

**October 1961** French security forces killed between 150 and 250 Algerians on and around 17 October 1961 before, during and after a peaceful demonstration in Paris by 25,000 supporters of the Algerian nationalist *Front de libération nationale* (FLN) against the night curfew imposed by police chief Maurice PAPON; 11,538 protestors were detained. Those killed were shot, beaten, tortured or drowned in the Seine or canals. This explosion of state violence had many causes. Violent repression in the colonies was commonplace, and had been transferred to metropolitan France from the 1930s onwards as the perceived danger of Algerian nationalism increased. In metropolitan France, long-standing public antipathy to Algerians had worsened during the course of the ALGERIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, as had police hostility to Algerians, especially due to FLN armed attacks on security forces. The Gaullist state covered up the massacre, suppressing the limited protests organised by Algerians and their French support networks and deliberately misinforming parliament. The mainstream Left protested far more strongly after the CHARONNE massacre in February 1962, and the memory of Charonne subsumed that of October 1961. Furthermore, Algerian nationalist leaders, keen to continue peace negotiations with de Gaulle, did not publicise the massacre. However, the memory of October 1961 was kept alive throughout the 1960s and 1970s by Algerian migrant groups, and has resurfaced into the public domain since the 1980s as antiracist and counter-cultural associations have sought to establish a parallel between the October massacre and the high levels of physical and symbolic RACISM that Algerians and their descendants continue to face. These associations now commemorate the massacre annually and demand official recognition of the numbers killed and of state responsibility. October 1961 has thereby taken on a wider significance as emblematic of racial violence, official impunity, lack of accountability and of France's difficulties in coming to terms with its colonial past (see House, 2001). (Jim House)

#### Further reading

Einaudi (2001) – a vivid reconstruction of the lead-up to and events of 17 October, using FLN archives; Brunet (1999) – detailed but conservative historical examination of security force involvement, using police archives.

**OIF Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie** (International Francophone Organisation). The OIF encompasses the official institutions of *La Francophonie*. The name was adopted at the Ministerial Conference held in Bucharest in 1998, as part of the process of constituting a new political institutional framework for what had hitherto been a somewhat nebulous group of Francophone organisations. See also FRANCOPHONE INSTITUTIONS; APPENDIX.

#### Further reading

See website: <http://www.Francophonie.org/oif.cfm>

**Ontario** Canadian province. Whereas Canada is officially bilingual on the federal level, the province of Ontario is officially English-speaking. Although the French-speaking minority is the most important Canadian French-speaking population

outside QUEBEC (close to 500,000), it represents less than 5 per cent of the total population of the province and is subject to seemingly irreversible assimilation (see ASSIMILATION/INTEGRATION/INSERTION).

Important instruments in the struggle against assimilation are a complete school system in French (in certain areas of concentration), a university network, radio stations, newspapers and an active publishing sector defending a French-Ontarian literature. The defence of French-speaking hospital services has been of great symbolic value. (John Kristian Sanaker)

#### Further reading

Jaenen (1993) – an important contribution to the description of Franco-Ontarian economic, social and cultural characteristics.

**Orality in Moroccan culture** Orality is a fundamental ingredient of Moroccan culture. Speech regulates everyday life, and communication is mainly channelled through two oral languages: Moroccan Arabic and BERBER. Orality constitutes a powerful system that deeply shapes the way visual and non-visual representations of cultural roles and values are constructed and perpetuated. Related to seeing and hearing, orality is central to the Moroccan speech community's sensory experience and a valuable source of 'authentic' information.

Orality is related to illiteracy and women, the vast majority of whom are illiterate, mastering only one or both mother tongues. Printed and electronic texts do not reach illiterate women. Monolingual, or even bilingual, Moroccans do not understand mainly French or Standard Arabic movies and television programmes.

Orality has a dual status in MOROCCO: both a 'degenerate', 'vulgar', 'low class' medium of expression, because it is vehicled by non-prestigious languages – Berber and Moroccan Arabic; at the same time, a symbol of identity and authenticity, because of its link with Moroccan cultural specificity.

The power of *Ikkelma* (the word) is attested in many deep aspects of Moroccan culture, such as marriage contracts, business contracts, and even legacies, until recently conducted exclusively through the oral medium.

Morocco is full of signs that oral literature is strong and alive: storytellers are seen in market places and cafés, as well as homes; the KORAN is still learned by rote; the call for prayers is publicly announced five times a day; and centuries-old poetry recited even among illiterate people.

Oral literature is the most authentic, un-Westernised literature in Morocco. Until recently, written literature was considered the only prestigious 'literary' form. Now, oral literature is receiving more attention. Including oral histories and folktales, it covers a broad range of social writings, revealing authentic symbolic formations and systems of representations. It is full of mysteries dismissed by Western modernism: demons and other supernatural agents intervening in the lives of humans, ecstatic dreams, miracle cures and superstition. Oral literature is continually presented, represented and exhibited in a recursive way as the images and symbols constituting the core system of cultural themes in a society tend to recur in an infinite number of distinct and original expressions, exhibitions and texts. (Fatima Sadiqi)