

**KADHAYA
TARIKHIA**



قضايا تاريخية

ISSN :718X

EISSN : 2802-6031



<https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/228>

Algeria and South Africa

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الصفحات: 18-03	السنة: ديسمبر 2025	العدد: 02	مجلد: 10
تاريخ النشر: 2025/12/28	تاريخ القبول: 2025/12/19	2025/11/30م	تاريخ الاستلام:

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Abstract:

On the instruction of the minister of mujahideen mr. muhammad cherif abbas i represented Algeria in south africa in the tenth anniversary of South Africa's independence, which coincided with president's bouteflika's visit to pretoria .it is worth noting that algeria enjoys friendly relations and provides diplomatic and military support nelson mandela received his training in Algeria.

Keywords: Algeria. Liberation.south Africa , Bouteflika , Nelson Mandela ,
Support of Algeria at UN.

Ladies And Gentlemens

I am very grateful to be among you to share your celebration 10th, October 2004, of the republic of South Africa and Algeria, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary of the revolution, as you know, Algeria has shared a common history of defending the rights of the peoples for their liberty and freedom with South Africa.

Mr. Bouteflika, then Minister of foreign Affairs in 1975, has presided the General Assembly in the United Nations and spoke out on the decolonization of guinea-Bissau which became new member in the Organization, and Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Cape Verde and South Africa, and denounced the economical, military and political pressures and conspiracies aiming to fail the expectances for liberty and independence.

This year is the 60th anniversary of the long – lasting and merciless campaign for restore national sovereignty of Algeria. On the French side it was called “les événements” (the events”, a euphemistic way to avoid the term war. However, it was a total war that lasted it 7 years and a half, and ended with liberty for the Algerian people. Unfortunately, all parties lost

On the 1st of November, 1954, the revolution broke out in Algeria. Since then the Algerian Question has forced itself, internally, On French public opinion, and, externally, on international public opinion.

It is necessary to note that Algeria did not follow Morocco and Tunis immediately in armed struggle. There are reasons for this delay.

At the beginning of this article, we must describe Algeria, however summarily; it's historic past, the aggression which ended its national sovereignty, the period when it was colonized and the resistance of the Algerian people.

Algeria including the Sahara is four times larger than France. The Algerian Sahara is not less important than the North of the country, for, from the standpoint of communication, it links Algeria with an important part of the African Continent. The Sahara is recognized today as a great prize, both from the strategic and from the industrial and mineral points of view. This is doubtless the reason which induces French colonialism to detach from it the whole of the North African Sahara, In order to make Algeria into part of the national territory of France, bound directly to it.

Before the aggression of 1830, the Algerian people lived relatively happily, maintaining commercial and diplomatic relations with the Mediterranean states, with England and the United States.

Algeria maintained good relations with the French Government, and emissaries of the French Government were favorably received, especially in Algiers. At the time of the Grand Alliance of Europe against the French Revolution, the Algerian Government sent ships laden with food to France. These ships, accompanied by a certain amount of coined money, constituted a loan free of interest. This loan has never been repaid. It was the subject of numerous discussions, in the course of which the French negotiators of that time showed their bad faith.

The official French version presents the aggression against Algeria and the military occupation as a reply to the accident of the "blow of the fan".

This version cannot stand up to the examination of the historical facts.

For the principal causes of this aggression are to be found in the difficulties encountered by the monarchy of France after the triumphal period of Napoleon, and in the necessity felt by Charles x for an external success to bolster up his tottering position. Not only did the French Government of the period not pay the sums which it owed, but, further, it prepared in extreme secrecy the French Armada which made a surprise landing in Sidi Ferruche on the 5th of June, 1830. But the fact remains that among the causes of the aggression there was also the necessity for economic expansion and for territorial extension to get raw materials, markets and strategic positions in the Mediterranean basin.

The 19th century is a period characterized by the colonial developments of all the European powers. This is the reason why, after having occupied Algeria in 1830, France did the same thing, invoking the same excuses, to Tunis in 1881 and Morocco in 1912. On the morrow of the Great War, France enlarged her colonial possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean by occupying Lebanon and Syria.

We have purposely recalled the principal stages of European colonialism in order to refute the colonialist thesis which presents territorial and economic expansion as a benefit for the colonial peoples.

Algeria also has been the victim, among some many others, of colonial expropriation and exploitation as the same what happened before that time in South Africa.

From 1830 to 1900, our country underwent military occupation and the installation of large scale settlement which, supported by the army, took over all the good lands and drove off the native people to dry and infertile lands.

At the eve of the Great War, the Algerian people were reduced to their simplest expression.

In 1923, M. Violette, former Governor –General of Algeria, declared in his book, "Will Algeria Survive?" that more than 67% of the national wealth of Algeria belonged to 100,000 Frenchmen, and that only 33% belonged to 10 Millions of Algerians.

The aggression of 1830, the crimes of the chiefs of the colonization and the bloody repressions of the army of occupation led to several uprisings of the Algerian people.

(Messali Hadj, The Algerian Revolution, 3–4)

NOVEMBER 1942 AND AFTER–REPRESSION FIRES REVOLT

When the Allies arrived in North Africa on 8th November, 1942, the promises made at the time by the great powers, the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, remained unfulfilled.

At the moment of armistice, in May, 1945, 45,000 Algerians were slaughtered following a police provocation in the Constantine province.

It is tragic to remember that, soon after the conclusion of the war, when the Algerian people demonstrated not for their freedom but in enjoyment of the victory of the war, they were put down by the force of French arms immediately after the war itself. But that is past history, and we should never forget these things.

Never discouraged the Algerian Movements continued their struggle with greater determination.

The Algerian Revolution, 1954–1962

What is the position with regard to Algeria? The position with regard to Algeria is as follows. Algeria was surrendered by the Turks when it was of the Ottoman Empire—in parentheses, may I say that I am happy that there is no claim that it should be put back into the Ottoman Empire. The French proclaimed Algeria as an integral part of France. That was an act of conquest; and conquest, particularly in modern times, confers the reciprocal right of rebellion. Conquest is an act of *force majeure*. It is not a juridical act: It is a political act; and every conquest confers the right of rebellion. It is written into the American Declaration of Independence, and into the declarations of independence of many countries, that where peoples are governed against their will they have the right to rid themselves of that rule. In 1834, therefore, France proclaimed Algeria as an integral part of France.

But if this fact had remained alone, this problem would have a different complexion. However, immediately France proclaimed Algeria as an integral part of France, and the rule of the Ottoman Empire was terminated, not by the people but by France; the people of Algeria rebelled against it as early as 1847. So we are dealing not with an ephemeral, a temporary or a passing phase of the resistance of a people. The people of Algeria have been fighting the thralldom of an empire for

nearly 100 years; and the French conquest of Algeria met with resistance under the national leader of that day, Abd El-Kader. He surrendered. That surrendered, again, was surrender to physical force; and it carries with it, as its corollary, the right to resist when you are able to wake up.

Then there was quiescence for a period. After the conclusion of the First World War North Africans in Paris started a movement, moderate in its character, which proclaimed the right of the Algerian people to freedom. Then came the years of the Second World War, and the Algerian nationalists presented to the Allies stationed in Algeria a manifesto demanding sovereignty; and there was no greater supporter, not in exact terms but in sentiment, of this movement than the present leader of the French nation, General de Gaulle. It was the first time he proclaimed, on behalf of the Free French Government of the day, that it was proper and appropriate that the Algerians– whom the French call the “Moslem Algerians”–had the right to citizenship without renouncing their status.

This is the background in which we are functioning. We have on the one hand proclamation of French policy which has recognized Algeria as a country– and what is more, two years later the Foreign Minister of France told the General Assembly that the French Government recognized the personality of Algeria. What is a personality if it is not a personality, that is to say, it has the right to express its person? So if there is any suggestion then this matter must be decided in Metropolitan France, that the Algerian people have no right to their independence, and then there is a

regression from the position already communicated to the General Assembly

The International Action of the FLN

The Algerian nationalists realized the risk of finding themselves face to face with the Formidable French war machine. Very quickly, they became aware of the need to broaden their audience to the international level. The armed struggle was thus combined with political and diplomatic action. The objective was to heighten public awareness throughout the world of the cause of Algerian independence, to interest foreign governments, and to mobilize such international authorities as the UN and the Red Cross. That internationalization of the war, desired by the FLN, would allow it to find material support (deliveries of weapons, especially from Eastern countries), and moral support (pressure on France regarding its Algerian policy).

From the beginning of the war in January 1955, the members of the Arab League, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia, directed the attention of the UN's Security Council to the gravity of the situation in Algeria. The Bandung Conference of nonaligned nations in April 1955 heard the communications of the Algerian leaders. In September of the same year, the UN placed the Question of the "events of Algeria" on its agenda for the first time. In July 1956, the Union Generale des Travailleurs Algeriens, or UGTA (General Union of Algerian Workers), a union organization linked to the FLN, was recognized by the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) over its competitor, Algerian Workers' Federation of Unions, run by MNA militants. At the same time, the Union Generale des Etudiants Musulmans Algeriens, or UGEMA (General Union of Muslim Algerian Students), actively participated in different worldwide cultural groups and developed an intense propaganda campaign (Perville 1984).

In that way, the Soummam Congress in August 1956 established the FLN's international actions: "Externally, seek out the maximum material, moral, and psychological support. Among the governments of the Bandung Congress, incite the intervention of the UN as well as diplomatic pressure...on France."

In 1956, when the UN once more put the Algerian question on the agenda (Gadant 1988), FLN delegations set off on a mission: to Eastern Europe (East Berlin, Prague), Western Europe (Bonn, Rome, London), the United States (New York), China, India, and Latin America.

The two events that accelerated and broadened the internationalization of the Algerian war were the hijacking of the plane of FLN leaders on October 22, 1956, and the French bombing of the Tunisian village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef on February 8, 1958, which had a particularly strong emotional effect on world opinion. On the eve of the Fourth Republic's fall, France found itself brought up on charges by the UN. Atlantic and European solidarity was very uncertain on the question of North Africa.

In waging war against France, the Algerian Nationalists set in place "diplomacy of guerrillas." Very early on, they constructed a diplomatic apparatus, an external presentation that would continue to function effectively after independence in 1962.

ALGERIAN DETERMINATION

The Government Provisoire de la Republique Algerienne (GPRA) « Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic » came into being on September 19, 1958. It was headed by Ferhat Abbas and replaced the Comité de Coordination et d'Execution, or CCE (Coordination and Execution Committee), the first centralized FLN leadership. A year later, in December 1959, an ALN (National Liberation

Army) general staff was instituted, under the direction of Colonel Houari Boumedienne. Despite the contradictions that would emerge between them, these two structures at first planned to be complementary: the task of the GPRA was to win support on the international political scene and to undertake any eventual negotiations with France. The mission of the general staff, by contrast, was to reorganize the ALN, which had been weakened in 1958–59 by the offensives of the French army quartered on the Moroccan and Tunisian borders.

The war of Algerian independence was one of the two cruelest wars of French decolonization in the past century; the other was the war in Indochina (1946–1954), how are we to understand the bitterness of the Algerian war?

The AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS: 1912–1990

The African National Congress, Currently South Africa's ruling Party, endured a rough ride from its formation in 1912 to its current position of power.

This was the first time that blacks and coloreds were allowed to vote alongside whites in the country and the victory was testament to the durability of the ANC, the country's first political party established for the rights of non-whites in the country.

In 1911, one-year after formation of the British colony known as the Union of South Africa, Pixley Ka Isaka Seme addressed the diminishing rights for blacks in the country, urging the people to form one national organization, united against oppression.

As consequence, Tribal chiefs and heads of religious groups gathered in Bloemfontein in January 1912, forming the African National Congress, an organization designed to promote the rights and freedoms of the African people.

More crippling legislation followed. The 1913 Land Act stripped blacks of their rights to land that they already occupied and made it impossible for them to obtain land rights in anything other than impoverished areas demarcated by the government.

1918 saw the triumphant anti-pass campaign led by the Bantu Women's League of South Africa. This Women's branch of the ANC was formed by Charlotte Maxeke. Union organization was set upon the same year and many strikes led to many arrests and imprisonments. The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was formed in 1919. Soon after, the African National Congress in Transvaal led a campaign against the pass laws. The ANC also supported the militant strike by African mineworkers in 1920.

Some of the ANC leaders opposed militant actions like the strikes and protests. They argued for more passive action by appealing to Britain. Delegations had already visited Britain in 1914 to protest the Land Act, but were ignored. Now they again appealed to Britain to recognize African rights, but ignored again.

During the 20s, white racist government policies became harsher. In

many of the industries, a color-bar was established to stop blacks from holding semi-skilled jobs. Blacks were forced into menial jobs that the whites did not want and made sure that they were paid a lot less. During this time .Socialist organizations began to organize black workers. The International Socialist League merged with other groups to form the Communist Party in 1921, becoming the first non-racial political organization in South Africa.

The 30's was a time for organization and opened with the non-European Convention in Kimberley as a climax to a campaign of protest meetings. It was attended by more than 100 delegates representing the ANC, the APO, the Indian Congress, the Native Voters' Association, the Bantu Union and religious and welfare societies from all over Southern Africa.

The ANC gained new life in the 40's. As Hitler and the Axis powers plunged the world at war, the ANC Conference in Bloemfontein in 1939 made this statement: "Unless and until the government granted the Africans full democratic and citizenship rights the ANC was not prepared to advise the Africans to participate in the present war in any capacity."

During the war ,racial unity was repeatedly called for , the ANC was firmly established as the mouthpiece of the African people throughout South Africa and the ANC youth league was created by young, outspoken members like Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and walter Sisulu in 1944. These men were to later lead the blacks in this country to

freedom. Their ideas were based on African nationalism and believed Africans would be liberated only by their own efforts. The Youth League directed their attention to the masses for militant struggle.

By 1948, the Nationalist Party came to power entrenching white minority domination of South Africa. The white minority government of South Africa passed the apartheid laws of racial segregation. The African National Congress naturally opposed the laws and urged its members to resist them.

During the 50's the defiance Campaign begun as a mass movement of resistance to apartheid. The government banned its leaders and passed new stricter laws to separate the races.

The freedom Charter was drafted and adopted at the non-racist Congress of the people at Kliptown on the 26th June 1955, attracting both whites and blacks. It made the point that South Africa belonged to all who live in it(That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people) .

For thirty years, from 1960 to 1990, the African National Congress was banned by the white government and forced to lead its underground guerilla fight from outside the country.

The headquarters was placed in Zambia and the most important leaders

were kept in prison. The ANC was now underground

The organization Umkhonto We Sizwe was formed as a military branch of the ANC in 1961 and the armed combat begins.

A revolt in Soweto in 1976 leads to even stronger opposition among blacks. Strikes continued, resistance intensified and in 1986 a national emergency was declared, lasting until 1990, where 300,00 people, including children, were detained. Activists were murdered, homes were burned. ANC bases were destroyed in neighboring countries and the violence increased even more.

Throughout the protests of the world and the economic pressure of disinvestment of many multi-nationals under boycott, the black political organizations were accepted by the South African government. In February 1990, the white minority government was finally forced to unbanned the ANC. This gave the African National Congress the chance to soften its stance on violence and indicate for the first time that it might be prepared to try and solve South Africa's problems through negotiation.

The ANC, now allowed to work openly, quickly evolved as the most important political party and ended the armed fight.

Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years of imprisonment and emerges as the leader.

A national conference was held and the membership elected. Nelson Mandela was elected President of the African National Congress in 1991 and past president Oliver Tambo was elected National Chairperson. After giving his whole adult life to the ANC, Tambo died only two years late. By 1993, the ANC and the South African government agree to a five-year plan of a common government after the first democratic elections. The first free, multi-racial elections in South African history were held and Nelson Mandela is inaugurated president on May 10th, 1994.

CONCLUSION

After 1962, Algeria did not experience events like those of Vietnam, Korea and Cambodia under the Khmers rouges, and the reprisals faced by the Japanese and Germans. No one called for France's boycott or for any retaliation against war criminals who traded with their crimes through the publication of books and the projection of films relating their monstrous acts. Some of them even became members of the Government of the French Republic., which went so far as to send back the corpses of those killed among Algerians by French forces, compelling their family to pay the expenses for the transfer of their bodies.

Generations of Algerians can testify about the sight of cemeteries in cities, towns and villages where thousands of martyrs of the revolution are berried. Nevertheless, there has been no call for reprisal. Could there be any greater tolerance?

(Information gleaned from internet sources)

Pretoria, October 10th, 2004.