.

"You are surprised, but we don't even have an ethnic label, we don't even exist. We are waiting for a solution with fear in our stomachs. A solution is being drawn up by le Martel's Zionist henchman, Boublil, it's called the final solution."

"The final solution," Ennis exclaimed with disbelief.

"Yes, it's strange," said Poiget with a grim laugh. "Details are filtering through to us; we have our agents inside the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs. The Zone will be razed to the ground and all of its inhabitants will be transferred to a staging camp in the Queyras."

"The Queyras, I've heard that name before."

"It's a high valley in the Haute Alps near the Italian frontier, about two thousand metres up surrounded by high mountains. It's a dead end, the pass into Italy is at almost three thousand metres that's officially closed now, in any case it's snowed up for most of the year."

"So that's why they're building camps there!"

"How do you know!"

“One of your people in Medina Hurriya,” he said thinking of Asma. “When is this expected to happen?”

“We don’t know exactly, but we understand that they are planning to seal the Zone in the next few days, they have their special forces ready, you saw them near the wall.”

“So that’s what it was.”

“Yes, then they will start to move the population to the Gare de Marchandise, at least that’s what they hope.”

“What do you intend to do?”

“Fight!”

“How?”

“We are ready, our fighters have been preparing for this moment.”

“But...."

“Yes, there will be casualties, but we have no choice even if it’s only symbolic. We have to let the world know, that will be the role of people like you!”

Ennis knew that he was not a hero and the need to get out suddenly became urgent.

“Our headquarters will be in the old Town Hall of the 20th arrondissement at Place Gambetta. Our men have already established positions along the Wall and at the Barrier, they are also in the sewers and in the tunnels leading to the Metro.”

“Is the population informed?”

“I’m sorry to say no, it is impossible and in case would serve no purpose. There is no exit from the Zone other than the Barriers. Any panic will attract the RASE and that’s the end of any possible surprise by our resistance fighters.”

“There could be a lot of innocent people killed.”

“We have no choice, the system of Ethno-Nationalism is the worst form of discrimination, it’s worse that racism in a country and the end result will be the same.”

“Maybe.”

“Boublil’s system has victimised those persons who are distinguished by their skins, expulsing them from France, but le Martel has also created a sub-race of persons rejects because they are poor, sick or handicapped, it’s the worse form of eugenics.”

“It’s worse than being racist.”

“In any case race exists, we can’t deny that. You can’t be accused of being a racist by another white man, but I could be accused of being racist by a black man, so whatever you say there is a question of race between whites and blacks.”

“I suppose so, race exists in all forms in the minds of men and it will remain so as long as we have different colours, different languages and different religions.”

“Until we become one tribe.”

“In ten thousand years!”

“You’re no doubt right but it doesn’t prevent sincere people fighting against inequality, we the Maoists will continue our fight to our last drop of blood.”

“I hope it’s your blood, not that of those you want to save.”

“We are not Stalinists killing our own.”

“We shall see very soon.”

The Assault

The government of le Martel had carefully prepared its Rehabilitation Plan. The Zone would be purged of its population then demolished. They would finish once and for all with the Zonards and all the undesirables that were a festering sore on the City.

Late that evening of the 31st July le Martel signed the Sanitation and Rehabilitation order, which would start at dawn the next morning, when the Special Security Forces would enter into action. The outbreak of

haemorrhagic fever was a God send justifying the use of emergency powers.

The Order specified that all those who had useful employment would be re-housed at a safe distance from the City. The rest of the rabble and undesirables of Gallo-European origin would be shipped out to the camps in preparation for the re-colonisation of West Africa. All non-Gallos would be bussed from an assembly point at La Villette to the Hippodrome in Bois de Vincennes where they would be sorted, those with priority work permits would and those without, the later would be transported to Algharb or new camps in Corsica. The criminals, infiltrators, Clodos, Horbans and Drogo-alcolos would be transported to West Africa where they would be put to useful work building camps.

That night Ennis slept uneasily in the safe house where Poiget had left him the previous evening between Gambetta and Porte de Bagnolet. The night was unbearably hot and Ennis was up at about three in the morning woken by a knocking at the door, it was Poiget who whispered that it was almost time to leave.

Ennis quickly prepared himself and then went to the kitchen. The door was open and, still half asleep, he was startled, standing before him in the kitchen was a phantom, a girl who had returned from the dead, Asma Saïd!

She looked at the stupor and astonishment on his face.

“I’m sorry, it’s not a ghost, it’s me Asma.”

Ennis was fixed with shock, he had not imagined for a single instant that Asma was still alive.

“A woman died but it was not me. She was found drowned in the port, unidentified, probable a vice victim. Abdelmoumoun set you up to embarrass Paris and Washington by accusing you of murder and involvement in terrorist acts.”

“But why didn’t you tell me?”

“How could I? In any case that’s all they were waiting for.”

“How did you know I was in Paris?”

“We lost you in the suburbs of Median Hurriya. It was Doctor Guiglione who put us back on your trail, he’s fine by the way.” She laughed relaxing a

little.

Ennis slowly took the situation and looked at her.

“What are you doing here then?”

“I’m your guide from now on, they need all the men they have here.”

Poiget interrupted, questions and explanations could wait, and time was pressing.

“Before you leave you have to see the preparations at Gambetta for the resistance, the battle is about to begin.”

At Gambetta Poiget introduced Ennis to the leaders of the Resistance fighters, who informed them that the Zonards were organised for the battle that was imminent. They had based their strategy for the defence of the Zone with the tactics that had been established since Warsaw in 1944. Their arms were not sophisticated but were adequate to inflict serious damage to the enemy. Finally their escape routes were well prepared through the sewers and the Metro towards Montreuil and the nearby suburbs. Their objective was to inflict the greatest possible losses and resist as long as possible.

“Well there’s nothing to do now but wish you good luck, inform the world of our combat. Here are your documents, you have everything you will need to leave France.”

Poiget handed an envelope to Ennis and he opened it. There was a nano-identity card in the name of Alexis Barthomeuf, a passport and other papers as well as travel instructions and a plastified map.

“It’s started, quick you have no time to lose.”

“But not before we show you the transportation points.”

“Transportation!”

“Yes, operation Savannah.”

Transportation

At first Ennis had not taken operation Savannah seriously, rumours of the most extravagant type circulated amongst those against le Martel's regime, but after the assault on the Zone Ennis realised that even the most bizarre of ideas had become plausible.

His hesitation was more for his concern for his own safety; after all he was a specialist in international political affairs, not a war correspondent.

The resistance movement intercepted RASE orders to assemble at designated points the Zone's population that was to be transported to undesignated camps. All resistance and disobedience would be subject to the menace of instant military justice.

That evening he followed Asma and their guide through an endless maze of abandoned sewers to the cellars of an ancient apartment building where they passed the night listening to the thud of heavy fire. The next morning they were given official employee armbands and made their way to street level and found themselves on Rue de Belleville. The air was filled with acrid smoke and the smell of burning, crowds of disorientated people carrying suitcases and bundles who were being directed to different assembly points by officials wearing armbands.

They walked until they reached the Metro station Pyrenees where they saw a group of elderly men with weary women and their frightened children who were assembled in a bedraggled line by a damaged Post Office building, they were waiting for the buses. A heavy pall smoke hung over the quarter; the streets and pavements were strewn with debris.

From time to time there was the echo of an explosion or a burst of automatic gun fire, the sporadic fighting continued not more than a few blocks away, with each thud the children clung to their mothers who pressed against the walls in fear.

Asma stopped to ask one of women where the buses would bring them. "To the reception centres."

"For what?"

"I don't know, that's all, it's obligatory," she said nodding towards a heavily armed group of RASE men who stood on the corner some metres further on smoking and talking in low voices.

"Obligatory?"

“You’re daft or what! Where’ve you been the last few days?” The woman said looking at Ennis suspiciously as he bowed his head inspecting the ground.

“My husband is ill, we were in the cellar, our building was hit by rockets, a lot of people were killed or wounded,” Asma quickly added to calm the woman’s doubts.

“They gave us orders, we had no choice, they’ve even shot people we’ve heard. They said it was for sanitary reasons, an emergency, hemorrhagic or something.”

“Hemorrhagic fever!”

“What’s that? She said turning to Ennis.”

“It’s a severe and mostly fatal disease, with massive internal bleeding occurs. Normally in Africa, though in the last few years it has spread because of virus mutations.”

“What are the symptoms?”

“It starts with a high fever, headache, muscle aches, stomach pain, fatigue and diarrhoea, a few days later chest pains, shock, blindness, bleeding and ninety percent of its victims bleed to death within a few days.”

“My God is it here?”

“I don’t know!”

“How is it spread?”

“When an outbreak occurs it is transmitted in several ways. People can be exposed to hemorrhagic fever from direct contact with the blood or secretions of an infected person. It’s what specialists call a filovirus, it belongs to a virus family called Filoviridae. Other subtypes of hemorrhagic virus have been identified in Africa in the last twenty years. As the virus develops it eats through veins and arteries causing massive internal bleeding.”

“My God how did that arrive here?”

“Probably from Africa, somebody carrying the disease. It was first identified by scientists at Marburg in Germany, then in the Congo. Since then it has appeared in other regions of Africa.”

Two buses arrived and the RASE started to roughly herd the small crowd into the first bus. Ennis turned to leave but Asma grabbed his hand and climbed into the bus under the watchful eyes of a RASE guard.

“What now?” asked Ennis.

“Don’t panic, just keep calm, wait!”

The buses took the route along Rue de Belleville that led to the boulevards interieurs where they then turned north. They passed by a burnt out armoured vehicle and several crushed cars; it was obvious there had been fierce fighting. Twenty-five minutes later they arrived at the Gare de Marchandise where they were disembarked. An official stuck a label with a number on their chest.

“Wait until your number is called, then go the gate indicated,” an official ordered.

“What are you doing?”

“Social Service,” announced Asma flashing a card.

“Okay.”

They followed the crowd into a large depot where several hundred people were already waiting. A frightened hush reigned in the depot, from time to time a loud speaker called out a number and ordering those bearing that number to report to a gate.

Whilst they waited they were free to walk about and watch the proceedings. At the gates the Zonards were sorted into Gallo-Europeans and aliens. The Gallos-Europeans, the majority of whom were the very poor with little education, were dispatched in the direction of a sign that indicated ‘Sanitary Controls’. After a brief medical inspection they were provided with food, drink and blankets and then boarded trains. Families were permitted to remain together but no information was provided as to their destination except that it would be outside of Paris. They were comforted by the promised of a new home in a clean and healthy environment.

The aliens, who were composed of Temporary Residents and Infiltrators, were led to a holding area surrounded by barbed wire where they were separated into different groups. Those who could be identified as Temporary Residents with valid permits were transported for rehabilitation

to outlying suburban Zones. The Infiltrators, Ennis later learnt, were embarked onto trains and deported without further formality to the Algharb frontier or one of the many holding camps.

The officials and the RASE guards refused any further information or conversation. The guards were indifferent to the pleas of the deportees; they held their arms at the ready menacingly ready to intervene at the slightest sign of disorder.

The doors were locked automatically with an armed guard posted between each carriage. The blinds were blocked in the closed position; it was just possible to see outside through the gaps. The deportees were seated amongst their bags and bundles in the compartments of old TVG carriages, eating their sandwiches and talking in low voices, now and then a child cried.

Asma indicated the exit and they left flashing the card amongst the many other officials in attendance. They waited and watched at a canteen set up near the exit to the goods station.

Once the trains were filled they left heading to their unannounced destination, slowly rolling through the night without stop until early morning when the daylight started to filter around the blinds. They Lyon, then Liveron. The first glimpse of the countryside was the shadows of the mountains and at seven they arrived in the Goods station at Briançon in the Hauts Alpes.

The reception committee consisted of a squad of RASE guards and officials who would accompany them to their final destination. They were served hot drinks and then climbed into the waiting coaches that took a twisting road that rose steeply towards mountains, as they left the last houses of the town they saw a panel ‘Vallée de la Queyras’.

“Why the Queyras?” a mother asked.

“Probably because it’s a cul-de-sac, a valley surrounded by three thousand metre high mountains. There’s a pass that leads to the Piedmont but it’s closed six months a year.”

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With night fall sporadic firing broke out and RASE reconnaissance copters appeared as dark shadows in the night as Ennis and Asma made

their way in the direction of Port de Montreuil. There they would find a van belonging to a second hand furniture and antiques dealer that was to transport them to the north.

The found the Périphérique and followed it towards Porte de Montreuil. From time to time they heard the dull thuds of gunfire and from time to time an explosion followed by a cloud of smoke that rose above the buildings. A tank rolled along a side street to their left. The resistance fighters were still fighting back.

At Montreuil they turned towards Vincennes. A copter passed overhead, it was so low that they felt the air from its blades. Suddenly the sky was light by a spotlight from the copter; the shattering noise of its canon broke the silence.

“Run they’ll kill us!”

In a building to their right the saw the flashes of arms fire followed by a dull whistle, the copter stopped suddenly, suspended in the sky, it then started to slowly turn on itself then tipped over on one side, falling like a stone on the roof of a garage in an explosion of fire.

To the west there was the first glow in the sky announcing a day that would not be like others. They ran without paying attention to the people who were coming out of their houses and flats woken by the noise of gunfire and explosions that now continued without interruption.

Twenty minutes later they were in Rue de Lagny by a small cemetery where they saw a large van marked Transport de Meuble. They ran towards the van, there was nobody in the driving seat. Ennis then saw a man slumped on the pavement, he was dead, his head in a pool of blood.

“Shit, what do we do now?”

“You can drive?”

“I’ve never driven this type of vehicle!”

“Where are the keys?”

Ennis looked inside, the keys were not in the contact.

“Shit! They must be in his pocket.”

He turned the body over; the driver had been hit in the head. He searched in the trouser pockets and pulled out the keys.

“Here.”

“Christ that’s lucky.”

They climbed into the van; it was an old model, very old.

“You think we can make it in this pile of junk?”

“It’s our only chance.”

He put the key in the contact and turned it, the motor started first go; apparently the van was well maintained.

He looked for the gear in the half-light put it into first and they jerkily pulled away.

“Where to?”

“There’s no choice, to the east, we’ll turn north later.”

They took the back streets and were out of Vincennes in ten minutes. Then the road became difficult, the streets were full of old abandoned cars. It was the result of the expulsions and the rapid abandon of petrol driven private cars. The close suburbs had been emptied of their populations. Further on the conditions were better and they took the main road in the direction of Soissons.

“Switch on the radio.”

“Who killed the driver?”

“I don’t know, maybe the Drogos or the RASE, I don’t know,” Asma replied exhausted by the tension and their efforts to escape. She then turned her attention to the radio looking for the news programme that she found after some searching.

The newsreader was announcing that all Parisians and commuters should remain at home, a general curfew had been declared. Then he read a communiqué,

‘Units of the RASE Special Security Forces of the capital that moved into the Zone this morning as part of the government Rehabilitation programme were met by terrorist gunfire.

The programme announced by le Martel is destined to re-house the residents of the Zone after sanitary conditions had deteriorated. The new housing conditions that will ensure the health and well being of those

persons concerned whilst removing the criminal and illegal elements that have been a continuing source of serious problems of law and order.

The Special Forces have returned the fire after several members of the RASE were wounded by the terrorists.

The Brigadier in Chief has announced that the situation is under control and the operations should be terminated in the course of the day.'

"We'd better stay on this road, there'll be fewer check points than on the autoroute, they'll all be heading towards Paris for the moment."

They arrived in the suburbs of Lille towards midday where they abandoned the van. The morning news had tried to assure the population that all was under control could not hide the dimension of the drama that was unfolding in the capital.

The Paris Zone was taken by the forces of the RASE in a bloody battle that raged for six days. Many of the resistance fighters had escaped through the Metro and sewers to the no go Zones in the rundown suburbs of Montreuil, Bagnolet and Vincennes that lay to the east of Paris.

During the battle there was almost a total silence from the Brussels, the Federal Capital. A security clam surrounded the Paris Zone. It was declared off limits to all reporters and international news media. All direct satellite transmissions by the resistance were jammed. News was limited to laconic declarations by Boublil's ministry that sanitary and rehabilitation operations were running according to plan, though unruly elements had tried to prevent the police from carrying out their orders.

In spite of that it was impossible to impose a total news blanket but what leaked out provoked few demonstrations in European. Those who demonstrated were looked on as the usual lunatic fringe, students and various anarchist extremists groups. Internal conflicts were common place in many parts of the world where overflowing populations confronted the forces of law and order to press their demands for food and employment.

The Federal Capital

After entering Wallonia they took a commuter train to the Federal Capital, Brussels, without any sign of the French RASE other than a few units of the special forces posted at road blocks. Once in Federal Territory they relaxed and less than half an hour later they arrived at the Gare du Midi. It was the end of the line and they joined the morning crowd of commuters, following them down the escalator to the main concourse where a worried Smets was discreetly waiting for his friends.

Brussels was Federal Territory, a kind of no-man's-land between France and the Netherlands. On the one hand it was the seat of the powerful Federal government and on the other it a seething hive filled with political activists who sought to influence the decisions of the Federal Assembly. They included not only those from the Federation, but also lobbyists and representatives of almost every nation on earth. The Federation had the world's largest economy, but also the most chaotic political structure.

Brussels had become a paradise for all kinds of infiltrators, asylum seekers, and national opposition leaders protected by the special protective status offered to all political parties by Federal Territory law; for certain it was the Promised Land. The representatives of certain groups including the Muslims found a certain degree of sympathy from Federal Government officials, whilst others from Russia and neighbouring countries outside the Federation faced rejection. Over fifty percent of the population was composed of Arabo-Muslims and Africans, employed in practically every service of the sprawling Federal Administration. Though the elected officials and their immediate staff were nationals of the Federal States they represented, all other services were staffed to a large extent by of persons of Arabo-Muslims extraction.

It was strange that Europe half way through the twenty first century was administered by Arabo-Muslims and Africans government servants, and at the same time in France the same population was deported to Algharb.

This loss of sovereignty had been one of the major causes of loss of national pride in France, its population accusing its politicians of treason. The other cause was the transformation of the face of Europe. For two and a half millennium Europe had formed itself with its indigenous peoples

flowing to and forth across Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic, and from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. They had been essentially one race and finally one religion in spite of its numerous schisms.

From the middle of the twentieth century new populations arrived, mostly from Africa, bringing with them different cultures and a different religion. It was a religion that had looked at Europe from its eastern and southern flanks, at certain moments making incursions, but never really taking hold. Historically it had been the religion of invading monarchs and their armies, Turks and Arabs, who had been vigorously pushed back by Europe's rulers, from Moscow to Vienna and Paris to Madrid.

The new invasion insinuated itself silently, encouraged by blind politicians, encouraged by leftist intellectuals in the name of open hearted brotherly love, encouraged by economists who preached globalisation and low wages. By the time Europe awoke to take stock of itself it had changed profoundly. The New Europeans were second-class citizens, boiling with anger at the status that had been attributed to them, the bottom of the social scale.

The New Europeans looked on as the white Christians dominated politics and business, whilst the salaried classes took the choice jobs, leaving at the best the lowest paid positions to the New Europeans and at the worst no jobs at all.

Their religion was rejected, feared and suspected of sedition and terrorism. They were most affected by unemployment, which was not due to an economic crisis as such but a lack of jobs. The economy was typical of post industrial economies, industries existed and prospered, but demanded little manpower, mostly jobs in services, at the top end of the scale were those in the financial and banking sectors, or engineering and consultancy, at the bottom end of the scale were the jobs in transport and services.

The New French had difficulty in climbing the ladder to better paid positions and survived in the lowlier paid sectors. They were incapable of taking off and their discontent simmered when they were often left in the ranks of by more recently arrived Settlers.

As a consequence France had become divided, in a face off by two unequal social communities, and its politicians incapable of finding

adequate solutions faced with the rulings handed down from Brussels.

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The first thing that Ennis did was to link up to Steiner in Boston from his hotel room, which had been booked under a false name by Smets's friends.

“Where the fuck are you man?” shouted Steiner.

“Keep calm.”

“Calm, you've been gone nearly four weeks and you ask me to keep calm!”

“I’ve been in Paris.”

“Paris, Jesus Christ, there's a fucking war going on there from what we can figure out!”

“You're right and I’ve been in the middle of it.”

“Are you alright, you’re not hurt or anything?”

“No."

"What about this murder thing?”

“Nothing to do with me, a frame up.”

“Thank God for that!”

“When are you coming back?”

“I’m working on that, first I have some unfinished business here. I’ll send you up my notes, just give me a day or two, then we'll speak together again.”

“Okay, listen, be careful.”

They hung up and Ennis started to prepare his notes that he had kept over the last weeks.

o0o

Two days later he linked up to Steiner again. He had not decided what his next move would be, he expected Asma to arrive that evening.

“How are you?” asked Steiner. “You’re looking better, even though it sounds like you've had a rough time.”

Ennis saw him shifting in his seat uncomfortably, Steiner was safe in Boston, he was still on the run, though relatively safe in Brussels for the moment.

“Listen if you have a problem get your arse down to the embassy, I’ll warn them.”

“Don’t do that. It’s okay for now. I’ve rested. I’m safe here for the moment. I can't be sure for how long. I don’t know how the laws work in the Federation.”

“Listen, your notes, this is fantastic stuff. We’ll get top ratings for a story like this.”

Ennis was pleased, he had not realised until then how dramatic his adventure in Algharb and France had been. He was not an adventurer; he was a political analyst, not a war reporter.

“That’s good.”

“Tell me what about this Savannah thing?”

“I don't know much more than what I given you in my reports.”

“Can you get anything more?”

“That won’t be easy, at least without going back.”

“Forget that!”

Ennis had other things on his mind, Asma had not shown up. Smets had told him not to worry, but he could not help thinking of the risks if Boublil’s Guards arrested her. If she were in trouble he would have to return.

“It would be a hell of a story if we could find out exactly what le Martel’s plans were for his so called re-colonisation.”

“I told you I’m not a reporter.”

“Okay, okay, think about it, call me tomorrow.” The image on the screen faded.

Steiner’s insensitivity was something extraordinary, he lived on another planet, sitting safe in his New York office

For the first time in weeks he relaxed. Seen from Brussels things looked different. Once Asma appeared they would head for London, leaving France and Europe to their problems. Nations with such long histories and which

had been sovereign states for a dozen centuries or more found it difficult to adapt to their new condition, they continued to function as independent nations when if fact the seat of power had been transferred to Brussels.

Smets appeared at six, his face was grim, the good news was Asma should arrive in the city later that same evening, but their opposition losses in Paris had been great. Smets zapped the TS, catching a brief report on mopping-up operations in Paris and an official declaration from Boublil, who announced that an attempted terrorist attack in the Nation's capital by extremist Anarchist New World groups had been foiled, thanks to the government's prompt reaction.

Two days later he left for London on a direct intercity flight with diplomatic cover arranged by the US consular service and the help of Steiner's political friends.

New England

Ennis found New England a strange place. It reminded him of the classic television series of the twentieth century 'The Prisoner'. Scotland and Wales had gained their independence, the United Kingdom had ceased to exist and Northern Ireland had sullenly edged towards the Irish Republic. To the visitor London had taken on the air of Tel-Aviv or Cape Town, little resembling the capital of the mid-twentieth century.

His work was almost complete and he would be back in Boston in a week's time. Asma had decided to join him to help in the preparation of the series, but before that she had work in Brussels investigating le Martel's 'Project Savannah' which would be the culminating factor in the series.

In the meantime at the London offices of Global Focus he started to collect information for the New England segment of the series. He commenced with a political map of the country that showed a patchwork of what were in effect settlements, reminiscent of the occupied territories in the now defunct Palestine. Settlements such as Bradford or Slough were composed almost entirely of Neo populations whose population had their

origins in the Indian Sub-continent, who had brought their culture with them which they refused to abandon.

The settlements had grown over half a century. Ennis remembered that even when he was a child they had been considered as a temporary phenomenon. However, they already displayed their difference, saris, turbans, temples and brightly coloured mosques in the middle of the sad English working class landscapes where they had settled. Integration would follow explained politicians, social commentators and intellectuals, who could see no further than their own narrow experience, when a simple glance at cities such as Durban in South Africa would have given them a glimpse of the future.

Those communities, as did the Chinese and Jews, were bound by strong cultural links compared to the West Indian or African communities in England. Though as a reaction the blacks formed their own political groupings that fought against racism, defending black rights and inadvertently reinforcing the demands from the Asian communities.

The Asians did not want integration with the whites and especially blacks; they wanted the best of both worlds, rights and respect, whilst rejecting the values of their new homeland and its traditional English values.

They elected their representatives to Parliament, adhering initially to all parties, who represented their electors on community lines voting against any issue that appeared prejudicial to them, however out of context to their political principles. Later they established their own parties, whose main political platform was for community rights, crying racism, real or false, whenever it served their purpose.

As a consequence their towns and cities took on the appearance of uni-cultural settlements, magnets attracting new comers, a great number of whom slid naturally into their own cultural environment without ever really knowing that of their host country.

The Lord Lieutenant, in a tradition that had been well exploited by the English, had accepted the concept of separate development of different communities with the Anglo-Saxons nominally on top. This system had functioned efficiently either by partition in parts of the world as diverse as

Ireland, on the sub-Continent itself, through apartheid in Africa and the ad hoc separation of indigenous populations in Australia and New Zealand.

Though the system had been seriously weakened by the rise of International Communism and de-colonisation in the twentieth century, it was rediscovered with a certain enthusiasm at end of the Cold War, when fractures appeared in the blocs after the ideological veil of brotherhood and common interest was torn aside.

The Islamic community was composed of Neos and refugees from the Middle East, more recently Iraq and both Arabias, from Pakistan and India after their recent war, and minorities from Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia and many other distant countries such as Malaysia whose only point in common was the English language and Islam. In their voluntary exile they were joined together in a loose Ouma that rejected links to any specific ethnic community, and whose ambition was the creation of a new Emirate, a London, governed by the laws of the Sharia.

Many of them saw London as the capital of international Islam whose object was none other than a revolutionary Islam a community based the Koran and on the laws of the Sharia.

The Muslims from the sub-continent could not accept the Anglo Christian way of life of the larger community that they lived in whilst the nominal and most vulnerable Anglos were more willing to accept the Muslims and certain even started to mimic them in their way of dress whilst others even sought conversion to Islam.

The Muslims gathered together in their own communities, erected their own barriers as they occupied whole districts in towns such as Bradford where they represented ninety-nine percent of the population in certain areas. The primary and secondary schools in those districts were attended almost exclusively by Muslims who in addition attended classes in Koranic schools for religious instruction.

They had their own radio, press, shops, businesses, cinemas and of course mosques. The children frequented other Muslim children, they married within their own communities, in a large number of cases shopped in shops own by other Muslims or worked in businesses own by Muslims. Their life was a kind of apartheid refusing integration with the English and

as their population increased they colonised new districts where the white population moved on as the Muslims moved in.

The non-Anglos demanded concessions and whilst they made few concessions to their host country maintaining their links with their home country, their priority being to conserve their own way of life and seeing English culture as foreign.

But there were not only Asians and Africans, there were also those from Eastern Europe the Bulgarians and Romanians, the Russians and Ukrainians who represented more than a million. This population was seen by the nationalists as gangsters and Gipsies. The Poles, Czechs and Hungarians were seen as stealing jobs from the Brits but the danger was in fact greater for the Asians and Africans who lost out to this new wave of immigration of a newer kind with a population hardened by generations of Stalinism and Communism. Competition between minority groups resulted in resentment from the longer established minorities became a bone of contention as the Eastern European immigrants claimed priority by virtue of their 'whiteness'.

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His old friend from Tim Taylor, now political editor of The Times of London, took him to visit a pub they had often visited as young reporters, it was called the Blind Beggar in Whitechapel to the east of the City of London. The pub was famous as a meeting place for East London gangsters in the last century. Now it was in the heart of what was commonly known as Banglatown because its Bangladeshi population. They drove to the pub; the English were still much attached to their personal cars, though their numbers had fallen considerably in recent years. Along Mile End Road Ennis was surprised by the transformation, they passed by a fine mosque with its minarets all built in the brick preferred by English architects.

A dense crowd flowed along the pavements and they were almost all from the sub-continent, the women dressed in saris and many of the men in the baggy trousers and long jackets. It was a scene typical of Dacca or Karachi. The only incongruous element in the street scene was a road works where the men who laboured were all Anglos a contrast with France where Ennis could not remember seeing Gallos doing that kind of low class manual labour.

They parked the car and walked to the pub passing a bearded and turbaned Sikh who was parking his latest model Ferrari with scant regard for the regulations.

It was strange how English society had continued to evolve around its own particular concept of class structure. Class certainly existed in other European societies, however in New England the whole population hung fiercely onto the system, well after the other countries of Western Europe had evolved along more discrete lines. On the continent the demarcation between classes were less visible and their populations less conscious of the difference that nevertheless existed.

Ennis had observed that in a general manner the mass of the English Anglo-Saxon middle class-aspired to an imaginary sort of squiredom, country gentlemen, bearing their badges of status in the form of their cars, houses, jobs, styles of dress and pubs. They were also aped by many of the long established community from the sub-continent who had prospered and risen economically in England.

The pub was a microcosm of New England society where the different classes were visible. As an establishment based essentially on the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages there were no Muslims, and though there were one or two Indians the majority of the clientele were Anglos.

The wealthy Anglo-Saxon upper classes and those aspiring to join them lived out their popular image in districts such as Kensington or Chelsea. The lower classes were excluded from the division of wealth, mostly dismissed to social housing and a perpetual struggle against debt and unemployment; they were joined in a desperate no-man’s-land by those of mixed race who had lost their cultural identity.

Though the Neo populations fell into the class divisions of English society, whatever their aspirations, they were set apart, marked by their origins. The majority of the English regardless of their own social class resented those Neos who achieved success.

Class also had its North-South divide, the South being London and the Southeast, the difference being reinforced by the separation of Scotland and Wales.

The policy of separate development privileged the better off classes and the Neo populations and the result was a country that was hopelessly

divided and incapable of any political decision given its cleavages of race and class.

In short Ennis knew that New England was a nation of unspoken Apartheid that practised politics of rightist Nationalism, whilst at the same time but did not hesitate to heap criticism on le Martel's France, when it was politically expedient. However the Lord Lieutenant had a lot in common with le Martel, he was a Francophile and enjoyed his holidays in France where he was frequently a guest at de le Martel's chateau or in Monaco as an honoured guest of the Royal Prince.

The Brits, whose own nation was reduced to England, gloated over the predicament that the French had got themselves into with Algharb, whilst the French retorted by referring to England as 'Little Britain'. Both nations had undergone dramatic changes over the last half-century. The Federation with its thirty-two states, who had surrendered their sovereignty and power to the Federal Council in Brussels.

As Scotland and Wales had devolved into independent nations, and Ireland united, England had become diminished. The number of its Federal parliamentary seats had fallen from seventy-two to fifty, the same as Poland.

Though Algharb had solemnly declared its independence and was recognised by the Caliphates and other Muslim states, it was not recognised as an independent state by Brussels, where it was considered an Autonomous Region of France in accordance with the Evian Agreement represented by Paris at the Federal Council, under the tutelage of the Federation.

The Region of Provence that France appeared to have lost in the south was replaced by its gain in the north with Autonomous Region of Wallonia.

At the Federal Parliament in Strasbourg, fluctuating alliances were formed by groups of member states, having generally common interests, vied for influence. The most consistent groups were the Germans and the Latins, followed to a lesser by the Scandinavians, the ex-United Kingdom and finally the smaller states whose only point in common was their weakness.

Paris was the led the Latin group of countries, the most numerous but the most unstable, the second group was led by the Germans who were the

most influential and stable, in a crisis they were sure to assemble the most allies.

On the other hand London had the greatest of difficulties in leading a cohesive group composed of the ex-members of the United Kingdom. However, England had a strong cultural influence since English had become the common language of the Federation to the chagrin of both France and Germany.

On most issues the Federation was polarised around the Germans and the Latins. The only point of common accord was the need to find a long-term solution to the problem of Algharb.

London was different from Paris not only by its form and traditions but also by its political direction and its attitudes to its own non-Anglo population. New England preserved its class society whilst at the same time practised apartheid, on occasions benign and often brutal. The upper-class Anglos were not especially pre-occupied by the presence of a large Muslim minority. They did not differentiate between the different non-Anglos descendants of Settlers from the sub-continent, Hindus or Muslims, they were much the same. The only ones who counted were those who had joined the upper classes by their wealth. The rest were mostly grouped in lower-class ethnic communities. The West Indians and other Blacks, with a few exceptions, were low in the class system whilst the East Asians, who tended to be less clannish discretely, penetrated the middle-classes.

The Anglos together with the better-off non-Anglos practised their economic apartheid living in exclusive suburbs and by sending their children to private schools.

However, both Anglos and established non-Anglo Nimbys feared the flow of refugees and economic infiltrators who in spite of the barriers erected by the Lord Lieutenant's regime to stem the flow.

A majority of the Lord Lieutenant’s ruling party, the New England Conservatives, persisted in their traditional anti-European policy. New England, a member of the European Federation, resisted the introduction by the European Parliament of all legislation that would reduce the sovereignty of member states.

It was a mere facade given its feeble minority in the Parliament. There was no alternative to Europe for New England surrounded by the Welsh,

Scots and Irish, all fervent Europeans.

The Parliament in Westminster was composed of the traditional Conservative and Labour parties, but there were also minority parties that defended the interests of the different non-Anglo communities, there were MPs that represented the interests of the different ethnic groups. They introduced and defended proposals for legislation that favoured their own communities.

New England Parliament had its share of humanitarians who defended human rights and the acceptance of new refugees; they counted in their ranks a large number of non-Anglos MPs, who viewed the arrival of new refugees as positive, especially when the new arrivals would reinforce the numbers of their own communities.

Many of the Brits, as the New Englanders still proudly called themselves, pointed the finger at France, for them le Martel was the leader of a fascist and racist regime and the shame of the Federation.

The position of the Lord Lieutenant was more nuanced. The situation of New England was different and in private he sympathised with le Martel. England's ethnic minorities were more fragmented and divided than those of France and had never presented a physical threat to the unity of the country. England's enemies had been within, the English had been betrayed by the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish, it was they who had been responsible for England’s diminished role in the world.

The government in London resembled more and more that of South Africa with all ethnic and tribal minorities represented. It was truly a multi-racial government representing the population of New England.

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His work had reached its end, it now remained to put the story together, fill in the details. After oil, climate change, economic crises and disease the world was struggling to redefine itself. This would be described by the transformations to the Islamic world and how two ancient European nations, had struggled to come to terms with the changes, each evolving differently separated by a narrow channel of water, both bound to an incongruous Federation, too small to confront a world that had changed.

On one side the Nation of France was dominated by the Gallos, on the other in New England was governed by a semblance of a power sharing with an alliance of the minority ethnic parties. In effect the ruling class in New England was composed of a rich and powerful elite that include both Anglos and non-Anglos. Amongst the non-Anglos were many wealthy families that had their origins in the Indian sub-continent or Hong Kong. It was a reversal of roles of historic Britain and certain of the countries it had ruled for centuries. The influential classes held a disproportionately high number of non-Anglo professionals: doctors, lawyers, businessmen, entrepreneurs and industrialists, who lobbied the government to acquire privileges and rights. They used their position controlling decisions that affected the daily life of the population. The poor were composed of the traditional lower classes of Anglos and Blacks whom the elite non-Anglos learnt to despise.

The Gallos had opted for a new form of apartheid after temporarily being forced to cede part of their territory, their long term goal being to push back the infidels and even reconquer Africa.

POSTSCRIPT

The arrival of le Martel as leader of France and the expulsion of the Settlers was not without opposition. In spite of overwhelming support for le Martel's government an underground opposition movement existed, though in a state of deep disorder and fractionation. This was composed of the usual Gallic multiplicity of factions, covering the whole political spectrum, from the centrists to the lunatic left extremists in between. There were Liberals, Democrats, peoples revolutionary movements, a collection of conservationist anti-nuclear groups, anarchists, Islamic groups, Jewish groups, human rights movements of every shade, Black rights movements, all were more or less violently opposed to le Martel's regime, but above all to each and everyone of their fellow opposition groups.

The Democrats had formed the Republican Resistance Front, and were joined by a floating alliance with the revolutionary and anti-nuclear

movements who drifted with the current, sometimes closer and sometimes further from the RRF.

The Islamist groups rejected the revolutionaries, the conservationists rejected the liberals, the Blacks rejected the White dominated movements, and the Jews rejected the Islamists.

All opposition movements were by definition underground, their members risking their lives; the regime outlawed all non-approved opposition movements that were pursued as subversive or terrorist organisations.

Their day would no doubt come, but le Martel and his followers had many good years before them.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Gallos - French

Gallo-Europeans - Used for Europeans

Non-Gallo - Non-French

Non-Gallo European - Non-European

Immigrants - Term used by the Nation to describe those one fourth or more non-Gallo European descent

Settlers - All immigrants of non-European origin

Maghribis - North Africans

North Africans - From the Caliphate

Arabs - Arabs in general

Medina Hurriya - Capital of Jaziirat al Gharb

Jaziirat al Gharb - Name of Autonomous Region

Algharb - Generally used name of Jaziirat al Gharb

The Autonomous Region - Jaziirat al Gharb

Occupied Provence Jaziirat al Gharb
Lost Provence - Jaziirat al Gharb
WAC - Western Arabian Caliphate
Misr-Maghrib - Western Caliphate of North Africa
Misr - Egypt
Maghrib - Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco
Neos - Non-Gallos
Nation of France - Official name of France
European Federation - Federation of European states
RASE - Regiment Armé de la Securité d'Etat
Guards – RASE
Le Martel Charles d'Albignac - Premier Magistrat de la Nation de France
SIS - Special Intelligence Services
MEF - Multi-Ethnic Front
Party of the Caliphate - For union with the Caliphate
TS - Tunnel TV screen in 3D
Global Focus - International reports
Uplink - Satellite link
Cités - Urban Immigrant neighbourhoods
Zone - Special Residential Zones
Zonards - Inhabitants of Zone
Clodos – Homeless
SSF - Special Security Forces
RAS Corps - Republic of Algharb Security Corps
NASE Guards - National Armed Security
Pre-Restoration Period - Fifth Republic
SRZ - Special Residential Zone
SSW - Short Sojourn Worker

MSI - The Ministry of Security of the Interior MSI Police as opposed to National Police

National Party - Le Martel's party

RRF - Republican Resistance Front

UFMF - United French Muslim Front

The Greater Levant - Turkish-Israeli Protectorate

Free State, Autonomous State - Jaziirat al Gharb

Jaziirat al Gharb - Southern Island

Mansour Mohommedia AMM - Victorious Mohommedan Army

Al-Qaeda - The Base

Al-Muhadjiroun - The Immigrants

Al-Quds - The Holy, Jerusalem, The Seat of The Caliphate

Neos - French of immigrant descent