

Paris Trial Is Told Of Army's Despair

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PARIS, May 30.—The trial of former Gen. Maurice Challe and André Zeller, for sedition was turned today into a trial of a French Army torn between its duty to obey and its desire to keep Algeria for France.

A parade of witnesses before the High Military Tribunal set up to judge M. Challe and M. Zeller for staging a mutiny in Algeria last month pictured the entire army in Algeria, or at least its officers, as profoundly disturbed by the obligation to carry out a policy that was leading to Algeria's independence.

The witnesses were mostly officers, a large number of whom complained that, on orders, they had given the Moslem and European masses their word never to abandon

them and now could not face them.

Among the officers who refused to follow M. Challe, M. Zeller and their associates, former Gens. Edmond Jouhaud and Raoul Salan, there were some who indicated that they had remained faithful to Paris not so much because they did not sympathize with the mutiny's motives but because they did not think it could succeed.

A General's Testimony

One major general recounted that he had not taken any position at all but had merely followed the orders of his superior. It happened that the superior, Lieut. Gen. Henri de Poquilly, commander of the Oran region, refused to rally his forces to M. Challe, so the major general, Leon Perotit, commander of the Twenty-ninth Infantry Division, did not do so either.

There were a major general who stood at attention before M. Challe and M. Zeller before going to the witness stand and a young, earnest lieutenant with a blond crew-cut who saluted the two defendants after he left the stand.

The major general, Joseph Casenave, was a division commander in Algeria. The lieutenant, Jacques Favraud, was an officer in the First Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment who said that until M. Challe and the others took power he and his brothers officers had been in despair because they had sworn not to leave Algeria until the Moslem rebels were beaten.

On the second day of the trial in the heavily guarded Palace of Justice, M. Challe emerged as the central figure of the mutiny while M. Zeller was

little mentioned. Both M. Jouhaud and M. Salan are in flight.

M. Challe was pictured by witnesses, including those nominally for the prosecution, as a patriotic man driven to desperate measures by his profound conviction that he could win the war in the battlefield in a few months' time.

Testimony by Valluy

Retired Gen. Jean-Etienne Valluy, who preceded M. Challe as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's commander for Central Europe, said M. Challe and M. Zeller were not personally ambitious men but patriots.

M. Challe had been supreme commander in Algeria before going to NATO in April, 1960, and General Valluy said M. Challe had had a feeling of frustration because he had not been allowed to carry to a successful conclusion his plan to wipe out the rebels as an organized military force.

General Valluy said M. Challe's coup in Algiers had not caused a rupture in the army but merely had brought to light a rupture already existing. Very frankly, General Valluy told the court that his sentiment at the time of the mutiny was, "What you are doing is crazy, but I cannot help being at heart with you."

From conversations that the witnesses recounted they had had with M. Challe and M. Zeller, a story of vague improvisation emerged. M. Challe was said to have thought he could bring off a military victory in a few months' time with food and gasoline being hoarded and sparingly used. M. Zeller said he had contemplated turning toward Spain, South Africa, Israel and Latin-American countries for aid.

When he listed these countries one day in a conversation, M. Challe answered, according to a witness, in a 30-second way: "I would rather have the help of the United States."